



August/September 2015

## Calendar

August 6  
UC/Irvine Webinar, Trends in  
Consulting with CEO Mark Sklarow

August 11  
Monthly Webinar  
Red Flags During Intake

August 18 (Tentative)  
Fall Conference Registration Opens

September 7  
Labor Day, Office Closed

September 8  
Monthly Webinar  
The Redesigned SAT

September 16-19  
SSATB National Conference  
Las Vegas, NV

September 30  
Transitioning to Private Practice  
Workshop, San Diego, CA

October 1  
Annual IECA/Admission Officer  
Lunch, San Diego, CA

October 1-3  
NACAC National Conference  
IECA Booth

Looking Ahead:  
November 2-3  
School, College & Program Tours  
Scottsdale, AZ

November 3  
MBTI Training, Therapeutic Training  
Scottsdale, AZ

November 4  
Half-Day Pre-Cons:  
Financial Aid, Learning Disabilities  
Scottsdale, AZ

November 4-7  
IECA National Conference  
Scottsdale, AZ

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## Authors Frank Bruni and Michael Gurian Among Presenters at Fall Conference

Two of the country's most sought-after authors will be featured speakers when IECA gathers in a beautiful resort setting in Scottsdale, Arizona in November. With more than 50 educational sessions; remarkable pre-conference options; and campus tours for schools, colleges, and therapeutic environments, there will be extraordinary learning opportunities for all under our theme, *Helping Kids Shine*, which illuminates the key role of IECs and our educational partners.

Frank Bruni made a splash in publishing, talk show, and educational circles a few month ago when he released *Where You Go Is Not Who You'll Be: An Antidote to the College Admissions Mania*. His message—which applies as easily to boarding schools as it does to colleges, is that the public's current misperception—that students should seek admission at the most competitive school that will have them is feeding a frenzy that emphasizes “getting in” over finding a great match. Bruni is a columnist for the *New York Times* whose books and columns explore history, religion, and his own struggles with bulimia.

Michael Gurian is the prolific writer of more than 20 books. Among his best known are *The Wonder*

*of Boys*, *Raising Boys by Design*, *The Wonder of Girls*, and *Boys and Girls Learn Differently*. He'd be the first to say that the way we raise boys is seriously offtrack. He will share his solutions for educating healthy young men and women.



In addition, several tweaks have been made to the traditional conference schedule to increase time for discussion groups and to include additional time for breakouts and affiliate groups. Attendees will also have ample opportunity to enjoy the outdoors and even make their way to the resort's lazy river for an evening diversion.

Four pre-conference workshops will be available on Tuesday and Wednesday. The Tuesday offerings include a joint effort by IECA and CPP, the official training arm of Myers Briggs. The full-day event will allow prequalified members to complete the training and be immediately eligible to purchase

*continued on page 4*

# President's Letter

## The Impact of Volunteering

*Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world; indeed it is the only thing that ever has. —Margaret Mead*

For the past 10 years, I have been a proud, card-carrying professional member of IECA. I started out by volunteering as a nonvoting member on the Membership committee and then joined the Education and Training committee. I was excited to serve on that committee because developing education and training programs is my passion. I recall feeling honored to be asked to serve as its chair to continue the work and to implement new programs, such as the Professional Members Retreat. Working with IECA staff and fellow members has

been rewarding both professionally and personally. I have met men and women from all over the world who have become colleagues and dear friends; I have learned from every one of them and always enjoy exploring complex issues from richly varied perspectives. Many of my fellow board members are people I met when I first joined IECA over a decade ago. I feel like we have grown up together: learning, touring colleges, leading panel discussions, consulting on sensitive professional topics, and serving IECA.

IECA is actively developing more outreach efforts to expand our network of volunteers, creating access and gathering information to help connect people with



Gail Meyer

interesting, meaningful opportunities to serve. Our goal is to encourage members to use their existing skills while building new ones, to continue to create a vibrant community, and to fulfill the mission of IECA. During our last conference in Baltimore, I was delighted to see many new and younger faces—men and women from across the globe—who are joining committees, assuming leadership positions, and developing a sense of pride in belonging to IECA.

The importance of and benefits inherent in volunteerism cannot be overstated.

*continued on page 4*

## IECA<sup>+</sup> INSIGHTS

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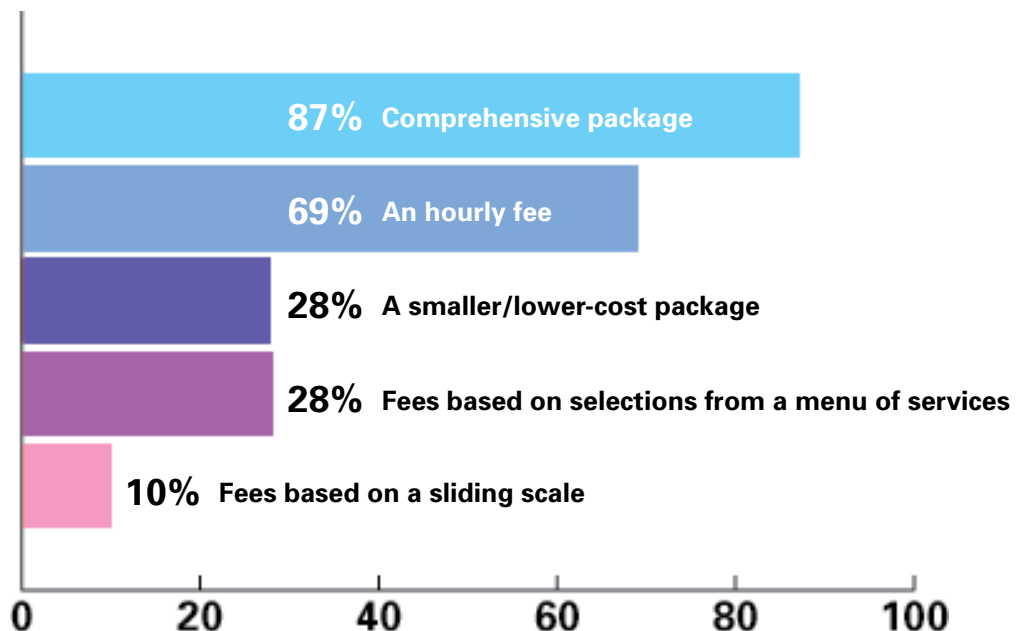
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and Twitter (@IECA).

## In Focus

### What service structures do IECA Members offer?



Source: IECA's 2015 State of the Profession Survey

# Money Magazine Selects IECA to Partner on New College Website

*Money* magazine is reaching out exclusively to IECA members to participate in a new online service that recognizes them as being able to offer exceptional support to its readers in the college search and application process. The partnership will increase recognition of the IECA brand and provide members with an opportunity to gain new clients.

Each summer, Time Inc. publishes its *Money* Best Colleges issue in print and online, featuring its exclusive value-based college rankings that include both quality and affordability factors. Developed in conjunction with the former commissioner of the federal government's National Center for Education Statistics, the rankings garner tremendous interest from the public, driving traffic to their website.

This year the website expands and becomes the *Money* College Planner website. Subscribers will receive access to articles, background materials, and search tools. Most importantly, they will be offered one complimentary one-on-one introductory session by telephone with a participating IECA member. The purpose of the 30-minute introductory sessions is to provide subscribers with general information about some aspect of the college search and planning process.

This opportunity is available only to IECA members. IECA members may be hired following the call, and a directory of all participating

members will appear on the *Money* College Planner website. Any decision by a family to hire an IECA member is completely between the family and the IEC and will not involve the magazine; the technology partner, Unigo; or IECA in any way. Members will be able to determine the extent of their participation, even to the specific days and times they are available.

Because the program will be widely promoted across Time Inc. publications, there is great potential to increase public awareness of the IEC profession and firmly establish the IECA brand as standing for excellence in college advising. The *Money* College Planner website and its benefits will be promoted in *Time*, *People*, *Sports Illustrated*, *Fortune*, and other publications in addition to *Money*.

Professional and associate members have the option to participate in this exciting, new, and exclusive opportunity, with other projects likely to be announced in the coming months.

For more information on this opportunity, contact [support@unigo.zendesk.com](mailto:support@unigo.zendesk.com).

