

The ADMISSIONIST

Summer 2019

by LIAISON 



EXPANDING
YOUR
REACH

PURCHASED
LISTS

COLLEGE
FAIRS

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The Power of Collaboration



Now more than ever, admissions leaders from around the globe need to collaborate with peers and strategic partners. Together, we're better positioned to achieve the universal goal of admitting "best-fit" students, the students who will define institutions and shape the future of higher education. Our industry has changed so rapidly in recent years that it would be nearly impossible to remain relevant, efficient and successful without learning from others who are looking at the same obstacles and opportunities, from their own unique vantage points.

I know this to be true because for more than 20 years Liaison has worked closely with over 31,000 programs on more than 1,000 campuses to identify new ways of thinking about admissions. Our affiliation with more than 30 educational associations has also enabled us to identify best practices and share meaningful insights with partners in our field. That, in turn, has allowed Liaison to develop solutions that streamline application management processes and tasks for everyone from you and your colleagues to the students you hope to admit.

It is no coincidence that I say this as final preparations are underway for the 2019 Liaison User Conference in Boston. We have planned each of the conference's interactive training sessions, presentations and networking opportunities specifically to help expand your reach to students, to partners and to peers.

This issue of *The Admissionist* shares that focus. For example, on pages 12-14, Toby McChesney, senior assistant dean of graduate business programs at Santa Clara University's Leavey School of Business, discusses lessons learned when that institution launched its inaugural online MBA program. He also explains how the school adapted its marketing efforts to address the new challenges that initiative presented. And our lead story, on pages 22-26, offers five suggestions for growing your applicant pool at a time when many disciplines are experiencing declining enrollment. For example, it proposes innovative ways of involving alumni, implementing omnichannel strategies and streamlining admissions processes.

Other eye-opening articles include an interview with the retiring president of the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine (AACOM) about the recent surge of interest in osteopathic medical training (pages 6-9) and a description of how University of La Verne's Psy.D. doubled its number of out-of-state applicants in just one year (page 10). In addition, this issue of *The Admissionist* features success stories about Liaison's highly regarded CAS™, EMP™, Time2Track™ and SlideRoom™ products and services as well.

Please let us know what you think about the ideas and strategies explored in these pages and at the Liaison User Conference. Our content team can be reached at editorial@liaisonedu.com, and they would love to hear your feedback.

Thank you for offering Liaison the opportunity to continue to be at your service.

Best,

George Haddad
Founder and CEO

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HIGHER ED BY THE NUMB3RS

The higher education industry has changed so rapidly in recent years and it shows no sign of slowing down. In this issue of Higher Ed by the Numbers, we explore what those changes look like for both students and the institutions where they study.



DESPITE POTENTIAL BENEFITS, SCHOOLS DEEMED “MOST COMPETITIVE” ACCEPT FEW TRANSFER STUDENTS FROM COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Compared with less competitive schools, the most competitive U.S. colleges and universities tend to admit far fewer transfer students from community colleges — despite the fact that such students typically succeed academically and are also likely to help increase campus diversity. According to one recent study, only **5%** of new undergraduates at schools defined as “most competitive” had transferred from community colleges in **2016**, whereas **21%** of those at “less competitive” schools had done so. That year, for example, Princeton admitted just **13** of the **1,429** transfer applicants who applied, and only eight identified as people of color. On the other hand, smaller and less competitive Dickinson College typically enrolls as many as half of the approximately **30** transfer students who apply each year. The school works with faculty members in honors programs at community colleges to find potential students and to help them transfer as many credits as possible.

Source: *Inside Higher Ed*



MOST UNDERGRADS NO LONGER FIT TYPICAL PROFILE

The majority (nearly **60%**) of undergraduate students are classified as “post-traditional learners.” That means they are over the age of **24**, work full-time, are financially independent or have had a military affiliation. As a result, these **13.3** million students are likely to look for — and require — different educational opportunities than those fresh out of high school.

Source: *Evolution*



STATES PROVIDING RESOURCES FOR VETERANS

Veterans are a huge part of the post-traditional student population, and they face unique challenges when beginning or continuing their education. Some states have recognized that fact and are now starting to act. Louisiana, for example, will become just the second state to have a resource center for veterans on each of its **30** campuses by Fall **2019**. Washington state has a similar program for veterans.

Source: *The Advocate*



BUSINESS SCHOOLS REPORT GAINS IN GENDER EQUALITY

More graduate business schools appear to be making progress toward their goals of gender equality, according to one report. Last year, for example, the University of Southern California Marshall School of Business announced that it had achieved gender parity. Other notable institutions making strides include Duke University’s Fuqua School of Business, which grew its female ranks from **34%** to **42%**, and the University of Washington Foster School of Business, which jumped from **36%** to **42%**.

Source: *Poets & Quants*



SCHOOLS LOOK FOR WAYS TO APPEAL TO “NON-TRADITIONAL LEARNERS”

Not all post-traditional learners desire the same learning experiences; while some may want the flexibility of online classes, others prefer the benefits of attending in-person classes. With that in mind, schools are trying to accommodate their needs. Smith College, for example, provides a customizable approach for its post-traditional students. Through its Ada Comstock Scholars Program, the school offers family housing for up to **12** months and financial assistance to the more than **100** students it enrolls each year. “There are **104** students and **104** different ways they do Smith,” a spokesperson said.

Source: KBIC



WILL ON-CAMPUS DAYCARE BOOST GRADUATION RATES?

Photos of professors holding children while lecturing regularly go viral on social media. Yet those acts of kindness aren't enough to address a widespread challenge in classrooms across the country: **25%** of college students are parents of dependent children, according to the Institute for Women's Policy Research. As a result, the burden of caring for children — which still falls primarily on women's shoulders — combined with the demands of studying and the high costs of childcare make attending college difficult for many. That's why schools, such as Monroe Community College in New York, have on-campus daycare facilities, which have helped increase on-time graduation rates. Texas A&M also offers on-campus childcare, but it provides recommendations for off-campus options due to its long waiting lists.

Source: *The Chronicle of Higher Education*



FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES CREATE SERIOUS CHALLENGES FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS

Among the nearly **6,000** community college students in nine states polled on the subject, equal numbers cited working (**34%**) and paying expenses (**34%**) as the top obstacles potentially interfering with their academic success. Approximately half of the respondents said their wages didn't cover expenses, and **61%** said they didn't have enough time outside of work to study. Many also struggled with balancing other familial responsibilities.

Source: *Inside Higher Ed*



BLACK UNDERGRADS CARRY MORE DEBT THAN OTHER STUDENTS

Black students face significantly greater financial struggles than other undergraduate and graduate students. For example, black undergrads typically have **15%** more debt than their classmates (**\$34,010** versus **\$29,669**); one-third owe more than **\$40,000** after graduation. Among those pursuing doctoral studies, the average debt exceeds **\$128,000**. Black graduates also tend to have lower salaries and a higher unemployment rate.

Source: *The Chronicle of Higher Education*



ASIAN STUDENTS COMPLETE ADVANCED STEM DEGREES AT HIGHEST RATE, FOLLOWED BY WHITE AND BLACK STUDENTS

Completing STEM programs is a challenge, particularly for minority groups. When looking at STEM master's programs, only **6.2%** of black students complete their degrees, compared with **22.9%** of Asian students and **10.7%** of white students. The percentage of degree completion increases with doctoral programs, but black students are still in the minority with a **13.8%** graduation level, compared with **51.9%** of Asian students and **35.5%** of white students.

Source: *Education Dive*



TAILORING ONLINE LEARNING EXPERIENCES TO STUDENT NEEDS INCREASES SATISFACTION

The University of Arizona has a **93%** satisfaction rating among students regarding its online campus because the school works to recommend classes that reflect academic programming and family needs, according to one report. It also strives to provide students with flexibility and control, continues to locate online employees on campus and has been able to bring more than **200** students back to school through its Second Start Program.

Source: *Evollution*



88,000 UNDERGRADS AT ONE SCHOOL — AND MOST ARE OLDER THAN 24

Western Governors University — although in existence for less than **30** years — currently has more than **88,000** enrolled undergraduate students. That's more than the top **14** ranked universities in the U.S. *News & World Report* combined. It's also noteworthy that just **8%** of the student body is under the age of **24**. WGU, an online institution, attracts post-traditional, adult learners and then retains them with its expertise and brand familiarity.

Source: *The Chronicle of Higher Education*





Dr. Stephen Shannon and AACOM: at the vanguard of the osteopathic medicine boom

Dr. Stephen C. Shannon has witnessed tremendous growth in his field ever since he earned his doctor of osteopathic medicine (D.O.) degree in 1986.

But in the years since 2006, when he became president and CEO of the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine (AACOM), Dr. Shannon has assumed a particularly influential front-row seat for the boom in osteopathic medicine.

AACOM is one of more than 30 professional associations across academic disciplines that partners with Liaison. It reports that nearly half of the 35 colleges of osteopathic medicine in the U.S. have been established in the last two decades alone, and that [more than 25% of the nation's medical students](#) are now studying osteopathic medicine, which has become the [fastest growing medical field in the U.S.](#)

Dr. Shannon serves as a spokesperson on behalf of all [35 colleges of osteopathic medicine](#) in the U.S., articulating the community's priorities and positions in a variety of national and international settings. Prior to becoming AACOM's president and CEO, he served as vice president for Health Services and dean of the College of Osteopathic Medicine at the University of New England.

