

The **ADMISSIONIST**

Fall 2018

by **LIAISON** 

**THE DIVERSITY
IMPERATIVE**



A Letter From Liaison's Founder and CEO



At Liaison, we've spent more than two decades collaborating with over 30 educational associations and working closely with over 7,000 schools and programs on more than 800 campuses. To better serve our partners in the field, we've established strategic relationships with those who share the admissions and enrollment marketing space with us, and we continue to add partners that can provide value to our clients who leverage Liaison's platforms.

The way I see it, we are uniquely positioned to serve our clients, to bring together those who are working towards similar goals and facilitate conversations around the solutions and strategies necessary to achieve them.

I am not alone in this observation. In a recent interview about the value of her relationship with Liaison, Dean of Graduate Admission at Marist College Kelly Holmes shared: "It's great for me in terms of being able to have a peer group to reach out to when I have questions. That's my selfish reason for wanting to be on the BusinessCAS™ advisory board!" (You can find our full interview with Kelly on page 10.)

Kelly puts succinctly what I've heard from many attendees of our biannual CAS™ Summits in Washington, DC as well. It was actually during one of these gatherings, which draw together leaders from health professions associations for discussions about the future of our services and products, that the idea for the magazine that you're currently reading was conceived.

At these summits, you've told us that you would benefit from hearing what's going well — and what could be going better — for those who are committed to increasing access to education. We're answering your request with *The Admissionist*, a quarterly magazine that will collect and share all the outcomes, best practices and lessons that we have had the privilege to contribute to while working with your colleagues.

While our first issue was developed to supplement the Liaison User Conference's breakout sessions, this issue will focus on diversity, a topic that is of the utmost importance to those who have a hand in educating our future workforce.

In these pages, we catch up with Emily Rhineberger, senior director of application services at the American Dental Education Association (ADEA) and a member of the Health Professions Week executive committee, to talk about how the committee is increasing diversity in the health care workforce. We talk to Norman Fortenberry, the executive director of the American Society for Engineering Education (ASEE), about how his discipline is proactively addressing low minority participation in the STEM workforce. In *Building a Better, More Diverse Class*, we offer tips to help you expand your applicant pool so that your faculty, staff and students can benefit from a more inclusive and enriched perspective.

This magazine is truly meant to amplify your voice as valued members of the higher education community. We want to know if you prefer one type of feature to another. We want to hear if you have ideas for articles or suggestions for topics to cover in future issues. Please enjoy catching up on your colleagues' latest news, and do not hesitate to share your thoughts with our content team at editorial@liaisonedu.com.

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "G. Haddad". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

George Haddad

Founder and CEO

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HIGHER ED BY THE NUMB3RS

Across disciplines, higher ed institutions are dedicated to increasing access to opportunities for those from different backgrounds. In this edition of *Higher Ed by the Numbers*, we're highlighting the progress that's been made towards diversifying higher ed — and the work that's yet to be done.



TRANSGENDER STUDENTS AT HBCUs

Spelman College, one of the two Historically Black Colleges/Universities (HBCUs) solely for women, this year joined the all-women's colleges that have an official admissions policy for transgender students. Trans women and other students who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual and queer have attended the college since its inception, but the new policy makes a clear statement about the school's mission and policy commitment to inclusivity around the experience of womanhood. Spelman is also offering a lecture series inspired by the college's "fervent belief in the power of the Spelman sisterhood" and a scholarship program that will give two students who self-identified as LGBTQ+ advocates a renewable **\$25,000** scholarship each. *Source: The Hechinger Report*

MILITARY STUDENTS

According to a report by the American Council on Education, more than **60%** of active duty military undergraduates have four or more risk factors historically associated with attrition. In comparison, 44% of veterans, 37% of reservists and 30% of National Guard members have a similar number of factors. What does this mean for your institution? A large number of military students need support beyond what's required by students who are not serving in the nation's armed forces. *Source: The Huffington Post*



LGBTQ+ STUDENT DEBT

While student debt is a concern for all college graduates, it is often of greater concern for students who identify as LGBTQ+. On average, these students owe about **\$16,000** more after completing their educations than the general student population, partly because of a lack of family support. Many of these students also find that workplace discrimination prevents them from finding high-paying jobs that help them pay back their debt in a timely manner. *Source: CNBC*



FIRST GENERATION STUDENTS

In 2018, 42% of — or **90,000** — students across the University of California system were the first in their immediate families to attend a four-year college/university. That's an increase of 36% from a decade ago, a trend that reflects positively on degrees becoming more attainable for those from lower socioeconomic statuses. *Source: USA Today*

RACE AND HEALTH CARE

Because white workers are overrepresented in health care professions, seven Michigan colleges have joined forces with the Grand Rapids African American Health Institute to increase the diversity in the health care field. Pathways to Careers in Health Care, which is funded by a \$400,000 planning grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, has three main goals: “diversity in health care professions to mirror community diversity by **2040**, establish a cadre of African American and Latino health care leaders in West Michigan and create early exposure programs to advance health care practice careers throughout the K-12 experience.” *Source: Grand Rapids Business Journal*

SPOTLIGHT ON GENDER



WOMEN, RACE AND UPWARD CAREER MOBILITY

When over 600 women opened up about their experiences working in the health care industry, it became clear that women are more pessimistic about achieving gender parity in the workplace than they have been in previous years. More than 50% of those surveyed said they think it will take at least 25 years to achieve this goal, partially because of the lack of women in health care leadership positions in recent years. **86%** of African American women see race as “very much” a barrier to career advancement, while only 9% of white women see race as a barrier. *Source: Forbes*



WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

FOUR black women are currently making history by serving as deans of prestigious Harvard schools. “If my presence in this role affirms someone’s sense of belonging and ownership, then I think that’s great,” Dr. Claudine Gay, the new dean of the faculty of arts and sciences, said. “And for people who are sort of beyond our gates, if this prompts them to look again and look anew at Harvard and imagine new possibilities for themselves, I think that’s great, as well.” *Source: Blavity*



GENDER IN ENGINEERING

Today, only **14%** of all engineers and 25% of all IT professionals in the U.S. are women, and a 2011 survey of 5,500 women with engineering degrees in the U.S. found that 40% did not pursue an engineering career after graduation. Schools like the University of California, Davis see collaboration as the solution to this underrepresentation problem. The University is working with Chevron and the Koret Foundation to launch AvenueE, a community college transfer program that intends to eliminate barriers that hold back women and underrepresented minorities (URM) in engineering and computer science. *Source: Scientific American*



GENDER IN BUSINESS

According to Forte Foundation, “women are benefitting from earning an MBA like never before.” Women who earn this degree can see their pay increase within their first five post-MBA years by 55-65%, making their lifetime earning potential over **\$3 MILLION**. There’s still work to be done, though. While companies are increasingly seeking out women with MBAs, only 17% of boardrooms include female representation and 4.8% of CEOs among the Fortune 500 are women — though 47% of the workforce is female. *Source: Forte Foundation*



SOCIAL JUSTICE AT WOMEN’S COLLEGES

According to *Inside Higher Ed*, many women’s colleges are seeing a “Trump bump.” Specifically, Barnard College has seen a **10%** increase in applications, and a 4% increase in yield, since the 2016 election. Why? Vice President of Enrollment at Barnard Jennifer Fondiller believes “those enrolling are acutely aware of what is happening in the world as current events have motivated them to fight for social justice and equality... They are looking for colleges that will prepare them to enter these challenging spaces and navigate these conversations with confidence.” *Source: Inside Higher Ed*



PREPARING FOR HEALTH PROFESSIONS — WEEK —

Now in its third year, Health Professions Week offers an opportunity for prospective students to explore more than 20 different health care careers. In this article, we explore the week's origins and how it's evolving to help attract more applicants to a variety of health-related programs.

Emily Rhineberger, M.A., senior director of application services for the American Dental Education Association (ADEA) and executive committee member for Health Professions Week, understands how to effectively connect with students. She originally worked in admissions at George Washington University with undergraduate and graduate students in public health. Her higher education background and direct experience with students have contributed to Health Professions Week's success.

In 2013, two years after Rhineberger joined ADEA, she and several of her colleagues from other professional associations began talking about recruitment in a broader way. "Because of our work with Liaison and the National Association of Advisors for the Health Professions, many of us were meeting several times a year, but we had never done anything in terms of pooling our resources and figuring out how to encourage young people to pursue our professions," she said. Seeing an opportunity for collaboration, in 2015 Rhineberger and a colleague from the Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health (ASPPH) began hammering out a plan. "We wanted a situation all the health professions could really buy into," she explained.

A Collaborative Public Awareness Campaign

Health Professions Week brings together more than 20 professional associations to expose young people to careers in their disciplines. "We're really targeting people who haven't considered health professions before," Rhineberger said. "On a daily basis, I work with people who've already identified dentistry as an intended career path. With Health Professions Week, we're targeting people who haven't thought of dentistry or medicine, or maybe thought about it but haven't figured out their path yet. We want to take someone interested in science, math, art or engineering and show them how that plays into a career in the health professions."

Rhineberger encourages Health Professions Week attendees to examine a variety of professions — especially those with which they may be less familiar. "This is an exploratory event. If you're interested in pharmacy or physical therapy, that's great — get information on that. Then choose one or two more professions you know less about and explore those, because as health care providers and practitioners, you're going to be interacting with people in those other professions." Taking the time to enhance knowledge about the health care team can give students a greater understanding of the type of career they're considering.

Learning from the Launch

The inaugural Health Professions Week took place in September 2016. "That first year, we underestimated the amount of work involved," Rhineberger said. "We probably really got started planning in May, so we ended up scrambling to put together a solid event in a short amount of time!"

