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IECA⁺™

INSIGHTS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE INDEPENDENT EDUCATIONAL CONSULTANTS ASSOCIATION

April/May 2019

Calendar

April 6-9
IECA at SACAC, Atlanta

April 8
College Symposium Registration Opens

April 9
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

June 11
Webinar: Advising Gifted yet Struggling Students (and Parents!): What Is Twice-Exceptionality and How Does It Impact Educational Consulting?

Procrastination and Cognitive Overload Theory

By Deborah Barany, PhD, IECA (OR)



11 p.m.—application deadline midnight: A frantic text appears from a student begging for help editing a supplemental essay. But wait, didn't we talk about that supplement last October? I know I sent out reminders by text and email. I even called

and left a cheery message two weeks earlier, "I am looking forward to helping..." No response.

My student is a high achiever (3.8 with IB classes), engaged in her school as a freshman mentor and athlete and serving as an intern in her US senator's office. All signs indicate that she can manage her work load successfully. She looks capable of juggling all her responsibilities; however, I missed what was going on underneath. She is like a swan gliding across the water but paddling hard.

She struggles with dyslexia and ADD and has learned powerful strategies to become a successful reader, but ADD gets in the way of her executive functioning skills. She is a procrastinator and that was the root of the problem—so I thought.

I always take a deep breath when diagnosing a student with procrastination. In our field we use the P word (procrastination) like the L word (lazy). But neither label helps to understand the reasons or circumstances behind procrastination. As an independent educational consultant (IEC), I want to understand the mechanisms of behavior so that I can support my students and build strong habits

for college and beyond. What is behind procrastination behavior?

Cramming as a Primary Strategy

Most high schools set up the need for cramming to keep up with the demands of assessment and grading. College bound students often find themselves with five or more core classes, all on top of athletics, music, political activism, or other pursuits. Compound that with teachers who do not coordinate between departments and homework, papers, projects, and presentations pile up. Students are overwhelmed with high expectations and little time to work. They spend all day at school only to come home to another 3 hours of study.

For students with learning disabilities, cramming interferes with processing and building understanding. My LD students need more

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President's Letter

The Value of the IECA Brand



Barbara Pasalis

As the recent college admissions scandal unfolded, the IECA Executive Board of Directors was in a meeting with CEO **Mark Sklarow**. As the day progressed, Mark's phone buzzed with increasing frequency. The media wanted IECA's perspective on the crisis. In the days that followed, Mark was quoted by the AP, *Washington Post*, *Boston Globe*, *New York Times*, *LA Times*, *Chicago Tribune*, *USA Today*, *NPR* and many more.

The staff worked overtime to help members who were drafting statements to release to their local media and others who rushed to add the IECA logo to their websites. The entire IECA staff has the board's

The entire IECA staff has the board's sincere thanks for jumping in to help our Association respond to this crisis when a response from IECA and its members was imperative.

sincere thanks for jumping in to help our Association respond to this crisis when a response from IECA and its members was imperative. I am proud to be a member of IECA, which is increasingly viewed as

the standard bearer for ethical college admissions counseling, just as we have set the ethical standards in all specialty areas. The value of an IECA membership has never been more evident than in the past few weeks.

Mark and the staff have made great progress over the past 10 years to increase awareness of the value of our work and the professionalism of the IECA brand within the college admissions community. The Bernuth & Williamson survey revealed that members also want IECA to be a recognizable brand to parents within their local communities, one that stands for competence and the highest

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Connect with us on Facebook, IECA's blog, LinkedIn, and Twitter (@IECA).

In Focus

IECA's Reach During 'Operation Varsity Blues'

The national media looked to IECA as the authority on the ethical practice of independent educational consulting during the admission scandal, Operation Varsity Blues, in March. We helped lead the shift in the conversation from the focus on illegal actions by a few to the ethical practices of IECA members who are focused on fit. We will continue to promote IECA members as the antidote to unethical college advising practices.

During the weeks of March 18–29:

- Well over 100 IECA members were quoted in the national and regional media
- IECA was featured in over 100 articles including all the major national publications
- The IECA website saw an increase of 30% in visitors

Facebook

- 14,000 reached with our posting of our 'Why Choose an IECA Member' card, plus 200 shares
- More than 27,000 viewed our "IECA Members Level the Playing Field" blog
- Nearly 5,000 views for our press release plus 100 shares

IECA's press release was reprinted or posted by 221 news outlets, including:

- 103 broadcast media
- 77 newspapers
- 28 news & finance services



A Look Inside the 2019 Spring Conference

By Mark Sklarow, IECA CEO

Plan to arrive rested and bring your vitamins because the Spring Conference is ready to test your stamina! The conference will open with three amazing ACE Speakers, including Robert Zimmer, president of the University of Chicago; Michele Borba, author and parenting, child development, and bullying expert; and Patrick Schwarz, professor and author. Borba and Schwarz will each follow their 20-minute presentations with featured breakouts, so you will be able to delve a little deeper into their respective topics:

- Explore how the “selfie syndrome” is leading to an empathy crisis in youth—and it isn’t just a crisis of character. Borba’s *The 9 Essential Habits That Unlock the Power of Empathy* will address how cultivating empathy is essential to creating caring children, compassionate schools, just communities, and a civilized society.
- Gain a fuller understanding of how passion and the interests of individuals with diverse learning styles are powerful tools for providing support, motivation, and learning advancement in Schwarz’s *Just Give Him the Whale: The Power of Using Passions, Fascinations, and Interests in Supporting Individuals With Learning Challenges*.

Pace Yourself

Pace yourself, though, so you’ll have enough energy for the more than 50 breakouts that will offer something for all specialties—college admission, school admission, therapeutic placements, plus business, grad school, global topics and more. Several will cross specialty areas, exploring adolescent issues that impact many students, including *Managing Anxiety in the College Search and Application Process* led by Jake Weld, MEd, Mansfield Hall, and IECA member **Rachel B. Sobel** (PA) and *Internet Use Disorder, the Adolescent Brain, and Co-occurring Disorders* with Chris Tuell, University of Cincinnati.

Get Face-to-Face

If you are looking for face-to-face interaction, you have hit the jackpot. Opportunities await, including the Member Roundtables, Therapeutic Community Discussions, and the school-focused Water Cooler Talks hosted by the Schools Committee. Among the planned roundtable topics are the struggle for new IECs, trends in college affordability, new IEC payment options for clients, and much more.

Showcases and More

In recent weeks the IECA TalkList was lit up with discussions about CampusReel. The founders will be among the many old and new companies serving IECs who will be in **Conference Central**. Other new attendees include Hedberg Maps, State Street Education, Dream Catcher Curriculum, and College Success Plan, among even more returning products and services. Friday brings so many highlights: Former Secretary of Education Arne Duncan will address the major challenges to education in the nation today. The College Showcase follows, featuring colleges from across the country and from small liberal arts colleges to large state research universities, including Brandeis University, Oberlin College, Rochester Institute of Technology, and the University of British Columbia.

Of course, themed parties (gangsters! Deep dish pizza! Speakeasies!), events, receptions, and meals provide tremendous opportunity for networking. Beyond those, the School and College Fair will feature hundreds of institutions, so whether you are joining IECA for the first time or the 40th time, you will find a variety of programs and schools to get to know. 🍷



Register for the IECA Spring Conference now at <https://link.IECAonline.com/conference-info>.

time and more exposure to new ideas before building enduring conceptual understanding. While they are building deep lasting knowledge, they also experience longer retrieval time to access new ideas. But our schools are designed for quick processing and memorization. Cramming becomes a survival strategy, not a learning strategy.

