

MACRAO Annual Conference

Draft Agenda — November 15–18, 2026 · Kellogg Hotel and Conference Center, East Lansing, MI

DRAFT as of October 5, 2026 — schedule subject to change.

Sunday, November 15, 2026

3:00 PM–6:00 PM Registration & Check-In

Monday, November 16, 2026

8:00 AM–5:00 PM Registration & Check-In

9:30 AM–12:00 PM MACRAO Leadership Summit (By Invitation Only)

11:30 AM–1:15 PM MCCA Registrar's Luncheon (By Invitation Only)

1:30 PM–1:45 PM Welcome to the Conference!

1:50 PM–2:25 PM Icebreaker Activity

2:30 PM–3:30 PM AACRAO Update

3:35 PM–3:55 PM Afternoon Stretch

3:35 PM–3:55 PM Break Time: Recharge & Connect with Our Partners

4:00 PM–4:50 PM Admissions & Recruitment Roundtable

4:00 PM–4:50 PM Enrollment Management Roundtable

4:00 PM–4:50 PM Equity in Education Roundtable

4:00 PM–4:50 PM Legislative Committee: Empowered Advocacy — Affecting Policy Through Action

4:00 PM–4:50 PM Military-Connected Student Roundtable

4:00 PM–4:50 PM O. G. Roundtable

4:00 PM–4:50 PM Registrar's Roundtable

4:00 PM–4:50 PM Transfer Roundtable

5:15 PM–6:15 PM New Attendee's Reception: Welcome to MACRAO!

6:30 PM–7:15 AM Dinner at the Kellogg Hotel and Conference Center (Optional at Time of Registration)

Tuesday, November 17, 2026

7:00 AM–7:30 AM Morning Stretch

8:00 AM–8:45 AM Breakfast

8:00 AM–11:00 AM Registration & Check-In

8:50 AM–9:40 AM Supporting Students Through Military Activation: Requirements and Best Practices

Military service can interrupt a student's academic journey with little notice, creating complex challenges for students, faculty, and institutional administrators alike. This session will explore the federal readmission requirements under 34 CFR 668.18 alongside practical strategies for supporting students who take short-term military leave. Drawing on both regulatory guidance and lived experience, presenters will discuss best practices for navigating institutional processes, collaborating across campus, and ensuring military-connected...

Presenter(s): Patrick Forystek, Phil Larson, Brent Landau

8:50 AM–9:40 AM Registrars' Roundtable Session

Registrars' roundtable session to discuss current hot topics, including MTA Ad Hoc Committee initiatives, Pathways, Credit for Apprenticeships, Auto Award Degrees, and Reverse Transfer and additional topics from those in attendance.

Presenter(s): Joe Balinski

8:50 AM–9:40 AM From Data to Decisions: Intelligence and Automation for Smarter Academic Operations

Academic operations have long existed in silos, leaving valuable data across scheduling, curriculum, and assessment untapped. Today, embedded intelligence is changing that. Discover how Coursedog's unified platform combines cross-functional data with AI-powered reporting, automated workflows, and contextual

recommendations to help institutions anticipate challenges, act with confidence, and create the conditions for student retention and long-term financial health.

Presenter(s): Nikki Pulido (Coursedog)

8:50 AM-9:40 AM Health Professions Registrars Roundtable

This session is for current health professions registrar teams to discuss the hot topics in graduate health professions. We'll talk LOAs, course failures, how to work with the university registrar's office, the new loan caps, and more. We've worked hard to build an AACRAO health professions registrars community and want to bring that same energy to MACRAO to enhance our professional relationships within our great state.

Presenter(s): Adrianna Moreno, Amy Yoki, Ali Jenner

8:50 AM-9:40 AM Admission to Graduation - Supporting Military-Connected Students

Supporting military-connected students requires a coordinated, campus-wide approach that recognizes their unique experiences, challenges, and strengths throughout their academic journey. This interactive panel discussion will bring together higher education professionals representing a variety of institutional types, including community colleges and four-year public universities. Panelists will share their experiences, discuss effective practices, and highlight opportunities for collaboration across campus departments to create a more welcoming...

Presenter(s): Sarah Woods, Bethany Alford, Alex Margraves, Kara Fields

8:50 AM-9:40 AM Veteran-Connected Students: The Hidden Opportunity for Enrollment Growth

Many institutions have embraced the goal of becoming "military-friendly," yet few have developed a comprehensive recruitment strategy for veterans, military-connected students, and their dependents. This session explores why this population remains one of higher education's most overlooked enrollment opportunities. Participants will learn who these students are, where institutions commonly miss opportunities to engage them, and practical strategies to strengthen recruitment, partnerships, and student support. Whether your role is in...

