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SPECIAL FOCUS:

College Advising

- Executive Functions for
- College Students
 Pokémon-GO on Campus
- Defining the Parent's Role
- Coalition Application
- FAFSA and PPY



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Insights

The Newsletter of the Independent Educational Consultants Association

Calendar

October 11 Monthly Webinar "Test Optional" With Strings Attached

October 25–28 IECA at AACAP Conference New York, NY

October 31–November 2 Campus Tours: College & Programs Louisiana

November 1 IECA Membership Dinner New Orleans, LA

November 2 Pre-Conference Workshops New Orleans, LA

November 2–5 IECA 2016 Fall Conference New Orleans, LA

November 5–6 Board of Directors meets New Orleans, LA

November 8 Election Day

November 8 Monthly Webinar Public University Honors Colleges & Programs

November 24–25 Thanksgiving Holiday Office Closed

December 1
Call for Proposals for Spring
Conference closes

December 13
Monthly Webinar
Perfect Placements: How the
Enrollment Management
Association Can Make Your Job
Fasier

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Debunking Need-Based and Merit Aid Myths

By Sandra M. Moore, MA, IECA (NY)



Imagine this scenario: you're leisurely surfing Facebook when you notice that one of your friends has posted a frantic alert: "Beware of the ABC virus that's chewing up mass quantities of emails from coast to coast. Do NOT

open messages that include in the subject line any combination of the letters a, b, or c."

Sound familiar? Not surprisingly, when this kind of thing happens, many folks panic. They madly race to their inboxes to see if the last message from Great Aunt Martha was really a virus-laden ABC email in disguise. Certainly, several of us have been duped in this way. But others—people in the know—typically jump on *Snopes.com* (a hoax debunking website) to see if such a bug truly exists or whether the circulating "alert" is simply another Internet falsehood that when shared a gazillion times took on a life of its own as a so-called urban legend.

Similarly, the families we work with can get caught up in the maze of misinformation and innuendo surrounding the college search and admission and financial aid application processes. Gossip gets spread in school parking lots and grocery store aisles every day! Someone always seems ready and able to point our families in the wrong direction, either spouting half-truths or totally bogus "facts."

That's where we step in. As independent educational consultants (IECs), we strive to belong to the in-the-know group. Part of our job as IECs is to stay on top of hot topics and ongoing developments in the wide world of college

admission and financial aid. But doing so takes a lot of time and effort. And many of us, admittedly, are less well-informed when it comes to the whole affordability aspect of what we do.



Myth or Fact?

Fortunately, the College Committee of IECA and its affordability subcommittee are working hard to provide members with resources and training that will help all of us stay ahead of the game. In the meantime, here are just a few, favorite financial-aid-related myths debunked.

Myth: Our family will never qualify for need-based aid, so why even bother?

Fact: You don't know exactly what you will or won't actually qualify for unless you apply! Moreover, to get a good sense of how much particular institutions will cost before their children fall in love with them, it's important for all families to estimate their expected family contribution (EFC). To do this, they can use a free online EFC calculator, such as the one provided by the College Board. True, an EFC

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President's Letter

Fall Forward Into New Challenges

Fall has always been a time of excitement and anticipation for me. As an educational consultant who focuses on the college search and application process, I still have that same feeling of excitement—mixed with a bit of angst—as I consider students' applications, essays, deadlines, and those who are going in for their (hopefully) best and (definitely) final standardized test performance.

This month's *Insights* is focused on college admissions—a subject that reaches far beyond the metrics that tend to define admissibility and fit. When we acknowledge that learning differences, emotional wellness, social fit, affordability, learning styles, and even parenting styles are all contributing factors in successful

college admissions, we begin to recognize the broad mix of elements that we, as well-qualified independent educational consultants (IECs), should address.

Ours is a fast-shifting landscape. This year's new timeline for financial aid and the Coalition application are two obvious examples of reasons to be engaged with one another and the Association as we grow our expertise.

IECA members have a valuable tool at their disposal in the depth and diversity of knowledge available from our organization and our members. Where else can IECs gain access to such a wide range of perspectives and backgrounds as well as to professionals with specialties that cover every facet of the admissions process?



Ann Rossbach

IECA currently delivers this expertise in an integrated fashion through training opportunities; networking events; college visits; and one of the most interactive and powerful email discussion groups in our industry, the IECA TalkList. A key initiative in our strategic plan is to "promote the integration of the membership's unique expertise within and across specialties." Although this may sound like a lofty objective, I believe we can all strive to meet it in our roles as IECs and as contributing members.

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IECA Insights

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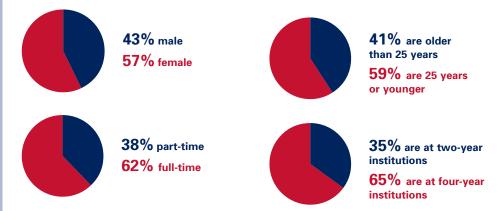
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Connect with us on Facebook, IECA's blog (www.IECAonline.com/blog), LinkedIn (for IECA members only), and Twitter (@IECA).

In Focus

Here's a quick snapshot of the undergraduate college student in 2016:



16.5% Hispanic
62% White Source: US Department of Education

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7% Asian

14.5% Black

Clinton and Trump: Where They Stand on Major Education Policies

By Mark Sklarow, CEO



Both Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump have articulated positions on education policy from preschool to college loans. With the election coming up soon, *Insights* gives you a look at the major policy declarations.

College Access

Hillary Clinton has proposed a policy to be

implemented over five years to eliminate tuition for in-state public colleges for all families earning \$125,000 or less. For those earning under \$85,000 the plan would take effect immediately. This would include 10 hours of work-study a week for those in the plan. She has called for a three-month delay in student loan repayment to allow for graduates to find employment. She has also called for loan deferments for those in public service, including teachers.

Donald Trump proposes shifting student loan management back to banks, rather than the federal government.



Teacher Pay & Accountability

Donald Trump has indicated that he views teacher unions as harmful to the education process because they have worked to limit school choice.

Hillary Clinton has indicated a desire for higher teacher pay but has pledged to oppose any link between students' test performance and teacher salaries. She has been endorsed by both the AFT and the NEA.

Secondary Curriculum & Testing

Hillary Clinton has called for less standardized testing. She supports Common Core State Standards.

Donald Trump has voiced support for returning education policy to the states and local government, free from federal regulation. Toward this end, he has proposed an end to Common Core.

Public Charter & Private Schools

Contrary to the party platform, Hillary Clinton has announced support for public charter schools, as supplementary to, not as a replacement for, traditional public schools. She opposes vouchers that would use tax funds to pay private school or parochial school tuition.

Trump has expressed support for public charter schools and for vouchers that would allow parents to use funds to choose a private or parochial school

Preschool

Donald Trump has not yet provided specifics, but indicates support for tax benefits for child care, dependent upon income levels of families.

Hillary Clinton supports universal preschool for all children beginning at four years of age.

Department of Education

Donald Trump has stated that he views education as one of the top three priorities of the federal government; however, he has also voiced support for cutting or eliminating the DOE.

Hillary Clinton has voiced support for maintaining the DOE and its functions within the federal government.

Editor's Note: The Clinton campaign has much detailed information on its website, and you can read about these issues and more in depth. The Trump campaign has little in terms of policy on its site, so much of the information on his positions was gleaned from speeches and comments during the debates.

Upcoming Webinars

October 11

"Test Optional" With Strings Attached

November 8

Public University Honors Programs/Colleges

December 13

Perfect Placement: How the Enrollment Management Association Can Make Your Job Easier

Note: A Beginner's Guide to Self-Publishing will be offered in spring 2017.

Debunking Myths, from page 1

may very well indicate low or no need, and as a result, a financial aid office might deem a student ineligible for a federal grant, such as Pell or SEOG. Still, the family must file the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) if the student wants to be considered for institutional aid. Many private colleges and universities also require the CSS/Financial Aid PROFILE to make that determination. At the very least, filing a FAFSA gives students the option of taking out a William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan (Direct Loan)—regardless of need. Loans may be subsidized or unsubsidized—subsidized Direct Loans are need-based and are offered only to students who qualify for them.

Myth: I'm not going to worry about applying for aid because my daughter will get an athletic scholarship.

Fact: Only 2% of high school athletes play sports at the college level. And if your child hasn't been recruited by the end of the junior year, chances are she won't be in the pool for receiving an athletic scholarship from a Division 1 or Division 2 school. If you're not already familiar with *ScholarshipStats.com*, it's a rich compendium of everything you might ever want to know about college athletics and scholarships. Although getting really good grades has been shown not only to significantly increase an athlete's chances of being admitted to particular schools but also the chances of winning athletic scholarships, it's a good idea for families to understand how the system works and to cover all their bases by also applying to schools that offer other forms of assistance.

Myth: My son plans to apply for "outside" scholarships because millions go unclaimed every year.

Fact: Most merit aid is distributed by colleges and universities themselves. And more often than not, to be considered for those scholarships requires no extra work on the part of the student. Unfortunately, many families erroneously believe that there's a treasure trove of scholarships "out there" just waiting to be had for the asking. What they don't realize is that most of the awards publicized through online subscription databases, such as FastWeb. com or MeritAid.com, are small (e.g., \$100-\$500) and often require an essay in addition to a separate application for each. Because students from all over the world vie for those modest awards. clients might have better luck checking out local scholarship sources, including various fraternal organizations, employers, and places of worship. But time and energy is best spent on discovering those schools that are most likely to provide generous need-based aid or merit money while making sure that students' applications are as strong as possible so that they have a crack at both!

Myth: There's no reason to save for college because if we do, we'll get less aid.