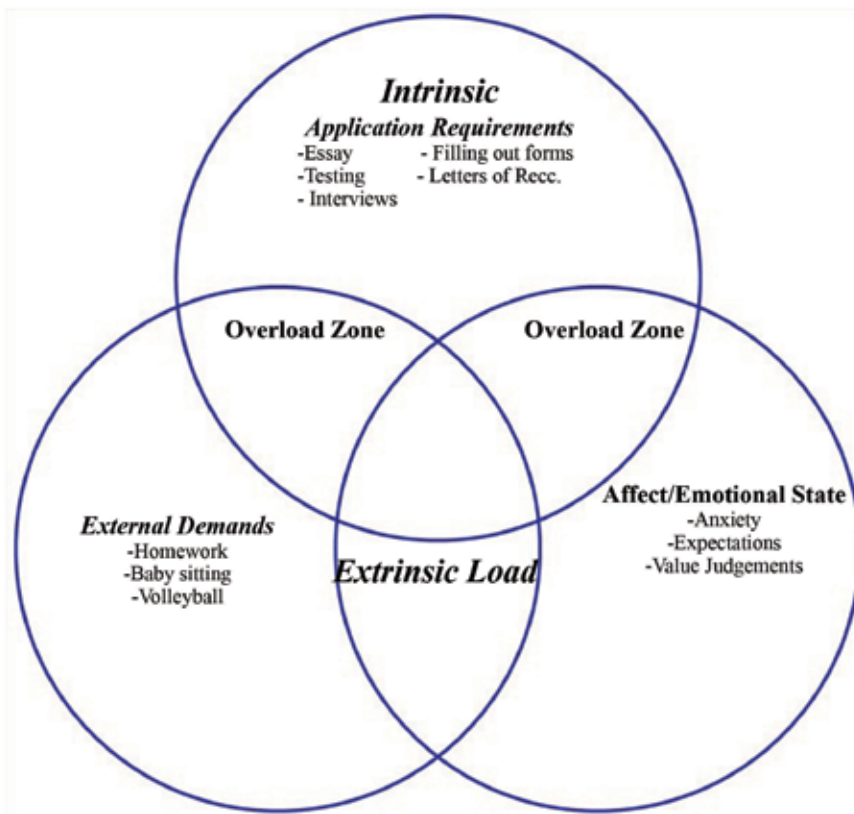
Why is cramming problematic? We all have done it in our academic and professional lives. We put off studying for a test or avoid writing a paper. What is happening when we cram? Cramming heavily relies on memorization and multitasking. We do not have the time to process information deeply, which affects the ability to connect new information with established knowledge. Cramming creates information that is shallow and temporary—just enough to recall on the test or write a passable essay. For most students that is compounded by sleep deprivation and multitasking, two other sources of interference in learning that interrupt the deep learning and concept building necessary for producing quality work. Most of our students are expert cramblers because that strategy serves them well and rewards them with grades. But cramming as a primary strategy can backfire when tasks are complicated (college applications) or the material they are studying is complex and expectations are high (college-level work).

Cognitive Load Theory

IECs can use the college application process to teach new strategies and habits as we guide our students through a complex, high-stakes process. Cognitive load theory provides a helpful conceptual framework to guide our work. First introduced by the cognitive psychologist John Sewell, cognitive load theory describes the capacity and limitations of our memory system when presented with difficult problems and complex tasks. New information is first processed through working memory. Working memory is like a train station moving information in and out in order to store new information and retrieve existing information from our long-term storage. If you want to keep the information, you have to actively process it to store it in long-term memory.

Working memory capacity is very limited, holding between three to five meaningful pieces of information. It gets crowded in there and if a new input is introduced, something has to fall out to make room. That is why multitasking is problematic if you are trying to hold onto and process information. For LD students, working memory can be even smaller, more-crowded, and disorganized. Limited working memory can be compounded by slower processing speed and slower retrieval time common with ADD, dyslexia, and anxiety disorders. When the information surpasses the capacity of the working memory, our system slows down, stops, or jams up. No

Figure 1



new information can be stored or recalled.

Strategies to Overcome Limitations


Cognitive load theory not only provides a way of helping students understand cognitive limitations, it also provides strategies for overcoming limitations. In any task there are both intrinsic loads, tasks that are essential to the demands, and extrinsic loads, tasks that are a distraction or unnecessary to the demands. Many students have a hard time differentiating the two. Using a Venn diagram can help them sort out the components of the application process. Figure 1 is an example from one of my students:

One powerful way to optimize our working memory is *chunking*—consolidating information into small bites. Chunking requires that we break down information into meaningful and important categories allowing us to coordinate, organize, and sort intrinsic tasks and acknowledge the extrinsic distractions. A simple example is how we remember our phone number. We don't see a phone number as 10 bits of information. We recite a phone number as (area code), pause, (first three), pause, (last four).

By bundling ideas together, we can get through the bottleneck limitation of working memory. Chunking is a way to help our students organize and prioritize the various requirements needed to complete their college application. I help my students create meaningful chunks as they define and write out each task on a separate note card or sticky note. I then ask them to collect tasks that “go together.” For example, asking for letters of recommendations or communications with colleges or collecting

demographic and family information are examples of chunking task demands. The student is learning to create categories by breaking down the overall process into organized and doable tasks. Rather than piling on additional items to a lengthy to-do list, my students now have a meaningful way to sort out additional actions that require their attention. Cocreating application chunks with my students enables them to take ownership of their process and organize the tasks in a way that makes sense to them.

The Long Game

As IECs, we can help our students develop new habits and approaches as they continue their educational exploration. Although our job is to make the college application accessible for all our students, there is more than just getting the reward of the big envelope in the mail. Helping students to develop new strategies, perspectives, and skills builds a toolkit for learning. Guiding, coaching, and practicing together enables our students to feel successful navigating complex tasks with high-stake outcomes. I have the long game in mind—my hope is my students will fully engage and unleash the power of their brains. 

Resources:

Alber, Rebecca. 2011; updated 2014. "6 Scaffolding Strategies to Use With Your Students." *Edutopia*. www.edutopia.org/blog/scaffolding-lessons-six-strategies-rebecca-alber.

Wheeler, Mark. 2012, August 22. "Cramming for a Test? Don't Do It, Say UCLA Researchers." *UCLA Newsroom*. <http://newsroom.ucla.edu/releases/cramming-for-a-test-don-t-do-it-237733>

Doolittle, Peter. 2013, June. *How Your Working Memory Makes Sense of the World* [Ted Talk]. www.ted.com/talks/peter_doolittle_how_your_working_memory_makes_sense_of_the_world?language=en.

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Author's note: Thank you to the Landmark College faculty at the 2019 Winter Institute for inspiring and reinvigorating my work with LD students, my colleagues on the LD committee for reviewing this article, and my daughter for editing.

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ethical standards. The board has made that a strategic objective moving forward.

What can members do to help? Make sure that the IECA logo is on your website and marketing materials. Add IECA brochures to your client packages. In the coming months, the staff will be developing a webinar and media kits to help members promote the IECA brand in their communities. Working together, we can make progress in increasing awareness of the value of hiring an IECA consultant.



Barbara Pasalis
IECA President



Learning doesn't just happen in the classroom!

Little Keswick School is a nonprofit therapeutic special education boarding school that serves boys 9–15 years old with social/emotional challenges and learning disabilities. The small school setting provides warm and nurturing relationships, intensive clinical interventions, and individualized education for 35 boys in a highly structured environment that ensures successful development.

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Beyond the Fair & Swap, Maximizing Your Time at IECA

By Robb Genetelli, Dean of Students, Landmark School

Make a good impression, meet an IEC or two, don't embarrass yourself, promote my program—those are the thoughts that went through my mind as I entered my first IECA conference in Springfield, MA, in 1987. I was new to my position in admissions and to say that I didn't know what I was doing would be an understatement. I walked in, registered, noted thankfully that I was at least dressed appropriately, and introduced myself and my school to the first independent educational consultant (IEC) I saw. Let's just say it didn't go so well. I froze for a second and didn't quite know what to do, so I walked away.

Out of nowhere, **Nancy Masland** (AZ), literally took my hand and introduced me to numerous IECs as if we had known each other for decades, helped me navigate the room, arranged an IEC tour of my school, and gave me some very valuable advice: “be yourself, relax, and trust your program.” Her words have stayed with me all these years later, and I remain grateful to Nancy for her kindness. Thus began my relationship with IECA and my education as to how to best maximize my time during the conference.

Fostering Relationships

There is no conference better designed to create new relationships or renew established relationships for school programs and educational consultants than IECA. As the organization has shifted and

grown, so have the opportunities—finding those opportunities, well, that is the goal. Whether you are a new admissions representative or a veteran, your goals should be to navigate IECA; maximize the opportunities; and leave refreshed, invigorated, and empowered with new information and new relationships.

When I look at the back of the IECA directory, I review the names of emeritus members, and I realize that I have been around for a long time. At last glance, I noted that there are more than 20 names there who were once active referral sources. So a reasonable question would be, Have I established new relationships with 20 new IECs? For most of us, probably not. Doesn't that suggest that every school person should see themselves as new to the conference? Make a special point to reach out to Associate members; they need to learn about our programs as they work toward full membership.

Engage and Connect

There are so many ways to maximize your time at the conference and meet IECs. Enjoying your time is a nice benefit but remember that you are working and representing your program.

Attend breakout sessions. Review the conference agenda and select breakout sessions of interest. The conference provides diverse sessions. A



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There is no conference better designed to create new relationships or renew established relationships for school programs and educational consultants than IECA.

great way to meet IECs is to sit next to them at a session, participate in the discussion, get to know them, and vice versa. Do a little homework, preview the attendance roster, make sure you connect with IECs who have students in your program, and make a mental note of a few you specifically want to connect with during the conference.

Work the coffee breaks. Going to all coffee breaks and finding a IEC or two to chat with is a great way to introduce yourself and your program. Invite them to stop by your table at the information swap or ask for their card and promise to send them information—and then do it! The networking opportunities at those more informal times are often some of the best conversations. Make sure you follow up with information.