Now the Executive Committee meets every two weeks, with a full committee meeting monthly. "In mid-2018, we're already looking ahead to 2019's event — we try to

look ahead as much as possible, but we're figuring it out as we go. There's a lot of 'Should we be doing this? How do we do it?' and a lot of ideas thrown around in those meetings," said Rhineberger.

The 2017 Health Professions Week drew 6,000 registrants, exceeding the executive committee's target. "We were really excited, but then didn't have the turnout we expected, so for 2018 our goal is to increase engagement," Rhineberger explained. "We're thinking about what high school or college students want that we can deliver."

New for 2018

This year, the executive committee is trying out a number of new tactics designed to increase attendance and interaction. Changes include breaking out virtual fairs by audience — high school students versus college students. "We realize someone in high school just starting the process is at a very different point in their career exploration than someone in college. We'll be more prepared to talk to a high school student about why these careers are great, as opposed to a college student who may be more interested in prerequisites and shadowing opportunities, for example," said Rhineberger.

Many of this year's conversations will be archived through the end of November, allowing students who couldn't attend live to access information later.

This year's fair will also include a live Twitter chat, Facebook videos and Instagram Stories — videos that offer a voting mechanism. "We're looking at ways to allow attendees to vote on content as well as that is much more engaging than just having them sit through a presentation," Rhineberger explained. "We're using a lot of different vehicles and technologies to bump up the engagement, so we reach the number of people we're looking for and have them actively exploring the health professions." ■

Health Professions Week Executive Committee Members



EMILY GORDON

Student Services Coordinator,
Association of Schools and Programs of
Public Health (ASPPH)



ELIZABETH JOHNSON

Director of Recruitment for ADEA
Application Services, American Dental
Education Association (ADEA)



MELANIE JOHNSON

Membership Program Director,
American Speech-Language-Hearing
Association (ASHA)



ALLISON MOON

Communications Marketing Manager,
Council on Social Work Education
(CSWE)



EMILY RHINEBERGER

Senior Director of Application Services,
American Dental Education Association
(ADEA)



REBECCA RICE

Director, Services Outreach,
Association of American Medical Colleges
(AAMC), **Health Professions Week
Executive Committee Chair**

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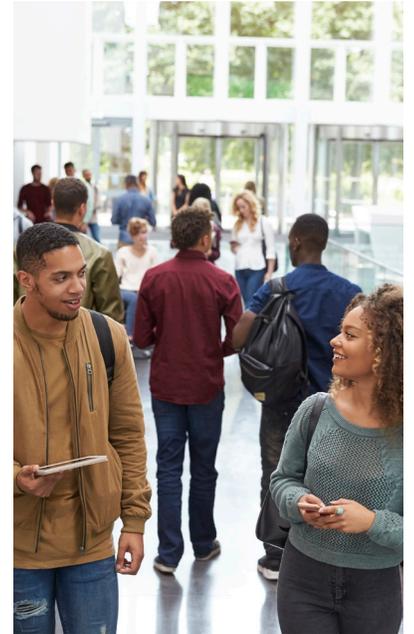
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Engaging the Next Generation of Social Workers

How SocialWorkCAS™ helped Temple University's School of Social Work shave 75% off application review time



The School of Social Work (SSW) at Temple University is highly focused on preparing students to meet the needs of our increasingly complex society. As interest in the SSW's comprehensive program increased, more applications started pouring in — so where was the problem?

Academic Coordinator Erin Brosious explained how a manual admissions pipeline process was getting in the way of being able to efficiently serve students' needs: "Having to do everything manually, including sending physical files out to faculty for review — and then hoping that faculty would return them — was a very tedious, long and cumbersome process," she said.

With limited administrative resources, staff members found that most of their time was taken up with managing applications, leaving little left over for any other tasks. Something had to change.

SocialWorkCAS™, a Fully Online, Single-portal Application Service

Over the course of 12 weeks, Liaison and its association partner, the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), worked closely with the SSW's admissions staff

to make the transition to SocialWorkCAS as seamless as possible. "Liaison was very accommodating and hand held us through most of the process," said Brosious, who also created slideshow and video presentations to share with her faculty to introduce SocialWorkCAS and walk them through the user experience.

Because each school is different, SocialWorkCAS offers a comprehensive yet flexible framework so it can truly be customized. Now that Temple has one year under its belt, Brosious said, "We're looking to tailor the service even more to the unique needs of our program and our desires as far as admissions go."

Brosious also praised Liaison for their attentive customer service throughout the implementation process: "Liaison is very responsive to feedback and updates, revamping their system to meet the program's needs, and I think that's also why this product is very helpful to schools," she said.

Centralizing to Increase Diversity and Decrease Time to Decision

Just one year after implementing SocialWorkCAS, Temple saw impressive results — including a 4% increase in

out-of-state applications. The platform's single-application portal makes it easy for prospects to apply to more than one program at the same time, so the school expects this geodiversity trend to continue.

The school also saw a whopping 75% reduction in the time it took to move applications through its review process. Instead of taking 4–6 weeks, now it takes just one.

With so much time freed up from routine administrative tasks, the SSW's admissions office can devote more attention to other important responsibilities, including the development of targeted messaging and communication plans that can be customized for prospects, in-progress applicants and accepted students.

"SocialWorkCAS is going to make you more available to your students, and it's going to make the relationships you have with your students more personable," Brosious shared. "The reality is that students want this. Students are becoming more familiar with a centralized application as they're applying to undergraduate programs, so they expect a similar experience when they go to graduate school." ■

Liaison Academy Sets Admissions Officers Up for Success

As an admissions professional, you face new obstacles every day as you respond to applicants' changing expectations and are introduced to new technologies that, when used correctly, can help meet your institutions' strategic goals. Over the last two and a half years, Liaison has assembled a team dedicated to ensuring you have the knowledge necessary to succeed in this ever-changing landscape.

Our Training and Knowledge Management Team

All of Liaison's knowledge offerings start with Stephen Naso, our director of training and knowledge management brought on board to centralize and standardize training opportunities. With a background in performance improvement and an M.Ed. in instructional design, Naso is also a certified professional in learning and performance through the Association for Talent Development (ATD), an organization dedicated to excellence in professional development. "In fact, almost everyone on the training team has some sort of ATD training," he shared with us during a recent interview.

The team of training specialists to which he refers — Reggie Ross, Katie Wedgewood, Jennifer Raab and Sarah Welch — pair product knowledge with expertise in instructional design, knowledge management, admissions, enrollment management and technical writing to develop a broad base of resources for users of Liaison's products and services. "Our training specialists develop new content on a weekly basis," said Naso. "Everything they create, from eLearning courses to regional workshops, takes on a practical approach. We don't just explain how to do something, we also pepper in the why behind the what and the benefits of using a particular feature."



Reggie Ross leads a WebAdMIT training session at the 2018 Liaison User Conference

An Accreditation Milestone and the Launch of Liaison Academy

Recently, our Training and Knowledge Management Team led the effort for Liaison to gain International Association for Continuing Education and Training (IACET) accreditation. Now, we have the ability to offer Continuing Education Units (CEUs), an extra value that we offered participants in WebAdMIT™ and Time2Track™ trainings at the 2018 Liaison User Conference and will continue to offer to participants in regional and online trainings throughout the year.

"Earning this recognition demonstrates our commitment to delivering quality instruction," Naso explained. That commitment has paid off, as Liaison clients completed more than 10,000 eLearning courses over the last 12 months. That's an average of 650 people accessing one or more courses each month.

So how did Naso react to such a positive response? He expanded our trainings to serve more clients!

"We're excited to take our educational offerings to the next level with the launch of Liaison Academy, a new branch of the company that is dedicated to fostering excellence in admissions through the production and dissemination of information and knowledge," shared Naso. "Liaison understands that in a competitive industry where every student counts, professionals need the right tools and access to industry best practices in order to thrive. That's why we're creating this centralized location for knowledge and resources for the Liaison end user."

Featuring webinars, eLearning courses, tutorials, a Help Center and more, Liaison Academy will collect admissions and enrollment management best practices to arm customers with the information they need to succeed in an increasingly competitive marketplace. ■



SIGN UP for the Liaison Academy mailing list at academy.liaisonedu.com to be the first hear about Liaison's new educational offerings.



Advancing MBA Admission — and the Social Good — at Marist College

Students and staff on the Marist campus are dedicated to pursuing three ideals: excellence in education, a sense of community and a commitment of service.

Kelly Holmes, dean of graduate admission at Marist College in Poughkeepsie, NY, is wearing quite a few hats these days.

In addition to managing admissions processes for 15 graduate programs, she is also helping the College implement its new five-year strategic plan, which is focused on “ensuring student success, promoting innovation and advancing the social good.”

In addition, Dean Holmes has recently been overseeing Marist's launch of BusinessCAS™, the

Liaison-powered Centralized Application Service (CAS™) for graduate management education programs, and she's found time to serve as an active member of Liaison's BusinessCAS advisory board as well.

She recently spoke with BusinessCAS Consultant Bob Alig to discuss Marist's goals for the years ahead, its 100% online MBA program and the benefits of offering a flexible admissions experience that reinforces existing marketing and branding initiatives.

Bob Alig (BA): What are you focusing on at Marist College right now, Kelly?

Kelly Holmes (KH): My goal this year is to create a more efficient applicant experience through the use of innovative technology, which in turn will impact workflow within the office. It sounds cliché but we want to work smarter not harder. That involves making sure we have the right systems in place to move students through the pipeline successfully. Our strength here at Marist is customer service.

Once we get a student into our pipeline, we hold their hands throughout the process. That's one of the reasons we're joining BusinessCAS — It will help us streamline the process for applicants and admission staff.

We were one of the first schools to adopt Liaison's Enrollment Marketing Platform (EMP™), and now we see EMP and BusinessCAS as a perfect marriage for us. Not only do we have a CRM that manages our communication plan through the funnel, but now our application

will also be integrated with EMP. It's another chance for us to implement the right technology to create greater efficiency.

