AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGIATE REGISTRARS AND ADMISSIONS OFFICERS

# COLLEGE and UNIVERSITY

*Educating the Modern Higher Education Administration Professional*

**Enrollment Management & the Enrollment Industry:**
Part I

**Athletics, Applications, & Yields:**
The Relationship between Successful College Football and Institutional Attractiveness

**Understanding the Bolgna Process for Admissions Officers**

**Assessing Perceived Professionalism in Medical School Applicants**

**Recent Developments with Degree Mills:**
Accreditation Mills and Counterfeit Diploma and Transcript Operations

## forum


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Do Not 'Fear' a Strong Registrar

The Not So Usual Suspects

One-and-Done:
An Academic Tragedy in Three Acts

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Managing Enrollment Bandits: Recovering Enrollments Lost During Registration

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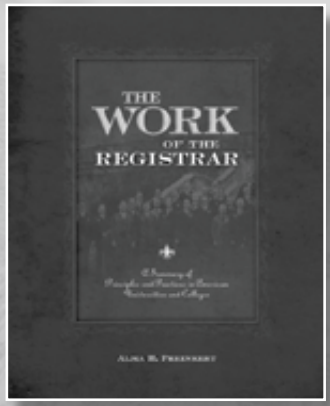


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IN THE SERIES OF ESSAYS DAVID KALSBEEK AND I HAVE AUTHORED FOR *COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY* OVER THE PAST TWO YEARS, WE HAVE ATTEMPTED TO EXAMINE THE BUSINESS OF ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT FROM A VARIETY OF PERSPECTIVES. FROM THE SPECIFIC DEMANDS THAT FACE SENIOR ENROLLMENT MANAGERS TO THE LARGER INSTITUTIONAL AND PUBLIC POLICY ISSUES

# Enrollment Management & THE ENROLLMENT INDUSTRY

THAT CREATE THE CONTEXT FOR THE PRACTICE OF ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT, WE HAVE TRIED TO CREATE CONVERSATIONS AND TO PROVIDE THE GRIST FOR DISCUSSIONS ABOUT REFLECTIVE PRACTICE WITHIN ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATIONS, AND HOPEFULLY AMONG OTHER SENIOR CAMPUS POLICY MAKERS AS WELL. FOR THIS ESSAY, DAVID HAD TO TAKE A SHORT HIATUS SO I AM FLYING SOLO ON THIS ONE. IN THIS PIECE, I BEGIN TO EXAMINE THE CONNECTIONS BETWEEN INSTITUTIONAL ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT EFFORTS AND THE VARIOUS EXTERNAL FOR-PROFIT, AND NOT-FOR-PROFIT, BUSINESSES THAT HAVE BECOME PART OF THE ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT INDUSTRY. THIS IS A COMPLEX TOPIC, ONE THAT FRANKLY, I AM NOT SURE I AM *ON THE RIGHT TRACK*. BUT BOTH DAVID AND I THINK IT IS AN IMPORTANT AND INTRIGUING TOPIC. THIS ESSAY IS AN EFFORT TO BEGIN THE CONVERSATION, AND MAP THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN INSTITUTIONS, THE ENROLLMENT INDUSTRY, AND MORE INDIRECTLY—TO SOME EXTENT—STUDENTS, PARENTS, AND SOCIETY.

By Don Hossler

# Part I

## THE ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT INDUSTRY

There is little doubt that the business of student enrollments has become a big industry— not just for colleges and universities but for a variety of for-profit and not-for-profit businesses. These can include private guidance counseling to help students make decisions about where to apply and where to matriculate, to marketing firms, to software programs that offer to help institutions stay in touch with enrolled students and thus encourage them to persist until graduation. Although the market is undergoing dramatic changes, non-government based student lending has been yet another example of the pervasiveness of the enrollment industry. The search for additional revenue is even starting to influence the activities of enrollment-related professional organizations. However, there is a more difficult topic that we face: to what extent do the enrollment-related practices of postsecondary educational institutions more closely resemble those of businesses whose primary objectives are to generate profits for their stockholders or individuals (in the case of privately held businesses) as opposed to placing the primary emphasis on student learning and the other important goals of social critic, the generation of new knowledge, and redressing social inequalities.

While this topic of the enrollment industry encompasses a broad array of issues, there are four broad categories that merit some discussion:

- Enrollment management consulting services and related vendors;
- The student loan industry and related services;
- The rankings and college guidance publications;
- Postsecondary educational institutions and non-profit professional associations.

This issue of *College and University* focuses on the first three categories. An examination of institutional practices and non-profit professional associations in the enrollment industry, which are nuanced and complex, merits a separate discussion in a future issue of *C&U.*

To set a context for this discussion of the *enrollment industry*, and to help explain the emergence of many of the policies and practices that are influencing various actors involved in enrollment management, the broader societal trends must be examined. There is no doubt that the neo-liberal ideology of privatization and the use of market mechanisms to achieve societal purposes more efficiently and effectively have taken center stage on both the left and the right sides of the political spectrum. Neo-liberalism has

lead to the privatization of state enterprises, thus making these enterprises more responsible for raising their own income. Additionally, it has resulted in deregulation, with an emphasis on greater levels of competition among formerly public entities. The reliance on private capital markets for student loans and private mechanisms for servicing loans provides an excellent example of the impact of privatization on postsecondary education and the rise of the enrollment industry. The diminution of high school guidance and college counseling at public high schools and the rise of private counseling, rankings publications, and even many of the grassroots non-profit college guidance and high school-to-college bridge programs can also be viewed through the lens of privatization. In a later essay, an argument will be made that many of the enrollment behaviors of institutions can be viewed from the perspective of privatization and from the neo-liberal push toward greater levels of competition among public colleges and universities.

In these essays on the enrollment industry, an extensive critique of the rise of neo-liberal ideologies is not offered; however, there is an intentional attempt to hold in tension the historical goals of postsecondary education and the move toward privatization of postsecondary education and related services. The goal in this essay is not to write simplistic muckraking analyses of these trends, but rather to point out both the benefits and the problems associated with the emergence of the enrollment management industry.

## THE OUTSOURCING OF ENROLLMENT SERVICES

In this essay, a differentiation is made between an array of enrollment-related services such as purchasing names through search services, the use of mail fulfillment houses, telemarketing and telequalification, graphic design services, Web development, financial aid back room services, financial aid compliance assistance, electronic transcript services, ERP systems, and in some areas research is included (though some types of research are more strategic in nature and thus fall under enrollment consulting). These are forms of transactional services, and for the most part, they can lead to greater efficiency and effectiveness for enrollment management organizations. However, there are some potential concerns in the area of outsourcing enrollment services that institutions should be cautious. It is tempting also to say something about ethics for the for-profit and not-for-profit companies that sell these services, but getting into the domain of business ethics in the enrollment industry is too expansive a topic and beyond my expertise.

At almost any national conference that touches on enrollment management, vendors for these various services can be found. For the most part, these transactional services are largely benign. Services such as direct mail fulfillment houses, designing effective Web sites and social media sites, management of electronic e-mail campaigns, telemarketing, and telequalification are often purchased by colleges and universities. Institutions usually purchase these services because they lack sufficient staff, their staff may not have the needed skills, or these external vendors can do these tasks more efficiently than the institution can. However, not all of these services are more effective and/or efficient.

For example, in areas such as purchasing prospective student names from external vendors, senior enrollment managers should think carefully about seeking assistance with their admissions recruitment efforts. Are the goals of the institution to seek more applicants, to seek more admissible students, or to increase the number of enrolled students—and at what cost? Strategies that dramatically expand direct mail and e-mail to a broad range of students can increase applications, and possibly the number of admitted students—but there can be a high cost to this. In addition, these strategies run counter to the many advocates of best practice that suggest that institutions should be seeking to carefully analyze prospective student populations to determine which ones are likely to be responsive to "my type of college." Products like the Enrollment Planning Service, EOS, or the use of other databases such as Claritas are based on the presumption that colleges and universities can help narrow the group of prospective students that an institution contacts by using analytical processes. If it costs $2 to $3 to service every prospective student, contacting prospective students who are unlikely to matriculate, perhaps even apply, can become an expensive proposition. On the other hand, if the goal is more cynical, such as hoping to increase applications so a campus can reject more students in an attempt to move up in the world of *U.S. News* rankings, then broad-based outreach strategies not based on good analysis might be an effective strategy. Telemarketing can also be expensive, and if it is not targeted, it can substantially raise the cost of recruiting new students.

Despite industry related research, conducted by ACT, The College Board as well as consulting firms like the Art and Science Group, the Lawlor Group, and Maguire Associates, that clearly demonstrates that prospective students have personal attributes that make them more or less likely to be interested in certain types of colleges and universities, too many institutions, with the aid of some enrollment management service organizations, continue to take a scattershot approach to recruiting students that is likely to result in low yield rates at every stage of the admissions funnel. This in turn results in increased institutional costs because admissions offices incur real costs associated with direct mail and electronic media to service students that are ultimately unlikely to enroll. A good study conducted by a reputable enrollment management research firm is likely to help demonstrate the efficacy of scattershot approaches to new student recruitment.

Similarly, the features of a new ERP or CRM system may look seductive, but many colleges and universities underestimate the amount of data, staff time, and other resources that will be required to implement and operate these systems. This can result in significant institutional expenditures with little to show for the effort in the long run. There may be nothing wrong with the ERP system or the CRM, but the additional costs of a data warehouse or programming data feeds to and from the warehouse, or the need to hire more IT staff at premium wages, can change the value proposition on some of these decisions.

The point is that even in areas such as transactional services it is possible to make poor decisions that outsource some activities at a cost that turns out to be unwarranted in the long run. Enrollment managers need to be thoughtful and data driven when making the decision to outsource some of these transactional services.

## ENROLLMENT CONSULTING AND STRATEGIC SERVICES

In contrast to the transactional services described above, there are a host of consulting and strategy vendors that focus on enrollment planning, financial aid leveraging, positioning research, and brand development. The goal of these types of consulting services is often to help colleges and universities transform their strategies and practices. The costs and what is at stake in these kinds of efforts are considerably higher than the services usually associated with many transactional enrollment management services and software, as these efforts cut more to the mission and core values of institutions. Therefore, they require considerably more oversight from senior enrollment managers. This section focuses upon consulting firms that specialize in reviewing enrollment plans, conducting audits of the staff and support systems for enrollment management organizations, market research that can lead to efforts to re-position an institution and/or some of its academic programs, consulting firms that specialize in branding, and firms that conduct professional searches. The critique of the emergence of consulting and related services focuses primarily on the institutions that seek these services and their need to have a clear focus on exactly what the institution needs.

The real question for enrollment managers and other senior campus administrators is what kind of assistance does your campus need? All too often, institutions are not clear on what they need. A recent issue of the *Lawlor Review* (2009) posited that there continues to be a dearth of highly qualified senior enrollment management personnel. This position is notable because many times senior enrollment personnel realize they need assistance with enrollment planning efforts, strategic enrollment position research, or financial aid modeling—but too often it appears that they fail to clearly identify their needs. Additionally, it is not unusual for other senior campus administrators or even members of the board of trustees to hear a presentation at a conference and determine that "this is what we need" when in fact it may not be what the campus needs.

For example, if a college or university has allocated dedicated staff to start working in research areas related to EM, then it is important to look for a consultant who will share information and teach staff members how to do predictive modeling. On the other hand, many small colleges have trouble attracting and retaining staff in research areas. In these cases, hiring a full-service consulting firm that can secure institutional data, analyze it, and provide thoughtful analytics may be the best way to proceed. Not all consulting groups will be completely transparent with potential clients, however. For example, there have been situations where consulting groups have seemingly promised to serve whatever needs campus administrators identify, while others have responded to the same inquiry by asking questions, and sometimes by stating, "We really don't do

that," or "This is not a task that plays to our strengths." A specific example of this came from a colleague in institutional research who once called a consulting firm that was doing some predictive modeling for his campus to point out that there would have been a more effective way to run the models. The analyst on the other end of the phone responded, "...I have to produce several of these models this week and I don't have time to experiment too much with any individual institution." Therefore, be leery of any consulting firm that claims to do everything equally well. One of the concerns all enrollment managers should have is—*how do I know I am getting the best effort from the consulting organization that I have hired?* Another example of a potential conflict of interest is in the area of professional searches. Should a consulting firm both offer to review the efficacy of enrollment management efforts and also be in the business of helping conduct searches for enrollment-related positions? The answer is self-evident, but too often senior campus administrators fail to consider this issue.

An additional issue for both institutions and consulting organizations to consider is the extent to which they can faithfully serve multiple institutions that compete with one another during the same time period. All consultants know that with every consulting job—whether it be improving predictive models or helping improve organizational strategies—they learn a good deal that can help them improve their business model. A legitimate question for enrollment managers to ask is: "to what extent do I want to help fund a consulting firm that may have entered into a contract with one of my primary competitors?" Not all consulting firms will take it upon themselves to point out potential conflicts of interest. Therefore, thoughtful enrollment managers should ask these kinds of questions of potential consulting firms.

Another noteworthy phenomenon is the growing plethora of providers of information, training, and consulting on recruitment, retention, and student success. In a recent editorial in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, George Kuh (2008) pointed out that a good deal of information on many of these topics is already in print, or is known through the institutional research efforts on many campuses. He wonders aloud why more use of this information is not being used, or why college administrators pay for such services. In fairness, Kuh points out that part of the problem is failure of researchers to present their findings in ways that are accessible to broad administrative and faculty audiences in colleges and universities. Nevertheless, Kuh has a point in highlighting that some consulting services in these areas provide information that is readily available if institutions seek it out. There is, of course, always the possibility— indeed a very real possibility— that for credibility purposes to move things forward, it is necessary to acquire the services of an outside expert.

In short, enrollment consulting and strategic services are another area where enrollment managers and other senior campus policy makers should think carefully about their goals and determine the most effective and efficient ways to achieve them. In addition, managing this array of external vendor relationships has become yet another important function of the senior enrollment manager.

## THE STUDENT LOAN INDUSTRY AND POSTSECONDARY INSTITUTIONS

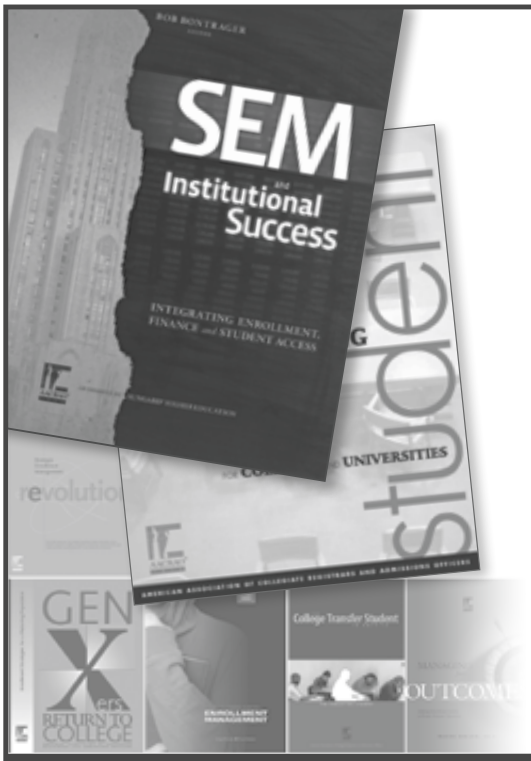
Another area now dominated by private external providers is the student loan industry and related services. Four years ago we might have discussed the student loan industry in more detail—but from the perspective of late in 2009, the combination of the investigations launched by New York State Attorney General Cuomo and now the rapid push toward direct lending from the Obama administration make it appear that the role of banks and related vendors associated with the FFELP program will be markedly reduced. Additionally, as a result of the economic downturn, the number of private lenders has decreased dramatically, and their business models are also in the midst of rapid changes. Nevertheless, the vestiges of the FFELP program leave interesting questions, and provide additional insights into the visible and less visible connections between institutions and the lending industry. A fascinating side story is unfolding involving debt counseling, loan origination interviews, exit interviews, and related services for students and institutions. These services were often provided by call centers staffed by lenders and/or by non-profit organizations that were funded from the profits of lenders and loan servicing companies. To a fault, senior campus administrators have failed to understand the importance, complexity, and multifaceted nature of various services that were provided by these various entities. As a result, institutional policy makers have often taken offices of financial aid for granted, and failed to adequately

invest in them. However, many colleges and universities now find themselves scrambling to provide these services at a time when the economy is making the bottom line of many colleges and universities more difficult. British historian Rupert Wilkinson (2006), author of *Aiding and Buying Students: Financial Aid in America*, recently noted in a lecture that the United States is the only country that uses student loans as a mechanism for financing students, while also relying heavily on the private market to provide and service loans. It could also be added that American colleges and universities are the only tertiary educational institutions who have relied heavily on the private market to support their efforts to provide loans for students.

The web of inter-connections between for-profit and not-for-profit lenders, the related services they have directly or indirectly provided to students and institutions represents an interesting view of how complex relationships have become between institutions, federal financial aid policies and programs, and students and families. There is no doubt that the FFELP lending program has lead to many innovations and services that have helped students, institutions, and even state and federal policy makers achieve their goals. Indeed one of the legitimate concerns of many enrollment and financial aid professionals is that over reliance on federally sponsored direct lending will eventually lead to a diminution in the quality of services and the level of innovation that has been stimulated by the FFELP lenders. On the other hand, at all levels of the enrollment industry we can rightfully be criticized for not stepping back and having thoughtful discussions about these issues and their effects on the stakeholder groups that are intertwined in societal efforts to increase access and the quality of postsecondary education, institutional efforts to achieve their enrollment goals, and the external providers associated with the student loan industry.

## THE RANKINGS AND COLLEGE GUIDANCE PUBLICATIONS

The last area of focus in this essay is rankings and guidebooks publishers. These publications and related services can be big business in the enrollment industry. Two of the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largest players in this business are *U.S. News and World Report's America's Best Colleges* (and related publications) and the *Princeton Review*; both produce traditional print versions and online versions of the rankings and guidebooks. It was difficult to secure financial information for these two publishers, but an ad revenue report for *U.S. News* publications stated more than $38 million dollars for the first quarter of 2008 (Folio 2008). In August 2008, *Folio* (2008) reported that revenue from the online version of *America's Best Colleges* rose by 500 percent, and as McDonough, Antonio, Walpole and Perez (1999) have noted, the college rankings publications are the single largest source of income for the publishers of *U.S. News.* Although investment analysts cannot isolate specific revenue increases associated with their ranking and college guides, Yahoo Finance reports that *Princeton Review* revenues for non-test preparation activities for the quarter that ended on March 31st of 2009 increased by nearly five million dollars or 39 percent (Yahoo Finance 2009). The amount of revenue derived from their college rankings activities could not be determined. Suffice it to say, some of the largest producers of rankings and guidebooks have found it to be a lucrative business.

The concern with these publications is not their income stream, but rather the extent to which they do their homework and provide reputable and reliable information about colleges and universities. *Princeton Review* purports to rank and to provide insights into everything from academics, to the campus with the most liberal or conservative students, to the quality of campus food, to the ubiquitous "best party campus." To a large extent, however, these rankings have no serious value. Because this publication uses samples of convenience—meaning whoever happens to go to their Web site and fill out their surveys—with no attempt to adjust the number of responses for the size of the student body, it goes without saying that its work lacks credibility. Although *U.S. News* relies on more objective data, they too have been under increasing criticism for failing to check the accuracy of their information. Unlike the *Princeton Review*, which presents their information with a modicum of irreverence, *U.S. News* portrays their information under the guise of factual information. The online news source, *Inside Higher Education*, has been running a series of stories that point to some serious problems associated with relying totally on institutional self-reports. To date, spokespersons for *U.S. News* continue to assert that they do not check for accuracy of information and have no plans to do so. Both cases are unimpressive. It would take very little money for the *Princeton Review* to take steps to adjust their response rates for campus size, or at a minimum provide some disclaimers. In the case of *U.S. News*, a part-time staffer (even a graduate student from a nearby campus) could cross-check institutionally reported data with data that is available through Moody's, IPEDS, or even on the Web sites of individual campuses. In failing to take these types of measures, the *Princeton Review* and *U.S. News* undermine the postsecondary educational sector that they rely upon for their revenue stream; and for serious consumers of postsecondary information, they undermine their own credibility.

These two visible publications have been the focus here because of their size and success, but similar questions could be raised of publications that focus on the best colleges for African American students, the top 20 liberal arts colleges, or the *Hidden Ivies*. The question in all cases is: what data were used to arrive at these rankings, and how can the validity and reliability of these rankings or lists be verified? An additional concern must be raised with some of these publications. (It is a concern that will be raised again in a future essay when professional organizations are considered). Some of these rankings and guidebooks have gotten into the business of "connecting prospective students to institutions." Institutions will pay for services like these, and it will inherently place the publishers and institutions in potential dilemmas. Can publishers resist the temptation to alter some of what they say about colleges and universities if these institutions are purchasing large volumes of student names or are a heavy advertiser? Can institutions resist the sense that they need to purchase advertising or go along in other ways with publishers that are widely used by students?

A final note on this topic: in the early 1970s, the federal government considered passing legislation to mandate that colleges and universities provide better and more accurate information to prospective students. Ultimately, they chose to study this issue (Project Choice) and determined that there was not a need to regulate colleges and universities. However, we have entered into an era where third-party vendors (mostly private) are arguably the principal providers of postsecondary information to traditional age

prospective students. Through rankings and guidance publications, Web sites, and other forms of social media, these new types of information providers now dominate the postsecondary information marketplace. Perhaps it is time to more closely examine the accuracy of the information they provide—even if at times they are simply reporting information that institutions have provided.

## WRAPPING THINGS UP

There is no question that the variegated forms of the enrollment industry have grown substantially in the last three decades. This essay has attempted to outline some of the structural dimensions of the *enrollment industry,* how enrollment managers and enrollment management efforts interact with it, and how students and families are affected by some actors and practices. To a lesser extent, at times this essay has also considered how elements of the *enrollment industry* interface with the goals of state and federal policy. Regardless of the degree to which individual readers may agree or disagree with some of the points raised in this essay, there is no question that being able to determine the appropriate use of these outsourced tools and services, and how to thoughtfully make sense of and rely upon them, has become an important responsibility of senior enrollment managers.

However, as in other essays in this series, there is an attempt to raise broader questions. There is no doubt that many of these services and tools can be viewed as forms of privatization and outsourcing. Perhaps as a result of the financial crisis we have recently endured, there is a growing number of critics of neo-liberalism, and the possible over-reliance upon privatization to provide services and support for what once were the responsibility of government, of the non-profit sector, and in the case of campus enrollment efforts, of colleges and universities themselves. It is unlikely that all colleges and universities would have staff with all of the requisite skills, hardware, and software to manage all areas of their enrollment efforts. A good consultant will always help to provide insights and a fresh perspective, even in a large and talented enrollment management division. However, have we become over-reliant on the various actors in the enrollment industry? Do all segments of the industry serve institutions and students well? Do these external actors hold themselves to sufficiently high standards? Do we ask enough questions of ourselves and these external providers before we enter into partnerships with them? Most of the time, it seems to work out well—institutions and students are served by securing services that are more effective, efficient, or both than institutions could provide on their own. But—isn't it the role of the senior enrollment management personnel to ponder these questions— and to help other senior campus policy makers to also consider them?

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# ATHLETIC APPLICAT & YIELDS

*The Relationship between*
*Successful College Football and Institutional Attractiveness*

This study examines the impact of fielding a successful college football team on institutional popularity using a dependent variable (admissions yield) and an independent variable (bowl game television rating) which have been unexamined in previous research on this topic. The findings suggest that college football success is correlated with a small but statistically significant increase in institutional popularity.

