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IECA<sup>+</sup>

# INSIGHTS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE INDEPENDENT EDUCATIONAL CONSULTANTS ASSOCIATION

## Calendar

### February 11

Webinar: College Readiness  
Coaching for Neurodiverse  
Students

### March 1–5

LD/ND College Tour

### March 10

Webinar: Health Insurance 101

### March 30–April 3

IECA Big 10 College Tour

### April 14

Webinar: Counseling  
Underclassmen (Hint: Don't Talk  
About College)

### May 8

E-voting for Nominating  
Committee opens (professional  
members only)

### May 11–13

Pre-Con Tours

### May 13

IECA Spring Conference  
Pre-Con Workshops

### May 13–15

IECA Spring Conference in  
Connecticut

### May 14

E-voting closes

### May 25

IECA office closed for  
Memorial Day

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February/March 2020

## IECA Ups Its Game for the Spring Conference

IECA is kicking off the new decade with a conference venue where work, play, and entertainment mingle—and making some important changes and additions to the program. For the first time, Connecticut is the site for an IECA Conference! With the most IECA members per capita of any state in the United States, it's a perfect place to hold the first conference of the 2020s, and the Mohegan Sun all-in-one resort is a property that will accommodate every attendee.

With more restaurants than anyone can visit in three days (42), the resort will host IECA's member dinner at Ballo, its top-rated restaurant. Onsite shopping at 34 stores, including Coach and Chico's, plus a bowling alley, performance venues, comedy club, and an WNBA team offer something for everyone. The networking event Thursday evening will be held at Game On!, which adds a new dimension to networking with arcade games, bowling, and much more. Please note that although Mohegan Sun does also have gaming, attendees can go from the front desk to guest rooms to conference events and never pass through the casino floor if they wish.

### Program Updates

#### Exclusive time for schools, colleges, and programs.

To facilitate even better information exchange and connections at the conference, changes have been made to the Thursday morning Fair, which will now be postsecondary only to concentrate on colleges, universities, gap year, and young adult (nontherapeutic) programs. On Wednesday



afternoon, traditional day and boarding schools will have an afternoon wine and cheese business-card exchange, a separate dedicated networking event that will be especially helpful to IECs who work with both schools and colleges and will not have to split their time or short-change either group.

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# President's Letter

## What Distinguishes IECA Membership?

In the wake of the Varsity Blues scandal, much has been said and written about the ethics of independent educational consultants (IECs). Our admission partners may not be aware that those seeking membership in IECA are strictly vetted for their ethics, as well as their knowledge and educational preparation.

In addition, IECA provides extensive, ongoing educational opportunities for its members. Educational offerings encompass preconference sessions, breakout sessions at conferences, webinars, tours, symposia, retreats, online and in-person discussions, and the new educational intensives.

The offerings provide knowledge in all specialties: college, school, therapeutic, LD/ND, graduate school, global, and business.

*Diverse educational offerings and members who represent all those specialties are significant strengths of IECA.*

An advantage of this broad-based training is that IECA member consultants approach

their work with students from a holistic perspective, considering the personal, social, and emotional well-being of students, in addition to academic fit.

Diverse educational offerings and members who represent all those specialties are significant strengths of IECA. When IECA members work with teens, their work inevitably crosses over into additional areas. A student being assisted with college planning or school placement often presents with a learning disability, anxiety, depression, or substance abuse or addiction issues, among others. Among our membership, we have a network of

*continued on page 5*



Barbara Pasalis

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

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## In Focus

### IECA Member Network Participation

(May 2019–Jan 2020)

Specialty Communities	# Members	# Discussion Posts
IECA College Network	1,805	3,027
IECA School Network	597	429
IECA Grad School Network	365	74
IECA Therapeutic Network	262	784

Affinity Groups (4 largest)	# Members
IECs Advising College-Bound Student Athletes	123
IECs Who Give Back	76
Working w/ Gifted/Talented & Twice Exceptional Students	60
Working with Chinese Students and Families	47

Regional Groups (3 largest)	# Members
Massachusetts/New Hampshire/Maine	50
Seattle, Washington	24
San Diego, California	23



# IECA Pre- and Post-Conference Tours

*For IECA member consultants only.*

## **Monday, May 11 | Wednesday, May 13 | Friday, May 15**

As you begin planning your trip to the IECA Spring Conference at the Mohegan Sun Resort in CT, keep in mind that IECA will be conducting both pre- and post-conference tours of area colleges, schools, and programs. Campus tour registration will open along with conference registration in mid-February. **Please do not make travel or flight arrangements until you've successfully completed your tour registration.**

## **College Tours**

*Register through IECA's conference registration system*

### **Monday–Tuesday | May 11–12 | Hartford**

Tour 1: University of Hartford, Trinity College, University of Connecticut, Wesleyan University, Mitchell College

### **Monday–Tuesday | May 11–12 | New Jersey & New York**

Tour 2: Rider University, Princeton University, Drew University, Fordham University, Sarah Lawrence College

### **Monday–Tuesday | May 11–12 | Southern Connecticut**

Tour 3: University of New Haven, Sacred Heart University, Fairfield University, Quinnipiac University, Yale University

### **Monday–Tuesday | May 11–12 | Rhode Island**

Tour 4: Bryant University, Providence College, Brown University, Rhode Island School of Design, Salve Regina University, University of Rhode Island

### **Wednesday Morning | May 13**

Tour 5: United States Coast Guard Academy and Connecticut College

### **Friday Afternoon | May 15**

Tour 6: Mitchell College

### **Friday Afternoon | May 15**

Tour 7: Connecticut College



## **School Tours**

*Contact school to register*

### **Monday–Wednesday | May 11–13**

Portsmouth Abbey School, St. George's School, St. Andrew's School, Marianapolis Preparatory School, Rectory School, Pomfret School

Contact for questions and registration: Kelly Sheehan, Senior Associate Director of Admissions, [ksheehan@pomfret.org](mailto:ksheehan@pomfret.org), 860-315-4411

## **Learning Disabilities & Therapeutic Program Tours**

*Contact program to register*

### **Monday–Tuesday | May 11–12**

Chapel Haven Schleifer Center, Franklin Academy, Vista Life Innovations, Oxford Academy, Grove School

Contact for questions and registration: Cindy Pope, Franklin Academy, [cindy@fa-ct.org](mailto:cindy@fa-ct.org)

Visit <https://link.iecaonline.com/precon-tours> for more detail about each campus tour. Tour content is subject to change.

# 2020 Summer Training Institutes

Contemplating becoming an independent educational consultant (IEC)? Already started on that path, but still not quite confident in your abilities? You won't find a better foundation for your practice than completing IECA's Summer Training Institute (STI). Four days of intensive education from professionals with years of expertise and experience to share will propel you to success.

## **East location**

Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, PA (suburb of Philadelphia): Tuesday, July 28–Saturday, August 1, 2020.

## **West location**

Dates and will be posted at <https://link.iecaonline.com/sti> by mid-February.

More detailed information about STI is available at <https://link.iecaonline.com/sti>.

**A new Career Center.** IECA's new Career Center will serve the needs of IECs looking to join an existing practice and those firms looking to bring on additional staff. The Career Center will be a place where jobs are posted, where interviews can be held, and where pop-up training will take place on crucial topics for expanding practices.

## Speakers Galore

Some things don't need to change, and the ACE Talks are in that category. Once again, a stellar lineup of speakers will take the stage—and this year all of them will present follow-up breakout sessions for deeper discussions. Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and author **Daniel Golden**, a senior editor at ProPublica, a nonprofit website for investigative reporting, will share his thoughts with "The Side Door: Reflections on Operation Varsity Blues." A longtime higher education reporter, he is best known for *The Price of Admission: How America's Ruling Class Buys Its Way Into Elite Colleges—and Who Gets Left Outside the Gates*, which he has recently reissued to include the scandal and offer a different take from popular perceptions. He will follow up with the breakout session "The Changing Landscape of College Admissions" to discuss changes in admissions practices, especially with regard to wealthy applicants.

**Roni Cohen-Sandler**, a clinical psychologist in private practice, author, and national expert will present "Easing the Stress of Parents During the Application Process," which will describe how IECs, program directors, and admissions officers can recognize the underlying anxiety that drives resistance, noncompliance, and other challenging behaviors in families and will provide insight into typical triggers for parents' anxiety and strategies to ease that stress. Her breakout session, "A Deeper Dive Into Easing Parents' Education-Induced Stress and Anxiety," will continue the exploration of common challenges, signs of stress, triggers, and much more.

**Marc Brackett** is the founding director of the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence; a professor in the Child Study Center of the Yale School of Medicine; and the lead developer of RULER, a systematic, evidence-based approach to social and emotional learning. His interactive presentation "Emotional Intelligence: Key to Raising Healthy, Happy, and Successful Children," will explore his center's research into the "emotional state" of our nation's children and families; describe the theory and skills of emotional intelligence; and teach the skills, tools, and practices that can immediately support parents. In his breakout session, "Emotional Intelligence: From Theory to Practice at Work," he will delve deeper into his work and its implications.



## Mohegan Sun Resort


*What can I do at Mohegan Sun when I'm not in a session or a business meeting?*

Be prepared for an experience where work, play, and entertainment coexist. Choose from 45 restaurants, bars, and lounges to nourish your body; two spas to pamper your tired bones; and multiple venues for music, comedy, and sports—the resort is home to an WNBA team and lacrosse team—to refresh your spirits. Or if you'd rather be playing than watching, there are two indoor pools, a golf course, and plenty of room to run or roam. Relax by a three-story crystal mountain or a 50-foot waterfall, shop in more than 30 stores, see their spectacular Chihuly sculpture, or just take in the sights on a huge sun deck.

You won't be able to fit it all in, so choose wisely. But don't miss the comedy club!

The first Master Class of 2020 will be taught by **Matthew Cruger**, PhD, a clinical neuropsychologist and senior director of the Learning and Development Center at the Child Mind Institute. "Supporting Independence in Students: Identifying Cognitive and Emotional Risk Factors, Appropriate Interventions and Placements" will consider supports required for moving students toward independence. After reviewing the research that shows strong relationships between cognition, emotion, and personality, participants will consider how the assessment of important psychological profiles can help identify methods of intervention and placement that will address areas of strength and weaknesses in students.

