IECA+

4 Pre-Conference Workshops offered in Baltimore

page 4

SPECIAL FOCUS:
Special Focus: Graduate School Advising
- **Law School**
- **Architecture School**
- **MFA**
- **Grad School Advisors**
- **Medical School**

pages 7-21

Advising Your Students on the New SAT

page 22

The Newsletter of the Independent Educational Consultants Association

INSIGHTS

February / March 2015

Calendar

February 10, Webinar: Service Academy Admissions

February 16, President's Day National Office Closed

February 17, Spring Conference Registration opens

March 1-3, IECA Executive Committee meets, Scottsdale, AZ

March 3, Planning Meeting: Fall 2016 Conference, Scottsdale, AZ

March 10, Webinar: Financial Aid for Global Residents

April 14, Webinar: The Future of Liberal Arts Colleges

April 19-21, IECA at Southern ACAC, Birmingham, AL

May 4-6, Campus Tours, MD

May 5, IECA/NATSAP Link 'n Learn, Baltimore, MD

May 5, American Gap Association Conference, Baltimore, MD

May 6, Four Educational Pre-Conference Workshops, Baltimore, MD

May 6-9, IECA Spring Conference, Baltimore, MD

May 8-9, IECA Board of Directors meeting, Baltimore, MD

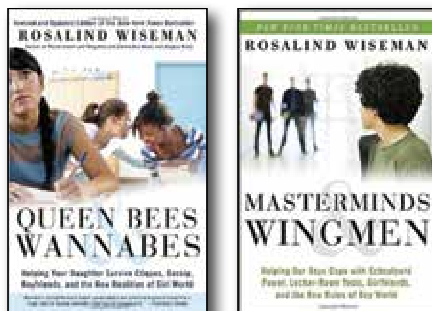
inside insights

Spring Conference Boasts Dynamic Speakers, Record Number of Sessions, and Networking

Nearly 200 speakers, presenters, panelists and discussion leaders have been chosen to create dynamic and compelling educational content for our 2015 Spring Conference. Together with another 1,000 independent educational consultants, and admission and administrative staff members from schools, colleges and programs, these professionals will share ideas, concepts, and theories and better prepare each other to ***Sail Ahead. Together.***

Dr. Jose Antonio Bowen, one of the most interesting and atypical college presidents in the nation, will open the conference. Formerly director of jazz ensembles and professor of music at Stanford University, and recent dean of the Arts School at Southern Methodist University, he is now president of Goucher College. Dr. Bowen's acclaimed book *Teaching Naked* speaks to the need for face-to-face interaction between faculty and students and to the role of technologies in leveraging that face-to-face (naked) interaction in schools and colleges alike.

At the other end of the conference, **Dr. Lauren Kenworthy**, director of the Center for Autism Spectrum Disorders, will teach our Saturday morning Master Class. She and her colleagues are developing learning strategies for students and teachers to help those with ASD develop flexibility in social and school settings. This approach, combined with the advanced imaging work being done at Children's National Health System, is pointing to an innovative way of addressing repetitive or "stuck" behaviors that are common in children and teens with ASD. The Master Class will be valuable to anyone—college, school, or therapeutic focused—working with students on the spectrum.



Our Keynote Speaker: ***Rosalind Wiseman****, author of "Queen Bees and Wannabees," and "Masterminds & Wingmen"*

Baltimore represents an ideal conference host. Located in the middle of the Atlantic Coast, the city is drivable by those on the East Coast and accessible by planes, trains and automobiles. It is a city marked by history, celebrated for its crab dishes, and in the midst of a dramatic upscale revival in the Inner Harbor East neighborhood—right where our conference will be held and within a few minutes walk of the city's newest restaurants, shopping, and both Little Italy and Fells Point neighborhoods. Also within a walk of the conference hotel is Camden Yards (home of the Baltimore Orioles), Lexington Market (bring your appetite), the National Aquarium, Visionary Art Museum, Edgar Allen Poe House, McFadden Art Glass Center, Babe Ruth Museum, and much more. And it's all tied up with a coffee shop vibe that will leave you wondering when the waitress sporting a beehive will call you "hon."

This Baltimore appeal will serve as backdrop for two of our most important networking community events. The pre-conference members dinner will be held at one of the neighborhood's newest and hippest restaurants that has become popular with

continued on page 4

President's Letter

Happy New Year!

Gail Meyer

As we embark on another year, I continue to be inspired by our vibrant membership, devoted board, and enthusiastic committee members. The wealth of experience and insight our members contribute to our organization is extraordinary.

One of the things I value most about my involvement in IECA is the interaction between our specialty groups. The ability to access colleagues who possess a wide range of expertise has made me a better Independent Educational Consultant (IEC). Recently, I contacted several IECA members who work with international students for information about accredited American universities in Europe. I received a bounty of details, insight, and data, along with thoughtful advice concerning which institutions might match up well with my student's academic aspirations.

Working with adolescents over the years, I have sometimes had to refer students to treatment programs for eating disorders, alcohol and drug abuse, as well as emerging psychiatric disorders. Having access to IECA Therapeutic Consultants, and participating in educational sessions at conferences has enhanced my professional growth and increased my knowledge base. During the San Diego and Orlando IECA conferences, I attended the School and College Fair and Therapeutic Program Information Swap, updating myself on available therapeutic options for the growing number of high school students who require intervention before or during college. I am grateful to the many excellent IECs who generously share their expertise, experience, and wisdom.

I would like to update you on two initiatives that the IECA Board of Directors has approved. In anticipation

continued on page 6

IECA INSIGHTS

Published by:

Independent Educational Consultants Association

3251 Old Lee Highway, Suite 510
Fairfax, Virginia 22030

Phone: 703-591-4850
Fax: 703-591-4860

www.IECAonline.com
e-mail: *info@IECAonline.com*

President: Gail Meyer

Chief Executive Officer: Mark H. Sklarow

Deputy Executive Director: Sue S. DePra

Editor: Sarah S. Brachman

Copy Editor: Jan Umphrey

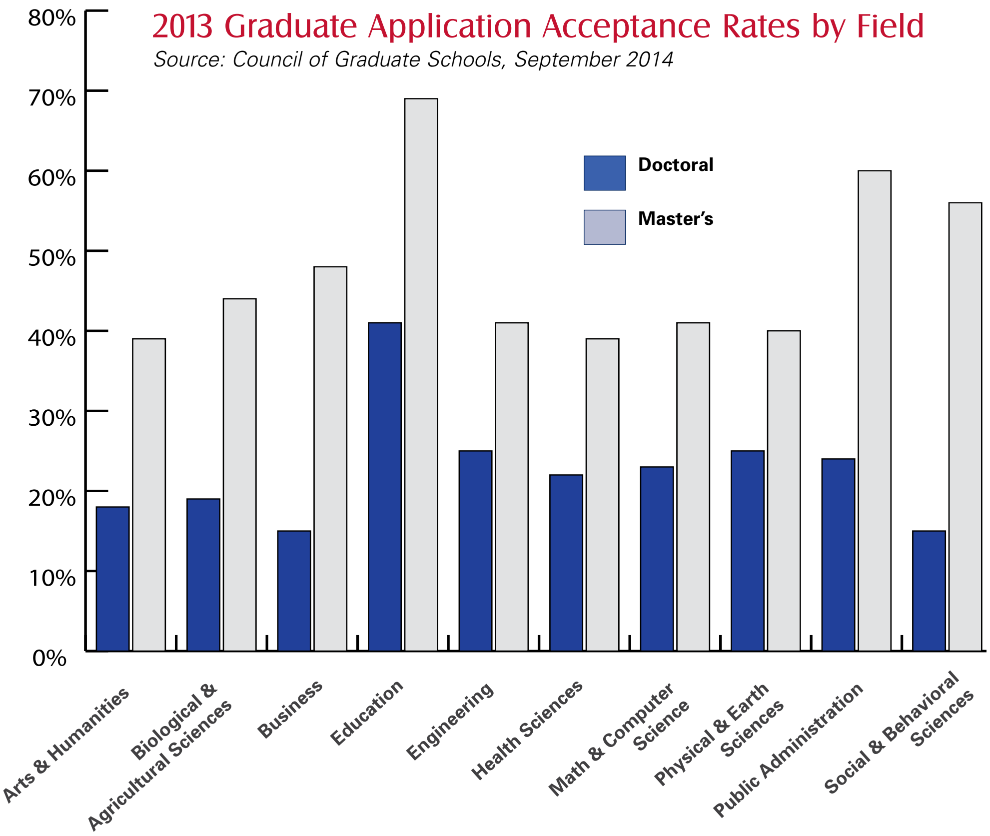
Design and Layout: Sarah S. Cox

Connect with us on Facebook, IECA's blog (*www.IECAonline.com/blog*), Linkedin (for IECA members only), and Twitter (@IECA).

In Focus

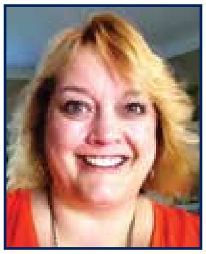
2013 Graduate Application Acceptance Rates by Field

Source: Council of Graduate Schools, September 2014



Summer Training Institute 2014: Oh, What a Week it Was!

by Sherry Easterman, IECA Associate Member (FL)



The summer of 2013 came with some hard decisions and a major crossroads in my life. I had been a teacher for over 20 years, the only career I ever truly wanted in my life. But in my heart and soul, I knew I needed a change. I had no idea what I wanted to do but knew I needed to be able use my bachelor's degree in education and my 20 years of experience. Finally, after much soul searching and many conversations with friends and family, one phone call changed my life. After telling my friend Denise how I loved the college vibe and about my previous experience of speaking on college campuses and recruiting new teachers, she told me that I should look into the college admissions field. I immediately thought that wasn't really a job but I spent the next few days researching and found that it was indeed a profession and one that I was very interested in. Then I found the UCLA Extension program and was so excited! When I called my mom to tell her about the program, a commercial for the UCLA program came on TV. Now, that is strange for two reasons: I never have the television on and I have never seen that or any commercial for UCLA since! I took that as a gigantic sign and registered with UCLA and gave my studies 100% of my effort. I also resigned from my position in the school system. I thrived in the classes and graduated with distinction in June 2014. When I initially started with the UCLA program, I thought I wanted to work on a college campus. But with a young child at home, I soon found that would be very hard with the traveling required for recruiting. The last class I took was The Business of Educational Consulting. I started that class with zero interest in becoming an Independent Educational Consultant (IEC) and finished the class 100% confident that I could be a very successful IEC.