# Money

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MBTI test materials and provide interpretation of results for clients. In this initial offering (designed to be an annual opportunity), registration will be limited to those with a postbachelors degree or license in counseling, social work, organizational theory, or a related field.


IECA will also host a day-and-a-half training for those who are in therapeutic consulting or who are looking to expand their knowledge or their practice in that field. Organized by members who specialize in therapeutic program placements, this training offers a remarkable opportunity to learn from IECA experts. The

program runs all-day Tuesday and Wednesday morning.

Two Wednesday morning workshops will examine college consulting: one will focus on learning disabilities and the other on college financial aid.

The Saturday Master Class will take a creative turn. Rather than hear from a single expert, attendees will get an in-depth exploration of overcoming the failure-to-launch syndrome from a panel of experts in the field.



One of the things we are most looking forward to is the beautiful resort setting and fantastic weather, which will provide a conducive environment for discussions, networking, and exploring crucial topics in education and admission. 

Using one's talents, helping our community, collaborating with others, learning to articulate our thoughts, and solving problems creatively can be enormously satisfying. Along the way, we garner professional contacts and enjoy our widening social circles.

Ours is a talented, energetic, and enthusiastic group. We have a passion for what we do—e.g., unlocking the puzzle of school placement, clarifying our position on ethical practices, and exploring the societal impact of college affordability. The members of our organization are interested in giving back, in serving students and their families, and in generating a positive image of our field.

I encourage each of you to volunteer, teach, learn, and mentor. We have much to share and to gain from one another.

Gail Meyer, IECA President

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## Across the Pond: Options for North American Students in Europe

by David Allen, MA, IECA (Scotland, UK)



There has long been a tradition of students from North America travelling overseas to study in the United Kingdom; indeed, even as far back as my time at St Andrews, we had some US nationals in my residence hall (dorm). More surprising, perhaps, was that they weren't just there to play golf.

Nowadays, St Andrews boasts a huge proportion of students from the US and Canada in its ranks (almost 15% of the total student population). Partly fuelled by the attendance a number of years ago by the now Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, St Andrews has a large presence in the minds of US regional recruiters, is on the Common Application, and boasts a great dual-degree programme with the college of William and Mary.

St Andrews is just one example of the United Kingdom being very attractive to students in the United States and Canada, and students are, in fact, eligible in some cases to take their student loans with them. Increasing numbers of UK institutions are joining the Common Application, and we are seeing an increasing attendance from the marketing teams at both NACAC and OACAC. A recent *Open Doors* (IIE, 2013) report noted that "U.S. students studying abroad increased by three percent to an all-time high of more than 283,000" and "The United Kingdom remains the leading destination for American students, followed by Italy, Spain, France and China," so we can see clearly that there is a growing trend of students applying to and attending institutions for more than just a semester study-abroad option.

One of the more interesting points that came out of the *Open Doors* report was the increasing number of students studying in nonnative English-speaking countries. It is in this area that we have seen most growth in recent years. More and more European countries are offering quality programmes in English in a whole range of subjects. It is now possible to study everything—from liberal arts to medicine—in Europe in English.

Of course the first places that most students look are the English-speaking countries of the United Kingdom and Ireland. The Republic of Ireland is a wonderful option for students. There are 7 traditional universities with a full range of courses and 13 more-technically orientated, degree-granting institutes of technology. The best place to start exploration is at [www.educationinireland.com](http://www.educationinireland.com).

Most recently, I have seen a major growth in the number of courses available in the Netherlands. I have toured schools there twice and have been very impressed with the courses and facilities on offer. The Dutch are modelling their university college structure much like a US liberal arts college, and their universities of applied sciences

offer some great career-focused programmes. Indeed, the last time I saw the data there were increasing numbers of UK students looking to the Netherlands for their studies. I think the tuition costs being about a third of those in England might have had something to do with that. For those of you who aren't aware, recently tuition in the United Kingdom for home students nearly tripled to approximately \$14,000—dreadful eh?



Clearly, the Netherlands is one place for North American students to consider over and above the United Kingdom or Ireland. In addition there are lots of smaller niche programmes available at places like Jacobs University in Bremen, Germany; Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic; and the Sorbonne and Sciences Po in Paris, France, just to mention a few. A great website to start to look is [www.studyineurope.eu/in-english](http://www.studyineurope.eu/in-english).

There are other obvious considerations when students are thinking about studying in Europe. First, there is the language issue. Although courses may be taught in English, students need to consider whether their social language is also English or, if they are so inclined, whether they need to learn a language in order to socialise. This may not be an issue in the Netherlands where English is widely spoken, but may be an issue when studying in the Czech Republic.

Whatever students are looking for, Europe is definitely worth considering. I have a personal bias toward studying in Scotland, but students these days have an incredible range of choices for their higher education. As many and varied as those choices are, it just makes the need for experienced, informed, professional counselling even more important.

David Allen can be reached at [david@globalcollegecounselors.com](mailto:david@globalcollegecounselors.com).



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## Update China

by Hamilton Gregg, MEd, Chair, Global Committee, IECA (China)



Chinese students continue to flood the US education sector at boarding schools, day schools, and universities. Families and students are seeking a wide array of options to further their education—and not just in the US. Along with that has come a number of problems: allegations of cheating on SAT I tests this year, reneged contracts at boarding schools and colleges, and continued ethical

violations by the agents who are hired to help students apply to universities, to name a few of the issues. However, on the bright side there is greater awareness of ethical practices because of the media reports. How can that be said given all the negative press? Well, leave it to the press to highlight the negative!

China is an enormous country, and the tide of affluence is reaching new sectors of the economy, raising a middle class that is becoming more and more aware of the benefits of overseas education but that hasn't learned how to make it a reality. Through the work of US colleges and boarding schools and their efforts to educate Chinese families on the application process, more of those families are learning to go about their search in a better way.

Over the last five or so years, US schools have been able to hold presentations and fairs in China when previously they could not. Starting with the Liberal Arts College (LAC) Tour six years ago under the guidance of current and graduated students from a group of LAC schools, a number of liberal arts schools started to tour major cities in China without the handholding of agents. Since then, the annual East Meets West Conference; other college tours, such as Linden and CIS; TABS Fairs; and individual school visits have helped spread information about the breadth of opportunities available in the United States and how to apply to schools.

One of the important things to remember is that the phenomena of Chinese students seeking international education has really only manifested itself over the last eight or nine years, so it is a rather new development in the grand scheme of things. Agents historically played a significant role in applying to graduate programs, and their role naturally morphed into assisting families in this new surge. In a culture where grandparents traditionally play a vital role in raising children, it's logical that families will seek someone to take care of the process of applying to schools overseas.

*continued on page 9*

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*China, from page 7*

Over time, there has been a growing dissatisfaction with agents. Parents complain that they do not do a good job. Now one could reason that parents are complaining because their children are not getting into "good" schools or the schools they expect them to gain entry to, but more often now families are seeking companies that follow ethical standards. More families are stating upfront that they want an IEC to work with their child. Although they may end up choosing a non-IEC, the fact that they are aware of IECA is a significant move in the right direction.

Further positive developments include the upcoming OACAC Regional Institute (ORI) to be held in Shanghai in August. At this first overseas mini-institute, OACAC is adding to the training of local public and private school counselors on ethical practices, along with a college fair. At present, there are more than 139 attendees registered for this conference. Made up of international universities from Australia, Canada, Japan, and the US, as well as international school counselors and vendors, such as InitialView, this event is shaping up to be a success from the start.

Finally, it is through the work of IECA and other organizations in conjunction with seasoned professional guidance counselors in local Chinese schools that more and more students and families are becoming aware of best practices. As more in-school counselors become trained, more qualified members of IECA enter the Chinese



marketplace, and the awareness about overseas education grows, the tide will change.

There will continue to be issues as we march forward. Sometimes it feels as if for every step forward, two are taken back, but there is forward momentum. It takes everyone involved in admissions to play a role in the process. It will take time, energy, and commitment to continue our move forward. 🙏

Hamilton Gregg can be reached at [hsgregg45@gmail.com](mailto:hsgregg45@gmail.com).

