
MINNESOTA ASSOCIATION FOR COLLEGE ADMISSION COUNSELING

STRATEGIC PLAN

2020-2023

Organizational Description: The Minnesota Association for College Admission Counseling (MACAC) is a non-profit professional organization founded in 1959 as an affiliate of the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC). Membership in MACAC is comprised of nearly 900 education professionals who work as public and private secondary school counselors, admissions and financial aid representatives from two and four-year colleges and universities, community based organizations, and independent educational consultants. MACAC provides an annual series of college fairs throughout the state referred to as Minnesota Education Fairs (MEFs). MACAC also supports the annual NACAC National College Fair, one of the largest fairs of its kind. In addition, MACAC provides members with professional development through conferences, resources, events, legislative advocacy efforts, and mentorship and leadership programs. Aligned with NACAC’s structural and ethical principles, these initiatives serve to benefit and support education professionals in their work with students and families exploring the transition to postsecondary education.

Strategic Priorities:

- I. **Maintain MACAC’s financial health through a fiscally balanced mindset.**
- II. **Deepen MACAC’s commitment to being inclusive, welcoming, and representative with respect to membership, leadership, and communities served.**
- III. **Elevate and enhance MACAC’s visual identity, Web, and public perception.**
- IV. **Strengthen MACAC’s individual and collective capacity to adapt to evolving ethical, economic, demographic, political, and social challenges facing college admissions.**

Background & Timeline:

The strategic planning process for the accompanying priorities was initiated by Mike Vandenberg, as President of MACAC, and delegated to Chris Franken, past MACAC Past President. The assembled Strategic Planning Committee represented diverse education segments within MACAC. The committee included current and past board members as well as non-board members to reflect a broad variety of perspectives, opinions, and experiences in the strategic planning process. The committee met throughout March, 2019 – January, 2020 with a draft of the association’s 2020-23 strategic priority recommendations presented to the MACAC board for review and approval in February, 2020.

Committee:

Chris Franken – Chair and MACAC past Past-President, Eastview High School/University of Minnesota; **Katie Asfeld** – Augsburg University; **Steven Baker** – University of Minnesota Twin Cities; **Casey Erickson** – Saint Thomas Academy; **Emily Mattran** – Chanhassen High School; **Elyan Paz** – Macalester College; **Tina Proctor** – Academy of Holy Angels; **Garth Robertson** – GR College Consulting; **Mai Nhia Xiong-Chan** – MACAC President-Elect, Hamline University

Executive Summary

“Envisioning the Future in Tumultuous Times”

Access to higher education is a main driver of individual and societal prosperity. Minnesota Association for College Admission Counseling members from all sides of the table play an important role in serving this public good in our work with students and families as well as each other. As the organizational description provided with this plan suggests, MACAC is well positioned to serve with strong membership, financial health, and effective programming. However, there is much to consider in the higher education landscape. Profound demographic shifts, rising costs of attending college, recruitment and enrollment pressures, and forced changes to NACAC’s code of ethics (CEPP/SPGP) are just some of the factors at play. Political, economic, social and technological challenges face our organization, as well as our members in their work as education professionals. Despite these challenges, the goal is to stay focused on our foundational mission, vision and values. Strategic planning requires an organization to examine what it is and the environment in which it is working. Strategic planning also helps the organization to focus its attention on crucial issues and challenges. It, therefore, helps the organization’s leaders decide what to do about those issues and challenges. In short, as a result of a strategic planning process, our organization will have a clearer idea of

-what it is,

-what it does, and

-what challenges it faces.

To that end, and in collaboration with the MACAC Board of Directors, a select group of engaged MACAC college counseling professionals came together over the past year, to “envision MACAC’s future in tumultuous times.” The conversation surrounding MACAC’s developing strategic priorities occurred in a series of meetings between March, 2019 and February, 2020. In March of 2019, the committee undertook an **Assess - Design - Build - Manage** strategic planning process. The initial **Assess** phase included a review of MACAC’s most recent strategic plan, dated 2014-2017. The review included MACAC’s mission, vision, values, strategic priorities, goals and initiatives. The committee agreed to adopt a similar format in development of a new strategic plan for implementation, 2020-2023. The Assess phase also included review of pertinent literature regarding strategic issues facing higher education and college admissions, including Minnesota-specific concerns (Appendix 1). As committee members reviewed journal articles, research reports, and relevant publications from state and national level sources, they engaged in PEST and SWOT analysis exercises. The PEST analysis served as a strategic tool to discover, organize, evaluate and track political, economic, social and technological factors that may impact MACAC now and in the future (Appendix 2). In addition to developing the PEST framework, the committee conducted a SWOT analysis to determine MACAC’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (Appendix 3).

