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IECA<sup>+</sup>

# INSIGHTS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE INDEPENDENT EDUCATIONAL CONSULTANTS ASSOCIATION

February/March 2019

## Calendar

### February 12

Webinar: Financial Aid at US Boarding Schools

### March 12

Webinar: How Do Test-Optional Admission Opportunities Affect Students, Colleges, and Affordability?

### March 19–21

SBSA, Gow School, NY

### March 23–26

TACAC, Dallas

### April 6–9

SACAC Annual Conference, Atlanta

### April 10

Webinar: College Planning for Students With Disabilities and Autism Spectrum Disorder

### May 3

Evoting opens for Nominating Committee

### May 6–8, 10

Campus Tours

### May 8–10

IECA Spring Conference, Chicago

### May 10

IECA Board of Directors Meets

### May 14

Webinar: Why Students Must Minimize Their Digital Footprint to Maximize Success for the College Application Process

### May 20–22

Super Conference: WACAC, PNACAC, RMACAC, Phoenix

## Chicago: It's Our Kind of Town

Among US cities, Chicago stands out—a dynamic city surviving against harsh realities of climate, economics, and history, its reputation preserved forever by Carl Sandburg's blustery and unapologetic 1914 ode "Chicago": "Come and show me another city with lifted head singing so/ proud to be alive and coarse and strong and cunning."



The conference promises to be as robust as the city itself with a stellar line up of pre- and post-conference tours, six pre-cons, engaging featured speakers, IECA's annual meeting on Friday morning, and more. The College Showcase and School Connections events offer perfect opportunities to talk one-to-one with representatives from a wealth of institutions. Of course, in between the noted

highlights are more breakout sessions than ever; dedicated discussions for IECs, the therapeutic community, and schools; and golden opportunities to interact with colleagues, including a networking event that will evoke the atmosphere of a 1920s speakeasy, minus the gangsters!

### Special Address

**Arne Duncan**, former US Secretary of Education, will speak on Friday to talk about the lessons he has learned in his long career, first in Chicago and then as a national leader in education. His insights into successes and failures in the fight to provide every child with a world class education may offer some inspiration for moving forward to meet



today's socioeconomic challenges, break the cycles of poverty, and create citizens who will engage in our democracy. Many may not know that early in his career, Duncan ran a nonprofit education association that helped fund college for a class of inner-city students.

Known now more for its lakefront, dizzyingly high John Hancock building observation deck, world-class art, and tempting food, it's a worthy destination in and of itself, but it is even more appealing now that IECA is holding its Spring Conference there May 8–10.

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# President's Letter

## The State of the Association



Barbara Pasalis

As we begin a new year, I feel it is my responsibility to provide the membership with a report on the state of our Association. To fulfill our fiduciary obligations to the membership, the IECA Board of Trustees established an Ad Hoc Audit Committee to formalize our ongoing audit practices in 2018 with **Betsy Morgan** (CT) as chair. Thereafter, an audit of the Association's books and records was conducted during the fourth quarter of 2018 for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2018.

I am happy to report that no material irregularities or discrepancies were found by the auditors. The IECA staff is currently in the process of ensuring that we comply

with the "best practice" recommendations of the auditors. In addition, the board will be asking the membership to add the Audit Committee as a standing committee of the board at the annual membership meeting in Chicago.

An evaluation of the current state of our Association reveals that:

- Our membership has grown to almost 2,000 members, while maintaining the highest ethical standards
- We have a diverse menu of educational programs to serve our members across all specialties, and we continue to improve and expand those programs
- Dedicated volunteers step forward each

spring to lead and join committees, adding new ideas and inspiration to our programs

- We continue to seek out and develop partnerships to benefit our members and our clients.

The growth of any association, however, necessitates change, so to position IECA for success in the future:

- A committee chaired by **Charlotte Klaar** (SC) developed a 5-year strategic plan in fall 2015 and *The IECA Strategic Plan 2015–2020* was shared with members at the 2016 Spring Conference and annual meeting
- That plan was integrated with additional perspectives from the Board of Trustees to

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

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## In Focus

### Graduate Degrees and Certificates Awarded 2016–17

Broad Field	Doctoral Degrees		Master's Degrees		Certificates	
Total	79,738	100.0%	597,304	100.0%	39,049	100.0%
Arts and Humanities	5,528	7.6%	25,488	4.9%	973	2.8%
Biological and Agricultural Sciences	8,590	11.8%	18,674	3.6%	923	2.6%
Business	2,324	3.2%	109,099	20.8	5,060	14.4%
Education	9,453	12.9%	98,318	18.8%	11,873	33.7%
Engineering	9,656	13.2%	50,359	9.6%	1,532	4.4%
Health Sciences	14,969	20.5%	64,478	12.3%	4,881	13.9%
Mathematics and Computer Sciences	3,353	4.6%	41,027	7.8%	1,757	5.0%
Physical and Earth Sciences	5,852	8.0%	8,043	1.5%	450	1.3%
Public Administration and Services	1,310	1.8%	31,930	6.1%	1,008	2.9%
Social and Behavioral Sciences	9,408	12.9%	35,900	6.9%	2,730	7.8%
Other Fields	2,582	3.5%	40,650	7.8%	4,003	11.4

Source: CGS/GRE Survey of Graduate Enrollment and Degrees. Notes: Because not all institutions responded to all items, details may not sum to totals. Percentages are based on total of known broad fields.



# STI Provides Missing Piece: Camaraderie

By Mandy Stangeland, MS, IECA (CA)

Like most of the newer independent educational consultants (IECs) I have met, I jumped into starting my practice without any business experience. I had the knowledge coming from the college side of the admissions desk, but running a business was like speaking a foreign language to me. I took some certificate classes from UC Irvine, which was helpful, but I was still missing something, and I couldn't quite put my finger on it.


Then I signed up for the IECA Summer Training Institute (STI) in 2018. I had read about it and it seemed like the logical next step for someone like me who had a year of experience under my belt but no real traction in my business. I quickly discovered the value in the program and realized what it was I had been missing: camaraderie.

The first thing I noticed was how I felt being on a college campus surrounded by like-minded individuals with similar goals. I thought "Wow, this is how our students must feel on their first day of college." The IECA staff was there to greet us and was two steps ahead of anything we could possibly need (including the aspirin I required one morning for the unexpected and very unwelcomed migraine).

Our cohort was quick to bond over our experiences and our insecurities, which made everyone feel very comfortable. We were able to easily relax and soak in the abundant amount of information that was not thrown at us but spoon-fed carefully to make sure we relished every bite. There were lectures, break

out sessions, special topics, and even special guests flown in from all over the world to help us achieve what so many in this industry have already mastered. I was blown away by the faculty's willingness to share what had and had not worked for them. They even supplied us with examples of contracts, price sheets, and breakdowns of how they work with clients. What I thought would be impossible to acquire from my competition was delivered to me in a two-inch thick binder that has been worth its weight in gold.

The message was clear: there is plenty of business to go around and we want you to succeed. Our success as business owners is reliant on our success as an industry. When we support each other, we all win, especially the students.

Knowing that IECA and my fellow members have my back gives me the confidence I need to go forward. The people from my STI cohort are more than colleagues, they are friends. We share our best tips with each other, consult with each other based on our niche or expertise, and room together at conferences (often saving a bundle on travel expenses). When there is an IEC event, we often seek each other out via a group text or through our private group Facebook page so we can claim a table and settle in quickly. We have even adopted some honorary members because the goal is to never be exclusive. It's the inclusive culture of IECA that brings so much value to this industry. And for me, that's how I know I have chosen the right fit profession. 



Mandy Stangeland, Wise Owl College Consulting LLC, can be reached at [mandy@wiseowlcollegeconsulting.com](mailto:mandy@wiseowlcollegeconsulting.com).

## 2019 Summer Training Institutes

July 9–July 13  
Claremont McKenna College, Claremont, CA

July 30–August 3  
Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, PA

Visit <https://link.IECAOnline.com/sti> for more information.




## ACE Talks

What was an innovation only two years ago when ACE Talks were introduced is now a staple for the opening general session, and the speakers just keep delivering. Taking the stage on Wednesday are **Michelle Borba**, educational psychologist, who will share her latest insights into empathy and building social capital; **Robert Zimmer**, president, University of Chicago, who will address the inevitable change that occurs on college campuses and the need to ensure that it is productive, not counterproductive, to an institution's mission; and **Patrick Schwartz**, CEO, Creative Culture Consulting, who will discuss his seven tenets of supporting diversity with examples from his practice.

## Master Class

**Dr. Donalee Markus**, who specializes in the clinical application of neuroscience and has designed NASA training programs and educational products for iPhone and iPad, will ensure that the end of the conference is as strong as the opening. Using her interactive program Designs for Strong Minds, which challenges the brain with context free graphic puzzles, she will help participants discover their habitual thinking patterns and how they influence their interactions.

True to form, The Spring Conference will feature content that is diverse and varied to meet the needs of attendees in all specialties and of all experience levels. For more information on the conference, including the full list of breakout sessions, and to register, go to <https://link.iecaonline.com/Conference-Info>. 

create *The Integration of Board Strategic Objectives and the IECA Strategic Plan 2015–2020*

- The firm of Bernuth & Williamson was hired to conduct an assessment of our members and the organization.

The results of that assessment produced recommendations for increasing the efficiency of our operations and for accomplishing the goals and objectives identified in the integrated strategic plan, which fall into six key areas:

- Branding
- Membership
- Education & Training
- Organizational Development & Governance
- Technology
- Partnerships.

