



OACAC Executive Board 2007- 2008

President Andrew Whyte Institut Le Rosey, Switzerland

President-Elect Lisa Ball Lincoln-American Intl School Buenos Aires, Argentina

Past President David Zutautas University of Toronto, Canada

VP for Finance (2008) Mark Wells University of Rochester, US

VP for Membership (2009) Peter Hauet St. Mary's International School, Japan

VP for Admission/ Enrollment Practices (2008) Rachel Smyrnios Suzuki

VP for Governmental Relations (2009) Panetha Nychis Ott Brown University, U.S.

VP for Technology and Communications (2008) Trevor Sturgeon International School-Manila, Philippines

VP for Professional Development (2008) Laura Malbogot Harare International School, Zimbabwe

Executive Assistant (ex officio) Doug Thompson Retired, US

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President's Message

It is amazing how time flies. Each morning, I intend to write an article for the OACAC newsletter. However, by day's end, I find that I have been distracted by students, parents and all the other interruptions that we each face. I do know, however, that OACAC as an organization is doing very well. There are two areas I wish to focus on today, the Summer Conference and Elections.

Lisa Ball, OACAC President-Elect, Doug Thompson, OACAC Executive Assistant and the folks at Michigan State, have been working extremely hard to organize and arrange another outstanding summer conference. There is hardly a day that goes by that I don't hear from Lisa with another idea or suggestion for a session. Lisa has been working hard to coordinate the sessions that will be offered and she is trying to make sure that the scheduling allows everyone to take advantage of each session. However, with the all the sessions that have been proposed it will be hard, once again, for us to choose which session to attend from all the offerings. Doug Thompson has just completed a site visit to Michigan State, where he was the eyes and ears of OACAC, making sure the physical arrangements are the best we can arrange. From housing, to break-out session locations, Doug has been making sure that those who attend will have the best. Of course all of this would not be possible without the local arrangement committee at Michigan State. They have been working with Lisa and Doug, proving that the "South" doesn't have an exclusive handle on Hospitality. They are certainly rolling out the red carpet for OACAC, and I am excited to be visiting!

The other important issue for today is election. In a few weeks, the OACAC website will be opened for the election. I encourage you to check the website frequently to make sure you can cast your vote. David Zutautas, as OACAC Past-President has been working hard to make sure we have an excellent and talented list of candidates for a number of different positions. Of course, every year we have the President-elect position open, and we have two strong candidates for this position. There are also several Vice President positions and NACAC Delegate positions open as well. Each candidate will be posting their brief biography on the OACAC Website. I encourage you to read these and learn more about each person. Keep checking the website so you can cast your vote!

On the 8th of March, I will be flying to Washington, DC for the annual NACAC Legislative Conference. At this conference, the President-Elect, Vice-President for Government Affairs and the President from all the State and Regional NACAC affiliates meet. Here we will be discussing the various issues that our S/R is facing and also meeting with members of Congress to educate them on the issues we think are so important. Part of my role will be to meet with representatives from the Department of State and discussing the issues faced by our international students as they look towards the United States for university. I am looking forward to this meeting and expressing the ideas and concerns that our constituents feel important.

I know OACAC is doing well. I am confident about our list of candidates who are running for the various open positions on the OACAC Board. I am very impressed with the organization and progression for the Summer Conference. I am excited to be attending the conference at Michigan State and I am looking forward to seeing you all there!

Andrew Whyte
OACAC President

News from the Membership Chair

I won't bore you with figures, but our membership just continues to grow. I am pleased to see more overseas counselors join. You can help by encouraging your colleagues to join us. College reps – please mention our organization when you are on the road.

Our new initiative “Retire-Rehire” is off the ground! Someone thought we should also include the word “retread.” Again, I ask your help. If you know of temporary or long-term positions opening up, encourage them to contact me or fill out the form below.

See you all at Michigan State –

Peter Hauet
Membership Chair
hauet@tkc.att.ne.jp

International School Counselor “Newsbits”....