On Thursday, the luncheon speaker is Angel B. Pérez, PhD, vice president for enrollment and student success at **Trinity College**. He will present "Cultivating Student Access and Success for a New Generation." Pérez has transformed enrollment and campus culture by adopting values-based, student-centered strategies, including adopting a test-optional policy and using character in evaluation. To reduce the financial and administrative burden on the lowest income students, he dropped the application fee for first-generation students and created a four-year financial aid awarding system.

The Spring Conference promises to be outstanding, so make sure your calendar is marked and prepare for a memorable experience. Registration opens in mid-February. Visit <https://link.iecaonline.com/Conference-Info> for more details. 

# Spring 2020 Pre-Conference Workshops

Wednesday, May 12 • 8:30–11:30 a.m.

Register for pre-conference workshops through the conference registration system which will open in mid-February.

## Where's the Money? Exploring Affordability Options

The landscape of college admissions has changed dramatically. This workshop introduces critical elements of college affordability planning and how money is used by colleges through admissions offers to compose incoming classes.

## Ready or Not: Assessing College Readiness and Support Options

Wondering how to support LD/ND students who aren't quite college-ready? Join IECA members and experts from transition, support, and disability programs to discuss case studies and understand readiness factors, program options, and best practices.

## You Don't Have to Be a Neuro-Guru to Use Neurofeedback

Explore the what, why, and how of neurofeedback and the science behind it, including research, bio-psycho-social approach, and qEEG brain mapping. Presenters will demystify implementing neurofeedback in the therapeutic and academic environment.



## Adapting to the Evolution of Therapeutic Consulting

The work therapeutic IECs do and the populations we serve keeps us on our toes. Our work is constantly changing, the risks are higher, and students and their families are more complex. This workshop will cover how therapeutic consulting has evolved over the years.

## Nine Tools to Reduce Teen Stress and Anxiety

An in-depth, interactive examination of how to reduce teen anxiety and improve performance. The session offers an evidence-based model of nine tools to help students be more calm, confident, and focused throughout the college application process.

### *President's Letter, from page 2*

professional colleagues to whom we can turn when the student's problem is outside our personal areas of expertise. Moreover, anecdotal information suggests that the longer IECs are members of IECA, the more specialties, or areas of expertise, they add to their knowledge base, allowing them to work with increasingly diverse groups of students.

The ability to obtain new knowledge and diversify one's practice adds significant value to IECA membership and also benefits the students with whom we work.

These are just two more reasons that IECA member consultants are among the most knowledgeable and professional consultants in higher education.



Barbara Pasalis  
IECA President



▲ **Mark Sklarow**, IECA's CEO, met with the Orange County regional group to talk about outreach and the status of legislation to regulate IECs in California. Contact **Joyee Lin** (info@thinqueprep.com) for more information about this group.



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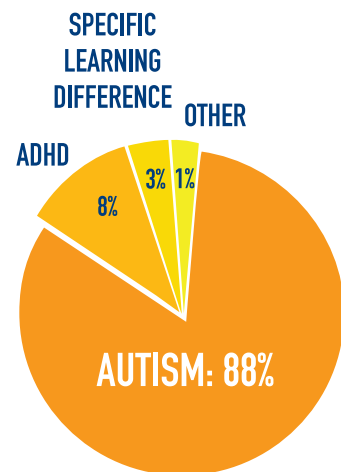
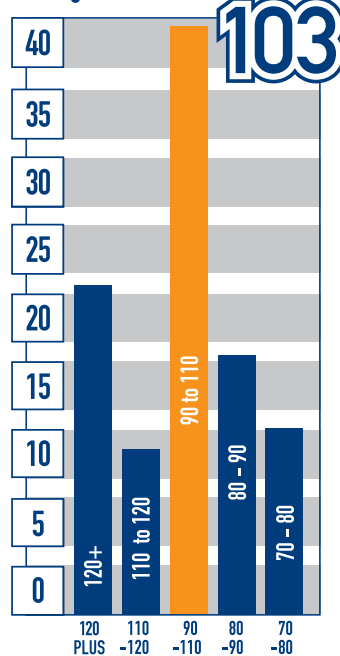
76% MALE

\*CIP actively supports students of all gender identities and expressions

### average age: 17



average FSIQ: 103

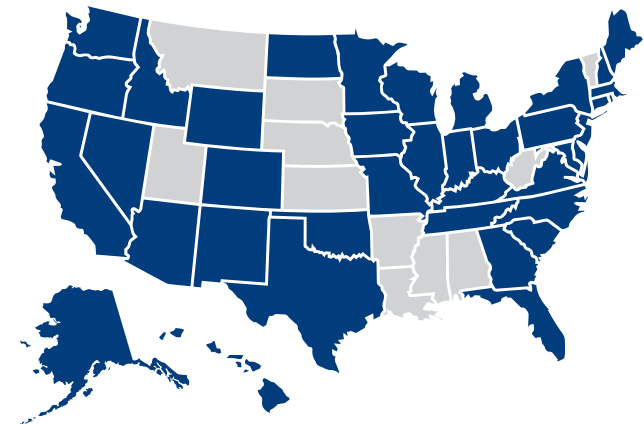


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# Trends and Innovations in Medical Education

By Deborah Gutman, MD, MPH, IECA (RI)

The current approach to medical school curricula was influenced by the *Flexner Report*, which was published in 1910, that aimed to standardize medical education in the biomedical model. It established the idea of Years 1 and 2 as preclinical or supported by the structure and timing of the United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE). Step 1 of the boards is a basic science examination taken between the preclinical and clinical years; Step 2 of the licensing exam includes both a simulated patient and a written examination focused on clinical knowledge that is typically taken in the last year of medical school. Since the *Flexner Report*, the volume of medical knowledge has exploded and the health care system has become more complex. New pedagogical methods have evolved, as has technology and its ability to support learners. With that in mind, 75% of US medical schools have had major curriculum reform in the last three years.

## Adapting With the Times

With the changes being made in medical school curricula to keep up with the changing times, independent educational consultants (IECs) can use the following information to refresh their knowledge.

**Early clinical integration.** The strong demarcation between preclinical and clinical years is being broken down. Students are being given skills to interact with patients from the very beginning of their educational journey—a change meant to reclaim the importance of the doctor-patient relationship as the center of medical education. It focuses on contextual and active learning. Examples of how schools are putting the patient front and center in the curriculum include the Art and Practice of Medicine curriculum at Beaumont or the Doctoring program at the Warren Alpert Medical School at Brown University. Patient stories make the acquisition of basic medical knowledge more compelling and

*continued on page 8*



Deborah Gutman, Admissions Rx, can be reached at [admissionsrx@gmail.com](mailto:admissionsrx@gmail.com).



serve as the scaffold on which facts and concepts can be organized and reinforced. There is a slow but steady move to eliminate the preclinical and clinical divide in the curriculum and create a fully vertically integrated curriculum of basic science and clinical medicine.

**Increased small-group learning.** The quantity of information contained in the basic science curriculum is so large that the fallback approach has been lecture-based teaching, which is an efficient way to deliver large volumes of information to a large audience. The downside to large-group learning is the passive learner experience and lack of individualization. Problem-based learning is one of the earliest innovations in small-group teaching: students work cooperatively in small groups, often 10–12 students, with a faculty member whose role is that of a facilitator and expert resource. Each group examines a carefully planned series of patient-centered problems designed to highlight principles and issues in health and disease. Medical schools are also embracing a flipped-classroom model in which students absorb an instructor's lecture in a digital format as homework and use class time for application of knowledge in simulation exercises.

**Incorporation of technology.** Different forms of simulation are being integrated into curricula, including *low-fidelity* procedural models and *high-fidelity* simulation that includes fully functioning physiologic mannequins in simulated hospitals. Podcasts, MOOCs (massive online open courses), and learning management systems allow for asynchronous or on-demand learning that can occur

wherever and whenever the learner is ready to learn. Asynchronous learning can be complementary to either small- or large-group learning and can compensate for limited resources or availability of classroom time and allow for the introduction of spaced repetition as a study technique.

Learning management systems, online textbooks, podcasts, blogs, wikis, online discussion forums, and social media may all just create added distractions if they are not couched in a good curriculum. The curriculum should not be technology based but rather technology enabled. Artificial intelligence will inevitably be part of the future of medicine, and students will need to witness the use of technology in innovative ways both for learning and for patient care.

**Improved scholarly mentorship.** Mentorship is taking the form of teaching academies or learning communities organized around a common interest. For example, scholarly concentrations can include seminars, research, and fieldwork to allow for a specific area of scholarship supervised by faculty. That allows the student to explore a topic in-depth as an adjunct to the core curriculum and to form a close relationship with a faculty mentor. One example is the Albert Einstein School of Medicine SOAR program, which includes such topics as medical ethics, aging, and integrative medicine.

**Team-based learning and interprofessional education.** There has been a steady move towards a more-collaborative curriculum—between teacher and student, between different students (physician assistant, nursing, pharmacy), and between disciplines. One example is the collaboration between Harvard Medical School and

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MIT in the form of the Harvard-MIT Health Sciences and Technology Program, a unique collaboration that integrates science, medicine, and engineering to solve problems in human health. Another example is the new Carle Illinois College of Medicine, which is the first engineering-based college of medicine.

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*There is more emphasis on active and independent learning in medical school than ever before.*

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**More efficient use of curricular time.** A driving force for improved educational efficiency is the increasing debt burden associated with medical training. Using some of the previously mentioned strategies can make learning more active and immersive and offer self-paced, mastery-based technology tools that allow the time to earn a medical degree to be shortened. Some schools, such as Baylor and Vanderbilt, have condensed the traditional two-year basic science curriculum into one-and-a-half years. Some schools are also trimming the fourth year, which is traditionally a time for exploration of clinical electives and interviewing for residency programs. Other programs have been bold enough to remove the fourth year entirely. NYU School of Medicine and UC-Davis both offer an accelerated three-year medical program with an incentive for applicants to enter primary care specialties with guaranteed

residency spots, which allows for removing extra interviewing and audition elective time in the fourth-year curriculum.

