



Supporting Asian students during COVID-19
page 9



Strategies for EF-challenged students
page 13



Reaching out to colleagues
page 20

IECA⁺

INSIGHTS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE INDEPENDENT EDUCATIONAL CONSULTANTS ASSOCIATION

Calendar

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, several IECA events have been rescheduled or gone virtual. IECA is posting the most up-to-date information on the Member Network.

August 11
Webinar: College Consultants Who Care

August 28
Associate & Student Members Virtual Roundtable

September 7
Labor Day: National office closed

September 8
Webinar: College Transition for High-Achieving Students with Preexisting Mental Health Issues

October 13
Webinar: Two Schools' Innovations to Ensure Their Graduates are Prepared

Inside Insights

President's Letter	2
Spring Into Summer Conference Recap	3
Community College for International Students	17
In the News	23
Regional Groups	24
Foundation	25
Introductions	26

August/September 2020

Combating Systemic Racism as an IEC

By Sydney Montgomery, Esq., IECA Associate (MD)



The recent killings of Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and George Floyd have sparked conversations among IECA members and the National

Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) about systemic racism and the ways in which individual members can act to combat their own racism and racism in their communities. I am glad these conversations are taking place. According to the 2018 IECA "State of the Profession," there are over 2,700 independent educational consultants (IECs) across various professional organizations. Despite this growth, IECs represented in these organizations continue to be overwhelmingly White.

It is important to the aim of dismantling White supremacy and racial injustice that White allies critically examine their own complicity (however unintentional). My aim is not to quell conversations that are taking place but offer my own perspective as a Black woman coming from a working-class background.

In an effort to do good and reverse the discomfort of providing high-cost services to mostly White students, I have heard many IECs look to providing pro bono resources to underserved Black communities. In fact, on the IECA website and in



promotional materials, we state that one of the things that make IECA members different is that "over 95% of our members provide significant pro bono work, either individually or through charitable community or national organizations." (<https://link.iecaonline.com/IECA-member-difference>)

The desire to help underserved communities is, of course, good in a way (as long as it does not turn into White-saviorism and ego-stroking), but I want to challenge this profession to think critically about the implications of that desire. Put more plainly, I want to challenge this conflation of Black students with pro bono and poor students. Black students aren't just found in Community-Based Organizations (CBOs), non-profits, Boys & Girls Clubs, and low-income

continued on page 4

Opportunities from Adversity

Opportunity. This is likely not a word that most would associate with the first of half of the year 2020. When I was asked to consider moving into the presidency of IECA we had not yet heard of COVID-19, and the important conversations surrounding racism were not yet front and center in the discussions at our board table. We were less than one year past the Varsity Blues scandal and many of our worries were focused on the Department of Justice ruling on NACAC's CEPP. While the issues we are facing now may be different from those front of mind at the start of the year, I remain excited about the **opportunities** that lie ahead for both our association and our profession.

One might assume that IECA members may have been hesitant to voluntarily take on any leadership role in our association during this uncertain time. In fact, the response has actually been just the opposite. The number of members who have stepped up to lead professional development **opportunities** to support their IECA colleagues during these uncertain times has been incredible. In addition, we have been fortunate to have members who have spoken up about the important role we play in combating systemic racism, and have volunteered their time to educate our members on what they can—and should—do to promote anti-discrimination.



Kristina Dooley

This show of support and dedication to the work we do has made me even more excited about the **opportunities** we have to make IECA stronger and even more valuable to our members.

Since COVID-19 hit, the IECA staff has worked tirelessly to transition both our spring conference and Summer Training Institute to an online format. Their dedication during these challenging times has surpassed expectations. They have supported members 24/7 as we have moved to being nearly 100% virtual in our work. They have taken this **opportunity** to look at how we engage with members around the world and have helped us become even more geographically and financially inclusive with our professional development offerings. In addition, they have begun anti-bias training and are participating in their own professional development to learn how to better support our members of color and become a more inclusive association. While the events of the past few months have been a terrible time in our history, they have provided an **opportunity** for all of us in IECA to have a very important conversation on race. This is just the tip of the iceberg.

As an IEC it is in my nature to provide tangible next steps as we move forward. First, I would like to ask all of you to think about who amongst our members, or from the IECA staff, has supported you in some way during the challenging months we have just traversed. Take a moment to let them know that their efforts have not gone unnoticed and thank them for providing **opportunities** to help you grow as a professional during these challenging times. Next, consider the role that YOU play in our association, and think about what excites you and where you think you might be able to contribute your time, talent, and treasures. As an association that relies on volunteers, I am hopeful that many of you who have not yet had an **opportunity** to engage with IECA in this way will consider now the time to do so. Finally, as we move forward, I would like to thank all of you for giving me the **opportunity** to lead our association over the next two years. I am fortunate to be working alongside an exceptional group of board members, committee chairs, regional group leaders, and IECA staff members. I am excited about the many **opportunities** that IECA members will be provided in the coming months and years and am thrilled to have all of you joining me on this journey.



Kristina Dooley, CEP
IECA President

IECA⁺ INSIGHTS

Published by:

**Independent Educational
Consultants Association**

3251 Old Lee Highway, Suite 510
Fairfax, Virginia 22030

Phone: 703-591-4850

Fax: 703-591-4860

www.IECAonline.com

email: info@IECAonline.com

President: Kristina Dooley

Chief Executive Officer:
Mark H. Sklarow

Deputy Executive Director:
Sue S. DePra

Director of Communications:
Sarah S. Brachman

Editor: Cyndi Bohlin

Design and Layout: Sarah S. Cox

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

IECA's First Virtual Conference a Success

IECA's 2020 Spring Into Summer Conference—our first-ever all-virtual conference—was a huge success!

More than 1,300 registrants—including 750+ IECs and hundreds of college, program, and school representatives—came together July 13-17 for pre-con workshops and tours as well as three full days of programming, all from the comfort of attendees' own homes! Highlights included:

- Pre-conference sessions on teen anxiety, the evolution of therapeutic consulting, financial aid, and psychoeducational/neuropsychological evaluations
- College tours of Princeton, University of Connecticut, Clemson, and Cornell
- Live keynotes with ACE speakers exploring the power of emotional intelligence; strategies to support equity and access in educational consulting; and how to recognize and ease student and parent anxiety
- Informative pre-recorded breakout sessions on a range of topics, followed by live Q&As with the panelists



- Stimulating roundtable discussions focused on topics relevant to IECs and program and school representatives
- An Exhibit Hall where IECs could review/download booth resources, engage in live chats with representatives, or leave messages and questions
- The first-ever Dedicated K-12 School Exchange, as well as a Therapeutic Info Swap and College Speaker & College Showcase

"The Scavenger Hunt was a nice way to have us check out all booths [in the Exhibit Hall]. I found vendors that may help our counseling services, and also with my own son as he enters 10th grade with his eyes on college."



- Fun after-hours social events ranging from yoga to trivia to a "quarantine cruise" and more


Everyone who attended the IECA conference can earn CE hours. Visit the conference website for detailed instructions (<https://link.iecaonline.com/CE-2020Conference>).

Even though the conference has ended, registrants may continue to view the 50+ hours of ACE speakers, breakout sessions, and campus tours, and to visit the Exhibit Hall booths, through August 14 on the conference website (<https://www.eventscribe.com/2020/IECAonline/>).

While we missed seeing you all in person, we appreciate your sense of adventure with this new, interactive format and hope you enjoyed the informative content and multiple opportunities to connect with one another!

"The virtual experience has been better than expected. I love the fact that I can go back to the recorded sessions over the next few weeks and see more than had I attended in person."

MANY THANKS TO OUR CONFERENCE SPONSORS!

Platinum Sponsors: Dwight Global Online School, Juniper Canyon Recovery Center for Women, North Cedar Academy, and Summit Educational Group. **Silver Sponsors:** Advantage College Planning Franchising, Inc., Brehm Preparatory School, Eagle Hill School-Greenwich, The Evergreen State College, OPTIONS Transitions to Independence, Shrub Oak International School, Spring Ridge Academy, and The Vanguard School. **Bronze Sponsors:** Alpine Academy, Benchmark Transitions, Colleges That Change Lives, Fay School, High Point University, JRI Schools, McLean Hospital, Newport Academy, Northwest College Support, St. Thomas More School, and Visa Life Innovations. **General Sponsors:** Applerouth Tutoring Services, Shire House, SMARTTRACK® College Funding, and Wow Writing Workshop. 

neighborhoods. The repeated fusing of “low-income” and “minority” perpetuates the stereotypes that most Black students are poor and disadvantaged. It sets up a dichotomy that most students are either rich and White or poor and Black. This is a dangerous mental schema for those of us in this profession. Too often the only time Black students are mentioned by IECs is in reference to their income or state of being underprivileged.

Systemic racism doesn't just affect students who are poor and Black. Wealthy Black students are victims of systemic racism. Boarding school and prep school Black students are victims of systemic racism. Black students who get into Princeton and Harvard are victims of systemic racism. Legacy Black students are victims of systemic racism. Systemic racism does not stop affecting Black individuals just because they become the CEO of a company, even if that company makes the Forbes 500 list.

If you are genuine about anti-racist work and committed to dismantling White supremacy, the question you must ask yourself is whether you feel just as passionate about helping dismantle systemic racism for the wealthy Black student with a 4.0 GPA as you do the archetypical “low-income” Black student from a poor neighborhood. I am not implying that these students have equal advantages or are the same, far from it, but what I am saying is that fighting systemic racism cannot just be confined to pro bono work. Black and minority students undermatch in the college application process *across all socioeconomic statuses*.

These students are subject to the ills of systemic racism that many members of IECA are either unaware of, willfully ignorant of, or are staunchly opposed to believing exist. To have (primarily) White IECs who do not understand or believe in systemic racism actively pursue working with students of color on their college search opens the organization up to intense scrutiny as a vehicle through which negligent White educators continue to perpetuate systems of harm. I do not think that the goal of most IECs is to create harm, but the harm occurs through implicit bias, through perpetuating the cycle of undermatching, through micro and macro-aggressions, and ultimately through not fully understanding the needs of these students because they do not understand the systems that affect the day-to-day lived experiences of these students. Without this understanding, how can IECs adequately assess the best fit school for these students? Without understanding systemic racism, how can IECs “know and understand the philosophies, values, missions, goals, approaches, and methods of the schools, universities, programs, and therapeutic institutions they recommend.” (IECA *Principles of Good Practice*. I. Competence, C).

Steps IECA Can Take to Help its Members Combat Systemic Racism

In its statement to the organization last month, IECA neglected to include any concrete action steps it planned to take toward combating systemic racism and/or the lack of diversity in the organization. IECA needs to consider adding cultural competency and/or diversity, equity, and inclusion training as an integral part of membership. There are several reasons why I think this is absolutely necessary.

As part of the benefits of membership, IECA states to provide “Education, Training, and Networking,” however, while there

exists ample training on business topics, school and college topics, therapeutic topics, and global topics, there is a dearth of robust and meaningful topics on diversity, equity, or inclusion. IECA cannot uphold the mission of “promoting the highest quality independent educational consulting to students and families seeking skilled, ethical, academic or therapeutic guidance; to enhance professional development; and to foster career satisfaction among members” without critically examining the lack of diversity and cultural competency among its members.

It cannot be part of IECA's Core Values to “recognize the importance of diversity and sensitivity” if IECA does nothing to combat racial inequality and its effects both within the organization and with the students we serve. Cultural competency training is not a partisan or political issue. Many organizations and corporations across the nation have cultural competency training as a mandatory part of Human Resources programming. The *IECA Principles of Good Practice* “are designed to promote and maintain the highest standards of professional service and personal conduct among all IECA members.” In order to deliver high standards of professional service, our members must be competent in their interactions and the context of their relationships.

While the below data points specifically refer to school-based counselors, the same principles hold true for IECs.

In the *Journal of Ethnic & Cultural Diversity in Social Work* (2011), Robert Mindrup, Alicia Lambergheni-West, and Beverly Spray note in their article, “White Privilege and Multicultural Counseling Competence: The Influence of Field of Study, Sex, and Racial/Ethnic

Advertisement



INSTEAD OF PLANNING FOR COLLEGE...
START COLLEGE.

Learn more today!
Explore simons-rock.edu.

Bard College at Simon's Rock is the only four-year residential college designed for thoughtful, motivated students who want to start college after the 10th or 11th grade.

84 ALFORD ROAD, GREAT BARRINGTON, MA 01230

Exposure” that many counselors work and interact with minority students in their daily activities, yet many White school counselors have limited knowledge of how whiteness and White identity development may influence their interactions with these students.² Counseling literature suggests that mindfulness regarding White privilege and racism are important for White counselors to develop a positive connection with racially and ethnically diverse clients.³ A crucial part of the success of the interactions between White IECs and minority students is the acknowledgment and understanding of White privilege and the systems of inequality present.

A crucial part of the success of the interactions between White IECs and minority students is the acknowledgment and understanding of White privilege and the systems of inequality present.

Research by Christine Mulhern at Harvard University, cited in a 2019 article (<https://www.chalkbeat.org/2019/11/20/21121875/it-s-not-just-teachers-how-counselor-diversity-matters-for-students-of-color/>) (among other places) states that there is a 3.8% increase in the likelihood of a low-income minority student graduating from high school when paired with a counselor of the same race. This points to both the need to have more Black and Brown IECs as well as the need to educate the White members of IECA on how to work more conscientiously when interacting with this population of students. Our membership should be aware of and have an understanding of work such as that in “We Want Black Students, Just Not You: How White Admissions Counselors Screen Black Prospective Students,” from Ted Thornhill, an assistant professor of sociology at Florida Gulf Coast University, which shows how racism operates on the college/university admissions level (<https://link.iecaonline.com/race-screening>). A summary of his research can be found in *Forbes* (<https://link.iecaonline.com/race-forbes>). There is also research on gender and ethnic bias in letters of recommendation that directly affects the college applications of the students we serve (<https://link.iecaonline.com/race-gender>). This is not an exhaustive list, but I hope it is a sample that allows you to see why an actual understanding of these issues is integral to the work we do with students.

IECs are Equipped to Enact Real Systemic Change

I think IECs are equipped to enact real systemic change, change that isn't limited to helping five to 10 pro bono students get into college. We can make a change on a larger level. We can make change on a *systemic*, rather than an *individual*, level. I am not saying don't do pro bono work, but don't let pro bono work be the checkbox for you on addressing this issue.

- We must think critically about the diversity within our own organization. How can we recruit more Black and Latinx IECs? What are the barriers to entry (financial and otherwise)? If diversity is an issue this organization cares about, there can be more targeted and meaningful ways to increase it. IECA can dedicate resources, time, and personpower toward sustained recruitment efforts of minority IECs.
- I know for many, being an IEC is not the primary household income. Having more workshops and professional development series that support IECs trying to make this career their primary household income could also lead to greater diversity.
- We should also examine the ways in which this organizational space is welcoming or not welcoming to minorities. White allies can do a better job of calling out and educating colleagues who spread racist views on the Member Network and elsewhere. It is not enough to just be non-racist, IECA should work to make the organization *anti-racist* and offer (and strongly insist that members engage in) professional development geared toward this.
- We have incredible access to college admissions officers. We can make it apparent that diversity is a priority to us. We can mention this during webinars or tours; we can write to our alma maters. We should be inquiring how many admissions recruiters/enrollment managers are Black. We don't have to accept the tagline when colleges continue to say diversity is important to them while doing very little to actually increase their numbers and foster a welcoming and safe racial environment.
- For IECs concerned that their work primarily benefits wealthy White students, I invite you to consider donating a portion of that money to an organization that is fighting systemic racism on a structural level. This could even be a set recurring donation or percentage of your income.
- All of us can advocate and push for legislation and policies that dismantle structural racism by getting in contact with our local and state government officials.

Having Conversations About Race

I want to challenge non-Black IECs to think about the conversations you are having with yourselves and others about racism. Especially when you are in spaces with Black colleagues and friends, I want you to think about whether you are centering yourself in the conversation.

continued on page 7

¹ Mindrup, R. M., Spray, B. J., & Lamberghini-West, A. (2011). “White privilege and multicultural counseling competence: The influence of field of study, sex and racial/ ethnic exposure.” *Journal of Ethnic & Cultural Diversity in Social Work*, 20, 20-38. doi:10.1080/15313204.2011.545942

² Moss, Lauren, Singh, Annliese, “White School Counselors Becoming Racial Justice Allies to Students of Color: A Call to the Field of Counseling”; See also, Helms, J. B. (1990). *Black and White Racial Identity: Theory, Research, and Practice*. New York, NY: Greenwood. doi:10.2307/2073777

³ Ancis, J., & Sanchez-Hucles, J. (2000). “A Preliminary Analysis of Counseling Students’ Attitudes Toward Counseling Women and Women of Color: Implications for Cultural Competency Training.” *Journal of Multicultural Counseling & Development*, 28(1), 16-31. doi:0.1002/j.2161-1912.2000.tb00225.x; See also Blitz, L. V. (2006). “Owning Whiteness: The Reinvention of Self and Practice.” *Journal of Emotional Abuse*, 6(2/3), 241-263. doi:10.1300/J135v06n02_15; See also Chao, R. C. (2013). “Race/Ethnicity and Multicultural Competence Among School Counselors: Multicultural Training, Racial/Ethnic Identity, and Color-Blind Racial Attitudes.” *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 91(2), 140-151. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1330852059?accountid=11920>; Constantine, M. G., Warren, A. K., & Miville, M. L. (2005). “White Racial Identity Dyadic Interactions in Supervision: Implications for Supervisees’ Multicultural Counseling Competence.” *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 52, 490-496. doi:10.1037/0022-0167.52.4.490

MAKE WASATCH ACADEMY PART OF YOUR JOURNEY THIS FALL.