Marist actually already has several active CASs on campus. We utilize PTCAS™ [the CAS for physical therapy], CASPA™ [the CAS for physician assistant studies], PSYCAS™ [the CAS for psychology programs], and now we're also adopting GradCAS™ [the service that Liaison launched to extend the benefits of a CAS to those programs not supported by a professional association-based service], in addition to BusinessCAS. We'll be fully implementing all of these programs in 2018.

There's great long-term potential in moving away from a home-grown system to a common web-based platform. Not only does it streamline processes, but it increases our exposure to potential students who may otherwise not know Marist exists. We're excited about it!

BA: The president of Marist College, David Yellen, has said that society is changing dramatically in terms of diversity and that higher education should be on the leading edge of that change. Can you share a little more about the work you and your colleagues at Marist are doing around this important vision?

KH: Our new strategic plan launched in January 2018.

For graduate admissions, we've been collaborating with the academic schools, exploring different initiatives to implement at the admission stage so we can make private education more accessible and attractive from a programmatic perspective to those from under-represented groups. We're discussing holistic application review, peer/faculty mentorship, student financial support and on-campus/online student services to ensure student success. Change doesn't

happen overnight, but we are committed to increasing diversity across all graduate programs.

BA: You have said you want your team to be more focused on helping students navigate the admissions process and understand what's really unique about Marist. Was that part of the reason you decided to look at BusinessCAS?

KH: I believe BusinessCAS, and the other CASs in place at Marist, will help us brand ourselves more effectively and also streamline a lot of the admissions processes. So instead of receiving tons of emails — with resumes and personal statements and attached files — that we have to send to different offices on campus, now we can collect all of that information in one spot. It makes us more efficient and allows us to focus on what we

“Not only does a common web-based platform streamline processes, it increases our exposure to potential students who may otherwise not know Marist exists.”

**- Kelly Holmes,
Dean of Graduate Admission
at Marist College**



Marist College's Poughkeepsie campus is situated along the scenic Hudson River's east banks.

are really good at — providing one-on-one customer service that guides students through the admission process.

BA: Speaking of interacting with students, across higher education as a whole, students over age 35 are expected to comprise nearly one-fifth of graduating classes by 2020. Does this trend reflect your current applicant pool? Are you undertaking any initiatives in regard to this segment of the student population?

KH: The age of students within our MBA program has always skewed a bit higher than average. I think that's because our program is 100% online and part time. We have always tailored our MBA to the working adult, keeping in mind our students have families and responsibilities that impact their ability to pursue a degree in a

traditional classroom. Our MBA is asynchronous. Students can study where they want, when they want.

We also have a long tradition of maintaining partnerships with local employers as well as national associations. Part of the partnership agreement is that we offer tuition discounts to their employees and our partners, in turn, help market our program to their workers. Since our target audience is working adults, those partnerships help to increase our enrollments. They also allow us to give back to the community by offering tuition discounts — not just to employees, but also to their adult family members.

BA: That's interesting insight, Kelly. Let's pivot a little — what keeps you up at night at this point of the admissions cycle?

KH: Just meeting enrollment goals! It's getting increasingly difficult to do more with less.

I'm sure a lot of my peers at other institutions would say the same. Trying to reach your target audience in a saturated market with diminishing marketing dollars is a challenge. There's no other word for it. When you see applications dipping, you hope you can convert them at a higher rate. It's not just about quantity though, it's important to make sure that we're bringing in qualified applicants, moving them through the pipeline and, at the end of the day, retaining them.

BA: You're an active member of Liaison's BusinessCAS advisory board. Can you tell us more about what led you to join this board and how you see its value as you look ahead? How do you think the work of the advisory board, in collaboration with Liaison colleagues, might be a resource and a support to you and your peers?

“Trying to reach your target audience in a saturated market with diminishing marketing dollars is a challenge. When you see applications dipping, you hope you can convert them at a higher rate.”

- Kelly Holmes, Dean of Graduate Admission at Marist College



Marist prides itself on being a wonderful place in which to live, work and play, and its Murray Student Center serves as the campus hub for many student-centered activities and support services.



The James A. Cannavino Library is named after a former senior vice president for strategy and development at IBM and a past chairman of the Marist board of trustees. Cannavino pledged \$3 million dollars to the library in the 1990s, the largest donation by an individual that the college had seen to date.

KH: It's great for me in terms of being able to have a peer group to reach out to when I have questions. That's my selfish reason for wanting to be on the advisory board! But I also believe in the service and appreciate the opportunity to help mold the product. As a new adopter of BusinessCAS, I have a vested interest in making sure that I'm giving feedback when I can. I just want to make sure that everybody understands the different types of programs out there and how maintaining some flexibility in a system is critical to allowing institutions to receive and review last minute applications. It truly can mean the difference between meeting enrollment goals or not.

BA: How do you think BusinessCAS will help participating programs extend their outreach, engage with prospective students more effectively

and launch new programs?

KH: BusinessCAS makes it easy for prospective students to research institutions, and it streamlines the process of applying to one or several programs with a single application. BusinessCAS will help Marist attract potential MBA students to our AACSB-accredited program by offering a flexible, personalized admission experience.

It's not unusual to receive a call from a prospective student the week before the semester begins who is ready to apply! BusinessCAS provides the opportunity to review applications "on-demand" and to communicate the message we want to communicate — "It's not too late, and we're here to help you reach your academic goals."

BA: How do you envision BusinessCAS helping schools not only compete but thrive in this time of

heightened competition?

As we look ahead, how can Liaison and BusinessCAS better support you and your team?

KH: As I've mentioned before, just being in the mix with other schools that students are looking at is going to help us compete. I also think our ability to move an application through quickly is going to help us compete, as will our ability to respond quickly not only in WebAdMIT™, but in EMP as well.

There are a lot of moving parts that I need to manage, and BusinessCAS will help me do that. We're always looking for ways to be more innovative and effective, and for me this is the answer. I don't see any other companies out there that can do what Liaison does. The more exposure BusinessCAS gets, the more exposure Marist gets. It's a win, win! ■

"BusinessCAS provides the opportunity to review applications 'on-demand' and to communicate the message we want to communicate — 'It's not too late, and we're here to help you reach your academic goals.'"

- Kelly Holmes,
Dean of Graduate Admission
at Marist College





BUILDING A BETTER, MORE DIVERSE CLASS

According to *Diverse: Issues in Higher Education*, “the work done on the grounds of colleges and universities has a big impact on society, from medical breakthroughs to mass adoption of social change.” Those social changes can range from eliminating the wage gap and reducing discrimination to making the U.S. more competitive in the world market.¹⁰ Experiencing learning in more culturally diverse settings also better prepares students for a globalized workplace.¹⁷

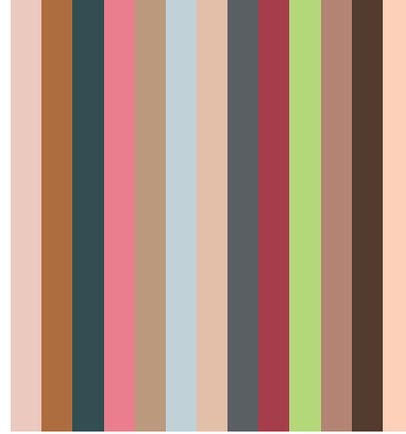
However, many schools still struggle with increasing diversity on their campuses. Despite wide-scale efforts to improve ethnic diversity, African Americans and Hispanics are more underrepresented at top colleges than they were 35 years ago.¹ Schools looking to create more racially diverse classes must recognize that not only do these students have lower high school graduation rates than white students, they also pursue higher education at lower rates.¹⁶ Six-year college completion rates for African American and Hispanic students are lower than those for whites and Asians, presenting yet another challenge in maintaining diverse campuses.⁴

For many colleges and universities, the diversity discussion extends beyond race and ethnicity to encompass socioeconomic background, gender identity, sexual preference and more. Developing an environment where members of each group feel welcomed and valued in the community requires focused efforts.

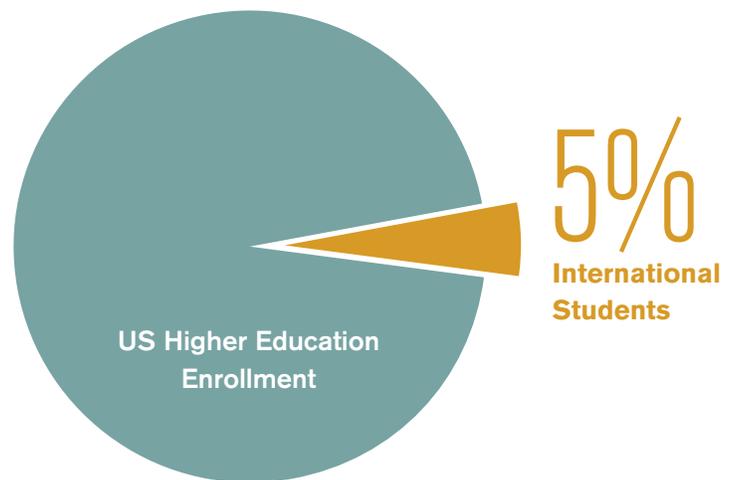


One component in creating campuses that better reflect the composition of society as a whole is a well-planned strategy to recruit and retain students across a variety of backgrounds. A number of schools have seen remarkable growth in diversity on campus by changing their admissions criteria, according to Emilie Cushman, CEO and founder of Kira Talent. "This needs to come from a bigger, school-wide commitment to diversity. Just one person pushing this forward won't be enough," she said. Cushman pointed to specific policy changes, such as Harvard and Northwestern Law expanding to allow GRE test scores from applicants as well as the LSAT or DePaul University's switch to evaluating noncognitive traits through essay questions, as examples of changes that can improve diversity.