#### **Competency-based assessments and continuous self-assessment.**

Using such tools as patient portfolios and virtual patients to track student progress in certain competency skills allows for greater individual flexibility in the curriculum. Competency-based assessments measure the skills that will be necessary for success in residency and in clinical practice. In a competency-based education, students are evaluated on their application of knowledge in clinical situations. Competency-based assessment has been used in residency programs for a while now and extending it to the beginning years will allow continuity in assessment for the entire scope of medical education.

### **Preparing Students**

What does this all mean for medical school applicants? There is now more variability than ever in how medical schools are delivering education, and students have more flexibility in matching their specific interests and learning styles to a specific school's curriculum delivery. What does this mean for those advising premedical students? There is more emphasis on active and independent learning in medical school than ever before. Premedical students will need to be prepared to take initiative in their learning, be active participants during both learning and evaluations, and work in teams. They will also be given the opportunity to not just be well-rounded but to be "angular" and pursue a particular passion that they may start to develop as a premedical student. 

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# Prepare a Graduate Application Step-by-Step

By Tripti Singh MA, IECA Associate (Mumbai)

If you work with clients who are considering graduate school, it's time to gear up. Most postgraduate programs are extremely competitive, so clients must spend adequate time systematically planning their applications.

## Start Early

The ideal time to start a master's application is in the year before an applicant wants to start his or her education. If a client is applying to postgraduate programs that begin in the fall, then starting sometime between August and October of the previous year is ideal. For a spring deadline, clients should start between June and July of the previous year. That leaves enough time to research colleges and programs, make informed decisions, take the necessary tests, collate data and documents, and write the statement of purpose (SOP). Most importantly, starting early allows a candidate to evaluate their profile and build on it to ensure that they stand out.

## Know the Deadlines

Most postgraduate programs start between August to October, with application deadlines falling anywhere between November of the previous year and February of the same year. Spring deadlines fall between September and October. Many colleges, such as the London School of Economics, have rolling admissions deadlines, which means that an applicant can apply at any time once the application opens. Qualified candidates who apply before the deadline leave ample time to prepare for the interview process if required and may be able to secure their acceptance before their peers.

## Follow the Process

Use this A-B-C-D application guide to help applicants with their postgraduate applications.

**Assess.** First, applicants must assess and understand their motivation for a postgraduate

*continued on page 12*



*Tripti Singh, The Red Pen, can be reached at [tripti.singh@theredpen.in](mailto:tripti.singh@theredpen.in).*



degree. As an independent educational consultant (IEC), you can help your client think through and answer crucial questions, such as, Why do I want to study further? What and where do I want to study? Is this program going to help me achieve my goals? Thoughtful answers to those questions, among others, will help clients narrow down available programs. It will also help them gain clarity when writing their statement of purpose (SOP).

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*The SOP [is an] applicant's best chance to add depth to the data provided in other parts of the application and let the admission committee know more about his or her motivation and goals.*

---

**Begin.** The next step is to gather the components that will come together to build a strong application. Encourage your clients to create an effective résumé that highlights their impact, skills, and achievements. At the same time, encourage them to reach out

to their professors and managers for letters of recommendation (LORs). Two or three strong LORs will serve to endorse their profile along with their good academic credentials and work ethic.

**Connect.** Encourage your client to connect with all the graduate schools that you have determined might be a good fit and support them in making their final shortlist. Besides the résumé and LORs, research any additional requirements, such as supplemental essays, GRE or GMAT score requirements, and applicable scholarships or fellowships. The most daunting and time-consuming task in this step is writing the SOP, which is a prospective applicant's best chance to add depth to the data provided in other parts of the application and let the admission committee know more about his or her motivation and goals. Although test scores highlight academic calibre, essays showcase how well one can think and succinctly translate learning into real-life situations. A well-written essay can make all the difference when everything else is equal between competing applicants.

**Deadline.** Set deadlines for each stage of the application process. Remind your client to add buffer time for such tasks as the retests of GRE or GMAT or additional essays. Putting together a master's application takes time and careful thought. But if you work with your client to start planning well in advance, neither of you will be rushing at the last minute. 



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# Amateurs vs. Professionals: Who We Are and What We Do

By Pamela Kwartler, MA, IECA (NJ)

Over the past year, I heard the following two responses from well-meaning people:

*Suburban parent:* “Oh, you’re doing college counseling? Everyone does that or real estate.”

*Seller of graduation gifts:* “You’ll love these! All my college counselors buy them.”

It’s challenging to respond to such comments appropriately without seeming petty, sensitive, or worse, superior. Generally, it’s best to avoid offering an explanation to those who are ignorant about what independent educational consulting actually entails and what we do for families every day. It is crucial, however, that we clarify our objectives ourselves rather than permitting others—amateurs—to do it for us erroneously in the public sphere.

How do we change the public perception of what we do, and why should we have to explain ourselves? Health care practitioners, accountants, STEM workers, electricians, plumbers, and those in countless other businesses don’t have to prove that they are professionals in their fields—their unique skills are respected, and people rarely consider

doing the jobs those specialists handle themselves. But amateurs are eager to jump into “college counseling,” and they don’t always play by our rules.

A basic misconception about our primary purpose obstructs us from proving our professionalism: the belief that families hire independent college consultants (IECs) to “get students into” college. That supposition goes against the fundamental ethics of a professional IEC. Many amateurs (and sadly, some professionals), however, sell this smoke and mirrors angle, hinting that we possess unique powers to manipulate the system and special connections who ensure back door admissions. The implication is unsavory, but we understand why it is seductive. To access that privilege, a high price is imperative. As we saw in the Varsity Blues scandal and many other instances, some families are undeterred by cost.

A recent provocative article in *USA Today* (Quintana and McCoy 2019) focused on a successful college consulting business founded by a young New Zealand native and Harvard grad. He is hardly the first to do this, as we know. Like his equally green

*continued on page 14*



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Counseling LLC,  
can be reached at  
[lesscollegestress@  
gmail.com](mailto:lesscollegestress@gmail.com).



predecessors, he hires amateurs: college-age tutors, usually Ivy or elite school grads, who he says are better than experienced consultants because they have recently been through college admissions. The business markets “getting students into” particular elite colleges.

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*We cannot continue to allow the practices of amateurs, dabblers, or the uninformed media to impact our public perception.*

---

The following quote underscores a misunderstanding of what reputable IECs do, along with other generalized misinformation:


The less-experienced consultants may include recent college graduates or parents who successfully got their child into a highly selective college, and therefore believe they can help others do the same. The more experienced ones often have a graduate-level education and former careers working in the admissions offices of the nation’s top schools. The thinking goes: They know what the colleges are looking for, so they can tell parents what their children should do (Quintana and McCoy 2019).

We cannot continue to allow the practices of amateurs, dabblers, or the uninformed media to impact our public perception. It prevents us from distancing ourselves from the young man profiled in the article or a huckster like Rick Singer. How many of us have not heard, “How many students have you gotten into the Ivies?” in the first meeting with a family? Many of us find it exciting to work with very high-performing students with ambitious goals. But that question is really asking us to make an unprofessional promise we cannot and should not keep. There is less predictability than ever before as colleges rely heavily on customer relationship management technologies (CRMs).

Since our adherence to an ethical code prevents us from engaging in deal-making with colleges, we need to state that loud and clear. At the same time, let’s revamp our public image by stressing what we *actually* do.

As professionals, we serve our families with the expertise garnered through organizations like IECA, which foster our growth by giving us access to continuing education, college visits, relationships with admissions representatives, and most of all, with one another. This business demands that we never stop gathering knowledge, much of which changes regularly. Our network of colleagues maintains our professionalism as we continually learn from one another. In addition to disseminating reliable, up-to-date information about individual colleges, trends in higher education, standardized testing, interview skills, major and career considerations, and how to help high school students discover their interests and skills, we support

students through the entire college process by teaching them to own it—no easy feat. With our support, a successful student matures throughout this process, gradually preparing for what he or she will face in college. We meet families as they embark upon an innately stressful process. They know that the service we provide is valuable, as it would be far more grueling and perhaps less fruitful if they took it on themselves.

Suspicion and negativity about our work resulted in proposed legal restrictions and potential licensing in California. Fortunately, that threat was shelved. Although we can worry about a renewed interest in licensing in the future, one thing is certain: unscrupulous amateurs like Singer and others will ply their trade regardless of legal requirements. To protect ourselves, should we pursue certification before it is imposed on us by an outside body that doesn’t have a legitimate perception of our work? That remains in the discussion phase at this point. But we chose to do this work and we committed to it, let’s unite in our clear definition of what a professional independent education consultant does—and does not—do. It’s up to us to set the public straight. 

#### Reference

Quintana, Chris and Kevin McCoy. 2019. “This Harvard grad has made millions on U.S. college admissions for international students.” *USA Today*, December 9.



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# Practical Tips for Working with Young Women on the Autism Spectrum

By Eva Mendes, LMHC, and Eric Endlich, PhD, IECA Associate (MA)

With Greta Thunberg being chosen as *Time* magazine's 2019 Person of the Year, young women on the spectrum are gaining greater visibility. And as children are increasingly being diagnosed with autism, independent educational consultants (IECs) are likely to encounter more students on the spectrum in their caseloads. But much of what people know—or think they know—about autism is based on a predominantly male presentation, so it is important to learn about the unique needs and challenges of females on the spectrum.

## Difficult Diagnosis

Autism is often not the first diagnosis that females receive when seeking help. Males are diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) at least three times as often as females, perhaps in part because ASD is harder to detect in females. Clinicians and ASD specialists strongly suspect that there are many undiagnosed autistic females in the population. Autism expert Tony Attwood estimates

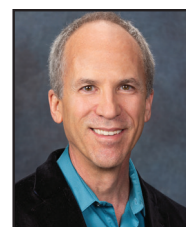
“we are currently detecting and diagnosing about 50 percent of children who have Asperger’s syndrome” (2007, p. 46).

