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2006-2007

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OACAC Looks To Improve Communications With Members

Greetings and welcome back to another year! I hope the year has gotten off to a great start for each of you. In my new role as VP for Communications and Technology, I hope to continue OACAC's effort in bringing counselors and college admission personnel from around the world a little bit closer - this new newsletter is the first step in doing in trying to do so! We hope to publish a quarterly newsletter to help update you on what OACAC is doing, as well as what is happening in the world of college admissions.

As such, I would like to invite you to submit articles or anything relevant you would like to share with members in our newsletter. Whether it be innovative programs at your school, opinion columns or other relevant articles, we strongly encourage you to submit them for our newsletter.

Another goal I have is to look at ways to improve our website and make it a more effective service to our members. Please send me your suggestions on anything you think we might consider changing or adding.

All the best for a great year and I look forward to meeting many of you at NACAC!

Trevor D. S. Sturgeon
VP for Communications and Technology
International School Manila

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Ray Marx (2009)
[Colegio Americano de Quito,](#)
Ecuador

Annual International School Guidance Counselor Survey

In 2004 OACAC published a survey which looked at a variety of schools, contract and benefit issues ranging from student-counselor ratios to salary information to professional development. OACAC now hopes to make this an annual survey for the benefit of all counselors. Please [CLICK HERE](#) and take 3-5 minutes to complete the new survey at Your participation will allow us to get the most accurate and helpful information possible. Please note that your individual responses will be held in confidence and only a summary of the summary results will be published.

Membership Continues To Grow!

We continue to grow and attract members from throughout the world. This growth increases our influence with NACAC and with international admissions in general. Our two target areas for membership are Canada and overseas counselors.

You can help in two ways - if you are a high school counselor, encourage your colleagues to join. If you are a college representative, tell the counselors you visit about OACAC and what a great group we are. Membership renewal notices will go out in mid November.

There is a brochure we have called, "Join Us." It gives all the reasons to join and the information to do so. These are available in any number you would like from Doug Thompson or me. Just send either of us an email and we will get them to you. (Hauet@tkc.att.ne.jp OR dthompson@hvc.rr.com) You can also download a copy at our website - www.oacac.com

Since you are all members you know what a vibrant organization we have. If you need any other reasons to encourage members to join here it is - Vancouver OACAC Conference July 2007!

Peter Hauet
VP for Membership
St. Mary's International School



OACAC Summer Conference at TCU a Huge Success!

Despite the heat, this year's 13th annual OACAC summer conference hosted by TCU was a big splash. We would like to take this opportunity to thank TCU, and especially Karen Scott and her staff, for hosting the event and making everyone feel so welcomed. This year's theme was "Bringing Western Education to the World."

Close to four hundred people attended the conference, making it one of the largest in our history. Rosa Moreno ran the first timers' session allowing for newcomers to meet new friends and to become acquainted with the pulse of the conference. This year four people received scholarships to attend the conference.

Many salient topics were discussed and debated at the conference which ensures a great learning opportunity for everyone in attendance. Regional updates provided useful information for both colleges and counselors to exchange important information, while workshop sessions covered topics from confidentiality and addressing the needs of students in crisis to sessions on how to run Online College Fairs to workshops on financial aid and scholarships in Canada.

During the OACAC business meeting special thanks was given to Panetha Ott, our VP for government relations, who worked tirelessly with NACAC, NAFSA and the Department of Homeland Security to help ease the transition of students affected by Hurricane Katrina. During the meeting the dues structure were approved and changed to include a new retired member category with a dues of \$10 per year and a flat dues amount of \$50 for all other members. A moment of silence to remember former admissions representative Alan Combs was a sobering moment for everyone and his loss has been felt throughout our community.

During Friday's dinner at the Collins Center, Vivian Cipolla from NYU was given the Lifetime Achievement Award. In addition Marie Vivas from Colegio Americano in Quito, Ecuador was given the Distinguished Service award. The gift exchange proved to be another hit as counselors and college admissions folks unwrapped gifts from around the world.

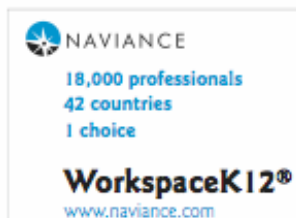
Our newly elected president, David Zutautas, did a great job helping to organize the conference and made sure everything ran smoothly. This year marked the arrival of several new board

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members on OACAC, including Lisa Ball, Ray Marx and Ellyn Levin who were all elected to delegate positions which will run for a term of three years. Laura Malbogot was also elected as the VP for Professional Development.

It would be difficult to discuss the OACAC conference without mentioning Saturday night. The final evening began with an incredible reception at the Modern Art Museum of Forth Worth where weary conference goers were treated to a bevy of great food and drink and to some spectacular art, including works from Andy Warhol and Mark Rothko.

