

A detailed map of Europe showing various countries and cities. The map is the background for the top section of the page. Countries like France, Germany, Poland, and the UK are clearly visible. Major cities such as London, Paris, Berlin, and Warsaw are marked. The map is oriented with North at the top.

AACRAO

INTERNATIONAL

Fall Symposium

The U.S. Perspective on the Three-Year Bologna-Compliant Bachelor's Degree

SEPTEMBER 18, 2017—WASHINGTON, D.C.

Fall Symposium Report

The U.S. Perspective on the Three-Year Bologna-Compliant Bachelor's Degree

AACRAO INTERNATIONAL FALL SYMPOSIUM

Background

On September 18, 2017, AACRAO hosted the 2nd symposium focused on the U.S. perspective on the three-year Bologna-compliant bachelor's degree. This gathering brought together leaders from across U.S. higher education including representatives from institutions, professional credential evaluators, and other key stakeholders. Participants reflected on past events that set the stage for this symposium.

Bologna Declaration (1999)

In June 1999, 29 European Ministers signed the Bologna Declaration with the goal of establishing the European Area of Higher Education by 2010 and promoting the European system of higher education worldwide.

1st AACRAO Symposium (2006)

In 2006, to assess the impact of the Bologna Declaration in the U.S., AACRAO hosted a symposium, "[The Impact of Bologna and Three-Year Degrees on U.S. Admissions](#)." Participants included representatives from Germany, the UK, and Australia, as well as several sectors of the U.S. higher education community.

The context in 2006 included:

- The U.S. was just beginning to see more graduates applying to U.S. graduate schools with three-year Bologna-compliant degrees.
- U.S. institutions were grappling with nuts and bolts issues like the numbers of years a degree represents and differences in degree structures from country to country within Europe.
- Some in the U.S. higher education community thought discussions of three-year degrees should not just focus on Europe, but should also include countries such as India and Australia.

The overall conclusion of the 2006 symposium was that there was not one policy on three-year degrees across the United States because higher education is so decentralized and each institution is so autonomous, which reflects the diversity of U.S. higher education.

2nd AACRAO Symposium (2017)

The purposes of this symposium were to:

- Assess what has changed over the past 11 years, since the first AACRAO symposium.
- Determine if there is a U.S. perspective on three-year Bologna-compliant bachelor's degrees.
- Identify outstanding questions that still need to be answered.
- Chart a way forward.

This symposium consisted of three panel discussions:

- Panel 1: The Professional Credential Evaluation Perspective
- Panel 2: The Institutional Perspective: Evaluation for Admission
- Panel 3: The Employment Perspective

After these panels, attendees participated in working groups followed by a group discussion of the key issues throughout the symposium.

Panel 1: The Professional Credential Evaluation Perspective

Credential evaluation experts from Educational Credential Evaluators (ECE), Foreign Credits, and SpanTran shared their perspectives on Bologna-compliant degrees. Key takeaways included:

- **In simple terms, three years are not equal to four years.** Both Foreign Credits and SpanTran characterized the philosophy of their agencies as “year counters,” a general philosophy that has not changed. Since years are the key unit being measured, a degree earned in three years is not equivalent to a degree earned in four years.

“We’ve remained a year-counting organization. We feel that it’s not appropriate to call something that is four and another that is three the same thing. So we cannot do that.”

Aleksander Morawski, Foreign Credits

Margit Schatzman of ECE offered a different perspective. She said that her agency looks at all of the characteristics of a credential, not just the number of years. Other factors that are considered include the level of education, who offers it, and the purpose of education in the country where it was received. As Schatzman said, “There are a whole series of characteristics, with years being only one of them, but an important one.”

Some participants suggested that considering only years is too simplistic. Some institutions may have a semester system while others have quarters. The number of hours per year may differ tremendously and the content can differ dramatically. Also, in some countries the secondary education is 12 years, while in other countries it is 13 or 14 years. Thus, simply counting the years of post-secondary education is not viewed by some as an adequate way of assessing a person. Still, these credential evaluators stressed that counting years is their sole or primary focus.

- **For credential evaluators, all evaluations are the same regardless of the evaluation’s purpose.** These credential evaluators are not decision makers; their evaluations are solely advisory. They see their role as providing information to end users who apply this information and make decisions. The information gathered and the evaluations are the same, regardless of the stated purpose. As Margit Schatzman said, “We don’t know how they are going to be used. And even if a report states a specific purpose, there is no guarantee that it is going to be used that way.”

“From our perspective, it doesn’t matter what the purpose is. Our evaluations are advisory only and it is up to the end user to decide if they’re going to accept what we say or not. It doesn’t matter if it is for immigration, for university admission, or for employment—the evaluation is the same.”