In the last fifty years, campuses have become less white and less male: the percentage of Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander and African American students has been growing steadily, though African American and Hispanic students remain under-represented.¹⁵ Female students now outnumber males, and the percentage of first-generation college students has dropped from 40% at the start of the 1970s to less than 20% at the end of 2016.¹³ International students account for about 5% of U.S. higher education attainment, rising from 110,000 in 1967 to 1.18 million in 2017.⁸ As you rethink your recruiting practices to serve an increasingly diverse society, keep in mind the following tips to build a better, more diverse class.



International students account for about 5% of U.S. higher education attainment, rising from 110,000 in 1967 to 1.18 million in 2017.



Diversifying institutions that were never designed to be accessible to everyone is hard work. So, too, is thinking and acting systemically. Many of the norms and practices people encounter in day-to-day organizational life are raced and gendered and heteronormative in ways that are beyond individuals' awareness."

Frank D. Golom⁵

Assistant Professor of Applied Psychology at Loyola University Maryland

WHAT DOES DIVERSITY LOOK LIKE FOR YOUR INSTITUTION?

What is the current composition of your student body? What about the faculty, staff and administration? What perspectives are missing? Why is it important to you to attract students from a particular group? Recent court decisions on how colleges can use race in admissions and acceptance clearly show that diversity initiatives must somehow align with the school's overall mission.²⁰ Linking your recruiting practices and diversity goals to your mission will help you demonstrate that diversity is a part of your organization's overall culture — not an afterthought.

TYPES OF DIVERSITY





As everyone in admissions knows, it's not just the size of your pool that matters, but who's in the pool. When demographics move the population around, that may or may not be relevant for a given institution or institution type, depending on what part of the market is growing and what part of the market is shrinking."

Nathan D. Grawe⁷

Author of Demographics and the Demand for Higher Education

SET REASONABLE GOALS

Focus on sustainable growth in diversity that aligns with your mission. If you're a small institution that primarily attracts students from the local area, it's likely that the composition of your student body reflects that community. If not, recruiting students from backgrounds that let you more accurately mirror the region from which you draw is a good place to start.

Consider whether certain populations of students will require additional campus resources or support services. Before focusing recruiting efforts on a specific group, ensure you can effectively meet their needs. For example, if you have limited housing on campus, before focusing on recruiting international students, consider whether you will give them priority on-campus housing or assign a resource to help international students find places to live while attending your school.

Pay attention to trends — both institutional and broader — in setting your diversity goals. Be prepared to pivot in response to changes that may impact your ability to attract students from a particular group. As a case in point, some schools that attract international students from countries included in recent travel bans did so by broadening their geographic focus in recruiting efforts to ensure they could maintain a certain number of international students.

BRIDGE THE FINANCIAL GAP

Many students from traditionally underserved populations need additional financial aid to afford college. One study reported the percentage of students with zero expected family contribution (EFC) — an indicator of high financial need — as 47% for Hispanic students, 60% for African American students and 37% for Asian students, while only 29% of white students have zero EFC. The same study found more than 80% of Hispanic, African American and Asian students have a gap between their financial need and grants and scholarships, compared with 71% for white undergraduate students.²²

To increase diversity, schools must be willing to adjust their financial aid awards as well as their admissions practices. Even schools that cannot substantially increase their own financial aid offerings for minority students can waive application fees and campus visit requirements, provide information about relevant scholarships and grants to assist these students in financing their degrees and find other ways to reduce costs.

Many first-generation students and students from low-income backgrounds are still not applying for post-secondary education, Cushman explained. "This might be because students do not have the support at home or in their schools to apply, or the money for application fees and campus visits, or the time it takes to get a degree because they need to start working sooner to support their families," she said.



More than seven million students in the United States are enrolled in rural school districts — about 15% of all public school students. Almost half of those rural students hover near or below the poverty line, and not all of them are white. More than 25% are children of color, according to a report by the Rural School and Community Trust.”³

LEVERAGE THE BENEFITS OFFERED BY PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

Organizations like the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN), the American Psychological Association (APA) or the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) offer many benefits to members, including Centralized Application Services (CASs™). Participating in a CAS can extend your reach and connect you to a broader pool of applicants who have already identified an area of study.

Joining the APA's PSYCAS™ allowed the University of La Verne to increase their number of applicants from out of state by 21%, said Program Chair Jerry Kernes. “As an APA-accredited program, we have to show deliberate work towards diversifying our applicant pool. It's not good enough just to say we have a diverse student body. We have to show that we're working to attract applicants with unique perspectives,” he said. The CAS for graduate psychology programs had the added benefit of improving access to data about applicants, such as gender, geographic area and other diversity factors, allowing the program to make more strategic enrollment and recruiting decisions.

EXPLORE UNDERSERVED AND OFTEN OVERLOOKED COMMUNITIES

Recruiting students from less-represented countries can provide an opportunity for schools working to expand diversity. With the majority of international students coming from China, India, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, Canada, Vietnam and Taiwan, regions such as Latin America, Europe and parts of the Middle East hold students willing to study in the U.S. with

little understanding of how to apply.¹⁸ Providing a checklist or roadmap walking these students through the application process can make it easier for them to apply — and help them feel like your school understands their needs.

When recruiting closer to home, a recent study determined that many schools appear to prioritize wealthy high schools, with many visiting high schools where the average family income is in excess of \$100,000, while skipping nearby high schools where average family income is around \$60,000 to \$70,000.⁹ The study suggests that recruiting visits favor those who attend high schools where family income is high, and these high schools are likely to include more white students than the population as a whole. Colleges are more likely to skip recruiting visits to schools where white students are in the minority, with many visiting a disproportionate number of private high schools.

Students from rural school districts offer another underserved population from which colleges can attract a more diverse applicant pool. A recent study by the National Student Clearinghouse found that nationwide, 59% of rural high school grads go on to college the following fall semester, compared to 62% of urban graduates and 67% of suburban grads. More than a quarter of the students enrolled in rural high schools are students of color.³ Developing pipeline programs, where students from a particular high school or district visit a college campus for mentoring, workshops or special programs, can introduce potential applicants to a college. ■

Continue reading this article by downloading our ebook *Building a Better, More Diverse Class* from bit.ly/building-a-better-more-diverse-class







RE ENGI NEER ING ED UCA TION

A Q&A with the American Society for Engineering Education's Executive Director Norman Fortenberry

Ron Hyman, Liaison's executive director of association partnerships, recently asked Norman Fortenberry, executive director of the American Society for Engineering Education (ASEE), for his insight into how he and his colleagues are planning for their discipline's future.

Ron Hyman (RH), Liaison: Thank you for your time today, Norman! I'd like to start with the numbers — According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, overall employment of engineers is projected to grow 4.0% from 2014 to 2024, with a select few occupations — civil engineers, environmental engineers and biomedical engineers, specifically — growing even faster than the 6.5% projected rate for all occupations.

On the other hand, three engineering occupations are expected to lose jobs during this decade: Electronics engineers, except computer, are projected to lose about 1.4% of their jobs; Aerospace engineers, 2.3%; Nuclear engineers, 4.0%.

Since your association focuses on preparing future engineers for the workforce, what do you read into these numbers? What trends do you see and how are you and the other leaders responsible for planning for the future of engineering education responding to them?

Norman Fortenberry (NF),

ASEE: Honestly, I don't spend a lot of time thinking about the numbers. The way I see it, any student should seek work that they find interesting and challenging — there will always be cycles where there is greater or lesser employment in one area or another. Fortunately for our industry, a well-educated engineer has the flexibility to shift to another closely related area if their particular specialty faces a lack of demand.

Most fundamentally, what numbers of this type tell me is there's growing recognition of the importance of being able to work at the interface of disciplines. Interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary work are critical. We need to work with people from different disciplines

in order to get jobs done, and it's important that we prioritize lifelong learning as our world evolves and changes.

There's an old saying, "Universities have departments — nature does not." Outside of academia, we're always working across disciplines to solve real-world problems — that's engineering for you. One sub-discipline is up, and one's down? That doesn't deserve our focus. What we need to prioritize is the quality of preparation, so our students are ready to think critically and address novel problems as they deliver solutions that serve human needs.

RH: Overall, do you feel engineering education is focusing on "the right things?" Do you believe it's

fostering a love of lifelong learning?

NF: I do. Over my three decades in this discipline, there's been work on engineering curricula to eliminate the dichotomy between hands-on and theoretical learning, to find a balance between hands-on and minds-on. We recognize that engineers don't work in isolation, and that real-world problems require us to be able to engage with the real world.

Engineers solve human problems. To do that you've got to understand the ways humans are struggling. We're not isolated techies off in a corner; we are engaged with the world, and our curricula are beginning to reflect that.

There's a strong emphasis on fundamental knowledge, but once that is established, there must also be interaction with

other disciplines. Applications go beyond a single discipline, therefore the abilities to work in teams and communicate across disciplines are increasingly critical. That's what industry tells us, and that's what's guiding our curricula moving forward.

RH: That's a great transition to my next question, because I'm interested to hear your perspective on how technology shifts drive change in education.

Specifically, studies like Stanford's One Hundred Year Study on Artificial Intelligence (AI100) suggest that artificial intelligence (AI) does not pose an imminent threat to workers, yet many engineers still fear that their jobs could soon be taken over by advanced robots. It's understandable when you consider that many of the world's major players are participating in the race to fund such technological advances, including France, where President Emmanuel Macron has pledged \$1.5 billion to put his country at the forefront of AI research; the U.S., which requested \$110 million to invest in AI in its military's fiscal 2019 budget request; and China, with its three-step development plan and overarching goal to lead the AI industry by 2030.

What do technological advances like AI mean for the future of engineering education, Norman?