After the past 5 years at Lincoln, the American International School of Buenos Aires, **Lisa Ball** will be moving to Dallas, Texas, in June, 2008.

After 8 years at International School Manila, **Trevor Sturgeon** has accepted a counseling position at Singapore American School. He can be reached at TSTURGEON@sas.edu.sg

After three years at the International School of Belgrade, **Aleka Novitski Bilan** will join the HS Counseling team at Western Academy in Beijing (WAB) next year. Her husband, Mike, will teach MYP Science and DP Biology at the school. Both Bilans are excited to be in China for the Olympics!”

After four years of service at the American School of Warsaw, **Debbie McDowell** will be joining the team at the International School of Bangkok for the 2008-09 school year.

After 18 years of counseling in Singapore, China, India and Saudi Arabia, **Beth Kramer** and her husband have resigned from Singapore American School and will be returning to the US to spend some time with an elderly parent. They hope to resume overseas life sometime in the future. In the meantime, Beth can be reached at kramer.beth@gmail.com.

John Carr is returning to International School Bangkok after a few years of mini-retirement.

Dubai is a booming place with thousands of people moving here each year and new schools opening almost every year. The curriculum varies from IB to AP to British, but counselors needs transcend those differences. As a result, counselors have banded together to form a network. Born out of discussions with college admissions counselors visiting the region for the first time to other school counselors expressing a need for more best practice discussions, the first meeting of the “**Dubai Counselors Consortium**” took place on February 18 at the American School of Dubai. A number of schools were represented including ACS-Abu Dhabi. There was a collective exhale as all involved were excited to meet one another, have practical discussions about our jobs, and feel more collegial. Overall, it seems that this idea is proving to be a success and will be around for the future.

OACAC Summer Conference 2008!

Plans for the annual OACAC conference are well underway! Hosted by *Michigan State University* in East Lansing, Michigan, the conference is set for July 10-12, 2008.

Registration will be open in early March, and members will be notified by e-mail when it is available. Registration will be through the OACAC website – www.oacac.com. When you register, you will find information on conference housing as well as suggestions for how to arrive and what to do in the area.

As our membership continues to grow, so does our conference. This year’s conference promises to provide even more opportunities for educational growth as well as fun and networking. Due to our very talented membership, we have been able to increase the

number of workshop opportunities in each Breakout Session! There will be updates on every region of the world given by people living in that region as well as sessions on career exploration, transitions and the ever popular Web 2.0. Plus opportunities to discuss on both sides how to handle some of sticky, ethically-challenging situations we sometimes find ourselves in. There will be great, informative and fun sessions for everyone. And we are adding some additional, formal opportunities for networking during breaks and lunches.

For those of you diehard dodgeball players and fans, we are including some surprise additions to our annual tournament. And as the competition between teams gets stiffer each year, teams are encouraged to come prepared and in uniforms for this year's tournament.

All of your favorite social events are still on the docket – the opening reception, the awards dinner, the late night socials as well as a cocktail and social time at the Michigan Historical Center. And we are adding a Cosmic Bowling Tournament followed by karaoke and late night fun!

This is also a great opportunity to take advantage of some travel in the area. Visitors who venture outside the boundaries of mid-Michigan will find plenty to explore. Home to the Great Lakes, Michigan features thousands of miles of shoreline. Quaint towns along Lake Michigan offer a small-town atmosphere, complete with antique stores, small art galleries, and ice cream shops – perfect for spending a relaxing day alongside the lake.

Come prepared to have a great time! See you in Michigan in July!!

Lisa Ball
OACAC President-Elect

ARTICLES

Exporting Education *by Bryan Zerbe*

When most people think about exports, they tend to think about products such as Chinese toys and clothing, American fast food chains and movies, French wines, and German cars. They don't tend to think about higher education as an exportable product, or at least they didn't before now.

What a difference a decade makes. Ten years ago, very few universities had overseas branch campuses. Today, as *The New York Times* reported in a special series in February 2008, there is a rush to set up outposts in other countries.