Why has osteopathic medicine experienced such a dramatic surge in popularity? Dr. Shannon provides his insight into that trend in the following interview with Liaison, while describing AACOM's role at the vanguard of promoting interprofessional collaboration and diversity in its discipline.

Liaison: What do you believe has led to the substantial growth in awareness of a patient-centered approach to healthcare through osteopathic medicine?

Dr. Stephen C. Shannon, AACOM (SS): The environment in which we've lived over the past decade or two is one that recognizes the growing complexity of a chronic disease epidemic and an aging population, in a country where there are already shortages and where there will be growing shortages of health professionals. Those issues have led people to focus more on prevention and population health, rather than on disease or organ-focused care. This patient-centered approach has emerged as a strong primary care basis for healthcare delivery. Everybody needs a way to not only get healthcare when they are sick, but also access to ways to stay well.

Osteopathic medical education and osteopathic medicine align very closely with the needs of a rapidly changing healthcare landscape. Everyone from institutions to organizations to U.S. states looked at their own particular situation and thought about what type of professionals they might need. They looked at the track record of osteopathic medicine — particularly its community-based curriculum and outcomes — and saw that as a mechanism to help solve their needs.

AACOM has member schools that have developed

throughout Appalachia in areas like Pikeville, Kentucky, where there are recognized shortages and needs in healthcare, as well as in other rural areas like Yakima, Washington. Our schools also address needs for underserved populations in urban areas like Harlem, home of the Touro College of Osteopathic Medicine.

To further demonstrate AACOM's commitment to promoting osteopathic medical education as a preferred pathway for future physicians and to help meet U.S. healthcare needs, [we launched Choose DO, the Association's first medical student recruitment brand](#). Choose DO serves the growing community of osteopathic medical students in the U.S. by providing tailored resources that [engage and guide students interested in becoming physicians](#) to learn more about their options for osteopathic medical school. The initiative also offers branding, language and resources to help advance and build upon osteopathic medical school recruitment efforts at AACOM's member colleges.

These days, if you want to become a physician and you haven't looked at osteopathic medicine as a potential track, you really haven't explored your options enough. Osteopathic medical education provides all the sound scientific medical approaches to diagnosis and treatment in addition to the holistic, patient-centered hands-on approach that all of our students are trained in — and that people want to find.

Liaison: How are colleges of osteopathic medicine evolving their admissions and application review practices to find students who are best prepared for today's — and tomorrow's — healthcare environment?

SS: We used to train physicians on the assumption they were going to be solo or small-group practitioners. The reality now is that the cohort of physicians trained these days will go out and work in teams. From an admissions perspective, that necessitates the recruitment of individuals who have the background and skills enabling them to progress in that environment. So, you look beyond the numbers. You don't just look at MCAT scores and GPAs, even if you do need to

be sure that those you admit are up to the academic rigor they will encounter. You look for individuals who fit into the mission of the institution to which they're applying. If they're applying to a school which says its mission is to produce primary care physicians for rural and underserved areas, then you look at his or her background and what they have done outside academics. The more diversity of experiences they're able to bring, the better.

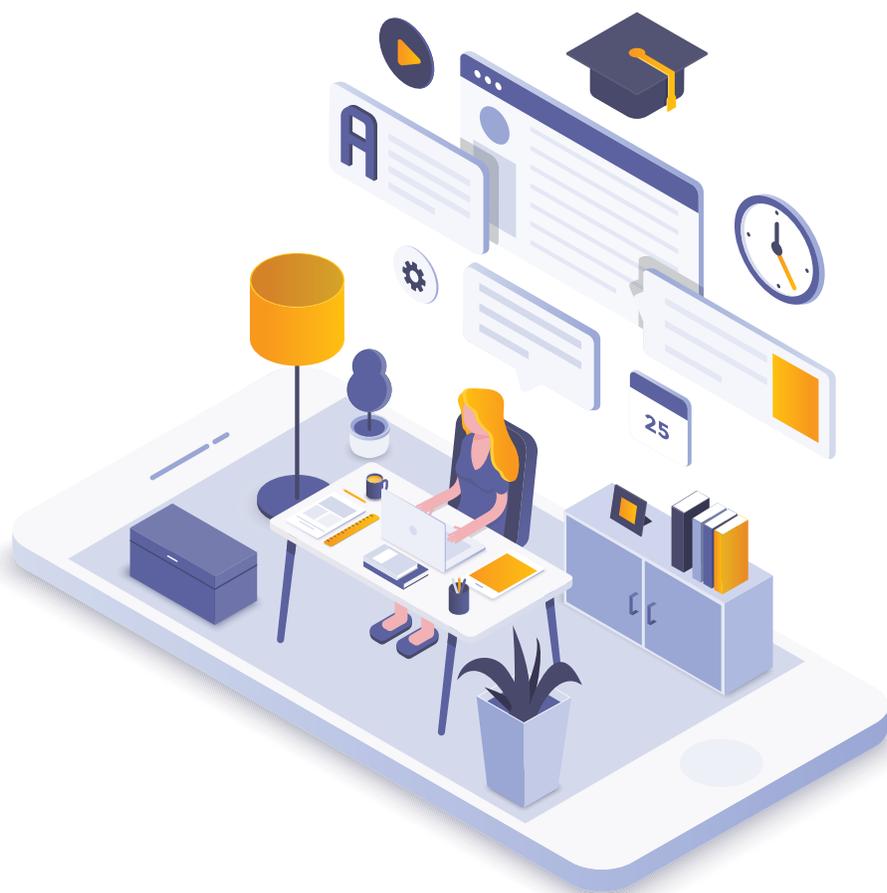
It's not just looking at the individuals, but it's also thinking about the entire cohort you're developing. These students will not only be learning as individuals, but more and more they'll be learning in groups. There needs to be a recognition of the characteristics that are necessary for success in that environment. You want students with the character that will allow them to develop the professionalism needed within the field. The way you do that is not just by looking at the numbers, but by looking at their experiences and by using different types of interview techniques. The vision of the future medical student is different than it used to be. And it also varies, depending on the college and what their mission is, where

they're located and what they're trying to do.

Along these lines, our member schools have benefited tremendously from partnering with Liaison, through utilizing its tools for admissions and enrollment. Liaison has such broad experience working within the health professions to gather and quantify information for admissions processes. In addition, they have a strong commitment to education and diversity in the health professions.

Liaison: How do you suggest that schools ensure their students graduate with the skills and knowledge they need in the area of interprofessional collaboration?

SS: Going back to when I was a medical student, interprofessional education has been part of the curriculum of osteopathic medical schools for years. It really began to emerge as a key component that we needed to formally recognize, build tools for and adopt accreditation standards for as we have transitioned into a healthcare system that's focused on both quality of outcomes as well as value of care. This means emphasizing not only prevention of disease and limiting negative outcomes that might occur within a healthcare



system, but also advancing team-based care and health promotion.

At the same time, I joined with several leaders in other health professions education associations to work on how to advance education for health professional students for team-based care. That led to us developing an organization called the [Interprofessional Education Collaborative](#) that has now expanded to over 20 different associations in the health professions. One of the first things we recognized was that we needed a common language and common competencies to talk about this issue. The published [Core Competencies for Interprofessional Collaborative Practice](#) is now cited nationally and internationally regarding what interprofessional education means for students in all health professions, and what competencies they should be getting from their curriculum. It has had a big impact on the educational system that we're living with now and in shaping changes we will continue to see unfold.

The need for team-based care as health systems evolve has also led to collaboration between the accrediting bodies for most health professions, who are looking at common goals relative to accreditation. Many organizations in our field, including the Commission on Osteopathic College Accreditation, have adopted core standards for interprofessional education. It's becoming more and more important as we focus on prevention, caring for individuals with chronic diseases and limiting the impact of disease — and on trying to do this all as economically as possible. I think the schools have to focus on where they fit in on this issue. And it varies. We have some stand-alone colleges of osteopathic medicine that have teamed up with other health professions schools to develop experiences and work in the clinical scenarios around these issues. We also have colleges that are part of universities and larger academic health systems, meaning they have natural connections with other health professions education programs as well as hospitals and clinics that enable these kinds of interactions.

It's an evolution of how we structure health professions education, evolving accreditation standards, how clinical care

is delivered and how financing works. All those factors are coming together to move this forward.

Liaison: AACOM reports that in the 2016-17 academic year, underrepresented minorities represented just 12% of total enrollment in U.S. medical schools. How is AACOM addressing this concern and others pertaining to diversity?

SS: We certainly need health professionals who reflect the populations they're serving. We don't have that with the current underrepresentation of minorities in virtually all of the health professions.

However, there are some good areas of progress to celebrate. At the association level, we have established a council on diversity. We have a program that's seeking to provide scholarship funds for underrepresented minorities and has a track record of doing that. And we are creating opportunities for all our colleges to get together and share best practices on diversity.

Many of our schools have developed a relationship with high schools or colleges that have strong underrepresented minority populations. That provides avenues for students to experience what it's like in the health professions and to envision their careers developing along those lines.

For example, the OSU (Oklahoma State University) College of Osteopathic Medicine is entering a partnership with the Cherokee Nation to establish a campus on tribal land in Oklahoma, where there will be a focus on training both Native American and rural physicians. We have a strong Hispanic presence within our member schools in New Mexico, Texas and Florida. For the University of Pikeville, their mission is providing care for those living in eastern Kentucky, so their focus has been on socioeconomic diversity as much as racial and ethnic diversity. And other schools have similar missions and initiatives.