Presenter(s): Colin Scott, Carol Osborne

8:50 AM-9:40 AM Catch Them Before They Quit: A 15-Minute Stay Conversation for Registrar and Admissions Offices

Registrar and admissions offices run on people who know where everything is: the transcript exceptions, the transfer-credit quirks, the FERPA edge cases, the calendar that only works because one person remembers it. When that person leaves, the office feels it for a year. Most offices find out someone is leaving when the two-week notice lands, long after it could have been fixed. This session gives supervisors and directors a 15-minute "stay conversation": five plain questions to ask a staff member before a problem shows up. We cover the...

Presenter(s): Obet Pabon II

9:45 AM–10:05 AM Break Time: Recharge & Connect with Our Partners

9:45 AM–10:05 AM Mid-morning Stretch

10:10 AM–11:00 AM Is it appropriate to call an Associate of General Studies (AGS) a transfer degree, if it does not include MTA requirements?

This session will analyze outcome and transfer data from Delta and North Central Michigan College Associate of General Studies (AGS) degrees, both of which do not include MTA requirements, to try and determine if they should be labeled a "transfer" degree or categorized differently. This presentation will include completion and transfer data analysis and discussion about the degrees and how students are using them to meet their goals.

Presenter(s): Joseph Balinski, Emily Clement

10:10 AM–11:00 AM Going Pro: Health Professions Registrars Panel

This session is for current and potential health professions registrar teams to discuss what makes our programs different and what it's like to work in a health professions school. Representatives from medical and dental schools will share their career paths to health professions schools and explore the challenges of working with health professions students.

Presenter(s): Adrianna Moreno, Amy Yoki, Ali Jenner

10:10 AM–11:00 AM College Credit in High School: Earn It, Transfer It, Use It

Students today have more opportunities than ever to get a head start on college while still in high school. This session explores three key pathways for earning college credit early: Early Middle College (EMC), dual enrollment, and Career and Technical Education (CTE). Participants will gain a clear understanding of how these models work, who they

serve, and how they are being leveraged to expand access and improve student outcomes.

Presenter(s): Dr. Stacey Stover

10:10 AM–11:00 AM Strengthening Military-Connected Student Support: A Collaborative Roundtable

Supporting military-connected students requires collaboration, shared knowledge, and a commitment to addressing the evolving needs of this unique student population. This interactive roundtable will be facilitated by two higher education professionals representing a community college and a four-year public university. Together, they will guide an open discussion focused on identifying key areas of need, sharing effective practices, and exploring opportunities to strengthen support for military-connected students across different institutional...

Presenter(s): Bethany Alford, Kara Field

10:10 AM–11:00 AM Keeping the Promise: Using Promise Zone Programming as a Model for Promoting Educational Equity and Student Success in Higher Education

This session will provide an overview of three major Promise Zones in Michigan - Kalamazoo Promise, Detroit Promise, and Grand Rapids Promise Zone. We will discuss how these organizations improve retention and remove barriers by providing financial support, bridging the space between different departments/supports on campus, anticipating student needs, and supporting the transition from high school to college in a more centralized/streamlined way.

Presenter(s): Olivia Rademacher, Danielle Tschirhart

10:10 AM–11:00 AM Shaping the Policies We Implement: Using Your Voice to Drive Better Higher Ed Legislation

As Higher Ed professionals across institution types and offices, MACRAO members are on the front lines of the student experience, witnessing firsthand where policy succeeds and where it creates barriers. Translating this operational expertise into legislative advocacy can feel intimidating though - and who has the time? Following MCAN's policy overview, this interactive workshop is designed to turn conference energy into immediate action. Referencing recent policy proposals we will demystify the advocacy process for first-timers and all those...

Presenter(s): Amber Thomas (additional presenter to be announced)

10:10 AM–11:00 AM Rethinking the College Admissions: Direct Admission Through MI College Match

Many Michigan students never apply to college, often because of friction with the application process itself. Direct admission flips that script. Institutions don't wait for applications. They offer admission to students based on the academic record and interests those students have already shared. The question students ask shifts from "Can I get in?" to "Where do I want to go?". MI College Match, the Michigan College Access Network's statewide direct admission initiative, is bringing this approach to colleges and universities across every...

Presenter(s): Zach Evans

11:05 AM–11:55 AM Legislative Updates

12:00 PM–12:45 PM Charitable Organization Presentation and Lunch

12:50 PM–1:40 PM Annual Business Meeting

1:45 PM–2:10 PM Afternoon Stretch

1:45 PM–2:10 PM Break Time: Recharge & Connect with Our Partners

2:15 PM–3:05 PM State of the State

3:10 PM–4:00 PM Current Topic Focused Session

4:05 PM–4:55 PM Afternoon Breakout Session #1

To be announced — see the call for presentations.

4:05 PM–4:55 PM Afternoon Breakout Session #2

To be announced — see the call for presentations.

4:05 PM–4:55 PM Afternoon Breakout Session #3

To be announced — see the call for presentations.

