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IECA<sup>+</sup>

# INSIGHTS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE INDEPENDENT EDUCATIONAL CONSULTANTS ASSOCIATION



## Calendar

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

**December 3**  
Global College Conversations:  
University of Oxford

**December 8**  
Webinar: NCAA: Inside Secrets of  
Effective Athletic Counseling

**December 10**  
Global College Conversations:  
John Cabot University

**December 14**  
College Conversations: University  
of Maryland

**December 17**  
Global College Conversations:  
Globe Business College Munich

**December 25**  
Christmas Day: National office  
closed

**January 1**  
New Year's Day: National  
office closed

**January 7**  
Webinar: The Future of NACAC and  
IECs with NACAC CEO Angel B.  
Pérez and President Todd Rinehart

Global College Conversations:  
Newcastle University

**January 21-22**  
IECA Professional Member  
Retreat (Virtual)

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December 2020/January 2021

## 10 Ways the Pandemic is Likely to Change IEC Work in the Future

By Mark H. Sklarow, IECA CEO



With the COVID-19 pandemic, workers are gaining a new appreciation for some changes they seem unlikely to want to give up. Here are 10 that IECs may want to consider.

colleagues, but virtual tours will not go away. IECs will have no excuse for not having visited remote campuses or smaller schools, as they will be available for touring online.

### 1. More Work from Home

Some IECs are already giving up their offices as they discover that space in an office building may not be as necessary as they thought. They've discovered over the last seven months that working from home can be just as productive and save thousands of dollars in rent payments.

Others are likely to maintain their offices, but experts predict they will use them less. No meeting scheduled until 2:00 p.m.? Why not work from home for the first part of the day, where the kitchen, deck, porch, and shoeless comforts offer a nicer start?

This also means more client parents will be working from home, allowing them greater opportunities to participate in the process, for better or worse.

### 2. Less Travel

Virtual tours have exploded and today practically every college, prep school, and program either developed their own such tour or created virtual visits for IECA. Sure, group tours will return, and we know IECs love the ability to travel with



Travel industry experts think regular business travel won't fully return until 2024. By then, many IECs will have learned to rely on other information-gathering opportunities.

### 3. Immunity Passports

In the next year, many expect that those who are immune to COVID-19—either because they had the coronavirus or through a vaccine—will be afforded greater freedom to travel and engage in face-to-face meetings. Often referred to as “immunity passports,” it's really a fancy way to say: before you see a family, meet with an admissions director, or

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# President's Letter

## A Resolution Challenge

**resolution** (noun): a firm decision to do or not to do something.

Years ago, I gave up on making **resolutions** when starting a new year. It wasn't because I didn't believe I could follow through on these goals; it was because I'd lose focus on them a few weeks into January. The importance of weight loss, more frequent reading for pleasure, and revisiting my Spanish course on Duolingo were soon replaced by more pressing priorities in my life. Kids, work, and the day-to-day chaos of life in general quickly pushed aside any hope of checking off those **resolutions**. But, after traversing the challenges of the past year during the pandemic, I'm reconsidering my ban on **resolutions**. In fact, I'm planning to not only **resolve** to do things, but I'm actually going to hold myself accountable for doing them.

So, why the change?

If 2020 has taught us anything, it's that things can change in a minute. The way we've always done things can be upended due to details outside our control. **Resolutions** by their very nature are the things of which we have an incredible amount of control. They are the things that, if we allow them to, can take priority in our lives. They're what we probably should have focused on beyond the first month of each new year, but we set aside in favor of the things we'd prioritized over them.

Now, don't get me wrong—my family and work will still be a priority in my life this year. However, my decision to **resolve** to do other meaningful things, and to actually stick with them, is the difference. Within our association I frequently witness members resolving to grow their businesses, to increase their knowledge on topics relevant to our work as IECs, and to support their students and families in the very best way. This year I'd like to issue a **resolution** challenge to all of you—my IECA colleagues, friends on the school, college

and program side, and outside supporters of our association. I'd like us all to **resolve** to look outside of our personal priorities and think of how we might better support others around us. Let's consider the ways in which we are stronger as a collective group supporting families through significant transitions and think about how we can grow in our professional capacity together.

If you're looking for some inspiration for how you might follow through on this **resolution**, here are just a few examples from this past year:

- Holly Ramsey (IL) recognized a need amongst members who work with homeschooled students for a space to share information and best practices. She went on to create the IECA Homeschooling Affinity Group.

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IECA<sup>+</sup> INSIGHTS

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## In Focus

### Service Award Honorees



Gail Curran



Jennie Kent



Joanne LaSpina



Jeff Levy



Marilyn O'Toole

The Service Award recipients were selected from among members in a leadership position who contributed in a long-term effort to the association during the pandemic, and were presented at IECA's 2020 Virtual Town Hall in August.

# IECA Fall Conference: Access to Content through December 30



Thanks to the over 650 IEC participants and over 400 school/college/program/vendors who attended our Fall Conference! It was great to see and interact with so many colleagues even though we couldn't be together in person. Among the many highlights was the presentation of the inaugural IECA Making a Difference Awards, recognizing those who have, through unprompted meaningful gestures, made a difference in the work of our members. Recipients are individuals selected from the general membership who are not currently serving in a leadership role in IECA, such as board members and committee chairs. If you were registered for the Fall Conference and missed the live presentation on Friday, be sure to log on to your conference dashboard and watch the recording to hear more about our winners! Honorees include:

- Katherine Andersen
- Stacey Cunitz
- Eric Endlich
- Heidi Molbak
- Sydney Montgomery
- Holly Ramsey
- David Stoeckel

Congratulations to all of the awardees and thank you for your support of IECA colleagues!



The Exhibit Hall (College Fair, School Exchange, Therapeutic Swap, and Vendors) will be open 24/7 through December 14 for all attendees. ACE talks, breakouts (including Q&A), and the College Showcase will be available to conference registrants through December 30.

Everyone who attended the IECA conference can earn CE hours. Visit the conference website for detailed instructions.



The Fall Conference featured welcome videos from a number of our Southern California Regional Groups, in recognition of the original plan to meet in San Diego. Pictured above, Joyee Lin, chair of the IECA Orange County group, welcomes attendees on day two of the conference. Other greetings came from San Diego and two of the Los Angeles groups.

