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**Featuring:** Ally Landis, Associate Director of Regional Admission at the University of Tulsa

**How did you first become involved with TACAC?**

In my first job in college admissions, my supervisor at the time encouraged me to sign for the TACAC conference (that year happened to be a Super Conference!) in Galveston. I followed her encouragement and signed up and went!

**What inspired you to pursue a career in your field and what do you enjoy most about your career choice?**

I feel like most people in admissions, I didn't intend to end up here but I'm so glad that I did! I have always enjoyed working with students and started out as a high school math teacher. I learned pretty quickly I didn't want to teach but I truly enjoyed students so I ended up working for a campus ministry I had been involved in as a student. There were parts I loved but it was very unstructured and I knew I needed some more structure in a job so I started to look for jobs on the University side. I applied for anything that sounded interesting and that I thought I would be good at and ended up accepting a job offer as an admission counselor in Dallas. It's hard to pick what I enjoy most so I'll narrow it down to two- I love the ability to truly make a difference in someone's life and advocate and cheer them on in such a pivotal time of their life. I also love the people I work with- not only in my office but also high school counselors, other regionals, etc. It's such a joy to work with people who are all working together for a common goal- to help students find the best fit and pursue what's next for them.

**How has being a TACAC member been beneficial to you and your career?**

TACAC has give me the opportunity to network and make connections all over the state, collaborate with my colleagues and present at conference, learn how to lead via being Membership Chair and building up a committee, and so much more! I don't think you can do the work we do without support and TACAC is a huge provider of that support both via the people and the programming.

**What do you think are the most important qualities for success to you and your career?**

Empathy comes to mind first and foremost when working with students and families. Being able to communicate clearly and honestly throughout the process with all involved also ranks very highly for me. Finally, honestly being able to set boundaries and advocate not only for students but also for yourself!

### **How do you think you impact and inspire students?**

I think I impact and inspire students by supporting them in their college search regardless of where they choose to go. I desire to be available and give them helpful information in general about financial aid and applying for college. I also do my very best to be transparent and honest with students and helping them recognize if my school is a good fit for them and if not, helping them find and think about schools that might be a better fit. One of my favorite moments is when an old coworker texted me that one of the students I had recruited four years earlier was a senior and giving a speech at a prospective student dinner. In his speech he talked about how I helped get him to the school- I nominated him for a room and board program at our school to give him every opportunity to make it work financially but he also talked about how I told him as a first-generation college student I didn't care if he picked the school I worked at, I just wanted him to go to college. He said no other college had said that to him. You don't always get to know about the impact you make on students' lives, but I am so thankful for the glimpse that we do make an impact and what we say inspires students to continue on in their education and makes a difference in their lives.

### **How do you give back to your community?**

I'm an active member of my local church so I volunteer mostly through them/teaching kids.

### **How do you stay current and informed in your field?**

Reading articles, attending conferences like TACAC and Slate Summit, having open conversations and learning from my colleagues.

### **What are some of the biggest trends or developments that you are seeing in your field?**

I'm very intrigued with AI and how that's going to change everything! How we market and recruit to students, how students find and apply to schools, etc.

### **How do you balance work life and personal life?**

I try and do some sort of physical activity after work to decompress/get me out of my house since I work from home. Usually I will take my dog on a walk or go to the gym. I also try and turn off Teams notifications after hours/not look at email after hours.

### **What are your future aspirations for your career?**

I'm actually currently transitioning to our Operations/Database Management/CRM team to help support our office from the back end. I graduated with a math degree so I think my dream would be able to find a sweet spot of working with people and supporting students but also getting to use what I studied and utilize all the technology/data we have available.