The members of the Board, in conjunction with our CEO, are now assessing and evaluating our progress toward those goals and objectives. We are eager to complete the course charted for us in 2015 to best position our Association for success in the future. The board welcomes your input and suggestions. Please feel free to share your thoughts with me at any time.



Barbara Pasalis  
IECA President



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# Securing Testing Accommodations for Graduate School Exams

By Jed Applerouth, President, Applerouth Tutoring

Many students who utilized testing accommodations for the SAT and ACT will require similar accommodations on graduate school tests, such as the GRE, GMAT, LSAT, MCAT, and others. The process for securing testing accommodations for graduate-level tests is similar to that for the SAT and ACT, but the primary responsibility for requesting them shifts from school-based disability coordinators to the students themselves.

Historically, it has been more challenging to receive accommodations on graduate tests than it has been to receive similar accommodations on the SAT and ACT. But forces are in play to increase the rates of accommodations on graduate-level tests for students with disabilities.

The College Board and ACT Inc. have respectively reported granting accommodations to 85% and 90% of those students submitting requests, accounting for roughly 3% and 5% of all test takers. Compare that to the graduate exams:

- Accommodations data for the MCAT are not published, but one recent study of medical school

applicants by the American Medical Association found that a mere .3% of medical school applicants in the 2011–2013 entering classes received extended time on the MCAT.

- In 2012–2013 there were 1,581 requests for LSAT accommodations and only 729 approved (a 46% acceptance rate, with those receiving accommodations comprising less than 2% of LSAT takers that year).
- In 2010, the Graduate Management Admission Council (GMAC), which administers the GMAT exam, reported that it received 1,700 requests for testing accommodations in a year that 260,000 tests were administered. In other words, fewer than 1% of GMAT takers in 2010 even requested accommodations. And 90% of those requests were for extended time.

Clearly, far fewer students are even applying for accommodations on graduate level tests, which aligns with research showing that use of academic accommodations declines as students progress



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through the academic pipeline from secondary to postsecondary education and beyond. According to the National Center for Learning Disabilities, 94% of high school students with a learning disability have some form of accommodation, but that number falls to a paltry 17% in college.

With those trends in mind, independent educational consultants (IECs) can expect that many students who could benefit from accommodations on graduate admissions tests may not even apply for them. That's where IECs can step in and encourage students with disabilities to advocate for themselves and receive the accommodations they need—accommodations that are supported by federal law.

## Equal Access

All testing agencies are beholden to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), under which individuals with a diagnosed disability are entitled to receive necessary and appropriate accommodations. Pursuant to the ADA, the Department of Justice (DOJ) established new guidelines for testing entities in 2010, demanding a more streamlined accommodations process, limiting the burden of disability documentation, and emphasizing that testing entities should use previous accommodations on admissions tests as a guide for decisions about future accommodations.

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Demonstrating its commitment to the ADA, the DOJ supported a 2013 lawsuit against the Law School Admissions Council Inc. (LSAC) for discriminatory practices. The LSAC lost an \$8.7 million judgment and was obligated to overhaul its accommodations process. Through its conspicuous involvement, the DOJ sent a clear signal to all testing entities that it would vigorously enforce the ADA.

## LSAT Accommodations Overhaul

In response to the legal judgement, the LSAC entered into a binding agreement to comply with the ADA and transform its accommodation policies. If a student has received a typical testing accommodation on a prior postsecondary admissions test (e.g., SAT or GRE) for a functional limitation that continues to impact the student, LSAC will offer that student identical or equivalent accommodations (except for multiday accommodations) and require only "proof of the approval for such testing accommodations."

Even if they have never received prior admissions testing accommodations, students who present evidence of a disability and a functional limitation supported by a diagnosis from a

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qualified and credentialed professional will be eligible for LSAT accommodations if the professional examinations are recent enough. LSAC will give considerable weight to documentation of past testing accommodations and accommodations granted on IEPs or 504 plans but will not reject an application solely because the candidate has no formal accommodations history.

Following the lawsuit and LSAC's policy changes, the number of applications for LSAT accommodations submitted and granted have soared. Comparing the 2016–2017 cycle to the previously-mentioned numbers for 2012–2013 tells a compelling story. In 2016–2017, 3,789 students applied for accommodations and 3,000 (79%) of those requests were granted. Although the total number of tests administered remained roughly stable, the number of accommodations applications increased by 140% and the number of accommodations granted increased by 311%. That is progress and good news for students with disabilities.

## Types of Accommodations Offered


Students may apply to receive several dozen potential accommodations, including a quiet room; a larger font; a screen reader; use of spell check; additional or longer breaks; voice recognition software; and the ability to bring snacks, check blood sugar, take medication, and more. Requests for extended time account for more than 75% of all accommodations granted and tends to be the catch-all accommodation, particularly for students with cognitive disabilities. Students regularly receive 50% extended time, and some students may receive additional time for more severe disabilities. The accommodation requested must be aligned with a student's diagnosed disability, and the requirements for documentation (ranging from a medical evaluation to cognitive assessments) will vary according to the disability. The testing entities post their documentation requirements on their respective websites.

## Comparing Application Processes

All the major testing entities have moved their primary review processes online, like the College Board and ACT Inc. Some students can handle parts of the process by phone or mail, but online portals are now central to the process for all the testing entities. Typically, students create a user ID, submit their application, and upload or send all their required paperwork to begin the review process. Students will typically be asked to include a history of their past accommodations and supporting documentation particular to their requested accommodation and diagnosed disability.



**LSAT.** Students must first register for an LSAT exam before they can apply for testing accommodations. Students must submit their request and all documentation in advance of a stated registration deadline for each test. Typically, the LSAC will respond to each request for testing accommodations within 14 business days of its receipt.

**GRE.** Students must have their accommodations approved by ETS Disability Services before they can schedule a test date. Documentation review takes approximately six weeks once all paperwork has been submitted and an additional six weeks may be required if supporting supplemental documentation is required. For



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that reason, it's best to submit the application well before the testing cycle begins. Students who are approved for accommodations will be emailed instructions on how to register for the GRE. Once a student is approved for GRE accommodations, they can use the online PowerPrep tool to simulate GRE tests with extra time, breaks, screen magnification, colors, a screen reader, and more.

**MCAT.** Students must submit a request for a testing registration and accommodations through the MCAT online portal, where they will identify their disability, their history with the disability, and previous accommodations received. A student must also complete a personal statement about his or her functional limitation, history of accommodation, and what accommodations would "level the playing field" on the MCAT.

The MCAT portal specifies what types of evaluations are required according to the nature of the student's impairment. The evaluation must be current, which means no older than three years for cognitive impairments. Most requests for accommodations will be reviewed within 60 days of submission, but reconsideration, appeals, or extensions may take an additional 30 days. The student will be notified of the outcome of the review along with the period of eligibility for any accommodation granted. Students must submit requests by specific deadlines to be eligible to receive accommodations on particular test dates.

**GMAT.** Students must receive approval for an accommodation before they can register for a GMAT exam with accommodations. Students must complete the application and send it with all supporting materials by fax or mail to GMAT Disability Services.


## Learn More About Accommodations at IECA's Website

IECA's *SAT and ACT Accommodations* brochure is available to members online ([www.IECAOnline.com/marketing](http://www.IECAOnline.com/marketing)) and in print, one of many brochures available to IECA members to aid in their work. Learn more about:

- How disability is defined in the law
- How accommodations are determined
- How accommodations affect scores
- Diagnostic testing and documentation
- When to ask for accommodations
- Appealing a decision.

They will receive confirmation letters upon receipt. GMAC will attempt to complete the review process within 25 business days and send a written decision within 30 days. The decision may take six to eight weeks total. Once the request is approved, a student will be able to schedule accommodated testing for the GMAT.

## In Closing

Encourage your students to seek accommodations early for their graduate school admissions tests. If they have already received prior testing accommodations, it will be a familiar process. And their odds of securing testing accommodations have increased substantially in recent years. 



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*Vista Life Innovations would like to thank the Board of Trustees of the IECA Foundation for supporting our organization by selecting us as one of the 2018 grant recipients. This demonstrated generosity will greatly impact our 2019 summer program, Exploring Independence. Thank you!*