## From Some of our Attendees...

We were pleased to receive so much positive feedback from conference participants:

"A big thanks to you and the IECA staff for coordinating such a quality virtual event, both from a vendor and attendee perspective. Although I sorely miss seeing colleagues in person, you have created the next best thing!" —Brooke Daly

"The session brought out specific information to help me support my students applying to boarding schools, and when working with seniors and juniors who are questioning the college planning process in the midst of the COVID crisis. I appreciated hearing directly from the admissions people; Very helpful, real-time information." —Carol Kinlan

"The Keynote [ACE] Speakers provided welcome enthusiasm and optimism, reenergizing us to continue on the course of making a positive impact after a busy year of uncertainties and pivots for everyone." —Sandy Arahamian

## Save the Date: IECA Spring Conference


May 3–5, 2021

Join us for the IECA Spring Conference, scheduled to be held in Detroit, Michigan, May 3–5, 2021. There remains a possibility that the conference will be held virtually, with a decision expected this winter. This is the largest conference for the independent educational consultant community.

We look forward to seeing you there!





A close-up photograph of a woman with reddish-brown hair and a young child with blonde hair, both smiling and lying on their stomachs on a grassy surface. The woman is on the left, and the child is on the right. The background is softly blurred, showing green foliage.

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take part in any live event, don't be surprised if you need to either prove your immunity or demonstrate that you are medically cleared.

The purpose of these medical clearances is not to keep the attendee safe; rather, it's to assure the other conference or meeting attendees that it is fine to participate because everyone in the room has been medically cleared.

## 4. Video Meetings Will Be the Norm

The era of live meetings with students may be a thing of the past. Students have gotten used to learning, interacting, testing, and meeting via computer with all of its conveniences (meeting in pajamas!) and may resist a return to drive-to sessions with their IEC. IECs may discover that virtual meetings cut down on missed sessions and wasted time.

In addition, helping students to master Zoom-based interviews may become a regular part of the process for school and college consultants. What to wear, what to have in the background, and their demeanor on camera may all play a greater role as live, campus-based interviews become less common (but may, on the other hand, become a clear demonstration of student interest and intent).

## 5. Varied Work Schedule

Experts tell us that the 9-5 work schedule has gone out the window. Increasingly, work-from-home employees have created flexibility in their work schedules. At an office, if you are free from 10:00–11:30 a.m., you sit at your desk and work. Today, you can go out for a run, put away your delivered groceries, and perhaps reschedule that morning meeting for 5:30 p.m. Look for schedules to remain flexible and consider your own body's peak work times to maximize your work hours.

## 6. Greater Equity for Women

While in the short term COVID-19 is disproportionately impacting women's gains in the workforce and leading many to reduce hours or leave their jobs entirely, there is reason to be hopeful. Greater work from home and flexibility in work hours may, in the longer term, create a more equitable space for women, who have traditionally been marginalized in the workforce when child-rearing begins to interfere with the 9-5 workday. We may also see an increased role for men in child-rearing.

## 7. Greater Reliance on E-Commerce

IECs who gather checks from clients and head over to the bank to make deposits are discovering the time-saving ease of e-commerce. More IECs are accepting credit cards or electronic fund transfers for payments. They are banking with cell phones and ordering office supplies on their laptops. The future promises more advancements, more ease, and quick adoption.

## 8. Conference Flexibility


We have heard from members over and over: "I can't wait until we can meet in person again." Yet, as web-based conferences

improve, develop, and offer an ease of participation, we may hear that less and less. Conferences that allow participants to attend every session—rather than choose one for each time slot—plus avoid air travel, hotel bills, and diet-busting cocktail parties, may grow increasingly common. Or more likely, organizations like IECA will explore varied formats and options so that members can learn in the style they appreciate most. In-person conferences are unlikely to go away, but they are likely to evolve with remote options.

## 9. Streamlined Staff

For many IEC practices, their first non-consultant staff member is the office manager/office assistant who handles appointments and billing, and takes inquiry calls. As technology replaces the need for some tasks and office use decreases, I expect many offices to reduce overhead costs by eliminating this position. The key may be ROI: does this person answering inquiries convert a high percentage of callers into clients? This measure, rather than a 9–5 assistant, may be how IECs will decide about the necessity of such a position.

## 10. Another Baby Boom May be Coming!

All of this staying-at-home has led some experts to anticipate a coming baby boom, helping to assure a growing client base in the 2030s. 

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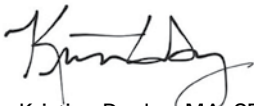
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- Members with the Schools designation were struggling to keep up with the opening plans for boarding schools around the country as a result of the pandemic. Heidi Molbak (LA) stepped up and created a useful "Opening Plans" document that could be updated as campus decisions were made and that members could access as needed.
- After a successful gathering of the IECs Advising College-Bound Athletes Affinity Group at the Atlanta conference in 2019, Katherine Andersen (CA) and David Stoeckel (CA) initiated an ongoing virtual roundtable in 2020 for members to continue their professional development in this arena.

These are just a few of the small but meaningful steps a few of our members have taken to support their peers during these challenging times. As we navigate through the coming months, think about what you can **resolve** to do this year to support your colleagues. Alternatively, what are some of the ways your peers and our association can support you? I'd love to hear from you. As your association president, I **resolve** to work with our board and the IECA staff to ensure that IECA remains an invaluable resource for our members and school, college, and program colleagues...and this year I'm sticking to it.



Kristina Dooley, MA, CEP  
IECA President

## Join us Online for the Professional Member Retreat

January 21-22, 2021

The Professional Member Retreat was created to allow mid-career IECA members to gather and explore business issues that relate to their stage of professional development and to encourage communication and sharing in a relaxed, size-limited environment. Since the retreat began, about 60 professional members have participated annually. The "One Great Idea" discussion, moderated by Mark Sklarow, gives participants a chance to share their own creative, innovative, and successful ideas.

The Retreat is limited to IECA professional members and is particularly focused on the needs of members with five years of experience in the profession. **The presentations and guest speakers are appropriate and valuable for those practicing in all specialty areas:** college, schools, therapeutic, learning disabilities, and international. The focus of the retreat is sharing, group discussion, and special-focused presentations. This year's Retreat will include timely sessions on how to manage a large caseload, how to effectively connect with your audience during the pandemic, business changes from COVID-19, and more.

Retreat registration opens December 15. Visit <https://link.iecaonline.com/retreat> for details and to register.



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# Are Canadian Universities a Good Choice for Your Students?

By Bibi Malek, EdM, IECA (Canada)

Canadian universities are a popular choice for international students for a variety of reasons. These include an enviably high standard of living and quality of life, prestigious universities with relatively high global rankings, lower tuition/room and board costs, better acceptance rates, affordable health insurance, and the fact that Canada is a diverse, welcoming, safe and well-organized country. Hence, looking at Canada as an alternative option to education from one's home country can make good sense for some international students. Obtaining a visa to study at a designated learning institution in Canada is relatively simple and can be completed online.