Wasatch Academy has been at the forefront of education as a premier college preparatory co-ed boarding school since 1875. Our project-based learning is tailored to each individual student to create a supportive, safe, and structured environment to gain confidence and success.

The campus is located in rural Utah away from outside distractions and is close to 5 national parks and ample outdoor recreation!

We welcome students from more than 30 countries and 35 states, providing an exceptional opportunity for students to learn from others and themselves.

Enjoy freedom and flexibility through 2021 with our free COVID-19 Enrollment Protection: our guarantee for a full, prorated refund should the school cancel a semester for any reason. Visit us at wasatchacademy.org.



"Let's Talk About Race: Nic Stone and Jodi Picoult" is an excellent talk that speaks to this issue and is beneficial to listen to. The talk can be found on both YouTube (<https://tinyurl.com/letstalkaboutracejodipicoult>) and Facebook.

Some IECs have wondered in these conversations about the "self-segregation" of Black students in the dining halls and on college campuses. I encourage you to read the 20th Anniversary Edition of Dr. Beverly Tatum's *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria? And Other Conversations about Race* which gives an overview at the beginning in which she explains that "because of residential segregation, economic disadvantage and racial disadvantage are inextricably linked. The social context in which students of color and White students enter academic environments together, in those few places where they do, is still a context in which their lived experiences are likely to have been quite different from each other and in which racial stereotyping is still likely to be an inhibiting factor in their cross-group interactions."

My own two cents is that it is possible, regardless of any differences in income levels, that some Black students do not want to sit with the White students partially because of previous negative social interactions and the fact that Black students are tired. They are tired of being the token minority. They are tired because they have had to overcome several obstacles to get into the schools they did and maybe they just want to sit with their Black friends in the dining hall and recharge before their next assignment/class/test instead of having to be the educator of race for their White peers or endure micro/macro-aggressions.

Resources for IECs

There exists a wealth of resources for cultural competency training in various forms. I would like to see IECA curate a combination of resources that would create the standard of professional development for its members. Some sample programs are included below.

- The American School Counselor Association has a wealth of race and equity resources that is being continually updated. <https://www.schoolcounselor.org/school-counselors/professional-development/learn-more/race-and-equity-resources>
- The University of North Carolina, Charlotte has a Graduate Certificate in Anti-Racism in Urban Education that also provides foundational courses on what racism is in this country. <https://reel.uncc.edu/graduate-certificate-anti-racism-urban-education>
- The Institute for Anti-Racist Education works with school districts, individual schools, departments, and educators on anti-racist pedagogy and practices. <https://www.antiracisted.org/>
- The Center for Racial Justice in Education also offers trainings, consultations, and in-depth partnerships to educators, schools, and educational organizations who want to advance racial justice. <https://centerracialjustice.org/trainings/>
- The Columbia Teachers' College is offering the recordings from its Reimagining Education: Teaching Learning and Leading for a Racially Just Society Summer Institute online.

<https://www.tc.columbia.edu/continuing-professional-studies/programs/all-offerings/reimagining-education/>

- New York University's Office of Global Inclusion, Diversity, and Strategic Innovation (OGI) has also curated anti-racism education, programs, and resources. <https://www.nyu.edu/life/global-inclusion-and-diversity/anti-racism.html>
- Jane Elliott, internationally known teacher, lecturer, diversity trainer, and recipient of the National Mental Health Association Award for Excellence in Education has several learning materials including a checklist for combating racism. <https://janeelliott.com/commitment>

Resources For the Families That IECs Work With


Below are some resources that parents may find helpful as they talk to their own children about race. I encourage you to read them and then also share them with the parents and families that you work with. Credit to the Potomac and Chesapeake Association for College Admission Counseling (PCACAC) for sharing some of these in their own newsletter and as part of their public statement condemning racism.

- "Your Kids Aren't Too Young to Talk About Race: Resource Roundup" written by Katrina Michie: <https://tinyurl.com/talkingtochildrenaboutrace>
- "Talking to Kids about Racism" conversations with Dr. Kira Banks, creator of Raising Equity, and Dr. Beverly Daniel Tatum, author of *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria? And Other Conversations About Race*.
Episode 1: <https://tinyurl.com/talkingtokidsepisode1>
Episode 2: <https://tinyurl.com/talkingtokidsepisode2>

Potential Organizations For Donation

Below are some organizations that you can donate to that are working to dismantle White supremacy and increase educational opportunities for Black students:

- Equal Justice Initiative: <https://eji.org/>
- NAACP Legal Defense Fund: <https://naacpldf.org>
- Know Your Rights Camp Legal Defense Initiative: <https://www.knowyourrightscamp.com/legal>
- United Negro College Fund: <https://uncf.org/>
- National Society of Black Engineers: <https://nsbe.org/home.aspx>
- National Black Law Students Association: <https://www.nblsa.org/>
- Thurgood Marshall College Fund: <https://www.tmcf.org/>

It is not enough that our members visit schools, attend tours and webinars, and go to conferences. We must become an organization that refuses to hide behind the veil of ignorance when it comes to our interactions with diverse students and the impact that we have on their education and, ultimately, their future. We can either be part of creating a profound positive impact, or we can be part of a system that, even if unknowingly, perpetuates systems of harm. I hope we can be the former. 

Sydney Montgomery, S. Montgomery Admissions Consulting, can be reached at sydney@smontgomeryconsulting.com



lynn.edu/visit

If you're defiantly optimistic

you're
LYNN

We have a different way of doing things. Three-year bachelor's degrees. iPad®-powered learning. Dialogues instead of lectures. We come from everywhere and believe we can do anything. We're Lynn. And if your students are defiantly optimistic like us, they're Lynn, too.

We invite you and your students to explore our visit options today.

+1 561-237-7900 | lynn.edu/visit

iPad is a registered trademark of Apple Inc. Lynn University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, genetic information, age, pregnancy, parenting status, veteran status or retirement status in its activities and programs. In accordance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Lynn University does not discriminate on the basis of sex. Inquiries concerning the application of the non-discrimination policy may be directed to the Lynn University Compliance Officer/Title IX Coordinator at 3601 N. Military Trail, Boca Raton, FL 33431, titleixcoordinator@lynn.edu, or +1 561-237-7727; or to the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights. Lynn University is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges to award baccalaureate, master's and doctoral degrees. Contact the Commission on Colleges at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097 or call +1 404-679-4500 for questions about the accreditation of Lynn University. © 2020 Lynn University



Supporting the Well-Being of Asian Students During COVID-19

By Caroline Min (Bryn Mawr College); Yining (Elaine) Yan, Intern at Cogita Education Initiatives, Undergraduate student at Tufts University; and Marina Lee, EdM, Former IECA Global Committee Chair (MA)

Asians make up one of the largest minority groups in schools and universities. Within this context, we bring what we hope will be helpful to educators, families, and students during the COVID-19 pandemic.

This year, Asian students found themselves in difficult situations never encountered before. The global crisis seems to reveal and worsen some issues that have long existed in the Asian and Asian American student community. In April and May, the Harvard Graduate School of Education “Let’s Talk!” Conference and the MGH Institute of Health Professions (IHP) collaboratively hosted a COVID-19 webinar series. The goal of this webinar series was to support the emotional well-being of Asian and Asian American students during this time of uncertainty. Professionals from various fields addressed relevant topics and provided specific guidance, two of which were centered around the anti-Asian racism and mental health issues evoked by the pandemic.

Anti-Asian discrimination is not new to the Asian community in the US, but the pandemic has, as stated in one of the webinars, “opened the floodgates” for racism. Terms such as “Wuhan virus” and “Chinese virus” circulate on the internet, encouraging the general public to act out their frustrations on Asian people, specifically of Chinese descent. Recent cases of hate crimes targeting Asians have been reported across the US, demonstrating

the need to address an important question: How do we support Asian and Asian American students during this critical time of physical isolation and xenophobia? Following are some tips from the “Let’s Talk! X MGH” webinar series.

Acknowledge the History of Anti-Asian Racism in the US

Asian immigrants have experienced legal exclusions and severe discrimination since the first flow of Chinese immigration in the 1850s. During that time, Asian immigrants were described as “yellow peril” by the mainstream media and society. This stereotype was shifted in the 1950s. According to Dr. Justin Chen, members of the community started to be seen as “achieve[ing] a higher degree of socio-economic success than the population average.” However, the new label “model minority” did not free Asian Americans from stereotypical images, but rather migrate them from one pigeonhole to another.

This stereotype of “model minority” has remained with Asian students throughout the years. Yet, a recent article by NBC News suggested that the anti-Asian racism elevated by COVID-19 is changing the stereotype of Asian Americans from “model minority” back to “yellow peril.” Despite the fact that we are all victims of this pandemic, many believe

continued on page 10



Marina Lee can be reached at marinalee@cogitaeducation.com



Yining (Elaine) Yan

that all Asians are to blame. In order to understand students' struggles, it is essential for educators to recognize the root of anti-Asian discrimination in history and the developing aspects in the present. Students, on the other hand, should understand that their struggles are based on deep-rooted history rather than surfacing individual problems.

Recognize the Diverse Cultures and Their Uniqueness Under the Umbrella Term "Asian"

While educators should be aware of the ongoing anti-Asian racism, it is also important to remember that students come from diverse cultures even though they all identify as Asians. During this pandemic, students from every culture are in unique stances, which should be researched and recognized when educators approach them. Chinese students and students who are racialized as Chinese might have very different needs. Understanding the cultural context and using empathy are recommended for IECs who hope to think from the student's perspective and offer individualized solutions.

Understanding the cultural context and using empathy are recommended for IECs who hope to think from the student's perspective and offer individualized solutions.

Educate Students of Other Ethnic Groups

Although guiding and supporting Asian students is a must, schools and IECs should also seek to educate students of other ethnicities. Dr. Taharee A. Jackson countered a quote from Andrew Yang's speech on April 1, 2020, which states that "Asian Americans need to embrace and show our American-ness in ways we never have before." As Dr. Jackson pointed out, we should be holding the perpetrators of racism accountable, not the victims, and educators should work on promoting racial equality in their schools or communities.

Encourage Asian Students to Share Their Stories

It can be emotionally difficult for young adults to share their experiences when they become victims. However, without these voices, the public would take much more time to realize the severity of anti-Asian racism and its traumatic impact on individuals. Other Asian students can also feel empowered and connected with one another through hearing their narratives.

Even without the rise of anti-Asian racism prompted by the onset of COVID-19, the global pandemic has posed other difficulties for Asian students. The mandatory government-imposed self-quarantine regulations led to months of staying indoors, communicating and completing work online from the comfort of our homes. But students who quarantined alone were put at an increased risk of suffering from loneliness, given that humans are naturally social beings that usually need to be of somewhat close physical



Where Students Fit In and Stand Out

A coed independent boarding school for grades 9-12 in Burlington, Vermont

Rock Point School offers:

- A positive alternative to traditional schools for teens who have not found success in other educational settings.
- A college-preparatory education that focuses on helping students grow in and out of the classroom through warm, supportive, experiential learning, combined with clear boundaries and expectations.
- Experience working with students with anxiety, school refusal, and attention issues.



ROCK POINT SCHOOL

Become Your Best Self

rockpointschool.org

proximity to others. Even those who did not quarantine alone were still susceptible to fear and stress, induced by irrational thoughts regarding the virus and the sudden loss of life's predictability. Students who had to move out of campus mid-semester and return home may have also faced an array of challenges, including the sudden need to code-switch in the presence of family. Going back and forth between two cultures that have different stances, such as the disparities between the generally more conservative nature of Asia and the generally more liberal nature of the US, can create confusion, and students may feel the need to change accordingly each time they move.

Fortunately, there are many ways to help cope with negative thinking. It all starts with acknowledging our feelings without judgment. Some questions to ask ourselves include but are not limited to:


- What are other possibilities in this situation?
- What's the likelihood?
- Evidence for/against?
- How does believing this serve you?
- What would you tell someone else who is thinking about this?

Additionally, there are things we can do to calm down, including:

- Deep breathing, slow and deliberate
- Grounding exercises
- Guided progressive relaxation exercises
- Splashing water on face
- Jumping jacks or taking a walk
- Calling a trusted friend

It is important to seek professional help when needed, such as if you currently are or have been suffering from:

- Suicidal thoughts
- Hallucinations
- Paranoia
- Recurrent panic attacks
- Other issues related to either your body, school, or relationships

For teachers and educators, though much of the advice above can be helpful for non-Asian students, it's important to recognize the cultural pressures of international students that are distinct from those of other students. Brushing their worries aside and minimizing them, even if said with good intentions, can be counterproductive and reinforce self-judgment. Rather, it is better to be curious and present, to listen rather than trying to fix. During this time, creating affinity groups for those who are struggling is also a good idea. Lastly, it is helpful to advocate to students that self-care is not selfish. 

SOURCE:

US Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics (2019). *Digest of Education Statistics -- Table 306.20* [Data set].

Information on IECA's Working with Chinese Student Affinity Group can be found on our website: <https://link.iecaonline.com/affinity>

Members can also join this Affinity Group discussion on the IECA Member Network: <http://network.iecaonline.com>



Riverview School

There is so much more to your child than their learning challenges. What if there was a boarding school that understood this as well as you?

Riverview School is that school – one that nurtures strengths, embraces differences and puts students with complex language, learning and cognitive challenges on a firm footing for life.

Middle/High School, GROW Transition and Summer Programs – Ages 11-22.

508-888-0489

RiverviewSchool.org

East Sandwich, Cape Cod, Massachusetts

RECTORY STUDENTS ARE...

READY TO SUCCEED

{ WITH JUST THE RIGHT AMOUNT OF SUPPORT }

Rectory School's Individualized Instruction Program (IIP) is designed to address a range of academic needs with seamless integration into the academic day. This allows students to build skills, develop executive functioning strategies, and gain the remediation and enrichment they need to thrive in our overall academic program.

OUR LEARNING SPECIALISTS, ORTON-GILLINGHAM SPECIALISTS, AND READING SPECIALISTS OFFER EXPERTISE IN:

LEARNING DIFFERENCES

EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING SKILLS

ENRICHMENT & TEST PREPARATION

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING



www.rectoryschool.org/ieca

Rectory School is an independent, coed, junior boarding (5-9) and day school (Early Childhood-9) in Pomfret, CT.



BESANT HILL SCHOOL

A GLOBAL COMMUNITY WHERE STUDENTS DEVELOP THEIR INTELLECTUAL & ARTISTIC ABILITIES



4:1 STUDENT TO FACULTY RATIO

Our small class sizes maintain rigorous college preparatory curriculum whether on campus or online.

Our 520 acre campus is nestled outside the small town of Ojai, California.



DISCOVER
THE
POWER OF SMALL



100 STUDENTS FROM 20+ COUNTRIES



OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES ABOUND



NEW CERAMICS STUDIO

Our small, inclusive educational community fosters self-discovery and encourages individuality.

We have a few spots available for the 2020-2021 academic year. To apply, please contact Alex Spence, Director of Admissions & Financial Aid, at aspence@besanthill.org.

2020 COLLEGE ACCEPTANCES

18 GRADUATING SENIORS
\$1.7 MILLION IN SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS
6 ACCEPTANCES PER STUDENT





Practical Strategies for Executive Function-Challenged Students

By Scott Lutotanski, MEd, MC, State Street Education

Most of us have been there. We're working with a student who is just not "starting." It may be their college essays, an application, or schoolwork. Regardless of the details, the story arc is always the same: the student owed you some work for two months, and now it's the night before your deadline and they're emailing you to say they don't know what to do.

One high school junior I worked with had so much difficulty keeping track of his schoolwork, following deadlines, and getting started that three weeks would go by without him completing a single homework assignment. He was unable to answer questions about what he needed to do and he rarely understood, or was aware of, the components of his assignments. Sometimes, he'd play video games for eight hours straight, only to be surprised when he looked up and the sun had set.