## *Spring Open House*

Saturday, April 6, 2019 • 1:00 pm

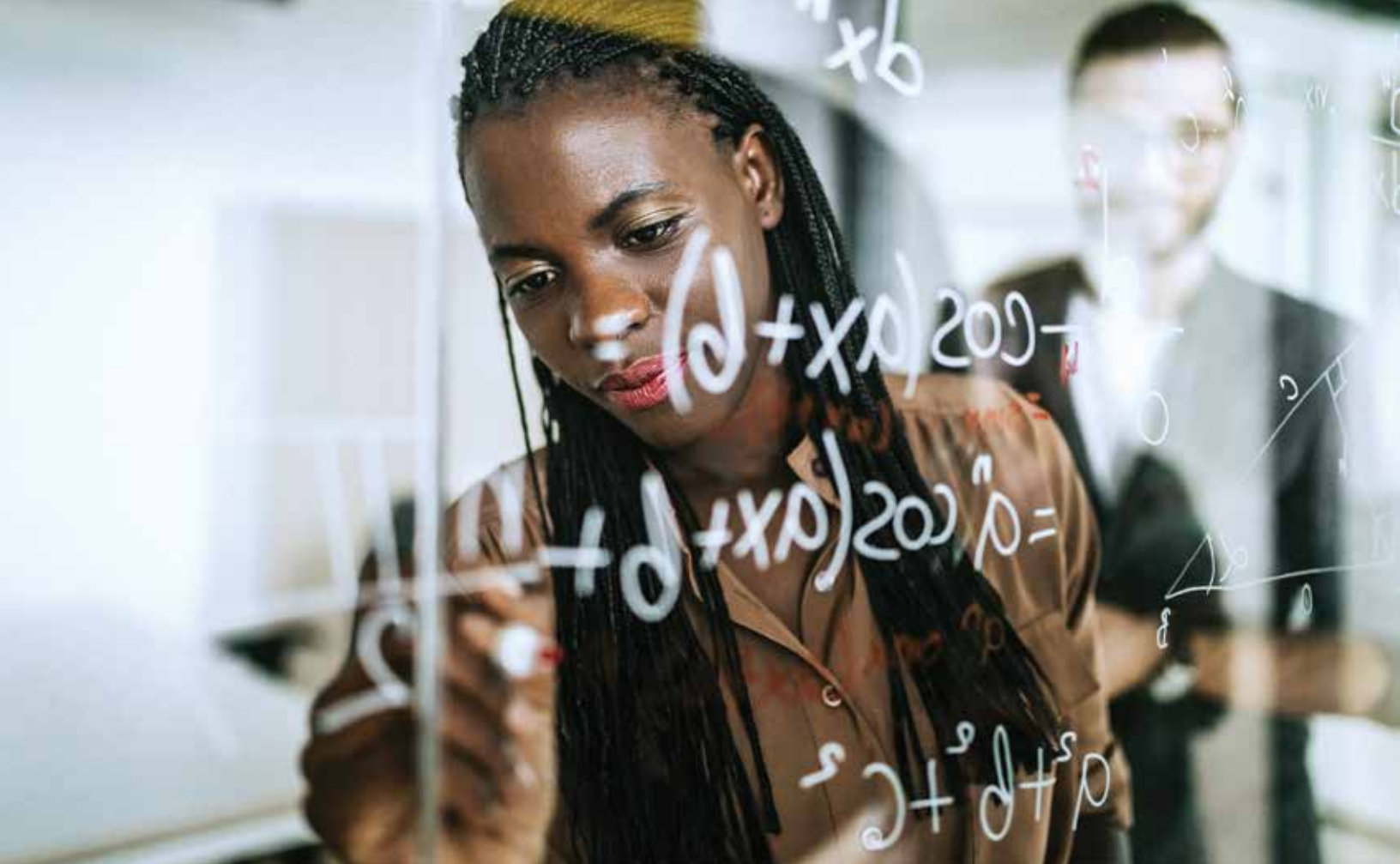
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or contact Erica Campbell at 860.399.8080 ext.132**





# Exploring Graduate School: PhD or Master's?

By Anjanita Mahadoo, MA, MSED, IECA Associate (MA)

When choosing the right educational path to follow after earning an undergraduate degree, 75% of current undergraduates plan to continue on to a master's or doctorate degree compared to 50% of their counterparts in the 1970s, according to a survey of college freshman (Nelson 2015a). In fact, "master's degrees are as common now as bachelor's degrees were in the 1960s" (Nelson, 2015b).

In most countries, students are expected to earn a master's degree before undertaking a doctoral degree, but in the United States, a master's degree is not required to pursue a PhD. Students are not obligated to undertake a master's degree in the same field as their undergraduate degree. The same is true for a PhD, although it might be more challenging to undertake advanced research in a new field. A master's degree provides college graduates as well as career changers an easier and faster way to switch fields of studies and professions.

Although a doctorate degree might be more prestigious and may offer candidates a higher level of authority in their fields of research, the master's degree remains the fastest-growing college credential in the United States.

## Cost

As the number of people holding a master's degree increases, so do the associated educational debts, because most master's degrees are not funded by the institution nor is federal financial aid granted to master's students. Most PhD candidates, on the other hand, receive full tuition reimbursement along with a living allowance in return for a teaching assistantship or research assistantship through the program to which they are affiliated. Yet a doctorate degree might not necessarily carry a return on investment that is as high as the master's degree because it takes an average of six years to obtain a PhD, a substantial

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opportunity cost. In comparison, a master's degree can be obtained in as little as one to two years, so a person could enter the workforce much sooner than the PhD candidate and start earning a salary that is much higher than the PhD stipend. Plus, the salary of a PhD is not always proportional to the time investment and effort.

## Passion

Aside from cost considerations, a PhD typically appeals to students who are particularly passionate about a subject in which they are prepared to immerse themselves through research that culminates in a dissertation to advance the field in an original manner. In addition, liberal arts and humanities students might find PhD programs more apt than a master's degree to improve their employment prospects. But computer science, mathematics, and information systems students might not find it as useful to pursue a PhD, especially if they have no special research interests and would rather join the industry and hone their skills on the job with a bachelor's degree or a master's.

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*Aside from cost considerations, a PhD typically appeals to students who are particularly passionate about a subject in which they are prepared to immerse themselves through research....*

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In the technological fields, for example, a higher degree is generally not required, except to join a higher salary point or engage in original research in the field. According to the Education Department statistics ([https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d17/tables/dt17\\_323.10.asp](https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d17/tables/dt17_323.10.asp)), since the 1970s, the most popular master's degrees have been awarded in the fields of education and business. Irrespective of the profession, master's degree holders generally earn a higher salary rate than their college graduate counterparts (Schram 2014).

## Preparation

Regardless of their areas of interest, students need to evaluate both options carefully to determine their right fit. A student who is genuinely interested in moving on to graduate school after earning an undergraduate degree needs to start planning while in college by gaining a deep understanding of what each option will entail.



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Joining a PhD program calls for exceptional graduate school readiness: demonstrating focus and temperance and building mental strength that will see the candidates through the lengthy, often lonely journey that requires six to seven years of researching a hypothetical idea. The prospective candidates should understand that research entails investigating an abstract idea that can be proven wrong; therefore, they need to be ready to fail. But they also must be prepared to persevere and continue believing in their idea despite the hurdles that they face along the way.

Although research can be a solitary endeavor, it can rarely be done in isolation. Students also need to be able to build relationships with mentors while in college and learn to appreciate collaboration with other students within their own and allied fields. Joining a PhD program involves a deep commitment that is not easy to maintain unless it is accompanied by relentless dedication and intrinsic satisfaction due to the person's innate passion and deep interest for the field. More importantly, it is essential to choose a right-fit program.

## Evaluate Options

Before joining a PhD program, candidates should fully understand what research entails, whether they are cut out for research, and whether they are ready for the intensity of the PhD coursework, which can be more rigorous than a master's program. If they cannot keep up with the intensity of the PhD program, they can be asked to leave the program without any terminal degree; not all PhD programs would award a master's degree en route to a PhD.

*continued on page 14*

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I am Brilee

I am a lover of all things photography and film. Living through my parents divorce and learning how to learn with my ADHD has been a challenge. I would often listen to music and envision different ways to bring these songs to life through photography and film.

At Wasatch Academy I have mentors eager to guide me in my passion. I have many friends who make the hard things in life seem not so bad. While I don't know what I want to do with my life yet, Wasatch Academy is helping me figure it out. I am excited to be successful while making my mark on the world.

When a student is unsure, it might be better for him or her to consider starting with a master's program before moving on to a doctorate program to familiarize themselves with what awaits them as a PhD scholar. Similarly, a master's degree, especially a research-based program, can be used as a stepping stone by PhD students who need to reinforce their foundational research groundwork before undertaking a PhD, especially in a new field. A predoctoral master's degree will strengthen the student's PhD application and has the potential of reducing the number of years the student will spend in the doctoral program.

There is no right or wrong path to graduate school, but students need to evaluate all their options carefully to determine their right fit: master's or PhD? 