Fact: Students and their parents are primarily responsible for meeting college costs. That could mean that the less a family saves, the more they may have to borrow, especially if the student applies to schools with less-than-generous aid budgets. Sure, need-based aid decisions do consider family assets, such as money put away through statesponsored 529 and other educational savings plans, but parent assets

are assessed at only about 5.6% of their value. The financial aid formulas for both FAFSA and PROFILE assess income at higher rates than assets and are income-driven, not asset-driven. Remember, too, that the formulas weigh such other factors as the number of students in college at the same time and the age of the older parent. FAFSA's asset protection allowance, for example, can significantly reduce the percentage of a family's savings that is actually assessed as a contribution toward educational expenses, especially in the case of near-retirement parents.

Myth: Only top students receive merit scholarships.

Fact: Many institutions practice "tuition discounting," whereby they slash their sticker prices by thousands of dollars without students having to prove their worth in a specific way. Often colleges do this as a matter of course for B+ or A- students who've been judged to have no financial need but nevertheless are solid candidates with a good deal of potential. Schools typically call these tuition discounts merit scholarships, and they help lure kids to their campuses who might otherwise opt for more-well-known institutions. Indeed, if in searching for best-fit schools, families are open to places with a regional rather than national reputation, great bargains can be had.

The Bottom Line

No matter our clients' financial situations, we as IECS provide an invaluable service by helping them avoid a lot of the stress and confusion that comes with not knowing. By encouraging families to conduct an affordability analysis early in the college search process and continually educating them on how the college financial aid process works—including what's true and what's not—we can help them make admission application and enrollment decisions with their eyes wide open.

Sandra M. Moore, Next Step College Consulting, can be reached at smoore@nextstepcollegecounseling.com.

President's Letter, from page 2

IECA's strategic plan also calls for us all to be worthy of the logo we use in our communications and in our materials. In fact, a key objective of the plan revolves around building and enhancing the IECA brand, as I mentioned in last month's letter. But how do we meet this challenge in an industry that is becoming substantially more competitive and complex? Your active participation in IECA's programs, learning opportunities, and discussions plays a crucial role in ensuring that you—our front line ambassadors—are equipped with the latest information and best consulting tools.

Fall has arrived, and we are at the start of another exciting, challenging, and sometimes unpredictable admissions season. IECA is here to help you smooth the ride and exceed the expectations of your clients. See you in New Orleans!

Ann Rossbach, MAT IECA President

- Loubuh



Special Focus: College Advising

Executive Functions for College Students: Don't Leave Home Without Them

By Patti Schabinger, MEd, IECA (IL)



While attending my youngest son's freshmen summer welcome session, I sat with other eagerly attentive parents and students as the dean asked what we considered the most important skill necessary for success in college. Some listeners may have thought academic preparation would trump the list; however, when the speaker announced time

management, heads subsequently nodded in silent agreement.

The highly structured life of a typical high school student involves a full schedule of classes and extracurricular activities with little flexibility in their all-too-busy lives. A big change occurs when those young adults suddenly have freedom to decide when to eat, sleep, study, and socialize. Making the transition to the unstructured schedule on campus may overwhelm even the best students as they adjust to the wealth of offerings and the desire to participate in as many activities as can be squeezed into one day. Students may forget to eat regular meals and to get an adequate amount of sleep. Temptations abound to divert attention from studying, such as sporting events, fraternity parties, organized clubs, concerts on the quad, social media exchanges, and impromptu conversations.

Executive Functions for College Success

The efficient use of time-key to managing activities, classes, and friendships—helps students fully engage in college opportunities. But time management is just one skill college that students need. Executive functions are the central control processes located in the frontal lobe of the brain that coordinate and manage time as well as the ability to set goals, self-regulate, and think critically. How well students plan, prioritize, initiate, and complete tasks throughout the day reflects their ability to use their executive functions. Strong executive functions enhance the ability to balance options and make healthy choices and form the necessary foundation for academic success. Some conditions, such as ADHD or learning disabilities, may affect working memory and compromise other processes that involve the capacity to sustain attention, organize, persevere, problem solve, and think flexibly. Because the developing brain doesn't mature until age 25 or later, decision making tends to be more impulsive for teens and young adults. The good news is that executive function skills can be taught to aid the early maturation of these essential abilities.

Balance the 24 hours in a day. Let's face it—a college student would most likely claim there just isn't enough time in one day to do all the studying and fun happenings on campus. Even before movein day ends, volunteers inundate dorms to inform, recruit, and introduce a plethora of get-to-know-you activities to freshmen and returning students. Soon, many young adults forgo adequate sleep

and a healthy diet to maintain their new lifestyle, which features exhausted days and active nights. But sleep is imperative for mental clarity, focus, memory, and health. Make sure students understand that 8–10 hours of rest (ideally) would refresh their bodies and promote critical thinking. Planning their schedules to accommodate a mix of studying and other activities during waking hours will increase a positive mood and academic outcomes. College students should specifically think about and plan for balancing the following components of their lives:

- · Classes and studying
- · Extracurricular activities
- Sleep
- Exercise
- Friends
- Family connections
- · Spiritual needs and relaxation techniques
- · Finances, budget, and part-time work if applicable
- · Healthy lifestyle and diet.

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Executive Function, from page 5

Plan, prioritize, preview, and prevent procrastination. Planning when, what, and where to study fosters efficient use of time. Previewing a chapter or future tasks allows for a wider perspective of the teacher's goals and the most important concepts to be learned. Writing down all the assignments from multiple classes helps students determine which tasks should be completed first, and phone apps and calendars can assist with planning. Some students may delay initiating a job that involves long-term planning, harder material, confusing information, or tedious reading, but when they reflect on why getting starting is difficult, solutions will arise, many involving small changes that can make a difference in an outcome.

Set goals and action plans. Breaking down assignments promotes confidence that a task can be accomplished and encourages initiation. Setting SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, time-bound) goals encourages students to think about what they want beyond a letter grade and naturally leads into action plans to obtain the goals. For example, "I want to do better in English," does not offer a specific plan or time. A SMART goal might be "I will get an 85% or above on my math test in the next month," or "I will make five new friends the first semester and call or see them at least once a week." After SMART goals are written for each class and other areas of interest, students can formulate an action plan by breaking down the tasks into smaller, more manageable chunks. Once started, students are more likely to keep working. A positive mood and reduced stress often result.

Manage time—get it done. Students rarely think about how much time they spend on mundane activities or with friends—watching movies or looking at social media may waste precious hours. Estimating how much time various tasks take and keeping track of time throughout the day help students see how much time is taken up completing various activities. After planning tasks, students should think about how much time they feel is needed to complete each one. Today, most young adults use their phone or computer for their main source of telling time, so a visual timer, such as the Time Timer app, enables students to see time disappear. Using an analog instead of a digital clock also makes the passage of time visible. Creating a reasonable schedule after having thought specifically about how much time is available helps college students work efficiently and enjoy their social activities too.

Use all the Senses. The most effective way to study is to use multiple modalities—including visual, auditory, and kinesthetic strategies—to best absorb information. Strategies include outlining notes, underlining or flagging key ideas, verbalizing concepts, and discussing topics. The human brain responds to colors and shapes, so utilizing those aids may assist memory. Colored tabs, highlighters, sticky notes, or simple drawings help students categorize and sort material. Mnemonics, such as acrostics, acronyms, rhymes, or songs, also build lasting neural connections for improved retention. Most people can sing the alphabet song or name the order of planets by reciting a version of "My very educated mother just served us nectarines."



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Limit distractions. Text messages, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, video games, emails, and other online interruptions lure students away from the task at hand, especially when the subject matter challenges or perplexes a tired teen. The best way to stay focused involves turning off cell phones and studying in the library or another quiet, well-lighted spot. Keeping track of distractions increases awareness too, so students may want to let close friends and family know their study times to help prevent some interruptions. Working when one is most awake speeds up reading and assignments. Some students study better with headphones and classical music while others find music distracting.

Practice metacognition and mindfulness. "Thinking about thinking" is often used to define metacognition—in other words, reflecting on personal habits, routines, successes, failures, and what works best for learning. Evaluating processes and altering actions involve higher-level thinking. Mindfulness entails a sense of living in the present and awareness of oneself. Too often people dwell on past experiences, holding grudges or reliving an unpleasant event. On the other hand, some individuals worry about the future instead of planning for it. Meditation, yoga, and calm moments de-stress students and improve mindful living. Positive self-talk encourages progress too. Keeping a journal of thoughts for a day or week may help students increase their self-awareness, and writing down grateful statements each night can refocus their attention to a thankful presence.



Independence Is Possible

Executive function skills can be enhanced through consistent practice after steps are taken to identify personal needs and to learn strategies to improve deficits. Long-term measures, such as planning, prioritizing, estimating time, and creating action plans, help college students accomplish goals and successfully transition to the unstructured college routine. Teachers, advisors, career counselors, and other resources can offer guidance to students as they adjust to an independent lifestyle.

