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IECA<sup>+</sup><sub>TM</sub>

# INSIGHTS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE INDEPENDENT EDUCATIONAL CONSULTANTS ASSOCIATION

## Calendar

**Visit the Member Network  
for the most up-to-date  
information on IECA events.**

### October 5

College Conversations:  
Gonzaga University

### October 13

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

### October 23

Associate & Student Members  
Virtual Roundtable

### November 10

Webinar: ACT Changes: What  
We Know Now

### November 16–20

IECA Virtual Fall Conference

### November 26–27

IECA office closed for  
Thanksgiving holiday

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October/November 2020

## Helping Our Members Succeed and Thrive, No Matter the Challenges

*By Mark H. Sklarow, IECA CEO*



Our new membership year, IECA's 44th year as a professional association, began on July 1, 2020. In a year when the vast majority of professional associations are seeing declining membership numbers and significant revenue loss,

we began our new year on firm financial footing with a 12 percent **increase** in membership over the past six months. What accounts for this success? In a word: value.

Over its 40-plus years, IECA membership has been the gold standard for the profession of independent educational consulting. We are the largest organization representing IECs in the world, with more than 2,300 members hailing from nearly every US state and more than 25 countries worldwide.

Each year, IECA sponsors dozens of campus tours and educational events, including two national conferences, our Summer Training Institute, retreats, symposia, and webinars. We believe one of our primary responsibilities is to keep members connected and we do so through our regional groups, affinity groups, mentor program, online Member Network, and numerous other networking opportunities.

When faced with obstacles, IECA rises to the challenge through our amazing corps of volunteer leaders working with our professional staff. Thanks to the strength of our member community and our national office's driving focus on supporting you, our members, we have made it through uncertainty and adversity over the past year and a half.



On March 11, 2019, the day the Varsity Blues Scandal broke, many IECA members voiced to me their concern that this scandal would be the end of the IEC profession. I was with many of our members in Atlanta on that fateful day. I met by phone with IECA staff that morning and we had one question: Right this minute, what do our members need from us?

*continued on page 5*

## President's Letter

# Finding Thankfulness in Challenging Times

As we approach the time of year when we focus on what we're most **thankful** for in our lives, I'm going to say something that might surprise many: I am **thankful** for the year 2020. That's right. While others would likely not use the word "**thankful**" to describe what has been one of the most difficult and emotionally trying years in the lives of many people, I'm going to argue that it fits. Being home with my family for most of the year has given me the opportunity to see my children grow—physically, socially, and emotionally—right before my eyes. We have had serious conversations about the effects of the pandemic on our world, and

meaningful discussions about the issues of race deeply impacting the US. I am **thankful** to have had the chance to hit the reset button on priorities and to sharpen my focus on what truly matters in my life. I am **thankful** for the reminder this has given me to focus on my own personal health, something that I'd pushed aside for a decade as a working mom of young children. In turn, my dog is **thankful** for the multiple daily walks he is getting now that I am working from home again.

In my work as an IEC, I am **thankful** to be able to support families and students struggling with the uncertainty that is impacting the education landscape due to COVID-19. They have been **thankful** to me for reminding them to focus on what they can control and not on the unknown. When I meet with my students I am reminded that teenagers really are amazing, and I am **thankful** that I have

the chance to work with them each day. Each one is different and I am **thankful** that I get to see the current world through their fresh eyes. This has given me the opportunity to hear different perspectives about the impact of the many issues 2020 has brought to the forefront. For this I am **thankful**.

As an IECA member, I have been **thankful** over and over throughout this past year for the incredible colleagues we have within our association who have stepped up to support one another in these difficult times. During our first Virtual IECA Town Hall in August, I was **thankful** that I could publicly acknowledge—with our newly created IECA Service Award—just a few of these members who have gone above and beyond to help their IECA colleagues: Gail Curran, Jennie Kent,

*continued on page 6*



Kristina Dooley

## IECA<sup>+</sup> INSIGHTS

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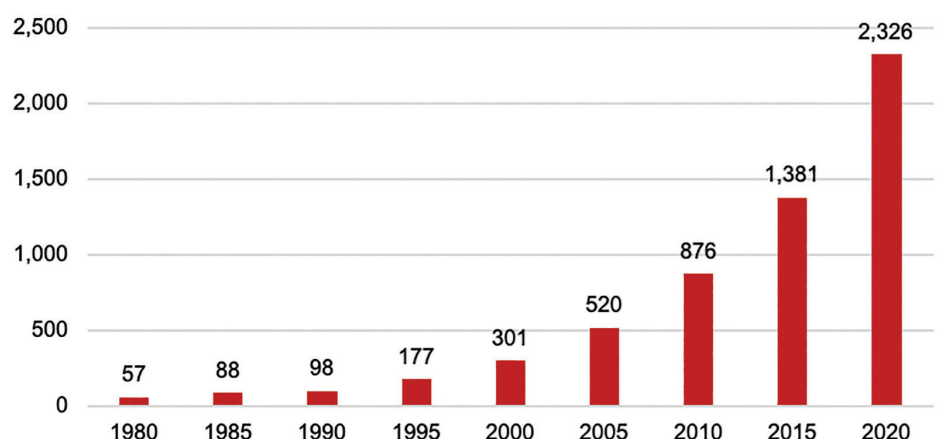
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## In Focus

IECA's Membership Growth 1980-2020  
(Includes all membership levels)





# Join Us for the IECA (Virtual) Fall Conference

Monday, November 16 –  
Friday, November 20, 2020

Our Spring into Summer Virtual Conference was a huge success, with 80-plus sessions attended by 1,200-plus attendees logging into our conference platform 18,000 times! Now IECA is gearing up for the Virtual Fall Conference, which promises to be an equally interactive, engaging experience that you can attend from the comfort of your own home.

**Will this be your first virtual conference?** The IECA Virtual Fall Conference is designed to provide education, networking, and all the flexibility you need! Choose from a menu of fantastic options and participate at your own pace in a way that is most comfortable for you. Watch presentations live and participate in the Q&As or view them at your convenience later. Explore the Exhibit Hall and leave your contact information for college, school, and program reps, or join for the dedicated live times for different Exhibit Hall categories. And be sure to stay online for the fun after-hours virtual receptions offered by sponsors!

There is so much educational content that you'll need more than one week to view it all—which is why all educational sessions, Q&As, and tours will be available to registrants until **December 30**.

## Pre-Conference Presentations and Live Q&As

### Monday, November 16

Law School Admissions  
Content Marketing for IECs  
Continuum of Care

**Virtual College, School, and Therapeutic Tours**

### Tuesday, November 17

Where's the Money: College Affordability  
Consulting for Neurodiverse Students  
What's Going on with China?

**Virtual College, School, and Therapeutic Tours**

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## About the Adolescence, Consulting, and Education (ACE) Speakers

These renowned thought leaders will conduct 15 to 20-minute dynamic, energetic presentations to kick off the day's programs Wednesday, November 18 through Friday, November 20.



**Ravi Hutheesing** empowers education and business leaders to pivot for success in multicultural and multigenerational environments. Born into a lineage of prime ministers and raised by a family of Wall Street bankers, his journey as a rock star, aviator, and cultural diplomat for the US Department of State is an inspiring example of how to stay relevant while positively impacting the world.



**Sarita Maybin** shows her audiences how to transform uncomfortable conversations into straightforward communication. With real stories, real solutions, and a relatable presence, she breaks down barriers to reveal how to work together better. In her 20-plus year career as a professional speaker, this former university dean has made it her mission to motivate others to embrace positivity, even amid the challenges of our ever-changing high-tech times.



**Jeffrey Selingo** offers a hopeful, inspiring blueprint for how students can make the most of their undergraduate years and how colleges and universities will evolve to better meet the needs of society in the 21st century. He has written about higher education for more than two decades and authored three books. Selingo is a special advisor and professor of practice at Arizona State University, a visiting scholar at Georgia Tech's Center for 21st Century Universities, and the former top editor of the *Chronicle of Higher Education*.

A photograph of a woman and a young girl, likely a mother and daughter, holding hands and looking at each other. The woman is on the right, with long dark hair, wearing a mustard-colored sweater. The girl is on the left, with her hair in a bun, wearing a black and white striped shirt. They are both smiling and looking at each other. The background is a bright, out-of-focus window.

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We agreed that IECA members needed:

- Language to share with their clients
- Talking points for the press
- An alternate message about parent anxiety
- National media coverage demonstrating why parents need IECs and the ethical value that guides IECA members

By supporting our members along these guidelines, we emerged stronger than ever.

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### *Right this minute, what do our members need from us?*

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From there, our new membership year, running from July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020, began so well. We released several new publications on test accommodations, what colleges are looking for, and other timely topics. IECA staff took part in conferences throughout the fall. We ran a full-bus trip (remember campus tours?) to visit colleges in western Oregon and Washington. Our national conference in Atlanta brought us together for more campus tours (schools, colleges and programs), a new Educational Intensive in financial aid, and even visits from college mascots.

