

## ACI's Fall Professional Development Conference Draws 102 Attendees

Dec. 7, 2022



There were 102 attendees at [ACI's Fall Professional Development Conference](#), including professional staff from [ACI member colleges and universities](#), plus ACI board members, corporate sponsors, speakers and staff, according to Daisy Gomez, ACI director, events and scholarships. The conference, held Nov. 11, was at the Microsoft Technology Center in Chicago.

With the theme, "Coming Together Again," the meeting was ACI's first in-person conference since 2019 and the pandemic. Designed for staff of ACI member institutions, the conference included 20 breakout sessions, led by 26 business and higher education leaders, Gomez reported. Sessions were grouped into four tracks, including advancement, finance, public relations and marketing, and student engagement.



Nathan Chappell,  
DonorSearch

Keynote speaker [Nathan Chappell](#), senior vice president, [DonorSearch](#), shared insights on philanthropy and from a new book, *The Generosity Crisis*, which he coauthored with Michael Ashley and Brian Crimmins. He also led a breakout session in the conference's Advancement Track.

Chappell noted that the nature of philanthropic giving is changing and declining, affecting nonprofit organizations. One solution is a concept he called "radical connection."



Figure 1 Kurt Meyer, left, and Dan Kaufman, Michael Best, discussed employee recruitment and retention.

"Generosity does not have to be complicated, but we do have to realize what's going on and that competition for connection is real. Affiliation and association are no longer enough," he told the audience. "You can like something. But when you go the distance, you go there often, or you tell your friends about it. This idea of 'radical connection' is not just 'I know you' or 'you know me.' It's that 'you know me

*and I know you' -- and together we'll do something special."*

He urged the audience to "make conscious decisions about the things that you enjoy -- the things that you're passionate about, the organizations whose values are aligned with yours, and then go the distance with those organizations."

At least 18 of ACI's 24 member colleges and universities had representatives at the conference. Saint Xavier University had 16 attendees, the largest staff presence, followed by North Park University, with six. Speakers shared slides from their presentation, which are available on the conference website.

Conference co-sponsors were DonorSearch and [Quest Food Management Services](#). [The Virtual Care Group](#), which recently joined ACI as a corporate partner, sponsored the Student Engagement Track.



The venue for the conference was the Microsoft Technology Center, Chicago.