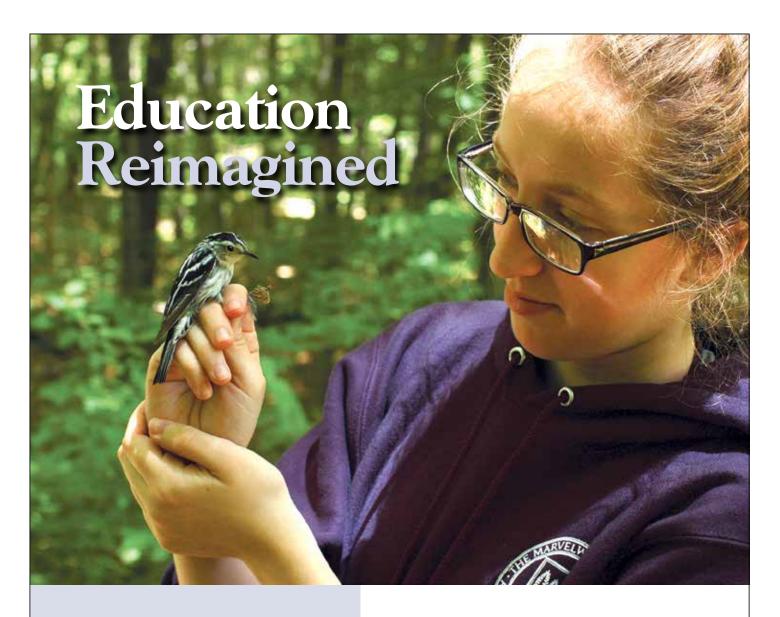
Patti Schabinger, College Comprehensive Consulting LLC, can be reached at pattischabinger@gmail.com.



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College Advising

Colleges—and One IEC—Embrace Pokémon-GO!

By Lisa C. Thomas, PhD, IECA (MN)



"Gotta catch 'em all! Gotta catch 'em all!"

That is what I have been yelling all summer, well at least since July. So if you don't know what I am talking about, it's because you have had your head down while you critiqued hundreds of college essays and applications all summer. If so, you may be one of a few people on Earth who have missed the influx of the newly released augmented-reality game

called Pokémon-GO on July 6th this year.

I have become an avid player. I am called DocCollege in the game and I impress all my college-bound students with my Level 25 Poke-Hunter status. In addition, to continue the wonderful IEC legacy, I have renamed all my well-earned and proudly caught Pokémon "IEC's Rule!"

Even if you missed this phenomenon, most of our college-bound teens and colleges did not. It came in as the biggest mobile game in US history. The computer servers that ran the game in those first days just kept crashing and begging for mercy. It caught everyone by surprise, including the colleges and universities we love to visit. They did not know that with the release, their campuses would automatically have Poke-Stops in many places, such as historical markers and monuments, that allow Pokehunters to replenish the muchneeded balls and resources



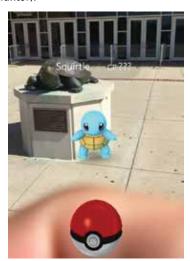
to catch and strengthen their caught creatures. Also much to the surprise of many colleges, Poke-Gyms also automatically showed up on their campuses in major locations. Gyms are where the major battles between creatures take place and are where three teams battle for territory on a regular—let's be real, I mean, 24/7—basis.

So what is a college to do when they know thousands of their highly energetic college-bound and current students are obsessed with this game? Well, their marketing and communications teams are working overtime to benefit from it. Following are some examples on our nations campuses:

- A large crowd of Pokemon-GO players gathered on the campus of Florida International University on July 10 in search of an elusive Pokémon Squirtle.
- Harvard University utilized its Twitter account to show it embraced this game. Their tweet the day after the game started

states: ✓ @Harvard Did you know that the John Harvard Statue stood outside Memorial Hall from 1884 to 1924? Now, just Zubats. #PokemonGO [Zubats are one of the creatures you can catch in the game]

- Washington State University Tri-Cities has harnessed the craze and offers a Pokémon-themed campus tour. Their website visit section states: Get Up, Get Out and Explore WSU Tri-Cities! Learn more about WSU Tri-Cities and catch wild Pokémon with a current student (and fellow Pokémon hunter).
- UW-Madison, Harvard,
 Notre Dame and many
 others have tweeted fantastic
 on-campus Pokémon photos,
 but the one tweeted by
 the University of Maryland
 of its iconic terrapin turtle
 alongside Squirtle is one
 of my favorites. "Fear the
 Turtle" indeed!
- Saint Vincent College
 provides its website users
 with a map of all their Poke Stops and gyms, but reminds
 them, "Please remember
 that some areas are private.

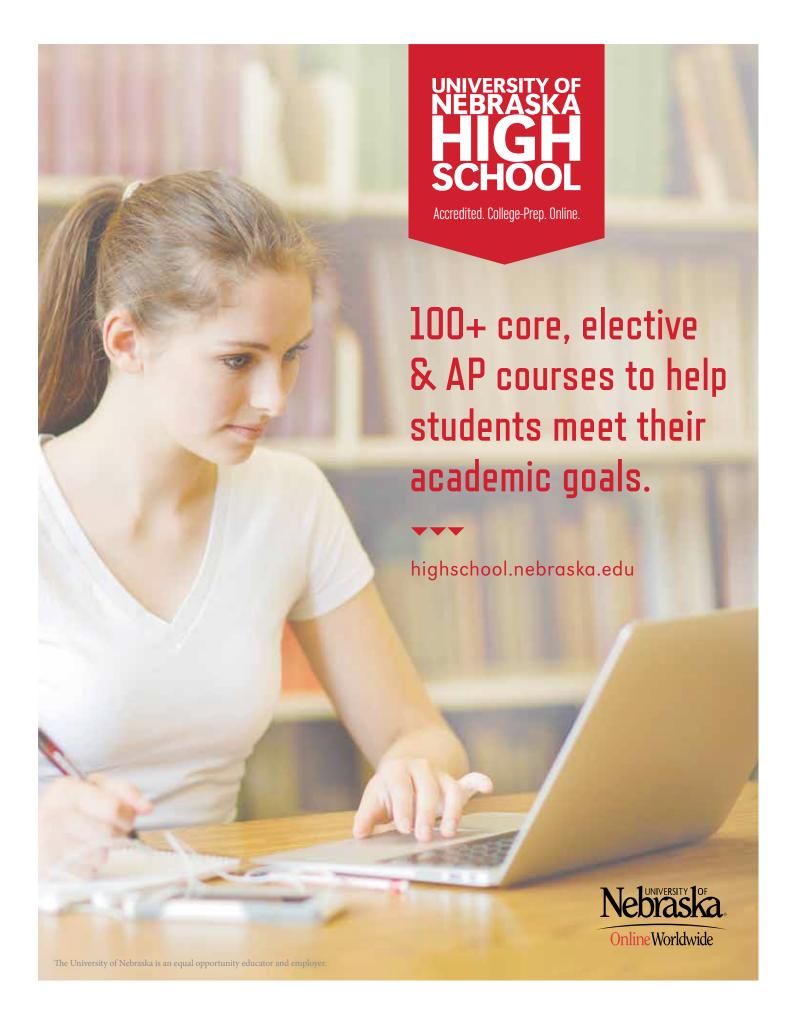


- particularly the Monastery, and respect those taking part in events at the Basilica and Chapel, such as weddings and funerals."
- Fresno City College in California is offering a one-credit physical fitness class, called PE-6 Pokémon- GO. Players of the game explore the augmented reality world largely by walking, but Oliver Germond, who will teach the one-credit fitness course, told *The Bee* that the class will also incorporate other basic cardiovascular workouts.
- William Paterson University created an entire Instagram account just for Pokémon news on their campus.
- The University of Minnesota–Twin Cities sent out a public safety announcement warning students and staff to be careful as they played Pokémon-Go.

I could go on and on. The game's influence is everywhere in our college world. As IECs we just need to know what is happening in the lives of our students and on campuses. Playing Pokémon-GO may not be every IEC's dream game, but it has allowed me to relate to my students in a new way, resulting in added trust and conversations related to college, college tours, and college campuses—and I get fantastic "street cred" in the process.

"Wait, I think I see Pikachu around the corner. DocCollege Out"

Lisa C. Thomas, College Admissions Training LLC, can be reached at dontwingit@yahoo.com.



College Advising

Establish the Parents' Role Early

By Sue Luse, MA, IECA (MN)



Working with parents is one of the most challenging aspects of our job as independent educational consultants (IECs). The parents we work with want to be involved but often need direction on their role in the process. I like to establish their role early, usually at the second meeting, and give them specific things they can do to help. I also send out a monthly

newsletter and calendar with reminders for specifically for them.

Parents of teenagers may already be feeling overwhelmed. Although they may not say it, they may have conflicting thoughts coupled with a feeling of panic that their teen will *never* get into college—or that he *will* get into college, leaving the family in financial ruin. It doesn't have to be that way. By sharing your knowledge with the parents and encouraging a little planning, you can help them make this busy journey a fun one to share with their teen.

At the outset, parents need to understand that the college planning process can actually help prepare their teenager for college and life after college. How? It is a great opportunity for their children to take control of their own lives by practicing skills in critical thinking, decision making, planning, and organization. Parents and other responsible adults can play a supporting role, but this is the student's college search. It is her life, his future. The student needs to be in charge—or she may end up not caring about what happens.

At the same time, today's teens are busier than ever and they need to continue to focus on their classes, grades, activities, and testing. So what can you suggest parents do to help without totally taking charge and getting in the way? Here are the five most important suggestions you can give to parents.

Be informed. This is a time when parents really do have to keep up with their teen's level of maturity and skill development. How responsible is their teen? How much help does he or she need? What kind of college would be best? Parents' understanding of what their teen wants out of the college years is key. Parents should be informed about:

- · Classes and grades
- · Standardized tests
- College requirements
- Trends in college admissions (colleges have become much more selective).

Be realistic. Parents need to understand and believe in their teen's ability, but shouldn't set the bar too high or too low. They should compare their teen's GPA scores and test scores to the average range of what colleges accept, keeping in mind that highly selective colleges only take a fraction of students who have stellar grades

and test scores. One of the worst things parents can do is take their teen on visits to colleges where he or she has little chance of being accepted. That just sets their teen up for failure by providing unrealistic expectations. They should also be up-front with their teen about costs and what they can afford. Remind parents, however, that they shouldn't eliminate any school because of cost until they have fully investigated financial aid and scholarship options. Finally, parents should make sure their teen applies to a range of schools, including at least two "likely" schools that their teen loves and they can afford.