In terms of delivery, A.T. Still University in Arizona has developed a curriculum whereby students in their second through fourth years go into community health centers around the country and complete their education working with populations

in need of healthcare. Graduates of those programs are much more likely to go into underrepresented primary care areas and then stay in the community healthcare system.

Liaison: AACOM's grassroots "ED to MED" campaign focuses on bringing medical students, medical educators, graduate and professional students and other advocates together to join the conversation about graduate student debt issues on Capitol Hill. Why should healthcare students get involved with this initiative?

SS: [ED to MED](#) is aimed at educating people about the Higher Education Act, which is up for reauthorization this year. It's the law which governs federal financial aid programs that graduate students rely on to finance their education. Across the health professions, student debt is a tremendous challenge when you're talking about providing clinicians in underserved and rural areas. The debt level in and of itself can be a disincentive to be able to fulfill one's mission as an institution.

Since congressional leaders say they are going to be handling reauthorization of the Higher Education Act this year, this is a crucial time that will determine the future of federal programs such as Grad PLUS loans and Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF). Grad PLUS loans help cover the cost of health professionals' education, and PSLF provides incentives for careers in public service by assisting those who qualify to give back to their communities and have loan forgiveness as a part of that. These programs work well in terms of providing access to medically underserved populations.

ED to MED developed a set of principles, and then we went out and talked to other organizations about them. Now, we have 18 partner organizations that have endorsed the campaign principles and are participating in efforts to educate our congressional representatives about the importance of these programs. Through social media, publications and blogs by students who talk about their debt experiences, I think we're getting a good reaction on Capitol Hill. And it's really important, especially this year, to keep speaking up and taking action as a community. ■

One Year, Nearly Double the Number of Out of State Applicants

How PSYCAS™, the Centralized Application Service (CAS™) for graduate psychology programs, helped University of La Verne's Psy.D. meet its institutional goals

Located in Southern California, the University of La Verne seeks to draw applicants from all over the country as part of its institutional commitment to diversity, a core value for the University and all of its programs. The problem: Less than 25% of Psy.D. applications were coming from out-of-state prospects. Jerry Kernes, Ph.D. and program chair, believed they could do better, both in recruitment and admissions — but not without making some significant changes.

"We were interested in PSYCAS™ because it would expand our reach beyond our geographic area," he said, adding that another goal was to satisfy certain related APA requirements. "As an APA accredited program, we have to show deliberate work towards diversifying our applicant pool," he explained. "It's not good enough just to say that we have a diverse student body. We have to show how we're working to attract applicants with unique perspectives." In other words, the Psy.D. program needed a platform that would not only attract more out-of-state students, but would also provide access to data that proved they were actively engaged in outreach efforts — goals that the Liaison-powered Centralized Application Service (CAS™) for graduate psychology programs could help them achieve.

PSYCAS™, the CAS for Graduate Psychology Programs

PSYCAS provided a streamlined, single application portal, a robust suite of analytics

and communications tools — and next-level customer support for staff and students. There was another aspect of PSYCAS that Natalie Brown, psychology department manager, particularly appreciated: "I think a piece that doesn't get talked about often enough is how helpful the customer service is," she said, adding that it was not only beneficial for staff but for applicants as well. "The feedback we got during the applicant interview phase is that overwhelmingly they like the process better, and they wish more schools used PSYCAS."

"At first, I was hesitant about PSYCAS because I didn't want to turn over control to an outside agency," admitted Dr. Kernes. "I found just the opposite has been true. I feel like now we're in better control of our application process." For the psychology program's admissions staff, the ability to export all data was a great boon for the program. As Brown explained, "We can easily pull all of the information that goes into the PSYCAS application, whether it's related to applicant gender, diversity in different factors or geographic area. We also poll our applicants to find out where they hear about us, so we have a good base of knowledge [related to] where they're hearing about our program." In a student survey, 7% of respondents said they heard about the program through PSYCAS.

Increased access to data has led to deeper insight into current program statistics. Now, the program can make more strategic recruitment and enrollment decisions. "PSYCAS changed



admissions at University of La Verne for the better," said Brown. Dr. Kernes agreed: "I would say to my colleagues at other universities, don't be afraid to try it! If you're similarly focused on increasing diversity and would benefit from more transparency into recruitment and enrollment trends, you stand to benefit greatly from PSYCAS." ■

"As an APA accredited program, we have to show deliberate work towards diversifying our applicant pool. It's not good enough just to say that we have a diverse student body. We have to show how we're working to attract applicants with unique perspectives."

- Jerry Kernes, Ph.D. and program chair

Top 5 Reasons to Enroll in a Liaison Academy Course



We launched Liaison Academy last year to make product training and professional development more accessible to the more than 31,000 programs on over 1,000 campuses that leverage Liaison's products and services. How do you stand to benefit from participating in our courses? Read on to find out.

1. Spend one-on-one time with trained professionals

Each in-person Liaison Academy course builds in an opportunity for one-on-one time with Liaison staff to cover your specific questions, while our live, interactive webinars provide an opportunity for you to ask questions in real time. All events are taught by certified trainers who bring their own unique talents and knowledge of both Liaison products and the higher education industry.

2. Learn on your time

Liaison Academy offers courses in a variety of formats. Whether you enjoy learning and networking with others in-person, from the convenience of your office or home or via short, microlearning webinars, there are many ways to reach your goals.

3. Earn affordable Continuing Education Units (CEUs)

Liaison Academy believes that education should be affordable. Costs associated with courses help cover logistical expenses and license agreements. As a result, courses are an economical way to earn CEUs that can be converted to other education measurements for professional development or licensing requirements.

4. Maximize your efficiency at work

The adage "Knowledge is Power" is true. Knowledge also equals efficiency. The more you understand a product or a concept, the easier it is to perform a function around it. At the core of a Liaison Academy workshop, the learning objectives focus on creating a more efficient workplace for you.

5. Learn something new about Liaison products

Exploring best practices for Liaison software is a main priority of the curriculum and is built into each Liaison Academy course. Whether you are a beginner or expert, you're sure to learn something new in a Liaison Academy workshop. And later, you can teach others in your office a trick or two.

Develop your
personal learning plan at
academy.liaisonedu.com



Insights from Santa Clara University's Senior Assistant Dean of Graduate Business Programs

Former GMAC executive and experienced admissions leader Bob Alig recently interviewed Toby McChesney, senior assistant dean of graduate business programs at Santa Clara University's Leavey School of Business and chair of Liaison's BusinessCAS™ advisory board. Toby shares more about his experience launching Santa Clara's inaugural online program and how the school adapted its marketing efforts to extend its reach.

**THE REACH OF AN
ONLINE PROGRAM**

Bob Alig (BA), Liaison: Santa Clara launched its first online program in January 2018 — I know many business schools are working to launch new programs and would love to learn from your experience. Can you tell us more about your marketing efforts to date?

Toby McChesney, Santa Clara University (TM): We had a tight timeline: We didn't get to advertise until late October or early November after we got the regional accreditation approval from the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). Once we got that approval, it was full force recruiting for our January 5 start date — we launched with 15 online students, so we had two short months to do that with holidays and whatnot. We moved pretty fast.

This is our first online MBA and it's my first online program as well, which is exciting. There are so many things we can learn from the experience. First, we wanted a strong tagline for our online MBA. As you know, there are a lot of MBA programs out there, so we had to ask how Santa Clara differentiates itself. We learned there are not many online MBAs in the Bay Area, so we wanted to be the first really strong brand in the area and to expand from there eventually. We came up with the notion that our program helps students disrupt their career. All of our marketing is centered around this message that if you attend our online MBA program, you'll be able to make big changes or start your own company.

We've been targeting students with three or more years of work experience who are serious about continuing their education by getting an MBA from a school in Silicon Valley. We spent a great deal of time optimizing the demographics and did a lot of geo-targeting to help tweak our marketing messaging. We adjusted and optimized our landing pages, ad copy and keywords, depending on the traffic, carefully examining the buzzwords

that appealed to our audience.

BA: Beyond your tagline and targeting, can you tell us more about how your approach to recruiting for the new online program is different than outreach for your traditional programs?

TM: For on-campus, we didn't do a lot in terms of mailings — for this campaign we created a special brochure which we mailed to GMAT test-takers in the Bay Area who were looking for an online MBA program. We sent them a mailer in early November which helped us attract attention. We also did more call campaigns. Overall, there was a lot more personal attention paid to every lead we got through our online MBA website.

At Santa Clara, we do not have a full-time MBA program. We have the evening MBA and an Executive MBA, the new online program and three MS programs. Before the online program reared its head, our travel was very limited to California. Now we're doing more with events in Seattle, Portland and Texas to extend our reach. We can invite alumni in those areas to different events and tell them about our online program — we have something to sell to alums outside the Bay Area and a way to create engagement, which is very powerful.

BA: Tell us about the segmentation work that the Graduate Management Admission Council (GMAC) did and how that impacted your outreach.

TM: I had been at Santa Clara for 13 months, and when I came on board I had to move fast: We redid our evening MBA curriculum that's identical to the online MBA program, so a lot was going on! Given my past work with GMAC, I thought it was important that Santa Clara did the study. We were one of the pilot schools that jumped in and did the research. We decided to use the tagline, "Our program helps students disrupt their career." When we look at the data from the students who completed the GMAC

survey for the segmentation, the career revitalizers and skill upgraders were the two bigger segmentations we saw. That reflects on-campus students — I want to do the survey again for our online MBA prospects and current students to get a sense of where they're falling to see if we want to change our marketing message.