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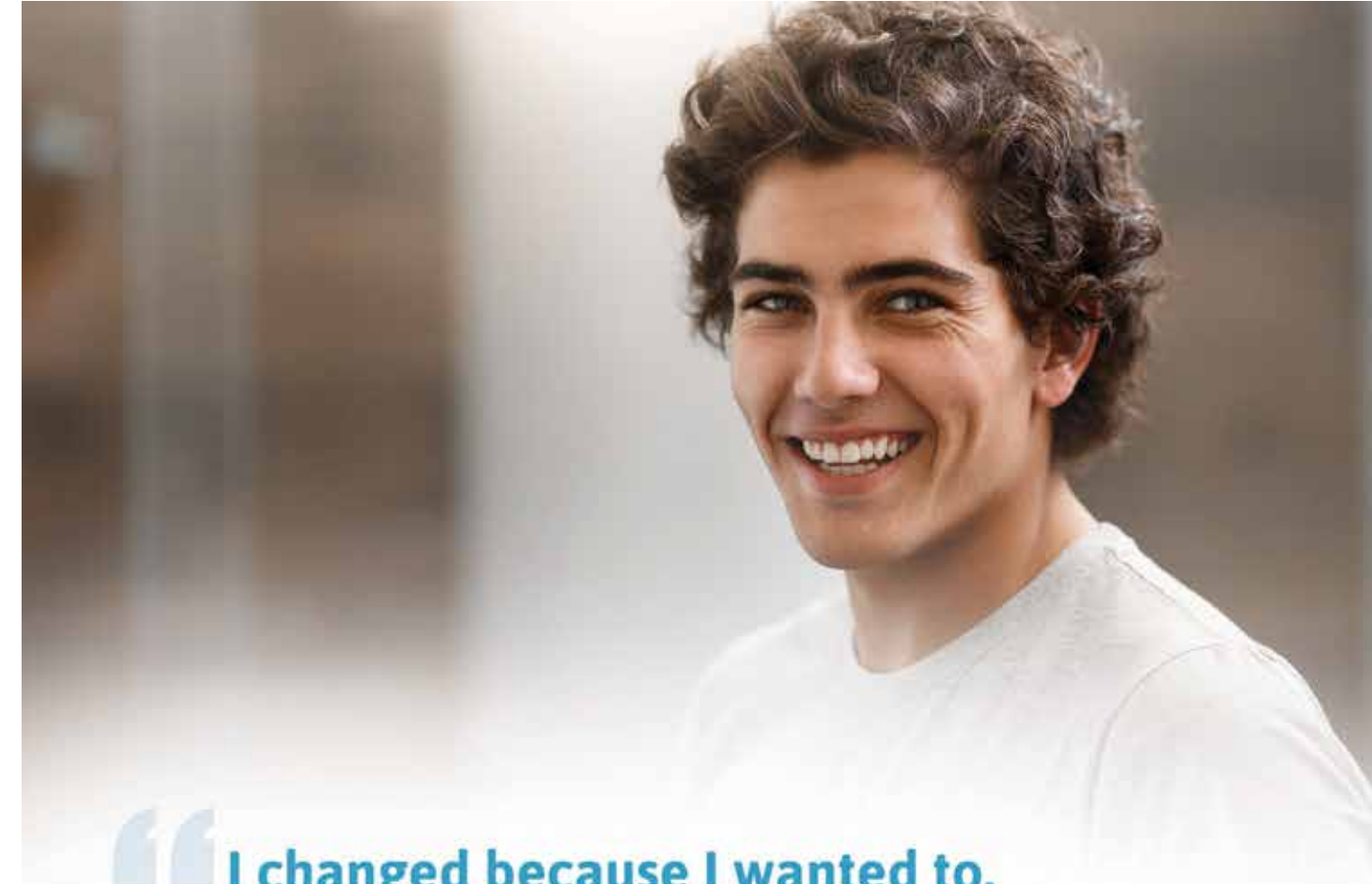
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# AP Overkill?

By Patricia O’Keefe, MBA, IECA (Shanghai)

Recently, admissions representatives from Pomona (a liberal arts college) and the University of Southern California (USC) joined Collegewise at the 2018 IECA Fall Conference to discuss how many AP classes are enough to get into a highly selective university or liberal arts college. Is it 5? Maybe 10? How about 20? As representatives from *U.S. News & World Report’s* Top 25, (ranked 5 and 21 respectively) with acceptance rates as low as 8.1%, surely, they would know the answer.

The audience leaned in with anticipation. The statistics flashed on the screen: between 2015–2018, more than 54,000 students had taken as many as 10 AP exams, 1,793 students had taken 15, and 6 brave students had taken as many as 24. The audience of IECs gasped. When did those students sleep?

Assistant Dean of USC admissions, Becky Chassin, sighed as she illustrated to the audience that students do not need to take 24 AP exams. Neither AP classes nor SAT courses are valid extra activities. “Yes, we want to see AP classes, but

we also want to see students develop interests and talents outside of the classroom,” she said.” Why? USC doesn’t want every single student in the library 24/7. They have a marching band that needs tuba players. They have an orchestra that needs French horn musicians, and they have foreign language teachers who want students interested in Hebrew or Farsi. They need students who are gifted in animation and digital arts and curious about American pop culture. In essence, USC, just like any other college, needs a student body with a broad range of individual talents, and who have great passion for talents beyond a test.”

## AP: What’s the Magic Number?

As independent educational consultants (IECs) who work with ambitious students, you likely have students who will think: Yes, that’s fine, but what is the magic number of AP classes? How many and which AP classes should I be taking to get into Harvard, Princeton, or Yale?” The answer is contextual. As admission officers love to say,

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it depends. It depends on the student's high school. If a school offers 20 AP courses but students are only allowed to take a maximum of 2 AP classes sophomore year and 8 AP classes in total junior and senior year, then admission officers will only expect a student to enroll in 10 AP courses. They don't expect any more. If a student takes less, that's fine too. But they will give a second look to the students who took the most challenging level of classes and excelled with an unweighted GPA of 3.95/4.0.

For example, if a student is a highly ranked competitive sailor who races in regattas across the nation, has taken 8 AP courses, has a 1500+ on the SAT, and an unweighted GPA of 3.95–4.0, highly selective colleges will understand that the applicant is capable of their level of academics and collegiate pressure. But that student will look like 80% of their applicant pool—obviously capable of handling the collegiate workload. What makes her stand out? In this case, her unique sailing capability. For example, in *SailingWorld.com*, Yale University coach, Zach Leonard said: "Title IX is a really big deal for sailing. Most of our programs owe their existence to Title IX. If you need a bigger all-up crew weight and don't have at least one woman in every boat, you're going to have Title IX problems." Guess what Yale needs? Competitive women sailors.

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*So, what is the magic number of AP classes? Spoiler alert...there is no magic number.... The message to students is find your passion, find your goals in life, then find the right college to serve your needs.*

---

So, what is the magic number of AP classes? Spoiler alert: Arun Ponnusamy, chief academic officer, Collegewise, pointed out that there is no magic number. Rather, we should ask whether both sailing (or any other passionately pursued activity) and studying are equally enduring passions and which colleges are the right fit. The message to students is find your passion, find your goals in life, then find the right college to serve your needs.

"If a student asks whether he can take AP Environmental Science instead of AP Calc BC," said Ponnusamy, "often he is really saying that AP Calc BC is too hard, and he'd like to take an easier class." In that case, maybe MIT isn't the right fit. But if a student took all the math classes her school had to offer, earned a breezy 4.0, and loved math classes so much she continued to take higher advanced math outside of school, then MIT would see a math buff capable of the work load.

Remember, life in college is not going to get easier, it's going to get harder. If a student can't handle a rigorous course load in



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high school, then he or she shouldn't be looking at the top 25 per *USNWR*. So, encourage students aiming for highly selective schools to test themselves—push themselves—and take the hardest level of classes they can. Tell them to take their SAT or ACT classes very seriously. They should strive for 1500+ and a 3.95/4.0 unweighted GPA, and if they succeed, great! But that will only get their application past first base. Finding and excelling at a talent will help their applications get a second look if the college to which they are applying needs a student with that talent.

## Letters of Recommendation

Both the Pomona College and USC admissions officers mentioned the importance of letters of recommendation. They said that they look for applicants to be great team players and can't emphasize enough how important it is to be generous to classmates. For example, if a high school counselor writes: "Tim prefers to work on his own," it's code for "Tim isn't a team player." That is a death-knell. Students who are incredibly intelligent help those who aren't.

Let's take Sasha who got into Columbia for example. She had a 4.0 and strong SAT scores, but so did thousands of other students. What set her apart according to the Columbia admission rep? Her high school counselor wrote that even though the student was very popular, she took the time to befriend a new student from the Middle East who was a bit of an outcast. That small act of kindness to one scared student in a sea of

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classmates who looked at the foreign student with disinterest tipped the scales for the Columbia admissions team. The message is loud and clear. Even if you have a 4.0 and 1600, if you are not a team player with fantastic supporting letters of recommendation, you're out.

## More Than Academics


In summary, IECs should help students targeting Ivies and the sort understand that they should get out of their comfort zones, respect others, be open and welcoming to diversity, and help the underdog. Get all As. Take SAT classes seriously. Take as many AP classes as your school allows and excel or demonstrate a unique talent. Help them understand that they do not need to give up a unique talent for the sake of taking an extra AP class online because the difference between eight and nine AP classes is not great. But to a sailing coach who needs sailors, if you raced and placed in national regattas for the last four years; you're talented; and you're a kind-hearted, giving student with 4.0 academics, then that combination might make all the difference in the world. 🦋

**Author's note:** For more information on educating students about the importance of concern for others and the common good, check out Harvard's Making Caring Common at: <https://mcc.gse.harvard.edu>. A personal thank you to Arun Ponnusamy for presenting a very important message to all.

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# From Dusk to Dawn: A Wilderness Experience

By Lisa Vella, PhD, IECA (NY)

Stepping far outside their comfort zone, **Gail Curran** (AZ), **Ruby Laufer** (NJ), **Karen Mabie** (IL), and **Cynthia Cohen** (CO) ventured into the unknown for four days in the desert of Arizona in September 2018. The four brave independent educational consultants (IECs) were led by Shayne Gallagher, founder and executive director of Wingate Wilderness Therapy, whose deep passion for the outdoors and gift for compassion and healing supported them throughout their adventure. Gallagher's son, Yanni, and Wingate's admission director, Chris Black, were also part of the journey and became an integral part of the team.

The days leading up to their journey were filled with mixed emotions because the IECs did not know what to expect. While some were excited for the adventure, others experienced apprehension and anxiety, but all were comforted and inspired

by the wilderness team. "Not telling them too much in advance was the goal to add mystery and discomfort," Gallagher explained. The intentional secret agenda would lead them to hand themselves over, let go, and trust the process.

As they prepared for their journey, a strict list of what to bring created overwhelming feelings of stress and vulnerability. The list was extremely limited, and even a toothbrush was one of the simple luxuries excluded because, as they learned, certain sticks with branches have mint and work well to floss and brush. Although the IECs applied the art of persuasion in an attempt to modify that list, Gallagher did not budge. One of the goals was to make life easier and not having luxuries was part of the plan. Rumor has it, however, that some did attempt to secretly smuggle some extra items (dental floss), which was referred to as "contraband."