By Willis A. Jones

# S, TIONS,

**IN THE JUNE 2007** edition of *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, Stu Woo published an article on how the death of Liberty University Founder and President Jerry Falwell could affect the institution's athletic program (Woo 2006). Falwell, perhaps the institution's most passionate advocate of college athletics, had recently pushed for the construction of a new $10 million training facility for Liberty's football team; the facility would be "equal to anything in the state of Virginia" (Woo 2007). Falwell's rationale for the expenditure was his belief in the ability of college athletics to increase the profile of a college or university among potential applicants. According to Falwell, having a top-tier football program would increase the university's visibility and attract more students to Liberty University (Woo 2007).

Liberty University has some anecdotal evidence on which to base its claims about the positive relationship between high-profile college sports and institutional popularity as measured by the number of admissions applications received. In 1983, quarterback Doug Flutie's last second "Hail Mary" pass enabled Boston College to beat the heavily favored University of Miami: This victory—and the resulting institutional notoriety—is believed to have played a major role in Boston College's 25 percent increase in the number of admissions applications received the following year (Braddock and Hua 2006). This phenomenon in fact became known as the "Flutie Factor" and has been observed at other institutions with highly successful athletic programs. For example, Clemson University had an unprecedented 17 percent increase in the number of admissions applications received following its 1981 football national championship (Litan, Orszag and Orszag 2003). At Northwestern University, the football team's march to the 1996 Rose Bowl reportedly was followed by a 30 percent increase in the number of admissions applications received (Dodd 1997).

Such anecdotal evidence, however, has not yet received strong empirical support. While some studies have looked at the impact of college athletics on institutional admissions, they have failed to clarify whether the notoriety an institution gains from success in high-profile college sports affects that institution's ability to attract students. This study offers new evidence on this relationship by examining how the appearance of an institution's football team in a post-season bowl game influences both the number of admissions applications that institution receives and that institution's admissions yield (the ratio of admitted students who enroll at the institution to the size of the applicant pool). In addition, this study examines how the amount of institutional exposure resulting from a bowl game appearance (as measured by the bowl game's television rating) influences both of the aforementioned outcomes.

## ATHLETICS AND THE COLLEGE CHOICE PROCESS: A LITERATURE REVIEW

Empirical work on the influence of athletics on the quantity of incoming students to a college or university is limited (Pope and Pope 2009). This inattention is surprising when one considers the widely held belief that college sports serve as the "front door to the university" (Braddock and Hue 2006). This "front door" metaphor, proposed initially by Toma and Cross (1998), is meant to symbolize the fact that spectator sports "are the aspect of the university most often visible to those outside of the academic community, both sports fans and non-sports fans alike" (Toma and Cross 1998). If this metaphor were true, one would expect that success in high-profile college athletics would increase an institution's competitiveness in attracting students. Theoretically, this increase would occur for two primary reasons: First, a high-profile intercollegiate athletics program increases media attention received by a university. A top-ranked football team, for example, receives increased media attention from local and national news outlets such as ESPN, *USA Today*, and CNN. Such increased media exposure results in the name—and often the trademarked logo—of an institution being mentioned or shown repeatedly. The more a potential applicant hears an institution's name, the more likely he is to seek information about that particular institution. More students seeking information about a school may result in more admissions applications.

A second reason high-profile college sports would increase an institution's ability to attract students stems from the idea that students use a university's athletics program as a proxy for campus solidarity. Toma and Cross (1998) express this idea in asserting that college sports "serve as a surrogate for the more intimate campus community-building activities traditionally found on smaller residential campuses which appeal to students and incoming students" (p. 634). Campus solidarity and social life have been found to be important factors in students' college choice process (Litten and Brodigan 1982). Because potential students may not have complete information about the social environment on campus, many may perceive the institution's athletics program as an indication of the overall campus atmosphere. This could increase both the number of applications for admission and the institution's admissions yield.

Unfortunately, this relationship between athletics and institutional admissions has been studied by only a few scholars. Murphy and Trandel (1994) collected admissions data on 42 institutions of higher education with Division I-A football programs from 1978 through 1987 in an attempt to determine if, after controlling for various factors, the winning percentage of a university's football team had any impact on the number of admissions applications received by that institution. They found evidence that a 25 percent increase in football wins would, on average, result in a 1.3 percent increase in the number of admissions applications. That same year, Mixon and Hsing (1994) used data from 220 NCAA Division I, Division II, and Division III colleges and universities to investigate whether participation in higher-level college athletics had an impact on an institution's out-of-state student enrollment. They found some evidence that institutions that compete in higher-level college athletics attract more out-of-state students.

In 1995, Mixon and Ressler examined the impact of success in the NCAA men's basketball tournament on an institution's out-of-state enrollment. Using cross-sectional data on 156 colleges and universities with Division I basketball programs, the researchers found that a 100 percent increase in the number of tournament rounds in which an institution's basketball team participates is associated with a 6 percent increase in out-of-state enrollment.

Toma and Cross (1998) also investigated the impact of successful intercollegiate athletics on the number of admissions applications received. However, their study focused on the impact of championship seasons on the number of applications received. Using data from every institution whose team won an NCAA Division I-A championship in men's basketball and football from 1979 through 1992, the researchers compared the number of applications received in the three years prior to winning the championship with the number received in the three years following winning the championship. After comparing admissions data from championship-winning and non-championship-winning schools, Toma and Cross (1998) concluded that winning a championship resulted in an increase in the number of admissions applications received by an institution.

More recently, four published studies have found further evidence that successful college athletics has a positive impact on the number of applications received by an institution. Zimbalist (1999), using panel data from 1980

through 1995, finds athletic success to be associated with increased numbers of applications. Goff (2000) finds that dropping college football can have a significant negative impact on enrollment. McEvoy (2005) finds that the winning percentage of an institution's football team has a significant positive relationship to the number of new applicants. Nevertheless, such a relationship does not seem to exist with men's or women's basketball or women's volleyball. Finally, Pope and Pope (2009) describe evidence that football and basketball success increase the number of applications an institution receives by 2 to 8 percent. This increase received in the wake of sports success was found to be 2 to 4 times higher for private schools in comparison to public schools.

While each of these studies adds to our understanding of the impact of college athletics on institutional admissions, additional research is needed if we are to fully understand this relationship and its implications. This study attempts to address a couple of issues not examined in the aforementioned studies. One of these is the fact that each of the aforementioned studies focused on only one aspect of the admissions process: the number of admissions applications received by an institution. To date, no author has attempted to examine the impact of college athletics on an institution's admissions *yield.* Commonly seen as a measure of an institution's competitiveness, *admissions yield* allows an institution to be more selective in choosing which students will be granted admission. Perhaps more important, a higher admissions yield offers an institution a reliable gauge of its attractiveness—relative to peer institutions—to potential students. If successful athletics serves as an advertising tool for colleges and universities and is used by students as an indication of an inviting institutional atmosphere, then it may be that a student who has applied and been accepted to several institutions would choose to enroll in the school with the most successful athletic program.

In addition, the aforementioned studies make no attempt to measure the actual amount of publicity gained from fielding a highly successful athletic team. The assumption of most of these studies is that success in intercollegiate athletics automatically increases institutional exposure and visibility. Yet such may not always be the case. For example, if the football team at the University of North Texas increases its winning percentage by 25 percent, it likely would receive far less media attention than the University of Texas would if its football team were to increase its winning percentage by 25 percent. As a result, some measure of the amount of institutional exposure resulting from fielding a successful athletic team would add significantly to our understanding of the impact of college athletics on the college choice process.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Four research questions were addressed in this study:

- For Division I-A colleges/universities, does the appearance of an institution's football team in a bowl game influence the number of applications for admissions received by that institution in the following year?
- For Division I-A colleges/universities, does the appearance of an institution's football team in a bowl game influence that institution's admissions yield in the following year?
- For Division I-A colleges/universities, does appearance in a more popular bowl game (*i.e.*, one watched by significant numbers of people) influence the number of admissions applications received the following year?
- For Division I-A colleges/universities, does an appearance in a more popular bowl game (*i.e.*, one watched by significant numbers of people) influence the institution's admissions yield the following year?

The use of "bowl game appearance" and "bowl game television rating" as independent variables allow for a better measure of the relationship between a successful football season and institutional attractiveness: Bowl games are the culmination of the college football season. The more successful a college football team in a given season, the more likely the team will be invited to participate in a bowl game. Therefore, grouping institutions on the basis of whether or not their football team participated in a postseason bowl game at the end of a given season provides a reliable measure of the construct "athletics success."

Further, the more successful a football team's performance in a given season, the more likely the team is to be invited to play in a higher prestige bowl game. Such bowl games typically receive more media coverage and are watched by more people than lower prestige bowl games. Consequently, one would expect that an institution whose

football team participates in a higher prestige bowl game would receive a greater amount of institutional exposure. By examining the impact of bowl game appearance and bowl game television ratings on both the number of admissions applications received and institutional admissions yield, the higher education community can better understand how exposure resulting from a successful football season may affect an institution's ability to attract students and enroll the students it accepts.

## METHODS

A panel dataset composed of information from every college or university whose football team participated at the NCAA Division I-A level in the 2002–03, 2003–04, 2004–05, 2005–06, and 2007–08[1] seasons was used to address the aforementioned research questions.[2] For research questions one and two, the econometric specifications used were:

$$Applications\ Received_{it+1} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 Bowl\ Game\ Appearance_{it} + \beta_2\ Institution\ Size_{it} + \beta_3\ Cost_{it} + \beta_4\ Student\ Quality_{it} + \beta_5\ High\ School\ Graduates_{it} + \beta_6\ Professor\ Salary_{it} + \gamma i + \eta t + \varepsilon_{it}\ (1)$$

$$Admissions\ Yield_{it+1} = \beta_0 + \beta_1\ Bowl\ Game\ Appearance_{it} + \beta_2\ Institution\ Size_{it} + \beta_3\ Cost_{it} + \beta_4\ Student\ Quality_{it} + \beta_5 Professor\ Salary_{it} + \gamma i + \eta t + \varepsilon_i\ (2)$$

The dependent variables "Applications Received" and "Admissions Yield" are the natural logarithm of the number of applications for admission from first-time, degree-/certificate-seeking undergraduate students an institution receives and the natural logarithm[3] of an institution's admissions yield for first-time, degree-/certificate-seeking undergraduate students, respectively, for institution i in the admissions cycle following season t. "Bowl Game Appearance" is a dummy variable set to one if that institution's football team participated in a post-season bowl game in season t and zero if it did not.[4]

The remaining independent variables were used to control for factors which have been found to influence the dependent variables in this study. "Institution Size" is the university's full-time undergraduate enrollment during season t. "Cost" is the total price for in-state students living on-campus during season t. "Student Quality" is the average cumulative (verbal score + math score) SAT scores for the 25th percentile of first-time undergraduate students[5] in the admissions cycle prior to season t. "High School Graduates" is the number of public high school graduates in the state in which the institution is located during season t. "Professor Salary," a common measure of institutional quality, is the average salary for professors on a nine- to ten-month contract at an institution during season t. Epsilon (ε) is the random error term. The institutional fixed effect γi controls for characteristics, both observable and unobservable, of a college or university that do not vary over the period covered in this study (such as institutional control and institutional location). The time-fixed effect ηt controls for national trends that affect all institutions of higher education in a given year (such as national economic conditions).[6] Each independent variable, except for bowl game appearance, also was measured using the natural logarithm.[7] Each equation was estimated separately using gender-specific dependent variables (*e.g.*, male applications, female applications, male yield, female yield).[8]

The econometric specification used to address research questions three and four were of the following form:

$$Applications\ Received_{it+1} = \beta_0 + \beta_1\ Television\ Ratings_{it} + \beta_2\ Institution\ Size_{it} + \beta_3\ Cost_{it} + \beta_4\ Student\ Quality_{it} + \beta_5\ High\ School\ Graduates_{it} + \beta_6\ Professor\ Salary_{it} + \gamma i + \eta t + \varepsilon_{it}\ (3)$$

[1] This study is limited to these seasons because IPEDS institutional admissions data are only available for those years.

[2] Data for this study were collected from Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), ESPN.com, and BCS.org. Some data were collected from institutional Web sites.

[3] Natural logs of the dependent variables were used because, after examining the work of other authors studying college athletics and admissions, sports success would increase applications and yield by a given percentage rather than a given level.

[4] This construction meant that for an institution whose football team went to a bowl game in each of the five seasons studied, it would get a value of 1 for this variable in each year and vice versa.

[5] While the mean SAT scores would have been ideal for this study, these data were not available in IPEDS.

[6] Some variables included in this model are moderately correlated. Threats of multicollinearity, however, were assessed using Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) indicators, and none of these correlations necessitated the removal of variables.

[7] The natural logarithm is used to ensure the linearity of the control variables.

[8] Each of these additional dependent variables also was measured in natural logarithms.

$$Admissions\ Yield_{it+1} = \beta_0 + \beta_1\ Television\ Ratings_{it} + \beta_2\ Institution\ Size_{it} + \beta_3\ Cost_{it} + \beta_4\ Student\ Quality_{it} + \beta_5\ Professor\ Salary_{it} + \gamma i + \eta t + \varepsilon_i \quad (4)$$

"Applications Received," "Admissions Yield," and each of the control variables was measured the same way as in equations one and two.

The independent variable of interest for this part of the analysis is "Television Ratings." Television Ratings is the Nielsen rating of the bowl game in which a university's football team participated during season t. Nielsen ratings indicate the percentage of U.S. households with televisions tuned in to a particular television broadcast. There are approximately 105,444,000 U.S. households with television sets (Bowl Championship Series 2008). Therefore, a Nielsen rating of 5.5 indicates that 5.5 percent of all U.S. households with televisions (approximately 5,799,420 households) were tuned in to that broadcast. In years in which an institution's football team did not participate in a bowl game, a value of 0 was assigned for bowl game television rating.[9]

The television rating variable is intended to capture how the amount of exposure a university received as a result of participating in a higher prestige bowl game affected the institution's ability to attract students. As mentioned earlier, many studies addressing the impact of intercollegiate athletics on college choice fail to provide a more nuanced quantitative measure of the amount of exposure an institution receives as a result of a successful college football season. By employing the methodology used in this part of the study, we were better able to establish how changes in the amount of exposure a college/university receives as a result of its college football team's performance affects its ability to attract students. As was the case for equations one and two, equations three and four also were estimated using gender-specific dependent variables.[10]

## RESULTS

### Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive statistics for each of the variables used in the study are displayed in Table 1. The average number of admissions applications received by Division I-A institutions over this five-year period was 13,859, with an average admissions yield of 45 percent. Data on the Nielsen rating of bowl games over these five years show the popularity of college football in the United States: The average bowl game received a rating of 4.26, with 20 bowl games receiv-

Table 1.

*Descriptive Statistics of Dependent and Independent Variables*

| | Mean | Standard Deviation | Minimum | Maximum |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Applications Received | 13,859 | 8,234 | 1,405 | 50,755 |
| Admissions Yield | 0.4499 | 0.1153 | 0.2051 | 0.8652 |
| Institution Size | 16,639 | 7,385 | 2,439 | 35,462 |
| Student Quality | 1036 | 122 | 680 | 1380 |
| Total Cost | $19,484 | $8,900 | $9,715 | $49,839 |
| HS Graduates | 97,896 | 91,151 | 4,954 | 380,200 |
| Faculty Salary | $95,442 | $18,072 | $57,266 | $170,262 |
| TV Rating | 4.25 | 3.73 | 0.60 | 21.70 |
| Bowl Game Appearance | 0.4955 | 0.5004 | 0 | 1 |

**NOTE:** Descriptive statistics for Television Rating are for all bowl games played during the five years studied. Values of 0 were not included in calculating descriptive statistics.

[9] For example, the University of Alabama's football team went to a bowl game in three of the five seasons in this period. Therefore, the TV Rating variable for this institution was set at 0 for the two seasons it did not participate in a bowl game.

[10] Due to missing, incomplete, or inaccurate data, some of the 117 institutions that competed at the Division I-A level during these five seasons were dropped in each model. Because of the uniqueness of United States military academies, they also were eliminated from the empirical analysis. In addition, several institutions reported total applications and total yield without differentiating between men and women. Other missing data points appeared to be random.

ing a rating of more than 8; the most-watched bowl game obtained a rating of 21.7. (By way of comparison, prime-time broadcast programming in 2002 obtained an average rating of 8.8 [Bowl Championship Series 2008] while the 2007 NBA Finals obtained an average rating of 6.2 for the four games played.)

### OLS Regression Analysis

The OLS estimates for Equations 1 and 2 are displayed in Table 2. The first column shows a positive but statistically insignificant relationship between bowl game appearance and total admissions applications received ($\beta = 0.017$, $p = 0.078$). This indicates that, after controlling for various factors believed to influence institutional attractiveness, having a college football team participate in a post-season bowl game is *not* significantly associated with an increase in the number of admissions applications that institution receives.

Once gender-specific admissions applications variables are used, however, the relationship between bowl game appearance and applications received changes somewhat: While the relationship remains insignificant with regard to female applications received ($\beta = 0.015$, $p = 0.153$), a bowl-game appearance *does* appear to have a significant impact on the number of applications an institution receives from male students ($\beta = 0.023$, $p = 0.029$). Specifically, playing in a bowl game is associated with a 2.3 percent increase in the number of admissions applications an institution receives from male students the following year.

The second part of Table 2 presents OLS estimates of the impact of a bowl game appearance on admissions yield. While each model (total yield, male yields, and female yield) found a positive relationship between bowl game appearance and admissions yield, this relationship was not statistically significant in any model. This indicates that, other factors held constant, appearing in a bowl game has no significant impact on an institution's ability to enroll the students it accepts.

Table 3 (on page 17) presents OLS estimates of Equation 3 and 4. The first part of this table appears to support the idea that after controlling for other factors believed to influence an institution's attractiveness, having a college football team participate in a higher prestige bowl game is associated with an increase in the number of admissions applications the institution receives ($\beta = 0.0034$, $p = 0.026$). A one-point increase in the

## Table 2.

*Coefficients for OLS Regression Analysis of the Association of Bowl Game Appearance on Institutional Admissions with Fixed Effects*

| | Applications | | | Yield | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Total | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female |
| Bowl Game | 0.017 | 0.023[1] | 0.015 | 0.013 | 0.011 | 0.019 |
| Appearance | (0.009) | (0.010) | (0.010) | (0.010) | (0.010) | (0.012) |
| Institution Size | 0.986[3] | 0.995[3] | 1.007[3] | 0.349[1] | 0.309 | 0.389[1] |
| | (0.116) | (0.120) | (0.119) | (0.160) | (0.175) | (0.161) |
| Total Cost | 0.065 | 0.028 | 0.089 | -0.052 | -0.050 | -0.085 |
| | (0.076) | (0.078) | (0.079) | (0.078) | (0.081) | (0.085) |
| Student Quality | -0.074 | -0.034 | -0.050 | -0.149 | -0.680[3] | 0.190 |
| | (0.271) | (0.269) | (0.294) | (0.176) | (0.180) | (0.337) |
| Faculty Salary | -0.091 | -0.072 | -0.091 | -0.091 | 0.045 | -0.257 |
| | (0.160) | (0.162) | (0.164) | (0.189) | (0.111) | (0.259) |
| HS Graduates | -0.278[3] | -0.259[3] | -0.287[3] | – | – | – |
| | (0.059) | (0.060) | (0.061) | – | – | – |
| Observations | 554 | 546 | 546 | 554 | 545 | 545 |
| R-squared | 0.985 | 0.984 | 0.984 | 0.924 | 0.923 | 0.887 |
| Prob > F | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 |

[1] Significant at a 0.05 level; [2] Significant at a 0.01 level; [3] Significant at a 0.001 level
**NOTE:** Robust standard errors in parentheses.

television rating increases the number of applications received by an institution by 0.34 percent the following year. This suggests that for the average institution in this dataset, fielding a football team whose bowl game television rating increases by eight Nielson points (which would represent a significant jump) would only increase the number of applications received by 2.72 percent, or approximately 377 applications. The second and third columns in Table 3 show that this positive relationship is evident with regard to both male and female applications. In fact, the second column indicates that a one-point increase in Nielson rating increased the number of applications the institution received from male students by 0.042 percent ($\beta = 0.0042$, $p = 0.01$). The third column indicates that, though just missing statistical significance, a one-point increase in Nielsen rating increases the number of applications received from female students by 0.030 percent ($\beta = 0.0030$, $p = 0.051$). These gender-specific findings are similar to the results found using Equation 1.

The final three columns of Table 3 tell a slightly different story about the relationship of athletic success and admissions yield than was apparent when the relationship was examined using Equation 2. This specification indicates that participating in a higher prestige bowl game was correlated with an institution's admissions yield ($\beta = 0.003$, $p = 0.009$). This positive, statistically significant relationship was found with regard to an institution's ability to enroll accepted male ($\beta = 0.003$, $p = 0.036$) and female students ($\beta = 0.004$, $p = 0.015$).

## Discussion and Conclusion

This study explored the relationship between successful college football and institutional admissions. In an attempt to account for the shortcomings of previous research on this relationship, this study addressed two broad questions: The first examined whether the success of an institution's football team, as measured by its appearance in a post-season bowl game, has any association either with the number of admissions applications an institution receives or with its admissions yield. The second question examined the relationship between the amount of exposure an institution receives as a result of fielding a successful college football team (as measured by the television rating of the bowl game in which the team competes) and

# Table 3.

*Coefficients for OLS Regression Analysis of the Association of Bowl Game Television Rating on Institution Admissions with Fixed Effects*

| | Applications | | | Yield | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Total | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female |
| TV Rating | 0.003[1] | 0.004[2] | 0.003 | 0.003[2] | 0.003[1] | 0.004[1] |
| | (0.002) | (0.002) | (0.002) | (0.001) | (0.001) | (0.001) |
| Institution Size | 0.980[3] | 0.991[3] | 1.002[3] | 0.336[1] | 0.300 | 0.384[1] |
| | (0.114) | (0.117) | (0.118) | (0.164) | (0.180) | (0.164) |
| Total Cost | 0.065 | 0.028 | 0.089 | -0.056 | -0.052 | -0.085 |
| | (0.076) | (0.078) | (0.079) | (0.077) | (0.080) | (0.085) |
| Student Quality | -0.074 | -0.032 | -0.047 | -0.147 | -0.677[3] | 0.192 |
| | (0.272) | (0.272) | (0.295) | (0.176) | (0.180) | (0.338) |
| Faculty Salary | -0.089 | -0.068 | -0.088 | -0.085 | 0.050 | -0.252 |
| | (0.161) | (0.162) | (0.164) | (0.187) | (0.113) | (0.255) |
| HS Graduates | -0.279[3] | -0.260[3] | -0.287[3] | – | – | – |
| | (0.059) | (0.060) | (0.060) | – | – | – |
| Observations | 554 | 546 | 546 | 554 | 545 | 545 |
| R-squared | 0.985 | 0.985 | 0.984 | 0.924 | 0.924 | 0.887 |
| Probability > F | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 |

[1] Significant at a 0.05 level; [2] Significant at a 0.01 level; [3] Significant at a 0.001 level
**NOTE:** Robust standard errors in parentheses.

the number of admissions applications the institution receives and its subsequent admissions yield.

The results of this study support the broader work of scholars who have found that successful college athletics have a positive impact on the number of admissions applications received by a college or university. Other factors held constant, this study found that having a football team play in a post-season bowl game had a significant positive impact on the number of admissions applications received *from male students.* However, the television rating of the bowl game in which an institution's football team competed was found in this study to have a positive impact on the number of applications received from male and from female students. This study's findings regarding college football success and admissions yield also provide evidence of a positive relationship. While bowl game appearance was found to have no significant impact on admissions yield, the Nielsen rating of the bowl game in which a given institution's football team competed did have a positive, statistically significant impact on admissions yield.

While many of the relationships in this study were found to be statistically significant, their magnitudes often were relatively small. From a policy perspective, this calls into question whether the expenditures required to field a successful college football team are justified given the short-term positive impact on admissions. As described above, the increased success of a university's football team (as measured by the television rating of its bowl game) resulted in only a 3 percent increase in the number of admissions applications received. Could an equivalent or even greater increase in applications be achieved by other means—for example, as a result of more cost-efficient advertising? The answer to this question is not within the scope of the present study. Rather, future research should be directed at investigating whether other forms of institutional marketing might have a greater impact on institutional admissions.