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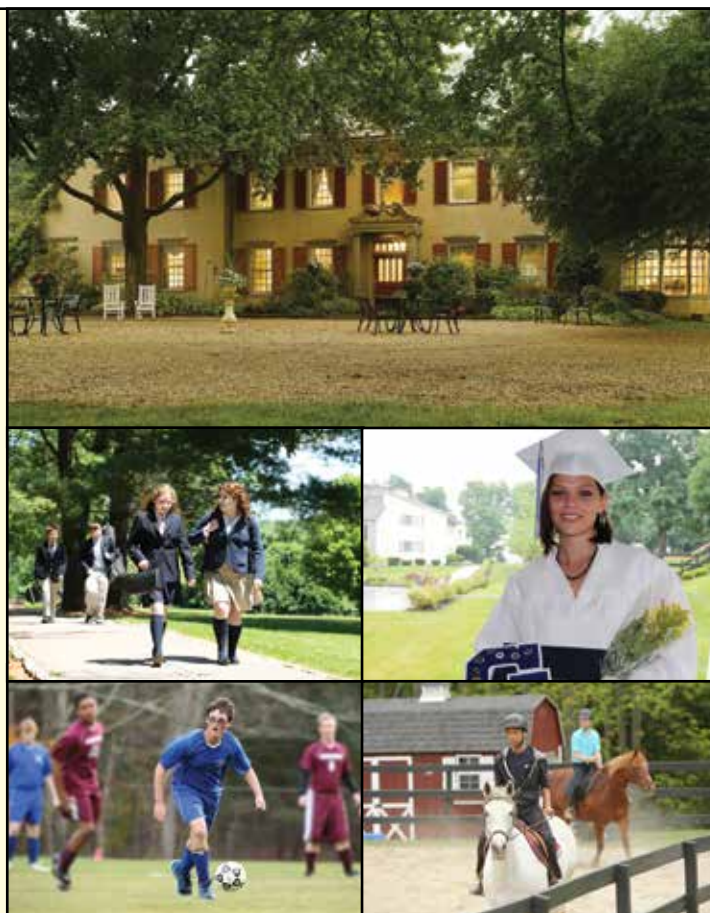
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## Demonstrating Sufficient Financial Resources Adds to International Students' Burden

by Laura O'Brien Gatzionis, IECA (Greece) and Linda Magnussen, MBA, IECA (VT)

International student applicants must submit financial documentation that demonstrates the ability to pay for their undergraduate education before they can receive a visa to attend a US college. This additional hurdle is often a confusing step for many families.



Laura O'Brien Gatzionis

### Student Visa

International students are required by the US government to have a student visa to attend college in the United States. To apply for that visa, the student must first obtain a certificate of eligibility for nonimmigrant student status. The US academic institution or program that the student will attend must provide that completed form prior to the student's interview at the local embassy or consulate.

### Certification of Finances

First, however, the college is obliged to require proof that the student can afford the cost of attendance. Often known as the

certification of finances, this financial documentation is usually requested after a student has been accepted and has made a deposit at the college. But it is becoming more common for this requirement to be included as part of the application process, particularly for institutions that are need-aware for international students.



Linda Magnussen

Colleges may request financial documentation to cover one year of attendance or may require documentation for the full four years typical of an undergraduate degree. Part of the standard required documentation is an original bank letter addressed directly to the college stating that the funds are available. Sufficient financial resources may be a combination of personal funding, parental support, sponsor's support, finances provided by the student's home government, loans, and financial scholarships and aid given by the college.

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### Financial Aid

Families should be aware that if international students do not apply for financial aid as part of the application process, they will probably not be eligible for aid as upperclassmen. It's important that families understand that requests for financial aid *must* be made at the time of the original application and that the required documentation to apply for aid varies by college. Because international students are not eligible for federal aid, they may end up receiving little or no financial aid from the United States, depending on the college. [see related article on page 17]

Some colleges that require financial documentation as part of the application process do an excellent job of making that information accessible and obvious by listing it as one of the required steps on the international-student admissions webpage. At many institutions, however, the requirement is less obvious—or nonexistent—and an applicant must conduct his or her own research. We have often found it necessary to contact the admissions office directly to

*continued on page 12*



*Demonstrating Burden, from page 11*

decipher the deadline, the specific requirements, and where the paperwork should be sent.

## Forms & Official Documents


Colleges may use their own institutional form or perhaps the more typical College Board International Certification of Finance form. Some institutions will only accept original documents; therefore, the family needs to know in advance what is required because that sensitive paperwork must be sent from abroad to each college that makes the request. Sometimes the required paperwork can be sent by e-mail or fax, but we recommend that it be sent by courier, which has added challenges and costs. Without sufficient guidance, it is often quite difficult for a student to understand which documents are required, when those documents should be filed, to which office they should be sent, and what follow-up is needed to ensure that all documentation has been received and is complete.

IECs who are working with non-US passport holders should be aware that this is a nonstandardized process. Institutions that require financial documentation as part of the application process might consider the application incomplete and decline to evaluate the student's application if they don't receive the paperwork by the

deadline. We have heard stories of students missing the opportunity to attend college in the United States—even if they were not applying for any financial aid—because they were not aware of this financial requirement.

You may choose to assist your families by researching the schools' websites and contacting international admissions officers when necessary to



create a spreadsheet that includes the diverse requirements. Or you may prefer that families take full responsibility for collecting that information and complying with requirements. In either case, you should be certain to give your clients timely notice about this important part of the application process for international students. 

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*Linda Magnussen can be reached at [Linda@LMEdAdvisory.com](mailto:Linda@LMEdAdvisory.com).*

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## The Boarding School Perspective on International Placements

by Marina Lee, EdM, IECA (MA)



By now, the statistics have become common knowledge. Over the past decade, the number of international students enrolled in US secondary programs has grown by 300%. Of the 48,632 students pursuing a full diploma in 2014, the vast majority came from the Asian continent, with China and South

Korea together accounting for over 60% of the total (Farrugia, 2015), as is clearly visible to anyone touring, for example, a Northeast boarding school.

As the numbers have grown, the backgrounds of the families have become more diverse as well, with fewer and fewer parents having personal experience studying in the United States. As a result, many international families have sought out professionals to provide advisory services. Those advisors can be roughly categorized as agents; independent educational consultants (IECs or professionals of similar skills); and what can be best described as the “aunties.” Agents primarily recruit international students on behalf of specific schools; whereas, IECs work with families and schools to find the best match.

The aunties are often a scattered group of former agents, recent immigrants, new graduates, and part-timers with some connection to the United States. Although many are well-intentioned, they are characterized by a superficial knowledge of admissions processes, often making exaggerated promises and spreading rumors among international families. Uncertain of how to properly communicate their position to schools, they will introduce themselves as aunties or uncles, adding to the confusion.

Not surprisingly, because all of these advisors fall outside of the traditional boxes of family or school, the perspective of admissions offices ranges from caution to suspicion. The extreme end is exemplified by a recent published statement from Lisa Lapin, a spokesperson for Stanford University (Lee 2014), “We discourage prospective applicants from engaging with education consultants. We consider much of their work unethical.” Her statement demonstrates that the terms *education consultant* and *agent* are often interchangeable, adding to the confusion.

Lapin’s viewpoint has some merit, particularly given the recent upsurge among the aunties. The low cost of entry and lack of regulation in South Korea, for example, have made it possible for unscrupulous businesspeople to open admissions centers, known as *u-hagwons*, across the country. Though many *u-hagwons* do have a high sense of professionalism and ethics, there are many more “consultants” in *u-hagwons* that charge high rates for basic levels of service and have little knowledge of the admissions process. Meanwhile, the tremendous demand in China has created an environment where anyone with a connection to the United States can find families willing to pay for their advice. Despite these truths, Lapin’s comment lacks both empathy for those families who require assistance to navigate the admissions process and appreciation for well-trained, experienced IECs who adhere to IECA’s Principles of Good Practice and ethical guidelines.



The reality is that some boarding school officials share this sentiment, to the point where certain schools refuse to work with anyone outside of the immediate family whether he or she is an established professional member of IECA or not. The motivation for that restriction is to increase transparency, focus only on the student, and level the playing field. All of those are worthwhile sentiments; however, they assume that all families have equal capacity to understand and take action on the various options to further their child’s education. The truth is that American admissions processes rely on contextual elements that simply do not exist around the world. Ultimately, international families seek out advisors for the following reasons:

*continued on page 14*



*Boarding School, from page 13*

- They don't speak English
- They have little knowledge of the schools or application process
- They feel that available sources of information are insufficient or unreliable
- They wish to avoid making mistakes or missing a part of the process
- They desire to do everything possible to support their children to find better opportunities.