4:05 PM–4:55 PM Afternoon Breakout Session #4

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4:05 PM–4:55 PM Afternoon Breakout Session #5

To be announced — see the call for presentations.

4:05 PM–4:55 PM Afternoon Breakout Session #6

To be announced — see the call for presentations.

4:05 PM–4:55 PM Afternoon Breakout Session #7

To be announced — see the call for presentations.

5:00 PM–5:45 PM Past President's Reception: Honoring the Leaders of MACRAO

6:00 PM–7:00 PM Dinner at the Kellogg Hotel and Conference Center (Optional at Time of Registration)

7:30 PM–10:30 PM Evening Activities

Wednesday, November 18, 2026

7:00 AM–7:30 AM Morning Stretch

8:00 AM–8:45 AM Breakfast

8:50 AM–9:40 AM Transfer 101

Transfer 101 provides an introduction to the transfer landscape for new higher education professionals. Participants will explore Transfer terminology, key concepts, and processes in Michigan.

Presenter(s): Emily Clement, Colleen Kibin

8:50 AM–9:40 AM CPOS-itive Vibes Only: Bridging the Gap Between Financial Aid, Advising, and the Registrar

Course Program of Study (CPoS) implementation requires a full campus effort. To prepare for launch, Oakland University built executive buy-in to proceed, established a comprehensive implementation plan, and formed a core team across Financial Aid, the Registrar, and Advising. Learn how we operationalized CPoS from high-level governance down to daily workflows. We will share actionable tips, tricks, and collaborative strategies you can take back to lead a smooth implementation on your own campus.

Presenter(s): Tricia Westergaard, Neil Baumgartner, Nicole Boelk, Lauren Fillmore

8:50 AM–9:40 AM From Intuition to Infrastructure: Building In-House Enrollment Prediction Capability

Most enrollment offices make yield decisions the same way they always have: historical trends, counselor intuition, and vendor tools that tell you what happened but not what's coming. This session presents a different model: a production-grade, in-house Enrollment Likelihood Framework (ELF) built from scratch at a large public university, now operational across 50,000+ applicants annually.

Presenter(s): Emilio Xavier Esposito, Seth Tanner Walker, Steven R Miller, Danielle Owen

8:50 AM–9:40 AM From 20 Minutes to 20 Seconds: Practical AI-Assisted SQL Development for Reporting

Generative AI tools have transformed how we approach SQL development—but how do you actually use them effectively in a higher education reporting environment? This session provides a practical, real-world walkthrough of using AI assistants to optimize, troubleshoot, and develop SQL queries for Argos and Banner ERP systems. Attendees will see documented examples where AI-assisted development reduced query execution times from over 20 minutes to under 30 seconds, learn prompt engineering techniques specific to Oracle SQL, and discover how to...

Presenter(s): Bob Griffith

8:50 AM–9:40 AM CPL as Infrastructure: Scalable CPL Practices that Advance Credit Mobility and Institutional Outcomes

As institutions seek innovative ways to support learners—particularly adult and non-traditional learners—and improve degree completion, Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) has emerged as a powerful strategy. This session explores Davenport University's multifaceted CPL program and its role in expanding access, accelerating progress, and recognizing the value of learning beyond the classroom. Participants will gain insight into how Davenport strategically evaluates and transcribes CPL credit to maximize transferability and credit mobility—ensuring...

Presenter(s): Mathew Devereaux

8:50 AM–9:40 AM Morning Breakout Session #6

To be announced — see the call for presentations.

8:50 AM–9:40 AM Morning Breakout Session #7

To be announced — see the call for presentations.

9:45 AM–10:05 AM Break Time: Recharge & Connect with Our Partners

10:10 AM–11:00 AM Updates from the Michigan Center for Adult College Success

In this session, participants will meet the team from The Michigan Center for Adult College Success and learn about the research initiatives and resources available to colleges and universities to drive adult learner enrollment and attainment. As an initiative of TalentFirst in Grand Rapids, the Center was created by the state of Michigan to meet the statewide need for a skilled workforce by increasing the number of adults obtaining postsecondary credentials. These credentials open the door to good-paying jobs, allowing more Michiganders to...

Presenter(s): Jeremy Hendges, Michelle Burke, Matt DeMonbrun

10:10 AM–11:00 AM Mid-morning Breakout Session #2

To be announced — see the call for presentations.

10:10 AM–11:00 AM Mid-morning Breakout Session #3

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10:10 AM–11:00 AM Mid-morning Breakout Session #4

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10:10 AM–11:00 AM Mid-morning Breakout Session #5

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10:10 AM–11:00 AM Mid-morning Breakout Session #6

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10:10 AM–11:00 AM Mid-morning Breakout Session #7

To be announced — see the call for presentations.

11:05 AM–11:25 AM Conference Wrap-Up