Kate Freeman, SpanTran

One caveat that was mentioned is that if the purpose of an evaluation is for professional licensure, and if a degree in a field of study gives the degree holder the right to practice a certain profession (like teaching), the agency will mention to the end user that the credential entitles the individual to teach in that country.

- **Communicating the evaluation conclusion is extremely important.** The agency doing the evaluation must carefully word the evaluation report so the end user understands the conclusion. It is then the end user's responsibility to apply this information.

Other points discussed during this session were:

- **Legal recognition.** When credentials are discussed in Europe, the focus is on legal recognition of credentials for purposes such as immigration, employment, or licensure.
- **European variability.** While this symposium is focused on the U.S. perspective on Bologna-compliant three-year degrees, the reality is that there is tremendous variability across Europe in countries, institutions, and degrees. As one participant said, "The institutions in Europe are not doing it all the same."
- **Evaluator justification.** The three agencies represented on this panel don't see equivalence between Bologna-compliant three-year degrees and typical American four-year degrees. However, one panelist noted that there are evaluation companies that can reasonably make a logical assessment that these degrees are equivalent. The justification is based on:
 - *The functional outcome* in that the degrees grant access to graduate study in the country or the educational system in which the three-year degree was granted.
 - *Longer secondary education in Europe.* Secondary education in many European countries—such as Norway, Italy, and the —is longer than the traditional 12-year U.S. secondary education. So, some evaluators may see a 13- or 14-year European secondary education plus a three-year European bachelor's degree as equivalent to a 12-year American secondary education and a four-year U.S. bachelor's degree. (Though this view was not shared by the panelists.)

Panel 2: The Institutional Perspective: Evaluation for Admission

Representatives from three large state institutions—the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, the University of Colorado at Boulder, and the University of Texas at Austin—shared their perspectives on three-year Bologna-compliant bachelor's degrees and discussed how their universities are thinking about students with these degrees. Key takeaways from this discussion include:

- **Graduate admission decisions are highly decentralized.** These major state institutions are similar in that they have:
 - Tens of thousands of students.
 - Thousands of graduate students spread across more than 100 different departments.
 - A significant percentage of international students.

They are also similar in that the undergraduate admissions process is highly centralized, while the graduate admissions process is extremely decentralized, with each department deciding on which graduate students to admit.

For international students applying for admission to a graduate program, these universities all have a function that prepares in-house preadmission evaluations of the international students, which includes assessing degree equivalency. These evaluations typically include a credential evaluation and a report, which are furnished to individual graduate departments to make the final admission decision.

“We do a credential evaluation and a report so the individual [graduate] departments have the academic information they need . . . it’s their decision as to whether they want to admit the student or not.”

Jeanie Bell, Senior Assistant Director, Office of Admissions, University of Colorado Boulder

The sequence of these evaluations differs slightly. At the University of Colorado and the University of Texas, the admissions office first prepares evaluations for all international applications and forwards this information to the graduate departments so they can make admission decisions. At the University of Illinois the order is reversed: the departments first decide which international students they want to admit and evaluations are then performed on those students.

In all instances, the final admission decision for graduate students resides with the departments.

- **Graduate admission policies have evolved over time.** In looking back, the participants acknowledged that years ago their institutions lacked clear policies regarding degree equivalency for international applicants to graduate programs. Essentially, every international application was handled on a case-by-case basis. However, this resulted in inconsistency, frequent questions, and dissatisfaction from applicants, faculty, and staff.

So, institutions have worked to develop policies to make evaluations easier and more consistent. Policies have included:

- *Creating minimum standards.* The University of Illinois established minimum educational standards for accepting international students into graduate programs. However, admitting departments were allowed to make exceptions.
- *Publishing educational comparability.* These universities have developed and published on their websites information about what the university views as comparable educational attainment to a U.S. bachelor’s degree. This information provides guidance to the departments in making their admission decisions.
- *Offering provisional or limited admission.* Each of these institutions allows departments to admit graduate students on a provisional or limited basis, which essentially is a probationary period for students. This allows departments to admit students who may not fully meet published requirements.
- *Considering alternatives.* For example, while the University of Illinois was previously reluctant to admit students with a three-year bachelor’s degree into a master’s program, they were comfortable admitting students with a three-year bachelor’s degree and a two-year master’s (3+2) into a PhD program. This was based on the view that the total number of hours for these students was comparable to students from U.S. institutions, and history has shown that these 3+2 students have performed well in PhD programs.

Similarly, in conducting evaluations, universities also look at the total years of education, including both secondary and post-secondary. The University of Colorado’s policy states that it is looking for students with 16 years of combined education.

“We have a policy posted that states specifically that we’re looking for the 16-year model . . . this seems to resonate with people and we can point to something and say, ‘Here’s what our policy is.’ . . . We don’t screen for degree equivalency. We don’t stop an application if they don’t meet our criteria. We pass it on to the department . . . and they have the ability to review it and admit if they want.”