## Educational Options Abound

Students studying in Canada have a range of choices, the majority being public, from large research institutions like McGill University, University of British Columbia, and University of Toronto, which consistently rank high among top universities worldwide (see *Times Higher Education's* World University Rankings 2021), to the smaller universities like the "Maple League" institutions that make up a consortium of four similar schools in Eastern Canada and Quebec: Mount Allison University, Acadia

University, St. Francis Xavier University, and Bishop's University. The focus of the Maple League is a liberal education for undergraduate students. Canadian universities, as a whole, offer both undergraduate and graduate degrees which pretty much cover the entire spectrum of academic offerings ranging from the sciences, to business and commerce (a very popular undergraduate option), fine arts, humanities, and engineering. Study abroad and other co-curricular programs are available. Bachelor's degrees are generally four years in duration.

## Acceptance Rates are High

Additionally, top Canadian universities have relatively high acceptance rates that vary by faculty. There are programs, however, such as Commerce at Queen's University, Business at Richard Ivey (University of Western Ontario), and Health Sciences at McMaster University that are highly selective, with admission rates in the single digits. Admission requirements vary by institution and are quite transparent, resulting in fewer ineligible students applying haphazardly just in case they might get in. Typically, students are evaluated based on their academic



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transcript from grades 11 and 12. Unlike their US counterparts, Canadian university applications are not essay-intensive, with some exceptions like UBC where essays and a list of activities are required. Essays are, however, becoming more prominent, particularly for commerce and engineering programs. Canadian universities are generally easier to gain admission to than their US counterparts and the process is simpler and much less stressful for applicants given that no letters of recommendation or in-person interviews are required and “demonstrated interest” is never a factor. Some competitive programs, such as UBC’s Sauder School of Business, University of Toronto’s Rotman School of Management, and University of Waterloo’s engineering program, among others, do require an online automated short interview.

## Bilingual Education

It is no wonder that students from across the world seek higher education in this bilingual country where they can study in French or in English. In addition to the province of Quebec, which is Francophone, bilingual study options are available across the country at institutions such as the University of Ottawa and Glendon College at York University. Bilingual studies enrich the students’ educational and cultural experience while also improving future job prospects elsewhere in the world, including in Francophone countries.

## Co-op Education for Experiential Learning

Canadian education is known for its co-op programs, which

can take place locally, nationally, or internationally. This type of experiential learning was initially pioneered by the University of Waterloo and has since become the hallmark of Canadian postsecondary education. For those who take advantage of this on-the-job learning option, they will have the opportunity to work in three or more organizations within their industry while gaining income and experience. For most, this will add an additional year to their program of study and work. However, co-op is also a foot-in-the door for employment opportunities and will help students decide what type of work setting appeals to them most—often even allowing students to further narrow down their educational path. The academic year at Canadian universities begins after Labor Day and ends in late April, allowing for a longer summer break, an added advantage for gaining work experience. For information on work permit programs and eligibility criteria, visit [www.cic.gc.ca](http://www.cic.gc.ca)

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## Finances and Affordability

Tuition fees in Canada are generally lower than those of the US and UK and vary by program. For the 2020/21 academic year, an international student will pay approximately \$50,800 (\$38,100 USD) per year for tuition if enrolled in applied science versus about \$39,600 (\$29,700 USD) if enrolled in the humanities. Given that living costs are generally dollar-for-dollar equivalent with the US, and the fact that the exchange rate of the Canadian dollar is 25 percent lower than the US dollar, education and living costs are quite affordable for international students. Healthcare costs are subsidized by the government, making them very reasonable. Tuition for Canadian citizens and permanent residents, whether residing in Canada or elsewhere, is at a much lower rate and extremely affordable.

## Lifestyle

The majority of Canadian universities offer housing in the first year, after which students move to off-campus housing in the vicinity of the university or in the city where they are attending university. Some move back home and commute to classes. Given the cosmopolitan and peaceful backdrop, the university experience in a Canadian city is more of a European type lifestyle than the typical American university experience where students live on campus, eat together in dining halls, and attend football and basketball games to cheer on their teams. As such, this type of cosmopolitan city life is well-suited for students who are slightly more mature than their peers. Canada and its major cities consistently rank in third place or better in the world for quality of life.

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## An Open Path to Citizenship

Canada is an ideal place for international students to spread their wings and broaden their horizons, especially as they will have an opportunity to work up to 20 hours per week during the academic year and full-time during school breaks. International graduates of Canadian university students may be eligible to transition to permanent residency and eventually to citizenship in Canada, which may be a very attractive option to some.

*Canadian university students may be eligible to transition to permanent residency and eventually to citizenship in Canada, which may be a very attractive option to some.*

## Canada is Welcoming and Embraces Diversity

Canada welcomes those seeking higher education, and many of its largest urban centers, Toronto and Vancouver included, boast a foreign-born population of 40 percent or higher. This multicultural country is very welcoming to students from across the world both in its cities and campuses. International students pay higher tuition rates than domestic students, hence they support the educational institutions they attend while also boosting the economy through their labor, tax payments (if working), and general spending.

## Educational Support Services

Support services make the transition to study in Canada easier and include orientation events, language support, student advising, disability-related accommodations, and career counseling. There are a variety of extracurricular clubs and associations to engage the student in campus life and academics.

## Outdoor Life

For students who are environmentally conscious, and for those who seek active adventure and enjoy spending time outdoors, Canada offers a myriad of experiences. Adventures abound from windsurfing to kayaking, sailing to white water rafting, hiking to mountain climbing, and from spending time in world-class ski resorts to visiting rainforests and pristine national parks. In fact, students in Vancouver can ski and surf the ocean on the same day!

Finally, in Canada, the culture of kindness, tolerance, and inclusion is more the norm than the exception. Nobody asks you "where you are from." It is, therefore, no wonder that more and more students, from across the world, flock to the shores of this safe and beautiful country, which is ranked sixth on the global peace index. Visit [www.EduCanada.ca](http://www.EduCanada.ca), the official government of Canada website, for study in Canada information and to begin your research. 🇨🇦

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# Commitment to the Mission: Returning to Boarding School during a Pandemic

By Korey Lee, IECA Associate (MA)

In the midst of a global pandemic, private and independent schools continue to focus on providing a top-notch education for their students. This goes beyond academics to include a full-on educational experience while also managing health and safety in new and challenging ways. What are the considerations families are using to determine the best school communities for their children in these times, when not only academic success, but even lives, are on the line? What aspects of the school experience have students yearning to return to classrooms and hallways? As independent educational consultants (IECs), understanding these choices amid the new reality of COVID-19 is essential as we look to support families in seeking the best opportunities for their children.

