Hawkeyes get to work. We get involved. We explore the far reaches of space, write novels, and cure diseases. Our undergraduates make vital contributions to some of the world’s most inventive research and creative work, graduating with skills and experience that set them apart. That’s why 93% of Iowa grads find jobs or get accepted to graduate school within 6 months of finishing their degree. #ThisIsUIOWA

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### SPRING / 2017

### THE JOURNAL OF COLLEGE ADMISSION

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### YOU’RE BIASED

Hawkeyes get to work. We get involved. We explore the far reaches of space, write novels, and cure diseases. Our undergraduates make vital contributions to some of the world’s most inventive research and creative work, graduating with skills and experience that set them apart. That’s why 93% of Iowa grads find jobs or get accepted to graduate school within 6 months of finishing their degree.

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### COMMITTED TO DIVERSITY

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### PAYING FOR COLLEGE

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### HOW IECS FIT

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From small towns, big cities or the suburbs, students come to BGSU, establish roots, discover their passions and go on to lead lives that change the world. The moment you set foot on campus at BGSU you’ll know this is a place where you can **BELONG.** In fact, BGSU is recognized by the Wall Street Journal for engaging students in their education. And with a faculty-to-student ratio of 19:1, you’ll never get lost in the crowd. This is a place where you can **STAND OUT.** Choose a program that fits you and take advantage of the Falcon Internship Guarantee – the first of its kind in Ohio. With a BGSU degree you can **GO FAR.** Confident in your qualifications from one of the nation’s top public universities, according to U.S.News & World Report.
“...WE NEED TO REACQUAINT OURSELVES WITH WHAT EDUCATION REALLY MEANS AND WHAT COLLEGES DO AND DON’T OWE THEIR CHARGES. PHYSICAL SAFETY? ABSOLUTELY. A SMOOTH, VALIDATING PASSAGE ACROSS THE OCEAN OF IDEAS? NO. IF ANYTHING, COLLEGES OWE STUDENTS TURBULENCE, BECAUSE IT’S FROM A CONTEST OF PERSPECTIVES AND AN ASSAULT ON PRESUMPTIONS THAT TRUTH EMERGES—AND, WITH IT, TRUE CONFIDENCE.”

Our goal:  
“We must adapt to the changing definitions of diversity among the students we serve and provide better support for those dealing with issues of intersectionality.”  
— Tamara Siler

As I write this, my team and I are awaiting the arrival of 250 African American, Hispanic, and Native American high-achieving students. While they were selected because their ethnicities are underrepresented on our campus, they represent so many more points of diversity—gender identity, geography, sexual orientation, class, first in their family to go to college (or not), differently abled, religion, and other forms of identity that only they may know. Intersectionality makes it imperative that we let students define what is important to them in the college search process, rather than making assumptions. It also may mean adding new tools to our toolbox.

One of the best parts of counseling students in the transition to postsecondary education is the opportunity to grow and learn. Annual data—made available by the College Board and ACT—help raise sensitivities during staff training on how standardized testing may differ between populations based on ethnicity, income level, and educational attainment in the family. Add in discussions about how activities might look different for students based on factors such as family responsibilities, religious beliefs, or cultural traditions. We should always strive to make sure everyone in our offices is prepared to advocate for any student at every stage in the process.

Partnerships are key in supporting students from various backgrounds. Certainly financial aid and student affairs staff are instrumental in supporting the students we serve, but direct conversations with faculty, housing, disability services, and current students often pave the way for discussions that sometimes illuminate opportunities to shift the campus culture in positive ways. Targeted support for first-generation and low-income students, mentoring programs that connect alumni and current students based on identity, gender-neutral housing and bathrooms, and the restructuring and renaming of certain traditions in recognition of the evolving face of the campus are real changes I have been privileged to witness as a result of bringing more voices to the table.

I hope you will use the articles in this issue on bias and racial inequality to fuel important conversations in your offices and communities. There is no question that our work often leaves us with little time for extra, but groups such as the Coca-Cola Scholars Foundation and the Point Foundation challenge their application readers with exercises which help combat the biases they may bring to the table, and provide perspective that might allow for integration of those insights back at one’s home institution. The Access College Fair at the NACAC national conference is a chance to make connections, but networking with colleagues online is also a great way to unearth opportunities. It would be great to see every special interest group (SIG) of NACAC add to the content of the Knowledge Center.

Stress in the college admission process can take on a whole new meaning for female, underrepresented minority, low-income, first-generation, LGBTQ, non-Christian, or differently abled students in terms of representation and campus safety. Imagine if you are someone who would be using “and” instead of “or” in that statement. Hopefully we are all committed to adding whatever we need to our arsenal of tools to make sure that every student finds a postsecondary match that allows every part of themselves to be supported and celebrated.

Tamara Siler, Senior Associate Director of Admission & Coordinator of Minority Recruitment, Rice University (TX) and NACAC Board Director
EXCEPTIONAL STUDENTS.

EXCEPTIONAL OUTCOMES.

Stevens Institute of Technology is a career launchpad for students with drive and ingenuity. Equipped with hands-on learning experiences, meaningful collaboration and the support of a top-ranked career center, Stevens students are well positioned for success.

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STUDENT OUTCOMES
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STUDENT SATISFACTION
95%
FIRST-YEAR RETENTION RATE, 2015 COHORT

SEE FOR YOURSELF
STEVENS.EDU/SUCCESS
MEMBERSHIP MATTERS
BOTH SIDES OF THE DESK
Rockridge Secondary School strives to graduate responsible and creative global citizens in a respectful and diverse environment where relevant learning fosters excellence in personal achievement, compassion, curiosity, and critical thinking.

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN A UNIVERSITY COUNSELOR?
I have been a school counselor in public schools in the Vancouver area for 20 years. About five years ago our counseling department embarked on redesigning our service model. We all felt we were doing a good job addressing the social/emotional needs of our students but felt we could be doing better at our postsecondary counseling. We decided to assign one counselor specifically to do university counseling and to further develop our university counseling program. I offered to take on this role.

HOW DOES YOUR INVOLVEMENT WITH NACAC ASSIST YOU IN YOUR WORK IN THE VANCOUVER AREA?
NACAC has been a lifeline for me in my role as a university counselor in the Vancouver area. The application process to Canadian universities is considerably different and more straightforward than it is in other countries yet many of my students apply to universities outside of Canada, many in the US, and increasingly in the UK and Europe, as well as Asia and Australia. Much of what I have learned about international university admission has been from NACAC. Ongoing professional development is essential to being a successful university counselor and by far some of the best professional development I’ve gotten has been provided by NACAC. The sessions and workshops at the NACAC conferences have been outstanding, as well as the networking opportunities.

CAN YOU DESCRIBE NACAC’S INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY FAIR IMPACT ON YOUR STUDENTS?
The Vancouver fair has been one of the most exciting things to happen for students (and counselors) in this area. For students to learn about so many different universities from all over the world and the many postsecondary opportunities available to them is nothing short of remarkable. The workshops at the fair were so well-received that there was standing-room only and for this year’s fair some of the workshops are being held twice and in bigger rooms. As one parent said to me: “Students often don’t know just how vast their options for postsecondary studies are, but at events like this they can learn about programs they didn’t even know existed.”

Continued on page 8

KEL MCDOWELL

University Counsellor
Rockridge Secondary School, West Vancouver, British Columbia
NACAC member since 2013

Frank Church High School is an alternative public secondary school. Its mission is to help students achieve their educational potential and become contributing members of the community.

WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST NACAC NATIONAL CONFERENCE LIKE?
My first conference was in Seattle. I was awarded a scholarship to attend the conference and, as part of accepting the award, I was required to volunteer at conference. I still use my Starbucks-themed apron now, Soy or whole milk? (And I continue to volunteer through the Pacific Northwest College Fairs Committee.) The financial aid workshop was one of the best. The information they provided me was invaluable as I embarked on my new role. I was grateful for the information given to me and I still use it today.

DID YOU BEGIN IN A TRADITIONAL SCHOOL?
I began my career in the alternative setting and when the principal asked me if I was interested in this position, I said yes, not really knowing what it was. It turns out that having a dedicated college counselor that works with the school counselor has been invaluable to the students we serve. I work one-on-one with the kids. I get to see the highs and lows, and assist them in overcoming barriers.

WHAT IS IT LIKE BEING A COLLEGE COUNSELOR IN AN ALTERNATIVE SETTING?
Alternative settings are like small private schools, but we serve everyone. Our students need lots of information. I provide this information and support students looking for apprenticeship programs. My students need lots of one-on-one time. This is crucial to our students’ understanding of the postsecondary world.

WHY DID YOU LEAVE THE CLASSROOM?
After my mom said, “Do something that you want to do,” I explored the idea of becoming a school counselor. I knew I wanted to continue working with students!

Continued on page 8

ANN MARIE WAIBEL

Career Counselor
Frank Church High School, Boise, Idaho
NACAC member since 2008
Ann Marie, from page 7

HOW IS WORKING WITH YOUR SCHOOL COUNSELORS IN YOUR DEPARTMENT?
We work well together. If a college comes and meets with them they bring them to me and vice versa. We are great at sharing time and resources. I keep the school counselor abreast of what is taking place and vice versa. We often strategize together about best options for some students.

IF YOU COULD MAKE ANY CHANGE IN YOUR JOB, WHAT WOULD IT BE?
More time with students… more time to do all the things I want to do! Because of compressed time, I have had to get creative—I created a hall pass card that I use to send for students. I am constantly reaching out to students because I want all of my students to have a plan when they leave us.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE TO DO OFF THE CLOCK?
Baking, knitting, scrapbooking, and any outdoor activities. I believe variety is the spice of life. I encourage everyone to find their passion. When you do, you will have found your career.

WHICH SUPER HERO ARE YOU?
I would like to be Storm because she’s way cooler than Wonder Woman—with her outfit and her style. However, as far as interpretation, Wonder Woman is more fitting because I am always trying to save the day and avoid the storms, and when working with students and families.

Kel, from page 7

HOW DO YOU DESCRIBE THE IB MIDDLE YEARS PROGRAM (MYP) TO UNIVERSITY REPRESENTATIVES?
We have been an MYP school for the past seven years. Very few university representatives have actually asked me about it, but I think it’s a good university preparation program. The goals of the MYP program—such as the emphasis on critical thinking skills, inquiry-based learning, and cross-curricular learning—are invaluable to students and are skills that can help them be more successful at university. I am a big fan of the personal project in the MYP program and think the inquiry skills gained by doing the project are congruent with postsecondary learning.

