



WESTERN ASSOCIATION FOR COLLEGE ADMISSION COUNSELING



President's Message

Barbara Schultz

Making a Difference

Barbara Schultz

2002 Conference Chair and WACAC President 2002/03

The starfish story has always been one of my favorites. I truly believe even the little things in life can make a positive difference in the lives of our students, their families, and our colleagues. The conference theme "Make a Difference" centered on the value in each WACAC member and the strength found in the diversity of our membership.

Our keynote speaker, Canh Oxelson, set the tone with the wonderful story of his childhood and how so many people have made a difference in his life. He motivated new professionals to stay in the profession and rekindled enthusiasm in seasoned counselors, deans and directors. Canh reminded us that one of the ways we can make a

difference is to be a mentor. Mentoring is the mechanism to match new folks with experienced folks on a one-to-one basis.

Sonali Perera from Mount St. Mary's College and Allyson Hill from the University of Southern California have taken the lead and are revitalizing the WACAC Mentoring Program. More information on mentoring can be found on the wacac web site www.wacac.org and

also in this newsletter. My hope is to get everyone involved. Helping is what we do best, and we do need to help each other.

The conference provided members an opportunity to

friendships gone dormant during the year. This venue provided an extremely rewarding professional development experience, valuable informal networking, and fun social activities – no one will forget the "Stanford not Ready for Prime Time Vocalists" who are already practicing for next year's karaoke routine.

As president, I look forward to continuing the exciting tone set forth at the conference. I accept the challenge of representing you and look forward to a productive year of positive growth.

Thank you to the best Conference Planning Committee for truly "Making A Difference":

- **Robynne Royster**, University of the Pacific – On Site Queen
- **Mary Jane Greene**, Saint Margaret's Episcopal School – Publications and Publicity Chair
- **Minh-Ha Hoang**, University of San Diego – Program Chair
- **Margaret Hollis**, Baylor University – Pre Conference Chair

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meet and interact with new professionals and to reacquaint



A Regional Organization of the

National Association

for College

Admission

Counseling

3845 E. Race Ave.

Visalia, CA 93292

- **Loraine Pagavonan**, University of the Pacific and **Paulette Palafox**, Whittier College – Social Co Chairs
 - **Gail Grant** and **Dave Vasquez**, CSU Hayward – Registration Co-Chairs
 - **Tiffany Kunich**, Mount St. Mary's College – Scholarship Chair
 - **Pati Pineiro-Goodenberger**, Occidental College – Exhibitor Chair
 - **Carolyn Barnhart**, retired, and **Tim Ford**, Mount St. Mary's College – First Timers and Past President Co Chairs
 - **Melissa Garcia** and **Rachel Lemons**, Notre Dame de Namur University – Evaluation Co Chairs
 - **Sonali Perera**, Mount St. Mary's College – Hospitality Chair
 - **Rick Diaz**, Southern Methodist University – Talent Showcase Chair and Conference Mentor
 - **Cyndy McDonald** – Administrative Assistant
 - *and the wonderful staff at the University of the Pacific*
- A very special thanks to Chandre and Lori at Lime Twig Group for the design of the conference materials.

A Balancing Act— Counseling and Motherhood

By Mary Zilge, Scotts Valley High School

After six months of single parenting one child (my husband was out of town for job-related training,) selling our house, preparing to move to a new region, and oops – I forgot to mention having a second child (another adorable girl) AND working, I was ready for a break.

My new job title – mommy. I knew I would miss my friends but miss working? No way.

I dived into my mommy role head on. We participated in playgroup, arts and crafts (translation: messy stuff to pick up) and afternoons in the park. All seemed well until after a month into my motherhood abandon, my husband not so subtly asked, “When are you going back to work?”

Could it be that I wasn't truly cut out for one profession, motherhood? I noticed how uncomfortable I felt when asked by acquaintances where I worked. I would mumble, “I don't work anymore.

I am a stay-at-home mom.” My friends thought it strange when I tried to discuss college interests with their pre-school age children. I finally conceded that as much as I loved my children and was grateful for my time with them, I DID miss working. I found being a guidance counselor to be enriching and challenging, and I was proud of the accomplishments I had made. I believed that my profession in part defined me. To not work was frustrating.

I felt a part of my identity was missing. Because I believed my children were my priority and that I have only one chance with them, I did not want to go back to work fulltime or even halftime. My dilemma was finding a job (under 20 hours per week) that would allow me to maintain and develop my skills, have adult conversations, and remain a sane person. Could I find something like that?