I recently spoke with a student, Vienay Morris, and her mother, Tammy Henderson, to get their

answers to these questions. This family chose a boarding school outside of a large city, as they felt public schools were not the ideal option for their child. Like many families seeking the support of IECs, they recognized the value of private school and were willing to invest resources of time and energy to find the right fit. While this family has access to a well-known scholarship program to assist them in the process, the mother noted, “I do, however, wish I had a personal consultant helping with all the paperwork. It was a very daunting task, but we knew private school was the best for her.” The student and her parents were equally invested in all educational opportunities available to her, no matter what.

**Lee: What influenced your choices regarding in-person learning with the COVID-19 crisis looming?**



Korey Lee,  
Lee Education  
Enlightenment, can be  
reached at [koreyglee@  
gmail.com](mailto:koreyglee@gmail.com)

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**Henderson:** Well, to be honest, my daughter is in her sixth form (senior year) and I know that it's very special to her to complete her last year. It's important for all of us that she can finish out this year. What also influenced me was, I was there as the school began to reopen. Each student had a 14-day quarantine. And I saw all the safety procedures that they put in place. I was very happy and satisfied with the way the school was prepared.

**Morris:** It was important for me to return to school so that I could maintain relationships with friends and classmates. I also want to complete all the things that come with prize day (graduation) in my senior year.

**Lee:** Do you have faith in your school's academic platform and how has it worked for virtual learning in the past?

**Henderson:** Yes, however, I know my daughter needs the structure of the physical classroom to do well. I feel she is more mentally focused in a traditional classroom setting. Help from the teachers is paramount for us and the classroom also gives her accountability.

**Morris:** I didn't like virtual learning. I felt like I was just staring at the screen. I had no connection to my classmates. I also enjoy high school experiences like basketball games, camaraderie with classmates while hanging out on campus, and just being a high school student. It's my senior year and I'm excited to complete all the things that come with that.

**Lee:** Are you happy with what you've heard from your student about how the school is responding to the COVID-19 crisis on campus and within the community?

**Henderson:** At first, I was very worried she was going to get sick. The school has a good plan, I believe. They do daily testing, there are lots of handwashing stations. There's sanitizer everywhere. Because she actually had to quarantine before returning to school, I believe that the school has a very good plan, all things considered.

**Morris:** I was definitely scared at first and I had concerns about getting sick. But having to quarantine for 14 days before returning to school made me feel okay. My school has daily testing, morning health checks, plexiglass all across the school and even in the dining hall, and hand sanitizer everywhere. That has made me feel much more comfortable and safe.

**Lee:** What are your goals for your student academically this year?

**Henderson:** She's a senior this year and I know that she's prepared for all the senior accolades, graduation, and prom, and all the things that she can enjoy with her classmates. I am, however, concerned about returning after Thanksgiving plans, especially with the rising number of cases across the country. But our hopes are for her to return and graduate, be triumphant, and have a great remainder of the school year.

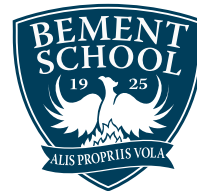
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**Morris:** To be able to maintain great academic standards, keep my college applications organized, and have fun with classmates and actually have graduation.

**Lee:** What's the school like for you now, and what are your plans for the year?

**Morris:** School is different. We do a lot of things outside socially distanced and with masks. I'm excited to be back at school even in the middle of a global pandemic. It is my senior year and I'm ready!

Living in a residential boarding community has been a challenge for my own family over the last couple of months due to the COVID-19 crisis. After having conducted this and other interviews, it confirms my thoughts that schools have to be focused on the welfare of families first. To me, this underscores the importance of student/family-focused residential living.

Initially, I was upset with the decision for students to return to campus. However, I understand how important it is for students to have a sense of normalcy for academic success. I believe that the power of education still exists. The fact that students are eager to still be successful gives me hope. Students and families will overcome the difficulties we are currently facing because they have a bigger goal in mind. For this student and her mother, that goal is graduation and college success. It will definitely take a united front from all of us to make sure that we can help all families reach their goals. That is our mission as IECs. 



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# What's Next? Transitions from Therapeutic Placements

By Jody Dobson, MA, IECA (PA); Ruby Laufer, OTR/L, IECA (NJ); and Allison Letourneau, MA, Associate Head of School for Enrollment Management, The White Mountain School

Independent educational consultants who work with both therapeutic and traditional school placements have noticed interesting trends in both worlds as each learns from the other. Many traditional boarding schools (especially smaller schools) have strong learning support programs. More recently, they have enhanced their on-campus counseling services and encouraged their students to use local therapeutic services where appropriate. At the same time, many therapeutic programs have significantly improved their academic components, implementing teacher-directed learning, augmenting learning supports, and expanding course offerings. Traditional schools are acknowledging the necessity of strong counseling services, and therapeutic programs are recognizing the value of robust academic programming.

For kids who have been successful in therapeutic interventions, these recent trends have provided more alternatives to the question, "What's next?"—including those coming directly from wilderness therapy programs. For the past several months, IECA's Therapeutic Committee has been hosting presentations from boarding schools that have had success with kids from therapeutic placements. Allison Letourneau from The White Mountain School (Bethlehem, NH) was a participant. She writes:

*Small boarding schools have long been attractive options for a wide range of students, including those who have successfully completed a therapeutic program and are professionally recommended to transition to a traditional boarding school. As an admission director who has worked in small boarding schools for a decade and a board member of the Small Boarding School Association (SBSA), it's my belief that there are a growing number of characteristics unique to small boarding schools that create conditions in which these students can thrive.*

*In these small residential communities, students have access to trusted adults who know them well. Given the strong culture of connection in these schools, there are many opportunities for students to engage with adults and peers in multiple facets of their lives. Faculty advisors serve a critical role in supporting and empowering students and serving as conduits through which information can be quickly shared with parents and consultants, preventing kids from "falling through the cracks." The emphasis on building durable relationships strengthens our ability, as educators, to know when and how a student needs to be stretched or supported and the nuances of that decision.*



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Ruby Laufer, Dobson Educational Services, can be reached at [rubyl@comcast.net](mailto:rubyl@comcast.net)



