**OACRAO 2016**

**OACRAO is interested in helping you justify your attendance at our conference. Following are some points you could consider including in your justification, some suggested items to include, and a sample letter.**

**Benefits to attending a conference**

* Networking: where else, for a small investment, can I be in contact with people from my profession and vendors who will be able to explain their services?
* Sessions on important topics: I will be able to bring good information back to the institution about issues that are currently being discussed at a national, regional, and state level.
* What do we need to know about our policies/practices? This is a great time to ask questions, such as “what are you doing about …”

**Structuring your request to attend**

1. Include specifics such as cost:

* Travel to and from
* Housing
* Meals not covered by conference fee

1. Explain what the conference is and who is sponsoring the conference:

**AACRAO** is a non-profit, voluntary, professional association of more than 11,000 higher education professionals who represent approximately 2,600 institutions in more than 40 countries. Its mission is to provide professional development, guidelines, and voluntary standards to be used by higher education officials regarding the best practices in records management, admissions, enrollment management, administrative information technology, and student services. AACRAO represents institutions in every part of the higher education community, from large public institutions to small, private liberal arts colleges.  
  
The association promotes the well-being and advancement of professionals in the higher education community by engaging members in the collaborative pursuit of excellence in admissions, registration, and enrollment services. The association provides relevant programs, professional development tools, and information resources necessary to chart the course for professional success.

**OACRAO**’s mission is to provide professional development regarding best practices, standards, and guidelines in records management, admissions, enrollment management, administrative information technology, and student services to higher education officials in Ohio. In addition to the many benefits that AACRAO provides its members, OACRAO members enjoy educational workshops and lively conferences.

**Add specific reasons that your attendance will be a good return on the institution’s investment.**

For example:

* FERPA training will give me a sound basis for interpreting the legislation and what our best practices should be.
* We need to improve our procedures for graduation; there will be several sessions highlighting this process.
* AACRAO regularly sends one of the members of the board to the OACRAO Conference; this is an excellent opportunity to hear what is happening at the national level without traveling a long distance.

Sample letter

Dear [Name],

I am requesting approval to attend the Ohio Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (OACRAO) State Conference October 5-7, 2016, at Deer Creek State Park. The conference is an important training and professional development opportunity and will be a valuable experience for the college.

OACRAO expects over 100 participants from across the state, with representatives from large universities to small colleges in attendance. With departmental and budget priorities in mind, I am outlining why my attendance is a good investment for our office.

During the conference, I will have access to:

* Sessions tailored to my specific interests and job responsibilities and on topics that are currently being discussed nationally.
* A network of peers, with whom I can discuss challenges, strategies, and ideas for improving our practices. This is an excellent opportunity to evaluate our practices and learn about best business practices in our profession.
* Roundtable Discussions, where I can meet with colleagues in a small, focused format.
* Companies who can provide products and services to help our department function more effectively.
* Critical information and handouts, which I can bring back to our institution.
* Members of the AACRAO Board of Directors who will speak to issues in Higher Education.

I am requesting approval for travel and registration expenses. Below is an estimate of the costs associated with this conference:

* Transportation: $[xxx]
* Hotel: $[xxx]
* Meals: $[xxx]
* Conference fee: $[xxx]

**Approximate total: $[xxx]**

I will plan to meet with you after the conference to discuss significant takeaways, tips, and recommended actions. I hope you agree that the conference is a good investment of time and resources.

Thank you for considering this request. I look forward to your reply.

Regards,

[Name]