We returned from the museum and everyone had a final chance to socialize and escape the heat by the pool where plenty of entertainment could be found. Karaoke was once again a huge hit, with plenty of dancing and singing from our talent laden members. This year's newest craze was the addition of the Dodge Ball Tournament, where members of the ECIS summer tour took top honors with their team, "Back of the Bus."

Andrew Whyte, our president-elect, promised that next year's conference in Vancouver (July 10-13th) will be a great event as well and many exciting activities are being planned as we speak. We hope to see everyone there.

*Ray Marx
Colegio Americano de Quito*

2007 OACAC Conference at the University of British Columbia

The 2007 conference will be held on July 13-14, 2007, at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada. Check out the [OACAC website](#) for new information soon!

Call for Sessions for 2007 Summer Conference

Individuals who would like to see a specific session, have ideas for sessions, or would like to present a session at the 2007 OACAC Conference, please contact Andrew Whyte at whyte@roseych





Seeking Proposals to Host Our 2008 Conference

Institutions interested in hosting the 2008 OACAC Summer Conference are invited to submit a proposal to the Executive Board. The Board will review all proposals at their meeting to be held in conjunction with the NACAC conference. Download this [Request for Proposals form](#) from the OACAC website and submit it by September 15th. You can also download the successful proposals from [Washington University](#), [TCU](#) or [UBC](#) if you would like to see what they submitted. If your institution is looking for a way to get over 100 overseas counselors to your campus for three days, hosting the conference is a wonderful way to accomplish this goal! For those of you like to plan ahead, the dates for the 2008 conference will be July 10-12, 2008.

Conference Dates for 2009

We are currently considering possible dates for our 2009 conference. [Cast your vote here!](#)

New Common Application International School Supplement

Rob Killion, Executive Director of The Common Application has asked us to inform you about the new International Supplement to the Common Application. It can be accessed and downloaded at: http://www.commonapp.org/common2007_AddlForms.pdf. It's intended for any international school that doesn't use an AP curriculum. Please email or contact Mr. Killion directly at rkillion@commonapp.org, by phone at 484.433.9305 or by fax at 484.450.2508 if you have any questions.

New Website to Help Oxbridge Applicants

A group of Oxbridge undergraduates has set up a useful website to help applicants to Oxford and Cambridge with all aspects of admissions. The unique contribution of this website is more than 350 detailed profiles of former applicants for more than 40 different courses and a discussion forum moderated by current students.



The profiles contain information on personal background, academic results and grades, reasons for applying to Oxbridge, reasons for choosing a particular course/college or, of course, the university itself, what was difficult, how was the interview experience, as well as any information about written tests or submitted work and much more. Prospective applicants have found the site extremely useful for finding out more about the process, for dispelling the usual stereotypes and myths and, most importantly, for gaining the necessary confidence to apply.

Anyone applying or considering applying to Oxbridge should visit <http://www.oxbridge-admissions.info> for anything they need to know.

Call for Submissions for OACAC Newsletter

Once again, please submit any articles you wish to be considered to be included in the next OACAC Newsletter to sturgeon@ismanila.com. Thanks!

Featured Article

“It Takes a Whole Village to Raise a Child” (African Proverb) Responding To Global Children and Their Needs

Written by Ms. Laura Malbogot

I lived in the same city for the greater part of my adult life. And then I moved. Not to my neighborhood city or state, but rather to the other end of the world, South Africa. I was completely unprepared for the journey of change that awaited me, as my husband and two children embarked on our first overseas teaching posts. I remember chuckling to myself that most people move from one city to another or at least within the same country, not us!

Our children were six and nine years old at the time of our move. I retain a crystal image of landing in Johannesburg airport, clasp my handbag, eyes darting in constant vigilance while holding my two children’s hands much too tightly. I was completely ignorant of the culture, as well as what lay ahead.



Possibilities are what I experienced. The word alone nudges and beckons. Four years in South Africa not only nudged me, I was catapulted into change. Change regarding my perception of teaching, living and learning.

Being the College Advisor and High School Counselor offered me countless opportunities to learn. To learn that change is always a challenge and change for third culture children, is the norm. How can we maximize the benefits of internationally mobile children? International schools exist to provide education for internationally mobile communities. Our world has become increasingly mobile, no longer does this just include the diplomatic community and non-governmental agencies but hosts of business companies have increasingly joined the ranks of global living.

Third culture children grow up moving from one culture, language, and school to another, sometimes moving every two to three years. Having worked now in three international schools, I have observed a host of students come and go, but what impressed me were those students who were able to integrate into their new school with ease, develop a sense of belonging and community as well as learn how to leave with grace and candor. These are not easy lessons for any school or student to learn. How can this be achieved? What can schools do to facilitate this positive integration? It can happen with purposeful planning.