## Secrecy and Fear

The true extent to which advisors are used is uncertain. During interviews with admissions counselors at several highly selective boarding schools, their estimates of the percentages of applicants receiving outside guidance included less than 20%, more than half, and "nearly everyone, I'm certain." For college counselors, the range of estimates was much narrower, with all falling between 15%–25%.

This difficulty in knowing the truth comes, in part, from the feeling among international families that working with an outside consultant will anger the school and thus jeopardize their child's future. Families become trapped into hiding the use of services that they desperately need and look to those aunties who are willing to skirt the boundaries of truthfulness in their interactions with schools. Therefore, schools' restrictions on advisors have the unintended consequence of encouraging more aunties to enter the market because the heightened paranoia and secrecy provides the proper environment to sustain nonprofessional workers.

## The Role of IECs

Fortunately, true professionals who know both schools and families well are making strides to alter this culture. As more and more admissions counselors experience working with these ethical consultants, a positive image is emerging.

In fact, several college counselors expressed the wish that families would introduce them to IECs in order to facilitate a smoother relationship. As one secondary school placement counselor put it, "I highly respect the work of those involved in this business of admissions. When I see families go in a wrong way, I know that some of the [IECs] will talk with me to help them come back."

Another said, "I will give credit to [the good] consultants...They know the schools. They know the families. I know that they care about the fit for the child in a way that non-English speaking parents may not know much about."

## Consultants vs. Agents

Several boarding school officers placed great emphasis on the differentiation between agents and IECs. As one officer noted, "I can always tell when an agent is involved, because the rhetoric of child-centered and fit-centered never matches the actions." The ultimate goal of agents is to fill a quota at a school, regardless of fit. IECs, meanwhile, serve as cultural liaisons between schools and families, facilitating the building of a relationship and helping both sides understand the context behind various behaviors.

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*The ultimate goal of agents is to fill a quota at a school, regardless of fit. IECs, meanwhile, serve as cultural liaisons between schools and families, facilitating the building of a relationship and helping both sides understand the context behind various behaviors.*

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In a series of e-mail exchanges, an admissions counselor from a highly selective boarding school said:

[IECs] are key in helping support families who are not educated in the many different schools that may be possible matches for a child. A lot of this lack of education from the families has to do mostly with the lack of English ability. International [IECs] tend to be their lifeline to the child's world. Another role is advocating for the family. The international family should be kept in touch with just as much as a domestic family [by the school]. If a family isn't getting the contact they feel they need, then the [IEC]...should be able to advocate for the family.

## The Bigger Picture

The United States will continue to draw students of all grade levels, and each school will continue to serve as a nexus for public diplomacy, holding the potential to develop global citizenship within students of all backgrounds.





The decision to send a child abroad is one that no family takes lightly. In this context, the role of the IEC is to empower international families to understand their options and ensure that they continue to be a part of their child's life. At their best, IECs allow schools to interact with their global community while upholding the empathy, understanding, and respect inherent in their mission statements. It is the responsibility of IECs who work with international families to realize this larger vision and take the steps necessary to fulfill it. It is also our responsibility as professional members of IECA to continue to professionalize our community by encouraging both agents and aunties to undertake the necessary training to better serve their clients and ensuring that schools are aware of the value that we provide.

## Boarding Schools Speak: Best (and Worst) Practices by IECs for International Families

- International IECs can add immense value in translation and interpretation services for parents. This comes both when they receive regular materials from the school—including handbooks, grade reports, and advisor comments—as well as in emergency situations.
- I can always tell when a family is working with a bad consultant because the student's college list changes drastically when she returns from the summer break. IECs need to be able to have those difficult conversations with the family when matching students and schools. The brand-name school is not as important as making sure that students are in a positive social environment that has the right academic challenges.
- I appreciate IECs who can let the child really take ownership over the application process. If I feel that a student is aware of and managing his or her own schedule, then I feel more comfortable with the child's status and in working with the consultant.
- How much an IEC knows about a family tells us a lot about the quality of that consultant. I am shocked at the calls I get from consultants who don't know the age or address of the students. Don't contact schools unless you have done your homework, know the family, and know how to present them honestly.
- Agents come to the school saying that we can pick the students we want from their portfolio. A good IEC, meanwhile, has already worked with the family to make sure that the student meets the basic criteria before they apply.
- It is crucially important that IECs know and uphold IECA's *Principles of Good Practice*. If families and schools know that their private materials and conversations are respected, we can all feel

like we are working towards a common goal.

- The very best IECs are those who understand how important family relationships are for our schools. I've had IECs advise our Headmaster about managing potential crises and turn what could have been a disaster into a growth experience.
- IECs need to know the American school landscape and system extremely well. There's nothing more frustrating than having to deal with a consultant who is giving bad information to families and students. 🙄


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## Financial Aid for International Students

by Sarah Contomichalos, IECA (ME)



Many international students come from countries where higher education is either free or heavily subsidized; therefore, the cost of a US undergraduate education represents a major investment. Financial aid is usually very limited—if even available—for international students. When counseling international

families, the following points should be stressed.

- **Cost.** Can the family reasonably afford the cost of a US undergraduate education? In Europe, tuition costs are lower and many degrees are three years instead of the standard four in the United States, which represents an immediate savings for the family. Although US colleges may give credit for high scores in the IB diploma program or for AP exams, which can represent savings for the family, the cost differential remains. A realistic discussion of the cost of attendance is an important first step.

- **Financial aid.** Financial aid for international families can be very confusing, beginning with the difference between financial aid and merit aid. It is important to explain to international families that to qualify for financial aid they must *prove* need by submitting tax returns, financial documents, and financial aid forms. International families are often shocked by the number and type of questions asked on the College Scholarship Service Profile or institutional financial aid forms.

- **Need.** Almost all universities that offer financial aid to international students are need-aware in terms of admissions decisions. Six exceptions are Amherst, Dartmouth, Harvard, MIT, Princeton, and Yale. At the same time, if an international student does not apply for financial aid at the time of application, it is usually not available later. Therefore, if the family is unable to easily afford all four years, it is crucial that the student apply for financial aid as an applicant even though doing so may decrease the chance of admission for the student. In discussions with other IECs and counselors who work primarily with international students, it seems that unless the student is of the caliber to be a realistic candidate for one of the six need-blind colleges, he or she is unlikely to be admitted and have their high need met.

- **Merit aid.** Although merit aid for international students is available, competition is fierce and full scholarships are extremely rare. Even very high-performing international students cannot count on such opportunities. A \$20,000 merit scholarship is a very generous scholarship and realistic, but that can still leave the family with a high cost of attendance. To target schools that are more likely to award merit scholarships to international students—in addition to the usual advice that the student be



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*continued on page 18*



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*Financial Aid for International Students, from page 17*

academically strong relative to the admitted-student profile—I suggest that international students apply to colleges where the number of international students is relatively low, i.e., 5% or less. It is also worth researching where the majority of international students are from because many schools do not wish to have any one nationality overrepresented. Those factors often translate into advising international families to consider colleges in the Midwest and the South.

International families who cannot comfortably afford the financial investment required for a US undergraduate education should be encouraged to develop other options for college in the event that their need is not met. [see related article on page 11.] To better serve international clients, both NACAC and NAFSA include resources for international parents and students at [www.nacacnet.org/International/InternationalInitiatives/Pages/Students-Parents-International.aspx](http://www.nacacnet.org/International/InternationalInitiatives/Pages/Students-Parents-International.aspx) and [www.nafsa.org/Content.aspx?id=7952&LangType=1033](http://www.nafsa.org/Content.aspx?id=7952&LangType=1033). 

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## You Are What You Skype

by Jenny Buyens, MBA, IECA Associate Member (MN)



Skype? Yipes! Have you dipped your toe in the waters of virtual meetings? If so, Skype, Facetime, ooVoo, Google Hangouts, and goToMeeting may sound or be familiar to you. “To Skype” has even crept into the vernacular, meaning “to talk using your computer” no matter what program you use (Skype is, however, a trademark of Microsoft). Your

students are very familiar with “Skyping,” and perhaps you have even used it with local, as well as remote, clients.

