

THE

BULLETIN

OF ACUI



COLLEGE UNIONS

STUDENT AFFAIRS CERTIFICATION



This certification is designed exclusively for college unions specialists who are mid-level and above, as well as student affairs educators looking to transition into college unions specialist and senior-level roles.

Developed by ACUI subject matter experts and built upon the foundation of Student Affairs Educator Certification, it is a specialty credential for demonstrating continuous learning and competencies essential to success in the complex and evolving landscape of college unions work.

Eligibility/Requirements

Eligible educators include those with a master's degree and five years of student affairs/services work experience, and educators whose highest degree earned is a bachelor's or an associate's with seven years of student affairs/services work experience.

The Core Student Affairs Educator Certification is a foundation and prerequisite for this specialty credential.

STUDENT AFFAIRS
EDUCATOR CERTIFICATION



For more information or to join our distribution list, please visit www.studentaffairscertification.org

This credential is offered by the Higher Education Consortium for Student Affairs Certification-an association founded by ACUHO-I, ACUI, AFA, ASCA, NACA, NASPA, and NIRSA.

THE BULLETIN

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CALENDAR

MAY 2024

1-MAY 12

Full Course: Intermediate Leadership
Online Learning

1-MAY 26

Full Course: Inclusive Spaces
Online Learning

7

2024 Region IV Online Event: Basic Needs & Pantry Roundtable
Online Learning, 5-6 p.m. Eastern

13-17

2024 Directors Institute (Virtual)
Online Learning

22

Webinar: May 2024 Hot Topics Roundtable
Online Learning, 2-3 p.m. Eastern

JUNE 2024

3-5

Renovation & Construction Seminar
Georgia Institute of Technology

10-JULY 28

Full Course: Financial Management in College Unions
Online Learning

10-JULY 28

Full Course: Student Staff Supervision
Online Learning

10-13

Student Organization Institute
University of Nevada-Las Vegas

27

2024 Region VII Mental Health First Aid Certification
Montclair State University



JULY 2024

1

Thought Leadership: Beyond Literacy: A JEDI Approach to Student Financial Empowerment
Online Learning, 1-2 p.m. Eastern

8-12

IPDS: New Professionals Seminar
Indiana University-Bloomington

9-11

Aspiring Directors Institute
Portland, Oregon

15-18

Institute for Leadership Education and Development (I-LEAD®)
California State University-San Bernardino

24

Webinar: Group Dynamic Stages
Online Learning, 12-1 p.m. Eastern

25

2024 Region VII Grad & Grow Institute
Rutgers University-Camden

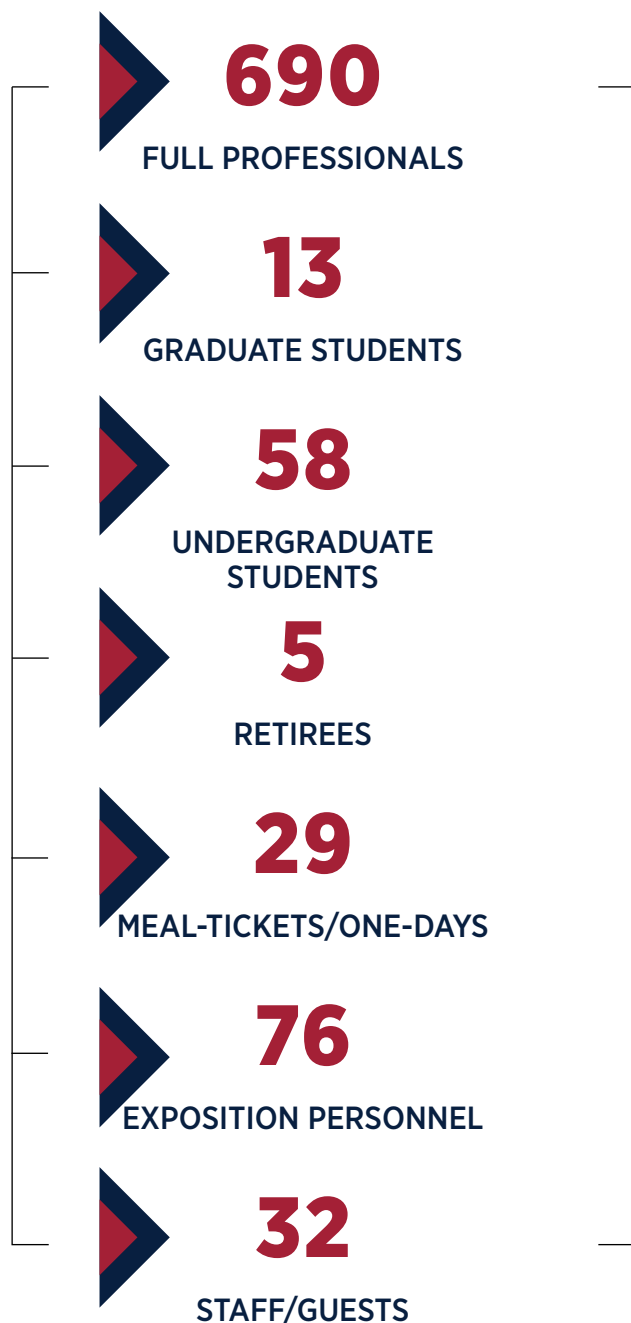
SEPTEMBER 2024

17-19

Active Dialogue Institute
Rutgers University-New Brunswick

DENVER BY THE NUMBERS

903 TOTAL DELEGATES



327
NEWCOMERS

103
PRECONFERENCE
PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS



496
CONFERENCE DELEGATES

PARTICIPATED IN
18
ADVENTURES

THAT WERE HOSTED THROUGHOUT DENVER, BOULDER,
COLORADO SPRINGS, AND FORT COLLINS.