Nowhere is that trend more apparent than in the Arabian Gulf. Flush with cash from soaring oil and gas revenues, rulers of countries such as Qatar, the UAE, and Bahrain have been racing and competing against each other to create new higher education opportunities for their burgeoning populations in a region where the historical trend was to send students abroad to study. Instead of creating new universities from scratch, however, the Gulf states have embraced a philosophy of importing existing programs from existing universities.

At the moment, Qatar seems to be in the lead insofar as the “prestige factor” is concerned, with six American universities now operating on a massive campus known as Education City. Education City is the flagship project of the Qatar Foundation for Science, Education, and Community Development, chaired by the wife of Qatar’s Emir, Sheika Mozah bint Nasser Al-Missned. The Doha-based campuses of U.S. universities include Cornell, Carnegie Mellon, Georgetown, Northwestern, Texas A&M, and Virginia Commonwealth University. Qatar is also home to branches of two Canadian institutions: the Newfoundland-based College of the North Atlantic and a nursing program offered by the University of Calgary. A branch of the elite French military academy, St. Cyr, will open in Qatar later in 2008.

The UAE also has a variety of options including a French-medium branch of the Sorbonne and an English-medium branch of the well-known French business school, INSEAD. Michigan State will be opening a campus in Dubai later this year as the anchor tenant in Dubai’s International Academic City project, and NYU is due to open a campus in Abu Dhabi in 2009. There is a British University of Dubai, a Canadian University of Dubai, and a campus called Knowledge Village, which houses branches of several English and Indian universities. The Virginia-based George Mason University operates a campus in the Emirate of Ras al Khaimah.

In Bahrain, the well-regarded Irish Royal College of Surgeons runs a medical school. Oman and Kuwait have also been exploring options for undergraduate and medical campuses. In Saudi Arabia, King Abdulla recently gave \$10 billion of his own money to start the King Abdulla University of Science and Technology (KAUST). Although KAUST is not a campus of an existing university, it is looking for non-Saudi professionals to operate the campus; Dr. Shih Choon Fong, a former Brown University faculty member and current president of the National University of Singapore, was recently named as KAUST’s founding president.

As internationally focused education professionals, the exportation of university programs opens a whole new world of possibilities for career development. While overseas opportunities were once the sole domain of those OACAC members on the counseling side, opportunities now exist for admissions professionals to live and work in locations around the world. That’s good news for all of us, but it also presents challenges. As OACAC grows in membership and as members come from so many different types of universities and schools, it becomes more important than ever to find common ground and agree on best practices as we seek to make the transition from secondary school to university as ethical and professional as possible. We owe our university-bound students no less.

“This is not my essay, btw.” by M. K. Woodsman

(pseudonym for pseudo-student, pseudo-written by Mario Sylvander, Singapore American School)

FYI people:

I applied to 42 schools. Well, 52 if you count my in-state safeties. (Yikes, that previous sentence lacks/needs something which I know because of the squiggly green line under it—thanks a lot Microsoft-- but I can't seem to fix it so I'm just leaving it like that.) Not that I'd ever attend one of those safeties in a million years. For I present an awesome portfolio, or cornucopia, if you will, of varied and sundry accomplishments ranging from the sublime to the more (most?) sublime. Just for example, I have founded numerous organizations, ranging from the Pool & Darts for Charity Club, to the PlayStation2 Prom Support Crew, to the Build a Skateboard Ramp Benefit Concert (BSRBC), virtually single-handed. And I deserve all my choices, though of course some lame admissions offices will fail to recognize my afore-mentioned awesomeness (and can expect an earful from my P's [Mom for outbursts of passive-aggressive tears, Dad for aplomb, anger, and indignation—consider this fair warning if you're even considering sending a thin envelope]). Besides founding those positive-for-the-community institutions, I swim with disabled children on Tuesdays & Thursdays, bowl with disaffected youth on Mondays, read off & on with the illiterate, and quilt with the disabled, disaffected elderly some Sundays during 3rd quarter. But other accomplishments/engagements/leaderships abound even if too numerous to present here. Did I mention my teachers adore me? Or rather admire and adore me. Hey, you would, too (like admission counselors must), given the near impossible academic load I carry (with grace, blood, sweat, quibbling, grade-lobbying, and spontaneous wisdom). Once, Mrs. Kirkpatrick exclaimed, “M.K.! you have written a lot here, and much of it is interesting!” No one else in the class ever enjoyed such singular praise, to my knowledge (unless it was when I was absent on college visits (I maxed out the allowable 3 days [and, not to toot my own horn, packed in 22 colleges during those 3 days][plus, shhhh, Dad wrote me a note to miss 2 more days to see 15 others—talk about frequent flyer mileage!]) Anyway, I get comments (praise) like Mrs. Kirkpatrick's constantly. I work hard, which tells you why I expect a lot—of myself, of others, and especially of college admissions. I amaze my family and friends with multi-tasking prowess. As when, ambidextrously, I research Google images of Tiananmen Square (right hand) and (left-handed) scroll to the techno remake of “Red, red, wine” on my iPod, all the while texting an intellectual question to Shannon (she definitely digs this workaholic attitude I adopt, as needed, to “do what it takes to take bring home the bacon”)(she rocks) (I can basically text message right or left handed!). You should see my college essay (unfortunately too long to fit here). Let's talk sports. I have D1 potential in football. Without a school team, though, I had to kick booty in tennis instead. The kind of contributions I make are the ones of legend. For instance, I once smacked a tennis ball so hard at my opponent at the net that he ducked *and* it was in! This *coup de grâce* propelled the whole JV squad to a win. Everyone talked about that shot, even though I didn't win my match. But suffice it to say that I am an impact player. Some will say I have unreal expectations. I say up yours—I applied to 42 (52) schools, comfortable in the knowledge that I am going to have some sweet bragging rights. Not that I'll really need to brag since I'll probably do some rad gap year anyway.

Ten Ideas You Can Use to Make Your Counseling Office More Efficient

*By Dale Ford
Singapore American School*

No matter which side of the globe you are on, there are still only 24 hours every day. How can you accomplish all you want to do each day and still have time to have some semblance of a life? The following are some suggestions on how you might become just a little more efficient. With the hours you save you can either 1) relax a little, or 2) add a few more things to your plate. That choice is yours.

1. Whether you're using Naviance or some other college software, there are likely options you aren't using that could make your life easier. In Naviance, for example, there is a feature where students who have listed a college can get an automatic email a day or two before a representative visits. If your students have "prospective colleges" added and their email addresses are in the system, this automatic reminder can increase the odds that students will remember to show up for a visit.
2. Ask your IT people if your secretary and counselor colleagues can have a "shared folder" on the server. Rather than always saving everything in your personal "documents" folder, you can save some items in this shared folder so that others have access or can edit them.
3. Consider moving to the online submission of Common Application documents. Singapore American School submitted 720 Common App recommendations/transcripts this year and followed that up with the same number of midyear transcripts. That was a savings of something like US\$2,000 in postage, printing of school profiles, and paper – not to mention a huge savings of secretarial time.
4. Give your secretary and counselor colleagues access to view, and if you're really trusting, edit access to your electronic calendar. When someone wants to make an appointment with you, a secretary can see if you're free and add an appointment without interrupting you to ask.
5. When your student information system was setup (e.g., PowerSchool, Blackbaud) several features were likely turned off. Try to find out what else your system will do. PowerSchool has, for example, a graduation credit audit but security settings sometimes eliminate that menu item. Perhaps your IT person did not understand some features or realize that they could make your life easier.
6. What questions do you get over and over again? Put the answers on your website. College admission officers considering a visit to your school would love to be able to look at your school's calendar, print a map to your school, and learn how they can get from your school to neighboring schools. Make a page especially for admission officers and when you reply to a message about a visit, just include the link. Ours [is here](#). While building a website is complicated, having a few pages on a site and editing them isn't.
7. At least twice a year, make a CD backup of your computer and take it home. Not only

