The ADMISSIONIST

by **LIAISON**

HOLISTIC ADMISSIONS

BEYOND JUST FILLING SEATS

COMMUNITY SERVICE

VIDEO PORTFOLIOS

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

WORK EXPERIENCE

STANDARDIZED TEST SCORES

LEADERSHIP SKILLS

Building a Better Admissions Process, Together

Long gone are the days when applying to college only consisted of requesting transcripts, coordinating a few letters of recommendation and writing a short essay. Now, colleges in all disciplines expect more from prospective students so they can take a more holistic approach to reviewing *applicants* rather than *applications.*

At Liaison, we have spent over two decades developing solutions that streamline application management for you and your admissions colleagues. Our secure platforms make it possible to collect and review all of the traditional components of the college application. But our services and processing team and our Boston-based customer support center are what set us apart. The people behind our solutions take on your burdensome administrative tasks, the ones that take your attention away from the most important task of them all: engaging tomorrow's leaders.

We are dedicating this issue of *The Admissionist* to you and your colleagues because it is quite impressive that you have figured out how to stay on top of all of your traditional application management tasks while adding more comprehensive review components. On pages 16-19, we share the first chapter of what will be a comprehensive guide to this new way of thinking about admissions. We start with the history of this strategy, and we will continue in future issues with an overview of the current landscape, a guide to operationalization and exploration of the intended outcomes of holistic admissions.

On pages 8-10, we explore how colleges are changing their approach to admissions in order to recruit and enroll students who have impressive real-world work and/or military experience that precedes their time on campus, students who begin their studies later than the "traditional" student does or who start at 2-year colleges before transferring to 4-year institutions.

Throughout this issue, we have also collected stories that share how our solutions — CAS, EMP, Time2Track and SlideRoom as well as the new Admissions and Analytics — and the teams behind them help professionals like you in their work to build a better class. As always, please do not hesitate to share your thoughts with our content team at editorial@liaisonedu.com, and please accept our gratitude for allowing us to be your trusted partner in this important work.

Best,

G. Haddad

George Haddad
Founder and CEO

LIAISON

IN THIS ISSUE

H1GHER ED BY THE NUMB3RS

Programs in the health professions, STEM and a range of other disciplines are taking a new approach to reviewing applicants, an approach that gives more weight to qualitative attributes. In this edition of *Higher Ed by the Numbers*, we're exploring how universities are expanding their review to build the best classes possible.

HOLISTIC REVIEW AND DIVERSITY

Since the 1980s, Louisiana State University has had a policy of rejecting applications that include standardized test scores that don't meet their minimum requirement — that is, until the University tried out holistic review practices on many of the **23,000** applications it received for its Fall 2018 class. The **5,803** freshmen it ended up admitting make up the largest, most diverse and highest achieving class in LSU history.
Source: The Advocate

SPOTLIGHT ON HEALTH PROFESSIONS

A NEW APPROACH TO VETERINARY ADMISSIONS

The Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges (AAVMC) has selected **3** programs to participate in a pilot program studying holistic admissions. As a part of the pilot program, the AAVMC will work with the University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine, the University of Missouri College of Veterinary Medicine and North Carolina State University College of Veterinary Medicine as they "pursue admissions reviews that are flexible, consider the applicants' capabilities, provide balanced consideration to academic performance, life experience and attributes and assess how applicants will contribute to the learning environment and the veterinary profession," according to Lisa Greenhill, Ed.D, AAVMC's senior director for institutional research and diversity.
Source: Veterinary Practice News

THE HOLISTIC HOLDUP FOR SOME NURSING PROGRAMS

Health professions programs are leading the way on holistic admissions, with **93%** of dental schools and **91%** of medical schools already using a holistic process. Nursing schools, on the other hand, have been a little hesitant to adopt holistic assessment practices. The most common reasons cited are fears of not being able to be objective, not having enough time to change the process and lack of confidence that it will be successful.
Source: Kira Talent

NEW HOLISTIC PROJECT FUNDED

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation has provided a grant of **$1,195,000** to UC Davis, UCLA and USC to fund a 4½-year holistic review project. The project is focused on developing holistic review methods for **eight** humanities and humanistic social science graduate programs at each UC campus. "We are excited because, ultimately, this project has the potential not only to reach across our **10**-campus system, but also to reach peer institutions nationwide," said Prasant Mohapatra, principal investigator for the project and vice provost for Graduate Education and dean of Graduate Studies at UC Davis.
Source: UCDavis.edu

A NEW APPROACH TO STANDARDIZED TESTS

Colleges and universities are removing the required submission of test scores at a surprising rate. With over **1,000** institutions no longer requiring these scores, the research is showing that the quality of student admitted and enrolled in these schools has not changed.
Source: Inside Higher Ed

YIELD INCREASES FOR LOW- AND MODERATE-INCOME WHITE FEMALE STUDENTS

This year, the yield for low- and moderate-income white female students at Oxford College of Emory University increased **21%**, going from **13%** to **34%**. Douglas A. Hicks, dean and the William R. Kenan Jr. Professor of Religion at Oxford, believes that the College's approach of focusing on all low-income students, rather than just minority students, may be why yield is up so much for this group this year. The College's commitment to "looking at students for all kinds of experiences and backgrounds" means that a combination of factors plays into admissions decisions, contributing to the diversity of this year's freshman class.
Source: Inside Higher Ed

HISTORY UNCHANGED

The share of black freshmen at elite schools has basically not changed since 1980. Although they make up **15%** of college-aged Americans, black students are just **6%** of freshmen at the nation's top colleges and universities. According to the *New York Times*, "Affirmative action increases the numbers of black and Hispanic students at many colleges and universities, but experts say that persistent underrepresentation often stems from equity issues that begin earlier."
Source: New York Times

SOCIAL MEDIA IN ADMISSIONS

More than two-thirds of colleges — that's **68%** — believe it's fair to use social media in order to get a better picture of an applicant's life. Students should take note: Holistic admissions means that the good and the bad are seen, and considered, in application review.
Source: Kaplan

A QUICK AND EFFICIENT APPROACH TO INTERVIEWS

Since it was developed at McMaster University in 2002, the Multiple Mini-Interview (MMI) has been adopted at other medical schools across North America and the globe. The process consists of **10** mini-interviews. Each session is **8** minutes long, and students receive a **2**-minute break in between interviews. Applicants interact with one person at each station, giving them the opportunity to participate in **10** interviews with **10** people, in a more comfortable atmosphere.
Source: McMaster University

For links to full articles, check out our weekly Highlights from Higher Ed blog series at liaisonedu.com/blog

LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE "THIS IS PUBLIC HEALTH" PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

The public health field had a problem some academic disciplines understand all too well: prospective students didn't fully understand what public health workers do. So, in 2008, the Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health (ASPPH) started the "This is Public Health" (TIPH) campaign to help raise awareness of the field.

Tracie Seward, ASPPH's manager of student services, explained the campaign originated as a way to help prospective students understand how public health ties into many different fields. "We wanted a way to show that public health is everywhere — you can be a dentist and still be involved in public health!" Seward said.

The campaign started with a simple parallelogram sticker that stated, "This is public health." Ten years later, it includes a website, newsletter, multiple social media channels and events. An annual road show during National Public Health Week engages students of all ages in activities that teach them about public health. ASPPH also has a robust social media program supporting the campaign. "We hold Twitter chats, engage current public health students as ambassadors, present to K-12 students and do social media take-overs," said Seward.

Emily Gordon joined ASPPH as its Student Services Coordinator in 2017. During her time with the association, she managed all of the communications to prospective students, including a monthly newsletter for applicants through SOPHAS [the Centralized Application Service (CAS™) for schools and programs of public health] and the TIPH campaign. "We have fun with this brand since it allows us to branch out from the 'this is when you start an application, this is how you submit it' message to provide more context about what those in our profession do," Gordon said.

1 FIND A WAY TO DRIVE THE PUBLIC'S INTEREST IN YOUR ISSUE

ASPPH used the TIPH campaign as an umbrella to showcase how an interest in health care can align with public health and to demonstrate the diversity of the field. "It's been a gold mine," said Seward. "When people know what public health is, it helps everyone involved with our organization."

To help people understand what public health looks like, ASPPH began affixing their "This is public health" stickers to public objects related to air and water quality, hygiene, nutrition and other messages about community wellness. The stickers drew attention to how people's individual actions, such as picking up pet waste or washing their hands, could have a larger impact on the community. The stickers also promoted a link to thisispublichealth.org, where people could learn more.

"We started off providing information to a broad audience to introduce the field, then honed in to help provide options for prospective students to explore education," Seward explained.

2 START SMALL AND EVOLVE

While the campaign began with simple stickers and a website, it gradually expanded to include social media, adding a Facebook page in 2009, Instagram in 2013 and Twitter and Snapchat in March 2017. Beyond simply adding new channels, ASPPH has focused on tapping into each channel's unique format to drive engagement. "We recently started doing Twitter chats," Gordon said. "They're slowly growing and gaining more diverse perspectives."

The association hosts approximately a dozen graduate school fairs each year, drawing more than 2,000 prospective students. In addition, ASPPH's four virtual college fairs annually attract more than 6,500 registrants interested in learning about various public health degree programs. To engage students earlier in the pipeline, ASPPH added a roadshow in 2016, visiting a different state during National Public Health Week each year. "We guide students of all ages through a variety of activities to help them understand public health," Seward explained. "You've got to meet students where they are," she said, "Whether that's through social media, at virtual events or in person."

The Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health (ASPPH) started their multifaceted "This is Public Health" (TIPH) campaign to help raise awareness of the public health field.