This is the hallmark of a student with executive function (EF) challenges. For some students, the root of their problems is development. Others have

a skill gap. Regardless of the cause, they can all end up in the same place: school, college applications, and other tasks are very challenging to start, manage, and see through to the finish line.

Signs of EF Challenges

In many cases, it can be easy to identify a student who struggles with their EFs. There are consistent and archetypal indicators: missing assignments or leaving them incomplete, being constantly behind in their work, scrambling at the last second, misplacing papers or materials, and showing sloppy organization. The inability to create and use systems, routines, and everyday structures makes it especially difficult for these students to manage themselves and their work.

Compounding the issues that these students face is the emotional distress they can cause. EF difficulties can have a far-reaching impact on multiple facets of a student's life. Oftentimes, they interact with a

continued on page 14



Scott Lutotanski, State Street Education, can be reached at Scott@StateStreetEducation.com

student's emotional well-being, causing them to slip into lengthened bouts of anxiety, depression, or just feeling *stuck*.

There are other students who may not exhibit the obvious signs of EF struggles, but demonstrate less obvious indicators instead. For instance, they may have a hard time receiving and carrying out multi-step instructions or solving problems in a sequence—such as higher-level algebra or trigonometry problems. In other cases, these students may struggle with the writing process; this may manifest itself as difficulty with organizing and structuring their thoughts into an outline, writing and rewriting the same sentence or paragraph over and over trying to make it better. They get derailed by writer's block as they struggle to find the “ideal” word to fit in a sentence. Finally, some students may respond to a verbal question more slowly than most others. Typically, this happens when a student is taking longer to process what an instructor has said and keeps working hard to formulate a response. Whether the student is presenting the more obvious EF symptoms or the subtler ones, it is important to monitor not only the EFs themselves, but also their emotional well-being, in order to support that student within the work you do.

The Transition to College

Because I work with both high school and college students, I often observe how the EFs can impact students at different levels of schooling, and how they develop and change over that period of time. Some students who struggle with EFs in high school

do go on to succeed later in college, whereas others continue to struggle, and may experience more drastic negative effects from their EF challenges in the independent living environment that college provides.

Students who continue to underperform typically maintain their same high school patterns and habits in college without seeking change. They ignore building new systems, avoid trying out new strategies, and overlook developing new habits and instead, they wing it. Commonly, these students miss online postings, start to skip class, do not submit regular or weekly submissions, pull all-nighters and cram before tests, wait until the last second to get started on large assignments, and underestimate the time needed for most tasks. In some cases, these students start to withdraw from college life more broadly. They stop attending classes and never leave the dorm. Days can become one long video game stint or marathon Netflix session, without once stepping outside. This creates a multitude of problems that make it increasingly difficult for students to have a successful semester. The problems they experienced in high school become exacerbated in college without the appropriate attention, goal-setting, and practice.

How You Can Help a High School Student Struggling with EFs

One could make the argument that EFs are essential human functions that we should all work to master. In schools, however, they are mostly ignored, or it is assumed that students already have

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS ARLINGTON



UTA, a Carnegie R-1 university, provides a world-class education in the heart of the Dallas Fort-Worth Metroplex. We're proud to educate the next generation of innovators as they develop solutions to improve quality of life for all.

Students first. Excellence always.

That's the **MAVERICK IMPACT**



TAKE A VIRTUAL TOUR

REQUEST INFO


these skills. When it comes to building EF skills, the first thing to understand is that students who struggle with their EFs do not have the same thought patterns needed to automatically execute tasks as many other students. Managing the hours of the day by checking off tasks or projects on a to-do list is not intuitive for these students. In fact, it's unnatural and difficult.

The goal is to create a new cognitive roadmap for the student that will provide the structure they need to become better now and in the future.

Because executive functions are neurological skills, it's important to develop a new thought structure to help students execute tasks.

When we understand that these students do not have this innate ability, it can help us change the lens with which we view them. For example, a student will most likely have to observe how papers and assignments go into a folder, learn the strategies of how to be organized, and then practice that system repeatedly, perhaps with scaffolding to support them as they learn. The highest demand is put on EFs when students, like all of us, are faced with tasks that are more novel, more complex, and longer term.

The goal is to create a *new cognitive roadmap* for the student that will provide the structure they need to become better now and in the future. Because executive functions are neurological skills, it's important to develop a new thought structure to help students execute tasks. For example, if we are able to create a new cognitive roadmap for school organization and solidify this new behavior with consistent practice, the mastery of those skills can be applied to other life situations, such as effectively planning and packing a suitcase for a vacation. Naturally, this means that the framework for best supporting students to develop EF skills is to provide them with strategies and interventions to make things less novel, simpler, and shorter term.

The college admissions process is a perfect example of a novel, complex, long-term task. The key to supporting a student with EF challenges to successfully complete a task like this is to provide EF strategies that do the following: model and scaffold an organization system, assign self-imposed deadlines, engage in backwards planning over a long period, break large assignments into smaller steps, use a time tracker, set manageable and realistic goals, and commit to making these habits as routine as possible. An IEC's goal for the student is to help them be more effective, efficient, and independent as they learn to take the structures you initially provide to them and create new cognitive roadmaps that will strengthen and enhance their ability to manage novel tasks in the future. In doing so, you can help address the student's short-term needs as they grapple with the college admissions process, while also building learnable skills they can apply as they transition to college and beyond. 

Fay
School



An independent, co-educational school 25 miles from Boston serving Kindergarten through grade 9, with boarding available for grades 7-9.


Ninth Grade Leadership Program •
5-Day and 7-Day Boarding • Innovation Lab
for Creativity & Design • Interscholastic
Athletics • Public Speaking Program

SOUTHBOROUGH, MA • 508.490.8201



Top 25 secondary schools attended by Fay students in the past five years: Blair Academy, Brooks School, Choate Rosemary Hall, Concord Academy, Deerfield Academy, Groton School, Hotchkiss School, Kent School, Lawrenceville School, Loomis Chaffee School, Middlesex School, Milton Academy, Noble and Greenough School, Northfield Mt. Hermon School, Phillips Academy (Andover), Phillips Exeter Academy, Pomfret School, Rivers School, St. John's High School, St. George's School, St. Mark's School, St. Paul's School, Suffield Academy, Tabor Academy, Worcester Academy.

Visit us at www.fayschool.org



College Program at CooperRiis

*A Supported Education Model
For CooperRiis Residents*

Announcing a new program: The College Program at CooperRiis.

Designed for individuals whose college experience has been interrupted or inhibited by mental health challenges, the College Program at CooperRiis integrates educational services and supports with our powerful approach to mental health treatment to help residents whose recovery goals include a successful college experience.

Find out if the **College Program at CooperRiis** is right for your client or patient.

Call 828.894.7140

www.cooperriis.org/supported-college-program/



Elevating the Community College Transfer Pathway for International Students

By Heather Yush, MS, Associate Director of College & Transfer Relations, Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society

"The greatest challenges we face in a changing world are those of perceptions." Billy Mills, a 1964 Olympic gold medalist, shared his philosophy of self-empowerment with me and a theatre full of fellow coaches and student-athletes on the campus of Coffeyville Community College in Kansas in 2009.

Over a decade later, this quote applies to the opportunity for community colleges to seize the moment and ascend to a position of prominence amidst the rapidly changing higher education landscape. International students stand to benefit in ways that can be life-changing and of intergenerational impact from exposure to the community college transfer pathway.

Independent educational consultants (IECs) collectively possess the power as influencers and educators to simultaneously increase access for international students and expand the reach of community colleges through heightening awareness. Converting the road less traveled to the road traveled will involve encounters with

skeptics, and efforts may be met with resistance. There will be myths to dispel, minds to change, and misconceptions to overcome until the community college transfer pathway becomes recognized and respected as a prudent option. What can IECs do to position more international students for success via community college?

Educate Yourself to Educate Others

The airline industry cautions you to put on your own oxygen mask before assisting others. Similar logic applies here. Challenging yourself to become proficient in this area will make your IEC practice more inclusive and allow you to serve a more globally diverse population of students. Study and familiarize yourself with community colleges in the same way you research four-year institutions. Explore institutional websites, follow official social media pages, and contact community college representatives to ask questions or seek clarification. Include community

continued on page 18



Heather Yush can be reached at heather.yush@ptk.org

college visits on your campus tour circuits and, perhaps most importantly, talk to students.

In my experience, international students are eager and enthusiastic to share their story, especially to empower other international students. These under-told narratives are some of the most inspiring and courageous stories you will ever hear. Keeping in touch with students after they transfer will provide a network of near peers who can offer guidance to future clients. Immersing yourself in this community of students will allow you to understand their lived experiences and discover resources and opportunities, as well as obstacles and hardships, so you can aptly guide the next student.

Diversify College Lists

A primary function of IECs is the curation of a best-fit list of college options. A balanced list features an assortment of institutions matching the student's academic, financial, and social profile across a spectrum of admission probability. For international students especially, including community colleges on the list drastically expands the range of affordable options. Presenting a client with the direct cost comparison of a four-year institution versus a two-to-four-year option can be eye-opening, and the savings could be even greater if the student earns scholarships *because* of community college.

How do you select the community colleges to add to a list? Consider the student's target four-year institutions and work backwards. Jennie Kent and Jeff Levy's "Financial Aid for Nonresident Alien

Undergraduates" chart is a tremendous resource for investigating affordable four-year options. With the target four-year institution in mind, reverse engineer the path by researching which community colleges serve as pipelines or feeder campuses.

Contact the transfer and international student admission counselors at the four-year institution for recommendations on community colleges where future international students could get their start. These representatives frequently visit community colleges for recruitment purposes (sometimes even holding office hours on those campuses) and often know as much about surrounding community colleges as they do their own institution. They can speak to the transferability of courses, articulation agreements or bridge programs, and on-campus housing, and advise on the optimal plan to maximize scholarship and financial aid eligibility. The prospective student gains an advocate and advisor through early exposure to the admission counselor and avoids being a stealth mode applicant.

Reference the April/May 2018 edition of *Insights* for helpful primers written by Patricia O'Keefe and Jennie Kent on evaluating the fit of a community college campus for an international student. The community college pathway is only a choice for students who are aware it is an option, and IECs are perfectly positioned to create this familiarity.

Provide Evidence of Rigor

An unfortunate misunderstanding about community college is that open access somehow equates to low quality. For evidence of rigor,



The Teaching-Family Model (TFM) is an internationally recognized, evidence-based trauma-informed cognitive and behavioral approach that uses consistent, positive teaching moments to eliminate negative behaviors and equip students with the skills needed to succeed in life. As our students participate in weekly group, individual, and family therapies to address deficits, the Teaching-Family Model brings an established, time-honored approach for skills training and staff consultation in a residential treatment setting.

Teaching-Family Model is:

- ✕ A behavior management model
- ✕ Backed by decades of research
- ✕ A strength-based approach
- ✕ Trauma-informed, relational approach
- ✕ Experiential in nature to teach skills

If you are interested in learning more about TFM or Compass Rose, please contact our admissions office at **260.569.4757** or madeline.spring@compassroseacademy.org.



/CompassRoseAcademyOnline



@CompassRoseAca



/user/compassroseacademy

one doesn't need to look much further than the Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) chapter on the community college campus. With nearly 1,300 chapters worldwide, chances are there's a chapter of the official honor society of two-year colleges on a campus near you.

For nearly 70 percent of community colleges, Phi Theta Kappa's Honors in Action program serves as the honors program. Students earn an invitation to join the international honor society based on academic achievement, and members gain access to a wealth of resources and wraparound support services. Members engage in personal and professional development, campaign for leadership positions, compete for individual awards and chapter recognition, participate in academic conferences, and benefit from increased access to scholarships. Students also gain opportunities for publication in PTK's journal of undergraduate research, *Civic Scholar*, and in PTK's online literary journal, *Nota Bene*.

Accepting membership in PTK can help international students find their identity and gain confidence within an inclusive, supportive community of high-achieving peers. Phi Theta Kappa chapters are even more diverse than the colleges they serve in terms of the percentage of international students represented among its membership.


Share Outcomes


It's hard to argue with living proof. Parents and students may be more receptive to the community college pathway if they have real and current success stories. Take for example four

international students who assumed leadership roles in PTK and earned associate degrees from community colleges in New Jersey, Kansas, California, and Oklahoma. Collectively, they saved half a million dollars on their educations, and all four transferred to out-of-state universities to pursue their bachelor's degrees.

Joining PTK places students in a smaller pool to maximize opportunities for exclusive scholarships from the organization in addition to eligibility for designated PTK scholarships at 800+ four-year institutions. Also, over 80 percent of last year's recipients of the prestigious \$40,000-per-year Jack Kent Cooke Foundation Undergraduate Transfer Scholarship were PTK members.

Many students find themselves with a much broader range of four-year college options after community college than they were facing out of high school. Highlighting the scholarships that students receive *because of* community college will strengthen the value proposition and appeal.

It's the role of IECs to help international families understand the merit of the community college transfer pathway. A list of college options that truly reflects the full spectrum of financial fit *should* include community colleges. Help international families to understand this is not a risky proposition (in some states, credit is guaranteed by law to transfer), and the value proposition of saving thousands of dollars can be life-altering. Planned transfer is thoughtful, intentional, and strategic; it is a calculated and informed decision. When perceptions change, students win. 



"STM gave me the chance I needed to succeed!"

If you are working with a family looking for a school where their son can succeed, please contact us.

Formal Student Athlete Preparation Program for aspiring college athletes. Highly competitive programs in Football, Soccer, Basketball, Baseball.

STM is a NEASC accredited college prep boarding school, offering a structured program optimized to how boys learn!



ST. THOMAS MORE SCHOOL

admissions@stmct.org • 860-823-3861 • 45 Cottage Road • Oakdale, CT 06370



When is it Time to Reach Out to Colleagues and Allied Professionals?

By Deborah Barany, PhD, IECA (OR) and Marci Schwartz, LCSW, PhD

Twenty minutes late again. Multiple texts unanswered...where is Sarah? You find yourself waiting and wondering if Sarah forgot her appointment to edit essays, again. Just as you reach for the phone to call her parents, Sarah rushes into your office and apologies for being late. "I totally forgot, sorry." Excuses about her essay, "I have been super distracted and didn't work on it since the last session. I kind of forgot." For Sarah, this is a pattern. For you, a concern. Sarah is struggling in school, struggling to keep up with application deadlines, and struggling to keep appointments. Despite all your reminders, conversations, support, and outreach to her parents, Sarah seems to be slipping academically and emotionally.

This is a common experience in our offices. Most busy students can get back on track with reminders or a long weekend of catch up. But for other students, this is the beginning of a worrying trend. Perhaps Sarah has undiagnosed or undisclosed learning differences. Is she depressed or anxious? Is this a vicious cycle for her now?

As college admissions consultants, we have a unique relationship with students and families. We help guide students on their pathway to college, support them with the application process, and help smooth their transition from high school to university. Our work is all about building trusting, supportive relationships with students and families through their growth and development. Throughout this process, we may recognize areas of concern with some of our students. A student might seem to be struggling in completing assignments you give them or chronically missing scheduled appointments

with you. A student's lack of organization skills or time management skills may be impeding progress. Or, you might notice that their transcript is not reflective of their academic potential.

Sarah is not progressing on her Common Application essay after three appointments. She seems stuck despite text and email reminders and feedback from you. What are her barriers? Are you seeing how she approaches her homework and bigger academic assignments? Sarah reports that she procrastinates ("A LOT—I put off my work until the last minute.") and it takes her longer to do homework ("Hours every night—I stay up really late to get all my work done. I don't sleep much.")

Maybe you have picked up on some anxiety that is impacting the student academically or socially. Could there be more obvious challenges that might indicate a learning difference? Without in-depth information, an IEC would be working blindfolded. Although some parents might be very upfront with you with complete disclosure of information, some may insist that the student will not need to continue academic support after high school. This kind of magical thinking on the part of parents is common with students and families who see the college years as an opportunity for students to resolve their challenges on their own. Both of these situations require the IEC to reach out and look deeper into the background of the student.

"I haven't slept this week at all. I just can't seem to get my work finished on time," Sarah confesses in your office. "All this will get better once I am in college." She looks anxious and exhausted. Are you concerned about her mental health? Do you suspect there are



Deborah Barany, Barany Educational Consulting, LLC, can be reached at baranyeduconsult@gmail.com



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

underlying issues that Sarah and her family have not disclosed?