But now my classes were over. Where was I supposed to go from here? How was I supposed to make this business happen? I was lost and needed guidance and had no idea how to find it. So I went on NACAC and IECA websites looking for training opportunities. That's when I found the teaser for the IECA Summer Training Institute. Holy cow! This was it! This seemed like the logical next step. The training sounded intriguing to me, but soon fear and doubt crept its way into my head, and I wondered if I could pull it off financially and logistically with my son. Days went by; each day I looked at the IECA website and pondered. Fear is a funny thing, it can cripple you or it can empower you, and I chose to keep moving forward and believing in myself. As a result, I decided that this was an investment in my future and I just took the leap. I called IECA and asked for information, turned in my application, and found out I was accepted to attend at Swarthmore College in Philadelphia in July. The timing was perfect.

Pulling up to Swarthmore College was exhilarating. The campus was so green and full of blooming flowers everywhere. It was truly beautiful. The women at check-in were wonderfully patient and kind, answering questions and guiding attendees to the next location. There I met the wonderful **Sue DePra** (IECA's Deputy Executive Director), **Karen Mabie**, IECA (IL), and **Jane Klemmer**, IECA (NY). They were so welcoming with big smiles on their faces. I am so grateful for their kindness and warmth, as that began to put me at ease. I went into the hall and found a seat and began taking in my surroundings. How awesome that **Steve Antonoff**, IECA (CO), and **Joan Koven**, IECA (PA), were walking around initiating

continued on page 5

2015 Summer Training Institute

The dates and locations for the 2015 Summer Training Institutes are:

West: July 7 – July 11, 2015, at Claremont McKenna College in Claremont, CA (50 miles east of Los Angeles)

The West STI is exclusively for those interested in college consulting. The program starts at 2:00 p.m. on Tuesday, July 7, and ends at 8:00 p.m. on Friday, July 10. Housing on Friday night and Saturday breakfast is included for all those staying in the residence hall. All residence hall rooms are single occupancy.

East: July 28 – August 1, 2015 at Swarthmore College in Swarthmore, PA (suburb of Philadelphia)

The East STI will offer training for those interested in college, school, and/or therapeutic/at-risk consulting. The program starts at 2:00 p.m. on Tuesday, July 28, and ends at 8:00 p.m. on Friday, July 31. Housing on Friday night and Saturday breakfast is included for all those staying in the residence hall. All residence hall rooms are single occupancy and air-conditioned.

For more information, go to *www.iecaonline.com/sti.html*

Spring Conference, from page 1

the Hollywood crowd when filming in "Charm City" or when passing through. IECA has arranged a special event where small plates-meet-authentic-Italian in a renovated boat repair shop. On Thursday night, all attendees are invited to join us for our networking social. This event will feature foods from across Baltimore: from the crab cakes of Fells Point to the delicacies of Lexington Market.

IECA has scheduled more breakout sessions than ever. Among the innovations: global offerings during all time periods, business sessions for IECs during all time periods, and more graduate school sessions than ever. **Goldie Blumenstyk**, one of the nation's most respected higher education reporters (*Chronicle of Higher Education*) and author of *Higher Education in Crisis* will offer a featured breakout. Also featured is **Dr. William Stixrud** of the National Children's Medical Center on the connections between executive functioning, ADHD, and learning disabilities. With more than 50 breakout sessions chosen from nearly 150 proposals, the offerings give attendees the best from among IECA members; from schools, colleges and programs; and educational experts drawn from across the mid-Atlantic area.

Pre-Conference: Options Include 4 Pre-Cons, 3 Days of Tours, 2 Certificates, 1 Link 'n Learn (but no partridges or pear trees)

The IECA Conference opens on Wednesday, May 6, at 1:00 p.m. But for those looking to enhance their knowledge, develop new specialties, earn a certificate, or visit school or university campuses, there are several days of activities coming first.

4 Pre-Cons & 2 Certificate Options

Wednesday morning offers a number of learning opportunities designed to help members serve new markets, enhance their skills, and grow their practice.

College for the LD Student

- Columbia University's learning specialist and LD expert Elizabeth Hamblet will join IECA's **Joan Wittan** (MD) for a session that will explore "**7 Steps for Success**" in helping students with disabilities to make a successful transition from high school to college. This session is ideal for IECs serving LD students as well as learning specialists and administrators of secondary schools who want to ensure students are ready for college success.

British University System

- IECA, in partnership with the British Council, offers in-depth training for those who want to understand how the British postsecondary system operates. Those who want to advise clients on the process—very different than our own—will receive a Certificate of Course Completion demonstrating their knowledge of British university placements. Those completing this course will be given preference for upcoming IEC tours of British universities.

Gap Year Programs

- This session is designed for those who wish to become experts at gap year opportunities, gain a better understanding of the diverse offerings, learn who is best suited to a gap experience, and evaluate gap programs. Offered in partnership with the American Gap Association, attendees will be awarded a Certificate of Course Completion demonstrating expertise in gap year placements.

Marketing on the Internet

- This session grew out of a hugely popular breakout session last fall. It is designed for those who want to make a change: dedicate more energy, chart a new marketing course, or get a first website off the ground. For novice and intermediate marketers, the four-step plan will give you bump in the right direction.

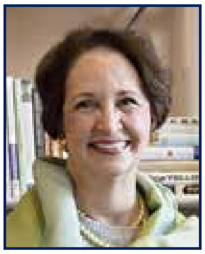
3 Days of Campus Tours

Monday to Wednesday, May 4–6 will see more than a dozen campus tours open to IECA members. Maryland offers a wealth of options among boarding schools and colleges. Look in the Member-to-Member section of this issue for details on the specific tour opportunities available to you.

1 Link 'n Learn

Nothing provides in-depth knowledge of therapeutic schools and programs like a Link 'n Learn. Haven't taken part in one? Think of speed dating between IECs and therapeutic program representatives. Each IEC will complete about 20 one-on-one meetings with program administrators over the course of the day. Link 'n Learn, in partnership with NATSAP, will open Monday afternoon, May 4, with the added benefit of a new educational program for those newer to therapeutic advising followed by a welcome reception. The one-on-one meetings take place the next day. There is no cost to IECs, and the expense of the additional hotel room nights and meals is covered. Contact NATSAP to register: http://natsap.org/conferences-workshops/link-n-learn

Why I Belong



"In our profession, practicing alone or in small groups, traveling often, feeling the weighty responsibility of guiding students' lives, we form strong bonds of respect and love with others who do what we do. IECA provides the opportunity to gather with other professionals, learn together from experts, and share wisdom among ourselves. It enables us to continue learning and growing and considering new ways to do our work more effectively. It spreads the word about our profession and articulates the principles that all ethical consultants adhere to. Finally—or first, actually—having IECA's Principles of Good Practice at the onset of my career gave me the courage and the framework to embark on this fulfilling profession."

—Christie Theriot Woodfin, LPC (GA)

STI, from page 3

conversations and again making me feel so welcome. I could feel myself decompressing. By the time Sue and **Mark Sklarow** (IECA's CEO) spoke and I was laughing out loud, I knew I was in the right place. Mark spoke from such a place of wisdom, passion, and experience, sprinkled with a sense of humor that left my belly sore from laughing so much. That is my favorite way to learn and I instantly trusted and respected him. The speakers were top notch and experts in their fields. And did I tell you how funny this team was? They just clicked and there were times when I had tears rolling down my face!

The mini sessions that were offered were outstanding and very relevant. The hardest part of this whole weekend was narrowing down the choices of where to go each session; I wanted to go to them all! I heard from Steve with building college lists and essentials. Jane spoke of the intake appointment. Joan is a marketing guru! I loved listening to her and all her insights and wisdom (I am signing up for her marketing class at UC Irvine this week!). **Deborah Davis Groves**, IECA (TX), gave excellent insights and useful tips two years after she attended STI. Finally Mark spoke about trends and liabilities and social media and wowed us all. *Awesome* does not begin to describe what they presented to us. They offered personal insight and experiences that are priceless to growing my own business. I have never been to a training conference where I received such amazing information. And I have already put numerous things that I learned that week into action.

Beyond the educational sessions, STI offered a chance to build new friendships and network with others with similar interests and passions. I met several people whom I now call my friends and we continue to support each other on our mission to grow our businesses. I even got to go sightseeing with four other attendees in downtown Philly after the training. We rode a double decker bus, walked Elfreth's Alley, and sat in George Washington's church pew. It was great fun with new friends. IECA also set up a group Facebook page for attendees to use as a resource to post articles, ask questions and give updates in our business growth. This has been a great way to keep in touch.

I walked into STI 2014 with a desire to become an independent educational consultant, but was oblivious of the next step; I left with a roadmap of how to make it happen. I was given practical

information and was able to put it into immediate use. When I got home, I immediately filled out my application to become an IECA Associate Member. I am happy to say that I was accepted. I created my to do list and I am very busy completing tasks. I have picked a business name and ordered business cards, bought a website that I need to build, registered my business with the state, and am setting up my home office. I also received a mentor from IECA. Finally, I am working with several pro bono students to help me build my experience. Some weeks are more productive than others as I am still working part time. I just keep doing something to move me forward. I am making this happen.

I am so grateful to have had the opportunity to attend the Summer Training Institute 2014 at Swarthmore. From the bottom of my heart, thank you to every single person who helped make that week possible for me. Your hard work and dedication to helping grow quality IECs is outstanding and has changed my life. It means so much to me that I have an organization that wants me to succeed and that I can call them for assistance anytime. The future looks bright. What a gift!

