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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **INTERNATIONAL ACAC HOSTS THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA REGIONAL INSTITUTE ON GLOBAL UNIVERSITY ADMISSION AND ADVISING**

**ARLINGTON, VA – November 3, 2017** – The three-day Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Regional Institute, organized by the International Association of College Admission Counseling (International ACAC) and hosted by the American Community School of Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates, concluded on October 21st. The mission of the MENA Regional Institute was to connect secondary school counselors within the Middle East and North Africa with university admission officers from around the world to discuss important matters specific to the region, its students, and its schools. Furthermore, the event allowed universities from around the world to build connections and deepen their understanding of the Middle Eastern and North African student market. According to [IIE's Open Doors Report](#), in 2015/16 nearly 54,000 undergraduate students from the MENA region were enrolled in U.S. post-secondary institutions alone, making this region an important source of students, talents, and cultures for institutions worldwide. Nonetheless, the MENA region faces unique economic and political challenges requiring collaboration to overcome.

The MENA Regional Institute is the fifth institute of its kind. Previous locations include Shanghai, China; London, United Kingdom; Nairobi, Kenya; and Incheon, South Korea. An upcoming Latin America Regional Institute is planned for Panama City, Panama from March 8-10, 2018.

### **MENA Regional Institute Highlights**

- 158 attendees from 22 nations around the globe were represented
  - 33 secondary schools counselors representing institutions in Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Sudan, and United Arab Emirates
  - 109 representatives from colleges and universities located in Canada, France, Hong Kong, India, Italy, Netherlands, Singapore, Spain, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, and the United States were in attendance
  - 16 attendees representing organizations ranging from EducationUSA to independent educational consultants were also part of the Institute
  - Full attendee lists are available on the [MENA Regional Institute site](#)
- Three concurrent information sessions were offered for each of two streams; a High School Counseling stream and a College and University Recruitment and Admissions stream
- Session presentations in the High School Counseling stream, designed to address specialized topics for professionals working with students exploring and transitioning to post-secondary education, included topics ranging from essay/personal statement advising to understanding funding options
- College and University Recruitment and Admissions stream session presentations included specialized topics for representatives recruiting in the Middle East/North Africa Regions, such as understanding regional mobility trends and working with regional sponsoring organizations
- Four Institute sessions brought all attendees together to discuss topics ranging from the challenges and benefits for MENA students choosing to study abroad to the transitional considerations unique to students of the region when they arrive in a new country
- Additionally, two non-streamed session blocks allowed attendees to choose among topics as diverse as the use of social media in the process and supporting female students from the MENA region

- Institute faculty included representatives from 16 higher education institutions across five countries, representatives from 10 secondary schools across four countries, as well as EducationUSA
- The MENA Regional Institute concluded on Saturday (Oct 21<sup>st</sup>) with a free, two-hour, International Universities College Fair open to students and local schools in the region
  - 102 colleges and universities from 11 countries exhibited at the fair
  - The fair hosted approximately 500 attendees to learn more about admission to these global institutions

### **International ACAC Online**

- Twitter: <https://twitter.com/IntlACAC>
- Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/intlacac/>

### **About American Community School (ACS) of Abu Dhabi**

ACS is located in downtown Abu Dhabi in a section of town populated by many American businesses and government offices. It is a K-12 college preparatory school with an international student population numbering over 1,200 students which represent more than 60 countries. They have been a member of the Abu Dhabi community since 1972 and they offer the rigorous International Baccalaureate Diploma Program. The school is a member of International ACAC, among other accredited international school organizations.

### **About International ACAC**

International ACAC was founded in 1991 as the Overseas Association for College Admission Counseling and is affiliated with the US-based National Association for College admission Counseling (NACAC). Membership is made up of over 2,800 professionals from more than 100 countries worldwide, dedicated to serving students as they make choices about pursuing post-secondary education. International ACAC effectively brings together secondary school counselors, independent counselors, college admission and financial aid officers, enrollment managers and organizations engaged in guiding students through the transition from secondary to higher education.

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