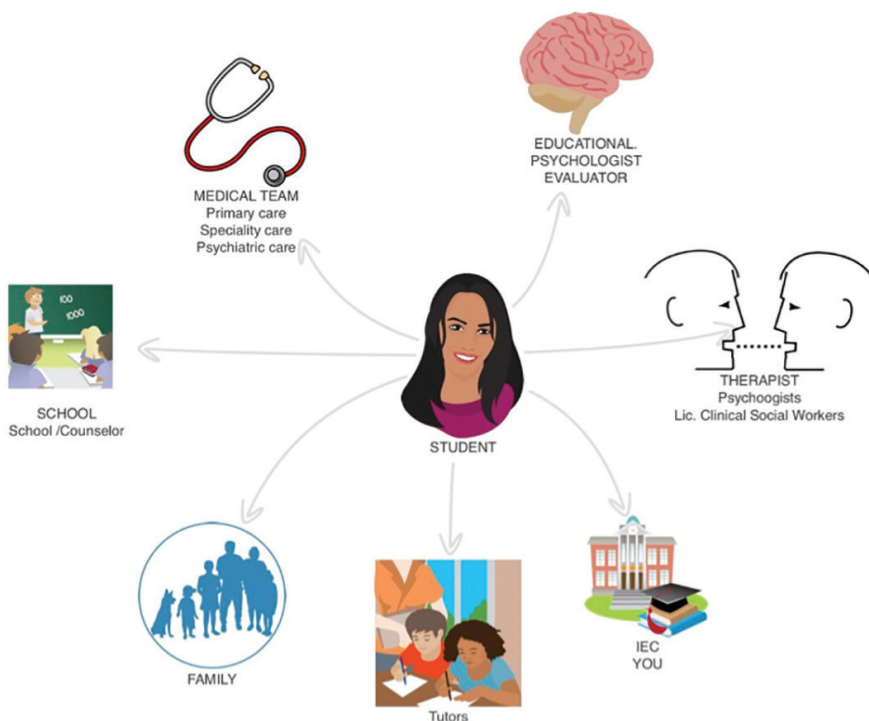
These are signs which should concern an IEC.

When is it time to reach out to colleagues and professionals about these concerns, and who will be able to best guide you? After consulting with your group of colleagues, who else might be a resource for you to best support this student in a meaningful and tangible way? Every student is part of an extended social network. As IECs we should see ourselves as part of this support network. Here is where the IEC can reach out into the student's network and find others to work with collaboratively. We, as IECs, can do better work if we see ourselves as part of a larger support community surrounding the student. Each connection we make enables us to guide and support the student and the family.

Steps to consider:

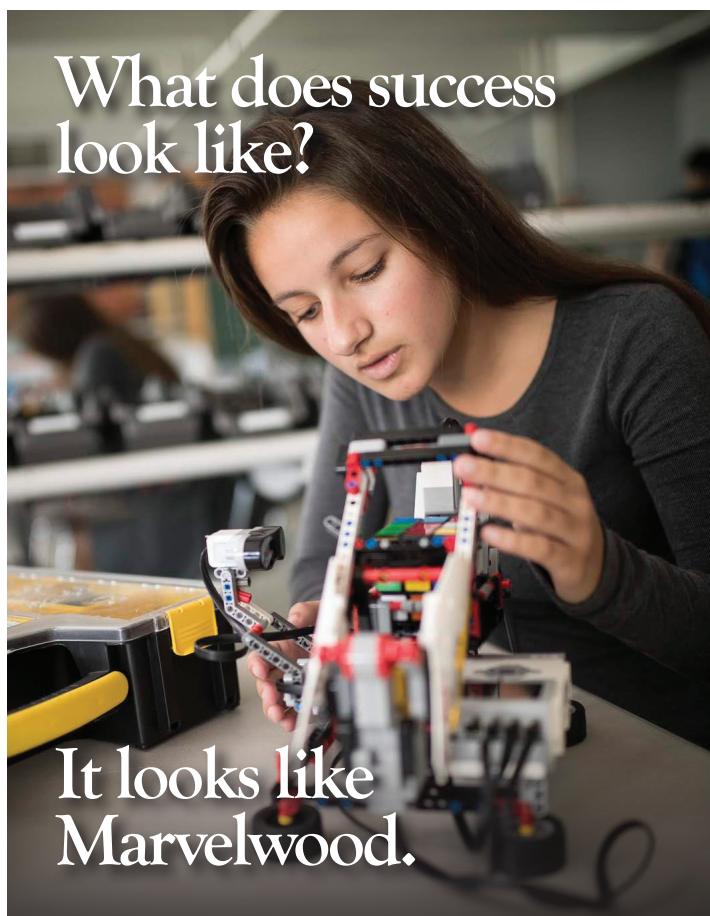
Step 1: Meet with the parents and the student

to review concerns regarding how the student is managing the responsibilities of the college application process, and your concern regarding how the student will manage the independence and responsibilities of college. Be descriptive in your conversation. IECs cannot and should not use diagnostic language, but we can refer to specialists who can help the student gain insight and skills. Would an assessment be helpful in clarifying concerns?



Step 2: Mine your network. If the student has a therapist, tutor or other supportive resources, connecting with them will be essential to the success of your work with the student. If they do not have these resources, mining your network to make referrals will be important. Be sure to obtain releases of information in order for you to effectively communicate with those working with the student.

continued on page 22



What does success look like?

It looks like Marvelwood.

Marvelwood students want to achieve.

And because they are surrounded by peers with a matched level of grit and teachers with an unparalleled commitment to their success, they do. The transformations we see in our students over their years with us are nothing less than astounding. The source of this success? Resilience. Our students graduate with enduring courage, compassion, and confidence for their futures.

CORNERSTONES

- Experiential and hands-on curriculum
- Support for all types of learners, including Orton-Gillingham and Wilson Reading-trained teachers
- Connections program for social skills training
- Weekly community service
- International exchange, service, and exploration programs
- Competitive athletics
- Vibrant arts programming, including Film Studies and performing arts
- Year-round gardening program



THE MARVELWOOD SCHOOL

A Co-ed Boarding & Day School in Kent, CT
Grades 9 thru 12 & Post-Graduate


www.marvelwood.org

860.927.0047 x1005

Getting everyone on the same page is critical. For new IECs, this is the opportunity to expand and find trusted professionals to build up your referral network.

Step 3: Match college supports to the student's needs. If it is evident that the student will benefit from a level of support in college that will allow them to succeed, how familiar are you with connecting students with these types of colleges and supports? Do you have colleagues you can reach out to and get their perspective and advice? The goal is to find colleges and programs that are able to serve the student's needs.

Step 4: Connect with other IECs who can share wisdom. Would you as an IEC benefit from a consultation with another IEC who specializes with students like the one you are working with? Would the student benefit from working with a different IEC? Using the IECA website you can search for local and national experts with the "LD" specialty designation in their profile.

Asking for help is not just something that students need to be able to do—it is a skill that we all should have access to in our work. When we ask for help, we can be great role models for our students as they learn to advocate for what they need to be successful. 

Available Resources on the IECA Website

The Learning Disability/Neurodiversity Resources Peer-to-Peer page of the IECA website (<https://link.iecaonline.com/LD-resources>) has a number of great resources that are helpful to both you and your students. For example, there are handouts that summarize the differences between accommodations in high school and college, the differences between the various laws that apply to accessing accommodations and services, and the different types of accommodations in college. When working with a student who has an IEP or a 504 plan, being knowledgeable about these differences and sharing the handouts with the student and parents is extremely helpful. There is a lot of information for families to understand, and having a handout can be important, particularly as many families assume, incorrectly, that the types of accommodations and services a student is receiving in high school will be the same in college.

When working with a student with a disability you are not familiar with, consider exploring the recommended reading list. There is also a handout to help you assess a student's readiness for college from Landmark College. If you are seeking to expand your knowledge through additional training, there is a list of opportunities to gain further education. And always keep in mind that reaching out to IECA members who have experience working with LD/ND students is a wonderful opportunity to deepen your knowledge, connect with other consultants, and increase your professional network.

PORTLAND, OREGON

LEWIS & CLARK STUDENTS TAKE SMALL CLASSES

AVERAGE CLASS SIZE = 17

WHERE THEY ARE MENTORED

STUDENT:FACULTY RATIO = 12:1

BY EXPERT PROFESSORS

GRADUATE ASSISTANTS = 0

AND GRADUATE READY TO TAKE ON THE WORLD

TOP PRODUCER OF FULBRIGHT AWARD WINNERS
TOP PEACE CORPS SCHOOL

Lewis & Clark
College



GO.LCLARK.EDU/MEET OUR STUDENTS

In the News

Michelle McAnaney (NY) was interviewed on the segment “What does COVID-19 mean for the future of college admissions?” on the *PBS NewsHour* on May 18.

Elizabeth Levine (NY) was quoted in “ACT vs. SAT: How to Decide Which Test to Take” in *US News & World Report* on June 17.

Belinda Wilkerson (NC) and **Carol Doherty** (GA) were quoted in “How to Get More College Financial Aid During the Coronavirus Crisis” in *Consumer Reports* on May 19.

Lisa Gelman (MA) and **Jeff Levy** (CA) were quoted in “College wait lists used to be where dreams died. The pandemic changed that.” in the *Boston Globe* on May 25.

Mark Sklarow, IECA CEO, was quoted in “Why is Massachusetts’ tech sector so lacking in diversity? Take a look inside AP computer science classes,” in the *Boston Globe* on May 17. He was also quoted in “Even with Operation Varsity Blues guilty pleas, college admission coaches remain unregulated” on *CNBC.com* on July 17.

Lisa Gelman (MA) was quoted in “Amid virus, US students look to colleges closer to home” in the *Associated Press* on June 6.

Diane Vater (PA) was quoted in “For inbound college students—and universities—fall semester presents new choices and dilemmas” in the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* on May 11.

Jill Madenburg (NY) was quoted in “Beating the high cost of college: 17 tips for trimming the price tag on that mortarboard” in *Newsday* on July 5.

Ibrahim Firat (TX) was quoted in “What to Know About Deferred College Admission” in the *US News & World Report* on May 15; “How to prepare for and excel at taking the online GMAT, according to testing experts and instructors” in *Business Insider*

on May 18; and “College students don’t want to return in the fall, and it could cause many universities to collapse” in *Business Insider* on May 17.

Debra Felix (MD) was quoted in “From dorm living to classes, here’s how college will be different this fall,” on *CNBC* on June 16.

IECA was featured in “The valuable role of a private college counselor” on *www.mycentraljersey.com* on July 3.

Janet Rosier (CT) was interviewed on WTNH Channel 8 News New Haven’s Good Morning Connecticut program for the segment “Tips for Keeping up with the College Admissions Process During the Pandemic” on April 22. She was also quoted in “Prospective students must choose their perfect college ‘fit’ virtually” in the *Connecticut Post* on April 21.

Anne R. Wager (WA) and **Laurie Kopp Weingarten** (NJ) were quoted in “Changing College Plans Amid COVID-19” in *CollegeXpress*.

Barbara Connolly (MI) appeared on WDIV–Detroit’s Channel 4 on May 22 for a segment discussing summer opportunities for teens amidst coronavirus concerns. Connolly also writes a monthly column for MediaNews Group which is published in seven publications, including the *Oakland Press* in Southeastern Michigan.

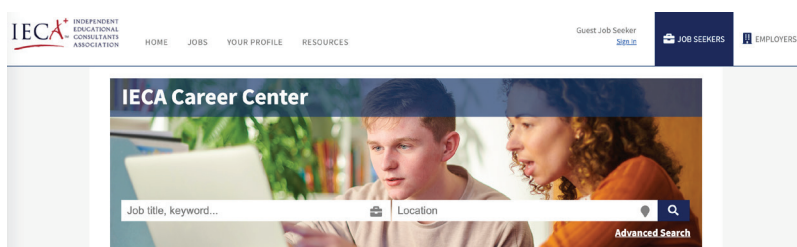
Initiatives

Carolyn Mulligan (NJ) and **Cathy Zales** (CT), both alumna of Bucknell University, participated in their summer College Admissions Workshop, held June 29-30, 2020. In its 45th year, this legacy event, one of the oldest in the country, was held virtually for the very first time.

IECA’s New Career Center

IECA is excited to announce the launch of our new Career Center, featuring job listings in areas such as educational consulting, admissions, psycho-ed testing, test prep, tutoring, life coaching, and other related professions. It also includes links to webinars and articles on building your consulting practice.

The Career Center is open to our 2,200 members and all related professionals in consulting, as well as schools, colleges, programs, and related areas. **IECA is offering a 20% discount** for the initial posting period (through August) for those posting positions available in franchising, expansion opportunities, admissions, counseling, etc. As we introduce this valuable resource, IECA will no longer allow job opportunities to be placed in the Member Network, to ensure the Network remains an information exchange service. To access the Career Center or place an ad, visit link.iecaonline.com/careers



Regional Groups

New Jersey

Despite being at the epicenter of the COVID-19 pandemic this spring, the NJ IECA Regional Group has been going strong! The group coordinators commend the 85+ NJ-based IEC members for their commitment to continuing education during this difficult time and thank them for their loyalty.

During the second quarter, NJ IECs held Zoom meetings with college representatives from Coastal Carolina (Aleya Tylinski), DePaul University (Amanda Wulle), and University of Miami (Tamara Lapham). They also enjoyed an educational presentation by Karla Robertson, professional certified coach, on "Helping Students Find Their True North." Members compared notes and supported one another during the group's first virtual "Whine and Wine" in mid-May. Forthcoming meetings will feature presentations by college reps from WPI, the University of Alabama, and Savannah College of Art and Design.

If you are a NJ IEC and are not receiving notices of these meetings, please contact Hildie Steiner (hildie@highfivecollegeprep.com) or Shari Powell (creatingcollegeoptions@gmail.com).

Broward/Palm Beach, FL

Throughout the fall, the Broward/Palm Beach Regional Group held local meetings with visiting college admissions representatives, and on March 6 IECs attended the SACAC Drive-In Workshop at

Lynn University. Then, the COVID-19 lockdown began. Beginning in April, the group organized Zoom meetings—inspiring opportunities to see one another, share stories, and discuss how to handle students, families, their own families, and more. This summer, the group is reaching out to members who may be struggling with virtual meetings and with keeping their businesses afloat during the pandemic.

Because of the large geographic area of Broward/Palm Beach, it has been difficult to plan in-person get-togethers; Zoom has solved that problem! Virtual meetings have been an easy way to connect and grow closer throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. For more information about this group, contact Susan Groden (sgrodenccs@gmail.com).



Advertiser Index

Company	Page	Website
Bard College at Simon's Rock		http://simons-rock.edu
Besant Hill School		www.besanthill.org
Compass Rose		http://compassroseacademy.org
College for Creative Studies		www.collegeforcreativestudies.edu
Cooper Riis Healing Community		www.cooperriis.org
Fay School		www.fayschool.org
Lewis & Clark College		www.lclark.edu
Lynn University		www.lynn.edu
Marvelwood School, The		www.marvelwood.org
Rectory School (The)		www.rectoryschool.org
Riverview School		https://riverviewschool.org
Rock Point School		www.rockpointschool.org
St. Thomas More School		www.stmct.org
University of Texas at Arlington		www.uta.edu
Wasatch Academy		www.wasatchacademy.org

IECA[®] Webinar series

Professional Development at Your Fingertips!

August 11: College Consultants Who Care

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

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

All IECA webinars are free to members (live or recorded). For more information and to register, go to <http://webinars.IECAonline.com>.



The IECA Foundation supports small organizations that have a big impact—organizations off the radar screen of major grant makers. For many years, we've had the pleasure of watching these organizations thrive. Now, we are seeing that they are uniquely vulnerable.

Ordinarily, the Foundation sponsors one major grant cycle annually, with recipients announced in the fall. This year, to assist organizations in desperate need due to the pandemic, we coordinated an additional round of grants. We are pleased to announce the following programs received funds to sustain them during this difficult time:

Kids on Point
Give More HUGS
Tailored Rides
MOSTe
Evanston Scholars
Riding Unlimited
Pass with Flying Colors
Sisters Circle
College Bound Opportunities

Program Highlight

Give More HUGS (GMH) was established in 2012 in Texas to support both students and teachers in disadvantaged communities to achieve their educational goals. They have three pillars of programming: BookShare, BackPacks, and Ambassadors. The mission of GMH is to provide underprivileged students with the tools to develop a lifelong love for learning, reading, and creativity. In seven years, they have trained 113 students, partnered with 86 teachers, and impacted over 35,000 students' lives in underserved communities.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, GMH asked the IECA Foundation to help support a new project: Care Packages for Students. Through this initiative, GMH's team of teachers is able to provide students brand new books, healthy snacks, a Flat Stanley of each teacher, and encouragement as they navigate uncertain times.



"It is important for us to come together to help pave a way for students to continue the learning. I am grateful we have supporters and partners who want to help ensure students have access to resources and tools to continue their academic learning," said Chris McGilvery, volunteer executive director of Give More HUGS. "Plus, we get to provide encouragement with the handwritten notes, and students need social emotional support as they go through this new journey."

