



SAT and ACT Accommodations Update

page 3



SPECIAL FOCUS
Graduate School
Advising

- Online master's in engineering
- Master of management degrees



Spreading the IECA way in China

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February/March 2017

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INSIGHTS

The Newsletter of the Independent Educational Consultants Association

Calendar (

February 14

Spring Conference registration opens

Webinar: A Beginner's Guide to Self-Publishing

February 20

President's Day, National Office Closed

March 1-3

Therapeutic Workshop: Integrating Mindfulness, Brain-Based, and Somatic Techniques Into Your Personal and Professional Work, AZ

March 14

Webinar: Changing Role of Disability Documentation in Transition to College

March 22

IECA at Small Boarding School Conference

April 11

Webinar: Preparing High School Students for Careers in 2020

April 21-25

IECA at SACAC/TACAC/ RMACAC Conference

May 8-10

Campus Tours, CO

May 10-13

IECA Spring Conference, Denver

May 13

IECA Board of Directors Meets

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Reaching New Heights in Education, Admission, and Service to Adolescents

By Mark Sklarow, CEO, IECA

Gathering a mile above sea level for the spring conference inspires IECA to take a birds-eye view of the state of admission, adolescent issues and concerns, and the expansive education and advising world. Denver, Colorado, marks a unique locale for the IECA national gathering and an amazing, innovative program awaits attendees.

reps and independent educational consultants (IECs) alike can apply Z-friendly practices to their work.

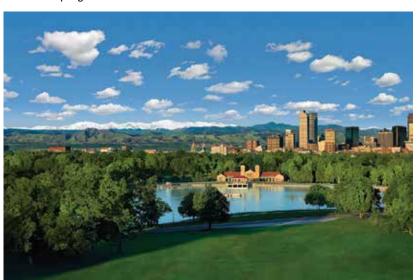
On Friday, the keynote will be given by Mark Katz, author of the acclaimed *Children Who Fail at School but Succeed at Life* (2016, W. W. Norton) and *On Playing a Poor Hand Well* (1997). Katz

will explore how to prevent or overcome the behavioral, psychological, and health-related effects of adverse childhood experiences.

In addition, Dr.
Raymond Kotwicki's
Master Class on
Saturday will interest
all those who work
with adolescents and
young adults and
are on the front line
for recognizing risk
factors. He will help
attendees identify and

differentiate students who may have a mental illness or substance abuse disorder from those who exhibit developmentally appropriate behaviors.

Pre-conference opportunities abound, including tours of schools, programs, and college campuses from Wyoming to Colorado. IECA is especially excited to announce a joint effort with School Connections to offer a full-day workshop on Tuesday, allowing IECs and school admission



Two renowned authors will give attendees a remarkable opportunity to explore critical topics. In Wednesday's session, Corey Seemiller will help us all turn our attention away from millennials to look at today's pre-teens and teens: the so-called generation Z. Considered one of the country's top experts on this generation, Seemiller is the author of *Generation Z Goes to College* (2016, Jossey-Bass) and a professor of leadership at the University of Arizona. After her large-group presentation, Seemiller will offer a breakout on how admission

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President's Letter

Give-and-Take

IECA is a give-and-take association: as members, we give to the Association through building professional and mentoring relationships with other members, taking on roles as educators, representing our association at events, belonging to or heading regional or special interest groups, and assuming responsibilities of leadership within our committees and Board. So, although we are a membership association, many of us would say that we are also an association of volunteers.

The first—and most important—part of this message is to thank all of you for the contributory roles you play within our association. We have a talented and dynamic staff led by a dynamo of a CEO, but the Association relies on your contributions to our programs and sense of professional cohesiveness. Your time, energy, and enthusiasm are truly appreciated.

And we need that expertise and energy as committees revamp for 2017–2018! This message is, in part, a call-out to those who might be interested in stepping forward for committee work in the coming year. If you have a special interest or would like to have your voice heard within the Association, please let us know. Although some positions are limited to professional member status, associate members can find ways to contribute as well. You can contact me, a Board member, the office, or a current committee chair to express your interest.

This is also a call-out asking all of you to participate in an important survey that will be distributed to members in the coming months. In implementing our strategic plan, IECA will engage an external consultant to look at each of the components of our organizational structure to determine what changes are necessary to ensure that we are properly staffed and structured to meet the evolving needs of our membership.



Ann Rossbach

Our programs and decision making must reflect members' needs and expectations. Your voice in shaping the future of IECA matters—and so your response to the survey or interview is crucial.

I am writing this while attending the retreat in Tampa (part of the "take"); the opportunity to learn alongside such an impressive group of peers from around the country has been truly enjoyable. I have been reminded here of the give-and-take that helps to drive the success of our dynamic association. And I can only hope that same spirit will continue as our membership grows

Ann Rossbach, MAT, IECA President



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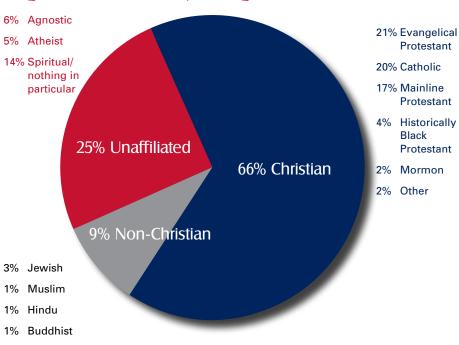
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In Focus

Religious Affiliation of Today's College Students



Source: Pew Research Center, Religion & Public Life 2017

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3% Other

Streamlined Accommodations Processes for SAT and ACT

By Jed Applerouth, CEO Applerouth Tutoring



Changes are afoot in the word of testing accommodations, with both the College Board and ACT streamlining their accommodations request processes. Because of these changes, more of your students will be able to take the SAT and ACT tests with accommodations and will have an easier time gaining access to those accommodations.

The testing giants are making these bold moves in response to changes in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and increased scrutiny from the Department of Justice (DOJ), enforcers of the ADA. Signaling a new era of enforcement against testing companies, DOJ's Civil Rights Division became involved in a lawsuit against the creators of the law school admissions test (LSAT). As a result of the suit, which alleged widespread and systemic discrimination under the ADA, the LSAT's creators eventually agreed to make comprehensive reforms to their accommodations process and to

Because more students are taking statesponsored SAT and ACT tests than at any time in history and because the government is taking an increasingly active enforcement role, ensuring fair access to all students is more important than ever.

The Amended ADA and **Revised DOJ Regulations**

compensation.

In 2008, Congress passed amendments to the ADA to affirm that the term disability should be broadly construed under the law. In August 2016, DOJ published updates to its corresponding

regulations, reflecting the amended ADA and outlining new guidance for testing companies.

Testing companies are now on notice that they must remove burdensome procedures and other obstacles to seeking and receiving testing accommodations. Documentation of evidence for a disability, if required, should be reasonable and limited, and "repeated costly testing" should be minimized. Proof of past testing accommodations should suffice for securing similar accommodations on other high-stakes tests. In addition, testing agencies must expedite the submission and decision process for accommodations.

Perhaps the most noteworthy aspect of the new guidance is the focus on school-based accommodations as a potential determining factor for high-stakes testing companies. Students who receive testing accommodations in their high school (under an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or a Section 504 Plan for public school students and under formal plans in private schools) should "generally receive the same testing accommodations for a current standardized exam or high-stakes test" (See www.ada. gov/regs2014/testing_accommodations.pdf for more information). Students with disabilities who have never had a formal testing plan but have received informal school-based accommodations may also be eligible to receive accommodations on high-stakes tests.