Be supportive. Reassure parents that you have worked with a number of families with many different circumstances, and although they may not believe it now, everything will work out just fine. Encourage them and explain that there are some specific things they can do to support their teen and contribute to a favorable outcome. Along with arranging college visits, parents can help keep track of application requirements, be aware of deadlines, and

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Parents' Role, from page 11

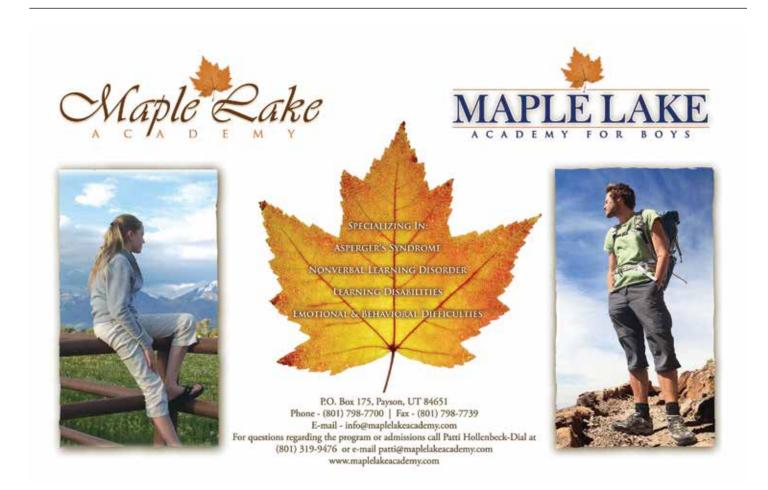
oversee the financial aid process. Parents can also review and proof the applications, but stress that they should be careful not to "over edit" anything. Admissions counselors know the difference between the distinctive writing style of a 17-year-old and an overzealous parent. Supportive parents also help their teen find a balance between school, activities, and relaxation.

Know when to "butt out." Encourage parents to keep an open mind and a tight lip in the beginning of the college search and application process. Tell them they may hear things like, "I am not going to college" or "I want to go to college in Hawaii and live on the beach" and then something completely different the next day. Let them know that it's normal and they should listen, empathize, and understand that their teen's plans will probably change many times during the process. Explain that their teen should make the initial contacts with the colleges and that they should fade into the background and let him be in charge when they visit the campus. Remind them not to horrify their teen by asking embarrassing questions or by going into the interview with her unless invited. It is also crucial that parents let their teen handle any issues that may arise with high school teachers and not intervene unless absolutely necessary.

Enjoy the process and keep a sense of humor. College planning and exploration can be one of the best times parents will spend with their teen. Encourage them not to ruin it by stressing out and nagging. Parents should plan the college visits carefully so that they can be fun times to spend together. Advise them to familiarize themselves with the campus, set appointments ahead of time, know where the buildings are located that they are going to visit, and learn where to park. That way, their time on campus will run smoothly and they will avoid the frustration of getting lost and missing appointments. Parents should be flexible during their college visits as well. It's okay for them to change the itinerary if things aren't going as planned. Encourage parents to look for the humorous and fun parts of the process and to keep telling themselves and their teen that everything will work out in the end. Remind them to relax, have fun, and enjoy the journey.

Establishing the parents' role right away will improve the process for everyone. Armed with a few simple tips, informed parents can replace the stress with positive opportunities to spend quality time with their teenagers, resulting in better outcomes and happier clients.

Sue Luse, College Expert, can be reached at sue@collegeexpert.net.





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College Advising

The Coalition Application: What a Difference It Would Have Made

By Mel Preimesberger, IECA (CA), with Courtney O. McAnuff



During a recent dinner with Courtney
McAnuff, the vice president for enrollment
management at Rutgers and the founding
board member of the Coalition for
Accessibility, Affordability and Success
(Coalition), I heard him make this simple
statement, "My entire college application
process would have been different had the

Coalition been around." I had begun the evening hesitant and unsure about the Coalition; however, by the end of the meal, I was convinced of its value and the opportunities it would make possible for those students who choose to apply to college using its application process. The Coalition recently launched its inaugural application season with more than 56 members and an additional 38 scheduled to join in 2017.

So often a person's involvement in and passion for a project are born out of their own experiences, which I found to be true for McAnuff as I talked with him during dinner. That's where I got the idea to interview him for *Insights* and share what ignited his interest in the Coalition's platform, how his application experience might have been different, his involvement, and what he hopes it will offer to students.

Preimesberger: Will you briefly explain your college application process?

McAnuff: My personal application process was from a position of little knowledge and no experience. I went to high school in New York City and never spoke to an advisor. I applied to City College of the City University of New York because a friend was applying.

Preimesberger: Was the process affordable or did you limit your applications to the number of ones you could afford to apply to?

McAnuff: For me it was an affordable process. As a city resident, the application to City College was free, and I did not know about other schools outside New York. I was a very good student from a magnet high school, but did not know I had options outside of New York.

Preimesberger: How would it have been different had the Coalition Application been available to you?

McAnuff: Had there been a Coalition Application, I believe that I would have been exposed to the process of planning for college much earlier. At a website like Rutgers Future Scholars, I would have been able to enter my grades from ninth grade and receive feedback on my potential to be admitted to the university. It would have exposed me to other options.

Preimesberger: How would your parents have been able to participate in the process?

McAnuff: I would have had the possibility of sharing information

from my locker [a virtual space where students can save materials and artifacts] with my parents. We would have been able to explore options at all the Coalition schools. Since my parents never went to college, it would have been a learning experience for all of us.

Preimesberger: What role would your recommenders and mentors have played if you had the Coalition Application?

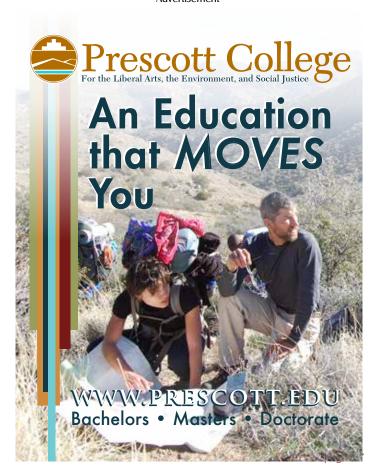
McAnuff: I would have been able to share achievements or projects that I had accomplished in high school with my recommenders to give them a better personal look at my high school career and help them write a unique letter of recommendation for me. As a pretty quiet person, I probably would not have shared much with my advisors until it was time to apply. I do know, however, that the Rutgers site would have reinforced my academic choices in high school and allowed me to know that I was on track to be admitted to a college.

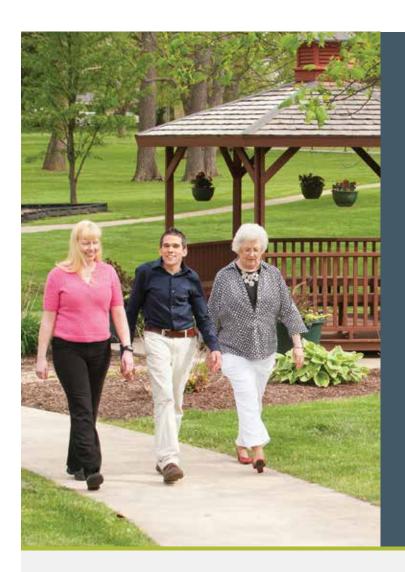
Preimesberger: Is the Coalition Application a game changer?

McAnuff: It's a very useful tool for low-income urban as well as rural children who may not necessarily have all the support they need

continued on page 17

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College Advising

Coalition Application, from page 16

in high school. It can also be a very powerful tool for community based organizations who are short staffed and need to reinforce academic decisions with students.

Preimesberger: What resources on the Coalition Application would you have used?

McAnuff: I would have used the locker and the planning tool to seek out information about participating universities. I might have asked several schools in the Coalition to consider me a prospect and thus share academic information about their institution. Above all, I would probably have used the fee waiver, which is available for students who have need at all the Coalition schools. Eventually, I would probably have used the collaboration files, but what would have appealed to me most was my own personal locker space that no one else or no institution could access unless I allowed them.

Preimesberger: What type of resources might you have put in your locker?

McAnuff: I would have things that I was proud of in the locker, perhaps papers or articles from the school newspaper column that I wrote. Now this is really fantasy since computers were just starting to be used when I was in high school and there was no Internet and definitely nothing to download. I loved to write, competed in sports, and built electronics, so I would probably have posted examples of

the electronic devices I enjoyed building. I think I also would have stored information about colleges I was interested in and what I had to achieve to obtain merit and need-based financial aid.

Preimesberger: Why would you encourage the young Courtney to apply using the Coalition Application and what advice would you give him?

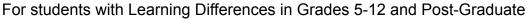
McAnuff: I would encourage any young person to consider the Coalition Application as a strong option. Perhaps one of the best reasons to use it is that all the Coalition schools offer strong outcomes for students. They all offer significant financial aid and have strong retention and graduation rates—among the best in the nation. I'd definitely advise him to take the time to explore his options and start early: senior year is too late to begin the college selection process. And to seek out and take support from others who understand the application process.

Preimesberger: What advice do you have for students?

McAnuff: Many opportunities exist for students who are academically prepared. Money should not be an obstacle; most schools will support you if you are in need. Take the strongest academic curriculum you can, ask schools if you can visit, and ask your counselors for advice.

Mel Preimesberger, MP College Chat LLC, can be reached at mpcollegechat@gmail.com.