STI 2014 was a *risk taker, life changer, laugh maker, belly acher, confidence booster, hope launcher, doubt crusher, fear smasher kind of week!*

Sherry Easterman can be reached at seasterman@gmail.com

'It is a beautiful thing when a career and a passion come together.'

—Unknown

President's Letter, from page 2

of the changing needs of our profession, the **Strategic Planning Committee**, chaired by **Charlotte Klaar,** IECA (MD), is working to provide a framework for the board to establish organizational goals for the future direction and focus of IECA. This committee will investigate ways to increase member involvement in the organization, consider options for the delivery of IECA programs, and explore how we can best use our resources to accomplish the mission of IECA. Under Charlotte's leadership, the Strategic Planning Committee will gather the relevant information required to review existing programs and services, and create a proposal for the board to approve and implement. Our Strategic Plan will establish a five-year blueprint of the goals and priorities for IECA.

In May 2014, the board established the **Professional Liaison Committee** to "foster stronger collegial and cooperative relationships between admissions offices and professional associations." **Don McMillan**, IECA (MA), chair of the Professional Liaison Committee, has created four sub-committees (Therapeutic, Schools, College, Graduate) and the Board approved action plans for each sub-committee in November 2014. The committee seeks to connect IECA "regional diplomats " with admissions officers in all specialties. The Professional Liaison Committee's focus is to raise awareness in the educational community about IECA and improve our relationships with schools, programs, colleges and graduate schools at all levels of selectivity. The Committee will also work to establish additional networks with regional ACAC groups to expand professional relationships between admissions officers and IECA consultants.

Lastly, I would like to welcome **Diana Kane** as our new Manager of Member Outreach and Engagement. Our members can look forward to meeting Diana at the IECA conference in Baltimore.

I know we are all eager to accomplish our professional goals in 2015, mindful of our responsibility to the students and families we serve.

Gail Meyer

Gail Meyer
IECA President, MSW, LCSW

Advising Students on Law School Admission

by Elise Epner, MA, JD, IECA (CT)

Sometimes, at our first meeting, applicants are already on the express train speeding into the darkness. It's junior year, already three years—or maybe a lifetime—into mom and dad's inquisition about career plans. With roommates heading to bank internships or MCATs and the not-too-distant pressure of student loan payments, our conscientious college students are understandably stressed to develop a game plan.

Law school is the dream—at least at this moment.

You know these wonderful young adults? She's writing the senior thesis on Ugandan gender roles and wants to build on the advocacy skills she's developed as a student government leader. He's the somber philosophy major who veered away from Differential Equations after his legal philosophy course epiphany. Or, maybe he just developed a deep admiration for Saul Goodman while binge-watching *Breaking Bad*.

Whatever led them here, these great students are now sitting across your desk, bubbling over about LSATs and personal statements.

How can an Independent Educational Consultant (IEC) help? To be sure, my students, like you, don't want to hear my half-baked microeconomic analyses of the legal industry or my personal—and archaic—take on work-life balance struggles as a large firm litigation associate.

Legal work offers the possibility of world-changing power, whether advocating for gay marriage or helping the biotech entrepreneur patent an anti-cancer vaccine. Still lawyering, like all careers, has strong points that don't fit everyone and downsides that might be a bit hidden from view.

In my work counseling prospective applicants to medical, dental, law, and other programs each cycle, I feel the continuing responsibility to inject realism into their graduate school dreams.

At times, my role is to slow down or even derail the train.

STEP 1: Ask some questions: How close has the applicant been to real life lawyers, legal issues or a variety of practice settings?

No specific major, coursework or shadowing are prerequisite to law school admission. But, it's always good for an applicant to know what they're getting into, right? And with tuition and expenses nearing a quarter of a million dollars for three years at some fancy-dancy law schools and the Great Recession demolishing some high-flying law firms, pushing applicants to evaluate their potential investment is a no brainer. Even the law school application process, with $1,500 prep courses and $80 application fees to 10 or more schools, represents a sizeable expenditure.

As I start this conversation, I'm listening for enthusiasm and informed insights. I'm also hoping to hear evidence of how the student has developed research and analytical abilities, writing and speaking skills, problem solving, and detail-oriented perfectionism that will help both in law school and the profession. Has she stepped up to leadership positions in the outing club or her sorority? Has he embraced writing courses and tried his hand at reporting for the campus daily? Math, logic, physics, and social science and humanities courses all are great ways to cultivate logic and analytical skills.

Delving into the applicant's specific legal exposures comes next. Options for test-driving the legal profession abound including mock trial teams and nonprofit internships. If your student has shied away from these experiences, why? Maybe a law-related opportunity would help—whether demonstrating the detail-oriented drafting or the hefty research that presumably occurs off-screen during Alicia & Will's tension-filled tête-à-tête? Insurance companies, big law firms, solo practitioners, political campaigns, federal and state courts, D.C. policy makers, and others all have provided paid or unpaid experiences to my students.

As I help students reflect on their reasons for a legal career, I'm really hoping our conversation is their personal statement in the

continued on page 8

Law School, from page 7

making. And, "Perry Mason" work is not the only option leading to a great essay, for sure. Whether a student was the reporter covering the local crime beat with plenty of juicy police stories to share or the college junior working a summer job fielding consumer complaints at a call center, winning applicants develop their passion for justice in every which way.

STEP 2: GPA, LSAT & the Admissions Process

Will a student's experiences wow a top-tier admissions committee without the requisite proof of academic success provided by a strong GPA and LSAT? Like med school and other professional programs, top law schools are looking for the full package. Undoubtedly, academic credentials play the most important part in the admissions equation. I always ask to review students' college and graduate school transcripts and LSAT scores, along with their resumés, before our first meeting. The data I collect from past applicants, along with information posted on websites like *lawschoolnumbers.com*, helps us brainstorm a list.

Usual requirements for admission include transcripts from all colleges and graduate schools attended, LSAT scores, resume, two letters of recommendation, and a personal statement. The Law School Admission Council (LSAC *www.LSAC.org)* administers the LSAT and processes credentials for applicants applying to ABA accredited law schools in the US and Canada. Most applicants apply electronically through the LSAC.

The application timeframe is pretty similar to college admissions; most schools accept applications from September until March for regular decision. Acceptances are handed out on a rolling basis at most schools, so applying early usually lets students hear their decisions early. Some schools, such as Yale, expressly state that application timing doesn't impact admissions decision, but at other schools applying early when most seats are unfilled seems to yield better results. Anyway, if she can be ready with her best application by Labor Day, why not push the send button? I'm good with celebrating the Georgetown early decision acceptance in mid-October and the Harvard acceptance from the waitlist in July!

Early decision, with a binding commitment if the applicant is accepted, is an option at many grad schools—just like college admissions. For example, Emory allows ED applications up until March 1, promising a decision within two weeks and hefty merit money, if accepted. Others, like Penn, provide two rounds of early decision, with specific deadlines in November and January. Just as with college admissions, if institutional financial aid is a factor, early decision isn't wise. And, similar to college admissions, ED's show of interest and binding commitment does seem to improve the applicant's chances a bit.

STEP 3: Talk Money

Can merit money entice an applicant? If a slashed price tag is important, applicants should consider schools where their stats are above the schools' 75%. Merit money is ubiquitous and can be very significant—for example, University of Chicago's David M. Rubenstein Scholars Program and NYU's Root-Tilden-Kern program offer three years of full tuition. For many applicants, at least their "safety" school acceptances are accompanied by some special scholarship, often amounting to a 2–5% or larger tuition discount.

As the *New York Times* reported a few years ago about Golden Gate University School of Law and others, sometimes attractive grants are offered to first years, but renewal conditions are all but impossible to fulfill. For sure, students need to be cautioned to investigate the chances of their scholarships continuing for years two and three. Columbia, Yale and others schools offer added financial benefits including loan repayment assistance programs for graduates pursuing public interest law.

STEP 4: Talk Strategy

Students starting at UMiami Law School recently ranged from ages 20 to 46. At Boston College, the oldest law students hit 50. Only a quarter of Yale's incoming first years matriculate straight from undergrad; a third have taken off for three or more years. So, what's the rush for a college junior to go straight to law school? Plenty of good reasons can delay law school applications; helping the student become a stronger applicant by retaking the LSAT, rethinking the personal statement, and exploring options is often one.

LSAT retake? I spend time with students brainstorming ways to strengthen their candidacy. ED and adding legal activities are discussed, of course, but retaking the LSAT is often strategy number one. When the ABA stopped requiring law schools to report average LSAT scores of their entering class who had sat for the LSAT multiple times, law schools started looking a lot more kindly upon LSAT re-takes. Law schools receive all scores along with an average in the LSAC report, and law schools say they judge these results "holistically."

Practically, I think that means that many students can gain from LSAT re-takes, especially if a disappointing first score doesn't adequately match practice tests and classroom performance as measured by their GPA. For students with consistently top grades at rigorous colleges, I raise the possibility of waiting a year and re-taking the LSAT after college graduation. Maybe applicants sell themselves short without another try? In my limited experience, I've seen greater improvement after a break, rather than a September LSAT repeated at the next date in December.

Re-think the Personal Statement? I want the personal statement blank canvas to persuasively demonstrate the applicant's argument for "Why me?" I can't tell you how many times I write "Show, don't tell" or "Evidence?" in the margin of essays. Draft after draft, I work hard to give thoughtful critique on personal statements; I carefully evaluate both the reasons given for law school admission and the presentation. Once they're sitting with sizeable merit money offers and handwritten praise on their acceptance letters, my students usually agree that their hard work, possibly the product of my incessant nagging, paid off.

Options: Part-time and evenings programs allow students to work while preparing for a legal career. Joint programs, combining MBAs, PhDs, or other specialized training are great fits for some students with a clear vision of their future. And if your pre-law junior decides to go in a different direction, that's okay too. "Well, I ain't passed the bar but I still know a bit," is true, as Jay-Z says.