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As athletics budgets at colleges and universities around the country increase and as more colleges attempt to build high-profile athletics programs, this study's finding that increased institutional exposure resulting from a successful college football season is associated with a slight increase both in the number of admissions applications received and in an institution's admissions yield provides substantive evidence that institutions can utilize athletics as an instrument for self-promotion to prospective students. Nevertheless, these findings should be interpreted with some degree of caution. The impact of college athletics on higher education is a complex issue. The relationship has multiple layers, many of which have yet to be explored by higher education scholars. This study does suggest, however, that high-profile college athletics may increase an institution's attractiveness to potential students. As scholars and practitioners continue to examine how students choose which college to attend, intercollegiate athletics looks to be an important variable worth continued study.

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Understanding

# The Bologna Process

*for* Admissions Officers

By Mary Baxton, Johnny Kent Johnson,
Gloria Nathanson, William Paver, and Robert Watkins

In Spring 2008, senior members of the international admission and credential evaluation community met to deliberate over the admission and placement of Bologna Compliant degree holders into U.S. graduate programs. This group comprised several individuals holding top leadership positions in NAFSA, AACRAO, and closely allied groups involved in international education. The decisions that grew out of the meeting are reflected in the Educational Database for Global Education (EDGE) profile on the Bologna Process and in the Advice to Admissions Offficers section of that profile.

In the 1980s Europeans decided to ease transition from upper secondary to post-secondary education across Europe by deliberating (under UNESCO auspices) and declaring all individual upper secondary university-bound leaving certificates to be comparable. This decision enabled holders of the French *Baccalaureat* (for example) to access British universities, German *Reifezeugnis* holders to enter French universities, etc. Thus, mobility among European participants was guaranteed in theory without changing a thing. It also was agreed at the time to reform higher education as well.

In Bologna, Italy, in June 1999, 29 ministers of education from various European countries met to create the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), which subsequently became known as the Bologna Process.[1] As of June 2007, the number of participating ministers of education had grown to 46. At that first meeting, it was decided to reform European higher education, not as had been done with secondary education some fifteen years previously, when all leaving certificates, however named and at whatever length, were deemed comparable, but by actually altering significantly the existing national systems of education to conform to an agreed upon model. In effect, they created a European educational 'euro.'

Several things were decided at that first meeting in Bologna:

- A new system of degrees of three levels, or cycles, spanning higher education would be created, with each degree leading to the other. These degrees had no mandated names but over the years have become known as *bachelor, master,* and *doctor.* No length of time to the first degree was stipulated, but it could *not* be less than three years. The second-level degree would last for as many years as necessary so that the time to the two degrees together would total five years. Thus, one could

[1] In the Resources section, we provide a significant amount of detailed information on the Bologna Process. Use Internet links to official information and other useful sources on the topic. Readers are urged to visit these sites and familiarize themselves with the wealth of detail about this very significant process of transformation of European higher education.

have 3+2 or 4+1 for bachelor/master. The vast majority of signatory countries have opted for the 3+2 model.

- The new degrees would be based on a credit system; founded in 1989 for the Erasmus programs on student mobility, the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) was adopted. This system is based on a full annual load of 60 ECTS (30 per semester) and includes lecture, lab, tutorials, and outside-of-class work time. A typical 3+2 system would require 180 ECTS for the bachelor, 120 for the master, or 300 total.
- A document enumerating the degrees and credits and other pertinent information about the education system of the country would be issued upon completion of the degree(s). This *Diploma Supplement* would be in English as well as the indigenous language of the country and would include information on grading and the country's overall education system.
- A system of quality assurance or accreditation that extended among all institutions and countries involved in the Bologna Process would be instituted.

These four features of the Process would be implemented in each of the countries over time, with 2010 as the date set for full implementation. The biannual Ministers' Conferences began in 2001 to assess progress toward full implementation; progress has been recorded in communiqués and reports (Trends I–V through 2007). The ministers have met at the following sites: Prague (2001), Berlin (2003), Bergen (2005), and London (2007); the 2009 meeting is scheduled to take place in Leuven and Louvain-la-Neuve (Belguim).

The effect on higher education in the United States, particularly in terms of admission to graduate programs, centers largely on the nature of the three-year, Bologna-compliant first-level degrees. Historically, U.S. graduate programs have required four-year (or more) first university degrees for admission. This requirement stems from the wording most institutions use stipulating requirements for admission: a student "must possess a bachelor's degree from an regionally accredited institution in the United States or foreign equivalent." The problem of equivalence is complicated as there are very few first university degrees abroad that are 'equivalent' to the U.S. bachelor's degree (with the exception of those awarded in countries whose education systems closely follow the U.S. model).

As a result, degree comparability typically was reduced to counting the total number of years of full-time study. Thus, three-year bachelor's degrees from Ontario, Canada, or Australia or India or South Africa (to name but a few) were considered insufficient for admission to graduate programs at U.S. institutions. Questions of fairness inevitably arise when the treatment of three-year degree holders versus U.S. degree holders is considered. European (and European-style) degrees and Bologna-compliant degrees are no exception: eschewing the U.S. preference for including a substantial amount of non-major courses (referred to most frequently as "General Distributive Education"), European degrees require students to study almost exclusively—and, therefore, deeply—in their chosen field of study. Given these starkly different models of higher education, counting the total years of full-time education has become the de facto process by which degree comparability is determined. Indeed, placement recommendations in books and publications emanating from nearly 50 years' worth of work by the National Council on the Evaluation of Foreign Educational Credentials for the U.S. international admissions community almost always followed this methodology.

## BOLOGNA-COMPLIANT DEGREES AND U.S. ADMISSION AND PLACEMENT

AACRAO has been involved in the placement of international students at U.S. higher education institutions for more than 50 years. In 1955, AACRAO created the AACRAO Committee on the Evaluation of Foreign Student Credentials, which evolved into an interassociation committee, The National Council on the Evaluation of Foreign Educational Credentials. This Council, consisting of various associations involved in international education, provided placement advice in a succession of publications on overseas countries' education systems. In March 2006, the Council was dissolved as outside funding in support of further publications dried up.

Meanwhile, AACRAO moved to fill the ensuing void both in publications and in placement recommendations. The AACRAO Board of Directors approved the creation of the International Education Standards Council (IESC), which would render placement advice in AACRAO publications, and country profiles, of which the Electronic Database for Global Education (EDGE) is a major new example. Approval of placement recommendations by the

Standards Council is based on review of information contained in the publication which validates and supports the recommendations of the author. The placement recommendations are to be considered guidelines for evaluators in determining foreign credential equivalencies to U.S. degrees and diplomas. They are written to allow flexibility on the part of users (depending on the focus and programs offered at U.S. institutions).

Because this transformation is so important in the analysis of European higher education credentials, it is vital to summarize the key component of the process with respect to U.S. graduate admissions. Certainly, the Bologna Process has a major impact on other areas of U.S. higher education, such as undergraduate transfer credit policies and study abroad credit issues, but it is in the realm of graduate placement that it has the most profound effect. As stated above, the Bologna Process is to culminate in full implementation among the signatory countries by 2010. That said, it is unlikely that all features of the Process will uniformly replace former aspects of higher education in these countries by that time. Nevertheless, as the transformation continues to move forward, U.S. education administrators increasingly will encounter these new credentials. It therefore is important that AACRAO EDGE make a statement on how to interpret credentials resulting from the Bologna Process.

The essential philosophy underpinning European higher education is fundamentally different from that which defines U.S. higher education. In Europe, postsecondary education represents intensive study in a chosen field; in the United States, undergraduate students are exposed to a broad range of subject matter with emphasis on a selected field of study. Given the difficulty of readily comparing such disparate approaches to higher education, U.S. international admissions officers chose to utilize an *applied comparative approach* that relied on quantifying data. Thus, traditionally, many felt that a four-year postsecondary credential was the best indicator of comparability to a U.S. bachelor's degree. In individual EDGE entries for the signatory countries, credential advice is given for the Bologna-compliant degree structure. In most instances this advice will follow the standard recommendation that three-year degrees and diplomas result in three years of transfer credit on a course-by-course basis.

Increasingly, however, U.S. graduate and international admissions officers realize that graduates of three-year first-degree programs in Europe have in-depth academic preparation in a chosen field and are adequately prepared to study in a closely related U.S. graduate program. Even as EDGE continues to deem a four-year first degree most comparable to the U.S. bachelor's degree, it is clear that U.S. universities' graduate departments may consider admitting qualified applicants to their programs. In other words, given the preparation that graduates of Bologna-compliant degree programs possess, EDGE suggests that, under certain conditions, U.S. graduate admissions officers may wish to admit these students to their graduate degree programs.

Suggested conditions or criteria for admission of students from Bologna signatory countries are:

- Degree must be in the same or similar field of study.
- Bologna-compliant degrees must lead to unrestricted admission to the next educational level.
- The awarding institution should be comparable in nature to the receiving institution—that is, both should be universities or both should be non-university higher education institutions.
- A national quality assurance mechanism must be in place in order for holders of three-year degrees to be considered for placement in graduate-level programs in the United States.
- Close comparison by faculty in the receiving graduate department of the curriculum of the overseas degree with the content of the U.S. degree program reveals significant compatibility.
- The Bologna-compliant degree holder is deemed as prepared to undertake graduate-level study as a student enrolled in comparable courses at a U.S. institution.

## THE ECTS GRADING SCALE[2]

Grading is an essential and sensitive part of the learning process. It is strongly rooted in the diverse pedagogical and cultural traditions of Europe's various education systems. Nevertheless, there is a need to make national grading systems more transparent, allowing ready transfer of grades from one system to another, in order to serve mobile learners and graduates.

[2] Adapted from www.hrk.de/de/download/dateien/ECTSUsersGuide(1).pdf

# Bologna Process Key Terms

**ACCREDITATION:** A system mandated by the Bologna Process that calls for a type of quality assurance in each of the degrees and programs among signatory countries but which is only beginning to be implemented. Quality assurance exists in most institutions in signatory countries at the program level, and at least one national quality assurance body exists in each country, but as yet articulation between the two levels and at an Area-wide (European) level is not yet fully realized. The Bologna ministers did accept the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) recommended by the E4 (European University Association; European Network for Quality Assurance; National Union of Students in Europe, now called the European Students Union; and European Association of Institutions in Higher Education).at the Bergen Meeting in 2005.

**BOLOGNA EXPERTS:** Individuals working in higher education in each signatory country that advise and explain the Process in general and more specifically regarding the features of the Process (such as ECTS, Diploma Supplement, European Qualifications Framework, etc.). The Bologna Experts also organize informational workshops and make site visits to assist institutions and their components in that country to implement the features of the Bologna Process.

**BOLOGNA PROMOTERS:** Individuals in higher education in the signatory countries responsible for guiding and advising institutions on all aspects of the Bologna Process and how it affects their constituencies. They include vice rectors, deans, faculty members, senior academics to international relations officers, higher education experts, and even student representatives. The Promoters existed from 2004 until 2007, at which time the name was changed to 'Bologna Experts.'

**DIPLOMA SUPPLEMENT:** Document mandated by the Bologna Agreement upon which signatory countries were to describe degree(s) awarded, courses taken, grades received, and credits earned.

**DUBLIN DESCRIPTORS:** These were created by the Joint Quality Initiative to define generic competencies for the levels of bachelor and master, the first two levels or cycles of the new Bologna degree structure formulated by the Bologna Agreement.

**ECTS/EUROPEAN CREDIT TRANSFER SYSTEM:** Credit system (originally created in 1989 for Erasmus mobility programs in Europe) adopted by the Bologna signatory countries to replace all indigenous credit systems (if any) and applied as values to each of the courses leading to the new degrees. Amount of credit needed for the award of the degrees would be expressed in ECTS and would be uniform across signatory countries; they are cumulative with respect to the new degrees.

**EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA:** Formal name for the Bologna Process.

**FULL IMPLEMENTATION:** According to the Bologna Process, all signatory countries must reach full implementation (of the agreed characteristics of the Process) by 2010. However, as implementation is progressing slowly among the signatory countries, it is becoming apparent that there is no clearly understood definition of 'full implementation.' Must countries have only some new degree programs at each university and each faculty (department) by 2010, or must *all* indigenous degrees have disappeared by this date?

**JOINT QUALITY INITIATIVE:** The JQI was created in September 2001 in Maastricht, Netherlands, at a meeting of several European countries with similar education systems and quality assurance frameworks. Member countries include Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. Member countries were desirous of instituting in specific ways the transparency called for at the 2001 Prague Ministers Conference of the Bologna Process. They are particularly concerned with accreditation and quality assurance within the Bologna reforms and focus primarily on the bachelor-master levels (the first two Bologna degree cycles). Out of the Maastricht and subsequent meetings of the JQI have come the 'Dublin Descriptors.'

**NEW DEGREES:** New degree structure mandated by the Bologna Process for the 46 signatory countries; new degrees consist of a first degree leading to a further, higher degree (many countries have defaulted to calling these bachelor and master degrees, respectively, though this terminology was not mandated in the agreement). These degrees will replace all previous indigenous degrees awarded in each country.

**SIGNATORY COUNTRY:** One of the countries participating in the European Higher Education Area formed at the 1999 meeting in Bologna that began the reform of European higher education. Originally 29 countries, represented by the national minister of education in each country, the group has grown to include ministers of education from 46 countries. New countries petitioning to join the group must be approved at one of the biannual ministers' conferences. A list of participating countries and organizations can be found on the Bologna Process Web site: www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/pcao/.

**TERMINAL DEGREES:** University first degrees that are not generally meant to continue to the next academic degree level. For example, the Ontario three-year Ordinary Bachelor's Degree is *not* considered eligible for admission to master's study at Ontario universities which require the four-year honors degree.

**TUNING PROJECT:** A project begun by various universities in 2000 that focuses on the curricular aspects of the Bologna reforms rather than on the overarching systemic education structure in each signatory country. The Tuning Project aims to allow universities to 'tune' their study programs to achieve comparability, compatibility, and transparency consistent with the Bologna reforms while maintaining their diversity and autonomy. Tuning 'reference points' center around learning outcomes and competencies and reflect the criteria embodied in the Dublin Descriptors.

**YEAR COUNTING:** Used previously by international credential analysts, the method basically says that the only true way to compare a U.S. bachelor's degree to "outside" first degrees is to match the number of years the degree is designed to take. Even among conservative proponents of this methodology, it is applied inconsistently. Three-year university degrees following a thirteen-year primary/secondary system (degrees awarded in the United Kingdom are a prime example) are acceptable whereas those that follow a twelve-year primary/secondary system (as in the USA or India or France or Norway) are *not* considered acceptable for graduate admission under this philosophy.

**3+2 or 4+1:** Bologna mandated two tiered degrees, one leading to the other, but did not mandate a timeframe *other* than to say that the first degree could not take less than three years to complete. This leads to a choice among signatory countries of either a 3+2 model (three-year bachelor's and two-year master's) or a 4+1 model (four-year bachelor's and one-year master's). Most have opted for the 3+2 model.

This is the first-level degree devised under the Bologna Process. First-cycle degrees are generally, though not invariably, three years in length. While three years was not required in the definition of first-cycle degrees, it was stated that such degrees would not be awarded for courses of study less than three years in duration. Similarly, while the name of the new first degrees was left to the discretion of individual countries, the majority have adopted the term 'bachelor.' In the ECTS credit accumulation scheme, first degrees that are three years in length would consist of 180 ECTS.

## FIRST CYCLE (BACHELOR)

This is the second-level degree devised under the Bologna Process. Second-cycle degrees are generally, though not invariably, two years in length. The length of the second cycle degree is predicated on the length of the first degree: If the first degree is three years in length, the second is two years in length so that the two combined equal five years—the length recommended for the first two cycles added together. As was the case regarding nomenclature for the first degree, the name of the new second degree was left to the individual countries. The term 'master' (note the lack of the letter 's' on the end of the names of the first and second degrees) has been adopted by the majority of the countries. According to the ECTS credit accumulation scheme, second degrees which are two years in length would consist of 120 ECTS, for a total of 300 ECTS in a 3+2 scheme.

## SECOND CYCLE (MASTER)

This is the third and terminal degree devised under the Bologna Process. Third-cycle degrees are of no specified duration. Ministers from the signatory countries of the European Higher Education Area generally desired to avoid excessive interference in the doctoral degree construction process. In the very early stages of EHEA, emphasis was on the first two cycles of the new degree structure. But by the time of the Bergen (2003) and Berlin (2005) ministerial meetings, increasing concern focused on the addition of the third-cycle (doctoral) degrees. Even by the time of the London Meeting (2007), much work remained to be done on describing precisely how the third-cycle degrees (almost universally rendered as 'doctoral' or some similar name) should be described. Considerable differences among signatory countries exist regarding the required length of study (a three-year minimum is most often suggested) and ECTS required, if any (so far no particular amount has been stipulated); nor have other criteria been specified in light of agreed-upon standards. Doubtless this formed a significant part of the discussion in the months leading up to and in the papers presented at the May 2009 Ministerial Meeting in Leuven.

## THIRD-CYCLE (DOCTORATE)

# Bologna Compliant Degree Cycles

In the framework of ECTS, a grading scale has been developed to facilitate the understanding and comparison of grades given according to different national systems. It has no national reference point, aiming instead at an objective evaluation of student abilities relative to those of other students within the same system. It was not designed to replace national systems, but rather to enhance understanding of them in other countries.

The ECTS grading scale is based on the rank of a student on a given assessment: that is, how she performed relative to other students. The ECTS system classifies students into broad groups, thereby making interpretation of ranking simpler. It is this grouping that lies at the heart of the ECTS grading system.

The ECTS system initially divides students into pass and fail groups and then assesses the performance of these two groups separately. Those obtaining passing grades are divided into five subgroups: the best 10 percent are awarded a grade of A, the next 25 percent a grade of B, the following 30 percent a grade of C, the following 25 percent a grade of D, and the final 10 percent a grade of E.

Those students who do not demonstrate performance sufficient to allow a passing grade are divided into two subgroups: FX (Fail—some more work required before credit can be awarded) and F (Fail—considerable further work is required). This distinction differentiates between those students who have been assessed as almost passing and those who clearly lack the required knowledge and skills.

The ECTS grading scale can be represented in tabular fashion (*see* Table 1).

The main requirements for establishing ECTS grades are: the availability of sufficiently detailed primary data; cohorts of sufficient size to ensure validity; proper statistical methods; and regular quality control of the results obtained through use of the scale.

The degree of differentiation in grades varies greatly not only from country to country, but also often within a single country, or even within a single institution. Where the local marks are highly differentiated, expression in terms of ECTS grades is simple. However, a sizeable number of instances exist where the local marks are less differentiated than those of the ECTS grading scale. These cases fall into two categories, depending on whether the primary assessment data allow establishment of a ranking list. Where the original assessment can provide a ranking, the ranking may be used directly to provide the appropriate ECTS grade. Where a valid ranking cannot be obtained from the primary assessment data, only an ECTS pass or fail should be recorded.

The size of the cohort used as a basis for arriving at the ECTS grades is of great importance. When large numbers of students are being assessed for the same course unit/module at the same time, the situation is straightforward as the results of the assessment can be used to arrive directly at ranking and, therefore, to ECTS grades. A cohort of students in which at least 30 individuals achieve passing grades is suggested as the minimum number necessary for meaningful ranking, although larger numbers are preferred.

A variety of alternate strategies are available to institutions where cohorts are not of sufficient size. Grades obtained at different sessions or in different but related modules at the same session may be compiled in a variety

## Table 1.
*ECTS Grading Scale*

| ECTS Grade | % of Successful Students Normally Achieving the Grade | Comment |
|---|---|---|
| A | 10 | Use of words like "excellent" or "good" is no longer recommended as such comments are not appropriate in light of the percentage-based ranking on which the ECTS Grade Transfer Scale is based |
| B | 25 | |
| C | 30 | |
| D | 25 | |
| E | 10 | |
| FX | – | Fail – some work required to pass |
| F | – | Fail – considerable further work required |

of ways to arrive at suitably sized cohorts. For example, experience shows that:

- grades over several course units/modules of similar level often follow a similar distribution; and
- the distribution of grades over a five-year period is likely to produce a balanced result.

Higher education institutions should strive to provide ECTS grades for all of their students and to take into account the ECTS grades awarded by other institutions. A certain amount of flexibility is always advisable as the ECTS grading scale was designed to improve transparency of a variety of grading systems and cannot, by itself, cover all possible cases.

## About Grade Conversion

The ECTS grading system has undergone changes since 1989, when it first was conceived for the Erasmus mobility program. Initially, the scale contained text descriptors which enabled one to make some logical inferences regarding grading scale comparability to the U.S. and other grading systems. Over the past few years, however, in the wake of adoption by the Bologna ministers and heavy use by institutions in the signatory countries, the text descriptors were dropped, ostensibly because they were not deemed compatible with the ECTS grades and percentage achievement levels. However, enough European universities have retained those descriptions on their own Web pages pertaining to institutional grading that they are reproduced here along with the suggested EDGE comparison to the U.S. grading scale:

| ECTS Scale | Definition | % Receiving Grade | U.S. Grade Equivalent[1] |
|---|---|---|---|
| A | Excellent—outstanding performance with only minor errors | 10 | A |
| B | Very Good—above the average standard but with some errors | 25 | B+ |
| C | Good—generally sound work with a number of notable errors | 30 | B |
| D | Satisfactory—fair but with significant shortcomings | 25 | C+ |
| E | Sufficient—performance meets the minimum criteria | 10 | C |
| FX | Fail—more work required before the credit can be awarded | — | F |
| F | Fail—considerable further work is required | — | F |

[1] Note that there is no 'D' concept: this is because 'E' DOES meet minimum criteria and the U.S. grade of 'D' denotes a deficient level of achievement that is essentially a condoned pass. Also, the FX grade indicates that more work must be done to earn credit. When the grade of 'D' is assigned at U.S. colleges and universities, it typically carries with it credit earned though often NOT acceptable for transfer to other U.S. schools; a grade of 'D' also is not sufficient for meeting certain degree requirements. Finally, the scale embraces a +/- concept that may be lacking at some U.S. institutions, in which case these grades should default downward to the overall letter grade indicated (for example, B+ becomes B; C+, C; etc.).

## ECTS CREDIT CONVERSION

In addition to assessing grading comparability, another significant element to understanding the European Transfer Credit System is that of converting these ECTS credits to U.S. semester hour credits. ECTS credits are predicated on a full load of 60 ECTS per year (30 per semester). When compared to the U.S. semester-hour full load of fifteen to eighteen per semester, or 30 to 36 per year (excluding summer terms), the natural inclination of U.S. admissions officers and credentials analysts is to convert these credits using a ratio of 2:1. Indeed, a year or so prior to the dissolution in March 2006 of the National Council on the Evaluation of Foreign Educational Credentials, that body approved a comparability statement of precisely this ratio. European users of ECTS, on the other hand, point to the fact that the ECTS credit is an indicator of more than simple 'seat time' or 'contact hours.' Indeed, it is reflective of many other aspects of learning outcomes, such as lab work, tutorials, study time, research efforts, etc. Therefore, simply halving the ECTS credits to conform to U.S. semester hour credits which are predicated on contact hours is misleading at best and unfair at worst. While it is true that the two measuring indices **do** reflect different pedagogical measurements, it should be pointed out that the U.S. Carnegie unit based on contact hours (45 contact hours = three semester hours, or 15:1 in lecture courses) also carries with it the understanding (or admonition) that for every *one* hour of in-class lecture, a student should spend *three* hours in outside preparation. This is feasible for U.S. students with access to appropriate study facilities, large libraries with significant current holdings, personal

computers, and required and even recommended texts; in such cases, outside preparation time is truly qualitative study time that contributes significantly to attainment of the overall learning outcome(s) of the course. EDGE therefore recommends the 2:1 ratio approved by the Council and followed by the majority of U.S. admissions officers and international credentials analysts.

