American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers
Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors
May 20, 2026
Virtual Meeting

Board Members in Attendance: Hala Abou Arraj, Wendolyn Davis, Chris Dorsten, Chris Huang, Carrie Jeffers, Caroline Laguerre-Brown, Cassandra Moore, Connie Newsome, Tiffani Robertson, Beth Warner, Max Xiong,

Staff Members in Attendance: Quintina Barnett Gallion, Tina DeNeen, Melanie Gottlieb, Martha Henebry, Tiffany Hsu

Guests in Attendance: Fred Magdaug

Call to Order
President Newsome called the meeting to order at 2:34 PM EDT on May 20, 2026

Approval of Consent Agenda and Minutes
MOTION 2026.05.01 – It was duly moved and seconded to approve the consent agenda, the April 17-18, 2026 meeting minutes, and the 2026 Business Session minutes as presented. APPROVED

Officer Reports
All officer reports were uploaded to AACRAO Exchange and approved as a part of the consent agenda.

Committee Reports
All committee reports were uploaded into AACRAO Exchange and approved as a part of the consent agenda.

Staff Report
Executive Director Gottlieb directed the Board to Exchange for her May report. Some key highlights from her report:

- Annual Meeting registration numbers were very close to last year's numbers
- The Assembly call for proposals is open
- The AACRAO census date is April 15. The census data is published on the AACRAO impact page and updated on a quarterly basis
- The process for updating the Public Policy Agenda has begun
- Membership renewals are underway and successfully launched on May 1

- The budget development process has begun. Draft budgets will be available for the FI&A committee to review and discuss at the June meeting
- Negotiated Rulemaking - The accreditation round is concluding early. It includes new transfer items, and the AACRAO Government Relations team is providing data to negotiators
- Executive Director Gottlieb attended the CHEMA meeting with President Newsome
- AACRAO is partnering with SOVA to refresh the joint transfer statement based on LEARN Commission recommendations
- LER Accelerator is shifting and broadening. The partners are interested in addressing the larger issue surrounding learning mobility. The coalition is reconfiguring to become the Learning Mobility Coalition
- The Gates Foundation is engaged in a $5 million grant proposal to develop a public good database for transfer data. AACRAO's involvement is critical to ensure member data is represented
- Ascendium Grant – An 18-month research project on transfer evaluation timing is expected to be awarded for the next budget year

MOTION 2026.05.02 – It was duly moved and seconded to approve Executive Director Gottlieb's May 2026 report as presented. APPROVED

Old Business
There was no old business to discuss.

New Business
Introduction/Review of Board Norms and Engagement Agreement
President Newsome emphasized the importance of reviewing the Board Norms and Engagement Agreement. She noted that the agreement was developed through thoughtful collaboration among all board members and serves as an important guiding document for both current and future boards.

March 2026 Financials
CFO Magdaug went over the March 2026 financials noting the following highlights:

- Investments declined by approximately $576,000. The organization currently has about $6.4 million available in operating reserves, representing roughly five months of operating expense coverage.
- $243,000 of the strategic spending funds as of the end of March have been spent leaving $157,000 remaining. The funds are related to the new website.
- Vendor payables are higher compared to last year. This is primarily attributed to timing issues.
- The organization maintains a $2 million line of credit, with a maximum available usage of $2 million. As of March, approximately $400,000 had been utilized at an interest rate of 4.3%. The line of credit must be repaid within one year of use.

- Through March, the organization reported an operating deficit of approximately $991,000, including about $242,000 related to strategic spending. Excluding strategic spending, the core operating deficit is approximately $684,000.
- Operating revenue totaled $5.2 million, which is $1.8 million short from the estimated budget.
- Membership dues collected total to $1.7 million year-to-date for the current fiscal year. So far, $3.2 million have been collected for the 2025-2026 membership year (July 2025 to June 2026). There's a shortfall of $81,000 compared to the same period in the 2024-2025 membership year. The shortfall is due to a decrease in the number of both new and returning past institutional members.
- Sponsorship revenue totaled $220,000, which is $162,000 below the year-to-date budget. $215,000 of the total amount was generated by the SEM Conference.
- Grants were short of the budget by $1.1 million. The variance is primarily due to the Gitlab/Ballmer grant, which was budgeted for the first quarter, but was not awarded.
- The Prison Education Transfer Grant ($650,000) was initially expected, later appeared unlikely, but following the assignment of a new program officer, the organization was invited to reapply. A secondary transfer-related grant from the same funder is also expected to be awarded around the same time. Executive Director Gottlieb expressed optimism that both grants may be received near the end of the budget year.
- AACRAO investments have increased in value compared to the previous year by $526,000.