I meet many consultants who sneer at the mention of using such a tool and can only imagine it as a last resort option to in-person consulting. Yet some of us have had to harness video communication as the main way we conduct our consulting business because our clients are mainly remote from us. Although this article talks about Skype, which is the specific program I use, these suggestions can work for any virtual program.

So as an IEC you might ask, “How does meeting a student electronically differ from meeting in person? Or is there a difference?”

I won’t attempt to give you shortcuts or hot keys to dazzle your students with your techy use of Skype—that’s for another day—but here are some ideas to avoid the awkward moments and boost your Skype etiquette IQ:

**Be brief, be bright, be gone.** One of my favorite sayings has reminded me to err on the side of brevity while using Skype. This doesn’t mean rushing through the session, just as you wouldn’t rush through an in-person meeting. I mean to say that the use of video communication, in particular, challenges us to be direct and succinct—which translates well to local meetings, too. Being brief puts additional emphasis on the importance of the follow-up e-mail to be certain you’ve captured the key points of your session.

**Be as formal in your video session as you would be in person.** Have an agenda, but do a bit of small talk to ease into the conversation. Why not acknowledge a success your student has enjoyed since your last call? Say, “I see that you were nominated for Governor’s Honors Program. Congratulations!” or “Today we are going to talk about...” and “What things do we need to discuss this session?”

*continued on page 21*

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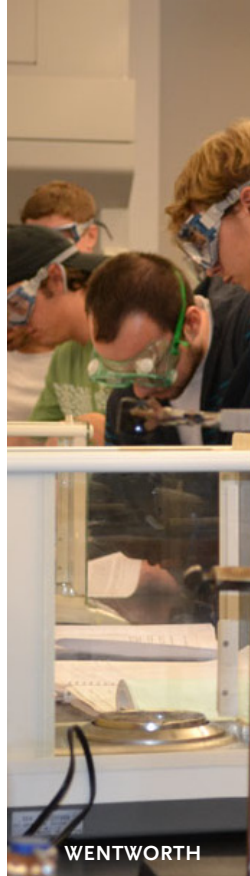
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*Skype, from page 19*

Come to an agreement on what will be covered during the session. Being electronic doesn't mean being sloppy. Focus on one or two items to maximize your virtual session.

**Control the discussion for multiple speakers.** A parent sitting in the background dropping little comments now and then is not acceptable. It is easy to lose focus trying to bounce from one comment to another, and it can swiftly derail the student conversation. Decide ahead of time who will be active in the meeting—and who won't—and have only those folks participate (and be seen) in the session. Your student will thank you!



**Always have a backup plan.** Electronic media will fail—if not this time, then the next. Networks crash and batteries die. Planning ahead of time to transition to hard copy instead of online, to phone instead of Skype, or simply to reschedule the session as a last resort will offer you peace of mind.

**Ambient noise is magnified in Skype.** The rustling of papers, uncontrolled background noise, and unplanned interruptions can be major distractions over electronic media. Something you don't think will be transmitted comes across loud and clear to your audience. Turn off your fan, take off the noisy jewelry, put your cat in the next room, and tack a note to your door that says "In Session—Do Not Disturb."

**Dress and grooming are as important on Skype as in person.** And that goes for both the client and the IEC! Approach each Skype session as though you were there in person and ask your clients to do the same. Nothing is more contradictory than saying "you are important to me" and then showing up online wearing sweats.

Pay attention to your background and setting. Try a test video run and take a long look at what shows up in the background behind

you. Many of us work from home offices but just across the hall is our kitchen, a bathroom, or a room where someone is watching TV. Take care to adjust your computer's camera to reflect a professional setting. Are there reflections on the screen or too much or too little light? Does your viewer see college pennants and diplomas or an open closet door and an unkempt office?

**In a recent survey, 41% of members say they use Skype with clients.**

If you are outside of your office, consider the setting you're working from. Video conferencing from a local coffee shop is a no-no, even if you can't be coherent before your first jolt of caffeine. I know it's tempting, but sitting by your pool while you dispense collegiate wisdom might not make you appear serious. And video conferencing from the salon where you're having your nails done? Well, you get the idea.

So, to use Skype or not to use Skype? Video sessions can be tremendous time-savers for clients and IECs alike, plus it's fun! Why not offer it to your students as an option and see what I mean? 🎧

*Jenny Buyens can be contacted at [colledge4u@gmail.com](mailto:colledge4u@gmail.com).*

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## Five Critical Elements to International Therapeutic Consulting

by Michelle Grappo, EdM, NCSP, IECA Associate Member (CO)



Whether you've been working with international clients for 1 year or 10, you will know that every case holds new challenges. We are constantly learning and growing in our practice, but following are some of the elements we have found important over the years.

### 1. Language

A fairly good command of English is necessary for students to engage successfully in a therapeutic program. The inability to speak English is a nonstarter. Although fluency is desirable, we have worked with students whose English is less than strong—which is sometimes tangled up in the cognitive abilities related to language. Still, it's prudent to manage parents' expectations around language. Many schools will not work with a student for whom English is going to be an issue because they simply do not have the expertise or resources. No one wants to leave a student unable to access basic communication, especially a student far from home and with limited English resources. Some schools will make exceptions and take a chance on a student with "enough" English, although what *enough* means varies. This is one area where an educational consultant's knowledge, experience, and advocacy skills are crucial.

### 2. Education (for parents)

Many international clients find us through a referring professional or a friend who has already explained the role of an educational consultant on a basic level. Others have found us through our website, but still have only a cursory understanding of our role. One of our first tasks is to help clients or potential clients understand what we do and how we do it, without overwhelming them with details. I am careful to discuss our qualifications and professional memberships and have found that sample scenarios are a great way to demonstrate our work, our expertise, and ultimately our value. International clients may not be familiar with the idea of *wilderness* or even *therapy*, so it's important to assess the client's prior knowledge and beliefs so those elements can be a scaffold for new information. A good rule of thumb: make no assumptions about prior knowledge.

### 3. Logistics

One of the key distinguishing factors to international work is setting and maintaining expectations around practical matters. The first, most obvious piece to this is visas. I am careful to remind families that I am not a legal expert; however, I can discuss my own experience with programs, such as wilderness experiences and therapeutic boarding schools. I also advise clients to consult with an immigration attorney with whom I have collaborated in the past, especially if the situation is complicated. Secondly, understanding

the family's hopes around program location and number of options is important. Some expectations must be managed immediately—no, there are no therapeutic boarding schools in Manhattan—while others may be more workable. You might vow to make a good faith effort to honor their requests while simultaneously advising them that you may have to look further afield.



### 4. Assessment

The first step for most of our international referrals is typically to obtain a good assessment. Some families come to us having worked with very skilled clinicians abroad, but that is rare. As with local clients, we often must utilize wilderness or other clinical assessment or stabilization programs. We maintain a (sadly short) list of qualified clinicians around the world to whom we refer clients for quality psycho-educational evaluations, although we arrange for most clients to do testing in the United States.

### 5. Communication

Much like with local clients, communication is key to working successfully on therapeutic or special needs cases in the international domain. International work, however, does require more sensitivity about issues ranging from the practical to the cultural. Extra attention must be paid to helping families understand the work we do as IECs and also the very ethos of therapeutic programs in the United States. It frequently requires more time and more patience, with careful listening, extensive educating, and a good dose of kindness. But when it all comes together, the young person inevitably has an opportunity for a life-changing experience that is unavailable to them abroad. It's difficult work, but it is high impact.

Michelle Grappo can be reached at [michelle@rnginternational.com](mailto:michelle@rnginternational.com).





## International Students & Summer Experiences: Important Considerations

by Jill Tipograph, MBA, IECA (NY)



The landscape of summer program options for students is rich with opportunities, yet very overwhelming—even more so for international families that choose to send their children to the US for summer experiences. To share greater insights on this important topic, I reached out to IECA colleagues and supporters who also work with this population. Our

combined input resulted in the following summary of key questions and considerations to use when evaluating US summer options for international students.

**What are the top summer goals families have for their international students?** The primary objectives we hear include prepping students for US boarding school and university admissions; improving English language proficiency; experiencing advanced coursework (e.g., research work and classes for college credit); developing stronger writing and communications skills; and experiencing life away from home, primarily in an academic setting. Those goals are often coupled with wanting better training in inferential reading and the opportunity to take TOEFL or SAT/SSAT tests in the summer.