Mary Zilge, (left), and David Wilmot (right) get “mentored” by Allyson Hill, University of Southern California.

Without a well developed plan I relied on good fortune and my highly respected work history. A former colleague from Southern California referred me to a counselor in the Santa Cruz area. The WACAC connection was working! A grant for a part-time person (10 hours per week.) was available in her school district. As a result, I got a “real” job again. I am so thankful to have the opportunity to fulfill my desire to be a mommy full time and continue working in a profession that I love.

I still struggle thinking I should be doing more in both areas of my life. It is often hard to leave home to go to work, and it is difficult as well to leave work when I know I have more to offer. I am grateful to be in a profession that allows me the opportunity to pursue two careers that I love. I hope that by finding a balance between the two I am a better mommy and also a better counselor.



The Institute for Contemporary Leadership (ICL) Conference,
has been postponed until the summer of 2003

McDonald Leaves WACAC Post

After serving one year as Administrative Assistant, Cyndy McDonald, has decided to devote her energies to the full time position she holds as AVID Consultant for Region VII.

“She has done an outstanding job for us,” offered WACAC President Barbara Schultz, “and we hate to lose her.” For the past several months Cyndy has devoted her shrinking time between a demanding work load for WACAC and her increasing responsibilities for AVID.

“It has become apparent to me that I cannot balance the two without one or the other organizations suffering a loss in service,” said McDonald. “I have learned that my responsibilities demand a change.”

WACAC thanks Cyndy for her dedicated service and looks forward to a continuing relationship with her as an active member.



See You
at the
NACAC
Conference
September 26-28, 2002
Salt Lake City, UT

2003 SCHEDULE WACAC / NACAC Spring College Fairs

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
April 20	April 21	April 22	April 23	April 24	April 25	April 26
				NACAC San Diego 9:00am—12:00pm 5:30pm—8:30pm		
April 27	April 28	April 29	April 30	May 1	May 2	May 3
NACAC Orange County 1:00pm—4:00pm	NACAC Inland Empire 9:00am—12:00pm 6:00pm—8:00pm	NACAC Ventura/ Tri-County 6:00pm—8:00pm	NACAC Ventura/ Tri-County 9:00am—12:00pm	NACAC Greater Los Angeles 9:00am—12:00pm 6:00pm—9:00pm		SAT Test Date
May 4	May 5	May 6	May 7	May 8	May 9	May 10
WACAC Central Valley 1:00pm—4:00pm	WACAC Central Valley Alameda County 9:00am—12:00pm 5:30pm—8:00pm	NACAC San Francisco 3:00pm—8:00pm	WACAC Marin 6:00pm—8:30pm	WACAC Santa Clara 10:00am—12:30pm 5:30pm—8:00pm		WACAC East Bay 1:00pm—4:30pm
May 11	May 12	May 13	May 14	May 15	May 16	May 17
Mothers Day	WACAC Sonoma 9:00am—11:30pm 6:00pm—8:00pm					

Please continue to check the WACAC websites for up to date information on the WACAC & NACAC College Fairs. Registration materials for the 2003 WACAC Fairs will be mailed in December of 2002. Registration for the NACAC fairs is handled by the NACAC office www.nacac.com.

University of the Pacific, WACAC Conference

Stockton, CA — May 29-31, 2002



1. First timers ready for Mardi Gras celebration at Luncheon
2. Dining in style at UOP!
3. Rick Diaz never stops working?
4. WACAC presenter, Bonnie Laughlin, packs up for conference.
5. Robynne Royster (left) newly elected delegate.
6. Elizabeth Mejia, WACAC new counselor award.
7. Peggy Hock, newly elected delegate.
8. Carl (Sandy) Behrend, NACAC President-elect and WACAC quartet serenade at talent show.
9. Sybil Furman, newly elected delegate.
10. Esther Hugo, President-elect.

WACAC Elections, Awards 2002

Esther Hugo Tapped President-Elect

In addition to our new President-Elect, **Esther Hugo**, Santa Monica College, WACAC members elected four new assembly delegates this year. They are **Sybil Furman**, University of Phoenix, Reno, NV, and WACAC Executive Board Member; **Peggy Hock**, Notre Dame High School, San Jose, CA; **Robynne Royster**, University of the Pacific, Stockton, CA; and **Tim Ford**, Mt. St. Mary's College, Los Angeles, CA.

