

Introduction

This document presents the approved goals and strategies for the next AACRAO strategic plan, as developed and approved by the Strategic Planning Committee.

The goals and strategies are intended to set direction and focus for the association over the coming plan period, 2026 - 2031. They articulate where AACRAO will lead and what the association will prioritize, not the specific activities or operational decisions through which that work will be carried out.

It is important to note that the [AACRAO mission, vision, and values](#) remain unchanged from the current strategic plan. They continue to anchor this work and provide continuity across planning cycles. The approved goals and strategies are designed to advance that same mission and vision in response to the evolving higher education landscape, while preserving the Association's core identity and commitments.

Approval of these goals and strategies now allows staff to proceed with full tactical development, prioritization, and implementation aligned with Board intent.

Goal 1

Elevate shared understanding among institutions, partners, and the broader higher education community of the enrollment and academic services ecosystem to strengthen transparent, equitable, and learner-centered institutional practices. {{APPROVED BY SP COMMITTEE 01/09/2026}}

Strategies

- A. Position AACRAO as the primary source of professional knowledge in enrollment and academic services through evidence-based leadership and clear positioning. {{APPROVED BY SP COMMITTEE 01/09/2026}}
- B. Strengthen global and cross-sector partnerships to expand the influence of AACRAO beyond traditional higher-education contexts. {{APPROVED BY SP COMMITTEE 01/09/2026}}
- C. Promote policies, processes, and technologies that reduce friction, increase transparency, and enable timely recognition of learning across contexts into AACRAO standards, research, and training. {{APPROVED BY SP COMMITTEE 01/09/2026}}

Goal 2

Advance evidence-based practice through applied research that informs ethical, interoperable, and effective institutional decision-making. {{APPROVED BY SP COMMITTEE 01/09/2026}}

Strategies

- A. Establish AACRAO as the hub for applied, practitioner-centered research connecting theory, technology, and practice that translates into actionable guidance for institutional leaders and practitioners. {{APPROVED BY SP COMMITTEE 01/09/2026}}
- B. Advance ethical and equitable use of technology and AI in enrollment and academic services. {{APPROVED BY SP COMMITTEE 01/09/2026}}
- C. Cultivate multi-sector research partnerships that produce shared evidence and scalable models for learner success and improve institutional outcomes. {{APPROVED BY SP COMMITTEE 01/09/2026}}

Goal 3

Nurture an inclusive, accessible, digitally connected professional community that supports lifelong learning, leadership development, and advancement across the AACRAO professions. {{APPROVED BY SP COMMITTEE 01/09/2026}}

Strategies

- A. Build recognized credentials for broadening knowledge and skills as well as career pathways for the AACRAO core and emerging professions. {{APPROVED BY SP COMMITTEE 01/09/2026}}
- B. Deepen collaboration with state, regional, national, and global partners to form an integrated professional network. {{APPROVED BY SP COMMITTEE 01/09/2026}}
- C. Foster collaborative learning environments that promote peer exchange, skill-building, and succession within the profession. {{APPROVED BY SP COMMITTEE 01/09/2026}}



Goal 4

Lead coordinated advocacy that advances higher education policies and practices equitably and effectively. {{APPROVED BY SP COMMITTEE 02/06/2026}}

Strategies

- A. Position AACRAO as the trusted, data-informed voice on policy issues that shape how learning is documented, transferred, and recognized. {{APPROVED BY SP COMMITTEE 01/09/2026}}
- B. Support advocacy frameworks and awareness of emerging higher education issues that align national, state, and regional efforts around the policy priorities of AACRAO. {{APPROVED BY SP COMMITTEE 02/06/2026}}