IECs can play an important role in empowering applicants with information and strategies for admission to law school, even if that sometimes makes me feel like I'm throwing myself in front of a speeding train.

Elise Epner can be reached at eliseepner@snet.net

Photograph by Charlie Samuels

Summer Pre-College Program at Skidmore College

Saratoga Springs, NY

Try college on before taking college on

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.

Prepare for college success

In Skidmore's Pre-College Program, high school students earn college credit while studying alongside college students. They work with Skidmore's nationally recognized faculty and visiting artists and enjoy access to the College's state-of-the-art facilities and resources. Do your interests range from math to studio art, psychology to English, economics to religion? Skidmore's unique curriculum allows students to take either two liberal arts courses, two studio art courses, or one of each. Choose a class in an area where your strengths lie, or delve into an unexplored subject to challenge your perceptions and discover new fields of knowledge.

Live and learn at Skidmore

At Skidmore, high school students can imagine their futures while living together, cultivating new friendships, and discovering the right balance between work and fun. A carefully selected and trained residential staff lives with Pre-College students in their own private residence hall. The residential life program, designed to support and complement academic and artistic endeavors, ensures that students' social lives are every bit as exhilarating as their intellectual lives.

Skidmore College is a highly selective, independent liberal arts college known for outstanding academics, a rich co-curricular life, and its historic resort town setting. On Skidmore's lively summer campus Pre-College students not only learn together with high school peers and college students, but have the chance to meet visiting students and participants from other programs as well. They are invited to take active part in the special workshops, visiting artist lectures, 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

skidmore.edu/precollege

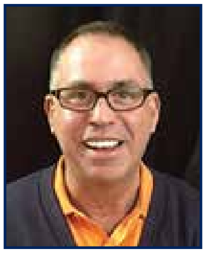
SKIDMORE
COLLEGE

CREATIVE THOUGHT MATTERS

Advertisement

Passion and Purpose in the Architecture Personal Statement

by Evan Forster, MFA, IECA (NY)



No matter what name it goes by—statement of purpose, statement of interest, or plain old personal statement—architecture school statements are challenging. They often want you to cover a whole lot of information in only 500 words. For instance, Columbia University's prompt last year was: *In a statement of approximately 500 words, describe your background, your past work in your intended field of study, and your plans for graduate study and a professional career.* All of that in only 500 words or less? No wonder my candidate Kara, an aspiring architect, had called me in a panic.

"So by 'background' do they mean my entire life story plus all of my work, school, and internship experiences?" Kara, wired on venti Americanos, asked. "It says 'personal'—does that mean I should tell them about my parents' divorce?"

Here's the thing: It is important that after the admissions committee has read your statement of purpose, they feel that they know who you are. They need to know what you want to do (your goal)—Kara's was opening her own "green" architecture firm one day—why this is important to you, what you have done thus far in regards to pursuing that goal or taking an interest in the subject matter, and what you still have left to learn and explore. And right there is the outline for your entire 500-word statement of purpose.

The break down:

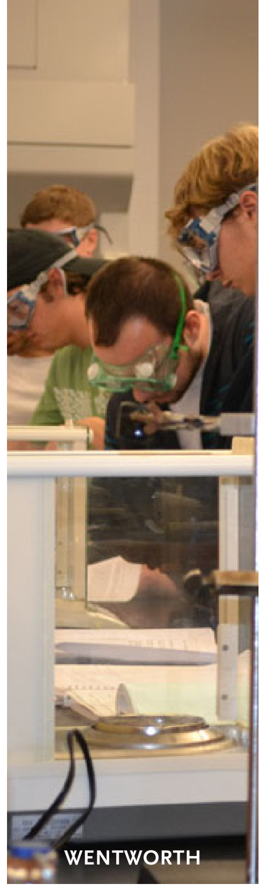
Paragraph 1: This is where you get personal. No, this doesn't mean empty the contents of your diary. This means write about the moment you realized you wanted to pursue your goal. In Kara's case it was when her family moved from a sprawling home in Greenwich, Connecticut, to a 1,200-square-foot apartment in Manhattan. She found herself wishing she could move the walls around and reconfigure the space to be more open. There! She had her "ah-hah!" moment—the moment she realized that architecture would be a part of her life. This is the type of specific moment that all candidates should search for and write about.

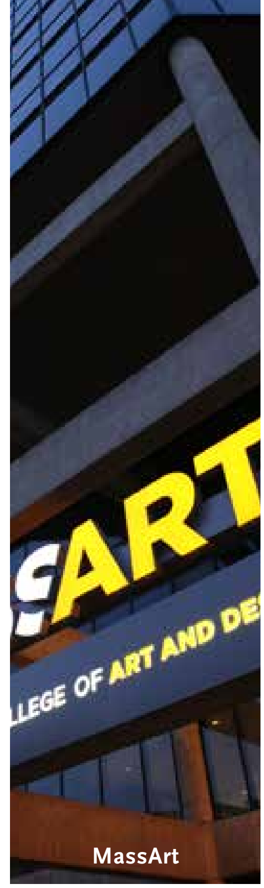
Why? Graduate programs want students who are passionate about what they want to do, not students who are just looking to avoid the real world for another few years. This is your opportunity to show the school why you want this.

Paragraph 2: What have you done thus far to pursue your interest in architecture? Did you explore classes in college? Did you take art or art history classes? When you studied abroad, did you take an active interest in the city's architecture? This is an opportunity to discuss specific classes you have taken as well as experiences—talk about a particular professor you've learned from or clubs you started or joined. Discuss internships or observation hours. But, as I told Kara, do not simply list them; you don't want to regurgitate your resume (remember, they have it!). Tell the school what's not on your resume. Dig down deep and discuss specific moments within that internship where you've learned something significant and how you plan to apply what you learned.

Why? Graduate schools want students who have already been seeking knowledge.

continued on page 13





Colleges of the Fenway (COF) Colleges of the Fenway (COF) gives students the benefits of a university — access to a wider range of social and academic experiences and opportunities — while maintaining the personal touch of a small college. COF is a consortium that brings together the resources of six colleges in Boston's famed Fenway Cultural District, one of the city's most lively and distinguished neighborhoods, to offer more — more classes, more clubs, more social activities. And it's available to you, just by attending one of the six COF colleges.

WHEELOCK COLLEGE

wheelock.edu

A four-year, private, coeducational college with comprehensive arts, sciences, and professional programs. Wheelock College provides a transformational education to students passionate about making the world a better place-especially for children and families.

EMMANUEL COLLEGE

emmanuel.edu

Emmanuel College is a coeducational, residential Catholic liberal arts and sciences college. Emmanuel educates students in a dynamic learning community rooted in the liberal arts and sciences and shaped by strong ethical values and a Catholic academic tradition.

MCPHS

mcphs.edu

An accredited, private institution specializing in medical careers. Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences (MCPHS) prepares students for successful careers in health care through excellence in teaching, scholarship, research, professional service, and community engagement.

WENTWORTH INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

wit.edu

Wentworth provides a comprehensive interdisciplinary, project-based education in engineering, technology, design and management that integrates classroom, laboratory, studio, cooperative, and experiential learning resulting in a career-ready, skilled professional and engaged citizen.

MASSACHUSETTS COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN

MassArt.edu

A public, independent college of visual and applied art. Massachusetts College of Art & Design strives to prepare students to participate in the creative economy as fine artists, designers, and art educators, and to engage in the well being of their society.

SIMMONS COLLEGE

simmons.edu

A four-year, private, non-sectarian undergraduate women's college with a comprehensive liberal arts and professional curriculum, and four coeducational graduate professional schools. Transformative learning that links passion with lifelong purpose.

Architecture Personal Statement, from page 11

Paragraph 3: Why do you want to go to grad school? What do you still have left to learn? Discuss skills that still need development or improvement. Kara was looking to strengthen her foundation and design skills with a master's in architecture. She was also interested in expanding her knowledge of technology and how she could use it in the design process in order to achieve greater innovation. So look at your goals, and then ask, "What do I need to get better at in order to improve my chances of achieving my goal?"

Now here's the part where Kara asks, "But, don't I want to appear confident? Won't it make me look weak to admit that I still have stuff to learn?"

No. Schools want students who are self-aware, who know their strongest and weakest areas. Kara needed to show the school that she knows what she needs to work on and what experiences she needs to gather in order to accomplish her goal. This also demonstrates that she actually will benefit from graduate school—and proves to the school even more that she is a serious candidate.

Paragraph 4: The school-specific portion of your essay addresses why Columbia, specifically. Here it is important to be extremely specific to show enthusiasm for a particular school. Do your research on classes, professors, and clubs, and discuss how they will help you accomplish your goal.

Why? The candidate must prove their desire to go to the school. Being specific about the school demonstrates Kara's ability to research and gain knowledge—good traits for a prospective student. Additionally, when she got that interview—she had lots to discuss.

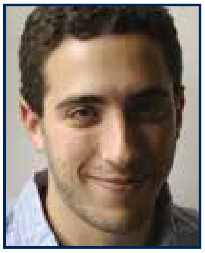
Final paragraph: Finish with a few short sentences about how Columbia is going to help you achieve your goal—and how you will contribute to Columbia—to change the planet (by using your master's in architecture).

Kara, who is now at Columbia, called me the other day. She was still drinking a venti Americano, but this time she was excited—not panicked. She had just interviewed for an internship at a prestigious New York "green" architecture firm and wanted to tell me she had nailed it. And she had applied the work we had done together almost a year ago. She researched the firm, was specific about what she could contribute to its office environment, and communicated clearly to the interviewers how gaining experience at their firm was in line with her long term goals.