Ideally, families want all of these. But international students need even more help in developing emotional and social skills. So often, parents do not focus on those areas of development. As part of our practice, IECs stress those skills as critical components of effective youth development (for all clients) and seek to use summer experiences that will enhance those areas.

Another goal is character development, which happens more often outside the classroom than inside it. In our opinion, camps provide this skill training better than other programs. Outdoor adventure programs that focus on leadership building are another option, especially for preteens. Whether a student is biking, hiking, kayaking,

climbing, camping, or participating in a collaborative activity where they need to tolerate and support others, team-building experiences personally challenge them and help to build character and 21st century skills. As **Hamilton Gregg**, IECA (China), noted, “For students in China, many have been deeply steeped in classwork preparing for the two main tests in the Chinese education system, (and) few have engaged in any meaningful extracurricular or outdoor activities (while this is changing there is a lack of experience beyond the intense classroom experience).”

- 16% of members do Gap Year placements
- 18% of members do Summer Placements

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**What are the types of summer programs that international families seek out most?** Boarding schools are very popular and are used to test out whether a campus or institution would be of interest for a student to attend. **Jennifer Bush Evans**, IECA (Singapore), said that families are looking for summer schools that will enrich their child academically and that have structured programs with nurturing environments and dorm parents. If a family plans to send their child to the United States for college, they'll also seek out precollege summer programs at the top tier universities. Some families may feel comfortable with third-party academic programs (those run by outside organizations renting space) whose courses and activities are offered at well-known universities or other appealing locations.

Slowly families are looking toward actual summer camps; which we believe is a wonderful summer start for younger students and the optimal time for them to develop and pursue passions and extracurricular activities. For international students, who are so often focused solely on academics, summer camps may be even more important to encourage and pursue. Gregg, however, pointed out that many program dates start too early for international students; for example, many Chinese students are in school until early July and summer camps typically begin the last week of June. But there are many camps and programs that offer options during the second half of the summer.

**What are the important academic skills that international students should work on over the summer?** International students who are planning to study in the United States face a multitude of shifts and transitions, including different cultures; language barriers; and, most notably, the requisite academic skills. Lisa Jacobson, founder

*continued on page 24*



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#### *Summer Experiences, from page 23*

and CEO of Inspirica, said that many of the international students who are applying to or preparing to attend US schools have a very limited knowledge of the English language and no exposure to an American educational institution. Her company creates customized summer programs to ensure that those students are able to meet the new educational demands. Initially, much of the work centers on mastery of the English language skills required to succeed in an English-speaking academic setting, including writing, reading, vocabulary, and grammar.

The summer is an optimal time for international students to prepare for their US educational program and also for standardized testing. This includes basic familiarity with a particular subject or exam, an intensive program with a focus on expertise, or some combination of the two. Customized one-on-one sessions provide the perfect opportunity to work with students on their weaknesses and strengths.

For families with students who are beginning the school/college application process, requests for TOEFL, SAT, and ACT test-preparation programs are common. For families with a student who has already been accepted to a US school, college, or university, the focus may be on improving the student's ability to effectively comprehend, communicate, and study within an English-speaking academic setting.

**What are the greatest concerns for an international student attending a US summer program?** Gregg's perspective is that they are not entirely prepared for the experience. It's hard to prepare for an English-focused program, "so they hang out with their Chinese peers." It is a tough transition and completely understandable. When traveling so far away from home, it is natural for students to gravitate to the more familiar.

Evans pointed out that students and parents may focus on brand name over fit, although "the right fit is the key to success." Considerations that play into the fit are program size and general age groupings. And especially for international students, it's important that there is a sizeable sample of other international students (from different countries) among the US students in the program. Cultural sensitivity is important.

Jacobson's concern is that they have limited English knowledge and US education exposure. She suggested, and I agree, that a summer immersion program is a perfect way for students to expand their academic skills, "as well as learn how to complete rudimentary assignments, such as writing a research papers or book reports."

I would add that logistics and application requirements and sometimes visas, are more often than not a stumbling block for international students. Proactively educating families and monitoring the process are part of our work to help better ensure student admissions. Other considerations include student learning vs. teaching styles.

#### **What information do families fail to ask about a summer program?**

There is so much more to planning a summer experience than it may seem at first. I often feel that families do not ask enough questions about the emotional, social, and residential parts of a program. They focus more on content and activities. International families are often





more interested in the name brand of the program, the kinds of classes, and how their child will benefit from the knowledge gained. Evans noted, "Families often need further clarity about the degree of specific programs. For instance: the different ESL options available or the level of reading comprehension offered and balancing that with what their child really needs." They also do not inquire enough about the size and structure of the program (e.g., what happens in down times?).

Some families are so single-minded and focused on "getting ahead" in academia that they forget to consider what their child's true passions are (or can be). From time to time, I work with students who don't even consider what they'd *like* to do, but rather focus on what they *should* do. Some students don't realize that they can do a program that aligns with their true passions and integrate it with academics. It also helps to work with families early on about medical forms and visas and travel; many often leave those tasks to the last minute, which ultimately can affect their child's enrollment.

**What do international students feel most and least prepared for in their summer program?** The IECs in this article work to prepare their students, so it is less likely they will feel unprepared; however, today's children and teens are very anxious. They fear the unknown and they worry. Their concerns, ironically, often become some of their positive outcomes. They're concerned they won't make friends, then they leave their programs with strong relationships. If a student attends a service program, they may fear they aren't experienced enough for the service, but then they leave feeling accomplished and confident. In our work, we're all focused on the right fit and achieving that goal of matching the correct student to the most appropriate program. Each summer is truly dependent on the last, with experiences accumulating to benefit a student. When working with preteens and young high school students, I make sure each subsequent summer is built as a stepping stone from the last one.

**What kind of summer experience feedback do you get from international students?** Most students return from a summer experience satisfied or even having had it exceed their expectations. It is very important to manage the student's and family's expectations so the outcome is positive. We discuss goals with our clients and remind them of those goals pre- and postsummer. My students often tell me they couldn't believe how the time flew by and that they found their experiences to be more rewarding than they anticipated. When I asked Gregg, he recalled a student from last year who went on a service trip in southern Montana and was surprised by the cultural similarities she shared with Native Americans. "They mature a lot during these summer months and it puts them in a very strong position academically, socially, and emotionally" said Evans. In her work, Evans found that students return with a sense of independence. I've also found that with my students, it's the smaller accomplishments and successes that build confidence and independence. 🦋

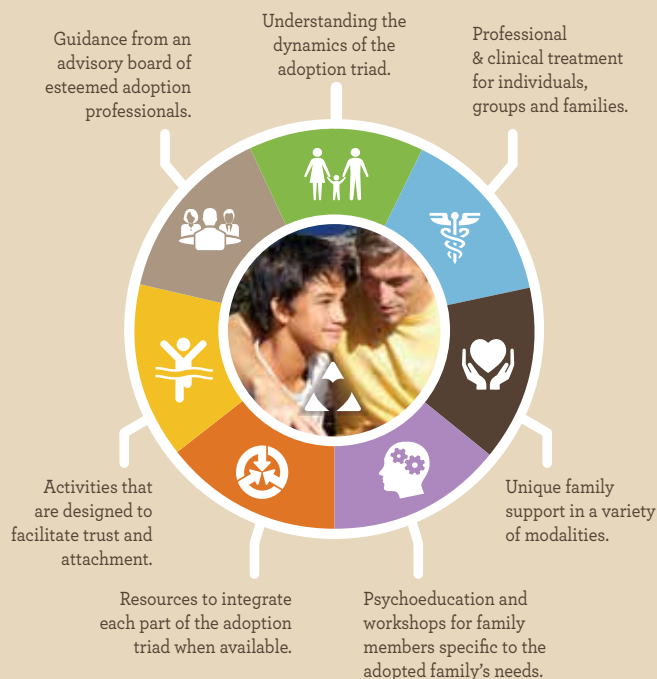
*Jill Tipograph, founder of Everything Summer & Beyond, LLC, can be reached at [jill@everythingsummer.com](mailto:jill@everythingsummer.com).*

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# Campus Visits



IECA school consultants on the Mid-Atlantic Boarding School Tour in April.