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Lisa Vella, Vella Consulting Inc, can be reached at [lisa@alternativesuccess.com](mailto:lisa@alternativesuccess.com).

They gathered to begin their journey in the light of day and drove for hours into the desert as dusk was rapidly falling. They hiked in the dark to get to the field—the discomfort and challenges of the darkness was the beginning of letting go and trusting the process. They were forced to adapt to their new environment and slowly surrender their fears, trusting their guide’s ability to predict and sense their anxiety and lead them safely to their destination. Although they arrived tired, hungry, and full of emotions, they prepared their sleeping area and worked together to build a fire. The soothing effects of the fire provided calm and peace as they ended the first day of their journey. “The fire takes care of the nerves and makes people say, I can do this,” Gallagher said.



*They were forced to adapt to their new environment and slowly surrender their fears.... Although they arrived tired, hungry, and full of emotions, they prepared their sleeping area and worked together to build a fire.*

As the sun rose the next day and began warming them, they gathered for breakfast, which they made themselves, and prepared for their hike to a new campsite. The IECs courageously collaborated throughout the hike, walking over big boulders and tree stumps and through mud to get to a beautiful and breathtaking campsite by a brook. They gathered wood for their fires, swam in the brook, worked together to make crafts and pots to cook in, shared condiments while cooking their own

meals, learned about their surroundings, bonded, laughed, and grew closer as the day went on. Over the next few days, they came together, took care of each other, and appreciated their time together. Surprisingly, they did not talk about work at all. They unanimously agreed that one of the most beautiful moments was the evening Gallagher played the flute and softly serenaded them to sleep. The delicious prickly pears were another beautiful surprise.



The mindfulness and peace of the experience brought together four dedicated and devoted IECs in a nourishing way. The gift of time and space with a supportive group of professionals naturally led to full engagement throughout the process,

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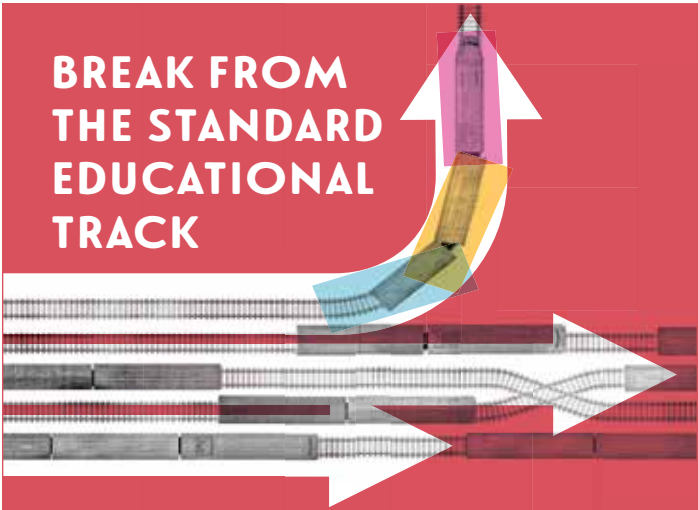




creating memories that they say will affect their lives forever. The trip felt like a gift to themselves. Although they had already spent time with groups of kids in the woods, their own immersive experience helped them gain much greater insight into what their clients go through when they encounter the power of wilderness. 🏕️

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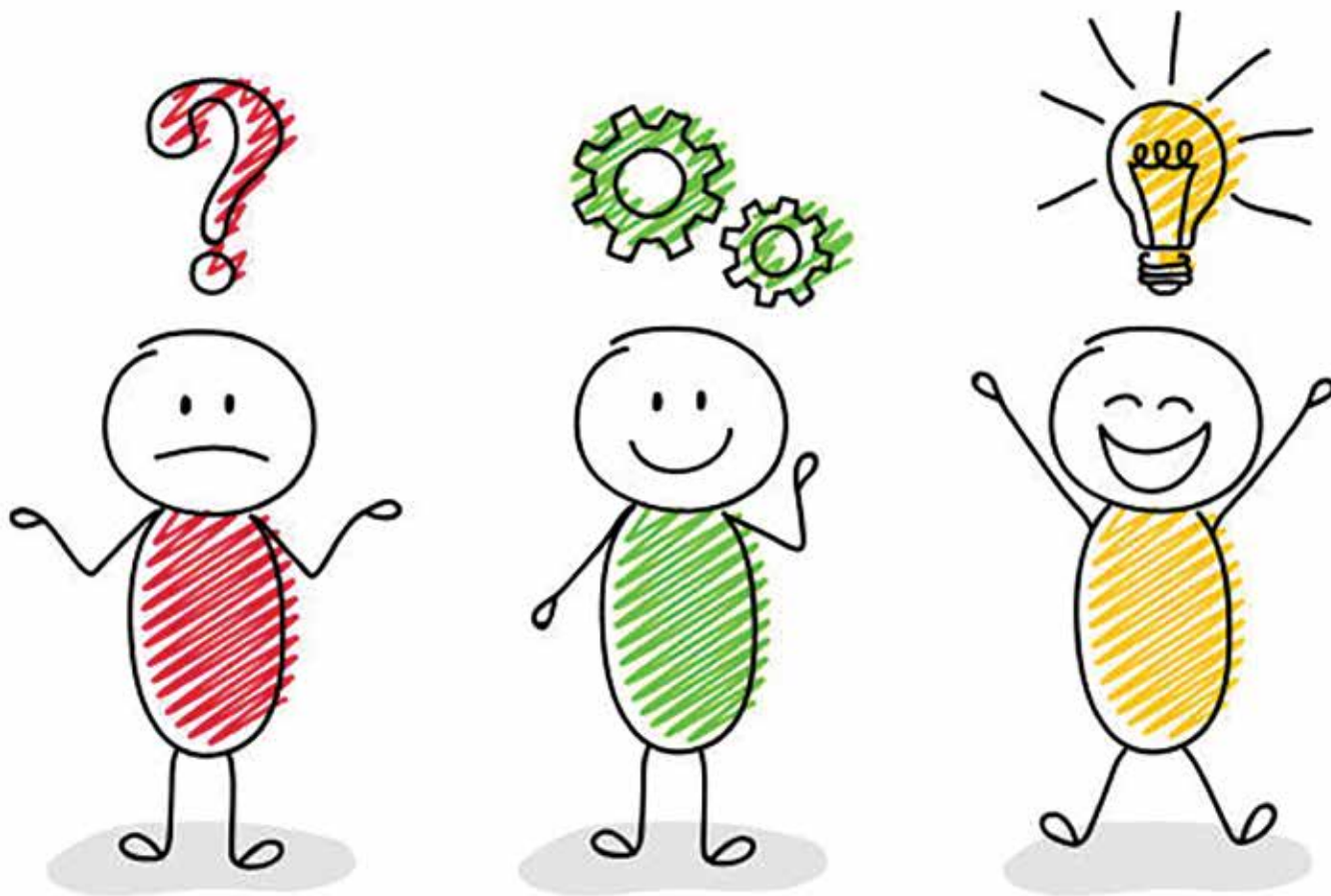
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# Mission-Driven Assessment: Assessing What Matters

*By Mike Peller, Assistant Head of School for Teaching and Learning, The White Mountain School, and Becky Schaeffer, Academic Administrator, Assistant Director of Admissions, Waring School*

Schools and the systems within schools are arguably changing faster than ever before. New models of teaching and learning are improving schools but making it harder to place students into the right independent school. Why? As independent schools feel the market pressure of increased school options—such as charter schools, for-profits, and micro schools—and with a recent downturn in the stock market and 2008 not far in the rearview mirror, there has never been more urgency for each independent school to clearly articulate its own unique value proposition. Now, questions about what APs or advanced courses a school offers need to be replaced with questions about how the academic program prepares students to be flexible, dynamic, and persistent problem solvers.

We should no longer think about schools in terms of tiers, believing erroneously that because a school was historically an Ivy feeder that it will now prepare

students for a changing world and a changing social and professional landscape. Independent schools are being forced—wonderfully so—to become mission-driven in all that they do, and the result is increased heterogeneity in the independent school market. Because of that, it is imperative that parents, high school placement counsellors, and independent educational consultants (IECs) do their research. That means not relying on past reputations and instead focusing on what schools are doing and their respective strategic visions.

## Assessment Systems

One of the most important questions that needs to be answered when choosing the right school is, What is your assessment system and how does it reflect your mission and academic culture? As many schools and school leaders are collectively pushing hard

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*Becky Schaeffer can be reached at [bschaeffer@waringschool.org](mailto:bschaeffer@waringschool.org).*

against traditional grading (the reductive and static 0–100% scale that results in A–F grading), the Mastery Transcript Consortium (MTC) has galvanized schools, encouraging schools and school leaders to consider what they teach and assess and why. The MTC has inspired school leaders to ask: What would school look like if it were mission-driven in its teaching, assessment, and reporting on students? The MTC has been the catalyst for bringing schools together through an educational movement, but what it offers is simply a different version of a transcript, a new way of capturing a student's high school experience that allows schools to report on what matters to them, enabling authentic, mission-driven reporting. Each school, however, must determine their priorities and develop their learning and assessment systems.

