

Please use the following PDF link to access our 2025 schedule: [WaACRAO 2025 - Conference at a glance.pdf](#)

Keynote Speaker: Dr. Ervin

We're excited to welcome **Dr. Tafona Ervin** as our keynote speaker!



**Chief Executive Officer at Foundation
for Tacoma Students**

Dr. TAFONA ERVIN is an advocate for transformational educational opportunities for all, bringing over 15 years of experience advocating for equitable education for historically marginalized children and offering extensive experience leading place-based community initiatives. As the Chief Executive Officer of the Foundation for Tacoma Students, she collaborates with hundreds of community partners in a united effort to help Tacoma's youngest residents thrive from cradle to college and career. Her focus: equity, community, collaboration, and student success.

Tafona is a renowned member of her community. Her leadership has earned her numerous accolades, including, but not limited to, being named one of South Sound's 40 Under 40 and Business Leader of the Year, recognized by StriveTogether National as a Cradle to Career Champion, receiving recognition by the Tacoma Urban League as a Champion for Children and Community Advocate, and being celebrated as an Innovator in Education and Golden Apple Recipient by KCTS 9 Local Public Television.

AACRAO Update

William (Bill) Gil, Senior Director of Government Relations at AACRAO, will be joining us to provide an important update on current initiatives and policies.



William Rafael Gil
Senior Director, Government Affairs, AACRAO
Research & Policy Division

In this role, he implements the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admission Officers (AACRAO's) public policy agenda and oversees federal government relations, legislative, policy, and regulatory matters that could impact AACRAO's membership, which includes 11,000 individual members at over 2,600 higher education institutions. He provides information and strategic advice regarding developments in education policy and regulations related to college admissions, student records, privacy, financial aid, and other higher education issues at the federal, state, and local levels.

Prior to this position, he served as Vice President of Programs for the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute (CHCI), where he oversaw all day-to-day operations of CHCI's leadership development programs and educational services. This included managing the Congressional Internship, Public Policy Fellowship, Graduate Fellowship, Ready to Lead, and Scholarship award programs, as well as CHCI's educational resources and tools.

He was also Associate Vice President for Collegiate Programs and Federal Relations for the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU). In this position, he was responsible for all aspects of the largest Hispanic internship program in the nation, coordinating internships for over 600 individuals per year. He also forged stronger relationships between HACU, the White House, Congress, federal agencies, member institutions, and other national higher education and Hispanic organizations. Additionally, he oversaw regulatory issues affecting Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs).

Other professional experiences include serving as Executive Director and Legislative Assistant for the Congressional Hispanic Caucus (CHC), an informal group of Hispanic Members of Congress committed to advancing Latino issues through the legislative process. He has also worked with the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)

program of Arlington County, The Washington Center for Internships and Academic Seminars, and the United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce (USHCC).

Bill was born in Venezuela and moved to the United States at a young age. He earned a Master's in Public Administration from George Mason University and a bachelor's degree from the University of Wisconsin–Whitewater, where he double-majored in Economics and Spanish Literature. He lives in Arlington, VA with his wife Kelly and their two sons, Alexander Rafael and Dominic Vicente.

Bill's Role at AACRAO

Bill manages and implements AACRAO's public policy agenda and oversees federal government relations, legislative, policy, and regulatory matters impacting the AACRAO membership.