## RESOURCES

A list of participating countries and organizations can be found on the Bologna Process Web site. Under each signatory country link, there is a link to recognized higher education institutions (*see* www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/pcao/).

### Internet Resources

- *Bologna Process Benelux 2009*
  www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna
- *Council of Europe*
  www.coe.int/T/DG4/HigherEducation/EHEA2010/BolognaPedestrians_en.asp
- *European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education*
  www.enqa.eu/bologna_overview.lasso
- *European University Association*
  www.eua.be/index.php?id=36
- *Joint Quality Initiative*
  www.jointquality.nl
- *NAFSA*
  www.nafsa.org/knowledge_community_network.sec/recruitment_admissions/bologna_process_network
- *Tuning Project*
  http://tuning.unideusto.org/tuningeu/
- *UNESCO Europe*
  www.cepes.ro/cepes/mission.htm

### Printed Resources

*The Impact of Bologna and Three-Year Degrees on U.S. Admissions: A Focus on Europe, Australia, and the United Kingdom*. AACRAO 2007.

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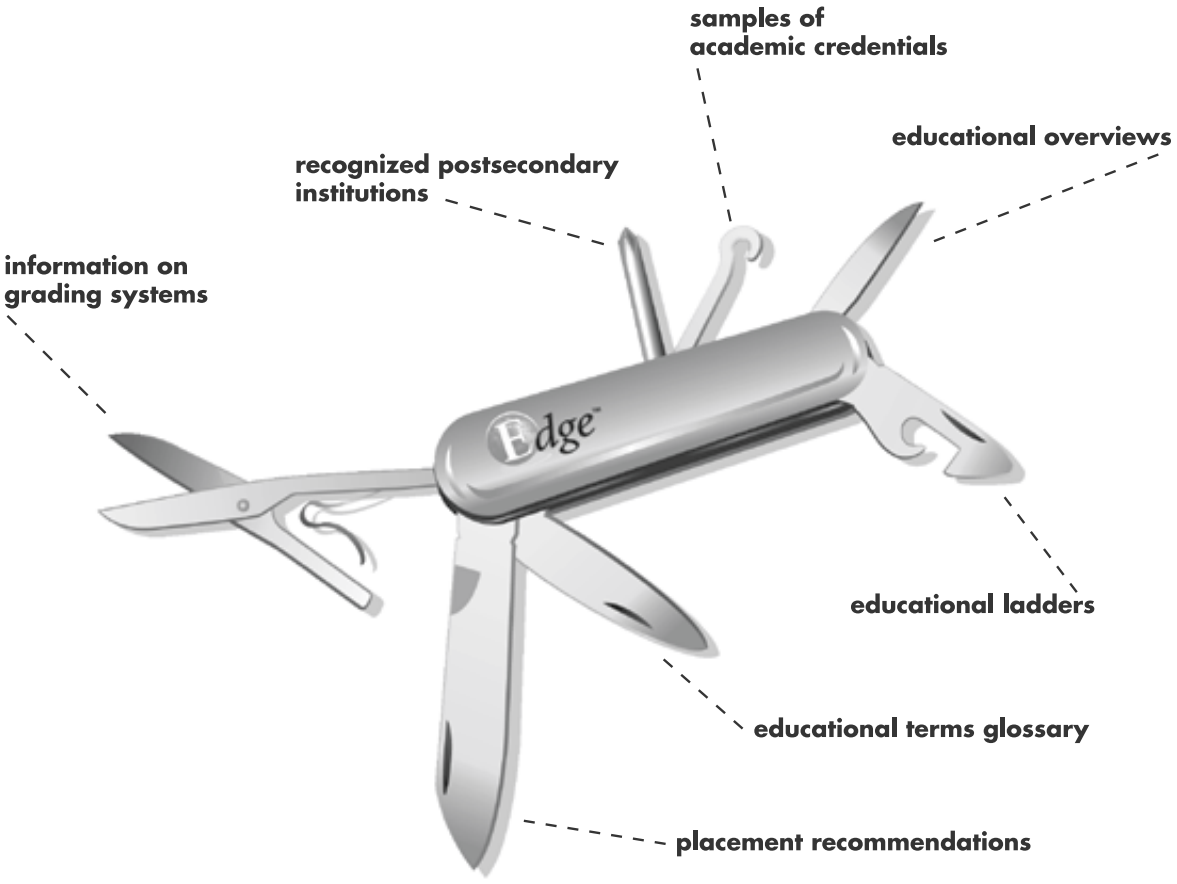


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ONE WAY OF ASSURING PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR IN DOCTORS IS TO ENSURE THAT ONLY THOSE STUDENTS WHO ARE LIKELY TO BEHAVE PROFESSIONALLY ARE ADMITTED TO MEDICAL SCHOOL. THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY IS TO EVALUATE THE USEFULNESS OF AN INSTRUMENT TO EVALUATE THE PROFESSIONAL BEARING OF APPLICANTS AT THE TIME OF THE MEDICAL SCHOOL INTERVIEW.

*Assessing Perceived Professionalism*

IN

# MEDICAL SCHOOL APPLICANTS

By Carol L. Elam, Craig H. Ziegler,
Ruth B. Greenberg, and Beth A. Bailey

# Citing studies that suggest members of the public believe physicians as a group lack listening and communication skills and empathy,

leaders in medical education have argued that medical schools have an obligation to graduate students with a specific set of professional skills, qualities, and behaviors (Cohen 2006; Stern, Frohna and Gruppen 2005). In response, a number of professional organizations across the continuum of medical education have worked diligently in recent years to define professionalism; enumerate professional standards and codes of conduct; and delineate behavioral markers indicative of professional behaviors in medical settings (Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education 2004; American Board of Internal Medicine 2001; Association of American Medical Colleges 2002, 2004; and National Board of Medical Examiners 2006). The Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) published *Learning Objectives for Medical Student Education*, which outlines the attributes medical students should possess at graduation (AAMC 1998). Two of the four attributes, *altruistic* and *dutiful,* focus on competencies and attitudes related to professionalism (*e.g.*, a commitment to advocacy, respect for patient privacy, and honesty and integrity in all interactions). Similarly, the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education's (ACGME) Outcome Project provides all residency programs with assessment tools for evaluating behaviors associated with professionalism, including compassion, respect for privacy, and sensitivity to diverse patient populations (ACGME 2004). Furthermore, initiatives at medical schools are currently underway to ensure that the formal and experiential teaching of professionalism is enhanced and that ongoing assessments occur throughout the four years of medical school to ensure that students who graduate possess these qualities (Cohen 2006). Another strategy for ensuring professional behavior in doctors is to make certain that only those students who are likely to behave professionally are *admitted* to medical school (Cohen 2006; Stern *et al.* 2005). Most American medical schools interview candidates for admission as part of the selection process, the goal being to assess personal qualities and provide an indication of general fitness for practicing medicine. Applicants who meet academic and non-academic screening criteria stipulated by individual medical schools are invited for interviews. Interviewers rate and/or write comments in accordance with their impressions of candidates. Although the topics addressed and the specificity of information ascertained during interviews varies across institutions, most interviews are designed to gauge such attributes as motivation for medicine, commitment to serving others, and interpersonal skills (Elam, Studts and Johnson 1997).

Despite widespread recognition that non-cognitive or personal qualities are important to a candidate's ability to become a competent professional, most admissions processes do not produce quantifiable and reliable data on personal qualities that predict future success as a physician. Stern and his colleagues found no consistent, significant correlations between any materials from the admissions packet and the measures of professionalism they tracked in the clinical years (Stern *et al.* 2005). Efforts to develop new admissions tools that could accurately identify candidates who possess the desired non-cognitive traits associated with professional behavior are under way. A "multiple mini-interview" (MMI) developed at McMaster University consists of ten stations designed to provide information about a prospective medical student's non-cognitive qualities. The MMI was found to provide a more valid indication of a candidate's non-cognitive characteristics than traditional admissions tools (Eva, Rosenfeld, Reiter and Norman 2004). Investigators at Tel Aviv University developed a multi-station admissions protocol (MOR) that consists of simulation-based interactions in which prospective students are evaluated by faculty and standardized patients (actors who are trained to serve as simulated patients who aid in teaching and evaluating health professions students); researchers have found that the MOR has good psychometric properties and that it heightened admissions committee members' awareness of the importance of assessing interpersonal competencies and moral qualities in the admissions process (Ziv *et al.* 2008).

Demographic features (such as gender and age) that may be predictive of the professional behaviors associated with medical practice have not yet been explored. Our search of the literature produced no investigations of the relationship between gender or age and professional behaviors; however, there is some evidence that men and women perceive aspects of professionalism differently. For example, female students and residents were significantly more likely than their male counterparts to believe that the process for selection of medical students and residents should include an assessment of professionalism (Roberts *et al.* 2004). Further, in a study regarding appropriate physician behaviors, female medical students were more likely than males to have negative attitudes about the alleged benefits of physician callousness (*e.g.*, hardness, insensitivity) toward patients, which often is associated with unprofessional behavior (Rentmeester, Brack and Cavan 2007). Another study (Stern *et al.* 2005) found that age at time of entry to medical school was not predictive of professional behavior in the clinical years.

The present investigation sought to develop an admissions instrument to assess demographic and non-cognitive qualities indicative of professionalism that would be less labor intensive and less costly than either the MMI or the MOR. In order to develop a professionalism instrument for medical school interviewers, staff at the University of Virginia School of Medicine began by analyzing professionalism standards for physicians, residents, and medical students as defined by ABIM, ACGME, and NBME and in a comprehensive review of professionalism in medical education published by AAMC (Inui 2003). Based on this analysis, survey items were developed to assess established professionalism attributes that would be appropriate at the medical school application stage. Each of the items in the admissions instrument appears in some form in each of the medical professionalism documents listed above. In an effort to generate results that could be compared with future evaluations of the professionalism of medical students, each item was scaled in a manner that was consistent with the Medical School Performance Evaluation, the letter of reference to residency directors sent on behalf of graduating medical students seeking residency positions. This scale ranges from "too little" to "too much" of a particular attribute, resulting in a five-item Likert scale in which a score of "1" (too little) is equal to a score of "5" (too much), with the optimal descriptor of each item receiving a score of "4" (*see* Figure 1 on page 33). The purposes of this preliminary study are (1) to examine the psychometric properties of this instrument in terms of its ability to evaluate the professional bearing of applicants at the time of the medical school interview and (2) to examine whether age and gender may be related to interviewers' perceptions of the professionalism behaviors and attitudes assessed by the instrument. Specifically, the study examined:

- The relationship of professionalism scores to gender (both overall score and individual scores);
- The relationship of professionalism scores to the applicant's age;
- Whether any professionalism scores were correlated with the overall professionalism rating;

- Interrater reliability of the professionalism ratings; and
- Construct validity and internal consistency of the professionalism ratings.

## METHOD

A seven-item instrument, Assessing Professionalism in Medical School Applicants (see Figure 1), was made available to other medical schools after presentation at an Association of American Medical Colleges conference (Elam, Preczewski and Bailey 2005). Two medical schools, the University of Kentucky College of Medicine (UKCOM) and the University of Louisville School of Medicine (ULSOM), agreed to participate in a pilot study designed to examine the utility of the professionalism instrument. The professionalism instrument was completed by medical school interviewers for all applicants receiving interviews at UKCOM and ULSOM during the 2005–06 and 2006–07 application cycles. At both institutions, each applicant was interviewed twice, by separate interviewers. The two interviews at each medical school constitute standard admissions procedures at both institutions and cover such broad areas of applicant preparedness as exposure to medicine, motivation for a medical career, interpersonal skills and ability to interact with others, responsibility and commitment, work experience and leadership, and overall acceptability for admission to medical school. The professionalism instrument was completed in addition to the regular interview form used by the schools.

Name of applicant: _____ Name of interviewer: _____

Please evaluate the applicant on the following criteria after interview.

**Image (appropriate dress and grooming for a health care environment. Note excessive jewelry, cologne/perfumes, chewing gum, eating, drinking).**

- ☐ Above average
- ☐ Average
- ☐ Below average

**Interpersonal and communication skills (speech, body language, eye contact, listening skills, ability to organize and articulate thoughts).**

- ☐ Quiet but thoughtful (3)
- ☐ Distant and withdrawn (1)
- ☐ Engaged, comfortable, and articulate (4)
- ☐ Inappropriately casual and overly familiar (5)
- ☐ Nervous but appropriate (2)

**Leadership skills (evidence in application and in interview of ability and desire to take leadership roles when appropriate).**

- ☐ Willing to take leadership role if encouraged (3)
- ☐ No evidence of leadership activities, but shows potential (2)
- ☐ May avoid taking leadership roles (1)
- ☐ Prefers to lead; may have trouble being a member of the team when necessary (5)
- ☐ Actively seeks leadership roles (4)

**Altruism (willingness to serve others in personal life and community settings)**

- ☐ No signs of altruistic activities but seems concerned for others (2)
- ☐ Self-involved; interested mainly in personal gratification (1)
- ☐ Always places others above self, regardless of personal needs (5)
- ☐ Consistently and appropriately seeks out opportunities to serve his/her community (4)
- ☐ Some evidence of altruistic activities in the past (3)

**Respect for others**

- ☐ Seems judgmental when talking about others (2)
- ☐ Demonstrates appropriate level of respect for interviewer and others (4)
- ☐ Respect for others may be selective (3)
- ☐ Obsequious (5)
- ☐ Disrespectful, arrogant, or condescending (1)

**Tolerance and appreciation for cultural/gender differences**

- ☐ Makes comments that reflect intolerance for different viewpoints (1)
- ☐ Appears to have some experience in working with a wide range of people (3)
- ☐ Little contact with different viewpoints but seems open-minded (2)
- ☐ Avoids expressing a personal opinion on any cultural/gender issue (5)
- ☐ Able to comfortably discuss different cultural/gender viewpoints (4)

**Overall Professionalism Rating**

Professional <----------> Unprofessional

**1 2 3 4 5**

**FIGURE 1**. *Assessing Perceived Professionalism in Medical School Applicants*

The professionalism instrument assessed the following characteristics: Image, Interpersonal and Communication Skills, Leadership Skills, Altruism, Respect for Others, Tolerance and Appreciation of Cultural/Gender Differences, and Overall Professionalism. *Image* was rated using a three-point Likert scale anchored with "Below Average" and "Above Average." Overall Professionalism was rated using a five-point scale anchored with "Unprofessional"

and "Professional." Responses for the other items were assigned a numeric value from one to five. The items reflected the degree to which the applicant manifested the characteristic; higher ratings indicated increased levels of manifestation. (Refer to numbers in parentheses in Figure 1.) That is, a rating of 1 represented the worst possible rating while a "4" signified the ideal rating. A rating of 5 indicated that the applicant manifested that particular trait to an excessive degree; for purposes of data analysis, every score of 5 was re-coded as a 1.

The age and gender of each applicant who was interviewed during the study period were collected from the medical school applications at both institutions and were linked to the assigned scores for each item on the professionalism instrument. Two interviewers rated each applicant on the basis of separate interviews. As a result, average scores on each item on the professionalism instrument were calculated for each applicant at the two institutions.

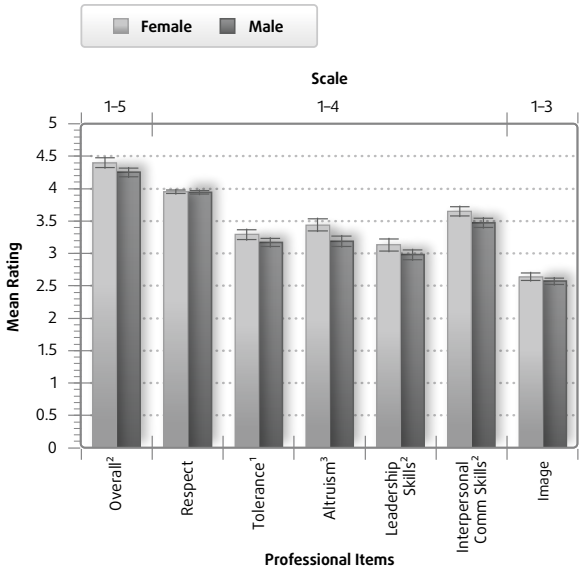


**FIGURE 2**. *Mean Differences across Professionalism Item Scores by Gender* ( $^{1}p < 0.05$; $^{2}p < 0.01$; $^{3}p < 0.001$ )

SPSS version 17.0 was used for data analysis. Likert-scaled and ordinal data were analyzed using both the Mann-Whitney U test and the Spearman's Rho Correlation Coefficient. A comparison was made between males and females on the professionalism items. The professional items also were correlated with age and the overall professionalism score. The proportion of overall agreement, weighted Kappa, and 95 percent confidence intervals were used to assess interrater reliability between interviewers on applicants' professionalism scores. Factor analysis using principal factor extraction with varimax rotation and Cronbach's alpha were performed to assess construct validity and internal consistency of the instrument. All p-values were two-tailed. Statistical significance was set by convention at $p \leq 0.05$. The study was approved by the Institutional Review Board at each respective institution.

## RESULTS

Six hundred and thirty-seven (n = 637) applicants were assessed by interviewers who completed the professionalism instrument (UKCOM n = 314 and ULSOM n = 323). Sixty-one percent of the sample was male (n = 389) and 39 percent were female (n = 248). The mean age of applicants at both schools was 23.7 years (SD 2.8 years; range 19 to 39 years).

Addressing the first research question, we used the Mann-Whitney U test to examine whether there were differences in professionalism scores assigned by the interviewers according to applicant gender (*see* Figure 2). Females were assigned significantly higher ratings than males on Interpersonal and Communication Skills (females: M = 3.65, SD = 0.57; males: M = 3.47, SD = 0.70, p = 0.001); Leadership Skills (females: M = 3.13, SD = 0.72; males: M = 2.98, SD = 0.72, p = 0.014); Altruism (females: M = 3.44, SD = 0.72; males: M = 3.19, SD = 0.77, $p < 0.001$); Tolerance (females: M = 3.29, SD = 0.59; males: M = 3.17, SD = 0.60, p = 0.015), and Overall Professional rating (females: M = 4.40, SD = 0.58; males: M = 4.25, SD = 0.65, $p<0.01$).

Spearman's Rho Correlation Coefficients were computed between applicant age and items on the professionalism instrument. As displayed in Table 1, statistically significant correlations were noted between age and three of the seven items: Communication Skills ($r_s = 0.105$, p = 0.009); Tolerance ($r_s = 0.084$, p = 0.035); and Overall Professional rating ($r_s = 0.130$, p = 0.001). The positive correlations indicate that, on average, older applicants received higher scores than younger applicants on these items. To determine whether any of the item subscores were a better predictor of the Overall Professional rating, Spearman's Rho Correlation Coefficients were computed.

## Table 1:

*Correlation of Professional Items with Age and Overall Professionalism Rating*

| Spearman's Rho | Overall Professionalism | Interpersonal Communication | Tolerance | Altruism | Respect | Leadership | Image |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Age | 0.130[2] | 0.105[2] | 0.084[1] | -0.067 | 0.049 | 0.015 | 0.004 |
| Overall Professionalism | 1.000 | 0.329[3] | 0.320[3] | 0.246[3] | 0.159[3] | 0.336[3] | 0.503[3] |

[1] $p < 0.05$; [2] $p < 0.01$; [3] $p < 0.001$

## Table 2:

*Weighted Kappa, 95% Confidence Limits (CL), and the Proportion of Overall Agreement of the Professionalism Items*

| | | Weighted Kappa | 95% Lower CL | 95% Upper CL | Proportion of Overall Agreement |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Overall Professionalism | UK | 0.28 | 0.15 | 0.40 | 0.53 |
| | UL | 0.04 | -0.08 | 0.16 | 0.36 |
| Interpersonal Communication | UK | 0.21 | 0.08 | 0.34 | 0.59 |
| | UL | 0.32 | 0.16 | 0.48 | 0.64 |
| Tolerance | UK | 0.03 | -0.09 | 0.16 | 0.39 |
| | UL | 0.14 | 0.03 | 0.25 | 0.46 |
| Altruism | UK | 0.34 | 0.19 | 0.48 | 0.54 |
| | UL | 0.30 | 0.19 | 0.41 | 0.48 |
| Leadership | UK | 0.34 | 0.22 | 0.47 | 0.49 |
| | UL | 0.29 | 0.17 | 0.41 | 0.47 |
| Image | UK | 0.14 | -0.01 | 0.29 | 0.62 |
| | UL | 0.08 | -0.06 | 0.21 | 0.55 |
| Respect | UK | -0.024 | -0.12 | 0.07 | 0.92 |
| | UL | -0.03 | -0.05 | -0.02 | 0.92 |

The Overall Professional rating had a low to moderate correlation with all of the professional items ($p < 0.001$; *see* Table 1).

To determine interrater reliability across the professionalism items, the proportion of overall agreement, weighted Kappa and 95 percent confidence intervals were calculated and are displayed in Table 2. Weighted Kappa for most professionalism items from each school ranged from 0.03 to 0.34, indicating poor interrater reliability between interviewers. The proportion of overall agreement between interviewers also was modest, ranging from 0.36 to 0.64. The exception to this was the item "Respect for Others," which had a high proportion of overall agreement—92 percent for each school—as the vast majority

## Table 3:

*Professionalism Scales (one factor solution), Factor Loadings, and Cronbach's Alpha*

| Factor | Factor Loadings | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Leadership | Interpersonal/ Communication | Tolerance | Altruism | Image | Respect | Cronbach's Alpha |
| Professionalism | 0.64 | 0.59 | 0.54 | 0.50 | 0.48 | 0.29 | 0.67 |

of the interviewers (92%) selected "demonstrates appropriate level of respect for interviewer and others." The negative weighted Kappa coefficients for this item are an artifact of little variability between interviewers on the responses chosen and indicate that weighted Kappa could not establish a valid estimate of interrater reliability (*see* Table 2 on page 35).

An exploratory factor analysis was performed to assess how many common dimensions the first six items on the instrument measure. The factor loadings among items showed one underlying construct indicating that the six items assessed aspects of professionalism (*see* Table 3).

Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. A modest degree of reliability for the six items was found (0.67).

## CONCLUSIONS

Academic medicine leaders have encouraged admissions officers to find ways to improve the medical school admissions process (Cohen 2006). This preliminary study was designed to explore properties of a newly designed professionalism instrument. The results of the study suggest five tentative conclusions. First, as a group, female applicants generally were rated higher than male applicants on professionalism items pertaining to interpersonal communication skills, leadership, altruism, tolerance, and overall professionalism. This finding fits with previous work that suggests that women typically are viewed as more socio-emotional and nurturing than males; such perceptions may carry over to interview settings (Eagly 1987; Holloway 2006; Juodvalkis *et al.* 2003). Second, older applicants were rated higher than younger applicants on the categories Communication Skills, Tolerance, and Overall Professionalism. Interviewers' perceptions of older applicants may have factored into the assignment of ratings, with higher ratings assigned on the basis of the applicant's life experiences. If interviewers believed that older applicants were more likely—as a result of their life experiences—to have acquired attitudes and behaviors indicative of professionalism, then assigned ratings may have been biased (Macan and Dipboye 1990). Third, all six items on the professionalism instrument were correlated with the Overall Professionalism rating. While this finding and the Cronbach's alpha suggest modest internal consistency across items in the instrument, it is noteworthy that the item with the highest correlation with the Overall Professionalism rating was Image. Studies have suggested that interviewers may perceive applicants with a pleasant demeanor and pleasing personal appearance more positively than others (Bretz, Rynes and Gerhart 1993). As a result, applicants with appropriate dress and good grooming may have been perceived as more professional. Fourth, our study results indicated that the interrater reliability of scores assigned on the instrument was modest. It is possible that the interviewers found it difficult to assess those items indicative of professional attitudes and behaviors in the medical school interview setting. Alternatively, the interviewers may have found the item responses difficult to interpret. While the University of Virginia School of Medicine staff who developed this instrument based its content on the literature, they undoubtedly were influenced by experiences related to the behaviors of applicants and students at their institution. Following the UVSOM lead, beyond being asked to assign a rating on each item for each applicant with whom they had interacted in the

admission interview setting, interviewers at UKCOM and ULSOM did not receive training related to completing the instrument. Describing scenarios that address the subject of each professionalism item and reviewing applicant attitudes and behaviors that might be indicative of each rating point on each item as part of interviewer training on the use of this instrument likely would improve interrater reliability. Fifth, the one-dimension solution of the six professionalism items found during the exploratory factor analysis indicates that the instrument obtained modest construct validity for professionalism.