As the 2020 calendar year began, we held our largest retreat ever—in Arizona—with a focus on sharing and business. Our regional groups were meeting regularly, and I had the opportunity to join the Orange County group in California. IECA played host to a leadership meeting with NACAC and HECA. In March, we held our first Education Intensive combined with a campus tour in the Washington, DC area. It was a great success, and even included a visit to the IECA national office.

And then COVID-19 disrupted everything. By the end of March, our national office closed and all staff began to work remotely. Events were cancelled or postponed. We took steps to cut our expenses, including suspending contracts and enforcing staff furloughs. At first, we guided members on how to continue meeting in-person with students in accordance with CDC guidelines. Then things got more serious.

In the middle of this, 2020 also delivered a new awareness and awakening in many about systemic racial injustice, an issue that IECA is addressing in numerous ways, from education to operations.

Faced with myriad challenges, IECA staff came together again and asked the same question: **What do our members need right now?**


This time, we agreed the answers were information and connection. And before we could even act you—our members—came forward with resources to support one another. College Conversations replacing in-person campus tours. Google Docs tracking school and college testing requirements, operations, and other relevant data shared via the Member Network. Virtual Program Tours and a weekly Therapeutic Committee Zoom meeting designed to provide emotional support. Business Practices Committee webinars addressing current challenges. A new Black Affinity Group guiding the creation of cultural-competency curriculum for our members.

Special presentations, including one with Jeff Selingo, delivered virtually. And much more.

Then, in July, IECA staff members worked tirelessly to create something completely unfamiliar to us: a virtual conference that allowed for face-to-face discussions, high-level speakers, live Q&A, and, yes, some moments of levity and fun. A mere week later, we did it all again, this time with our first-ever virtual Summer Training Institute featuring 18 members as volunteer instructors and 168 attendees—our largest STI ever!

We faced new challenges and, again, we came out stronger than ever.

The sense of volunteerism among our members has never been greater. We have provided a continuity of service that admittedly, hasn't been perfect, but has made me exceedingly proud. In a time of great challenge, everyone—IECA staff, members, board and committee chairs—has stepped up.

As we look forward, we will remain nimble and innovative, committed to social justice equity and antiracism, and creative and dynamic as we navigate the new “abnormal.” While we don't know yet what the remainder of this membership year will bring, I do know that we will remain committed to making sure you, our members, not only survive, but thrive and succeed. **What do our members need?** This question will continue to be our lodestar. 

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Joanne LaSpina, Jeff Levy, and Marilyn O'Toole. Many members have reached out over the past year to sing the praises of these five IECs for giving so much time and energy to creating programming to support their colleagues, and to share how **thankful** they are for them. In addition to these IECs, I am **thankful** for our many members who have supported their colleagues in regional group gatherings, through our mentoring program, by answering calls for advice on the Member Network, and so much more. I am continuously reminded that even in the most trying of times, I am surrounded by wonderful people in our association who are so giving of their time, talent, and treasures.

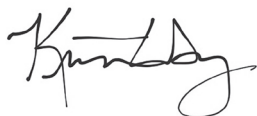
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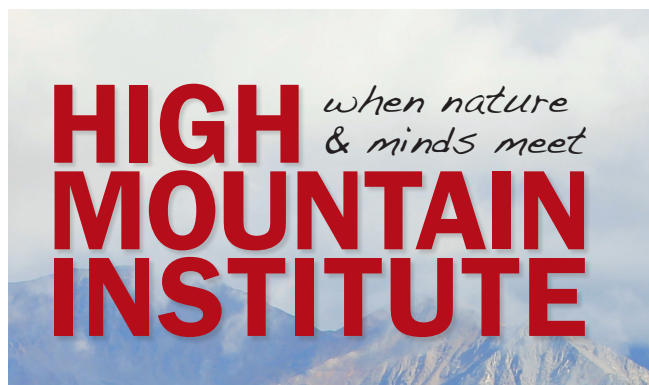
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Finally, I remain **thankful** to the IECA staff for their constant support of our members during these challenging times. They have worked tirelessly to ensure that our professional development continues, and that our connections with schools, colleges, and programs not only continue, but strengthen.

As we head into the last few months of 2020, I encourage you to consider the silver linings you are **thankful** for that this past year has brought you, and to reflect on how you can hit your own reset button. Consider how you can pay it forward—just as our IECA Service Award recipients have—and how you can support others in our profession and our association. Just as we are telling our students, think about the things you can control during these uncertain times and focus on doing those things well. As the late Maya Angelou said, “Be present in all things and **thankful** for all things.” Let us all be present for one another during these challenging times and **thankful** for the opportunities that lie ahead.



Kristina Dooley, MA, CEP  
IECA President



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# Jump-Start Student Learning with Technology

By Eric Endlich, PhD, IECA (MA) and Joan Green, MA, CCC-SLP

I recently had the honor of interviewing Joan Green, MA, CCC-SLP, Washington, DC-area speech-language pathologist and author of *Assistive Technology in Special Education: Resources to Support Literacy, Communication, and Learning Differences*.

**Endlich: Why is it important for independent educational consultants (IECs) to be familiar with assistive technology?**

**Green:** To help determine a good fit for a student, everyone needs to be sure that there are appropriate resources and services available. We take assistive technologies such as hearing aids and eyeglasses for granted, but they are critical for learning. There are other technologies that many of us may use and benefit from, but students with diagnosed disabilities need them to access the curriculum, stay engaged, and demonstrate knowledge.

Technology plays a vital role in every student's college experience. If IECs and counselors aren't aware of how technology can be used to help overcome barriers and take advantage of strengths, then it is more difficult to truly assess whether or not the environment will be a favorable one for the student.

Families expect college experts to know how students can use technology for vital tasks such as taking notes, staying organized, writing essays, studying, and interacting with other students, TAs, and professors. Some students do best if they can watch recorded lectures at their own pace prior to discussion sections. Others do best when they can have access to digital notes or slides prior to lectures. It's important to know whether students are permitted to record lectures and student interactions so they can learn in the moment and not be concerned with taking notes. These questions are important whether classes are held in person on campus or virtually.

**Endlich: What is the best way for IECs to come up to speed, so that they can advise their students more thoughtfully?**

**Green:** Reading this article is a great first step, as is connecting with colleagues who are well-versed in the use of technology to support college students. Also, reaching out and asking the office in charge of implementing student accommodations and learning support how they support their student body with the help of technology.



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Computers, tablets, and phones now come with built-in, powerful tools for students who learn differently. Are your students aware of the tech features they need to access content and be effective self-advocates? Students often need help setting them up and figuring out strategies for effective implementation.

I've written several books on this topic, and I provide online coaching and courses for families and professionals. I frequently speak on this topic online.

**Endlich: Which students should IECs be talking to about this subject?**

**Green:** Students who need help with organization and time management, as well as those who have reading and writing challenges. Many—but not all—of these individuals have had IEPs and 504s. Private high schools may have provided learning support informally.

Students who are at risk for getting overwhelmed and stressed, or who may have medical conditions that limit endurance, are also ideal candidates for using tech to make life easier in college.

**Endlich: When can students implement this technology on their own, and when do they need to request it as an accommodation?**

**Green:** If students require specific features provided by assistive technology, or certain benefits such as extended time on tests or priority registration, then they need to make sure they will have access to those features and accommodations in college.

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There are tools, like digital calendars and using text-to-speech and speech-to-text, that all students may benefit from, but that students may require assistance using to increase success. If the university is flexible in letting the student use whatever means they need to access content and show what they know—and if they provide videos and notes ahead of time, and accessible content to everybody proactively—then maybe students don't need an accommodation. It may suffice if they are entering college with confidence about how to set themselves up with these tools, and if they are already strong self-advocates.

***COVID-19 has forced us to rely on technology for classes. The traditional in-person lecture format has been replaced, at least for now.***

Even if courses are online, sometimes not all digital content is accessible to individuals who have reading and vision-related disabilities. Some universities are fine with everybody using features available on the devices we already use. So why not use them in order to help with reading and writing and organization? Other places have frowned on the use of technology because it presented yet another source of distraction for students.

**Endlich: What kind of impact are you seeing of the pandemic on how students are interfacing with technology?**

**Green:** There's a scramble now for students, as well as educators, to become more tech-savvy very quickly. The use of technology is no longer in question.

COVID-19 has forced us to rely on technology for classes. The traditional in-person lecture format has been replaced, at least for now.

It's really helpful if students develop skills such as using notifications and reminders to use their time efficiently, setting up effective digital management systems to quickly find what they need online, splitting their screens to participate in online sessions, taking screenshots to capture images on the screen, and capturing notes that are synced to audio and visual content.