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Early FAFSA: Does It Benefit Students?

By C. Claire Law, MS, IECA (SC)



Are your clients ready? Early FAFSA is here! Parents can actually file from October 1, 2016 to June 30th, 2018. They no longer have to refile every January 1 of the following year.

Early FAFSA will benefit those students who apply for nonbinding early admission, are accepted, and get a financial aid award—all as early as November or the end of the

year. An early financial aid award would give families more time to figure out which colleges they could afford. If they've worked with an IECA member, the colleges on the list were already vetted as being a fit. Then they'll have until May 1 to deposit and commit to a college. However, as Yogi Berra says, "In theory, there's no difference between theory and practice. But in practice there is." In practice, it remains to be seen if those colleges will be able to process FAFSAs in October and deliver those financial aid letters to families by December.

The Department of Education has been working for years to enact early FASFA. Now that the prior-prior year (PPY) income tax information is on file with the IRS, it fills the FAFSA data fields in one DRT fell swoop. That way, the colleges can formulate awards based on factual information, albeit two years old. The Department of Education has provided students with another goodie this year: FAFSA no longer reports which other colleges the student applied to. Presumably, colleges used that information for enrollment purposes.

It sure feels like the college financial aid process had edged in earlier and earlier to keep pace with the admission

application cycle. Notice anything about the October 1 Early FAFSA date? It's the same day the PROFILE form becomes available online, so families can be evaluated for institutional aid. The College Board indicated it also would use PPY tax information. In reality private colleges can ask for any amount of information as far back or forward as they need before awarding their institutional financial aid.

College financial aid departments are busy adapting to early FAFSA and trying to award federal aid based on an expected family contribution (EFC) computed on prior-prior-year tax information. For now, it affects college financial aid departments far more than our students.

Explore Early

The 2017–18 FAFSA is available at https://fafsa.gov.
Plus, families can calculate their eligibility for federal aid anytime instead of waiting until senior year by using the FAFSA4caster tool, which is located at that site under Thinking About College? This mock EFC gives families better insight when making college choices.

How can IECA members use these changes to the benefit of our students and their parents?

Benefit to Families

With early FAFSA, independent educational consultants (IECs) have more time to help families evaluate admission and financial aid offers. Financial award letters can be confusing. A



federal loan gets split into two or three semesters, according to the particular school schedule. A Direct loan follows a "scholarship" that might be an enticement to enroll, but the family thinks it's pure merit. These award packages, as they are called in the industry, are confusing to families. They are part of the communication flow of the college and, as such, they are enrollment tools. Sensing this confusion, the Department of Education mentioned at its last conference that they may provide a separate federal form for awarding federal aid. Stay tuned.

Why is this important? When students ask for more financial aid, they need to understand what they've received. Many families have no clue whether they've maxed out of federal aid or they can ask

College Advising

for more. They often are unaware of how they are being assessed for aid. They may qualify for the same amount of federal aid at multiple colleges, which would open up more options for them. It's usually the uninitiated, first-gen students who apply to out-of-state public institutions without realizing the state funding that they are leaving behind and the double or triple cost of out-of-state tuition. Parents who have saved for college and can afford it are in a different category. However, need-sensitive, unaware families may be more susceptible to recruitment practices and need smart financial aid advising the most. Early FAFSA has the potential for giving those families an early picture of aid to be awarded

More Appeals Expected

As noted, the PPY tax data is two-years-old. If families receive financial aid packages in December, they have more time to appeal. A survey conducted by two WACAC members shows that colleges are increasing staff members in anticipation of answering appeals. Jeff Levy (CA) provided a detailed view of this survey in a recent IECA webinar. He reviewed what colleges will and won't do to change their admission timeline, financial aid packaging, and staffing. The webinar is available on the IECA library of online learning (www.iecaonline. com/webinars-library.html).

The PPY loophole is that a lot can happen in two years. A dad or a mom may lose their job, may get married or divorced, may pass away, or, may receive unexpected income. A cynic might say only financial reductions rather than increases will be brought to the attention of the financial aid administrator. Because families will file FAFSA only two times over the course of four years, some will be able to arrange their affairs so that they will look poorer during those two years. Perhaps because of those loopholes, it's interesting to note that three large public universities, UVA, Michigan, and UNC-Chapel Hill, now require the PROFILE and noncustodial statement, which was required only by private colleges.

If a parent finds work or gets married or receives an inheritance from Aunt Bertha, it must also be reported—even if it increases their expected family contribution (EFC)—because it's the honest thing to do. Besides, it's a legal requirement. The penalty can be a jail sentence, \$20,000 fine or both.

One thing IECAs can do is to teach families what is appealable and what is not. For example, if the student has maxed out of federal aid, there's no sense asking for more in that department. That's easy to calculate. The aggregate amounts that dependent students can receive from the federal government are fixed. For example, in the first year, dependent students can receive a maximum amount of \$5,500 from the Direct Loan program. If there's a demonstrated need, up to \$3,500 can be subsidized, which means that the government pays the interest on that portion on that while the student is in school.

Whether or not our clients know about PPY and early FAFSA, we still need to explain that they will not pay less than their EFC and

College's PPY Concerns

With any new system, it takes a while to get the process to work well for the parties concerned. It's important to note, however, that PPY affects colleges' financial aid administrators way more than it affects families.

During the Federal Town Hall session at the July 2016 NASFAA conference, financial aid administrators raised many questions that Department of Education officials tried to answer regarding prior-prior year (PPY) income, verification, and conflicting information for 2017–18 (read more at http://bit.ly/2amEULm). No doubt this new system will create more work for them, and families will do well to use the DRT to avoid verification.

The Federal Department of Education disburses federal aid to help student gain a college education. There is very little "free" aid that doesn't have to be repaid back. It's allocated to exceptionally needy families with teens that otherwise would have no access to any post-secondary education. The rest are loans. As bad as loans of any kind sound, federal loans provide many income-based repayment plans and even forgiveness when borrowers work at non-profits and repay on schedule for ten years. Private loans have no such provisions.

that the EFC is only a minimum amount because many colleges cannot fill full demonstrated need. Undoubtedly, some parents find their EFC too high and either can't or won't pay it, so they ask the college for more aid. They need to know that no amount of federal or institutional aid—other than loans—will fund their EFC (except when institutionally-based merit scholarships cover it, which is not a common occurrence).

In Conclusion

IECs are uniquely positioned to help families become savvy consumers and choose fit and quality of education over name recognition. This might even trigger marketplace forces to bring down college costs. Making college affordable, especially for needy students, means graduating with little to no debt.

We are seeing the federal financial aid cycle accelerate to line up with the early admission cycles. In this environment, it may feel like being in ninth grade and planning whom to take to the senior prom. The mantra remains the same: families need to explore their options earlier. The better prepared families will give their kids a fitting education and get real value for their money.

C. Claire Law, Educational Avenues, is a member of the IECA Subcommittee on College Affordability and can be reached at clare@ eduave.com.

The Truth About Liberal Arts Education

By S. Georgia Nugent, Senior Fellow, Council of Independent Colleges



As the former president of two liberal arts colleges, I am dismayed by the misinformation surrounding these institutions and the value of a liberal arts education. For our young people to make well-informed decisions about their future, they need accurate and up-to-date information about the array of choices American higher education offers. Yet many of the stories circulated in

popular media today present distorted, stereotypical, or downright wrong information about colleges and universities.

The Council of Independent Colleges (CIC), an association of more than 650 small and medium-sized private colleges around the country, has launched a multimedia campaign to serve as a reliable source of information about private, liberal-arts-based education. This public information campaign, recipient of three national media awards, has produced a broad array of online resources for students, parents, and college counsellors.

To combat the five most common misunderstandings about a liberal arts education, here's the truth:

A liberal arts education is for everyone. Although a liberal arts education is often portrayed as only for the elite, that's not the truth. In fact, private liberal arts colleges enroll the same or a slightly higher percentage of low-income students as do the flagship public

universities. Nearly one-third of all private college students are from low-income backgrounds. Even more important, all students—but especially underrepresented or low-income students—graduate in a shorter amount of time when they enroll at liberal arts colleges (NCES 2009). And that means fewer semesters of tuition and an earlier start on a career.

Liberal arts colleges are affordable. It is true that what liberal arts colleges offer—small classes, personal mentoring by full-time faculty members, and the many opportunities for learning and growth inherent in a residential, on-campus experience—is expensive. But it's also true that those colleges offer six times more student aid than is provided by the federal government. Students at independent colleges are twice as likely to receive financial aid as those at public institutions, and the average grant received is three times as large as the average grant at public institutions. As a result, the net cost of attendance can be surprisingly close to—or even less than—that of attending a state college.

Graduates' debt remains manageable. Although it's common to hear that liberal arts graduates incur staggering debt, more than 25% of students who graduate from small, private liberal arts colleges have no debt at all (Radwin et al. 2013). For other graduates, the average amount of debt is the same today as it was in 2007: about \$19,500. That is approximately the same cost as an economy automobile. But there are no doomsday stories in the



media about young people incurring "staggering debt" to buy a car. Yet the value of the auto decreases the moment it's driven off the lot, while the value of a college degree pays enduring dividends throughout life. The US Census Bureau indicates that lifetime earnings for a college graduate exceed those of non-degree earners by \$1 million. A \$25,000 investment toward a million-dollar-return seems pretty good. (It's also important to note that about 40% of the national student loan debt is for postgraduate programs, such as law or medicine, not for undergraduate degrees.)



A liberal arts education has practical value. We live in a world where future graduates will likely be employed in roles that don't even exist today. What they will need to succeed are skills in problem solving, research, written and oral communication, teamwork, and a disposition toward life-long learning. More and more, employers are finding that liberal arts graduates excel in those qualities. This kind of learning is actually more practical than training in a specific skill that may well be obsolete soon after graduation.