Many young women on the spectrum have been labeled as intellectually gifted or carry other diagnoses, such as anxiety, depression, ADHD, eating disorders, borderline personality disorder, or bipolar disorder. Some receive a series of diagnoses for years before they stumble across the autistic profile—sometimes at the suggestion of a partner or clinician—and then obtain the correct diagnosis later in life. In addition to those who have been misdiagnosed, many have additional comorbid conditions (e.g., autism plus depression or anxiety). According to Haley Moss, a young autistic attorney prominent in the neurodiversity movement whom we interviewed for this article, “Women don’t present the same way as young men on the spectrum—women get overlooked. They don’t get diagnosed, or they get diagnosed later. They go through diagnostic roulette.”

*continued on page 16*



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Eric Endlich, Top College Consultants, can be reached at [eric@topcollegeconsultants.com](mailto:eric@topcollegeconsultants.com).

Depending on where you live, finding adequate resources can sometimes present a major challenge. Many clinicians have little experience with autistic females, and as a result, women sometimes become discouraged with the assessment process. Women who are seeking evaluations have sometimes been told that they “can’t be autistic” because of their eye contact, vocal inflections, or social network. There is some evidence to suggest that women are more likely than men to self-identify, as opposed to obtaining a professional diagnosis (Wake, Endlich, and Lagos, forthcoming).

## Hidden Symptoms

Research suggests that young women learn social skills differently from males. They may experience more pressure to conform to social expectations, and they may be less likely to exhibit aggressive behaviors that draw attention. Their autism might also be harder to detect because they may mimic their nonautistic peers more successfully than males. Unfortunately, this chronic masking or “camouflaging” can lead to increased depression, fatigue, and stress.

In addition, young women don’t always fit the “geek” stereotype. Although it may be true that a disproportionate number of autistic students choose STEM fields of study, at least half of those on the spectrum select other pursuits. Intelligent, quirky young women may have more socially acceptable interests than young autistic men, including animals, astrology, musicians or

other celebrities, poetry, environmental activism (think Greta Thunberg), or even fashion.

If you suspect that a young woman is autistic, consider referring her to a specialist to get a diagnostic evaluation, preferably to someone who is familiar with the female presentation of autism. Even if the student or family isn’t interested in a formal assessment, it’s still a good idea to suggest appropriate supports and resources, at least for the comorbid conditions, such as anxiety.

Working with these students may require a great deal of patience to ascertain their true wants and feelings. According to Moss, “What we say isn’t always what we mean. There’s a compliance culture: you’ll say yes when you want to say no. You want uncomfortable situations to be over. You’ll say you’re fine if you’re not.” Reviewing neuropsychological testing, if available, can help an IEC understand a student’s cognitive and emotional styles to establish an effective working relationship.

## College Selection

It’s not unusual for young autistic women to struggle with adjusting to college life, and many fail to graduate as a result. Therefore, it’s crucial to guide them in picking the right educational institution. Some students do better when they start at community colleges or commuter schools so that they can learn to handle college-level coursework before dealing with the challenge of independent living. Those who plan to move away from home may wish to avoid large “party” schools or

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institutions that are overly focused on socializing and sports and instead seek out small colleges with more individualized attention. Depending on their interests, they may thrive in academically oriented colleges with strong arts or science/engineering programs. Because of potential naïveté and difficulty reading social cues, they may be at increased risk for exploitation and should become familiar with safety trainings and resources, regardless of which colleges they attend.

## Disclosure Decision

The decision about whether and when to disclose a diagnosis to a college is highly individual. Sometimes a student will mention the diagnosis during the application process to qualify for a support program or to explain something unusual (e.g., a temporary drop in grades because of depression). If a student will require accommodations in college, she should be prepared to provide documentation, such as recent neuropsychological testing, soon after admission. The college's disability and accessibility office can guide the student through this process. Depending on her difficulties with social interactions, one option is for her to seek a single room in a residence hall as an accommodation. Many young women on the spectrum are also attached to and soothed by animals and can benefit from having an emotional support animal or residing on a pet-friendly campus.

In considering accommodations and supports, keep in mind that the student may downplay her needs. Moss noted, "I don't think I was honest with myself about what supports I needed. When you're young you want to believe you can take on the world. My roommate thing was a disaster. They offered a single room, but I said no. I didn't want to be different or be an outcast." It may be necessary for an IEC to gently challenge a student who is resisting supports and services that may be key to her success in college.

## On-Campus Supports

Young autistic women often struggle with on-campus living, challenged by the social aspect of having to live with roommates, sensory sensitivities that may be exacerbated by dorm living, a lack of social-emotional support, and executive functioning issues. IECs should assess students' college readiness and determine the type and level of support needed. Students may need not only accommodations but also a variety of supports, including counseling, executive function coaching, and social skills groups. Some colleges have dedicated autism support programs with all those components, allowing one-stop shopping for services; a list of such programs can be found at [topcollegeconsultants.com](http://topcollegeconsultants.com). 

### References

Attwood, T. 2007. *The complete guide to Asperger's syndrome*. London and Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Wake, Wilma, Eric Endlich, and Robert Lagos. Forthcoming. *Older autistic adults: The lost generation*. Shawnee, KS: AAPC.

*Authors' Note:* Special thanks to Haley Moss, Esq., for contributing to this article.



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# Guiding Families Through Insurance Funding

By Suzie Courtney, Executive Director, Spring Ridge Academy, and Gail Curran, MS, MBA, IECA Therapeutic Committee Chair (AZ)

At the IECA 2019 Fall Conference in Atlanta, a group of professionals (pictured) gathered to share resources and methods that programs and IECs use to guide families through insurance funding for different types and levels of treatment. Program representatives and IECs discussed how and whether programs provide direct billing with insurance, in or out of network; differing levels of care billed to insurance; single case agreements; the use of insurance advocates; offering parents superbills to submit to their insurance; differing funding sources outside of insurance policies; and levels of accreditation and licensure.

For clarity, direct billing refers to a program or facility billing directly for services, either through an internal billing department or with the use of a contracted billing company. Represented programs that offered direct billing services use insurance funds as either full payment for services or as reimbursement for services paid upfront by the patient/patient's families.

Participants at the table represented many different levels on the continuum of care and services, including the following:

- Wilderness programs
- Residential treatment facilities (RTCs)
- Partial hospitalization programs (PHP)
- Intensive outpatient programs (IOP)
- General outpatient (GOP)
- Psychiatry
- Medication management.

Program licensure determines the level of care billed by facilities. Many programs hold state licenses, and licensure varies by state. National accreditations, which require state licenses, are held by many facilities and that designation can assist with insurance reimbursement. National accreditation bodies are CARF and Joint Commission. Alternate funding sources for families and facilities could include school district contract and adoption subsidy. Both funding sources have been beneficial and have specific processes.

It is helpful to ask families to call their insurance companies early in the process to see what types of mental health coverage exist within their plan's

*continued on page 20*



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Gail Curran, Optimal Edu Options, can be reached at [optimaleduoptions@gmail.com](mailto:optimaleduoptions@gmail.com).



benefits in addition to which facilities are contracted with the insurance company for services. Having a sense of what their insurance company will provide helps families with decision making as they look at therapeutic supports for placement services, in and outside of the home. It was also recommended to provide the families with a list of insurance advocates to call.

Many program representatives have families file for reimbursement using GOP benefits by submitting superbills from the program—superbills list types, durations, and frequency of therapies with the associated codes for the services for families to submit to their insurance companies. They find that parents who are relentless in their engagement with their policyholders tend to have better reimbursement success. A resource for rates associated with different functions can be found at *FairHealthConsumer.org*.

One outpatient facility representative noted that it could be a disadvantage when programs use billing levels of PHP, IOP, and GOP because that could exhaust the client's allotted benefits when they return home. As a result, the client may require continued support services and find that their benefits are exhausted. An IEC at the table expressed hope for changing insurance practices and insurance appeals following a class action suit that United Behavioral Health lost.

The group closed with a desire to have more meaningful discussions at future gatherings. The topic was so consuming; each participant had just enough time to share once. Time flew with exciting exchanges of information and perspective. All members of the discussion were passionate about helping families have better and more comprehensive coverage for mental and behavioral health services. 

**Note:** The sidebar (suggested by the group) features a comprehensive list of insurance advocates, billing companies, scholarship organizations, and tax deduction information.

## Resources for Insurance Information

- NATSAP Scholarship and Tax Deduction Resources:  
[https://natsap.org/Public/For\\_Parents/Financial\\_Options/Public/Parents/Affiliated\\_Granteeing\\_Organizations.aspx?hkey=633298e0-e40b-4cca-b035-af88008b7d4c](https://natsap.org/Public/For_Parents/Financial_Options/Public/Parents/Affiliated_Granteeing_Organizations.aspx?hkey=633298e0-e40b-4cca-b035-af88008b7d4c)
- Mental Health & Autism Insurance Project  
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## Billing Companies

- Axis Billing [axisbilling.com](http://axisbilling.com)
- Bridge Way Billing [www.medicalbillersandcoders.com](http://www.medicalbillersandcoders.com)

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**July 14:** College Transition for IECs Working With Students With Health Conditions and Physical Disabilities

**August 11:** TBA

**September 8:** College Transition Support for High-Achieving Students With Preexisting Mental Health Issues

**October 13:** Two Schools' Innovations to Ensure Their Graduates Are Prepared

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# Professional Member Retreat: 10 out of 10

"All in all, this was a 10 out of 10 and an event I will likely participate in annually," **Wilton Paogofie** (CA) said when asked about his experience at the Professional Member Retreat in Arizona held in January. Beginning with Mark Sklarow's timely Fireside Chat about government intervention and the future of IECA, the relevant topics kept coming—mindfulness basics for young adults; One Great Idea sessions; and business topics, such as billing practices, creating engaging content for customers, women entrepreneurs, media strategies, finding your audience, and marketing tools.

**Amy McVeigh** (IN), a first-time attendee, said, "I wasn't quite sure what to expect. I experienced intriguing discussions, inspirational



colleagues, thought-provoking points of view, and focused presentations on important topics. I'm returning home with a long list of ideas to implement. Time and money well spent."

Of course, it's almost impossible to capture the unscheduled moments—the conversations, sharing, and networking that is, perhaps, the most valuable element of the retreat. Paogofie summed it up: "My practice is going through a transition, so the timing was vital to gather insight from a wide array of consultant practices as well as guest speakers. More importantly, I got face time with established consultants who were more than gracious with their time. I left with specific action items and that is more than I would have expected. Socially, I made new friends, caught up with STI classmates, reconnected with mentors, and shared conversations with our CEO." 



colleagues, thought-provoking points of view, and focused presentations on important topics. I'm returning home with a long list of ideas to implement. Time and money well spent."