- can you use the information at home if needed, but should catastrophe happen at work, you'll have a copy of most of your files.
8. Get to know your counseling colleagues from your peer international schools. If you're considering implementing a new policy or want to see if something just makes sense, send an email to four or five counselors from other similar schools. Recently some folks in this region asked by email if other schools limited the maximum number of applications. Another day the same group asked how long students are able to add/drop classes at the beginning of the term. Just like when you were a child and said, "But mom, everyone else does it that way!" you can more easily change a policy if you learn that it's the standard procedure at other schools.
 9. Always save "soft" computer files instead of "hard" paper copies. When you want to edit (ok, borrow!) something, it is so much easier if you don't have to retype the whole thing.
 10. Ask other experienced counselors for help. Rarely do you have to start from scratch if you want to write a college guide for your students, make a list of summer programs, or put together a PowerPoint for your College Night. The odds are that someone has already done it.

Harvard, Brownie Brains, and Your Child

*By Trevor Sturgeon,
International School Manila*

The following article was originally published in the "Newsflash", a publication produced by International School Manila.

For some readers, simply the word "Harvard" will be enough to cause them to carefully read, and perhaps even *study* this article, in hopes that it might offer some insight into how to get into the 'Ivy of the Ivies'. For others, curiosity about the term "Brownie Brains" might be enough to intrigue their interest to read further. But the safety and personal development of children is the main focus here and hopefully that inspires people to keep reading.

Without question, one of the main reasons why parents choose to enroll their students in ISM is because of the superb academic program and its ability to prepare young minds to be successful in both their college and career lives. That, certainly, is an excellent reason to choose a high quality academic institution. And parent should be applauded for placing such high value on a quality education. However, I do sometimes wonder if the obsession with getting students in to the most well known and prestigious post-secondary institutions overshadows other, more crucial, reasons why we are all here. Is this continual quest to get students into the "best" college coming at the expense of our kids' personal growth, development and safety?

In early September, ISM had two drug and alcohol educators, from a US-based company called Freedom from Chemical Dependency, on campus to work with our community.

Besides spending time with MS and HS students, they also meet with faculty, administration, the PTA, and parents. In their final debriefing, our FCD guests highlighted our Wellness program as one of the best they have seen, our counseling program as being very effective and very positively perceived by our students, and our drug-testing program as one of the most comprehensive they had come across. In sum, they felt the school was doing an excellent job at addressing an issue that every school faces – that of alcohol and drug use and abuse. What these presenters were surprised by, however, was the apparent lack of parent involvement and initiative in addressing this issue. Indeed, at the parent meeting, which all ISM parents were invited to, only 63 parents from our entire community were present! At a panel discussion organized last year following a couple of alcohol and drug-related incidents, the parental turnout was also disappointing.

As a counselor, I continue to ask myself “Why do so few parents turn out for such events and presentations that deal with our students’ safety and emotional and personal development? Why is it so much easier to draw crowds when the topic is Ivy League universities?” Following the FCD parent meeting, one person jokingly suggested that had we called the session “How to Get into Harvard!” the Little Theatre would have been filled. Sadly, he was right.

It is true that part of the high school counselor’s job is to assist students in the college and career search process. I believe, though, that the part of our job that obliges us to assist in the students’ personal and emotional development and to help them learn to make good decisions is more important still. To be brutally blunt, your kids stand no chance of going to any university, never mind a highly selective one, if they get killed in a drunk-driving accident, die from alcohol poisoning, or suffer permanent brain damage from inhalants!

But the responsibility for the safety and personal development of our young people does not rest primarily, and certainly not solely, with schools. Kids spend the majority of their time outside the walls of ISM – at times when we have neither authority nor opportunity to monitor their behavior. Whatever students do on Friday and Saturday nights happens with the advice and consent of the parents – or, worse still, happens because parents simply don’t bother to check on what their sons and daughters are doing. Virtually every incident involving alcohol, drugs and our students occurs outside of the school environment. Drug and alcohol issues are a community concern and a family concern, and we have to work together to preserve the precious lives of our children and I urge you to take a more active role in this joint venture with us.