Left to right: Kim Chorosiewski (MA), Don McMillan (MA), Jody Dobson (PA), Pamela Tedeschi (MD), Muffy Fox (CT), Amanda Mallory (CA), Allison Matlack (MA), Clare Anderson (MD). Missing from photo: Patti Murphy (MD)

Schools visited: Blair Academy (NJ), Mercersburg Academy (PA), Peddie School (NJ), Episcopal High School (VA), St. Andrew's School (DE).



Several IECA members visited WinGate Wilderness Therapy in Utah in May.

Left to right: BJ Hopper (GA), Lindy Kahn (TX), Imy Wax (IL), and Pamela Jobin (CO).

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Rogers Memorial Hospital in Milwaukee recently hosted a group of IECA members for tours and attendance at their women's gathering in May.



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# Regional Groups

## Washington, DC

The MIX group met on June 25 to discuss the year in review. Their previous events this year included meeting with college reps from Bryant University, Birmingham-Southern College, Creighton University, Salisbury University, and York St. John University (located in York, England). In April, they met at George Mason University for a private information session with the Office of Admissions and a meeting with the director of University Career Services to learn more about the trends in career services, not only at George Mason but across the country. In February, they met with Art History Abroad, a program that provides gap year and summer opportunities for students to travel throughout Italy while learning about Italian art history and European civilizations. Contact: Kim Snyder Mehta [kim@knowyouroptions.net](mailto:kim@knowyouroptions.net)

## Orange County, CA

The Orange County group met on June 15. They discussed the changes in the SAT and admissions trends for the class of 2015. The group meets about four times a year. Contacts: Jane Ruane, [Jayne@mycollegeplan.net](mailto:Jayne@mycollegeplan.net) and Amberley Wolf [awolf@wolfcollegeconsulting.com](mailto:awolf@wolfcollegeconsulting.com)

## New England

The New England group met on June 22, with 14 attendees. Lisa Gelman presented "The Year in Review." Contact: Sarah McGinty at [sarahmcginty@att.net](mailto:sarahmcginty@att.net)



## San Diego

The San Diego group held their first meeting in May. "We are off to a strong start with the talented, passionate IECA members who attended the first meeting," said Jackie Woolley. They meet the second Thursday of each month from 10:00 to 11:30 a.m. Meetings include time for networking and a discussion topic or speaker.

Contacts: Jackie Woolley [summitcollegecounseling@gmail.com](mailto:summitcollegecounseling@gmail.com) and Gina Gerrato [edsupportbygina@aol.com](mailto:edsupportbygina@aol.com)



Pictured from left to right are Mary Taylor, Allison Molenaar, Jackie Woolley (co-leader), Gina Gerrato (co-leader), Dori Middlebrook, Marjorie Hansen Shaevit, Catherine McCarthy, Jennifer MacLure.

## Atlanta

The Atlanta group met on June 10 and more than 20 members attended. Contact: Christie Woodfin [cwoodfin@bestschoolforyou.com](mailto:cwoodfin@bestschoolforyou.com)







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## In the News

**Hamilton Gregg** (China) was quoted in the *Wall Street Journal's* June 6 article, "Cheating Concerns in Asia Cloud SAT Testing."

IECA and its *12 Questions to Ask Before Hiring an Independent Educational Consultant* publication were featured in the *Wall Street Journal's* June 3 article, "Should U.S. Expats Hire College Admissions Advisers for Teen Applicants?"

**Becky Grappo** (CO) was featured in the *Wall Street Journal Expat* edition on May 21 in the article "In Music, Expat Teens in Thailand Find a Home Away From Home" and on June 18 in the article "How to Make a Transition Abroad Easier on the Kids."

**Joan Casey's** (MA) letter to the editor in response to the article "Students Urged to Tamp Down Identity Are Being Sent Wrong Message" was published in the *Boston Globe* on June 5.

**Catherine Marrs** (TX) was interviewed by the local Dallas-Fort Worth CBS station regarding an admissions mix-up at Texas A&M Texarkana; it aired as the lead story on June 5. She was also interviewed for a Mansfield, TX, paper on parenting teens who are planning for college and was interviewed in the *Dallas Morning News* insert for the NACAC college fair in April.

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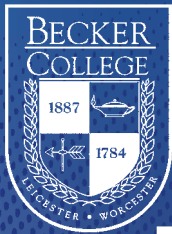
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# Introductions

## Please Welcome IECA's New Professional Members

**Samantha Bernstein** (NH), an independent educational consultant for three years and an IECA associate member for two years, specializes in finding small schools who will value what her clients have to offer. Most



of the students she works with are what she calls “quirky kids,”—high-functioning, high-IQ students who happen to have a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder or NLD. She is also an RN who currently works on an OB unit at a critical access hospital in rural New Hampshire.

Bernstein has a BA in Anthropology from the University of Colorado, a BSN from Simmons College (MA), and an MA in American Studies from Fairfield University (CT).

In 2013, she attended the IECA Summer Training Institute and has just finished a year serving on the IECA Schools Committee. In addition, she is a member of SBSA and NATSAP and has been a volunteer RN for an AmeriCares Clinic for the past three years.

She and her family recently moved into a cohousing community in Peterborough, NH. Her sons have attended junior boarding school for several years but are now being homeschooled.

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Specialty: S*

**Laura J. Blanche** (PA) has worked as an independent educational consultant for 4 years, has been an IECA associate member for 2 years, and served as a high school guidance counselor for 20, most recently



at Lower Moreland High School (PA) and previously at Herndon High School (VA). She holds an MEd from Clemson University and a BS in Education from George Mason University. She attended the 2013 IECA Summer Training Institute and participated in the 2015 webinars. Her professional memberships include NACAC, PACAC, PSCA, and MCCA.

In 2013–14 she conducted an extensive college tour and wrote *Blanche Tour: A High School Guidance Counselor's Journey While Visiting Seventy U.S. Colleges in One School Year* about her experience. In addition to consulting, she sits on the Bucks County Community College Guidance Counselor Advisory Board, the 2015 North Hills Country Club Women's Golf Board of Directors, and the North Hills Country Club General Membership Committee.

Blanche is married and has two children, ages 13 and 10. She enjoys watching them play soccer and lacrosse and loves to cross-train and play golf, including competing in the Women's Golf Association of Philadelphia. She and her family love to vacation on a lake in Maine.

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Specialty: C*

**Sarah Marcus Frederick** (PA) has been an IEC for five years and an IECA associate member; her professional experience includes serving as an admissions associate, a financial aid director, and a coach. She has



worked at The Hill School in Pottstown, PA, and earned a BA from Drew University. IECA webinars and sessions at the IECA conference in Baltimore have added to her training. She is a member of SSATB.

She and her husband, Matt, have three children, Quinn, Jordan, and Cole, and a three-year old Labradoodle. She coaches her daughters' field hockey and lacrosse teams and enjoys outdoor activities with her family, including golf, tennis, hiking, and swimming.

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Specialty: S*

continued on page 34

**Diana Rodgers** (MA) has worked as an independent educational consultant for eight years and has been an IECA associate member for the past year. She taught history and social studies for five years at Medway (MA) High School.

Rodgers earned a BA in history from Boston College, an MA in history from Carnegie Mellon University, and an MEd in Learning & Teaching/Instructional Leadership from Harvard University.

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**Juan-Camilo Tamayo** (FL) has been an IEC for 20 years. His experience includes coordinating international recruitment in the office of admissions at Clarke University in Dubuque, IA, where he also earned BAs in communications and in marketing, and working in the office of admissions at Lynn University in Boca Raton, FL, where he completed an MBA. His affiliations include NACAC, ACAC, OACAC, and CIS.

Tamayo is currently the vice president of government relations for OACAC. He received the CIS T. Michael Maybury Award at the 2010 CIS Forum in Mexico. In his free time, he loves to compete in triathlons and ultramarathons.

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**Lauren Westendorf** (OH) has worked as an independent educational consultant for three years. Her previous positions include associate director of College Guidance and coordinator of Lifeskills Programming at Laurel School, an independent day school for girls; assistant director of domestic admission at Berklee College of Music; and assistant director of Admission and Financial Aid at Muhlenberg College.

Westendorf earned a BA in Psychology with extensive course work in the sciences from Muhlenberg College, has attended an IECA conference, and is looking forward to attending the 2015 Summer Training Institute in July. She is a member of NACAC.

While at the Laurel School, Westendorf developed a new curriculum for the Lifeskills program designed to empower Laurel girls to implement strategies of self-care; sharpen decision making; explore nutrition and fitness; and learn about mental and emotional health, substance abuse and prevention, women's health, and public speaking.

