

TACRAO NEWS

SUMMER 2026

Ready, Set, Summer Meeting!

Webinar Watch

Conference Countdown

Committee Connection

Regional Roundup



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Message from the President



Lori's Launchpad

I can't believe we're already well into the summer! I hope you've had a chance to relax, recharge, and maybe even cross a few things off that never-ending to-do list before the busy fall semester begins.

One thing I'm especially looking forward to is seeing many of you at the [TACRAO Summer Meeting](#). Take a look at the website for the full agenda. The Summer Meeting Committee has done a fantastic job planning all the details. It's one of my favorite opportunities to catch up with colleagues and learn about changes impacting our institutions.

If you haven't registered yet, there's still time – but not much! The meeting begins Monday, July 20, so be sure to reserve your spot if you're planning to attend. We'd love to have you join us for great conversations, professional development, and plenty of opportunities to reconnect with your TACRAO family.

Thank you for your continued engagement with and support of our great Association!

Lori Zerr
TACRAO President

Lori Zerr
President
University of Texas
Health Science Center
at Houston

Reed's Ramblings:

Howdy All! I hope the summer is providing you all with some measure of rest and that your fall preparations are going smoothly. It's been a busy summer for the TEC and I wanted to make you aware of a couple of key items.

First, we've been having a number of discussions about the ever-expanding costs of running TACRAO. It's no secret that the costs of everything from food to audio-visual aids have gone through the roof in the last few years. We've always been proud that both our membership costs and our conferences have remained affordable in spite of these increases and we remain committed to that. The reality however is that we do need to adjust our pricing ever so slightly to ensure we can continue to provide the types of experiences we want for our members. As a result, we recently voted to increase the costs of each membership tier and our subscriber fee by \$100 beginning with the 27/28 year. This nominal increase will allow us to maintain our activities while still sitting at price point well below most of our peers. An official notice will be shared with the membership soon and we'll go over the details at the annual conference.

Also, you should have recently received a notice that elections for the 26/27 TACRAO Executive Committee and Nominations Committee are open. This will be our first election through our new provider Election Buddy. You'll notice a lot of new features including detailed information on each candidate to help inform your decision. Please vote and let your voice be part of determining the future of the organization!

See y'all in Houston soon!



Chris Reed
Past President
Texas A&M University



*Andi Buncik
VP Admissions
University of Texas at Arlington*

Andi's Announcements

TACRAO College Fair Schedule and Registration:

As you all know, we launched the [2026-2027 TACRAO College Fair registration](#) earlier this month with our brand-new partner, StriveScan. I cannot thank the High School Relations Committee, the HSR Committee Chairwoman (Sierra Trenhaile), our amazing partners at StriveScan (Annie Mills, Isabella Williams, and Gretchen Burnes), and our Vice President of Technology (Jodie Rexroat) enough for such a smooth launch.

Please refer to the [TACRAO College Fair Member Resources page](#) (behind the member login) on the TACRAO website for helpful resources!

StriveScan Webinar Updates:

In partnership with StriveScan, TACRAO hosted the following webinars in April and May in preparation for the 2026-2026 TACRAO College Fair Registration launch:

TACRAO Member Announcement Webinar: April 27, 2026

- Approximately 50 members attended.
- A list of TACRAO Member frequently asked questions was created based off questions submitted prior to and during the webinar and is available on the [TACRAO website](#).

TACRAO Subscriber Announcement Webinar: May 18, 2026

- Approximately 20 subscribers attended.
- A list of TACRAO Subscriber frequently asked questions was created based off questions submitted prior to and during the webinar and is available on the [TACRAO website](#).

Recruitment and Travel Manager Training: May 28, 2026

- Approximately 25 attended.
- A recording of this training is available [online](#).

I encourage you to check out the training resources available on [StriveScan's website](#). Also, stay tuned for additional webinars hosted by StriveScan in August. These webinars will be posted on [StriveScan's webinar page](#) once registration opens.



Andi Buncik
VP Admissions
University of Texas at Arlington

Andi's Announcements Continued

Annual Conference Presenter Webinar Updates:

Kristen McDonald Willey and I hosted a virtual information session for interested Annual Conference presenters on April 22, 2026. Approximately 10 people attended, and a recording of the webinar [can be viewed](#) on the TACRAO YouTube channel. We will be hosting a similar webinar on October 2, 2026, at 11:00am CST. This webinar will be geared toward confirmed presenters; however, all are welcome. It will aim to establish best practices for conference presentations, provide tips on audience engagement, and clarify expectations of presenters. If you have submitted a session proposal or are simply interested in learning about conference presentation, [please RSVP for the webinar here!](#)

Annual Conference Session Selection Timeline:

We are currently reviewing Annual Conference session submissions. We will send out the first round of presenter selections in mid-August and the second round of presenter selections in mid-September based on space availability.