Allison Letourneau can be reached at [Allison.Letourneau@whitemountain.org](mailto:Allison.Letourneau@whitemountain.org)

*continued on page 18*



Our communities are intentionally designed to embrace a holistic approach to serving students. Small boarding schools are deeply committed to the principle that in order for students to take courageous risks—intellectually and otherwise—social and emotional learning must be woven into the fabric of the student experience. Given our size, our schools are well known for their ability to create opportunities for faculty members to speak frequently about individual students, increasing our ability to respond to students' needs quickly, appropriately, and on an individual basis. When asked about the transition from a therapeutic setting to a small boarding school, one of our current students shared,

*"I visited several small boarding schools and, while they all had their own flavor of culture, I felt a palpable and authentic sense of belonging in each community. Small boarding schools have what I need to be successful: a challenging and relevant academic experience, access to academic coaching, a strong sense of community, weekly meetings with my therapist, and opportunities to try new things in a culture free of judgment."*

*Students who have successfully completed a therapeutic program have engaged in deep, meaningful work, work that is anchored in an understanding and awareness of self. As admission directors, we are always in search of key indicators that can predict a student's ability to find success at our schools. In my experience, the breadth and depth of the work in which these students engage*


*during their time in therapeutic programs often prepares them to serve as exemplars and leaders in our communities.*

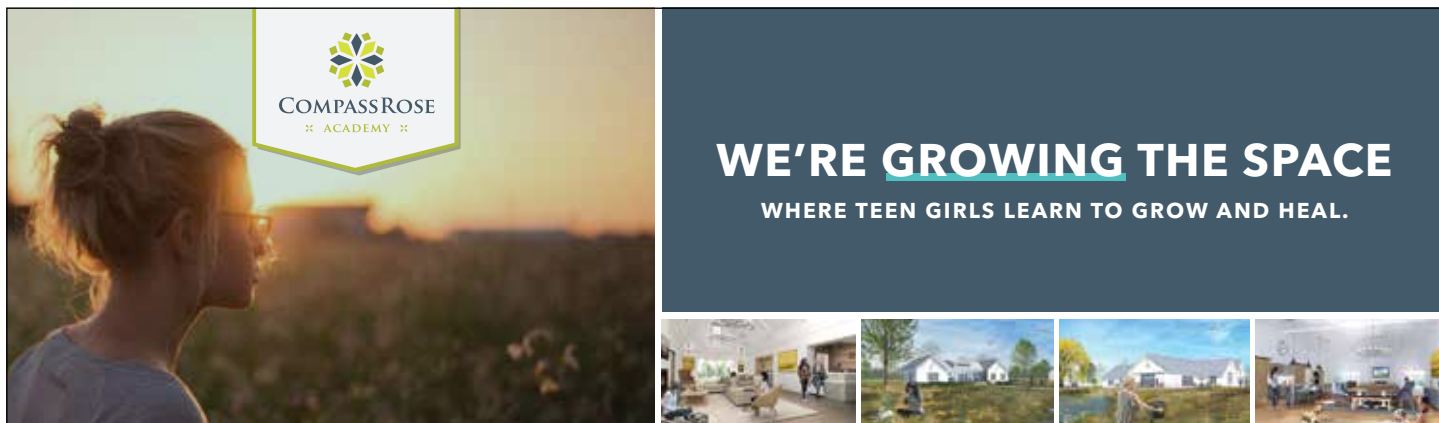
*As unique as the students are who successfully complete therapeutic programs, schools, too, are unique in who they serve best. Direct conversations with small boarding school admission officers provide the best way for IECs to fully capture a school's ability to appropriately support and challenge a student.*

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***...schools, too, are unique in who they serve best. Direct conversations with small boarding school admission officers provide the best way for IECs to fully capture a school's ability to appropriately support and challenge a student.***

---

This is a very exciting time for us to be having these conversations. It is more important than ever to expand the range of options for our clients. Small boarding schools have had increasingly successful experiences with our kids coming from therapeutic programs, and our kids have blossomed in these schools. As schools have become more receptive to our therapeutic kids, they are also recognizing the benefits and richness of having these kids as members of their communities. 



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*Jim Nolan with IECA members Harriet Gershman (Emeritus) and Lynn Hamilton (CA)*

## “Only Concern is for the Student; Only Client is the Parent”

### IECA Founding Member Jim Nolan Reflects on 45 Years in the Profession

Jim Nolan holds a unique position. While several founders of IECA are still practicing members, only Jim Nolan of Philadelphia has been a member, working as an IEC, for all of the association’s 44 years. He recently sat for an interview with IECA CEO Mark Sklarow to reflect on his long career, during which he worked with over 10,000 students.

Like most IECs, Jim moved into a career in consulting after working in college admissions, including undergraduate admissions at the University of Pennsylvania, where he worked when UPenn accepted about half of its applicants.

When he entered the IEC profession, most were advising on boarding school placements, with just a few advising on college placements. More significantly, the “biggest names” were really agents—accepting kickbacks of 15 percent of the first-year tuition and holding contracts with just a limited number of schools.

While the first independent educational consultants were likely operating as far back as the 1920s, Jim became one of about a dozen in a fledgling profession who set out to create an organization focused squarely on ethics as its core mission. Jim

indicated that the association’s founding motto was “Our only concern is the student; our only client is the parent,” a focus that quickly separated what would eventually become IECA from the agents. [Fun fact: the association’s original name was Independent Educational Counselors Association.]

Of course, these founding members soon discovered that it was a challenge to explain this new, unheard of profession to potential clients, and most in the original group were located in a handful of major cities. Jim shares that in the early years, IECA members often took on other assignments, including career advising and trainings for the NBA, NFL, political groups, and more.

Jim noted that the profession has gone through a number of evolutions: the dramatic growth of therapeutic advising in the 1980s to the sustained dominance of college advising since the late ‘80s. One change that Jim spoke of has been one many will recognize: the change in parents who are “more demanding, concern over maximizing their child’s ability to get into a top school, and how much they hover over their children.” As for the students themselves, “more entitled” was his quick description.

*continued on page 22*



Reflecting on new IECs joining the profession and building their practices, Jim advised, "I would say that the best way to market oneself is to provide superior service to one's clients. The surest referral source is satisfied customers." He encouraged IECs to "be knowledgeable, professional, kind, sensitive, honest, and available."

Forty-five years in, Jim recently cleaned out his suburban office, shifting his practice to his downtown Philly residence. Much was discarded. One thing he couldn't part with: the folders containing the records of his favorite students. "I'm still in touch with many of them" Jim said, especially after he was shown on a recent television broadcast.