The first critical challenge for any new student is to integrate. This is particularly important for students entering either Middle or High School where fitting in and belonging is critical. Recall the transience of international schools; that one third of the student and teacher body is new in any given year, one third remains but friends or treasured teachers may have departed, and the remaining one third is lucky, they stayed and so did their friends. Integrating in a new school or country includes many stages, the first and often most exciting is also the most challenging for third culture children.

International schools are home to more than 40-50 different nationalities, all learning under the same roof. Our students invariably come from different cultures, customs, and languages; making it essential that international schools respond to the diverse needs of multi cultural classrooms, it cannot afford to be ignored.



Of primary importance to any new student, no matter where in the world they are, is that, in fact, they do matter. If students feel invisible, problems can sometimes develop, both academically, or social. New students need to feel welcomed. One excellent strategy for Middle/High School students is to interview the student about himself or herself in order to gather some information about their likes, dislikes, interests, etc, and to take their photograph. It provides an opportunity to share 'who is new in our community' with the school community via a newsletter. Making sure that the appropriate grade levels receive the newsletter is important. One example might look like this:

We would like to welcome Tom, a new student in Grade 9. Tom comes to us from Scotland. This is Tom's first move from his hometown. Tom also has a sister new to the school, in Grade 11, named Rebecca. Tom played Junior Varsity basketball at his old school and worked behind stage for all the school plays. He also loves volleyball.

The newsletter is shared with the teachers and community. So all of a sudden, Tom, who no one knew, now has a history; he loves to play basketball and is a terrific volleyball player. He has been introduced to the students and this makes it easier to approach Tom and for Tom to approach others. When the 'Introduction' is sent to teachers an extra paragraph is included providing teachers with some essential information about the new student. This varies according to each student, sometimes including family background or history, other times including how many moves this particular student has experienced or how he feels about this latest move. Information about the student's academic strengths and weaknesses is also included as well as any outstanding abilities or serious concerns. Teachers appreciate knowing the essentials averting possible problems later on.

The buddy system is another old trademark used in many schools. This should be done with some care and planning. Choosing the leader of the grade or someone popular, especially if the group is a closed one can open the circle for Tom, the new kid on the block. Buddies need some training in what constitutes a good buddy. Assuming this is a natural skill can be a recipe for disaster at worst or just plain ineffective at best. Make it powerful by providing the buddy some guidelines.

Being new in a school also means there may be no adult support. If we want students to gravitate towards the adults in schools, such as advisors, counselors, and principals then it is critical that



measures are implemented to support this ideal. Young, maturing adolescents need adult figures to talk with, to pore over adolescent problems because if the only people they talk over their problems and concerns with are also fourteen or fifteen, then they are only able to gain the insights, perspectives and wisdom of kids who has lived a short life, just like themselves.

One strategy to create possible connection is a welcome luncheon for all new students; this can happen for a single grade if there are a lot of grade six students or across grades if there are fewer. One year I organized a Middle school luncheon, a Grade 9 & 10 luncheon and one for Grades 11 & 12. We ate sandwiches, easy salads; home baked cookies while we sat around the table and shared an extended lunch getting to know each other. The students had the opportunity to get to know the adults in the room whom they had previously seen walking the halls as anonymous adults. They also learnt who the other new students in their grade were. How else would a new student know who else was new? The key is to create a comfortable atmosphere so students later feel at ease approaching an adult for support. Sometimes the luncheon created new friendships, even if short lived, it provided the temporary support that new students benefit from.

A final welcome strategy is to provide an opportunity to 'check in' after the initial few weeks of school. It is usually after this initial phase that students are lonely and longing for the comforts of what they had, where they had been, and all that was familiar to them. It is then that students need support to move forward. It is hard work to introduce yourself as the new kid, to be tested, watched for and sized up. Tom may have been the best basketball player at Sheraton School, but no one knows him at Prince Edward International School, and the worst fear many students harbor is that no one actually cares. It is this basic premise that schools must work hard to counter. To care. This means resisting the temptation that taking time out of the academic day is a waste of time. It is not. If a student feels welcomed and cared for, chances are this student integrates with greater ease in their new school community. Chances are, this same student becomes our leader of tomorrow.

When meeting with the new student it is helpful to do so individually, to ask some basic but meaningful questions, such as, how they are settling in, who their new friends are, how this school is similar or different than their previous, and finally how are they involved at school?



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A short phone call ahead of the student meeting helps identify any real concerns parents identify. More significantly, parents notice that someone at the school cared enough to call and check in about their son/daughter. This develops community. It is not enough to talk about community and cultural differences, time must be spent nurturing it.

Schools are living communities that provide a place of learning and living. It is our responsibility to ensure it happens. This takes purposeful planning.

“Every organization is a product of how its members think and act. Changing the way we interact means redesigning not just the formal structures of the organization, but the hard-to-see patterns of interaction for people and processes.”

--Peter Senge

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