BA: Let's pivot for a couple of minutes to your decision to join Liaison's BusinessCAS advisory board — can you tell me more about that decision? How do you think our work together will serve as a support for you and your peers, especially as you're thinking about the growth of your online program?

TM: I've been blessed to be a part of many different organizations, and I feel it's really important for any graduate programs leader to work with different organizations. I was on the board with directors in GMAC and have been a part of a number of different organizations as a committee member or on the advisory board for a number of smaller organizations. When I got the call from you, Bob, [inviting me to serve on the board] I was excited but didn't really know anything about Liaison.

When I first came on board at Santa Clara, I had it in the back of my mind that it would be nice to have a common application; I've seen undergraduate programs excelling with that. We had just started using GMAC's common letter of recommendation and received feedback from employers that having one common recommendation form was helpful. When I got the call, it seemed like a chance to help graduate management education overall. I love Santa Clara and want Santa Clara to thrive, but I think as thought leaders in this space we need to make sure the message is out there to all students that an advanced degree in business is very important. It can help with moving up your career overall or starting your own business — it can deliver a

return on investment. I think it's important to step forward and join these kinds of organizations.

BA: And what were your impressions after that initial meeting?

TM: What really struck me is how large Liaison is — I knew by the website and from phone calls but I don't think you can really appreciate the scope until you're on the campus in Watertown. Walking around meeting the people and seeing the operations was really mind-blowing. When I was there, it was the California State University system's application deadline for undergraduate programs — they had an amazing number of applications and it blew my mind.

It struck me that if we can get more MBA/MS business programs on the BusinessCAS platform, how exciting it will be to extend our reach. We have an opportunity to really help spread the word about the value of a graduate management degree.

I'm always excited to try something new. BusinessCAS is new for Liaison, and it's exciting for me. Hopefully a few years down the road those of us on the advisory board now will be able to look back and say we were part of the beginning, we helped the platform grow from working with several business schools to supporting several hundred. That's something I've really been touting for our online program — I've been interviewing students and telling them, "You're part of the first ever online program for Santa Clara University." That's exciting for them, too — when they graduate in two years, they want to be able to say to their friends and colleagues, "I was part of the first ever online class at Santa Clara."

You don't get that option very often, so I think it's an exciting time. There's a lot of work to be done to promote BusinessCAS but we've already started planting the seeds among various business school folks across the country.

BA: I hadn't really thought about the parallel between that inaugural MBA class at Santa Clara and the inaugural group with BusinessCAS — that's terrific. You've talked a bit about how you hope BusinessCAS can help expand your outreach and drive engagement with prospective

students but are there areas that have surprised you as you've gotten to know Liaison and understand BusinessCAS better over the last couple of months?

TM: I did not realize there are over 40 different CASs you all operate. While I'm focusing on business schools and Santa Clara, it's powerful to sit down with deans of schools of engineering, medicine, public health and education to talk about overall trends in graduate education.

[At Santa Clara] we're looking at some joint degree programs with the law school, engineering and some other programs as well. I've talked to our school dean to find out when someone comes out of a program if they would benefit from specific strategy management courses from the business school. We're looking at links across disciplines. I see the CAS Summit [a bi-annual meeting of CAS leaders] as an extension of that — a chance to brainstorm and hear what different schools are experiencing. With so much focus on international student enrollments and the political climate, I think it's important for us to come together and talk through those things and hear about trends.

That's another thing I enjoy about BusinessCAS: The board members and I can all get together over the phone, through email and at meetings to talk about trends and best practices. I think it's very powerful.

BA: That's an interesting overlap. Liaison certainly has the power to convene, and I think that's what you're talking about and what you've experienced with other organizations.

We've learned that as we become more international and develop more diversity of programs, we have to be more creative in how we engage people and how we connect them — not everyone can attend an annual meeting in a different country. Because Liaison has such a vantage point in terms of technology to support and enable education, we can do even more of that in partnership with you and your colleagues.

Getting back to your recent online program launch — is there anything else you'd like to share about that experience?

TM: It was a very heavy lift with our online MBA. We made the strategic decision to have it exactly mirror our revamped evening MBA program. Just when I got to Santa Clara, we were redoing the evening MBA. The numbers were not very strong — the curriculum was not resonating in the marketplace. We made the decision to offer more electives and streamline the program so students could graduate in two years. We built an intensive management strategy class, so students were able to bond on campus at the beginning of the program. We also built in a core data analytics course, which was definitely needed where we are situated in Silicon Valley.

Our enrollment numbers have really skyrocketed since launching the redesigned evening MBA. We virtually doubled our intake without loosening our admissions standards. That's created a nice buzz at Santa Clara and helped us move into the top 40 in the part-time MBA program rankings in *U.S. News & World Report*. I think it's important to highlight that the online program is not a separate animal, it's tied to our evening program. It has the same admissions process, the same curriculum and the same standards, just some of it is online.

BA: Let's conclude with some advice: What would you suggest to someone considering launching an online program, or anyone considering something of that nature that requires changing their reach?

TM: Great question. We had an aggressive timeline for a variety of reasons and were really blessed to launch in nine months with 15 students. I would advise anybody looking to do this to talk to someone who's been there about what resources you need, what companies you can work with and the pros and cons of working with different vendors. We're a smaller school so we had to go with one; I'm not saying that's good or bad, it's what made sense for us. It's important for leaders to explore both sides before signing a contract with a vendor. Overall, I wanted more time to do research and talk with colleagues about the online MBA space, pros and cons and timelines before jumping into it. It's a lot of work, but it's exciting. ■

GOING GLOBAL:

Smarter International Recruitment with the HigherYield™ Solution

It's no secret. International enrollment in the U.S. has declined over the past few years. While America is still the hottest destination for graduate and undergraduate students from other countries, the number of students enrolling for the first time experienced a 6.6% drop in the fall of 2017 alone, according to the Institute of International Education's 2018 Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange.

Those behind the study downplay the role of political agendas and policy change and point their fingers at the rising cost of education in the U.S. and stronger competition from universities in other countries. Regardless of the defining reason behind the decline, international recruiters and admissions representatives throughout the country are

looking for the most competitive, cost-effective way to attract future international students.

Introducing the HigherYield™ solution

Brought to you by Educational Testing Service (ETS) and Liaison's Enrollment Marketing Platform (EMP™), the collaboration of these companies makes perfect sense as both are in the business of helping admissions offices enroll more students with fewer resources. International recruitment at the undergraduate and graduate level has never been considered easy, but in our current climate, it is more difficult than ever.

The HigherYield solution recognizes that although universities in Canada, Japan, Spain and China have seen gains in overall enrollment, the U.S. is still home to the biggest, best and most successful marketing companies in the world. Your institution has the opportunity to prove it, one campaign at a time.

Let's start with the basics. Immediacy is key. According to the 2017 Aslanian Market Research Study of Online College Students, 61% of students enrolled at the institution that contacted them first. Before you can respond with immediacy, you need to attract an international population seeking the degree and experience your institution offers. This is where ETS comes in.

The GRE® Search Service and TOEFL® Search Service allow institutions to tap into a worldwide database and cost effectively reach prospective applicants who have demonstrated

graduate-level readiness. Rather than relying on admissions representatives to recruit an international population on their own, these services focus on specific prospects and let you narrow your list with more than 30 search criteria.

Once you have the names, what's next? So many international admissions offices allow their qualified prospects to collect dust as they sit in an Excel document for days, weeks or even months. Remember what we said about immediacy. It's key! Liaison's powerful EMP and the higher education marketing talent behind the technology ensure that you leave no names in the dust. The HigherYield solution offers four base packages, but each one is highly customizable depending on program need and client request. From relevant, targeted email campaigns to personalized microsites and everything in between, our strategy is designed with your prospects in mind.

The GRE Search Service and TOEFL Search Service databases are updated twice weekly. So as long as there is a need for new prospects, the HigherYield solution can continue producing fresh leads. EMP's trackable marketing data ensures that successful campaigns continue to engage applicants. If changes are required, they can be made on the fly. International student recruitment may be taking a hit, but the HigherYield solution will make the process easier. ■

"Having the support that Liaison provides me is really priceless. To get eight enrolled students from \$4.80, what else can I possibly do better than that? It's exciting to see those numbers and know that this really works for us."

—Kelly Holmes, Dean of Graduate Admission at Marist College





STUDENT ACTIVISM

IS RAISING THE BAR FOR ALL OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Author: Andrew J. Seligsohn, Ph.D., president, Campus Compact

The news is full of young people taking action on public issues. Students are striking to pressure public officials to act on climate change. They are marching to pressure public officials to take action to reduce the likelihood of school shootings. They are reminding us that Black Lives Matter. They are on social media contributing to the success of younger and more diverse political candidates. Over and over, we see videos of young people confronting authoritative adults — senators, university presidents — and calling them to account for actions they have taken or failed to take.

However, we all know that what gets covered on television news or goes viral on social media is not necessarily reflective of what's going on in the daily lives of real people. So it's reasonable to ask whether there is really a wave of youth engagement in public issues. Are young people in 2019 really paying more attention to and getting more involved with the big issues of our day than those who came before them?

YOUNG PEOPLE ARE FIRED UP

While it's always good practice to be skeptical of hype, in this case, the answer is a resounding yes. Young people really are getting engaged in ways that set them apart from cohorts going back many years. Between the 2014 and 2018 midterm elections, the share of young people who cast a ballot jumped from 21% to 31%.¹ Think about an indicator that matters to you and what it would mean to increase it by nearly 50% from one cycle to the next — and you begin to get a sense of the change we are experiencing.