Connect with other school reps. Finding other professionals to connect with can also be a great source of information. Don't overlook schools or other school representatives simply because you are focused on IECs. We all work together to benefit children, share information, make connections, and introduce one another. Collaboration goes a long way these days.


It's All About the In-Between Times

Attendance at keynotes, welcoming receptions, and smaller targeted receptions is an industry staple and a great way to meet people, learn about programs, and make connections. Sometimes the best connections happen in the elevator between floors looking for a reception or navigating the hotel. Try to limit your screen time during transit, look around, engage, and smile. I'm always amazed by watching so many missed opportunities because of technology, especially at the information swap. I really strive to be present in our technological world.

Going to the lobby during the evening hours or around the hosted receptions is another great way to meet and connect. This informal setting typically generates the best conversations and rapport. Reaching out to IECs you don't currently work with ahead of the conference to try to meet is always an option. That 1:1 appointment for breakfast, meeting up at breaks, or a quick drink in the lobby are ways to find that coveted time to promote your program.

Well Worth the Investment

If your school or program can afford to host a reception, that is ideal; if not, try partnering with similar regional programs, specialty programs, and the like—then invite and advertise. I have found that most IECs really enjoy those opportunities and happily attend. You can also attend hosted receptions and enjoy learning about other programs. There are so many options to choose from, just remember to be appreciative of your host.

Finally, just remember that IECA is a wonderful group of user-friendly professionals committed to making a difference in the lives of children—and in that belief we all share a common vision. So enjoy, celebrate existing relationships, and endeavor to create new opportunities. 



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The Arch Learning Community is a comprehensive program designed to support students with diagnosed learning disabilities and/or learning challenges. Through cohort classroom learning, customized academic coaching, weekly seminars, specialized advising and a pre-orientation program, students acquire the necessary skills to be successful in their degree program.

For more information contact:

Katie Fernandes

Associate Director

Arch Learning Community

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dean.edu/arch

A photograph showing three women and a large group of young children. Two women are in the foreground, smiling, surrounded by many children in yellow shirts. A third woman is partially visible on the right. The background is a chalkboard.

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IECA Shifts the Conversation

Thanks to those who posted the IECA logo and IECA's *Principles of Good Practice* on their websites and social media and talked with the press. We worked hard after the news broke on March 12 to get the word out about ethical IECs. Mark Sklarow, CEO, was interviewed dozens of times by reporters and was featured in many of the major news outlets (the *Wall Street Journal*, *Chicago Tribune*, Associated Press, *LA Times*, *CNBC*, *Boston Globe*, and more). We also posted our statement, *IECA Stresses Ethics & Personal Fit to Guide Students in Choosing a College*, as a press release and on social media, which tens of thousands of people have seen.

As a result, we helped lead the shift in the conversation from the focus on illegal actions by a few to the ethical practices of IECA members who are focused on fit. We will continue to promote IECA members as the antidote to unethical college advising practices. Here's just a sample of what he said:

"When checking out potential consultants, parents should look at the messaging on their websites and pay attention to what is said in the first 'get to know you meeting,' Sklarow said. 'If it is all about getting into college, that's a short-term outcome. If it is about finding the right place where they student is going to thrive, that benefit lasts a lifetime.'"

—*CNBC* interview: "The Business of College Advisors Is Booming. Here's How to Navigate the Consulting Process"


"At the core is our belief that the consultant's job is to fairly reflect a student's abilities, needs and everything about them," Sklarow said. "Any deception that's done only hurts the student. If you think your job as a consultant is to 'get your kid in,' that's not correct. The job," Sklarow said, "is to help a student 'find the right place.'"

—*Portland Press Herald* "'Master Coach' for College Admissions Pleads Guilty to Racketeering in Cheating Scandal"

"Yes, I'm worried," said Mark Sklarow, chief executive officer for the Independent Educational Consultants Association. "But at the same time, I think it's a time to distinguish the ethical counselors from the unethical."

—*Boston Herald*, "Bribery Scandal Puts College Counselors on Edge"

"The Independent Education Consultants Association strongly encourages members to also offer their services for free to community groups that help students from disadvantaged areas prepare for college, and 99 percent do so, CEO Mark Sklarow said. With in-school guidance counselors at public high schools stretched particularly thin—one study found they have so many other duties that they spend only 38 minutes a year on college counseling per student—sometimes it's the only help those students get, I think it's something that helps level the playing field," Sklarow said.

—*Chicago Tribune* "College Bribery Scandal Puts Spotlight on Admissions Consulting, a Booming but Unregulated Cottage Industry" 



The Gow School

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Bullying | Physical Abuse | Emotional Abandonment
Sexual Abuse | Loss and Grief

These young adults see the world through the eyes of fear and shame. At the Claudia Black Young Adult Center, we create a community of safety, work to name the traumas they have experienced, and help them to let go of internalized shame and calm their highly dysregulated nervous system. We teach them skills to more effectively own their power and no longer be victims to their past or potential future situations so they can start living.



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A Meadows Behavioral Healthcare Program

Speaking Up and Speaking Out in Washington, DC

By Jesse Quam, LCSW, ACSW, IECA (NC)

My favorite TV show of all-time is *The West Wing*. In one episode the chief of staff, harkening back to a 100-year-old tradition of “Big Block of Cheese Day,” let small interest groups into the White House to give common folk an opportunity to have their voices heard. Although that may not be the way the real world is today, that’s what I thought of as I entered the historic halls of the congressional office buildings in Washington, DC, to begin an invigorating and exhausting 10-hour day of meetings with members of Congress.

The NATSAP Fly-in is an annual event in May where program representatives, independent educational consultants (IECs), and client program alumni meet with congresspeople and their staffs. The goal of the meetings was to educate lawmakers about NATSAP programs—what they do and how they can be an educational resource as future legislation lands on their desks. Megan Stokes and her team at NATSAP set the meetings up and did a great job coordinating the day.

The meetings were quick and to the point. NATSAP members introduced the scope of the meeting and spoke to research, an alumni student spoke about her experiences in a therapeutic wilderness program and in a therapeutic boarding school, and I spoke about being wilderness front-line staff, a wilderness therapist, and an IEC. Although hearing from those of us with letters behind our names was helpful, the most effective remarks were made by young people, my 10-year-old son, David, and the 21-year-old program alumni who shared that she could have been dead or in jail without treatment. Her tears and her family’s presence were powerful testaments to the change she made in herself.

I was honored to have my son with me to share his story. David lives with dyslexia, but with two plus years of Orton-Gillingham tutoring, he now reads on grade level. David read the following at each of our seven meetings: “My name is David Quam. I am 10 years old and I live with dyslexia. Through tutoring and support I now read on level. I hope all children get the kind of help they need, like I received. Thank

you.” My heart swelled with pride at witnessing the resiliency in my son. More importantly, he was proud of his hard work. We celebrated the next day with a trip to the Spy Museum in DC and both got blisters walking six miles while sight-seeing.

The entire team was a powerful witness to the healing power of NATSAP programs to the whole family system and many conversations with the congress members and their staffs expanded to explain how individual client growth helps our whole culture, not just the lives saved and futures salvaged. By the end of the day we had a rhythm and pace to our presentation—we were ready for Oprah.



On the train trip home, I felt enormous gratitude for the NATSAP programs I have worked with as an employee for two decades and referred to as an IEC since 2015. As we work in isolation in our individual practices, it is good to know that someone is advocating for us in Washington, DC. Please join in the fine work NATSAP and IECA do in educating our world about programs and supports that exist. I’m thankful to be a part of the big block of cheese. 🧀



Jesse Quam, John Huie & Associates, can be reached at jesse@johnhuie.com.

Author’s note: If all this seems exciting and something you would like to experience, I encourage you to reach out to the NATSAP office to learn about 2019/2020 events and find out how you can participate.



Talking About College Readiness for Students With Learning Differences

By Marci Schwartz, PhD, LCSW, IECA (CA)

Independent educational consultants (IECs) work with students who are at differing levels of college readiness. Some students have a level of maturity and life experience that allows for greater ease during the transition to college than other students. Of course, even the most college-ready students can have bumps in that transition, but many of the typical challenges they encounter can be worked through in time. Often, that is because of the student's ability to communicate his or her challenges to those who can help and as a result gain access to support to get them through difficult times.

For students with learning disabilities, however, gaps in their readiness for college can affect their ability to successfully make that transition. Although as IECs we understand the importance of college readiness in our students, finding opportunities to start a dialogue about it can take additional effort. But attention to readiness can be

very worthwhile because it offers insights into the realities of the transition process that neither the student nor the parent have considered or know how to address. IECs play a valuable role in helping families see the transition to college from a more objective viewpoint.