We have also decided to offer some of the proposed sessions in a webinar format after the Annual Conference to allow for extended presentation time and additional audience participation.

We are excited about how the Annual Conference agenda is shaping up! Stay Tuned!

Save the Date: TACRAO 2026

Annual Conference in Houston

Mark your calendars and start making plans to join colleagues from across Texas for the 2026 TACRAO Annual Conference, taking place November 8–11, 2026, in Houston, Texas.

This year's conference will be hosted at the Westin Galleria and Westin Oaks, with primary conference activities taking place at the Westin Galleria. Conveniently connected to the Galleria Mall, the venue offers easy access to dining, shopping, and entertainment while providing an outstanding setting for professional development and networking.

Attendees can look forward to a full schedule of educational sessions, engaging discussions, networking opportunities, and social events designed to support admissions, records, registration, enrollment management, and student services professionals throughout Texas.

Registration Opens July 27

Conference registration will officially open on **Monday, July 27, 2026**. Members are encouraged to register early to take advantage of regular registration rates and secure their place at one of TACRAO's premier professional development events. Registration for the conference will be \$350 from July 27 - September 25.

Hotel Block Opens July 27

The conference hotel block will also open on **Monday, July 27, 2026**. Discounted guest room rates of **\$199 per night** will be available at both the Westin Galleria and Westin Oaks. Participants are encouraged to book their accommodations as soon as possible, as rooms are expected to fill quickly.

Stay Tuned for More Information

Additional conference details, including agenda highlights, featured speakers, educational sessions, and networking events, will be announced in the coming months. Be sure to visit the TACRAO Annual Conference webpage regularly for updates and important conference information. We look forward to seeing you in Houston this November for another outstanding TACRAO conference experience.

Committee Spotlight:

Communications Committee

Connecting Members. Sharing Stories. Strengthening TACRAO.

Our committee is responsible for producing the TACRAO newsletter, highlighting member accomplishments, sharing important association news, promoting conferences and professional development opportunities, and helping tell the story of TACRAO. We collaborate with the Executive Committee, committee chairs, and members from every region to ensure information is timely, accurate, and meaningful.

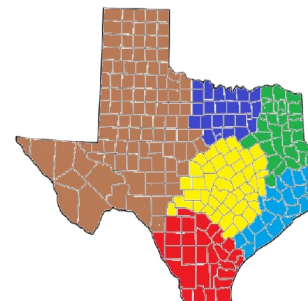
One of our newest initiatives is the addition of **Committee Spotlights** in the newsletter. Our goal is to help members learn more about the committees that keep TACRAO moving forward, showcase the incredible work of our volunteers, and encourage members to get involved in areas that match their interests and talents.

Whether it's celebrating a promotion, recognizing a retiree, announcing a new partnership, or sharing conference highlights, the Communications Committee is committed to celebrating the people and accomplishments that make TACRAO such a strong professional community.

Interested in helping shape how TACRAO communicates with its members? We'd love to have you join us! Serving on the Communications Committee is a great way to build connections, contribute your creativity, and help keep our members informed and engaged.

REGIONAL NEWS

NORTH TEXAS



Tarrant County College®
SUCCESS WITHIN REACH.

Tarrant County College

TCC Welcomes New District Director of Admissions and Records

Karen Jarrell has been named District Director of Admissions and Records, effective June 1, 2026.

Jarrell brings more than 38 years of higher education experience from institutions including the University of Texas at Dallas, UNT Dallas College of Law and Texas Wesleyan University. She's served in leadership roles focused on student services, academic operations, enrollment management and institutional effectiveness.

In her new role, Jarrell will provide leadership for District Admissions and Records operations, including regulatory enrollment reporting, admissions processing, veterans' educational benefits processing, international student admissions and compliance, transcript evaluation, graduation outreach and completion initiatives, and enrollment record maintenance. The position also collaborates closely with other TCCD Student Services areas to support and advance these functions.

Jarrell earned a Bachelor of Arts and a Master of Education in Higher Education Administration from the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts. She earned her Doctorate in Public Affairs from UT Dallas.