Elizabeth Spark, Assistant Dean, Admissions, Registration, and Enrollment Services, University of Colorado

- **In general, students admitted with Bologna-compliant degrees have performed well.** While creation of policies about admitting students into graduate programs with three-year degrees has at times been controversial, the experience of these panelists is that students admitted into their graduate programs with Bologna-compliant three-year degrees have done very well.

“We’re looking to make sure that the applicant is capable of doing the work [in a graduate program]. When you look at a very subject-intensive three-year Bologna-compliant bachelor’s degree, the answer is yes, they can do the work.”

Robert A. Watkins, Assistant Director of Admissions, University of Texas at Austin

Reasons for why graduates with Bologna-compliant three-year degrees have performed well include:

- *Educational philosophy.* The American higher education model focuses on breadth while the European model emphasizes depth in the subject. As a result, those who graduate with a Bologna-compliant three-year degree in a particular subject have a depth of knowledge in that subject and are able to perform well in graduate programs.
- *Quality assurance.* Europe’s Bologna Process was predicated on quality assurance mechanisms at the national level, area-wide level, institutional level, and program level. As a result, Bologna-compliant degrees have an undergirding of quality assurance. While there is still not complete consistency, and there are differences in implementation and quality in Europe, there is nonetheless a focus on and a commitment to quality, which is reflected in the performance of students.

In comparison, there is massive variation in the quality of Indian institutions and in the caliber of students with three-year degrees from these institutions. It is for this reason that universities such as UT Austin are comfortable admitting students from Europe with Bologna-compliant three-year degrees but are not comfortable admitting students from India with three-year degrees. As Mr. Watkins said, “All three-year degrees are not created equal.”

- **Dealing with applicants with Bologna-compliant degrees is just one of many challenges for major state institutions.** Developing policies and wrestling with admission decisions for students with Bologna-compliant degrees is just one challenge faced by admissions leaders from major universities. However, the panelists noted that students from Europe represent only a small number of their international students; the number of international students from China, India, and other Asian and Middle Eastern countries is often far greater.

Other challenges these individuals and their organizations face include:

- *Staffing challenges.* These admissions offices have small teams that are asked to do a lot. Dealing with undergraduate admissions and applications from international students from countries such as China tends to be somewhat straightforward. But, evaluating applicants from Europe is often not straightforward. The panelists mentioned that finding staffing to evaluate European applicants can be difficult. As Jeanie Bell said, “I do Europe because nobody else wants to do it.”
- *Budget issues.* Because state universities are dealing with budget challenges they are reluctant to turn away international applicants, putting added pressure on admissions offices.
- *Turnaround time.* Along with small staffs and thousands of applications, admissions offices are being held to very short turnarounds. This means evaluating international credentials in a limited amount of time. Evaluating a student from China may take just two seconds, but evaluating a student from Europe takes considerably longer, which adds pressure.

— *International diversity.* At the same time that universities are actively recruiting more students from China they don't want to be reliant on Chinese students and want greater diversity of their international students.

Panel 3: The Employment Perspective

These panelists shared perspectives on the role of three-year Bologna-compliant degrees related to employment and immigration issues. Nancy Katz of Evaluation Service does evaluations for immigration and employment processing. Lynn Shotwell of the Council for Global Immigration is deeply engaged in a host of issues related to immigration. Key takeaways from the discussion include:

- **Employers are looking more closely than ever at credential evaluations.** Employers often engage third parties to perform credential evaluations for employment purposes. The whole process is largely a mystery to most employers. Both employers and the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) are increasing the scrutiny of evaluations and are asking more questions. Questions are about the legitimacy of the evaluation agency, about a candidate's education, and more. Also, it is not uncommon to get comments back from companies or the USCIS saying "No, we don't think this is correct."

"Particularly when you look at STEM degrees . . . the government is really questioning it. . . . They're always questioning what we're doing for immigration processing."

Lynn Shotwell, Executive Director, Director, Council for Global Immigration

- **Evaluations often require proof of a bachelor's degree or a foreign equivalent.** A key part of the credential evaluation process is determining if a degree was awarded, and what degree was awarded from which institution. Part of the process is to determine if the degree is equivalent to a U.S. degree.

These credential evaluations are not for admission to universities. They are so that individuals who come to the U.S. with degrees earned internationally are able to attain professional licensing in their desired field in the U.S. and possibly if they return to their home country. An individual could be an engineer, an accountant, a health care worker, or in another field.

An example was given of an issue where a U.S. educational institution would accept foreign three-year diploma holders into a master's program. But, when these individuals went to become licensed they lacked necessary qualifications based on their foreign three-year bachelor's degree. There can also be licensing issues that arise for students who return to their home country.