The **Design** phase produced a set of strategic priorities viewed as most critical to the organization in the current and near future. **The four Strategic Priorities are:**

- 1) maintaining MACAC's financial health through a fiscally balanced mindset;**
- 2) deepening MACAC's commitment to being inclusive, welcoming, and representative with respect to membership, leadership, and communities served;**
- 3) elevating and enhancing MACAC's visual identity, web, and public perception; and**
- 4) strengthening MACAC'S individual and collective capacity to adapt to evolving ethical, economic, demographic, political, and social challenges facing college admissions.** This phase also included revisions to MACAC's **mission, vision, and values statements** to most clearly and concisely convey the purpose, direction and driving forces of our organization.

The **Build** phase followed, constructing goals and initiatives in support of each of the four strategic priorities. Input from the MACAC Board of Directors and standing committees occurred with specific contributions at the August, 2019 Board retreat and the November, 2019 Board meeting, as well as committee level review and feedback provided by January, 2020. Each **Strategic Priority** is outlined in the plan, labeled as **I – II – III** or **IV**. In support of each priority is a list of two to four **Goals**, labeled as **A – B – C** or **D**. And finally, aligned with each goal is at least one, to perhaps several, **Initiatives**, identified as **1 – 2 – 3 – 4**, etc. These initiatives serve as the **action steps** to be undertaken in order to achieve the goals that support and reflect the priorities of the strategic plan. Each initiative lists one to several *examples of action steps*, indicated as **a – b – c – d**, etc. (So for instance, one could search for and identify a specific initiative example as **II-B-1-a**.) Each goal includes a general timeline (Year 1, 2 or 3) as well as which MACAC committees are involved.

The **Management** phase is intended to convene in February, 2020. The current and near future MACAC leadership is charged with rolling out and communicating strategic priorities to the membership and pertinent outside audiences, implementing elements of the plan, and reviewing progress over the course of the next one to three years.

An optimistic, thoughtful, yet reality-based approach was undertaken in developing the priorities, goals and initiatives of this strategic plan. My personal thank you to each of the strategic planning committee members who contributed a great deal of time and effort to this endeavor. Your dedication, contributions, and commitment were inspiring! I also want to thank the MACAC Board of Directors and Executive Committee for their leadership and collaboration in pursuit of this strategic plan. With your efforts and continued leadership, this plan can help to strengthen, renew, and refresh MACAC as an organization. Fully engaging with and implementing the elements of this plan can help to further solidify MACAC as a collaborative, and inclusive leader, strengthen and expand our relationships with like-minded partners, further impact and serve underrepresented constituents, and increase the financial viability of the association. Despite current challenges in the landscape of access to higher education, MACAC can serve an even more influential role in support of this vital public interest.

Chris Franken
Chair, MACAC Strategic Planning Committee – 2020-2023
February 12, 2020

MISSION → VISION → VALUES

Mission Statement

MACAC supports education professionals by advocating for and providing resources that benefit our members as well as students and families navigating postsecondary education opportunities.

Vision Statement

A recognized leader in education, college access, and inclusion, MACAC is a vibrant and collaborative community of education professionals committed to empowering all individuals to achieve their post-secondary goals.

Values

Collaboration enables individuals to work together to achieve a defined and common organizational purpose; this includes other associations, institutions, professionals, and students.

Inclusivity is a commitment to intentional engagement of those underrepresented within our membership and communities served; this is our guide which prompts action to overcome inequities.

Access and equity remove barriers and provide resources to meet the needs of students and membership to ensure that opportunities exist, regardless of background.

Ethics and integrity provide a foundation of moral principles that consistently guide our decisions with positive influence on leadership, fiscal responsibility, and the communities we serve.

Education is a process of facilitating learning that ensures our members, students, and families acquire knowledge and skills as lifelong learners.