In a negative sense, many of us are in Zoom meetings all day; it's tiresome. We're not getting physical exercise or seeing people in person. And you miss the camaraderie; you don't get a lot of the social-emotional benefits.

**Endlich: Can you give me some examples of really useful tools that many people don't know about?**

**Green:** The first two are speech-to-text and text-to-speech. You can have text highlighted and read out loud to you with different voices and at different speeds. If you're on an iPhone, often you just set this up in the accessibility settings. You can just select words and have it read out loud. If you're in a Google Document or Microsoft Word, it's a feature that's already there. In the newest Edge browser,

*continued on page 10*

even PDFs can be easily read aloud. A lot of people don't realize that that exists, as well as the ability to just talk and have the words turn into text, whether you're in Microsoft Word or Google Docs or sending a text message. It's just a matter of configuring the settings.

I'm very focused on distance learning. If you don't have multiple monitors, it helps to be able to split your screen, so you take notes on one half and participate on the other half. A split screen is also helpful as you read an article and type up an essay so you don't have to keep switching back and forth between tabs. Many students that I'm seeing aren't that tech-savvy with a lot of these skills.

**Endlich:** You've mentioned the importance of notetaking. What's important for people to know about notetaking and how they can develop that skill?


**Green:** A lot of people who might have ADHD or reading, writing, or language problems struggle to process information and learn while they're taking notes. And if they try to write something down, they miss content. Much of what we're doing these days is listening to lectures. In distance learning, many professors may end up flipping the content: not giving live lectures, but providing videos so students can learn at their own pace. They can capture a screenshot, stop the video and take notes, and then continue. And if there is synchronous learning—having real-time live debates or conversations, I like that much better. Students get together and have that socialization and interaction.

**Endlich:** So students who have trouble processing, who can't listen and take notes simultaneously, actually do better with asynchronous distance learning, because they can pause, take notes, and absorb the material better. People may complain that online learning is not as good, but for some students, it may actually be beneficial.

**Green:** And people with physical/health-related issues can learn at their own pace. So for some students that's good. I look for the silver linings. This is going to make people realize that a lot of these technology features are good for everybody. They just become assistive technology when without them you're unable to learn.

**Endlich:** Any other important advice for IECs?

**Green:** Technology can be a student's friend and help them to be much more successful in college. These tools are included in our devices now. You don't have to spend hundreds of dollars to get a good dictation software or text-to-speech package, but you do need to know how to use it. So it's really helpful to have some support at the university to enable these features, and to work with a student on fine-tuning to make it more successful. And that can be done from a distance or in person.

*Learning how to learn more* about these supports is critical. Once students know that they might want to do something like dictating to Google Docs, then they just search for a video tutorial. Look at this with a problem-solving approach. Because there's so much information—you just have to know what to look for. 

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# Unforeseen Advantages of Virtual Learning

*By Gina Apicella, MS, BCBA, LBA, Vice President, Autism Services, Chapel Haven Schleifer Center and Carolyn Gorman, LPC, ATR, Supervisor, ASAT Program, Chapel Haven Schleifer Center*

When the COVID-19 pandemic began, educational settings were faced with the unplanned, immediate need to create innovative ways to prevent regression and continue to provide ongoing instruction. In many ways, this need turned out to be more of an opportunity to reach students in ways that had not been anticipated. With the use of an online video conferencing service to link all of our students together, everyone has the ability to both see and hear each other and share screens as needed. As you can imagine, there are many disadvantages to online formats over having class in person; however, in a relatively short time, we have come to realize that there are also many unforeseen advantages.

This has proven especially true for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Deficits in social-emotional reciprocity, nonverbal communication, and difficulty making and maintaining relationships are some of the barriers individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) face in their daily lives (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). In addition,

there are high prevalence rates of psychiatric comorbidities such as ADHD, anxiety, and OCD in those with ASD (Romero, M., Aguilar, J. M., Del-Rey-Mejías, Á., Mayoral, F., Rapado, M., Peciña, M., Barbancho, M. Á., Ruiz-Veguilla, M., & Lara, J. P., 2016). All of these factors contribute to potential difficulties in a learning environment.

In many programs for adults with ASD, such as the ASAT program at Chapel Haven Schleifer Center, instruction is focused on social communication and independent living skills. Instruction is provided in small groups and individually, and is most effective when it happens in the natural setting. With stay-at-home orders in place, many are not doing their usual activities in natural settings, creating the need for new natural settings for everyday activities such as work, grocery shopping, and socializing with friends and family. This new setting is most often utilizing technology—the same technology many

*continued on page 13*



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individuals with ASD have enjoyed using in their downtime, and that they have a great amount of expertise navigating.

Navigating the online world is observed to be a natural strength of many of our program participants. In taking this natural strength into consideration, a task that one is accustomed to and comfortable doing typically requires less effort than one that is not within one's repertoire. As with anyone, when our students understand something at the level of being able to help someone else to understand it or explain it to someone else, a sense of confidence is evident. Building on a strength typically leads to a more reinforcing environment, assuming praise and attention from peers or an instructor are desirable for an individual.

As a participant of virtual learning, it has been noted that some individuals have benefited from being able to control their surroundings in a way that they know to be most conducive to their learning. For some, this may mean being in a room alone without any distractions and with lighting of their choice, seating that feels most comfortable, and the choice to disable audio or video. These options have allowed individuals to access information that they might have otherwise missed if they had only had the option of fully attending (in person or virtually).

Preliminary attendance outcomes maintained by Chapel Haven suggest that in some cases, the barriers that are removed with the shift to a virtual format have had a positive impact on attendance rates of individuals who have otherwise struggled with attendance.

One participant had an average attendance rate of 50 percent from January through March 2020, but has a 100 percent attendance rate, with the exception of a few late arrivals, since shifting to virtual learning. The number of classes the individual is taking each semester has not changed, however, the barriers of in-person attendance are no longer relevant with virtual learning. The virtual learning format has quite possibly mitigated barriers that were impacting this individual's ability to fully access programming.

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*...it has been noted that some individuals have benefited from being able to control their surroundings in a way that they know to be most conducive to their learning.*

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Relatedly, it may be no surprise that accessibility has been advantageous in other ways as well. There is an ability to reach a much broader group of students, both in terms of socioeconomic status and physical location. The new virtual offerings of the ASAT program have been able to reach students in a range of other states for a reasonable cost, giving individuals who may not have a suitable social network while at home during the pandemic the ability to connect with others and to have access to a robust curriculum and recreational offerings (virtually).

Within our social communicative curriculum, difficulties with reciprocal conversations, or "turn taking," and the ability to

*continued on page 14*

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filter thoughts or know when to end a conversational topic are addressed. When used thoughtfully, features such as the ability for the facilitator to mute participants and for students to privately chat enable the facilitator and students to learn about and model these social nuances. For example, a student who is repeatedly upset with a peer could be able to quietly resolve the problem in real-time over private chat with the instructor without interruption to the class.

The online format means that most students are taking classes from their familial homes. The virtual teaching format creates a window into the students' home environments. Through this window, teachers are better able to understand where each student is coming from and how to address those needs. Within some classes, participation or assistance from parents or family members may be helpful, such as in a virtual cooking class. Parent-student relationships can also be positively affected by virtual learning formats. In some cases, they have given parents the opportunity to better understand what each individual is learning and an ability to help reinforce those areas in the home environment. This has also given the students a chance to be able to generalize previous on-campus learning across settings with the guidance of an instructor.

The planning and preparation for classes such as virtual dinner prep have also given students executive functioning modeling and practice. While they are receiving assistance, they have been required to know what they are cooking week to week and to have ingredients ready for their class times. Virtual classes during

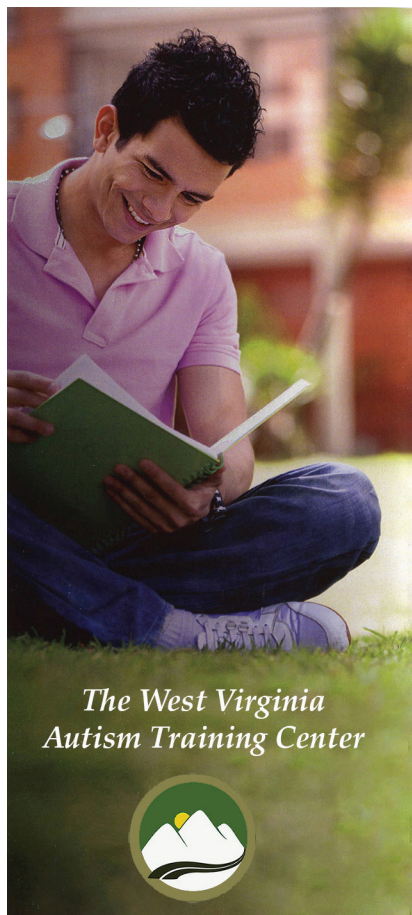
a pandemic have also required students to do a bit of problem-solving. Sometimes the exact item they need for a class is not available. They have learned to be flexible, to substitute ingredients or art supplies, to adjust to new technology, and to complete tasks under less than ideal circumstances.