"We have a responsibility to those students to make sure that they will be able to be licensed in their field if we admit them [into the United States] with a three-year degree."

Nancy Katz, Director, Evaluation Service, Inc.

At the moment there is not a universal standard for determining if a three-year bachelor's degree from a particular university in a particular country is comparable to a four-year degree in the United States. Each situation needs to be considered individually, including the field of study and the employment and licensing criteria in the field.

A valuable tool in this process is [AACRAO EDGE](#). The Electronic Database for Global Education (AACRAO EDGE) is a resource for evaluating educational credentials earned in foreign systems, whether the purpose is for admission into an institution of higher learning in the United States, to obtain employment, to establish visa eligibility, or to qualify for additional professional qualifications. For immigration processing, USCIS relies heavily on EDGE and wants to know what EDGE says.

- **For the most part, EDGE does not consider three-year degrees from Bologna countries to be comparable to four-year U.S. bachelor’s degrees.**

In Lynn Shotwell’s experience, if an individual only has a three-year degree an employer will decide not to pursue an immigrant petition until the person also has some work experience.

Other comments include:

- **Work experience.** Under current immigration credentialing, three years of work experience is considered equal to one year of education. So, a person with a three-year bachelor’s degree and three years of work experience is deemed to have four years of post-secondary education.
- **International harmonization.** An offshoot of the UN is bringing international governments together to try to harmonize and streamline immigration systems. The issue of credentials is always on the table, with the Europeans usually putting it forward. In general, the business community wants immigration policies that are fair, predictable, and efficient.
- **NAFTA.** Under NAFTA, a three-year bachelor’s degree from Ontario is considered equivalent to a U.S. bachelor’s degree.

Discussion

Following the panel discussions participants engaged in smaller breakouts and then reconvened to offer observations on admissions to graduate programs, credential evaluations, employment and immigration issues, and other general comments. Comments are summarized below:

Overall

Participants see tremendous autonomy and diversity across U.S. higher education. They do not see three-year degrees—even from Bologna-compliant institutions—as equivalent to four-year U.S. bachelor’s degrees, but there may be factors that would cause an institution to consider a student for a graduate program. Factors include the number of years of secondary education, the total number of credits and class hours, the amount of work experience, and the ability to admit a student on a provisional basis.

In considering students for graduate programs, it is important to understand the professional licensure requirements so that a student doesn’t attain a graduate degree yet is unable to sit for the licensure exam in a field.

Graduate Program Admissions

- **Autonomy of U.S. institutions.** Institutional autonomy is a sacred principle in American higher education. As one group said, “Until the U.S. government tells us what to do, we’re going to do what we want.” Another hallmark of U.S. education is its decentralized nature.

“One thing we can all agree on is that a valued quality in U.S. higher education is institutional autonomy . . . that’s really a hallmark of U.S. education.”

Member of higher education breakout group

- **Admission confusion.** Admissions processes at institutions are often opaque and confusing, with inconsistencies and differences between departments. At times the graduate admissions department will have one policy and the faculty will have another policy.
- **Equivalency and functional equivalency.** Among a group from U.S. higher education there was agreement that a four-year degree from a Bologna-compliant institution was equivalent to a U.S. bachelor's degree, and some three-year degrees from Bologna-compliant institutions warrant consideration as potentially being functionally equivalent to a U.S. bachelor's degree.
- **Views of equivalency.** Participants in one group discussed several possibilities for equivalency:
 - Some would consider Bologna-compliant degrees, regardless of the hours or credits, and regardless of secondary completion level.
 - Some would consider Bologna-compliant degrees, but would require a certain number of credits and/or years of secondary education.
 - Some participants were open to the idea of "12 + 3."
 - Others were comfortable with the concept of counting 16 years of secondary and post-secondary education.
- **Considering professional licensure.** One participant remarked that if universities ignore or gloss over professional licensure realities and admit people with three-year degrees, it could be a real risk for these individuals if they stay in the United States. It can be heartbreaking to see people get degrees in licensed professions but then not be able to get licensure. Higher education bears some responsibility here.

Credential Evaluations

- **Standards needed.** International credential evaluation standards and methodology provide the foundation for assessment of any and all credentials, not just Bologna-compliant degrees. An area of focus is to establish and confirm standards and methodology for credential evaluators.
- **Educating end users.** The users of evaluations bear responsibility to apply evaluations in accordance with their institutional and ethical standards. Credential evaluators need to do a better job of educating student and institutional end users of the purpose of credential evaluations and how to use them.
- **Educating non-U.S. colleagues.** Credential evaluators need to help colleagues, especially in Europe, understand the diversity of U.S. higher education, professional licensure, and employment environments.
- **Role of credential evaluators.** There was some debate around the role of credential evaluators, as one participant asked why evaluators don't "stand by" their reports. Credential evaluators responded that they do stand by their reports, but the role of an evaluator is to provide an expert opinion, which end users then apply.

