

Compass Education Group's Adam Ingersoll to Lead 2026 WACAC Closing Session with USC's Kirk Brennan & UCSD's Jim Rawlins

Adam Ingersoll joins Kirk Brennan of USC and Jim Rawlins of UCSD to explore college readiness, testing policy, and what admissions has learned since 2020.

LOS ANGELES, CA, UNITED STATES, May 18, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ --



Adam Ingersoll, Co-Founder and Principal of Compass Education Group, will present the closing session at the 2026 Western Association for College Admission Counseling (WACAC) Annual Conference, held at the Pasadena Convention Center on May 20–22. Co-presenters are Kirk Brennan, Director of Undergraduate Admission at the University of Southern California, and Jim Rawlins, Associate Vice Chancellor of Enrollment Management at the University of California San Diego.



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The session, titled "Six Years Later: The Search for a New Normal" is described as follows:

"The events of 2020 precipitated tectonic shifts in higher ed, with aftershocks still reverberating. As the cohorts admitted during that upheaval are now graduating, what have we learned and what remains unanswered? Are our definitions of readiness appropriately broad and

contemporary while still useful and practical? How does a crude tool like the [SAT/ACT](#) illuminate or obfuscate what matters? Who decides? What are we even at liberty to discuss in a fraught political environment? Join us for the frankest possible discussion of these concerns, highlighted by the recent UCSD report on student preparation and USC's determination of its policy on [admission testing](#)."

Central to the session is a 2025 Senate-Administration Workgroup (SAWG) report on admissions at UC San Diego, which documented declining student preparedness in math and writing and

put forward recommendations to strengthen both admissions criteria and academic support systems. The report generated substantial national media coverage and sparked considerable debate over its conclusions and implications for the broader testing landscape.

Ingersoll notes that “the report was a controversial and important contribution to an ongoing national tug-of-war between pro- and anti-SAT/ACT points of view. There tends to be more heat than light in these exchanges, and Kirk, Jim, and I hope to provide a nuanced and useful perspective for both admissions officers and college counselors on what’s actually true and what matters in their work around our common goals and shared concerns for students.”

The 2026 WACAC Annual Conference is the premier professional development gathering for enrollment and counseling professionals across California and Nevada. The conference brings together high school counselors, independent educational consultants, and college admissions officers to share best practices, network, and advance student equity in higher education—with particular attention to freshman and transfer access.

ABOUT COMPASS EDUCATION GROUP

Compass Education Group is one of the world's leading providers of test prep and academic tutoring — including ACT, AP, and [SAT tutoring](#) — and small group courses for high school students aspiring to attend competitive colleges. Compass has earned the trust of college counselors and administrators at thousands of high schools. That reputation dates to 1989 and reflects the results our students achieve, our commitment to research and sharing accurate information about testing, and the ethical standards we maintain in relationships with clients and counselors.



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