HAS THE CURRENT POLITICAL CLIMATE IN THE US MADE A DIFFERENCE IN THE WAY YOUR STUDENTS ARE VIEWING THEIR UNIVERSITY CHOICES?
I had fewer domestic students applying to universities in the US this year than in previous years, but the number was not significantly lower. I’m not certain whether this is directly related to the political climate or not. What I did notice is that a significant number of our international students who typically might have applied to universities in the US opted to apply only to Canadian universities. Many of them also applied to universities in the UK or Australia, or some are returning to their home countries in Europe and/or Asia. I also think some counselors, including myself, may be more concerned about sending students to study in the US than they might have been in the past. I think American universities, if not already, will indeed begin to feel the impact of stricter rules on visa requirements and other restrictions pertaining to international students.

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Vancouver Convention Centre—EAST
Vancouver, BC, Canada

For more information, visit nacacfairs.org.

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• Mentoring Program
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Amanda@IECAonline.com

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“This isn’t magic,” said Emiola Jay Oriola, associate director of INVESTING NOW. “We’re investing our time and resources in these kids and we’re asking them to do the same: Invest in themselves and their education and future. It works. There’s not much of a trick to it.”

INVESTING NOW, founded in 1988 at the University of Pittsburgh’s Swanson School of Engineering, is a college preparatory program created to stimulate, support, and recognize the high academic performance of pre-college students from groups that are historically underrepresented in STEM majors and careers. The students are recruited from Pittsburgh public high schools. The program is majority-minority and 60 percent female.

The program provides students with quarterly academic advising, tutoring, workshops for academic success, SAT preparation, hands-on science and engineering programming, college preparation and financial aid workshops, as well as career and cultural awareness seminars and career shadowing. Current college students and INVESTING NOW alumni offer a workshop offering an insider’s view of college without staff or faculty in the room so that students can ask questions about college life that they might not be comfortable approaching otherwise.

INVESTING NOW students spend five weeks in the summer on Pitt’s campus, taking classes and working on engineering projects. They work with faculty from Pitt’s Swanson School of Engineering, as well as other constituent Pitt schools. Current college students serve as TAs. Graduate students and PhD students who were once INVESTING NOW students return to teach in the program. This shows current students a possible future.

“Allowing students to see graduates continue on in the field, to see where they are five, 10, 15 years later kind of bridges the gap and connects the dots for them,” Oriola said. “It lets them know that this isn’t just something we talk about. Math and science aren’t just subjects in school—they’re fields that they can work in.”

Since 2010, over 95 percent of students have enrolled in college, with enrollment at 100 percent for the last few years. Over 50 percent of program alums go on to major in a STEM subject, showing a long-term commitment to STEM subjects.

Oriola is especially proud of an INVESTING NOW alum who is now a student at Georgia Tech. He came to INVEST NOW two years after coming to America from Kenya and was wearing a NASA T-shirt on his first visit to the program. In his senior year of high school, with the encouragement of program staff, he applied to an internship with NASA.

“He didn’t believe he had a shot or that something like that was possible for him,” said Oriola. “But we knew he could do it.”

As one of a few finalists for the internship program, he was invited to NASA’s facilities in Virginia and toured them with his mother. While he didn’t get the internship, being a finalist gave him new confidence in his own potential. Now he studies aerospace engineering at Georgia Tech. Oriola said that INVESTING NOW students are “battle-tested.” It’s not enough to get an A in a subject for the sake of the A. At INVESTING NOW, the students have to understand the material in order to do the science and engineering work expected of them. Not only are they academically prepared for college, they are passionate about STEM. They have participated in research, are volunteers, and are leaders. “They’re ready to do the work of college students,” he said.

For NACAC’s searchable database of CBOs, visit casp.nacacnet.org.
What students are saying about the new SAT®...

- 71% of students say the test reflected what they’re learning in school.
- 62% of students who used Khan Academy® to practice for the SAT® found it extremely or very helpful.
- 75% of students say they can imagine themselves using vocabulary from the new SAT.

Results are based on a survey of 26,585 SAT takers in March 2016.

Through free practice tools, scholarship opportunities, and college application fee waivers, the SAT removes barriers to college.

Find tools to help you use the new SAT scores at sat.org/highered.
Candice Mackey can’t help it—if you give her some free time, she gravitates to work in higher education. As a counselor at Culver City High School for the past five years, most would consider this to be more than a full-time job. However, she isn’t like most people.

As a counselor at Culver City, Mackey helps and motivates students to reach their goals, a role she considers her passion and one of her greatest strengths. She has such dedication and commitment to students learning and growing that she has taken on three higher ed positions, in addition to counseling. She is an instructor in the College Counseling Certificate program at UCLA, an undergraduate admission application reader for UCLA, and an instructor at West Los Angeles Community College. She said, through it all, she remains committed to helping young people, “by being resourceful and purposeful by inspiring, motivating, and connecting students to their callings and the things that make them happy.”

Mackey stayed close to home for both her undergraduate and graduate degrees. She comes from a very supportive family. Her one wish (if she could do it all again) would be to go away to college. As a counselor, though, she has the opportunity to live vicariously through her students. Her hope is to provide them the same support and encouragement she received from her parents growing up. “I know every student can benefit (in some capacity) from being inspired, encouraged and empowered along their academic journey,” she said.

A typical day for Mackey starts at 5:30 a.m. She and her husband get up and out with their two young children so she can get to work. (She gives some credit to Nespresso Caramel Coffee for getting her through the first part of her morning.)

As with many counselors, Mackey can’t predict her day. With 450 students on her caseload, her plan of attack is to prioritize as best she can, but still be flexible. If there’s a student in crisis, that student comes first. “As a counselor, your day can seem like a roller coaster, having many unexpected twists and turns. In many ways for our students, we are life-savers!” she said.

The days move quickly. Mackey works with students who need both academic and college advising, so the pendulum swings quickly from one area to the next. She goes from a meeting about a student’s academic progress, to helping with course selection for the next year, to assisting a student...
deciding on a college or university. Her day can also include meetings with parents or teachers at the school.

Culver City is a diverse school, with 90 percent ultimately moving on to some kind of higher learning. Students represent a wide variety of ethnic communities, and the school is recognized for being one of the most diverse in the state of California. In fact, Culver City Unified School District is the fourth most diverse district in America, which the staff sees as a great advantage. Mackey said, “The counseling staff and I believe unequivocally Culver City High School’s diverse student body is a key to making the campus a special place.”

Culver City is one of 12 schools in California designated a California Democracy School. This designation is working to ensure that all students are prepared for college, career, and citizenship in the 21st century. Culver City is, as Dr. Joshua Arnold, superintendent of the Culver City School district says, “Where everybody can be anybody!”

In addition to her counseling duties, Mackey serves as one of the Naviance site coordinators. Along with another counselor, she recently took students on a college tour in the Northeast, visiting 13 schools, including Ivy League institutions, in five states with 30 students in tow. She views college preparation as integral to students’ lives at Culver City and is currently working on a class for incoming freshmen students called “Freshman Focus” summer boot camp course. This is a course designed to help freshmen navigate the transition to high school and beyond. “My goal is to get them started on the right path, ensuring students learn effective study skills, time management, and also early college preparation,” she said

While Mackey might leave school after her day wraps up, the work is not complete. She goes home with letters of recommendation to write … and three other jobs. She is incredibly busy, but she wouldn’t have it any other way. “Even when I’m relaxing, I gravitate toward matching students with colleges and careers, she said.” Her ultimate goal is that her students feel connected, supported, and confident to make a unique contribution to the world. She is no doubt providing them the opportunity to do so.

If you’d like to suggest a member to be featured, contact the Journal editor at journal@nacacnet.org.
In January, 435 members of the House of Representatives and 34 senators were sworn into office and Donald Trump became the 45th President of the United States. Tens of thousands of people descended on Washington, DC to watch the peaceful transfer of power from one president to another.

With this new administration, new challenges arise as we strive to help students realize their educational goals. President Trump and Congress are talking about cutting funding for scores of federal programs, including those at the Department of Education and related financial aid programs—potentially putting a college degree out of reach for thousands of students. Undocumented and foreign students are concerned that their educational dreams are in jeopardy. Progress realized over the past several years for LGBTQ students is at risk.

Despite these possible setbacks, NACAC recognizes the opportunity to introduce itself as a champion for students and to demonstrate its values. Access remains our core message to the US Congress and state legislatures—and to the public.

In early March, over 140 NACAC and affiliate members traveled to the nation’s Capitol to introduce themselves and NACAC’s work to their representatives and senators. NACAC’s affiliates are also doing great work in their states, with many hosting advocacy days at their state capitols. These are the first steps of many to ensure that our voice, and the voices of your students, are heard.

Even if you can’t make it to Washington, DC, each year, we encourage you to get involved. Subscribe to NACAC’s Legislative Action Center at cqrcengage.com/nacac. You’ll receive updates on what NACAC is doing on your behalf and how you can take action—even from your desk.

Use your voice to inform our elected officials about our students and the future of America.
“A pathways course also gives (students) room to make mistakes which they will inevitably learn from, and hopefully avoid during their bachelor’s or master’s.”

—NACAC member Matthew Leake, writing for Admitted about pathways courses—educational bridge programs that many UK universities offer to help foreign students achieve entry to a degree program. Leake is a pathways marketing officer with Oxford Brookes University in the UK.

“Seeing all the colleges and seeing all the college representatives—it can be overwhelming for students. But ultimately, that exposure helps. It may help plant a seed for some students, and because they attended a college fair, they now know there are options…”

—Aba Blankson, quoted in an Admitted article about NACAC National College Fairs. Blankson is senior director for marketing and communications with The Common Application.

“Just like a teacher in the classroom wants a student engaged, we want students engaged in the process with us. I think it makes for better discernment of what a good fit is for both them and for us.”

—NACAC member Ann McDermott, quoted in an Admitted article about the role personal reflection plays in determining college fit. McDermott is director of admissions at the College of the Holy Cross (MA).

“For this first-generation college student, being accepted into a college was the easy part. Believing that I belonged there was a challenge I did not anticipate facing.”

—Christina Berchini, writing for The Huffington Post about her experiences as a first-generation college student. Berchini is an assistant professor of English at the University of Wisconsin–Eau Claire.

“By giving high school students more exposure to jobs, and perhaps steering more of them into other pathways than just the one that leads them directly to a four-year college without a plan, we can help fill the jobs that are coming available…”

—Jeffrey Selingo, writing for The Washington Post about vocational and career education.