Given that the virtual format is new and will continue to be modified as outcomes are measured and data is analyzed, the expected challenges have surprisingly been rebutted with unexpected anecdotal and observed advantages. As a program committed to providing high-quality programming to increase the independence of adults with social and developmental disabilities, the virtual learning format has allowed the individuals we serve to continue to work toward reaching their goals and to stay connected with their peers and staff. There are more opportunities to begin the journey toward independence as part of our community than there have ever been, and it has come on the heels of a worldwide pandemic. 

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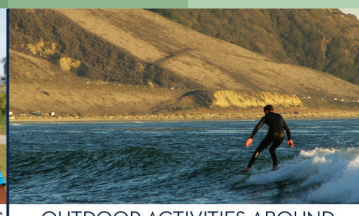
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# Concourse Global Clearing: A New Movement for Access and Equity

*By Jamie Kanki, Head of Engagement, Concourse Global, CT, and Emily Dobson, Lead Counselor, Second Chance, Porto Alegre, Brazil*

## Soul Searching within Higher Education

The call to reinvent the college admissions process is not a new one; however, it has rightly become a mainstream topic. College admissions scandals and the pandemic have created an aerial view of what has been and forced stakeholders to consider what could be. Finding new ways to serve and engage students at a distance while navigating constant changes within their own offices, schools, and campuses has left many feeling both exhausted and overwhelmed.

As with many crises, calls for action are ringing loudly. Risk-takers dedicated to the education field are brainstorming, sharing, piloting, and advocating. Concourse Global (CG), an innovative online platform, has reimagined the flow of

communication during the application process. Concourse's Global Clearing tool has quite literally flipped admissions on its head.

## Reinventing the College Admissions Process

For universities, the traditional in-person recruitment and passively-waiting-for-applications approach was ripe for an improved model. Concourse Global allows universities to travel virtually and connect with students in lesser-known or hard-to-reach regions that they typically would not have accessed via face-to-face recruitment. Rather than forcing them to spend months researching various application systems and gathering combinations of documentation, sweating

*continued on page 18*



*Jamie Kanki can be reached at [jamie@concourse.global](mailto:jamie@concourse.global)*



*Emily Dobson can be reached at [msemilydobson@gmail.com](mailto:msemilydobson@gmail.com)*



over a lack of specific exams, assessment-style, or letter grade, Concourse Global Clearing asks that universities meet students where they are. For students and their counselors, receiving offers (sometimes as many as 10 or more) over the course of one event week is exciting and often relieving.

In some ways similar to the UK's UCAS Clearing, where students without university offers are matched to university places not yet filled, Concourse flips the power structure and allows for global results. Relying on participation from students, their counselors/coordinators, and universities, Concourse Global Clearing is collaborative, transparent, and FAST.

Students fill in a profile outlining their academic history, extracurricular activities, preferred learning styles, and program(s) they are interested in. Counselors certify the information and then nominate the students for Global Clearing events. (In contrast to UCAS Clearing, Global Clearing happens multiple times throughout the year and involves universities—as the name suggests—globally. Each round lasts only a few weeks, making it an efficient and high-impact event.) Once nominated, student profiles are reviewed by participating institutions that make direct offers of admission to their programs, sometimes specific or, depending on the student's preference, offering a place within a range of programs. The platform is built for collaboration between students, their counselors, and universities. Admissions officers can pose questions about the students and communicate directly and easily with counselors. In a time when counselor insight and “added

color” has become paramount to understanding where a student has been and where they are now, Concourse enables a candid and important conversation to happen.

Highlighting communication and initiative, Concourse sends regular reminders and nudges to keep stakeholders engaged and moving forward. Students are encouraged to take the lead and book virtual meetings with the universities to discuss the details of their offers, ask questions, and learn about next steps. Collaborative meetings, often also attended by the students' families and counselors, are intimate and intensive, allowing students exclusive time with a university official.

---

*Collaborative meetings, often also attended by the students' families and counselors, are intimate and intensive, allowing students exclusive time with a university official.*

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## In Practice: Blue Skies and Second Chance

In May 2020, Concourse Global launched two pilot programs: Blue Skies and Second Chance.

**Blue Skies** was launched to test the flexibility of global university admissions and the new idea of “active admissions.” Blue Skies primarily served students who either had no university offers, or who, due to any number of complexities, were suddenly faced



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with the daunting task of searching new regions of the world for their studies.

The idea of Blue Skies meant that for students, offers would come “out of the blue.” The pilot involved 17 universities from Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the UK, and the USA and about 50 students from nine countries, resulting in 180 offers of admission and more than \$1.5 million in scholarship offers.

**Second Chance** was a very special initiative—an offshoot of the Nepal Justice League’s movements led by industry leader and global “SHEro,” this time led by a UWC Singapore-based counselor, Joan Liu. Both initiatives were grassroots efforts that helped place high-achieving, low-income students who had been financially gapped, waitlisted, or rejected, primarily by US universities, “geo-swerve” to other universities around the world. What the teams did, under Liu’s guidance, also reimaged admissions practices. In a space of time that is never considered viable, during the season when most applications are closed and almost all budgets are capped, and with the May 1 decision deadline looming, the progressive thinking of the group along with the centralization of information through Concourse Global’s platform, created magic. Not once, but twice.

Second Chance was a group purposefully built to navigate the same “dead space” and challenges: to give rejected, waitlisted, or gapped students a chance to receive offers or to apply to English-medium universities outside the US with the full cost of attendance covered by scholarships. Similarly, Concourse Global is a platform

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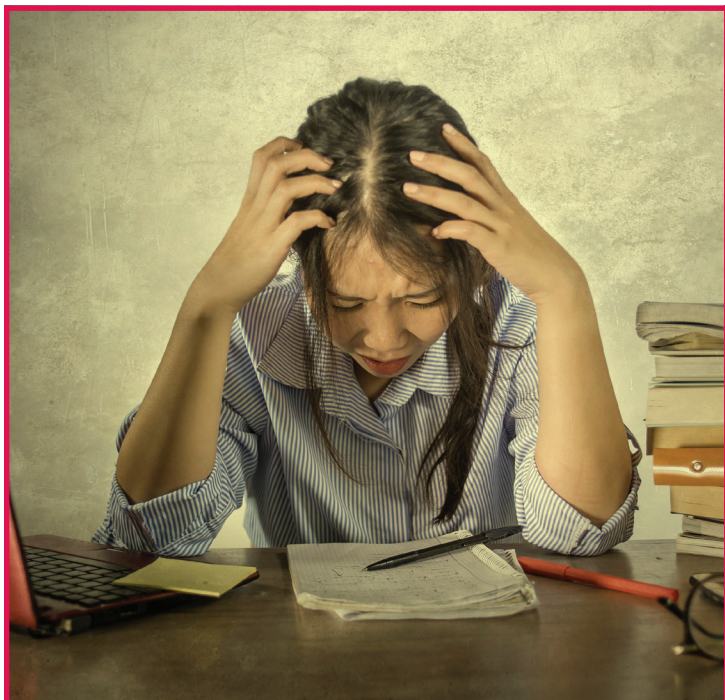


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purposefully built to help counselors (regardless of resource level) navigate a myriad of admissions systems: to create access—from universities to students and from students to universities, connecting opportunities to those searching for them.

As of August 12, the 20th and final Second Chance participant, a student from Uganda, was placed with a full scholarship at the Foundation for Liberal and Management Education (FLAME university) in Pune, India.

## New Directions in Higher Education

Concourse Global's outreach as a company is a model of what access and outreach could look like, and maybe what it should have always looked like. Turbulent times have been more calmly navigated with the support of this student-centered company, bringing all parties to the table (or to the Concourse, so to speak) to collaborate and ultimately put opportunities into the hands of students.

To date, Concourse Global has assisted in the placement in more than 100 students who were rejected from approximately 1,000 colleges total. The pilot projects collectively landed more than \$3.5 million in scholarships. The most recent round of Global Clearing brought an average of four offers of admission per participating student and more than \$6 million in scholarships offered. With many more Global Clearing events scheduled throughout the year, Concourse Global has steadily taken admissions possibilities to new heights. 