Honoring its own for outstanding service to others has become a WACAC tradition. **Michael Drummy**, Associate Dean of Enrollment at Chapman University and the **Chapman University Admission staff** (see smiling faces in picture) were recipients of the WACAC Service Award. This annual honor goes to the WACAC member who best exemplifies the leadership qualities of the late Steve Hankins.

Jennifer Rudolph, Peninsula High School, Palos Verdes, CA., was cited as the winner of the Hankins New Counselor Award. With less than five years in the



Newly elected delegate
Tim Ford



Chapman University crew show off WACAC 2002 Service Award

profession, Jennifer's involvement in WACAC and dedication to students earned her this honor. Selected as the Joe Allen Human Relations Award recipient was **Alfred Herrera** of UCLA. This award is presented to an individual who has encouraged and supported traditionally underrepresented students in the transition from high school to college.

Elizabeth Mejia of Santa Monica College received the Emery Walker New College Counselor Award because of her active interest in WACAC and outstanding service to students.

On the Move

Mary Jane Greene to La Jolla Country Day School from St. Margaret's Episcopal School

Kathy Woods, La Jolla Country Day School, Director of College Counseling, has retired

Katy Murphy, new Dean of Enrollment Management, Notre Dame de Namur University, Belmont, CA. from Mt. St. Mary's

Sharon Appenzeller, to counselor at Granite Hills High School, El Cajon, CA. from English teaching position at same school

Roland Allen to college counselor at Sidwell Friends School in Washington, D.C. from Stanford University



Radia Alouache to Project Grad, Los Angeles, from Mount St. Mary's

Richard Scaffidi to Notre Dame de Namur from Project Grad, Los Angeles

Tim Ford, to Mount St. Mary's College from Otis Parsons School of Art and Design

Jan Ryder, retired from **Granite Hills High School**, to part time at St. Augustine High School

Gary Clark, from Admission Counselor to Assistant Director of Admission, Pitzer College

Sybil Furman to the University of Phoenix from Galena High School, Reno, NV

Special Thanks!

A special thanks to the many committee members and volunteers who gave their time to make the 2002 College Fairs so successful. We especially wish to recognize all the local chairs for their hard work:

- **Mike Hughes**, University of San Francisco
- **Ted Adams**, UC Davis
- **Gina Geck**, Sonoma State University
- **Laura Connell**, Dominican University
- **Alta Tinsely**, California State University, Hayward
- **Linda Ortega**, San Jose State University
- **Michael Beseda**, St. Mary's College
- **Linda Ellis**, Amador Valley High School
- **Mary Fitzpatrick**, Beverly Hills High School
- **Jalani Bakari**, California State University, Fullerton
- **Frank Jonasson**, San Diego State University (retired)
- **Patricia Gorman**, Yucaipa High School
- **Linda Conti**, Oxnard College

Middle College High School Rescues Bored Students

Now beginning its second year of operation, Grossmont Community College's Middle College High School is providing a viable alternative for "bored" high school students...WACAC editor Jan Ryder visited with Director Cathy Zemlich and several Middle College High School students to learn how the program helps students transition to college life

After twenty five years of teaching Humanities at Valhalla High School in El Cajon, teacher Cathy Zemlich has found herself directing a program aimed at students in the Grossmont Union High School District who are not "connecting to high school life".

Started last fall, the program provides high school juniors in the district the opportunity to get a head start in college by taking high school AND college classes on the Grossmont Community College campus. Students take college courses in the mornings and their high school classes – taught by Zemlich – in the afternoon.

Director Zemlich has identified (with the help of high school counselors) bright, capable kids who are not being fulfilled in the traditional high school programs. At Middle College High School these same students are flourishing.

"Many of my students are into theatre and art. One took the SAT in high school – got a 1475 – but he really wasn't hooked in with regards to going on to college. Now things have changed. He is excited about learning and continuing his education," she added.

With plans for expansion underway, Zemlich said that a new group of juniors will enroll next year, and the current number of 33 students will most likely double. This year's class will continue as seniors for the fall of 2002. Students complete requirements for high school graduation while earning college credits. They are required to complete at least two college classes each semester.

Each student takes courses unique to



Middle College High School students with Director, Cathy Zemlich

his/her interests, and it is important that students possess a high skill level. Because students must function in an independent manner, most are self directed.