NF: More so than just reacting to change, I think we



Norman Fortenberry at a Capitol Hill education event organized by the National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity; Pictured with Dr. Michael E. Wooten, deputy assistant secretary for community colleges at the U.S. Department of Education



recognize there are a variety of new and powerful tools available now — in fact, engineers have created some of those tools. So, as a new tool comes along, the engineer thinks, “How do I use this tool to accomplish my objective?” When we went from the slide rule to the calculator, we didn’t say, “This is a major change in technology.” We said, “This is a better tool that allows us to do analysis more quickly.” Now, we’ve got to have confidence in this black box calculator or this computer.

Once you have confidence in the processes of the tool, you can use it to tackle more complex problems. That’s the way we view AI: It’s just another tool to solve ever more complex problems.

RH: What other technology trends are you tracking? Are there any other tools like AI that have caught your eye?

NF: AI is a major change — That’s why you’ve heard all of these references to “Industry 4.0,” with steam being 1.0, followed by mechanical and then electrical power. It’s a major advance that opens the door to blending the constructed world with the biological world. I’m not going to diminish that — It is a major advance, but it is a tool. Do we see anything else like that on the horizon? Not at that level.

RH: When I’m thinking on that level, I think of the internet, especially since it has helped our world make great strides towards becoming more connected. Still, we’ve struggled with wealth gaps that separate those who have access to technology and those who do not.

Developments like blockchain have given global leaders confidence

that we may be able to address this accessibility issue and truly connect people across geographic borders to more opportunities. If we do continue to work towards what the World Economic Forum’s Global Futures Council on Blockchain deems a “new era of globalism,” what will this increased connectivity mean for engineering education?

NF: We have to take extra care to make sure those communication skills I mentioned before are not only dealing with different disciplines, but with different cultures across boundaries and borders as well! We’re working on projects now where design drawings begin in Singapore; then the drawings travel to Japan, then the United States and then production starts in Germany, so being on the same page about what’s happening every step of the way is crucial.

I’m thinking of an example — a very large-scale one, at that — and I don’t remember it in great detail, but it had to do with a NASA craft the U.S. was working on with another country. Ultimately the craft couldn’t connect to the space station because the space station used the metric system and we used different units of measure! It seems like a small thing, but when you’re talking about a spacecraft, that’s millions of dollars in both materials and personnel time rendered useless because nobody communicated what the proper units were. That’s a trivial example — units — but it illustrates the importance of communication across cultures.

Similarly, fighting the California wildfires, there have

been radio interviews with people from Australia and New Zealand who have come over to the U.S. to help. In the first interview I listened to, one of the speakers said, “You know, in Australia, when we talk about a tanker, we mean a big truck on wheels — it carries fluid. When American firefighters say, ‘I need a tanker,’ they mean an airplane.” So, if you say “I need a tanker, and I need it now,” you get a very different thing depending on who you’re talking to if you don’t understand cultural context.

What I’m talking about here is not only good engineering practice but good communications practice as well.

RH: It’s clear that appreciation for and an understanding of diverse perspectives is important and will continue to be important moving forward, yet we do still face a somewhat homogenized engineering workforce. In fact, the National Science Foundation found that African Americans comprised 2.6% of the engineering workforce in 2014, while Hispanics

constituted 6.6% and women accounted for 14.8%.

Since low minority workforce participation in STEM is driven by low numbers of underrepresented populations pursuing degrees in these fields, how does graduate engineering education need to change in order to meet the goal of building a more diverse workforce?

NF: First and foremost, we need to work on retention. Across the board, engineering nationally has around a 40% attrition rate — 40% of the students who start do not finish. That’s counting those who were admitted into an engineering program. Let’s be clear that these are not weak students. We have data going all the way back to 1997’s *Talking About Leaving: Why Undergraduates Leave the Sciences* stating that a number of students leave science and engineering fields not because they can’t hack the work, but because they’re not properly instructed. We need to first and foremost retain those students who have already expressed an interest, taken the time to enroll

and found their way to our classrooms.

Concurrently with doing that, we need to engage younger students by having proper role models at the precollege and collegiate levels. This is one of a large number of components to keep in mind as we work on building welcoming environments, understanding that students have choices when it comes to their education and their career paths, and they won't hesitate to vote with their feet.

Engineering and science, in general, used to be in a position where faculty took pride in being the weed-out or filter courses: "Look to your left, look to your right — only one of you will be here in three years..." We don't have that luxury anymore. Engineering's career satisfaction and compensation rates have to compete with those of other satisfying career fields for very bright students.

So, we need to compete, we need to explain to students the attractions of an engineering career and we need to move away from harping on how hard this is as a field. You don't see people talking to future doctors saying, "You're going to spend a lot of time memorizing gross anatomy and dissecting things and trying to memorize all the parts." They say, "You're going to save lives." The average doctor or surgeon treats one person at a time. An engineer creates a system, a product, a process that affects hundreds of lives at one time. If an airplane goes down or a building implodes, there are a lot of lives at stake.

The quality of human life is directly tied to engineering. If you look at everything that is not growing on a tree — and even some things that are growing on trees— they're the

result of engineering. We need to communicate that message to potential students better. Demographics are telling us that's particularly important for women and underrepresented minorities, but many white males are looking for relevance in what they do as well. We have to explain the human relevance of engineering as a profession if we are to attract and retain more students.

RH: Related to doing this important work, ASEE was one of the first engineering societies to partner with Liaison on EngineeringCAS™, the Centralized Application Service (CAS™) for graduate engineering programs. In previous interviews, you've offered insight into why you see participating in this initiative as valuable for your members, with one particular reason being that those who participate in the CAS can collaborate closely with colleagues, sharing best practices and implementing new ideas.

Can you share more about some of the other projects and initiatives that ASEE is currently undertaking to help its members work together for the benefit of the engineering field as a whole?

NF: As a society, ASEE places strong emphasis on broadening participation and diversity. For the past several years, we have had sessions at our annual meeting, write-ups in our magazine and activities at our section meetings focused on building a more inclusive environment for women, minorities and members of the LGBTQ+ community. We haven't

done as good a job as we should concerning people with disabilities, but we recognize we need to do more there as well. That's the society overall.

We've done Safe Zone workshops for LGBTQ+ community members, and the engineering deans have something called the Deans Diversity Initiative which is looking at building a more inclusive precollege pipeline for women and minorities, strengthening the retention of those populations at the undergraduate level and encouraging students in those groups to go on to graduate degrees. That's part of where EngineeringCAS comes in. We want to have a more diverse professoriate, both for role models and viewpoints for problem-solving, and we're working on a major gender equity initiative for women faculty that we hope to be starting in the next few months.

We're also continuing with efforts like our National Effective Teaching Institute. If we get faculty in the classroom, they should know the research that informs effective teaching and how to implement that research base. We're trying to get that information out so time spent in classrooms is as effective as possible.

Overall, we're taking a more holistic view to engineering faculty, whether that means considering their unique backgrounds or keeping in mind their work as researchers and also as higher-level administrators: chairs, deans, etc. People no longer have the luxury they had in the 1950s. The stereotypical engineer, whether in industry or academe, was male, living in a traditional household with someone else

who took care of running that household. Now, engineers live in two-career households — they have issues with child care, elder care. They're stretched thin, so they need to be as effective as possible across a broad spectrum of their professional life — and their personal life, but that's a bit outside our purview.

What we're trying to do as a society is transmit the message that ASEE makes you more effective and we do that by providing guidance and education, whether you are a new faculty member, a student counselor, a dean, a chair or a corporate recruiter. Across the board, if you are a member of ASEE, we're here to make you more effective at your job.

RH: Thank you so much for your time, Norman. It's been great hearing your perspective. Is there anything else you'd like to add or emphasize before we wrap up?

NF: I want to emphasize the point you made about being in a connected world — Increasingly, we need to think globally. We need to recognize that there's very little that is truly someone else's problem. Take the example of air pollution — We recognize now that air pollution travels on the jet stream, so if we don't solve air pollution in a number of places, then we still have a problem that needs to be solved. It's even more critical with the way we treat our water. Planetary-scale issues that we may try to treat as local or national problems are really global problems.

As the saying goes, we need to think globally but act locally because we're all connected. Engineering is central to both recognizing that connectivity and addressing problems systematically, so we can all have a better future. ■

Is a Robust, Flexible CRM the Key to Increasing Verified Applications?

How EMP™ helped Northeast Ohio Medical University increase its College of Pharmacy verified applications by 42%

Northeast Ohio
MEDICAL UNIVERSITY



When James Barrett came on board as Director of Admissions at Northeast Ohio Medical (NEOMED) University, the College of Pharmacy needed to grow its number of verified applications. “Coming to a professional clinical school environment from the undergraduate and comprehensive admissions world, I knew the importance of top-of-funnel strategy. Starting off here, the top of our funnel looked like a cylinder. I knew we needed some sort of inquiry management as well as a prospecting CRM [Customer Relationship Management] solution to open up opportunities and create a successful admissions model at NEOMED.”

The CRM in place at the time had limited outbound email capabilities and an out-of-date user interface. Barrett said, “NEOMED doesn’t compete in this sphere with other colleges of pharmacy — we compete with Instagram and Amazon. Our user experience has to be seamless and intuitive.”

Seeking a Robust, Flexible CRM Designed for Higher Ed

Barrett learned about Liaison’s Enrollment Marketing Platform (EMP™) through the American Association of

Colleges of Pharmacy (AACP). He said he was pleasantly surprised by how easy it was to get the platform up and running. “With a few basic lessons in navigation, you can start creating content and begin to understand how to build data fields that are flexible and rational — there aren’t 67 data tables you have to link together. There’s no need to get IT involved!”