THE US WILL SEE SHIFTS IN THE NUMBER OF HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES HAPPEN REGIONALLY:
- **South**: 11 percent increase
- **West**: 3.4 percent increase
- **Northeast**: 4.3 percent decrease
- **Midwest**: 4.4 percent decrease

READ THE FULL REPORT
For 40 years, the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) has produced *Knocking at the College Door*, projections of high school graduates. Widely used by policymakers, enrollment managers, college counselors, K-12 educators, researchers, and the media, this ninth edition of *Knocking* projects by state and race/ethnicity through the class of 2032. Read the full report at [http://knocking.wiche.edu](http://knocking.wiche.edu).
NACAC WORKING FOR YOU

BOTH SIDES OF THE DESK
As part of our on-going effort to better serve the membership, NACAC would like to know a little more about you!

NACAC’s new customer relations database and redesigned website allow better customization, allowing us to provide you with timely resources and services to best meet your needs.

We’ve expanded our member profile section to include additional biographical and demographic information that can help us understand your preferences. For example, your areas of interest and expertise; your current job responsibilities; and your number of years in the profession. This information helps us develop and deliver programs and services that directly impact your daily work.

NACAC has taken the necessary safeguards to ensure you information won’t be shared with or sold to outside parties. The information will be used internally, to tailor NACAC offerings—publications, special messages, events, etc.—to your professional interests.

Update your profile at hub.nacacnet.org. Log on to your account and click on “Edit My Profile” to edit your information.

Need assistance? Contact our Data Management Team at dmt@nacacnet.org or call 703.299.2000.
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Learn how to successfully counsel, recruit, and enroll students in an increasingly global landscape with NACAC’s international resources.

TRUSTED SOURCES: SEEKING ADVICE ON APPLYING TO UNIVERSITIES IN ANOTHER COUNTRY

Now available in new languages, this free brochure helps students and parents better understand the advisors available to guide them through the admission process. Available in English, Spanish, Korean, Vietnamese, and Mandarin.

www.nacacnet.org/TrustedSources

NEW! INTERNATIONAL INFOGRAPHICS

This free series of fact sheets highlights top international findings from NACAC’s State of College Admission report, including inbound international/outbound American students at US secondary schools; agent utilization by US institutions; and international student recruitment and admission at four-year institutions.

www.nacacnet.org/SoCASheets

COUNSELOR TOOLKIT

This free online resource helps counselors from the moment international students arrive until the day they start college orientation.

www.nacacnet.org/CounselorToolkit

NEW! FUNDAMENTALS OF RECRUITING AND COUNSELING INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS PRECONFERENCE WORKSHOP

Sept. 13–14 | Boston Convention and Exhibition Center

This professional development opportunity gives high school counselors, independent educational consultants, and US college and university admission officers the foundational skills and knowledge to more effectively counsel, advise, and recruit international students who wish to pursue undergraduate study in the United States—and enables them to enhance their professional network in support of these students.

Topics include testing, financial aid, credential evaluation, outreach and communication strategies, and immigration basics.

Registration for preconference workshops and the NACAC 2017 National Conference is open.

nacacconference.org

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT RECRUITMENT AGENCIES

This free guide details concrete steps institutions can take to engage with agencies responsibly.

www.nacacnet.org/RecruitmentAgencies

GUIDE TO INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY ADMISSION

This free booklet guides US students seeking full degrees outside their home country.

www.nacacnet.org/guidetointluniadmission
NACAC PRECONS
Offering Specialized Learning

“People wonder all the time why we have ‘preconference’ events instead of just building these topics into the conference,” said Tania Rachkoskie, NACAC’s director of education and training. “The truth is, these topics are built into the conference, but also require a deep dive that takes longer than our typical hour-long sessions.”

Rachkoskie, a former college counselor and admission counselor, knows firsthand the value of these intense learning sessions. Tried-and-true and trending topics are selected based on member feedback and what rises to the top of NACAC’s strategic plan. NACAC’s Professional Development Committee and Education and Training Department work together to build important topics into robust and meaningful sessions lead by experts. “We spend a lot of time developing sessions members need,” said Fran Swift, Professional Development Committee chair and director of guidance at Rumson-Fair Haven Regional High School in New Jersey. “Attendees come away with wider knowledge, and tools and tips they can use in their daily work.”

“If you are already traveling to the NACAC National Conference in Boston this year, consider making the most of your time by adding a precon,” said Rachkoskie. “It just makes sense.” These sessions also allow NACAC to offer more CEUs to attendees.

To register for preconference events, visit www.nacacconference.org. Workshops require an additional fee—ranging from $325 to $550—and can be added during the conference registration process.

GUIDING THE WAY TO INCLUSION

Guiding the Way to Inclusion features best practices and the latest research on campus diversity and multicultural recruitment.

Learn more at nacacnet.org/gwi.

Follow @NACACedu and #NACACGWI for updates.
Thank you to these donors for their support in 2016!
The Imagine Fund supports Imagine Grants, where 100 percent of all proceeds raised directly benefit college admission counselors. Grantees are provided financial assistance to attend professional development opportunities or to implement a new school program.

**2016 Fund for the Future Donors**

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Nancy Beane on behalf of NACAC Staff
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Stage Door Manor Performing Arts and Theater Center Trib Total Media

$500+
Steven Huh
Ron Koger
Tara Lebar
Adam Parker
Brandi Smith in honor of Nancy Beane on behalf of the Wonder Women in Admission Group
Weingarten Realty Investors in honor of Jeff Fuller

$250+
Sonia Harrison in honor of George Lynes
Deborah Hudson
Kimberly Johnston
Regina Manley
John McGrath
Patty Montague
Catherine Murphy
Eddie West

$200+
Joyce Smith

Eva Dodds
Phyllis Gill
Louis Hirsh
Adam Ingersoll
Nazan Kabatepe
Jeana Kawamura
George Kirkland
Dale Kramer
Curtis Lippincott
Amber Long
Susan Makowski
Stephen McGrath
Thomas McKnight
Steven Mercer
Jim Miller
Jennifer Mrowka
Patrick O’Connor
Mike Oligmueller in memory of Suzanne Colligan
Nicole Oringer
Jerry Pope
Marissa Potts
Kent Rinehart
Lori Schmidt
F. Sheppard Shanley
Linda Shapiro
Douglas Shapiro
R. Russell Shunk
Brian K Smith
Lisa Sohmer
Valori Stitt
Douglas Thompson
Phillip Trout
Bradley Ward
Thomas Weede
Up to $99
Robin Abedon
Iraida Alvarado
Anthony Ambrogi
Mick Amundson-Geisel
Joseph Anthony
Athens Academy
Lauren Avalos
K. Patricia Aviezer
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Raquel Bailey
Lun Ye Crim Barefield in honor/memory of Joyce Fischer—ETHS Former Counselor
Ronn Beck
Luhr Beckmann III
Carl Behrend
Robert Bennett
Sandy Bercu
Frank Betkowski
Valerie Blair
Ramon Blakley
Karyn Blaser
Francine Block
Stuart Bonner
Susie Bremen
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Jill Byers
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Susan Davidson
Mary Jo Dawson
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Heath Einstein
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Jayne Fonash
Julie Fopma
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Steven Frappier
Darnell Frazier
Doris Freedman
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Jeff Gallant
Sherri Geller in honor of New England ACAC’s 50th Anniversary
Theresa Gibson
Barry Goren
Lori Grandstaff
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William Hancock
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Chris Holzwarth
Joan Jacobs
Marjorie Jacobs
Robin Jasinski
Alison Jesse
John Paul II Catholic School
Robyn Johnson
Debra Johns
Betty Jones
Gwen Kanelos
Rachel Kaney
Sylvia Karpf
Heather Keddie in honor of Joseph Allen
Young Jun Lee
Stacy Lightfoot
Sarah Liu
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You’re Biased

But that’s okay. Everyone is, and you might be able to jettison some of it.

By Jim Paterson
Like it or not, research shows time and again that despite our best intentions, we make assumptions about others—judgments based on sweeping cultural or racial stereotypes, preconceptions our parents quietly fostered, or even someone’s clothing style or resemblance to a middle school bully.

And to make matters worse, we often don’t even know we’re doing it. Researchers, however, also are finding that while it’s hard to identify and dismiss all these assumptions, we can grow to understand and combat them with some work, which is important when we’re making judgments about young people and their futures every day.

“We are imperfect and have preconceived ideas about people,” said Lisa Sohmer, director of college counseling at Garden School in New York City, and a former NACAC board member and college consultant who has been involved in the issue of equity. “So it’s important for us to be honest and to be clear about the assumptions we make.”

Experts say counselors in most cases can likely temper intentional, visible “explicit” bias, but subtler “implicit” bias, which occurs in a different part of the brain entirely, is much harder to avoid. “It’s not something we ‘live’ with, but it is something that is ‘triggered’ within us from time-to-time,” said Rakin Hall, associate director of admissions at the University of Southern California, who has studied the issue. Implicit bias involves “quick brain thinking” and likely comes from personal experience, he said.

For example, one counselor might explicitly determine at some point that students from Nebraska just don’t as a group have the ability to do college-level work and judge them that way. Another might be magnanimous toward Nebraskans, but have been threatened by a gang of Nebraska students or been raised in an environment where they were disliked—and therefore implicitly assess them all unfairly without even knowing it.

A CHECK-IN FOR YOU

In an effort to find a solution to implicit bias, researchers found “people must be aware of their biases and concerned about the consequences before they will exert effort to eliminate them.” They also reported they should understand when they are likely to occur and ways they can replace them.

Here are some potential solutions:

- **Lighten up.** Tight deadlines, stress, or high emotions tend to cause us to show bias along with a lack of focus. Recognize your emotions and take notes or summarize and make sure you clearly understand the things a student says are important to them.
- **Look inward.** Think about your bias. Become aware of feelings you have about a student without reason. Think about what it felt like when you were once pre-judged. Think about the conditions or environment when it occurs. Some experts recommend “counter imaging”—intentionally developing an entirely different thought or image of an opposite assessment than your first impulse suggests.
- **Get info.** Not having good information about specific student or the criteria under which you should be assessing them can cause your biases to have more power. Getting to know more about cultures, races, or other groups of people is a good way to diminish your preconceived notions. Have genuine interaction with others who you might not normally. Ask questions. Change up the geographical and socioeconomic places or types of students you work with if you can.
- **Check on yourself.** Often we are aware of our bias to some degree, and by talking about them and asking others we can understand them better. Researchers found making mistakes and showing a bias—then correcting—helps us become more aware.
- **Be upfront.** If you know something about yourself, consider telling the student or family you are working with when appropriate, reassuring them that you can objectively help.
- **Look back.** Think about your history, personal circumstances, or the situation you are in and how they affect your perceptions—a bad day, a threatening environment, a student late for an appointment, or a group of students who acts casually when you are used to more order.