EDUCATION

100 EDUCATIONAL SESSIONS PRESENTED BY	90 50-MINUTE SESSIONS
155 INDIVIDUALS WITH AVERAGE ATTENDANCE OF	9 25-MINUTE FLASH SESSIONS
45 PER SESSION	1 EXTENDED WORKSHOP

419 SIGNUPS FOR SOCIALS, GROUP MEALS, AND MEET-UPS	80 SIGNUPS FOR FIVE DIFFERENT TYPES OF ON-SITE VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES
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LONGTIME ACUI VOLUNTEER AIKMAN RECEIVES ASSOCIATION'S HIGHEST HONOR

Sarah Aikman, assistant vice president for student engagement and inclusiveness at Northern Kentucky University, was recognized with ACUI's highest honor, the Butts-Whiting Award, during the March 27 closing night banquet of the 2024 Annual Conference in Denver. The live ceremony recognized Aikman for her decades of contributions to the college union and student activities movement.

"I'm not one for the limelight," Aikman said in accepting the award. "I don't do this for the recognition, I do it for the love of ACUI." She then thanked "two really, really great women who have shown me the way through ACUI," and recognized 1990 Butts-Whiting Winner Linda Eldred, who introduced Aikman to ACUI when they were at Indiana State University, and Ann Claussen, the former assistant director of the Kansas State University student union, where Aikman worked as a young professional.

"Linda Eldred gave me my first opportunity to attend an ACUI conference as a grad student," Aikman recalled. "And then, as a new professional at Kansas State, my boss at the time, Ann Claussen, said we were hosting the Region 11 Conference, and then I was stuffing conference notebooks at two o'clock in the morning."

In presenting the award, Dr. Kim Harrington, interim vice president for arts, belonging, and community at Georgia Tech, said nominators described Aikman as "innovative, a bridge-builder, reliable, tireless, honest, hardworking, and loyal," and used phrases like, "this person inspires us all to be better; leads with positive change; models integrity; exhibits unparalleled selflessness and service," to capture the essence of Aikman's work.

Aikman's list of volunteer service to ACUI is indeed impressive. She served as an at-large member of the Board of Trustees from 2009-11 and then president from



2015-16. She joined the Education and Research Fund in 2018, eventually becoming chair of the committee from 2019-22. In that role, she spearheaded the development of ACUI's Financial Assistance Fund and creation of the Legacy Leader Award program.

Aikman chaired both the 2008 and 2014 Conference Program Teams; the latter allowed her to serve on the 100th Anniversary Celebration Committee, through which she was instrumental in the development and execution of the event's museum.

"If you don't get chosen the first time around, don't give up. I was rejected for the Conference Program Team three times in a row; I kind of got a complex," Aikman

joked during her acceptance speech. “But you know, things change.”

Aikman has also served as I-LEAD® host and facilitator, Regional Conference host, Regional Leadership Team member, and 2005 Conference Program Team member. And she continues her volunteer efforts to this day as a member of the 2025 Conference Program Team.

Noting in one of the more than 20 letters of nomination, Heather Beasley, director of operations in the office of the vice provost for student life at Purdue University, recalled Aikman’s impact.

“Sarah took me under her wing and introduced me to ACUI,” Beasley wrote. “She selected me to be a student chair with her on the planning committee for a regional conference we were hosting at Indiana State. She insisted that my student voice needed to be at the table and that I attend the regional to meet others from ACUI to see the bigger picture. I fell in love with ACUI. This was because of Sarah.”

Aikman’s career in student affairs has spanned almost 30 years in roles at Kansas State University, Indiana State University, University of Wisconsin–Oshkosh, and Northern Kentucky University, where she has remained since 2006.

During the Annual Conference, Aikman also was awarded the Legacy Leader Award, along with Gail Sutton of Georgia State University and Texas State University’s Lanita Legan, and the Region VI Gretchen Laatsch Outstanding Service Award.

The Butts-Whiting Award recognizes and honors outstanding leaders in ACUI who have made significant contributions to the college union and student activities movement and whose accomplishments and careers are a credit to ACUI. It spotlights the accomplishments of the Association and thereby increases the pride of the staff and students who work with the college union program on each campus. It presents to college communities around the world tangible evidence of the effectiveness of the programs of the college union.

The award presentation and more information about the history of the award and its past winners can be found here.

PRESENTATION AND HISTORY

ARE YOU READY TO BECOME A STUDENT UNION IN THE WORLD?



Crediting others for pushing her to volunteer, noting the importance of curiosity in her life experiences, and recognizing her family, peers, and the other women she has worked with in the field of student affairs, University of Illinois–Springfield Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Ann Comerford began her new role as the 2024–25 president of ACUI with an address at the Closing Banquet during the ACUI 2024 Annual Conference in Denver.

“Over the past 12 months, I’ve given this speech a lot of thought,” she said after receiving the president’s gavel from outgoing president Neela Patel. “I don’t want to overstate its importance, as it’s just one aspect of this role, however, how often do we get the chance to address a room full of peers?”

Comerford quickly reflected on how volunteering has served as a much-needed outlet when work on a college campus became overwhelming. “But truth be told, I initially got involved because someone asked me to. They saw something in me and nudged me in the right direction,” she said. “But I like to think it was the potential they saw. The potential I see for everyone in this room—the potential to lead, serve, learn, and grow. I wasn’t always ready or fully prepared for these volunteer experiences, but I dove in anyway.”