Evan Forster can be reached at evan@forsterthomas.com

Crafting a Top-Notch Portfolio for Your Film/TV/Video MFA

by Ben Feuer, Associate Member, IECA (MA)



Everyone's had that moment—you're watching *Transformers* or *Frozen* and thinking to yourself, I could write that I could direct that! Well, thousands of students every year take that thought and try to make it a reality by attending a film or television MFA program. There are now dozens of MFA offerings at schools across America and Europe focused on a range of disciplines, from screenwriting to cinematography to documentary. The top five film schools in America—USC, UCLA, AFI, NYU and Columbia—have become more selective every year, with admittance rates ranging from 9–20%. (Full disclosure: I graduated from Columbia's MFA program in 2012, so for obvious reasons, I won't play favorites.)

Getting a creative portfolio in shape is a long-term project. In this article, I'll cover the key elements of the USC application and talk about what makes them stand out. Why USC? Because it is a top-ranked school, and many of the items it requests or requires are standard across the board at top film schools.

So here are the central elements of a Film MFA application—and how to make each one shine.

1. Cinematic Arts Personal Statement

One of the most common errors in a film school personal statement is excessive reliance on name-dropping. A top film school does NOT want to hear about the time you brought Robert Downey Jr. a beer on the set of *Iron Man 5*. They do not want to know that your mom's mom knew that girl from *The Big Bang Theory* growing up. Bringing that kind of stuff up in a personal statement is crass and off-putting.

Another typical mistake is obsessing over your film likes and dislikes. Who cares that you had a transformative experience watching *Persona* or *Cries and Whispers* for the first time—except maybe Ingmar Bergman? No one's interested in your top ten favorite episodes of *Breaking Bad* either. Making reference to USC-alum-directed films is also a silly move. They know their own success stories, believe me. What they're trying to decide is whether you're the next one.

Okay, so what *do* you talk about? Simple. They want to know your story—your personal, human narrative—that led you to apply to film school. Obviously, it would be impossible to tell that story without mentioning film, but the subject should come up organically. Going

continued on page 16

Film/TV/Video MFA, from page 15

to the cinema with your grandfather and remembering how he gasped the first time he saw *Avatar* in 3D—that's a real memory. Getting so excited by *Raiders of the Lost Ark* that you recreated the rock-rolling scene with papier-mâché cutouts in your backyard—now that I can sink my teeth into. But it's nowhere near enough, and if your client doesn't have those kinds of stories, don't worry. Everyone has stories inside them: raw material, attitudes, beliefs, and experiences that they will draw upon to tell their stories. And the very first story your client is going to tell will be theirs. So make it good!

2. Writing Samples

An outline for a four-minute film that contains no dialogue. It can be fiction or nonfiction. The story has to be communicated visually. (No more than two pages).

One important principle in screenwriting is that you're only allowed to write about what you can see and hear, present tense. This prompt tests your ability to tell simple visual stories that are restricted to the two senses cinema makes use of.

I like to think of silent films as little picture books or comics—each image contains its own story in miniature, and they add up to a larger story, one with twists, surprises, reversals, and real human connection. Tell your clients not to push the limits of the medium. Don't let them try to reinvent the wheel. Instead, have them be clear, direct, and specific. The freshness will arise naturally from the limitations the exercise places upon them.

And a special note to all those post-Twitter filmmakers you'll be dealing with. This is not, or at least should not be, an exercise in fast cutting and showmanship. Instead, sentences should correspond to shots and paragraphs to scenes. Think of something evolving step by step. Include detail. Slow the pace.

A dialogue scene between two people. Provide a one-paragraph introduction describing the two characters in screenplay format. (No more than three pages).

There is a principle in dramatic writing known as a *fulcrum*—the idea is that every scene in a movie contains its own miniature conflict and that conflict resolves (in one way or another) at the fulcrum, or climax, of the dramatic scene. A good dramatic scene is unpredictable—it could resolve either way, but it winds up resolving in one particular way, thereby advancing the story.

Whether or not your client agrees that every scene works this way, for THIS assignment and this scene, they should write this way. Why? It provides a useful framework that an admissions committee will immediately recognize and understand. It proves your client speaks their language. It also forces your budding writer to work efficiently, instead of burning a page and a half introducing characters and coming up with clever one-liners.

Describe a concept for a feature-length movie, fiction or documentary, that you would like to develop. (No more than two pages).

Concepts, or treatments, as they are more commonly known in the "biz," should be written in present tense format, just like screenplays. They should be limited to what we see and hear, just like screenplays. Unlike screenplays, they don't need to use Courier font or any specialized formatting.

The most important thing to consider when writing a concept is pacing. Your client should think about the rate at which movies unfold their stories, and deliver something that is well-balanced and consistently interesting. One good way to make sure your client is doing that is to use an old screenwriter's trick by breaking down the story into acts and sequences. A typical feature film contains three (or four, depending on who you ask) acts and eight to ten sequences, each of which should have its own self-contained story and sense of progress. Added together, they should make up a compelling whole. Different (but related) challenges apply to writing treatments for television scripts.

3. Visual Sample

Please submit one visual sample. It is essential that you specify what role(s) you have played in your visual sample.

Video Option: Create a brief narrative video in which you had a major creative role. The video can be live-action or animation, fiction or documentary, but it should reflect your aesthetic tastes and intellectual and emotional interests. (No longer than five minutes.) Please submit only ONE video. Multiple submissions WILL NOT be reviewed.

Photo Option: Prepare a series of eight photographs you have taken that when viewed in a specific sequence portray a unique and original character or tell a simple narrative story. Please upload the photos in order of sequence (1–8). Also, include a one-page narrative about the character being portrayed in the photos. The images may either be black and white or in color. Please also upload the required one-page narrative into the "media" section of the application.

You see that phrase, "specify your role"? There is a very good reason USC asks you to do that. This material is being used to assess your abilities, not whether you were peripherally connected to something famous or interesting. Don't waste this submission by focusing on the biggest project your client was a part of. Instead, choose a smaller project that your client was integral to.

Another important warning here—less is better. USC helps you by limiting the duration of your video to five minutes, but many schools will give your clients more than enough rope to hang themselves. Your clients will probably fight you on this point. They'll tell you they just don't think that way, that they can't tell a whole story in that short a period of time. You just tell them, that's the point. Heck, you can make a great short film in 30 seconds—just check out the Super Bowl ads!

Don't get too bogged down in technical details like production value, either. If your sample looks amazing or stars that kid from that show, hey, that's nice, but it's ultimately beside the point. Great storytelling can happen with an iPhone, starring a cat.

Those are the basic components of a compelling portfolio. Don't feel like everything has to be perfect—after all, your client is going to film school to learn to make great movies. There wouldn't be much point if she already knew everything!

Happy scribbling!

Ben Feuer can be reached at ben@forsterthomas.com

Questions to Ask of Potential Graduate School Advisors

by Lucia D. Tyler, PhD, IECA (NY)

Graduate school is a big commitment. Students who are undertaking graduate study should interview their advisors or mentors to make sure it is a good fit. Independent Educational Consultants (IECs) can help prospective graduate students by sharing these important questions with them prior to an interview.

1. **How many graduate students are you currently advising? International students? Ratio of men to women?**

This question addresses the social dynamic of the advising group. It helps if there is at least one other English-speaking student in the mix. In typically male disciplines such as engineering (or vice versa), a mix of women and men often makes a more collegial group atmosphere. Students often learn from each other so having at least one other student in the group is helpful. However, grad students are expensive to support, so a professor of interest to you may not have funding for many students.

2. **How many graduate students have graduated under your advisement in the last five years?**

If this number is zero, you need to ask more questions about the professor's experience as a mentor.

3. **How long does a graduate student usually take to finish?**

This is an important question. Some advisors have extra requirements for publishing or experimental work that may take a very long time to fulfill. You should also ask other graduate students in the department about this.

4. **How much funding is available for your students? Are there teaching or research fellowships available? Are they competitive? Will the funding last as long as the graduate program?**

Financial support is important to the successful completion of graduate school. For budgeting purposes you should obtain specific answers to these questions. It is horrible to be part way through a program and realize that you don't have enough money to finish.

5. **Are there funds available for students to travel to professional conferences?**

Conferences provide valuable opportunities for students to network with possible future employers or collaborators. Some programs have rules about travel support that are tied to presenting research.

6. **Do your students share authorship on papers that you publish? Are they ever senior authors?**

This can be an area of contention because research ideas come to fruition. It is extremely frustrating to have a major advisor take all of the credit for student work. It is best to be clear about these boundaries from the beginning.

7. **What are your research interests? Do you have specific topics in mind for a potential PhD student?**

Prior to the interview, you should have looked up some of the professor's publications to get an idea of the types of things he or she is working on. The research should spark an interest in you. After all, you will spend years digging into the topic so if you are not excited about the research, it will be a hard journey in graduate school.

Lucia Tyler can be reached at lucia@tyleradmissions.com


CompassRose
ACADEMY

Finding the Right College to Get Your Student to Medical School

by Todd Johnson, JD, IECA (MN)

For many high school seniors, their dream is to make it to medical school. While it is true that you can get to medical school from any college, some colleges make the process much easier. So how do you find those colleges that will help your student with their medical school dream?

First, an understanding of what medical schools are looking for is important. The two most important factors for medical school admissions are the college GPA, particularly the GPA in math and science courses, and the MCAT score. In addition, medical schools want to see students who have healthcare related volunteering, some scientific research experience, and letters of recommendations from professors.

While none of this is too surprising, let's look at how a particular college can influence those factors. Since grades are important, you may think that colleges with the most grade inflation would have a greater likelihood of getting their students into medical school. However, medical schools are aware of the colleges that have the greatest grade inflation and will often discount the grades from those colleges and focus more on the MCAT scores.

On the other hand, lower grades in a "tough" major, like engineering, are problematic as well. Medical schools like to see a 3.5 GPA and they will not be impressed with a significantly lower GPA even if your major typically has lower grades.

It is important to note that many students at smaller colleges, such as liberal arts colleges, score better on the MCAT than students at larger universities, presumably because they have learned the basic sciences better in the smaller classes.

Another advantage that smaller colleges have is that students are much more likely to get to know their professors well. Medical schools require recommendation letters from professors or a pre-med committee. I have often seen students at larger universities who have had trouble getting this recommendation because they did not know any of their professors well enough to ask for a recommendation.