Our network of teachers across Texas are ready to support students to continue the learning and reading during these unprecedented times," McGilvery said. "Teachers will go to their students' homes to provide care packages to support both academic and social emotional support."



Introductions

Please Welcome IECA's New Professional Members



Jill Athenour (CO) has been an IEC for five years and was an Associate member. Previously, she worked as the co-founder and chief learning

office of StarQuest Learning and as director of marketing and admissions for Regis University's School for Professional Studies.

Athenour holds a BA in business economics from the University of California-Santa Barbara and an MA in counseling from Saint Mary's College of California. She also earned an Independent Educational Consultant Certificate from the University of California-Irvine Extension. Athenour is a member of AICEP and RMACAC.

Athenour served as the chair of the College Consultants of College from 2017 to 2019. She also volunteers as a puppy raiser with Canine Companions and serves as a volunteer with Mt. Evans Hospice.

Athenour lives in beautiful Evergreen, Colorado. She's been married for 30 years and has two children: a daughter who will be a college senior and a son who will finish law school this year, both graduating on the same day. Athenour also has a Canine Companions puppy, bred to be a service dog. Athenour raised her for the first year and a half, then adopted the puppy when she "failed" the training. You just might see the puppy if you are ever on a Zoom call with Athenour!

*Jill Athenour, MA
Head to College
Evergreen, CO 80439
303-918-4414
jill@headtocollege.com
www.headtocollege.com
Specialty: C*



Emily Haft Bloom (NY) has been an IEC for 13 years and was an Associate member. Bloom spent 10 years in finance at Credit Suisse First Boston and then published

three books, was a monthly contributor to *Parents Magazine*, and also wrote for *Family Circle* and other national magazines.

Bloom earned a BA in English at Union College and a Certificate with Distinction in College Advising at UCLA Extension. She is currently pursuing a master's in higher education administration at SUNY-Stony Brook. She is a member of NACAC.

Bloom supports five pro bono students per admissions round and volunteers each summer at the College App Boot Camp for students from Harlem Village Academy, NY, to assist with developing and crafting college essays.

Bloom enjoys riding as an EMT for her community volunteer ambulance corps, playing tennis, hiking with her dogs, and spending time with her adult sons.

*Emily Haft Bloom
Athena College Advisors, LLC
Chappaqua, NY 10514
914-282-5701
athenacollegeadvisors@gmail.com
www.athenacollegeadvisors.com
Specialty: C*



Claire Cafaro (NJ) has been an IEC for 16 years. Previously, she worked as a school counselor at Ridgewood High School in Ridgewood, NJ.

Cafaro holds an MA in human development as well as NJ certifications in pupil personnel services, supervision, and secondary school principalship. She is a member of NACAC, NCAG, and NJACAC.

Cafaro currently serves as president of NJACAC and assembly delegate for NACAC. She has devoted much time advocating for students and school and independent counselors through her volunteer work with NJACAC and NACAC.

Cafaro and her husband enjoy spending time in Vermont on the shores of Lake Champlain with family and friends.

*Claire Cafaro, MA
Clear Directions
HoHoKus, NJ 07423
201-358-1317
claire@cleardirection4u.com
Specialty: C*



Shakti Dalal (TX) has been an IEC for 10 years. Previously, she taught biology and chemistry at Duchesne Academy, while also serving on the Upper School admissions

committee. Prior to that, she worked as director of admissions and financial assistance at St. Francis Episcopal Day School.

Dalal started Excel Educational Consulting, LLC in 2010. In 2013, she returned to Duchesne Academy to serve as director of admissions. In the spring of 2015, she returned to her practice. She currently helps Holy Spirit Episcopal School with their high school placement, along with her consulting work.

Dalal earned a BS in biology with a minor in religion from Trinity University, and completed her MA in teaching with a concentration in secondary science from Rice University.

Dalal served as parliamentarian for the Houston Area Independent Schools Association's board from 2008 to 2010. She speaks about the private school admissions process to neighborhood parent groups, and volunteers with her kids monthly at Turning Point Shelter, where they prepare and serve food to homeless elderly people.

Dalal is a mother of three at three different private schools in Houston. Her husband of 20 years is a physical therapist. Dalal is a dancer, exercise enthusiast, triathlete, and breast cancer survivor.

Shakti Dalal, MAT
Excel Educational Consulting, LLC
713-294-5990
shakdalal@gmail.com
www.excelprivateschoolconsulting.com
Specialty: S+LD



Brooke Daly (NC) has been an IEC for 12 years and was an Associate member. She is owner of Advantage College Planning, manages a team of five, and

has recently opened a second location. For the past four years, she has been a business coach for new IECs emerging in the profession. Previously, she worked as a counselor at Vermont Student Assistance Corporation, a non-profit agency designed to help students save, plan, and pay for college.

Daly holds a BA in business management from Champlain College and earned designation as an Associate Certified Executive Coach from Coach Training EDU. She is a member of NACAC and SACAC, and a former board member of NCAG.

Daly and her husband have two small children, Blake (3) and Madelyn (5), and their first baby, a 15-year-old Yorkie, Buddy. They spend their free time as a family camping in their RV, going to the beach, and visiting family in Vermont.

Brooke Daly
Advantage College Planning
Raleigh, NC 27614
919-601-7000
brooke@advcp.com
www.advcp.com
Specialty: C



Lori Day (MA) has been an IEC for 10 years, specializing in PK-8 advising, and was an Associate member. Previously she worked as head of school for the Odyssey

Day School and as director of admissions and financial aid for The Fenn School. She also served on MIT's undergraduate admissions committee and worked as a school psychologist for various schools in MA and VA.

Day holds a BA in psychology from the University of Virginia, and an MEd and EdS in school psychology from the College of William & Mary. She is the author of *Her Next Chapter: How Mother-Daughter Book Clubs Can Help Girls Navigate Malicious Media, Risky Relationships, Girl Gossip, and So Much More*, published in 2014. Day is also president of the board of directors of the Jeanne Geiger Crisis Center.

Day lives in Newburyport, MA with her husband, Geoffrey. Her daughter, Charlotte, is a graduate of Mount Holyoke College and graduate school at the University of Rhode Island. Day enjoys writing, reading, fishing, boating, swimming, and volunteering.

Lori Day, MEd
Lori Day Consulting
Newburyport, MA 01950
978-505-5429
lday@loridayconsulting.com
www.loridayconsulting.com
Specialty: S

continued on page 28



Patricia (Patty) Garza (TX) has been an IEC for 12 years and was an Associate member. A graduate of the University of Florida and a master's candidate at University

of Texas RGV, Garza also earned University of California-Irvine Extension's American College Consulting for the International Student Certificate. She attended IECA's 2011 Summer Training Institute.

Garza founded a college mentoring and life skills program in the 1990s for high school students called VIBES, Volunteers Interested in a Better Education for Students, where they help students apply to college, obtain job shadowing positions and scholarships, hear from community leaders, and learn about important life skills. Governor Rick Perry honored her with The Texas Heroes Award for Outstanding Contributions in Education for the state, which sparked her desire to do even more.

More than anything about this career, she loves sharing knowledge and ideas with others, and especially with teens. Over the years she has had the opportunity to present numerous seminars to AP teachers, parent-teacher organizations, high school and middle school students, at-risk students, cotillions, counselors, and advanced academic advisory boards.

Garza resides in South Texas near the Mexican border. Married for 31 years, with two beautiful daughters living in New York and London, she has traveled to 37 countries and 37 states, and has a lot more to go.

Patricia Garza
College Strategies
Edinburg, TX 78539
956-607-0331
coachstrategies@aol.com
www.collegestrategiesbypattygarza.com
Specialty: C



Amanda Hirko (CA) has been an IEC for 14 years. Previously, she worked as a secondary English teacher at Northville High School (MI) and at Bloomington South

High School (IN).

Hirko earned a BA in English and education from Indiana University, a master's in English and education from the University of Michigan, and a Certificate in College Counseling from the University of California-San Diego Extension. She is a CEP.

Hirko lives in San Diego with her husband, while her two college-age daughters continue to move in and out of the house. She loves staying active with her dog, reading, and traveling, and is a forever learner.

Amanda Hirko, MA
Hirko Consulting INC
San Diego, CA 92122
858-437-3879
amanda@hirkoconsulting.com
www.hirkoconsulting.com
Specialty: C



Michelle (Shelly) Humach (CO) has been an IEC for 10 years and was an Associate member. Prior to becoming an IEC, she worked for 23 years as a litigation paralegal.

Humbach earned a BA in sociology from the University of Colorado-Boulder and attended the Denver Paralegal Institute. She is a graduate of the UCLA Extension College Counseling Certificate Course, with distinction, and a Certified Educational Planner. She was recently featured in *VoyageDenver* magazine as part of their "Inspiring Stories" series.

Humbach helps coordinate College Consultants of Colorado volunteers for the Denver Public Schools' annual College Access Days. She also serves on the Advisory Board for College Consultants of Colorado.

Humbach mentors and provides resources and systems to the college planning division of the Bridge Project, a non-profit organization, affiliated with the University of Denver, and a free after-school and tutoring program that reduces educational barriers and improves academic and behavioral outcomes for young people living in Denver public housing communities.

Humbach serves on the Advisory Board for the Together Project, a non-profit that provides free dental and orthodontic services to qualified financially disadvantaged children as well as those with other special needs and circumstances.

Married with three adult daughters, Humbach loves spending time with her husband and girls, and doing anything outdoors: skiing, golfing, and hiking.

Michelle Humbach
Humbach Education Consulting, LLC
Littleton, CO 80120
303-829-2668
shelly@humbacheducationconsulting.com
www.humbacheducationconsulting.com
Specialty: C



Reena Kamins (NJ) has been an IEC for 17 years and was an Associate member. Previously, she worked as director of admissions at The Pingry School;

admissions counselor at Rutgers University with responsibility for the Educational Opportunity Fund determinations and the Mason Gross School of the Arts Dance and Theater candidates; director of admissions at List College's dual degree programs with Columbia University and Barnard College; interim associate dean of admissions at Brandeis's International Business School; and as admissions counselor at Brandeis University Graduate School of Arts & Sciences.

Kamins graduated with a BA in anthropology from Brandeis University and completed graduate coursework in higher ed administration at Boston University. She also earned an MA in applied psychology with a counseling and guidance concentration from NYU's Steinhardt School of Education. She is a member of NJACAC and NYSACAC.

Kamins has been a reader for the Maltz Museum's "Stop the Hate" essay contest and served on the Coca-Cola Scholars Program Review Committee. Currently, she volunteers with the local chapter of Family Promise, a national organization that serves the homeless. Kamins has served as the sisterhood president and board vice president at her synagogue.

Kamins has twins in high school who teach her new things about parenting and counseling every day. She learns far less from her pups, Velvet and Winston, but she's grateful for the extra time with all of them while they are safe at home together.

*Reena Kamins, MA
College, Career & Life
Flemington, NJ 08822
347-683-5470
reena@collegecareerlife.com
www.collegecareerlife.com
Specialty: C*



Joanna Lilley (CO) has been an IEC for four years and was an Associate member. Previously, she worked for a private wilderness therapy program

and a wilderness program run by the Department of Children and Family Services. She also worked for a K-12 private school in the Bronx, and an adolescent residential treatment program. Lilley was in higher education for five years in student success/retention, and then employed by the Denver Public Schools as the Coordinator for College Access Initiatives.

Lilley earned a BS in recreation, parks, and tourism and a BS in art education from Radford University, and an MA in counseling from West Virginia University. She attended IECA's 2016 Summer Training Institute and is a member of YATA, GYA, and TCA.

Lilley recently wrapped up a six-class series for parents of incoming college freshmen and anticipates offering a "fall semester" parent series for the transition as well. Although she now works independently, she continues to help with Denver Public Schools' "Application Days" in October and November, which historically have included around 20 high schools and more than 1,500 urban, low-income students applying to college.

Lilley lives in the mountains of Colorado, where you can find her paddleboarding, hiking, or fly fishing with her pup, Luna.

*Joanna Lilley, MA
Lilley Consulting
Gunnison, CO 81230
970-219-9958
joanna@lilleyconsulting.com
www.lilleyconsulting.com
Specialty: T*



Meegan McRoberts (MI) has been an IEC for three years and was an Associate member. She founded Future Plan, LLC College Consulting in 2017 and joined the

Collegewise Metro Detroit Affiliate office in June 2020.

McRoberts earned a BA in English from Colgate University and an MEd from Washington University. She also received a Certificate of College Counseling from UCLA Extension.

McRoberts attended IECA's 2017 Summer Training Institute and serves as current secretary of MACAC. She volunteers with ScholarMatch and the Joyce Ivy Foundation.

Mother to three almost-grown children, McRoberts enjoys gardening, cooking, reading, and traveling. She has also developed a love of the Peloton bike.

*Meegan McRoberts, MEd
Future Plan, LLC
Birmingham, MI 48009
248-321-5034
mmcroberts67@gmail.com
www.futureplanonline.com
Specialty: C*

continued on page 30



Kathleen (Kathy) Noble (MI) has been an IEC for five years and was an Associate member. Prior to becoming an IEC, Noble worked for 15 years as a brand and digital

marketing strategist with various consumer products companies such as KitchenAid and Kellogg's. Additionally, she served in a marketing and innovation role at the University of Michigan for 10 years.

Noble earned her undergraduate degree from the University of Michigan and an MBA from the University of Notre Dame. She received a College Counseling Certificate with Distinction from UCLA Extension and a Leadership Coaching Certificate from Northwestern University's School of Education and Social Policy. Noble is a member of NACAC and MACAC.

Noble volunteered as steering committee member and faculty presenter at the Joyce Ivy Foundation's "Launching a Leader, College Admissions Symposium." Through the Joyce Ivy Foundation, she also serves as a volunteer consultant for a cohort of first-generation female students as they navigate the college admissions process.

Noble volunteers each winter with the Washtenaw County Winter Warming Centers. Alongside her kids, she cooks and serves meals for food and housing insecure individuals in the Ann Arbor area.

Noble loves to travel with her family. Whether it's a road trip in the US or an excursion to China, she is always game for a new adventure.

*Kathleen Noble, MBA
Start With Your Story Educational Consulting
Ann Arbor, MI 48103
734-997-3829
kathleen.t.noble@gmail.com
www.startwithyourstory.com
Specialty: C*



Nagla Orlando (CA) has been an IEC for six years and was an Associate member. She has 25 years of experience as a high school science educator, teaching AP

and general-studies biology, as well as anatomy and physiology.

Orlando earned a BS in health and human sciences from California State University, an MEd in curriculum and instruction from William Howard Taft University, and a College Counseling Certificate from the University of California-San Diego Extension. She is a member of NACAC and an WACAC affiliate, and chair of the WACAC Central Coast College Fair Site.

Orlando has volunteered as a KAIROS leader and offered college admissions workshops for underserved students. She has also coordinated Girl Scout College Knowledge Badge workshops.

Orlando loves working with students and sharing in the very special part of their life that is filled with hope, excitement and interpersonal growth; she enjoys "de-stressing" the process and instead helping students find joy and excitement about their future.

Orlando has been married for 25 years and is mother to two grown sons: a 22-year-old graduate of the University of Southern California and a 21-year-old graduate of Johns Hopkins University. Orlando loves Pilates and weight training, and recently reached a personal best of a 195-lb. deadlift!

*Nagla Orlando, MEd
Knowledge Worx 4 College, Inc.
Templeton, CA 93465
818-519-2565
nagla@knowledgeworx4college.com
www.knowledgeworx4college.com
Specialty: C*



Debra (Debbie) Schwartz (CT) has been an IEC for six years and was an Associate member. Previously, she worked for the Yale School of Management admissions office. For

many years, she worked with non-profit organizations, including Jewish Family Services of Greenwich and the Westchester Jewish Council. Schwartz created and directed the NJY Camps' Forever Families Weekend, a program for Jewish families formed in part or in whole by adoption.

Schwartz holds an undergraduate degree in economics from Drew University and an MPPM (master's in public and private management) from the Yale School of Management. She attended IECA's 2014 Summer Training Institute and is a member of NEACAC.

In 2010, Schwartz was a recipient of the CCAI Angels in Adoption® Award for her work with pre- and post-adoptive families. She has also held volunteer leadership positions and served on the boards of directors for multiple non-profit organizations. Her article, "Adoption and the College Admissions Process," was published in the April 2017 edition of *Adoption Today*.

Schwartz and her husband are proud parents to two young adults, Jacob (22) and Josh (20), both of whom successfully navigated the college admissions journey.

*Debra Schwartz, MPPM
DS College Consulting, LLC
Redding, CT 06896
914-768-3722
debbie.schwartz@dscollegeconsulting.com
www.dscollegeconsulting.com
Specialty: C*



William (Bill) Shain (ME) has been an IEC for 12 years. Previously, he was dean of admissions at Bowdoin College. Shain earned an AB from Princeton

University and a JD from Columbia University. He is a member of NACAC.