A longtime ACUI volunteer, having served as former Region 11 director, member of the 2018 Annual Conference Planning Team, and as a member of the Education Council and Board of Trustees, Comerford admitted that curiosity had always been a guiding force in her career and throughout her life. It led her to volunteer in El Salvador, to spend time as a Buddhist monk in-training in South Korea, to compete in mini-triathlons, and to join a gourmet cooking club.

“MOST OF THE TIME MY CURIOSITY LEADS ME TO ANSWER MORE ‘WHYS’ AND LEADS ME TO THE NEXT IDEA OR HELPFUL BIT OF INFORMATION IN MY LIFE AND WORK,” SHE SAID. “IT IS WHAT I HAVE TRIED TO INSTILL IN THE STUDENTS AND STAFF I WORK WITH AND FOR. CURIOSITY FUELS MY PASSION FOR LEARNING AND EXPLORATION, EVEN IF IT OCCASIONALLY LEADS TO ROLLER COASTER MOMENTS OF UNCERTAINTY.”

“In today’s world, where questioning and critical thinking are often stifled, nurturing curiosity is more important than ever,” Comerford said. “Our campuses should be havens for debate, diversity, and celebration. If we can’t be our authentic selves in the college environment, then what are we doing? How do I—we—support our colleagues and students who are not able to work and live our purpose fully, authentically? I don’t know. I really don’t. But I am looking inward on what is in my ability to impact, support, and influence.”

Comerford also shared a mentor’s suggestion to consider oneself a “student union in the world.”

“That simple statement really blew my mind. Be a student union in the world. What does that mean? How did he do that?” Comerford said, quoting William Brattain, director of the student union at Western Illinois University for over 25 years. “I think he did this by encouraging students and staff to seek out a variety of people to connect with (not wait for those people to come to us—but seek them out), take time to look at art, listen to music, pause, recreate, debate, and laugh. With all the other challenges in our work, in the world, and in our own lives, becoming living breathing student unions might help us create a better world.”

Comerford continued: “It is exciting to think of a union being more than bricks and mortar. We already know the role of the college union is more than a building. But to consider it being a way to live; it’s exciting.”

Comerford earned an undergraduate degree from Quincy College, then a master’s degree in higher education administration from Southern Illinois University–Carbondale. She was director of the university union at Western Illinois before becoming executive director of the student union at Southern Illinois–Carbondale.

In closing, while Comerford admitted not being one for “lofty vision statements,” she expressed excitement toward ACUI’s new vision statement: To advance campus community to positively change the world.

“This one excites me. It speaks to the transformative power of community and our role in shaping a better world,” she said. “We are community builders, and our work is to build community, remind people the importance of community—how it can lift people up in struggles, protects and cares for their most vulnerable. Community can change the world. Please share with our students and campuses the power of community and why it can transform people, spaces, lives, and futures. In short: be a student union in the world.”



2024 ACUI ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING, STATE OF THE ASSOCIATION HIGHLIGHTS

During the 2024 Annual Conference in Denver, ACUI President Neela Patel and Chief Executive Officer John Taylor, along with other Board of Trustees members, provided an update on the State of the Association.

[VIEW THE FULL RECORDING](#)

Finances and Fundraising

An external accounting firm, Blue & Co., reported the Association received a clean review of finances for Fiscal Year 2022; the audited financial statement can be found on the Board of Trustees page on the ACUI website.

Overall, the Association's annual operating budget is \$4 million, down from \$4.8 million pre-pandemic in 2019. ACUI has over \$1 million in reserves, and collectively the regional funds, Education and Research Fund, and primary ACUI fund have net assets of just over \$2 million. After the 2023 audit is completed and accepted by the Board of Trustees, a summary will be published in *The Bulletin*, and the full financial statement will be available on the ACUI website.

The Investing in Our Profession campaign is designated to support the Student Affairs & College Union Certification Program, including educational scholarships toward ACUI programs that support participants learning and preparation for the certification program. ACUI has received \$167,750 in pledges and contributions toward a \$200,000 campaign goal, making this the largest single fundraising campaign in ACUI's history. The Education and Research Fund also raised \$7,478 from the Silent Auction, \$6,119 from the Legacy Leader program, and \$12,169 from the Day of Giving raised throughout 2023.

Additionally, since its inception in 2020, \$69,000 in donations to the Financial Assistance Fund have funded 19 institutions to maintain their membership and 37 individuals to attend ACUI conferences and programs.

Strategic Planning

The 2020–24 Strategic Plan focused on three guideposts: Empowerment and Social Justice, Member Engagement, and Financial Stability. Below are some highlights from each guidepost; a full article showcasing the impact of the 2020–24 Strategic Plan will be available in the next *Bulletin* issue.

■ Empowerment and Social Justice

Guidepost Highlights: The Social Justice Seminar resulted in the development of a tool for assessing social justice & equity in college unions; ACUI partnered with experts, such as Social Responsibility Speaks, to provide members the opportunity to attend workshops and take a deep dive into social justice; and the Association continued the Closing the Gap program.

■ Member Engagement Guidepost Highlights:

ACUI updated its membership model for the first time in over two decades to expand benefits; the ACUI Adventure offered at the Annual Conference provided members a different and robust engagement opportunity in the host city.

■ Financial Sustainability Guidepost Highlights:

ACUI sought sources for non-dues revenue opportunities, such as the virtual events business that was created during the pandemic and expansion of association management services; ACUI's financial investment policies were revised to make sure its portfolio emphasizes companies that operate with high environmental, social, and governance standards; and the Association

received pandemic-relief funds available through the United States Government.

ACUI Conferences and Programs

ACUI event attendance continues to rebound following the pandemic. The 2022 Annual Conference in Chicago had about 66% of typical attendance for professional members; last year, in Boston, attendance was up to 78%. The 2024 Annual Conference in Denver was up to 86% of typical attendance. Attendance at other traditional programs like IPDS: New Professionals Orientation and the Aspiring Directors varied, but all broke even or met budget goals.