You need to be aware that not all colleges handle recommendations for medical school the same. Some pre-med committees will write recommendation letters for any student who requests such a letter.

Emory University is a good example of a college that writes recommendation letters for all of their students and is very open about the success of their students, depending on grades and MCAT scores.

Other committees will only write recommendation letters for their strongest students. This of course skews the acceptance rate for those colleges. If you see a 90% or better acceptance rate from a college, the odds are high that they only recommend their best students.

The other major issue is the availability of undergraduate research. Medical schools do not care if the research performed by the student is cutting-edge research. They just want to see some type of experience with scientific research. At major research universities, much of the research is reserved for graduate students. At the smaller colleges that is not an issue.

There are many colleges that do a good job of helping students get to medical school. Many of the strongest are smaller colleges, so make sure that your student understands this before deciding where to apply.

Todd Johnson can be reached at todd@collegeadmissionspartners.com

Advising Your Students About the New SAT

by Jed Applerouth, PhD, Founder, Applerouth Tutoring Services

In the domain of college admissions testing, the times, they are a-changing. If you haven't already fielded questions from families and students who are curious or nervous about the new SAT, rest assured the inquiries will be forthcoming. The SAT is undergoing a radical transformation, and the changes may affect your students' admission test choices and testing timelines.

In December the College Board released the most comprehensive problem set to date, offering a glimpse of what the new SAT and PSAT will entail. The released test items reflect a surprisingly different SAT, both in terms of content and level of difficulty. If this practice set is indeed representative of the new test in development, it will be the hardest SAT we've ever seen and significantly harder than the ACT.

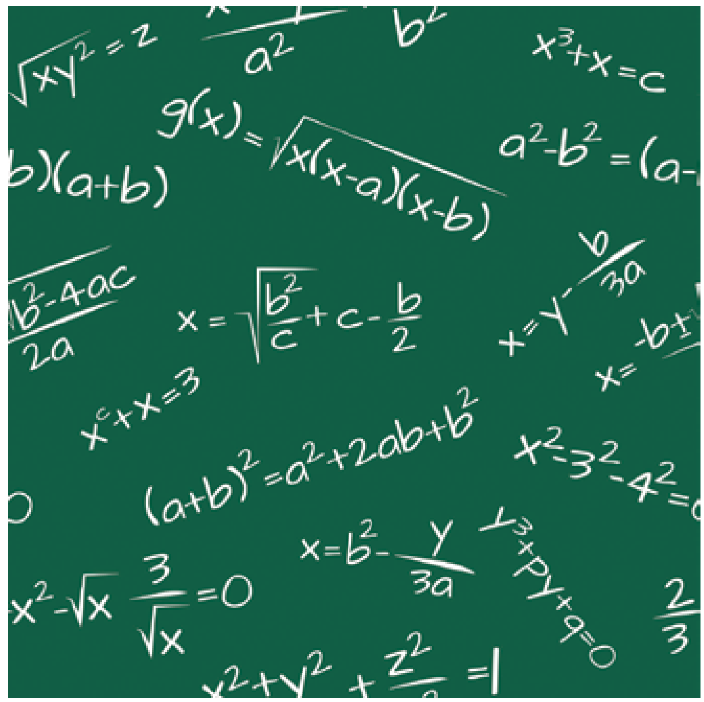
This new SAT bears the deep imprint of the Common Core State Standards: nearly every defined learning objective in the recently released problem set maps directly to a Common Core standard. This focus on the Common Core has transformed the test. While success on the current SAT is predicated upon a student's ability to solve math, reading and writing items, the new SAT seeks to measure fluency and gauge a student's deeper understanding of the content. The latter approach will yield a more complete picture of a student's comprehension, but it comes at the price of a more challenging test, which may intimidate certain students and drive them toward alternative assessments.

Reading and Writing

Although the format of the sample SAT Writing section mirrors that of the ACT English section, the reading level of the passages is remarkably more advanced on the new SAT. Likewise, several passages in the sample SAT Reading section are more difficult than those that have historically appeared on the test. These passages resemble those typically found on the harder, more complex SAT Literature test, and demand a significantly higher level of reading fluency. Advanced vocabulary permeates the Reading passages and "SAT words," such as *acuteness, partisan* and *empirically*—which were purportedly to be excised from the new assessment—appear in correct answer choices. Additionally, the sample included a new question type that requires students to provide evidence for previous answers. These new multi-part questions are time-intensive and prone to creating a "domino effect" in which students miss both the initial inference question and the supporting evidence question. Given the elevated textual complexity, ongoing presence of advanced vocabulary, and time-intensive "command of evidence" question types, there is no doubt that this new Reading test is harder than its equivalent on the current SAT or ACT.

Optional Essay: Harder, but Better

The "optional" essay requires students to analyze the manner in which an author uses logic, structure and rhetorical skills to build an argument. It is markedly more challenging and analytical than the current required essay, which allows students to make up facts or cite personal experience to support a claim. On this new essay, students can attain a maximum score of 12, with a possible 4 points each for Reading, Analysis, and Writing. A profound departure from today's SAT essay, this essay is better suited to assess a student's readiness for college-level writing and analysis.



Math: Awaken the Slumbering Giant

Of all the sections, the math section is by far the most surprising and challenging. Emphasizing math fluency and conceptual understanding, the math questions require students to model real-world situations with complex formulas and articulate underlying math fundamentals. The student's ability to merely solve a problem (e.g., find the value for *x* in a given equation) is now subordinate to the student's ability to "read" the problem and understand its various components (e.g., articulate what abstract value 1/*x* represents in a given system of equations). Even when students are asked to simply solve problems, they will find the new problems require more discrete steps and significantly more time than do typical SAT problems. Additionally, for the first time on the SAT, students will need to wade through extraneous information and distractors to find the relevant information. This will add to the time and reading requirements for this new math section.

In particular, the calculator-free section is the most radical departure from anything we've ever seen on the SAT or the ACT. Questions in this section require a different method of perceiving a math problem. Students who are well-versed in the logic and language of the current SAT may, in fact, struggle on the new SAT because of their training. A student looking for the standard set up—find the relevant info in the problem, structure the work left to right, top to bottom, and solve—may be confounded, wondering how to proceed when facing these new kinds of problems. Students trained on the current SAT will have to unlearn existing strategies to succeed on the new SAT, eliminating the prospect of transitioning seamlessly between the current and new SAT.

The scope of the math content is also broader than ever before. Students will be accountable to know more definitions, equations, and math structures on this new test. The variety of new concepts covered in the sample math sections was unprecedented, requiring deep knowledge of trigonometry, planar geometry, and much more. At times this test felt more like a high school Algebra II/Trig final than an SAT. Extrapolating from the depth and variety of content covered in this small sample of problems, students might be accountable for knowing over a hundred new math concepts, well beyond the 40 or so discrete topics assessed on the current SAT.

If the level of difficulty of this problem set is a reflection of what's to come, the College Board will need a very forgiving curve to round out the normal scoring distribution, allowing a student to miss numerous problems and still attain a high score.

More Time per Item: A Necessity Rather Than a Gift

While I was initially excited by the prospect of having more time per question on the new SAT and assumed the College Board was backing off processing speed, I now realize that much of the benefit from the additional time will be negated by the new, harder problem types. Though this test will continue to be gentler on processing speed than the ACT, the benefit will be less substantial than anticipated. Students have more time per item, and they will need it.

A Better Test?

From first analysis, it seems this better-aligned and more challenging SAT will give college admissions officers a better prediction of college preparedness and school administrators a better measure of their students' academic performance. Will school districts, states or college admissions officers engage with this new test? Maybe. The Michigan Department of Education, for example, just opted out of its longstanding ACT contract and secured a three-year contract with the College Board to ensure that every junior in the state takes the new SAT. With aggressive pricing and better Common Core alignment, the new SAT may make inroads at the district and state levels.

The most important question for IECs is how will college admissions offices value the enhanced difficulty and Common Core alignment of this new test? Will they view the SAT as a superior instrument to the ACT, or will they continue to view these assessments on equal footing? If the data bears out that the new SAT is, in fact, a better predictor of collegiate success, college admissions offices will have to respond. But until that time, we cannot assume there will be any particular advantage in taking the more challenging SAT over the ACT.

Timelines and Potential Implications

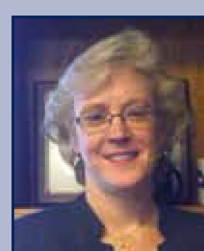
By March or April of this year we will have the first complete, calibrated new SATs from the College Board. Until we have complete tests, it's essentially impossible to conduct an accurate, valid and reliable diagnostic test for the new SAT. A new Blue Book of College Board practice tests should arrive in the spring/early summer, and Khan Academy will release official College Board practice material in a digital format. In October the new PSAT will be administered, and the new SAT will replace the current test in March of 2016.

Assuming the new SAT aligns with the test content provided in December and the College Board test writers are not merely showing off their hardest possible material, we anticipate significant changes in student behavior. Many current sophomores will shy away from this harder assessment, either completing testing on the current SAT by January 2016 or migrating to the ACT. Not only is the content harder on the new SAT, but the College Board has indicated that the initial March and May SAT results may not be released until 6–8 weeks after the tests are administered, denying students critical, timely feedback. While many students will avoid the new SAT, your top-performing students, those who will be unfazed by harder reading or more advanced math, may benefit from taking the new SAT.

If your sophomore students decide to stick with the current SAT, this will accelerate their testing timelines. These students will need

continued on page 25

New Manager of Member Outreach & Engagement



Please welcome our new Manager of Member Outreach & Engagement, Diana Kane, who joined IECA at the end of December following Janice Berger's retirement. Diana comes to us from the Girl Scout Council of the Nation's Capital where she worked in member recruitment. She has a master's degree in Education–Training & Development from Penn State University and a bachelor's degree in Public Relations & Speech Communications from Shippensburg University. She and her husband, Jim, are empty nesters, with two grown sons and one college sophomore daughter. They reside in Western Loudoun County, Virginia. Diana can be reached at *Diana@IECAonline.com* or 703-591-4850, ext. 6973. She looks forward to meeting many of you at the Spring Conference in Baltimore.