Jim also notes how his IECA colleagues have become his closest friends, still meeting with them (now via Zoom) on a regular basis, even as many have retired. "These are people I traveled with, including trips to Europe that resulted in more good times than business leads."

As for the future of IECA, Jim hopes that the association will always adhere to those same founding principles, putting ethics at the forefront.

As he looked back on his career, Jim reflected, "I can't imagine doing anything else for the last 45 years. It's been a great ride." 🦋

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## IECA<sup>®</sup> Webinar series

### IECA Webinar Series Update

In 2021, IECA will shift from a series of regularly scheduled webinars on a specific Tuesday at noon, to special webinars scheduled based on current events. This will allow us flexibility to pivot and offer events that will best serve members' needs. For questions or to suggest a future webinar, contact Valerie Vasquez-Guzman at [Valerie@IECAonline.com](mailto:Valerie@IECAonline.com)



# Regional Groups

Admission reps that are interested in meeting with IECA members, virtually or in person, are encouraged to reach out to our Regional Groups. You can find a list of IECA's Regional Groups at [link.iecaonline.com/regional](http://link.iecaonline.com/regional)

## Austin, TX

The Austin Regional Group met in November and discussed many hot topics, including college decisions and trends. Due to COVID-19, this has been an exceptionally challenging year for everyone. Each member shared their takeaways for this application season and how they want to adjust for next year. This group is beyond special as IECs work hard to support one another, especially the newest IECA members/IECs. We will end the year with a Holiday Happy Hour Zoom on Wednesday, December 9. In 2021, the group will continue to meet monthly via Zoom as that is the most efficient and easiest way for us to reach all of our members! It typically does not meet in June and July. For more information about this group, contact Deb Davis Groves ([deb@davisgrovesedu.com](mailto:deb@davisgrovesedu.com)).



## Broward/Palm Beach, FL

On October 2, the Broward/Palm Beach Regional Group had a well-attended Zoom get-together, with 18 IECs convening online. It was a great opportunity to share recent information and ask questions and was, as always, a lively meeting. For more information about this group, contact Susan Groden ([sgrodencs@gmail.com](mailto:sgrodencs@gmail.com)).

## New Jersey

The NJ Regional Group has been busy! Following presentations from WPI, the University of Alabama, SCAD, and Union College, the group migrated to a series of thematic presentations. NJ IECs learned about Canadian universities (thanks to Chris Weber at UBC), athletic recruitment (thanks to Joanne Nora-Trattner at Clear Directions), and BFA programs (thanks to Morgan Theze and Wayne Petro from PACE University). More recently, the group learned about Elon's strategic plan and new majors from VP of Enrollment Greg Zaiser, and met their new NJ Representative.

The group will host Skidmore College in November and then in December will wrap up the year by comparing notes from this admissions season in a virtual "Whine and Wine." If you are an NJ IEC and are not receiving notices of our meetings, please contact Hildie Steiner ([hildie@highfivecollegeprep.com](mailto:hildie@highfivecollegeprep.com)) or Shari Powell ([creatingcollegeoptions@gmail.com](mailto:creatingcollegeoptions@gmail.com)). We'd love to have you join us!

## Philadelphia, PA

The Philadelphia Regional Group has been very busy hosting several virtual events throughout the fall, including presentations by Scott Grzenda, admissions counselor at the University of Delaware; Compass Education Group, on admissions testing; Aaron Gabat, admissions counselor at Bard College at Simon's Rock; and Dave Frohman, associate director of admissions at Ohio Wesleyan University. Upcoming programs will be led by Mark Emblidge, assistant director of undergraduate admissions at the Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT), and Tyra G. Crosbie, admissions counselor at Gettysburg College. For more information about this group, contact Fran Manning-Smith ([fran@steplanners.com](mailto:fran@steplanners.com)).

## San Diego, CA

The San Diego Regional Group has been busy this year. After the group realized they weren't going to be able to meet in person, it quickly shifted to meeting in a virtual setting. San Diego-area IECs reached out to various colleges and educational experts to provide content they could learn about through virtual meetings. Over the past six months, the group has had presentations by DePaul University; Cal Lutheran University; IECA professional member Paul Rivas on study skills; Gonzaga; Saint Mary's College; University of Colorado, Boulder; Denison University; and Peg Keog on financial aid. For more information about this group, contact Jackie Woolley and Gina Gerrato ([ECASDRegionalGroupCoordinator@gmail.com](mailto:ECASDRegionalGroupCoordinator@gmail.com)).

## Europe

The European Regional Group has its general meeting every third Wednesday of the month with an additional monthly session if presenters are secured to share their expertise. Forthcoming programs include presentations by Francis McIvor on Oxbridge and UK admissions; Franklin University; Paul Rivas on "Tools for IECs: How to Help Your Clients with Motivation and Time Management"; and a webinar with Cabot University, in collaboration with the IECA Global Committee. For more information about this group, contact Jean Louis ([jean@louisedconsulting.com](mailto:jean@louisedconsulting.com)) and Yesim Erez ([yesimerez@admittanceeducation.com](mailto:yesimerez@admittanceeducation.com)). 🇹🇷





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## In the News

**Eric Endlich** (MA) was quoted in “Seven Ways to Successfully Land College Scholarships” in *Forbes* on October 13.

**Susan Groden** (FL) was quoted in the segment “Applying for College During COVID-19” on WLRN, the Miami affiliate of NPR, on October 22; “Florida universities are pushed to drop ACT/SAT scores in admission decisions” in the *Orlando Sentinel* on September 11; “How are Florida’s high school seniors going to go to college if they can’t take SAT?” in the *Miami-Herald* on October 15; and “Applications Tank in State That Requires SAT or ACT” in *Inside Higher Ed* on November 9.

**Colleen Ganjian** (VA) was quoted in “Public Schools Will Struggle Even More as Parents Move Kids to Private Ones During the Pandemic” in *Time* on August 31.

**Ibrahim Firat** (TX) was quoted in “Dual credit classes save money, time for college” in the *Laredo Morning Times* on October 16. He was also interviewed for the segment “Should your child repeat a grade amid COVID-19 learning challenges?” on KTRK-TV (ABC 13) on November 6.

**Laurie Kopp Weingarten** (NJ) was quoted in “It’s Not Too Late to Have a Meaningful Gap Year” in *Your Teen* magazine; “How to

Apply to College During COVID-19, According to 5 Experts” on *Brainly.com* on October 6; and “Experts worry that Penn’s test-optional application process will benefit wealthier students” in *The Daily Pennsylvanian* on October 19.