At the regional level, Region II had a successful drive-in at Texas State University and Region 7 saw strong participation in their Grad & Grow program, but Regions V and VI had to cancel conferences due to low registration numbers. A report and recommendations from a task force that examined regional engagement was received by the Board of Trustees in August, and since then, the board and regional directors have been discussing next steps for moving forward.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Work done over the past year began at the 2023 Annual Conference in Boston when senior diversity officers shared their perspectives on the challenges and opportunities around diversity, equity, and inclusion. This was followed by a post-conference webinar to gain

greater insights into this work. Additionally, the non-profit Social Responsibility Speaks hosted in-person sessions at two 2023 Regional Conferences, workshops on empathetic leadership and tools to advance campus community for DACA students were offered, and ACUI saw participation double in Closing the Gap, a program designed for mid-level and senior-level BIPOC professionals focused on career advancement, with 14 professionals engaging in the sessions.

Student Affairs Certification

Participation in the Higher Education Consortium for Student Affairs Certification completed its second year, with ACUI partnering with six other higher education associations. Designed to enhance career pathways and mobility for aspiring leaders, and elevate the credibility, integrity, and visibility of the profession, the program has provided certification to 24 ACUI members in the College Unions Specialty certification. To date, 100% of the ACUI members who have taken the ACUI preparation course have passed the student affairs and college union certification exams.

Operations

ACUI transitioned to a new Association Management System and launched a refreshed website in 2023. Also, the Central Office moved to a different physical office, still in the city of Bloomington, Indiana, with fewer office spaces and a larger footprint for storing program and service materials.

ALL-CONFERENCE SESSIONS

ACUI KEYNOTE: **TEMPLE GRANDIN** AND THE WAY WE LOOK AT THINGS



There is a place for everyone at the education table, and that table may not look the same for everyone, explained renowned professor of animal science Temple Grandin during a keynote address at the ACUI 2024 Annual Conference in Denver.

“We need people who think differently,” said the autism rights activist who has been at Colorado State University for 35 years. “And the first step to learning is realizing that different kinds of thinking exist.” Diagnosed with autism at an early age, Grandin is quick to describe herself as a visual thinker. That point hits home, as well, in her 2022 book, “Visual Thinking: The Hidden Gifts of People Who Think in Pictures, Patterns, and Abstractions.”

An “object visualizer,” Grandin identified others that think as visual spatial thinkers, like mathematicians or musicians, and verbal thinkers, those who think in words. “Visual thinkers, like myself, see risk. Verbal thinkers talk about risk, and spatial thinkers, like mathematicians, calculate risk. The early inventors were object visualizers, they made all this stuff. Now it all comes into this country in shipping containers.”

Grandin made it a point to emphasize the importance of hands-on learning, recognizing there will always be a place for visualizers when it comes to mechanical things, fixing things, animals, photography, and art. It was with animals and her work in developing humane animal production systems that brought Grandin to fame. She then applied some of those same achievements to the needs of autistic people like herself, even designing a “squeeze machine” to relieve her own nervous tension. Modeled after a chute designed to hold livestock in place during branding, the version used by people has served autistic children and adults around the world.

Having published over 30 books on autism and animal welfare, and serving nine years as the executive director of the Autism Society of Colorado, Grandin shared that fear was the one primary side effect of autism. “It is the main emotion with autism; I had horrible panic attacks,” she recalled. “I used to be afraid of two things, airplanes and public speaking, and then I learned to take a scary thing and make it interesting.”

Following her speech, Grandin met ACUI members for a book signing; and during the ACUI Adventure, some attendees went to a screening of the documentary, “An Open Door,” of which Grandin is the subject. In 2010, she was also the subject of a movie, the biopic “Temple Grandin,” which starred Claire Danes.

#ACUI24 SUSTAINABILITY PANEL: BALANCING GROWTH WITH THE NATURAL WORLD



Climate action, sustainable services, resiliency, and collaborative action took center stage when sustainability professionals from Colorado State University, University of Colorado–Boulder, and the city of Denver shared insights, current activities, and plans for building sustainable resiliency into Colorado’s future. The panel discussion was moderated by Spencer Wigodsky, a Masters of the Environment graduate student at University of Colorado Boulder.

Brian Dunbar, executive director of the Institute for the Built Environment at Colorado State University, recalled that gas was 36 cents a gallon when he was 16 years old. Then the oil embargo hit the United States and suddenly gas was \$1 a gallon. “That became the subject of my first research paper; how are we going to deal with systems like that,” he said.

Jocelyn Hittle, associate vice chancellor at CSU Spur, has used her background in ecology and environmental biology to conduct sustainability assessments and implement sustainability goals on college campuses. Her work, she explained, is about “balancing growth with the natural world in a sustainable way.”

Jorge Figueroa, environmental justice manager at Denver’s Office of Climate Action, Sustainability, and Resiliency, described how a commitment to sustainability and climate action must include a broad coalition of investors, particularly young people. “Our youth, our students, can be the protagonists. They need to play a leading role, now more than ever,” he said.

Damien Thompson, the sustainable food systems specialization lead at the University of Colorado–Boulder, discussed advocating for food justice, biodiversity, and social equity, and the work being done on the issues through the Frontline Farming initiative. “There is a wealth and an abundance in growing food. My mother would say, ‘We were poor, but we didn’t know it,’” he said.

Together, the four professionals described how unique coalitions between neighborhoods, higher education, governments, nonprofits, and volunteers were working to build the infrastructure and resilient systems in an equitable way that can stave off what could be droughts and other mega-weather events that have yet to be witnessed in the modern era.

