



## Get Ready for NACRO's 2026 Annual Conference and Celebrate the Kickoff of Our 20th Year!

Registration for the [2026 NACRO Annual Conference and Corporate Engagement Bootcamp](#) are open (taking place July 14-16 in Salt Lake City, UT)!

Join us and be a part of history in Salt Lake City as we kick off a year-long celebration of NACRO's 20th anniversary!

Here's a small sampling of some of the dynamic sessions to participate in:



- **NACRO at 20: Corporate Relations Then, Now, and in the Future**
- **Stop Tripping Over Each Other: A CFR Survival Guide**
- **The Student Advantage: Insights That Transform Corporate and Alumni Engagement**
- **NACRO Career Exploration Survey Results**
- **Visual Story Telling: photography and videography for your corporate relations office**

[LEARN MORE AND REGISTER](#)

## Interested in Becoming a Locked In: 360-Degree Leader? Apply for NACRO's Advanced Career Track Pre-Conference Seminar!

Designed exclusively for NACRO members with 10+ years of corporate relations experience, the Advanced Career Track Pre-Conference half-day seminar blends peer-driven discussion with an executive leadership workshop.

Senior leaders will engage in a collaborative deep dive on the front door model, operationalizing the essential elements, and navigating the day-to-day realities of corporate relations work.



This year's seminar also features a facilitated workshop with [CEO, Stanford Football Team Captain, and NFL alumnus Damon Dunn](#). His [360° Leader Framework](#) challenges the traditional, top-down view of management and equips participants with a complete system for leading with influence, credibility, and measurable impact. This high-impact, evidence-based intensive session is grounded in research from Harvard Business Review, Wharton, and others, and will equip senior professionals with a complete system for leading in every direction.

The seminar takes place Tuesday, July 14 from 9:30 am – 3:30 pm for accepted applicants.

Visit the [Advanced Career Track webpage](#) for the [full agenda](#) and to apply. The deadline to apply is **Friday, May 15**.

[LEARN MORE AND APPLY](#)

## Voting is Open for the 2026-27 Board of Directors

NACRO Members are encouraged to cast their vote for the 2026-27 NACRO Board of Directors. Voting is open now through **Friday, May 22**.

The slate of candidates can be found [here](#).

Our thanks to all of our candidates for their commitment to NACRO! Our organization and membership will continue to grow and thrive under your leadership.



[CAST YOUR VOTE](#)

## Nominations are Open for the 2026 Awards

Nominations are open for the [2026 NACRO Awards](#) — our annual opportunity to recognize the individuals going above and beyond to advance our academic corporate relations profession and strengthening our community.

We are accepting nominations for:

- **Mary Beth Maddox Lifetime Service Award**
- **Rising Star Award**
- **Volunteer of the Year Award**



NACRO's impact is driven by our engaged member volunteers who generously contribute their time, expertise and leadership. Each year, we honor those individuals whose efforts elevate both our organization and the broader field of academic corporate relations.

Our award recipients represent the very best of NACRO — demonstrating leadership, creativity and a deep commitment to progress. Whether through a lifetime of service, emerging excellence or dedicated volunteerism, their contributions inspire us all.

Our 2026 NACRO Award recipients will be recognized at the [NACRO 2026 Annual Conference \(July 14-16 in Salt Lake City, UT\)](#).

Submit your nominations by **Friday, May 29**.

[SUBMIT YOUR NOMINATIONS](#)

## A "Quick Text With..." FAMU-FSU's Kim Jacobs!

For our next "Quick Text With . . .", we're delighted to present [Kimberly Jacobs, PhD](#), NACRO Past President and Assistant Dean of Development at [FAMU-FSU College of Engineering](#)!

**NACRO:** "Hi Kim, what's a new CR project at FAMU-FSU College of Engineering?"

**Kim:** "We are excited about recent industry investments our faculty members received to develop fusion technologies. With the various research centers and institutes surrounding the college, including the [National High Field Magnetic Laboratory](#), [the research ecosystem is booming](#) here in Tallahassee."



**NACRO:** "This is terrific news Kim – thank you for your update!"

## *Corporate Relations Reimagined - "Understanding Corporate Investment"*

For NACRO's white paper — "[CORPORATE RELATIONS REIMAGINED: How Academic Institutions Can Build Sustainable Industry Partnerships](#)" — we're

highlighting each month one of our "seven essential elements" for successful corporate engagement.