Upon graduation from law school, Shain taught social studies at Cold Spring Harbor High School (Long Island) where he also coordinated Princeton alumni interviewing in Suffolk County, NY. He left teaching to work in admissions at Princeton, and subsequently headed the admission offices at Macalester College, Vanderbilt University, and Bowdoin.

His most recent leadership contribution was serving as co-chair of the IEC SIG at NACAC. In the past, Shain was at various times chair of the Common Application, on the TOEFL Policy Council, and on the College and University Recognition Task Force for IB-North America.

Shain has been married to Sandra Lipsey for many happy years, and they live just outside Portland, Maine. He enjoys cooking, wine, dining at Portland's restaurants (may they reopen!), traveling, and fitness. Reading is a major pleasure, including three daily newspapers and many books (contemporary fiction, classics, and mysteries, among others).

*William Shain, JD
William M Shain Consulting
Falmouth, ME 04105
207-899-1125
wmshain@gmail.com
www.williamshain.com
Specialty: C*



Amy Trinnaman (CT) has been an IEC for three years and was an Associate member. She has more than 15 years of experience in public education including reading

intervention, special education, school counseling, dual enrollment coordination, and policy development. Previously, she worked as a policy analyst and communications director for a non-profit organization.

Trinnaman earned a BA in economics from Hobart and William Smith Colleges and a master's degree in public administration from The George Washington University. She holds a certificate in Independent Educational Consulting from the University of California-Irvine Extension. She attended IECA's 2018 Summer Training Institute.

Drawing on her background in writing and data analysis, Trinnaman writes articles on a variety of college admissions topics. She is passionate about increasing college access, and volunteers her time with scholarship organizations and as a mentor to teens in her community.

A lifelong open-water swimmer, Trinnaman enjoys summer evening swims in the ocean and lakes that surround her Connecticut home. Her son is a senior at Bryant University majoring in marketing, and her daughter is a junior at Fordham University majoring in economics. Trinnaman is entertained daily by the antics of her 12-year-old Boston Terrier, Duke.

*Amy Trinnaman, MPA
Amy Trinnaman Educational Consulting, LLC
Glastonbury, CT 06033
978-994-1063
atedconsulting@gmail.com
www.at-edconsulting.com
Specialty: C*



Jian-Ping (Michelle) Ye (NY) has been an IEC for four years and was an Associate member. Prior to becoming an IEC, Ye worked in the field of psychological research in California.

She moved to New York to pursue her master's degree, and started working in the educational field as a student advisor at Kaplan International Inc. Her work in helping students with their college planning and studies inspired her to become an IEC.

Ye completed a BA in linguistics and psychology at UCLA and an MA in cognitive science in education at Columbia University. She also earned a College Counseling Certificate at UCLA Extension. In 2019, Ye attended IECA's Summer Training Institute, Spring Conference, and Fall Conference. She is a member of ACA, NECA, and WACAC.

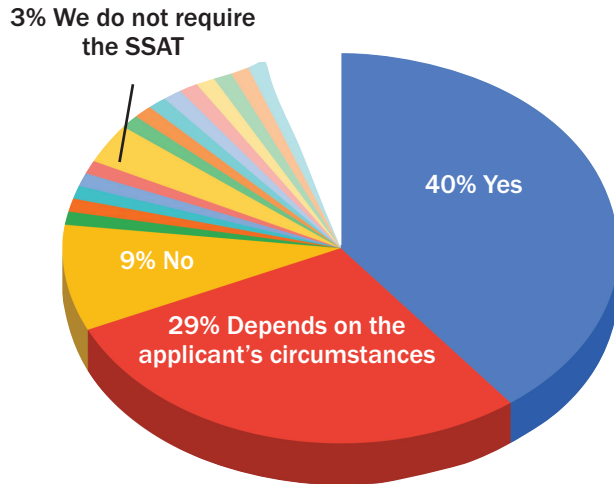
In her free time, Ye enjoys reading books, watching movies, hiking mountains, and traveling.

*Jian-Ping (Michelle) Ye, MA
DaXinEdTech LLC
New York, NY 10010
415-205-8403
michelle.ye.jp@gmail.com
Specialty: C*

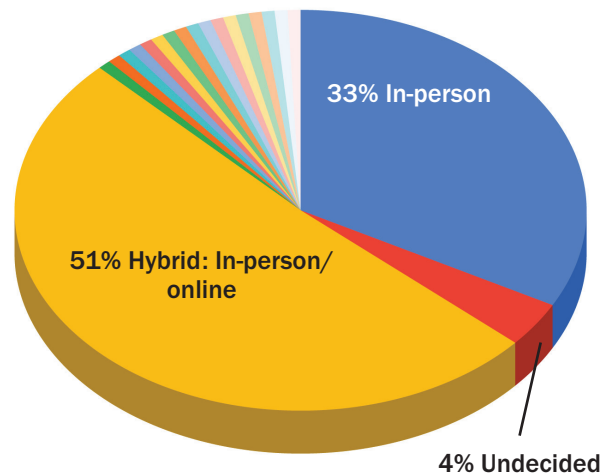
The Back Page

Fall 2020 Boarding School Plans

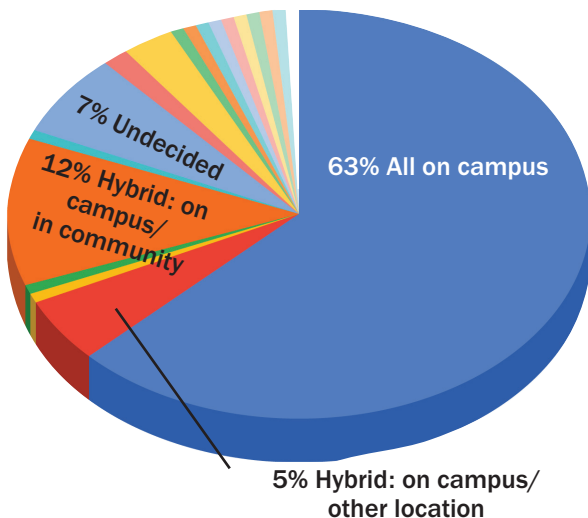
Will the SSAT be optional for current year and 2021-22 applicants?



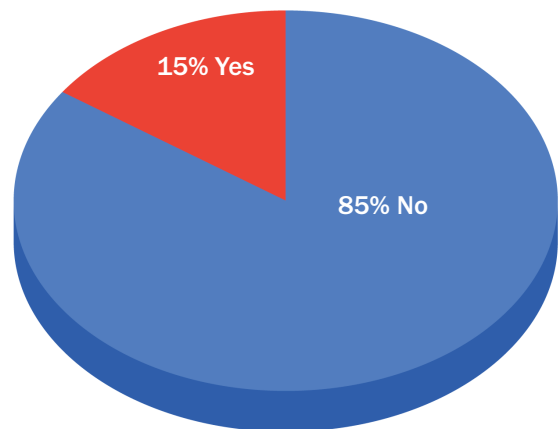
Teaching options



Student Housing Options



Will your school offer an October break?



Source: Survey created by IECA's Heidi Molbak; 56 IECA members reached out to 138 boarding schools for their responses as of 7/24/2020.



Essay writing with ND students
page M4



Healing attachment disruptions
page M6



Insurance coverage considerations
page M7

IECA⁺™

Member-to-Member INSIGHTS

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

August/September 2020

IECA Career Center

Find the talent your organization needs or search jobs for your own career advancement in IECA's new Job Board & Career Center, available to IECA members and the general public. Job seekers can post their resumes, create job alerts, and apply online—for FREE!

Visit <https://link.iecaonline.com/careers> to get started today.

IECA Mentor Match

Experienced Professional and Associate members are invited to serve as mentors to members seeking one-on-one guidance. You can find the link to IECA's Mentor Match on the red navigation bar of our Member Network: <https://network.iecaonline.com>

Academic and Social Support Models for LD/ND Students

By Elizabeth Cooper, JD, IECA Associate (MA) and Julie Richie, MFA, IECA (TX)

In March 2020, the LD/ND Committee hosted the first-ever LD College Tour and Educational Intensive (EI) in Maryland, Virginia, and Washington, DC. More than 40 IECs visited seven colleges and one residential living support program for LD/ND students.

Tour participants also heard from LD/ND experts, participated in an afternoon of collaborative peer-led learning about the IEC intake process for new students, deepened their knowledge of how to support and guide their LD/ND students, and cultivated a new network of supportive colleagues.

This article is not meant to be a comprehensive report on any particular college or program. Rather, it is an overview of the LD/ND support models we saw, with the goal of giving IECs an understanding of some of the structures and learning supports available to research for LD/ND students at other colleges and universities throughout the country.



Comprehensive Fee-Based Programs

College Living Experience (CLE): Not affiliated with a specific university, CLE is a residential program with wrap-around support that helps students with academics, social skills, independent living, and career development. With centers in Ft. Lauderdale, FL; Washington, DC; Austin, TX; Denver, CO; Costa Mesa, CA; and Monterey, CA, each CLE location is near area colleges and vocational programs so students have easy access to CLE support services while they pursue their degree or career of interest. Individualized services often include executive function

continued on page M3



Elizabeth Cooper can be reached at lizkagancooper@gmail.com



Julie Richie can be reached at julie@collegematchpoint.com



The Growing Office

How to Transition from Associate to Professional Membership

Congratulations! You are a current Associate member of IECA and are now ready to work toward becoming a Professional member, demonstrating your professional mastery and years of experience. Where to begin?

One of the requirements to become an IECA Professional member is to complete a minimum number of evaluative campus visits during the previous five years within the IEC's specialty area(s): 25 visits for boarding/day schools; 50 visits for college; 25 visits for LD schools/programs; and 50 visits for therapeutic programs.

In a recent Associate & New Member Roundtable, one participant posed the question: how do other IECs tackle this requirement? Several members shared their suggestions:

- Until campuses open again for in-person tours, you can include virtual visits
- Attach visits to conferences
- Reach out to other IECs to arrange group visits
- Participate in organized bus tours, which also provide opportunities to get to know other IECs
- Add time for visits onto your personal vacations
- Each year, spend at least two weeks doing several tours per week


Other Professional membership requirements include:

- Three years of experience in educational placement counseling or admissions, including a minimum of one year of independent educational consulting.
- A master's degree or higher in a relevant field, or a combination of training and experience that demonstrates a mastery of the profession.
- Minimum number of students advised (during the previous five years) on school, college, or program admission. Either:
 - o 35 students advised in private practice; OR
 - o 50 students advised: a minimum of 10 students advised in private practice; the balance personally advised as a counselor or admission professional.
- Three professional references: If you are an Associate member, IECA should already have one professional reference document on file. If you wish to use that for one of the three required professional references, you are welcome to list that person as a reference contact again. The IECA membership staff will simply afford that person the opportunity to write a quick update.
- Transcripts: With a few exceptions, the IECA office should already have your official transcripts, as filed with your associate application.
- Dues: Professional membership dues are \$600 annually. We'll apply all of your unused Associate membership dues toward Professional membership when your application is complete and approved, so you won't lose any of your membership dues and there is no need to wait for your current Associate membership year to lapse.

Suggestions for additional references include:

- o College or independent school admissions officers
- o Psychologists/counselors
- o Other educational counseling professional with whom applicant has worked in the application process
- o An IECA member
- o Client family
- o Should not be a relative of the applicant



We welcome all qualified IEC applicants and want to make the process as smooth as possible. For more information about transitioning from an Associate to Professional member of IECA, contact the membership department (membership@iecaonline.com). 

coaching, tutoring, individual and small group social skills coaching, help connecting with campus supports, supervised study spaces, independent living skills coaching, and career testing and readiness.

⇒ Consider investigating **CLE** for LD/ND young adults who are college- or vocational career-able but need additional independent living and social support to help them transition to college or career.

George Mason University: George Mason offers LD/ND students free basic support such as accommodations, tutoring, and academic coaching. For students on the autism spectrum (ASD), the fee-based **MASI** program offers comprehensive social, academic, and career services support. Each **MASI** student is paired with a graduate student learning strategist and a peer mentor to help with social integration. Students take credit-bearing career and life skills courses, participate in social events with support and guidance, and enjoy the **MASI** lounge to hang out and practice their social skills.

⇒ Consider investigating George Mason's **MASI** program for ASD students who could benefit from a large university with structured social and academic support.



University of Maryland at College Park: UMD offers two fee-based formal support programs for students with ASD and/or ADHD: **SIGNA (Social Interaction Group Network for All)** and **SUCCEEDS**. **SIGNA** is a social and academic support program for ASD students that requires a two-year commitment. The program includes a psychological and academic evaluation, weekly group sessions led by master's level therapists on organizational skills, time management, motivation, goal-identification, preparation for future coursework and careers, and weekly individual coaching sessions. Students with ADHD can enroll in **SUCCEEDS** by semester. There are three components to **SUCCEEDS**: 1) a psychological and academic evaluation and support for applying for academic accommodations; 2) weekly group sessions with a therapist; and 3) individual weekly sessions with an academic and mental health coach.

⇒ Consider investigating the University of Maryland's **SIGNA** and/or **SUCCEEDS** programs for ASD students and students with ADHD who are sufficiently independent to navigate a large university and may benefit from structured social and/or academic support.

McDaniel College: McDaniel offers wrap-around support for LD/ND students. The all-inclusive **Academic Skills Program (ASP)** includes one-on-one weekly sessions with an academic counselor for support in academics, time management, organizational skills,

and self-advocacy. Additionally, **ASP** includes graduate student-led academic study sessions (**Providing Academic Support for Success, or PASS**), and the **Mentorship Advantage Program (MAP)**, which focuses on enhancing students' social and academic skills. Students not enrolled in **ASP** can choose **PASS** or **MAP** as à la carte options.

⇒ Consider investigating McDaniel's **ASP** program for students with a wide range of LD/ND learning profiles who could benefit from structured support.

Moderate Support Options (Some Fee-Based)

American University: American's fee-based, one-year **Learning Services Program (LSP)** offers weekly meetings with a professional staff member on time management, planning, and college-level reading and writing skills. Students are coached on requesting and using academic accommodations and assistive technology, as well as improving self-advocacy skills. Students in **LSP** also receive individualized course selection advising and are placed in a reserved section of the required freshman writing class with a professor who has specialized training in working with LD/ND students. The program also includes individual weekly meetings with a writing tutor to assist with steps from brainstorming to the final draft.

⇒ Consider investigating American's **LSP** program for college-ready students with a language-based learning disability, such as dyslexia, who need structured support for the transition to college academics.

The Catholic University of America (CUA): Students registered with Disability Services can apply to attend Smart Start, a free two-day pre-orientation program for incoming students with a documented disability. Students move into dorms early, and learn from peer mentors how to navigate DSS, use assistive technology, and how to transition to and succeed at CUA. Through the **248 Program**, DSS staff meets one-on-one with registered first-year students two, four, and eight weeks into the semester to improve academic skills such as time management, organization, study skills, test-taking, note-taking, and stress management. All students registered with DSS can meet weekly with a Learning Specialist (at no cost). CUA's small, one-semester **Forging Friendships Groups** guide students on topics such as dating, finding friends, conflict resolution, and social communications.

⇒ Consider investigating CUA for college-ready students of any faith (20% of CUA students are not Catholic) who are interested in a small, self-contained and supportive campus in the heart of DC.

Goucher College: Goucher students have access to individual **Academic Coaching** sessions through the **Academic Center for Excellence (ACE)** for 30 minutes sessions every other week. These professional coaches will work with any Goucher student on improving executive function and study skills. **ACE** also partners with faculty to educate them on working with LD/ND students. For students who need more frequent executive function support, Goucher recommends outside coaches (Baltimore is a resource-rich area for therapists and providers).

⇒ Consider investigating Goucher for college-ready students who may thrive in a small, accepting, and supportive college

continued on page M4

Essay Writing: Insights for IECs Working with Neurodiverse Students

By Joan Wittan, MA, IECA (MD), and Kyle Kane, JD, IECA (SC)

You've seen the look: deer in the headlights. Refusal to make eye contact. Forehead to the desk. College essay writing can be challenging for anyone, but neurodiverse students often struggle more than their peers. Why? These students can have neurodevelopmental and academic lags, executive functioning deficits, lack of appropriate instruction, cognitive inflexibility, specific learning disabilities, and academic exhaustion—or a combination of these factors. These students often arrive at high school with deficient writing skills and a notable lack of confidence and enthusiasm for college essays.

Students with executive function challenges are especially vulnerable when tasked with planning, composing, and revising an organized essay. Those on the autism spectrum can struggle to understand how to share personal insights. Less flexible or socially unaware students may resist writing expressively about themselves, preferring to produce more expository-style materials that don't provide the personal insights admissions officers are seeking.