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## In the News

**Ibrahim Firat** (TX) was quoted in "Moving With Kids? How to Learn About the School Districts in Your New Area" on *Realtor.com* on November 26.

**Juan-Camilo Tamayo** (FL) was quoted in "Where, How International Students Are Studying in the U.S." in *U.S. News and World Report* on November 18.

**Benjamin Caldarelli** Associate member (NY) was quoted in "As US college costs soar, some students find bargains overseas" at *CNBC.com* on November 23.

**IECA** was recommended for its "online directory of qualified practitioners" in "Advisors Counsel Clients on How to Pay Their Kids' College Tuition" in *Investor's Business Daily* on December 13.

**Laurie Weingarten** (NJ) was quoted in "To recruit applicants, colleges lean on big data" in the *Vermont Digger* on December 9; in "How to Strategize Your B-List of Colleges" in *College Confidential* on December 13; and in "VIP lists and a music mogul: How one private equity exec caught in the college admissions scandal says he tried to his son into USC, legally" in *Business Insider* on December 19.

**Joanna Lilley**, Associate member, (CO) wrote "What it means to be 'off-track to graduate'" on *Thrive Global* on December 20.

**Janet Rosier** (CT) was quoted in "Connecticut Private Colleges Get Mixed Grades for Financial Soundness" in the *New Haven Register/Connecticut Insider* on December 16, 2019.

**Steven Mercer** (CA) was quoted in "UC admission rates have plummeted, so what should anxious students and parents do?" on *KCRW* on December 6.

**Mandee Heller Adler** (FL) was quoted in "12 things to Know About Merit Aid Scholarships" on *Yahoo Finance* on December 9.

**Helese Sandler** (GA) was quoted in "Hart to Heart: Find the right school for your child" in *Savannah Now/Savannah Morning News* on December 27.

**Mark Fisher's** (GA) article "Juniors: College Applications Are Closer Than You Think" was published in the *Atlanta Jewish Times* on January 8.

**Stephanie Kennedy** Associate member (IL) was quoted in and IECA was included as a resource in "Pros, Cons of Using International Student Agents, Consultants" in *U.S. News and World Report* on December 10.

## Initiatives

**Sarah Loring de Garcia** (Mexico) received the GEM Award from International ACAC. The Going the Extra Mile (GEM) program recognizes the exemplary work of International ACAC members by highlighting a dedication to our profession, colleagues, and students by demonstrating best practices, acts of goodwill, creativity, and ethics.

**Mark Cruver** (GA) and **Wesley Fondal, Jr.**, Associate member (GA) represented IECA and presented a workshop at the NSHSS conference in November. Joining them at the IECA booth was **Mary Joyce Bacon**, Associate (GA).

**Belinda Wilkerson** (NC) was elected chair of the Cumberland County Public Library and Information Center in December.

**Jason Robinovitz** (FL) hosted nearly 30 test prep providers from across the country at the first annual Test and the Rest Winter Conference on January 10–11. The conference provided a platform for test prep professionals to share best practices.



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# Regional Groups

## Chicago

In November, Andrew Laue, associate director for fine arts admissions at Webster University (far left) gave a presentation on selective arts college admissions as well as an overview of Webster to the Chicago area group. Members attending were Jill Burstein, Jordan Burstein, Vita Cohen, Alexandra Ellison, Patti Schabinger, Hannah Stotland, Lisa Temkin, and Elizabeth Wiltshire.

For more information about this group, contact Carolyn Geldermann ([carolyn@geldermanncollegeconsulting.com](mailto:carolyn@geldermanncollegeconsulting.com)).



## Philadelphia

Philadelphia IECs met with Dean DeCarolus and Julia Ross of the Charles D. Close School of Entrepreneurship at Drexel University on November 20 (above) and hosted Allie Warrick, from the University of South Carolina on November 1.

For more information about this group, contact Fran Manning-Smith ([fran@stepplanners.com](mailto:fran@stepplanners.com)).



## Minnesota

The Minnesota Regional group visited Gustavus Adolphus College on November 20



Attending were Julie Ekkers, Emily Crawford, Mike Camilli, Greta Van Ochten, Laurie Macgregor, and Stephanie George.



In January, the group visited the University of Minnesota for a presentation and tour of the College of Design. Pictured (l to r) are Kris Olson, Karl Bunday, Susan Luse, Gerald Downing, Kate Neiss, Ryan Luse, Beth Kreusch, Laurie Macgregor, Susan Hoff, Emily Crawford, Julie Ekkers, and Greta Van Ochten.

For more information about this group, contact Greta Van Ochten ([minnesotaiecs@gmail.com](mailto:minnesotaiecs@gmail.com)).

## New Jersey



The New Jersey group met for lunch in November with Kelsey Cromie, senior assistant director of admissions at Wheaton College in Norton, MA. Pictured are Kelsey Cromie, Wendy Amsterdam, Susana MacLean, Carolyn Mulligan, Hildie Steiner, Laurie Weingarten, Carole Kraemer, Stephanie Ackerman, Traey Hobson, Kate Sonnenberg, Shari Powell, Amy Hallock, and Pamela Kwartler.

For more information about this group, contact Shari Powell ([creatingcollegeoptions@gmail.com](mailto:creatingcollegeoptions@gmail.com)) or Hildie Steiner ([hildie@highfivecollegeprep.com](mailto:hildie@highfivecollegeprep.com)).





## Consultant's Corner: Kristina Dooley



Dear IECA Colleagues and Friends,

When I joined the IECA Foundation Board in 2016, I knew I was adding one more layer to my commitment to our profession. What I didn't know then - but has become very apparent to me now - was just how deep that layer would become for me personally. Growing up in a community where 65% of the students were on free or reduced lunch (myself included), and where the college-going rate hovered around 50%, I had no idea the impact that access to higher education would have on the trajectory of my life. As an alumnus of the oldest college access program in the U.S. - College Now Greater Cleveland - I feel truly blessed that I am able to pay it forward today by supporting the IECA Foundation with both my time and my contribution to its Annual Fund.

My involvement with the Foundation has become one of my proudest accomplishments since becoming an IEC. My one regret is that I was an IECA member for several years before becoming involved with the Foundation. In fact, my knowledge of what the Foundation actually does was minimal and I had a very superficial understanding of the impact of their grants. Which is why I wanted to write this letter to all of you - my IECA colleagues and friends.

My hope is that you will consider supporting the IECA Foundation in one of these ways in 2020:

- 1) Encourage a deserving education or student-focused non-profit organization to apply for a Foundation Grant
- 2) Nominate a colleague for the IECA Katz Award
- 3) Attend the Foundation event during the Fall 2020 IECA Conference in San Diego
- 4) Contribute any dollar amount to the Annual Fund

As IECA members we are fortunate to have a philanthropic arm of our Association which provides an opportunity for us to go beyond our traditional roles as IECs. I hope to see many of you make 2020 the year in which you add "IECA Foundation Supporter" to your list of accomplishments. I can assure you it will be one of the most impactful things you do all year.

With gratitude,  
Kristina Dooley, CEP  
Professional Member, IECA  
IECA and IECAF Board Member

## The IECA Foundation Welcomes New Board Chair: Krissy Naspo



Krissy started KJN Educational Consulting in 2013 and became a Partner at The Bertram Group in 2017. Prior to becoming an educational consultant, Krissy spent twelve years in boarding school admissions at Hillside School, Portsmouth Abbey and St. Andrew's School in Rhode Island. She became a Professional member of IECA in 2014 and has served on the Schools Committee for two years and was Chair of the Committee from 2017-2018. Krissy works with families looking for traditional schools or those needing more therapeutic support. Krissy is a graduate of Lawrence Academy and attended Providence College where she earned both Bachelors and Masters Degrees. She has been on the board of the IECA Foundation for the last three years and Chairs the Development Committee for the board. The IECA Foundation is thrilled to welcome Krissy as our new Board Chair this year!





# Introductions

## Please Welcome IECA's New Professional Members



**Mary Alptekin** (CT) has been an IEC for 5 years and was an Associate member. Previously, she worked in human resources in recruitment,

compensation, and succession planning for 9 years.

Alptekin earned a BA from Lehigh University and a master's degree in human resources management from Stony Brook University. She attended IECA's 2019 Regional Symposium in Philadelphia and is a member of NACAC.

A member of a parent organization that advocates for children's education, Alptekin served in several positions, including president and board member. In addition, she managed more than a dozen local USTA junior teams, affecting about 120 kids between the ages of 8 and 18, was a Boy Scout advancement chair for a troop of more than 90 boys, and was an Eagle Scout and Girl Scout Gold Award advisor for dozens of young adults.

Alptekin's true passion lies in helping the underserved break the cycle of poverty through education. She has been working with a nonprofit community-based organization for three years helping DACA, first generation, and low-income students navigate the college application process.

Alptekin is married with three children—two girls and a boy. Her husband and all her children are engineers while she is the lone psych major in the house! They are all active tennis players. She loves to play paddleball in the winter, cook, and entertain friends and family.

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**Elizabeth (Liz) Durham** (NY) has been an IEC for 3 years. Previously, she worked in admissions at Villanova University, where she was vice president

of the student-run admissions program; Wagner College; and Sarah Lawrence College.

Durham graduated from Villanova with a degree in Spanish studies with minors in philosophy and psychology and studied abroad in Chile and Spain, immersing herself in the language and cultures of each country. She has been a volunteer for Habitat for Humanity for 10 years.

Durham is an avid backgammon player; tennis competitor, who has been to every grand slam tournament except the Australian Open; and movie quoter! She loves meeting new people and is looking forward to many amazing years meeting passionate IECs.

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**Allison Henderson** (CA) has been an IEC for 7 years. Before that she trained as an agricultural entomologist at UCD and worked for

traditional and organic growers, a local farm bureau, ag marketing organizations, and an international food company.

In addition to a BS in international agricultural development and an MS in plant protection and pest management from UC-Davis, Henderson earned a certificate in college counseling from UCSD Extension.