Service is a valuable action, deed, or effort to satisfy the needs of our membership, students, and families we support; for example, volunteering on a committee, board, or program.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES → GOALS → INITIATIVES

I. Enhance MACAC's financial health through a fiscally balanced mindset.

Description: Create a culture in which committees maintain integrity of MACAC initiatives with a financially responsible approach. It is incumbent on MACAC decision-makers at every level to demonstrate effective stewardship of association resources. Establishing such a culture will help to achieve organizational goals and allow MACAC to sustainably accomplish its mission long into the future.

Goals (A-B-C)

A. Review and enhance opportunities for revenue generation.

Description: MACAC committees explore new ideas for revenue generation within their area of expertise and collaborate with other committees on new revenue opportunities.

Initiatives:

- 1. Examine MEFs - focus on revenue, format, future viability.**
 - a. MEF contract historical review indicates a slow decline. Examine other ways to keep numbers steady or possibly increase.
 - b. Examine ways to reduce table expenses, other tangible costs.
 - c. Explore what MEFs might look like in the future – virtual fairs, technology needed, etc. Keep an eye on college admissions strategies since MEFs reflect those practices.
 - d. Seek input, feedback, ideas from other ACACs.
- 2. Increase High School Counselor, Career Center, and other memberships.**
 - a. Focus on underrepresented membership categories in addition to overall membership growth.
 - b. Member Relations to refocus efforts to build partnerships with underrepresented schools, promote benefits of MACAC to specific populations (Ex: MSCA partnership).
 - c. Grants & Development committee will create a brag sheet for dual purposes of development and showcasing the work in which MACAC is engaged.
- 3. Evaluate Committee expenses for reduction to support new growth initiatives.**
 - a. Evaluate MEF expenses; reduce where possible (ex. food, printing, tables)
 - a. Utilize Zoom meetings as appropriate to reduce committee transportation and food costs.
 - b. Prioritize finding Social locations that do not include a room rental.

4. **NCF in partnership with NACAC - fully utilize resources provided to increase participation of exhibitors and marketing around NACAC 2020** (w/goal to encourage more colleges/universities to stay and participate in the Minnesota National College Fair.

Timeline: Year 1 - Fall, 2020

Involved (based on 2020-2023 Board Structure): All MACAC Committees

B. Explore opportunities to invest in new initiatives.

Description: A fiscally balanced mindset opens the opportunity for initiatives that may not be revenue generating, either from the first roll out or long term, but grow the overall fiscal strength of the entire MACAC organization indirectly over time. Opportunities for growth often need an initial investment in order to succeed.

Initiatives:

1. **Consider expansion of previous investment: Camp College.**
 - a. Examine ways to “package” “boot camp” style programming to reach more underserved students (and the education professionals who serve them) beyond the current iteration of Camp College.
2. **Consider expansion of previous investment: Show on the Road (SOTR)**
 - a. Examine ways to expand SOTR to provide professional development resources to more counselors in greater MN; investigate additional ways to communicate with SOTR attendees the benefits of MACAC membership.
3. **Consider opportunities to invest in free resources for membership**
 - a. Provide free training, webinars, and recorded professional development sessions on the website for counselors who are MACAC members to increase membership (especially for public high school counselors).

Timeline: Year 1: “Day Camp” Camp College will launch May 2020 @ Augsburg, free web resources. Year 2: Expansion of SOTR

Involved (based on 2020-2023 Board Structure): All MACAC Committees

C. Implement the work of the Grants & Development Committee

Description: Beginning in 2016, several ad hoc positions have been created and charged by MACAC presidents with the task of examining the work of the Grants & Development Committee, looking for opportunities for new investments, and re-structuring the Legacy Grant program. After three years of research and reporting, it is time to move forward with the proposals that rose to the top of the list and are in alignment with MACAC’s new vision for the future.

Initiatives:

1. **Expand and maintain relationships with Sponsoring Business Organizations (hereafter SBOs) to fund a portion of proposals below.**

- a. Organize and maintain a master database of 3rd party vendors for SBOs and other possible revenue streams.
- b. Work in conjunction with PD in cultivating sponsors for major events.
- c. Serve as the main communication channel to vendors interested in engaging the organization, and facilitate appropriate connections/redirecting within the organization as needed.
- d. Review as a board at least annually.
- e. Create an organizational brag piece/sell sheet.
- f. Create/generate list of new initiatives that could entice SBOs (below).