DOJ estimates that tens of thousands of additional students will be eligible to receive testing accommodations because of these new guidelines.

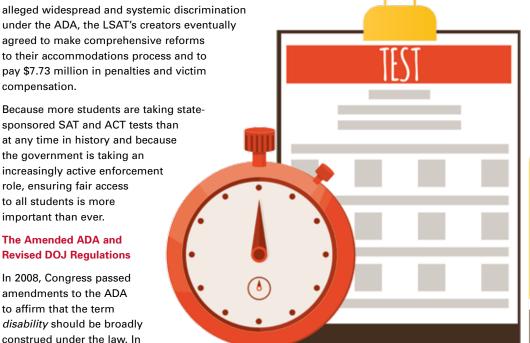
The SAT and ACT Respond

In summer 2016, even before DOJ published its updated regulations, ACT overhauled its

> accommodations system, shifting to an online model and placing the high school's test accommodations coordinator at the center of the process.

Shortly after DOJ published its updated regulations, both the College Board and ACT announced updated policies for accommodations.

In November, ACT, announced streamlined accommodations for designated English language learners (as defined by the Every Student Succeeds Act), who can apply through their high school counselor's office to automatically receive testing supports for the ACT test, including extended time, language supports, and testing in a



separate room.

In December, the College Board matched all the accommodations that ACT offered to English language learners and made a sweeping change for students with disabilities: beginning January 1, 2017, for the SAT, PSAT, APs and SAT subject tests, the College Board will automatically approve testing accommodations for the majority of students who are approved for and use testing accommodations in their schools. The College Board is moving to a greatly simplified "two-question" process:

- Is the requested accommodation(s) in the student's plan?
- Has the student used the accommodation(s) for school testing?

According to a College Board press release on 12/1/16, the answers to these two questions will determine whether the requested accommodations will be granted:

continued on page 6

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Conference, from page 1

representatives to meet for a series of one-on-one meetings. Another Tuesday offering is a day-long pre-conference program on suicide that will allow attendees to gain a certificate in detecting and advising students suffering from suicidal thoughts. Three half-day workshops just prior to the opening general session on Wednesday will examine college affordability, learning differences, and personal growth.

Breakouts were carefully chosen to ensure that attendees, from all backgrounds and specialties, will have exceptional choices and occasions to learn, grow, and discuss. Both IECs and all related professionals—school and college admission officers, therapeutic program leaders, and therapists—will find scores of choices from Wednesday to Friday.

Of course, networking and sharing campus information remains an important part of the conference experience and our enhanced Conference Central—so popular at the fall gathering—returns. Our Thursday night reception will bring to life much of what makes Colorado an outdoor lovers' paradise, with exciting interactive opportunities for the adventurers as well as relaxing places to gather with friends and meet new colleagues.

For many IECA members—old and new—it is the members-only pre-conference dinner that makes for a special opening to all conferences. As has become a popular tradition, IECA will take over one of the hottest restaurants in Denver, overseen by celebrity chef Richard Sandoval. Located in Denver's historic LoDo district, attendees can walk or grab one of the city's free downtown 16th street shuttles available just a few steps from the hotel's front door.

Members will also get to experience a renewed Annual Meeting on Friday that will examine all that's going on with the profession, new plans by IECA, and a celebration of members' achievements.

With pre-conference events, excellent speakers, networking, the exhibit hall, breakout educational sessions, and the Master Class, the conference promises to be an exceptional examination of topics that can make a direct and immediate impact on all attendees' professional lives.

Pre-conference Offerings Include Boarding School "Speed Dating"

Plan to arrive in Denver, CO, well-rested because the adventures at the spring conference start immediately with five high-quality pre-conference workshops!

TUESDAY, MAY 9

School Connections

8:00 a.m.-5:30 p.m. • For IECs and school representatives

IECA partners with School Connections to offer IECA members an opportunity to visit with 20 boarding schools for 25-minute one-on-one discussions in a speed-dating format—for free. Registration includes a Monday night reception, a hotel room for Monday night, and a meal and refreshments on Tuesday. Contact School Connections at http://schoolconnections.org/upcoming-workshops/denver-co for details and to register.

Talking Suicide: Suicide Prevention Training

9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. • For IECs and school/college representatives

A full-day workshop in two parts, begins with Living Works safeTALK offering a half-day alertness training to prepare IECs and school reps to become suicide alert helpers who can recognize invitations for help and connect students with intervention resources. In the afternoon, attendees will use case studies, including drafts of college essays with suicidal threats or an applicant's experience with threats from friends and loved ones, to discuss suicide in the admissions process. With the help of a college admissions officers, attendees will also cover confidentiality and reporting.

Timothy Brown, Living Works; Brittany Slaughter, Elon University; Elizabeth Stone, IECA

WEDNESDAY, MAY 10

Building Affordability Planning Into Your Practice: A Hands-On Training Workshop

8:30-11:30 a.m. • For IECs

Do you dread having the college affordability talk with your clients? This workshop will show you how to begin the conversation, help families find their expected family contributions (EFCs), evaluate colleges' net price calculators, and more. Members of the Affordability Subcommittee will conduct the workshop and a financial aid representative will provide the college perspective.

Katelyn Klapper and Cyndy McDonald, IECA

Strengths Discovery: Unleash Your Talents

8:30-11:30 a.m. • For all attendees

Learn how to nurture and develop your strengths and natural talents to maximize your confidence, direction, and sense of purpose. Attendees will complete the Clifton Strengths Finder before the session (available at www.gallupstrengthscenter.com) and bring their Signature Themes Report to the session.

Sarah Engel, Regis University

Working With College-Bound Students With Learning Differences

8:30-11:00 a.m. For all attendees

Using case studies and practical materials, you'll learn more about how to work with students who have learning disabilities, evaluate colleges' learning services and programs, and prepare for the best possible placements for your clients. The session will also address the requisite competencies for IECs who work with students with learning disabilities.

Kyle Kane and Joan Wittan, IECA

For more information on the conference, including the full list of breakout sessions, and to register, go to www.IECAOnline.com/conferences.html.

Accommodations, from page 3

If the answer is yes to both questions, eligible students can be approved to receive most accommodations on College Board exams. This new process is expected to reduce the approval time for an overwhelming majority of accommodation requests.

This shift is a clear signal that the College Board intends to conform to DOJ's new guidance. If the high school grants the accommodation, the College Board will effectively fall in line. A public school student who receives accommodations through a current IEP or 504 Plan can typically expect to have the same accommodations approved for the SAT, PSAT, SAT Subject Tests, and AP exams. This same policy applies to private school students with formal school-based plans that meet College Board criteria. This approach should streamline the entire process, minimize the need for submission of additional documentation, and save resources for all involved.

Implications

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As we move forward, more students are going to receive testing accommodations and the process will be quicker and less cumbersome. Some questions remain, but we expect many of them to be resolved in ways that make the process less burdensome. Will ACT follow the direction of the College Board and move toward a "two-question" process that largely defers to what the school has already implemented? How long must a school-based plan be in place before the testing giants will defer to that plan? The College Board has given priority to students who have at least four months of school-based accommodations, whereas ACT has given priority to students who have a full year of documented school accommodations. Will those

time frames change in this new era of enhanced accessibility?

Another issue is how recent a student's psychological and educational testing must be. The College Board has previously required that such testing be no more than five years old, while the ACT wanted testing conducted within the last three years. Under the College Board's new two-question system, will the recentness of testing be a factor? And will ACT adopt a more liberal policy and allow older testing?

Perhaps the most noteworthy aspect of the new guidance is the focus on school-based accommodations as a potential determining factor for high-stakes testing companies.