In the exhaustive report *The Nature of Implicit Bias*, psychology professors Curtis Hardin of City University of New York and Mahzarin Banaji at Harvard say the distinction is important. “The common view of prejudice is incomplete, even dangerously so,” they say. “Prejudice and stereotyping in social judgment and behavior does not require personal animus, hostility or even awareness. In fact, prejudice is often… unwitting, unintentional, and uncontrollable—even among the most well-intentioned people.”

They found, in fact, that an overemphasis on very conspicuous explicit bias causes us to ignore subtler assumptions. Other research shows that implicit bias may be even stronger and more stubborn.

But the two researchers say while this tendency “remains stubbornly immune to individual efforts to wish it away,” they are optimistic that we can change (see sidebar above).
Marie Bigham, a former NACAC board member and college counselor, and now director of college counseling at the Isidore Newman School in New Orleans, has seen various types of bias, including gender assumptions at a student recognition activity where girls were uniformly praised for soft skills such as their “willingness to ask questions,” while boys were recognized for being competitive, aggressive, and determined.

She notes that she often received contrary guidance about career choice as a half Irish/Scottish and half Vietnamese woman. “There were two very different conflicting messages: As an Asian you must be good in math or you are lazy. As a girl, you can’t really be good in math. It was very confusing, and later made me think hard about this and how I’m judging students,” she said.

She believes that beyond big issues of gender or race, a simple negative interaction with a certain type of person can influence us, especially during formative adolescent years.

“If a woman had a bad experience with a guy on the lacrosse team, she might view lacrosse players differently. I was a glass blower in college. In college admission, if a glass blower came into the room, I’d recommend him. I know it.”

Sohmer said we might assume that students who are from a “bad neighborhood” will lack certain skills or preparedness, or that first-generation parents who don’t communicate with counselors or attend their events won’t support their child, when they simply may be busy at two jobs or embarrassed about their language skills. She said counselors also may expect an average student can’t do better, or that an athlete isn’t smart or that a studious-looking high school senior will enjoy rigorous STEM classes, while a student with blue hair and tattoos should be in art.

Meanwhile, Trey Moore, associate director of diversity and enrichment programs at the University of Oklahoma and formerly an admission officer who has worked a wide range of socioeconomic regions, is concerned about assuming that a student from an affluent suburb doesn’t need financial aid or enrollment processing support.

“There are many ways we assume things. It is very hard to keep an open mind,” he said. “We all have very different perspectives and life experiences.”

Researchers at the University of California, Berkley spotted bias among college admission staffs who automatically assumed that a high GPA meant a student was well qualified, despite evidence to the contrary, calling it “correspondence bias.” Hall noted counselors may be affected by several

**Look inward.** Think about your bias. Become aware of feelings you have about a student without reason. Think about what it felt like when you were once pre-judged. Think about the conditions or environment when it occurs. Some experts recommend “counter imaging”—intentionally developing an entirely different thought or image of an opposite assessment than your first impulse suggests.
other types of bias, including confirmation bias (trying to confirm a belief), in-group bias (following the beliefs of a group you’re in) and status quo bias (trying to maintain the current situation).

Perhaps even more importantly, research has shown when we display such implicit bias—even more than explicit bias—it often leads others to behave in the manner we assume, according to Hardin and Banaji.

WE CAN CHANGE. SOMEWHAT.

David Amodio, a psychology professor and neuroscientist at New York University who has studied implicit bias, explains that our natural “fight or flight” responses develop in a small interior part of the brain called the amygdala and trigger the automatic alarm or distrust behind implicit bias. Evolution has also expanded our brain to let us override those reactions in the way a basketball player racing down court can adjust motion to direct the ball to the hoop at the last minute, he writes, but it takes patience and practice.

“We have to let the amygdala do its job, and then train ourselves to help the neocortex do its job. We really don’t have a choice—so many other aspects of life depend on our quick reactions and snap judgments, and it is a system that is designed to be relatively tamper-proof,” Amodio writes.

Certain circumstances make such work harder. A study done to help the courts reduce bias among judges and jurors found that we are less likely to be objective when we are emotional, distracted, pressured, ill-informed, or lazy.

“I think using big data, mission, and departmental goals and having regular conversations regarding admission decision trends helps,” said Hall.

Bigham said she believes it is important to confront a bias when you spot it and think about where it came from and how new experience has dispelled it. She even tells a student or parent about her potential bias to make them feel she is being honest and forthcoming and to reinforce it with herself.

And Ari Worthman, director of college counseling at the Lakeside School in Seattle, said he also likes to talk to a student or a colleague about a bias (especially if they’re from a group about which he feels it) to see if they can help him better understand. He also talks to students more thoroughly when he detects a bias to get an even better understanding of them personally and develop more empathy.

A CHECK-IN FOR YOUR DEPARTMENT

On opposite coasts, two university admission offices are facing potential bias in the admission process head on.

Deb Shaver, dean of admissions at Smith College in Massachusetts, said her staff annually meets with an official responsible for equity on the campus to hear new thinking about such issues, and then before reading applications she holds a “lens” exercise where they self-reflect then informally chat about their implicit bias.

“You always have to be thinking about it and working on it. It is so important in our jobs. As we read applications, we just have to be as fair, generous, and unbiased as possible.”

She admitted that as a struggling, low-income, nerdy girl who regrets having dropped out of Girl Scouts to be cooler, she has to avoid favoring studious, serious girls—and those who she admires for sticking with Girl Scouts. Others on her staff have expressed a wide range of familiar and not-so familiar assumptions, including two staff members who have precisely opposite views about athletes and their seriousness about school.

“It forces us to confront our biases—and when we know everyone else’s lens we can call them out about it. It changes our thinking and creates a conversation about this.”

Rakin Hall, associate director of admissions at the University of Southern California, said admission counselors at USC are told to “keep university goals in mind and to discuss personal and department stereotype biases openly.” They also use data to compare the applicant pool to other demographic information, stick to rubrics to assess applications, and look at “decision patterns” in application readers.

It is important, he said, for everyone to know that having a bias is normal and confronting them is important.

But, he warned, it is easy to feel you’ve been objective when the work is more authentic—like a one-on-one meeting—than symbolic. “Intentions don’t mean impact,” he said.

Jim Paterson is a writer and former school counselor living in Lewes, DE.
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Experts also say now—amid the spirited discussions and debates about race, privilege, and inequality on campus—is a good time for admission and enrollment professionals to collaborate to develop new ways to engage students around issues of diversity and inclusion.
Back in the fall of 2016—with the nation in the throes of one of the most contentious elections in history and student protests roiling campuses nationwide—admission leaders at the University of Texas at Austin gave prospective students and their families a unique look at the kind of spirited discussions students were likely to have on campus if they enrolled.

Working with Dr. Leonard Moore, history professor and associate vice president of Academic Diversity Initiatives in the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, admission leaders arranged for families to visit Moore’s class, “Race in the Age of Obama.”

“This particular course is not only one of, if not the most popular undergraduate courses on campus, but it also has one of the most diverse enrollments, including students from non-minority groups with varying political beliefs,” explained Ka’rin Thornburg, associate director of admissions at UT Austin and chair of the NACAC’s Inclusion, Access, and Success Committee.

“Given the election this fall, as one could imagine, class discussions were quite passionate,” Thornburg said.

She explained that one particular visit to Moore’s class followed a “campus climate issue surrounding a student organization’s characterization of admission affirmative action policies.”

“Dr. Moore incorporated this incident into his discussion,” Thornburg said.

“Our prospective students and families visiting the class that day told the admission counselors how much they appreciated the visit—that it was a ‘lively’ but healthy discussion and that it was reassuring to know this kind of discourse was encouraged and facilitated.”

The course visit at UT Austin is remarkable for a number of reasons—not the least of which the school happens to be ground zero in the nation’s debate about the merits of using race-conscious affirmative action in admission because of the Fisher v. University of Texas US Supreme Court case.

But the class visit is also the type of thing that experts say colleges and universities should do more of to give prospective students a more authentic experience as opposed to just presenting them with brochures filled with pictures of happy-looking students.

Experts also say now—amid the spirited discussions and debates about race, privilege, and inequality on campus—is a good time for admission and enrollment professionals to collaborate to develop new ways to engage students around issues of diversity and inclusion.

“These are certainly shifting and volatile times on campus, with issues regarding diversity and inclusion front and center,” said Jennifer Desjarlais, a consultant in the education practice of the executive search firm Witt/Kieffer, as well as a co-leader of the firm’s enrollment practice.

“However, change can spell opportunity,” Desjarlais said. “For admission and enrollment professionals and leaders, it is a chance to review and reconsider standard approaches, practices, and policies—in discussion with the president, colleagues in leadership roles across different departments, campus representatives, and especially students—then realign them according to institutional priorities.

“Institutions are looking for leaders and staff who embrace current challenges,” Desjarlais said.

At Pomona College, an admission administrator said the admission office has begun to focus on giving students a clearer sense of what campus life entails.

“We’ve actually shifted our program significantly to: How do we make sure that students get an accurate portrayal of what this college is going to be like when they come so they don’t feel like we lied to them about the experience,” explained Ashley Pallie, associate dean of admissions at Pomona College.

“That’s an active conversation,” Pallie said. “We have to talk to our current students and say, ‘Hey, you can’t be protesting the night before and then show up on a panel and say everything is good because you want to make sure there’s representation of you on this campus.’

Instead, current students should be encouraged to tell prospective students “what it’s like to be here.”

“Tell them in a hopeful way, like you would still want to be at this place, but it takes work,” Pallie said.

It is also important for admission officers to be deliberate about making sure that incoming classes are diverse and reflective of the local population.

While diversity should be a focal point of a university’s mission, the admission office must take on an active role to help execute that mission, Pallie said.

“We have a very, very diverse class, and that is incredibly intentional,” Pallie said, citing figures that show 50 percent of the student population are domestic students of color, up from 42 percent in recent times. “We don’t believe students are going to show up in our pool unless we put the resources and strong effort and energy into that.

“So that’s where we put our time and energy, going into schools sometimes where students may not know about us, or pursuing avenues where we can go and see a student and their family where they are,” Pallie said. “That’s really important. That might mean going to more public schools, more rural schools, and when we go out and make these grand speeches about why students should go to college, we tailor those speeches to the students we are working with.”