He continued: “EMP is our one-stop shop prior to students entering the application phase. We also use the event manager to have students set up their visit experience and schedule their interviews. We’ve been using the ecommerce feature to have them deposit. Basically, we’ve gotten a ton of mileage out of EMP.”

Through EMP, NEOMED is able to foster relationships, track communications and

“The curve from delivery to seeing a return on our investment has been among the shortest that I’ve seen. EMP’s versatility is fantastic relative to other CRMs I’ve used.”

— James Barrett, Director, Admissions,
Northeast Ohio Medical University

provide a personalized online portal for each prospective student.

Increasing Verified Applications and Top-of-Funnel Growth

Barrett’s primary goal was to manage enrollment more effectively. “NEOMED has been susceptible to feast or famine,” he said. Increasing the number of applicants overall allowed the school to be more selective while producing a better yield. “This was the rising tide that lifted all boats — it gave us a more predictable interview pool, which in turn gave us a more predictable admissions committee decision set. We’ve become less reliant on a fairly unpredictable market,” said Barrett.

“A robust CRM also allowed us to expand to a more nationwide presence,” Barrett said. “We’ve been able to segment opportunities for students using EMP as a portal. 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.” With EMP, NEOMED can track integrated communications across channels and has therefore been able to more consistently meet its enrollment goals. ■



New Realities in Graduate Education Demand New Tools and Techniques

Every year during its graduate commencement ceremony, Missouri State University celebrates the accomplishments of a new class of ethical leaders dedicated to cultural competence and community engagement.

Missouri State University shares the challenges facing many other schools around the country — declining international student enrollments, pressure to increase diversity on campus and changing student expectations. Unlike some other institutions, however, Missouri State is empowered with new admissions technology that will help the University better understand and address these issues.

During a recent conversation about her decision to join Liaison's GradCAS™, Dr. Julie Masterson, associate provost and dean of the University's Graduate College, said the school needed a new graduate admissions tool for a variety of reasons. In addition to delivering a better user experience and improving access

to critical data about applicants, adopting the new Centralized Application Service (CAS™) for programs not supported by an association-based service provided an opportunity to reexamine admissions processes to ensure effectiveness.

Streamlining processes for international students

For example, the University uncovered several ways to streamline international student admissions. "We've seen a dip, about 8-9% over the last 4 years, in our international enrollment," said Dr. Masterson. "We've seen the decrease primarily in what we call our walk-in students — students we recruit through generic ways, such as

graduate fairs and international student events in various countries."

According to Dr. Masterson, Missouri State was doing well with international students "and then all these things started to happen with the political landscape, which has been really problematic." In reviewing their admission process, she and her colleague Stephanie Praschan, director of graduate enrollment management, realized that there was an opportunity to allow the University to reach decisions more efficiently for the international students who were applying for graduate programs.

The international services office was processing every application, which was then released to the admissions

office and the department for review. "Now that we've joined GradCAS, we can change the sequence within the process. The program will make the admission recommendation first, and then international services only has to focus on visas and financial viability for qualified students. This should decrease the burden on international services, and we're hoping it will give our international applicants a quicker response as well," Dr. Masterson said.

Reducing time to decision and providing transparency into the process

Quickly responding to students and communicating where they are in the process matters — and not just for international students. "Time to decision is a major issue — it's the name of the game for a lot of programs," Dr. Masterson said. "Sometimes students will say yes to whoever says yes to them first!" The faster application processing that comes with participating in a CAS allows for quicker decisions in programs with a rolling admissions model.

Dr. Masterson and Praschan

also believe GradCAS will increase transparency for prospective graduate students. "Once materials are complete, we can set up an email to automatically go to the applicant to let them know what's going on — that we're excited to have received the application and that the department begins evaluating applications on a certain date. They're not left hanging," Dr. Masterson said.

Praschan added that the service lets students know that "they're under consideration, they haven't been eliminated." She expects the ability for students to log in and see which recommendations and scores have been received to cut down on the number of calls asking for status updates. Praschan explained that giving students access to view real-time status updates will be "a huge relief for their stress and anxiety levels."

Benchmarking against other programs and monitoring trends

Dr. Masterson has extensive experience with several of Liaison's other CASs that are live on the Missouri State campus as well. She said one of

the things that makes these types of services so attractive is the ability to compare her programs to others. "I can see how my physical therapy applicants compare to the entire pool in PTCAS™ [the CAS for physical therapy programs], or I can select five, six or seven competitor programs and see how my applicant demographics compare to those."

"I'm very excited about the robust reporting that I will be able to do with GradCAS and how we will be able to closely watch applicant pool trends," said Praschan. For example, the Missouri State graduate staff was recently asked if their student population reflected national trends toward a growing number of students over age 35. While many of the students in allied health programs come straight from undergraduate programs, the admission staff was surprised to learn that more than 25% of students in graduate degree programs were 35 or older.

Dr. Masterson said, "It's a great example of how thinking about things like this is important for us in terms of focusing our marketing messaging and encouraging our



Named in honor of the first president of the University, Carrington Hall was Missouri State's first building.



In Fall 2018, Missouri State enrolled 3,689 graduate students.

program directors to consider their delivery options. We offer many popular master's degrees (MBA, Professional Studies, Cybersecurity, Criminology, Education) as well as some professional doctorates in Nursing online — if we know one of the reasons these programs are appealing is that older students are more likely to be working folks looking for part-time, flexible options, we'll promote that even more now that we know they're such an important component of our student body."

Increasing diversity

One of the major goals in the University's long-term plan focuses on building diversity. While Dr. Masterson says the University has been making steady progress, location poses a challenge. "We live in an area with very limited racial and ethnic diversity — it's challenging to recruit faculty to come and stay here, and it's challenging to recruit students to come and stay here. Our retention rates aren't as high as we'd like them to be," she explained.

The University's use of various CAS

solutions helps connect with a larger audience and reinforce messages about flexibility and affordability. Dr. Masterson said her experience with CSDCAS™, the service for communications disorders programs, helped her understand how to use the application itself to differentiate Missouri State's programs. "We can have Missouri State's Application Materials section of the application look different from what other schools' applications look like, because even though all programs are accredited by the same body and offer similar courses, we want to be unique. This gives us a chance to highlight those differences."

Using Liaison's Enrollment Marketing Platform (EMP™) will also allow Missouri State to strengthen recruiting. "We'll be able to target students in a systematic, focused way," said Dr. Masterson. "All of these changes to our admissions process work together — our recruiting will be better, we'll be in new markets and we'll have a better application process. We hope that increases applications from underrepresented students," she said.

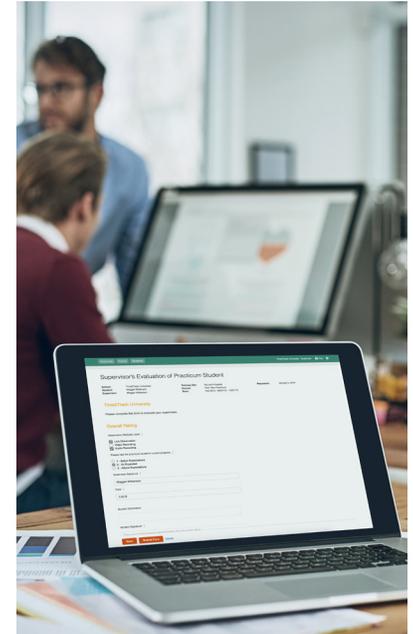
Starting a larger conversation about admissions across campus

While configuring 250 applications to represent program-specific admissions requirements, Dr. Masterson said she and Praschan had the chance to start a dialog with program directors about best practices in admissions. "A lot of times we'd ask them why they did things a certain way and they'd say, 'we always have.' Sometimes they had good reasons, but other times they didn't," said Dr. Masterson. "In those cases, Stephanie was able to suggest new ways of doing things and they were really open to it."

"I feel like we've been able to empower our departments to try a holistic approach to admissions," said Praschan. "We've had good conversations about how to streamline our processes so we can speed up applicant feedback, and that's going to be a huge benefit for us and for future Missouri State students." ■

Need Control of Your Clinical Training Data? There's an Online Tool for That.

How Time2Track™ offered Regent University insight into student progress



Like many schools, before implementing Time2Track™, Regent University relied on students to keep track of their own clinical hours using paper forms. Each program in the School of Psychology and Counseling used a different form. “We couldn’t aggregate data or look at trends across all students,” said Jennifer Ripley, Ph.D., director of the Marriage Ministry Assessment Training and Empowerment (MMATE) Center. “It was cumbersome for the student to have to manage all of their training experiences on paper. There was also a wide variety of ways in which they might document their time,” she said.

In addition to a lack of consistency, program directors lacked visibility into students’ progress during the course of each semester. “In the past, students would get to the end of the year and we wouldn’t know they weren’t getting enough training from their practica sites until we had their forms,” said Ripley.

More than One Reason to Choose Time2Track

Regent University had a special incentive to use Time2Track: the program was created by two of Regent’s doctoral students. “We adopted Time2Track while it

was in beta,” Ripley said. While faculty and staff wanted to support alumni, they also wanted to do what was best for students, so they evaluated other solutions as well. “We found Time2Track was simple and we had a good experience with it. We didn’t see any advantage to other solutions,” said Ripley.

The Time2Track system provides guidance for students in how to track their time, allowing them to select from a menu of options. “Some things are very simple to track, like individual psychotherapy. But

tasks like clinical research or consultation are harder to document, and the system helps with that,” Ripley said.

Real-time Insight Facilitates Real-time Support

Regent University now has real-time insight into student progress. Linda Baum, Ph.D., director of clinical training and associate professor of psychology, said the system’s reports allow her to easily check progress for individual students and see trends and outliers across the entire student population. Baum said, “I can look at an activity summary and see exactly what’s going on, whether they’re meeting the goals, what types of hours they’re getting. I can quickly determine if they’re meeting the goals in one area but not another, so we can go to the students and discuss any potential problems.”