Liberal arts graduates find employment. One of the most surprising and misguided myths about liberal arts education is that graduates are not employable. First, the unemployment rate for college graduates, even in the depth of the recent recession, was about half that for non-college graduates. More specifically, for graduates of small, private, baccalaureate colleges, recent annual studies carried out by the National Association of Colleges and Employers found that approximately 90% of graduates were employed or enrolled in graduate studies within six months of graduation. Both the rate of employment and the average compensation exceeded those for graduates of other types of institutions.

Know the Facts

At CIC, we know that students and parents are eager to understand the path from college to employment. That's why CIC developed www.LiberalArtsLife.org to help answer the question, What can you do with a liberal arts degree? The site uses video clips, photographs, statements from graduates and employers, and animated data visualizations to tell the story of the value that a liberal arts education provides.

Video highlights from the national symposium, *The Liberal Arts in Action*, featuring successful liberal arts graduates from many walks of life discussing how their education has influenced their lives, can be seen at *www.cic.edu/SymposiumHome*. A more complete

overview of a liberal arts education and liberal arts colleges is presented by www.LiberalArtsPower.org.

The Twitter feed @SmartColleges and Facebook page facebook.com/SmartColleges both provide real-time information, news, and commentary relevant to liberal arts education. And the newly launched Instagram.com@SmartColleges features graphic images, videos, campus photos, and tips to encourage prospective students to consider a liberal arts education.

An extremely rich array of resources designed for the education professional, including data, infographics, research reports, and a curated selection of publications and editorials, is available at www.cic.edu/LiberalArts.

The liberal arts college is a uniquely American phenomenon (although it's increasingly being emulated around the world). Arguably, it has been a significant factor in our nation's success in innovation and entrepreneurship. It is imperative for prospective college students to have access to the facts about what such an education can provide.

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Why Take a Gap Year?

By Ethan Knight, Executive Director, American Gap Association, and Sarah Persha, IECA (OR)

From all available data it is clear that gap year programs have profound impact on young people including personal growth, academic attainment, and postcollege success. The two most common reasons students cite for taking a gap year are "burnout from the pressures of getting into college" and "a desire to know more about myself." With students increasingly reporting that the achievement bar has gone up for the most competitive colleges, forcing students into relentless performance for the sake of college acceptance, it's no great surprise, then, that the second most common reason would represent a deeper pursuit of self alignment and personal awareness.

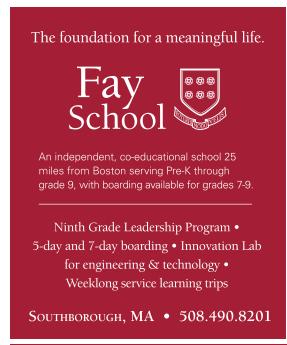
Data from a study by Haigler and Nelson (2009) have shown that students who take a gap year return to college at a rate of 90% within a year and pursue their studies with renewed focus. There are significant academic benefits to the gap year as demonstrated by over-performance on GPAs and a shorter path to graduation as compared to peers who did not take a gap year. For example, the trends in the study also showed that average students will change majors 3–5 times in college, contributing to an average graduation time of six years—and that doesn't factor in the almost 40% of students who simply never complete any college degree.

In contrast, students who have taken a gap year typically graduate in just four years, with a median of 3.75 years (Haigler and Nelson, 2009).

Over the long haul, taking a gap year also improves a young person's employment prospects and boosts civic engagement. At the personal growth level, the data also show that 86% of students who have taken a gap year report that they are satisfied or very satisfied with their careers once they get there. And as an added bonus, the upfront investment of a gap year can save parents money over the scope of a student's academic career if the student graduates in four years.

Parental Concerns

Most parents have concerns about the academic impact of a gap year as well as the safety of their child on a gap year. Both are valid considerations. Where safety is concerned, data from *Insurance Claims Data and Mortality Rate for College Students Studying Abroad*, a March 2016 study from the Forum on Education Abroad, confirms that students are actually safer on programs in the developing world than they are on college campuses domestically. The American Gap Association (AGA), for example, vets organizations according to a robust 56-page application that incorporates standards from outdoor education, higher education, study abroad, service learning, and others in an effort to provide as much safety consideration as possible. AGA accredited programs are among those that have demonstrated a commitment to the safety of students in gap year programs and have critical reporting requirements to ensure that student safety never becomes an afterthought.





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Costs and Funding

The costs associated with taking a gap year vary greatly, some experiences offer a stipend and money toward higher education and other programs are priced equivalent to time spent in college. Most students begin planning (and saving) for their gap years a year or two in advance. Last year \$2.8 million in needs-based scholarships were made available through individual programs. Some gap year providers are also able to access federal financial aid dollars (FAFSA). Private scholarships, such as Hostelling International's Explore the World Scholarships—which this past season were awarded to 61 recipients and valued at \$2,000 each—are another means of funding.

Within the larger context of education, we are increasingly finding that universities are giving away scholarships for gap years. Florida State University has been at the leading edge of the academic community in valuing the experiential learning that happens on a gap year through deferment policies and a scholarship that is earmarked specifically for students who have taken a gap year. UNC Chapel Hill's Global Gap Year Fellowship is another example of a progressive initiative by a public university to help students design an educational and transformative gap year that will support their academic studies and career path moving forward. Through its Community Engagement & Leadership Scholarships, Warren Wilson College provides money to eligible gap year graduates who matriculate with them, recognizing that those students perform better on campus and in society. Other universities are in the process of creating such initiatives as well.



Program Options

Experts, including gap year alumni, recommend beginning a gap year with something structured to provide a context within which students can gain skills and build confidence as they subsequently transition to more independence for the latter portions of their gap year. Examples of AGA accredited organizations providing structured gap year programs abroad include Thinking Beyond Borders, combining deep cultural immersion, fieldwork with experts, and engaging readings and discussions; National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS), with a focus on leadership and outdoor skills in some of the most awe-inspiring locations in the world; and

continued on page 24



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Gap Year, from page 23

Pacific Discovery, which offers experiential education programs that are deliberate overland journeys.

For students looking for a domestic program, options include Ridge Mountain Academy, a campus-based academy that focuses on mountain sports, education, and life skills as well as Outward Bound, which offers courses in some of the most spectacular and inspiring settings in the United States. AmeriCorps is another domestic option that provides a well-structured program, paying for the participant's housing and food for the full year. Those who successfully complete the program are awarded a \$5,700 stipend to use towards continuing education.

It is always a good idea to consider working with a gap year counselor for something more independent—specialists who have a long history in vetting placements and through their extensive networks can not only provide appropriate structures for student support but also, in many cases, reduce the financial burden through those same connections.

Deferring University Admission

Deferment policies vary greatly and some specify what kind of college credit (if any) they will honor as a result of the gap year. We still encourage students to apply to college, get accepted, and then defer for the gap year—in that way students already have a plan for college upon gap year completion. The American Gap Association has an extensive list of the deferment policies of colleges and universities organized by state. Be sure to check with the particular institution and ask if deferment is possible even if one is not initially offered; the data is on your student's side in establishing the value of taking an experiential year on (not off) between high school and a university.

Personal, Emotional, and Social Growth

With current concerns over delays in maturity and protraction of dependence as highlighted by emerging-adult research (Arnett 2014), gap year experiences represent an opportunity to step out of the sequence of high school immediately followed by college with a value-based event in between: discovering the resiliency of one's own self with others in another land or culture (or state or project), where discomfort and challenge are supported by trip leaders and peers. Anecdotally, gap year students continue to report that they used the support and relationships with their gap leaders and fellow students where before they may have relied upon parents or dismissed their emotional needs. Developing self-advocacy and autonomy with support continues to be a positive comment in follow-up polls with students who complete a gap year. 👗

Ethan Knight can be reached at ethan@americangap.org. Sarah Persha, Dean Doering & Associates, can be reached at sarah@ deandoering.com.

References

Arnett, Jeffrey. 2014. Emerging Adulthood: The Winding Road From the Late Teens Through the Twenties (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Haigler, Karl and Rae Nelson. 2009. The Gap-Year Advantage: Helping Your Child Benefit From Time Off Before or During College. New York, NY: St. Martin's Griffin.





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Campus Visits



Members of the Connecticut regional group were hosted by Quinnipiac University on September 13, and met with Heidi Erickson, senior associate director of admissions. They were treated to an information session over breakfast and then took a bus tour of Quinnipiac's three campuses in New Haven County.

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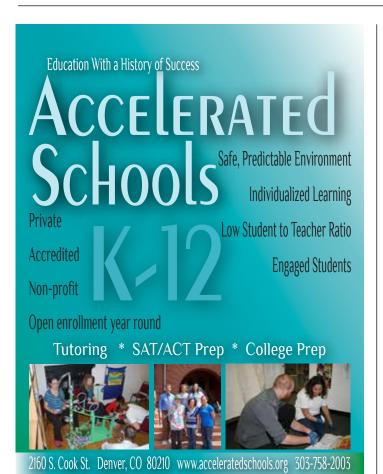
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On the Road

Columbus, Ohio

The membership team of Amanda Fogler and Caitlin Myers was in charge of the IECA booth at NACAC in Columbus, OH. Sue DePra, deputy executive director, and Mark Sklarow, CEO, also attended. Sklarow presented at the Transitioning to Private Practice preconference workshop on alongside Steve Antonoff (CO) and Kristina Dooley (OH) and at a breakout session led by Kristina Dooley during the conference.



The Transitioning Workshop faculty at NACAC (I to r): Steve Antonoff (CO), Kristina Dooley (OH), and CEO Mark Sklarow.