Overlapping Skills

One aspect of talking about college readiness with students involves the IEC's understanding about how different areas of college readiness affect one another. For example, social skills and self-advocacy skills can often overlap. A student might struggle with social skills but still report good self-advocacy skills because he is able to advocate for his needs easily with teachers. But as an IEC asks additional questions, such as how the student does or would do in advocating for their needs with a person he does not know well, his reported skill set might be lower than initially thought. When the student



Marci Schwartz, Thrive College Counseling, can be reached at thrivecollegecounseling@gmail.com.

goes to college, he will be dealing with many new people that he will need to speak with to advocate for his needs. Asking students if they can **accurately discuss their disability without parental support with a person unfamiliar to them** will be helpful in this circumstance.

Another example of overlap is time management skills and understanding how that skill can affect many areas of a student's life. It is not uncommon to speak with a student who struggles with time-management skills and therefore works with a tutor to manage her time around academics. She may get good grades and seem to be able to handle her time-management issues with the support of a tutor. It is still helpful, however, to ask additional questions to understand how a student manages other aspects of her life that involve time management. For example, can the student **independently manage time while using social media by setting and maintaining appropriate limits?** A possible response to this question that illuminates a potential challenge is that the parents are turning off the Internet or in some other way managing her electronic media—not quite the same as the student managing on her own.


As parents and students begin to incorporate information about potential college readiness challenges, there are opportunities for IECs to offer guidance. For example, a suggestion that the student practice a skill (like using Uber or Lyft) or work with a tutor to build time-management skills may come out of these discussions. The discussion may also set the stage for a referral to a therapist or other community support to address such areas as self-awareness and self-advocacy that are so important to college success.

In working with students with learning differences and being cognizant of their readiness for the independence of college, it is important to understand how different areas of readiness overlap and affect a student more broadly than it initially appears. Creating and maintaining an environment of open discussion about college readiness with both parents and students is a good way to highlight the readiness skills that will be expected in college. The guidance that IECs have to offer can be so vital to the future of a student; incorporating meaningful discussions around college readiness can allow us to grow in how we serve our students. 🙏

Parent Thank You


A parent reached out to **Vita Cohen** (IL) during the recent admission scandal with this message of support.

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College and University Rankings & Guidebooks: Bane or Benefit?

By Terry Giffen, Independent Educational Consultant, Virginia J. Bush Associates

In the early 1980s two publications profoundly changed the landscape of the college search process. Published in 1982 and instantly controversial, the *Fiske Guide to Colleges* used ratings and was the first of its kind to be very subjective in its description of a school's academic reputation, social scene, and overall ethos. Equally as controversial was the initial College and University Rankings issue of *U.S. News and World Report*. First published in 1983 and next in 1985, it became the company's largest selling issue and subsequently spawned an entire industry dedicated to telling the public what is "best." Thus began what I term the "consumers' report mentality" of the college process.

Define the "Best"

Sadly, far too many students—but more-often parents—choose to begin a college search by looking only at the "top" or the "best" schools. As independent educational consultants (IECs) are fully aware, that is especially true for many international families who are considering US colleges and universities. That said, I clearly understand why that is the case. Parents want only the best for their children, and that is how it should be; however, "the best" as defined by formulaic or subjective rankings designed to increase circulation or to sell books may not be what is best for many students. The goal should not be to gain admission to the most prestigious or highest ranked school. Rather, the goal should be to identify a group of colleges (with varying levels of selectivity) that will foster a student's personal, academic, and social growth; build a foundation for a lifetime of learning; and create opportunities for success in graduate schools

or careers. There are hundreds of schools that do that every day—not just the top 10 or 20!

The harsh reality of the last four decades has shown that rankings are here to stay. A quick Google search 15 "college and university rankings" generates more than 200 million results, and the first page alone points the reader to lists of rankings offered by magazines, such as *U.S. News*, *Forbes*, *Money*, *Town and Country*, and *Kiplinger's*; newspapers, such as the *Wall Street Journal* and the *London Times*; and specialty sites hosted by *Niche* and *The Princeton Review*. It's not surprising that the proliferation of various rankings has ultimately led to articles that ranked the rankings!

To help advise students and families, it's important to point out that each publication uses a variety of different factors and weights to help them craft a rankings list. For example, *U.S. News* factors in graduation and retention rates, faculty resources, expert opinions, financial resources, student excellence (test scores and class rank), and alumni giving. *Forbes*, however, assesses alumni salaries, student debt, first-to-second-year retention, the American Leaders List, graduation rates, and academic success (i.e., Fulbright, Rhodes, Cambridge, and Truman scholars). And *Money Magazine* uses the quality of education (value-added graduation rates, test scores, and yield rates); affordability; and outcomes (employment rates, current salaries, and lifetime earnings). Because the perceived value of those various metrics will undoubtedly resonate differently with families, I encourage you to guide them to the specific webpages that describe and delineate the varying methodologies.



Terry Giffen can be reached at tag@virginiabush.com.

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Make Rankings Your Friend

If pushed, most of our colleagues would agree that the rankings of colleges and universities are an anathema to our profession. I concur in the macro sense, but I have often taken a micro approach to help make rankings my friend. Using rankings has afforded me the opportunity to provide perspective, to expand lists, and to change some minds. We understand that when students and families begin to consider postsecondary options, their knowledge of schools is informed—and often limited—by their own experience, having been shaped by family, friends, teachers, classmates, and the media.

Many families and students suffer from what I have termed “geographic myopia.” Most folks in New England know about Amherst or Williams, but many have never heard of Grinnell or Carleton; conversely, many folks in Iowa haven’t a clue about Bowdoin or Centre, but they do know Drake and Coe. For international families this is further complicated by the word *college*, which is often thought to be of lesser value than *university*. Middlebury College doesn’t appeal, but Boston University does; Swarthmore College is unknown, but New York University is definitely on the list. Mentioning Gambier, OH; Northfield, MN; Brunswick, ME; or Lexington, VA, elicits puzzled facial expressions or a dismissive, “Where’s that?”

That is where we IECs come in and where rankings can become our friend. We can point to the fact that *U.S. News* ranks Williams and

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Amherst #1 and #2 among liberal arts colleges. *Forbes* combines colleges and universities and ranks Williams #11, ahead of both #13 Cornell, #15 Columbia, and #16 Amherst. *Money Magazine* ranks eight public universities ahead of all but one Ivy League school, and *Niche* ranks Pomona and Bowdoin ahead of Dartmouth and Cornell. Clearly, liberal arts colleges should be strongly considered by top international scholars, right along with the Ivies, Stanford, MIT, U Chicago, and Duke. Rankings can help you to make that point.

For students who may not be as competitive but are still driven by prestige, we can suggest schools like Case Western Reserve, Tulane, RPI, University of Georgia, Trinity, Sewanee, and Gettysburg. All are ranked among the top 50 national universities and liberal arts colleges, representing the top 3% of all four-year schools in the US; yet, many are three to five times less selective than the top 10. Also among the top 3% as determined by *Forbes* are Colorado College, Reed, Macalester, DePauw, and the Universities of Rochester, Richmond, and Miami.

Finally, rankings can also help as we counsel students with more modest records. We can move down the charts to build balanced application lists and affirm self-worth at the same time. I can picture the conversation:

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Colleges Must Define Mental Health Support—and Be Transparent

By Pamela Kwartler, IECA (NJ)

Hamilton College, Northwestern University, Purdue University: recent suicides on those campuses and many others have led to demands that institutions be accountable for providing better mental health support on campus. The idea that more attention might have saved a student's life is heartbreaking. Still, those most tragic cases and other less devastating ones underscore the need for comprehensive mental health care for students with anxiety or depression. Independent educational consultants (IECs) know those students well. For more than a year, we build relationships with them, thoughtfully building their college lists and guiding them through the essay and application process. We do our best to ensure that they choose colleges where they have the best chance of being successful. But there are too many factors beyond our control and no way to see into the future. We need to know what degree of support schools are providing to best help our students.

Familiar Stories

Ashley's mother called me in mid-October to ask, "Can we get together to talk about Ashley?" I wondered what the issue was; Ashley's Instagram pictures showed her enjoying the college social scene and playing soccer for the school's Division III team.

When she walked into my office, Ashley's mother's nerves were strained, her eyes revealing sheer exhaustion. "I have been driving back and forth for four hours two or three times a week," she told

me. "Ashley calls me every day, crying and saying, 'Everyone is smarter than me! I can't take it. And I hate the soccer team! The coach won't even listen to me!'" The school counseling office had provided solid support, even finding an off-campus counselor. Ashley had insisted on coming home, then going back to school repeatedly because she "didn't want to miss the parties." Eventually, the demands of college became too overwhelming, and Ashley went on medical leave, six weeks into her first semester.