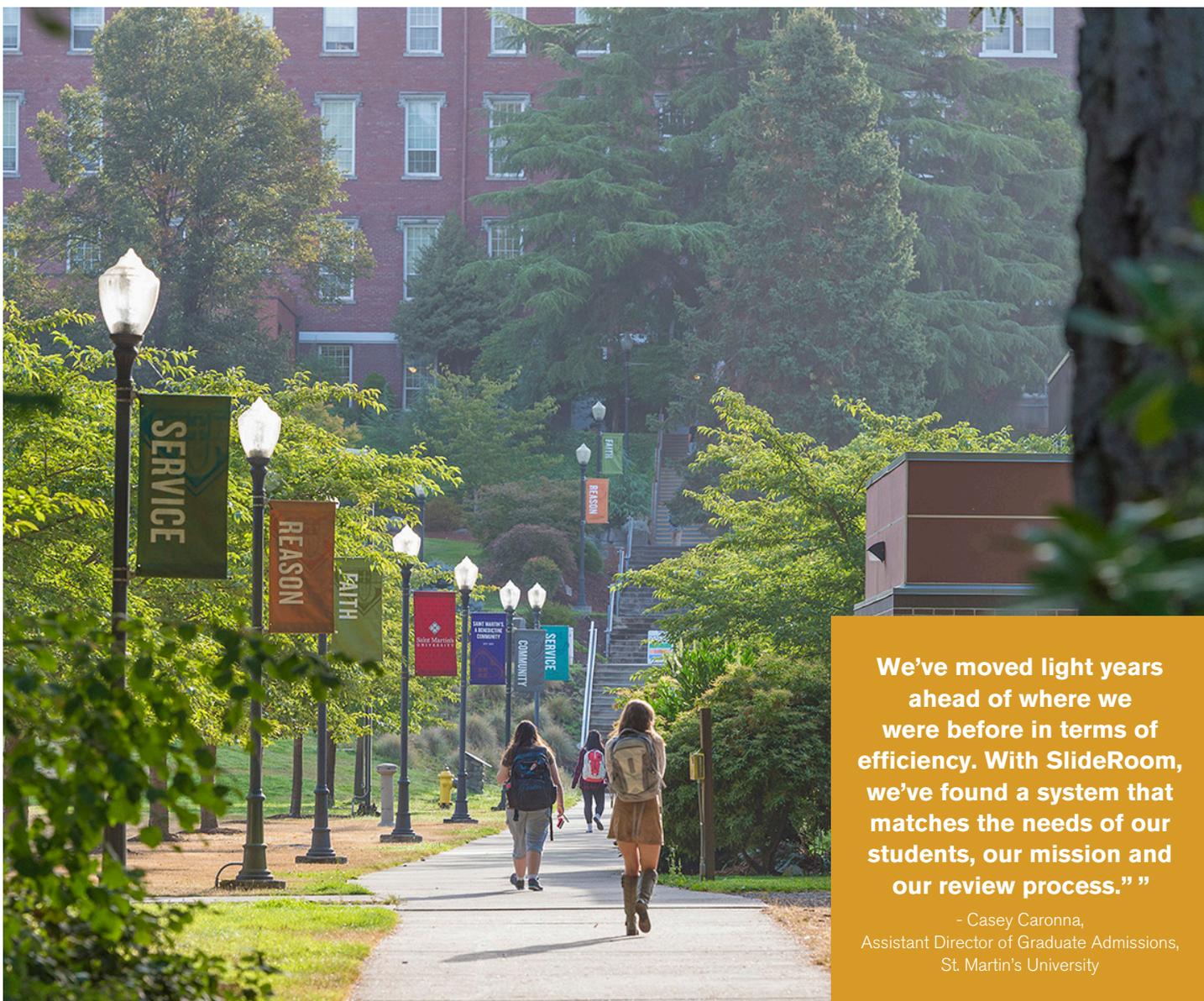
Baum said the system saves students and staff a great deal of time, particularly when responding to licensure requests. “There’s a big difference in verifying hours when I’m going through paper, trying to add up numbers and figure out how they tracked hours. Now with Time2Track, I just type in a name and the numbers are all there.” ■

“Time2Track has simplified so many things and makes so much data accessible to us that I really can’t imagine managing time tracking any other way.”

- Jennifer Ripley, Ph.D., Director of the Marriage Ministry Assessment Training and Empowerment (MMATE) Center, Regent University

Fewer Administrative Tasks Lead to Stronger Applicant Engagement

How SlideRoom™ helped St. Martin's University increase its accepted-to-enrolled student ratio to 95%



We've moved light years ahead of where we were before in terms of efficiency. With SlideRoom, we've found a system that matches the needs of our students, our mission and our review process.” ”

- Casey Caronna,
Assistant Director of Graduate Admissions,
St. Martin's University

Within Casey Caronna's first month as Assistant Director of Graduate Admissions at St. Martin's University, he knew he wanted to move away from a paper-based admissions process. "Paper was inefficient, and it didn't support the complex needs of the programs that our office serves," he explained.

Each of the University's programs had different admissions criteria, and many programs wanted to be able to evaluate applicants based on more in-depth criteria. The University implemented a customer relationship management (CRM) tool, but according to Caronna, "We had far too many verticals and we weren't flat enough to make that successful — I spent a lot of time becoming an IT expert!"

Revealing the Person Behind the Transcript

In SlideRoom™, St. Martin's was able to easily set up unique applications for each graduate program, capturing a variety of details about applicants. "The applicant gets to tell the full story of who they are, and on the other end, the reviewer, the processor and the program manager all get to hear that story. That's what I like about SlideRoom — It connects you to people, not just to numbers," said Caronna.

He added: "It's important to our admissions office that we offer prospective students a great application interface and, on the backend, that our staff has support from our technology partners," Caronna said. "After all, we're dealing with people who have busy lives and competing priorities, so we want to make it as seamless as possible to apply and to review applications! SlideRoom meets those needs for us."

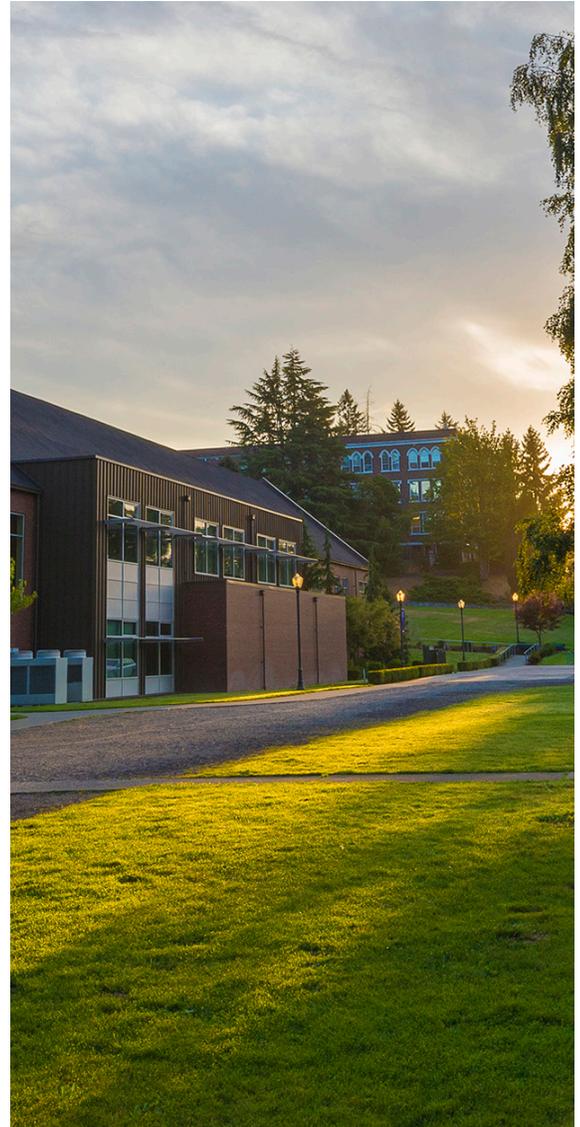
Intuitiveness Unheard of in the EdTech World

The University was able to capture all the information necessary to streamline applications and document management for each of its programs. Caronna added that setting up applications is much easier now as well. "I had four new graduate programs approved in March, and I had to get those applications live right away. I was able to add them to SlideRoom within an hour since I built them out myself on the easy-to-use backend. That's something that's unheard of in the EdTech world!"

Not only were applications easy to launch with SlideRoom, but since implementation, the school's admitted-to-enrolled ratio has jumped to 95%. "Our application quality has increased," Caronna said. "Since SlideRoom has streamlined our application and application review process, recruiters and program directors have more time to dedicate to recruiting. They can spend more time in advising sessions, showing students that St. Martin's cares about their success. I anticipate our retention rate will skyrocket as well!" ■



Saint Martin's
UNIVERSITY



SINCE IMPLEMENTING SLIDEROOM, ST. MARTIN'S UNIVERSITY HAS:

Received the

2nd
highest

number of graduate
applications in the
school's history

Cut down on
one-off emails
by

50%

Increased its
admit-to-enrolled
ratio to

95%

LIAISON in the

NEWS



Tennessee State University Partners With Liaison To Streamline Admissions For All Stakeholders

Historically Black College/University (HBCU) Joins Five Centralized Application Services (CASs™) and Implements Liaison's Enrollment Marketing Platform (EMP™)

As a part of this collaboration, TSU will provide a better experience to applicants through five of Liaison's Centralized Application Services (CAS™). Prospective graduate management students can now apply for TSU's business programs through BusinessCAS™; prospective graduate engineering students, through EngineeringCAS™; prospective master's-level social work students, through SocialWorkCAS™; and prospective graduate psychology students, through PSYCAS™. All of TSU's graduate programs that are not affiliated with a national CAS are now members of GradCAS™, which Liaison launched to extend the benefits of a CAS to those not served by a professional association-based service.