Executive Director Gottlieb noted that the draft budget is currently in development for the 2027 fiscal year. Revenue generating departments have been asked to target a 25% net gain to cover non-revenue generating departments. In addition, staff are analyzing all lines for cost savings and making sure that budgets align with the strategic plan and PSR reports. Draft budgets will be made available to the FI&A committee for review and discussion at the June FI&A committee meeting.

<u>Strategic Plan Update</u>
Vice President Jeffers reminded the Board that the new Strategic Plan will officially launch on October 1. The communications rollout began at the Annual Meeting and continues through promotional content in various AACRAO Connect articles.

Vice President Jeffers shared that staff quarterly reports are expected to transition to a high-level dashboard format. In addition, the Executive Director's report is also expected to undergo a restructure as a part of this new reporting system.

AACRAO staff are currently finalizing the Strategic Plan tactics and have narrowed the list from more than 110 initial tactics to 91. Staff are using a RACI framework to assign responsibility and assess organizational capacity. To ensure alignment with the budget, staff were advised that all tactics must either be funded within the budget or moved to a wish list for future grant funding opportunities. A completed set of tactics is expected to be finalized by June 1 for Executive Team review.

<u>Governance Policies</u>
The Governance Committee has been working this past year on restructuring the old Board of Directors Handbook into separate and standardized documents based on the following categories: Policies, Procedures, Job Descriptions and Charters. Seven updated policies were presented for approval. The Board requested additional time to review the documents and will provide additional feedback on the documents directly. The committee will review the feedback collected, and the policies will be brought forth for a board vote at the June board meeting.

<u>Awards Committee Chair Selection</u>
Immediate Past President Moore raised concerns regarding the recent selection of the Awards Committee Chair through an informal nomination process initiated by the outgoing Chair, which bypassed the newly established volunteer application process. It was noted that the selected nominee was not a current member of the Awards Committee. Immediate Past President Moore expressed concern that the process lacked transparency, equity, and appeared inconsistent with AACRAO's stated values.

It was also noted that a new application process had been implemented the previous year to promote greater transparency and equity in volunteer appointments. Historically, the Vice-Chair has transitioned into the Chair role to support leadership succession; however, this cycle differed as the Chair stepped down to pursue a professional opportunity outside the field while the Vice-Chair retired simultaneously. Questions were raised regarding whether existing committee members had been asked if they were interested in serving in the Chair or Vice-Chair roles before the position was offered to Rhonda Kitch, who was not serving on the committee at the time.

As Board liaison to the Awards Committee in her role as Immediate Past President, Immediate Past President Moore proposed working with Associate Executive Director Henebry, her team, and the Awards Committee to formalize committee processes and strengthen leadership succession planning. Suggestions included documenting procedures for selecting committee members and leadership, identifying contingency plans in the event leadership vacancies occur simultaneously, defining clear eligibility criteria for membership and leadership roles, establishing term limits, and creating a formal succession plan.

MOTION 2026.05.03 – It was duly moved and seconded to authorize the Immediate Past President to work with Associate Executive Director Henebry, her team, and the Awards

Committee to strengthen the integrity and transparency of Awards Committee processes.
APPROVED

<u>June Leadership Meeting and Board Meeting</u>
Executive Director Gottlieb informed the Board that the agendas for the Leadership Meeting and Board Meeting are currently in development. AACRAO staff member Hsu reviewed the draft agenda with the Board to ensure members were aware of their expected duties and scheduled events. Board members were also reminded to register for the meeting if they had not already done so.

Executive Director Gottlieb asked Board committee chairs to work with AACRAO staff member Hsu to determine whether in-person committee meetings would be necessary during the Leadership Meeting. Any unused committee meeting time would be reallocated for additional Board discussion.

Executive Session

MOTION 2026.05.04 – It was duly moved and seconded to enter Executive Session.
APPROVED

The Executive Session began at 4:29 PM EDT to discuss a matter.

Discussion was held regarding the matter. No motions were brought forward during the Executive Session.

MOTION 2026.05.06 – It was duly moved and seconded to adjourn the Executive Session.
APPROVED

The Executive Session adjourned at 5:22 PM EDT.

Attachments
Agenda
April 17-18, 2026 meeting minutes
2026 Business Session meeting minutes
VP for Admissions and Enrollment Management Report_May 2026
PREZ Newsome Officer Report_May 2026
HRC Committee Report_May 2026
VP at Large May Report
VP for Information Technology Board Report
President-Elect Report May 2026
Strategic Planning Committee Report – May 2026

VP Leadership Report May 2026
HRC Committee Report May 2026
VP for Records & Academic Services Board Report _ May 2026
VP for Finance – May 2026 Board Report
Finance, Investments & Audit Committee Report – May 2026
AACRAO March 2026 Financials
VP for Access & Equity BOD Report May 2026
VP for International Education – May 2026
Governance – May 2026
Immediate Past President's Report IPP _ May 2026