3 BE INCLUSIVE

To help showcase the diversity of public health, ASPPH has recruited several graduate students to serve as ambassadors. "They talk about their experiences and answer questions," Gordon said. For example, Allante Moon, a second-year Health Behavior Health Education MPH student at the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor, shared information about her practicum project on Instagram. Through the Minority Health and Health Disparities International Research Training Program (MHIRT), she spent three months in Trinidad and Tobago conducting a pilot study on chronic oil spill exposure and its health effects as well as understanding how Trinidadians are able to cope with oil pollution.

The ambassadors include students in a variety of academic programs: MPH, an MPH/MBA combination and a Ph.D. in biostatistics. They come from schools all over the country and represent a variety of different research interests ranging from infectious disease and mental health to health policy and minority health.

Ultimately, a well-conceived and executed public awareness campaign can strengthen the pipeline for many academic disciplines. Keep the tactics above in mind as you plan your campaign and you'll be well on your way to building an engaged pool of future students. ■

WHERE TEST SCORES MEET MILITARY EXPERIENCE

HOLISTIC ADMISSIONS FOR NON-TRADITIONAL STUDENTS
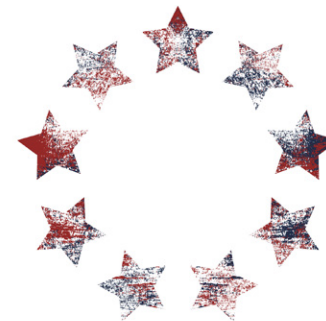
Conventional wisdom holds that students attend college in order to acquire the skills which enable them to launch professional careers. But what about a situation in which impressive real-world work experience actually preceded their time on campus? What should that mean for different aspects of higher education, such as course credit and admissions?

That's precisely the scenario unfolding for Ty Upshaw, who was deployed to Iraq, Kuwait and Afghanistan and worked in the U.S. Army's Human Resources Department before he ever stepped foot in a university lecture hall. Now pursuing an undergraduate degree in business at the University of Colorado in Colorado Springs, Upshaw received college credit from the school for group communication, computer information science, organizational communication and public speaking due to his human resources experience in the military.

The same is true for Kierra Howard, who spent four years as a communication specialist in the Army and received 20 credits from Pikes Peak Community College, also located in Colorado Springs, for that experience.[1]

Upshaw and Howard — who were both profiled in a PBS NewsHour segment by Hari Sreenivasan which aired last fall — benefited from a new Colorado law which allows students to earn college credit for expertise outside the classroom, including in the military. The Colorado Commission on Higher Education officially implemented the legislation last spring.

"As faculty, we take seriously our charge of ensuring that students have the skills and knowledge they need to be successful," said Wayne Artis, chairman of the Colorado Faculty Advisory Council. "We know that today's students are bringing real life, relevant experience with them to college. Blending prior learning with traditional curriculum to ensure the same results is exciting."[2]

"This is the right thing to do for service members and veterans," echoed David Ortiz, a veteran advocate who helped craft the Colorado legislation, in the PBS NewsHour segment. "It makes them feel as if their training and service to this country not only mattered in the bigger sense, but in the particular level, that they're now getting civilian credit for what they have already demonstrated."[1]

This year's new developments in Colorado could have implications that go beyond course credit, including by raising the question of how non-traditional pre-college experiences should be factored into higher education admissions for applicants such as members of the military, transfer students and adult learners.

Taking pre-college professional experience into account in admissions would represent the latest frontier in holistic application review, an increasingly popular practice which features an emphasis on the whole applicant and goes beyond conventional academic metrics such as GPA and standardized test scores. This process often includes unconventional application requirements, such as Bennington College's "Dimensional Application"[3] or Goucher College's video application.[4]

An arts school will typically include the submission of a portfolio or the performance of an audition in its application, reasoning that those metrics properly reflect students' academic experiences at such institutions and ultimately, their careers. Then why, for instance, shouldn't an undergraduate business program significantly prioritize an applicant's practical internships or other forms of experiences in high school, much like an MBA program's admissions process would consider an applicant's professional experience?

The question isn't as pressing, however, for traditional undergraduate applicants, as colleges are already accustomed to considering a student's extracurricular and community/volunteer activities as well as application requirements like essays as relevant factors in admissions decisions. Greater consequences are felt among non-traditional applicants and students, who enter the admissions process already facing an uphill climb: the need to convince academic institutions to buck conventional practices by looking beyond the easy-to-assess and presumably "objective" metrics like grades and standardized test scores.

ADULT LEARNERS

The broadest category of non-traditional student is the adult learner — applicants ages 24 or 25 and up who are more than four years removed from high school and often don't possess a high school diploma. Adult learners can be veterans or active-duty military members, or anyone else seeking to complete their education after a substantial amount of time away from an academic setting.

Some schools' admissions offices specifically express their openness to adult learners, while indicating that their application review standards for such students are rooted in a holistic approach.

Penn State University notes it "has professional staff dedicated to assisting adult learners through the enrollment process" and acknowledges how education "has become a lifelong endeavor that is an essential element of career success" in today's marketplace.

"Understanding that education improves job performance and enhances marketability, adult learners are enrolling in colleges and universities in record numbers. As an adult student at Penn State, you will not only earn the quality education employers demand, but you will receive the individual attention you deserve," the University affirms.[5]

Indiana University Bloomington (IU) uses particularly empathetic language on adult applicants, stating, "If you're thinking about coming back to school (or attending for the very first time), we understand the excitement — and the fear — that comes along with it." Advisors with IU's Center for Students in Transition (SIT), according to the school, "help students investigate and identify

solutions and degree options that make the most sense for their backgrounds and goals." Further, SIT says it "works with adult learners who have had gaps in their education, including those who began a degree, left college for a number of years and now want to return and complete an undergraduate degree." [6]

TRANSFER STUDENTS

Another category of non-traditional applicant is transfer students, as evaluating transfer applications may call for a different set of standards than assessing freshman candidates.

University of California, Berkeley (UC Berkeley) spells out distinct practices for freshman and transfer applicants. The school states that for freshmen, it implements a holistic review of applications in which "no one piece of information is weighted more heavily over another," while separately defining a "comprehensive review" process for transfer applicants in which "all academic and personal attributes are considered, but more emphasis is put on academic preparedness for the major." [7]

The average observer might gloss over this subtle difference in language, but the practical implication for applicants is significant — UC Berkeley specifically abandons the process of holistic review for transfer students, implementing a procedure for transfers which seemingly contains a greater emphasis on traditional academic metrics or in the

school's own words, "academic preparedness."

This begs the following question: What, exactly, constitutes "academic preparedness?" High grades? Challenging and varied coursework? What about the non-traditional factors like extracurriculars, internships, community involvement and life experiences?

The University of Washington (UW), meanwhile, lists a wide variety of "assessment areas" for transfer applicants such as their GPA "based on all transferable college-level courses attempted, rigor of curriculum and consistency in course completion;" academic goals, preparation for intended major, academic or artistic awards and achievements, community service, work experience, cultural awareness and "perseverance in attaining higher education in spite of personal adversity, disability or economic disadvantage."

On the surface, UW's review of transfer applications appears quite holistic in nature. However, the University gives "the highest admission priority" to transfer applicants with an associate degree or with "90 transferable credits taken in preparation for a professional academic major." UW acknowledges that admission for transfer applicants with fewer than 40 quarter credits "is competitive and limited," once again underscoring the uphill climb facing non-traditional applicants. [8]

Yet if prospective UW transfer students could earn credit for expertise outside the classroom, such as their professional

specialties during military service, one could imagine a world in which 90 transferable credits would be much easier to attain.

FOSTERING DIVERSITY

We've surveyed the landscape for non-traditional students, while identifying some obstacles they face to admission. But for academic institutions, why does this all matter?

What it comes down to is diversity — and not necessarily in the usual sense of the word. Often, the mention of "diversity" in higher education triggers heated debates on race and its associated admissions policies, such as affirmative action. Holistic application review, however, is a method for fostering a more diverse campus which goes beyond common notions of diversity like a person's race or country of origin.

The holistic approach builds a broader picture of each applicant, by asking some foundational questions about who they are and what they'd bring to campus: How would this student contribute to the campus community in meaningful ways? How would the unique life experiences that this student brings to campus facilitate personal growth for other students, inside and outside the classroom? What would this applicant contribute to his or her field as a future professional?

As veteran advocate Ortiz noted in the PBS NewsHour piece, veterans or active-duty military members come

to campus equipped with experiences and accomplishments like "being responsible for multimillion-dollar equipment, being responsible for a dozen men and women, accomplishing a mission, with quick, high-intensity timelines coming up, where lives are on the line, and, obviously, the maturity and life experience that comes with it." [1]

For a college admissions officer, should those experiences carry more, less or equal weight when they're evaluated alongside GPA and standardized test scores? At the very least, in a holistic admissions process, that's food for thought. ■
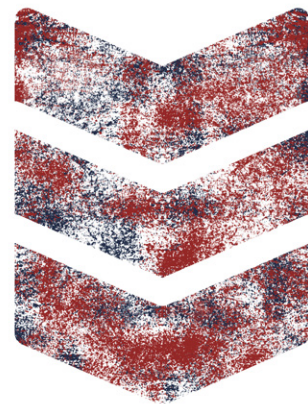
SOURCES

1 Turning soldiers into scholars by turning military experience into college credit, PBS NewsHour

2 Higher ed commission approves changes awarding college credit for military training, Valley Courier

3 The Dimensional Application, Bennington College

4 The Goucher Video Application, Goucher College

5 Adult Students, Penn State University

6 Adult Applicant, Indiana University Bloomington

7 Selection Process, University of California, Berkeley

8 Holistic Review, University of Washington

A Better Applicant Experience and Shorter Application Review Time: A Centralized Application Service (CAS™) Makes It Possible

OLLU
OUR LADY OF THE LAKE UNIVERSITY

How Liaison's CAS for Communication Sciences and Disorders Programs streamlined admissions for Our Lady of the Lake University

Our Lady of the Lake University has 12 graduate programs, with the Department of Communication Disorders receiving over one-third of the total applications to the school's master's degree programs. Without a dedicated admissions team of its own, the department relied on one university admissions processor — who was also managing applications for other graduate departments — to process their nearly 300 applications, answer applicant questions, calculate GPAs and create paper folders to deliver to faculty reviewers.

