

Pre-Conference Sessions



Our pre-conference workshops provide you with an opportunity to do a deep dive into a particular topic before the conference begins in full swing. Please note that all sessions begin at 9 AM but end at various times that morning. Each session will include a continental breakfast.

Management for Dummies

Managing a team can be one of the most rewarding and challenging responsibilities. Often, supervisors assume their role with no formal training beforehand. It's time for that to change! In our time together, we'll talk through leadership philosophy and theory, challenges unique to middle management, and offer tips that have been successful to us in our journey. This space is not one for perfection, instead, it is a space for collective learning. Management For Dummies is a session for aspiring leaders, experienced managers, and all who fall between. Thus, we invite you to our table to discuss the beauty and challenges of management.

Presented by: Lexi Aguayo, Associate Director of Admission, Pepperdine University
Gabrielle Tolentino, Associate Director for Campus Visit Experience and Visit Center Manager, Saint Mary's College of California
Justin Wells, Associate Director of Admission, Pepperdine University

Navigating the Financial Aid Process for 24-25

2024 is a year of big changes in the financial aid process. With a new FAFSA for 24-25 and changes to eligibility formulas, there will be those who benefit and those who may find their eligibility is reduced. The good news is that the goal of the changes is to make sure that those who need the most financial assistance, will get it, and there are more opportunities than ever to address unique family or income situations. Join financial aid experts from CASFAA and CSAC who will give you the run down on some financial aid basics, and where we are today with the FAFSA and the 24-25 financial aid process.

Presented by: Thalassa Naylor, Independent Consultant, UCLA Instructor, Naylor College Consulting/UCLA Extension

Establishing a Successful, Ethical, Student-Centered IEC Practice

This pre-conference workshop is designed to equip newer Independent Educational Consultants with practical tools that can be implemented right away to build a successful and student-centered practice. The workshop will focus on four critical areas: effective ways to reach new clients, managing clients and workflow, engaging with colleges, and delivering the best practices to serve your students.

Presented by: Steven Mercer, Ed.D., Independent Educational Consultant, Mercer Educational Consulting, LLC
Cyndy McDonald, Independent Educational Consultant, McDonald & Associates
Stacy Kadesh, MA, Independent Educational Consultant, Stacy Kadesh and Associates College Consulting

Partnering for Access: How School Districts and Counselors Can Work Together to Advance Their Students' Post-Secondary Goals

The Los Angeles Unified School District is the second largest public school system in the nation. Their counselor to student ratio hovers around 500:1. In order to better address the professional needs of their counselors, LAUSD has partnered with UCLA Extension's College Counseling program to offer a four-course specialization in college advising to all 600 district counselors. In this session, participants will hear from lead instructors and LAUSD administrators on best practices from the program.

Presented by: Jennifer Mandel, Program Director, UCLA College Counseling & Access, UCLA Extension
Dr. Esther Hugo, Instructor, UCLA Extension College Counseling Program
Yetunde Rubinstein, Instructor, UCLA Extension College Counseling Program
Nicole Jackson, Instructor, UCLA Extension College Counseling Program
Micaela Vazquez-Hahn, College Readiness Coordinator, Los Angeles Unified School District
Sian Eddington, A-G Intervention Coordinator, Los Angeles Unified School District

Personal Statement Writing Mini-Retreat for Counselors

In this interactive workshop, learn a variety of strategies for helping students brainstorm, write, and revise their college essays in an immersive way—by writing your own personal statement. Once you register for this session, you'll be invited to join Ethan Sawyer (College Essay Guy) for a live brainstorming session in August (weeks before the conference in LA) and tools for beginning your draft. During the in-person, three-hour pre-conference session, we'll gather to work through practical exercises to broaden and deepen our stories, plus you'll gain tools you can use with your own students. This workshop is ideal for those interested in writing as a tool for personal growth, and developing deeper connections with colleagues.

Presented by: Ethan Sawyer, The College Essay Guy