2. Utilize a lesser portion of Bremer funds to sustain partnership with MnACC for renewal of previous scholarship funding and distribution.

- a. Historical nature of our arrangement in comparison to other affiliates.
- b. Crossover with membership.
- c. Sustained distribution allows us to both distribute scholarships to students, and focus the committee's efforts on grants and external prospects around development of professional membership.

3. Utilize a lesser portion of Bremer funds to create a sustained MACAC-specific scholarship for students.

- a. Serve our students and member institutions.
- b. Align with a number of other affiliates (as well as NACAC) in terms of meeting needs around access and equity.
- c. Further engage with school counselors who are underrepresented within our organization.

4: Utilize a larger portion of Bremer funds to sustain professional development opportunities to enhance the experiences/education of membership. Continue to leverage Legacy funding for professional development, but enhance the slate of opportunities and "level of investment" for award recipients.

- a. Educational attainment enhances "both/and," both membership who benefits and the students that membership serves.
- b. Reach disengaged members who may no longer perceive value in MACAC.
- c. Reach members who are underrepresented within our organization.

Timeline: 2020-2023

Year 1: Spring 2020 - sustain partnership with MnACC via donation renewal; Summer 2020 - launch re-design of Legacy Grant: Professional Development Grant; Fall 2020 - compile list of SBO's and meet with parties involved to create partnership development plan.

Year 2: Fall 2021: Launch MACAC Scholarship with goal of fund distribution fall of 2022.

Involved (based on 2020-2023 Board Structure): Executive, Grants & Development, Professional Development, Member Relations, Communications, Inclusion Access & Success

II. Deepen MACAC's commitment to being inclusive, welcoming, and representative with respect to membership, leadership, and communities served.

Description: MACAC must conduct intentional work in support of ensuring the association is welcoming and inclusive in its practices.

Goals (A-B-C)

A. Create an inclusive community dedicated to anti-racism, a culture of belonging among members, and in all of MACAC programming.

Description: MACAC succeeds when all members and prospective members feel as if they have a place within the organization, and that the organization is a safe, welcoming, and empowering place for their experience and voice.

Initiatives:

- 1. Organize and train “welcoming” teams for all MACAC events** (*Suggest Board members take on this role as available.*)
 - a. Consider teams of two who introduce themselves (to anyone unknown, or unfamiliar) during lunches/MACAC meetings/PD events, etc., to be intentionally inclusive, especially of people who are not yet well connected.
 - b. Member Relations - generate a welcome letter for event folders and/or provide additional contact from a mentor or veteran member as follow-up.
- 2. Continue to prioritize and commit to providing more in-depth anti-racism and diversity training for the board, at every conference and PD event, and for our membership.**
- 3. Empower membership with agency and platforms for their voices:**
 - a. Develop, promote and communicate the benefits of joining a committee (to include promotion in event materials such as at ACI, PD events, etc.)
 - b. Communicate opportunities and benefits to admission office leadership to help cultivate cultures of support for MACAC leadership within their own organizations.
 - c. Encourage committee chairs to examine their individual committee structure to find ways to develop, encourage and provide additional, assistive leadership options within the committee structure.
- 4. Honor Native lands and peoples before every professional development event.**
- 5. Promote and create awareness of NACAC Special Interest Group(s) within MACAC.**
- 6. Ensure use of inclusive language in all organization-wide communication.**

Timeline: Year 1

Involved (based on 2020-2023 Board Structure): Executive, Member Relations, Professional Development, Communication, Government Relations, Grants & Development

B. Ensure that MACAC, its leadership, and its programming are representative of our diverse population.

Description: For MACAC to optimally engage with the communities we serve, we need to ensure that membership, leadership, and programming are representative of our diversity. This means that we should be working to enhance the diversity within MACAC by recruiting a diverse membership pool and casting a critical eye to individuals in leadership roles and content in professional development opportunities. MACAC needs to assure that representation in the broadest sense (*including but not limited to:* geographic diversity, post-secondary and secondary diversity, urban and rural voices, private and public institutions, two-year and four-year educational programs, racial and ethnic backgrounds, gender, and LGBTQ+) is achieved to assist us meeting the diverse needs of the communities we serve.