Because the admissions team needed at least two weeks after the application deadline to continue processing paperwork, receiving transcripts and creating folders for each applicant, faculty reviewers were receiving applications weeks after the February 1 deadline, leaving them only one week to review between 60 and 75 applications each before sending interview invitations. The school's manual processes resulted in lost information, human error in GPA calculations and inefficiencies in sending interview invitations and acceptance letters.

CSDCAS™: An Efficient System for Capturing and Reviewing Applications

"After attending the CAPCSD Conference, I knew I had found the solution to ease the administrative burdens, improve our admissions process and obtain the best-fit students for our University: It was CSDCAS™, the Centralized Application Service (CAS™) for Communication Sciences and Disorders programs," said Dr. Christine Carmichael, IRB chair and director of graduate admissions for the Department of Communication Disorders.

The implementation of CSDCAS drastically reduced application processing time. "Globally, CSDCAS has quickened and refined our entire application process," Dr. Carmichael said. "We went from processing applications for nine months in the admissions office and two months in the department to less than one month of total processing with CSDCAS."

Our Lady of the Lake University's Outcome

"Before, it would take up to a week to review 60 or so folders, with faculty spending every waking moment that we weren't teaching, in meetings or doing research looking at graduate applications," said Dr. Carmichael. "Now, we still have two faculty reviewers for each applicant, but they can review all of their applicants within one day's time — in less than an 8-hour day." CSDCAS processes and calculates points according to rubrics defined and configured by the department, ranking applicants automatically, based on coursework and test scores.

In addition, Dr. Carmichael said CSDCAS has improved the applicant experience. "Students prefer the instant access of the portal to having to call admissions and be put on hold. The response to the online paperless portal has been overwhelmingly positive." She said she appreciates the ability to "provide proactive and consistent communication with applicants through the tools within CSDCAS." ■

Increase Yield with Innovative Direct Mail Campaigns

It is true that today's undergraduates are digital natives, surrounded by technology since birth. However, the notion that digital communication eliminates the need for other channels — especially direct mail — has been proven false. Liaison's clients repeatedly draw on the power of direct mail in their recruitment marketing campaigns with great results. For example, one school consistently saw an over 240% increase in personalized URL (PURL) click-throughs after their postcard mailings.

Whether you're developing a campaign to drive registrations for an open house, to spur applications or to bring in deposits, direct mail can deliver a powerful lift. A study by Accudata found that 56% of consumers trust print marketing more than digital, so including direct mail can add credibility to your message. Here are a few examples of how undergraduate institutions are incorporating print pieces into their communications with students.

Central Methodist University

The journey often starts with driving students to apply — Central Methodist University uses a mailer with messages from students and alumni to describe the CMU experience to prospective students. The offer of a free iPad Pro for all students at the Fayetteville campus attracts attention as well, offering an added incentive for students to apply, and, ultimately enroll.

Temple University's School of Public Health

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

Washington & Jefferson College

Washington & Jefferson College also maintains contact with accepted students over the summer with a series of direct mail pieces designed to immerse them in the W&J experience. The first mailers to accepted students invite them to share their W&J pride and include small gifts like decals, socks and magnets. The final touch provides a journal that students can use to begin building a Platform — the school's cleverly-named learning plan tied to its presidential theme. The mailer drives students to a page that guides them through the process of building a Platform.

W&J also invites students to share their #prezpride on social media, tagging photos of themselves and their new school gear.

Creative direct mail pieces that encourage accepted/enrolled students to take the next step and show up on campus can be a worthwhile investment. Liaison's Enrollment Marketing Platform (EMP™) has helped schools across the U.S. send personalized pieces that help students develop a connection to the college community.

Visit liaisonedu.com to learn more about how this cloud-based marketing solution and its optional supplementary services can maximize enrollment for your undergraduate and graduate admissions offices. ■

Deposit Link Clicks in PURL

Clicks Increased 242% in 1 Week
(when postcards were delivered: 28.2% vs 11.7%)

Weekly Clicks Increased 241% After Postcard
(Pre-print: 8.2% vs Post-print: 19.7%)

Y-axis: % OF TOTAL DEPOSIT CLICKS (0% to 28%)

Date	Label
MARCH 12 2017	EMAIL #1
MARCH 19 2017	
MARCH 26 2017	EMAIL #2
APRIL 2 2017	
APRIL 9 2017	
APRIL 16 2017	EMAIL #3 + POSTCARDS
APRIL 23 2017	EMAIL #4
APRIL 30 2017	EMAIL #5

Central Methodist University students and alumni describe the CMU experience to prospective students in CMU mail pieces.
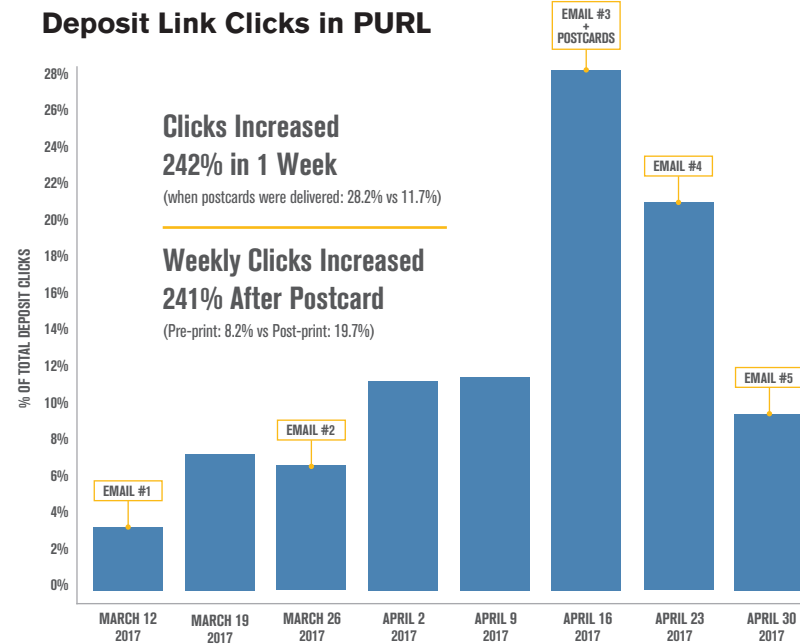
Washington & Jefferson College immerses accepted students in the W&J experience through a series of direct mail pieces.

Tracking Clinical Hours Across Disciplines — It Doesn't Have to Be So Complicated

How Time2Track™ improved John F. Kennedy University's data accuracy and facilitated access to information

JOHN F. KENNEDY UNIVERSITY

Alvin McLean, Ph.D., associate dean and co-director of clinical training for JFK University's PsyD program, said before starting with Time2Track™ about five years ago, students were tracking their clinical hours via paper and pencil. "We'd input the data into an Excel spreadsheet, which would ultimately go into a FileMaker Pro app, then we'd summarize the data for accreditation purposes and students would use the data to apply for internships," he explained.

The process was time-intensive for both students and staff. "It required a lot of data quality review — we'd frequently uncover input errors," said McLean. Staff wanted

to reduce these errors, find a quicker way to produce reports for the American Psychological Association (APA) commission on accreditation and find a system that students could easily use to facilitate their application to APA internship sites.

Time2Track™, a Single Platform for Clinical Training Management

When JFK University started using Time2Track to record clinical psychology doctoral program hours, both staff and students were impressed. "The program maps directly to what's needed for students to apply for APA internships," said McLean. "The APA internship application process requires students to input data into the program in a very specific manner, and Time2Track created summary sheets students can download that match the requirements exactly."

In addition, Time2Track allows the University to aggregate data to report to accrediting agencies for various programs, such as the APA for the clinical psychology PsyD, the Association of Sports Psychology for the master's in sports psychology or the Board of Behavioral Science for the master's in marriage and family therapy.

"Not only does Time2Track allow us to track students' hours of clinical work, it also has built in the clinical supervision evaluation tools we need to assess students' performance," said McLean.

Streamlined Tracking and Access to Detailed Data

In addition to saving time for students and staff in tracking hours and evaluating student performance, McLean said the data Time2Track provides had other surprising benefits. "The system can give you aggregate data across multiple sites, so you can compare how well you're performing against national norms. You wouldn't find that capability in other tracking tools. It makes a difference for us to have one tool we can use across our academic programs."