ACUI TALKS: TRANSFORMATIVE VOICES: ACTIVISM, OPPORTUNITY, AND AWARENESS



Three thought leaders on three different but evolving topics presented their own stories of transformative experiences that led them on paths to growth for themselves and their communities. ACUI Talks: Transformative Voices offered insights into how ACUI members could benefit from these speakers' experiences.

Panama Soweto uses his skills as a poet and hip-hop artist to inform on his abilities as an educator, nonprofit leader, and community activist. **Alison Malmon** used the pain of losing her older brother to suicide as the impetus to form a nonprofit offering preventative solutions for a generation facing mental health issues. **Renée Welch** used her decades of experience in higher education career services to lead a transformative apprenticeship program now being scaled up to colleges across the United States. All three offered messages of inspiration, disruption, and collaboration that were translatable to the work of ACUI's members.

When speaking about her brother, Malmon, executive director of Active Minds said: "The emotion that was most salient to me was fear. As a suicide loss survivor, and because it had happened to Brian, it could also happen to me, and probably, was happening to a lot of people around me." Malmon went on to explain that the age of onset for almost every form of mental health issue is high school and college age, and that suicide is the second leading cause of death for college students. "It's happening with our youth and young adults, and we are not talking about it enough," she said.

Soweto challenged anyone who was making art—music, photography, painting—to be the activist that is hidden inside that artist. "If you create art, then you are an activist," he said. "We can use art to create social change." Soweto called his primary message CAFÉ: Collaboration, Advocacy, Funding, and Education, and every part of CAFÉ begins with listening. "Listening is the key. In your community, when you are working with youth, you must listen first to their concerns, their aspirations. You have to start by listening," he said.

Welch, having spent 20 years in higher education, including a number of those in student centers, shared how her career path changed unexpectedly after watching the career pipeline "dry up" while she was director of career services at the University of Northern Colorado. That's when she learned about work-based learning, higher education collaborations with apprenticeship programs, and what other countries were doing with the same programs. After visiting an applied science apprenticeship program in Germany on a Fulbright Scholarship, Welch returned to direct a new Colorado State Department of Education apprenticeship program. "My career unfolded in a way a couldn't imagine because it is often about finding disparate things and realizing what connection might exist. That was the case here," she said.

2024 ACUI UPCOMING PROGRAMS

RENOVATION & CONSTRUCTION SEMINAR

JUNE 3-5, Georgia Institute of Technology

This new ACUI seminar provides the opportunity to gain valuable insights, knowledge, and expertise in this crucial aspect of campus development.

STUDENT ORGANIZATION INSTITUTE

JUNE 10-13, University of Nevada-Las Vegas

Bringing together those working with student organizations, this program focuses on strategies for risk management, advisor development, and student leadership development.

IPDS: NEW PROFESSIONALS SEMINAR

JULY 8-11, Indiana University-Bloomington

Geared toward new college union and student activities professionals, this seminar provides a foundation for a successful career in the field.

ASPIRING DIRECTORS INSTITUTE

JULY 9-11, Portland, Oregon

With a focus on career advancement, this event dives into trends impacting higher education including staffing, organizational development, planning, and fiscal management.

INSTITUTE FOR LEADERSHIP EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT (I-LEAD®)

JULY 15-18, California State University-San Bernardino

A transformational experience, informed by student development and leadership theories, provides space for students to explore the complexities of leadership in our current world. rucial aspect of campus development.

acui.org/events

ACUI ANNOUNCES HOST OF CONFERENCE SPECIAL HONORS

ACUI bestowed Honorary Lifetime Membership, Emeritus Award, and Legacy Leader Award during the 2024 Annual Conference in Denver.

[VIEW THE FULL LIST HERE](#)

Honorary Lifetime Membership

Honorary lifetime membership is conferred by the Board of Trustees to individuals who have demonstrated exceptional service. [You may find recipient acceptance videos online.](#)

DAVE BARNES

Colleagues describe Dave Barnes as a joy to work with, a person who always sees the glass half full. Barnes retired in June after more than 30 years as the director at James Madison University. Barnes saw himself as a steward of his facility during his career, focused on creating a better future. Barnes provided his leadership and stewardship to ACUI through his roles as president, at-large Board of Trustees member, Education and Research Fund Team member, Conference Program Team member, and more. Barnes received the Butts-Whiting Awards in 2020.

MATT CAMERON

Matt Cameron retired in August of last year; he served for more than 36 years at Santa Clara University, most recently as assistant vice provost. Colleagues appreciate Cameron's ability to problem solve; he can analyze any situation and assist in finding a path forward. Cameron brought his leadership skills to ACUI, serving as ACUI president, 1997 Conference Program Team chair, and Region 15 director, among other roles. Cameron received the Butts-Whiting Award in 2006.

DEBRA HAMMOND

Debra Hammond's impact at California State University-Northridge can be found through facilities she brought to life to better serve students, including the Pride Center and Veterans Resource Center. She will retire in December after more than 30 years at the campus. She served through roles on the Board of Trustees, including

president, and imperative working groups; as a leader of the Multi-Ethnic Professionals and Allies Community; and as mentor to many. Hammond received the Butts-Whiting Award in 2002 and Legacy Leader Award in 2022.

LANITA LEGAN

Lanita Legan will retire in May after more than 40 years in the field, most recently as the associate director at Texas State University. Her career is marked by her dedication to students and commitment to creating an environment for their success. Legan also worked for the success of ACUI; in fact, one of her nominators said that "her heart bleeds ACUI." Among her ACUI volunteer roles, Legan was director of former Regions 5 and 12 and just completed a term as member of the Education Council. Legan received the Legacy Leader award in 2024.

