

High School Relations Committee Report
October 15, 2018

Committee Members:

Leticia Bazan, Chair	Chris Arteaga
Jessica Maynard, Co-Chair	Maryellen Baeza
Trevor Partney (replaced Maryssa Adams)	Tracey Avery
Jennifer Beal	Linda Ramon Barbato
Danielle Garcia	Laurie Castillo
Sara Shepherd	Natalie Rhodes
Krystal Marroquin	

At the conclusion of the 2017 TACRAO Conference in South Padre Island, the High School Relations Committee proposed exploring software to manage the day/night recruitment schedule and possibly create a method for all-in-one registration for fairs.

The committee received demonstrations from Gotocollegefairs.com, Memberclicks, ePly, and Cvents. In reviewing the software, it was determined that Memberclicks, ePly, and Cvents provided services geared more toward conference and membership coordination, and not into the management of the regional college fair schedule. These software programs would require major customization, and still not provide the accessibility that was needed.

It was determined to pilot with FairPlanner (Gotocollegefairs.com). The system would provide the capability of maintaining the entire schedule, with the necessary information we requested, provide a method of communication, reports, and user access for the committee, fair hosts, and TACRAO memberships.

After implementing the system, the High School Relations committee launched the software in June 2018. The launch included an online calendar for review, all-in-one registration, and standard excel and PDF versions of the schedule.

Over the 5-month period that the system has been online, the FairPlanner system maintained 408 college fair events, over 17,000 fair registrations, and communicated with over 1,000 fair hosts and TACRAO members. While multiple procedures were put in place to facilitate and communicate to the many FairPlanner users, it was quickly discovered that there were some software issues and failures which would greatly affect the usage of FairPlanner. Pros and cons for the system are wide ranging, and the experience varies depending on region, level of involvement in fair planning, and personalization. Fairplanner provided a mechanism to address multiple requests by the members and fair hosts, but could not address all issues. FairPlanner was not equipped to handle the large amount of traffic during the initial start of usage. TACRAO exceeded the FairPlanner bandwidth causing a reduced amount of service. Additionally, current user permissions either allowed too much access, or not enough as FairPlanner changed their permission structure. This change continues to cause issue for logging in, and fair host communication. With regard to the registration functionality, its success is mixed. For regions without a strong college fair planning partnership between high school host and recruiters, FairPlanner was a large help in organizing the event, providing information and maintaining registration. However, in regions wanting specific fair requests, such as limiting of spaces, registration by invitation only, academic vs. trade participation only, FairPlanner was not able to make these accommodations. Due to these issues, we had fairs decide not to participate in the usage of FairPlanner causing recruitment staffs to have to RSVP through FairPlanner and individual registration sites.

After discussing ongoing issues with FairPlanner the High School Relations committee was told that issues would continue to be worked on as system upgrades are completed, but no timeline was able to be provided. Considering that the system is in flux, it is the recommendation of the committee to suspend using FairPlanner for 1-year to reevaluated their upgrades or look towards a different solution.

Additional Information:

- 2019-2020 Day/Night Week Schedule approved at South Padre Conference
- 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 to be created and submitted to TEC at Fort Worth Conference
- Spring Day/Night schedule to be posted on the TACRAO website in excel format, no registration or coordination using FairPlanner
- Committee changes to occur during Fort Worth conference: Committee chair, Dallas, Houston, Coastal Bend, East Texas regions