"We are giving our opinion, but they need to apply it according to their own institutional policy."

Credential evaluator

- **Report inconsistency.** One participant asked why there might be differences and inconsistencies between different reports. The answer: different evaluators do things in different ways.

Employment and Immigration

- **Licensing ineligibility.** There are a number of licensing boards where a person with a three-year degree would be ineligible to sit for a licensing exam, even if they could be admitted to a graduate program. Admissions offices have more flexibility than licensing boards. End users need to be aware that just because they are admitted to a graduate program does not mean they will be eligible to sit for a licensing exam.

Additional Comments

- **No justification found for three-year degrees.** One participant said she was hoping to hear justification for accepting three-year degrees as equivalent to U.S. bachelor's degrees, because it would make her life much easier. Yet, despite wanting to hear justification, she did not.
- **Origins of Bologna.** The Bologna Process was not a bottom-up movement to promote mobility. It was ministers of education who did this as political movements.
- **European discrimination.** A participant noted that European counterparts have mentioned that at times they discriminate against U.S. applicants for European graduate programs because these applicants lack the depth of coursework that European students have.
- **Impact of Lisbon.** Europeans are all fully aware of the Lisbon Recognition Convention and take it very seriously. Lisbon calls for accepting another country's degree unless there are "substantial differences" and calls on evaluators to demonstrate any such differences. For Europeans, this is the law, which helps explain where they are coming from. But the U.S. is not legally a party to this agreement. Also, most Americans in higher education would argue that a three-year degree is a substantial difference compared to a four-year degree.
- **Need for definitions.** Many terms are used in discussions, such as "equivalency" or "comparability." It would be helpful to have clear and accepted definitions of these terms.

Participants

Jeanie Bell, Senior Assistant Director of International Admissions, University of Colorado Boulder

William Bellin, Senior Evaluator, Educational Credential Evaluators (ECE)

Spencer Berk, Assistant Director of Graduate Admissions, Hood College

Shamsh Chowdhury, Evaluations Associate, SpanTran: The Evaluation Company

Kate Freeman, Senior Credentials Analyst Consultant, SpanTran: The Evaluation Company

Peggy Hendrickson, Director, Transcript Research

Nancy Katz, Director, Evaluation Service, Inc.

Aleksander Morawski, Director of Evaluation Services, Foreign Credits Inc.

Abigail Nanquil, Evaluations Associate, SpanTran: The Evaluation Company

Rafael Nevarez, International Education Specialist, U.S. Department of Education

Kevin Rolwing, Quality Assurance Director, World Education Services

Narendra Rustagi, Professor, Howard University

Margit Schatzman, President, Educational Credential Evaluators, Inc.

Lynn Shotwell, Executive Director, Council for Global Immigration

Elizabeth Spark, Assistant Dean, Graduate College, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Angela Sreckovic, Assistant Manager, ASCP

Sarah Stivison, Senior Evaluator, Global Credential Evaluators

Robert Watkins, Assistant Director of Admissions, The University of Texas at Austin

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The AACRAO logo is displayed in a large, blue, serif font at the top left of the page. The background of the entire top section is a map of Europe, showing various countries and cities in different colors.

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Panelist and Participant
Biographies

AACRAO International Staff

Melanie Gottlieb



Melanie Gottlieb joined the staff as Deputy Director of AACRAO in 2015. She came to the national office with 18 years as an AACRAO member, with experience in Records & Registration, Enrollment Management and International Recruitment and Credential Evaluation. She has served the association in a variety of leadership roles throughout her career, most recently as Vice President for International Education on the AACRAO Board of Directors. Melanie earned an MA in Information Science from the University of Missouri - Columbia and a BA in History /American Studies from Marlboro College in Vermont.

Ann Koenig



Ann has been an associate director with AACRAO International since 2002. Her career in international education spans more than 25 years, including foreign credential evaluation in professional evaluation services, and campus-based work in international undergraduate and graduate admissions, student records management, academic advising and transfer credit evaluation, at Cardinal Stritch University in Milwaukee, a University of Maryland University College program in Germany, Golden Gate University in San Francisco, and the University of California, Berkeley.

Ann has done in-depth research on education in several countries. She is the author of the ECE monograph *An Overview of the Educational System of Albania* (1993), co-author of the PIER workshop report on Poland (1992) and AACRAO Country Guide *The Educational System of the Russian Federation* (2008), and contributor to NAFSA's *A Guide to Educational Systems Around the World* (1999), the AACRAO EDGE online database, AACRAO's *Guide to Bogus Institutions and Documents* (2006), *The AACRAO International Guide* (2010 and 2016 editions), *AACRAO's Transfer Handbook* (2015), the AACRAO quarterly journal *College & University* and *AACRAO Connect*.