Emeritus Awards

Emeritus Awards are presented by the Board of Trustees to professionals for leadership and dedication to serving students and advancing campus community. [You may find recipient acceptance videos online.](#)

CARLOS GARCIA

Carlos Garcia worked for more than 40 years in the field; he retired in February as the associate vice chancellor for administration and finance at University of Colorado-Cororado Springs. Garcia is most proud of helping student affairs departments receive much needed resources. Garcia also served ACUI through roles in Region 12, as a consultant for the CUSA evaluation program, and as an at-large member of the Board of Trustees.

SUSAN LEBOW

Susan LeBow is a dedicated leader, always making time for colleagues and students alike. She worked for more

than 28 years at the University of Wisconsin–Stevens Point, retiring as the associate director, University Centers. The impact LeBow had throughout her career is immeasurable; in fact, nominators found it difficult to concisely define the importance of her presence, attitude, and work ethic.

MICHAEL MADECKY

During his career, Michael Madecky had a profound impact on those around him—both colleagues and students. He retired in January from the University of Kansas–Wichita after more than 50 years in the field. Madecky served the former Region 11 as a conference chair, regional representative, and other roles throughout this career.

AMY LOPEZ-MATTHEWS

Amy Lopez-Matthews will retire in July as executive director, Center for Student Involvement at the University of Dayton, concluding more than 35 years at the campus. Her time at the university helped to shape it into the welcoming community it is today. Lopez-Matthews also helped advance ACUI through her leadership as the Catholic Colleges and Universities Community leader for seven years.

WILLIAM SCHWEHR

William Schwehr helped bring new ideas to life during his time at the University of Houston. He retired last year after nearly 40 years as the assistant director, leisure services. Schwehr was passionate about his work and meeting student needs. He did for students beyond just the University of Houston as a host for ACUI's recreational tournaments.

RENE SINGLETON

Rene Singleton is described as a pillar of the University of Washington by those campaigning for the university's Singleton Leadership Fund created in her honor. Singleton retired from her role as associate director for student activities in December; she worked at the university for 33 years. In 2014, Singleton appeared in an In Focus video about ACUI and the role it plays in advancing campus community.

BETSY SUNDHOLM

Sundholm retired from the University of Michigan in May of last year after more than 27 years with the university. Sundholm was an advocate for the role of recreation and leisure activities, primarily billiards, in the college union. She served as recreation coordinator for the former Region 7 and the Recreation and Leisure Activities Program Team chair, among other roles.

Legacy Leader Awards

Legacy Leaders recognize individuals who have served as leaders within the college union profession and have dedicated themselves to advancing campus community building, as acknowledged by fellow ACUI members.

SARAH AIKMAN

Sarah Aikman is widely known as a leader in the field and ACUI. She has served as ACUI president, at-large member of the Board of Trustees, chair of both the 2008 and 2014 Conference Planning Teams, and chair of the Education and Research Fund, among other roles. She also received this year's Butts-Whiting Award.

Aikman's champion shared: "Sarah's generosity, compassion, and willingness to give of herself inspires those with whom she works and reflects her dedication to community building. She is committed to her work and to serving ACUI and truly personifies the qualities and traits of a servant leader."

LANITA LEGAN

Lanita Legan has served the field and ACUI for more than 30 years. Legan has served in multiple Regional Leadership Team roles, including regional director, host chair for the Annual Conference, and the Education Council. Her work on campus has been honored through various awards from her home campuses.

Legan's champion shared: "Lanita is the consummate professional, an engaged mentor, a fierce learner, a tireless teacher, a resolute volunteer, a stalwart supporter of ACUI, and all-around one of the best humans you will ever meet. She takes you under her wing immediately and pours herself into you."

GAIL SUTTON

Gail Sutton's dedication to ACUI spans decades. She was a long-time contributor and leader for ACUI's involvement with College Bowl and NAQT. Other roles include regional director, Seasoned Professionals and Retirees Community of Practice chair, the Role of the College Union State Working Group, and the Investing in Our Profession Campaign Committee.

Suttons champion shared: "Gail is a quiet leader that always puts students first. She seeks neither limelight nor recognition, and no matter what initiative, she gives 110% of herself. She is ACUI's unsung hero, a dedicated volunteer, a sounding board, an ally, an advocate, and a steadfast colleague."

2024 ACUI FACILITY DESIGN AWARDS

ACUI Chief Executive Officer John Taylor and Andy Smriga, chair of ACUI's Corporate Partners Development Team, announced the winners of the 2024 Facility Design Awards during the Architecture and Design Showcase on Monday, March 25, during the ACUI Annual Conference in Denver.



PROJECT LESS THAN \$25 MILLION

PERKINS&WILL **COX HALL IDENTITY SPACES, EMORY UNIVERSITY**

Emory's Identity Spaces project revitalized and reimagined their affinity group spaces, establishing welcoming and inclusive environments reflective of the unique groups' culture. The two-phase process significantly upgraded Emory's belonging and community justice spaces to create a more just and equitable campus where all students thrive. The \$9.8 million project renovating 18,500 square feet was completed in September 2023. Judges were impressed by the 70 workshops that were held for stakeholders, and the "careful design to balance the unique needs of the institution and students."



\$25 MILLION-\$55 MILLION PROJECTS

WORKSHOP ARCHITECTS **PURDUE MEMORIAL UNION, PURDUE UNIVERSITY**

Improvements to the historic Purdue Memorial Union included excavated space to construct new outdoor social terraces, four new student organization programming stages, a new marketplace with 12 food concepts, and numerous historical features, such as limestone markers which had been in storage, 100-year-old brick and concrete walls original to the building, and artifacts from a beloved 1927 restaurant. The \$35.7 million renovation of 65,530-square-feet was completed in 2022.



