



Carolinas Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers

Vern Granger
President

www.cacrao.org

CACRAO Response To Non-Sponsored College Fair Programs

The Educational Opportunities (Ed-Op) Committee of the Carolinas Association of College Registrars and Admission Officers (CACRAO) is made up of college representatives from across North and South Carolina. The Committee works closely with high school counselors and community colleges to coordinate the CACRAO tour. The schedule of college fairs beginning in September and ending in November covers all of NC and SC. The result is a planned and efficient pattern of college fairs, which provides the opportunity for every student in both states to attend a college fair in his or her region without requiring college representatives to visit every high school.

One of the reasons CACRAO organizes the Ed-Op tour is to avoid duplicating our efforts as representatives on the road. We are committed to providing an opportunity for students to meet with college representatives in every region of NC and SC. If we sponsor an individual high school fair in one area, we would have to accommodate similar requests from individual high schools all over NC and SC. In large cities, like Raleigh, Charlotte, or Columbia, this would be an impossible task both physically and financially for college admissions offices, which simply do not have the resources to accommodate such requests.

We are fortunate to have a college tour that is very organized. Other states with no organized college tour often have as many as three college fairs scheduled for the same evening. College representatives are forced to make a choice because they cannot be in several places at one time. Students ultimately are going to miss out on an opportunity to find a good post-secondary match.

We understand that high schools counselors receive pressure from parents to host their own program on "home turf" because they feel their students are not receiving enough personal attention in larger venues. College fairs are not necessarily the appropriate venue for personal attention. Individual high school visits made by college reps during the school day or visits by the student to the college or university itself provides a better opportunity for personal interaction.

We are seeing an increase in the number of college fair type programs throughout the state, which are not sponsored by CACRAO. By hosting an additional college fair, high schools are essentially asking college representatives to duplicate their visits to an area. As a result, there will not be representation from many CACRAO institutions because of some of the reasons stated previously.

CACRAO defines a college fair program as non-sponsored if it is not a part of the Ed-Op schedule. It does not appear on the NC or SC invitation, nor the CACRAO website or listserv. CACRAO does not endorse participation in non-sponsored fairs. However, we do not prevent member institutions from participating in them. We feel it is each individual institution's responsibility to decide what is best for their office.

CACRAO does not define college night information panels or workshops as non-sponsored programs. These can be an excellent resource for all high school students and their parents. We value this approach to preparing students for the college search and do not consider this a duplication of the CACRAO tour. Panels usually consist of 3-5 college representatives from a variety of institutions presenting on topics related to the college search process. We find that parents and students of all ages find this type of presentation very helpful and informative.

If you become aware of a non-sponsored college fair program, I ask that you to bring it to the attention of the NC and SC Vice Presidents of Admission. We will contact the program organizers to discuss the possibility of CACRAO working with them in order to satisfy the needs of their students and CACRAO member institutions.

I welcome your comments and feedback. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

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