Finally, this study highlights the need to continue to explore strategies for measuring the non-cognitive traits associated with professional behavior as medical students and as physicians. The MMI (Eva *et al.* 2004) and the MOR (Ziv *et al.* 2008) represent new tools being developed to measure an applicant's commitment to the professional behaviors needed to succeed as a medical student and to perform the responsibilities of a physician; we believe that the instrument piloted in this investigation also holds promise as an admissions tool that could be implemented efficiently and effectively even at schools with limited resources.

Additional research is recommended to address the limitations of the current study. Further study is necessary to demonstrate whether training interviewers in the use of this instrument would improve the low to moderate interrater reliability obtained across ratings assigned on the professionalism scale. Because behavior at an interview can differ substantially from behavior subsequent to enrollment, future work also must establish whether there is an association between professionalism scores assigned at an interview and those assigned in response to medical students' conduct in both basic and clinical science curricula. Additional research also is needed to examine the relationship between professionalism ratings assigned at interviews and final admissions decisions: Is the professionalism instrument collecting unique information (apart from that obtained from other non-academic admissions tools, such as the medical school interview or letters of recommendation)? Further, it is important to determine


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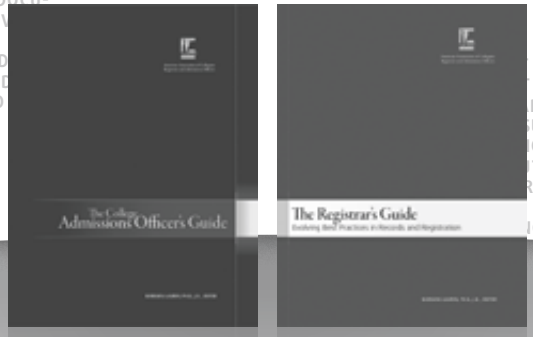


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whether admissions committees that use the professionalism instrument are able to accurately evaluate and predict medical students' future professional behaviors.

Admissions officers at both study institutions were pleased to pilot test an instrument used during the interview process to document impressions of prospective students' professionalism. The addition of a professionalism instrument to the medical school interview process is a potential way to obtain information related to the behavior and demeanor of medical school applicants. Ultimately, the authors hope that this project will improve the medical school admissions process by providing admissions committees with an instrument that will identify students whose commitment to the professional behaviors required for success in the medical profession is strong.

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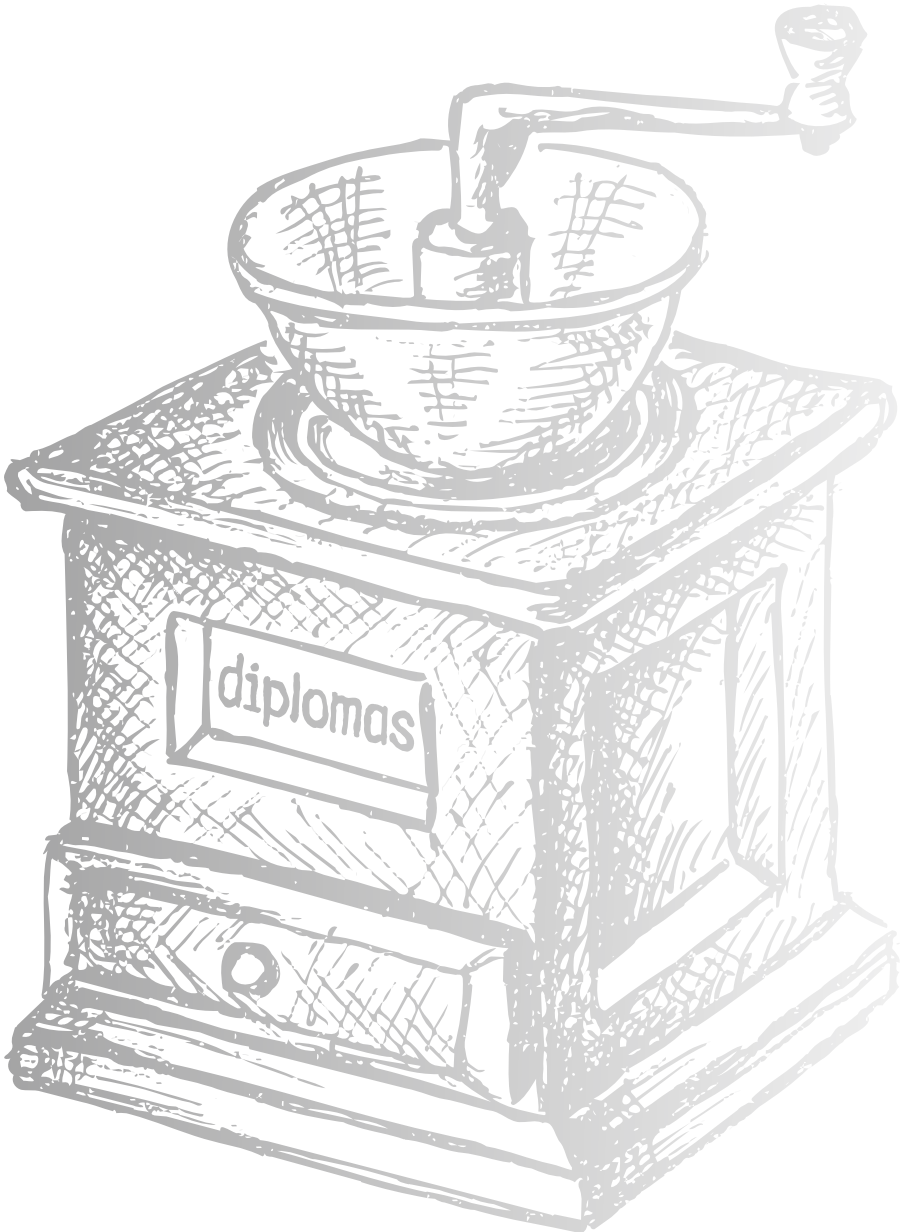
# Recent Developments

## Accreditation Mills and




This article updates developments regarding Diploma Mills, Accreditation Mills, and Counterfeit Diploma & Transcript operations. It will cover identification & prosecution, to new entities now appearing in these growth industries with annual revenues over one billion dollars. This article will address federal and state laws, a new Federal Diploma Mill definition, trends, resources, and steps that can be taken to prevent these academic frauds.

By Allen Ezell

# with Degree Mills:

## Counterfeit Diploma and Transcript Operations

Significant developments have occurred during the last several years regarding academic fraud and the activities of Diploma Mill (DM), Accreditation Mill (AM), and Counterfeit Diploma and Transcript (CD&T) operations. These fraudulent operations have become more sophisticated and daily ply their wares around the world via the Internet. Although the investigation and public exposure of the manufacture, sale, and use of fraudulent credentials have led to arrests and prosecutions as well as loss of positions and credibility—with international ramifications—these operations still flourish. In spite of success in closing down several of these large operations, the scarcity of public outrage and the lack of consistent action by law enforcement, coupled with anonymity afforded by the Internet, have given the operations new life and the resources they need to flourish worldwide. DMs and CD&T operations have been characterized by some as "whacking a gopher."

My objective in this article is to encourage your active participation in defending traditional educational standards against these fraudulent operations, many of which blend in with legitimate distance education. You can participate by being better informed as to what is available in today's market, by being vigilant in your activities, and by promoting and supporting legislative and law enforcement action in these areas. At the same time, strengthen the security and integrity of your own institutional documents to prevent your institution from being victimized. A review of recent events should prove sufficient to persuade you to join in this fight. Remember: Lead by example!

Related recent events include:

- USSS undercover operation "Gold Seal" against operators of St. Regis University, Monrovia, Liberia, and Spokane, WA (and corruption of foreign government officials)
- Explosion in internet DMs offering degrees based wholly on "credit for life experience"
- Increase in number of internet "degree brokers" representing various schools
- Increased number of CD&T Web sites in the Richmond, VA, vicinity
- Creation of numerous new AMs used to support the plethora of new Internet DMs
- Emergence of several "look-alike" organizations designed to confuse the public (*e.g.*, ASCAOR; COHL; DETQ; IDETC; THLC)
- Arrest and conviction (or civil charges against) operators of:
  - *LaSalle University,* Mandeville, LA;
  - *Columbia State University,* Metairie, LA, and San Clemente, CA;
  - *Trinity Southern University,* Dallas, TX;

- *www.DiplomasForLess.com,* Spring, TX;
- *University of Berkley,* Erie, PA (civil charges);
- *University Degree Program*, Bucharest, Romania, and Jerusalem, Israel; CA and NYC (civil)

- New state and federal statutes; congressional hearings
- Exposure of government officials, educators, law enforcement, and other professionals around the world who were using DM and CD&T credentials
- Crackdowns by foreign governments on the manufacture, sale, and use of fraudulent academic credentials
- Academic fraud at Touro College, New York City and resulting prosecutions; application/resume fraud leading to downfall of registrar at MIT
- Crackdown by National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) on high school DMs, resulting investigations and new regulations

## DIPLOMA MILLS

There is a lot of truth in the saying "Where consumers go, business follows" (www.CounterfeitDegrees.com).

Certainly, the current world economic crisis is affecting Internet DM sales. As the world economy has tanked, the dynamics of the job market have changed dramatically; academic credentials are in ever-greater demand for employment purposes. Thousands of new DMs have appeared on the Internet in recent years, offering entire degree programs based on life experience with no, or little new, academic work. Most new "institutions" hide their location and ownership, using street or foreign domain registration, virtual addresses, or a box number at a private mail facility; either no telephone number or a toll-free telephone number (which usually goes directly to voicemail or to a call center) is given; 24x7 access or 24x7 customer support is advertised on many of these Web sites.

Spurious academic documents typically come with certified transcripts, a multi-colored registrar's stamp, a university seal, and a "verification service;" receipt is promised within seven to ten working days. Payment may be made via E-Gold, credit card, or Western Union; costs typically range from $299 to $2,400. Multiple degree packages (for example, a bachelor's and a master's degree) are available, usually at a discount; a 3.2 GPA is the norm, with higher GPAs available for an additional fee. Select schools also use "instant scholarships" to increase their sales. DM and CD&T Web sites utilize various marketing techniques. They resort to the same gimmicks and gadgetry used by legitimate retailers—*e.g.*, coupons, discount codes, holiday specials, two for one (buy one, get one free), multi-degree discounts, and even "as seen on TV." About the only tactic I have not seen is an "end of year clearance." Interestingly, we have observed an increase in "related DMs," for example, when five to fifteen different schools are all being operated by the same parent company. Many "related entities" now offer their own Internet high school, useful for "feeding" new students to their own fake colleges and universities.

Some of these newer DMs include:

- Adams College
- Adison University
- Almeda University
- Andersen University
- Ashington University
- Ashwood University
- Belford University
- Breyer State University
- Bridgewood University
- Bronte International University
- Canbourne University
- Canterbury University
- Capitol University
- ClosedCollegeDiploma.com
- Colton University
- Concordia College & University
- Corlins University
- Earlstown University (a UDP International school)
- Euclid University
- Hartford University
- Hill University
- Irish International University
- Knightsbridge University (Denmark)
- Kingston University
- Landford University
- Lansbridge University
- Lorenz University
- Los Angeles University
- New England State University
- Northfield University
- Penbrook University
- Randford University (www.randford.org)
- Redding University

- Ridgewood University (www.ru-edu.org)
- Somerset University
- Southern Pacific University
- Sutherland University
- Thornhill University
- Trinity College & University
- Unknown school—being sold by www.WorryFreeDegree.com
- University of Bedford
- University of Devon
- University of Northwest
- Valley University
- Washington College and University
- Washington University (washingtonuniversity.us)
- Westmore College
- Whitton University
- Williamsburg University (wwwedu-wu.com)
- Winchester University

At the same time, there has been an increase in the number of degree broker Web sites: The broker represents up to 20 different schools; after the buyer details his qualifications and background, the broker will advise as to whether he has been accepted by a particular school. Individuals enter this transaction blind as they are not given the name of their "accredited" school until after they have registered (*i.e.*, paid their money). Some advise, first, that "the policy of not disclosing the name of the university protects you against unscrupulous individuals who do not approve of self-study and lifestyle improvement" and, second, to avoid "bad publicity." They also tout the fact by not disclosing the name of the school up front; this will prevent future employers from being able to obtain derogatory information about the school. A good example is Degree Express (www.alumniservices.co.uk), which offers "online degrees from accredited universities. No Diploma Mills—*Guaranteed*." (The site even offers a 20 percent commission in its affiliate program.) A similar Web site, which states it represents sixteen schools, is www.life-experience-college-degrees.com.

The proliferation of DMs, and particularly those which require some classwork or submission of a research paper, harm legitimate distance learning. In some circles, there already exists skepticism regarding the value of degrees earned through distance learning. DMs only fuel the ongoing debate.

## ACCREDITATION MILLS

DMs utilize fraudulent accreditation as an advertising and sales tool. They create their own accreditation entity (or rent accreditation from a fellow fraudster) then embellish this "accreditation" on their Web site. Because DMs target the U.S. market, they frequently list the six legitimate regional U.S. accrediting entities, placing their phony accrediting entities among them. It may be difficult for the novice to distinguish the authentic from the fraudulent.

Some of the new unrecognized AMs are:

- **AAUC** American Association of Universities & Colleges
- **AAPS** Association of Accredited Private Schools
- **AAHEA** American Association for Higher Education and Accreditation
- **ABHE** American Bureau of Higher Education (ac-edu.org)
- **ACI** The Accrediting Commission International (Beebe, AR)
- **ACTDE** Accreditation Council for Distance Education
- **AGC-USA** Accrediting Governing Commission of the United States of America
- **AIDE** Association for Innovation in Distance Education
- **APTEC** Accreditation Panel for Online Colleges and Universities
- **BOUA** Board of Online Universities Accreditation
- **CSACDE** Central States Association Council on Distance Education
- **COHL** Commission on Online Higher Learning
- **DETQ** Division of Education Training Quality
- **DGAA** Distance Graduation Accrediting Association (with American flag)
- **ECHOE** European Committee of Home and Online Education
- **GDETGC** Global Distance Education Training and Graduation Council
- **HEASA** Higher Education Accreditation and Standards Association
- **IAAFOE** International Accreditation Association for Online Education

- **IAAOU** International Accreditation Agency for Online Universities
- **IABOS** International Accrediting Body of Online Schools
- **IACOOS** International Accreditation Committee of Online Schools
- **IADL** International Association for Distance Learning
- **IAF** International Accreditation Forum
- **ICHE** International Commission for Higher Education
- **ICDE** International Council for Open & Distance Education
- **IDLAA** International Distance Learning Accrediting Association
- **IOEAB** International Online Education Accrediting Board
- **NAAR** National Academic Archive Registrar
- **NACS** National Accreditation for Colleges and Schools
- **NAcHED** National Academic Higher Education LLC
- **NAHEA** National Academic Higher Education Agency
- **NAHEAA** North American Higher Education Accreditation Association
- **NAPFEW** New Millennium Accrediting Partnership for Educators Worldwide
- **NBOE** National Board of Education
- **NCAC** National College Accreditation Council
- **NDLAC** National Distance Learning Accreditation Council
- **OKOLA** Organization for Online Learning Accreditation
- **REAC** Regional Education Accrediting Commission
- **THLC** The Higher Learning Commission
- **USDLA** United States Distance Learning Association
- **UCOEA** Universal Council for Online Education Accreditation
- **WDLAC** World Distance Learning Accreditation Council
- **WDLC** World Distance Learning Council
- **WHeAS** Worldwide Higher Education Accreditation Society
- **WOEAC** World Online Education Accrediting Commission

## COUNTERFEIT DIPLOMA AND TRANSCRIPT OPERATIONS

The number of CD&T Web sites offering counterfeit diplomas and transcripts (on generic security paper) in the names of legitimate accredited colleges and universities has increased significantly. Anything and everything is available for sale—from $299 to $1,000—for either an in-stock or custom-made item. Typically, the Web sites display copies of their counterfeit diplomas and transcripts and tout the number of years they have been in the printing business; their sales volume; customer satisfaction; etc. One CD&T was so brazen as to post on its Web site both a group photo of its employees and a picture of the printing operation showing several employees involved in "quality control"—never mind that the diplomas were in the names of *your* institutions! Once examined, the fraudulent diplomas were shipped in unmarked brown paper.

Numerous foreign countries have been embarrassed by exposure of either CD&T operations operating with impunity from within their borders or of government leaders or prominent businessmen utilizing fake academic credentials. Authorities have conducted numerous raids on either DMs or CD&T operations, sometimes involving large-scale, sophisticated visa and passport operations. As governments have raided actual physical operations and cracked down on their postal systems (targeting incoming payments or delivery of finished products), many such operations either have shut down or have moved to countries where law enforcement is more lax.

In recent years, China has cracked down on several large-scale CD&T operations; as a result, Midlothian, Virginia (a suburb of Richmond) is now the hub of CD&T operations in the United States. At least six current CD&T operations can be traced to Virginia. In the process of conducting research for AACRAO's new book, *Counterfeit Diplomas and Transcripts,* and in another instance, I purchased three counterfeit diplomas and transcripts—in the names of AACRAO member schools—from Virginia counterfeiters. I subsequently advised federal authorities of the details of my transactions.

Richmond-area counterfeiters continue to operate despite Virginia legislation, H776, approved on April 23, 2008, creating Virginia statute, Code of Virginia, §§

23-276.1, 23-276.10, and 23-276.12, relating to fraudulent academic credentials. This statute became effective July 1, 2008 and made unlawful the manufacture, sale, exchange, barter, use, or presentment as legitimate any academic credential (degree or transcript) to obtain employment, promotion, licensure, or admission to an institution of higher learning, knowing the same to be false, or to make a false claim regarding accreditation. Violation of this statute constitutes a Class 1 misdemeanor (maximum imprisonment one year). Upon learning of this statute, I hoped it would serve as a model for other states. But lack of implementation appears to have neutered legislative intent.

The Virginia Attorney General's office subsequently issued an opinion that as long as a counterfeiter's Web site indicates that the diploma and transcript being offered for sale are "novelties," then the business is not violating the law. (This regardless of the fact that the word "novelty" does not appear anywhere on the face [or the reverse] of the diploma or transcript being sold *in the name of your institution.*) Note that the Virginia Attorney General's office must not have been aware of the federal mail fraud or civil action convictions obtained previously regarding diploma counterfeit operations Alumni Arts, Associated Enterprises, and Buy A College Degree/United Student Services, Inc., wherein the word "novelty" did not appear on the face of any of their counterfeit diplomas.

CD&T Web sites that appear to be hosted by agencies located in Virginia are:

- www.ClosedCollegeDiplomas.com, and possibly
- www.DiplomaCompany.com (KAD Solutions)
- www.ND-Center.com
- www.NextDayDiplomas.com
- www.PhonyDiplomas.com
- www.PhonyDiploma.com (Document Printing Services)
- www.RealisticDiplomas.com
- www.ReplicaDiplomas.com (Online Ventures LTD)
- www.TjrCompany.com
- www.TrueDiplomas.com

Some of the other CD&T Web sites are:

- www.BackAlleyPress.com
- www.BuyDiplomasOnline.com
- www.DiplomaDoctor.com (1)
- www.DiplomasAndTranscripts.co.uk
- www.DiplomasAndTranscripts.com
- www.DiplomaReplication.andMuchMore.com
- www.DiplomaStore.com
- www.FakeDiplomaNovelty.Blogspot.com
- www.Fake-Diploma1.com
- www.FakeDiplomaSale.com
- www.FakeDiplomaSite.com
- www.InstantDegrees.biz
- www.NoveltyDiplomas.co.uk
- www.NoveltySchoolDegrees.com
- www.VirtualDiplomas.net

## LOOK ALIKES

These fraudulent entities are created to confuse the public; sometimes they constitute part of the support network for a DM, adding another layer of apparent legitimacy to an illegitimate operation. The more a Web site insists it is real, the more unreal it likely is. So, the more logos of member accrediting entities or organizations/associations to which it belongs appear on its Web site, the phonier it likely is. This is the purpose of look-alikes and sound-alikes. For example:

- **AAHEA** (American Association for Higher Education and Accreditation) assumed the identity and telephone number of a previously existing (legitimate) Washington, DC-based organization; it even established a mail drop address in Washington, DC, to hide its true location, in Ocala, Florida.
- **ASCAOR** (American Society of Collegiate Admissions Officers & Registrars) parroting AACRAO. In fact, it copied some of the AACRAO Web site but in numerous instances forgot to change the acronym and other identifying information.
- **COHL** (Council of Online Higher Learning) designed to add some fluff to ASCARO 'accredited' schools.
- **IDETC** (International Distance Education Training Council) and
- **USDETC** (United States Distance Education Training Council), both designed to confuse the public with the real DETC (Distance Education Training Council) in Washington, DC.
- **THLC** (The Higher Learning Commission), similar to the (authentic) Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.

# AIPE, the gold standard of accreditation directories.

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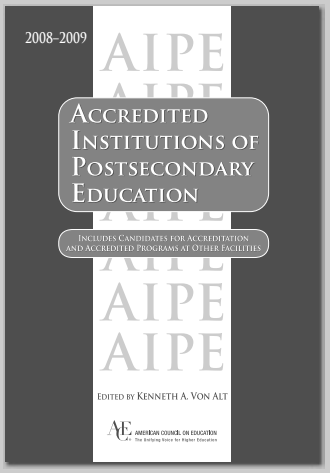


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## STATE STATUTES AND CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS

Several notorious DM states have enacted legislation resulting in various DMs ceasing operating or moving to a less stringent state (or offshore). New statutes were passed in Wyoming, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama, which are leading to their desired results. As DMs moved from one state to the next (think of migration), the newest "host" state was left holding the bag (in fact, the DM). Now it was the new host state's turn to be publically embarrassed, in response to which it either could create new legislation or amend old laws. Most recently, DMs have been migrating to Alabama, Hawaii, Idaho, Mississippi, Montana, and Wyoming because of "either no meaningful standards, excessive loopholes, or poor enforcement owning to local policy or insufficient staff" (Oregon Office of Degree Authorization 2009). In addition, ODA states, "Degrees issued by unaccredited colleges in Alabama, Idaho, Mississippi, or Wyoming should be evaluated with great caution. In particular, Mississippi has no oversight standards" (Oregon Office of Degree Authorization 2009). On the other hand, Maine, Nevada, North Dakota, Oregon, Texas, and Washington are among the states with tougher laws and strict enforcement.

Whenever there is embarrassment in Washington, DC, congressional hearings soon follow: When there was a national scandal in 1924 involving phony physicians practicing medicine throughout the United States, Congress held hearings; after the revelation in 1983 that an Alexandria, Virginia, broker was selling M.D. degrees from a Caribbean medical school, and that many of these degree holders were practicing medicine in the United States, congressional hearings were held. In 1985, hearings stemming from the FBI's DIPSCAM (Diploma Scam) Operation were held; the president of AACRAO testified. Yet no new legislation resulted from any of these hearings.