Southern Methodist University

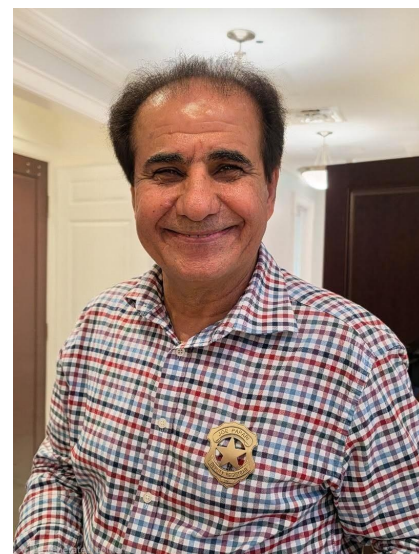
On May 29th, SMU celebrated the retirement of Joe Papari, Deputy Registrar and TACRAO Past President, after 46 years of service to the university. In addition to SMU faculty and staff, the reception was attended by a number of TACRAO and SACRAO colleagues, including nine past presidents, as well as Joe's family.



TACRAO past presidents celebrating the retirement of fellow past president, Joe Papari.

Back row, left to right: John Hall, Fred Rodriguez, Dave Stones, Bobby Lothringer

Front row, left to right: Darla Inglish, Becki Griffith, Joe Papari, Sofia Almeda, Rebecca Lothringer, Chuck Kettwell



NORTH TEXAS Continued



Grayson College

As Grayson College concludes the celebration of its 60th anniversary, the institution continues to build momentum through record student achievement, strategic growth and investments in the future. This spring, the College celebrated a record-breaking 893 conferrals, including Fields of Study, Occupational Skills Awards, Certificates, Associate Degrees and Bachelor's Degrees, reflecting its continued commitment to student success and workforce preparation.

Grayson College remains focused on meeting the evolving needs of the regional economy by expanding academic offerings and strengthening partnerships. Supported through TRUE grant funding, the College launched three new Industrial Technology programs in Pipefitting, Orbital Welding and Logistics to prepare students for careers supporting the rapidly growing semiconductor industry. In addition, Grayson College partnered with North Central Texas College to co-host the North Texas Leadership Gateway Program, a collaborative initiative that graduated 16 emerging higher education leaders.

Transformational campus projects funded through the College's \$456 million voter-approved bond program continue to make significant progress. This fall, Grayson College will open its new 299-bed residence hall, expanding on-campus housing from 98 to 299 students and creating additional opportunities for student engagement, belonging and success. Construction also continues on the Dr. Mary Moses Health Sciences Center, which is nearing the halfway point. Once complete, the state-of-the-art facility will support students pursuing careers in Nursing, Emergency Medical Services, Dental Assisting, Dental Hygiene, Radiologic Technology and other healthcare professions.

Beyond academics and facilities, the College continues to foster an engaging and supportive campus culture. Throughout June, Grayson College recognized Title IX Month with a campus-wide awareness campaign featuring educational resources, videos and themed activities that concluded with celebrations on both campuses promoting awareness, respect and support. Looking ahead, Student Life is preparing for another year of meaningful student engagement through campus traditions, expanded leadership opportunities with a redesigned Student Government Association and a growing student organization community, all designed to strengthen the student experience and sense of belonging.

EAST TEXAS

Panola College



Katie Ferris is the new Director of Admissions as of July 6. Katie brings five years of advising and recruiting experience to the position. Welcome Katie!

New degree programs include:

- AS: Mathematics
- AS: Social Work
- AAS Construction Site Supervision & Management



Tarleton State University

Tarleton State University continues to demonstrate significant momentum across enrollment growth, student success, and institutional transformation. The university recently achieved [historic enrollment milestones](#) and maintained [strong spring enrollment and retention trends](#), while also earning recognition as [Texas' fastest-growing university](#). Tarleton State's commitment to access and student achievement has been further recognized through its designation as a [FirstGen Forward Transformation Institution](#), its [top graduate success rate in Texas for the sixth consecutive year](#), and the prestigious [Carnegie Community Engagement Classification](#). Strategic initiatives are also positioning the university for long-term impact, including the release of an ambitious [Fort Worth campus master plan](#), the [elevation of the Division of Health Sciences' schools to colleges](#), and the convening of national thought leaders through the [Future Summit](#) to advance its strategic plan, *Tarleton State Forward 2030*. Additionally, Tarleton State's expanding outreach efforts were highlighted by statewide recognition of the [Tarleton Today dual enrollment program](#), which continues to create pathways to higher education for Texas high school students through innovative partnerships and increased access to college coursework.