PROJECTS MORE THAN \$55 MILLION

CANNONDESIGN

WESTERN MICHIGAN STUDENT CENTER, WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

This new vibrant space serves as the hub of belonging, fostering connection, community, and collaboration for all students. The three-level building features gathering and lounge spaces, a dining facility, the campus bookstore, an on-campus brewpub, the campus welcome center, retail locations, and more. Completed in July 2023 at a cost of \$99 million, the 163,000-square-foot building was shaped by an extensive stakeholder engagement process and principles of institutional diversity and multiculturalism.



STUDENT LIFE PROJECTS OTHER THAN STUDENT CENTER

MACKEY MITCHELL ARCHITECTS

SCAD FORTY FOUR AND FORTY FIVE, SAVANNAH COLLEGE OF ART & DESIGN-ATLANTA

Completion of the FORTY FOUR and FORTY FIVE represented the final buildings in a trio of living-learning towers, providing nearly 1,000 students with an immersive residential experience that represents a commitment to innovation and student success. The complex has it all—from academic spaces and cafes to fitness studios and performance venues—creating a dazzling experience of artistic energy specifically designed for the student body. The \$115 million, 448,759-square-foot project was completed in September 2023.

2024 ACUI ADVENTURES

Following the success of the first ACUI Adventure at the 2023 Annual Conference in Boston, the 2024 Conference Program Team collaborated with site hosts in Denver, Boulder, Colorado Springs, and Fort Collins to offer 18 unique adventures for ACUI members. The adventures, some of which lasted six hours, included visits to seven unique college campuses, the U.S. Air Force Academy, and the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Training Center. Also included were experiences at a Denver esports center, a session on managing stress through self-hypnosis, and a documentary viewing that centered around the conference's keynote speaker, Temple Grandin. In all, 496 conference delegates participated in the Adventure Experiences.



Auraria Higher Education Center: Tivoli Student Union



CSU Spur



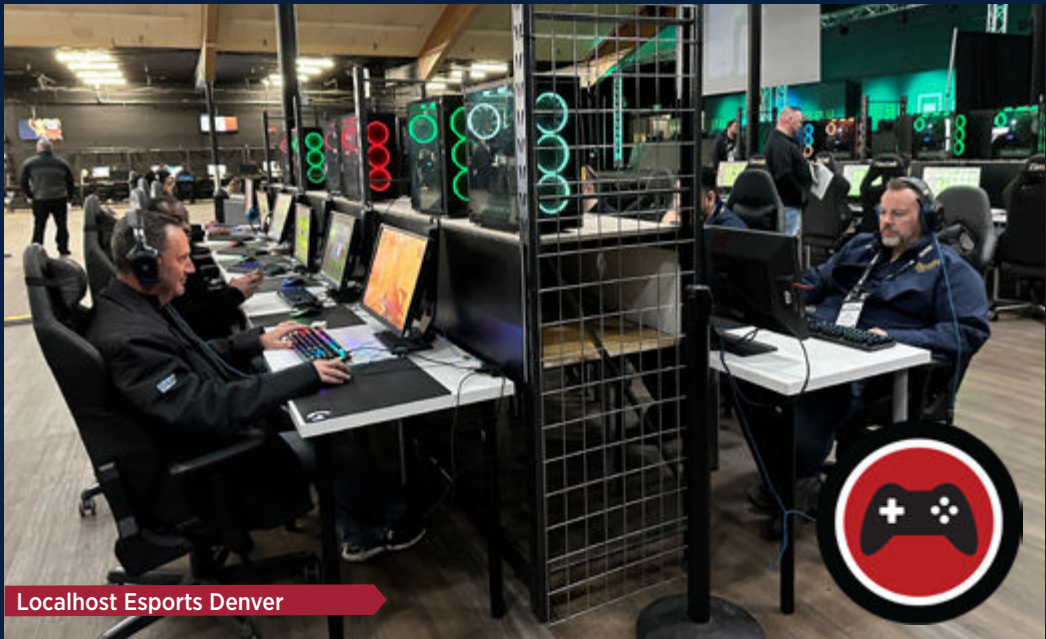
University of Denver Driscoll & Community Commons



United States Air Force Academy



University of Denver Athletics Facility & Carillon Tour



Localhost Esports Denver

Manitou Cliff Dwellings



Red Rocks Community College



University of Colorado at Boulder



CSU Fort Collins - Lory Student Center

CSU Fort Collins - Rams Against Hunger

CSU Fort Collins - LSC Arts Program





Colorado Convention Center



Auraria Campus Sustainable Program & One World One Water Center



Wellness Workshop



Temple Grandin Documentary Viewing: An Open Door



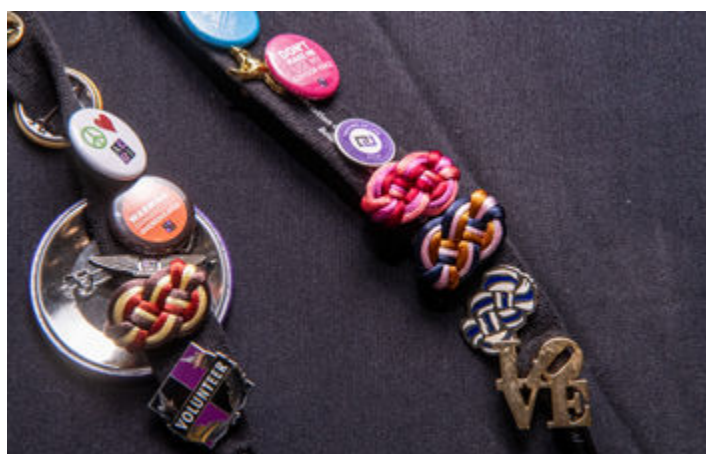
US Olympic & Paralympic Training Center

ACUI BUTTONS: THEY HELP MARK THE MEMORIES

It is your first ACUI Annual Conference and suddenly you feel out of place. It is not the overwhelming number of greetings you receive, or the fact that every one of your questions was answered perfectly at the member services desk. No, it is not that. It is the conference lanyard you just dropped around your neck. Suddenly you feel “button-naked.”