Lauren agonized about navigating the social scene; she missed her tight group from high school and continually saw pictures on social media of them partying at their various colleges. She began seeing a counselor at school. Then a month into the semester, she caught a cold that became a sinus infection, causing her to miss classes. After the health center nurse didn't prescribe treatment, Lauren visited a clinic and was prescribed Prednisone. One night when the counseling center was closed, she suffered a side effect of severe anxiety and panic. Lauren was transported to a hospital for behavioral health, missing yet another week of school. Upon returning, she learned that she was required to make up a midterm the next day at 8:00 a.m. Six weeks into her first semester, feeling incapable of managing her stress, Lauren left college on medical leave until the following fall.

Both Ashley and Lauren had histories of mild anxiety managed by medication before leaving for college,

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but they had done well in high school. Despite awards for distinction in every academic course in high school, Ashley's anxiety was triggered by academic insecurity. Lauren had done well socially in high school, but navigating the college social scene was intimidating for her, as it is for many new students (See Cornell freshman Emery Bergmann's 2017 video https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCsHkv24QnMKAYaGIFzEv_kA.)

How Do We Help?

Some students would benefit from a gap year, but that's a hard sell. College is generally the unquestioned plan. According to a 2015 online survey of college students in their second term conducted by Harris Poll on behalf of the Jed Foundation, the Jordan Matthew Porco Foundation, and the Partnership for Drug-Free Kids, 60% of students said they "wish they had more help getting emotionally ready for college." High functioning students with anxiety and depression, especially girls, do not stand out as exceptional. A 2016 study by Daniel Eisenberg and Sarah Lipson of The Healthy Minds Network found: "In the 2016–17 academic year in a national survey conducted by the Healthy Minds Study, 31% of students screened positive for moderate or severe depression, 26% showed evidence of an anxiety disorder, 21% reported non-suicidal self-injury and 36% reported having been diagnosed with a mental illness at some point in the past" (<http://healthymindsnetwork.org/research/hms>).

Making Policies Transparent

Although every college provides some counseling services, the resources may be inadequate for a school's diverse population. It's true that many students with no prior mental health diagnoses visit the counseling center for general college-related stress: a positive outcome of destigmatizing mental health issues. But others who arrive at college with anxiety or depression or develop these disorders on campus need professionals to count on whenever necessary. Students seeking support for disabilities must advocate for themselves, and "an IHE (institute of higher education) has no legal obligation to accommodate a disability of which it is unaware," according to the Health Privacy Project. Peer counselors or untrained college staff are not equipped to support that population, nor should they be responsible for its care. The common practice of charging the Office of Student Services (OSS) to manage both mental health and LD accommodations is not ideal: note-takers and extra time on tests may address the needs of some students with anxiety or depression, but those accommodations are not the right prescription for all.

Some OSS counselors suggest that students with accommodations approach their professors about allowing additional absences or postponing exams in the event of an anxious or depressive episode. Some professors may oblige; others may not. Therefore, solutions by classroom address the symptoms but not the larger problem. The ADA amendments that define disabilities requiring accommodation primarily serve LD students. Colleges need to establish similar clear, quantifiable mental health support policies and practices that IECs can access.

We strive to find college matches in size, location, major, campus culture, and other ultimately less-crucial variables as we build college lists, but we are at a disadvantage when we cannot serve



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our students and families with reliable information on mental health support. College admissions officers may report the hiring of an on-staff psychiatrist and additional counselors in response to an IEC's question. But unlike the easy-access information on appropriate LD programs offered in Princeton's, *The K&W Guide to Colleges Programs & Services for Students With Learning Disabilities and Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder* and other guides, there is no reference source with specific details on mental health support.

Colleges Lose Out Too

Learning about mental health services is crucial and not just for our high school juniors and seniors. Once students go on medical leave, how can we help them return successfully to college and advise those who transfer? There is also a dearth of interim programs to help students transition successfully back into colleges so that they do not repeatedly crash and burn. We need to guide students through all phases of their process.

Of course, many institutions are committing resources to manage mental health crises on their campuses both ethically and financially—as well they should. Admissions officers cannot predict which students will or won't succeed, especially when so many students with anxiety are high-performing applicants. Accepted students are expected to attend and pay for four years or more. Colleges run a serious risk when students in crisis must wait a week to see a counselor, and they cannot afford to question the value of maintaining solid support teams. Losing students to medical leave, especially in freshman year, upsets the equation and impacts the bottom line.

It's worth noting that both Ashley and Lauren's college deans and counseling centers had been kind and attentive. That is not surprising. Campus organizations like Active Minds and the Jed Foundation are dedicated to that cause. According to the 2016 Kognito study *Are Campuses Ready to Support Students in Distress?* by Glenn Albright, PhD, and Victor Schwartz, MD, "More than 87% say that it is part of their role as faculty and staff to connect students experiencing psychological distress with mental health support services (95% of faculty/ staff and 87% of undergraduate students)." Although that is encouraging, "More than 60% don't feel adequately prepared to approach at-risk students to discuss their concern (66% of faculty/staff and 61% of undergraduate students)." More education is clearly needed. Requiring professors, staff, and students to complete the Mental Health First Aid training, which teaches participants how to spot telltale signs of mental health irregularities and direct students towards counseling or a hotline, should be a start.

Colleges face the peril of losing students to mental health emergencies. Adolescent behavior is unpredictable, and students should be able to count on the availability of preventive as well as crisis care. After medical leave, many students transfer elsewhere; perhaps more would return to their campuses if they had truly felt supported there. As IECs, we must continue to question admissions officers about mental health support on their campuses so that we can feel confident about our students transitioning successfully. The goal is to get official, reliable information that could be compiled into a reference guide. We are committed to doing whatever we can to serve all our students. If we are honestly destigmatizing mental health, let's talk about it with colleges and get answers. 

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Rethinking Advanced Placement

Martha Seretta, IECA Associate (MA)

Started by the College Board in the 1950s as a pilot program covering 11 disciplines, today Advanced Placement (AP) exams are taken by nearly 2.8 million high school students at both public and private schools. The original pilot was a collaboration between Lawrenceville School, Phillips Academy, Phillips Exeter, Harvard, Princeton, and Yale with the intention of providing high school students with opportunities to take college-level courses and examinations and to earn credits allowing them to graduate early.

Perhaps one of the most compelling questions asked today by independent schools is, Should we keep teaching to the AP exam? Many institutions question whether the courses are aligned to their current academic model and whether the program is the best way of teaching. Does curriculum oriented toward collaborative, experiential, and interdisciplinary learning better serve the needs of students for college and their professional futures? Today, Andover offers a few AP courses but only in the math and science disciplines. Although Exeter, Lawrenceville, Concord Academy, and Loomis Chaffee no longer teach designated AP courses, they do offer a vast number of college-level (CL) and advanced courses that continue to provide rigor as well as breadth and depth to their academic offerings.

Despite the increased conversation by independent schools to rethink AP courses, College Board's data from 2013–2018 reflect a net 1,292 independent schools have added AP to their offerings, increasing the number of independent schools that offer AP from 3,887 to 5,179. That is a 33% increase just in the last five years. By way of comparison, there has been a 14% increase in the number of public schools offering AP courses over that same time period. It seems, at least for the time being, that independent schools that have dropped or will be phasing out AP courses are doing so with great forethought and consideration by key stakeholders—administrators, admissions officers, faculty, and college counselors.

In 2018, eight elite private high schools in the Washington, DC, area announced that they are dropping out of the Advanced Placement program and will phase out AP courses by 2022. Those schools—Georgetown Day, Holton-Arms, Landon, Maret, National Cathedral, Potomac, St. Albans, and Sidwell Friends—collectively felt that developing their own advanced courses would “more effectively address their students’ needs and interests...and appeal to students’ innate curiosity, increase their motivation, and fuel their love of learning” (Jaschik 2018).

continued on page 24



Martha Seretta, New England Educational Partners, can be reached at martha@needupartners.com.

In the fall of 2014, Pomfret School decided to opt out of the College Board's AP program so that they could offer courses that will be more rigorous and relevant. To that end, they want to serve each student's learning in a more personal and customized way while offering skills that transfer beyond the subject area. In addition, they found that AP courses can hamper teachers' creativity and don't allow students to have time for questions about topics and tangents that are of interest. Although critics might contend that an AP curriculum is more specified and standardized, many independent schools seem to be leaning in the direction of curricula that are flexible and invite in-depth investigation and applied learning.

From the college side, it's not entirely clear that taking AP courses in high school allows students to graduate early. Currently, AP scores are more often used for placement in a college-level course than for allowing a student to "place out." The perception that colleges demand AP courses often leads many students to pass up other classes that they might otherwise find intellectually stimulating and rewarding. The question for colleges is not whether the applicant has taken AP courses, but whether the student has taken advantage of their school's most demanding and rigorous classes. If a school does not offer APs, a college will not expect a student to have them. To date, schools that have opted out of the AP curriculum have not seen an adverse impact on the college matriculation list. Those independent schools that have departed from the AP program believe they can provide a better education while also preparing students for competitive college admissions. At some schools, including Concord Academy, many students do conclude a course

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by taking the AP exam—provided extensive preparation isn't necessary because it can detract from other academic coursework. Students who wish to take an AP test will continue to be able to do so, but teaching at these schools will no longer be geared toward that end. It's noteworthy to mention that from a college advising standpoint, AP exams would be recommended for students applying to universities overseas.