Of course, there are many additional threats to student welfare than drugs and alcohol. In the hope of offering more parental support, this year the ISM Counseling Department is offering a wide variety of sessions to help parents in their very challenging role. From issues such as the dangers of the internet to depression to learning effective ways to talk with your child, our aim is to help educate parents on some of the potential dangers facing our kids and to offer helpful advice on how parents can help protect their children. But the biggest challenge we face is getting parents to attend. We can offer these sessions but the reality is that if only a few parents show up, these sessions are nothing more than good PR.

*** Brownie Brains refers to an analogy used by the FCD presenters to help kids understand why the difference between kids and adults drinking. Essentially, they describe how a youngster’s brain is not fully developed and that by drinking at a young age is like adding salt to a brownie mix before cooking them – it becomes ‘baked in’ and unchangeable.*

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

College Board Counselor Institutes

The College Board Office of International Education would like to announce the 2008 9th Annual Summer Institute for International Admissions.

Dates: June 16-20, 2008

Location: Georgetown University, Washington DC

Who Should Attend: The Summer Institute at Georgetown University has been specifically designed to train individuals from counseling offices at overseas secondary schools; counseling offices at U.S. private boarding/day schools and EducationUSA advising centers. This institute is designed to address the varying needs of professionals involved in the college admissions and college advising processes.

New Counselor Workshop (Pre-Institute option)

Dates: June 15–16, 2008

As part of the Summer Institute, the College Board is also offering a two part workshop designed specifically for new counselors who have a year or less experience in college admissions counseling. This workshop gives new counselors the basic tools and resources they need to get started.

Registration bulletin can be found on our website at

http://www.collegeboard.com/about/association/international/pdf/si08_registration_packet.pdf

HEC Montréal Trilingual cohort – The first students will graduate in May

Montreal, February 8th, 2008 – Three years ago, HEC Montréal became the first business school in North America to offer a Bachelor's in Business Administration taught in French, English and Spanish. In early May of this year, close to one hundred graduates from the program will enter the labour market. For the past three years, these students have shared a common timetable and have taken a minimum of five courses in French, five in English and five in Spanish. Then, those that were eligible for the mandatory exchange program did an internship totally immersed in a language that was not their mother tongue. With such high education standards and an enriching international experience, students are well prepared for their future.

In addition to this unique program, starting in September, HEC Montréal will be offering two new optional language courses for BBA students: Introduction to Business Chinese I and II. The courses will not only help ready students to meet the challenges of globalization, but also better prepare those taking part in the international exchange program at one of the 81 participating universities and business institutes in 30 countries.

About HEC Montréal

HEC Montréal was the first business school in North America to hold the three most prestigious certifications in the world in management teaching – AACSB International (US), EQUIS (Europe) and AMBA (UK) – and has been listed in the Forbes and *BusinessWeek* rankings as one of the best MBAs. The School has close to 12,000 students in its 35 management study programs, from the undergraduate to postgraduate levels, including certificates, and employs approximately 250 professors. In its first one hundred years, the School trained over 57,000 students in a wide variety of management fields. www.hec.ca

3rd Annual Counselor Survey!!!

If you have not already done so, please take a few minutes to complete the Annual International Counselor Survey. Each year we gather a variety of data from counselors around the world on such topics as Counselor-Student ratios, structure of guidance offices, programs offered and much more! The success and accuracy of the survey depends on YOU taking 5 minutes to complete it! Results will be published on the OACAC website in May and available at the summer conference.

[Do It here!](#)

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=naqlw6BiGuAFCQ0jIDJU9g_3d_3d

University Admissions Reps Survey??

We are exploring the idea of doing a similar survey for Admissions reps. Would this be useful? If so, is there an admissions person out there who would like to draft an initial list of questions? **If so, email me at sturgeon@ismanila.org**

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.org. Thanks!

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