## Inquiry-Based Learning

At the heart of the movement started by the MTC is a fundamental belief that high school students are capable of great things. It is time for schools to step out of the way of their students, empowering them to ask their own daring questions and pursue answers with intellectual curiosity and stamina. Inquiry is the most natural way for humans to learn. We know from research and experience that when students have agency in what they learn, they are more engaged, the quality of their work is higher, and information and skills are both better retained and more transferrable. One might mistakenly think that student-driven inquiry implies a renouncement of content. That is incorrect. Instead, content is the medium through which students

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are motivated to ask relevant questions. In other words, content is the source for the questions, not the end goal. The questions become the primary focus.

Schools' assessment systems provide direct insight into school culture. If we want students to learn to ask meaningful questions and pursue them with curiosity and academic rigor, we must provide feedback that focuses on the skills and habits required to do that well. By focusing less on content acquisition and more on skill development in terms of the classroom experience as well as feedback, schools are effectively establishing and executing inquiry-based learning environments.

Many schools claim to be student-centered and driven by inquiry, but what does that mean? Ask schools what student-centered learning means at their school in the context of assessment. Because as long as schools assess only content, primarily by means of tests, they will not effectively create a student-driven inquiry environment.

## Finding the Answers

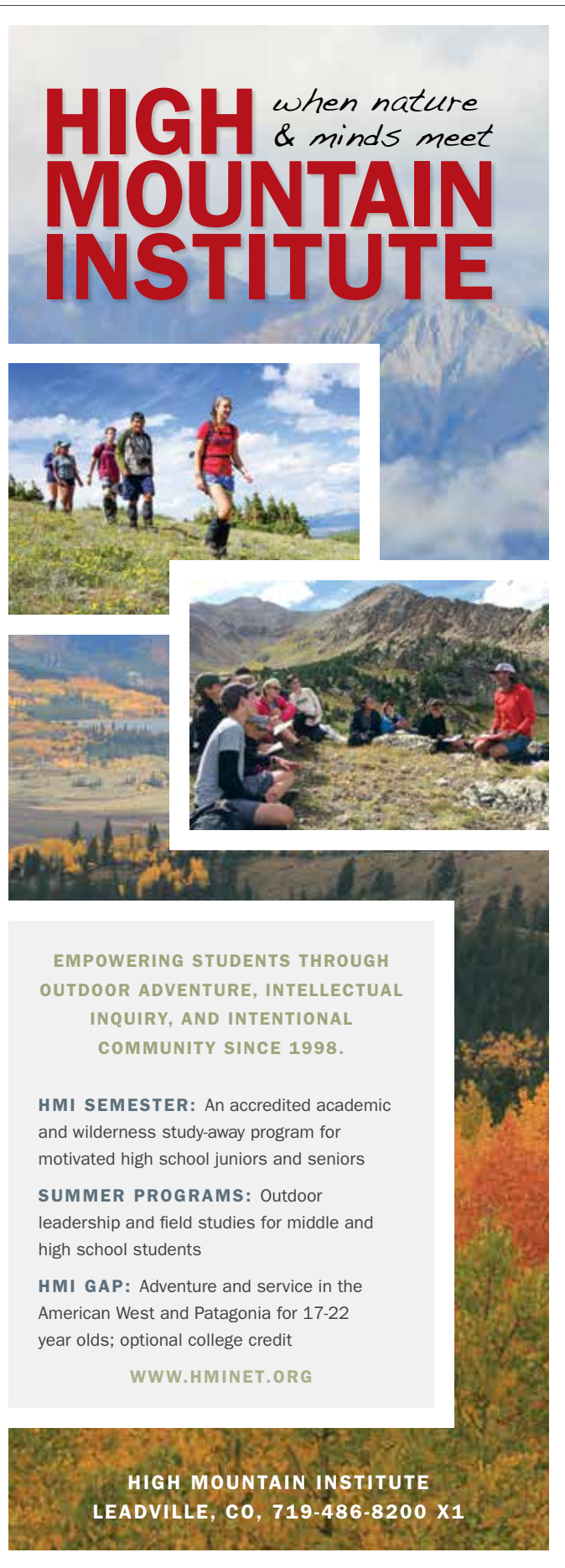
If you are interested in finding a school with a student-centered learning environment, ask the following questions.

**What are your school's core competencies?** Many schools have identified a set of skills and habits that are core to student learning across any discipline, often called 21st century skills. Whether it is an English, history, or math class, students receive regular feedback on how they are communicating, thinking critically, and reflecting on their learning. Whether in art, science, or a world language class, students receive feedback about how they are researching, organizing their work, and collaborating with others. Such competencies provide the framework to ensure that learning is inspiring, relevant, and meaningful and assessment allows for student-driven inquiry, thus developing in students the skills and habits to be nimble and dynamic problem-solvers who thrive in ambiguity and uncertainty. Assessing core competencies shared across disciplines is one way for schools to become mission-driven through their assessment system. As you visit schools, ask them about their core competencies and how they specifically teach and assess for 21st century skills.

### In what ways does your school focus on narrative assessment?

The assessment at many schools has taken the form of extensive narrative evaluations, with those written narratives driving a continued conversation between teachers, students, and parents about learning and growth. The assessments reflect all the risk-taking, failure, and growth inherent in life experience, and in doing so, capture the school's mission and values. A graded report card leaves little room for growth and makes the grade the goal, but when schools focus on narrative feedback, the engagement and learning is the goal. Narrative evaluations continue the conversation about how a student is learning in class. They report on class projects, the successful and the unsuccessful; classroom participation; expression in written and spoken words; leadership; citizenship; and the more-standard categories, such as timeliness, organization, and development of skills specific to areas of study.

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Narrative evaluations also further the conversation between teachers and students—they give students something else to strive for in their search for knowledge and skill development in any given area. The evaluations are frequently written directly from teachers to students, encouraging them to engage in new ways, to take risks, and even to learn from failure as much as they do from success. As you visit schools, ask them how teachers provide narrative feedback. Maybe even ask for a few samples of narrative feedback to serve as primary documents that speak to the school culture and values.

## Learning to Learn

How do students at your school learn to learn? That is perhaps the broadest and most effective question you might ask a school. Student-centered schools that focus on inquiry develop graduates who are ready to delve deeply into the world around them. Students prioritize the act of learning as its own goal, engaging with the material—whether it is Homer, the quadratic formula, or mastering a soccer skill—and with the world around them. They learn how to interact with others, including adults; to speak up for themselves and for others; and to advocate for themselves and others. MTC is attractive because it attempts to remove the focus from a grade—from a standardization of the student—and to focus on more-holistic characteristics of any successful person: citizenship, participation, and well-rounded interdisciplinary focus. It has created a movement that supports authentic, student-centered assessment that focuses on the values of each respective school. Given that, we recommend that you ask each school a final question: What is your perspective on the Mastery Transcript? 

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All IECA webinars are free to members (live and on demand) and cost just \$24 for nonmembers. For more information and to register, go to <http://webinars.IECAOnline.com>. Our webinars remain available in the archives for years.

## Upcoming Events

### IECA College Symposium in Philadelphia

June 10–11

A two-day program will bring together senior college admission officials and IECA members for discussions focused on the process, challenges, and changing dynamics of college admission. More information will be announced in February.

### Tennessee Valley College Tour (TN, IL, MO, MS, AL)

March 24–29

The Red, White, and Blues Tour of Tennessee Valley was organized by the College Committee. Tentative participating colleges include Belmont University, Rhodes College, Saint Louis University, Southern Illinois University Carbondale, The University of Alabama in Huntsville, The University of the South, University of Mississippi, University of Missouri, Vanderbilt University, and Washington University in St. Louis. More information, including registration, will be announced in February.



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# Regional Groups

## San Diego

The San Diego Group met at Villa Capri in December for its annual holiday luncheon. They discussed ideas and started planning for the upcoming year's meetings.

For more information about this group, contact Jackie Woolley ([summitcollegecounseling@gmail.com](mailto:summitcollegecounseling@gmail.com)).



## Nashville

The Nashville group, small but dedicated, meets every few months. At their most recent meeting, are Diane Connolly, Associate member; Francine Schwartz; Heejung Laird, Student member; and Kathy March. For more information about this group, contact Kathryn March ([ktm@kathrynsmarch.com](mailto:ktm@kathrynsmarch.com)).



## Philadelphia

In December, members of the Philadelphia regional group were treated to a train trip to Juniata College. A tour of the campus and the Raystown Field Station and lunch with President Troha were highlights of the day. Earlier in the month, group members had an opportunity to meet with Bob Massa, senior vice president for enrollment and institutional planning at Drew University, as he prepared to retire. Drawing on decades of experience in higher education, he shared updated information about Drew and his observations about where the field of college admissions is heading. For more information about this group, contact Joanne LaSpina ([joanne@mycollegehelper.com](mailto:joanne@mycollegehelper.com)) or Laura Blanche ([blanchecollegeconsulting@gmail.com](mailto:blanchecollegeconsulting@gmail.com)).



## New Jersey

In December, the New Jersey group met with Margot O'Connor, assistant director of admissions, Gettysburg College, at their monthly meeting. Pictured are Geri Perkal, Traecy Hobson, Melanie Talesnick, Wendy Amsterdam, Carole Kraemer, Lauren Alizio, O'Connor, Karime Jankauskas, Susana MacLean, Amy Hallock, and Nikki Bruno.



## Beijing

Beijing regional group members met on November 28. From left to right are, Wanning Ding, Jack Cao, Hamilton Gregg, Steve Li, and Xin Guo. For more information about this group, contact Wanning Ding ([wanningding.beijing@gmail.com](mailto:wanningding.beijing@gmail.com)) or Hamilton Gregg ([hsgregg45@gmail.com](mailto:hsgregg45@gmail.com)).