And it's not just voting. The proportion of young people participating in protests tripled in the two years leading up to the 2018 election. In that period, 22% of young people reported participating in offline activism, such as protests, marches and sit-ins. Many more engaged in online activism, such as signing internet petitions. And, in contrast to the typical picture of “clicktivism” or “slacktivism,” the evidence shows that online participants are much more likely to engage in real-world activism than others. Young people are getting engaged online, and they are taking it to the streets and the ballot box.²

Crucially, along with all this action has come a change in belief. In far greater numbers than just two years ago, young people now believe that dramatic change is possible if people band together and demand it, and they believe that people working together can overcome the barriers that stand in the way.³

RAISING THE BAR FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

So what does all this have to do with college? These data give us a sense of the expectations that students bring to college. As interest in community service grew among young people in the 1990s and early 2000s, colleges and universities responded, creating centers for community engagement and embracing the pedagogy of service learning. We learned that students expected experiential learning focused on making their communities better, and research showed us they were right to expect it. Service learning and community engagement proved themselves to be powerful tools for student learning and development.

Those programs and opportunities remain important, but our students are telling us that they are not enough. Students will increasingly be looking for opportunities to engage in advocacy, activism and direct participation in the democratic process. The challenge for colleges and universities will be meeting those expectations in a way that is consistent with the obligation of institutions of higher education to be spaces of openness for a wide range of viewpoints. That means that our programs will need to emphasize listening across differences and working together to find common solutions to the challenges we face.

And student expectations are not limited to what the institutions they attend offer to them. Students have expectations of how colleges — and their leaders — will act. Research has shown that high-impact experiences, such as service learning and engaging with diversity, have positive effects on students — as long as students believe their institutions are committed to those values. We all know from experience that students are highly sensitive to hypocrisy. If they believe that institutions are telling students to be active participants in making the world better but are creating policies that don't live up to those values, they will be turned off.⁴

LIVING UP TO STUDENTS' EXPECTATIONS

So what can colleges and universities do? While there are many specific answers to that question, involving curriculum, co-curricular programs, research and institutional operations, they all boil down to one answer: A college or university that wants to connect with the students who will shape the future will get in the habit of asking whether everything it is doing is oriented toward improving the world. Have we designed our curricular and co-curricular programs to develop students who will make the world better? Does our research answer questions that matter to communities in our region and around the world? Do our purchasing practices reflect our stated values? How about our decisions about real estate development, employment practices, admissions and financial aid?

The savviest campuses build comprehensive plans to advance their public mission — and they make those plans visible. Over the last three years,

Campus Compact has helped more than 100 colleges and universities build Campus Civic Action Plans to articulate how they plan to make good on the values they espouse. Each of these plans is different from all of the others, reflecting the assets, challenges and opportunities of the institution itself and the communities to which it is connected. What all of the Campus Civic Action Plans have in common is a clear and public connection between what the institution says it stands for and the real steps it will take to turn the talk into action. Public plans create accountability — the most powerful antidote to cynicism.

Young people remain open to learning when they see committed adults ready to engage with them. At the same time, they quite rightly see adults as responsible for causing — or failing to address — the challenges that will define the next several decades. If we want students to see colleges and universities as places to develop themselves for the future, higher education leaders will need to shape their own actions and those of their institutions in ways that match up to the students' highest aspirations. ■

Andrew J. Seligsohn is president of Campus Compact, a national coalition of 1,000 colleges and universities dedicated to the public purposes of higher education. Before joining Campus Compact in 2014, Seligsohn served as associate chancellor for Civic Engagement and Strategic Planning at Rutgers University—Camden, where he worked across the campus to develop the University's engagement infrastructure to maximize community impact and student learning. Seligsohn previously served as director of Civic Engagement Learning in the Pace Center at Princeton University and as a faculty member in the Department of Political Science at Hartwick College. Seligsohn holds a Ph.D. in political science from the University of Minnesota and a B.A. in modern intellectual history from Williams College.

1. Young People Dramatically Increase their Turnout to 31%, Shape 2018 Midterm Elections, CIRCLE (Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement)

2. CIRCLE Poll: So Much for Slacktivism, As Youth Translate Online Engagement to Offline Political Action, CIRCLE

3. CIRCLE Poll: Ahead of 2018 Midterms, A New Generation Finds its Political Voice, CIRCLE

4. You Expect What? Students' Perceptions as Resources in Acquiring Commitments and Capacities for Civic Engagement, Barnhardt, Cassie L., et al., Research in Higher Education

Addressing Biomedical Programs' Unique Admissions Challenges



Graduate biomedical programs have distinct needs when it comes to admissions. Yet, often operating under the umbrella of a larger department or organization, admissions staff are frequently forced to make do with application systems that aren't designed to accommodate these needs.

Van Andel Institute, for one, was using an application system tied to their student information system, which was an offshoot of their fundraising and development system. "It was built for a K-12 program, not really meant for a college or grad school," said Enrollment and Records Administrator Christy Mayo. "It was cumbersome and not intuitive."

Van Andel was not alone in having to use a less than ideal tool for the job at hand. In fact, while transcripts, letters of recommendation and other materials that supplement applications provide critical insight into whether or not a student belongs in a particular biomed program, oftentimes these programs' applications fail to collect this information in a streamlined way.

BioMedCAS™: A new way to gather the information necessary to identify best-fit students

That's not the case with BioMedCAS™. When Albert Einstein College of Medicine joined the Centralized Application Service (CAS™) for biomedical sciences programs, the school was able to ask more relevant questions via the application. Salvatore Calabro, director of graduate admissions and enrollment for graduate programs in the

biomedical sciences, said, "We were able to go deeper into our specific questions related to the biomedical sciences. We were able to focus on questions about research, which are really important to us."

When Van Andel joined the CAS, they quickly realized that the new service made it easier to collect recommendations. "The recommendation letter system that comes with BioMedCAS is really nice," said Mayo. "It's a big improvement over the way we used to collect letters of recommendation, which was either through the mail or a general email box."

Calabro said BioMedCAS also reduces the burden on faculty members providing recommendations for applicants. "Recommenders aren't often considered in the admissions process, but in the biomedical sciences, they play a big role — research-based programs are looking for letters from faculty students worked with directly. To help get the student into a good school, sometimes they have to submit letters to 10 different schools, and these are busy people," said Calabro. "With BioMedCAS, they're able to submit just one letter for all the programs."

Streamlining the application process and applicant review

Weill Cornell Medicine's applicants and faculty members saw a large difference in the college's application process once BioMedCAS was implemented: "Students in our summer programs found the ease of applying to multiple schools such a pleasure they wished more schools were members of

BioMedCAS because of the amount of time it saved them," said Weill Cornell Medicine's Associate Director of Enrollment and Education Operations Matt Cipriano.

Cipriano said since adopting the CAS, he's been getting feedback from faculty reviewers about how much simpler it makes things and how much cleaner everything is, both in terms of the process and the applications themselves.

Albert Einstein College of Medicine had a similar experience. "Getting applications to faculty quickly for review was a priority — that was something we wanted to do better," Calabro said. "We were able to leverage the functionality of the CAS to get complete applications to multiple faculty quickly and to collect their feedback. Our faculty are really happy with it."

Prospective students and faculty members aren't the only ones looking forward to having more institutions join BioMedCAS. As more schools come on board, members will be able to compare their admissions and enrollment numbers to those of other biomed programs and the CAS pool as a whole, which is substantial considering Liaison powers over 40 CASs for disciplines in the health professions and beyond. "I'm looking forward to being able to benchmark against other schools," Mayo said. ■

Learn more about joining the BioMedCAS community at biomedcas.liaisoncas.org.

MAKING THE CASE FOR CAS™

CSWE Shares Insights on Recruiting Programs to Join SocialWorkCAS™



Heather Marshall has served as Director of SocialWorkCAS™ and Student Initiatives at the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) since mid-2016. Responsible for recruiting new programs to join Liaison's SocialWorkCAS, the Centralized Application Service (CAS™) for graduate social work programs, she recently spoke to Liaison about why her organization decided to develop a CAS and what she's learned about recruiting programs to join the SocialWorkCAS community.

Liaison: What led your association to develop a CAS, Heather?

Heather Marshall, Council on Social Work Education (HM): We started this journey a few years ago when we were looking at what other associations were doing to increase national recruitment to their professions. We did a lot of background work so that we could inform our Board of Directors about the potential of SocialWorkCAS. In March 2016, the board decided to move forward with the CAS because they thought it was a good initiative for the field.

At CSWE, we collect a lot of data on social work education, specifically regarding what our individual programs are doing. We saw SocialWorkCAS as another way to understand who was coming into the field and how we could support incoming students.

Liaison: What goals does CSWE have for SocialWorkCAS?

HM: As I said, we really wanted to better understand and support our incoming students. For example, we established a fee-waiver program early on that includes applicants who have served in the U.S. military as well as in other service-based initiatives. The data we were collecting indicated that many of our applicants had had such experiences before coming into the social work field.

For me personally, the goals have evolved over time to focus more on recruitment at the program level. We feel like the programs currently participating in SocialWorkCAS are really seeing the benefits. There are so many social work programs at institutions that already have a CAS for other disciplines that moving forward with SocialWorkCAS seemed like a great way to help support recruitment. As a result, a lot of my efforts now revolve around program adoption.