As a volunteer at the SD Natural History Museum, she has been past chair and a board member and is a current member of the Speaker's Bureau. Science was her vocation and is now her avocation. Touring the ALMA array on the Chajantor plateau in Chile was number one on her bucket list, although it sits at 16,404 feet of altitude and she knew she'd be gasping for air! She also crossed off number two on her bucket list when she spent the night at sea on the aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson—a ship chock-full of science geeks and patriots.

Henderson has two adult children, a husband, a PADI card (scuba certification), and an EPIC pass (skiing).

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*continued on page 28*





**Charles (Chuck) Jones** (NJ) has been an IEC for 5 years and was an Associate member. Previously, he was head of school at

Heathwood Hall Episcopal School in Columbia, SC; provost, middle school director, teacher, and coach at Forsyth Country Day School in Lewisville/Winston-Salem, NC; dean, teacher, coach, and dorm head at Episcopal High School Alexandria, VA; and teacher and coach at Delbarton School in Morristown, NJ.

Jones earned an EdD from the Curry School of Education at the University of Virginia, a master's degree in educational leadership from Teachers College (Columbia University), and a bachelor's degree in religion from Princeton University.

Jones was honored to have the Jones Faculty Award at Forsyth Country Day School named for him, an annual award given to the faculty member who has exhibited the highest ideals of the teaching profession. In 2019, he was recognized for his commitment and service to the Monmouth County Historical Association.

Jones currently serves as president of both the Rumson (NJ) Board of Education and the Two River Little League and is a new trustee at Mary's Place by the Sea. He was a founding trustee of Trinity Hall (a new all-girls school in NJ).

Jones, a long-suffering Jets fan, lives on the New Jersey shore with his wife, Shea, and their three school-aged children. Shea is a preschool teacher, and the kids are busy with sports and the arts.

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**Patricia H. Smith** (DE) has worked as an IEC for 9 years. Previously, she was director of school counseling for Saint John

Paul the Great Catholic High School; director of career services and academic advisor at Southeastern University; an assistant dean and assistant director of career services at University of Mary Washington; and an assistant director of career services at Millersville University.

Smith earned an EdD from Argosy University; an MEd from Millersville University, an MBA from Southeastern University, and a BS in theater arts from Bowie State University. She attended IECA's 2018 STI and is a member of NACAC, ASCA, and NCDA.

Smith received the 2018 Delaware State Chamber of Commerce's Marvin S. Gilman Superstars Business Award of Excellence. She established and is president of the annual College Planning Conference for Parents and Guardians and established and managed the Boys & Girls Clubs of Delaware statewide College Awareness and Planning Program (CAP), where she also serves on the scholarship selection committee.

Smith authored *The Power of Parent Involvement in the College Planning Process* and is a quarterly contributor to *The New Castle County Women's Journal*. She is a member of the Delaware State Chamber of Commerce's Superstars in Education Selection Committee; and cochair of the Physical and Mental Health Committee, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Lancaster (PA) Alumni Chapter.

Smith is married and has two adult sons.

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Specialty: C



**Jennifer Sun** (China) has worked as an IEC for 5 years and was an Associate member.

Previously, she was director of the Office of Academic Links, at the Chinese University of Hongkong, Shenzhen, China, and a research scientist at China National Genebank (CNGB), Beijing Genomic Institute, Shenzhen. In addition, she was a science teacher for Montgomery Public School District, Rockville, MD, a lecturer in biochemistry at Shenzhen Polytechnic (College), Guangdong, China, and a visiting fellow at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University in the Department of Applied Biology and Chemistry.

She earned an MA degree in science education from Johns Hopkins University and a PhD in biology from Sun Yat-Sen University. She attended IECA's 2015 STI.

Sun coauthored *Crossing Boundaries in Science Teacher Education. Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice* and has published in scientific journals.

Sun now lives in Shenzhen, China, with her husband, a dog, and a cat. Her 19-year-old daughter, Anna, is a sophomore student at Penn, studying urban studies.

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Specialty: C+I



**Thalia Thompson** (CT) has worked as an IEC for 7 years and was an Associate member. All told, she has more than 25 years

of experience working with students on the college admissions process.

Previously, Thompson was director of the Paraprofessional Academy at the City University of New York for 18 years, where she counseled adults in transition as they enrolled in college for the first time or returned to college after an extended absence. She also served as a liaison between the New York City Department of Education, the United Federation of Teachers, and public and private colleges as they collaborated to better serve teaching assistants with their educational and career goals. Currently, she is director of student assessment at Norwalk (CT) Community College.

Thompson earned a BS in human development from Cornell University and an MS in counselor education from Syracuse University. She is a member of ACA.

In her spare time, Thompson enjoys singing, travelling, and reading. She lives in Norwalk, CT, with her husband and their beloved Labrador retriever.

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**Louise Williams** (CO) has worked as an IEC for 11 years. She practiced law in various capacities for more than 20 years and worked in

test prep tutoring.

Williams earned a BA in journalism and English from the University of North Carolina–Chapel Hill, a JD from the University of North Carolina School of Law, and a masters in secondary education from Regis University. She is a member of NACAC, RMACAC, State Bar of Colorado, and College Consultants of Colorado.

Williams served on the board of the Cherry Creek Schools Foundation for six years and is often invited to teach classes on test prep and college admissions in schools and organizations.

Williams is a court appointed special advocate (CASA) for children in foster care and helps them with test prep and college planning at no charge. In addition to taking several pro bono and reduced-fee clients each year, she volunteers her services at Boys Hope/Girls Hope, at local high schools, and during Free Application Day for students in Denver Public Schools. A dog lover, she volunteers with the Mile High Lab Mission as a dog foster parent.

William's has two adult children—Tricia and her husband, John, graduates of Elon University, live in Charlotte, NC, and Pete and his wife Zoe, graduates of the University of Colorado–Boulder, live in Denver. Her somewhat empty nest now consists of her husband Michael and their dog Misty.

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**Wenyi (Wendy) Zhao** (MA) has been an IEC for 6 years and was an Associate member. She has worked extensively with

both international and domestic students. She holds a BA in English Education from Neijiang (China) Normal University, a BA in English with a minor in professional writing and an MA in English with a concentration in English as a second language from Eastern New Mexico University–Portales. She also earned a certificate in college counseling from UCLA Extension.

Zhao volunteers at Boston Children's Hospital and the Burlington Food Pantry. Outside of work, she enjoys strength training, intense cardio workouts, and hot yoga. She is also a foodie, enjoys exploring different kinds of cuisine, and makes sure to visit as many newly opened restaurants in the Boston area as she can.

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Specialties: S, C + I*



## iPad Apps for Learners with Dyslexia/Reading & Writing Difficulties



## Dyslexia Indicator Apps



Dyslexia Indicator apps don't fit into the 'wheel', but are definitely worth knowing about. These apps (particularly Dyslexia Detector and 'What is Dyslexia?') do not provide formal screening tests, but give an indication that a learner MAY have dyslexia and that this should be investigated further.

Many iPad apps are available to support learners with reading and writing difficulties. This 'Wheel of Apps' is not comprehensive, but attempts to identify relevant apps and to categorise them according to some of the difficulties faced by people with dyslexia.

Note that some apps address a range of difficulties. In order to save space, we have decided not to place individual apps into multiple categories, but have placed them according to a single category that is particularly relevant to the app.

There will be a far more comprehensive guide to apps for dyslexia and how to use them in a forthcoming book from CALL Scotland. This will be available as a printed book and as a free download early in the New Year from: <http://www.callscotland.org.uk/Resources/Books/>

This 'Wheel of apps' for dyslexia is inspired by previous visual app representations:

- *The Pedagogy Wheel* - Allan Carrington
- *Mobile Learning with Bloom's Taxonomy & the Pedagogy Wheel* - Cherie Pickering & Amanda Pickering
- *Apps for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders* - Mark Coppin.

These representations are available from various web sites, but can all be downloaded from: <http://apps4stages.wikispaces.com/AppWheels>.



Version 1.0, November 2013 CALL Scotland, The University of Edinburgh.  
CALL Scotland is part funded by Scottish Government.  
An electronic version of this chart can be downloaded from:  
<http://bit.ly/1qgQszG>

**CALL Scotland**  
Communication, Access, Literacy and Learning

An Android version of this app wheel can be downloaded from <https://www.callscotland.org.uk/downloads/posters-and-leaflets/android-apps-for-learners-with-dyslexia>

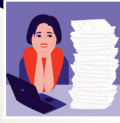
Special thanks to Colin Brady, Mitchell College, for sharing this graphic with us.



**Enforcing  
new rules**  
page M3



**Standards of  
behavior**  
page M4



**Essay fatigue**  
page M8

**IECA**<sup>+</sup>  
TM

# Member-to-Member

THE **NEWSLETTER** OF THE INDEPENDENT EDUCATIONAL CONSULTANTS ASSOCIATION

February/March 2020

## Connecticut Members-Only Events

**Monday–Wednesday,  
May 11–13**

Pre-conference tours  
(see page 3 in the general  
section for details)

**Tuesday, May 12**

6:30–8:30 p.m.  
IECA Member Dinner at  
Ballo restaurant

**Thursday, May 14**

7:30–9:00 a.m.  
Consultant Roundtables  
(for all IECs)

**Friday, May 15**

7:00–7:45 a.m.  
IECA Affinity Group  
Meetings  
(for all IECA members)

7:45–9:00 a.m.

Annual Membership  
Meeting with breakfast  
(for all IECA members)

**Friday, May 15**

Post-conference tours  
(see page 3 in the general  
section for details)

## New Developments in the Gap Year World

*By Kristin White, MBA, IECA (CT)*



I found several new developments in the gap year world with my recent research.

**It's a major growth segment in the travel industry.** We have seen expansion into the gap year market by companies that were once exclusively running college study abroad programs or teen camps and trips. Companies who run vacation tours and volunteer trips have also expanded into this space, providing many options for gap year students of all ages.