There is no "holy grail" for essay writing because every IEC and each student is different. However, especially when working with neurodiverse students, IECs need to have multiple approaches and abundant patience. Here are some suggestions and a general process we have found useful.

Set the Stage

"My hands will NOT be on the keyboard." Set clear expectations for students and their families from the outset. State explicitly that you won't write the essay for the students (neither will their parents), but you will support them throughout the entire process. Express confidence that the job will be done by a specific date. Share input from past students who found that writing their college essays, while difficult, was a transformative and positive experience.

"What are your goals for today's session?" Begin each session using a metacognition strategy that asks students to think about specific goals. Model goal-setting at the outset, but expect students to take control within a few sessions. Rather than handing students a "to-do" list at the end of each session, have them open their Google calendars and schedule the individual items that need attention. Suggest that students add text and email reminders to help them stay abreast of their commitments. At the next session, see if students have completed their assigned tasks; if not, figure out why not and discuss adjustments.

Brainstorm

"We are just tossing around ideas, not writing the essay yet." Most students fear the college essay.

continued on page M5



Joan Wittan can be reached at joan@collegeLD.com



Kyle Kane can be reached at kyle@collegeLD.com

Support Models, from page M3


environment that offers some specialized, structured support, but also has ample available community resources.

Accommodations and Limited Support (No Fee)

The George Washington University: All GW students (including LD/ND students) have access to learning resources through the **Academic Commons**. Students may sign up for one hour each of peer tutoring and writing support (must be scheduled in advance). For students who need further support, **Academic Commons** suggests that students attend drop-in tutoring hours (first-come, first-served), find a review session, or start a study group. For LD/ND students to thrive at GW, they must be able to seek out support independently and be strong self-advocates who can proactively navigate the complexities of a large university. At our visit, we heard from a student with ADHD and anxiety who is succeeding at GW because she is an excellent self-advocate, meets weekly (virtually) with an outside executive function coach and a therapist, and utilizes accommodations.

⇒ Consider investigating GW for highly motivated, college-ready LD/ND students who can navigate a large, urban campus and are experienced self-advocates. As the director of DSS told us, "Students who have known their LD all along and have had good remediation do the best here."

Tour Takeaways

- The programs described above exemplify some of the different models of support available for LD/ND students.
- If a college that is otherwise a good fit but does not meet your student's learning support needs, there may be ways to provide that support with outside resources.
- Developing and strengthening self-advocacy skills prior to college is a very important aspect of college readiness. 

This strong emotion can inhibit progress and foster destructive perfectionism. Students can become paralyzed staring at the blank, white page. Brainstorming allows for non-threatening, participatory activities that generate ideas, put words on paper, and are fun and easy to do. It doesn't matter if you ask students to list objects they would save from a burning house, identify meaningful moments, or rank order personal values. The idea is to engage students in doable, thought-provoking assignments.

Some students will still need prompting. Find stories they have shared during the intake and assessment process. Encourage students to talk with their parents, teachers, and friends to gather anecdotes that they can use to give color to their essay. Try mind-mapping, webbing, free-associating—anything to get words onto paper or into a computer.

Listen and watch students carefully. Don't allow a student to hit a wall because regrouping can be painfully slow and difficult. If the student starts to struggle, immediately introduce another approach to make tangible progress.



Organize the Word Salad

"There are so many good ideas here! Which one appeals most to you?" It is time to turn these wild ideas and random thoughts into an outline or rough draft. Students who write by formula (i.e., the five-paragraph model) may struggle with the more creative, personal approach expected by college admissions readers. Students can have trouble finding a topic that seems unique, reflective, and meaningful. Ask the student to take two or three of these ideas and do a "free write" to test the theme or use an outline to build the structure and then fill in the ideas.

Don't worry about sentence structure or spelling; tell the student not to stop the process to make corrections. Talk out ideas with those who need more help fleshing out their thinking. Little by little, a draft should be emerging. Occasionally, it is necessary to scribe for students to help them express themselves. Careful! It's hard not to automatically correct and edit, so transcribe faithfully.

If the student has generated several good ideas, ask them to select the best. The magic of moving from ideas to a composed essay is underway. Sometimes a rubric helps novice writers understand the process. One approach is ACE (A, answer the question; C, cite

the evidence; E, explain/expand/end with a new insight) to add structure, substance, and depth to the essay. ACE allows us to ask guiding questions like, "Did you answer the question/prompt?" "What evidence have you provided for that point?" "What else can you add to reflect who you are?" "Does your ending reflect insight or growth?" Gently insist on evidence and support for ideas. Keep focused on adding relevant information, rather than word counts or grammar. Keep working until there is a recognizable first draft.

Students sometimes think they've completed the essay at this point. It can be difficult to persuade them that there need to be several drafts before the essay is completed. Spellcheck is not the answer to editing!

Revise the Diamond in the Rough

"Pretend that you are the admissions officer and I will read you this essay. Don't worry about little mistakes but listen for what facts you can glean about this person. Then decide if you want him/her on campus." Reflection guides revision and you can refine students' writing by introducing an editing process. We like 6+1 Trait Writing™ because it defines three distinct phases of editing: global, qualitative, and mechanical. Once students learn this approach, they can apply it to any writing assignment. Reading out loud is one of our favorite tricks to help students stay engaged and to critique their own work.


The global edit focuses on overall ideas/content and organization. Begin by re-reading the prompt and reflecting for a moment. "Does the essay answer the question? Is it organized logically? Are the ideas interesting? Do the paragraphs need to be reordered to improve the logic or add drama?"

The qualitative edit addresses the quality of the writing. Read paragraph by paragraph to focus on voice, word choice, and sentence fluency. When applicable and appropriate, talk about parallelism, alliteration, and other grammatical flourishes. Ask "How could you say that more clearly, concisely, or elegantly?"

The mechanical edit is what students usually think of as "editing." Here we are reading aloud, line by line, to review conventions and mechanics. Ask "What sounds wrong to you?" Often students can identify parts that don't sound right even if they don't know the grammar rule that applies. We can't make up for years of lost instruction, but we can correct a few common grammar issues (its versus it's and noun/pronoun or verb tense agreement can be difficult for some students).

Reflect and Learn

"You did it! How are you feeling?" We wrap up with reflection and self-assessment to improve metacognition. Ask "What worked well? What did you learn about writing? Is there anything you want to try differently next time?" Vigorously applaud progress and end on a positive note. The essay is undoubtedly better than it was, and the student is an improved writer and editor.

Our approach to writing college essays has become a hallmark of our individualized work with students. We feel fortunate to have the opportunity to bolster our students' independence and competency. The feeling of accomplishment from a well-written essay is satisfying, but the skill to write another is a gift. 

Healing Attachment Disruptions in Non-Adoption Families

By Mindy Goodman, IECA Associate (MD) and Gail Curran, MS, MBA, CEP, IECA (AZ)

Secure attachment is classified as when the primary caregiver provides stability and safety in moments of stress, which allows an infant to explore their surroundings. A child with a secure attachment can regulate themselves when their caregiver is not present or leaves, knowing that their caregiver will return (Ainsworth, 1993).

Attachment is understood as the enduring emotional closeness that binds families to prepare children for independence and parenthood. Bowlby suggested that early attachment experiences create “internal working models” equaling lifelong templates for preconceptions of the value and reliability of relationships, close and otherwise.

Attachment allows children the “secure base” necessary to explore, learn, and relate, and the well-being, motivation, and opportunity to do so.

Disruptions of attachment can lead to a vicious cycle of unhealthy behaviors even through

the teen and young adult years. Attachment disorders have traditionally been thought to affect children who have been adopted or raised in the foster care system. Often overlooked are families that are intact, with biological children. Disruptors of attachment and developing a secure base can affect all families.

How do disruptors manifest in the development of secure attachment?

The most apparent disruptor to establishing a secure emotional base is abuse. Abuse may be physical, sexual, or emotional. A not-so-obvious interpretation of abuse is a medical issue at a

very young age. Healing touch can be painful and, at times, lonely and even traumatic. It can feel physically the same as other abusive situations, even though it is medically necessary. A young child who suffers from abuse learns that they do not have an adult in their life that they can depend on to meet their basic safety needs. No matter the origin, when in pain and alone, they interpret abuse as only being able to rely on themselves for comfort and care.

An obvious disrupter to developing a secure base is neglect. Neglect can be the failure to provide food, appropriate clothing, supervision, or a safe home environment. Uninvolved parenting can be

both obvious and subtle. More subtle examples of neglect disrupting childhood attachment include high-achieving parents who are chronically absent or a parent who struggles with their mental health or substance abuse issues.

Other examples include a parent on the autism spectrum, a very chaotic, messy divorce situation, a parent who battles a life-threatening illness, maternal depression or anxiety both pre- and post-delivery, and multiple nannies throughout early childhood. An example may be a child born to a highly profiled medical couple who need to complete their fellowships, are under tremendous stress to achieve, and have multiple nannies. Another example may be a couple who divorced when a child was four, due to alcoholism, and had struggled with a chaotic household for several years prior to the divorce.

Children and teens carry the scars of attachment disruption no matter its origin. The hallmarks



Mindy Goodman, New Chapter Consulting, can be reached at mindy@newchapterconsulting.com



Gail Curran, Optimal Edu Options, can be reached at gail@optimaleduoptions.com



continued on page M8

How to Consider Insurance Coverage When Recommending a Placement

By Cecily Ruttenberg, Owner, MH Billing Inc.

When determining the best possible placement for a client, don't forget an often-overlooked factor: insurance billing support.

The affordability factor of treatment is not new. Typically, a family either can or cannot afford the high out-of-pocket cost of treatment. But even those who can afford it—whether due to existing wealth, family support, or extreme measures—deserve to use their insurance benefits.

Every month, each one of us sends a payment to our health insurance company such that if/when we need medical or behavioral health treatment, the costs will be covered. Our enrollment and subsequent payment to an insurance carrier creates a legally binding contract. We pay our premium, and they pay our costs according to the terms agreed to in the contract. But it's not quite that simple. In order to actually pay the costs, insurance companies often require a complex list of steps that must be taken. These steps are full of pitfalls and obstacles.

Struggling families are already traversing a rugged emotional path and are not well positioned to navigate the insurance company's complex maze.

Residential treatment programs, adult transition programs, and therapeutic boarding schools know that families want insurance reimbursement and do not know how to obtain it. In response, programs have taken several steps, which I will rate below according to how helpful they are to families.

- **Gold/Full Insurance Support:** Treatment programs that offer this level of support either contract with

a full-service third-party billing company, or else hire a competent UR/billing team in-house. The billing support handles everything for the family, from verification of benefits, to pre-authorization and ongoing utilization review, to billing and claims follow up. Most importantly, at this top tier, treatment programs do not pass the cost of insurance support onto the family. There is no additional cost for insurance billing.



- **Silver/Full Insurance Support for Pay:** Under this model, treatment programs generally contract with a third-party billing company to handle all aspects of insurance billing (same as above), however, they pass the cost onto the family. The industry standard cost is usually 10% of dollars recovered from insurance and families must take the extra step of signing an agreement with the third-party billing company and ensuring that their fees are paid.

- **Bronze/Break Out Bill:** This is the older model whereby treatment programs provide a superbill of the therapy sessions for families to submit on



Cecily Ruttenberg can be reached at cecily@mentalhealthbill.net

continued on page M9

Attachment Disruptions, from page M6

of disrupted attachment are the need to be in control and lack of trusting anyone but themselves. Presenting behaviors include anger management, dysmaturity, regressive behaviors, codependency, hypersexuality, substance abuse, self-harm, suicide ideation or active attempts, comorbid mental health issues, and other psychological issues. More severe disruptions can cause attachment to be disorganized, and the severity of the mental illness can cause a psychotic break.

Every child needs a loving, safe home, and children whose needs are not met may have significant physical and mental health problems as well as difficulties with emotions, concentration, and behaviors. This increased risk is most often due to children exposed to adverse experiences, including prenatal substance exposure, malnutrition, exposure to family dysfunction, parental substance abuse, or mental health disorders. Research has shown that the higher number of adverse experiences (ACEs) children are exposed to, the higher the likelihood that they will have chronic physical, emotional, and developmental conditions.

How can disruption in attachment become secure?

How then do disrupted attachments heal? It may sound obvious that relationships heal attachment and help to co-regulate a child. The connection can be with an animal or a calm, connected adult. Animals offer unconditional love and no judgment. Relationships with animals help to create transferable trust between the child and the adults in their world. The availability of adults in a child's life is equally important. Just being there for a child as a calm, self-regulated adult can co-regulate a dysregulated child. Didactic curiosity, curiosity without judgment, is another tool to both create and heal relationships. Parents who are willing to admit past mistakes, ask forgiveness, and are open and honest with their child also can heal a disrupted attachment.

Whether the child is adopted or a raised in their biological family, we now know that specific brain and physiological systems are wired differently in children with disruptions in their attachments.

Attachment disordered children and teens often thrive with predictable structure. There was so much uncertainty in their early lives that routines, schedules, limits, and consistent

boundaries help make them feel safe in the world. The goal of working with any detachment disordered child should be to teach them about their own need for structure, help them to establish healthy routines and structure outside of a therapeutic placement, and to help them to learn to live in the discomfort of the unexpected.

Treatments have come a long way.

In earlier decades, residential treatment centers focused a behavioral model, using points and levels systems to earn privileges or consequences based on behaviors. We know now that for children with attachment disrupters, behavior modification was not a sufficient long-term strategy.



Fortunately, today, many therapeutic environments (therapeutic boarding schools, residential treatment centers, and wilderness programs and young adult therapeutic programs) are knowledgeable in the processes that might mediate the impact of attachment disruptions.

Whether the child is adopted or a raised in their biological family, we now know that specific brain and physiological systems are wired differently in children with disruptions in their attachments. Decades of studies in attachment theory provided the basis for building continual theoretical frameworks as well as promising therapies, now used in therapeutic environments. Person-centered counseling, mindfulness, yoga, meditation, brain mapping, neurofeedback, brain spotting, as well as eye movement desensitization and reprocessing (EMDR), dialectical behavioral therapy (DBT), and cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) are good examples and often part of residential treatment settings. [A](#)

Resources:

1. Adverse Childhood Experience and Trauma (ACEs)
2. Bowlby, J. (1988) *A Secure Base: Parent-Child Attachment and Healthy Human Development*. London: Routledge
3. Ainsworth, M.D.S. (1989) "Attachments beyond Infancy." *American Psychologist*, 44 (4). 709-716



Committee Reports

College Committee

Chair: Joanne LaSpina

Vice Chair: Laurie Kopp-Weingarten

Ex officio: Marilyn O'Toole


Recent Activities and Accomplishments

Marilyn O'Toole brought forward the idea of hosting webinars with individual colleges when the Big 10+ Tour needed to be canceled due to COVID-19. She and Joanne LaSpina, with the help of the IECA office, offered the first College Conversation with University of Washington on March 31, 2020. There was immediate and very positive feedback from the membership, and to date, we've hosted 26 College Conversations. Louise Franklin helps on the backend by aggregating overflow questions from the webinars. Nancy Federspiel updated the College Peer-to-Peer resource section of the IECA website so it is now user-friendly and relevant. Pamela Kwartler has written relevant articles for *Insights* and tapped experts to provide articles. She sought out the expertise of committee member Vita Cohen, along with Lisa Temkin, to pen an article about tuition reciprocity for the April/May 2020 *Insights*. She worked with committee member Eva-Garza Nyer to enlist Marie Bigham of Hack the Gates for an article in the June/July 2020 issue.

Current/Ongoing Initiatives

Improving College Relations: Our webinars, College Conversations, have offered the opportunity to invite directors and deans from colleges and universities all over the world to share information and respond to member questions live. We must continue to seek out ways to show colleges the knowledge and professionalism of our IECA membership.

Future Plans and Goals

- Assign a committee member to review the Peer-to-Peer resource section of the website at least monthly to keep it fresh and relevant.
- Resume tours as soon as safely possible. The canceled spring 2020 Big 10+ tour would be a top priority.
- Continue to meet the needs of IECA members who are seeking to increase their college knowledge through webinars, such as College Conversations and other means.
- Expand member engagement by involving untapped members in staffing sub-committee work, actively soliciting input, and delivering on goals.
- Seek out ways to continue to spread awareness of the IECA brand. Families should recognize the name as a symbol of trust, reliability, and knowledge. 


Insurance from page M7

their own to their insurance company.

This model allows families to recover just a fraction of their costs and is not ideal.

- **No Support/Cash Pay Only:** A few treatment programs, fewer and fewer, still insist they will provide no insurance support whatsoever and families must cash pay.

When looking into possible placements for families, feel free to show this article to admissions directors and ask them which of the four models best describes their insurance support: Gold/Silver/Bronze or No Support.