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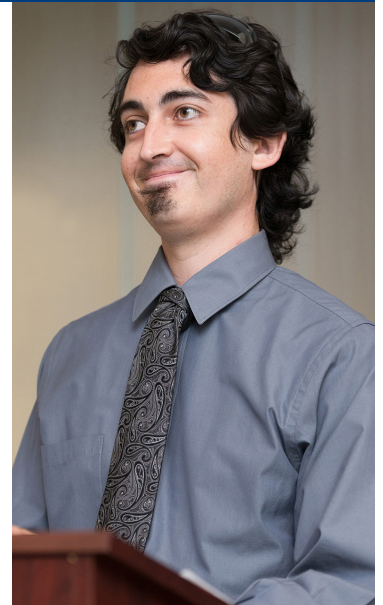
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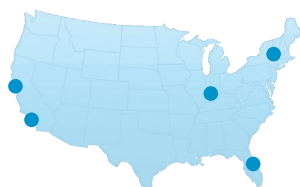
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# Better Brain Regulation through Mobile and Classroom Neurofeedback

By Dianne Kosto, SCN, Founder & CEO of SYMMETRY Neuro-Pathway Training

As we all know, anxiety has been skyrocketing, even prior to the worldwide pandemic. Statistics from the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) in 2001-4 documented the percentage of adolescence anxiety disorders and therefore, the comorbid behavior such as inattention, impulsivity, and depression, at 31.9 percent.

Recent studies from the US Census Bureau indicated that adults' anxiety levels have increased in the spring of 2020 **threefold!** Imagine how our young adults and youth are feeling.

In the qEEG brain map reports of our clients across the country, we have clearly seen anxiety-related patterns on the rise over the past few years. Many of these students were diagnosed with ADHD and learning difficulties. QEEG brain mapping is a way to measure brain wave activity, compare it to what a healthy brain produces, and identify areas of the brain that are not well regulated. Brain maps provide great insight into what is really going on with an individual, and can guide the therapeutic and neurofeedback process.

Neurofeedback is a form of biofeedback which measures EEG brain wave activity to help guide the user to better regulate their brain. In the past, it seemed that only a few "Neuro-Gurus" with specialized expertise could provide this service. That's not the case anymore. Now with shrinking technology, user-friendly apps, and online virtual training and coaching, anyone can have quality neurofeedback services wherever they may be. Whether your client is preparing for college or a therapeutic environment, or coming home from either, independent educational consultants can utilize this widely available and growing resource.

Neurofeedback is a technology-driven learning modality that involves applying sensors to the scalp to detect the minute electrical activity produced as our brain processes. That brain wave activity is then analyzed by the software. While your client is watching a movie on Netflix, YouTube, Hulu or any online streaming platform, the software overlays a filter. This causes the video to be brighter and slightly

*continued on page 24*



Dianne Kosto can be reached at [dianne@symmetryneuropt.com](mailto:dianne@symmetryneuropt.com)



louder when desirable brainwave patterns are met, and dimmer and softer when not. Thus the brain is being rewarded to regulate its own activity, and this is subconsciously learned and mastered with practice. The science shows that after 20 neurofeedback sessions, new and permanent change in the grey and white matter of the brain is measurable. [1]

In the 1960s, neurofeedback was discovered in a university lab. Now many studies show significant improvements in conditions including anxiety, learning disorders, and ADHD. [2]

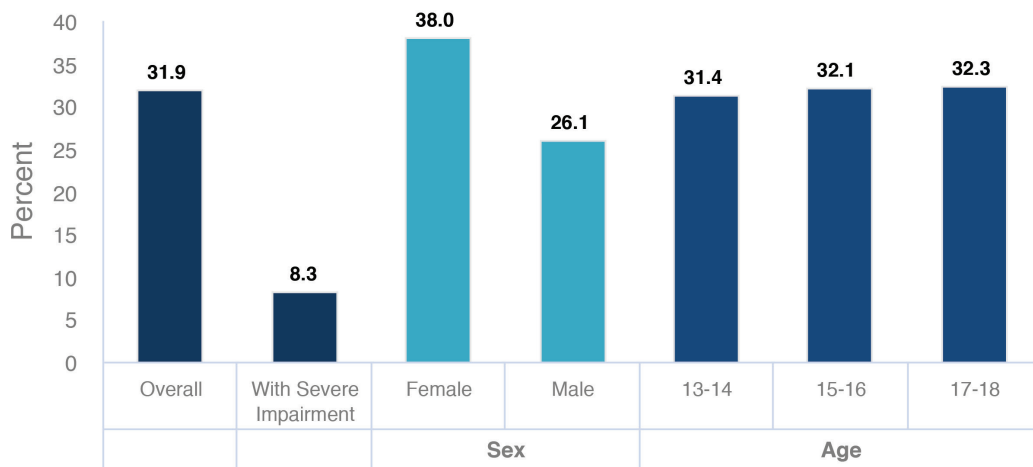
It is also used by peak performers, Olympic athletes, and business professionals. We all have a brain, and that brain can learn to better regulate itself. This allows negative symptoms to fall by the wayside and increases our chances of success and well-being.

As a mom on a mission, I found neurofeedback after many years of struggling to help my son,

whose impulsivity was off the charts. He was continually kicked out of various programs and schools. Finally, I discovered and became certified to provide neurofeedback, and I believe this saved his life 10 years ago. It really is gratifying to see so many programs, professionals, and families embracing this now.

## Lifetime Prevalence of Any Anxiety Disorder Among Adolescents (2001-2004)

Data from National Comorbidity Survey Adolescent Supplement (NCS-A)



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As IECs, you have been entrusted to find the right resources for your clients and families, yet many of them are growing leery of sending their children across the country. Finding local resources for them can be extremely challenging, if not close to impossible at this time. Neurofeedback is a resource to be aware of and well versed on. Programs, schools, and families are rapidly turning to neurofeedback to help with anxiety, focus, attention, and other related concerns. It appears to be on track to become a normal standard of care over the next few years.

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*As IECs, you have been entrusted to find the right resources for your clients and families, yet many of them are growing leery of sending their children across the country.*

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In the neurofeedback realm, there are many different techniques. Some neurofeedback is more invasive or aggressive than the qEEG-based approach and requires a closer clinical eye on the client during the sessions. Such approaches may not be appropriate for home or mobile training. I have used the style of neurofeedback over the last 10 decades (starting with my son) that lends itself nicely to remote users and does not require a clinician to be present. Sessions can be monitored from a distance very effectively. This approach is also easy to implement in a classroom setting for schools, colleges, and therapeutic programs. I look forward to watching as it becomes the “new norm.” 



[1] Gharzi et al. *Neurofeedback induces changes in white and gray matter*. Clin EEG Neurosci. 2013 Oct; 44 (4): 265-72

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# Regional Groups

## Austin

The Austin IECA Regional Group meets virtually on the second Wednesday of the month at 10:00 a.m. to discuss hot topics and provide support to one another through the application season. The group also meets with college admission representatives throughout the year. For more information about this group, contact Deb Davis Groves ([deb@davisgrovesedu.com](mailto:deb@davisgrovesedu.com)).

## Georgia

In July, Georgia IECA members wrapped up a 17-week marathon, meeting virtually every week, discussing the latest changes to our work environments, and hearing from experts and admissions representatives from across their home state. Experts included guest appearances by Mark Sklarow and Terry Knaus. Additionally, members had the honor of hearing and speaking at length with admissions representatives from the University of Georgia, Georgia Institute of Technology, Georgia State University, Emory University, Berry College, Mercer University, Morehouse College, Spelman College, Savannah College of Art and Design, Oglethorpe University, and Agnes Scott College. For more information about this group, contact Mark Cruver ([georgiaiecs@gmail.com](mailto:georgiaiecs@gmail.com)).



## New York

On September 14, Hendrix College held a virtual information session for IECs living in the New York metro area. For more information about this group, contact Alan Sheptin ([alan@sheptin.com](mailto:alan@sheptin.com)).

## Ohio/Michigan/Western Pennsylvania

The OH/MI/Western PA Regional Group convenes online monthly. Fall programs include meeting with representatives from the University of Kentucky, Savannah College of Art and Design, and Purdue University. For more information about this group, contact Jason Vallozzi ([jason@campustocareercrossroads.com](mailto:jason@campustocareercrossroads.com)).

## Philadelphia

The Philadelphia Regional Group kicked off its fall season with a September 15 meeting with Scott Grzenda, undergraduate admissions counselor at the University of Delaware. Along with an update on UD's admissions plans for the spring and the outlook for the class of 2021, Grzenda shared information about UD's new gap year programs. For more information about this group, contact Fran Manning-Smith ([fran@steplanners.com](mailto:fran@steplanners.com)).

## Raleigh-RTP

Throughout the summer, the Raleigh-RTP Regional Group met every two weeks to keep up with the changing landscape of college admissions, including a meeting led by Pam Shelor, IECA associate member, to discuss takeaways from the IECA Virtual Spring into Summer Conference. Study skills specialist and IECA professional member Paul Rivas gave an informative presentation on time management and study skills at the group's August meeting, with valuable tips for working with students as well as managing your own time as busy professionals. This fall, the group will meet every third Thursday. For more information, contact, Manjiri Sethna ([bewisec@gmail.com](mailto:bewisec@gmail.com)).