A frequent workshop trainer and conference presenter, Ann specializes in sharing information on country educational systems, best practices in international academic record review and admissions, and academic credential

fraud awareness. She has presented at professional development and training events sponsored by AACRAO, NAFSA, NAGAP, EAIE, and other organizations in the U.S. and Europe.

Annetta Stroud



Annetta Stroud began working with AACCCRO in 2008 in the role of Senior Evaluator and Training Coordinator, and is currently the Associate Director for Training and Program Development. She has worked in the field of international education for over 15 years in both public and private institutions in various positions in international admissions and credential evaluation, student services

and academic management. Her current role with AACRAO allows her to engage in the research of international comparative education and support the training of professional in the field, and has presented at various conferences including both AACRAO and NAFSA annual and regionals and the Education USA MENA Forum. Annetta holds a B.A. in Music from the University of New Mexico, M.A. in Adult Education from San Francisco State University, and an Ed.M. in Human Resource Development from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

Julia Funaki



Julia Funaki is the Associate Director of International Education Services at AACRAO. Julia received her Bachelor of Science from The Ohio State University and worked for the Columbus Council on World Affairs. She attended a graduate program at American University and worked in domestic and international admissions for the University. Upon completion of her Master's in International Communication she took a job in the foreign student services office at Ohio Wesleyan University. After returning to Washington and completing a Master's in International Education with an emphasis in Higher Ed

Administration, Julia worked for the University of Maryland College Park in the office of International Education Services. In 1996, Julia joined the staff at AACRAO. She has been involved with NAFSA and AACRAO as an author, presenter, and committee member and chair and serves on the faculty for the AACRAO Summer and Winter Institute.

Credential Evaluation Agency Panelists

Kate Freeman – SpanTran



Kate Freeman has more than 30 years of experience in international education that started with studying abroad in Salamanca, Spain as an undergraduate, and continued as an ESL teacher with United States Peace Corps in Morocco and at Feng Chia University in Taichung, Taiwan followed by positions as an international student advisor, international admission officer, and foreign credentials evaluator. She is the author of 150+ entries in AACRAO's Electronic Database for Global Education (EDGE), as well as volumes on the educational system of Morocco, an introduction to foreign credentials evaluation, and is co-author of a book on the educational system of France. She is currently the senior credentials analyst consultant at SpanTran: The Evaluation Company.

Aleks Morawski – Foreign Credits Inc.



Aleks Morawski is an experienced International Enrollment Management professional. He completed his BA at Marquette University and his MA at San Diego State University, both in political science, focusing on international politics. His experience in international education spans the public and private sector in the United States. He currently serves as Director of Evaluation Services at Foreign Credits Inc., where he leads a staff of experts in providing effective credential evaluation solutions.

Morawski has presented at state, regional, and national conferences, is an active member of NAFSA's Trainer Corps, and is active in leadership of NAFSA and other professional organizations. Morawski is also a contributor to "Managing a Successful International Admissions Office", NAFSA's guide to international admissions.

Margit Schatzman – ECE



Margit A. Schatzman has been involved in international admissions and credential evaluation for over 30 years and is President of Educational Credential Evaluators, Inc. (ECE). ECE is a non-profit organization that provides academic institutions and other organizations with services in foreign credential evaluation, research and training in international education.

She is a frequent speaker at U.S. and international conferences on international education on topics such as credential evaluation principles and methods, and falsified and altered documents.

As a member of the European Association of International Education (EAIE) she is interested in the changes taking place in Europe as a result of the Bologna Declaration. She was co-chair of the first NAFSA Task Force on the Bologna Process.

Her most recent professional activity is serving on the founding Steering Committee of The Association for International Credential Evaluation Professionals (TAICEP), a world-wide association devoted to providing support, professional development and advocacy for international credential evaluators. She is currently President of TAICEP.

Institutional-Admissions Panelists

Jeanie Bell - University of Colorado, Boulder



Jeanie Bell is Senior Assistant Director of International Admissions in the Office of Admissions, University of Colorado Boulder, located in Boulder, Colorado, USA. She has lead international admissions teams at US universities, including in her current position. She has set standards for international academic admissions, has recruited students, and trained staff in credential evaluation and immigration processing. Professionally active in international education since 1986, her accomplishments include presenting and chairing sessions in Asia, Europe and North America for various profession organizations including AACRAO, EAIE, NAFSA and TAICEP. She has published several articles, including on the subject of refugee credential recognition. She is currently Vice-President of Membership for The Association for International Credential Evaluation Professionals (TAICEP). She received her Master of Public Administration from the University of Colorado Denver.