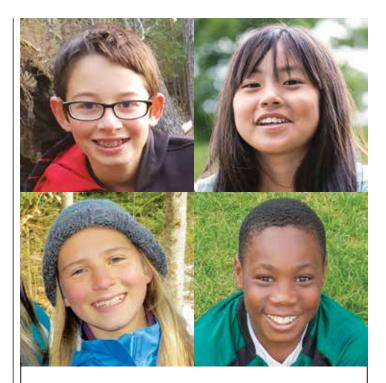


IECA's annual admission rep and IECA member luncheon at NACAC.

Baltimore, Maryland

At the Enrollment Management Association (formerly SSATB) conference in Baltimore, Sklarow led a workshop on the impact of IECs on boarding school admission. In addition, the first copies of the new IECA white paper on that topic were distributed.

Sklarow was also in Kennebunkport, ME, for the annual IECA/ NATSAP Link 'n Learn program on September 26–27.



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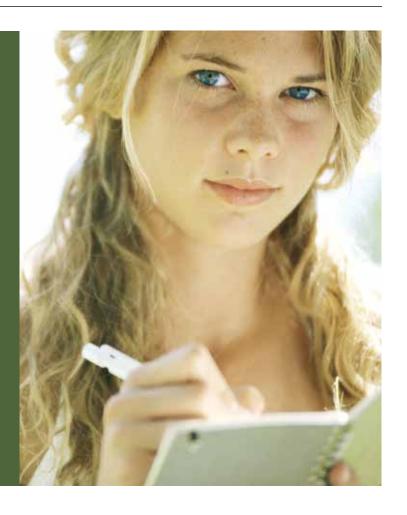


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Why I Belong

What defines professional in the independent educational consultant profession? That was a question that I needed to answer when I first decided that if I was going to help students, it was going to be full-time and comprehensive. I realized that I needed to know current trends in education, technology, and the admission process. Working alone, I wanted access to colleagues and



their viewpoints and experience. The business part seemed overwhelming; I knew it was a weakness. Where could I plug in and continue to learn and grow and become the professional that I aspired to be? IECA was and continues to be the answer.

I wasn't able to immediately join IECA. I had work to do. Quite frankly, I appreciated that there was a vetting system in place. It is important to have to provide qualifications for membership in a professional organization. The requirements for membership gave me direction, and soon after becoming an associate member, I applied for professional membership. That led me to the certified educational planner process.

The TalkList contributes to my daily growth. Earlier this month, a colleague posted about changes in the early decision plan at Penn; another followed up with the testing policy change. When the University of Washington released information about holding off on the Coalition application, I heard it the same day it happened. That news immediately affected my student meetings because I was able to help my students have the most current information and that leads to trust.

IECA's twice-yearly conferences offer another important piece to my ongoing education. I feel that I have had master's classes in interviewing, how to recognize bullying, selective admissions, and the UK application process just to name a few. Conference attendance allows for learning within the IECA classroom but also outside the classroom through contact with our amazing colleagues.

The staff of IECA continues to constantly amaze me. Mark Sklarow taught me that I don't have to apologize for charging families and the importance of networking. Without the ongoing support of Amanda Fogler, my committee would most likely fall apart. The philosophy of the entire IECA staff seems to be, How can I help you be your best self? The byproduct of a busy and engaged membership has been friendships, opportunities for leadership, and personal and professional growth. I value being an IECA member.

—Jeana Kawamura, MA, IECA (CA)

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Regional Groups

Connecticut

The **Connecticut** group held its first meeting in early September with a visit to **Quinnipiac University**. In attendance were: Vicki Boudin, Bobbi Crocker, Debbie Davis, Bill Dennett, Jennifer Dooher, Elise Epner, Lisa Frisbie, Victoria Hirsch, Stephanie Klein Wassink, Shyamla Menon, Betsy Morgan, Bill Morse, Grace Mulliken, JinYoung Kim Park, Pam Pik, Amy Rich, Jan Rooker, Janet Rosier, Francine Schwartz, Laura Seese, Mary Spiegel, Geoff Stearns, Eileen Studdert, Kathyrn Vivian, and Cathy Zales.



Minnesota

The Minnesota regional group met at Macalester College on August 17, for its kickoff meeting. Macalester admissions graciously hosted us with an admissions panel, a tour, and lunch. Pictured first row (I to r), Kate Neiss, Abby Power, Sue Luse, Todd Johnson, Lisa Thomas. Back row, Laurie MacGregor, Garth Robertson, Ryan Luse, Lisa, Knudson, Vita Cohen, Susan Hoff, Jenny Buyens, Kelley Johnson, and Clarinda Low.



New Jersey

The New Jersey regional group hosted representatives from **Seton Hall University** at their August meeting. Pictured first row (I to r) are Wendy Amsterdam; Pam Kwartler; Mary Clare Cullum, director of undergraduate admissions at Seton Hall University; Amy Hallock; and Carolyn Johnson. Second row: Laurie Weingarten, Eva Ries, and Janet Loren.



Philadelphia

After a successful kick-off meeting to discuss families and financial aid on September 14, the **Philadelphia** regional group partnered with the **New Jersey** group to meet with **Hiram College** in Wayne, PA, on September 19. Members also met with a Vanderbilt rep on Sept. 30.

Seattle

Kiersten Murphy, Julia Sensenbrenner, and Andrea Main from the Seattle group attended a CTCL-hosted a breakfast for high school and independent college counselors on August 3. Forty-two out of the 44 CTCL colleges were in attendance. On September 8, Kiersten Murphy and associate members Andrea Main and Roger Cibella attended a luncheon hosted by Hawaii Pacific University, Boise State U, Gonzaga U, Embry Riddle Aeronautical University Prescott, University of Idaho, and University of the Pacific.

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

In the News

Jane Klemmer's (NY) article "Will Not Asking for Financial Aid Boost Your College Odds?" was published in *Money* magazine on August 4.

Stephanie Klein Wassink's (CT) article "7 Proven Tips for Successful College Application Essays" was published in *Money* magazine on August 3 and reprinted in the *University Herald* on August 4.

Victoria Tilson Evans (MD) was quoted in the U.S. News and World Report article, "Some Colleges Choose to Slash/Freeze Tuition" on August 31.

Janet Rossier (CT) was interviewed about Early Decision by Fox61 Connecticut on September 14.

Mark Sklarow was quoted in "Considering a Private School?" in the Alexandria Gazette Packet on August 16.

Initiatives

One of six alumni honored, **Jenny Buyens** (MN) received the UCI Alumni Achievement award at the UCI Extension Certificate Awards Ceremony on June 23.

C. Claire Law, MS, (SC) attended the Lowcountry Mental Health Conference in Charleston SC, in July.

Nancy Masland, IECA emeritus (AZ), has been selected to receive the first Local Writer of the Year award from the NAMI Book Club for her book *House of Heart and Heartbreak*.

Larry Blumenstyck (NJ) (pictured) spoke about the importance of student engagement and the intentional development of relationships at a Summit, NJ, community-based organization event on August 11.



Andrew Belasco (GA) coauthored *The Enlightened College*Applicant: A New Approach to the Search and Admissions Process, which was published by Rowman and Littlefield in September.

On August 16, Jessie Peck Martin, Associate (NJ), presented Five Things Nobody Ever Told YOU about College Admissions in Sparta, NJ. Proceeds of the event benefited Pass It Along, a local nonprofit that promotes teen volunteerism and service learning.

Smart Kids With Learning Disabilities named Audrey Noyes Ludemann (CT) to its board of directors in September.

2016–17 Member Status Changes

The following Professional Member has reactivated her Professional membership for 2016–17:

Janelle Braverman (IA)

The following Professional Members have chosen Inactive status for the 2016–17 membership year, as they are taking temporary leaves of absence from their IEC practices:

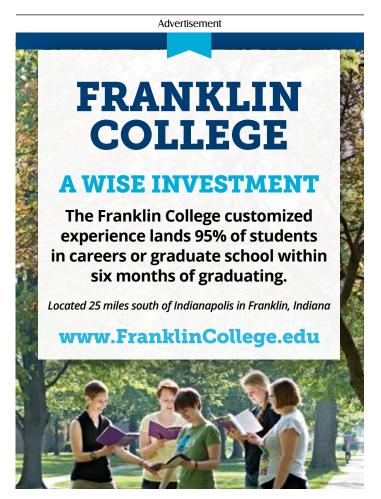
Robert Bilello (MA), Judith Christie (MA), Carol Kinlan (MA), Annie Reznik (RI), Susan Samson (FL)

The following Professional Members have either retired from or are scaling back their IEC practices or are no longer working as an IEC (see the list of Members Emeritus in the back of the 2016–17 IECA Directory):

Samantha Bernstein (NH), Nicky Carpenter (MN), Carol Gene Cohen (TX), Katherine Ghirardelli (MA), Adam Goldberg (MA), John Granozio (SC), Susan Hanflik (RI), Faith Howland (MA), Peggy Manley (TX), Judge Mason (AZ), Ruth Perlstein (VA), Jill Porter (CA), Paula Porter (PA), Susan Smith (NY), Peter Stevens (MA), Gillian Stubblefield (TX), George Vosburgh (PA)

The following are no longer affiliated with IECA:

Robin Abel (MA), Ron Eubanks (TX), Sean Hawes (WA), Martin Humphrys (UK), Michelle Kim (Korea), Andrew Kwak (MA), Louise Kreiner (MA), Susan Lewis Lally (CT), Dani Levine (CA), Patti Murphy (MD), Catherine Oh (Korea), Julia Varriale (MA)





Introductions

Please Welcome IECA's New Professional Members

Andrew Belasco (GA) has worked as an



IEC for nine years.
Previously, he was an admissions consultant and blogger for Kaplan Test Prep, a school counselor in the Abington (PA) School District, and a research

consultant for the Congressional Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance.