Liaison: How many programs currently participate in SocialWorkCAS?

HM: As of today, we have 13 programs.

Initially, I think we were pretty aggressive with our projections, but we're getting there. However, I am very pleased that the programs that are participating are having really positive outcomes. We're seeing quality results.

Liaison: What outcomes have you seen from SocialWorkCAS so far? How are these aligning with your goals?

HM: We recently launched a survey about our outcomes, and I expect to have more quantifiable information on that subject at the end of the current cycle. But, anecdotally, I would say some of the most significant outcomes so far include the ability for programs to be more creative with their admissions process and to reach more students earlier in the process. SocialWorkCAS creates efficiencies and gives programs greater visibility and access to students.

For example, with SocialWorkCAS, schools and programs can do a lot more regarding targeted marketing and communications. That has really helped. The CAS has also helped in terms of streamlining the application and admissions processes. Schools were spending a lot of time on GPA calculations and manually processing applications — moving paper around, essentially. With SocialWorkCAS, they're now able to be more creative about the way they're recruiting students because they're not spending so much time on other efforts.

I was hoping that's what people would experience by joining the community.

Liaison: How does CSWE approach SocialWorkCAS member recruitment?

HM: I'm the primary person working on this initiative at CSWE. While I do get support from our marketing team, I also get a lot of support from Liaison's marketing team, our CAS account director and the customer solutions manager. Because the decision to launch SocialWorkCAS was a board-directed initiative, it was very important to our leadership that there would be somebody helping to provide hands-on oversight.

Personally, I do a lot in the way of one-on-one sessions and marketing campaigns. I also built a website through Liaison's Enrollment Marketing Platform (EMP™). That was key when it came to supporting our CAS program recruitment efforts and providing resources for our enrolled programs.

I think CAS is a great way to nurture applicants who are in the pipeline — to encourage them to continue with their

applications and move forward in the process. Beyond that, we're trying to decide how much time and energy we want to spend getting people into social work seats. I think CAS is a nice way to start the process and it's certainly opened up some other pathways for us in looking at how we can engage with students.

Liaison: How would you describe your experience in recruiting programs to join SocialWorkCAS? Why do programs join? What challenges have you faced?

HM: There's no single reason why programs join. It really depends on each program's unique needs. For example, a newly accredited program might want to get its name out there to raise its visibility. Or an established program with limited resources may be attracted by the ability to streamline its admissions process.

In general, however, we're able to build successful relationships when we can get out in front of people to explain the benefits of the CAS and show that cost is not really an issue or a barrier. Regardless of the program, our job involves understanding why they might need SocialWorkCAS and then making a case.

Liaison: What are some of the specific challenges you face when recruiting programs to join?

HM: A lack of resources within a program can present obstacles. For example, social work programs may not have access to the same IT support that other programs on the same campus have. The cost to students — or, more accurately, cost perception — also remains a challenge, even when you break down the numbers and explain the benefits.

Liaison: What resources do you find most helpful when having conversations about the CAS with potential members?

HM: Data. It's really helpful when people can just sit down and see some numbers. It's also important to have marketing collateral that quickly gets to the root of common myths or preconceptions about the CAS. For example, potential members need to be able to understand right away that CSWE is not managing their admissions process, but rather offering a tool that will help them manage their own process.

When we get in front of potential CAS adopters and have those conversations, that's when we can demonstrate the return on investment. ■

PLENTY OF FISH IN THE SEA:



5 WAYS TO EXPAND YOUR REACH

Where have all the applicants gone?

That's exactly what a growing number of college admissions staffers across the country have been wondering in recent years, with applicant pools dwindling and enrollment pressures rising on parallel tracks.

Only 38% of college admissions officers are meeting their enrollment goals by the traditional target date of May 1, according to one recent study. In the survey of 499 senior staffers in admissions or enrollment management, more than 50% of respondents working for community colleges, private/doctoral master's programs and private bachelor's programs — as well as over 60% of those working for public master's/bachelor's programs — reported feeling “very concerned” about filling their institutions' classes.¹

It isn't just a matter of perception. Overall, applications to U.S. MBA programs have been on the downswing for four consecutive years, including a 7% decline from 2017 to 2018, according to a Graduate Management Admission Council study. The latest year-to-year drop in applications for international students was even sharper at 11%, amid an uncertain policy landscape on

immigration. Even some of the country's leading MBA programs, such as those at Harvard Business School, University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School and Stanford Graduate School of Business, applicant pools declined by 4.5%, 6.7%, and 4.6%, respectively, from 2017 to 2018.²

The timing could not be worse. The drop in international students' applications to U.S. MBA programs is occurring in tandem with another broad trend threatening key admissions priority across academic disciplines — low rates of diversity in the classroom. In 2016-17, international graduate students' interest in American higher education declined for the first time in 14 years.³ And despite wide-scale efforts to improve ethnic diversity in higher education, African

Americans and Hispanics are more underrepresented at top colleges than they were 35 years ago.⁴

All of this has admissions offices asking: What new tools and strategies can we utilize to stem the tide of declining applications and enrollment, and ultimately, to increase those numbers? The truth is, there are plenty of fish in the sea. Schools just need to start thinking more creatively about finding them — and reeling them in. The following five strategies have all proven effective at helping schools achieve that goal.



LEVERAGE ALUMNI AS RECRUITING TOOLS

When it comes to promoting the growth of current and future enrollment, schools can benefit from enlisting their past students to help create alumni recruiting networks.⁵ After all, the individuals whose lives and careers have been positively influenced by their experiences on campus represent arguably the best spokespeople for an academic institution.

For example, the U.K.-based University of York runs a Student Ambassador program with paid part-time representatives who reach out to prospective international students “to explain what life as a student is like and to encourage them to apply to [the] University.”⁶

Longwood University’s Assistant Vice President of Alumni and Career Services Ryan Catherwood has suggested that if institutions wish to recruit alumni to volunteer their time for enrollment efforts, the schools should engage the alums “in a different way.” That includes “not requiring them to show up at a specific place and time” and providing “an engagement avenue that could be more appealing than a traditional volunteer.” Such engagement could include “digital volunteerism” such as sharing Facebook posts or retweeting messages that are meant to drive interest in the school.

“If it’s simple, meaningful and doesn’t require a place and time, it’s probably tough [for an alumni volunteer] to say no to, right?” Catherwood writes.⁷



ENGAGE IN DISCIPLINE-WIDE RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGNS

Schools and programs don’t need to operate in isolation. In virtually all well-established academic disciplines, professional associations support the efforts of their member institutions to boost enrollment by driving interest in their fields.

One example is the “Pharmacy Is Right for Me” recruitment campaign — a collaboration between the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy, the American Pharmacists Association and the Pharmacy Career Information Council. It provides students, parents and educators with interactive tools, resources and first-person testimonials that offer insights into career opportunities within the pharmacy field.

The campaign’s activities and resources include the distribution of the Pharm4Me monthly email newsletter, which showcases potential career pathways by spotlighting news, events, internship opportunities and exclusive content produced by current pharmacy students. Also, an “Innovation Challenge” places middle and high school students with student pharmacists on teams in which they collaboratively identify innovative solutions to medication or health-related problems in their communities. Other features of the program include an online glossary of pharmacy terms and information on pharmacy school admissions.



DEPLOY A MULTIFACETED MARKETING STRATEGY

When it comes to designing a marketing strategy that drives enrollment, it’s incumbent upon schools to use the full range of possible tools and media at their disposal — from the new-age to the traditional. A multifaceted marketing strategy ensures that colleges and

universities can reach a more diverse audience of potential applicants with wide-ranging habits and preferences regarding their modes of communication.

As early as 2014, nearly two-thirds of high school students were using social media to research colleges and three-quarters found social media to be an influential tool in their enrollment decisions, according to a Uiversity survey.⁸ With that in mind, building a steady following of prospective students on social media, creating shareable content that sparks interest and formulating an effective social media advertising strategy are crucial components of enrollment marketing in the 21st century.

Thinking creatively about recruitment videos can also ignite positive momentum during enrollment season. Butler University deployed its mascot, a bulldog named Butler Blue, as the star of its January 2018 recruitment video. A 2015 video from the University of Oregon emphasized the lush forestry on the school’s campus as well as the University’s history and football program. The video’s philosophical theme — “the power of ‘if’” — aimed to make the school feel accessible for prospective students. And in March 2018, Boston College artistically leveraged students’ pop culture interests in a “Special Delivery” video, with a Harry Potter theme envisioning what admissions might look like for the Class of 2022.

At the same time, even though many of today’s applicants have been surrounded by technology since birth, traditional communication methods — such as direct mail — also remain relevant and effective. Marketing literature that students can touch and feel often possesses the potential for a more enduring impact than digital materials, which students can click away from in an instant online.

Consider, for example, how Liaison’s clients repeatedly draw on the power of direct mail in their recruitment marketing campaigns.

Central Methodist University (CMU) uses a mailer with messages from students and alumni to describe the CMU experience to prospective students. The offer of a free iPad Pro for all students at the school’s Fayetteville campus offers an added incentive for students to apply and, ultimately, enroll.

Temple University's School of Public Health sends a graduation cap topper to accepted high school seniors to build a sense of pride that they are part of the Temple community. The direct mail piece is complemented by a series of ongoing "touch point" communications over the summer to keep accepted numbers steady.