Congress remained quiet on matters of diploma fraud until 2003, when the DC press splashed the story that a high-ranking official at the new Department of Homeland Security (DHS) held degrees from Hamilton University, in Evanston, Wyoming (a diploma mill). The whistleblower even bragged on the Internet that he had exposed the DHS official. Government officials were outraged; if this could happen at DHS, what about the rest of the government? At the 2005 congressional hearings, the Government Accountability Office made public the results of its 'degree audit,' identifying five targeted schools as diploma mills.

These five schools alone had grossed $111 million from 1995 through 2003; the GAO advised further that it had identified 463 senior government employees (GS-15 and above) claiming to have earned degrees from unrecognized and not regionally accredited schools. The names of these high-level employees were never made public—never mind that 64 of them had been reimbursed more than $170,000 for their educational expenses. Several senators indicated that this was "just the tip of the iceberg." In September 2004, the House Committee on Education and the Workforce held additional hearings; again, no new legislation resulted.

### What can you do to combat academic fraud?

- Become educated on the topic.
- Demand state and federal legislation outlawing all forms of academic fraud.
- Demand enforcement of and prosecutions resulting from such statutes.
- Request that federal law enforcement, irrespective of the agency (e.g., FBI, USPO, USSS), dedicate at least one investigator to work exclusively on academic fraud cases.
- Be proactive regarding counterfeit diplomas and transcripts sold in the name of your school: Demand prosecution!
- Encourage publicity of all instances of academic fraud (this serves as a deterrent).
- Request that your institution use only secure document paper, and limit access to it.

The Higher Education Reauthorization Act of 2008 [HR 4137] was incorporated into the College Opportunity and Affordability Act of 2008, a 1,100-page document passed in July 2008 and signed into law the following month. (Much of the anticipated language relative to DMs had been removed from HR 4137.) The version that was passed indicates that in an effort to assist students, families, and employers, the Secretary of Education is tasked to have information and resources regarding diploma mills (*e.g.*, how to identify and avoid them) on its Web site. The Secretary of Education also is tasked to "continue to collaborate" with officials of the USPS, Federal Trade Commission, Department of Justice (including FBI), IRS, and Office of Personnel Management "to maximize federal efforts to (1) prevent, identify, and prosecute diploma mills; and (2) broadly disseminate to the public information about diploma mills and resources to identify diploma mills."

This law provided a formal federal definition of a diploma mill for the very first time. A diploma mill is:

*"An entity that offers, for a fee, degrees, diplomas, or certificates, that may be used to represent to the general public that the individual possessing such a degree, diploma, or certificate had completed a program of post-secondary education or training; and*

*requires such individual to complete little or no education or coursework to obtain such degree, diploma, or certificate;*

*and lacks accreditation by an accrediting agency or association that is recognized as an accrediting agency or association of institutions of higher education (as such term is defined under Section 102) by the Secretary pursuant to subpart 1 of part H of title IV;*

*or federal agency, state government, or other organization or association that recognized accrediting agencies or association."*

Now, the academic community, the business world, state regulators, and local, state, and federal law enforcement has a definition of a diploma mill on which to base further action. However, one year later, no federal agency has taken any steps regarding DM; rather, it appears to be business as usual. There are more fraudulent entities on the Internet than ever before. Further, neither this definition nor the Bill addresses or defines accreditation mills or counterfeiting operations.

### Resources and Related Web Sites

- www.chea.org
- www.CredentialWatch.com
- www.CounterfeitDegrees. Com
- www.DegreeDiscussion.com
- www.DegreeInfo.com
- www.DiplomaMillblogspot.com
- www.GetEducated.com [Diploma Mill Police]
- www.ope/ed/gov/accreditaiton
- www.osac.state.or.us

### St. Regis University

This is truly the case that was heard 'round the world. "Operation Gold Seal" was a one-year undercover operation by the United States Secret Service (USSS) regarding St. Regis University (SRU), Mead, Washington, and Monrovia, Liberia. Oddly, some state prison sentences handed down against defendants in the Touro College academic fraud even surpassed the federal prison sentences given in the multimillion dollar SRU fund. The USSS is to be congratulated for the manner in which it spearheaded the task force that brought the operators of St. Regis University to justice. The United States Attorney's Office, Spokane, Washington, is to be commended for authorizing the investigation and prosecuting the guilty parties. Several of the eight defendants are now in federal prison.

Because SRU was Internet based, the USSS purchased diplomas and transcripts from several SRU schools and then established a cover story for its next "student." (Remember that in this post-9/11 environment, USSS is part of DHS.) The student was a Syrian Army officer with a background in chemistry and chemical engineering; he desired a "quick degree" so he could obtain a job and his H1-B visa. USSS purchased several diplomas for this student and had these credentials 'evaluated' for use in obtaining his visa.

The undercover agents then established Randolph Addison Davis Technical University (RADTU), their own fake university, on the Internet. They approached the SRU principals for assistance and to purchase accreditation. On July 7, 2005, a three-hour meeting was held at the Mayflower Hotel, Washington, DC (with audio and video operating). After several hours, in walked the Chief of Mission, Liberian Embassy; he agreed to accept a $5,000 bribe and to travel to Liberia (all expenses paid) in order to obtain accreditation for RADTU.

Internet-based SRU operated from January 2000 until October 2005; it had 37 high schools, colleges, and universities and used 121 Web sites, four credential evaluators, three government accrediting agencies, through eight degree brokers, and sold its wares for $399 to $2,454 per document. SRU sold 10,815 degrees and other academic products to 9,612 buyers in all 50 states and 131 countries. One-half of all diplomas were sold to foreign nationals. SRU targeted Liberia, corrupted its government officials, established its fake university, rented a local space and proceeded to hire local educators to pose as SRU faculty members. They were paid a nominal monthly fee (as long as they made favorable comments about SRU when contacted), set up its own accreditors, and then set out to sell its wares. SRU even established its own medical school, awarding MD credentials. SRU diplomas have

surfaced all over the world. The Federal Grand Jury indictment charges that SRU grossed $7,369,907, with monthly revenues, at its peak, of $1,650,000.

As if this were not enough, SRU officials counterfeited diplomas and transcripts of legitimate United States colleges and universities. They sold 270 documents in the names of 77 different legitimate colleges and universities as well as 1,757 degrees in the names of 121 unrecognized schools to buyers in 29 states and six countries. SRU officials would print and sell anything to anyone.

SRU established new benchmarks for corruption and bribery. This was the first DM racket in which numerous foreign government officials were bribed: $60,000 was paid to officials of Liberia; $100,000 to an unidentified official in India; and undisclosed amounts to officials in Italy and in the Russian Education Ministry. There was an avalanche of publicity surrounding the leak of SRU's 9,600 "graduates"' names. The list included business, education, and law enforcement officials in addition to at least 350 high-level government employees, including some at the Departments of Defense, Justice, and State, as well as one White House staffer. When asked about future prosecutions of federal employees using fake academic credentials, officials of the Department of Homeland Security and Immigration Customs Enforcement (DHS/ICE) advised that only those employees who used their degrees for personal gain or to obtain a job would face scrutiny. (Are we to assume that any and all others are off the hook? This is hardly the example for our government to set!) A significant number of SRU diplomas were sold to persons in the Middle East.

The global media reaction to diploma mill prosecution and the release of students' names was unprecedented. Not only did officials in many foreign countries examine the list for their own residents (and government officials), but they also started campaigns to ferret out officials in their own country who were using worthless or fraudulent education credentials. As a result, many countries have instituted their own investigations and are re-examining regulatory controls. Some investigative journalists in China have reported that the world is full of fakes and academic imposters. In our own country, the U.S. Army has identified more than 200 soldiers on the SRU "graduate" list; these individuals are being investigated to determine their intent in using fraudulent credentials. The Army is revamping its human resources command to better detect fake academic credentials.

Other SRU "graduates" exposed were ten Georgia school teachers; one community college president; 76 Chrysler factory employees; two chiefs of police; one police dog; and 14 New York firemen; these are just a few of the SRU graduates who have been exposed publicly. One Deputy U.S. Marshall was charged for having used his SRU diploma to obtain a promotion and salary increase.

### University Degree Program

Except in the case of SRU, no federal agency or department has made a concerted effort to tackle the problem of DMs. In 2002, the Federal Trade Commission brought federal civil action against what has been called the "University Degree Program" (UDP), which began operating in 1998 and had at least 22 purported colleges and universities throughout Europe (approximately 30 clones later appeared). UDP established Web sites for each of its colleges and universities as well as for its own accrediting/recognition entities. All of this was overseen by several Americans from Brooklyn, New York (Yad Abraham and others) doing business as University Systems, Wheelie International Limited, and Mountain View Systems through telemarketing offices ("boiler rooms") located in Jerusalem, Israel, and Bucharest, Romania.

UDP operators perfected the art of spam: several companies sent millions of spam e-mails daily; interested buyers called various telephone message drops located throughout the United States. These messages ("Please leave your name, day and night telephone numbers, and type of degree desired") would be retrieved by one of the "registrars" located in a "boiler room." The "prospective student" subsequently would receive a call from the registrar, who started the sales pitch at $2,400, after which a $500 instant scholarship was offered. This was the point at which the real bargaining would begin.

The UDP case should prove quite embarrassing to federal law enforcement. UDP was operated with impunity, with no concern for federal law enforcement. As a result of their millions of spam e-mails, everyone—including individuals on Capitol Hill and in federal law enforcement—knew of its existence. Nevertheless, no active criminal investigation was launched.

Although UDP was by far the largest DM ever identified, federal law enforcement officials might have reacted differently had it sold its products to buyers in the mid-East instead of primarily to U.S. and Canadian residents. As it was, federal law enforcement did not seem to care about this further example of non-violent white-collar crime. Yet UDP sold more than 450,000 diplomas and transcripts, many in medical majors! Where are these "degree holders" today? Are they your health professionals? UDP gross receipts were more than $435,000,000; UDP's 2003 FTC "disgorgement" for its fake International Drivers Permit scam was a mere $57,000. The overwhelming disinterest of federal law enforcement in prosecuting fraudulent education initiatives is the primary reason we continue to have the DM, AM, and CD&T problem. We applaud the states of Oregon and North Dakota for their passage of new legislation outlawing AMs and hope other states follow their example.

Closer to home, academic fraud at Touro College and at MIT cast a black eye on legitimate higher education, the value of academic credentials, and, certainly, on the honor of registrar's office personnel. These instances vividly demonstrate why all academic credentials—of students as well as staff—must be verified. Above all, be alert to the possibility of fraud at your own institution.

## TRENDS

The federal government likely will continue to be reactive rather than proactive about investigating and prosecuting academic fraud. We appear to be on a downhill cycle in terms of public interest: a school teacher, scientist, minister or even a government employee exposed in the press—perhaps even some local public outrage—but no government action. Apart from local media coverage, we have no reason to expect a concerted national effort to eradicate DMs, AMs, and CD&T operations.

We foresee a progression toward more state oversight regarding DMs: a steady movement by states toward greater restrictions on the award and use of degrees from unaccredited institutions. We hope for groundbreaking state regulation—possibly culminating in federal legislation—regarding both credential evaluators and accrediting entities.

The operators of criminal academic enterprises certainly will use increasingly sophisticated Web sites, sales techniques, production methods, and products, continuing all the while to hide their true origin and location and to project a more international image. As observed with regard to the St. Regis operation, we believe these operators will continue to establish their own accrediting entities as part of their effort to give the illusion of legitimate accreditation and to align themselves with foreign governments, thereby providing the further—and perhaps more dangerous—illusion of "government approval" and legitimacy.

This article provides but a brief introduction to the landscape of fraudulent academic credentials, a billion-dollar growth industry with no end in sight. Fraudulent academic credentials constitute a blight on legitimate, hard-earned academic credentials. Should we fail to put a stop to this—and quickly—then real credentials will continue to lose value.

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## About the Author

**ALLEN EZELL** is a retired FBI Agent, an AACRAO presenter for the past 25 years, co-author of *Degree Mills* with Dr. John Bear, and author of AACRAO publications, *Accreditation Mills* and *Counterfeit Diplomas and Transcripts.*

Commentary

# Do Not 'Fear' a Strong Registrar

By Chuck Hurley

As a student at the University of Notre Dame, I resided in Zahm Hall. Intramural athletic events were a significant part of our Hall identity. During one intramural football contest, an opponent shouted, "Zahm is full of fear!" Later, a metamorphosis occurred and our unofficial dormitory nickname was born: the "Zahm Fear." As with many collegiate monikers such as Hoosiers or Huskers, the name borne out of humiliation actually became a rallying cry.

Fear is an interesting word. Especially, when contemplating the contemporary collegiate registrar. The registrar profession seemed to diverge over the last decade. There appears now to be two categories. One is a benevolent person who honors traditional registrar standards, yet does little to grow the profession. The second is an ambassador of data.

The first individual often fails to make an important connection. The connection that high quality e-services and data mining abilities do improve student-faculty satisfaction. The perception of how welcoming our institutions are does correlate to constituent satisfaction. Regretfully, how such student data is mined and transmitted is black box magic. Viewing solely record keeping, FERPA and transcripts as core registrar functions presents an incomplete view of the contemporary job. Disappointedly, a noteworthy percentage of our profession still views technology as a distinctly non-registrar activity.

The fear of information technology is a problem for the registrar profession.

There is a solution. It is the path taken by many successful registrars. The path is to become an ambassador of data. One who collaboratively brings forward the fruit of student-faculty data thanks to a combined knowledge of records and information technology. These are people of strength who possess a comprehensive view of what it means to be a registrar.

The contemporary successful registrar is a strong registrar. Fear of information technology is illogical to such an individual. Rather, technology is an integral part of a well balanced registrar skill set. Good registrars have realized an important fact: to know the data is not enough. Registrars must be able to mine and present data without constantly relying on IT staff to cover any knowledge gap.

There should not be a conflict over who we are as registrars.

The traditional duty of the registrar has been "to assure the accuracy and integrity of the student's record." However, we have turned a corner in the profession, and the time has come to append our traditional definition. "The duty of the registrar is to assure the accuracy and integrity

of the student's record and to maintain jurisdiction over the sphere of technology containing student and faculty data."

I do not solely want the definition changed only in editorials and periodicals. I want the definition changed in every AACRAO publication, professional Web site, and most importantly people's hearts. I want the definition to become a rallying cry.

The additional phrase allows for the profession's authority to be maintained even while technology changes in the future. The registrar is an academic office with medieval roots. We do a dishonor to the nearly 700 years of registrars who have preceded us when we fail to enhance the profession.

The position is one of the top academic offices held at institutions. By clearly stating the registrar profession has license to control the transmission of student and faculty data makes any fear of technology irrelevant. Yes, some may elect to ignore such a principle. However, such an individual would be out of compliance with a foundational tenet of the profession. Part of the issue registrars face today is some in the profession believe that the registrar is not the controlling authority for the transmission of their own data. Regretfully, some are even willing to shirk their data steward responsibilities in favor of handing them off to IT staff.

Please to do not get bogged down in transitional topics. The Office of the Registrar has consistently been influx almost from the beginning. From the storage of parchment records in trunks in the 1300s, to unifying records in ledger books, to official files, then official records, one-stop organizations, enrollment management models and technology challenges, the registrar has consistently had to adjust.

Registrars need to look at the profession on a macro level.

Something has changed about the registrar profession much greater than any of the aforementioned hot topics of a particular point in history. What has changed? Registrars as a profession seem confused as to the limits of their authority over a record. Throughout much of history, the campus boarder is where the registrar's record authority ended. However, we have become far less internally driven organizations and much more external focused on services.

The definition of a registrar's duties must reflect that external focus. If the campus network drops a student's record, who is in charge? The I.T. department? What if the student record is electronically compromised in an off-campus network? Technology has blurred that authoritative line for registrars. Right now, we are faced with a wonderful opportunity. Registrars have the opportunity to mature the profession by stepping into the transmission vacuum as a leader.

I would like to see registrars start fighting much harder for our profession. We could use a few more folks championing our profession and proclaiming the success stories of registrars. As a group, registrars tend to be quite humble servant-leaders. Much of that comes from the type of work and people we are.

We need to begin tooting our own horn a little louder. Innovation is issuing a challenge to the registrar profession. Fear has pushed too many in the profession to the background of higher education. The registrar profession has a strong and influential history. The time has arrived for the present occupiers of our 700 year strong office to move the profession onward and upward once again.

## About the Author

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# The Not So Usual Suspects

By Chuck Hurley

*Editor's Note: A version of this article appeared in an April 2009 issue of Inside Higher Ed: www.insidehighered.com/advice/2009/04/15/hurley*

A number of higher education institutions are aggressively recruiting professionals from outside academia. The challenge for managers is to provide the new staff members basic knowledge of what registrars and enrollment managers really "do." Although very talented, many of the professionals from outside academia have little knowledge about the nature, culture and structure of higher education.

Registrar and enrollment management positions have steadily been increasing in complexity. As expectations have risen, a number of our institutions in higher education have looked to the outside world's talent pool to assertively draft qualified staff. Many of these professionals possess substantial corporate careers, excellent aptitude for the job at hand, and are generally wonderful additions to our colleges and universities. The test we often face as managers is to impart to these new staff members foundational knowledge of our vocation.

One of the first career counseling issues we face with new staff is to help them comprehend our work as a vocation. Many people who work in higher education still utilize the word "vocation" instead of "job." They correctly view their responsibilities as having a much more profound impact on the world then a regular "job" would. This is a new line of logic for scores of professionals. Often, being drawn to a vocation is already in their heart. In fact, I have discovered this is the primary reason why so many talented professionals leave the business world and join us in higher education. However, the expression of that vocation is still important for them to visualize and verbalize. Such an expression leads to a far more dedicated and fulfilled staff member.

People new to the profession require specialized training to comprehend exactly who and what the registrar originally was at a university. The short answer is they were faculty members. The registrar's profession is an ancient one that dates back to the medieval university. Medieval registrars were regarded as an academic officer from the faculty ranks who proclaimed messages, maintained records and executed the mandates of the university authorities. The raison d'être for the registrar is a critical comprehension for new staff. As collegiate enrollments grew in the nineteenth century, a swift change came to the registrar profession. By 1880, ten percent of the institutions of higher learning had full-time registrars, 42 percent by 1900, 76 percent by 1910, and over 90 percent by 1920. If staff grasp how the profession originated, they

have a much better opportunity to cultivate services and grown their career.

Training for such staff often has more to do with the function and philosophy of a college or university on the whole, rather than the specific operational mechanics of a duty. Most professional staff are equipped to quickly deal with the operational challenges in an efficient manner. Often, it is the nature, culture and structure of higher education that perplexes them.

From early in a professional's career, there is an important floor of expectations to erect. The culture of higher education is very different from the corporate world. I came from a corporate background to work at a university. That first year was quite a learning experience. When I was working in the corporate world, money was the sole decision-making instrument. Professionals coming from the corporate world have lived within an apparatus where the only question to ask was, "Does this increase revenue?" Treating fellow employees or subordinates with disrespect was simply not a concern in the corporate world.

In higher education, most folks have little tolerance for treating people with disrespect. Whereas in private industry it is perfectly alright to dress a person down in public on multiple occasions, higher education has a different set of standards. One really must pick and choose very precise times to fight public battles. Staff that do not hold the respect of their peers often have a challenging time succeeding. Actually, on balance this is one of the most attractive aspects of higher education to the outside professional. They are sick of being treated poorly, are looking for a new challenge, and wish to strive for the internal fulfillment that a successful vocation can bring.

Mobility can be a great marketing tool for attracting new professionals into the registrar and enrollment management profession. Even during our challenging economy, one can click on the AACRAO jobs page and find numerous openings in the field of enrollment management. If you work at a corporation, mobility is quite limited. The accounting department only wants CPAs, marketing wants staff who have worked for advertising firms, IT departments only want folks with at least three Final Fantasy posters and a Wookie costume.

Such constraints on mobility are not quite so limited at a college or university. Most institutions are like mini cities unto themselves. Jobs regularly go to internal candidates first. This means a person can switch positions, often without uprooting their entire life and family.

Attrition can be what a manager makes of it. In contemporary society, people are going to hold many positions in their lifetime. I am not looking for someone who just wants to plop down into a comfortable job for the next 30 years. I want a go-getter. A person who is going to work their tail off, wants to earn an advanced degree and move up the institutional ladder. That type of person is going to be an incredibly productive staff member. If I can just hold onto that individual for two or three years, I consider it a success. Then, I then can go out and hire a new person just as driven.

One way to reduce attrition is to hire staff from outside academia with ties to the institution. Too often we look at our graduating seniors and alumni and say, "Why would they want to work here?" Most of these former students adore their alma mater. They would do anything to support their school, including take a position at a lower income from what they might earn in the corporate world. Several of the alumni who have joined our Office of the Registrar from the private sector report vastly increased job satisfaction. This allows for a dramatic increase in productivity and efficiency for the institution, and a decrease in attrition.

An attrition issue most institutions face with all staff members is salary. Higher education simply cannot pay what the corporate world offers. In the private sector, money is the penultimate status symbol and reason for staying with a company. Higher education pays fairly, but rarely can match the glamour of high salaries and bonuses available from major corporations. In my experience, registrars and enrollment managers need to accentuate the excellent benefits that higher education positions typically possess. For example, our health care benefits often vastly exceed those of private corporations. Moreover, the educational benefit of taking classes at no cost or a drastically reduced cost is a major attraction. Finally, the controlled stress level of working in higher education means your odds of living a longer life significantly increase.

The point at which staff from outside academia integrate themselves with a registrar's office varies by individual. Integration to the profession typically occurs when these individuals start making strategic decisions. Such decisions are often well thought out and nuanced at an

important level. Rather than thinking solely in terms of revenue or self promotion, the staff realign their thought process to scholarship, advising, graduation rate and student-faculty satisfaction.

We now are in the educational post-modern era. New technology and financial pressures are pushing us forward. However, technologies and finances still need to be balanced with our traditional duties. Hiring well qualified staff from outside academia is an excellent way to tackle many of the contemporary issues we face in higher education.

## About the Author

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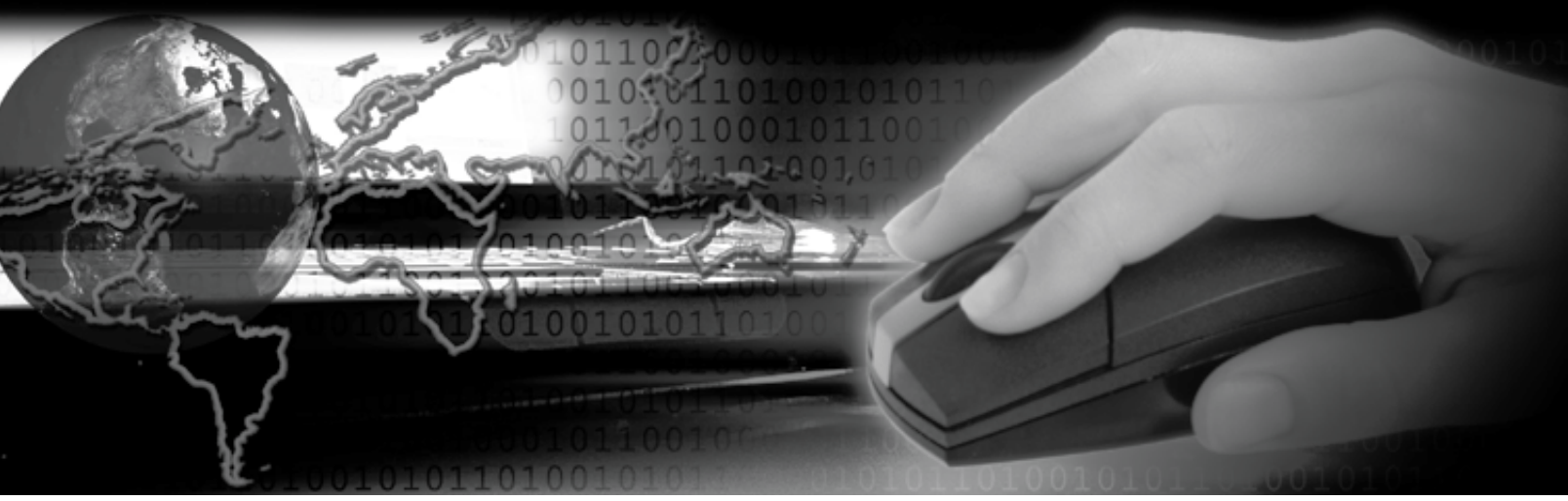

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Commentary

# One-and-Done: An Academic Tragedy in Three Acts

By Jerome C. Weber

## ACT I

An unusually talented male basketball player is discovered and reported on by one of a number of scouting services. While this used to be a relatively common occurrence for high school students entering their junior and senior years, the practice has steadily gravitated downward to the point that junior high school students now are regularly reported on and tracked. For those students who are seen as possessing the potential to play ultimately in the National Basketball Association (NBA), these reports are a siren's song to unscrupulous agents who see themselves as negotiating lucrative contracts when these thirteen-year-olds eventually enter the NBA. This downward drift was characterized in a recent *USA Today* article as "...worries over the youth game, which has long been considered a cesspool as agents and runners flush with cash set out to secure future clients—potential NBA gold mines" (Wieberg and Garcia 2009). The problem is so widely recognized that the NCAA has recognized seventh- and eighth-graders as college prospects so it can cover them in its rules.