Even as the finer details come into focus, one thing remains clear: for your students who have formal testing plans in place at their high schools, things should be getting a whole lot easier this year, particularly for students applying for accommodations on College Board tests. We are moving to a new model where the center of power is shifting, for better or for worse, to the high schools and away from a distant panel of reviewers. We must encourage our students to work closely with their school's disability office and seek accommodations on high school tests as soon as a disability is identified, as well as encourage their self-advocacy in this process.

Jed Applerouth can be reached at jed@applerouth.com.

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Special Focus: Grad School Advising

Online Graduate Engineering Programs

By Stephen Asztalos, PhD, IECA (CA)



Because of the combined pressures of technology, cost, and convenience, it seems inexorable that online graduate programs would eventually penetrate the higher education market. Indeed, online master's engineering programs are on the verge becoming commonplace, but certainly not to the degree that they have become an

indispensable, or even common, staple in an IEC's toolkit. With the appearance of numerous well-regarded online programs, however, it is a propitious time to survey the field. For the sake of specificity, I will restrict myself to online engineering master's degrees, although I imagine that the conclusions drawn can readily be extrapolated to other disciplines. To my knowledge, there are no credible online PhD programs in the country, at least in the engineering disciplines.

Distance Education

Online education falls under the broader rubric of distance education, which has a longer history than might be naively anticipated: the first recorded instance of distance learning occurred in the 1840's in England, when Sir Isaac Pitman established a series of correspondence colleges that taught shorthand via the exchange of postcards and transcription between teacher and student. Fast forward 150 years to the appearance of the world's first fully online university, the Open University of Catalonia in 1994, followed five years later by the equivalent in the United States, only 10 years after the creation of the World Wide Web. By 2011 it was estimated that one out of every three postsecondary students had taken an accredited online course. In the physics department at Cal State East Bay where I teach, online courses were first offered in 2012 and now comprise about 20% of our course offerings. (My online astronomy course regularly draws nearly double that of an identical on-campus course.)

It is only natural that online master's programs would enter the scene later than their undergraduate counterparts. Although it wasn't possible to construct an exact timeline, it's safe to say that there were few, if any, accredited online master's courses prior to 2005. Acceptance has been slow, but steady. A casual search of the Internet these days reveals dozens of online master's programs in engineering, including those from the country's most prestigious graduate programs. Arizona State University (ASU) has offered graduate engineering online courses for 16 years and has a strong online advertising presence.

I contacted a staff member from the Ira A. Fulton School of Engineering at ASU, which according to its website is ranked at 14 out of more than 80 other online engineering graduate programs. For the sake of specificity, I focused on their materials science master's degree. In ensuing conversation and email exchanges, I learned that online students are allowed up to six years to complete a nominal two-year MS degree in material science. As many as 12 of the 30 units required for completion of the graduate degree can be transferred in (if they have been taken within the past three years, a B or better has been earned, and they have not been applied to another degree program). The 2016-17 materials science cohort is 20 students, with 362 students overall enrolled in 10 online graduate engineering programs.



Advantages

Clearly, the major advantage afforded by an online degree is convenience. According to ASU's website, a vast majority of online graduate degree seekers are currently employed—what could be more inconvenient than quitting a potentially good paying job and possibly relocating for school? Then there's the added convenience of not having to commute to campus. Where I teach, it is not uncommon for students to travel more than an hour in each direction to attend class—two hours that could, in principle, be put to much more productive use. Of course, not quitting a job and not commuting have their own implications, such as the need to carve out time to do the work and not be sidelined by distractions.

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Grad School Advising



Engineering, from page 7

Disadvantages

What are some disadvantages of an online program? Surprisingly, cost falls into this category. The cost (tuition plus fees) per unit for an online graduate degree in engineering at ASU is roughly \$1,000, which is nearly three times that for an in-state resident attending class on campus. Another important drawback is the lack of personal interaction with faculty. Even more important is the lack of access to lab facilities—hands-on learning being one of the main reasons why students pursue an engineering degree in the first place. In fact, it is the cutting-edge tools available on campus and the physical ties with industry that make engineering programs so worthwhile.

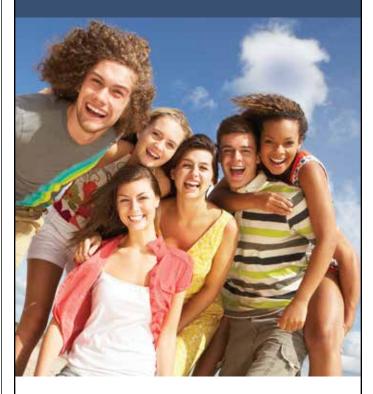
Good Candidates

Who is a likely candidate for an online master's degree? An employed engineering degree holder looking for some sort of edge. Cursory investigation shows that an overwhelming majority (greater than 95%) of students who pursue online master's degrees in engineering are already employed. That corroborates my own experience that engineering master's degrees are generally pursued to either increase one's knowledge or marketability in a field that is closely aligned with their undergraduate degree. This includes individuals who have hit a knowledge barrier or have sufficient technical knowledge but are otherwise unable to distinguish themselves for promotion. Conversely, I would not suggest an online program to a recent BS recipient who was not employed—an online degree represents a significant cash outlay at a time when there is no money coming in. I would counsel the student to wait a year or two after becoming employed to see whether he or she still sees the benefit and whether his or her technical interests have shifted.

Based on what I've learned, would I advise a client to consider an online engineering master's degree? Yes, but with significant caveats. My client would have to be employed, not looking to use the degree to change fields, clearly articulate why he or she needs an advanced degree, fully understand the limitations intrinsic to this type of degree, and have a schedule for completion within a reasonable time frame. Many students pursue master's degrees without proper guidance and context, and the proliferation of online options only seems to increase the propensity to do so. Finally, there is the question of program quality. Although any one of the top 50 programs should be able to deliver quality lectures—the heart of an online education—there may be significant differences in the extent of less-tangible factors, such as student engagement. It is worth spending some time examining these nonacademic factors before choosing a program.

Stephen Asztalos, Academically Speaking, can be reached at steve@academicallyspeaking.com.





Gain a Competitive Edge This Summer

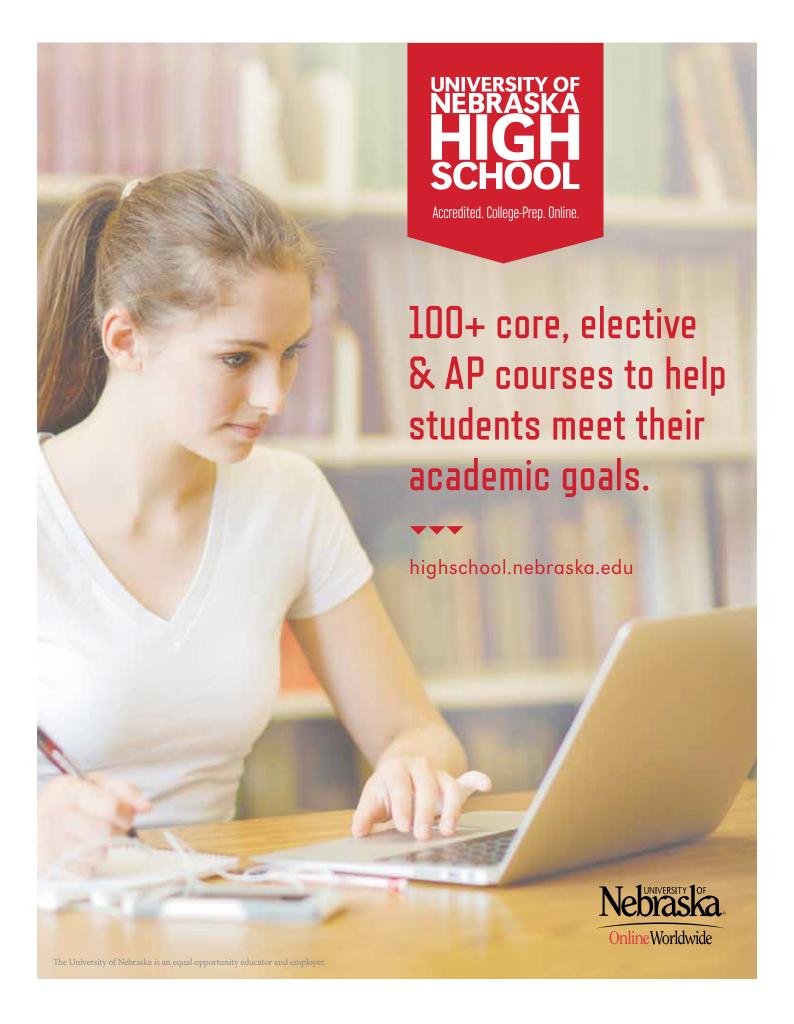
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Grad School Advising