Initiatives:

- 1. Regular reporting from the Member Relations Committee** that helps us understand where our members are coming from and where we are not seeing members that need to be represented.
 - a. Update required fields in membership form to reflect desired information regarding member individual and institutional demographics.
 - b. Encourage members to update their profile regularly through automatic mechanism (ex: annual membership renewal).
 - c. Regular outreach to help potential members understand why MACAC is a valuable organization and what we have to offer them and their communities.

- 2. Critical eye is needed from President's Cycle when committee chairs are chosen to assure the Board is representative of a variety of our valued membership groups.** A diversity of voices is important as the MACAC Board sets the initiatives and goals each year.

- 3. Critical eye is needed from President's Cycle when supporting programming initiatives.**
 - a. Expand professional development initiatives that benefit rural, out-state and/or non-metro education professionals and the students/families they serve. [Consider increasing efforts similar/additional to MACAC's "Show on the Road"].
 - b. Continue to prioritize underrepresented high schools (under-resourced, rural, etc.) for transportation grants to NCF and MEFs, and other programming opportunities for students.
 - c. Expand initiatives for education professionals whose work is primarily focused on 2-year and/or certificate programs, and/or transfer students/adult learners.

Timeline: Year 1

Involved (based on 2020-2023 Board Structure): All MACAC committees, including Governance & Nominating

C. Strengthen partnerships with like-minded organizations such as MNACC, MNEEP, MCAN (MMEP), MSCA, MAFAA and others who share a similar mission to MACAC.

Description: In coordination with other efforts to enhance diversity in our organization, MACAC leadership will take the initiative to reach out to other organizations whose mission is to assist students and families with the college process in order to explore the possibilities of coordinating programs, services and resources. Given the multiple organizations in MN that focus efforts on the college admissions process, it would be helpful for MACAC to explore possibilities to enhance the student experience in the college process.

Initiatives:

1. Create opportunities for collaboration:

- a. Continue to host meetings for leadership of like-minded organizations (quarterly, biannually) to discuss challenges, initiatives, and possible opportunities for collaboration (ex.: Partnership Roundtable w/MACAC, MSCA, MnACC, MAFAA)
- b. Explore content at professional development events as an opportunity to bring together members from these organizations.
- c. Consider promotional opportunities at venues that may help lead to greater exposure, publicity, and potential collaborative partners such as educational conferences, or public venues linked to the MN Education Department or Office of Higher Education.
- d. Consider Communications led development of a newsletter or blog; reach out to other organizations' Communication committees and develop collaborative relationships, highlight the organizations and share them with our own membership, so as to promote their goals and initiatives.
- e. Inclusion-Access-Success collaboration with MnACC for culturally competent offerings at Camp College; increase diversity of Camp College mentors.
- f. Examine ways where partnerships can increase possible MEF Contracts as well as MEF attendance, better serving the needs of both colleges and high school students.

2. Advocacy efforts:

- a. Combine related group efforts for events like Day on the Hill where we can all benefit from advocating for common issues that affect our members and those we serve.
- b. Collaborate on joint statements and/or press releases in response to topics or issues that come up related to our profession.
- c. Government Relations to collaborate with advocacy efforts as needed to showcase MACAC as a valuable resource to education-related groups in Minnesota.

3. Conference presentations and participation:

- a. Ensure invitations to events are shared with organizations where membership is not present.
- b. Promote membership (if necessary) and the Legacy Grant as an opportunity for members to attend.
- c. Evaluate conference content to ensure it covers a broad spectrum of topics to meet the needs of our members and audiences.

4. Intentional efforts to increase exposure with public school administrator associations; with a specific aim of garnering strong support for, and increase active involvement of, public School Counselors.

- a. Consider a MACAC leadership-led mailing/emailing campaign to introduce the association to school superintendents, principals and assistant principals, especially to include targeted communications to rural/out-state school districts.
- b. Consider a MACAC promotional presence and/or presentation at educational conferences with school administration professionals in attendance, for example: MASA (MN Association of School Administrators), MASSP (MN Association of Secondary School Principals).