In addition to joining the five CASs, Tennessee State also now leverages Liaison's Enrollment Marketing Platform (EMP™), a cloud-based solution that helps admissions offices deliver highly personalized communications to prospective students. The intuitive platform scales outreach, giving admissions officers time to engage authentically with a greater number of contacts. Through its 360-view of campaign performance and robust time management features, programs that leverage EMP save money and time while determining which applicants are the best fit for their schools.



The University of Texas at Arlington College of Engineering Joins Liaison's EngineeringCAS™

Texas Carnegie Research-1 powerhouse now a member of Centralized Application Service (CAS™) that serves as a global graduate engineering education community

The University of Texas at Arlington College of Engineering has added its 14 master's and 9 doctoral programs to EngineeringCAS™, Liaison's Centralized Application Service (CAS™) for graduate engineering programs. Previously processing applications through ApplyTexas, the UTA's College of Engineering has now joined over 7,000 programs on 800 campuses that have partnered with Liaison to streamline admissions for all stakeholders.

"As the most comprehensive College of Engineering in the thriving North Texas region, we seek bold solutions with global impact to address society's most pressing needs," said Erick Jones, Ph.D., the College's associate dean for graduate studies. "As we align our student recruitment and enrollment efforts with our vision of life-enhancing discovery, innovative instruction and caring community engagement, we are rethinking how we engage graduate engineering candidates. We want to attract the brightest minds to join us in tackling challenging issues, so we are happy to partner with EngineeringCAS to make researching and applying to our graduate programs a better experience for students. We're looking forward to making it easy to apply to UTA by removing potential barriers for applicants."

Santa Clara University's Leavey School of Business Joins Liaison's BusinessCAS™

The Jesuit University in Silicon Valley is now a member of the Centralized Application Service (CAS™) that serves as a global graduate management education community

Santa Clara University's Leavey School of Business has added its seven graduate management education programs to BusinessCAS™.

"Santa Clara is a place for the bold, the tenacious and the ambitious. Our students embrace the challenge of transforming innovative ideas into action in order to do what's best for people, profits and the planet, and I would expect nothing less of our School of Business admissions staff as well," said Caryn Beck-Dudley, dean of the Leavey School. "We are excited to forge a new way forward for GME admissions as founding members of BusinessCAS."

"I've long shared Dean Beck-Dudley's belief that GME would benefit from a more centralized approach to admissions, and I'm excited to lead the board that is making this a reality," shared Dr. Toby McChesney, the Leavey School's senior assistant dean of graduate business programs and chair of Liaison's BusinessCAS advisory board. "BusinessCAS will help Santa Clara and all programs that join the community extend our reach, attract more qualified applicants, deliver a seamless application experience and capture data that facilitates more strategic admissions decisions." shared Dr. Toby McChesney, the Leavey School's senior assistant dean of graduate business programs and chair of Liaison's BusinessCAS advisory board.



ETS and Liaison Release New Graduate Student Recruitment Solution

New tool will help admissions professionals in the U.S. and around the world drive awareness of opportunities available to prospective applicants

The HigherYield™ solution will enable admissions staff to build stronger, more qualified applicant pools through four new data-driven GRE® Search Service and TOEFL® Search Service campaign packages, tailored to fit their needs and budget requirements.

The HigherYield solution combines ETS's GRE Search Service and TOEFL Search Service with Liaison International's Enrollment Marketing Platform (EMP™) and campaign services providing access to a robust database of prospective applicants from around the world who have indicated an interest in advancing their studies. Recruiters can select from a multitude of search criteria, such as demographics, geographic data, academic disciplines and test scores to cost-effectively segment and launch campaigns to expand and diversify their applicant pools.

"Many programs view ETS's Search Services as the recruitment resource that delivers high yield because users can select a specific group of potential applicants from databases of up to a million people who have opted to share their educational intentions," said David Payne, vice president and COO of global education at ETS. "The new offering incorporates the ETS services into a system that provides institutions the additional tools and expertise needed to deploy scalable and personalized recruitment campaigns to GRE and TOEFL contacts, who want to learn about their programs."

David Feng Joins Liaison as Vice President of Client Success

Senior business leader will ensure company's products and services help higher education institutions meet their admissions and recruitment marketing goals

Over the past several years, Liaison has transformed its organizational structure to better support and drive positive client satisfaction and outcomes. The departments that have most noticeably contributed to these changes have been Operations, Account Management and Client Delivery Management. Because the performance of these teams and client feedback on changes made to them have been so positive, the company recognized a need for a business leader to tie together these interdependent organizations.

Dave will serve as this executive, leveraging his two decades of experience achieving strategic outcomes within small, hyper-growth companies and large global enterprises to streamline all interdependent client interaction under a consolidated customer success strategy. He brings to Liaison senior leadership experience at leading technology and healthcare companies, including Nuance Healthcare, Kronos, Be Free and Open Market.

"What attracted me to Liaison is the customer-focused culture of the employees," shared Dave. "I am excited to leverage my experience helping fast-growing organizations scale while ensuring the success of Liaison's many partners." ■

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THE FOURTH QUADRANT



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. This quarter, we sat down with Robert Ruiz, Liaison's vice president of strategic enrollment, to discuss the hot topic of standardized tests. Robert draws on his 25 years of admissions and enrollment management experience, including work in diversity-based admissions, emerging technologies, operational efficiencies and process management, to offer his stance on the topic.

Eliminating Standardized Tests in College Admissions — Do We Have It All Wrong?

As a first-generation Hispanic college student, seemingly I should hate standardized tests. After all, numerous studies report the SAT and ACT display racial and gender bias. When many colleges and universities are struggling to attract more diverse applicant pools, you'd expect me to advocate for removing an admissions requirement that seems to undermine those efforts. However, I actually think standardized tests are a critical component of the admissions big picture.

Hear me out: Tests like the SAT and ACT can drive accountability. Currently 12 states have adopted one of the two exams as a measure of state accountability for ESSA.¹ Standardized tests have some other surprising benefits as well.

Encouraging lower-income students to pursue higher education

Data suggests that when tests are required of all high school students, the number of lower income students who continue their education increases. In 2007, Michigan began requiring all juniors to take the ACT. A study revealed that for every 1,000 students who scored high enough to attend a selective college before testing was universal, the new policy revealed another 230 high scorers.²

The study found a more dramatic impact for low income students: "For every 1,000 low-income students who had taken the test before 2007 and scored well, another 480 college-ready, low-income students were uncovered by the universal test." It seems that in many cases, access to tests and the ability to pay for them has been the true barrier for low-income students, rather than their test results.

Supporting outcomes-based education

Whether we like it or not, higher ed is headed towards outcomes-based education. Employers are often dissatisfied with the knowledge base of the students being sent their way — and as students become more concerned with return on investment for the cost of a degree, they're looking for evidence they'll be able to find jobs in their fields after graduation.

Yet schools are falling short of delivering the results both students and employers want.

Bloomberg found that employers seeking top B-school grads struggled to find candidates with strong leadership, communication and strategic thinking skills.³ GE's Global Innovation Barometer 2018 found that nearly 3 in 4 (74%) global executives believe a lack of skills is an issue facing their industry — a challenge that has increased over time (64% say a lack of talent/inadequate skills is a key challenge today, up from 56% in 2014).⁴

The disconnect cuts across fields and starts at the undergraduate level — the problem isn't limited to specialized graduate programs like engineering and MBAs. In 2016, half of managers felt that recent college graduates were poorly prepared for the workforce, missing key skills such as writing, public speaking and critical thinking.⁵ Standardized tests like the SAT and ACT, which measure specific capabilities, provide a common means for assessing learning and college readiness. Such tests drive us closer to outcomes-based education.

Predicting student success when coupled with other indicators

Standardized tests become a valuable predictor of success when used in conjunction with other non-cognitive variables. Studies show that when combined with high school GPA, test scores can help reliably predict freshman GPA. The key is pairing test scores with other indicators, rather than using scores in isolation. There are plenty of sad but true tales of students who performed exceptionally on tests gaining admission despite

poor grades, only to drop out (or flunk out) because they lacked the discipline and focus necessary for collegiate study. On the flip side, some students test poorly, but have grades that demonstrate the capacity to do well in college.

It's interesting to me that most test-optional schools have replaced tests with another admissions requirement or established a minimum threshold for opting out of submitting test scores. For example, George Mason University requires that a nonsubmitter have a 3.5 grade-point average and class rank in the top 20%, while Temple University's test optional application includes additional essay questions.⁶ These schools recognize they still need to capture information that helps them predict student success.

Measuring specific things (which may not be the right things)

Perhaps using standardized tests makes sense, but not in their current format. In many cases, throwing out tests entirely reflects the old throwing the baby out with the bathwater argument — we don't need to keep all aspects of current tests intact. Instead, we could refine what we have. For example, Harvard and several other Ivy League schools have dropped the SAT essay score requirement, arguing that a single essay doesn't significantly factor into accurate predictions of student success.⁷

Advances in psychometrics and adaptive testing make it easier to identify bias in test questions and measure results more precisely.⁸ Developing tests that more accurately measure certain traits without

the bias in existing tests could provide valuable insight on college applicants.

Delivering insight that helps schools build better classes

The way I see it, if we reconstruct standardized tests, finding the right areas of emphasis, and use test scores as part of a holistic admissions process, we'll be able to build better classes. Really, even if we just change how we position standardized tests, encouraging all high school students — especially those from families with low incomes — to take them early and often, we'll be closer to this goal.⁹ ■

So, what do you think? Do we have it all wrong when it comes to standardized tests? Let us know by tweeting @liaisonedu and using #buildabetterclass. 

SOURCES

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