The system also captures data the University uses to apply for grants, including information on specific populations, such as the percentage of patients with certain diagnoses or the number from underserved communities. "With Time2Track, we can very easily generate reports of the demographics of the patients we serve and how frequently we're working with them — for grants, that's been a real asset," McLean said. ■
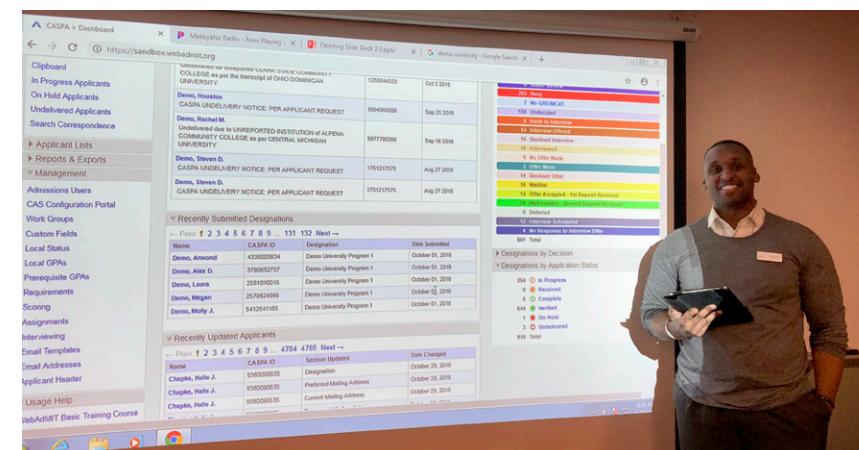
> "Not only does Time2Track allow us to track students' hours of clinical work, it also has built in the clinical supervision evaluation tools we need to assess students' performance."
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> - Alvin McLean, Ph.D., associate dean and co-director of clinical training for JFK University's PsyD program

LIAISON ACADEMY

SIGN UP

Discover all of Liaison's educational offerings on the Liaison Academy mailing list. Sign up at academy.liaisonedu.com.

Liaison Academy Presents:

Reviewing & Scoring Applicants in WebAdMIT™

Training Specialist Reggie Ross facilitates a WebAdMIT™ workshop in Washington, DC.

Picture it — you are reviewing hundreds of applications a year and spend way too much time using an archaic process adding paper notes, Excel documents and emails to an applicant file. An upload here, a spreadsheet there and tons and tons of emails — it takes a lot of organization to keep track of application materials during the review process. Sound all too familiar? WebAdMIT™ provides solutions to these common challenges, and admissions professionals looking to optimize their review process can learn more about them at the Reviewing & Scoring Applicants workshop.

Reviewing & Scoring Applicants in WebAdMIT combines product training, best practices and networking into an all-day workshop. The class outlines the steps necessary to implement the requirements, assignments, interviewing and scoring features within WebAdMIT as well as tips and tricks to use the system more efficiently. Centralized Application Service (CAS™) users from all over the country have the chance to work together by participating in hands-on activities during the workshop. Attending these in-person classes gives

users a unique opportunity to not only learn from the training experts but also from each other.

At the Liaison User Conference this summer, the Training & Knowledge Management Team, led by Stephen Naso, announced the launch of Liaison Academy. Under Naso's direction, Liaison Academy offers Liaison product training workshops that foster excellence in admissions through the production and dissemination of information and knowledge. "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," says Naso.

Reviewing & Scoring Applicants in WebAdMIT is the first of many classes users can register for through Liaison Academy. New courses are expected to launch in early 2019. Liaison Academy also offers regularly scheduled webinars on the Configuration Portal, WebAdMIT Basic Training, WebAdMIT Advanced Training and special topics. ■

To register for an upcoming session, visit webadmit.liaisonedu.com.

LESS APPLICATION, MORE APPLICANT:
AN OVERVIEW OF THE HOLISTIC ADMISSIONS LANDSCAPE

In higher education, the word "diversity" often triggers impassioned debates on affirmative action as well as other policies and principles. But regardless of what anyone feels about diversity based on their worldview, political orientation or personal background, diversity matters. Experiencing learning in more culturally diverse settings better prepares students for a globalized workplace and economy.

Yet in academia today, diversity is at risk. In 2016-17, international graduate students' interest in American higher education declined for the first time in 14 years, and increasingly restrictive federal immigration policy threatens to amplify the trend. Despite wide-scale efforts to improve ethnic diversity in the four decades since the Supreme Court's *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke* ruling, which allowed race to be one of several factors in college admissions policy, African Americans and Hispanics are more underrepresented at top colleges than they were 35 years ago.

When policymakers, commentators or any interested citizens think about how to cultivate diversity in higher educational environments, the first words that usually come to mind are "affirmative action"— there it is again, that lightning rod policy. But in more recent years, academic institutions are increasingly adopting a more expansive approach to diversity, in the form of a concept known as "holistic admissions" or "holistic review."

For higher education institutions, focusing on holistic review of applications is a method for fostering a more diverse campus. A holistic admissions process entails an emphasis on the whole applicant, rather than just the traditional components of the application. It goes beyond conventional academic metrics such as GPA and standardized test scores, and often includes unconventional application requirements such as auditions or portfolios.

In a 2013 survey administered as part of the Urban Universities for Health partnership, 91% of schools self-reported using holistic application review. How did this standard become such a common practice, and what exactly does holistic admissions look like today? In this article, we examine the recent history of holistic admissions, as well as how different academic disciplines and institutions implement the process.

THE HISTORY OF HOLISTIC ADMISSIONS

The recent history of holistic admissions is significantly shaped by multiple rulings in *Fisher v. University of Texas*. In 2013, the U.S. Supreme Court's majority opinion in *Fisher* stated that "available, workable race-neutral alternatives do not suffice" before taking race into account in admissions decisions, while ordering an appeals court to reconsider the case under that standard.

Subsequently, in July 2014, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit ruled that "universities may use race as part of a holistic admissions program where it cannot otherwise achieve diversity," thus classifying race as one of the various factors which academic institutions can consider when assessing an applicant's overall profile. In June 2016, the Supreme Court upheld race-conscious admissions in *Fisher II.*

More recently, the *Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard* case has placed affirmative action and holistic review squarely back in the national spotlight. The case breaks new ground in the sense that students who are themselves from a demographic minority — the Asian American community — are suing on the grounds of diversity and admissions inequality, alleging that Harvard utilizes a quota to limit its admission of Asian Americans and institutes a policy of "racial balancing" on campus. Arguments began in the case on October 15.

Harvard has defended its admissions process by noting that its practice of holistic review considers various factors such as academic performance, extracurricular activities and personal history for each applicant. Race is taken into account, but it isn't a disqualifying factor nor a deciding factor in the University's process, which the school calls "whole person review."

"Race is one of many factors that Harvard considers in evaluating each applicant as a whole person, an approach that helps create a diverse campus community where students from all walks of life have the opportunity to share ideas and learn from each other," the University states. "Harvard also uses many race-neutral means to pursue diversity — including extensive recruiting and one of the most generous financial aid policies in the country — and it has carefully studied other potential race-neutral measures, ultimately concluding that the consideration of race, among many other factors, remains necessary to attain an exceptional class that is diverse on many dimensions and central to the ability of Harvard College to pursue its educational mission."

HOLISTIC ADMISSIONS ACROSS DISCIPLINES

Typical questions asked in a holistic admissions process include:

- **How would this student contribute to the campus community in meaningful ways?**

- **How would the unique life experiences that this student brings to campus facilitate personal growth for other students, inside and outside the classroom?**

- **What would this applicant contribute to his or her field as a future professional?**

- **What has this student overcome in order to accomplish what they've accomplished so far?**

In particular, the latter question lends insight into the variety of holistic admissions priorities for different types of academic institutions. Any individual's search for a career and a higher purpose — and we all remember that foundational question, "What do you want to do with your life?" — usually involves analysis and self-reflection into how a person's character strengths and passions can translate to the responsibilities and demands of a specific professional field.

The same is true for higher education institutions, which must consider how an applicant's specific strengths and weaknesses might apply to a career in that school's particular academic discipline. After all, the same person who exudes creativity and feels like an artist might not simultaneously have the classic attributes of a successful attorney. This means that while holistic admissions

processes implement the same core principle of evaluating the whole applicant, standards and procedures will vary among schools producing degrees in different fields.

HEALTH AND MEDICINE

The Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) defines holistic admissions as "a flexible, individualized way of assessing an applicant's capabilities by which balanced consideration is given to experiences, attributes and academic metrics and, when considered in combination, how the individual might contribute value as a medical student and physician." Robert Ruiz, Liaison's vice president of strategic enrollment, used an application review model that considered candidates' experiences and attributes as well as academic metrics while he served for 10 years as director of admissions at the University of Michigan Medical School. The AAMC, noted Ruiz, "has guidelines for evaluating applicants that combine a broad set of criteria to consider how each student may contribute value as a medical student and a physician." "Many studies have identified traits such as compassion, honesty and humility as crucial for physicians, and you simply can't assess whether an applicant possesses those characteristics by looking at test scores and transcripts," Ruiz said.

The AAMC promotes an "Advancing Holistic Review Initiative" which strives to enable the implementation of holistic review in the Association's member institutions. While acknowledging the inevitable variety in holistic review criteria from school to school, the AAMC affirms that the "shared goal is a diverse, inclusive student body who will be poised to address the many needs facing our

healthcare workforce."

"As the 2016 'Holistic Review in Graduate Admissions' report from the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) explained, the AAMC's embrace of holistic admissions as a recommended practice is driven by the increasing need for physicians to serve a diverse society, a need that is reflected in the missions of many medical schools."

"Indeed, the AAMC's handbook on integrating holistic review processes into medical school admissions offers several examples of ways that medical school missions may benefit a diverse student body, such as the need to teach students to address inequalities in health care that may be based on race and ethnicity, or to broaden the health care research agenda to include studies relevant to a diversifying population," stated the report.

GRADUATE MANAGEMENT EDUCATION

According to research conducted by the Graduate Management Admission Council (GMAC), holistic admissions standards among business schools vary between regions and countries. In the U.S., full-time two-year MBA programs give candidate interviews (18%) relatively the same weight as test scores (21%) and academic transcripts (18%). But in the Asia-Pacific region, candidate interviews (38%) are by far the most important factor in the admissions process.