At their November luncheon, despite a nor'easter bearing down, the group met with Danielle Togli, regional director of The George Washington University. In addition, some members also attended a luncheon hosted by Stacy Kovalycsik, NJ regional recruiter for Penn State. Pictured with the Nittany lion are Pamela Kwarter, Carolyn Mulligan, and Kovalycsik. For more information about this group, please contact Carolyn Mulligan ([insidersnetwork@comcast.com](mailto:insidersnetwork@comcast.com)).





## Author's Corner



### The Ultimate Summer Program Guide for High School Students

(Bookbaby 2019)

by Jennifer Williams Taylor, MBA, IECA (CA)  
and Joyce Wong, MEd, IECA Associate (CA)

Offering a roadmap to the college admissions process, this book is a planning strategy guide that accounts for academic and personal self-exploration. With the power to make a student's college application stand out, ability to assess campuses, and the chance to discover a career path, it's an essential resource for any student no matter their college or career path.

IECA members: If you've authored a book in the past 2–3 years, let us know so we can feature it here and on the IECA website. Send your book titles to [Insights@IECAonline.com](mailto:Insights@IECAonline.com)



### Educational Planning of Court-Involved Youth: A Guide for Counties, Systems, and Individuals

(Routledge 2019)

By Amy Bishop, MSW, IECA Associate (CO)

This book provides a framework for alleviating chronic barriers for youth in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems, combining best-practice recommendations from national research with direct service tactics employed successfully in multiple counties. It includes the components needed to implement a collaborative, community-centered intervention system that meets the needs of the county, family, and individual.



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## In the News

**Jeff Levy** (CA) and **Steve Goodman** (DC) were quoted in “Early Applications Surge at Prestigious Colleges. So Does Early Heartache” in the *Washington Post* on January 5.

**Janet Rosier** (CT), **Jill Madenberg** (NY), and **Judi Robinovitz** (FL) were quoted in “What Students Should Know About the GPA Scale” in *U.S. News and World Report*, on November 30.

**Elizabeth Stone** (CA) was quoted in “Their Plans Derailed by a Wildfire, Seniors at Paradise High School Wonder What’s Next” in the *New York Times*.

**Stephanie Meade** (CA), **Julie R. Gross** (NY), **Jane Shropshire** (KY), **Ann Rossbach** (NJ), and **Joan Casey** (MA) were quoted in “Survive College-Application Season With the Family in One Piece” in the *Wall Street Journal* on December 11.

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**Mark Sklarow**, IECA CEO, was the featured expert in, “Building Relationships with Independent Educational Consultants,” in *Octane* (Winter 2019), which is published by enrollmentFUEL for college and university admission professionals. The article urges admission leaders to incorporate IEC outreach into their efforts, stating “A family who hires an educational consultant is more likely to appreciate the unique features of your institution. As times change for enrollment management professionals, so must strategies. One starting point is involvement with **IECA**.”

---

**Andrew (Drew) Carlson** (MA) was quoted in “What U.S. College Waitlists Mean for International Students” in *U.S. News and World Report* on December 11.

**Peggy Baker** (PA) was quoted in “What a Liberal Arts College Is and What You Should Know” in *U.S. News and World Report* on December 7.

**Elease Layman**, Associate (MD), was quoted in “Four FAQs About Transferring From Community College to a Four-Year School” in *College Confidential* on January 14.

An interview with **Mark Hofer**, Associate (WA), “Advice for Filling Out Your College Applications” aired on K5News in Seattle on December 20.

**IECA** was included as a resource for its directory of IECs in “What to Buy the Parents in Your Life Who Are Saving and Paying for College” in *MarketWatch* on December 20.

In his *Tulane University Admission Blog* “So You’re Using an Independent Counselor,” Jeff Schiffman, director of admission, recognizes IECs in general and **IECA** specifically as valuable resources for students in the application process.



## Initiatives

In early December, California IECs **Mark Bechtold**, **Marilyn van Lobel Sels**, **Beth Coyle**, **Sandy Furth**, **Jeff Levy**, **Rebecca Joseph**, and **Elizabeth Stone** helped students who were displaced by wildfires in California fill out their college applications. Stone organized the event, which included college reps from St. Mary’s College of California, California State Universities, Willamette College, and the University of California. The Courtyard Marriott Chico donated space for the entire weekend and lunch was sponsored by WACAC.

**Kristina Dooley** (OH) was recently selected as the recipient of the 2018 Distinguished Instructor Award from the University of California Irvine Division of Continuing Education. Dooley has been an instructor in the UCI certificate program in independent educational consulting since 2014 teaching *College Consulting Resources* to students from across the country and around the world.



▲ **Katherine Stievater** (MA) hosted a coffee to share more information on gap years with Chicagoland IECs in November.



# IECA Foundation

## Dear IECA Foundation friends and supporters,

Thank you for helping us make 2018 a monumental year for the IECA Foundation. We are thrilled to announce our incredible impact over the past year, only made possible through the generous support of our donors.

- We granted more than \$100,000—the most significant amount in the Foundation's history—to 26 organizations across 17 states, almost a 100% increase in our grant-making efforts from 2017.
- Our Board of Trustees demonstrated their dedication to the Foundation by investing a ground-breaking amount through a Board Match Challenge and reaching 100% Board giving.
- We hosted over 300 guests at our Hollywood-themed event in Los Angeles. Thanks to our dedicated sponsors and event attendees, we raised \$58,000 for our future grant-making efforts and danced the night away!
- We supported a diverse array of organizations, from those with a therapeutic focus to college preparation programs for inner-city students, and to many other unique audiences.

The IECA Foundation's mission is to leverage the knowledge, professional skills, and funds of IECA members, sponsors, and donors so that underserved students can map pathways to success. We do this important work with you and are grateful for your generosity.

Thank you

Luisa M. Rabe, CEP, IECA Foundation Board Chair



Stay tuned for information on our event in Atlanta, November 2019



## WELCOME TO OUR CIRCLE 96 SOCIETY!

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# Introductions

## Please Welcome IECA's New Professional Members



**Rebecca Claster** (DC) has been an IEC for 5 years and was an Associate member. After spending a few years as a high school social studies teacher, she took a long detour

into politics, including a dozen years doing domestic policy work for a member of Congress and several years at the agency that runs AmeriCorps.

She holds a BA in political science and public policy from UC Berkeley and an MA in secondary education from Adelphi University. She attended IECA's 2014 Summer Training Institute and is a member of NACAC and the Gap Year Association. In addition, she cofounded IECA's affinity group for IECs Who Give Back. During her time in the government, she was an active volunteer with several DC community-based organizations.

Claster lives on Capitol Hill with her husband and three children.

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www.clastereducation.com  
Specialty: C*



**Julia Gooding** (VT) has been an IEC for 3 years and was an Associate member. She is the China director of international education for BE Education and previously was

the United Nations representative and US director of Woodenfish Foundation, the associate director of admissions and international student programs at The Harvey School, and a college counseling associate at Lemán Manhattan Preparatory School.

Gooding holds a BA from Colgate University in Asian Studies and Spanish and was a Fulbright scholar at Renmin University of China. She earned an EdM in international education policy from Harvard Graduate School of Education and a certificate in college counseling from UCLA Extension. She attended IECA's 2017 Summer Training Institute and is a member of IACAC.

In addition, Gooding serves on IECA's Global Committee and is the Shanghai regional group coordinator.

Gooding moved to Shanghai in October 2018, and she enjoys hiking with her dog, traveling, and trying all kinds of food under the sun!

*Julia Gooding, MEd  
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**Dana Haddad** (NY) has been an IEC for 10 years. Previously, she was director of admissions at Claremont Preparatory School, director of admissions at Horace

Mann School, and a head teacher in New York City.

Haddad holds an MEd in early childhood and elementary education from Bank Street College of Education and a BS in political science and international relations from Marymount Manhattan College. A licensed teacher in New York State, she has permanent certification for preK, kindergarten, and grades 1–6.

Her book *40 Blended Poems* was published with Scholastic. As the former executive director of Children's PressLine, she led an organization that helps underprivileged youth get their work published in local newspapers and magazines. In addition, she takes on pro bono clients each year.

Haddad is the proud mom of a six-year-old daughter, Callie, and is married to her husband, Pepper, who loves fly fishing.

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Specialty: S*

*continued on page 36*



**Shyamla Menon (CT)** has been an IEC for 5 years and was an Associate member. In her previous career, she was in investment banking at Goldman Sachs in mortgage

finance; when she took time off to raise her three kids, she began to volunteer in gifted education, community organizations, and youth soccer.

Menon has a degree in economics from the University of Delhi, India, and an MBA in finance from the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania. She completed a certificate in independent educational consulting from UC Irvine Extension and attended IECA's 2014 Summer Training Institute. She is a member of NACAC.

In addition, Menon has been treasurer and president of the parent advocacy group for gifted education in her town and continues to work to promote academic enrichment opportunities for middle-school students through youth talent search programs. She also serves in a volunteer capacity on the board of her local A Better Chance (ABC) chapter and provides college counseling services for ABC Scholars.

Menon has three adult children, two daughters and a son. They love to travel as a family, hike, and ski. She spends part of the year in Wyoming where her family gathers regularly, and she loves to swim, bike, watch movies, and read.