**THEY ARE EVERYWHERE:
REGIONAL ANNIVERSARY
BUTTONS, COMMUNITY OF
PRACTICE BUTTONS, ANNUAL
CONFERENCE SITE BUTTONS,
SOME FOR DEDICATED EVENTS,
AND OTHERS OFFERING ACUI-
UNIQUE MESSAGES LIKE,
“DON’T MAKE ME USE MY
ADVISOR VOICE!”**

For a first-time conference attendee, it is a rite of passage. Hence the table near registration offering the current year’s latest issue of buttons, up for grabs to all. Members say lanyards are cramped with buttons as they represent reservoirs of memories, call backs to unique experiences, and reminders of the volunteer work they have done with component groups, task forces, communities of practice, and regions. Some represent corporate sponsors, like the battery-powered, blinking martini glass from WTW Architects that recalls one of their annual conference client receptions; others not directly associated with ACUI are pinned on lanyards to initiate a fresh conversation between members.





One of the most unique must be the handmade I-LEAD® knot, which represents the program's curriculum that focuses on forming a common bond, symbolized in part by the knot pin. Nicole BellCorelli, manager for residential experience and community initiatives at University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh, said I-LEAD® always begins with a connection activity that culminates in an "I will..." call out.

"The prompt is, 'Because of I-LEAD® I will...,' and then you throw a ball of rope to the next person, then you end up with a giant web," said BellCorelli. Each participant receives a piece of the cord to tie onto something for their journey home; everyone also receives a knot pin unique to that year's class.



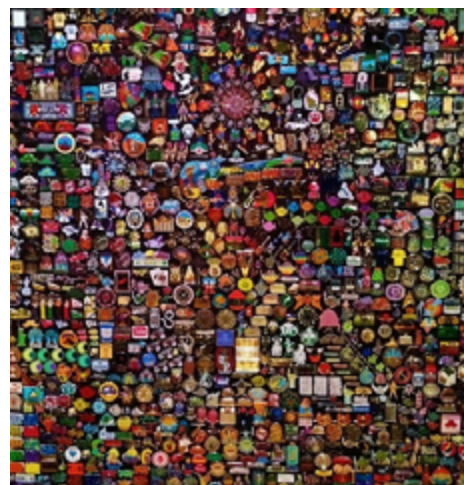
The knot pin tradition began in 1994 when Mari Strombom, now the executive director of housing and dining services at Colorado State University, was one of the I-LEAD® instructors hosting the event on that campus. A few years earlier she and other members of the anti-racism group "Our Own Best Interest" had created the macrame knot pins to distribute in the community after a series of racist events and bomb threats: "At the time we just wanted to say, 'This is not OK here.' And then in 1993 when we taught I-LEAD®, we gave those pins out to the class." The tradition of the handmade pins has continued with the I-LEAD® program to this day.

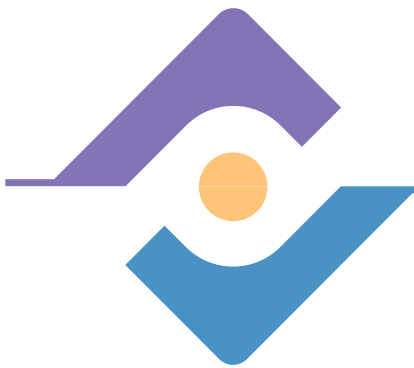


Luke Altendorf, director of Memorial Student Union for over 35 years before becoming director of strategic collaborations for student affairs at Texas A&M University, may put it best when he calls the buttons and pins "time stamps that bring back fond memories with some really great people who have had an impact on the lives of others."

Looking at his buttons, Altendorf recalled "profound" campus visits during Annual Conferences, "quirky" experiences in various cities that he had before or after conferences, and "old school" memories when regions sold the buttons as fundraisers.

"They are a great conversation piece; and it has also been fun trading with colleagues from other universities, especially ones I have visited," he said.





PROGRAM REVIEW COLLABORATIVE

A Partnership between ACUHO-I, ACUI, NASPA, NIRSA

What is the PRC?

The Program Review Collaborative (PRC) is a joint venture between the Association of Colleges and University Housing Officers - International (ACUHO-I), the Association of College Unions International (ACUI), NASPA - Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education (NASPA), and the National Intramural-Recreational Sports Association (NIRSA). The PRC offers external reviews for departments/programs often positioned within a student affairs division.

What makes the PRC distinct?

This collective approach allows us to leverage the skills and talents of our extensive membership to provide expert reviewers identified and vetted through professional organizations. Review services are not “one size fits all,” rather they account for an institution’s mission, culture, identity, and history in order to utilize processes and generate outcomes that best serve one’s respective department/unit/functional area.

Overview

The PRC provides external reviews to departments/programs within student affairs with the primary focus on the health and functioning of a unit—its strengths, opportunities, and strategic areas for enhancement. PRC reviews are designed to be applicable to departments, programs, and services regardless of institutional mission, size, function, organization, and budget. PRC services are not a form of accreditation process or a set of standards. External reviews provide peer-to-peer assistance from seasoned student affairs officers and subject matter experts which results in meaningful insight and valuable recommendations.

For more information, visit acui.org/prc or email schaplin@acui.org to discuss how the PRC can support you.