GMAC found variety in holistic review practices also exists between different kinds of business programs. American-based Master of Finance programs normally accept candidates with little-to-no work experience, while highly prioritizing academic transcripts (27%) and test scores (27%). Yet executive MBA programs,

whose applicants often have a decade or more of professional experience, heavily weigh resumes (26%) and candidate interviews (22%).

THE ARTS

Given the hands-on and sensory nature of the arts, it's no surprise that holistic review practices for arts schools align accordingly.

Like many of its counterparts, New York University's Tisch School of the Arts includes an "artistic review" as a cornerstone of its application process, stating, "As Tisch is a community of storytellers, consider both parts as an opportunity to share your story — we want to know who you are, and what you care about; what you've done, and what you intend to achieve."

The Berklee College of Music, meanwhile, includes both a candidate interview and "audition" as part of its "holistic evaluation of each applicant." The four-part audition includes performing a prepared piece of music as well as sight reading, improvisation and melodic and rhythmic playback exercises.

STEM

Much like the arts, holistic admissions in the STEM (Science, Technology,

Engineering and Mathematics) fields can reflect the hands-on nature of the disciplines themselves. For instance, the admissions process at Olin College of Engineering includes a design challenge as a live audition.

"Olin College prepares students to become exemplary engineering innovators who recognize needs, design solutions and engage in creative enterprises for the good of the world," the school states. "As such, we practice a holistic admission process, reviewing applications for both academic achievement and potential as well as personal qualities that would make the applicant a good fit for the Olin education and community."

Columbia Engineering's admissions page uses language that emphasizes the societal value of engineers as problem solvers whose education "prepares them for the most in-demand careers of today and for fields not yet imagined."

"We believe that engineers are creative problem solvers uniquely suited to address a variety of social needs, from assuring clean

air and water to discovering more effective remedies for disease, and developing and securing systems that connect people with greater efficiency," the school states.

HOLISTIC ADMISSIONS ACROSS INSTITUTIONS

While the *Fisher* rulings essentially institutionalized the practice of holistic review, the courts' language still left the definition of holistic admissions — and more importantly, the concept's practical application and implementation — largely subject to the interpretation of the institutions themselves.

As such, the finer points of language reveal subtleties in how different schools define and ultimately practice holistic review of applicants.

University of California, Berkeley defines holistic review as "the process of evaluating Freshman applications where no one piece of information is weighted more heavily over another," while separately defining a "comprehensive review" process for transfer students' applications in which "all academic and personal attributes are considered, but more emphasis is put on academic preparedness for the major." UC Berkeley notes diversity as its desired outcome from holistic review, describing that the process "[enables] us to admit a diverse undergraduate class representing 53 states/commonwealths and 74 countries, with 17% who are first-generation college-going and 65% who receive financial aid."

Columbia University states that holistic admissions "means that every part of the application matters to help

inform our judgment," noting the importance of personal statements and teacher recommendations in the school's process of trying to ascertain "what that candidate might offer their Columbia classmates." The University says the role of its admissions committee is to "select those that we believe will take greatest advantage of the unique Columbia experience and will offer something meaningful in return to the community."

Oakland University William Beaumont School of Medicine (OUWB) states outright that holistic review is "a mission-driven approach." The school defines holistic admissions as "the examination of a student's full application file to determine how the applicant might contribute to both the OUWB learning environment as well as to the medical profession as a future physician," while stating its process gives "balanced consideration to academic credentials, student experiences and attributes."

Holistic review also means that some schools think outside the box about the steps in their application process.

Bennington College doesn't require the submission of any official documents, such as transcripts, in its admissions process. Instead, the school implements a "Dimensional Application" which asks students to build a portfolio — in any format they choose — of the materials "that will best demonstrate a readiness for a Bennington education."

"From person to person, and throughout one's lifetime, intellectual and creative capacities are on a continuum of development," the College states. "They may be demonstrated in any number of ways — which is precisely the opportunity this application presents."

Goucher College also thinks outside the box about admissions, offering applicants who don't feel that "the traditional application process enables you to fully tell your story" the option of submitting a video application. While Goucher still accepts the Common Application, the school describes that its video application provides "another opportunity for students to show us what makes them unique, why they would flourish at Goucher and how they will fit into our community of learners."

DIVERSITY WITHIN DIVERSITY

Holistic review goes beyond assessing the usual factors like grades and standardized test scores, and even beyond common notions of diversity, such as a person's race, to build a much broader picture of each applicant. The result for higher education institutions is diversity within diversity itself — first in the admissions process, and ultimately in the student body.

At Liaison, we are dedicated to helping our partners streamline their processes and introduce a holistic approach to application review. To this end, we've partnered with over 40 professional associations to launch Centralized Application Services (CASs™) that bring admissions offices an improved way to recruit, enroll and admit best-fit students while saving money and better allocating staff resources each admissions cycle.

In our forthcoming ebook on holistic admissions, we'll delve much deeper into this practice by exploring more about its current landscape, its implementation and its intended outcomes. ▪

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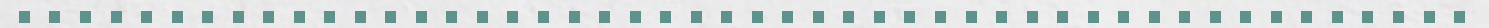
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University of Miami Business School Director of Admissions Covers the Role of Technology in Admissions

Liaison International's Bob Alig recently spoke with Loubna Bouamane, Ph.D. director of admissions for graduate business programs at the University of Miami, about how her school incorporates technology into the recruiting process — and why the University of Miami has found technology and creativity vital in maintaining a steady pipeline of international applicants.

Bob Alig (BA), Liaison: There's a clear undercurrent in the initiatives of your dean, Dr. John Quelch, and the University of Miami Business School around embracing technology. You're really on the cutting edge — you're trying new things, you have the courage to make mistakes and learn along the way. Tell us a little more about that culture, why it appeals to you and maybe even what brought you to the University of Miami in the first place.

Loubna Bouamane (LB), University of Miami: I've been with the University of Miami for three years now as the Director of Admissions. I take care of the full-time program and the specialized master's. We have another director who manages all the executive programs and the professional MBA.

To answer your question about technology, the University of Miami has taken a global approach to education from the very beginning. We have very diverse classrooms — our reach goes far beyond our geographic area, and technology plays a critical part in that outreach. Dr. Quelch has been a dean on three different continents, so he's really bringing a global approach to business education.

Technology is not just in our recruiting and admissions; it's also in the classroom. For example, our faculty were among the first to incorporate innovative technology into their teaching. We use artificial intelligence, gaming, simulations and virtual reality. The goal is to train our students to get lifelong learning and to succeed in this labor market that sometimes requires very advanced technological skills.

Getting back to recruiting and admissions, we were looking for a way to differentiate ourselves by integrating social media and technology into the way we interact with prospective students. They want to have access to information at their own pace, usually as fast as possible. We concentrated on making information readily available and making the admissions team as accessible as possible.

To give you an example of some of the tools that we use in the recruiting process, we offer a virtual campus tour with a 360-degree view of the campus. Students can select different buildings, look inside, go inside the library — all from their own computers! It helps them get a feel for what the campus is like, and what the atmosphere is like. We also host virtual info sessions and chats — this brings personal attention and helps students get the answers they need to evaluate our program without having to come to campus and meet face to face with an admissions officer. This is really important for people who are far away.

For example, in China, they have very limited access to social media, and they use WeChat. So, we created a chat room in WeChat to interact with prospects and currently admitted students. We send them updates on where they stand in terms of the admissions process, for example, the I-20 student visa. Another thing, we started doing virtual interviews early on. A lot of our students are far away from Miami. Phone interviews are great, but they lack the sense of personal connection you can get with video when you can actually see the person. We made the interview a critical part of the admissions process because that's when you get to establish contact with the candidate, learn their goals and have a discussion about what they're trying to achieve. We can make sure we're setting them up with the best program to help them achieve their goals. The overwhelming majority of our interviews are conducted online.

We're very active on social media — I think most schools are now, but we've been active for a long time. You can learn everything about the University of Miami on Facebook, on Twitter and we also have an Instagram account. Once we admit a student, we invite them to join a private Facebook group where they have access to a message board and can make connections with classmates directly. They can find students from the same areas, people with common interests — this creates a sense of community before they're even on campus. It really has an impact on the number of students who accept the offer. Creating that sense of community early on is critical.

BA: That's incredible — I love to hear the passion and enthusiasm in your voice — so palpable. Social media is so important and connecting with people where they are is powerful. This is truly an international MBA program that happens to be located in the U.S., and I think that sets you apart. This dovetails beautifully as you're one of the first five global institutions to adopt BusinessCAS™, and to partner with us at Liaison as a member of the BusinessCAS advisory board. Can you give us a little perspective on those decisions and how our work together is evolving?

LB: Sure. We really leapfrogged into the use of technology early on, especially in the recruiting process, so the next step for us was to apply technology to the way we process our admissions files. We were using a different method and looking for a way to make the application process as smooth and seamless as possible. We had established a good method for recruiting, where our interactions with students and prospects were easy, so we really needed to bring that seamlessness to the admissions process. That's why our leaders went looking for ways to make this better, and that's where BusinessCAS came in. We saw the Centralized Application Service as a great opportunity to create the best experience possible for our applicants.

BA: And how has it been for you to communicate this change with your staff, your faculty, with your colleagues? Sometimes people are apprehensive of being first — they want to wait until 20 other schools have done it. You're obviously showing some courage to be among the first.

LB: We've been very entrepreneurial at the University of Miami, especially the Business School. We have great leadership that gives us the freedom to think outside the box. We all knew, from the recruiting team all the way to the deans, that we were doing great when it came to recruiting, but there was room for improvement around the process. We didn't get pushback, everyone was willing to try. We're very

The mission of the Miami Business School is to develop innovative ideas and principled leaders that transform global business and society.

confident it will greatly help us with our application process; there was no doubt in anyone's mind that this was the right time to jump in and try.