Here's what the kids had to say about their middle college experience:

"It's a mature atmosphere...a better learning environment for me...not so much busy work."

JASON BEGEMANN, 16, MONTE VISTA H.S

"The ability to do high school and college together is much more challenging"

TIFFANY THOMAS, 16, MT. MIGUEL H.S.

"This is fabulous. When I revisited high school I thought it was ditzzy. The conversations with other students up here are a biggie for me. I want to go to UCSD after I leave the program."

**MICHAEL ROKEI, 17,
EL CAJON VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL**

"There's no busy work. I like the people and the campus. I am coming back next year for sure."

URIAH LAMB, 17, MONTE VISTA H.S.

The only program of its kind in San Diego County, the concept of Middle College is not new. Originated 25 years ago at LaGuardia in New York, the middle college concept has spread to numerous community college districts on the West Coast. Collaborative relationships with high school districts to provide continuing educational opportunities have been established at the following sites in California: DeAnza Community College in Fremont, Contra Costa College in San Pablo, Foothill College in Los Altos Hills, San Jose City College and the College of San Mateo.

Ask The Expert!



Q. I had a difficult time explaining to my high school students about the new admission procedures at San Diego State last fall. Can you help? Most of the seniors thought that meeting the eligibility index number would “get them into State” and were caught off guard when they were offered dual admission.

Dr. Sandra Cook, Executive Director of Enrollment Services, San Diego State University, responds to the question:

A. Each year, university admission offices must take into consideration many factors before making their admission decisions. At San Diego State University, a few of the major issues faced last fall included unprecedented enrollment demands and overenrollment of current students. In making decisions, SDSU seeks to balance the need to maintain quality services provided to current students and the goal of making SDSU as accessible as possible to service area and outside-of-service area applicants.

SDSU's selective and competitive admission criteria are based on the applicant pool each semester. Admission criteria for outside-of-service area applicants are determined once we have an opportunity to review the academic qualifications of the applicant pool and the number of spaces available. For fall 2002, we received over 40,000 applications for 6500 spaces. The average Eligibility Index of admitted freshmen was 4,000 (967 if based on ACT). The average high school grade point average was 3.62. The average SAT I total score was 1,104; the average ACT composite score was 23. The average grade point average of admitted upper-division transfers was 3.17.

To manage its enrollment demand, SDSU has employed a series of strategies designed

to match enrollment with funding and the campus' capacity to serve. These strategies include continuing to grow the main campus, implementing year-round operations, and increasing the number of course offerings at off-campus centers. Even with these practices in place, SDSU is still experiencing significant applicant and enrollment demand.

As part of a series of efforts to manage our enrollment pressures, a new enrollment management policy was approved by the Chancellor's Office that will eliminate most applications to SDSU for spring 2003 admission. Please visit www.sdsu.edu/spring2003 for details. During San Diego State University's enrollment management discussions for the fall 2002 admission cycle, it was decided that this change would be the most effective way to keep our admission criteria from significantly increasing beyond current upward trend levels. In essence, limiting the categories of applications accepted for spring 2003 allowed us to admit more students from throughout California for fall 2002 using moderately increased admission criteria.

In addition, SDSU implemented two new enrollment management strategies that affect its service area applicants. First, Cal State San Marcos and San Diego State University now have separate regional service areas within San Diego County. A service region map was approved by the California State University Chancellor's Office, dividing San Diego County at approximately State Route 56 and extending eastward. Under this new plan, first-time freshmen in the Cal State San Marcos service region who wish to attend SDSU must meet SDSU's "out of service area" selective admission criteria.

In addition, for the fall 2002 admission cycle, San Diego State University implemented a Dual Admission Program for first-time freshmen in SDSU's regional service area. This program is designed for

applicants who are between the minimum CSU eligibility index of 2900 and the SDSU out-of-service area eligibility index who do not fulfill the Entry-Level Math (ELM) and/or English Placement Test (EPT) requirements. Under this program, students must complete their remedial requirements at the community college prior to enrolling at SDSU. They have one year to satisfy their remediation requirements in order to retain their admission status at SDSU. Dual admission students have access to SDSU's student services and are advised to take additional courses that will transfer successfully to SDSU.

As soon as new decisions are made, SDSU makes every effort to inform high schools, community colleges and applicants through letters, phone calls when appropriate, and the quarterly Counselor Connection. Current information is also available at www.sdsu.edu/admissions.