## San Diego

The San Diego Regional Group has been meeting virtually since February. Recent meetings have featured discussions with representatives of Scripps College, Johnson and Wales, Boise State University, De Paul, Cal Lutheran, Saint Mary's College, and the University of Colorado, Boulder and with study skills specialist and IECA professional member Paul Rivas.

For more information about this group, contact Jackie Woolley and Gina Gerrato ([IECASDRegionalGroupCoordinator@gmail.com](mailto:IECASDRegionalGroupCoordinator@gmail.com)).

## Seattle

Seattle-area IECs participated in a webinar with the Pacific Northwest representative from Cal Poly San Luis Obispo on August 25 to learn about changes due to COVID-19 and best admissions practices. On September 24, they met with study skill specialist and IECA professional member Paul Rivas. For more information about this group, contact Kiersten Murphy ([kiersten@schoolconsultant.com](mailto:kiersten@schoolconsultant.com)).

## Tennessee

Nashville-area IECs meet regularly via Zoom to support one another as they navigate college admissions during the COVID-19 pandemic. The group was delighted to recently welcome a new IECA student member, Michelle Rosen. For more information about this group, contact Kathy March ([ktm@kathrynsmarch.com](mailto:ktm@kathrynsmarch.com)).

## West LA

The West LA Regional Group continues to meet virtually twice monthly. For information about this group, contact Marilyn O'Toole ([marilyn@thecollegeconsortium.com](mailto:marilyn@thecollegeconsortium.com)).





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## In the News

**Laurie Weingarten** (NJ) was quoted in "College Food Safety 101: How Do You Safely Feed Students During the Pandemic?" in *Forbes* on August 14. She was also quoted in "GPA, SAT, and...COVID-19? College Admission in the Wake of a Pandemic" in *Health Righters*, a new magazine started by college students throughout the country, on July 18.

**Ibrahim Firat** (TX) was quoted in "Does College Tuition Insurance Cover COVID-19?" in the *Huffington Post* on September 4. He was also interviewed for the segment "College students face tough calls ahead of fall semester" on KTRK-ABC 13 on August 10.

**Theodra Washington** (MD) was interviewed for the segment "More parents are interested in private schools as most of DMV public schools go virtual" on WJLA ABC-7 on August 31.

## IECA's Career Center

Since announcing our Career Center in July, ads for independent educational consultant positions attracted 1,248 views with 26 applications filed. Visit [link.iecaonline.com/careers](https://link.iecaonline.com/careers) to post a position available or to explore our help wanted ads for newer IECs or those looking to affiliate, join a practice, or franchise.



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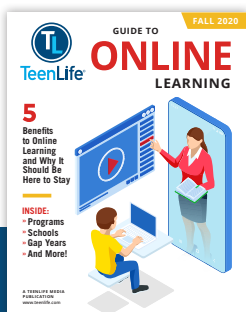
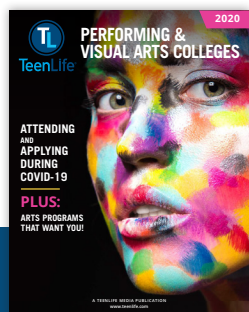


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## Announcing our 2020 Micro-Grant Recipients

The IECA Foundation supports the purpose of every independent educational consultant's work—to help children and young adults find the best possible choices for their education. For almost 25 years, the Foundation, the philanthropic arm of IECA, has been funding worthy programs that help children and young adults find great educational opportunities.

Each year, the Foundation seeks to highlight the work that IECA members and consultants do by awarding \$1,000 micro-grants to five organizations that align with our mission—organizations where consultants have had an ongoing relationship serving young people as they move forward in their education.

The following organizations are near and dear to the hearts of the IECA members who support them through volunteer work and will receive \$1,000 each from the Foundation.

### Caterpillar Ministries (North Carolina)

Caterpillar Ministries strives to support the well-being of families in the Huntington Green mobile home community of Huntersville, NC, most of whom live below the federal poverty line and face many of the challenges commonly associated with poverty. Programs include fun for preschoolers, small groups for teens, and ESL classes and job training for adults. [www.caterpillarministries.org](http://www.caterpillarministries.org)

### College Consultants Care

College Consultants Care provides FREE college application assistance from experienced independent educational consultants to students diagnosed with cancer or who have a parent diagnosed with cancer. <https://collegeconsultantscare.org/>

### Faulk Center for Counseling (Florida)

The mission of the Faulk Center for Counseling is to promote emotional well-being through a variety of free and low-cost programs for counseling, therapy, and support. The Faulk Center provides a warm, accepting, and confidential environment where people who are dealing with life's problems are helped to make changes or to cope more effectively with things that they cannot change. <https://faulkcenterforcounseling.org>

### iWRITE Literacy Organization (Texas)

iWRITE believes that creativity and imagination are natural gifts of childhood, which is why it encourages children to create daily and enter the annual short story contest, I Write Short Stories by Kids for Kids. Both reading and writing build a foundation



for children to become leaders among their peers. The I Write Short Stories by Kids for Kids annual publishing contest awards



children for their academic and artistic achievements. The act of being a published young author or illustrator increases positive self-esteem and encourages youth to become role models to others. <http://www.iwrite.org>

### Settlement Music School (Pennsylvania)

Settlement Music School was established by Mary Louise Curtis as a means by which students from poorer and underrepresented communities could receive free or reduced rate music lessons and have instruments to play. <https://settlementmusic.org>

For more information and to stay up-to-date on future events, visit [www.iecafoundation.org](http://www.iecafoundation.org)

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# Introductions

## Please Welcome IECA's New Professional Members



**Shannon Bergeron (TX)**

has been an IEC for five years and was an associate member. She has worked as a school counselor for the last 16 years and started her IEC business part-

time in 2016. Most recently, she was the lead counselor at the Liberal Arts & Science Academy High School in Austin, Texas. She transitioned out of schools in 2019 and now works full-time as an IEC.

Bergeron earned a BBA in marketing from the University of North Texas and an MEd in counselor education from the University of Maine. She is a member of NACAC.

As a lead counselor in Austin, Bergeron worked with district officials to change policies to protect privacy issues related to gender. She led a Bootcamp for New Counselors for more than 30 new counselors and leader of the Summer Melt program. Additionally, she was finalist for the Austin ISD "Counselor of the Year."

As a volunteer with the Matchlighters Scholarship program, Bergeron provides college counseling for high-achieving, low-income students. She also volunteers with Ally Parents, serving as a friendly and empathetic resource for transgender/non-binary youth (and parents).

Bergeron loves to travel and hike with her husband. In her spare time, she trains for and runs marathons.

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*Specialty: C*



**Cheryl Chamberlain**

(IL) has been an IEC for four years and was an associate member. Before working in educational consulting, Chamberlain practiced as a business litigation

attorney for more than 20 years.

Chamberlain earned a BA in public relations from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign and a JD Honors from the IIT Chicago-Kent College of Law. She also holds a Certificate in College Counseling with Distinction from UCLA Extension. Chamberlain attended the IECA 2016 Summer Training Institute and is a member of NACAC and IACAC.

A regular consultant with the College Consultant Consortium group, Chamberlain also writes a blog and gives presentations to families about the college admissions process. She has been active in civic and volunteer groups since she was a teenager in everything from education and environmental groups to acting as a volunteer educator or advocating for personal rights. Most recently, she has served as a mentor with College Bound Opportunities, a college list specialist with Matriculate, and a trustee for the Village of Riverwoods. Chamberlain welcomes the opportunity to work with LGBTQIA students.

Chamberlain loves traveling and reading. Together with her family she also enjoys a variety of outdoor sports, including golf, hiking, and kayaking.

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**Marsha Comegno (NJ)**

has been an IEC for 14 years. Previously, she worked with the associate vice provost of the University of Pennsylvania on distributed learning

and in law school admissions. Prior to that, she was associate dean of admissions at Salem College.

Comegno earned a PhD and an MS in higher education administration from the University of Pennsylvania and a BA in history and secondary education from Gettysburg College. She is a member of NACAC, NJACAC, PACAC, NYSACAC, SACAC, and Phi Beta Kappa.

Comegno holds several leadership positions, including as a member of the Gettysburg Board of Trustees; president of the Alumni Leadership Board at the University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education; member of the Gettysburg College Admissions Advisory Council; and past president of the Gettysburg College Alumni Board of Directors. Comegno volunteered previously as a Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (CCD) teacher and Pre-Cana instructor, and in various positions with the Moorestown Home and School Association.

Comegno enjoy daily yoga, reading (especially historical fiction), and traveling with her family.

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**Laurie Cortez** (CA) has been an IEC for 14 years and was an associate member. Her experience as a former teacher and vice principal, combined with her experience as

a certified independent college counselor, provides valuable insight into the higher education landscape.