Blinn College

Blinn College celebrated a record milestone this spring, recognizing 1,226 graduates during its Spring 2026 commencement. To accommodate the growing number of graduates and their guests, the college held two spring commencement ceremonies for the very first time.



Austin Community College

What's New at Austin Community College?

Austin Community College recently welcomed Bethany Bell as its new Executive Dean of Enrollment & Records. Bethany joined ACC this spring after serving in leadership roles at the University of Texas at Austin and now provides strategic leadership for enrollment and records operations across ACC's 11 campuses.

As a member of both TACRAO and AACRAO, Bethany looks forward to continuing to connect and collaborate with colleagues across Texas in her new role. Colleagues are welcome to reach out to her at bduncan@austincc.edu.

In other Enrollment & Records news, ACC's official transcripts will soon reflect Bethany's name and signature as part of this leadership transition.

SOUTHEAST TEXAS



Galveston College

Galveston College is excited to welcome Dr. Tracee Watts as the next College President. Dr. Watts has more than 20 years of higher education experience and most recently served as the Senior Vice President of Student Success and Advancement at Brazosport College. Dr. Watts began her new role at Galveston College on July 1.



Dr. Tracee Watts



*Wharton County
Junior College*

Wharton County Junior College

Emily Voulgaris has been promoted to Director of Admissions and Registrar.

Rice University

We have had a season of major transitions, celebrating several well-deserved retirements while welcoming incredible new talent to our team.

Promotions

Justin Schilke has been promoted to University Registrar, effective July 1.

Retirements

David Tenney, University Registrar

Chris Higgins, Classroom and Scheduling Manager

Ellen Everett, Project Manager - OTR Operations

Darlene Judd, Registration Assistant

John Martinez, Catalog and Scheduling Assistant

Shar-Lee Shandera, Registrar Specialist

New Hires

Ryan Allen, Registrar Specialist – Course Offerings and Classroom Resources

Vicky Bond, Assistant Registrar – Course Offerings and Classroom Resources

Edna Gutierrez, Student Records Specialist

Riane Harris, Student Records Specialist

Jillian Krempasky, Assistant Registrar – Strategic Operations



RICE



Justin Schilke



David Tenney

Texas A&M University—Kingsville

Welcome Back to TACRAO, Oscar Reyna!

Texas A&M University-Kingsville is pleased to welcome back Oscar Reyna as the new Associate Vice President for Strategic Enrollment.

A proud Javelina alumnus and former TAMUK Assistant Registrar, Oscar brings extensive experience and leadership in higher education enrollment and student affairs. Following his time at TAMUK, he served as Registrar at Texas A&M International University and, since 2013, has held several leadership positions at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, most recently serving as Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs.

Oscar officially began his new role at Texas A&M University-Kingsville on June 1, 2026. We are excited to welcome him back to Javelina Nation and look forward to the expertise and vision he will bring to Enrollment Management.

Congratulations and welcome home, Oscar!

Texas A&M-Kingsville gets approval to establish College of Nursing and Health Professions

KINGSVILLE (June 22, 2026) — With recent approval from the Texas A&M University System and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), Texas A&M University-Kingsville has taken a major step forward in its efforts to advance allied healthcare access in rural South Texas with the creation of the new College of Nursing and Health Professions (CONHP).

In addition to the approval of the name and organizational structure — which is effective on Sept. 1 2026, the CONHP has received the approval from the THECB for a Bachelor of Science in Nursing program and Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) approval for an RN-BSN program with the BSN option pending approval from the Texas Board of Nursing.

A Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) is also approved by the Board of Regents but is under review at THECB and will be submitted to SACSCOC later this summer.

The CONHP is currently accepting applications for the RN-BSN program for Fall 2026 and are taking interest applications for the MSN and pre-licensure BSN which includes students who have an LVN license.

The new college will house the new undergraduate and graduate programs in nursing as well as other health profession degrees in the current Department of Clinical Health Sciences, including Communications Science and Disorders, Social Work, Nutrition, and Dietetics.

Establishment of the new CONHP is the university's latest move into the allied healthcare space. The TAMU College of Medicine recently announced the launch of its Rural Campus—Kingsville to help inspire the next generation of rural medicine providers and — along with the College of Pharmacy — has established the Regional Rural Med Camp, a two-day program designed specifically for South Texas students ages 14- to 18-years old interested in career paths in healthcare.

Opportunities being created through these moves help ensure Rural South Texas can have easy access to healthcare as the industry continues to rapidly grow to keep up with demands.



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