The best advice you can give your students is to keep their grades as high as possible, thoroughly prepare for the SAT/ACT, and plan to take the SAT/ACT more than once. They should also be reminded that SDSU maintains strict deadlines. Applications are accepted October 1 through November 30 for the fall, and SAT/ACT tests should be taken no later than October. Once students are admitted, they must send their Intent to Enroll packets, including their Intent to Enroll form, official transcripts with fall grades from all schools previously attended, SAT/ACT scores, and a \$100 enrollment deposit by May 1. In addition, final official transcripts, including spring term grades, must be submitted by July 15.

In summary, San Diego State University is actively managing enrollment growth to ensure a high quality, positive educational experience for your former students. If you have any questions, you can call SDSU's counselor-only phone line at (619) 594-6966 or e-mail admissions@sdsu.edu.

Dying to be Thin!



Alistair Grant

Alistair Grant, Admission Counselor from Santa Clara University, shares his personal fight against anorexia nervosa—an eating disorder which plagues many high school and college students. The following article highlights his presentation at the WACAC Conference last Spring at the University of the Pacific.

I am here to talk to you today about college admissions and eating disorders. Why college admissions and eating disorders? Truthfully I wish I were sitting next to one of you as a member of the audience listening to someone who had some answers. Instead I find myself standing before you with questions; many of which I am sure are similar to yours. My hope is that we can use this time to raise those questions, share our ideas and see where it takes us. I see this more as a conversation, a dialogue, if you will.

Why am I here, though? My primary reason for being here is—quite simply—the students. But I am also here because of the profession to which we belong. I think they are closely related. Many of us—most of us, I hope—are drawn to the field because of our love for people. Essentially that's why I am here today.

At the beginning of the month I invited Mike and Stephanie Watt onto campus. They are no strangers to the sometimes-tragic reality of eating disorders. In July 1999 their daughter Kristen lost her struggle with anorexia at the young age of 14. About an hour before they arrived on campus one of my colleagues made a comment that struck me. He said, "Alistair you have to make yourself vulnerable. People will listen to you—and trust you—if you make yourself vulnerable."

The main reason I brought Mike and Stephanie onto campus is because no one

likes to talk about this stuff. You being here today says to me you do want to talk about this. So do I.

What initially prompted me to think about college admissions and eating disorders was my own experience. Part of the reason I am here, then, is to tell you my story. I was sixteen years old when I applied to college. I was still an adolescent. Concerned that I was too young to attend college my parents considered sending me to Switzerland to complete a thirteenth year of high school, common for students who graduated ahead of their peers. While it may have been the best decision, I declined the offer and set my sights on college, refusing to believe that I was too young. In retrospect I still can't say whether I made the wrong decision. What I can say is that I was a person unsure of his personality, a person who put a lot of faith in the system, specifically the admissions counselors who were evaluating me.

I took a medical leave of absence from my first university because of my struggle with anorexia. It was then that I felt pressure to stay in school despite my failing health. Certainly, my parents initially opposed my decision, worried that I would never return

to school. In retrospect they view my decision to take some time off as a good one.

We had been living in the United States for less than three years. During that short period of time my parents had adopted what I consider an American mindset. They saw the danger in taking time off from school. They worried that I would not return to complete my college education. When they realized the severity of my illness they supported my decision, but not before. I worry that they ignored my initial pleas due

to this mentality. By the time I left school I was 106 pounds. My heart rate had dropped to 22 beats per minutes. To be honest I was lucky to be alive. Waiting this long to pull me out of school was a mistake. Waiting for me to finish the semester so that more classes would later transfer was a mistake.

Assuming that I would get better while being in school was also a mistake.

School has always been important to me. My love for learning has defined me since my early childhood. Every morning I waited outside my parent's bathroom so that I could grab my mum to ask her a question. She would still be dripping wet when I approached her with my textbook in hand.

**People will
listen to you
—and trust you—
if you make
yourself vulnerable.**

As a student at a boarding school in Scotland I found an escape through academics. Even in college my closest friends were professors.

The only time I lost my love for learning was during my struggle with anorexia. I studied—but without passion. I passed my classes with good grades. But I had trouble retaining any information. I was learning very little. What little energy I did have should have gone into my recovery. Instead, I focused on my studies, as I had always done. I was unable to put things into perspective. What I should have done was leave at the end of my freshman year. But I was stubborn. I didn't want to let my parents down. I didn't want to let myself down. I saw where they were coming from. College is expensive. Taking a leave of absence for more than six months meant paying back student loans before I graduated. So I felt compelled for financial reasons to continue college. My advice here – never let money become more important than a person's life.