Timeline: Year 1-2

Involved (based on 2020-2023 Board Structure): Professional Development, Executive, Inclusion Access & Success, Government Relations, Communications, Member Relations

III. Elevate and enhance MACAC's visual identity, web, and public perception.

Description: MACAC's "brand" is a reflection of the association's values and identity, and over time, may need to be realigned to remain consistent with our vision. Elevating and enhancing MACAC's image through intentional actions offers the opportunity to revisit the most important elements of the culture and voice of the organization. This "brand refresh" can update the look and feel of the organization, which may help MACAC become even more relevant to our current audience and serve to engage new ones.

Goals (A-B-C-D)

A. Pro-active engagement of members & external partners.

Description: MACAC and its members do tremendous work and programming. That said, we may not be regularly recognized for the work we do and the students and families we serve. Each committee will need to think of ways to communicate their accomplishments to the public to enhance our organization's visibility in the profession.

Initiatives:

- 1. Develop a more user friendly website for our members to learn, collect and absorb information on college counseling and college admission.**
 - a. Become a one-stop shop for admissions information
 - b. Content needs to be updated more frequently
 - c. Go to source of professionals in the state
- 2. Promote our work and programming to the public and like-minded organizations.**
 - a. MACAC newsletter generated.
 - b. Feature professional spotlights.
 - c. Feature individual committee work.
 - d. Enhance MACAC's social media presence and content delivery.

- e. Conduct outreach with other like-minded legislative committees.

Timeline: Initiative 1: Year 2; Initiative 2: Year 1-2

Involved (based on 2020-2023 Board Structure): Communications, National College Fair, Professional Development, Inclusion Access & Success, Member Relations, Government Relations, Grants & Development

B. Identify roles and responsibilities of MACAC Board in support of Communications initiatives.

Description: As our membership and those we serve rely on online content and we continue to grow our initiatives, we need to define the resources needed to execute the work.

Initiatives:

1. **Support Communications committee and provide a more direct template of the goals and desired outcome for the committee.**
2. **Secure additional outside professional support or increase web coordinator hours.**
3. **Consider additional/enhanced MACAC position (ex., Administrative Assistant, Executive Assistant, Executive Director, or similar support role).**

Timeline: Year 1

Involved (based on 2020-2023 Board Structure): Communications, Executive

C. Public Relations; enhancing MACAC's profile in a public forum.

Description: As a recognized leader in education, college access, and inclusion, MACAC seeks to be the go-to source for the public on topics, stories, and issues related to college admission counseling.

1. **Explore establishing a public relations position to include public relations in the portfolio of a MACAC member or paid position (ex., Executive Director, or similar support role).**
 - a. Establish relationships with local media outlets.
 - b. In collaboration with MACAC leadership, provide proactive statements or press-releases to the public.
2. **Provide proactive updates to like-minded college access organizations.**
 - a. Open dialog and establish communication strategies with like-minded organizations to ensure we can support and advocate for the work they are conducting.
 - b. Explore initiatives and collaboration opportunities with organizations (MnACC, MSCA, College Possible, etc.) to maximize efforts to support the mission and values of MACAC.
3. **National College Fair publicity - intentional and increased outreach efforts.**

- a. Local news outlets.
- b. State/local government officials.
- c. Inform the public of the free opportunity to research postsecondary options across the US and globally.

4. Examine ways to increase visibility of MACAC support at MEFs;

- a. Optimize signage at the fair.
- b. Utilize the MACAC logo on all information to families.
- c. Provide a banner to all host sites to display at the sign-in table.
- d. Continuous enhancement/improvement efforts to contract purchasing and MEF online registration process.

5. Serve as a go-to resource for state legislators and local elected officials who serve on education-related committees.

- a. Continue advocacy efforts throughout the year with continuing dialogue with decision makers.

Timeline: Year 1

Involved (based on 2020-2023 Board Structure): National College Fair, Communications, Executive, MN Education Fair, Government Relations

D. Explore an external visual identity audit.

Description: MACAC may benefit from revisiting our visual identity to resonate with our members and the individuals we serve. Invest in a visual identity that expresses the energy and direction of the organization. Engage an external partner (design/brand agency) for audit of visual identity, competitive analysis (trending styles w/similar associations) and messaging.