Campus Visits

"We had a great time with the IECA group who visited last week. Thanks for sending such an energetic and exciting group to us! They were wonderful!" —Allison Doty, Assistant Director of University Recruitment, Auburn University

Alabama campus tours: Many members took part in the pre-retreat campus tours in Alabama. Visits included University of Alabama main campus (Tuscaloosa) and Birmingham campus, Birmingham-Southern College, University of Montevallo, Samford University, Auburn University, and Tuskegee University. [photos courtesy Gail Meyer]

Several IECA members visited **Marymount Manhattan** in December, including Katelyn Klapper (MA), Marilyn Emerson (NY), Eileen Nolan (NJ), Ann Rossbach (NJ), Associate member Elizabeth Shaheen (NJ), Alan Haas (CT), and Nicole Oringer (NJ), among others. [photo courtesy Marilyn Emerson]

New SAT, from page 23

to complete their preparation and take two or three official SAT administrations by January of 2016. Some IECs with whom we work have encouraged sophomores to take their first SAT in May or June of this year. In any other year, I would discourage this to keep the testing in the junior year. However, given this year of transition and understanding that many current sophomores will have challenging schedules in the fall, I think it's okay if a student wants to knock out an official SAT in May or June.

Students who did well on their sophomore PSAT and are in the range for National Merit scholarships will need to practice with the new SAT content this summer and hone their skills before October. While success on the old PSAT by no means guarantees a similar performance on the new PSAT, we anticipate the majority of strong testers, particularly those willing to put in the necessary practice, will be able to successfully transition to the new test.

Summary

As the landscape of admissions testing is in flux, we will need to carefully track developments from the College Board and from college admissions offices. This new SAT is clearly a work in progress, but its current charted course will have significant implications for this field. We promise to keep you fully informed as we navigate the new landscape of admissions testing together.

Jed Applerouth can be reached at jed@applerouth.com

Introductions

Please Welcome IECA's New Professional Members

Laura Barr (CO) has worked as an IEC for eight years. She formerly worked as an admissions director, classroom teacher, teacher coach, owner of Vocal Motion LLC Music Together, and founder of Words Matter.

Laura earned a bachelor's in Humanities and an MA in Early Childhood and Elementary Education.

She is a member of NAEYC, COPAA, and NAGC.

Laura is working on the Entitlement Antidote (Parenting for the 21st Century).

She has four wildly independent children whose ages range from 9th grade through college. She is an avid runner, reader, and lover of the outdoors. She and her family love to ski and hike. She feels that she has found her life work in serving families in such educational matters as school choice, parenting, and advocacy.

Laura Barr, MEd
e.Merging LLC
50 S. Steele St., Ste. 121
Denver, CO 80209
303-284-6429
laurabarr@me.com
www.e-merging.org
Specialty: S

Shannon Brady (CA) has worked as an IEC for seven years and was an associate member of IECA. Her past work experience includes working as a regional admissions representative for Drew University; a college and career counselor at Hunterdon Central Regional High School; and an internship coordinator at Fordham University's Career Planning Office. She is currently an instructor for the UCLA Extension College Counseling Certificate Program, teaching *Using the Internet for College & Career Counseling*.

Shannon earned a BS in Psychology with a minor in Biology from Loyola University of Maryland and an MS in Education, Pupil Personnel Services from Fordham University.

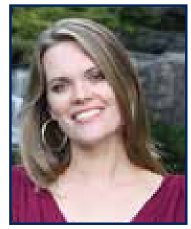
She is a member of NACAC and WACAC.

In addition to regular college admission counseling, Shannon has worked with many student athletes in the college recruiting process and is knowledgeable in NCAA and NAIA rules and regulations.

Shannon lives in Carlsbad, California with her husband, Brian; son, Liam; and daughter, Shae.

Shannon Brady, MEd
Brady College Counseling
12625 High Bluff Drive, Ste. 202
San Diego CA 92130
760-448-6326
shannon@bradycollegecounseling.com
www.bradycollegecounseling.com
Specialty: C

Carrie Lyndrup (SC) began helping families nine years ago and began working full time as an IEC in 2012. For the past three years she has worked with **Kathie Carnahan**, IECA (LA) of Carnahan and Associates in New Orleans, and she previously worked as director of Freshman Admissions at the College of Charleston as well as an application reader for Princeton University. She serves as the tour coordinator for the Palmetto's Finest College Tour.



Carrie earned a master's in Public Administration from the College of Charleston and a bachelor's degree from Winthrop University.

She attended IECA's 2005 Summer Training Institute.

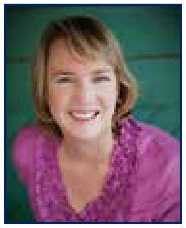
Carrie and her husband, Jay, will be celebrating their 15th wedding anniversary this April. They have two children, Marley (8) and Jonah (6), who have already visited more colleges than most of her students. Guiding families through the daunting admissions process is an honor and a joy. She is thrilled to be a new member of IECA!

Carolyn Lyndrup MPA
Lyndrup Consulting Services
2026 Pierce Street
Charleston SC 29492
856-655-6581
carrie.lyndrup@gmail.com
Web: www.lyndrupconsulting.com
Specialty: C

continued on page 28

Introductions, from page 27

Catherine Richardson McCarthy (CA) has been an independent educational consultant since 2010 and an associate member since 2012.



She previously worked as an instructional design consultant; many of the projects she was involved with were intended to teach K-8 students math and science concepts.

Catherine earned a BS in Zoology from Duke University; a BA in History; and an MA in School Counseling from the University of San Diego School of Leadership and Education Sciences.

She is a member of NACAC and WACAC.

Catherine volunteers with the Duke Club of San Diego, where she currently serves as the philanthropy liaison. Her volunteer work includes chair of the San Diego County Alumni Admission Advisory Committee; Meals on Wheels; and the Surf Cities Chapter of the National Charity League.

In 2011, she was awarded the Forever Duke Award for her support of the Duke Alumni Association.

Catherine and her husband, an attorney, have been married for 25 years. They have three children: a son who recently graduated from college and is a Naval Aviator and twin daughters who just finished their first semester at two different colleges. They enjoy sailing, soccer, and Duke basketball.

Catherine R. McCarthy, MA
College Smart Advising
7826 Quebrada Circle
Carlsbad, CA 92009
760-420-7465
crmccarthy@gmail.com
www.collegesmartadvising.com
Specialty: C

Grace Mulliken (CT) has worked as an IEC for two years and was an associate member in 2014. She previously worked as a school counselor at Lauralton Hall, and as a guidance counselor at Norwalk High School.

Grace earned a BA from Rutgers University; an MBA from Fordham Graduate School of Business; and an MA from Fairfield University. She attended IECA's Summer Training Institute in 2014.

Grace is a member of the American School Counselor Association and the National Board of Certified Counselors

She volunteers as a scholarship reader for the Point Foundation.

Grace is married and has two children—one a freshman at Middlebury College and the other a senior in high school. She enjoys gardening, cooking, yoga, skiing, traveling, and spending time with family and friends.

Grace Mulliken, MBA, MA
The College Counselor
24 Roosevelt Rd.
Westport, CT 06880
203-341-8575
grace@collegecounselor.net
www.collegecounselor.net
Specialty: C

Abbie Rabin (NJ) has worked as an IEC for 10 years and was an associate member of IECA for two years. She worked for 15 years at a local private girls school where she created the college guidance office.

Abbie earned a BA from Barnard College, an MA in Economics from Columbia University, and an MPhil in Health Economics from Columbia University.

She attended IECA's 2012 Summer Training Institute and earned a Certificate for Independent Educational Consulting from UC Irvine Extension in 2014.

Abbie is a member of NACAC.

She served for 10 years on the Board of Directors of her town's library, where she met people from a variety of backgrounds—an enriching experience.

Abbie and her husband, a neurologist, have three children: their daughters are physicians and their son is a rabbi. They have fun with their grandsons and granddaughter. She enjoys reading, Pilates, time with good friends, and traveling—especially to Israel. She is very grateful for the support IECA offers—both colleagues as well as IECA office staff.

Abbie Rabin MA, MPhil
Personalized College Consulting
164 Meadowbrook Road
Englewood NJ 07631
201-399-4802
abbie.rabin@gmail.com
www.personalizedcollegeconsulting.com
Specialty: C

IECA National Office

Phone: 703-591-4850
info@IECAonline.com

Mark Sklarow
Chief Executive Officer
ext. 6972
MSklarow@IECAonline.com

Sue DePra
Deputy Executive Director
ext. 6975
Sue@IECAonline.com

Sarah Brachman
Manager of Communications
ext. 6971
Sarah@IECAonline.com

Diana Kane
Manager of Member Outreach & Engagement
ext. 6973
Diana@IECAonline.com

Rachel King
Conference Manager
ext. 6978
Rachel@IECAonline.com

Valerie Vasquez-Guzman
Education Manager
ext. 6977
Valerie@IECAonline.com

Amanda Fogler
Membership Associate
ext. 6974
Amanda@IECAonline.com

LeAnnette Bailey
Office Administrator
ext. 6970
LeAnnette@IECAonline.com

Mary Patrick
Accounting Specialist
ext. 6976
Mary@IECAonline.com

Janet Stark (NY) has been an associate member for one year and has provided admissions consulting services (tutoring, advising, and helping with applications) for over 20 years. She advises college and graduate school candidates in the US and abroad.

Janet has held senior marketing positions in both large and entrepreneurial organizations including General Foods (now Kraft), Nestle, AFS, Zing (a cable start-up) and McKinsey. She also worked as a member of NYU-Stern's Admissions Committee.

Janet holds a BS in Psychology from Case Western Reserve University; an MSW from University of Michigan; and an MBA from Harvard Business School.