Master of Management

By Whitney Laughlin, EdD, IECA (Canada)



The Master of Management (aka, MIM, MM, MMgt, MMS, MSc in Management) is a one- to two-year program for students from a wide variety of academic disciplines that covers a

broad range of topics in business management, typically with a focus on leadership. In many programs, students may have the

option to concentrate in or specialize in several areas, such as accounting, finance, entrepreneurship, human resources, international business, and marketing. Some may also include internships or on-the-job placements to help prepare the student for the workplace. The MIM is tailor-made for the liberal arts graduate who wants a business degree before their first "real" job. With an MIM, they would typically be considered for more than an entry-level position because of the leadership and management background the degree provides.

What Is an MIM?

Like the MBA, MIM programs are competitive for entry and require a bachelor's degree, with a

competitive GPA (3.3–3.5 approximately). Some require a GMAT (or GRE) score (usually 600–700), but many programs will weigh the undergraduate coursework and GPA more heavily than the GMAT/GRE score. Unlike the MBA, however, students can



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apply right out of college or university with limited professional experience (usually one year of work or its equivalent in summer employment), if any. The average age of the MIM student is typically younger (20–27) than that of the MBA student (27–32) because of the MBA program's minimum requirement of 2–3 years of work in the field. MIM programs are also less expensive and of shorter duration.

Some MIM programs require an economics or business background or at least some quantitative coursework in statistics, finance, economics, or accounting; however, the majority do not—and many actually require that the applicant did not major in business as an undergraduate. Requirements and preferences vary widely by country and by program. Students can later continue for an MBA, with some programs even offering that possibility with credit to forego the first year's courses of the MBA or a leg up to their own MIM graduates.

The MIM is relatively new in the United States; programs in Europe, Asia, Australia, and Canada are more established. One way to assess the quality of a program is through rankings, such as those available at www.mim-compass.com/Rankings. Notice that the first 54 schools on the list are indeed outside of North America—although the majority offer their coursework in English—with #55 (UBC/Sauder) and #59 (Queen's/Smith) in Canada. Only one US school is even listed: #82 ASU/Carey. Some other good programs also worth mentioning in North America are Western/Ivey and York/Schulich in Canada, as well as Babson, Duke/Fuqua, Michigan/Ross, Rochester/Simon, Thunderbird, and Tulane/Freeman in the

continued on page 13



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Grad School Advising



Management, from page 11

US. Please note that their programs have distinct focuses, such as entrepreneurial leadership and global management.

Typical program requirements are an interview (most likely by Skype); a demonstration of strong analytical and communication skills; a personal statement (often including the "why us?" question); a CV and two references, one academic and one employment; and GMAT or GRE scores. Application deadlines are typically late October to mid-December.

A Student Profile

A profile of one of my MIM applicants this year is Simon (not his real name), a German citizen. I worked with him when he was in a private high school in Victoria, BC. He was a year young for his grade and although very bright—with 4s and 5s on AP's, including BC Calculus—he was a bit immature. Both he and his parents felt that a gap year would be a great idea.

He spent his gap year back in Germany working as a teacher's assistant with gifted students as well as those with learning differences. He also worked as an assistant to the occupational therapy team in a senior's residence, with a focus on those who were comatose and those with dementia. The summer before university, Simon worked as a sales person at a local clothing retailer, experiences that not only built character, maturity, and people skills but also planted the seeds for the future.

When I asked Simon why he didn't want to consider returning to Germany for university he replied, "I am a much nicer person in English." That cracked me up, but for him, it was probably quite true! He was keenly interested in neuropsychology and in going to school in the UK, having already experienced Canada and Germany. He will graduate this spring from the University of Glasgow with a BS Honours in Psychology. His accent is a charming combination of Scottish, Canadian, and hint of German.

The past two summers, Simon was introduced to the business world at Ernst & Young's German headquarters in Frankfurt, where he learned a great deal about fundamental and advanced accounting processes as well as event planning and execution. While at the University of Glasgow, he has been operations coordinator for TEDx, organizer of three Mental Health at the Workplace conferences in Scotland, and community ambassador (i.e., RA) for his dorm.

Simon writes in one of his personal statements: "In my internships with Ernst & Young I visited many different workplaces, some with healthy working environments, and some with anything but. It is my goal to improve those latter workplaces: the ones that suffocate even the best employees with their toxic atmosphere, rendering them unable to deliver work up to their full potential. To create the best solutions possible, I will need to understand the business perspective as well. The MIM programme is a perfect fit for my ambitions, as it does not require previous business experience but will still equip me with the tools and knowledge

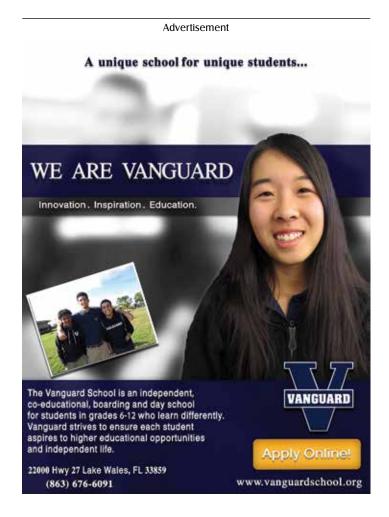
necessary to pursue my goals."

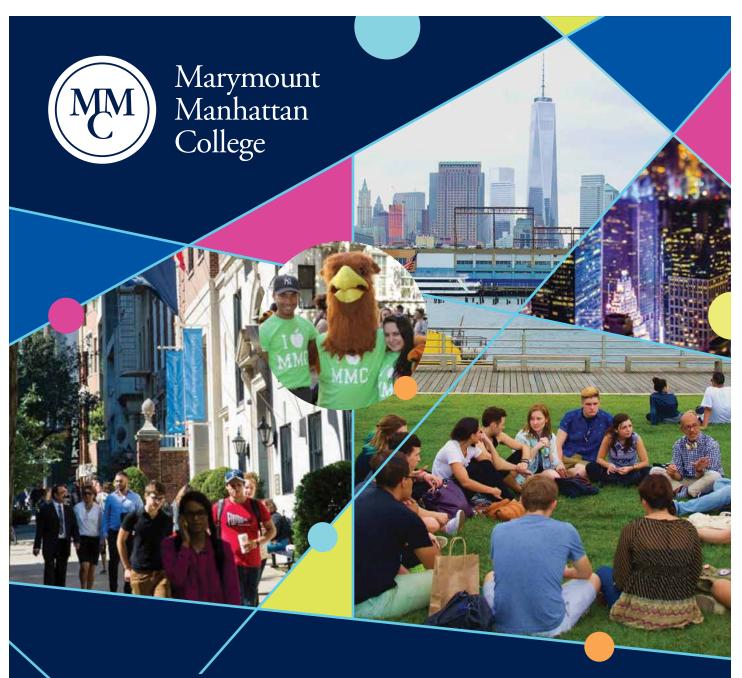
Simon has applied to Babson, Duke/Fuqua, Michigan/Ross, and UBC/Sauder. He has so far been accepted to Babson (with a \$20,000 merit scholarship) and Michigan and is waiting to hear from UBC and Duke. He is favoring the US so it will "round out" his very international education. If he ends up at Duke, that will indeed add a new dimension to his already interesting accent. If UBC, then he will need nothing, having already been prepared by the wet winters of Glasgow. However, if it is Michigan, he will need to invest in some heavy winter clothes (preferably blue!). And if Babson, then he will learn to love the Red Sox.