From the very beginning, we've had all the support we could possibly need. Now we're in the stage where we're working internally with our IT team to create an integration between Peoplesoft and BusinessCAS. I have to commend Liaison and its team, especially Karen Jacobs [Liaison's vice president of account management].

BA: That's terrific; it's so good to hear that. I'm not surprised, but it's good to hear that. So, you're wrapping up this year's admissions cycle and planning for next year. What are some of the stressors that you're currently feeling?

LB: When I think about it, in admissions we're the first point of contact for prospective students, so it's on us to offer top-notch customer service. From March all the way through early May is really the busiest time in terms of processing applications. We're mostly done with the bulk of the recruiting process, even though it's never really done, but now the bulk of our focus is on getting through the pipeline, issuing decisions. The big challenge is really offering personalized connections with students while still processing applications. That's not an easy task. That's where we're hoping BusinessCAS can help, by allowing us to be more hands-off in the processing of applications so we can focus on

Miami Business School prides itself on being "thought leaders that redefine business knowledge and practice in the broadest possible terms, shape business scholarship and how business is conceived and set the standard for business education."

counseling, recruiting and offering a personalized service to our students.

BA: It's interesting because while you were talking, I thought back to my own experience at Wharton. It might sound ridiculous, but I always cared very deeply how the students who were not admitted felt about the process because they never got a chance to form another impression of Wharton. If they felt like they were treated fairly, if they had a chance to put their best foot forward, then they would be a part of communicating the message of Wharton going forward — they could be a positive force or a negative force.

LB: That's our biggest concern: We have a limited staff, and it's tough to prioritize students who are calling or walking in. You want to give them the attention they deserve and update them on their application or give them information about the program they might be interested in, but when you have a stack of files that you need to process and decisions that you need to issue, it can be a challenge at times.

BA: Right. So, you've had a little more exposure to BusinessCAS, you're actually living and breathing the implementation as we speak. Are there new ways you think BusinessCAS is going to be able to support you in your efforts to engage a prospective student and help communicate the message of the University of Miami better?

LB: All of the information about our

programs will be centralized in one spot. It will create visibility — we'll be right there in the marketplace with other schools. Students who have already compiled the documents for applying to an MBA program will have us at their fingertips. All they have to do is select the University, look through our programs, check the requirements and click submit. It will make the process much easier for them and at the same time increase our visibility. I don't really see it as being in competition with other schools, I think it's quite the contrary, we're just making things easier for prospects. That's a great place to be. Everything has been seamless. The system is really intuitive and easy to use from both the student and admissions perspectives.

BA: I'd like to refer to a recent Poets & Quants article which mentioned that the number of new international enrollees in U.S. universities declined for the first time in 12 years in 2017 and that graduate business programs' numbers have gone flat. Can you tell us a little bit more about the trends you are seeing in international students at the University of Miami?

LB: It's interesting because we're experiencing quite the opposite. At the University of Miami, the number of international students has been steadily increasing over the past few years. We're seeing interest in our specialized master's programs, such as our finance program or business analytics, as well as our MBA program. I don't know if that result is because we were expecting numbers to decline so we were a little more aggressive in our international recruiting efforts. I'm happy to say we're having a very notable increase in the number of international applications, especially from China and several countries in Latin America.

BA: That's fantastic. I think that's just such an affirmation of all the hard work you and your team have been doing and the vision of your dean to think much more broadly. Have you done anything differently in the last couple of years?

LB: We've been experimenting with different things to try to increase diversity in the classroom. I started doing webinars and scheduled them at times that fit for people in China, Europe and Latin America, and I was surprised to see the number of people who registered and are interested

in learning about our programs.

Another thing we started doing is renting shared workspaces — we have one here that's called Pipeline and another called WeWork. They're everywhere in the U.S. and have some locations in Latin America, so we're looking to go to these locations especially in Latin America, Mexico and Brazil to rent space and host day-long info sessions. That's helped us put our programs out there and recruit in these countries. We also purchase lists of GMAT test-takers globally, which is also a great way to focus recruitment and let students know about the programs we offer.

BA: I had never thought of it before, but I'm doing work with a small consortium of volunteers to help startups in the Philadelphia area, and they have their monthly meetings at WeWork. I'm visiting WeWork on a monthly basis as part of this volunteer work, and I'm blown away by the buzz and the energy. That's perfect, what a great idea.

LB: Pipeline is similar, and we realized that these workspaces are often in convenient locations, either downtown or close to financial districts. It makes it easy for students to come in during lunch without having to come to our campus. We try to be as mobile as possible and meet our prospective students where they are.

BA: Let me pivot a little bit to our next question — across higher ed, the number of students over age 35 is expected to comprise about 19% of the total graduation pool by 2020: What trends are you seeing in the age of your applicants? And perhaps in a more general sense, are you satisfied with the diversity in your applicant pool? Are you considering any changes along those lines?

LB: We're always striving for more diversity. We're in Miami, which is one of the most diverse cities in the country, and we really want our classrooms to reflect that diversity. Not just in terms of cultural background or citizenship, but in terms of academic or professional background. For example, we're seeing a surge of people who come to us with 10 years of work experience and are wanting to further their education with either

a professional MBA or a specialized master's.

A few years back the majority of the people who would go for a specialized master's were young people who had just gotten a bachelor's degree who didn't necessarily want to take time off to go work somewhere then come back and further their education. They just wanted to get it done once and for all, but this is changing. Now we're seeing people who work for several years, and they're hearing about the specialized master's programs that are becoming more popular, especially among employers. They come, investigate and think, if I spend a year going back to school, I can get this master's degree and I can switch careers. We're seeing a trend where people who are very experienced are coming back for master's degrees. Some of them are career switchers, some of them realize they no longer like the place where they work and they want to learn a new industry, and they realize the master's is a great fit for them.

BA: Excellent. Very helpful. Building on that, can you share a little more about how you believe your use of BusinessCAS will help you with the diversification of your applicant pool?

LB: As I mentioned previously, we always try to use technology to help us in our recruiting efforts. I think being part of a marketplace like BusinessCAS allows us to have basically a storefront, and students who may not have considered the University of Miami see us and discover one of our programs is a good fit for them. It definitely helps in terms of exposure and accessibility as now students don't have to look up schools individually, they can go to one place and research different schools and programs. We're getting a sense that this younger generation is looking for easy access to information; that's really how we saw BusinessCAS — as an opportunity for us to be easily searchable and easily discovered.

BA: What can you share about your planning for next year?

LB: I'm not really worried about the trending decline in international applicants, especially with younger people, and we found that especially with our specialized master's programs, we never heard any concerns about the

possibility of getting a student visa or finding a job afterward. It's also our job as recruiters and admissions directors to have conversations with international students to tell them what to expect. I think if they feel like they're going to join an environment that will be welcoming, I don't think they will change their minds about attending a school in the U.S.

We try to reach out in many ways, as many ways as possible, to international students and hopefully that will keep the numbers coming in steady. Again, technology makes it so easy to connect with people wherever they are and it is so easy to share information. It's really up to us, as admissions staff at business schools, to reach out. People are there just looking for information, and it's up to us to make it as readily available as possible.

I hear all the time from candidates who are debating between two schools who end up coming here to Miami. They tell us the difference was not so much the rankings or the courses or the length of the program, it's that relationship they had with people in the admissions office, and they feel like, "This is the type of environment where I'll feel welcome."

BA: Is there anything else you'd like to share with us?

LB: I just want to say that I'm very thankful to be part of the [BusinessCAS] advisory board. As an admissions director, it's rare to get the opportunity to sit down and be in the same room with other admissions leaders from other institutions, to get to share best practices. It's a great opportunity to be a collaborative member in the business school community, which we rarely get outside of conferences — being assembled together for an entire day, getting the chance to discuss our challenges and how we can work together is great, and I'm very thankful for that.

BA: Frankly that's been one of the most wonderful things about my work at Liaison — I hope it's clear that I get a lot of satisfaction from bringing the group together. Everybody wins, and ultimately global grad education management benefits. ◼

4
REASONS

Why You Need a
New Graduate Admissions
Management Solution

CHANNEL CONFLICTS

DATA NEEDS

APPLICANT EXPERIENCE

NO TIME

Most traditional admissions management solutions were not developed to meet the complex needs of today's evolving graduate admissions processes. In addition to falling short of the admissions team's needs, these tools lack the ability to quickly and easily provide strategic insight to provosts, deans and other institutional leaders. Graduate admissions offices attempting to manage decentralized programs face many obstacles. Your admissions management solution shouldn't be one of them. In this article, you'll learn how graduate schools are overcoming challenges, streamlining admissions processes and providing a far better applicant experience. How many of our four reasons to consider a new solution apply to your institution?

1

Institution-wide insight and unique graduate program requirements aren't conflicting needs.

You want to provide your school's leadership team updates on your admissions and enrollment numbers across the board. You also want to be able to drill down into program specifics — which have totally different admissions requirements. Teachers and MFA students need wildly different skills to succeed in their chosen careers. Naturally, you're looking for different qualities and criteria in your applicants for each program.

In her book *Inside Graduate Admissions: Merit, Diversity and Faculty Gatekeeping,* Julie R. Posselt, assistant professor of higher education at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor, explained, "There is no singular idea of merit that faculty everywhere should use. It is context-specific, and it needs to be context-specific because programs and disciplines vary in their missions and the work that it takes to be successful. What programs can do is be clear with themselves and with prospective students about their mission and priorities." [1]

Setting up separate requirements for each program doesn't need to be difficult — that is, if you're using the right tools. Specifically, GradCAS™, Liaison's Centralized Application Service (CAS™) for graduate programs, allows each graduate program at your college or university to easily:

▪ Configure required parts of the application to their needs.