As independent educational consultants (IECs), it's our job to recommend best-fit schools and colleges for students and their families. Beyond the social/emotional and financial considerations, the academic fit is paramount; however, choosing a school because it does or does not offer AP courses is narrow sighted. Many families are aware of APs and believe that they correlate to a school's quality and likeliness of admission to a top university. Their perceptions are a bit misguided if that is the only criteria. Those independent schools that have "opted out" are top-notch. They provide robust academic offerings and prepare students for highly competitive college admissions while delivering endless opportunities for in-depth investigation, critical and applied thinking, and collaborative learning. 

Reference

Jaschik, Scott. 2018. "Rejecting AP Courses." Inside Higher Ed, June 19.
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Campus Visits



▲ New York IECs **Sherri Maxman**, **Jodi Nadler**, **Janet Stark**, and **Teresa Mady-Grove** are pictured (l to r) at the University of Alabama during a tour of colleges in Alabama and Tennessee.



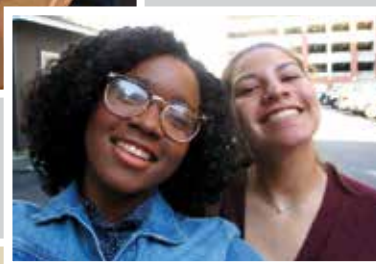
▲ IECA members on the British Council's London Tour visited Kings College London and are pictured crossing the Waterloo Bridge from KCL Strand campus to KCL Waterloo campus. Ten additional colleges and universities were visited. Members also enjoyed a Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) workshop, a UK Higher Education Fair, a walking tour of Bloomsbury, and a dinner cruise on the Thames!



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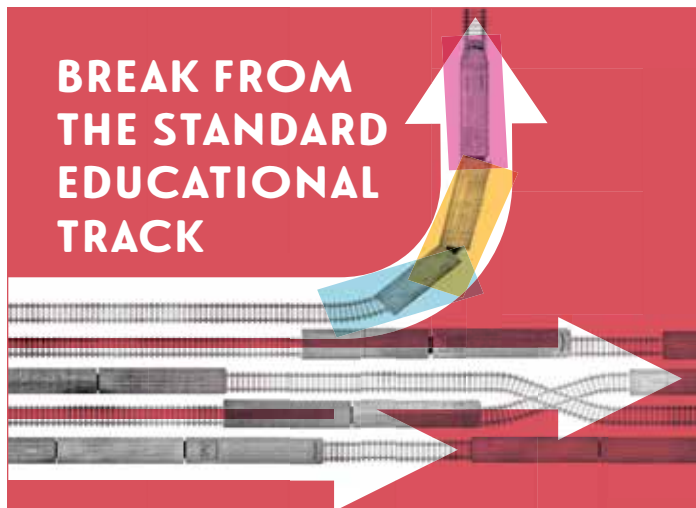
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Regional Groups

New Jersey

Joining the New Jersey group for their February lunch, Rob Yelnosky, vice president of enrollment for Juniata College (PA), drove four hours each way to meet with the group. What a guy! Please take the time to check out this college. Pictured are Laurie Weingarten, Rob Yelnosky, Janet Loren, Amy Hallock, Karime Jankauskas, Carolyn Mulligan, Abie Rabin, Lynne Rosenfeld, Pamela Kwartler, Traecy Hobson, Carole Kraemer, Anne Weisholtz, and Alice Fuscaldo.



Florida

The Florida group met with Bianca Simboli from Lynn University to learn about dynamic new majors being offered. Pictured with Simboli are members Cynthia Chomiak, Darla Neal, and Tino Schuler.



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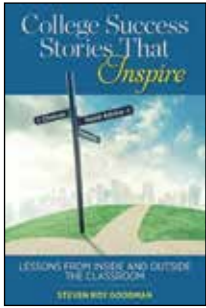
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Author's Corner



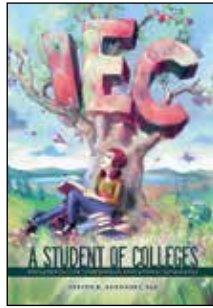
College Success Stories That Inspire: Lessons from Inside and Outside the Classroom

(Miniver Press 2018)

By Steven Roy Goodman, MS, JD, IECA (DC)

This collection of witty, insightful, thought-provoking and inspiring essays about lessons learned in college covers the full range of the experience of higher education: lessons learned from triumph and near-disaster, lessons learned from professors and classmates, and turning points that defined a career and those that defined a character.

IECA members: Send your book titles to Insights@IECAonline.com

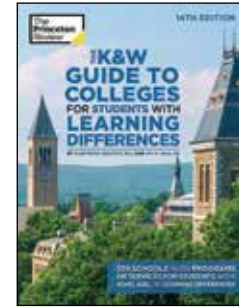


A Student of Colleges: Fundamentals of Independent Educational Consulting

(EDUconsultingMedia 2019)

By Steven R. Antonoff, PhD, IECA (CO)

This textbook is an introduction to a career in the field of independent educational consulting and highlights the practices, principles, and tenets that are essential to those contemplating a career in this field or those wanting to hone, strengthen, and grow their current practice. The content is applicable to other small business women and men, particularly those wanting to be a consultant of any sort.



K&W Guide to Colleges for Students

(Penguin Books 2019)

By Marybeth Kravets, MA, IECA (IL) and Imy Wax, MS, LPCP, IECA (IL)

Hundreds of thousands of students with ADHD, autism spectrum disorder, or other learning differences head to college every year. This comprehensive guide makes it easy for those students and their families and guidance counselors to tackle the daunting process of finding the school that fits their needs best.

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In the News

Bari Norman, (NY) was interviewed for “Expert: Preparing Students and Parents to Deal With College Denials,” which aired on *CBS New York* on March 6.

Nancy Federspiel (MA) was quoted in “Rejections Hurt. Here’s How to Help Your Child During College-Acceptance Season” in the *Washington Post* on March 5.

Eric Allen (MD) and **Steven Goodman** (DC) were quoted in “Here’s How to Make the Most Out of Your Graduate School Campus Visit” in the *Washington Post* on February 15.

Steven Goodman (DC) was quoted in “Application Numbers Steady After Test-Optional Spike” in the *GW Hatchet* on March 7.

Theresa Mady-Grove was quoted in “4 Things to Know About College Early Action Programs” in *U.S. News & World Report* on October 5, 2018.

Carolyn Mulligan (NJ) was quoted in “Data Mine” in the *NACAC Journal of College Admissions*, Winter 2019.

Jennie Kent (Colombia) and Jeff Levy (CA) were quoted in “What International Students Should Know About the FAFSA” in *U.S. News & World Report* on January 29.

Rod Bugarin, Student member (CO) was quoted in “4 Things to Know About College Early Action Programs in *U.S. News and World Report* on October 5, 2018.

Gina Gerrato-Greenhaus (CA) was quoted in “Are You Well-Suited for a Career in STEM?” In *NextStepStem*, Winter 2019.

Laurie Kopp Weingarten (NJ) was quoted in “‘You don’t have time for it’—Why Penn Admissions doesn’t fact-check most applications” in the *Daily Pennsylvanian* on January 31.

Kelly Linehan, Associate member (NY), was featured in “Business Helps Coach High Schoolers through College Applications” in the *Times Union* on February 28.

Thank you to all the IECA members who spoke to media during the recent bribery scandal. The profession was well-represented! So many members were interviewed and quoted in news outlets that more will be included in the June/July issue of *Insights*.

Peter Wright (MA) was quoted in the *Boston Herald*, “Admissions Consultants Warn of Red Flags.”

Randy Falk (FL) was interviewed by WKMG, News 6 in Orlando in “Maitland Educational Consultant Weighs in on College Admissions Scandal.”

Alexandra Rhodes (CA) was interviewed on *Access Live*, KNBC-TV in “Educational Expert Says Bribery Scandal ‘Is a Level of Criminality We Have Never Seen.’”

Bari Norman (NY) was quoted in *USA Today*, “College Admissions Scandal Involving Felicity Huffman and Lori Laughlin Was a Long Time Coming. Here’s How the System Got so Rigged.”

Steven Mercer (CA) was quoted in “Inside the Pricey Totally Legal World of College Consultants” in *New York Times*.

Jan Esposito (NY) was quoted in the *Newsday* article “Parents obsessed with children getting into good schools.”

Janet Rosier (CT) was quoted in the *Connecticut Post* on March 12 in “College Admissions Scandal ‘Reinforces the Crazyness of Whole Game,’ Experts Say” and was interviewed on WTHN, Channel 8, *Good Morning Connecticut* on March 14, “News 8 sits down with a college admissions consultant to address admissions scandal.”