Elizabeth Spark – University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign



Elizabeth Spark is the Assistant Dean for Admissions, Registration, and Enrollment Services. In this role, she oversees domestic and international graduate admissions, the issuance of visa eligibility documents to all incoming and returning graduate students, enrollment management reporting, and registration services. She is responsible for researching international higher education trends, staying informed of federal regulations that govern international student visa policies, and collaborating with our peer institutions to determine best practices for admissions policies and procedures. She is committed to providing guidance and training to graduate department contacts and faculty regarding recruitment, admissions, and registration policies. Her unit also assists students requesting exceptions to registration policies, changing academic program, and returning to the Graduate College after a leave of absence.

At Illinois, Spark completed her B.S. in Business Administration with a concentration in Organizational Administration in 2003, her Ed.M. degree in Education, Organization, and Leadership with a concentration in Higher Education Administration in 2008, and her Ph.D. in Education Policy, Organization, and

Leadership with a concentration in Global Studies in Education in 2017. She began her career as the Assistant to the Director for the Graduate and Professional Admissions and Academic Support Unit in the Office of the Registrar in 2004, and assisted with the transition of the unit to the Graduate College in 2005. Since joining the Graduate College, she has also served as the Assistant Director and the Director of the Graduate and Professional Admissions unit.

Robert Watkins - University of Texas, Austin



Robert Watkins has been in the field of international education for 40 years, all spent at The University of Texas at Austin. Member of AACRAO, NAFSA, and EAIE, he chaired the NCAA International Student Records Committee 2002-11 and served on the AACRAO Board as Vice President for International Education 2009-12. He has been involved with the AACRAO EDGE project from its inception and is one of the members of the International Education Standards Council (IESC) which provides credential advice found in EDGE. He is a frequent presenter at AACRAO and NAFSA conferences.

Employment/Immigration Panelists

Nancy Katz - Evaluation Service, Inc.



Nancy Katz has over twenty-five years of experience in international credential evaluation and international admissions. Her background includes working at academic institutions and private, not-for-profit organizations. Nancy's expertise is the evaluation of all levels of education and higher education majors from educational systems around the world. Nancy is known for her extensive background in authoring and making presentations at national and international conferences, hosting and organizing seminars and workshops on such topics as: Education in South Asia (India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh), The Middle East, Basics of Credential Evaluation and How to Detect Altered and Forged Documents. In addition, she is the co-author of the publication, *The Educational System of Thailand*(2000) and a frequent contributor to a number of publications on international credential evaluation, including, most recently, the *AACRAO Electronic Database for Global Education (EDGE)*.

Lynn Shotwell – Council for Global Immigration (CFGI)



Lynn Shotwell is an experienced association leader and advocate for immigration reform. She currently serves as the Executive Director of the Council for Global Immigration (CFGI), the world's leading network dedicated to advancing employment-based immigration. CFGI is an affiliate of the Society for Human Resource Management, the world's largest society of HR professionals. Passionate about advocating sensible policies to promote the global exchange of talent and ideas in the 21st Century economy, Lynn has been an active leader in a number of organizations. She is past-chair of the Alliance for International Exchange, and currently serves on the European Commission Expert Group on Economic Migration, the B20 Employment and Education Task Force, the Business Advisory Group of the Global Forum on Migration and Development, and the editorial board for the *Journal for Migration and Human Security*. She has testified before the US Congress, United Nations, World Trade Organization and has appeared on numerous television and radio shows.

Symposium Participants

William Bellin – ECE



William Bellin is in his tenth year working as an evaluator for ECE. He's presented at numerous seminars and contributed to a variety of publications including as the author of the recent publication on the educational system of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Prior to working with ECE, Bill taught in the Milwaukee Public School system, South Korea, and Vietnam. He holds degrees in Linguistics and Education.

Spencer Berk – Hood College



Spencer Berk is the assistant director of Graduate Admission and designated school officer at Hood College. Spencer joined Hood College with a strong background in admission and higher education. Spencer started his academic career as an Academic Advisor with University of Maryland University College.

Spencer then moved on to Capitol Technology University where he served in various admission roles over six years.

Before coming to Hood College, Spencer gained business experience as a banker with Wells Fargo Bank. Spencer's academic accomplishments include a bachelor's degree in art history from University of Maryland and an MBA from Capitol Technology University with membership in the honorsociety of Sigma Beta Delta. In his spare time, Spencer is a goalie for an ice hockey team and enjoys taking his Norwegian Elk Hound on long walks.