Pallie said it’s important for admission officers to help make sure the diversity found within the surrounding population is “evident on our campus.”

“If Pomona is located in southern California, Pomona should also look like southern California in so many ways,” Pallie said.

At the same time, Pallie said it’s important to support students once they are enrolled on campus, not just focus on getting them to enroll.

With regard to such, Pallie pointed to a “cohort” program in which students from underrepresented groups and who are studying math and science enter the college as a group.

The cohorts share a faculty mentor and take the same courses together during the first year.

“And that’s been particularly powerful,” Pallie said. “It’s not a program where we say like, ‘Oh, these student need additional help.’ It’s not like there’s something wrong with them.

“It’s like, ‘No, there’s something about being able to be around people who are like you who you feel comfortable with.’

The idea of having a faculty mentor for the cohorts is to make students in the cohorts more comfortable with faculty instead of being intimidated.

“This is not a faculty person who’s a scary person but this is someone who cares about me and wants me to be academically successful,” Pallie explained.
If there are no cohort programs or similar initiatives on campus for students from underrepresented backgrounds, admission officers should not shy away from creating one.

That’s what Quinton McArthur, associate director of admissions and director of Diversity and Targeted Outreach at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, did several years ago when he helped develop mathroots—a two-week mathematical “talent accelerator” summer program for “high-potential” high school students from underrepresented backgrounds. Some but not all of the program participants have gone on to MIT. “Essentially it’s an opportunity to introduce high-achieving black and Latino students to competition math because one of the areas that there is significant underrepresentation at the high school level is in this competition math community,” McArthur said. “There’s a pipeline of students here in America who are plugged into this opportunity and taking advantage of it, and the vast majority of those students are our Caucasian and Asian young brothers and sisters, and that’s great, that’s fantastic that they’re involved,” he said of competition math in general. “But we’re just trying to open up the doors and trying to identify more black and Latino students who would enjoy and benefit from this experience.

“When we had a lot of success and we’re really hopeful that a lot of these students will major in mathematics in particular, definitely STEM more broadly, but mathematics in particular, and then go on to hopefully graduate school and future careers in mathematics,” McArthur said. 

McArthur said he developed the program on his own time after work. “The work that I’ve done on the mathroots program was completely outside my job as an admission officer,” McArthur said. “I worked on it at night for months, building it slowly until it got to a point where others could help advance the idea.”

McArthur said although he doesn’t have a background in STEM, he saw the need for such a program based on his experience as an admission officer. “One of the things I recognized coming to MIT initially is that opportunities, even at the highest level, are still very segregated,” McArthur said. “There are places where these opportunities are readily available and there are other places that nobody has any idea about these opportunities.

“As admission officers, we have a unique viewpoint on the educational pipeline because we see so many different schools, so many difference resources and lack thereof, that we have an insight into communities that sometimes they don’t recognize and others don’t recognize,” McArthur continued. “If you’ve been in college admission, particularly selective college admission, you’ve seen patterns emerge from different schools and different places, and I think personally that we do have a responsibility to provide guidance and intervention in order to improve the state of affairs.

“If you care about people, you should do something,” McArthur said. “It’s that simple for me.” McArthur said it’s also important for admission officers to have the backing of the institution where they work.

“I just happen to be in a space where I’m in a good place for innovation and they’re always supportive of good ideas here at MIT, and I have supportive supervisors who let me work on this type of thing when I wasn’t reading a million applications, and so I just made it happen,” McArthur said. Desjarlais echoed McArthur’s thoughts on the unique role that admission officers can play in having an impact on issues of diversity and inclusion on campus.

“Enrollment management and admission officers have a unique perspective on many facets of an institution and are working more directly with their presidents, heads of student affairs, chief financial officers, and many others,” Desjarlais said. “They also have a clear picture of what’s happening off campus as well.

“They are students of and experts on changing demographics and diversifying communities, and can help their institutions change with society,” Desjarlais said. “Admission and enrollment leaders help their institutions to see beyond themselves.”

Jamaal Abdul-Alim is a senior staff writer at Diverse: Issues in Higher Education.
CHRISTOPHER GRAY
Founder and CEO, Scholly | Philadelphia

As a high school student, Christopher Gray often waited an hour or more to search for scholarship opportunities using a computer at his local public library in Birmingham, Alabama.

The process was frustratingly slow. The branch had only a handful of desktop computers and doled out internet access in 30-minute time slots. Aiming to become the first person in his family to attend college, Gray spent seven months combing the web for ways to finance his education.

Ultimately, his efforts paid off. Gray, now 25, received a whopping $1.3 million in scholarships. The awards financed his education at Philadelphia’s Drexel University, and inspired him to create Scholly—a $2.99 app that matches students with a personalized list of scholarships.

“It turns months of looking for scholarships into minutes,” said Gray, who launched the app while still in college. “Our goal is to help as many students as possible go to the college of their dreams and reduce their debt.”

Scholly uses eight parameters—including GPA, academic interests, and race—to instantly offer students a comprehensive list of scholarships for which they qualify. Need-based and merit-based awards are both included in the directory. And because the app is mobile, students don’t have to have a computer at home to research their options.

To date, Scholly has helped students secure more than $50 million in college scholarships.

“A lot of students work hard, but don’t have the resources to either pay for college or get into college,” said Gray, who was raised by a single mother. “…For me, it feels good to know that I’m helping create opportunities for other people who are coming from nothing.”

Scholly has garnered plenty of attention since it launched 2.5 years ago. In 2015, Gray was featured on ABC’s Shark Tank—a reality show where entrepreneurs seek support from investors. Through the appearance, he secured $40,000 in capital and a big bump in brand recognition.

A growing number of entities—including the city of Memphis, New York University, and Missouri State University—now partner with Scholly to provide free access to the app for their residents, students, and prospective applicants. In the coming years, Gray hopes to address other barriers to postsecondary education, including the high cost of textbooks.

College is a necessity, but it’s priced like a luxury good, he said. “There’s an income inequality gap in America,” Gray said. “A college education is the first step in bridging that gap.”
As Francis Larson sees it, two major hurdles stand in the way to universal college access.

No. 1: Costs are too high.

And, No. 2: The students who stand to benefit the most from higher education often invest the least.

Larson’s nonprofit, called Leif (short for Long-term Education Investment Fund), seeks to address those obstacles. Institutions that partner with Leif commit to cover tuition and living expenses for their students. In exchange, graduates agree to return a portion of their post-graduate income to their alma mater.

“Our goal is to encourage students to make an investment in themselves,” said Larson, 28. “By removing a lot of the risk associated with borrowing, we’re allowing students to breathe easy and take a long-term view of their lives.”

The government offers a similar income-based repayment plan for student borrowers, and Larson encourages those who qualify to take advantage.

“The government offers a similar income-based repayment plan for student borrowers, and Larson encourages those who qualify to take advantage.

But caps are placed on the total amount students can borrow from the feds. Private loans, meanwhile, don’t offer income-based payment plans. And government loans are not accepted at all educational institutions, including many short-term vocational programs.

Larson strives to fill that gap, while simultaneously building in pressure to student outcomes.

“We’re making it so that everyone’s interests align,” said Larson, a University of California, Irvine grad who went on to earn a master’s degree from the London School of Economics and Political Science. “Schools absolutely need to be invested in the welfare of their students in order to see a return on their investment. And because schools are paying their students’ tuition (and) paying for their living expenses, they have a bigger incentive to drive down costs.”

Sellers, a New Jersey institution offering specialized training in clinical research, drug safety, and medication monitoring, was the first school to sign on with Leif in February. Larson expects more institutions to adopt the platform over the next year.

Each school has the freedom to set its own terms, including the length of the loan and the percentage of income students are asked to pay.

“When a student is able to improve their life, there is a positive return on the investment,” Larson said.

Smith is tasked with thinking big when it comes to using finance and federal policy to tackle that challenge.

Currently, roughly 45 percent of Americans between the ages of 25 and 64 have a postsecondary credential.

“Every single day we’re looking at ways to ensure more students have the financial resources and wherewithal to be able to attend college,” said Smith, who joined Lumina in 2013 after serving as a senior education advisor with the Obama administration. “We look at the systemic barriers, we look at the process and the policies, and we look at ways to improve the information students have available to them.”

Within Lumina, a private foundation based in Indianapolis, Smith fills a unique role. Working from the nonprofit’s DC office, Smith uses the latest data and research to propel change within the system.

She also looks outward, taking inspiration from the work of Lumina’s grant recipients who are testing promising practices to increase the number of Americans with high-quality, postsecondary credentials.

Just as importantly, Smith and her colleagues at Lumina are committed to creating a common understanding among institutions, states, policymakers, and students about what college affordability truly means. “When you talk about affordable housing, whether it’s renting or buying a house, there’s a standard telling you how much of your income should be going to that expense,” said Smith, a NACAC board director. “There’s not a similar standard with colleges.”

Clear guidelines defining affordability would make it easier for families to plan for college, said Smith, 32.

As a teen, Smith was perplexed to learn that several students at her suburban Atlanta high school had no plans to pursue postsecondary education. The reason? “Most of the time they had parents who didn’t go to college; they didn’t know the process, and they didn’t have the information,” she explained.

Smith herself went on to attend Nashville’s Vanderbilt University. She later earned a master’s degree in education policy and management from the Harvard Graduate School of Education and holds a doctorate in higher education management from the University of Pennsylvania.

But she remains mindful that systemic barriers prevent many others from accessing the opportunities of higher education.

“I felt like there was so much potential in my classmates… they were just as smart as I was,” Smith said. “…I wake up every morning and think about how we can make postsecondary education more attainable for more people.”
How IECs Fit
into the Counseling Puzzle

By Andy Brown
There is undeniable tension woven throughout the college search and admission process. Students, families, and counselors—school and independent—have expectations of the process and of each other. When those expectations aren’t fully met, the strain amplifies.

As professionals, and particularly as NACAC members, it’s your job to support and even lead students through the process while maintaining not just high ethical standards, but the collegial spirit that allows you to put students first as they search for the right fit.

Sometimes this spirit barely gets you through the day. The pressures faced by the profession—from budget cuts, to staffing concerns, to over-demanding families or bosses—can drain your empathy for each other’s daily work to dangerously low levels. When this happens, professionals can start to be critical of each other and each other’s intentions. Compound that with one or two bad interpersonal experiences, and resentment can set in.

To work better together, professionals need to reset by taking the wide view of the college admission counseling puzzle… especially when sitting on the same side of the desk.