▪ Integrate with specific testing services.

▪ Track supplemental credentials and requirements.

▪ Schedule applicant interviews.

▪ Develop their own decision-making workflows.

▪ Manage their specific admissions requirements.

At Samford University, Dr. Marian Carter, assistant dean of enrollment management and student services, spent time working with chairs to develop an application and review process for each of her programs. With a CAS, scoring rubrics can be created to support a program's unique requirements and student applications can be accessed online. "When we get together we know extraordinary details about these students — their personal goals, mission trips or community service experiences. We have rubrics in place to score all of these different elements and weigh them fairly," she said. Dr. Carter said faculty were delighted with the centralized service, especially those who were new to holistic review.

Dr. Julie Masterson, associate provost and dean of the Graduate College at Missouri State University, 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 a new CAS provided an opportunity to reexamine admissions processes to ensure effectiveness. Dr. Masterson said one of the main reasons she chose GradCAS was the ability to configure applications for individual programs. "I absolutely had to have something that worked for a wide range of programs. For example, our master's in music needs students to upload or link to a YouTube video of them conducting an orchestra or sharing something they've written, which is very different from the experimental psychology program that wants to know what statistical programs students have used and what leadership qualities they have. Finding something that could accommodate that was really important to me."

2

You'll be able to spend far more time evaluating applicants.

A recent Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) survey of 625 institutions found that U.S. graduate programs received approximately 2.2 million applications for admission for study beginning in Fall 2016. With acceptance rates averaging about 22.2% for doctoral applicants and 48.7% for master's and other programs, that's a lot of applications to review. [7]

Liaison's integrated applicant services mean you can leave administrative tasks like transcript authentication, application completion verification and GPA calculation to GradCAS. We'll also take care of coursework entry and test score evaluation. Reducing the administrative workload means your staff is free to focus on more strategic admissions work and to work on building relationships with applicants. Getting to know individual students better and understanding their motivations and goals can help you better assess potential fit.

With GradCAS, you can quickly determine which applications are complete and which require additional components, then send automated notifications to applicants, saving your admissions team time while moving students through the pipeline. You can also easily capture the data necessary for holistic review, allowing you to evaluate students across a broad range of variables. Reviewers can evaluate applications online, whenever and wherever it's convenient. Multiple reviewers can access applications simultaneously, reducing bottlenecks and speeding time to decision. Matt Cipriano, associate director of enrollment and education operations at Weill Cornell Medicine, reported that implementing Liaison's CAS solution offered significant time savings for his school: "The results are impressive since implementing Liaison's CAS solution. Our applicant pool has risen by 12% — due in part to our new application — our incomplete applicant pool is less than 1% and our application review time has reduced from 8 days to 1-2 days."

Dina Batlivala, director of marketing and admissions for Rush University's College of Health Sciences, explained that having a CAS in place helps identify qualified applicants easily. "Each program has minimum requirements that are rarely malleable; they're set for students to be successful in each program. We're able to gauge quickly who meets the minimums right off the bat and see how the quality is trending," she said.

3

You can bring data from all of your programs together into a single reporting solution to get a global view of your graduate admissions performance.

A recent CGS study found that academic units were responsible for admissions for 75% of master's programs and 78% of doctoral programs.[5] With decentralized admissions, big picture reporting can pose a challenge. Institutions looking to track graduate admissions and enrollment trends across the entire college or university often struggle to bring data from disparate sources into a single location to evaluate overall progress.

In addition, the 2016 Campus Computing Survey revealed "analytic angst" across American higher education. Analytics performance has fallen short of campus needs and anticipated benefits, with less than one-fifth of survey respondents reporting that recent campus investments in analytics have proven "very effective." Kenneth C. Green, founding director of the Campus Computing Project, said, "The campus angst with analytics should not be surprising. As with so many new technologies in the consumer, corporate and campus sectors, the actual, implied and inferred promises often fall short of initial performance."[2]

Taking the angst out of analytics is possible. GradCAS provides easy and intuitive reporting that offers a window to your graduate programs' enrollment management performance across the board.

Developed specifically for managing complex application processes, GradCAS provides a single reporting platform and visual analytics tools that deliver graduate admissions — and institutional leaders — the information you need by program, by school and across the institution.

Information that previously required going to multiple colleagues and pulling from multiple solutions is now available in a unified view. GradCAS has common data standards that allow for comprehensive and consistent reporting across graduate schools and programs.

Its analytics tools forecast and model enrollment trends for current and future applicant cycles.

Executive dashboards provide strategic insight into performance at all levels of the institution.

Whether you're looking for data on how overall graduate inquiries, applications and acceptances are trending, evaluating growth across multiple programs or examining progress toward diversity goals, GradCAS provides easy access to the information you need. Bring simplicity and consistency to all of your graduate program data, regardless of where it resides, with this service.

At Oregon Health & Science University, the University Registrar's Office was increasingly requesting reports on specific student populations, such as underrepresented groups or the economically disadvantaged — but that data wasn't all housed in one service. The admissions staff realized that implementing a CAS would allow the Registrar's Office to pull data from one place, resolving reporting nightmares. Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs Richard Goranflo, EdD, said the choice to go with a CAS was natural. After rolling out the service, "folks are really happy with it," Goranflo said. Faculty, staff and applicants have all had a great experience using a CAS.

4

You want to provide the optimal applicant experience.

According to Higher Education Marketing, the lead time for graduate student recruitment is typically quite long: "Students may spend months, or even years, researching postgraduate opportunities."[6] So, once students contact your school to request information or apply, it's important to make a great impression.

Help prospective students understand the application process and the characteristics of a good candidate for your program. Many students — particularly first-generation college students — don't know how to begin to think about graduate study, according to an Inside Higher Ed report.[6] While the report focused on how undergraduate faculty can support students in researching graduate schools, the advice applies to graduate program staff as well: "Perhaps the most important thing we can do… is to demystify graduate study for all our students, so the people who don't know much about it can feel free to ask questions… Put yourself in your students' shoes: If you were a junior and had never thought about graduate school, what would you need to be told? What mistakes might you make?"

Think about the types of experiences today's students expect: the ability to save an application in progress, then return to complete it another time. Real-time status updates and change notifications. Access to information via their mobile devices. You need to make the process as seamless and user-friendly as possible.

GradCAS provides an exceptional, intuitive and highly responsive application experience for your prospective students. Applicants are guided through the application process with visual cues about their progress, next steps and deadlines — and they can manage their applications from any device, 24/7. They also receive real-time updates and reminders that keep them aware of their status. Liaison staff provide technical support and respond to any questions about the application, such as whether materials have been received. With support available via phone, email or chat, we ensure your applicants get the answers they need, when they need them.

Timothy Brunold, dean of admission for the University of Southern California, said, "A CAS helps deliver an excellent applicant experience while allowing each program to maintain its unique brand identity and application requirements. Best of all, with a CAS, our programs can be more self-sufficient when customizing their applications and review process." ■

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Moving Beyond a Cumbersome, Paper-based Admissions Process

Stanford University

How SlideRoom™ helped Stanford University's Clinical Summer Internship (CSI) program increase applications, improve applicant diversity and reduce application review time

When Kimya Stidum joined Stanford in 2015 as the program coordinator of its Clinical Summer Internship (CSI), she inherited an inefficient application process. "We were using a web-based form created by the IT department here at Stanford. Students would click a link, fill out a form and emails would go to our program manager and me… attachments were there, somehow everything had to be sorted and filed for each student. It was cumbersome," she said.

"We were printing out a lot of applications because of how directors were reviewing them — it was a lot of paper and quite inefficient," Stidum added. The web form didn't offer an online payment option for application fees, so staff were buried in checks, which required a great deal of manual processing and regular trips to the bank. "Families kept asking if there was any way they could pay by card and we had to tell them no," Stidum said.

The Solution: SlideRoom™

Stidum knew she needed to find a more efficient way to capture and review applications. One of the co-directors of her program recommended SlideRoom™ — a similar program on campus was already using it. "I was told it was easy to set up, and it was surprisingly easy. I may have done it all in one day!" shared Stidum.

"When I went on to set up the rating system we were going to use internally, which was completely new for some of our leadership, I was concerned because we have a range of technical abilities on our team. I wanted it to be easy for everyone," Stidum said. Implementation was smooth, and the team had no problem using the system.

Increased Applicant Diversity and Reduced Application Review Time

CSI has grown every year since implementing SlideRoom, while increasing applicant diversity and reducing applica- tion review time. While Stidum attributes some of the program's growth to the addition of housing options for students, she also believes adding an online payment option helped. "That was probably a factor in the increase of applications we saw because of the convenience of being able to pay the application fee online — especially for international applicants," Stidum said.

"We've increased the number of applications from around the U.S. and international students. We also had applicants from farther away than ever before — Ghana, China, Russia," said Stidum. And while growing the number of applications, CSI has dramatically reduced the amount of time it takes directors and faculty to review applications. "I would definitely recommend SlideRoom," Stidum said. ■

> **"We've increased the number of applications from around the U.S. and international students. We also had applicants from farther away than ever before — Ghana, China, Russia."**
>
> - Kimya Stidum,
> program coordinator
> Stanford University

LIAISON in the NEWS

California State University, Dominguez Hills Chooses Liaison as its Enrollment Marketing Partner

Highly diverse, metropolitan campus within the largest four-year public university system in the U.S. implements Liaison's Enrollment Marketing Platform (EMP™)

California State University, Dominguez Hills (CSUDH), which enrolls over 15,000 students in its bachelor's and master's programs, will leverage the leading admission and enrollment marketing solution provider's EMP to engage students at all stages of the recruitment and enrollment cycle.