#### #4 — Understanding Corporate

**Investment:** One of the challenges in this area is the fact that databases used to track corporate interactions on campus are often not integrated with each other and sometimes even carry restrictions regarding who can view certain data. It is critical to address the campus-wide need for data collection and sharing information in this area. [Read more.](#)

The 7 Essential Elements	
1	Institutional Support
2	Mutual Benefits
3	Campus Coordination By Central Corporate Relations
4	Understanding Corporate Investment <small>(formerly One-stop Shopping)</small>
5	Partnership with Career Services <b>new</b>
6	Integrated Approach to Corporate Sponsored Research <small>(formerly Integrated Research Development)</small>
7	Evaluating Corporate Relations Offices <b>new</b>

## NACRO: Upcoming Programming

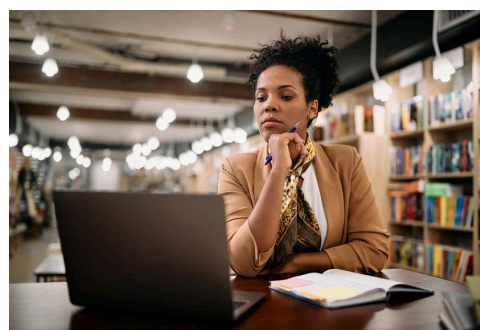
### Regional Meetups (Topic: Artificial Intelligence)

#### Wednesday, June 17

- Midwest: 10am-11am CT
- Western: 11am-12pm PT
- Southeast: 2pm-3pm ET

#### Thursday, June 18

- South Central: 10am-11am CT
- Northeast: 1:30pm-2:30pm ET



### 2026 NACRO Annual Conference (Salt Lake City, UT)

#### Tuesday, July 14

- Advanced Career Track Pre-Conference Seminar - 9:30am-3:30pm MT - [Learn more](#)
- Corporate Engagement Bootcamp - 8am-4pm MT - [Learn more](#)
- Conference - Welcome Keynote - 5pm-6pm MT - [Learn more](#)
- Conference - Welcome Reception - 6pm-8pm MT - [Learn more](#)

#### Wednesday, July 15 - Thursday, July 16

- Annual Conference - [Learn more](#)

[LEARN MORE AND REGISTER](#)

## NACRO: Job Postings

[Rice University, Director of Corporate Partnerships](#)

[University of Virginia, Director of Corporate Relations](#)

[Washington University in St. Louis, Director of Strategy, School of Public Health](#)

[Washington University in St. Louis, Senior Associate Director, Principal Gifts](#)

Job posting forms are due to [Jenna Brown](#) no later than the 1st of the month to be included in that month's *NACRO News*. The newsletter goes out the second Tuesday of every month.



## JOB POSTING FORM

## NACRO: Committee Updates

We're delighted to present our new *NACRO News* content section comprising brief updates from recent NACRO Committee meetings. From benchmarking and communications to membership growth and professional education, NACRO committees are actively advancing initiatives that build the value proposition of being a NACRO member and supporting the field of academic corporate relations.



The **NACRO Strategic Planning Committee** has been focusing on developing NACRO's 2026–2030 Strategic Plan, which will help guide the organization's priorities and growth over the next five years. We're excited to share that the final draft of the plan will be presented for a vote at the [2026 NACRO Annual Conference](#) in Salt Lake City this July. As part of this process, we want to hear directly from our members. Later this month, you'll receive an email inviting your feedback on the draft strategic plan. Please take a few moments to respond and share your ideas, perspectives, and priorities — your input is critical to ensuring that NACRO's future reflects the needs and aspirations of our membership!

**NACRO's Membership Committee** continues to strengthen its New Member Welcome Program through structured onboarding, intentional subcommittee integration and enhanced early engagement efforts designed to accelerate meaningful participation within members' first 90 days. Ongoing quarterly follow-up and increased cross-committee collaboration are also helping connect new members more quickly to relevant affinity groups, regional programming and broader opportunities for engagement across the NACRO community.

The **NACRO Benchmarking Committee** continues to advance several key initiatives, including completion of preliminary Career Exploration Survey data analysis, which is now being developed into interactive Power BI dashboards by Heather Pruitt. The committee is also preparing content and insights to share across NACRO committees and the broader membership, while the Industry Perspectives survey closed May 8. In parallel, work is underway on the timeline for the upcoming institutional survey, alongside ongoing collaboration with the Communications Committee to support coordinated marketing and outreach for all benchmarking instruments.

With the launch of the [new NACRO website](#), the **Communications Committee** is starting to use analytics to look at visitor traffic patterns and their interests. In the first 30 days, the new website drew approximately 1,700 users. Looking ahead, the committee is planning video and photography coverage at the July conference — with a focus on member spotlights, leadership perspectives, and anniversary stories — to fuel year-round content and branding efforts. The committee continues to seek dynamic content; if you have an idea for a blog or something from your institution you would like celebrated, reach out to Chad Brown or Jordan Broutman.