How many counselors one student needs can be a touchy subject. After all, no school counselor wants to feel their job has been outsourced. And 20 years ago, independent educational consultants (IECs) worked largely for affluent clientele and were more likely to focus on boarding schools than colleges.

CURRENT COUNSELING CLIMATE
Things have changed—and there are two big reasons the need for, and therefore the number of, IECs is growing. The Independent Educational Consultants Association (IECA) estimates that five years ago there were fewer than 2,500 full-time IECs nationwide. Today they estimate there are 7,500–8,000.

“The average student hiring a consultant today is from a middle-class family,” said Mark Sklarow, CEO of IECA. The demands on school counselors are increasing at a drastic rate, particularly in the public sector where budget cuts have reduced the size of counseling staff. “As the number of school counselors decreases and the expectations put on them increases, IECs fill an area that needs support.”

American School Counselor Association member and member of the IECA Board of Directors member Belinda Wilkerson, a retired school counselor who founded the independent consultancy Steps to the Future, knows firsthand the limitations faced by public schools. “It’s not about bashing your school counselor. We know what they go through. I had 355 kids on my caseload,” she said. “With school budgets being cut right and left, they don’t have time.”

Additionally, although the cost of going to college has risen sharply in recent years, the cost of hiring a consultant hasn’t gone up nearly so quickly. “Families began to see consulting as something affordable, as a small piece of the total cost of college,” said Sklarow.

WORKING TOGETHER: IEC PERSPECTIVE
IECs are fast becoming a regular part of the process, not only as paid consultants but through pro bono work with community-based organizations that focus on underprivileged and underrepresented communities. So how do school and independent counselors know who does what? And who can do what?

NACAC member Jeff Pilchiek of The Comprehensive College Check is a retired school counselor turned independent who makes clear to his clients that both sides have to work together. “There’s a misconception that we can do it all. We can’t,” said Pilchiek, who is also a member of The Higher Education Consultants Association (HECA). “We can’t write recommendation letters. We can’t send transcripts. And it’s not a competition. It’s about the student and giving them the best preparation through the process.”

Generally, parents guide how much they want their hired consultant to share with the school counselor, but students are better off when information is allowed to flow freely.

Jane Kolber, NACAC and IECA member, and long-time IEC, said that while client confidentiality is important, families need to realize school counselors are an integral part of the process. It takes both perspectives to find the right fit. “We overlap, but we really have differing knowledge,” said Kolber. “I may think a student is a great match for a private school, but the school counselor knows this student is in the top 20 at his high school. As good as the student looks to me on paper, I don’t know that there are 15 students above her in the class applying to those schools. A private school won’t take everybody from a school that applies, even if they’re all qualified. Once I know this, I know we need to add a few more schools to the student’s list.”

Kolber always makes it clear to families that school counselors are essential. “What I have said to families from the beginning is we need to have your school counselor be a part of the process. IECs shouldn’t be hidden away. Families should use all resources and not get nervous about it.”

PROVIDING AN EXTRA PERSPECTIVE
Students sometimes need an extra push in the right direction… and so do their parents, especially if the family is unfamiliar with the process.

“Independents can take what the high school has presented and ask, where can I expand your understanding of this? What is the question you didn’t get to ask because you weren’t thinking of it at the time,” said NACAC and HECA member Maureen Casey of Casey Educational Consulting (and retired director of counseling at Bellarmine College Prep in San Jose, California). “High schools do a good job of creating resources for families, but parents may learn a different way or just need to come back to it, especially if they haven’t been through the process before.”

IECs can also ease tensions between parents and students. Casey recalls working with one student who had a track record of procrastinating. His parents, constantly checking in and asking questions, unwittingly became antagonists.

The school counselor referred them to Casey. “Sometimes just in terms of nudging students or asking them what a parent would ask, you get a different reaction. I’m a surrogate for that,” she said.

Casey helped the student organize his process and compile a list of to-do items. She also held him accountable if he started to slide. “He just had a hard time keeping his appointments with the counselor and getting things done,” said Casey.

If the student procrastinated, Casey would call him on it. “This way, the conversations with his parents could focus on what he talked about with me instead of arguing about the process,” she said. “It lets them also become a consultant, a trusted person, while letting someone else keep the structure and timeline together.”
Francine Block, proprietor of American College Admissions Consultants, NACAC member, and member of HECA’s National Board (one of their goals is professionalism and working with counselors appropriately), said, “It’s always the parents’ discretion about whether a counselor knows or not.” But client confidentiality doesn’t trump her professional relationships. “The exception is if the counselor is a friend of mine. Then, unless you’re willing to let me share information, I won’t work with you as a family. My relationships and friendships are more important than having another family as a client.”

There are many reasons a family may hire an IEC. Some have a specialization and can help student with disabilities, athletics, or extra attention over weekends and the summer. “I can do things differently as an independent, because I’m not on bus duty or lunch duty anymore,” said Wilkerson. That includes being available to students and parents on evenings and weekends. On any given Saturday, Wilkerson might have students practicing standardized tests in her home office.

When IECA and NACAC member Kristina Dooley founded Estrela Consulting, she didn’t know that some school counselors regarded IECs negatively. “I was actually pretty unaware that there was an implied ‘divide’ between IECs and school-based counselors,” she said. She began working with a local counselor whose caseload was particularly high. “I would work on the list development after meeting with the student and administering a personality/interest inventory, happily adding any schools the school counselor suggested based on her longer-term experience with the students,” said Dooley. “She handled the recommendations and transcripts while I worked with the student on their testing timeline and strategy and essay development.”

When families had questions or needed help, they knew that either the school counselor or Dooley were available. “The main difference was that the students and parents had my cell phone number and knew they could reach me after school hours and on the weekends.”
WORKING TOGETHER: SCHOOL COUNSELOR PERSPECTIVE
The quality of communication between school and paid counselors determines whether they’ll work together productively. “The most common problem when a student is working with both an IEC and a school counselor is that there is an additional person in the communications loop,” said Ed Graf, director of college counseling at Isidore Newman School in Louisiana. “The student has to communicate with parents as well, so the additional person in the loop makes it important that the IEC and the school counselor communicate regularly.”

By keeping in touch and talking directly to each other instead of through parents or the student, IECs and school counselors can prevent a duplication of efforts and, more importantly, ensure that nothing falls through the cracks. Graf identifies four areas where IECs and school counselors can mutually agree to divide responsibility:

- Developing the college list
- Creating a testing schedule
- Helping with essays
- Reviewing the application before submission

“It makes it confusing and more difficult for the student if he or she has to work with both the IEC and the school counselor on these items,” said Graf. That’s not to say that stark lines exist when it comes to who does what. What matters is that one person is designated the primary support for the student. “I like to work together as opposed to ‘delineate responsibilities,’” said Paula McKinnon, a school counselor at Brooklyn Technical High School.

By keeping in touch and talking directly to each other instead of through parents or the student, IECs and school counselors can prevent a duplication of efforts…

“I think that if you know and trust the IEC, this happens organically and it is a joint effort as opposed to ‘you do this, I do that.’”

Because McKinnon works in a large, public high school with graduating classes of more than 1,300 students, she and the other counselors can only give so much of their time to each student. “Sometimes, a student using an IEC will not even share their essay with me, and since I tend to work with IECs who I personally know, I trust the IEC in regards to the essay,” she said. “I usually work on the original list with the student and the IEC gives his/her
When IECs and school counselors collaborate, students get the best of both worlds. When they don’t, a student can wind up at a school that’s the wrong fit. “I once had a family work with an IEC who didn’t communicate with me at all. She suggested a university for my student, which I couldn’t understand at all in terms of fit. The student went there. She hated it,” said McKinnon. “I think by working together and getting two different lenses, we can see what we see in common about the student and then also see the student from another viewpoint, which then can expand the possibilities for the student in terms of selection.”

RECOMMENDING AN ETHICAL IEC
IECs still encounter misperceptions about what they do, including the idea that they can get a student into any school. This isn’t possible and no ethical IEC would do it. They do their best to dispel this myth. “Consultants have to earn their reputation and authority on a daily basis,” said Sklarow.

Members of NACAC and other organizations representing IECs, such as IECA or HECA, must also follow ethical guidelines.

If helping a student select an IEC, tell families to look for someone who belongs to at least one of these organizations, and someone who has lots of experience, including having been a school counselor.

Additionally, IECs can be certified by the American Institute of Certified Educational Planners. It awards the CEP credential to professionals, working independently or in schools, who have achieved the highest level of competence in educational planning—including holding a master’s degree in education, a written assessment, and professional references. And you have to be re-certified very five years. Said Block: “This is not just something you sign up for.”

IECs build relationships with college admission officers, just as school counselors do. The addition of the IEC’s knowledge to the foundation of the school counselor’s knowledge is an advantage when searching for a good college fit. “We are a cohort of professionals who can help with the recruitment funnel. We don’t receive any type of commission from institutions but we still work hard to understand what type of students would be the best fit,” said Dooley.

Kolber echoed that fit is key, “You’re hiring somebody who’s going to help your student find school that’s an academic fit. It’s not to game the system.”

IECs who are members of ethical professional organizations must adhere to a stringent code of ethics that keep the student’s best interest—a good college fit—at the core. “Consultants who are not attentive to ethical issues don’t last very long,” said Sklarow.

Andy Brown is a freelance writer in Alexandria, VA and owner of Methodical Writing (www.methodicalwriting.com).

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W
ever Marine Corps veteran, Erin Georgia, decided to use her Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits to go to community college, she hadn’t written an essay in 15 years.

Like many veterans, Georgia was in her thirties and married with children when she decided to go back to school. She needed smaller class sizes, an opportunity to ease back into school academically and socially, flexible course offerings, and a campus close by.

The option for smaller class sizes, more personalization, and her need for remedial math, or as Erin puts it: “As a mother and a Marine, I was not doing algebra in Iraq”—were all reasons why she chose to go to Jefferson State Community College (AL).

In addition to the reasons Georgia mentioned, community colleges offer veterans an opportunity to ease back into school academically and socially, flexible course offerings, and convenience in location.

Community college was a good fit for Georgia. After graduating in 2016 with an associate of arts degree and a 4.0 GPA, Georgia transferred to Samford University (AL) where she received a scholarship and is currently pursuing her bachelor’s degree in organizational leadership.

While it’s impossible to generalize such a diverse population of students and their needs, looking for commonalities in veteran transfer student experiences gives us clues about how we can effectively serve and counsel them when they are considering a community college, then transferring to a four-year. Here are five areas where they need support:

1. FINANCES
A recent study from the Institute for Veterans & Military Families says when veterans and service members were asked about problems or barriers that hindered their pursuit or achievement of their education goals, 56 percent of respondents said lack of financial resources/financial burden and 25 percent said GI Bill benefits expiring before they complete their degree. Starting at a community college can be a benefit for veteran transfer students with more limited financial resources.