Cortez holds a BS degree in business, an MA in organizational management, California teaching credentials, and a UCLA Extension College Counseling Certificate. She is a member of NACAC.

Cortez is a frequent media commentator and provides college preparation workshops for parents and students at high and junior high schools as well as educational and community centers. She also provides pro bono college preparation assistance.

Cortez's husband, Ron, is vice chancellor/CFO of UC Irvine, and together they are the proud parents of two grown children: Kristen is an attorney and graduate of Loyola Marymount University and Southwestern Law School, and Marcus is an associate director of curriculum for Achievement First, a K-12 school network, and a graduate of Georgetown University.

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**Kathleen (Kate) Duey** (CA) has been an IEC for 11 years. As the principal of Admission Planning, LLC, she provides ethical, high-quality, customized, solution-

oriented college application consulting and a commitment to creating the best college options for each and every student. Every year about half of her students are highly gifted.

Duey earned an AB from Harvard College and an MBA from the Harvard Graduate School of Business. She also holds a Certificate in College Counseling from UCLA Extension and took coursework in the history of women's colleges and community colleges from the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Duey is a member of NACAC and the Harvard Alumni Association.

Duey gives talks to organizations that support gifted students including the California Association for the Gifted, the Institute for Educational Advancement, and the North Hollywood High School Highly Gifted Magnet. She also works with the college counselors at St. Pius X-St. Matthias Academy, a high school serving primarily low-income Latino students in Downey, California. Additionally, she works with two pro bono students every year.

Duey enjoys Iyengar yoga, growing vegetables, and hiking up Cherry Canyon Park in La Canada, California.

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**Eric Endlich** (MA) has been an IEC for three years and was an associate member. He founded Top College Consultants to help students worldwide—especially those with

learning differences or other challenges—successfully transition to college and graduate school. He has worked as a clinical psychologist for over 30 years and has taught undergraduate and graduate psychology courses at Boston University, Tufts University, Suffolk University, and UMass/Boston.

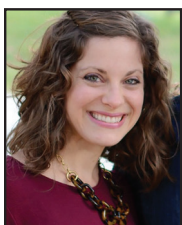
Endlich graduated Phi Beta Kappa from UC Berkeley with a BA in English and went on to earn an MA in psychology from NYU and a PhD in clinical psychology from Boston University. He also holds an Independent Educational Consultant Certificate from UC Irvine-Extension. Endlich attended IECA's 2018 Summer Training Institute and is a member of NACAC, the American Psychological Association (APA), the College Autism Network/NASPA, and AHEAD.

A member of IECA's LD/ND Committee and the Asperger/Autism Network (AANE) clinical advisory board, Endlich is a frequent conference presenter. He is also an advisory team member of the Friedman Neurodiverse Couples Institute and a writer and health advisory board member for Personal Best Publishing.

Endlich is coauthor of a forthcoming book on autistic adults and the contributor of a chapter in a recent book for attorneys with clients on the autism spectrum.

Married for 34 years, Endlich is father to two adult children, both of whom are neurodivergent.

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**Michelle Jacobs (MD)** has been an IEC for four years and was an associate member. She has a decade's worth of expertise on both sides of admissions and has been an independent

educational consultant with College Bound since 2016. Previously, Jacobs served as director of college counseling at a local private school, where she guided 200 students annually. She also worked at the George Washington University (GW), including as an assistant director in the Office of Admissions, reviewing thousands of applications and recruiting at high schools across the country. Prior to working in admissions, Jacobs taught high school English.

Jacobs earned her doctorate in higher education from GW, researching how students' college search, choice, and academic match is influenced by fit. She holds a master's in higher education from GW and a bachelor's from the University of Maryland, College Park. Jacobs has presented at national conferences on various topics related to students' college choice and experience.

Jacobs loves spending time with family and friends, exploring with her young kids and, in any spare moments, knitting and running.

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Specialty: C



**Huong Nguyen** (Vietnam) has been an IEC for six years and was an associate member. Because there is no counseling in the Vietnamese school system, Nguyen

worked with senior teachers from local high schools to cofound PAC Group (Professional Academic Counseling), a group of independent educational consultants designed to provide students with professional, transparent, comprehensive services. Nguyen serves as the organization's operations manager/IEC.

Previously, Nguyen worked as general director at the NTD Trading Company, key account supervisor at Viet Thai International Joint Stock Company, and as head of the customer service department at Cleverlearn Vietnam English Language Center.

Nguyen earned a BA in international business management studies at Zeeland University, the Netherlands and a Certificate of College Admission Counseling at the University of California-Riverside Extension. She also holds a Certificate of UK College Admission from UCAS and a Certificate in Japanese Universities Admission from the University of Tokyo. She is a member of International ACAC.

As co-founder of the Dream Wings Club, Nguyen directly planned, supervised, and coordinated with the support team to help disabled children at the rehabilitation centers of orphanages in the Son Tay and Ha Dong areas. She also organized events celebrating Christmas, Lunar Festival, and Children's Day for disabled children.

Nguyen has two children and together they love traveling, music, movies, cooking, and baking.

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**Margot O'Connor** (NJ) has been an IEC for three years and was an associate member. She brings her strong research and storytelling skills to her role as an IEC as well

as a keen understanding of adolescents. Before working as an IEC, she worked as an attorney specializing in commercial litigation. She also worked as a television producer for CBS News and Court TV, where she worked on live court proceedings such as the OJ Simpson and the Michael Jackson trials. O'Connor has also worked in sports production and marketing.

O'Connor earned a BA in history and art history from Georgetown University as well as a JD from Fordham University. She played women's field hockey for all four years of undergraduate school. O'Connor also holds an Independent Educational Consultant Certificate from UC Irvine-Extension.

O'Connor volunteers in a variety of capacities in her community. She is on the Library Board Association of her town's privately funded public library and is a past president of Campership of Monmouth Country, an organization that raises money to send underprivileged children to summer camp. O'Connor volunteers as a lacrosse and basketball coach and was a Recreation Commissioner for her town. Additionally, she volunteers at her church teaching religious education and assisting at mass.

O'Connor has been married for 21 years and has four children ranging in ages from 10 to 17 years old as well as a dog, Mabel. She is an avid tennis and paddle tennis player and enjoys skiing and spending time at the Jersey Shore during the summer.

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**Jennifer Piercey** (CA) has been an IEC for five years. Prior to starting her own consulting practice, she worked for a test prep-college consulting company. Before that,

she organized special events for a high-end wine retailer and served on the boards of several volunteer organizations.

Piercey earned a BA in history from UC Davis and a Diplôme SELFEE from the Sorbonne in Paris, France. She also holds a Certificate in College Counseling from UC San Diego Extension. Piercey is a member of WACAC, NARAL, the Sierra Club, and the ACLU.

Piercey volunteered with several school PTAs while her sons were in school and was on the board of directors for an aquatic club, running a few large swim meets each year. Most recently, her volunteering has focused on civic engagement.

Piercey and her husband are San Francisco Bay Area natives who have traveled to and lived in different corners of the world and want their sons to do the same in order to experience and understand other cultures and perspectives. Piercey's older son was in China with the Peace Corps and is heading to Johns Hopkins SAIS in Nanjing. Her younger son is starting his studies in marine science at Cal State Monterey Bay. Piercey loves traveling, hiking, cooking, and combing beaches for beach glass.

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**Barbara Rapaport** (NJ) has been an IEC for 16 years. Prior to founding Rapaport Consulting, LLC, she served as the founder and coach of Marshall Academy High School Mock Trial.

Rapaport earned a BA in American studies from Barnard College and a Certificate in College Counseling with Distinction from UCLA Extension. She is a member of NACAC.

Rapaport is co-founder of E-Cubed: Experience, Explore, Educate, a teen learning group for homeschoolers. She has served in various volunteer leadership positions, including as a NACAC Performing Arts SIG co-leader and on the advisory boards of the New Jersey Homeschool Association, Princeton Learning Cooperative, Lynn University, and Gettysburg College. She has also volunteered as a college coach/writing coach with PeerForward (formerly known as College Summit).

Rapaport has three wonderful children, all of whom work in the arts. In her spare time, she likes to swim, read, cook, and attend plays, concerts, recitals, and films, in person when possible and virtually when necessary.

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**Tino Schuler** (FL) has been an IEC for four years and was an associate member. Previously, he worked as senior director, marketing, for Medtronic and as

managing director for Medtronic Germany.

Schuler earned a BA in European history from Knox College and an MBA from the University of Texas at Austin. He attended IECA's 2016 Summer Training Institute.

Schuler serves on the Knox College Board of Trustees and is chair of the Admissions and Financial Aid Committee. He is also a board member of the Schuler Scholar Program. Schuler volunteers with local foster children at the Foster Closet.