Initiatives:

1. MACAC Board, Communication and/or Ad Hoc evaluates MACAC Visual Identity

- a. Gather/revisit current visual identity, including, but not limited to:
 - i. Website
 - ii. Logo for social media platforms
 - iii. Conference print materials logos/templates
 - iv. Conference online presentation (PPT)
 - v. Clothing
 - vi. Membership promotional items
- b. Identify new opportunities for branding, including but not limited to:
 - i. Event email templates
 - ii. Newsletter template
 - iii. Event specific logos
- c. Identify budget, timeline, and rollout.
 - i. To note, an additional expense would be suggestions for messaging, ie, a tagline.
- d. Secure external partner (design/brand agency).

2. MACAC Board, Communication and/or Ad Hoc reflection - goal of a new visual identity.

- a. Be more intentional about our values and mission of our organization.
- b. Focus on the “for” in our title. We are to be a resource for college admissions professionals, provide content and resources to support.
- c. Be more transparent on who we are, what we do and whom we serve.

3. Consider External Evaluation

- a. Secure external partner to evaluate current identity and conduct research.
- b. External partner to produce a comprehensive visual identity (logo, types of photography, colors, fonts, type, and web design) in line with the organization's values and mission.

Timeline: Year 1

Involved (based on 2020-2023 Board Structure): Executive, Communications

E. Conduct an internal web audit and refresh.

Description: Evaluate the effectiveness of current content with the goal of providing useful and valuable information to our membership and external audiences.

Initiatives:

1. Evaluate current MACAC website pages.

- a. Attach Google Analytics to mn-acac to see what pages users are visiting.
 - i. Look for opportunities to highlight high traffic areas.
- b. Survey MACAC membership on how they use the website.

2. Create Web framework that reflects MACAC initiatives.

- a. Web presence needs to become more robust and professional focused on the mission of our organization and the work we do. (For example, the home page currently says nothing about who we are or what we do, just an event advertisement.)
- b. Go-to source of professionals in the state.
- c. Valuable services for members.
- d. Become a one-stop shop for admissions information.

3. Create a process for engaging and collecting current web content.

- a. Present more up to date input from committee work and future engagement opportunities.
- b. Refresh outdated content. Board and Committee guidelines on how information is updated should be part of the strategic initiative for each committee.
- c. Provide additional training on how content can be updated and displayed.
- d. Provide opportunities for members to share photos of their work and when engaging in MACAC programming.

Timeline: Initiative 1 + 3: Year 1; Initiative 2: Year 2

Involved (based on 2020-2023 Board Structure): ALL committees, with particular roles/focus for Communications and Executive.

IV. Strengthen MACAC's individual and collective capacity to adapt to evolving ethical, economic, demographic, political, and social challenges facing college admissions.

Description: One of the best measures of organizational sustainability is the ability to act as circumstances require and opportunities allow. MACAC must have the capacity to nimbly respond to external conditions.

Goals (A-B-C)

A. Develop organizational mechanisms by which to research and responsibly address external influences and/or narratives impacting MACAC's mission and/or membership.

Description: MACAC will benefit from a systematic means by which to anticipate, evaluate and respond to trending issues. Through intentional, organized approaches to gathering, analyzing, and addressing qualitative and quantitative information, MACAC will be better equipped to predict, manage and respond to issues impacting our organization and members.

Initiatives:

- 1. Consider adopting a revised Board structure with the addition of a MACAC Current Trends & Future Issues (CTFI) committee.**
 - a. Conduct an Executive Board review of the proposal. Research NACAC CTFI and affiliate CTFI committees; structure, protocols, initiatives, reporting mechanisms.
 - b. Evaluate budget considerations to support costs associated with adding CTFI.

- 2. Embrace "constituent voice." Amplify messaging toward desired and/or reality-based outcomes and narratives.**
 - a. Implement and/or expand a communication strategy/platform to intentionally and effectively engage **membership** with trending issues. (Ex: Blog posts, newsletter, online forums, social media)
 - b. Expand appropriate messaging to include **external audiences** to help shape narratives in support of MACAC's mission and the importance of post-secondary education and training. Reach students/parents, policy and decision-makers, etc., through established media networks (press releases, interviews, statements)

- 3. Consider conducting a communication audit/strategy to develop best practices and protocols in collaboration with the Executive Board and Communications committee.**

Timeline: Year 1-2

Involved (based on 2020-2023 Board Structure): Communications Committee (or similar), Executive Committee

B. Promote awareness and best practices related to ethical admission standards in response to September, 2019 changes to NACAC's SPGP/CEPP.