Adam Metsch (MA) was interviewed by *Western Mass News* WGGB/WSHM in “Local College Advisor Reacts to ‘Operation Varsity Blues’ Scandal.”

Tina Trafaglia (IL), **Brooke Daly**, Associate member (NC), and **Sarah Langford**, Associate member (IL) were quoted in the *Chicago Tribune* article “College Bribery Scandal Puts Spotlight on Admissions Consulting, a Booming but Unregulated Cottage Industry.”

Marla Platt (MA), **Katelyn Klapper** (MA), and **Mark Sklarow**, IECA CEO, were quoted in “MetroWest College Admissions Consultants React to Bribery Scandal” *MetroWest Daily News*.

Mark Sklarow was quoted in and **IECA** was mentioned as a primary resource in “Do you need an independent educational consultant? 6 questions to ask” in *USA Today*.

Mark Sklarow and **Mandee Heller Adler** (FL) were quoted in “Do all students cheat on their college applications? No, consultants say but there are plenty of problems” in *USA Today*.

Kate Malczewski (MN) was interviewed on her local news channel KARE 11 about the “Varsity Blues” scandal in “College bribery allegations stunning to those who work in the industry.”

Alexis Avila (MA) was interviewed on *WBZ Channel 4* in Boston in “Massachusetts SAT Tutoring Service Comments on Recent College Admissions Scandal.”

Laurie Kopp Weingarten (NJ), **Susan Dabbar** (DC), and **Janet Rosier** (CT) were quoted in “How to Find Trustworthy College Admissions Advice” in the *New York Times*, which also referenced data from **IECA**.



Dear Friends of the IECA Foundation,



Your extraordinary support made 2018 a *record-breaking* year for the IECA Foundation. As excited as we were at this time last year for the possibilities to come, we could not have predicted the incredible level of support shown. Your generosity brought in over \$100K, funding over 28 programs for underserved children throughout the country.

From our micro-grants that foster excitement for nonprofits where IECA members volunteer, to our traditional grant program that offers outstanding nonprofits programmatic as well as operating funds, the Foundation was able to make an extraordinary impact in the lives of many. Additionally, through our partnership with a national nonprofit consulting firm, we streamlined operations and increased outreach so that we could better fulfill our mission.

2018 was a banner year, setting the stage for a tremendous 2019. We are so excited to expand the Foundation's outreach, deepening our relationship with our incredible donors and witnessing the impact of your gifts on our communities.

Thank you for making 2018 a year to remember, and we look forward to working with you to build on that success.

Sincerely,

Luisa Rabe, CEP, 2019 Board Chair, IECA Foundation

• • • • • The IECA Foundation • • • • • 2018

A YEAR IN REVIEW



The IECA Foundation Introduces New Program Director

We are delighted to welcome Lindsay Grattan as our new Program Director. "We are confident Lindsay's skill set as youth advocate, program organizer, and writer will promote the Foundation's growth," says Luisa Rabe, Board Chair.



Lindsay joins the Foundation as we say farewell to Karly Forman, who managed the Foundation through Schultz & Williams, a nonprofit consulting firm the Foundation contracted with in 2017 to streamline operations. Karly's commitment to our success was outstanding. We are grateful for her innumerable contributions.

After earning a BA in English from Stony Brook University, Lindsay worked as a youth librarian, so she knows how critical it is for all students to have access to resources. She will use her experience to assist our grantees as they strive to assist under-served students and their families. Lindsay earned her MFA in creative writing from the University of New Hampshire, and is eager to help us share our grantees' stories. "I'm grateful for the opportunity to work toward these goals with the Foundation. One of the things I'm excited about is creating a bridge between grantee and donor through story. Stories are so important in fostering a sense of community," says Lindsay.

Lindsay lives in Vermont where she spends her free time writing, baking—she holds a certificate in pastry art from the French Culinary Institute in New York—and enjoying nature. Please make time to greet her at IECA conferences or by email at lgrattan@iecafoundation.org.





Introductions

Please Welcome IECA's New Professional Members



Jessica Azout

(Colombia) has been an IEC for 5 years and was an Associate member. Originally from Miami, FL, Azout moved to Bogota, Colombia, when she married.

For many years, she volunteered at a local foundation for children with learning disabilities, where she interviewed families, administered tests, and referred students to appropriate therapies. She also served as a member of Tufts Alumni Association Program and interviewed potential applicants for many years before becoming an IEC. Currently, Azout is a co-regional group coordinator for IECA's Caribbean and South American Regional Group.

Azout has a BA in psychology and art history from Tufts University and an MS in social-organizational psychology from Teachers College, Columbia University. She earned a certificate in independent educational consulting from UC-Irvine Extension and recently completed a certificate in associate academic life coaching. She is a member of International ACAC.

Azout lives with her husband and three children in Bogota, but will be moving to Miami, FL, in June 2019. She loves to exercise and read books.

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jessica@jumpstartyourfuture.org
www.jumpstartyourfuture.org
Specialty: C*



Andrea Coupe (CA) has worked as an IEC for 17 years. Before becoming an IEC, she focused her academic efforts on teaching her students how to love to read and write as well as the

coordination of financial aid gap funding in her role as vice president of the Stephen J. Weaver Foundation.

A first-generation college student, Coupe graduated from Miami University with a BA in education and earned an MA at California State University-Los Angeles in language arts with a reading specialist credential. She speaks conversational Spanish and French and is also proficient in American Sign Language, which she learned while living with her deaf grandmother. She is a member of AICEP, NACAC, and WACAC.

Recently, Coupe trained to administer the Highlands Ability Battery so she can give students a vision for their future goals based on concrete data about their unique pattern of natural aptitudes. She has served on the High Point University Admissions Advisory Board for the past four years.

Coupe and her husband have three grown children and make their home in Southern California. Her hobbies include making new friends everywhere, cooking with her Instant Pot, reading voraciously, gardening year-round, traveling the world, and supporting research and fundraising efforts for the Cancer Support Community.

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hello@andreacoupe.com
www.andreacoupe.com
Specialty: C*



Stephanie Foundoulis (CA) has worked as an IEC for 6 years. Before becoming an IEC, she worked in engineering and consulting for 19 years.

Foundoulis holds a BS in mechanical engineering from Penn State, an MS in systems management from the University of Southern California, and a certificate in college counseling from UC-San Diego extension.

As a volunteer, Foundoulis has worked extensively with the Laguna Hills High School PTSA and served as the parent/student education chair; conference chair; and on the scholarship committee, where she led the development of a new program to recognize positive learning and classroom skills. She worked closely with teachers and designed and led a student leadership skills training workshop.

Foundoulis is the proud mother of three boys (ages 24, 22, and 19) and is enjoying her first year of an empty nest with her husband of 29 years. She loves to travel, visiting any college wherever she goes, and enjoys boot camp fitness programs and being outdoors in beautiful Southern California. Her older two sons are film major graduates, and she has focused on film production admissions and careers. But after 19 years in engineering and consulting, she is still a "geek" at heart and also loves helping future engineers find their STEM passion.

*Stephanie Foundoulis, MS
Success Forward College Planning
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Laguna Hills, CA 92653
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sfcollgeplanning@gmail.com
Specialties: C, G (medicine, business, science, engineering, and psychological/social work)*

continued on page 36



Jacqueline Guzzetta (CA) has been an IEC for 17 years. She has also worked as a senior admissions specialist at Arizona State University; the director of admissions planning at Spectrum College Planning; and a policy researcher at the University of California–Irvine, where she was also an instructor, mentor, and TA.

Guzzetta completed postgraduate coursework in curriculum planning, policy, and design; an MA in social ecology; and a BA in psychology and social behavior from the University of California–Irvine. She is a member of NACAC, WACAC, ACCFS, and NCAG. Currently, she is authoring two books: the first on myth busting college affordability and another on life after college and the dynamic shift that occurs when children move back home.

Guzzetta was an executive board member for the Irvine Unified School District where she spent several years lobbying against cuts to K–8 and higher education in Sacramento. In addition to speaking on admissions strategies, financial aid, and college funding for numerous youth organizations and high schools, she helps local guidance counselors run “application clinics” for students who are identified as at risk, first generation, or low-income college applicants. As a first-generation student herself, she is passionate about conveying the value of pursuing an education.

Guzzetta loves hiking, kayaking, skiing, and especially traveling. She has been married for 25 years and she and her husband are “on-again-off-again empty nesters.” She loves gardening, painting, and aviation.

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Specialty: C*



Anne Holmdahl (WA) has been an IEC for 7 years and was an Associate member. After 5 years in international marketing, she spent 17 years as a “volunteer queen” while raising her children. One of her jobs was coordinating the local Stanford admissions volunteer group—which led her to becoming an IEC.