Originally from the Pocono Mountain-area of Pennsylvania, Westendorf now makes her home in Ohio. She is the proud mother of a 15-month-old son and is married to her college sweetheart.

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## Why I Belong

Everyone likes a sense of belonging; after all, practicing as an IEC can be a lonely business, one that demands knowledge and relevance. With a healthy need for sharing and collaboration, I searched for a group of expertly qualified, like-minded professionals. Unsure about what I was getting myself into, I decided to attend IECA's Summer Training Institute. I was blown away by the quality of the sessions, the IECA staff, the faculty, and my fellow STI classmates. I knew immediately that I wanted to participate in a deeper, more meaningful way.



Coming from a non-traditional background of engineering, followed by business and marketing, I needed a comfortable, trustworthy environment to swap notes on business procedures and marketing techniques. Because of IECA's thoughtful membership requirements and welcoming inclusive culture, it was unintimidating to take the next steps to become a professional member. I longed to belong

to a professional group that shares my views on subjects like ethics, the importance of fit, and the essence of a student centric process. Each time I return from an IECA conference, tour, or event, I become energized and can't wait to implement innovative tools, add new contacts to my social network, and follow up on the latest trends and best business practices. Now, when my parents ask about the IECA logo on my website, I proudly explain what the logo represents and the assurances and benefits they receive by virtue of my membership.

Leaning on the old adage that there is strength in numbers, I feel emboldened by my small contribution to our shared calling of serving students and their families. I am proud and humbled to belong to this immensely talented group. Our profession is viable and growing and will continue to do so as long as we collectively share our important mission in a consistent and relevant way.

—**Susan Dabbar** (TX)



## Initiatives

**Sally McGinty** (MA) wrote a new book with The College Board, *The College Application Essay/50 College Admission Directors Speak to Parents*, which is available in the IECA Bookstore.

**Carolyn Mulligan** (NJ) and **Geri Perkal** (NJ) presented on a panel at the NJACAC Annual Conference in Atlantic City on June 1 with J. T. Duck, director of admissions at Swarthmore College; Kate Balboni, regional admissions representative from the University of South Carolina; Alex Trempus, assistant director of admissions from American University; and Claire Cafaro of Clear Directions. Their topic was Understanding the Role of Independent Educational Consultants and the Expansion of Collaboration with Admissions Professionals. It was very well received.

On April 30, 2015, Associate Member **Marla Bark Dembitz** (IL) spoke at Congregation Beth Shalom, sponsored by Hillel International and Hillel at the University of Illinois Urbana/Champaign, on the topic of Choosing a College from the Jewish Perspective.

Associate member **Linda Katz** (MA) was one of the presenters in a four-hour pre-conference session at the NEACAC conference at Roger Williams University, titled, Students with Learning Disabilities: How to Understand and Support Their Needs Through the College Application Process.

**Karen Curreri** (CA) served on a panel of presenters in May in Arlington, VA. She spoke to military children of fallen heroes about the college search, application, and admission processes. The event marked the 21st annual Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors Seminar. Children and teens attended from all over the country.

**Kristin White** (CT) presented How to Get Into Your Top Choice Boarding School or Day School on June 22.

---

*Choose an independent educational consultant very carefully: Foremost in your consideration of IECs—as both SAS and IECA emphasize—is their degree of relevant experience, educational background, professional integrity, and what they do on an ongoing basis to stay current in their knowledge of college campuses and admissions trends.*

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—*The Wall Street Journal*, June 3, 2015



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**INSIGHTS** August / September 2015



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**Inside the Member-to-Member Section:**



- Strategic Thinking Is Focus of IECA Finance Committee
- Essay Season
- Arizona Pre-Conference Tours





*The IECA Foundation is the force that leverages the knowledge, professional skills, and funds of IECA members, sponsors, and donors to help underserved students map pathways to success.*

## 2015 Grantee Profile: Sundog Theatre

*From Susan Fenley, Sundog Theatre Executive Director*

The IECA Foundation's \$5,000 grant to Sundog Theatre supports its 3-D Literacy Program at five schools on Staten Island, which lasts for approximately three months twice a week in three 3rd and 4th grade classrooms at each school. Seventy-three percent of students participating in this program last year increased their reading by three to nine levels. No small feat, being that many of the students are special education, English Language Learners and those needing help with reading.

Sundog's program incorporates movement and vocal exercises, theatre and focusing games, improvisation, vocabulary, emotional connection exercises, and scene writing. Sundog's teaching artists also use pantomime enhanced by theatrical lights and shadows and a vocabulary word machine. Approaching literacy through these methods uses the way the brain stores information and connects it to a word's meaning and related emotion. It is active—not passive—learning.

3-D Literacy is a carefully designed program that integrates studies on neural systems and novelty, making literacy learning a physical experience filled with imaginative, surprising, and stimulating games designed to catch and retain students' attention. As a result, they remember what they learn for a longer period of time.

Once students have a better idea how to learn, this program has added benefits in addition to literacy progression. These include more positive peer interactions, leadership skills, and teamwork. It also prepares children with career and personal skills they can use for future success in school and life.



Through theatre, the program increases reading comprehension and vocabulary, and fosters imagination and creativity for elementary grade students with special needs. Self-awareness and more confidence follow.

In the process, students learn rehearsal, stage design and presentation skills – all connected to the discipline of theatre.

The program culminates in a final performance at the end of the year.

Student comments include: "It taught me to express my feelings." (Nehemiah) "It inspired us." (Tahlyia) and "We love the punctuation people." (Rigel)

Principal Elise Feldman of PS 41 says, "3-D Literacy has empowered our students to have confidence in their abilities to break apart a text, focusing on the vocabulary and sentence structure being used as well as the underlying message. 3D Literacy is a program that enhances all components of the ELA instruction block." Melissa Fischer, a teacher from PS 39 says, "Students were much more articulate with one another." Assistant Principal Cynthia Leonard, from PS 44 talks about her special education participants: "In one class, for example, 36% of students increased two reading levels during the course of the 15 week program and 18% of students increased three reading levels. Even more astounding is that one student in this class, a student with Autism Spectrum Disorder, went up four reading levels during the 15 weeks of the program. Her mother cried tears of joy."



## 2015 Grantee Profile: Puget Creek Restoration Society

*From Angela Han, IECA Foundation Executive Director*

Puget Creek flows through the North End neighborhood of Tacoma, Washington. Along with its accompanying watershed, the creek is an important habitat for wildlife and is one of the only salmon-bearing streams in the area. Sadly, over the years habitat degradation has decreased the water flow and substantially reduced flora and fauna. By the early 1990s almost no salmon were present in Puget Creek.

In the mid-1990s a group of volunteers embarked on an effort to protect, enhance, and restore the watershed. This led to the establishment of the Puget Creek Restoration Society in 2000. Their hands-on restoration efforts have had observable results: a quarter of the watershed has been cleaned of trash and invasive species, the salmon population has surged, wildlife (hawks, eagles, coyotes, etc.) not seen in ten years have returned, and thousands of community members have engaged in environmental efforts.



PCRS is dedicated to involving the entire community in its work. In 2011 PCRS partnered with Tacoma Public Schools to pilot an outdoor STEM education program; it has now expanded to five area school districts, engaging students who are often at risk, disabled, or lack exposure to a natural environment. Naturalists bring students into the watershed, engaging them in hands-on activities and emphasizing interaction with the outdoors. Activities include learning how to identify native and invasive plants, conduct water quality testing, and record scientific observations. The IECA Foundation's grant supports their work with fourth and fifth grade students.

"Small Investments, Big Impact" is the Foundation's theme this year, and the grant to Puget Creek Restoration Society embodies this perfectly. Our \$5,000 grant supports a program coordinator to manage PCRS's education work with over 1,500 students and 250 teachers.



August / September 2015

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Thank you to these donors for their support in 2015!

as of June 15, 2015

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## Save the Date: November 6, 2015

Scottsdale conference attendees, mark Friday, November 6 on your calendars for the Foundation's reception! This special fundraising event will be an opportunity to celebrate and connect again with the Foundation. Those interested in sponsoring the event please contact Angela Han ([angela@iecafoundation.org](mailto:angela@iecafoundation.org)).

Connect with the IECA Foundation