CSUDH has been working closely with Liaison since the CSU System partnered with the company in 2016 to launch Cal State Apply, a centralized admissions management solution that is now used by all of its 23 campuses to manage 1,000,000 applications annually. Now, CSUDH is the first CSU campus to also use Liaison's EMP, a cloud-based solution that helps admissions offices deliver highly personalized multi-channel communications to prospective students. The intuitive platform gives admissions officers time to engage authentically with a greater number of contacts. Through its 360-degree view of campaign performance and robust behavioral tracking features, programs that leverage EMP save money and time while targeting best-fit students for their schools.

"The CSUDH story resonates with our prospective students, but we've struggled to reach our target audience with this message," shared Christina Rios, interim associate vice president for enrollment management at CSUDH. "Liaison's state-of-the-art technology and dedicated higher education marketing team is helping us strategize, develop and implement high-touch campaigns that get our story out there."

GRADCAS™ BY LIAISON

More than 25 Graduate Schools Join Liaison's GradCAS™ Community in its First Year

Liaison shares the substantial growth of Centralized Application Service (CAS™) for graduate programs since its December 2017 launch

Since it was launched at the CGS Annual Meeting in 2017, GradCAS has:

- Been endorsed by the Common Application, the nonprofit with a mission to "promote access, equity and integrity in the college admissions process."
- Begun forming an advisory board of graduate education enrollment leaders, including Jenny Rickard from the Common Application.
- Seen more than 25 schools join the community with the goal to streamline admissions at their institutions. Current members include research universities; regional universities; historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs); law schools; health sciences centers (HSCs) and medical schools; and private universities and colleges located in every region of the country, in both rural and metropolitan areas.

"At Howard University, we develop scholars and professionals who will drive change and solve contemporary global problems," shared LaTrice Byam, director of admissions and university registrar at Howard University. "While GradCAS will benefit all of our admissions stakeholders, we are especially excited that it will enhance the experience that we offer prospective students. Now that every Graduate School applicant will apply through GradCAS, we're able to save them time by facilitating applying to multiple programs with one set of application materials and reduce frustration with real-time status updates and on-call applicant support."

University of South Dakota chose GradCAS for similar reasons: "Our homegrown graduate application system was being retired, and we saw that as an opportunity to deliver a better applicant experience, introduce process efficiencies and save valuable staff time," shared Brandice Durham, director of recruitment and marketing for the University's graduate school. "We knew GradCAS was the solution for us because of the results we've seen from SocialWorkCAS™ [the CAS for social work programs] and CASPA™ [the CAS for physician assistant programs], two of Liaison's CASs that are already active on our campus."

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS ARLINGTON

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

Leading Texas research institution now a member of Centralized Application Service (CAS™) that serves as a global graduate engineering education community

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."

GMAC® GRADUATE MANAGEMENT ADMISSION COUNCIL

Liaison Integrates GMAC's Common Letter of Recommendation into BusinessCAS™ and Enhances the Reviewer Experience

Liaison's Centralized Application Service (CAS™) for graduate management education programs partners with GMAC to further streamline GME admissions

GME programs that are members of BusinessCAS can now make the recommendation component of their application more consistent through the Graduate Management Admission Council's Common Letter of Recommendation (LOR).

To address redundancies and introduce more efficiency to the GME application process, GMAC's Common LOR replaces the need for applicants, recommenders and reviewers to manage multiple ad hoc recommendation forms. The more than 40 business schools that already accept the Common LOR leverage a common set of questions that facilitates a more holistic review of applicants.

"The Common LOR simplifies the business school application process and reduces the workload for candidates and their recommenders," said Joy Jones, chief product officer at GMAC. "We're excited that Liaison has decided to adopt the Common LOR into its BusinessCAS offering."

To read full news articles, visit liaisonedu.com/news

THE | FOURTH ▪ QUADRANT

In each edition of *The Admissionist*, a Liaison team member joins us in The Fourth Quadrant to share a unique perspective on one of the issues facing higher ed today. This quarter, Christopher D'Arcy, Liaison's vice president of human resources, shares how the admissions recruitment and retention landscape has changed for both employers and higher education programs — and how companies and institutions are responding. Chris speaks from his strong background building out programs to attract and manage industry talent at leading tech companies like Silverlink Communications, Iron Mountain and GTE Internetworking.

Where HR and Admissions Collide: 3 Misconceptions That May Be Derailing Your Recruitment and Retention Goals

In 2017 Liaison was named one of the Best Places to Work by Glassdoor.[1] So maybe it's not surprising that at the last few conferences I've attended, I began noticing that more and more people were approaching me to ask, "What makes Liaison different? How do you recruit your employees? What's your secret?"

What was surprising was that it wasn't just HR managers asking these questions. They were college admissions counselors, undergraduate and graduate program directors and other leaders in the field of higher education recruitment.

But on second look, there are actually a lot of similarities between how corporations attract and retain top talent, and the ways universities attract and retain the best-fit students for their programs.

In both cases, the key is finding people who have passion for what they do. At Liaison, we hire people who are creative, inquisitive and want to ask questions — regardless of what position they're being hired for. Those are also the kinds of qualities that higher education programs look for in prospective students.

I freely admit that finding those people isn't easy. We can't sit back on our heels and bank on what we've done in the past. We always need to be innovating our approach to talent management, from our hiring processes to our retention strategies.

With that in mind, I wanted to share three common misconceptions that many HR managers (and higher education admissions departments) have about recruiting and retaining the people they want. Take a look and ask yourself: Do any of these apply to my team?

Misconception #1: To reach the people we want, we just need to post to the right recruiting websites.

While websites and social media can be helpful in widening your pool of potentials, they can't do all the work for you. To find great talent, you need to go where your prospects are — conferences, associations and organizational events.

In today's recruitment world, the phone conversation has become a lost art, as have one-on-one conversations in general. But those are the kinds of conversations that help you establish an emotional connection with a candidate. That's when you figure out: Is the candidate actively listening? Are they asking questions? Do they exhibit an inquisitive approach to the world? Those are important traits in candidates who are most likely to become passionate, dedicated students or employees.

For admissions counselors and directors, think about where your best-fit potential students are spending their time, and what organizations they might be a part of. Connect with those organizations at schools. Show up for events. Engage on social media.

Don't assume the people you want will automatically find you. Instead, get proactive and think about how you can increase your chances of connecting with them wherever they are. At Liaison we work hard to identify sources of great talent. We also get great referrals from our colleagues. And then we go after the people we want.

Misconception #2: The primary functions of HR or admissions are the same as they've always been.

These days, the higher education and employment landscapes are a lot more complex than they used to be — and people's expectations for their institutions and workplaces have changed a lot in response. This is critical to understand if we're going to improve our retention rates.

Consider: A recent report on employee trends for Industry 4.0 indicated that 52% of Millennials and 50% of Gen Z employees believe that "Industry 4.0 will augment my job, supporting me by allowing me to focus on more creative, human and value-adding work." [2]

What that tells me is that today's students (a.k.a. tomorrow's employees) hold values like creativity, personal growth opportunities and a sense of purpose very dear. They look for those values in their employers, and they look for them in their college and graduate school programs.

To address these expectations effectively, we all have to do much more in the 21st century than simply make sure that we can check off all the boxes on someone's application or resume. We need to be having more productive, holistic conversations with people about their needs, motivations and goals. We have

to keep asking ourselves: "Are my employees and colleagues — or my students — happy? What do they need from me? What can I do for them to help them feel supported?"

Which brings us to:

Misconception #3: Organizational culture is a "set it and forget it" proposition.

Every company or institution has a culture. The question is, is it the kind of culture you want? Does it nurture growth, curiosity, passion and attachment in your employees or students? And how do you create a healthy culture, anyway?

A 2005 personnel psychology study concluded among other findings that "[organizational] fit matters to applicants, recruiters and employees. It influences their attitudes, decisions and behaviors in the work domain. It is not enough to increasingly refine a job description or indoctrinate employees into a company's culture. Instead a multifaceted approach that involves the demands and supplies of jobs, coworker characteristics and organizational elements is needed." [3]

Put simply, culture goes beyond a catchy paragraph on your organization's or institution's "About Us" page or a cool graphic that you put up in executive boardrooms or around the campus common areas. Culture starts with the people we accept into our institutions, and it continues growing according to the ways and levels at which they are engaged with our missions and goals.

How do you create culture? You do it by listening to people and leaning into the things they want to know about. The more engaged you are with them, the more engaged they are likely to be with your institution's core

values — and the better off everyone will be.

The important thing is to be patient. Whether you're looking to develop an academic program or build up a company, establishing a culture that works and feels authentic takes a lot of time, collaboration, communication and commitment. But the payoff — attracting and retaining people who are talented, engaged and dedicated — is eminently worth it.

The bottom line

Many HR executives, higher ed program directors and admissions counselors are still relying on 20th-century tactics and strategies for 21st-century recruiting and retention. But in these rapidly changing, tech-driven times, constant innovation is key to any effective recruitment and retention strategy.

If all this sounds like a lot more work than it used to be, well, it is! But I also think this evolution is a good thing. All of our roles are changing in ways that allow us to be more personal and attentive to the needs of the people who keep our companies going — our employees, our colleagues, our friends. And I think that's pretty exciting.

So, what do you think? Are these misconceptions derailing your recruitment and retention goals? Let us know by tweeting @liaisonedu and using #buildabetterclass.

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