What creates the "one-and-done" scenario is the NBA rule that prohibits a player from graduating from high school and going directly to the NBA. The league's obviously cynical and self-interested rule prohibits a prospect from signing to play before at least one year has elapsed since his high school class has graduated. As a result, the athlete with NBA potential often chooses to engage in what is referred to as "one-and-done," the practice in which the player signs with a college or university and plays one year of college basketball before departing from the college ranks and moving to the pros: the destination that has been his obvious goal for many years. In this scenario the potential agent is presented—and presents himself—as an "adviser" who can help choose a college that will serve the student's needs (often meaning in fact one that is willing to accept a student who may be woefully unprepared to meet the demands of college-level study and that understands that the coming year is to be spent preparing not for a college degree but rather for the NBA).

## ACT II

Sometimes the player will openly declare his intention to spend only one year playing college basketball. There isn't even a nod in the direction of earning a degree, choosing courses with an eye toward academic interests, or participating in any aspect of the college—with the obvious exception of its athletic program. It is worth noting that NCAA regulations require a student to pass at least six hours (*i.e.*, any two courses) in his first (fall) semester in order to be eligible to continue to participate in his sec-

ond (spring) semester. Thus, a student with no academic interest and little academic preparation for the demands of college-level work can enroll in four courses in the fall, pass only two of those courses, and continue the charade of being a "student-athlete." For an athletic department whose staff know which faculty members on campus are enamored of athletics and which courses present minimal academic demands, finding two courses a student can pass is not much of a problem—particularly since two grades of "D" suffice to meet this requirement.

In his second semester, knowing that his intention is to go to the NBA and knowing that all the pros care about is his athletic performance, our hero spends all of his time and energy focused on practicing and playing basketball. A student in this situation doesn't even need to pretend to be concerned with academics. Rather, he can enroll in order to maintain his eligibility to play and then not even bother to attend classes, knowing that he won't be back after his first year. Because freshmen are immediately eligible to play, the first year becomes an opportunity for the prospect to demonstrate his skills on the court. Media exposure from moving his team to a berth in the NCAA's post-season tournament (known quite appropriately as "March Madness") affords him a showcase for his talent. Meanwhile, the agent, who has been prohibited by NCAA regulations from signing a formal contract with the student, continues to hover, to advise—in short, to do whatever is possible to ensure that he and he alone will reap the benefits of serving as the formal agent when the athlete declares his intention to pursue a career in professional basketball.

## ACT III

By the end of freshman year, the press has had the opportunity to chronicle every aspect of our student athlete's exploits on the basketball court. For the athlete who previously announced his intention to be "one and done," the announcement to enter the draft is a foregone conclusion. For the athlete who has made no such announcement—and who may or may not have declared his intent to consider whether to return to school or enter the draft, the lure of instant riches, his own needs and possibly those of his family, the ability to "move to the next level," the opportunity to test himself against the best in the world, and the possibility of sustaining an injury that could eliminate the long-anticipated payday combine to almost guarantee that he will decide to pursue a career as a professional athlete. Players who leave for the pros having failed to complete their final semester's work leave their institutions with a loss of scholarships. What also often happens is that scandal and cynicism dog the institution in the wake of the athlete's departure. For example, O.J. Mayo allegedly accepted gifts and cash from an agent's associate before attending the University of Southern California for one year; Derrick Rose allegedly engaged in academic fraud in order to gain admission to the University of Memphis. An obvious question, of course, is whether the coach had any knowledge of these circumstances. O.J. Mayo's coach resigned; Derrick Rose's coach moved from Memphis to another prominent basketball institution.

### Whose Rule Is It?

As stated previously, it is a National Basketball Association regulation that prohibits a player from going directly from high school to the pros. David Stern, NBA Commissioner, admits that the league likes to see potential players have an additional year of competition prior to entering league play. Essentially, the primary reason for the regulation is that the NBA can use college basketball as its minor league. With an additional year during which to observe prospects' growth and play, the league can make better judgments as to who is likely to succeed as a professional. For the sake of comparison, think of the high school graduate who is talented both in athletics and in other fields of endeavor. The National Football League requires players to be in college for three years before they can enter the draft. This allows a student athlete to make reasonable progress toward the goal of a college degree as well as to participate in the life of the institution. Within this three-year period, the student athlete must declare a major, maintain eligibility, and demonstrate progress toward a degree. (Of course, some unscrupulous institutions manage to manipulate unprepared students with little or no interest in academics even for this extended period, but three years is a far cry from the NBA's "one-and-done.") In contrast, Major League Baseball allows an athlete to be drafted directly out of high school; the National Hockey League organizes competitive leagues that allow high school-age players to move toward their goal of playing professionally. Apart from the world of profes-

sional athletics, talented individuals can translate their talent into professional status and income without regard to their age: A supremely talented musician, artist, or actor can gain professional status based solely on his abilities; a basketball player is denied this opportunity until he has completed one year of college.

### Why Is The Rule Allowed?

Isn't this an obvious violation of the federal prohibition against discrimination on the basis of age? Unfortunately, the law is written in such a way as to prevent discrimination against older—but not younger—persons. Logic would seem to dictate that perhaps this constitutes illegal restraint of trade: If an individual's talent qualifies her to play in the New York Philharmonic at age seventeen, why shouldn't a young man's talent qualify him to play in the NBA? Among the players who made the leap from high school to the pros are Kobe Bryant and LeBron James, the NBA's two brightest stars; these men are outstanding examples of players who moved to the pros before the NBA issued the current rule.

The answer to the legal question is that the NBA is a private organization that has the latitude to make rules that it considers to be in its best interests (regardless of whether those rules seem arbitrary). The other factor is that a year in the national spotlight makes a potential NBA player better known and more marketable; again, this benefit accrues to the NBA, and perhaps less so to the player and/or the college for which he plays. David Stern says, "This is a business decision by the NBA. We like to see our players in competition after high school" (Garcia 2009). Jeff Capel, men's basketball coach at the University of Oklahoma, speaks for many college coaches when he says, "Our sport is so different because you don't deal with this in any other sport. It puts us in conflict with educators and professors at the university" (Shinn 2009).

Abuse of student athletes and colleges by the NBA has reached the point where Representative Steve Cohen of Tennessee has requested that the league repeal the age minimum in its next labor contract. He asserts that the rule robs players of their right to earn a living. Utah Senator Orrin Hatch, in urging Congress to address the NCAA's Bowl Championship Series mechanism for determining a national college football champion, says, "The Sherman Antitrust Act prohibits contracts, combinations, or conspiracies designed to reduce competition. I don't think a more accurate description of what the BCS does exists" (Hatch 2009). Although Senator Hatch's focus is football and the BCS, the same observation might be made in regard to the NBA's regulation prohibiting students from advancing directly from high school to the NBA. Of course, whenever politics is injected into a discussion of this type, it's helpful to think about motivation: It is possible that Representative Cohen's interest in the University of Memphis fuels his outrage regarding the rule; similarly, it is possible that Senator Hatch's interest in the University of Utah *not* being invited to a BCS game fuels his outrage regarding the BCS system. However, motivations that are less than totally pure do not minimize the importance of the questions that are being asked.

### What Alternatives Exist?

Of course, the requirement that professional basketball prospects spend one year in college offers a number of benefits. For example, for a student with even limited academic interests, it can be argued that firsthand experience of college is inherently positive. Being in classes with other students, being made aware of new ideas, learning about other people's perspectives, and being exposed to people other than those with whom one grew up all are potentially positive experiences. Yet being steered to an institution whose cynicism matches that of the student's "adviser and friend" amounts to being treated as a hired gun, being exploited as a commodity, and being cheated of the positive aspects of being on a college campus. Worse, as stories of recruiting scandals emerge and as concern over the costs and benefits of a college education escalate, any process that communicates a lack of concern for the individual and that emphasizes short-term gain at the expense of long-term commitment makes colleges more and more vulnerable to the charge that they are willing to trade at least some of their integrity for visibility in the national sports pages.

Nevertheless, a new alternative is emerging. More than one potential "one-and-done" player has expressed the desire to play professional basketball in a European league. If the point of requiring prospects to spend a year playing college basketball is to provide the opportunity for outstanding competition, it can be argued that doing so in a professional league is a better alternative than pretending to be a college student while honing one's basketball skills.

# *Resources* for International Admissions

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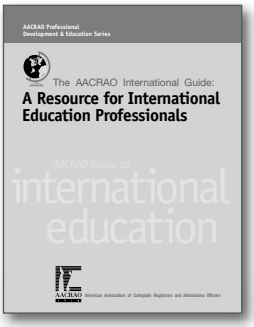
AACRAO's International Education Services (IES) serves as a resource center for matters on international education and exchange. All of the evaluators in IES have worked for a number of years at institutions evaluating foreign educational credentials for admission purposes. Our staff of professionals has evaluated thousands of foreign educational credentials, and has an average of 20 years of previous evaluation experience before joining AACRAO, with no staff member having less than seven years of experience. Our extensive archives, built up over 35 years, enable AACRAO to accurately research any educational credential in great depth. Historically, this service started with the AACRAO-US Agency for International Development (US-AID) Cooperative Agreement that began in the mid-1960s.

The Foreign Education Credential Service provides evaluations of educational credentials from all countries of the world, assuring consistent assessment of the qualifications of those persons educated outside the United States. The Foreign Education Credential Service is trusted in the field, and our evaluation reports are designed to help any reader to understand foreign academic credentials.

If you are looking for an easily accessible up-to-date electronic resource on foreign educational systems, the AACRAO *Electronic Database for Global Education* (EDGE) provides a wealth of information for each country profile in a convenient and consistent form. EDGE is a valuable and trusted tool for both novice and experienced international admissions personnel. The database is being expanded regularly and updated as educational systems change. For more information and to subscribe online visit aacraoedge.aacrao.org/register.

Ⓐ **Item #9019**




Ⓑ **Item #0103**

Ⓒ **Item #9018**

Ⓓ **Item #9026**

Ⓔ **Item #6538**

### Ⓐ FOREIGN EDUCATIONAL CREDENTIALS REQUIRED

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**Item #9019** $100 nonmembers | $75 members (2003)

### Ⓑ THE AACRAO INTERNATIONAL GUIDE: A RESOURCE FOR INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION PROFESSIONALS

The AACRAO International Guide is your complete source for information on international education, comprising such core issues as policy, recruitment, technology, English proficiency, student visas and credential evaluation. As a critical part of any international reference library, it also provides a thorough look at study abroad program development and specific roles and issues for community colleges.

**Item #0103** $80 nonmembers | $60 members (2001)

### Ⓒ THE AACRAO INTERNATIONAL GRADUATE ADMISSIONS GUIDE

A companion to The AACRAO International Guide: A Resource for International Educational Professionals, this volume provides a hands-on approach to enable you to determine the admissibility of applicants from abroad to your graduate degree and non-degree programs. A critical addition to any international educational library.

**Item #9018** $75 nonmember | $50 members (2003)

### Ⓓ AUSTRALIA: EDUCATION AND TRAINING

A guide for United States admissions officers to the structure and content of the educational system of Australia, including descriptions of the state and territorial public school systems. Also includes a formal set of comparability and placement recommendations based upon the author's research.

**Item #9026** $95 nonmembers | $70 members (2004)

### Ⓔ BRAZIL

A study of the structure and content of the educational system of Brazil, including extensive descriptions of undergraduate and technical programs. Also includes specific regional and country-wide statistics, and the author's recommendations on the evaluation of foreign educational credentials.

**Item #6538** $85 nonmembers | $60 members (2004)

### Ⓕ THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

A study of the educational system of the People's Republic of China, from preschool to higher education. Includes information on entrance examinations, vocational education, and a thorough guide to the academic placement of students in educational institutions in the United States.

**Item #6536** $85 nonmembers | $60 members (2000)

### INDIA

A study of the educational system of India, including the different types of universities, computer and management education, and a detailed list of professional associations in India. Also includes guidelines to the academic placement of students in educational institutions in the United States.

**Item #5342** $85 nonmembers | $60 members (1998)

### Ⓖ KYRGYZSTAN

The Educational System of Kyrgyzstan describes the current educational structure of Kyrgyzstan and serves as a guide to the academic placement of students in educational institutions in the United States. This monograph contains information on both secondary and higher education, grading scales and a directory of post-secondary institutions in Kyrgyzstan. It also covers transitional issues, fraud and academic corruption.

**Item #9020** $45 nonmembers | $30 members (2003)

### Ⓗ PHILIPPINES

A study of the educational system of the Philippines from basic to higher education, with information on academic and vocational degrees, and non-traditional education, including Islamic education. Serves as a valuable guide to the academic placement of students in educational institutions in the United States, with information on accrediting agencies and professional education associations in the Philippines.

**Item #6537** $85 nonmembers | $60 members (2001)

### ROMANIA

A study of the educational system of Romania. Includes an extensive list of sample diplomas, and detailed guidelines for admissions officers in the academic placement of students in educational institutions in the United States.

**Item #5339** $75 nonmembers | $50 members (1998)

### TAIWAN

An extensive guide to the structure and content of the educational system of Taiwan, from kindergarten through graduate and professional studies. Includes detailed information about schools recognized and not recognized by the Ministry of Education, a vital guide for any admissions officer considering incoming students from Taiwan.

**Item #6539** $95 nonmembers | $70 members (2004)

### Ⓘ THAILAND

A study of the educational system of Thailand and guide to the academic placement of students in educational institutions in the United States. Covers preschool education onwards, with a particular emphasis on higher education studies, including degrees and teaching methods. Includes information about teacher training, technical and vocational educational and health studies.

**Item #5341** $75 nonmembers | $50 members (1998)

### Ⓙ UNITED KINGDOM

Offers guidance on the structure and content of the United Kingdom's education system. The five-chapter guide includes a historical look at major legislative and policy changes affecting the system as a whole, and offers details on the country's Further Education, Secondary Education, and Professional Qualifications frameworks. Additionally, helpful reference information can be found in the book's five appendices, including: a key to system-related acronyms; listings of the UK's higher education institutions and further education colleges; details on the National Qualifications Framework; and a comprehensive listing of professional bodies and learned societies.

**Item #9027** $95 nonmembers | $70 members (2006)


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Ⓕ **Item #6536**

Ⓖ **Item #9020**

Ⓗ **Item #6537**

Ⓘ **Item #5341**

Ⓙ **Item #9027**

Of course, this alternative has aroused concerns that the athlete who exercises this option is moving too quickly into a professional league and forfeiting some portion of his growth process. On the other hand, one could argue that moving from high school to a professional basketball league provides better competition and removes the burden of pretending to be a college student athlete, particularly when the student himself and everyone watching him knows the lack of validity of that descriptor.

Bob Knight, the highly controversial former basketball coach of Indiana and Texas Tech Universities, describes "one-and-done" as the worst situation in college sports. His recommended solution is to have teams participating in the NCAA post-season basketball tournament submit rosters showing second-semester players' classes, attendance to the time of the tournament, and grade-point averages. He also recommends that the NCAA place such severe penalties on institutions that engage in "one and done" that recruitment of these players would be discouraged. As this would require the NCAA to address the situation in a manner that potentially would threaten its financial interests, the possibility of it taking such action does not seem likely.

### What About the NCAA?

In discussing the problems associated with "one and done," many observers question the role of the NCAA. In this instance, the NCAA is essentially an observer (if a self-interested one). The regulation that prohibits a high school graduate from going directly to the NBA is a regulation of the NBA itself; the NCAA thus can claim that it has no influence and no ability to influence the rule as it is currently written. Nevertheless, the NCAA *does* have an interest in using one-and-done players to showcase a number of college basketball programs and, most important, to showcase the NCAA post-season basketball tournament. Remember that the multi-billion dollar contract between the NCAA and CBS that televises March Madness is the largest single source of revenue for the NCAA. NCAA President Myles Brand has stated that while his organization has no influence on the rule, he believes it is in the interest of high school students to use college basketball as the route to the NBA. Doing so encourages students to concentrate more fully on academics than if they were to go directly from high school to the NBA. Such reasoning smacks of self-interest dressed up as academic concern. Given the minimal requirements for staying eligible to play and prepare for the NBA, the suggestion that one year of college is in the best interest of the student simply doesn't stand the test of logic.

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# Millennials Invading: Building Training for Today's Admissions Counselors

By W. Kent Barnds

A few years ago, while talking to my admissions staff at Augustana College, I realized that the antiquated way in which our industry provides training for our staff members no longer serves the needs of our profession. In the wake of staff meeting discussions of duties for the coming weeks, I was startled by the differences in approaches by the generations of employees. For example, if the week's priorities included personal calls to prospects, the baby boomers would leave staff meetings thinking, "I don't care how late I have to stay. I am personally going to make all of those calls this week." Gen X admissions counselors seemed to wonder, "When are my student workers going to be in this week so they can make the calls he is requiring?" Millennial counselors seemed to think, "He can't mean me because he didn't mention just me. And even if he did—gross!—students don't want a telephone call!"

As chief admissions officer at two small colleges, I have been responsible, in part, for ensuring that entry-level admissions counselors are trained properly. I have learned through trial and error, and I have adapted my methods to be increasingly sensitive to the learning curve of new employees. My thoughts about training new admissions counselors changed considerably as a new generation—Millennials—entered the workplace.

When I began my career in admissions in the early 1990s, much of the emphasis of training was on "travel tips," making friends on the road, and learning "to fly a desk." Too many admissions offices continue to use outdated training methods—methods I experienced when I began my career—rather than providing the personal attention and individualized training Millennials are accustomed to receiving. Counter to this generation's desires or learning styles, many admissions offices either neglect formal training altogether or assume that a good hire will readily acquire the skills necessary for success.

Because it is common practice to hire admissions counselors with little or no previous experience, training is critically important. The pace of admissions work is fast, and admissions staffs typically are small in numbers; new counselors therefore must be trained immediately to assume significant responsibilities, including relationship building, using technology effectively, interviewing prospective students, conducting information sessions, reviewing applications, and ensuring productive high school visits with guidance counselors and prospective students.

The typical new admissions counselor is an enthusiastic, likable, capable, recent college graduate entering the professional job market for the first time. Although the role

of an admissions counselor varies by institution, general responsibilities include visiting high schools; representing the institution at college fairs; conducting information sessions for campus visitors; developing relationships with prospective students, parents, high schools, and college counselors; interviewing prospective students; communicating with families by telephone and e-mail; and providing follow-up information for various audiences. In essence, we expect the counselor to *become* the college.

This is an enormous responsibility for a newly minted college graduate. Seldom does a new employee possess the traits necessary to "be" the college. Further, it is rare that sufficient thought has gone into the process by which existing staff are to train a new counselor to be successful. Often, admissions leaders rely on old (outdated) methods and/or training. A fresh look at and a new focus on training are necessary.

## THE WHOS AND WHATS OF TRAINING MILLENNIAL ADMISSIONS PROFESSIONALS

To develop a training program for new admissions counselors, it is important to answer three questions: Who is being trained? What methods should be used to train new staff? Who will be involved in delivering the training? The answers to these questions influence the development of a training program and suggest a specific approach for new admissions counselors—particularly Millennials.

We should begin by describing the attributes of a generation unlike any other. Millennials are best described as confident, hopeful, goal and achievement oriented, civic-minded, inclusive, and connected (Gimbel 2007). Because they believe in balancing their work and personal lives, and because their true loyalty lies with their personal lives rather than with their jobs, new Millennial employees may fail to see the appeal of traditional admissions activities and late nights. Millennials are the first generation to have been taught experientially and with teamwork as a core component of the learning experience. Technology has been infused throughout their lives, and their learning preferences mirror a "bit and byte" approach: structure and direction are of paramount importance (Raines 2002).

Given these generational differences, a training program must be tailored to match Millennial learning styles and conventions. It is unrealistic to expect Millennials to respond to the type of training provided two, five, or ten years ago. Verret (2000) suggests that success in training and developing Millennials should include letting them know that what they do matters; telling the truth; explaining why you are asking them to do something; learning their language; being on the lookout for opportunities to reward them; praising them in public; making the workplace fun; modeling behavior; and giving them the tools to do the job. In today's admissions offices, most (if not all) of these suggestions are foreign; but if today's new admissions professionals are to be well trained—and retained—then they must be adopted as standard practice.

Identifying the correct trainer is critical to developing a re-focused training program. Those individuals having the most direct knowledge of specific content areas should be responsible for training new admissions professionals. For example, those responsible for data management should train a new employee on that subject while those who cast vision and chart direction should provide training on those subjects. It is also a good idea to enroll new staff members in national programs specifically designed to orient entry-level admissions counselors to the admissions profession; such programs provide valuable external perspective on roles and responsibilities. All of these approaches align with the learning preferences of Millennials, who want to be valued and informed.

Like many professions, admissions is guided by industry principles. Discussion of profession-specific ethics is an important part of training. The National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) "Statement of Principles and Good Practices (SPGP)" should be given to counselors prior to their first day of work. The statement details the professional expectations of admissions counselors. For Millenials, emphasizing professional ethics confirms the value of their job: what they do matters.

On the new employee's first day of work, the director of admissions should discuss key elements of the document and probe for understanding of its principles. Because review of a policy statement may incite both impatience and distaste in the Millennial (Raines 2002), the discussion should follow a format that appeals to the trainees rather than the trainer. To further complement their learning preferences, Millennials should be presented with opportunities to practice related interactions.

In addition to reviewing standard college policies—*i.e.*, those relating to vacation, sick time, paid holidays, etc.—

human resource professionals should discuss policies related to privacy and personal use of computers, as well as federally mandated policies like the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Every new employee should participate in a FERPA training session and sign a document stating that he or she understands FERPA; the institution must keep this statement on file. Because Millennials tend to be less comfortable than previous generations with concepts such as accountability and personal responsibility, human resources professionals must work harder to ensure that new employees understand the implications of noncompliance with institutional policies.

## TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Entry-level counselors must begin contributing as quickly as possible. Thus, training and development goals must be attained along a short timeline. However, because of the important responsibilities given to entry-level counselors, a successful training program also must build knowledge that counselors may not need to use for some time.

Any training program for admissions counselors must emphasize information and skills the counselor will use immediately, *e.g.*, how to interview; how to conduct information sessions; how to use technology to communicate, etc.; it also must provide more comprehensive and developmental information, *e.g.*, about the college's departments and strategic plan, faculty and staff meetings, and the student selection process.

In addition, training programs must emphasize relationship development, proactive prospect management, proper use of technology, and professionalism. These are the emerging competencies of a successful admissions officer, and too often, they are left to chance rather than being developed through intentional training. In the case of Millennials, *all* are topics that need to be emphasized during training.