I told you that I arrived on campus pretty unsure of myself. The crowd I was initially drawn to did not bring out the best in me. I did not have the courage to break away from them. I did not have the voice to say no. I retreated into my own world in an attempt to escape theirs. It worked. They abandoned me. It was at that point that I started exercising obsessively. It was at that point that I should have sought new friends, people who cared about the values I held. But college was less forgiving than I imagined. So I retreated further. It was a frightening place. My eating disorder consumed me.

We need to change the American mindset. Parents must feel comfortable letting their children take time away from school. At the same time, students need to know that their parents would support their decision. I fear that too many students stay in school, as I did, worrying about how their parents might react. I worry about the silence that surrounds eating disorders.

When I started researching colleges I never thought about colleges having different personalities. I do now. Although that personality may be subject to change, students are drawn to schools

with personalities similar to their own, personalities that reflect a vision of themselves. A student is drawn, then, to what they believe is a reflection of their future, an idea of what they could be at that particular institution.

So our job in the field of admissions is unquestioningly an important one. We need to fully understand the personality of the institution we represent because we either need to a) accurately communicate it to prospective students or b) use that information to create a vision of a slightly different personality from the current one. It is entirely possible that we are charged with the mission to change the student body, alter slightly the very personality of the school by the class we bring in. Accordingly, the perception of the school, of the student body – what I am calling the greater personality – does influence who applies and ultimately enrolls each fall.

What can we do as admissions counselors? What is our role? As Mike and Stephanie talked about that evening, eating disorders have very little to do with food. Instead, it has to do with something much less tangible. It has to do with self-esteem.

It has to do with self-confidence. The questions – the silent questions being asked – but rarely heard are these. Who am I? Do I like who I am when I close my eyes? Am I willing to remain true to myself? Do I feel comfortable in my own body? These silent questions often go unanswered. I think we are in a position to hear those questions. We have a different set of ears than most. I think it is our responsibility to listen to these voices—these quiet but sometimes—desperate voices. Our role might only be to listen. Don't underestimate the power of that, though. Students will sense it. And they will appreciate it.

There are other reasons that bring me here. This past season we received a number of essays addressing the issue of eating disorders. It was not an alarming number. Just twenty essays. Twenty out of nearly six thousand applications, perhaps a deceptively small percentage; a percentage so low you may be wondering why I am here at all, why this is of any importance to us. Part of the answer to that question lies in the nature of our jobs, and in the nature of the people who are drawn to this profession, which for many of us is a way of life, an extension of our own personality.

Simply stated I am here because I care about the future of our students, about the future of this profession. And I know that you care. We stay in education because of the students. So let us ask ourselves not whether this seemingly small number of essays is really a problem worth addressing, but whether this is an indication of something larger, a glimpse of a growing problem we as admissions counselors will be facing.

Responsible for recruiting students in the Pacific Northwest, I decided to contact a few admissions offices in the region to see if they too had noticed a rise in the number of essays addressing eating disorders. After a few phone calls I was surprised to discover that other admissions offices had not received any. I went back to our essay questions and wondered if they had prompted students to write about this very sensitive issue. We asked them to describe a situation in which they extended compassion and what compelled them to move from perception to action. Perhaps the question



invited openness – openness necessary for students to talk about this issue. I no longer wonder why students are choosing to write about this stuff. I think they want to talk. But they need to know we are listening. I think we are. I think we need to be ready.

With only a handful of essays in a folder I decided not to ignore these students. I have come here today to ask you what we can do in our world, the world of admissions to help these students. What advice should we be giving them? Looking at the profile of a student struggling with an eating

disorder you may find that they are academically motivated, socially conscious and internally driven. For most of us they are attractive students, attractive because we believe they would bring their spirit to campus. That spirit of leadership and involvement. That spirit of consciousness. That spirit of action. Unfortunately, they are engaged in a terrible struggle, a daily struggle that is killing that very spirit we recognize and value.

If I was absolutely convinced – even fairly convinced – that these students could come to campus and be safe I would welcome their presence. I would support their decision to join our community. But I am not convinced. I do not question their academic preparedness. I question whether they have the energy to fight their struggle while juggling a demanding course load.