**Belinda Wilkerson** (NC) was interviewed for “How Extracurricular Activities Help Your College Application” on *The University Network* on October 5.

**Kristina Dooley** (OH) was interviewed for “How Letters of Recommendation Help Your College Application” on *The University Network* on October 7.

**IECA** and **Judy Bass** (MD) were referenced in “Picking up after an unsuccessful college experience” in *MultiBriefs* on October 26.

**Carolyn Mulligan** (NJ) was quoted in “How Students Can Mitigate the Effect of a Bad Economy on Career Exploration and Job Search” in the fall 2020 issue of the college planning magazine *NextStepU*.

**Erin Avery** (NJ) wrote the article “How to ‘Demonstrate Interest’ during COVID College Admissions” which appeared in the October 15-21 edition of the *Two River Times*.



## Initiatives

**Heidi Molbak** (LA) was selected as a “Person to Watch” in the twice-exceptional and cognitive diversity movement by *2enews.com* and was featured in the fall 2020 issue of *Variations2e* magazine, citing “It is a testament to your leadership and accomplishments in this field that you have been selected for this recognition.” *Variations2e* and *2eNews.com* provide high-level information and resources about cognitive diversity and twice-exceptional (2e) education.

International ACAC is engaging in an organizational change process to improve its effectiveness, particularly around creating a diverse, inclusive, equitable, and socially just organization. The Change Workgroup will play a key advisory role in helping facilitate and guide the change process. IECA Board member **Laura O’Brien Gatzionis** (Greece) was named to the Change Workgroup in October 2020.

Congratulations to **Melinda Kelly** (Associate, Ohio) whose volunteer work in Southern Ohio has led to her selection as president of the Cincinnati Rotary Club. Kelly will be that organization’s first Black president.

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## Irvin W. Katz Award Recognizes Jo Leonard

*The Irvin W. Katz Award is presented each year by the IECA Foundation. It was created to honor consultants for their volunteer work with organizations providing educational opportunities to children. Irv Katz was a beloved IECA consultant who worked passionately for the good of children.*

*This year, the IECA Foundation is delighted to present the Katz Award to IECA professional member Jo Leonard for her work with the R.J. Leonard Foundation, an organization she founded in memory of her father, who passed away in 2006.*

"Robert James Leonard, my dad, was a successful teacher and entrepreneur who had a passion for knowledge and education, as well as the tenacity necessary to build a successful business from very little. His passion, the decisions that he made, and the opportunities that he grabbed have inspired me throughout my life and still do today. In August 2008, motivated by both his passions and the support that he offered to me throughout

his life, I launched the R. J. Leonard Foundation (RJLF) in memory of him.

The organization offers education and life planning, mentorship, and extensive financial support to youth aging out of the foster care system so that they are playing on the same field as their more fortunate peers and are able to become self-sufficient and independent, free from poverty for the rest of their lives. I am proud of the work we have done to educate, mentor, and inspire this highly at-risk population, for whom the probability of success after aging out is exceptionally low.

Since our launch 11 years ago, we have worked with 21 Fellows, and we have watched some amazing success stories as they have launched into self-sufficiency." 🙌



## A Student Speaks

*By Masuma Islam Lonczak, a 2010 Graduate of Sisters Circle in Baltimore*



"I moved from Bangladesh to the US with my parents and sister, Makruma (also now a graduate of Sisters Circle). At the time, I was placed one grade level back because I knew very little English. Everything was new and different.

As a young woman, growing up I often struggled to find myself. I struggled to fit in with other students because of my social class status, and at times felt unseen and didn't know my place in society as a woman of color. But with Sisters Circle by my side, I was given the opportunity to meet other incredible women at various events, such as career panels where women in diverse professions talked about their work. I met so many mentors within our network who are making positive differences in people's lives.

Today, I'm a more confident independent woman because I know I matter and my place in society matters. It was my experience

with Sisters Circle from early adolescence to young womanhood that truly inspired me to pick my major in college and my career in diversity education at Johns Hopkins University.

Sisters Circle has been there for every milestone of my life and my success today has a direct connection with this loving community. With mentors by my side—those who truly believed in me and directed me to resources along the way—I was able to get to places I never thought existed for someone like me."

*Sisters Circle received a grant from the IECA Foundation in 2019. They provide long-term mentoring to foster meaningful and sustainable change in the lives of girls and young women in Baltimore. As early as middle school, Sisters Circle motivates students to create a vision for their own future by providing career exploration workshops, exposure to professional role models and internship opportunities. They work with students to make intentional decisions about their future, define success for themselves, and choose their own path.* 🙌





# Introductions

## Please Welcome IECA's New Professional Members



**Frank Bauer** (China) has been an IEC for six years. Previously, he was a postdoc and guest researcher in mathematics at leading universities, including Harvard University,

Max Plack Institute (Germany), and Fudan University (China), among others.

Bauer earned a master's degree in physics from University Leipzig and a PhD in mathematics from the university's Max Planck Institute for Mathematics in the Sciences. He has published many mathematical research articles, including applied work on disease-spreading models.

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Specialty: C*



**Chris Bell** (CO) has been an IEC for three years and was an associate member. He has more than 25 years of professional experience in higher education. Previously, he was a

high school English teacher.

Bell earned an MS in student affairs in higher education from Colorado State University. He attended the 2018 IECA Summer Training Institute, is a member of NCAG, NACAC, and ASCA, and serves on the board of College Consultants of Colorado.

*Chris Bell, MS  
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Specialty: C*



**Jennifer (Jenny) Cochran** (NV) has been an IEC for five years and was an associate member. Previously, she was owner of Integrated Educational

Consulting and a high school director of college and career counseling.

Cochran earned an MAT from Sierra Nevada University and holds credentials as a secondary science teacher. A member of LDA and an AP coordinator for the College Board, Cochran is working to become an expert in college placements for LD/ND students.

*Jennifer (Jenny) Cochran, MAT  
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**Marcy Beatty** (CT) has been an IEC for four years and was an associate member. Previously, Beatty worked with Madison Youth and Family Services, managing

strategic planning, grant writing, and community asset-building.

Beatty holds a BA in government from St. Lawrence University. She earned secondary school teaching certification and a Certificate in College Counseling with Distinction from UCLA Extension. Beatty serves on the IECA College Committee and volunteers with A Better Chance (ABC).