Description: The antitrust investigation by the Department of Justice resulted in the elimination of four key provisions in the Code of Ethics and Professional Practices. The new normal for college admissions is likely to include an increase in the use of enrollment round incentives, recruitment tactics leading up to the traditional start of the academic year, and recruitment of enrolled students. As an association dedicated to access and equity in education, we must consider how this could affect how students navigate the college admissions process, especially those with limited support.

- "Colleges must not offer incentives exclusive to students applying or admitted under an early decision application plan. Examples of incentives include the promise of special housing, enhanced financial aid packages, and special scholarships for early decision admits. Colleges may, however, disclose how admission rates for early decision differ from those for other admission plans."
- "College choices should be informed, well-considered, and free from coercion. Students require a reasonable amount of time to identify their college choices; complete applications for admission, financial aid, and scholarships; and decide which offer of admission to accept. Once students have committed themselves to a college, other colleges must respect that choice and cease recruiting them."
- "Colleges will not knowingly recruit or offer enrollment incentives to students who are already enrolled, registered, have declared their intent, or submitted contractual deposits to other institutions. May 1 is the point at which commitments to enroll become final, and colleges must respect that. The recognized exceptions are when students are admitted from a wait list, students initiate inquiries themselves, or cooperation is sought by institutions that provide transfer programs."
- "Colleges must not solicit transfer applications from a previous year's applicant or prospect pool unless the students have themselves initiated a transfer inquiry or the college has verified prior to contacting the students that they are either enrolled at a college that allows transfer recruitment from other colleges or are not currently enrolled in a college."

Initiatives:

- 1. Update the MACAC website with the current NACAC Code of Ethics and Professional Practices (CEPP) and explain the recent changes.**
- 2. Create and/or adopt a Student Rights document that empowers students to advocate for themselves in the admissions process, provide questions to ask before committing to an institution, and explains decision round options.**
 - a. Identify an existing committee or create ad hoc to explore development of Student Rights document (align w/NACAC as appropriate).
 - b. Create an accompanying video explaining student rights in the admissions process.
 - c. Create educational workshop(s) on student rights in admission and financial aid process(es) to be utilized at NCF, MEFs, and/or other student-centered programs.

3. Through discussion and research, develop guidelines for how colleges can clearly communicate admissions requirements, deadlines, and contracts (align w/NACAC as appropriate).

Timeline: TBD pending NACAC updates

Involved (based on 2020-2023 Board Structure): Admissions Practices,, National College Fair

C. Empower education professionals in their efforts to address important trending factors and narratives related to access and equity in higher education (postsecondary).

Description: An important trending issue among students and parents, and in particular, for low-income families, is the concern about the **cost of obtaining a post-secondary education**. Additionally, the **impact of student mental health** on the process of preparing for, applying, and transitioning to a postsecondary program is a trending concern. MACAC is in a position to contribute toward clarifying existing narratives and providing resources around these concerns for education professionals and the students and families they serve.

Initiatives:

1. **Strengthen efforts to confront false narratives regarding the value of higher education, for the benefit of MACAC members as well as students/families.**
 - a. Enhance resources available to our members to aid their understanding of the financial aid process. Examples include collaboration with MAFAA (MN Assoc. of Financial Aid Administrators) and utilizing NACAC resources such as new college affordability handouts designed to highlight the value of a college degree as well as the the E-Learning Course Financial Aid 101: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZQ8peLA81YY>
 - b. Explore opportunities to help educate middle school students by providing early college readiness programming
2. **Consider ways in which MACAC can further collaborate with organizations, agencies, or associations such as MSCA (MN School Counselor Association), NAMI (National Alliance for Mental Health), etc., to increase understanding of mental health issues as barriers to higher education.**
 - a. Develop a forum or other means of providing support, resources, and best practices to MACAC members on the topic of mental health and its impact on students in the college admission process.
 - b. Provide focused professional development events/sessions to improve understanding of mental health.

Timeline: Year 1

Involved (based on 2020-2023 Board Structure): Professional Development, National College Fair, Communications, Government Relations