Additional Reading

- "Masters in management an MBA alternative" by Della Bradshaw: www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/careers/ business-education/masters-in-management-an-mba-alternative/ article595080
- "How to get in: Admission to Master in Management programs (MIM)" by Thomas Graf: www.mim-compass.com/Master-in-Management-MBA/Admission-to-Master-in-Management-programs-MIM-How-to-become-eligible-and-how-to-become-accepted
- Compass Master in Management: www.mim-compass.com

Whitney Laughlin can be reached at laughlin@rt66.com.





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Ripples in the Pond: Spreading the IECA Way in China

By Bo Wang, IECA Associate (China)



I am not a teacher, but an awakener,

-Robert Frost

I have been eager to share my experiences working with Chinese clients as an IECA member since I attended the webinar *Working with Chinese Clients the IECA Way* on June 14, 2016. It's been almost a whole year since

I was accepted as an IECA Associate member, and it's my seventh year as an independent educational consultant (IEC). The Robert Frost quote is one of my favorites because it sums up how I feel about my work. But the sad fact is that a certain number of Chinese clients don't want an awakener in the educational counseling process at all, and they don't even want a teacher. What they really need is a babysitter.

If you currently have your educational consulting practice in China or if most of your clients are from China, congratulations! You must have been asked at least one of the following questions by your clients:

- Are you the current or the former admissions officer?
- Can you offer us a guaranteed admission to a certain college/university?
- Does your service package include everything so I/our kid just need to focus on the standardized tests?
- Look, here are my GPA and standardized test scores, where can I go?
- You are an IECA associate?
 Wow, good. Well, what is that?

Compared to the education counseling giants in China, such as the infamous New Oriental Education & Technology Group Inc. that falsified applications of some of their clients, IECA members are the minority

group. According to an online survey of prospective students who would like to study in the United States, over 40% tend to find an agency to help them—that means to "do everything for them" rather than accompany and guide them. Apart from that group, approximately 35% of students indicate that they do not believe agencies and will consider a do-it-yourself way to complete their applications.

Challenges for IECA Members

The ever-changing competitive market has brought new challenges to the professional ethics of IECA members. The letter of recommendation is a good example: that required item is supposed to be confidentially completed by the recommender and the applicant has to waive the right to access to the letters. The fact is, however, that many high schools in China do not have any "international class," and the counselor (class advisor in most cases) is not even able to write a letter of recommendation in English. It is an open secret that the counselor or teacher gives a draft of the Chinese letter to the applicant and signs on the English letter translated by the applicant. That is how it works in China, and it is quite common because the high schools that have international classes and English speakers are mostly in major cities, which is because of the unbalanced educational resource allocation in China.

For prospective students in regular high schools, submitting letters of recommendation that way is the only opportunity for them.

I used to try to work this out, and I made attempts to collaborate



with the school counselor and the student to get letters done. For example, I once discussed the personal traits and activity highlights of an applicant with a high school teacher and the teacher then had his Chinese letter translated by a translating company and submitted it on his own. But for most of the cases, the applicants still have access, limited or full, to the letter of recommendation.

continued on page 17



COLLEGE

Photograph by Jim McLaughlin

Summer Pre-College Program at Skidmore College

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How can you anticipate what you haven't yet experienced? Skidmore's prestigious Pre-College Program in the Liberal and Studio Arts has been preparing talented high school students for college success for more than forty years. High-achieving sophomores, juniors, and seniors from across the country and around the world travel to our Saratoga Springs campus each summer to take part in Skidmore's five-week Pre-College Program. Students engage in college-level study in the liberal and studio arts amid a beautiful upstate New York campus setting.

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and gallery talks sponsored by Skidmore's Summer Studio Art Program and the nightly readings by renowned writers of the New York State Summer Writers Institute. Skidmore's summer campus hosts many other concerts, lectures, events, and weekend activities, and just off campus is downtown Saratoga Springs' dynamic cultural and arts scene.

Find out for yourself why Skidmore Pre-College alumni describe the program as challenging, fun, enlightening, life-changing, mind-altering, motivational, experimental, adventurous, to name just a few. Come spend July with us and discover your future.

Skidmore Pre-College Program, Saratoga Springs, NY

www.skidmore.edu/pre-college



CREATIVE THOUGHT MATTERS

China, from page 15

Another factor that parents and students both care about is the essay. There are countless rumors online telling success stories about how a certain applicant who has normal test scores and GPA gets accepted with an amazing essay that literally "moved" the admissions committee. And those stories spread faster online by social media networks than you can imagine. "Can you write the application essays for my kid?" then becomes the most frequent question I have heard when dealing with prospective clients, regardless of how I explain to them that it is against the professional ethics—and even against the application regulations—to have someone else complete your essay. Those people eventually end up with going to somebody else who offers a "full-service" package. I do not know their application results, and I feel sorry for them.

But I feel grateful that there are still a lot of energetic, committed, and versatile students who are willing to work with an IECA member throughout their applications. I have just heard from one of my clients, who is a senior from the international class of a leading high school in Beijing, that she got ED admission to Rice University. She is a thoughtful girl with a great passion for physics, and in her application essay, she discussed the relationship between physics and the spiritual world. It was a brilliant essay because it reflected who she is and what she really cares about. Some parents, however, always believe that in the essay, they need to mold the applicant into a person whom the target college might prefer, an overcoaching game indeed.

I have read *Turning the Tide: Inspiring Concern for Others and the Common Good Through College Admissions*, a report by Harvard Graduate School of Education, and have found that utilitarianism is growing in the application process, regardless of which country. The report discourages overcoaching as well. According to the admissions requirement of the Stanford Graduate School of Business, "there is a big difference between 'feedback' and 'coaching.' You cross that line when any part of the application (excluding the letters of reference) ceases to be exclusively yours in either thought or word." So the essential questions that Chinese clients need to consider are: How can I make my voice heard by the admissions officers? and How do I let them know who I really am? I'm happy that a growing number of them have become aware of this need.

There is still a long way to go for IECA members in China, and it does take time to change the perspective of some Chinese clients. But from what I have seen, we are working on it along with our students, and we are spreading our influences and reputations among schools. We IECA members in China, like the pebbles dropped in a pond, will cause a ripple effect to make a growing number of qualified professionals involved. I hope one day I will hear from my Chinese clients about their educational consulting experiences: "For once I was blind, and now I can see."

Bo Wang, Chuchuguo, can be reached at wangbo@chuchuguo.com.