I wonder if their fragile personality is ready for the rigor of college, the difficulties faced in the turbulent world of student life, a world often without structure. I question whether we are doing the right thing by admitting these students, especially without conducting additional research. Should we encourage them to defer their decision for a year while they seek professional help? Should parents be told that it might be better for their sons or daughters to wait for the sake of their future and health? The question is really not whether they can do it. Indeed, these students are usually very

capable, students who have demonstrated intellectual and spiritual curiosity.

The question is would it be better for them to wait, to put their energy into recovering? Perhaps our evaluation of the students should be more realistic, more all encompassing.

The only time I lost my love for learning was during my struggle with anorexia.

A complicated disease, anorexia is not simply a response to the pressures faced in school. Healthy students respond to the same pressures differently. But there are so many reasons behind eating disorders. Added pressures to do well, to fit in, to be popular, are often too much for students. But these

pressures – these struggles – will never disappear. As I have come to realize, they are very much a part of the college experience. That struggle to remain true to our self. That struggle to stand up for what we believe in. That struggle to become a member of a complex community. That struggle to leave adolescence and enter adulthood.

So I ask again, what can we do in our positions to address this issue? When we evaluate students we are primarily concerned with their academic preparedness. Whether they are emotionally prepared for college is a question we rarely focus on. Realistically, I am not sure it is our responsibility. How do our responsibilities change, though, when students reveal their struggle with an eating disorder? How do we respond differently when we are given this information? And perhaps more importantly, why are they using the college essay to communicate this personal information? How should we use that knowledge? It is difficult to ignore essays addressing something so personal, so painful. I feel compelled to better understand their situation. So are we in a position to help these students? I believe we are.

I see it as our responsibility to question their readiness for college.

While students are choosing to write about their struggle, many high school counselors only occasionally allude to it, sometimes referring to it as a personal

difficulty. If we agree that the long term health and well being of the students is more important to us than getting them into the college of their choice, something needs to change. Perhaps we need to explore alternative courses of action for the students. We can start of by including the family in this decision.

During the fall I met with a number of students who opened up to their struggle with an eating disorder, but asking, begging, me not to mention it to their parents. It struck me that they were willing to share with me, a stranger, an extremely personal part of their lives and yet showed resistance to sharing that same information with their parents. One student refused to tell her parents the topic of her essay. The topic was her struggle with exercise bulimia.

What should I have done with this information? These students are on their way to becoming adults, independent from their parents. On the same note these students are often financially dependent on their parents. So many students feel compelled to fulfill their parents' wishes. This is perfectly understandable. Many parents live vicariously through their children and need them to attend a respectable four-year institution, remaining partially blind to their children's predicament.

Parents need to know that sending their sons or daughters to college prematurely or against their wishes could be detrimental to their health. At the same time, high school counselors need to know that we support their decision to defer college for a year. Again, that is a conversation we need to have. Let us put aside enrollment numbers and yield rates for a moment. Let us focus on what is important. Ask, not what is best for the university but what is best for the student. I suspect we would all lean towards looking out for the students' future.

As I already mentioned, my parents encouraged me to take a gap year, as many people from Britain do. I declined the offer, knowing that most of my classmates were heading off to college. I did not see that thirteenth year as an opportunity. It meant an additional year in school. In retrospect it may have been the better decision.

I did not start college with an eating disorder. But I did enter college with a fairly

low self-esteem. I was also two years younger than most of my peers. I was not prepared for the social environment waiting for me at college. I felt uncomfortable, except in the classroom. Academically, I did well. But socially I struggled. I did not have the strength to say no. I surrounded myself with people who had nothing in common with me. In silence, I suffered. That is when I started exercising, something I never did before college. It became an obsession, an escape. It was a way of avoiding the issues at hand.

During my year and a half off I did raise the questions I failed to ask as a high school senior. I promised myself I would not return to school until I felt comfortable with myself. It took me over a year to reach that point. And indeed I felt slightly distant from my peers when I transferred to Santa Clara University. But I liked who I was. I was my own person. That was key. Not immediately, but in time I saw Santa Clara as my home. I subsequently recovered fully from anorexia by the end of my sophomore year.

What can we do?

We can encourage students to explore their options after graduating from high school. Most people walk through one of two doors right now, one that leads to college and the other that does not. A third option is deferring enrollment for a year. We can acknowledge that some students are not ready to go straight from high school to college. Taking a year off can be a liberating experience. We can help them research alternative courses of action, reassuring them that deferring school for a year can be a great decision. Students may decide to explore a foreign country, learn about a different culture, and develop a more global perspective. Or they may choose to learn a trade, pick up a musical instrument or volunteer in their local community. Distance is not the key. Perspective is.