With a BA from Georgetown University, he went on to earn an MEd from Harvard Graduate School of Education and a PhD from the University of Georgia. He is a member of NACAC.

His book *The Enlightened College Applicant* was published in September by Rowman & Littlefield. As a volunteer, he works with the National College Advising Corps and with U-Lead, an organization devoted to assisting undocumented students.

Belasco currently lives in Athens, GA, with his wife, Eva, and his two daughters, Anna and Abigel.

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College Transitions LLC
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andrew@collegetransitions.com
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Specialty: C

Jeanne Choi (South Korea) has worked as an



IEC for 19 years, helping Korean and Chinese students find suitable boarding schools in the United States and supporting them as they adapt to their new environment.

Choi earned a BA in English literature from North Carolina State University and an MIA from Columbia University, School of International and Public Affairs. In addition to her business, she is the founder of Sharing Is Caring, a community service organization that helps poor regions; Dream Sketchers, a community service organization that paints slum areas with colorful drawings; and Book Wagon, a community service organization that runs book drives and delivers books to poor regions.

Choi, who lives part of the year in the New England area and the rest of the time in Korea, has devoted her life to consulting, teaching, and mentoring young people.

Jeanne Choi, MIA
Nobles Prep & Mentoring
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Lauren Gaylord (WA), an associate member



since 2013, has been an IEC for more than four years. Before becoming an IEC, she was an environmental consultant and served in the community on various boards related to

education and social services.

She holds a BS in resource economics from UC Berkeley, an MA in urban planning from UCLA, and a certificate in college counseling from UCLA Extension. She is a member of NACAC, PNACAC, and LDA.

Since 2011, Gaylord has volunteered with College Access Now (CAN), a nonprofit college access organization in the Seattle, WA, area that assists low-income students on their path from high school through college graduation. In 2013, she received the Governor's Outstanding Volunteer Service Award for her work with CAN. She also serves on the board of Seattle South African Scholarship Organization, a local student-driven nonprofit that raises funds to support the college education of students in a township school near Cape Town, South Africa.

Gaylord is married and has a son who recently graduated from Stanford and a daughter who is a student at Scripps College. She loves to hike, travel, bake, and enjoy the Seattle weather.

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Meral Bolak Gurol (Turkey), an associate



member for two years, has been an IEC for five years. After a successful career in advertising as a partner in her firm, Gurol moved into the field of education, teaching at several

universities in Istanbul, including Bosphorus University, Istanbul Technical University (ITU), and Bilgi University.

Gurol earned an undergraduate degree from Bosphorus University and an MA in English literature at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale. While doing doctoral work there, she was a teaching assistant in the English Department. Gurol also completed the UCLA Extension certificate program for college counseling. She is a member of International ACAC.

Gurol's book *Hedefe Giden Yol: College USA*—a comprehensive guide for US-bound Turkish high school students and their families about the US college application process—was published in October 2013. Between 2013–2016, she published a series of articles in an online advice column for a test prep agency to provide advice to international high school students regarding college admissions.

Since 2011, Gurol has provided pro bono work for a local private nonprofit foundation that is dedicated to providing financial aid to underprivileged Turkish graduate students. She also takes on one pro bono student each school year on the basis of need as well as merit.

On the personal side, Gurol is married and lives with her husband, a human resources expert, in Istanbul.

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Christine M. Hall (NC), a former high school



administrator in North Carolina and Florida for 11 years, has been an IEC for 8 years. She also previously taught high school special education to students with emotionally disabilities

and coached girls varsity track and cross country in Florida.

Hall earned an EdD in school administration with a focus on curriculum and instruction from Vanderbilt University as well as an MEd in educational leadership and a BS in special education from the University of South Florida. In July and August 2016, she was a featured guest speaker on the CW22's Community Matters "Preparing for College" program. Her memberships include NACAC and SACAC.

Married for 30 years, Hall has three children: her son is an aspiring writer, her oldest daughter is a chemist who just graduated from Hollins University, and her youngest is a neuroscience major at Furman University. A native Floridian, she loves the beach and the sun and is an avid kickboxer, swimmer, and runner.

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Specialty: C

Shunyi "Sean" Jiang (China), an associate



member since 2015, has been an IEC for four years. Previously, he was general manager for Rosetta Consulting and a marketing executive for FedEx China.

Jiang holds a MIM

from the Conservatoire national des arts et métiers in Paris, France, and a BS and a BE from Wuhan University in China. He was a guest speaker at ISACS 2015 Heads of School Conference and has been a guest on top education programs in Shanghai as well as interviewed in a special education report by CCTV (the national TV in China).

Having grown up in a small town in central China, Jiang personally benefited from the experience of studying abroad and became an education consultant to share his experience and to inspire more young students. After earning his master's degree in Europe, where he met his wife, they moved to Shanghai where they now make their home. Although he isn't able to play much now, he is a big soccer fan, particularly of Arsenal from English Premier League, and loves to travel.

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Specialty: S

Bingguang "Bing" Li (MD) has been an



IEC for six years. He focuses on helping Chinese students find a match with middle level schools, high schools, and colleges. Previously he was a professor of operations management

for the Harry F. Byrd Jr. School of Business at Shenandoah University, where the Dr. Li, Bingguang Li Endowed Scholarship in Business was established in 2014, as well as an associate professor of supply chain management and quantitative methods teaching multiple courses. Among other positions, Li was an assistant professor in the College of Business at Albany State University and chief operating officer for BG Global Trade Company in Atlanta, GA.

Li holds a PhD in industrial and management systems engineering from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, a BA, BSc and an MS in engineering from the School of Management, Tianjin University, China.

Bingguang "Bing" Li, PhD 3634 Worthington Blvd Frederick, MD 21704 229-395-8116 bingguang@gmail.com Specialty: S Laura McConkey (MN) has been an IEC



for four years and an associate member for two. Before becoming an IEC, she was the associate director of US admissions and college counseling for The Blake School, of which she is

an alumna; the director of communications for the Perpich Center for Arts Education; the associate director of admissions at Hamline University; the assistant director of annual giving at Northwestern University Law School; and the associate director of admissions at Skidmore College.

McConkey holds a BA from Skidmore College, and she is a member of NACAC. She is dedicated to her "second family," who are refugees from Uganda (six girls and four boys including two sets of twins), volunteering to assist them with the college process and education in the United States.

Her husband, John, works for a company that designs and builds playground and is dedicated to the importance of outdoor play and access for all children. Her daughter Maddie will be joining the Class of 2020 at Stanford University and enjoys politics, and her son Colin is in the Class of 2018 at the Blake School and enjoys soccer and singing in the Blaker's Dozen, and a cappella group. McConkey loves to be outdoors and stays active, often with the family dogs, Kensington and Windsor, who provide unconditional love and humor.

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Specialty: C

Adela Penagos (MA), an associate member



for two years, has been working as an IEC for three years. She is a part-time lecturer in the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures at Boston College,

where she teaches Spanish conversation, composition, and reading. Previously, she was the associate dean of academic advising at Harvard College and was responsible for overseeing undergraduate academic advising. She also worked at the University of Notre Dame in various roles, such as the assistant dean in the College of Arts and Letters, an academic advisor, the associate director of the Balfour-Hesburgh Program, and the coordinator of multicultural student programs and services.

Penagos earned a PhD in Hispanic languages and literatures from Boston University, an MA in Spanish literature from the University of Notre Dame, and a BA in Modern Languages from Knox College. She attended IECA's 2014 Summer Training Institute.

Currently, Penagos is the vice-president of the College Club of Boston Scholarship Fund and has previously served as treasurer and secretary. Her volunteer interests include the Notre Dame Alumni Association and the College Club of Boston.

After arriving in the United States as an international student, she further developed her interest in languages and hopes to add Irish to the Spanish, English, and French she currently speaks. Penagos enjoys barre; Pilates; kick-boxing; swimming; and traveling around New England, Europe, and Latin America.

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The Back Page

40 Years of IECA on one page

1974

 7 IECs meet to lay groundwork and tag onto NAIS

1976

Independent Educational Counselors
 Association established

1977

Dues double to \$100/year

1980

 Associate membership category established

1982

- First IECA Conference at Brewster Academy in NH
- ◆ Bill Pierce hired as part-time executive director
- ◆ Dues increase to \$600—the current level

1987

♦ Membership reaches 100

1993

♦ First Practices and Principles Workshop held

1994

- ◆ Mark Sklarow hired as first full-time executive director (later CEO)
 - Office moves from Cape Cod to suburban Washington, DC

1996

◆ IECA Foundation established

1997

- ♦ Membership reaches 200
- Therapeutic growth results in separating Info Swap from School/College Fair

1999

♦ First issue of *Insights* published

2003

 First Summer Training Institute held at Virginia Episcopal School

2004

♦ Budget exceeds \$1 million

2005

 Conference attendance surpasses 1,000 attendees in Philadelphia, PA

2006

- ♦ Membership reaches 500
- Staff increases to 5

2012

- Membership reaches 1,000
- Education Center launches, features monthly webinars
- ♦ Insights grows from 12 to 36 pages

2013

- First Professional Winter Retreat held in Charleston, SC
- ♦ IECA Partners with NATSAP for Link n' Learn
- SSATB requires IECA membership for independent testers

2016

- Conference attendance reaches 1,500 total attendees in Boston, MA
- Ethics course required of all members
- First symposia held in Newark, NJ and Los Angeles, CA
- Staff grows to 10