



TACRAO 2023-2024 Conference Site Selection Committee Report

The Site Selection Committee 2023-24 comprised of the following members:
Melinda Carroll, chair, North Central Texas College
Jason Hale, member, Texas Tech University
Lor Zerr, member, University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston

Overview of the Site Selection Process & Visit (April 2024)

The Conference Site Selection Committee, in collaboration with Keith Hymel and team at Conference Direct, conducted a thorough evaluation to select the optimal venue for the 2026 TACRAO Conference. The Committee aimed to identify a location that met TACRAO's high standards for conference facilities and attendee accommodations. As part of the process, the Committee reviewed potential sites in Houston, Corpus Christi, and South Padre Island. However, based on conference requirements and budget considerations, Houston was chosen as the most viable location.

In April 2024, site visits were conducted to two prominent Houston hotels: the Westin Galleria/Westin Oaks and the Hyatt Downtown. These visits included thorough tours of conference and guest facilities and meetings with hotel representatives to discuss services and capacity.

Review of Site Selection Recommendations

- **Westin Galleria & Westin Oaks:**
This venue provides extensive conference facilities with advanced technology, multiple breakout rooms, and large ballrooms suited for significant events. Connected to the Galleria, it offers easy access to various dining and shopping venues. The hotel accommodations are modern and comfortable, promising a high-quality experience for conference attendees. Parking is available at no charge for all attendees in the attached Galleria parking garage.
- **Hyatt Downtown:**
Centrally located, the Hyatt Downtown allows convenient access to key city attractions. However, the location of the exhibit hall in the basement was seen as a drawback, detracting from the overall appeal of the facility. Parking was not as plentiful in the downtown area.

Final Recommendation and Approval

Following careful evaluation, the Committee recommended the Westin Galleria & Westin Oaks as the preferred venue for the 2026 TACRAO Conference. This decision is supported by the venue's superior facilities, prime location, and alignment with TACRAO's requirements. The recommendation received TEC approval in May 2024, and the venue contract was finalized by June 15, 2024, ensuring all preparations are underway.

Local Arrangement Committee Members for 2026

To facilitate local planning and organization, the Houston Local Arrangement Committee Co-chairs were selected. Dr. Nickolaus Cioci, Dean of Records at Texas Southern University and Cole Parker, Regional Recruitment Manger, Houston at Texas Tech University, were contacted and both accepted the positions.

Respectfully submitted,

Melinda Carroll
TACRAO Past President
& Conference Site Selection Committee Chair