Washington & Jefferson College (W&J) maintains contact with its accepted students over the summer through a series of direct mail pieces designed to immerse them in the W&J experience. The first mailers, which invite accepted students to share their W&J pride, include small gifts like decals, socks and magnets. The final touch provides a journal that students can use to begin building a personalized learning plan as well as an online guide to lead them through the process.



AUTOMATE MORE WITH AN ENROLLMENT MARKETING PLATFORM

Liaison's Enrollment Marketing Platform (EMP™) functions as a full-service extension of a school's marketing team.

EMP creates integrated web, email, text, print and voice messaging campaigns within one convenient platform, enabling schools to scale their efforts without scaling admission resources. The platform tracks and scores all activities and interactions and provides easy access to data at all times, providing staffers with critical knowledge of prospects' interest in a school, based on their behavior. Institutions benefit from a 360-degree view of their enrollment marketing plan and results through an easy-to-use web interface.

Through EMP, schools identify and engage top prospects by launching personalized electronic, digital and print enrollment campaigns; send immediate, personalized responses to student interactions; continuously engage with prospects throughout the admissions cycle; score students based on their actions and identify those most likely to enroll; utilize event management tools

to maximize campus visits, open houses and virtual tours; and create a private social network to fully engage accepted students.

When Milwaukee School of Engineering (MSOE) partnered with Liaison's EMP, its goal was to develop a holistic campaign strategy with multiple touchpoints across each stage of the enrollment funnel. Search campaigns, event promotions and drive-to-apply campaigns leveraged data on each student to deliver personalized communication across channels.

"Internally, we worked with athletics and student life to identify high-level buckets based on whether a student says they're interested in club sports, playing a musical instrument or things like that. Then, we worked with the Liaison team to plan ways to promote MSOE to students based on their interests," explains MSOE's Dean of Admissions Seandra Mitchell.

EMP allows Mitchell and her team to operate more efficiently.

"We can immediately start getting high school seniors information on MSOE and our upcoming events, or sending freshmen and sophomores information about our summer programs," she says. "That's been a contributing factor in growing this year's applications — some of these students have been in our system longer so they've been hearing about us longer."

After implementing EMP, MSOE exceeded its enrollment goal for a new computer science major by 104% in 2018, while increasing total enrollment at the school by 15% and application volume by 14.5% from 2017 to 2018.

Before joining EMP, Northeast Ohio Medical (NEOMED) University was using a customer-relationship management (CRM) platform that had limited outbound email capabilities and an out-of-date user interface.

Now, EMP's "robust CRM" has "allowed us to expand to a more nationwide presence," says NEOMED's Director of Admissions James Barrett.

"We've been able to segment opportunities for students using EMP as a portal," he says. "This tool is not only a CRM, but it also provides a robust landing page experience that can be dynamic as prospective students change their areas of interest. We're able to leverage that quite a bit."

NEOMED has grown its verified applications by 42% and increased deposits by 39% since implementing EMP.

At Minnesota State University, Mankato (MSU, Mankato), the priority was to increase enrollment without growing its admissions budget. To stretch limited resources, Director of Admissions Brian Jones decided to reshape the University's communication strategy. By using data to determine which students were most likely to enroll, his team was able to refocus outreach efforts and become more efficient.

Refining engagement scores and updating the school's communication strategy through EMP allowed the University to realize a 9.8% year-over-year increase in the number of students enrolled for the fall — that meant 200 more first-year students, resulting in over \$1.1 million in additional tuition revenue.

In addition to identifying an engagement score threshold where students were more likely to enroll, MSU, Mankato also determined that students with scores below a certain level had a significantly lower yield percentage. Using that information, MSU admissions staff can now send out direct mail pieces when students reach a certain engagement threshold.

"EMP has helped us amend our communication strategy to ensure greater return on investment. We're now able to save costlier admissions tactics for those prospects most likely to enroll," Jones says. Those tactics include variable print campaigns developed in partnership with the EMP team and managed on the marketing platform.



JOIN A CENTRALIZED APPLICATION SERVICE

Another pioneering tool from Liaison is the Centralized Application Service (CAS™), a cloud-based recruiting and admissions solution for higher education institutions and associations looking to grow and shape enrollment while reducing overall effort and costs.

Today, more than 31,000 academic programs on over 1,000 campuses use a CAS. Liaison has partnered with more than 30 professional associations to create over 40 discipline-specific iterations of the CAS. As a result, associations can now better support their members by promoting best practices and the adoption of a transformative tool in the admissions process.

With a CAS, institutions receive a wide array of benefits at no cost, including program promotion; support throughout the on-boarding process and applicant cycles; and the scanning, processing and packaging of application materials. CAS enrollment management software includes program-specific workflows, scoring rubrics, interview resources and cutting-edge data reporting and analytics tools.

During the application process, Liaison physically receives and scans all application materials and supporting documentation, helping schools go paperless. This speeds packaging completion and decision times, allowing institutions to focus on achieving enrollment goals.

A CAS also frees up admissions professionals' time by automatically conducting thorough reviews of every application a school receives to ensure its completeness and accuracy. This involves verification of coursework entry, transcript authentication and GPA calculations.

Carsi Hughes, Ph.D., director of Dominican University's postbaccalaureate premedical program, explains how joining a CAS boosted the University's national reach through the implementation of a streamlined admissions process.

"We more than doubled our number of spring starts over previous years, with no

additional marketing," she says. "As for applications in progress, we easily have 10 times the number we usually have by now. The CAS has enhanced visibility and interest in our program. The numbers are unbelievable."

University of La Verne's PsyD program, meanwhile, nearly doubled its out-of-state applicants in just one year with a CAS.

"We can easily pull all of the information that goes into the CAS application, whether it's related to applicant gender, diversity in different factors or geographic area," says Psychology Department Manager Natalie Brown. "We also poll our applicants to find out how they heard about us, so we have a good base of knowledge [related to] where they're learning about our program."

Samford University's McWhorter School of Pharmacy grew its applicant pool 125% by using a CAS.

"It's great to be able to look at where our applicants are coming from and which undergraduate programs are the largest feeders of the national applicant pool," says Assistant Director of Admissions Jon Parker, noting that the information allows him to understand where to apply critical recruiting dollars.

Using the reporting tools in Liaison's WebAdMIT™, the administrative portal for each CAS, the admissions department at The College of St. Scholastica clearly demonstrated the value of a CAS to the schools' departments and administration: a 30% increase in the number of total applicants to graduate programs. With this data, the school applied for — and received — a significant institutional grant to fund additional technology for graduate and online programs.

"Our diversity has gone up, both in terms of culture and gender," says St. Scholastica's Assistant Director of Graduate, Extended and Online

Admissions Chad Oppelt. "As a result of implementing NursingCAS, our minority and male acceptances to nursing programs increased by 10%. And our quality — average GPAs and average GRE scores across all CAS programs — has gone up, too."

Your potential applicants are still out there. Thinking creatively about new marketing and recruitment strategies, and introducing resource-efficient tools like Liaison's EMP and CAS, will make it easier for you to find them. ■

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N E W S



Howard University Streamlines Admissions with Liaison's BusinessCAS™, EngineeringCAS™ and GradCAS™

*Historically Black College/University
(HBCU) Joins Three of Leading
Admissions Solution Provider's
Graduate Education Communities*

Howard will offer applicants an enhanced user experience through three of Liaison's Centralized Application Services (CASs™). Prospective graduate management students will now apply for Howard's business programs through BusinessCAS™, while prospective graduate engineering students will apply through EngineeringCAS™. All of Howard's graduate programs that are not affiliated with a national CAS will become members of GradCAS™, which Liaison launched to extend the benefits of a CAS to those programs not supported by a professional association-based service.

Since these services add Howard's programs to global graduate education directories, BusinessCAS, EngineeringCAS and GradCAS will expand Howard's global applicant pool. At the same time, Liaison's processing team will take previously burdensome administrative tasks off admissions staff's plates.

"Howard is a culturally diverse, comprehensive, research intensive and historically Black private university, and we are committed to developing scholars and professionals who drive change and solve contemporary global problems," said LaTrice Byam, director of admissions at Howard. "With BusinessCAS, EngineeringCAS and GradCAS, we'll attract an even greater number of students of high academic standing and potential, and we'll have more time to authentically engage them throughout the admissions process."

Indiana University to Manage Cross-Campus Graduate Enrollment with Liaison's UniCAS™

IU Chooses Liaison's Centralized Application Service (CAS™) as Admissions Platform for Graduate and Professional School Applications

In choosing UniCAS, Indiana University (IU) will join the over 31,000 programs on more than 1,000 campuses that streamline admissions and offer better applicant experiences with Liaison's Centralized Application Services (CASs™). IU's rollout of UniCAS will begin in Fall 2019.

"IU is committed to excellence in all aspects of the education we provide, which is why we are so excited to implement Liaison's UniCAS as our enrollment platform," said James C. Wimbush, vice president of Diversity, Equity and Multicultural Affairs, dean of The University Graduate School and Johnson Chair for Diversity and Leadership. "UniCAS will not only cut down on administrative costs and improve efficiency, but it will also foster a transparent and simple application process for all who look to call IU home."

Central to the implementation of UniCAS will be its ability to unify application processes from across IU's campuses. Rather than separate portals for each campus, UniCAS will provide students the ability to apply to multiple programs through one comprehensive application process. IU's seven campuses and two regional centers will all use this process, making it easier for The University Graduate School and academic programs to collaborate on implementing enrollment practices. The insights gleaned from UniCAS will also provide academic programs and The University Graduate School valuable data to help IU further its admission and enrollment of students.