**There's an increased focus on exploring career goals.** Parents and students today are very much focused on preparation for careers, and many students spend all or part of their gap year in an internship or career-oriented program. Ethan Knight, director of the Gap Year Association, cited three reasons why students are going on gap years: burnout from the competitive pressure of getting into college, a desire to learn more about themselves, and putting off the high cost of college until they have a clearer

understanding of their academic and career goals. It's worth noting that the third goal was not a factor in the past, but today it is very much driving the gap year plan.

Students want to participate in internships during and before college. They see the gap year as a time to learn more about themselves, experience



another culture, and get exposure to career possibilities. The *2016 State of Millennial Hiring Report*, a study by Looksharp, indicated that students who complete three or more internships are more likely to secure full-time employment than those with fewer internships. It also found that 81% of graduates reported that the internships helped them shift their career directions and

*continued on page M5*



# Call for Nominating Committee Candidates

By Ann Rossbach, IECA Past President (NJ)

Given the many leadership opportunities within IECA, serving as a member of the Nominating Committee is one of the more interesting and crucial roles. The committee is charged with proposing a slate of candidates for election to the Board of Directors and nominates the executive committee of the board, including the president and vice presidents. Serving on the Nominating Committee is a demonstration of your commitment to IECA and its future, and we are seeking individuals who are interested in accepting this responsibility.

## How does the Nominating Committee operate? What is the time commitment?


The nominating committee comprises six members elected by the professional members of IECA; three members are elected each year. Voting for those members is electronic and results are announced at the general meeting in May. An additional member (an outgoing board member) is appointed by the president of IECA and the past president serves as the chair of the committee.

The commitment of time usually runs from October through February, and a term is for two years. Once a slate is decided, the work of the committee is finished.

## What are the requirements to run for this position?

Only professional members can serve on this committee. It is hoped that a candidate would know other members within IECA and contribute to discussions regarding the importance of a board that is balanced and strengthened by the talents, specialty areas, knowledge, skills, and experience of its members.

## How am I nominated?


Candidates can self-nominate or be nominated by another professional member. Simply send an email to Mark Sklarow at [info@IECAonline.com](mailto:info@IECAonline.com). 

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If you have further questions about this committee, please contact any member of this year's committee: **Vita Cohen** (IL), **Alan Haas** (CT), **Charlotte Klaar** (SC), **Jane Klemmer** (NY), **Joan Koven** (PA), **Jesse Quam** (NC), **Carmen Tercilla** (FL), or **Ann Rossbach** (NJ). We would be happy to have a conversation with you!

# E-Voting for 2020 Nominating Committee Elections

Plan to cast your vote for the Nominating Committee even if you are unable to attend the Spring Conference. Once again, voting for the Nominating Committee will take place electronically starting one week before the annual meeting at the Spring Conference on May

15. All professional members are eligible to vote and will receive their voting credentials via email on May 8. Nominees will be announced to the membership in March. 

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# Enforcing New Rules for the IECA Member Network

By Mark Sklarow, IECA CEO

Our “new” IECA Member Network has been tremendously successful in its first year, with a significant increase in participation across all communities. It continues to be one of the most popular and valuable benefits of membership. We want to remind all members, however, that participation in the Member Network is a privilege, not a right, of membership.

We have listened to your feedback and **are adding new rules to the existing Terms & Conditions** to preserve the collegial nature of the network. The complete Terms & Conditions document can be found at <https://network.iecaonline.com/termsandconditions> on the Member Network.

Here is the additional language added to the existing Terms & Conditions, based on policies adopted by the IECA Board of Directors in December 2019.

## PART 6: Enforcing Rules for Member Network Participation

Violations of the Terms & Conditions, including self-promotion, disrespect of peers, posting political opinions, and other misuse, will be addressed by staff in the following actions:


IECA staff will contact violators individually to remind them about proper use of the Network. Staff will enforce the following actions for **those who violate** Network rules:

1. Place repeat offenders under moderation, requiring their emails to be reviewed by staff before appearing on the Network. This process will likely delay posts by a week. Moderation could be imposed for a period of up to six months.

2. Place a member in temporary suspension from the Member Network when the violation is serious or when a member who has been through moderation continues to violate the community rules. Suspension could last up to six months. IECA staff will inform the

Vice President for Ethics & Professional Practices when such action is taken.

3. Permanent ban from the Member Network would be imposed for those who continue to violate community rules despite previous warnings and those whose violations are grievous. Such action will be taken only upon approval of the VP for Ethics, upon recommendation of staff.

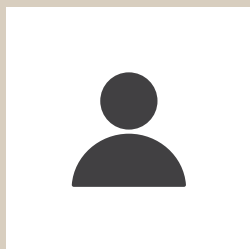
The IECA Ethics Committee retains the right to take additional action for Network violations. 



Mark Sklarow

## Don't Go Incognito!

Add your photo and keywords to your online profiles so your colleagues will recognize you on tours and at conferences, and families can search for you on the IECA website.





## Guided by Accepted Standards of Behavior

By Belinda Wilkerson EdD, IECA (NC), Vice President for Ethics & Professional Practices

Ethics, a derivative of the Greek word *ethos*, is generally described as moral philosophy. Throughout history, multiple societies, beginning with ancient Greek philosophers, examined the science of morals by focusing on questions, such as:

- What is good for the individual?
- What is the social good?
- How do these coexist?

Velasquez, Andre, and Shanks et al (2010) frame this discussion with similar questions:

- What is right or wrong?
- What does the law require?
- What standards of behavior does our society accept?

Leaving people in power and a place of privilege to view ethics through the first two bullets has wreaked havoc on the United States throughout history. Using a standard of “right or wrong” leaves too much to personal interpretation. The law allowed a society to develop that does not benefit all people—for example, *The 1619 Project*, a recent publication and podcast of the *New York Times*, gives a chronological account of events from the moment enslaved Africans arrived on these shores, and the laws passed to codify enslavement continue to reverberate today. Clearly, the remaining item regarding acceptable standards of behavior matters greatly.

IECA strives to focus on acceptable standards of behavior. During my tenure as VP for Ethics & Professional Practices, I am learning to listen more when members have concerns—I remind myself that *listen* and *silent* have the same letters. It is not easy because people’s feelings are involved and in the process of detangling feelings, the law and standards of behavior can get messy. But it is important that we continue to incorporate acceptable standards of behavior into our practices for the good of our businesses and for the good of the industry. Operation Varsity Blues is still in the news, not front page but lurking in the background. Determining our way forward with ethical concerns is of utmost importance. As we wrestle with this, I’d

like to share a few scenarios that were brought to the attention of the Ethics Committee. *The Principles of Good Practice*, the Standards of Excellence for IECA Member Consultants, and the Ethics Violation Complaint Procedures ([link.iecaonline.com/ethics-complaints](http://link.iecaonline.com/ethics-complaints)) inform the responses.

**Scenario 1. A member IEC is working with a new student who is interested in the performing arts (or another specialty area). The IEC lists numerous questions on the Member Network (or other platforms) on how to advise this student. From the questions, it’s apparent the student’s talent area is not in the IEC’s area of expertise. What is the proper course of action for the IEC?**

According to the *College Specialty Standards of Excellence*, members who do college consulting should “refer all clients whose needs are beyond the limits of one’s professional expertise to other professionals” (College Consulting, Professional Ethics, Item 7). When a situation in school consulting challenges the member’s expertise, this same document states, “refer all clients whose circumstances are beyond the limits of their professional expertise to another IEC who does possess the requisite experience and focus of practice.” (School Consulting, Professional Ethics, Item 10). Similar language regarding expertise is contained in the standards of excellence for Learning Disabilities (Professional Ethics, Item 4) and Therapeutic (Professional Ethics, Item 6).

**Scenario 2. A family member takes a new position in a college, school, program, or therapeutic setting. As an IEC, you have a student applying to or placed in the family member’s place of employment or you serve on the board of one of these entities. What is the proper course of action for the IEC?**

*The Principles of Good Practice* addresses these potential conflicts of interest in Section II, Multiple Relationships and Potential Conflicts of Interest. When a multiple relationship is unavoidable, it’s stated that “the member must disclose in writing the existence, extent and nature of that relationship. This disclosure should include a consent form for clients



Belinda Wilkerson, Steps to the Future LLC, can be reached at [doctorb@steps2thefuture.com](mailto:doctorb@steps2thefuture.com).

to sign, indicating that they have been informed of this additional role and agree to proceed with the services.”


**Scenario 3. A colleague owns a test preparation company. You (Member A) refer students to their company with the expectation of a referral fee. Another colleague (Member B) expresses concern to you that accepting referral fees is not in alignment with our *Principles of Good Practice*. What is the proper course of action for both IECs?**

The IEC expecting and accepting referral fees is in violation of the *Principles of Good Practice*, which state, “Members accept payment only for work performed. They do not receive commissions or other payments for enrollment in or referrals to programs or vendors; nor do they accept remuneration for referring clients to other IECs or other related professionals, unless such relationships involve ongoing coordination, responsibility and oversight for delivery of services.” (Section V, Relationships With Other Independent Educational Consultants, Item B).

Member B decides it’s necessary to alert the Ethics Committee of this situation. The Ethics Violation Complaint Procedures ([link .iecaonline.com/ethics-complaints](http://iecaonline.com/ethics-complaints)) states, “the Chief Executive

Officer (CEO) or the Chair of the Ethics Committee will try to resolve any complaint informally. If no resolution is reached, the Complainant may submit a complaint **in writing**, including a complete description of the nature of complaint, the name of the independent educational consultant (IEC), as much detail as possible, and copies of any documents, such a contract, where applicable.” Please refer to the procedures document for further information about the process.

The Ethics Committee recognizes the need for a system to track members’ concerns. If you’re like me, your inbox can be your worst enemy. We are creating a Google form for members to share their concerns with us. Look for an announcement and a link in early 2020.

Thank you all for the work you do every day to uplift the profession. 

#### Reference

Velasquez, Manuel, Claire Andre, Thomas Shanks, S. J. Meyer, and Michael J. Meyer. (2010, January 1). *What Is Ethics?* [www.scu.edu/ethics/ethics-resources/ethical-decision-making/what-is-ethics/](http://www.scu.edu/ethics/ethics-resources/ethical-decision-making/what-is-ethics/).

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#### Gap Year, from page M1


majors. Many parents feel that a gap year internship will help their student chose the right major and get started on the path to fulfilling employment. In response, more gap year companies offer internship opportunities around the world.