We can find out what resources exist on college campuses and highlight those for students. We can learn if there is a wellness or counseling center on campus. Many universities have Resident Assistants,

Resident Directors and even Resident Ministers in the residence halls. We are helping them answer the question, What kind of support is available when I arrive on campus?

I mentioned Mike and Stephanie Watt earlier in my presentation. Weekly, they visit high schools and middle schools to talk about eating disorders. To educate the students, many schools bring in speakers to talk about the dangers of drinking and driving and drug abuse. They may bring in someone to talk about relationships. Bringing someone onto campus to talk about eating disorders might also be a good idea.

We can learn that eating disorders are among many issues students face. We can inform ourselves so that we are in a better position to help students.

Contact Alistair at agrant@scu.edu if you are interested in more information or wish to arrange for a speaker concerning eating disorders at your school.



What's New on the Government Scene

*by Arnie Kaminsky,
Government Relations Chair*



State Senator O'Connell has introduced SB 1944 to close an omission in California Tax Law that will have a direct financial impact on credential counselors in the state. Currently fully credentialed teachers may take up to a \$1,500 credit on their California State Income Tax depending upon years of service. However under the current law, support services, administrators and other out of classroom personnel that are fully credentialed may not take the tax credit. SB1944 closes this discrepancy and all credential staff members may take the tax credit if SB1944 becomes law.

Senator Alaracon introduced SB 1731 to change the California high school graduation requirements. The rationale behind the proposed change is to enable more students to have access to colleges and universities in California. The bill is currently in the State Senate Appropriations Committee and has passed through the Education Committee. The basic principle of SB 1731 would require all California high school students to take the A – G pattern as the graduation requirements in all California high schools. There are provisions in the bill to allow individual

students as well as districts to opt out.

WACAC can be a force in shaping educational policy in California and Nevada if we mobilize as an organization to make our voices heard in the state legislatures and in the governors' offices of each state. Seven WACAC members signed up to be members of the Government Relations Committee at the recent WACAC Spring Conference, and it is not too late for you to do the same. It is your opportunity to be involved and be a person of action. Contact Arnie Kaminsky, GRAC Chair, at ahkaminsky@hotmail.com.



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3845 E. Race Ave., Visalia, CA 93292

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President & Alternate Delegate
(949) 509-9500 x1122
bschultz@tarbut.com

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Smurick@aol.com

Esther Hugo
President Elect & Delegate
(310) 434-4955
Hugo_esther@smc.edu

Antonio Reveles
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(323) 560-1800 x284
Revelestony@bell.k12.ca.us

Sybil Furman
Admission Practices & Delegate
(775) 851-5630 x 235
sfurman@washoe.k12.nv.us

Mark vanWarmerdam
College Fairs
(510) 885-3157
Mvan@csuhayward.edu

Arnie Kaminsky
Government Relations
(323) 735-0241 x 229
Ahkaminsky@hotmail.com

Patty Hart
Human Relations
(760) 436-6136 x6014
Patty.Hart@sduhsd.net

Fidel Ramirez
Membership
(818) 677-2967
Fidel.ramirez@csun.edu

Cindy Bevc
Delegate
(530) 752-7649
cavevc@ucdavis.edu

Mary Fitzpatrick
Delegate
(310) 551-5100 x8358
mfitzpatrick@bhUSD.k12.ca.us

Tim Ford
Delegate
(213) 477-2569
tford@msmc.la.edu

Vince Garcia
Delegate
(818) 505-5328
GarciaV@campbellhall.org

Avis Hinkson
Delegate
Avish@mills.edu

Peggy Hock
Delegate
(408) 294-1113
hockatnd@hotmail.com

Jane McClure
Professional Development
Delegate
(415) 421-4177
Janemcclr@aol.com

Sonali Perera
Delegate
(310) 954-4250
Sperera@msmc.la.edu

Robynne Royster
Delegate
(209) 946-2211
rroyster@uop.edu

Jan Russell-Cebull
Delegate
(925) 837-5375 x7241
jan_russel@athenian.org

Jan Ryder
Public Relations/Delegate
(858) 272-5676 x145
JRyder1373@aol.com

Esther Walling
Delegate
(323) 232-2261 x351
ewalling@lausd.k12.ca.us