Insurance is a benefit that we all pay for and we have a right to use it. Treatment programs that support families in using their benefits will likely hold a competitive advantage over those that don't. If any two programs are equally clinically appropriate for a client, why not go with the one that supports insurance? 

IECA National Office

Mark Sklarow

Chief Executive Officer
ext. 6972
MSklarow@IECAonline.com

Sue DePra

Deputy Executive Director
ext. 6975
Sue@IECAonline.com

Sarah Brachman

Director of Communications
ext. 6971
Sarah@IECAonline.com

Rachel King

Conference Manager
ext. 6978
Rachel@IECAonline.com

Valerie Vasquez-Guzman

Manager of Educational Programs
ext. 6977
Valerie@IECAonline.com

Trish Fratarcangelo

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

Jean Lockwood

External Relations Coordinator
ext. 6982
Jean@IECAonline.com

LeAnnette Bailey

Office Administrator
ext. 6970
LeAnnette@IECAonline.com

Caitlin Myers

Membership Associate
ext. 6974
Caitlin@IECAonline.com

Kim Constantine

Finance Manager
ext. 6976
Accounting@IECAonline.com

Cyndi Bohlin

Editor
ext. 6938
insights@IECAonline.com

Phone: 703-591-4850
3251 Old Lee Highway
Suite 510
Fairfax, Virginia 22030
info@IECAonline.com



What Students Should Know Before Applying for Financial Aid

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

"High school seniors should receive help in how to think about a student loan and how to make sure that the education bought with the loan offers good prospects for repayment."

—Richard Thaler, 2017 Nobel Memorial Prize Winner in Economic Sciences

As IECs, we spend lots of time helping students identify colleges that are best for them. We know that when the student fits in well and ranks above the average applicant, the cost will likely be less. Do we spend enough time explaining how to navigate financial aid?

Broaching the subject and sizing up the family's understanding of college costs lengthens the conversation, which is different depending on a family's financial situation. During this COVID-19 pandemic, families are worried about whether it will be safe for their students to attend college this fall. Maybe the college will send students back home and parents may not get their money back. Also, the national level of unemployment reduces their prospects for continued employment.

The high school class of 2020 is the first to graduate during a pandemic, which is on everyone's minds. Some students haven't spent a minute considering the cost of financing their college education. One basic notion that I explain to them is that the more expensive the college they attend, the more debt they and their parents will incur. Another surprise for my students and parents is that they can't pay for four years of college from savings or from one year's income. Some can pay without taking out loans, but paying for college usually involves borrowing. The FAFSA is simply a way to examine families' financial need, and their eligibility for federal grants and loans. Even if students qualify for grants, loans fund the lion's share of costs. As unfortunate as it is that higher education is synonymous with taking out loans, let's remember that federal student loans are less costly than private loans. Undergraduate

students can borrow without a cosigner and repayment terms are flexible.

The new federal student loan rates for the academic year 2020-21 were announced on May 12, 2020. As the economy is reopening slowly, there was some excitement generated. Being that the government lending rate is zero, the treasuries sold for 1.24%. This meant that new federal student loans from July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021 reached a record low.



What are the New Rates?

The interest rate on the Direct Stafford loan for undergraduate students dropped from 4.53% to 2.75%. According to Mark Kantrowitz, a nationally recognized expert on student financial aid, scholarships, and student loans, "This beats the previous record low interest rate of 2.875%, which was reached in 2004-05." (<https://www.savingforcollege.com/article/historical-federal-student-interest-rates-and-fees>) This interest rate is for new loans originating between July 1, 2020 and June 30, 2021.

Here's an example. Let's say Joey started college in the fall of 2019 and took out the maximum Direct unsubsidized loans of \$5,500. The interest rate then was 4.53%. Lucky for Joey, the 2020-21 interest rate on the undergraduate loan is only 2.75%. These rates don't apply to Joey's prior year loans. They recalibrate every year.



C. Claire Law,
Educational Avenues,
can be reached at
claire@eduave.com

continued on page M11



Member Shout Outs

I am a new member of IECA, having served previously as a volunteer in this capacity until formalizing my practice last year. IECA's Mentor Match program helped me align with an experienced independent educational consultant determined to pay it forward: **Sherri Maxman** (NY). While "sheltering in place," she suggested that we meet weekly instead of monthly, offering presentations and encouraging me to investigate independently between sessions, stimulating questions she may be able to answer. We've discussed engagement with students, parents, admissions counselors, outside professionals, and other IECs who specialize, and our common interest in serving students with learning and attention differences. She's modeled virtual presentations, demonstrated an effective college planning program, connected me with members of her own network, and extended invitations to participate in professional development. We are both poised to adjust our practices and better serve families as institutions establish new policies moving forward. Sherri has facilitated this relationship as though she was the one receiving value while pouring her wisdom and experience into me. I cannot imagine a mentoring relationship working any better than this and I applaud IECA for updating their program and promoting our participation.



—Julie McNair, EdD (FL)

When everything came to a sudden halt in mid-March, one IECA member, **Mark Cruver** (GA), made sure the IECs in Georgia stayed abreast of the many changes in the field of college admissions. Mark implemented a weekly zoom for the Georgia IECA members to meet together. Many of us were not only trying to figure out what day it was but we were all still adjusting to Zoom and how to keep up with next steps for our juniors and seniors. Mark met us all each week with a smile and laugh that put everyone at ease. He tolerated our less-than-professional attire and bad hair days! As we became more familiar with each other, Mark invited special guests to include Mark Sklarow, Rick Clark, and admissions representatives for UGA and GA State. Even though Mark has made it look so easy, we all know that he has put a lot of time and effort into reaching out to all of us and planning for an informative and entertaining weekly gathering. Thank you, Mark!



—Jean R. Flowers (GA)

To inspire and encourage camaraderie, the Community Committee welcomes you to send a Shout Out to recognize and thank a member who has encouraged, supported, or lent you a helping hand. Please send a short note about those typically quiet and unnoticed acts and generosity to Lisa Gelman (lisa@apptutoring.com). The committee will select one or two to share each issue of *Insights*.

Financial Aid, from page M10

After four years of college, students have four loans with different rates. This is why it's difficult for them to keep track of the different interest rates and which loan to pay first.

This coming year, lower interest rates will benefit grad students as well: borrowers of the unsubsidized Direct loan went down from 6.08% in 2019-20 to 4.3% for 2020-21. The rate for the Federal Grad PLUS and Direct PLUS for parents went from 7.08% to 5.3%.


What Remained the Same?

The origination and guarantee fees will remain the same until September 30, 2020: 1.059% for Direct Stafford; 4.236% for Direct PLUS loans. These fees cover the cost of disbursement, guarantee insurance, and pay the servicers that collect the loans.

In my practice I try to explain how these loans work. If my students have followed me thus far and not broken down in tears (as one student did), then after I explain the interest rates I deep dive into the loan fees. These are subtracted from the amount disbursed to the college. For example, when Joey borrows \$6,500 in his sophomore year, 1.059% or \$63.54 is deducted, so the college receives the difference of \$6,436 (\$6,500-\$63.54=\$6,436). This way, students won't be surprised when they look at their account and

the full amount of \$6,500 isn't deposited. If they bother to check, they may not recognize the \$6,436 as a legitimate amount. After all, they borrowed \$6,500, but every loan has a fee attached, like points on a mortgage. Some students have taken AB and BC Calculus, but this is the first time they do some real-life arithmetic. Let me tell you: this exercise has more impact on students who didn't think paying for college had anything to do with them. No matter the level of wealth in their family, now they understand they have skin in the game.

We can expect that parents will take advantage of their undergraduate student's borrowing limits. Why should they borrow a larger PLUS loan at the rate of 5.3%, however good that is compared to last year's, when their undergraduate student can borrow at an even-lower rate of 2.75%?

Once students graduate from college, the federal government offers loan consolidation. However, it will remain to be seen if by consolidating, the rate for the July 1, 2020 to June 30 loan would be as low! In addition, with consolidation, the interest is paid first. It will take longer to amortize the principal balance. And let's not forget to tell our students to consolidate federal loans with FedLoans only. If they consolidate with a private bank, the federal loans lose all benefits—from deferment, forbearance, and public-service-loan-forgiveness to income-based repayment options. 

Ethics and Self-Care

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

"Put on your oxygen mask first." We hear this statement every time we fly (hopefully, air travel will resume normal activity soon). Most of the time, we receive this message as white noise in the background, but lately, it's become crucial to consider our self-care.

I've been reading the ethical standards from various organizations for my own knowledge. As a longtime member of the American School Counselor Association (ASCA), I often peruse their publications to enhance my service to my students. ASCA's 12-page *Ethical Standards for School Counselors* contains a section titled "Responsibilities to Self." Section B.3f states school counselors "Monitor their emotional and physical health and practice wellness to ensure optimal professional effectiveness." So, let's imagine we have a similar clause in our *Principles of Good Practice*. How would this manifest itself in your life, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic and the unveiling again of racism in our country?

I don't know about you, but physical isolation and despair wreak havoc on my spirit at any given time of the day. Not only do I owe it to my family, friends, and students to practice self-care, I owe it to myself. With the difficult conversations today and in the years to come, I'm learning to do better.

What have I been doing? I've rediscovered the meditative qualities of baking! King Arthur's flour and I have become best friends, especially on Sunday mornings. Morning Glory muffins and peanut butter and oatmeal dog biscuits are my specialties; my neighbors and my two Rottweilers look forward to Sundays. Recipes available upon request.

I've also been practicing mindfulness using the Calm app. At first, I used it sporadically, but now Tamara Levitt (who provides the voice-overs) and I are on a first-name basis. Some days, it works and some days it's all I can do to not crawl out of my skin.


Self-care also include preparing yourself professionally so that when, not if, those courageous conversations happen, you will have a foundation for authentic engagement. We're in a time of immense social change. There is an abundance of resources available to answer questions you have now and questions that you will have as you learn more about the history of systemic racism in the United States.

Our PGP, in Section III: "Relationships with Students and Families," states, *Members are aware of and sensitive to cultural, individual and role differences, and do not discriminate or condone discrimination based on age, race, gender, sexual orientation, language, religion, ethnicity, disability, national origin or socioeconomic status (Ai).* **Aware** of and **sensitive** to. Unpacking those words as an individual and as an organization will challenge us for days, months, and years to come. Undoubtedly, there will be many uncomfortable moments. Growth and change cannot happen without these moments, so sit in the discomfort, think about how your level of awareness and sensitivity to your students and families may be affecting them in ways unrecognized by you.



Implicit bias exists in all of us. Project Implicit® provides 15 Implicit Association Tests (IAT). Start with the one on race and work your way through the remaining tests (<https://bit.ly/steps1619>). You decide how you want to address the results, which may cause some discomfort. Pema Chödrön, Tibetan Buddhist nun, teacher and author of *When Things Fall Apart: Heart Advice for Difficult Times*, says "When we learn to stay even a moment with uncomfortable energy, we gradually learn not to fear it."

This is where the rubber meets the road: for you, for your students and families, for IECA and for our country. With the work facing all of us, practice self-care, because it will get uncomfortable. Please keep Sydney Montgomery's article in this issue handy for future reference.

If you have an ethics concern, please follow the instructions found at <https://link.iecaonline.com/ethics-complaints> for reporting your concern. 



Belinda Wilkerson can be reached at doctorb@steps2thefuture.com

2020–2021 IECA Leadership

Executive Committee



President
Kristina Dooley (OH)



**Vice President
for Ethics &
Professional
Practices**
Belinda Wilkerson
(NC)



**Vice President
for Education &
Training**
Joan Wittan (MD)



**Vice President for
Committees**
Elisabeth (Betsy)
Morgan (CT)



**Vice President for
Membership &
Engagement**
Maite Halley (FL)



Secretary/Treasurer
Ibrahim Firat (TX)



Past President
Barbara Pasalis (OH)

Members of the Board

Zach Galin (WI)
Laura O'Brien Gatzionis (Greece)
Lauren Gaylord (WA)
Rebecca Grappo (CO)
Hamilton Gregg (China)
Maite Halley (FL)
Jeana Kawamura (CA)
Karen Mabie (IL)
Elisabeth (Betsy) Morgan (CT)—
second term
Lucy Pritzker (NJ)

Committees of the Board

Audit

Chair: Elisabeth (Betsy) Morgan (CT)

Board Development

Chair: Karen Mabie (IL)

Education and Training

Chair: Joan Wittan (MD)

Ethics

Chair: Belinda Wilkerson (NC)

Finance

Chair: Ibrahim Firat (TX)

Government Relations

Chair: Steven Mercer (CA)

Membership

Chair: Maite Halley (FL)

Nominating

Chair: Barbara Pasalis (OH)

Committees of the Membership

Business Practices

Chair: Bob Carlton (TX)
Vice Chair: Terri Streetman (CA)

China Sub-Committee

Chair: Hamilton Gregg (China)
Vice Chair: Kan (Steve) Li (China)

College

Chair: Laurie Kopp Weingarten (NJ)
Vice Chair: Carole Kraemer (NJ)

College Affordability Sub-Committee

Chair: Carole Doherty (GA)

College Tours

Chair: Louise Franklin (WA)

Community

Chair: Lisa Gelman (MA)
Vice Chair: Stephanie Klein Wassink (CT)

Global

Chair: Sarah Loring de Garcia (Mexico)
Vice Chair: Julia Gooding (China)

Graduate School

Chair: Kim Snyder Mehta (VA)
Vice Chair: Andrea Rubin Graziano (CT)

Learning Disabilities

Chair: Ann Rossbach (NJ)
Vice Chair: Elizabeth Cooper (MA)

Outreach Development

Chair: Sherry Humphrey (KS)
Vice Chair: Anne Holmdahl (WA)

Schools

Chair: Heather Hyslop (MN)
Vice Chair: Theodra Washington (MD)

Therapeutic

Chair: Lisa Vella (NY)
Vice Chair: Jesse Quam (NC)



What's Your Solution?

When to Charge a Consult Fee


By Sherri Maxman, IECA (NY)

I recently posted a question on the IECA Member Network about when to charge a family for an initial consultation—and I clearly touched a nerve as I received an avalanche of responses. The advice offered was practical and useful, and I'm pleased to share it with my fellow IECs in the hopes that it will help you successfully navigate what can sometimes be a tricky situation!

- Many IECs respond to parents who seem to be “fishing” for free advice with a version of, “Those are the kinds of things that we’ll be discussing when we’re working together.” This can be followed up with an emailed proposal or list of your services and fees.
- Don’t ever take a phone call from an unknown number, in case it’s a parent looking for information. Either call back when you are prepared to talk, or text/email to schedule a time to talk and to explain fees if you charge for the initial consultation.
- If you have an assistant, have that person return any inquiring phone calls to ask questions (services needed, who referred them, etc.) and explain how your services work, including fee structure and what you charge (if anything) for an initial consultation. This eliminates the possibility of spending any time talking to families who are not willing to pay for any information, including the initial consult.
- Place a strict limit on the amount of time you will spend on the phone with parents who are calling for information. (You can inform parents of this limit or simply keep it in mind for your own purpose.) Allow time for them to talk about their child and time for you to explain your services. The amount of time is up to you—IECs who responded to my posting allowed anywhere from 10 to 90 minutes.
- Give parents a few bits of helpful and free information. This shows off your expertise and demonstrates the value you can bring to them as a consultant.
- Talk about applying to college in a general sense and not specifically about colleges to which a student might apply. If parents press for names of colleges, tell them that you are unable to offer that information without knowing much more about their child—grades, test scores, extracurriculars, etc. This also shows parents that you are careful to consider all factors before recommending colleges.
- Use this as an opportunity to educate parents on the work their child will need to do in the process.

- If you do charge for an initial consultation and a family hires you, deduct that amount from the total fee you charge. Let parents know about this policy at the initial consultation. You can place a time limit on this, such as deducting that amount if the family signs a contract within two weeks of the consultation.
- Use that first 15-minute phone call to suggest a paid consultation—an hour to an hour and a half meeting when you can take time to describe how you work and answer all questions from the family. Again, you can offer to deduct the fee for this consultation from what you charge families who hire you.
- Make sure that all interested parties—i.e. both parents and not just one—are present for any initial consultation with a family. This avoids the “let me talk to my husband/wife/partner and get back to you” situation as well as having to spend time repeating yourself if the spouse/partner needs to talk to you before hiring you.
- Use the initial consultation (paid or not) to get a sense of what it might be like to work with a family. This can help you filter out families who are pushy, demanding, or unrealistic. If this is what they’re like during a brief consult, this is probably what they would be like during a long and stressful process!



Many IECs are comfortable giving away a certain amount of advice for free—they consider it marketing/business development. Others would prefer not to give out much free information and charge for any form of initial consultation. As with much of the work we do, in the end it’s up to the individual IEC’s comfort level and what’s best for your situation. 



Sherri Maxman can be reached at sherri@college-maven.com