Currently, as the assistant director of Graduate Admission and designated school officer at Hood College, Spencer helps both international and American applicants through the admission process. He is the admission liaison for the following programs: Computer Science, M.S., Information Technology, M.S., Cybersecurity Certificate, Business Administration, MBA, Doctorate of Business Administration, Doctorate of Organizational Leadership, Organizational Management Certificate, Financial Management Certificate and Accounting Certificate.

Shamsh Chowdhury – SpanTran



Shamsh Chowdhury is an international credentials evaluator with a background in writing, analysis, and education. With roots in New York City and Boston, Shamsh is currently an evaluations associate and training manager at SpanTran: The Evaluation Company.

Peggy Hendrickson – Transcript Research



Peggy has been working in international education for 15 years, starting in a large public research university before working in the private sector and later starting her own evaluation company. She has degrees in British Literature, Marketing, and Women's Studies.

Peggy also presents at NAFSA and AACRAO state, regional, and national conferences, and has participated in poster fairs on a variety of topics, co-written ad hoc conference workshops. She has also presented at NAFSA CEP workshops as a NAFSA Trainer Corps member among others. In addition, Peggy is also a Charter Member of The Association for International Credential Evaluation Professionals (TAICEP), the editor for the TAICEP Talk Newsletter, a contributing author to the NAFSA Online Guide to Educational Systems around the World, the AACRAO Electronic Database for Global Education (EDGE), the NAFSA wRAP-Up Newsletter, the 2010 AACRAO International Guide, the NAFSA Guide to International Student Recruitment, and others

Abigail Nanquil – SpanTran



Abigail Nanquil is currently an evaluations associate and translations project manager at SpanTran: The Evaluation Company. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in International Studies and a Master of Arts in East Asian Studies, and has studied the Japanese language since 2008.

Rafael Nevarez – U.S. Department of Education



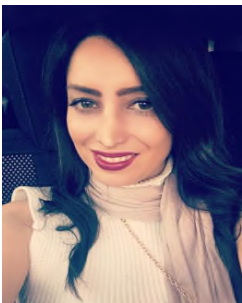
Rafael Nevárez is an International Education Specialist at the U.S. Department of Education. As part of his work on policy matters related to higher education and academic mobility, Rafael serves as the U.S. representative to the European Network of Information Centers (ENIC) and as a vice president on its steering committee, the ENIC Bureau. Rafael is a native of Sacramento, California.

Kevin Rolwing – World Education Services (WES)



Kevin F. Rolwing, Quality Assurance Director at World Education Services (WES), has more than 20 years of experience and extensive knowledge of international academic credential evaluation issues. He specializes in the educational systems of Latin America and Western Europe, and has presented his research in articles and at many national and international academic and professional conferences, including NAFSA, ACCRAO, NAGAP and EAIE conferences. He also regularly provides workshop training to university admissions officers and other professionals on various international education topics and issues, including profiles of educational systems, academic credential recognition and verification, diploma mills, transfer credit procedures and the Bologna Process. Kevin was a past participant in the Fulbright International Education Administrators Program in France, and the DAAD Germany Today program for US and Canadian International Educators.

Angela Sreckovic – ASCP



Experienced Manager with a demonstrated history of working in the non-profit organization management industry. Highly experienced in development and implementation of international credentialing programs that focus on laboratory and health workers and overall patient safety. Excellent breadth of experience in foreign aid programs and strong negotiation and presentation abilities in a variety of languages and cultural environments. Strong familiarity with geopolitical circumstances in a variety of European, Asian, African, Caribbean and South American countries.

Sarah Stivison – Global Credential Evaluators



Sarah A. Stivison has been in higher education for over 20 years, spending the majority of those involved in international admissions/credential evaluation. She now works for Global Credential Evaluators as a Senior Evaluator. She has been involved in many NAFSA and AACRAO conferences (attending and presenting), contributed to the NAFSA Online Guide to Educational Systems Around the World and conducted outside credential evaluation workshops/training sessions in conjunction with Robert Watkins of UT Austin. She holds degrees from the University of Dallas (MBA) and the University of Arkansas Monticello (BA/BS).

Monika Wojciechowski – College of Staten Island/CUNY



For the past fourteen years, I have been involved in many aspects of international education including; admission, recruitment, international credit evaluations, student advising and services, programming, marketing and technology first at St. Joseph's College, then at East Carolina University and finally now at the College of Staten Island/CUNY. I graduated summa cum laude from Hunter College/CUNY where I received a bachelor's degree in Romance Languages and I have a master's degree in Higher Education Administration from Baruch College, School of Public and International Affairs. I am also a graduate of East Carolina University Chancellor's Leadership Academy and the NAFSA Academy. I served on the NCAIE Board, UNCIP Marketing Committee and as a Co-chair of the Study New York Consortium Programming Committee. Last year I was selected to participate in the Fulbright International Education Administrators Seminar in Japan.