*Shyamla Menon, MBA  
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**Quyen Nguyen** (Bogotá, Columbia) has worked as an IEC for 5 years. Previously, she was director of academics at an educational consulting organization based

in Bangkok, Thailand. Currently, she is a professor of intercultural business communication and strategic competencies in leadership at Colegio de Estudios Superiores de Administración (CESA), a university in Bogotá, and consults with universities, nonprofits, and education startups on projects concerning social-emotional development, teacher training, and curriculum development. Nguyen has worked in education for over 10 years, holding classroom and administrative roles with Teach for America and KIPP before becoming an IEC.

She earned a BA in music and a BS in kinesiology and health from Iowa State University and an EdM in international education policy from Harvard Graduate School of Education. Nguyen attended IECA's 2018 Summer Training Institute and is a member of IACAC.

She won a 2016 Corporate Social Responsibility Award from the American Chamber of Commerce of Thailand and was a Fulbright fellow in Vietnam. As a volunteer, Nguyen advises refugees and asylum seekers through the high school and college admissions process and has led several Fulbright teacher training workshops.

Born and raised in Iowa, Nguyen lived in Denver, Atlanta, Boston, Vietnam, and Thailand, before Bogotá, Colombia, where she lives with her partner, Diego. Her hobbies include playing piano, singing, rock climbing, scuba diving, long distance running, and reading.

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<http://summitd.co>  
Specialty: C*



**Renée Serrano (MA)** has been an IEC for 10 years and was an Associate member. With more than 20 years of professional experience in higher education,

she has worked in numerous higher ed departments, including student activities, dean of students, admissions, and career planning and placement, at Endicott College, Tufts University, and Northeastern University.

Serving as the development director of Lazarus House Inc., a homeless shelter located in Lawrence, MA, the 28th poorest city in the United States, helped her realize the impact and value of community service, and she strives to instill that enthusiasm for community service in each of her students.

Serrano earned a BS in communication disorders and counseling from the University of Massachusetts-Amherst and an MEd in higher education and administration from Northeastern University. She is a member of NEACAC. She volunteers in the counseling department of a local charter high school in Lawrence and occasionally works with students at the local Boys and Girls Club who are applying to college.

Serrano enjoys Bikram yoga as often as she can and loves the peaceful and gorgeous coast of Maine where she spends lots of time. Her greatest joy, however, is her new grandson, Rory, who makes her day with his sweet smile!

*Renee Serrano, MEd  
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Specialty: C*





**Dana Stahl** (NY) has been an IEC for 5 years and was an Associate member. She holds a BS from Boston University and an MEd from the College of William and Mary.

She is a member of NATSAP, TABS, CEC (Council of Exceptional Children), and LDA.

In 2018, Stahl authored *The ABCs of Learning Issues*, a practical guide for parents to help them better understand their children's learning, attention, and anxiety issues. The book bridges the home-school gap and is available in English and Spanish. She also contributes to Education Update as an educational columnist.

Stahl is an avid reader and enjoys long walks on the beach and in the mountains. She has a two-year-old granddaughter. Becoming an IEC marked the culmination of her professional career as a learning specialist by helping families to understand that they are not alone in searching for ways to help their children reach their full potential.

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**Keith Wilkerson** (PA) has been an IEC for 21 years. Previously, he was senior program manager for A Better Chance and a program manager

for eAdvising, College Advising Corps.

Wilkerson holds a BA in religion with a certificate of proficiency in African-American studies from Princeton University. He is a member of NACAC.

With 21 years of experience, over 200 workshops conducted, 1,500 students placed in school, and more than 7,000 families counseled on educational options for private school education and college, he has helped many students reach great goals.

Wilkerson is involved with Youth Coordination for Sharon Temple SDA Church. His hobbies include photography, travel, and the occasional game of chess.

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## Long-time Guide to Independent Schools Ceases Publication

Stan Vincent, current editor and publisher of VincentCurtis and the *Education Register*, announced that the business and [www.TheEducationalRegister.com](http://www.TheEducationalRegister.com) ceased doing business at the end of December. In 1936, M. S. Vincent began providing independent schools, colleges, and summer programs with advertising and promotional advice. In 1941, he and his partner Benton Curtis published the first edition of *The VincentCurtis Educational Register*, a free annual guide to independent schools and summer programs. Vincent said, "I am proud to have been able to introduce millions of parents worldwide to the many advantages of independent schools and summer programs. Special thanks to all those who have helped spread the good word about independent education."

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# Professional Member Retreat Combines Fun With Learning

The warmth and sunshine experienced at the Professional Retreat held recently in Florida will soon fade from memory, but the experiences and knowledge acquired will remain and be useful long after. "As an IEC with five years under her belt, the intimate setting of the retreat gave me a great opportunity to meet more experienced members and to learn from them," said Barbara Leventhal (FL). "I took the information and put it into action as soon as I reached my office. I am working on a new marketing campaign."



Lynn University professors shared their expertise to help market independent educational consulting—a profession that is not well-known—and many IECA members led discussion groups and all attendees shared their "one great idea" to add to the collective knowledge of participants. In addition to discussions on business practices, learning lab presentations, and special presentations by two university presidents, the 2019 Professional Member Retreat provided opportunities for relaxation and fun, including a cooking class, the opportunity to try virtual reality, and a "Latin Nights" party hosted by nearby Lynn University.



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Company	Page	Website
American University School of Professional & Extended Studies	22	<a href="http://www.american.edu/spexs/">www.american.edu/spexs/</a>
Annie Wright Schools	4	<a href="http://www.aw.org">www.aw.org</a>
Arrowhead Academy	16	<a href="http://www.arrowheadyouth.org">www.arrowheadyouth.org</a>
Bard College at Simon's Rock	23	<a href="http://simons-rock.edu">http://simons-rock.edu</a>
Buffalo Seminary	19	<a href="http://buffaloseminary.org">buffaloseminary.org</a>
Cascadilla School	26	<a href="http://www.cascadillaschool.org">www.cascadillaschool.org</a>
Cooper Riis Healing Community	8	<a href="http://www.cooperriis.org">www.cooperriis.org</a>
Davidson Academy	28	<a href="http://www.DavidsonAcademy.unr.edu">www.DavidsonAcademy.unr.edu</a>
Dean College	18	<a href="http://www.dean.edu/">www.dean.edu/</a>
Glenholme School The	26	<a href="http://www.theglenholmeschool.org">www.theglenholmeschool.org</a>
Glenholme School The	39	<a href="http://www.theglenholmeschool.org">www.theglenholmeschool.org</a>
Grand River Academy	13	<a href="http://www.grandriver.org">www.grandriver.org</a>
High Mountain Institute	27	<a href="http://www.hminet.org">www.hminet.org</a>
Hyde School	38	<a href="http://www.hyde.edu">www.hyde.edu</a>
John Dewey Academy	30	<a href="https://www.jda.org">https://www.jda.org</a>
Landmark College	20	<a href="http://www.landmark.edu">www.landmark.edu</a>
Landmark School	19	<a href="http://landmarkschool.org">landmarkschool.org</a>
Little Keswick School	7	<a href="http://www.littlekeswickschool.net">www.littlekeswickschool.net</a>
Lynn University	15	<a href="http://www.lynn.edu">www.lynn.edu</a>
Marvelwood School, The	14	<a href="http://www.marvelwood.org">www.marvelwood.org</a>
Marymount Manhattan College	29	<a href="http://www.mmm.edu">www.mmm.edu</a>
Meadows Behavioral Healthcare	5	<a href="http://www.claudiablackcenter.com">www.claudiablackcenter.com</a>
North County School	12	<a href="http://www.northcountryschool.org">www.northcountryschool.org</a>
Northern Latitudes Tour	14	<a href="http://www.northcountryschool.org">www.northcountryschool.org</a>
Pathways to Stem Cell Science	28	<a href="http://www.stemcellpath.com">www.stemcellpath.com</a>
Rectory School	23	<a href="http://www.rectoryschool.org">www.rectoryschool.org</a>
Riverview School	9	<a href="https://riverviewschool.org">https://riverviewschool.org</a>
Shrub Oak School/K3 Learning, Inc.	24	<a href="https://shruboak.org">https://shruboak.org</a>
St. Margaret's School	32	<a href="http://www.sms.org">www.sms.org</a>
Vista Life Innovations	10	<a href="http://www.vistalifeinnovations.org/openhouse">www.vistalifeinnovations.org/ openhouse</a>
Wasatch Academy	13	<a href="http://www.wasatchacademy.org">www.wasatchacademy.org</a>
Woodhall School, The	20	<a href="http://www.woodhallschool.org">www.woodhallschool.org</a>

# The Back Page

## IECA Member Communications Survey Results

(December 2018)



### **The IECA Communication Members Read Most Frequently**

**91%** 5 Minute News

**68%** Insights

**62%** Emails from IECA (sent via TalkList)

**16%** Social Media

### **What Members Most Often Look for on the IECA Website**

**41%** Member Resources

**37%** Upcoming event information

**7%** Search the Membership Directory

**6%** Search Member Benefits

### **5 Minute News Email**

**90%** Read it every week

**90%** Click on a link to learn more at least once a month

### **Most Read Sections of Insights**

**1.** News of Upcoming Events

**2.** Cover Story/Featured Articles

**3.** Ethics Column

**4.** 1 Challenge/3 Solutions

**5.** Calendar

**6.** Financial Aid Column

**7.** Back Page/In Focus Statistics

### **Should Insights Switch to Online-Only Format?**

**63%** Less likely to read online-only version

**30%** More likely to read online-only version

### **Most Used Social Media Platforms by Members (for business use)**

**1.** LinkedIn (**75%**)

**2.** Facebook (**48%**)

**3.** Twitter (**37%**)

**4.** YouTube (**18%**)