Katie Giardello, director of veteran and transfer initiatives at the Michigan Community College Association, noted it’s important for professionals working with the students to think holistically about students’ goals to maximize the various education benefits available to them. “If they want to get a master’s degree it makes more sense to use [their GI Bill benefits] at a higher cost institution or [toward] a higher cost degree,” she said. Ensuring these students fill out the FAFSA and helping them identify scholarships is also vital. Lot of factors play into the final decision.

2. STRUCTURE AND CLEAR POINTS OF CONTACT
“Service members are accustomed to structure. They are given a mission, are shown how to complete it, and know what the expectations are for completion,” says Holly Wheeler, a

FIVE WAYS TO SUPPORT VETERAN TRANSFER STUDENTS

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT VETERANS
• Average age upon entry into postsecondary education: 25
• 44 percent are married
• 52 percent have dependents
• 79 percent are male
• 38 percent attend public two-year
• 23 percent attend private for-profit
• 19 percent attend public four-year
• 10 percent attend private nonprofit four-year

Source: US Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics
Veterans and Service Members

“When they arrive at college they expect the same structure. They are looking for an established procedure that tells them how to enroll, when to enroll, and where to turn in their paperwork. Providing a clear location and a point of contact for military students is the first step toward modeling the environment military students have become used to.”

Professionals who work with veteran transfer students often describe them as being independent and having greater self-efficacy in accomplishing tasks. However, Georgia points out that it’s critical that staff tell students what they need to do and to not assume students know everything about the process.

“The time I had gone to Jefferson State I had done all my research,” said Georgia, “I had talked to the VA, figured out what program I wanted to be in… the military teaches you to be self-sufficient and to take charge of whatever you’re doing.” But, she said, this doesn’t mean veterans can do it all alone. “There’s a lot of information that we don’t know when it comes to the education realm. We just need somebody to help us navigate that.”

Missy Helbert, a senior academic advisor at Texas Tech University and Marine Corps veteran and former transfer student, echoed this sentiment: “Most veterans are very disciplined… you tell us what to do, we’re going to do it. If you tell us the steps, we’ll follow them. But a lot of veterans don’t know the steps.”

3. VETERAN-SPECIFIC SERVICES

Many campuses have a dedicated office for veteran transfer students. Texas Tech University’s Military & Veterans Programs department (MVP) is one example. Helbert described the office as a place where students can go to get help with paperwork, benefits, financial aid, and more. “The advisors who work there all go through MVP training and upon completion, get a green sticker that lets veteran students know they’re veteran-friendly and can help them with their needs.”

The study Assessing Campus Programs for Veterans and Service Members looked at programs, services, and policies that colleges had in place to serve veterans and military personnel, and found that colleges with offices dedicated to supporting military students were more likely to:

- Offer services and programs specifically for service members and/or veterans
- Make programmatic changes according to service members and/or veterans’ needs
- Target service members and veterans for recruitment
- Add or expand training for faculty and staff
- Tailor common services for these service members and/or veterans

In addition, many veterans face challenges managing mental or physical disabilities resulting from their military experience. Services should be available to them. Staff and faculty should know and look for signs that these students need help.

4. TRANSFER PATHWAYS

A subpopulation of transfer students, veteran students face challenges related to navigating the transfer pathway through higher education. They have to figure out how their credits apply and transfer at different institutions, how to navigate systems tailored to traditional student majors, and how to develop a sense of belonging.

There are no set rules. “Some states have legislation that requires universities to accept those community college transfer credits for military training, but most do not… it’s really a disservice to the student if they have other goals to move on and they can’t get that credit to go with them,” said Giardello. But, she and others are working on solutions.

Giardello serves as a leadership liaison for the Multi-State Collaborative on Military Credit (MCMC), an interstate partnership of 13 working to advance best practices designed to ease the transition for veterans from military life to college campuses. To create and sustain this work, they are establishing best practices, such as convening a workgroup with staff across campus (registrar/records, admission, financial aid, student services, veteran services). “When it comes to awarding credit, there’s not one single person that can crack the code of military credit on a campus. It has to be a concerted effort …” she said.

This advice applies for general transfer credit, as well. Giardello also emphasizes use of common military language and assessment of student veteran experiences. “If we can accommodate, structurally, these students in a more efficient manner, then that helps us moving forward… it might be a heavy lift for campuses that haven’t done a lot of course equivalency work, but in the future, it saves time and money. And it does a better job of communicating to a student base that has goals we can help them meet and the money to finance their education.” Like other transfer students, veterans should plan their path from two- to four-year college before they enroll.

While at the community college, Georgia received six credits for health and military history from her military experience. When researching schools to transfer to after community college, she looked for schools that would accept the most transfer credits. “I finally settled on Samford University because they would take my entire associate’s degree from my community college and I could transfer right into [being a junior],” she said.

5. CULTURAL

Campuses can assist veteran transfer students with the cultural transition from service to school and civilian life by hiring those who best understand their experience. Hiring veterans to work with—and connect with—veteran transfer students is instrumental.

No one can understand better than someone who’s been in the military and through the transfer process. Veterans also feel an emotional connection. Georgia said, “We have a connection. We have a brotherhood with other veterans. When I meet another veteran we can usually talk and communicate much better… I can talk to somebody about war in a nonthreatening manner. We can talk to each other about experiences we’ve had in the warzone and really ask if you’re OK and look out for each other.”

Student mentoring programs, student veterans organizations on campus, and partnerships with community veteran organizations can also effectively serve veteran transfer students in higher education.

Transfer Trends is a standing column written by Heather Durosko, NACAC’s assistant director of strategic initiatives.
INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

RECRUITING INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS FROM US HIGH SCHOOLS

Could international students be in your own backyard?

Yes! According to the Institute of International Education’s (IIE) publication Charting New Pathways to US Higher Education: International Secondary Students in the US, the number of international students enrolled directly in United States secondary programs more than tripled from 2004 to 2013. Students enrolled for a full diploma—48,632—represented the largest percentage of international students enrolled at the secondary level in 2013, with China, South Korea, Vietnam, Mexico, and Japan making up the top five countries of origin.

Private high schools, including boarding schools, schools with religious affiliations, and private day schools with home stays, enroll the majority of diploma-seeking international students in the US, and California, New York, Florida, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania are home to the largest numbers of these students.

This trend presents both challenges and opportunities for your international student recruitment strategy. With this growth, you’re most likely dealing with:

• A dramatic increase in international undergraduate student (F, J, and diplomatic visa) applications from within the US in the past three to five years
• Limited resources for support, such as a designated admission officer for international applicants inside US high schools, and for training services on topics such as SEVP/SEVIS awareness and compliance, cross-cultural sensitivity, ESL, and credential evaluation
• Limited budgets for increased staffing
• Managing international applicant and family expectations
• Helping high school counselors understand your international admission requirements and policies.

Let’s break down what you’re dealing with and how to approach it.

TIMING OF ENROLLMENT

Reasons for sending international students to US high schools may vary, but many families believe that this experience will better prepare their student for eventual university study in the US, and for admission to the competitive Ivies.

However, depending on when the international student enters the US secondary school system, this may actually prove to make admission more challenging. Since many selective US admission officers calculate cumulative GPA based on grades from years nine, 10, and 11, and may look at year 12 academic performance for trends, the later the international student transitions to a US secondary school, the harder it could be to achieve a rigorous GPA in the same year the transition was made. It’s not an easy adjustment.

Academic English writing may need significant ESL support, and homesickness and cultural acclimation could affect academic performance in the very year US universities expect to see continued strong academic performance, significant upward trends, and solid standardized testing results.

Transition in grade nine or 10 is preferred, but these younger students still need extra support.

MULTIPLE INFLUENCES

School counselors often have to wade through conflicting information given to international students. Parents, agents, or private counselors back home may have set unrealistic expectations or pressures.

Of course, school counselors can help students understand requirements and campus services for international students, and articulate factors such as international diversity, support services, unique programs or strengths, safety, and graduation outcomes, rather than rankings. But this takes a lot of work, and a lot of convincing if students and parents had different expectations.

ADMISSION FACTORS

In many other countries, admission is tied to a student’s performance on one national entrance exam. As such, it is often difficult to get students to think beyond their scores on standardized tests. According to NACAC’s State of College Admission report, performance on English proficiency exams, grades in college prep courses, and the strength of the curriculum were considered top factors in admission decisions for international students. Standardized testing and the essay were considered moderately important decision factors.

If these factors are similar at your institution, your challenge is to share this information with school counselors and students during outreach, fairs, presentations, school visits, and student interviews.

DIVERSITY AMONG INTERNATIONAL APPLICANTS

While IIE data reflects great potential to recruit international secondary school students already here in the US who wish to stay and continue their
education, it also shows limited international diversity among the current potential applicant pool. How can you incorporate the recruitment of international secondary students already inside the US as one of several components of your overall strategic international enrollment management plan?

WORKING COLLABORATIVELY
Another challenge is avoiding siloed international and domestic recruitment approaches. So how can you work together in the best interest of international applicants and your institution’s recruitment goals? Consider these conversation starters as you think about a joint strategy:

- Do you or your domestic admission colleagues target visits to domestic secondary schools with a high percentage of international students?
- Do you or your domestic admission colleagues participate in boarding school tours, or other tours or fairs targeting international students already in the US?
- Do you have a specific international admission staff member tasked with international students at domestic high schools?
- Have you created specific international brochures or materials to use for domestic high school visits or fairs?

LESSONS LEARNED AT AU
At American University (AU), international undergraduate freshmen applications inside the US have steadily increased from 253 in 2007 to 682 in 2017, accounting for almost 30 percent of our overall international undergraduate freshmen applications each year over the past five years.

Fifty percent of our 2017 international freshmen applicant pool from within the US is made up of Chinese citizens, a new trend for us. As such, AU Undergraduate Admissions has implemented new activities and hopes to implement additional recommendations in the near future.

CURRENT PRACTICES
- Gather data. Pull data by country, state, and city of secondary school for current students, in addition to citizenship and visa status, according to how AU defines international. (AU defines international students by visa type and by international credentials.)

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS FROM US SECONDARY SCHOOLS ARE A GREAT POTENTIAL APPLICANT POOL FOR OUR US INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING.