**It can be crucial for college transition.** When a student does not have the maturity and independent living skills needed for college, he may benefit from a chance to build those life skills in a residential setting. Students can attend college classes, intern, volunteer, and participate in activities with their peers. Some programs are therapeutic in nature and others focus on wellness, internships, or building academic skills. For many students, a college-transition-focused gap semester or gap year can make all the difference for success in college.

**Independent volunteer programs are growing.** There are some bold and adventurous gappers who are ready to go into the world without the benefit of a structured program. They will connect with a nonprofit on their own, arrange a volunteer placement, and secure housing. This type of gap year experience is valued by students who are ready to get outside of their comfort zone. There have been criticisms recently about “voluntourism”—mainly that the activities are not driven by local need, but instead the work placements are set with the goal of driving the most paying volunteers to the program site. For that reason, and the desire for a more authentic experience, gap year students are creating their own customized experiences outside of the confines of established programs. Popular planning tools for this cohort include Omprakash and Giving Way.

**Gap semesters are popular.** Colleges have embraced the idea of the gap year, and some have even found that offering a gap semester can help with their enrollment management. Some colleges, such as Middlebury, Northeastern, Boston University, University of Delaware, and others, offer students the option to start college in January. That leaves the fall open for a gap semester. For many students, a semester is just the right amount of time for their gap experience.

**Scholarships are available.** If your student is lucky enough to be admitted to Duke, Princeton, UNC, or Florida State, she can receive funding from the university for her gap year. There are also gap year scholarships that any student can apply for that are sponsored by Travel Access Project, USA Gap Year Fairs, Hi USA, and several others.

If you want to learn more about the gap year, there are several resources that will keep you up to speed in this dynamic educational space. The Gap Year Association ([www.gapyearassociation.org](http://www.gapyearassociation.org)) has a wealth of information that includes ratings and reviews of programs, plus information on college deferral policies and funding. The USA Gap Year Fair, ([www.usagapyearfairs.org](http://www.usagapyearfairs.org)) hosts events throughout the country each winter and spring that give IECs and students a chance to meet representatives from programs. 

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## The Acceptance Is In: What Happens Next?

By Carol Dougherty, IECA (GA), Affordability Subcommittee Chair

Although the application often seems like the heavy lifting of the college admissions process, independent educational consultants (IECs) know that as decisions start to trickle in, we still can't really step away from the process. The nuances and intricacies are so important that we find ourselves frequently monitoring the practical and emotional sides of admission decisions and financial outcomes.

Despite the groundwork laid before submitting applications, there is very little predictability of the decisions and outcomes. As the landscape of college admissions continues to warp into a dizzying field of probability, statistics, and a dose of enrollment management, it is important to become more conversant in the field of college affordability and financial aid.

### Factor the Student's Cost for Each College

The starting point in any conversation about college affordability concerns the cost of attendance (COA)—the stated cost to attend a college for one year without regard to any projected reductions in the form of grants, scholarships, or the like.  $COA = \text{Direct Costs} + \text{Indirect Costs}$ :

- Direct costs are the costs directly billed by a college, such as tuition, fees, and room and board.
- Indirect costs are the costs incurred as a result of attending college that are not directly billed by a college. Those costs include books, transportation, and other discretionary money that is needed by the student.

Up until this point in the entire college search process, we have focused on the students' hopes and dreams as they weigh schools. But the next part of the conversation involves significant participation by the parents. The work they need to do includes determining the family's Expected Family Contribution (EFC) and each individual college's Net Price Calculator (NPC).

- The EFC provides a family with an estimate of what the government and the college expect them to pay for college. One of the most reliable EFC calculators can be completed on the FAFSA4Caster.
- Each school's NPC provides a family that knows their EFC with an estimate of what a given college expects the family to pay. The most reliable NPCs require the most information. The College Board's NPC is known to be relatively accurate.



In theory, if a family has arrived at both the EFC and the NPC for each college the student applies to, there shouldn't be any surprises when the aid letters start to come in. In practice, it is best to let families know that those tools are not an exact science. The difference between the COA and the financial aid is the actual net price, which is the amount a family is ultimately responsible for paying. The net price includes the EFC, student employment, loans, and an amount known as *gap*, which is the unmet need. Clearly, we do not advocate obtaining large loans to cover the unmet need.



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## Explain the Timeline for Decisions and Financial Aid

Colleges often post the expected date of admissions decision announcements. The trend for many, if not most, colleges is to initially notify a student of the admission decision via a note on the student's portal. Generally, the student will see that decision, but less frequently there is simultaneous notification of merit or need-based financial aid with that initial notification. Shortly after a student learns of their acceptance, they might receive either a packet in the mail or an email notifying them of next steps, including merit aid offered via automatic consideration, which is based strictly on such parameters as grades and scores. Schools that offer competitive scholarships often provide an invitation or a link that the student should use to apply for the competitive scholarships.

The last piece of the financial puzzle is the need-based portion. This is the part that is most mysterious to families. And here is why:

- For families with extremely low EFCs, the government offers an annual Pell Grant. The maximum Pell Grant for the 2019–2020 school year is \$6,195.
- Some colleges offer need-based grants to families that cannot afford the school. In this scenario, there are several considerations:
  - Public colleges only rarely provide out-of-state students with need-based grants. Because those funds are rather limited, the colleges first give them to in-state students to enable them to attend more-affordable institutions. Funds are often limited even for in-state applicants.
  - For less-selective, often lesser-known, private colleges, need-based grants are offered to make those colleges more desirable. But the ability to make up a significant portion of the need a family has demonstrated is strictly dependent on the financial health of the college. Often those colleges don't have the large endowments that more-selective colleges have.
  - A small number of highly selective private colleges offer significant grants to need-based students, and some of them guarantee that a student will graduate debt-free. Of course, many of those colleges are extremely difficult to gain admission to.

## Next Steps

As your families receive notification about the financial component of their students' acceptances, you're likely to see some disappointment. Despite the forewarning about the unpredictability of a gap amount, families will be surprised that they don't get everything they want. So, what are their next steps and yours?

Tell your client families:

- Don't listen to your neighbors. Everyone has a story about a student getting a "full ride," but for the record, full rides are

few and far between. To an IEC, full ride means that a family doesn't pay a penny for college. To your neighbors, full ride might mean anything from free tuition to a simple reduction in the tuition amount. As we all know, there can be a vast difference in those amounts.

- Don't try playing offers from two out-of-state public schools against each other. Public schools don't have the discretionary endowments to adjust aid awards. You're likely to be met with very little enthusiasm from a state school.
- Don't be surprised that many schools suggest you close the gap with student loans and parent plus loans.


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*Despite the forewarning about the unpredictability of a gap amount, families will be surprised that they don't get everything they want.*

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On the other hand, as an IEC, you must be ready to take the following steps—even if the information is repeated.

- Help families understand what is "free" money vs money that must be repaid.
- Remind families that if the student must borrow funds, the government intentionally limits the borrowing for undergraduate loans.
- Provide the family with a reasonable repayment plan for loans so that they can see the long-term financial impact of borrowing.
- Help families understand the importance of weighing the undergraduate COA with the student's long-term academic plan if there is a likelihood that graduate school is in their student's future.
- Help families determine whether a monthly payment plan might benefit them if they can pay out of current funds.
- Guide them to and through the appeal process with a college if they want to ask the college for more money.

Although accepting an offer of admission can be as simple as our students clicking "yes" onscreen, there are still a lot of considerations that parents and students should understand before May 1. Financial implications of the college choice must be foremost in everyone's minds. 





# What's Your Solution?

## Seasonal Affliction: Essay Fatigue

In response to a post on the Member Network from **Jeff Levy** (CA) seeking to compile a list of words he hopes not to see again until next year's essay drafts, many IECs shared their thoughts on essay fatigue.

Among the many responses, the following words and phrases came up more than once:

- Passion, plethora (a plethora of passions), impact, changemaker, awesome, very, unique (very unique), myriad, amazing, truly (truly amazing), furthermore, cherish, adore, literally, partake, everyday (when they mean every day, not routine or ordinary), highschool, apart of ( instead of a part of), excited, opportunity (everybody is *excited* about every *opportunity*), thing (as in best thing, most interesting thing, amazing thing)
- my educational journey, my personal growth, in my high school career, the best version of myself, as long as I can remember, ever since I was a child.

Other responses were more than mere words:

- When kids repeat the question in the answer, especially when there is a huge constraint on words. *Question*: "If you could create a food truck, what would it be and what would you name it?" *Answer*: If I could create a food truck, it would be falafel and I would name it "The Falafel Wagon."
- Too many students think that a comma is a substitute for a period. I wish they would learn how to use a semicolon.
- Anything akin to "My heart was bursting with joy seeing the difference I had made in their lives." "Seeing the smiles on their faces was the most satisfying thing I had ever experienced."
- I've had students writing about "gaining the skills to save the world."
- How could I have forgotten "expose myself"?
- On my list are the useless adjectives—e.g., great, wonderful, and terrific—and such phrases as "in my opinion" and "I was given the opportunity" and pretty much all passive constructions.
- What I call "comings and goings." I don't need to know that you traveled to Italy. I assume that if you are talking about what you did in Italy, you had to travel to get there. Just tell me what you did.
- My pet peeve this year and every year is passive verbs, such as "was thinking," and starting a sentence with "Being that I...."

- I hate when students use the present tense with "would" instead of using the past tense to describe what they have done: I would create, I would participate....
- Using "that" to refer to people instead of "who"—There are lots of people that believe....



Others shared some advice:

- Good writing is always in the rewriting. Put at least one day between you and your second or third drafts. The distance will give you the chance to see what to keep and what to cut.
- Never do a final copyedit on a screen. (You will miss mistakes.) Print out your work on paper, note the errors/typos with your pen, and make the fixes on your computer.
- Read your work out loud, slowly. Do not rush or mumble through. Do it like a performance, alone in your room in front of your mirror. Remember, your ear hears what your eye does not pick up. You may not catch every mistake, but you will catch a significant number of mistakes. You will certainly understand the many errors that Spell Check does not see—like "form" and "from."

**Note:** The full list of responses is available on the Member Network in the College Community.