Liaison Embraces New Global Networks and Opportunities With GEDC Strategic Partnership

Joining Forces with Global Engineering Deans Council (GEDC) Empowers EngineeringCAS™ to Transform Graduate Engineering Education

Becoming a corporate member of GEDC, which represents more than 400 engineering deans in more than 50 countries, allows Liaison and its EngineeringCAS™ community to shape the future of the graduate engineering student experience and the engineering profession as a whole.

GEDC Chair Natacha DePaola — dean of engineering at the Illinois Institute of Technology — sees the partnership with Liaison as a natural extension of GEDC's strategy to help today's students become leaders capable of enhancing not only their profession, but also society in general.

"Today's students are tomorrow's engineers who will solve complex, socially critical problems," DePaola said. "Just as the students of today understand the value of relying on technology to accomplish this goal, Liaison and GEDC understand the value of relying on technology and innovation to fill engineering programs with the best, brightest and most diverse groups of students possible. That's why I look forward to the benefits this partnership with Liaison will bring."

The Ohio State University Joins Liaison's EngineeringCAS™ to Achieve Key Recruitment and Admissions Goals

The College of Engineering Will Better Manage Applications and Admission Offers with Liaison's Single Portal for Researching and Applying to Engineering Graduate Programs

Ohio State, one of the nation's top-20 public universities, is now offering Liaison's convenient single-portal application services to a worldwide marketplace of potential applicants exploring their graduate education opportunities.

According to Assistant Dean of Graduate Programs Dr. LaTonia Stiner-Jones, the College of Engineering chose the Centralized Application Service (CAS™) for engineering graduate programs to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of its application and admissions processes.

"The CAS helps expand our applicant pool by promoting our program-specific landing pages to any potential applicant exploring graduate engineering education. As a result, we get the same exposure as other top institutions around the world — and the solution makes it easier for talented students to apply who may not have otherwise learned about us," Dr. Stiner-Jones says.

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THE FOURTH QUADRANT

teach us the value of optimism and perseverance. These lessons are reinforced throughout our formative years. Through encouragement in sports, academics and arts, children are taught to believe in themselves and overcome obstacles to find success. It's this optimism that fuels our desire and commitment to accomplish great things as we enter our careers. To, as Steve Jobs said, put a dent in the universe.

What happens then? Why don't we see more progress and more innovation in our careers? Well, unfortunately, life happens. And through life experiences, we often forget the innocent lessons of years past. We pay too much attention to the challenges or the failures, and we can get anchored to the perceived constraints that are all around us. We stop believing that anything is possible, and instead the constraints build up invisible barriers that prevent us from trying new ideas and achieving greatness. Once that happens, we are stuck. But the good news is there are often recognizable patterns, and once we understand them, we can adjust our approach and break through the mental barriers.

Here are five reasons why I believe we get stuck and what we can do about them.

1: Inertia

How often have you been in a meeting and heard someone make a suggestion — or perhaps made the suggestion yourself — only to have someone else say, "But we've always done it this way," or "We've tried that before." The inertia of business-as-usual can be a big reason that people believe they can't get something done.

The truth is that just because we've done things one way doesn't mean it's not possible or beneficial to try a new direction. While it's prudent to think about the possible implications of a new approach, if we allow ourselves to be anchored in the past, we will never accomplish anything of significance.

What if Apple never revisited a failed product? It's been over 25

Believing in Innovation: 5 Ways to Unblock Progress



In each edition of *The Admissionist*, a Liaison team member joins us in The Fourth Quadrant to share their unique perspective on one of the issues

facing higher ed today. As Vice President of Products at Liaison, Adam Kenney puts his passion for building innovative software solutions to work serving the needs of colleges and universities across the U.S. Over the course of his career, Adam has crafted a series of core beliefs that help shape his approach to life, work and career. These tenets have helped him lead transformational projects at companies like Capital One Financial, Pegasystems and now, Liaison. In this issue of *The Admissionist*, Adam shares his thoughts on innovation and the importance in believing in the possible.

Why innovation matters

We are living in an era of big challenges for higher education. Declining enrollment, rising tuition costs and the fast pace of evolving technologies make it critical for educational institutions to innovate the ways they attract, recruit and engage with students.¹

The U.S. Department of Education noted that, "As change accelerates, our current education system will struggle to keep pace. Unless we become more nimble in our approach and more scalable in our solutions, we will miss out on an opportunity to embrace and serve the majority of students who will need higher education and postsecondary learning."²

In this time of challenge, where change and innovation is essential to our success and survival, maybe now is a good time to step back and ask: What's getting in the way?

Our beliefs matter

"I think I can, I think I can, I think I can..." From an early age, books like *The Little Engine That Could*

years since Apple launched its first tablet, the Newton, and it's been over 20 since the product was killed off by the company after Steve Jobs returned as CEO. But now tablets are everywhere, with Apple iPads often replacing traditional PCs at home and in the office.

I try to encourage members of my team, whether they are in a position of leadership or not, to imagine the possible, and not only dream up big ideas, but look for how they might influence the culture around them so that it becomes easier and more comfortable for other people to try new things as well.

2: Fear of failure

"I have not failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work."
– Thomas Edison

Most of us have an innate fear of failure that can also prevent us from taking chances and trying new things. The effect of this can be worsened when people believe they will be punished (e.g., fired, missed bonuses, etc.) for their failures. It's important to create an environment where people feel like their efforts will be rewarded, even if those efforts don't pan out exactly as planned.³

There are a couple of ways to help your team members break through their fear of failure. For one, surround them by at a few people who have a naturally high tolerance for risk.⁴ While you probably don't want an entire team of risk-takers, having a few of them in the mix can help open up the entire team to exploring new ideas. It's also important to reward the act of trying new things. Even if the initial outcome isn't a huge success, it reinforces the value of learning over everything and those learnings can lead to bigger successes in the future.

Dyson vacuums are a great example of what becomes possible when you embrace the process of learning. James Dyson created 5,271 prototypes before he finally found a vacuum that worked, but once he did, his vacuums were a world-wide

sensation in less than two years!

3: Feeling overwhelmed

The bigger the project that your team or organization is facing, the harder it may feel to accomplish. Just as an example: Adding one new social media channel to your program's existing communications stream may not seem like a big deal. But what about implementing a whole new communications strategy while migrating to a different software platform? With all of your team's existing priorities, this can seem like an impossible project to attack.

However, Liaison has helped many universities do exactly that, so while I'm aware it can feel like a tremendous leap to everyone involved, we've had success by breaking down the project into smaller phases of meaningful deliverables that achieve value along the way.

This is similar to the widely advocated MVP (minimal viable product) approach to product development. While there is lots of debate about the specific interpretation of "minimal" and "viable," I do believe in the value of delivering incrementally. Not only will that help people feel less pressure, but it also helps you to measure and manage progress in a way that allows for quick course correction if you find at some point that you're getting off track. It also builds confidence and trust in the process. People, inside and outside of the team, will begin to believe in the process and trust in the outcomes.

4: Organizational bureaucracy

Many organizations, including colleges and universities, have a lot of oversight authorities they have to report to, including federal agencies. This can slow things down and make it hard to move the needle in a new direction.

But again, just because something is difficult or could take more time than you'd like doesn't mean it isn't right to try. To the contrary, sometimes

this the most important time to advocate for a new direction. As leaders, one of the most important things we can do is promote a better path forward and clear the way for our teams to achieve success.

In order to do this effectively, we need to make the motivation for innovation clear. Too often organizations are biased towards making "safe" decisions, but huge change and innovation is rarely safe. To overcome this dichotomy, we need to make the incentives for change so big and obvious that safe no longer feels safe. Innovation becomes the only and obvious answer. Once this happens, it will be easier for the entire organization to get on board, and the decision making process will no longer block progress.

5: Lack of leadership

Creating an innovation-friendly culture depends a lot on having leaders who intentionally focus on figuring out how to do that. It's difficult to believe things can change if the people in charge focus most of their energy on day-to-day operational tasks while neglecting the larger vision. This can unintentionally send the message that innovation is unimportant.

This can be easier said than done, and sometimes I struggle with this myself, so I intentionally structure my day to create the time to reflect, think and plan. What works for me is to get into the office early so I have an hour or two before I get disrupted by the day's demands to take care of bigger-picture items. By starting the day this way, I always get to the less urgent, but critically important strategic tasks that will have an impact in the future.

However you choose to do it, the key is to make sure you're carving out time on a regular basis to evaluate what's working for you and your team and what's not, so you can figure out what to change and then work with those around you to make it happen.

Taking the first step

Technology is going to continue to evolve. The challenges are going to continue to get harder. But that doesn't mean we can't continue to press on through the places where we feel comfortable and learn how to take risks, innovate and evolve as well.

I believe we can start making a difference right now. First, it's important to determine whether we are holding onto beliefs that are getting in our way. As psychotherapist and author Amy Morin has written, "Before you can change your beliefs you have to be open to the possibility that those things you believed to be true for all these years may not be 100% accurate."⁵

Once we have opened ourselves to that possibility, we can move toward creating the kinds of environments that allow colleagues and staff to pursue innovation in a more proactive, and hopefully accelerated, way. The more we are able to do this, the better we will be able to help people who are aspiring to get into higher education so they can advance their academic and post-academic careers. ■

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Are your beliefs blocking your path to innovation? Share what you think by tweeting @liaisonedu and using #buildabetterclass.



