

Region I 2020 Virtual Conference Wrap-Up

Over 200 ACUI members, including over 60 students from 19 institutions, attended the 2020 Region I Virtual Conference. With the theme of “Resilience and Reinvention,” the conference focused on providing new ways attendees could continue to support and serve their campuses and communities. The conference included 19 educational sessions, 2 keynotes, 2 communities of practice socials, 7 dedicated networking opportunities and 4 engaging activities. While being informative and engaging, the conference also offered a much-needed reset and refocus for those in attendance.

The conference was kicked-off with a keynote address from Dr. Melina Abdullah who is one of the original members and an on-the-ground organizer of the #BlackLivesMatter global network and former Chair of Pan African Studies at California State University–Los Angeles. Dr. Abdullah shared a personal narrative that engaged our student affairs community in a discussion about Black Lives Matter and provided tangible ways to plug in to our work. Dr. Abdullah was generously sponsored by the University Student Union at California State University–Northridge.

In Region I, we have our own Mt. Rushmore, our own titans, our own ICONS to serve as examples of professionalism and leadership within student affairs and ACUI. Our final keynote was a panel discussion between three ICONS that included two past ACUI Presidents and Butt-Whiting recipients—Debra L. Hammond from California State University–Northridge, Matt Cameron from Santa Clara University, and Jan Javinar from University of Hawaii–West Oahu. The panel was moderated by Ja’Corey Bowens who is a student activist, rising student affairs professional, and member of the Associated Students at San Francisco State University Board of Directors. The ICONS shared their knowledge and experience to help guide those in attendance through the challenges we are facing in this new normal. Following their keynotes Dr. Abdullah and the ICONS held interactive Q&A discussions during educational sessions.

The conference prioritized providing space for people to make connections and find their communities. In addition to scheduling time for participants to utilize the Hopin networking feature, this was done by planning socials for the Multi-ethnic Professionals & Allies and the LGBTQ+ Communities of Practice. Both socials welcomed new members, built connections and engaged attendees in conversations around the state of our organization and the nation.

Conference attendees were kept engaged throughout the three-day conference through multiple free activities. Participants had a blast completing a Virtual Scavenger Hunt on Instagram, found their zen during a morning yoga session, tested their knowledge in a trivia competition and laughed together in an ACUI rendition of “Match Game.” Despite

not charging attendees for any of these activities, through the silent auction the conference beat its fundraising goal for 2020.

Through the connections made and the experiences shared in the conference, the professionals and students of Region I expanded their commitment to the ACUI mission of Advancing Campus Community.