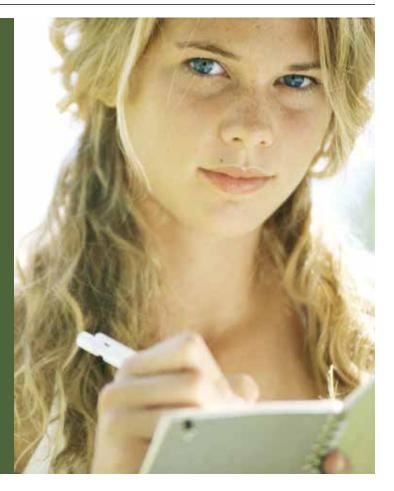


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Expressive Therapies in Mental Health Work

By Malissa Morrell, ATR-BC, LMFT, Director of Expressive Therapies at La Europa Academy



Through the ages, creativity and healing have been closely linked in human tradition.

Medicine men, shamans, priests, priestesses, and other community healers often relied heavily on

the power of song, spoken word, art, and even dance in their work. Instinctively, humans seem to recognize that creativity can play an important role in wellness.

Recently creative therapies have had strong exposure in the press and social media. With stories that include clear demonstrations of efficacy in clinical research trials and the boom in "art therapy" adult coloring books, popular culture seems to be turning toward the healing power of the arts. Musician David Bowie, who died of

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is now recognized as a farewell album, written and recorded while the musician was secretly dying from cancer. It even includes a song titled "Lazarus." Kate Middleton, the Duchess of Cambridge, is the official royal patron of an art therapy program in England. And actress Meryl Streep captured headlines because of an awards acceptance speech in which she quoted the late actress Carrie Fisher—a powerful mental health advocate and multitalented artist—as saying, "Take your broken heart, make it into art."

Well that sentiment splashed all over social media for a few days, but what does it really mean to take a broken heart and turn it into art? How can we infuse the arts into mental health programming in the most effective and ethical way possible?

Standardizing Expressive Therapy Practice

For decades, professionals have worked to establish training and credentialing standards for the various creative and expressive therapies. These include art therapy, music therapy, dance/movement therapy, poetry therapy, psychodrama, and sand tray therapy. Professional associations, credentialing bodies, program accreditation, and ever-improving research have worked to legitimize and standardize expectations for these various professions and ensure that clients and patients are receiving the best possible care.

Currently, there is a push across the country to create licensure and title protection recognition for many of the expressive therapies. Because of the vast similarities in training and accreditation, creative therapists who graduate from certain

master's programs are becoming eligible for counseling licensure in many states. That opens the door for increased oversight as well as funding sources, such as insurance, and training opportunities

But why does all the training and credentialing even matter? Ancient healers didn't need a license to perform their healing work, and many of us have experienced moments of insight or understanding from our own engagement in the arts. I often say that although it isn't difficult to "stumble into" an insight, healing moment, or powerful reflection during personal art-making, working with a trained art therapist has the potential to maximize those healing moments.

Through understanding how various mediums, rhythms, body systems, and brain functions work together, creative therapists can select activities and design interventions for maximum benefit. We can also recognize important diagnostic and dynamic material as it emerges from a client's creative work. Those of us who have the right training can translate and communicate those dynamics into traditional clinical language and become an important part of any treatment team.

The Future of Expressive Therapies

Despite economic recessions, political infighting about health care coverage, and the flood of do-it-yourself therapies attempting to capitalize on the magic of creativity, the future for expressive therapies seems good. Mental health care is increasingly in the spotlight and more and more important discussions about stigma and funding are happening at various levels of government and education.

Many universities, graduate programs, and training outlets, however, have recognized that although most expressive therapists are highly employable, not many job openings are titled "art therapist," "music therapist," and so on. Some graduate schools have begun to offer dual degrees: students take all the coursework needed for mental health licensure (such as counselor, marriage and family therapist, and the like.) while also getting the courses needed for board certification in their modality. Those double-threat therapists are qualified for any mental health job and can advocate their way into using their creative therapy skills within the construct of their mental health position. That way, expressive therapists who also have a counseling license can find employment in schools, mental health clinics, hospitals, retirement homes, hospice, residential programs, and other places where their specialties can bring value and marketability to their employers.

Benefits of Expressive Therapies

When all is said and done, incorporating expressive therapists into your team may bring a richer, more comprehensive understanding of a client's strengths, weaknesses, and progress.

Expressive Therapy Modalities

Each profession has its own set of standards, but here is an overview of the requirements for the most popular expressive therapies.

- Music therapy is the only expressive therapy that allows someone to practice with a bachelor's degree. It is also one of the best-researched expressive therapies, with practitioners using everything from enzymes in saliva to blood oxygen levels to measure what happens when clients are engaging with music therapists. When all the required education, supervised hours, and exams are complete, music therapists earn the title of MT-BC (board-certified music therapist).
- Art therapy requires a master's degree in art
 therapy, and art therapists can either be registered
 (ATR) or board certified (ATR-BC). Education at an
 accredited art therapy program includes classes
 in psychopathology, human development, therapy
 techniques, studio art, and research. Art therapists
 work with individuals, families, or groups to help
 clients put "unsayable" things into words.
- Dance/movement therapy also requires a
 master's degree and many hours of postgraduate
 supervision to achieve board certification as
 a BC-DMT. Dance/movement therapists must
 also become proficient in psychopathology,
 human growth and development, research, and
 movement observation.

It can also put a spin on therapy work that is needed for those clients who have had many years of therapy or treatment. All too often, those clients come equipped with the verbal skills needed to avoid, distract, and defend against the very work they need to do. For example, a young client once pouted at me during an art therapy group before exclaiming, "I hate art therapy!" She continued, "You get me all relaxed because I'm just playing around with paint, but then I actually have to look at my issues and they just stare back at me. I hate it!" As research continues to improve and demonstrate clear benefits, it's important to consider a comprehensive, credentialed approach to creativity, wellness, and healing.

Malissa Morrell can be reached at mmorrell@laeuropa.com.

Maryland



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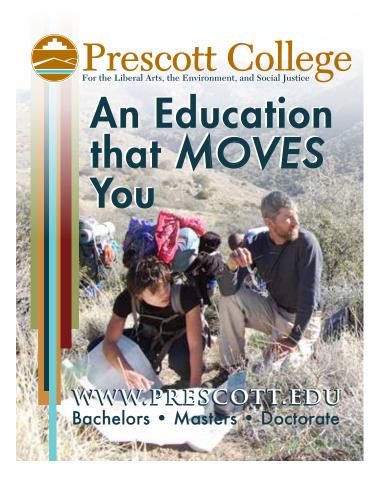
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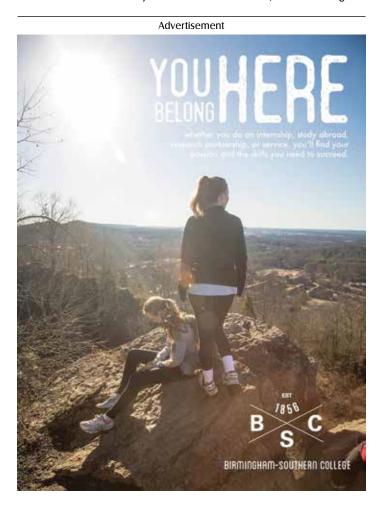
By Kiki Steele, IECA (NY)



I just attended my first
Professional Member
Retreat, and I knew from
the moment I arrived it
would be very different
from the major conferences
I had attended in the past.
I certainly felt different,
having recently earned

my Professional membership, and was excited to participate. At the national conferences, I have sometimes felt overwhelmed by the number of people and anxious about overlapping seminars, but the retreat was an opportunity for one-on-one conversation and career exploration. It was a small and friendly group, and I felt my usual shyness and anxiety immediately fall away. Seeing Mark Sklarow's familiar smiling face helped as he welcomed us and began the opening discussion "The Future of IECA."