She attended IECA's 2014 Summer Training Institute.

Janet is a founding member of the board of the HBS Women's Association of Metropolitan New York, and she maintains close ties to the school. She also serves on the board of the Epilepsy Foundation of Metropolitan New York and volunteers for the Lincoln Center.

Janet enjoys all New York City has to offer (e.g., theatre, concerts, jazz clubs), but also loves hiking here and abroad. She enjoys international travel.

Janet Stark, MSW, MBA
JJS Admissions
205 West End Ave., 14A
New York, NY 10023
917-902-5943
jjs.admissions@gmail.com
Specialty: G (Law, Business)

Trang K. Vuong (TX) has been as an associate member for a year and a half and has worked as an IEC for two years. Her previous experience includes director of academic and college advising at All Saints Episcopal School, Tyler, Texas; as a guidance counselor at several schools in Tyler, Texas and New Orleans; and as a science teacher in New Orleans.

Trang earned an MEd in Guidance & Counseling from Northwestern State University in Natchitoches, Louisiana; a Gifted Education Certification from the University of New Orleans; and a BS in Biology, a Teacher Certification, a Crisis Prevention Intervention (CPI) Certification, and a Trauma & Loss in Children (TLC) Certification from Tulane University. She attended IECA's 2013 Summer Training Institute.

Trang is a member of NACAC, TACAC, and SACAC.

She has earned many Excellence in Education Awards; is a National Recipient of the Milken Family Foundation Educator Award; earned Recognition of Talented and Outstanding Educators from the State of Texas Senate Resolution No. 85; an award for Service to Children of the Community from Big Brother Big Sisters of Tyler; and an award for Service to Children from the Office of the Governor of New Orleans.

Trang is a Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) for kids of East Texas where she also serves on the Executive Planning Committee; and serves on the Executive Fund Raising Committee of the Whitehouse Independent School District Educational Foundation.

She has three children, Noah (16); Nicholas (14); and Chloe (4).

Trang K. Vuong MEd
Vuong College Admission Consulting
1930 Stonegate Boulevard
Tyler TX 75703
903-581-3986
vuong@tvuongconsulting.com
www.tvuongconsulting.com
Specialty: C

In the News

Laird Durley (CA) was quoted in the November 23 issue of *The New York Times*, in the article *Promiscuous College Come-Ons*.

> *"It is harder than ever to sell 'fit' as opposed to 'logo affixing,'" he wrote, adding that "what you will learn there" has taken a back seat to a different consideration: "Look at my brand!" —Laird Durley, IECA Associate (CA), in* The New York Times *November 23, 2014.*

Shereem Herndon-Brown (GA) was quoted in the *Washington Post* article, *College Freshman First-term Grades: Should Parents Flip Out or Chill Out* on November 18.

Christie Woodfin (GA) was interviewed by Lisa Singer on The Women's Radio Network about the field of Educational Consulting and how we serve families, on December 17.

Judi Robinovitz (FL) was quoted in the January 6 article, *5 Reasons Your College Decision Isn't Your Biggest Decision Ever*, in the *Huffington Post*; and in the article, *What to Research Before Choosing a Private School in the Private School Review*.

Katherine Cohen (NY) was featured in several media outlets, including the *Today Show* (*Here's What to Include on your College Application*); Forbes (*10 Things You Need To Know To Successfully Navigate The Common App*); Bloomberg TV and Radio (*Students Broaden College Choices to Help Gain Acceptance*); and as LinkedIn's Higher Education expert, she has also contributed to LinkedIn's Official Blog (*Tips for Parents and Students on How to Pick the Right College*).

New Crime Reporting Standards Help Protect College Students

by Claire Law, MS, IECA (SC)

The Clery Act refers to the reporting of campus crimes and especially assaults against people of any gender, age or creed. Formerly called the "Campus Security Act" it was renamed after the death of Jeanne Clery, a young college student. The Federal Department of Education is the responsible agency for monitoring compliance of this reporting.

It's important for parents and especially students entering college for the first time to be aware of potential pitfalls. Statistics show that the highest rate of assaults occurs during the fall, when first year students arrive. Why? Because students are excited to be on campus, finally independent of their parents, seek new experiences as they settle into being college students. First year students are trying to make friends.

Away from home and susceptible to peer pressures, students may find themselves in unfamiliar situations. In every residence hall there are orientation sessions for new arrivals that offer many topics to help newbies transition to college life. The Clery and subsequent VAWA Act is an attempt to help colleges and students live better lives on campus.

The Clery Act is a compliance requirement for colleges. They must publish an annual report that encapsulates three years of campus crime statistics and post them in a place that is visible to students physically, like on campus boards, and online. Colleges also must post information about what to do in case of emergencies. If you take a tour of a college and read the bulletin boards, you will likely notice posters that explain what students should do in the case of a terrorist attack or explosion (e.g. duck and cover, move away from windows, exit through approved evacuation routes from the building).

At the recent Student Financial Aid convention in Atlanta (December 2-5, 2014) a representative from the Department of Education, James Moore, from the Clery Act Compliance Team, explained that under Clery, colleges that receive federal funding must participate in crime awareness and drug-alcohol abuse prevention measures on campus, and report these incidents accurately to the Department.

In addition to the Clery Act, new reporting standards now require even a higher level of compliance than Clery with the VAWA Act.

What is VAWA?

VAWA stands for "Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2014. It was enacted on March 3, 2013 and the final rule was issued on October 20, 2014. It requires expanded reporting for incidents of sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, stalking (including cyber-stalking), and any and all hate crimes.

VAWA spells out new definitions of what constitutes crimes that need to be reported. In addition, colleges must report these incidents whether or not the perpetrator is found guilty and convicted or whether or not a victim reports the crime days or years after the fact. These crime reports must be brought to the attention of campus security, campus authority, or local law enforcement personnel.

The government representative, Mr. Moore, pointed out that he received many compliance reports from colleges that did not jive with local and internal campus reports. He drew laughter when he added, "these reports don't balance out even though financial aid administrators are masters at re-conciliation." For example, he discovered that in some states, campus police do not report an arson if it's not reportable to the state and the state police do not classify it. The point was made that the Department of Education wants to keep track of all these incidents, even if they are reportable only locally.

Another new reporting requirement under VAWA means that colleges are responsible for reporting incidents and violations even if they took place in such locations as the coffee shop, or burger restaurant, or the campus bookstore managed by a national chain. It's not enough to say, "oh well, that crime took place at such and such a retail place." If the place is on campus and frequented by students and supports institutional purposes, it is the responsibility of the college to keep track of those incidents and include them on the report to the Department of Education. In addition, the geographic area covered no longer stops at the campus perimeter. If students reside off campus or nearby, if there are retail shops that serve the students of that college primarily, then the college must report those incidents as well.

Some financial aid administrators voiced the fear that federal funding would be withdrawn if college compliance officers make mistakes. Others wondered if they would be breaking FERPA confidentiality rules. The answer was that no federal funding would be withdrawn from colleges as a result of reporting all crimes and incidents, and this reporting would not be a breach of FERPA. However, lax and incorrect reporting would result in penalties and fines.

Several financial aid administrators left the session after hearing more compliance requirements, which will mean hiring dedicated compliance officers at additional expense. This is obviously an emotional topic and a hard one to listen to, especially when colleges are already trying to do their best and invest a great deal of effort in providing services to young people. I thought to myself that smaller colleges might be in a better position to provide "in loco parentis" coverage because faculty and staff may get to know their students in and outside the classroom. However, if these incidents didn't keep occurring on campus there would be no need for Clery or VAWA.

Moore pointed out that very quickly a residence hall that was free of drugs could become a place for gang members to meet when one of them enrolls and becomes the conduit for distribution. Moore pointed out that often people don't know whom to notify when they see possibly dangerous situations in the making. He emphasized that more staff, faculty members, and students should be instructed as to who are the people in charge, how they should pass on the information, and who is the responsible party with the authority of sounding the alarm in an emergency. Although many colleges may already be there, he reminded the financial aid administrators of the need for these measures.

Students are already galvanizing around these issues and formed groups like Take Back the Night (*www.takebackthenight.org*) and Green Dot, etc. (*http://livethegreendot.com*) to train students on how to live a safer life on campus. I resolved to give these resources to my entering first-year students. It's a difficult and unpleasant topic to discuss, but some of my students are still immature, naïve, and can't wait to get away from their parents and sail off into the sunset.

In conclusion, colleges now are required to appoint and empower a Clery Act compliance officer, enlarge the geographic coverage for which accidents must be reported, identify and train campus security so that more people know who to notify in case of emergency, and develop a plan that is in keeping with the recently approved VAWA act.

References:

The Federal Department of Education's presentation *"Complying with the Clery Act" presented on Dec 4, 2014 by James Moore, Clery Act Compliance team. http://fsaconferences.ed.gov/conferences/library/2014/2014FSAConfSession33.ppt*

VAWA: *http://ifap.ed.gov/eannouncements/102014ViolenceAgainstWomenAct.html*

FERPA: *http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html*

Claire Law can be reached at Claire@eduave.com

INDEPENDENT EDUCATIONAL CONSULTANTS ASSOCIATION

3251 Old Lee Highway, Suite 510
Fairfax, Virginia 22030

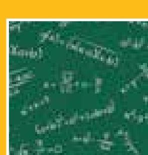
INDEPENDENT
EDUCATIONAL
CONSULTANTS
ASSOCIATION

INSIGHTS February/March 2015

Printed on recycled paper

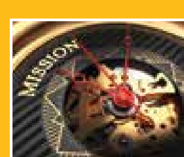
The Newsletter of the Independent Educational Consultants Association

Inside This Issue:




- Spring Conference Speakers, Sessions, Events
- Advising Your Students on the New SAT
- Special Focus: Graduate School Advising

Inside the Member-to-Member Section:




- New Mission Statement Provides Guidepost for Association
- Pre-Conference Campus Tours
- Pricing Strategies for your Practice

info@IECAonline.com • 703-591-4850 • www.IECAonline.com