Married for 23 years to his wife Silke, Schuler has three children: Emily (21), a senior at Middlebury College; Sophie (19), a sophomore at Tulane University; and William (17), a high school senior. He also has two dogs, Nick and Schatzi. Schuler's hobbies include travel, skiing, golf, and reading.

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**Claudia Schwarz** (CA) has been an IEC for three years. Previously, she had her own private therapy practice for 15 years. Schwarz is highly skilled in working with a wide range of

counseling issues as well as adapting to diverse populations. She is a credentialed parent coordinator and child custody evaluator who teaches continuing education courses nationwide.

Schwarz earned her BA in clinical psychology from Willamette University and her graduate degree in marriage and family therapy at Cal State Sacramento. She has undertaken additional training in cognitive behavioral and family systems specialties, as well as custody evaluations, child interviews, child reunification and parenting coordination. She is a member of AAMFT.

Schwarz has been a licensed marriage and family therapist since 2004 and continues to maintain that licensure. She has attended various conferences including IECA, the Adolescent and Young Adult Collective, and the Institute for Girls' Development.

Schwarz served on the Nevada MFT board as vice president and on the Collaborative Parenting and Divorce Task Force. Schwarz worked as a judge for the Greenspun Junior High School truancy diversion program. She has also volunteered for Give Kids A Smile, a free dentistry program for underprivileged kids, the Make a Wish Foundation, and for Iron Man USA Triathlons races.

Schwarz and her husband have two sons and she is very involved in their school district, having served as the PTO president for several years and as the current high school PTA secretary. Schwarz enjoys triathlons and marathons, and actively participates in races across the United States.

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Specialty: S, T*



**Whitney Shashoua** (NY) has been an IEC for five years and was an associate member. She has experience as a formal classroom teacher, curriculum developer, middle

school program director, and high school placement director.

Shashoua began her career in education as a part-time, public school teacher while overseeing an academic program focused on low-performing elementary school students. She then taught English at an underserved high school in Cape Town, South Africa and volunteered as an elementary school teacher at an orphanage in Khayelitsha. She joined Teach for America as a 4th grade classroom teacher and a 4th grade writing curriculum developer at Achievement First in Brownsville, Brooklyn. As the middle school program director and then high school placement director for Breakthrough New York, a college-access non-profit based in New York City, she was responsible for planning, leading, and overseeing high school placement for more than 65 students.

Shashoua graduated magna cum laude from the University of Pennsylvania and received her master's in teaching from Relay Graduate School of Education. She is a member of the Small Boarding Schools Association and Dreamers & Doers and volunteers as a mentor for Children of Promise, NYC.

Originally from Aspen, Colorado, Shashoua loves spending time with her four nephews, cooking, reading fiction, walking around New York City for hours, and dancing.

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**Carolyn Sorkin** (CT) has been an IEC for seven years. In addition to her consulting practice, Sorkin works as director of North American counseling and the team head for grad

and transfer applicants for Elite Scholars of China. Previously, she worked as director of international studies at Wesleyan University and associate director of the King Juan Carlos Center of NYU. Her experience also includes teaching at NYU and coordinating the international educational exchange at Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile.

Sorkin earned a BA in history from Brown University, a dual MA in international development education and educational administration and policy analysis from Stanford University, and a PhD in international education from NYU. She is a member of NACAC and attended the organization's "Transitioning to Independent College Consulting" in 2019.

Sorkin serves on the board of trustees for JTeen Connect and the Emanuel Synagogue. She also volunteers as a reader for Children's Reading Partners.

Sorkin's twins will graduate high school in 2023. Fluent in Spanish and competent in French and Portuguese, Sorkin loves learning about other cultures. Her favorite aspect of her work is helping students discover themselves and articulate their ideas. In her spare time, she takes long walks with friends, reads, participates in social activism, and needlepoints.

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**Stephanie Starr** (NC) has been an IEC for five years and was an associate member. In addition to her IEC practice, she works as assistant director of curriculum and instruction for ParentTeach. She has 31 years of experience as a middle school English teacher, department chair, and advisor and 10 years of experience as a middle school diversity chair.

Starr earned a BA in English from Davidson College and an MEd in English from the University of Richmond. She attended the IECA 2015 Summer Training Institute and is a member of NACAC.

With her sister, Starr created a positive parenting curriculum to prevent Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). She also helped create a community service curriculum that led to thousands of hours of community engagement on the parts of hundreds of students.

An active volunteer, Starr has spent the last five years working with high-impact organizations that are attacking social and economic inequality. She currently works with Circle de Luz, which supports first-generation Latinas throughout their middle and high school years in order to prepare them for college. To satisfy her love of the arts, Starr also serves as chair of the Jewish Film Festival Selection Committee.

She is also a certified doula and has assisted in more than 100 births.

In her spare time, Starr practices mindfulness, meditates, plays tennis, works out, reads, and travels.

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**Jennifer Stephan** (MA) has been an IEC for five years. She has spent her entire career in higher education helping young adults achieve their academic and personal goals. As such, she is aware of what it means and takes to thrive in college, and the importance of identifying schools that will enable this. She has expertise on engineering institutions and transfer students.

Prior to founding Lantern College Counseling, LLC, Stephan worked as dean of academic advising and undergraduate studies at Tufts University, as a consultant at Magellan College Counseling, and as an assistant professor of computer science and then class dean at Wellesley College.

Stephan holds a BS in electrical engineering from Johns Hopkins University as well as an MS and PhD in electrical and computer engineering from Carnegie Mellon University. She is a member of NACAC.

Among other media outlets, Stephan has been quoted in "Determine Whether a STEM Major is the Right Choice," *US News & World Report*; "A Focus on Mental Health on Campus" in *Tufts Now*; and "New summer program in Pavia, Italy bridges humanities, sciences" in *The Tufts Daily*. She also presented "Policies and Practices that Decrease Stress and Anxiety" at the Center for Enhancement of Learning and Teaching Symposium at Tufts University in 2019.

In addition to her consulting work, Stephan helped her own three daughters with their (very different) college search processes.

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**Bettina Weil** (NY) has been an IEC for four years and was an associate member. Previously, she worked as the director of college programs in Yonkers Partners

in Education, a non-profit organization that serves low-income, college-bound students. Later, Weil worked for the State University of New York and for Westchester Community College. In both organizations, she was responsible for creating and implementing programs for college transition, persistence, and completion for at-risk students.

Since 2008, Weil has worked closely with the Westchester Latino population through local community organizations and government agencies to educate and counsel students and their families on college-related topics. She continues to support low-income and undocumented students in their pursuit of post-secondary education.

Weil holds a master's degree from the Columbia University School of Social Work with a concentration in advanced generalist practice and programing for youth and family. As an undergraduate, she studied communications at the Universidad del Salvador in Buenos Aires.

Weil was born and raised in Buenos Aires and moved to New York in 1994. She began her career in Argentina as a journalist covering current events throughout Latin America, worked in marketing, and was the assistant director of the Centro Cultural San Martin, a cultural center in the center of Buenos Aires.

Weil loves traveling but spends most of her time in Westchester, New York, where she is kept quite busy with her five sons and two dogs.

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## Resources Recently Shared on the IECA Member Network

Thank you to the IECA members who have recently shared these resources with fellow members on the Member Network. Find more resources on the Member Network: <https://network.iecaonline.com> (Browse > Library Entries).



Data/Information Provided	Website
Financial Health of Colleges and Universities	<a href="https://www.moody.com">https://www.moody.com</a>
Institutions Currently Requiring Test Scores for Merit Aid	<a href="https://link.iecaonline.com/test-scores-required-merit-aid">https://link.iecaonline.com/test-scores-required-merit-aid</a>
Texas Public Colleges Test Optional in Fall 2021	<a href="https://link.iecaonline.com/TX-colleges-test-optional">https://link.iecaonline.com/TX-colleges-test-optional</a>
S&P Global Ratings Higher Ed Mid-Year Report	<a href="https://link.iecaonline.com/SPGlobal-higher-ed-mid-year-report">https://link.iecaonline.com/SPGlobal-higher-ed-mid-year-report</a>
Test Optional Colleges Due to COVID-19	<a href="https://link.iecaonline.com/test-optional-covid19">https://link.iecaonline.com/test-optional-covid19</a>
Boarding School Snapshot of Fall 2020 Plans	<a href="https://link.iecaonline.com/boarding-schools-fall2020">https://link.iecaonline.com/boarding-schools-fall2020</a>
Adrift in a Pandemic: 3,000+ Higher Ed Students on Remote Learning and Their Plans for Fall 2020 (Top Hat Survey)	<a href="https://link.iecaonline.com/higher-ed-students-plans-fall2020">https://link.iecaonline.com/higher-ed-students-plans-fall2020</a>
IECA Homeschool Specialists by State	<a href="https://link.iecaonline.com/homeschool-specialists-by-state">https://link.iecaonline.com/homeschool-specialists-by-state</a>