Holmdahl received her BA in political science from Stanford and completed the UCLA certificate in college counseling. She is a member of NACAC and PNACAC. A frequent speaker at local schools and PTA groups, Holmdahl presented at the Washington State PTA convention and to several hundred people at a district PTA meeting. She is currently a member of the IECA Outreach Committee.

Holmdahl has two sons who have recently graduated from Stanford, and she has been married to her husband for 27 years. She loves all of her past experiences—such as accompanying the middle school choir, being team mom for every single sports team, serving as PTA president and alumni board president—but she often tell students that it’s okay if they don’t know what they want to be when they grow up because it took her until 40 to figure it out!

*Anne Holmdahl
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Elisa Knudson (MN) has been an IEC for 8 years and was an Associate member. Although she began her career in the legal field, she has been involved in education for the past 17 years. She cofounded Nova Classical Academy, which just celebrated 15 years, and served as its first board chair and on several committees; evaluated charter schools as an educational consultant; and later found her passion transitioning to access in postsecondary education, working with an independent college consultant in St. Paul before she started her own practice.

Knudson received a BS in political science from Mount Holyoke College and a JD from Washington College of Law, American University. She recently attended IECA’s Professional Member Retreat in Boca Raton.

In addition to her volunteer work at Nova Classical Academy, she serves on the board of a neighborhood women’s group and volunteered to edit a book written in Spanish and being translated to English.

Born in New York City, Knudson was raised in Mexico, Brazil, and Venezuela, but she has lived in St. Paul, MN, for 30 years. She is married and has four children ages 20–29. She loves to play tennis, read, and visit her children around the country!

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Specialty: C*



Lucia Martin (PR) has been an IEC for 12 years and was an Associate member. Currently vice president for curriculum and development for Colegio San Ignacio de Loyola, in San Juan,

she held previous academic and leadership positions at the TASIS School in Dorado, the Caribbean Preparatory School, and the Colegio Puertorriqueño de Niñas.

Martin earned an MA in educational leadership and administration from George Washington University, a JD from the University of Puerto Rico, School of Law, and a BA in psychology from the University of Massachusetts-Amherst. She is a member of NACAC.

Martin works with the Luis Miranda Casanas Foundation to create a college going culture for students from very disadvantaged backgrounds. She is helping to start an Andover Bread Loaf program in Puerto Rico and working with the Jesuit High School and the community to create a community center for a local barrio.

Martin volunteers on the board of Fundacion Santa Maria de los Angeles, volunteers at Para La Naturaleza, Fideicomiso de Conservación de Puerto Rico, is part of a Puerto Rico Supreme Court effort to evaluate educational programs to work in conjunction with the Asociación de Escuelas Privadas, is a judge and evaluation committee member for Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE), and serves as a law clerk at the Circuit Court of Appeals.

Martin has two daughters, ages 14 and 15 and is a reader and a walker who loves nature and participates in adventure in the rivers, mountains, and oceans of Puerto Rico.

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Specialty: C*



Dana Rolander (OH) has been an IEC for 6 years and was an Associate member. After many years working in marketing in the financial services industry, she started

an independent marketing consulting firm where she continued that work and segued into the education industry.

Rolander holds a BA in journalism and mass communication with minors in English writing and sociology from the University of Iowa and a certificate in college counseling from UCLA Extension. She is a member of NACAC, OACAC, and WACAC.

Working with aspiring college athletes across many sports (golf, volleyball, lacrosse, swimming, rowing, basketball, and polo), Rolander specializes in helping prospective college sailors through her second company called College Sailing Associates. She has been active in the community for many years, conducted marketing for school levy campaigns, and was a trustee for the local school foundation and a board member for the athletic boosters and the Lake Geneva Yacht Club.

Rolander has a husband and three sons, two recent college graduates who now work in Austin and Boston, and a high school senior. She loves playing tennis, skiing, and boating.

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Specialty: C*



Marilyn van Löben Sels (CA) was an Associate member and has been an IEC for 14 years. Previously, she was an e21 school improvement facilitator in McClatchy High

School, an NCLB compliance coordinator in Washington Unified School District, and a reading intervention specialist for low-income, underachieving students.

van Löben Sels earned a BA in French from Stanford University, an elementary life teaching credential from UC-Davis School of Education, and a certificate of college counseling from UCLA Extension. She is member of NACAC and WACAC.

For 10 years, van Löben Sels has presented a college workshop series for the Sacramento Public Library System. She has volunteered as keynote speaker for the Johns Hopkins Center for Talented Youth (CTY) and is a speaker and presenter for a local IB high school's College Sunday. In addition, she organizes an annual free student resume workshop for Stanford alumni each May, is a liaison to SAC Prep Charter School, and traveled with a team to Paradise High School after the Camp Fire to support students with the college application process.

An active volunteer in her children's schools and activities, she is now leading her granddaughter's Girl Scout troop. She served two terms on the executive board of the Sacramento Stanford alumni club and currently sits on the Board of Governors of the Stanford Alumni Association.

van Löben Sels and her husband live in the Sacramento area and enjoy family gatherings and trips to the beach with their four children, their spouses, and five grandchildren. She is a real beach bum!

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Specialty: C*



On the Road

Sarah Brachman, IECA's manager of communications, attended a disaster communications work group at NACAC headquarters on March 13. Led by NACAC's CEO, Joyce Smith, communications representatives from NACAC, College Board, ACT, Common App, American School Counselors Association, AACRAO (American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers) met to work on a common protocol for responding to natural disaster or other crises that may affect students and families in the college admission process. The group plans to meet again in the coming months.



▲ **Mark Sklarow**, IECA CEO; **Rachel King**, IECA conference manager; and **Valerie Vasquez-Guzman**, IECA manager of educational programs, attended the Atlanta planning meeting in March. Joined by 30 IECA members as well as representatives from Applerouth, SCAD, Georgia Tech, Skyland Trail, Brightstone Transitions, Agnes Scott College, and Darlington School, the group began the planning process with recommendations for speakers and content for the fall 2019 conference.



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Invaluable R & R

By Sherry Humphrey, MSW, IECA (KS)



It's about the R&R—and I don't mean rest and relaxation. For me, IECA is all about the relationships and the resources. IECA was a godsend to me when I started my practice six years ago and still is today, even more so.

Let me first talk about the relationships that one can tap into and cultivate with the membership. For new members, the mentor program is a great way to extract information from a seasoned independent educational consultant (IEC)—invaluable when diving into your own practice. Attending the conferences and participating in the college tours is a bridge to network and establish friendships. That time on the bus really opens you up to meeting people from all over the country who have a variety of different practice models.

I live in Kansas City and there are not many IECs in the area, both an advantage and a disadvantage. There are also no regional groups in my area so the relationships and friendships that I have cultivated through IECA have been wonderful. I am in contact with many members throughout the country on a regular basis. My practice benefits from those friendships as we seek each other out, network, and exchange ideas regarding our practices and higher education issues. We have even traveled on trips together in different regions of the country to visit colleges. Having business colleagues throughout the country is fun and such an asset.

Now onto the resources. What's not to love about ready-made marketing tools, interesting free webinars, top-rate conferences, the exceptional Summer Training Institute, the TalkList, peer resources that are generously shared, a digital library stocked full of topics, and an old-fashioned hard copy of *Insights*. Some of us still like to receive snail mail that isn't a credit card offer. And the IECA logo certainly adds a sense of professionalism to my website and email communication.

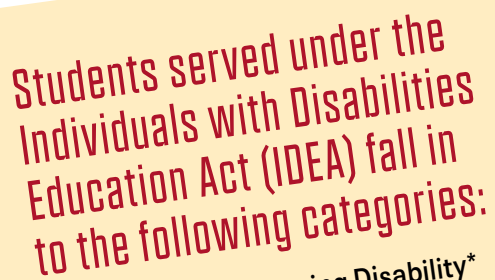
All the above is what differentiates a true professional IEC with proven expertise from a person going rogue without any training. That's why I joined. I feel some R & R coming on; time for Netflix.

Sherry Humphrey can be reached at shumphrey50@gmail.com.

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Landmark College	24	www.landmark.edu
Landmark School	16	landmarkschool.org
Little Keswick School	5	www.littlekeswickschool.net
Lynn University	8	www.lynn.edu
The Marvelwood School	29	www.marvelwood.org
Marymount Manhattan College	22	www.mmm.edu
Meadows Behavioral Healthcare	10	www.claudiblackcenter.com
Purnell School	25	purnell.org/admissions
Rectory School	26	www.rectoryschool.org
Riverview School	28	https://riverviewschool.org
St. Margaret's School	27	www.sms.org
Vanguard School	24	www.vanguardschool.org

IDEA and Learning Disabilities



- ## *Top 5 Diagnosed Learning Disabilities

- Of those students
diagnosed with a
learning disability:

From National Center for Education Statistics (2018)