The following three days were full of helpful information and community at the beautiful Entrepreneurship Center at the University of Tampa. Dr. Rebecca White, the chair of the Center led the entire retreat with enthusiasm and grace. The entrepreneurship model gave us a framework and vocabulary—words like *essentialism*, the "one thing





to focus on" that will make your business run more smoothly, and developing *metrics of key success* factors and plotting them out—and back-up handouts from every session were valuable resources. I found the session about what differentiates an employee from an independent contractor to be extremely helpful. And what is more important than the legal side of business? I will now add the phrase, "The only advice you can rely on from me is advice you get in writing," to my repertoire.

Right from the opening discussion, where they grabbed my attention by identifying our current situations as "the valley of death"—exploding growth, nose-to-the-grindstone busy, with no time to see the Big Picture and address the concerns of your business—the retreat gave me and my fellow attendees some clear ideas and tools for making the changes necessary to keep up with growth. Those resources, coupled with hearing my fellow members' experiences and having terrific opportunities to network with my peers, made for what I would consider a very successful retreat.

We closed out our time with a session called "One Great Idea," a collegial opportunity for us to share those practices that are most successful for us with one another. I left with some wonderful new ideas and in awe of the generosity of information and spirit of my fellow IECA members.

Kiki Steele, College Planning Connections, can be reached at kiki@collegeplanningconnections.com.

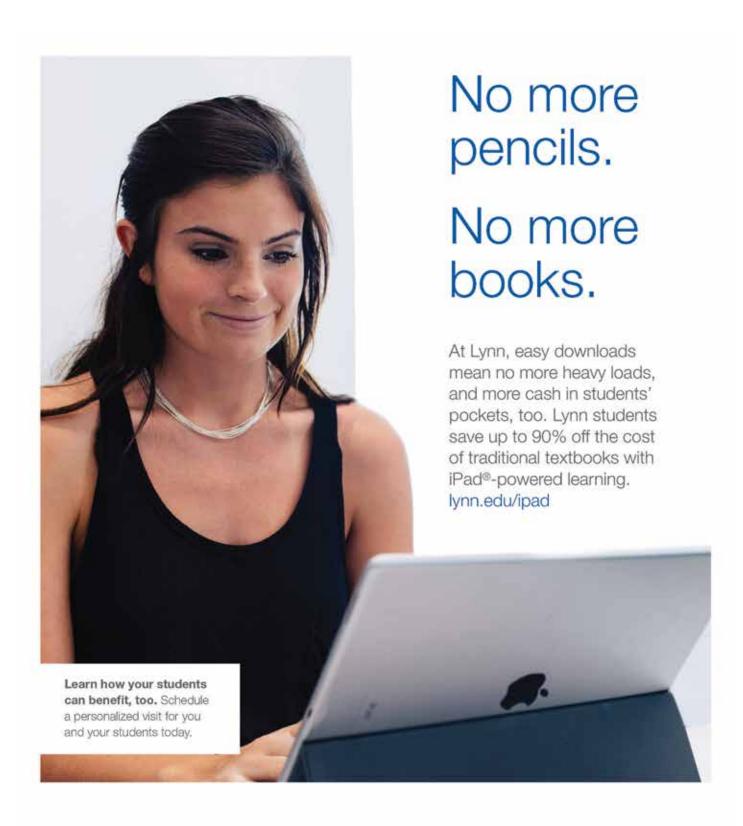
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On the Road

On January 5, IECA staff members Mark Sklarow, CEO, Rachel King, conference manager, and Valerie Vasquez-Guzman, manager of educational programs, were in Washington, DC, with 30 local members and admission reps to plan for the November 2017 national conference that will take place in the nation's capital.

On Wednesday, January 11, Mark Sklarow joined President Ann Rossbach at an opening discussion prior to the Professional Member Retreat in Tampa, FL. Members advised on communications (including suggested changes to 5 Things and *Insights*), operations, and what they would like to see IECA tackle in the coming years.



From January 23–27, Mark Sklarow attended the NATSAP Conference in Tucson, AZ. He led the joint NATSAP/IECA Link 'n Learn program and, with members, participated in ethics discussions and presentations. ▼



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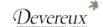


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Regional Groups

Minnesota

Minnesota IECs enjoyed a spectacular late fall day on November 16 as they met to celebrate early applications and recharge their batteries. Pictured left to right are (first row) Laurie McGregor, Sue Luse, Jenny Buyens, Kelley Anne Johnson, Todd Johnson, Shirley Xian; (second row) Kate Malczewski, Vita Cohen, Ann Cadwallader, Garth Robertson, Ryan Luse, Susan Sykes, Beth Kreusch, and Donna Kelly. Contact Jenny Buyens and Vita Cohen (minnesotaiecs@gmail. com) for more information.



San Diego

The San Diego regional group met on December 8 at Pacifica Del Mar for an end-of-year luncheon to celebrate the regional group and a busy and successful year of counseling. Contact Jackie Wooley (summitcollegecounseling@gmail.com) or Gina Gerrato (edsupportbygina@aol.com) for more information.



New Jersey

New Jersey members held a January luncheon at Lawrence University. Pictured left to right are (first row) Ken Anselment, dean of admissions, Lawrence University; Jodi Nadler; Marcia Kramer; Carolyn Mulligan; (second row) Laurie Weingarten, Jessie Martin, Anne Weisholtz, Abie Rabin; (third row) Traecy Hobson, Diana Towle, Beth Cassie; (top row) Alice Fuscaldo, and Lisa Bleich. Contact Carolyn Mulligan (insidersnetwork@comcast.net) for more information.



Ohio

Annie Reznik, executive director of the Coalition Application, was the guest for the Ohio regional group December meeting. This virtual group "meets" via Zoom—pictured left to right are (top row) Annie Reznik, Kristina Dooley, Susan Isler, and Mary Ann Newbill; (middle row) Liz Baxter, Dana Rolander, Barb Pasalis, and Mark Gathercole; (bottom row) Lauren Westendorf, Alicja Jahnke, Barbara Connolly, and Terry Lloyd. Attending but not pictured were Pam Ellis, Jane Williams, and Jane Watkins. Contact Kristina Dooley (kristina@estrelaconsulting.com) for more information.



Send your group news to *Insights* at *insights@iecaonline.com*As you hold events; host speakers; and visit colleges, schools, and programs, don't forget to take photos!



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Why I Belong

I stumbled upon the profession of college consulting. I was asked by a friend to help first-generation students with their college applications and essays at a local high school. My very first student, Saad, was from Sri Lanka, where his family still resided. Although he came from a prestigious family in his country, in the United States, Saad's circumstances were fairly circumscribed.



He felt the pressure and responsibility to his family to do well. Despite having arrived in freshman year without advanced English fluency, Saad had managed to maintain a high B average and do reasonably well on the ACT.

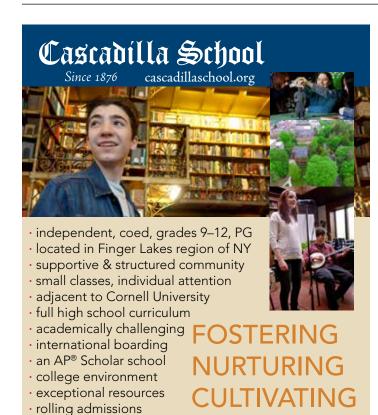
We sat together in the high school library during lunch break. Amid the musty book smells, we talked about his hopes and dreams. We talked about college in America. We connected and began to make a plan for him. I was hooked.