- Analyze data. Use data to identify domestic high schools with high concentrations of international students.
- Work together. Assign an international admission team liaison to work with domestic admission teams to assist with questions and secondary transcript evaluations. The domestic admission team reviews international students completing secondary school academic work inside the US. The international team reviews all applicants finishing high school outside the US.
- Conduct outreach efforts. Have the international team reach out to US school counselors with growing numbers of international applicants, offering on-campus workshops, webinars, and the virtual international counselor resource corner.
- Share resources. Encourage the domestic team to share with counselors our international virtual counselor resource corner which includes resources for four-year fiscal planning (www.american.edu/admissions/international/resourcesforcounselors.cfm).
- Conduct trainings. Educate domestic admission colleagues on:
  - AU policies for English proficiency exams (TOEFL/IELTS)
  - AU policies on standardized testing (SAT/ACT/test -optional)
  - F-visa regulations and SEVIS
  - Financial matters
  - International credentials, specifically Chinese secondary credentials.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE PRACTICES
- Increase outreach. Identify one opportunity to reach out to students within the US.
- Meaningfully engage with counselors. Invite school counselors to special events.
- Create opportunities to meet international students. Host panels of current international students for domestic recruiters.
- Share success stories. Promote graduation outcomes more prominently to international students.

INITIATING YOUR STRATEGY
If your institution is noticing a trend of international applicants from within the US, data is critical. Work with your department’s “data diva” to isolate and analyze data on international secondary school students. It is important to track these students’ application progress.

Monitor the number of calls or emails you and your colleagues receive from US secondary school counselors working with international students and the types of questions asked. Reach out to counselors at US schools with high volumes of international prospects to offer webinars, campus visits, or notify them of upcoming open house events. Create online training and international admission and financial planning resources and update regularly. Have your institution participate in fairs organized by high schools with large numbers of international secondary students.

And lastly, encourage highly-motivated international students in US high schools to visit your institution, and connect them with your current international student ambassadors from their home country.

CONCLUSION
International students from US secondary schools are a great potential applicant pool for US institutions of higher learning. They have had time to overcome homesickness and culture shock and acclimate to US society, adapt to US academic expectations, develop a level of independence by living away from home, learn to appreciate the value of the well-rounded high school experience and get involved in extracurricular activities, and benefit from an English-speaking environment.

By developing solid partnerships and communication channels between US secondary school counselors and US universities, students stand a good chance to expand their short lists and find their best fit school. You don’t need to travel overseas to find them. ☺

Evelyn Levinson is a director, international admissions, at American University (DC).
### NACAC Affiliate Meetings

#### JULY 23–26
**GUIDING THE WAY TO INCLUSION (GWI)**
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**PRECONFERENCE WORKSHOPS**
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- Chief Enrollment Officers’ Forum
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- New! Fundamentals of Recruiting and Counseling International Students
- Transitioning to Private Practice College Counseling

#### SEPTEMBER 14–16
**NACAC NATIONAL CONFERENCE**
Boston

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### Daytimer

### National College Fair Fall Schedule

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<td>1 p.m. – 4 p.m.</td>
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<td><strong>INDIANAPOLIS</strong></td>
<td>Oct. 20</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>OMAHA</td>
<td>Oct. 21</td>
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<td>Oct. 22</td>
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<td>Oct. 22</td>
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<td>Oct. 22</td>
<td>1 p.m. – 4 p.m.</td>
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<td>HONOLULU</td>
<td>Oct. 23</td>
<td>8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. &amp; 5 p.m. – 8 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>KANSAS CITY</td>
<td>Oct. 24</td>
<td>8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. &amp; 6 p.m. – 8 p.m.</td>
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<td>SPOKANE</td>
<td>Oct. 25</td>
<td>9 a.m. – 12 p.m. &amp; 6 p.m. – 8 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>SEATTLE</td>
<td>Oct. 27</td>
<td>9 a.m. – 12 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct. 28</td>
<td>12 p.m. – 4 p.m.</td>
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<td>PORTLAND</td>
<td>Oct. 29</td>
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<td>Oct. 30</td>
<td>9 a.m. – 12 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>BALTIMORE</td>
<td>Oct. 30</td>
<td>9 a.m. – 12 p.m. &amp; 6 p.m. – 8 p.m.</td>
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<td>Oct. 31</td>
<td>9 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>BOISE</td>
<td>Nov. 1</td>
<td>9 a.m. – 2 p.m. &amp; 6 p.m. – 8 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>ATLANTIC CITY</td>
<td>Nov. 2</td>
<td>9 a.m. – 12 p.m. &amp; 6 p.m. – 8 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>GREATER WASHINGTON, DC</td>
<td>Nov. 5</td>
<td>12:30 p.m. – 4 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>PHILADELPHIA</td>
<td>Nov. 12</td>
<td>11 a.m. – 3 p.m.</td>
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For more information, visit [www.nacacfairs.org](http://www.nacacfairs.org)

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**PERFORMING AND VISUAL ARTS COLLEGE FAIR SCHEDULE**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>BOSTON</td>
<td>Sept. 18</td>
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<td>CHARLOTTE</td>
<td>Sept. 24</td>
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<td>ATLANTA</td>
<td>Sept. 25</td>
<td>7 p.m. – 9 p.m.</td>
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<td>PHILADELPHIA</td>
<td>Sept. 26</td>
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<td>NEW YORK CITY</td>
<td>Sept. 27</td>
<td>6 p.m. – 9 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>FT. LAUDERDALE</td>
<td>Sept. 28</td>
<td>6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>WASHINGTON, DC</td>
<td>Oct. 1</td>
<td>11 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>CINCINNATI</td>
<td>Oct. 2</td>
<td>6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>CHICAGO</td>
<td>Oct. 3</td>
<td>6:30 p.m. – 9 p.m.</td>
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<td>CLEVELAND</td>
<td>Oct. 4</td>
<td>6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>GREATER PHOENIX</td>
<td>Oct. 5</td>
<td>7 p.m. – 9 p.m.</td>
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<td>ST. LOUIS</td>
<td>Oct. 7</td>
<td>11 a.m. – 3 p.m.</td>
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<td>INTERLOCHEN</td>
<td>Oct. 8</td>
<td>1 p.m. – 3 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>KANSAS CITY</td>
<td>Oct. 10</td>
<td>6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>MINNESOTA</td>
<td>Oct. 11</td>
<td>7 p.m. – 9 p.m.</td>
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For more information, visit [www.nacacfairs.org/PVA](http://www.nacacfairs.org/PVA)

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**STEM COLLEGE AND CAREER FAIR SCHEDULE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
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<th>Time</th>
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<tr>
<td>SILICON VALLEY</td>
<td>Oct. 8</td>
<td>1 p.m. – 4 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>NEW YORK CITY</td>
<td>Oct. 15</td>
<td>1 p.m. – 4 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>HOUSTON</td>
<td>Nov. 5</td>
<td>1 p.m. – 4 p.m.</td>
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For more information, visit [www.nacacfairs.org/STEM](http://www.nacacfairs.org/STEM)
THE VOICES OF MANY

Over the course of the last four years, as a member and now chair of NACAC’s Government Relations Committee, I have participated in the Washington, DC and Atlanta Hill Days. These opportunities have led to bills being proposed and passed related to transfer credit, campus carry, and most recently counselor-to-student ratio improvements. During many conversations with legislators, I have witnessed a troubling absence of knowledge surrounding the educational implications of legislative and monetary decisions. So it was incredibly encouraging to have a record 143 NACAC members representing 44 states and all 23 affiliates attend NACAC’s Advocacy Day in early March.

Coming off of a turbulent election season, and in the context of a politically divided national atmosphere, gathering with my talented, passionate colleagues to promote students’ rights and protections, as well as to educate legislators about the issues we face each day was both refreshing and inspiring.

We spent Sunday morning with expert speakers on topics including: the future of dual enrollment programs, and related state and federal policy implications; the current climate surrounding charter schools, vouchers, and school choice programs; prognostication on the Trump administration’s higher education policy including the re-authorization of the Higher Education Act; and a truly insider session on “How Congress REALLY works.”

This last session in particular served as a great reminder that our legislators work for us. While it’s easy to become cynical about political maneuver and the stagnation we often see at the federal level, lawmakers fundamentally are public servants faced with myriad demands. (Whether we’re on a college or high school campus, we can relate to this taxing workload.) This realization greatly diminished attendees’ level of intimidation—particularly for first-timers.

In the afternoon, NACAC President Nancy Beane articulated NACAC’s policy priorities and we had a robust, honest dialogue surrounding legislative issues connected to LGBTQ protections, students with special needs, the future of Pell Grants, and the potential implications of specific proposed bills at the state and federal level. Members shared powerful stories from their home campuses and communities, and voiced many concerns about immigration policy and executive orders.

One member noted that several Canadian universities are seeing growth of 50 percent or more in applications from US students due to the recent shift in American politics. I quoted this fact to Georgia legislators who continually focus on keeping the best talent in our state. If, in this cycle, we see a notable decrease in yield from abroad we’ll be able to leverage this data to influence policy.

On Monday, we headed to the Hill to meet with our congressional representatives. The Georgia delegation has been visiting these offices for several years—they know us. We no longer have to convince them that we are resources—NACAC is being consulted regularly. Just like the work we do each day, advocacy is about trust, relationships, starting conversations, and being prepared to follow up and follow through.

Between appointments, I was able to join the tour of the Capitol. While listening to our guide and viewing the statues of pivotal historical leaders, I was struck by the national seal: E pluribus unum. Out of many, one. It’s a powerful reminder that diversity and unity aren’t mutually exclusive. The voices of many, the collective wisdom of many, and the commitment to progress and improvement of many, is the vision of not only our democracy, but also of our organization.

I sincerely hope that if you were not able to attend your state’s legislative day this year, you’ll engage with your affiliate’s Government Relations Committee chair. It’s vital for NACAC members to educate legislators about the critical intersection of K-12 and higher education. If you take nothing else away from this article, I hope you hear this: You are qualified to do this work, you are supported in doing this work, and your voice, expertise, and insight are greatly needed. I implore you to get involved today!

Rick Clark is director of undergraduate admissions at Georgia Institute of Technology and chair of NACAC’s Government Relations Committee.

To learn about current NACAC legislative initiatives, visit: cprccengage.com/nacac.

Check out this year’s visit to Washington, DC at #NACACHillDay storify.
NACAC CAREER CENTER

Whether you’re looking for a new job or ready to take the next step in your career, we’ll help you find the opportunity that’s right for you.
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Registration and housing are open.

National Conference
Boston  |  2017

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Sept. 14–16  |  Registration and housing are open.