**The Professional Education Committee** is hard at work as the July annual conference approaches. Conference registration opened April 1 while the ACT 1/2 day pre-conference application process is open through May 15. The Early Career group is finalizing Bootcamp speakers for July 14, has successfully launched a pilot mentee program with 15 matches, and delivered a webinar on “Planning and Hosting Industry Partner Meetings with Campus Leaders” that showed record-breaking attendance. Mid-Career also delivered a well-timed webinar on April 28 — “From Efficiency to Strategy: How I Actually Use AI in Corporate Relations” — reflecting the profession's growing interest in practical AI applications. On the Advanced Career front, half-day programming for July 14 has been finalized and the application process is underway. Adding a special touch to the conference, the committee is coordinating with Ken Berlack to record a video message from NACRO co-founders Bill Hoslet and Charlie Swisher to kick off the organization's 20th anniversary celebrations at the conference.

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## NACRO: Corporate Relations Roundup



The University of Rhode Island Research Foundation has launched [URI Innovations](#) as a new public-facing hub designed to accelerate research translation, commercialization and industry collaboration across the university's innovation ecosystem. The initiative aims to strengthen partnerships with companies, startups, investors and government agencies by providing streamlined access to sponsored research opportunities, technology licensing, specialized facilities, and startup support. URI Innovations will also help connect industry partners with faculty expertise and emerging technologies in areas such as ocean technology, advanced manufacturing, climate research, and the blue economy, positioning the university as a stronger driver of regional economic development and innovation. [Read more.](#)

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[Brown University](#) has named James Kellner as its inaugural Associate Provost for Corporate Engagement, signaling a stronger institutional focus on building strategic partnerships with industry. In the newly created role, Kellner will help expand collaboration between Brown and corporate partners across research, innovation, entrepreneurship and workforce development, while also supporting efforts to translate university expertise and discovery into broader economic and societal impact. The appointment reflects Brown's growing emphasis on strengthening

connections between academia and industry to advance sponsored research, technology commercialization, and experiential learning opportunities. [Read more.](#)



The [University of Alabama in Huntsville](#) has announced that Palo Alto Networks will join its [Invention to Innovation Center \(I<sup>2</sup>C\)](#) as a Corporate Innovation Partner, expanding collaboration in cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, and mission-focused technology development. The partnership is designed to strengthen industry-academia engagement through funded research collaborations, internships, co-ops, workforce training, and joint technology

commercialization efforts, while embedding Palo Alto Networks within Huntsville's broader defense, aerospace, and innovation ecosystem. [Read more.](#)

## Welcome to Our New NACRO Members!

- **Jenny Abrams**, Vanderbilt University
- **Kathryn Deane Ballard**, Georgia Tech
- **Stephanie Baugh**, The University of Utah
- **Xander Bennett, Ed.M.**, Wentworth Institute of Technology
- **Tara Bleck**, Oakland University
- **Mark Breidenbach**, University of Colorado Boulder
- **Austin Brown**, Georgia Southern University
- **Kristine Caiafa**, New Jersey Institute of Technology
- **Garth Cook**, College of Charleston
- **Courtney Cox**, Northern Kentucky University
- **Carla Crowe**, Rice University
- **Scott Curry**, University of North Florida
- **Kimberly Dumpson**, UMass Amherst Foundation
- **Christina Frank-Lieberg**, University of Notre Dame
- **Stephanie Guth**, Washington University in St. Louis
- **Shane Karas**, University of Nevada, Reno
- **Eli Kuperman**, Georgia Institute of Technology
- **Kristen Linthicum**, University of Georgia
- **Tyson Marian**, Vanderbilt University

- **Danny Melvin**, California State Polytechnic University, Pomona
- **Jeanette Miller**, University of Texas at San Antonio
- **Kevin Miller**, University of Minnesota Foundation
- **Nick Miller**, Michigan State University
- **Mary Rosenbury**, The University of Utah
- **Sarah Sippl**, University of Wisconsin-Stout
- **Natalie Smith**, The University of Texas at San Antonio
- **Jennifer Speed**, Texas State University
- **Kelly Stockdale**, University of Memphis
- **Gerald Tang**, Bridgewater State University
- **Meagan Trilnick**, Northern Illinois University
- **Athena Tripodis**, University of Notre Dame
- **Joe Vaughn**, University of Georgia
- **Elizabeth Willimon**, University of Georgia
- **Lynn Wong**, The University of Utah

[BECOME A NACRO MEMBER!](#)

## NACRO: LinkedIn Group

NACRO has launched one of our most frequently requested member resources – a member-only discussion forum, hosted as a private, unlisted LinkedIn group.

NACRO members can request to join the group by clicking on the link below.



[JOIN THE LINKEDIN GROUP](#)

Network of Academic Corporate Relations Officers | P.O. Box 2905 | LaGrange, GA 30241 US

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