After careers in law and teaching, I had found a meaningful next step, but I had no idea how to develop this career. I cast

about for advice and mentors, but cold calling independent educational consultants (IECs) was not working. Finally, someone mentioned IECA. I called the office and was immediately given the names of some local IECs who would speak with me. Sure enough, each person was gracious and generous with their time and advice. They all urged me to sign up for the Summer Training Institute. I did and found it extremely useful. I was finally ready to launch.

There are many benefits of belonging to IECA, but one of the best is the camaraderie of its members. Through interactions at conferences, exchanges on the TalkList, and shared experiences during college tours, I have been bolstered and buttressed by this wonderful group of people. As a community, we learn from each other, no matter how many years we have been in the profession. We may have all come from different backgrounds, but we share the love of working with young people and the real desire to help them find their path. I find this both invaluable and inspiring.

-Kyle Kane, IECA (SC)



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Bruce Vinik (MD) was quoted in the *Washington Post* article "Surge in foreign students may be crowding Americans out of elite colleges" on December 21.

Jodi Rosenshein Atkin, Associate member (NY), was quoted in "6 Tips to Finish College Applications on New Year's Eve" in U.S. News and World Report Higher Education on December 19.

Doretta Massardo McGinnis, Associate member (PA), was featured in "Looking for the Fountain of Youth? Try Helping Students With College Admissions" at Forbes.com on November 26.

Katherine Cohen (NY) was quoted in "How to Craft the Perfect College Application Essay" in *Teen Vogue* on October 13, and in "Today's kids are getting ahead by learning how to code apps" in the *New York Post* on October 23.

Sandra Moore (NY) was quoted in "The Waiting Game," in the January 2017 education issue of *Chronogram*, a Hudson Valley magazine.

Carrie Lyndrup (SC), was interviewed in "DI Families: Meet the Lyndrups/Karens," in the *Daniel Island News* on December 7.



The IECA Foundation presented its Katz Award, which honors IECA members who make extraordinary voluntary contributions to organizations in their community that benefit children, to Kristina Dooley (OH), left, and Renee Joseph (NY) at IECA's Fall Conference in New Orleans in November



Carolyn P. Mulligan (NJ) presented Ins and Outs of the College Application, to the Summit YMCA Achievers Teen Group on November 22nd.



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Campus Visits

University of Arizona

Independent educational consultants (IECs) from California, Illinois, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Washington State attended the Fall 2016 Get UAcquainted Counselor Experience program at the University of Arizona. They spent three days exploring the campus and visiting colleges and student services offices, such as the SALT Center, Disability Resource Center, Campus Recreation, College of Engineering, Eller College of Management, College of Fine Arts, and much more. IECA members in attendance were Matt Gray (IL), Deborah Greenberg-Cinquemani (NJ), Mary Harkins (PA), Janet Loren (NJ), Sherri Maxman, Associate (NY), and Susan Meyers (TX).



Ringling College of Art and Design

IECA members toured several Florida colleges prior to the Professional Member Retreat in January, including University of Central Florida, Rollins College, Saint Leo University, Ringling College of Art and Design, Eckerd College, and University of South Florida.



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Please Welcome IECA's New Professional Members

Stephen Asztalos (CA) has been an IEC for



four years and has been an Associate member for nearly four years. Asztalos is a full-time adjunct professor of physics and astronomy at California State University–East Bay.

He holds a PhD in nuclear engineering from the University of California at Berkeley. He attended IECA's 2013 Summer Training Institute at Swarthmore and is a member of NACAC.

Asztalos is the author or coauthor on more than 100 papers covering the fields of nuclear and particle physics and astrophysics. For the past two years, he has volunteered as a college admissions with College Track in Oakland, CA.

Asztalos has two sons, ages 11 and 15, and his wife is chair of the math department of a local community college. He loves skiing and is a California native-plant enthusiast.

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Specialty: G

Eric Dobler (CT) has been an IEC for five



years. His life in higher education has taken him from the University of New Haven to Central Connecticut State University with roles in admissions, academic advising, and career counseling.

Coming from a blue collar family where he was the first to go to college, Dobler is a complete product of the Connecticut education system. He earned a BA in English from Eastern Connecticut State University and an MS in counseling with a concentration in student development in higher education from Central Connecticut State University. He is a member of NACAC.

While working at the University of New Haven, he served as the cochair for the Outstanding High School Senior Program, which selected up to a dozen high-achieving high school seniors from the New Haven public school system for a one-semester, early enrollment program. He was a mentor and an advisor for the entire semester and considers that time to be one of the things he is most proud of in his career.

Dobler has been married to his wife, Amanda, for 10 years, and they have two amazing sons, Brady, age 8, and Kasen, age 4, who provide them with moments to laugh each and every day.

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Specialty: C

Jamie Goodman (IL), an associate member



for three years, has worked as an IEC for four years. Previously, she worked as an elementary school counselor for Chicago Public Schools. Goodman holds an

MEd in school and community counseling from DePaul University and is a licensed professional counselor (LPC) as well as a certified school counselor (Type 73). She attended IECA's 2013 Summer Institute and is a member of NATSAP.

Among her volunteer activities, she was cochair of the MS Society's Young Leadership Board in Chicago. Goodman has three wonderful children (ages 18 months and 4 and 5 years) and a fabulous husband, who all keep her very busy.

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Joanne LaSpina (PA), an associate member for close to three years,



has been an IEC for four years. Before settling on educational consulting as her focus, she worked as a mental health counselor in a variety of community-based settings. A counselor and author, LaSpina received her undergraduate degree in psychology from Millersville University and her graduate degree in counseling psychology from Arcadia University.

In addition, she completed the University of California Irvine's certificate program in independent educational consulting and is a graduate of the Institute for Children's Literature writing program. She shares coordinator responsibilities for the Philadelphia IECA regional group and is a member of PACAC.

Currently, LaSpina serves as chair of the board of directors of Family and Home Network, a national nonprofit organization that offers affirmation, information, and advocacy to parents. She began a website and blog devoted to food allergies 8 years ago and has been an advocate for that community as a food allergy assistant for nearly 16 years.

She lives in Collegeville, PA, with her husband and two teenage children. She enjoys reading, traveling, and anything chocolate!

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Specialty: C

Jesse Quam (NC) has been an IEC for two years and was an



Associate member for one year. Early in his career he held several positions, including field staff, graduation coordinator, and field director, at the Aspen Achievement Academy in Utah and followed that with a two-year internship at the Walker Home and school for children in Needham, MA, and at the Brockton VA Hospital. He then spent 10 years as a therapist and clinical

director at SUWS of the Carolinas.

Quam earned his MSW from Boston College Graduate School of Social Work and is a licensed clinical social worker. Over the past decade, he has regularly attended IECA conferences and attended IECA's 2015 Summer Training Institute. He is affiliated with NSAW.

On the volunteer side, Quam served for six years on three NATSAP committees—government relations, ethics, and public relations—and has presented at a dozen IECA and NATSAP conferences. In addition, he has served on the vestry committee at his local Episcopal church.

Quam and his wife, Grace, have three children and a dozen chickens. He enjoys playing golf whenever he can.

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Members

55 New Professional Members (71% were Associate Members)

43 New Student Members

55% of the New Associate Members attended IECA's **Summer Training Institute**

Of those who joined **IECA in 2016**

Advise on Colleges

Advise on Schools

Advise on Learning Disabilities

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Our new members represent

33 States and 9 countries

(24 new members have primary offices outside of the USA)