Another element of effective training is thorough discussion of the essential responsibilities of the position. Although it is common practice to discuss such responsibilities during the interview and when offering a candidate a position, it is imperative to clearly state expectations for performance and to reiterate these points during training. Discussion and review of the job description should facilitate this outcome, especially as Millennials often are overconfident (despite their lack of experience) and unlikely to ask questions.

Any newly hired counselor should be required to meet individually with each staff member to learn his or her specific responsibilities. Ideally, these meetings would be guided by a previously developed list of questions rather than undirected conversation. It is critical that performance appraisals, expectations for success, and traditional advancement pathways be discussed. Although this aspect of training seems basic, it is important to ensure that a counselor understands her responsibilities, how performance will be assessed, and timelines for promotions. This part of training is more important than ever as it will help Millennials address any of their own unrealistic expectations and desires for immediate advancement.

### Millennial Training Dos and Don'ts

***Do...***

- Customize the content for their learning preferences.
- Make clear the expectations you have for their performance.
- Provide specific examples of success for each area of responsibility.
- Include content experts in the training program.
- Consider partnering instead of mentoring.
- Allow new professionals to shadow seasoned recruiters.
- Review ethics and professional policies, and probe for understanding.
- Consider implementing team projects rather than individual work.

***Don't...***

- Take for granted that they have the baseline of knowledge of past hires.
- Assume that they understand how career advancement looks or works at your institution.
- Forget the importance of ongoing training.
- Presume that confidence equates to understanding.
- Forget to pair constructive criticism with positive reinforcement.

Finally, an experiential element should be included in training developed for Millennial admissions counselors. Verret (2000) states that it is essential to model behavior for Millennials; further, Millennials should be provided a substantial amount of "actual experience." For example, a new counselor should be required to observe as an experienced staff member conducts interviews and information sessions, makes recruitment calls, and audits e-communi-

cation used to develop and strengthen relationships. Subsequent to such observation, the new counselor should perform similar tasks as an experienced staff member observes. Afterwards, because Millennials crave feedback, an experienced staff member should provide both constructive criticism and positive reinforcement.

Another example of experiential training is shadowing an experienced staff member during a high school visitation prior to conducting such a visit independently. Alternatively, pair a new counselor with an experienced staff member to review applications until the new staff member is "normed appropriately." Although we historically have relied on the mentor/mentee relationship, research suggests that partnering a more experienced staff member with a new counselor may be a better solution. At a small college, it may be possible to combine two counselors' prospect management populations into one and assign the two to work as partners in achieving the goals for each area. Recently, the Dutch-based staffing company *Randstad* began pairing older and younger employees in what they refer to as a unit system (*i.e.*, a buddy system) (Herman and Gioia 2008). Early indications are that these "units" are more productive and are a central element in reducing turnover among new employees. At Augustana, we have expanded the unit system to include multi-generational and multi-responsibility teams that we call *micro teams*. The team approach appeals to Millennials, and the broad range of job responsibilities on the teams creates new efficiencies for all team members.

It also is important to schedule specific training and development sessions for new counselors throughout their first year. Such training constitutes sustained development and confirms the importance of ongoing training. It also provides necessary outlets for feedback and reflection. If possible, enroll a new staff member in an outside professional development seminar early in her career to ensure that concepts discussed as part of organizational and office training are affirmed by an outside training program. Following a training schedule that includes immediate and ongoing knowledge development combined with outside training is a formula for success in training new admissions counselors.

Proper planning for and content and timing of training all help ensure success for the new admissions employee. The need to train new counselors quickly makes it essential to develop a program appropriate for its audience and communicating the proper information at appropriate times. Embarking on this path will ensure development of an effective training program for new admissions counselors. Training successes at Augustana College confirm that the professional benefits to and the personal satisfaction of new admissions employees are well worth the investment of time and attention.

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## About the Author


**W. KENT BARNDS** joined Augustana College in Rock Island, IL in the summer of 2005 as Vice President of Enrollment. He oversees the offices of admissions, financial assistance, communication and marketing, and Web services. Prior to joining Augustana, Barnds worked for Elizabethtown College in central Pennsylvania for thirteen years. He received his B.A. from Gettysburg College and his M.S. in management from Regis University.

Barnds has presented annually at the Conference of Lutheran College Enrollment Officers, Illinois Association for College Admissions Counseling (IACAC), and has served as a delegate with the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC). As a consultant for higher education admissions offices, he lectures on a wide variety of higher education topics ranging from college admission interviews and essays to the value of a four-year degree from a private college. He has published articles in Inside Higher Education, *University Business Magazine* and *Next Magazine*, and has served as a higher education enrollment expert to local and national media such as *The Chronicle of Higher Education, Washington Post* and *Wall Street Journal.*

# Managing Enrollment Bandits: Recovering Enrollments Lost During Registration

By Joe F. Head, Susan Blake, and Thomas M. Hughes

Good enrollment managers know that keeping current enrollment must be Job Number One and that maintaining enrollment must be the concern of all campus constituencies. However, a large number of students are "lost" during registration due to closed classes. Lost enrollments are a largely invisible phenomenon that represents frantic and frustrated students attempting to build desired schedules. But when the desired schedule does not prove possible, scores or even hundreds of students may exit the system. As several institutional offices affect and are affected by this issue, no single office may be configured either administratively or operationally to recover "walk-away" registrations. The result is a decidedly negative impact on retention, revenue, headcount, and graduation rates.

Some years ago, Kennesaw State University (KSU) developed a successful means of identifying and tracking "at risk" registrants during the registration period; such students were those who unknowingly "hit" on closed classes. KSU's approach is designed to recover walk-aways by identifying and communicating with affected students and by involving relevant campus constituencies in opening new courses.

The operational philosophy pursed by the KSU Office of Admissions is one of traditional admission, recruitment, and enrollment services functions overlaid with an array of 24x7 electronic, Web-savvy tools (see references). At most institutions, the admissions office is held accountable for application numbers, acceptances, and yield. Questions concerning overall enrollment numbers typically drift toward the admissions office. As at most institutions, enrollment at KSU primarily comprises returning students. While attrition through any means is an enrollment services concern, cases involving students who attempt to enroll but who are turned away because of closed classes are particularly discouraging. Whether closed classes affect new or returning students, these losses have a negative impact on overall enrollment. KSU utilizes a tool called the "Tried Report" to identify students who attempt to register for closed courses. Developed originally for telephone registration, the concept has been adapted for Web registration. Perhaps most important, the university administration enabled this tool to be used as part of an enrollment management program for recovering lost enrollments.

## ADDRESSING THE ISSUE OF LOST ENROLLMENTS

Student Information System (SIS) reports provide information to admission officers concerning many aspects of student enrollment trends and patterns. Although standard reporting software provides powerful data concerning students who enroll successfully, this information does

## Table 1.

*Failed Registration Attempts Report Sample* by Individual Student and Course*

| Name | Id# | No. Tries | Courses & Sections | Phone |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Roger | xxxxxxxxx | 254 | 10894 BIOL 3340 | (770) 417-xxxx |
| Jack | xxxxxxxxx | 68 | 11530 MGT 8050 | (770) 977-xxxx |
| Ed | xxxxxxxxx | 65 | 10815 BIOL 2221 *(new)* | (770) 217-xxxx |
| Ed | xxxxxxxxx | 47 | 11332 HIST 2275 | (770) 217-xxxx |
| Daniel | xxxxxxxxx | 22 | 10279 CHEM 1211 *(new)* | (770) 448-xxxx |
| Joe | xxxxxxxxx | 25 | 10896 BIOL 3340 | (770) 947-xxxx |
| Judy | xxxxxxxxx | 24 | 10810 ANTH 2105 *(new)* | (770) 894-xxxx |
| Larry | xxxxxxxxx | 24 | 10921 PHYS 1111 *(new)* | (770) 924-xxxx |
| Al | xxxxxxxxx | 23 | 10815 BIOL 2221 *(new)* | (770) 991-xxxx |
| Rita | xxxxxxxxx | 23 | 10895 BIOL 2340 *(new)* | (770) 977-xxxx |
| Sam | xxxxxxxxx | 23 | 10919 PHYS 1111 | (770) 924-xxxx |
| Harold | xxxxxxxxx | 22 | 10922 PHYS 1111 | (770) 817-xxxx |
| Lester | xxxxxxxxx | 22 | 12215 EDL 7755 *(new)* | (770) 817-xxxx |

* Kennesaw State University August 28, 2008

## Table 2.

*Failed Registration Attempts Report Sample: Course Summaries*

| Courses | Times | Tries* | Enrolled | Section |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ACCT 2100 | 12:30 pm | 1 | 120 | 11021 |
| ACCT 2100 | 8:00 am | 1 | 121 | 11023 |
| ACCT 2100 | 2:00 pm | 1 | 54 | 11030 |
| ACCT 2100 | 8:00 pm | 1 | 90 | 11045 |
| ACCT 2100 | TBA | 2 | 10 | 12149 |
| ACCT 3100 | 3:00 pm | 1 | 57 | 11097 |
| ACCT 4050 | 11:00 am | 1 | 40 | 11104 |
| ACCT 8100 | 8:00 pm | 1 | 55 | 11122 |
| ACCT 8220 | 6:00 pm | 1 | 36 | 11123 |
| ACCT 8400 | 8:15 pm | 1 | 39 | 12172 |
| ANTH 2105 | 8:00 pm | 1 | 39 | 10807 |
| ANTH 2105 | TBA | 4 | 50 | 10810 |

* Individuals Tries for Closed Course Sections

not personally identify or track students who fail to register for a class. Reports are needed to identify students who attempt but fail to enroll for closed classes. Closed classes occur in all kinds of institutions: those with declining enrollments as well as those with increasing enrollments.

At KSU, registration gains and losses are reported through final enrollment reports, including drop and add reports. Many students are not able to register for "prime-time" classes—those in mid-morning, early afternoon, or evening. Many anecdotal stories are told of students who dropped all their classes when they found they were not able to register for a full load. Rather than take a part-time load, some students simply skip a term altogether.

Reports that *identify* students attempting but failing to register for a course are not as easily produced. Data produced by students attempting to register are transitory; highly skilled computer administrators alone may be able to gather such data. In 1991, at the request from admissions, KSU's director of computer services took responsibility for this task. However, even with close collaboration between admissions and computer services, a glitch occurred: Early reports included inflated totals as registrants without the proper course prerequisites were listed incorrectly. Although the registration system blocked students without the proper course prerequisites, the earlier Tried Report had not been programmed to exclude these failed registration attempts. By 1993, the Tried Report appropriately excluded registrants lacking prerequisites for

the desired course. The Tried Report also was modified to include *current and returning* students. (The first Tried Report was limited to *new* students unable to register for any class because the requested course sections were full and closed to enrollment.)

Registration systems are complex, and institutional computing systems in general require a multidepartmental effort to solve reporting and service issues. To keep abreast of such issues, a Student Informational Services Committee, composed of KSU admissions, registrar, financial aid, business affairs, institutional research, health clinic, academic affairs, residency office and computer services representatives, meets weekly.

A typical fall semester Tried Report averages 32 pages and up to 600 student names. (*See* Tables 1, 2, and 3, on pages 68–69.) These examples indicate the three aspects of the Tried Report that have been particularly useful at KSU. Table 1 illustrates the type of information that is transmitted to the Telecenter and used in a call campaign (see below, "Lost Enrollment Action Plan"). (Note that Table 1 is truncated to protect privacy.) The first thirteen rows in Table 1 include data for the number of student attempts to register for a particular course section. Basic columns include name, attempted registration tries, new or returning student, course section, and phone number. Should broadcast e-mail be used to reach students, an additional column may include e-mail addresses.

The Tried Report has four sections: (1) failed registration attempts by individual student and course; (2) failed registration attempts course summaries; (3) failed registration attempts and time slots; and (4) non-registered summary. Note that the "number of tries" data may indicate the likelihood that certain students experience frustration as they attempt—repeatedly—to register for a particular course.

Table 2 indicates a sample of individual tries to enroll in course sections and the times the courses were offered. Approximately twelve pages in length, this part of the Tried Report provides timely information for university officials responsible for adding course offerings (see below, "Lost Enrollment Action Plan"). The results are unduplicated, reporting the number of individuals requesting a course.

Tables 2 and 3 provide useful information concerning the total number of individual tries for certain course times and thus help identify priority time slots. Comparison of Tried Reports from year to year may reveal enrollment preference trends. Also, in future semesters, some classes offered previously at low demand times may be scheduled during high demand times.

Table 4 (on page 70) illustrates the enrollment loss of potential students who, after attempting and failing to register, "walk away." In fall 2008, the loss of 329 students constituted not only an enrollment loss but also a financial loss to the institution and an educational loss to the community.

## Table 3.
*Failed Registration Attempts and Time Slot Totals*

| Times | Tries |
|---|---|
| TBD | 131 |
| 7:30 am | 3 |
| 8:00 am | 125 |
| 8:15 am | 4 |
| 8:30 am | 12 |
| 8:45 am | 4 |
| 9:00 am | 6 |
| 9:30 am | 114 |
| 10:00 am | 4 |
| 11:00 am | 147 |
| 12:30 pm | 72 |
| 2:00 pm | 113 |
| 3:30 pm | 42 |
| 4:30 pm | 2 |
| 5:00 pm | 76 |
| 5:30 pm | 6 |
| 6:00 pm | 3 |
| 6:30 pm | 88 |
| 8:00 pm | 55 |
| 8:15 pm | 3 |
| 9:30 pm | 6 |

## Table 4.

*Non-Registered Summary of Type of Students*

| Student Type | No. |
|---|---|
| New Applicants | 31 |
| Last Qtr. Students | 246 |
| Re-Admits | 16 |
| Holdovers | 27 |
| Others | 9 |
| Total | 329 |

## LOST ENROLLMENT ACTION PLAN

### Setting the Groundwork

The Tried Report was developed in 1991 to clarify the issues concerning new students attempting to enroll in closed classes. This first report identified more than 400 new students unable to register in fall 1991 because of closed course sections. Because of the political climate on campus and the lack of support for such a report, no action plan was developed at the academic VP level. Rather, deans and department chairs opened classes on an ad hoc basis. The process was decentralized, and limited budgeting hampered both the hiring of adjunct professors and the payment of overload stipends to full-time professors. (Fortunately this interaction continues presently among admissions officers, the vice president for student success, the vice president for academic affairs, and deans and department chairs.) Support was increased as the Tried Report came to be viewed as a resource for identifying registration trends and attempts, typically in the general education core but critically in science and mathematics.

In 1994, the Tried Report provided clear evidence of a large number of registration attempts in science and math courses. The Lost Enrollment Action Plan suggested an approach to resolving this issue favorably. Further, it helped convince the Georgia Board of Regents to allocate additional salaries for adjunct science and math faculty. This budget supplement enabled new course sections to be opened, resulting in increased enrollment. Using this enrollment management approach also helped increase campus administrators' confidence, resulting in students' higher regard for members of admissions.

### Implementation Steps

- Establish liaison with computer services to develop Tried Report to identify students unable to register for closed courses. Parts of Tried Reports should have "drill-down" lists of affected students suitable for Telecenter Outreach operations as well as "drill-down" lists and summary tables revealing enrollment patterns and trends.
- Run Tried Report each day of registration. Provide report results to academic administration, with options for adding additional course sections. Academic administrators should have funding available for additional course sections (if needed). Such funds might support the hiring of adjunct professors or overtime compensation for full-time professors. While past experience certainly can help administrators anticipate the number of course sections that will be needed, Tried Reports provide the data necessary to make targeted adjustments.
- Transmit Tried Report results of newly added seats or sessions to the Telecenter. Develop call scripts and broadcast e-mails to notify targeted students of newly opened or expanded classes.
- Prepare final report indicating enrollment gains attributed to Action Plan.
- Rerun Tried Report at conclusion of registration to determine outcomes.

## CONCLUSIONS

Closed classes at registration hinder enrollment growth and damage student morale. Along with the information provided by Tried Reports, the "Lost Enrollment Action Plan" provides a proactive means of identifying and alleviating the issues relating to closed classes. At many institutions, academic officials act on the basis of fragmented and incomplete information. Tried Reports provide a daily source of information that anticipates closed classes. This enrollment management approach helps increase administrators' and students' confidence in the professionalism of enrollment services officers.

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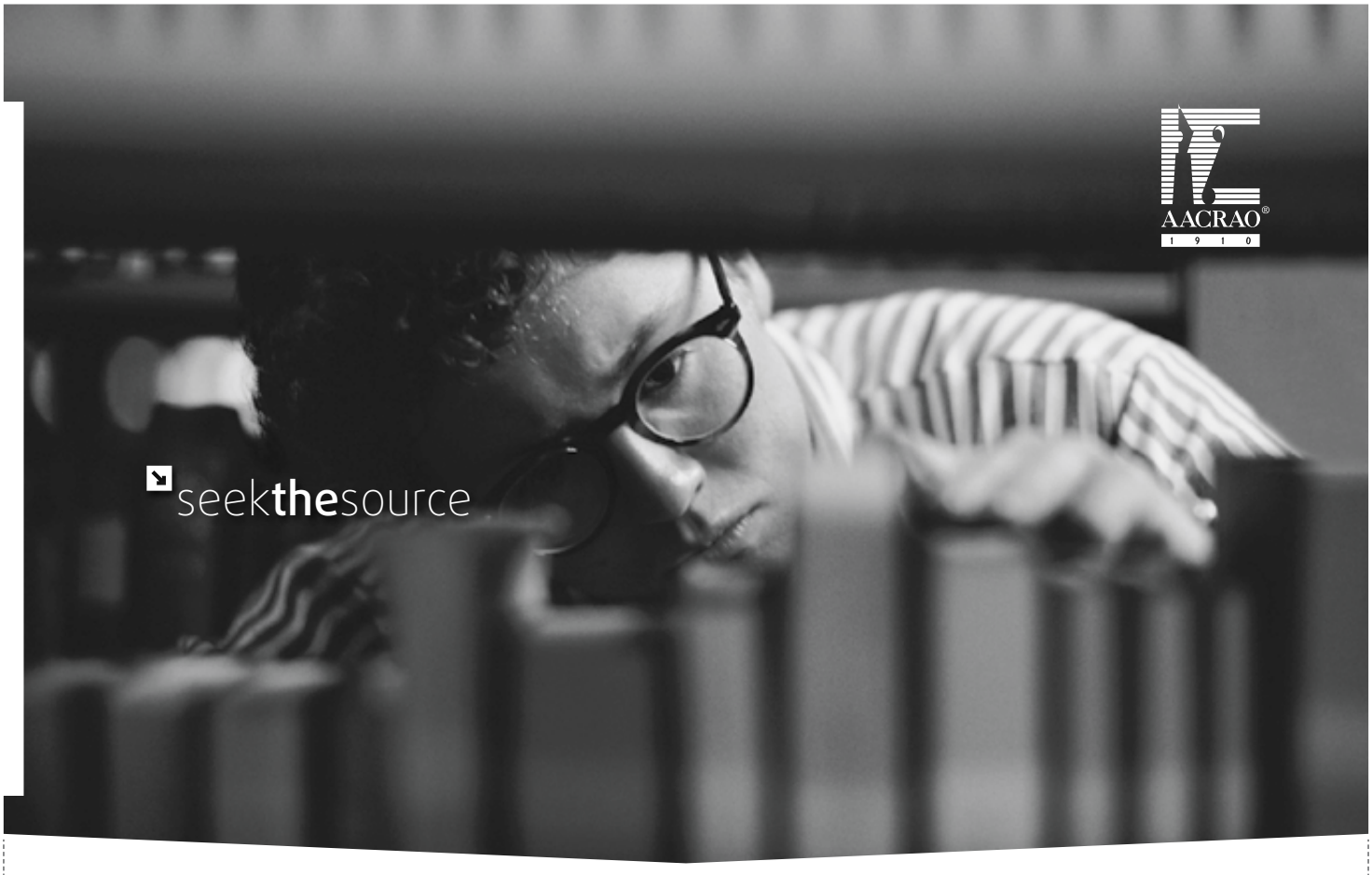


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## ADMISSION MATTERS: WHAT STUDENTS AND PARENTS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT GETTING INTO COLLEGE, 2ND EDITION

SALLY P. SPRINGER, JON REIDER, AND MARION R. FRANCK
JOSSEY-BASS, 2009, 316 PP.

*Reviewed by Chris J. Foley*

Each fall brings a wave of new students to college campuses. They move into housing, fill classrooms, lounge in public spaces. For most faculty and staff, it may feel as though these students emerge *ex nihilo*—one day the campus was empty, the next, it was not—but for the admissions officer, they are known quantities: for most, their relationship with the campus began months or even years earlier. It is timely, then, that Jossey-Bass has published a second edition of its guide to applying for colleges, *Admission Matters*, just in time for a new crop of high school juniors and seniors to begin the college search process.

Not surprisingly, the primary audiences for *Admission Matters* are prospective students and their families. The book is filled with crisp writing that dispenses solid advice. In addition to chapters focusing on the initial stages of the search (understanding how admission decisions are made), developing a list of possible fits, and navigating the application process, the authors review the "end game" of the college search process: figuring out how to compare costs, make the final choice, and pay the bill. Though the authors do seek to address students, one feels that the intended audience is in fact the parents of prospective applicants. (The book carries more of an "adult to adult" conversational tone than one that breaks the process down for a 17- or 18-year-old.) Still, given the involvement of parents in the decision making of the current generation of prospective students, this tone probably is more effective in aiding the college search process.

It also is not surprising that the book is geared primarily toward those students and families considering private liberal arts or highly selective research universities (this bent was a disappointment—though one of very few). For students without significant parental involvement, the book may be a bit too in-depth for their tastes, and I had hoped to see more information for families completely new to the college search process or at least for those without access to the resources required to apply to (let alone attend) these institutions. Although the authors emphasize "fit," they seem to avoid addressing the options for students who either do not want to (or who cannot afford to) attend a private liberal arts college or highly selective research university. By neglecting this option, the authors feed the misconception that only highly ranked institutions require a college search. Nonetheless, this is a single

caveat regarding a book that otherwise offers solid advice in almost every instance.

The authors include many examples—including quotations from other experts, students, and parents—to demonstrate the usefulness of their advice. In addition, the appendixes include several helpful references: worksheets for college profiles, comparing financial aid, and figuring the cost of attendance; a copy of the common application; a sample cover sheet for letters of recommendation; and a timeline, glossary, and list of recommended resources. For those looking to perform (or assist with) a college search, the appendixes constitute the basis of a sound kit.

*Admission Matters* is neither a "hurried" nor a "rushed" guide; instead, the authors take time to explain the reasoning behind much of their advice. Consider, for example, their review of the SAT: Not only do they describe the exam, but they also offer a bit of history about the exam as well as commentary about the rationale for using it (pros as well as cons). Their evenhanded review of the examination is thoughtful (but not unique; they also discuss other topics—rankings, for instance—with equal adeptness). Professionals new to the field of advising students regarding the college application process will find *Admission Matters* particularly helpful.

Having provided such detail, the authors inspired me to wonder whether they intended for *Admission Matters* to be used by more than "just" parents and students. I would suggest that two additional audiences—new high school counselors and admissions officers—pick up a copy. Because of their roles in advising students directly (in the case of high school counselors) and indirectly (admissions officers), a reference such as *Admission Matters* is critical to helping students successfully negotiate the college admissions process. Often, admissions officers (especially those of us at institutions that serve predominantly first-generation or low-SES populations) are asked not only about the institutions they represent but also about the application process in general. Knowing not just about your institution but about the broader college search process is imperative.

As an admissions professional, I welcome this updated reference guide to the college search process. An easy read that is well organized for quick reference, this book quickly became one I was happy to have on my shelf. Prospective students and their parents will surely find it just as useful. I highly recommend that high school counselors and admissions professionals quickly add it to their libraries as this next wave of prospective students start their college search.

## About the Author

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