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www.college-matters.com  
Specialty: C*



**Peter Chi** (South Korea) has been an IEC for 14 years. He holds an MA in computing in education from Columbia University and a Certificate in College Counseling

from UCLA Extension.

When he's not counseling students, he can be found at his favorite sushi restaurant or playing League of Legends. The interests he shares with his students are just one of the many examples of his ability to build meaningful relationships with them.

*Peter Chi, MA  
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**Jay Khang** (WA) has been an IEC for 15 years. Currently with Hampton Tutors, he is also co-founder of Pathway Consulting in Seoul, Korea.

Khang moved from CA to South Korea in high school and then graduated from the University of Wisconsin, Madison with a BA in economics.

In 2010, he was honored with a Commander-in-Chief Citation (Republic of Korea Army) and granted dual citizenship upon honorable discharge. Khang volunteers for Another Way of Seeing.

*Jay Khang  
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www.hamptontutors.com  
Specialty: C*



**Mary Killay Lavayen** (VA) has been an IEC for 12 years. Previously, she worked at The Foundation Ponce de Leon in Madrid and Georgetown

University's Center for Intercultural Education & Development.

Lavayen earned a master's from the School for International Training's Graduate Institute in Brattleboro, Vermont and a Certificate in Leadership Coaching from Georgetown.

She volunteers with Supporting the Emotional Needs of the Gifted and is a member of Washington Independent Services for Educational Resources.

*Mary Killay Lavayen, MA  
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Specialty: S*



**Liz Marx** (CA) has been an IEC for seven years. Previously, she was director of college counseling for Collegewise.

Marx worked as a casting director for 20 years and then, ready for a new challenge, earned her College Counseling Certificate from UCLA Extension. Now, instead of Broadway debuts, she helps students achieve success at college.

Marx holds a BA from Wesleyan University and is a member of WACAC. She co-authored Collegewise's *Summer Planning Guide*.

*Liz Marx  
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**Kathryn Stuart** (SC) has been an IEC for three years and was an associate member. Previously, she worked as a school counselor and as an adolescent

and family therapist.

Stuart earned an MEd in clinical counseling from The Citadel. She attended the 2020 IECA Summer Training Institute and is a member of NACAC and SACAC.

Stuart is vice president of a local business association, a Leadership Columbia graduate, and a Big Brothers/Big Sisters volunteer.

*Kathryn Stuart, MEd, LPC  
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Specialty: C*



**Rebecca (Becca) Stuart-Orlowski** (CA) has been an IEC for nine years and was an associate member. She has worked for BosonEd since 2016. Previously, Stuart-

Orlowski was a professional jazz dancer, teacher, and choreographer and a special education/deaf education teacher.

Stuart-Orlowski earned a BA in communicative disorders from San Diego State University and a Specialized College Counseling Certificate from UCSD Extension.

Stuart-Orlowski supports the CA Homeschool Network and is a member of NACAC and WACAC.

*Rebecca Stuart-Orlowski  
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**Carolyn Tiemann** (Singapore) has been an IEC for 17 years and was an associate member. Before becoming an IEC, she was an editor at

Xinhua News Agency and *The Wall Street Journal*, a communication specialist at Booz Allen, and an investment research editor at Citigroup.

Tiemann holds a BA in journalism from the University of Missouri, Columbia. She attended the 2009 IECA Summer Training Institute.

*Carolyn Tiemann  
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**Jason Vallozzi** (PA) has been an IEC for three years and was an associate member. Previously, he was a managing consultant with Helbing and Associates and

held various admissions positions with Triangle Tech.

Vallozzi earned a BA in communications from the University of Pittsburgh. He is a member of NACAC, PACAC, National Résumé Writers Association, and National Career Development Association.

Vallozzi coordinates IECA's Regional Group for OH, MI, and western PA and is a member of the Finance Committee.

*Jason Vallozzi  
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Specialty: C*

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**Elizabeth (Betsy) Veidenheimer (MA)** has been an IEC for four years and was a student and associate member. Prior to founding Lantern College

Counseling with her business partner, Jennifer Stephan (MA), she worked in communications and marketing in the financial services industry and held senior leadership positions in non-profits.

Veidenheimer earned an MBA from UNC-Chapel Hill and a College Counseling Certificate with Distinction from UCLA Extension. She volunteers with Wellesley Connects to counsel first-gen students on their college search.

*Elizabeth (Betsy) Veidenheimer, MBA*  
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**Ruth Warburg (CA)** has been an IEC as well as a community volunteer, sitting on multiple non-profit boards, for over 22 years.

Warburg holds undergraduate degrees from the University of Rochester and Yale, where she also earned a graduate degree, and took college counseling courses at UC San Diego Extension.

Warburg is a member of NACAC, WACAC, and AICEP and a West Coast contributor to *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Getting into Top Colleges*.

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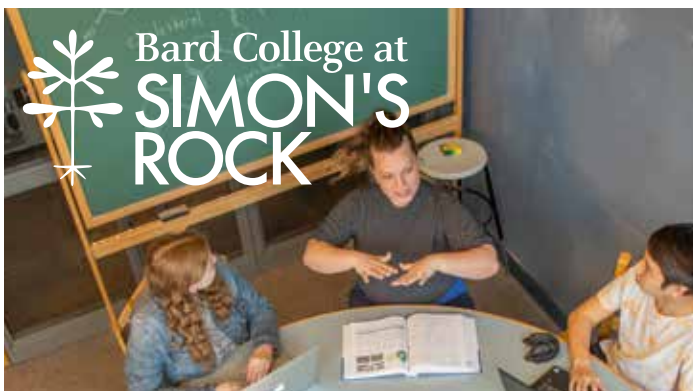
**Dr. Yuh sien Wu (VA)** has been an IEC for 12 years. Previously, she worked as a senior manager at K12 Inc. She has experience teaching at American, George Mason, and

High Point Universities.

Wu earned a PhD in business administration from the University of Missouri and an EdM in human development and psychology from Harvard University. She is a member of NACAC and the author of *Unlocking the Truth of Social Skill*.

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# Insights Moves to Quarterly Schedule

Please note our new quarterly schedule for *Insights*. The journal will now be produced four times per year (Winter, Spring, Summer, and Fall issues) and mailed to members in February, May, August, and November. Email [Insights@IECAonline.com](mailto:Insights@IECAonline.com) with any questions or to receive our submission guidelines and deadlines.



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## Insights Through the Years

As Insights transitions from a bimonthly newsletter into a quarterly journal in 2021, we thought you might enjoy seeing the progression over the years.

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