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Conference shows global commitment



A college fair marked one of many networking events at the three-day OACAC conference hosted by Northeastern University. Photo by Lauren McFalls.

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Northeastern University hosted a three-day conference for the Overseas Association for College Admission Counseling (OACAC) last week, bringing together nearly 900 participants from 87 countries to foster the organization's goal of helping high school students make the transition to college.

The conference achieved the largest attendance in its 17-year history. It was also the largest-ever regional affiliate conference of the National Association for College Admission Counseling.

"Hosting the OACAC annual conference was a great opportunity for Northeastern University," said Philomena Mantella, senior vice president for enrollment management and student affairs. "It has provided the opportunity for hundreds of secondary school counselors from more than 80 countries to come and experience our university and allowed us to share the initiatives that contribute to the distinctiveness of Northeastern.

"This is yet another example of our commitment to globalization and reinforcing our international relationships to advance cross-cultural understanding."

A major component of this year's conference was the extensive use of Web 2.0 tools, organizers said. Twitter and Facebook kept visitors informed about the conference events, while educational workshops explored how social media can be used more effectively in recruiting students across the country and around the globe. In addition, the conference offered a mobile phone application that provided visitors access to event schedules.

"For both college counselors and university representatives, my hope is that everyone leaves having made some important connections," said OACAC President Bridget Herrera on Friday. "It is really important to network and get to know others and have an opportunity to share information about our students and institutions to see altogether how we can match students up with universities."

College and high school fairs on Friday, held in Matthews Arena, served as key networking opportunities. Educational workshops explored topics such as planning successful high school and college visits, preparing students to study abroad in college and helping students reach their potential. Sessions offered glimpses of student life and high school curriculums in specific regions of the world, and provided strategies and tools necessary to embark on successful student recruiting trips around the globe.

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