



# The CLARION

Wisconsin Association for College Admission Counseling

## CONFERENCE RE-CAP AND REFLECTIONS

"Do not judge each day by the harvest you reap, but by the seeds that you plant."  
-Robert Louis Stevenson

As I reflect on the WACAC conference, I am so excited about where we are going as an organization and profession. Specifically, the unplowed field the new school year will bring us. At conference, we were able to take stock of this past year and replenish ourselves in new thoughts, bridges, and relationships that will help propel us all forward. Much like farmers the weeks and months after the harvest, we will spend the summer planning for the fall.

Personally, I have done a deep dive into data, prepared pivot tables and charts, and begun a relentless reflection on the past year. I know many of you are doing the same with your programming and processes. Fueled with new ideas and insights from conference and continuing education, we can all look to next year with fresh eyes and new ideas:

- We can break down what worked and what did not work.
- We can remove what failed.
- We can build upon our successes.
- Most importantly, we can plant the seeds that will bear a bountiful harvest next year.

I challenge everyone in WACAC to reach out to new colleagues; those you met at conferences or through your practice to see how collaboration can occur in the year to come. After the session Michelle McKenna and I gave at the conference, a few amazing things happened. We were able to sit down and thank each other for the friendship and partnership we have created. Both school and college counselors, approached us to talk about ways to adapt the Post-Secondary Night program we presented, proving once again, we had truly created something worthy of our students. Finally and most importantly, incorporated the ideas from the session into an already successful program. Hoping these new seeds planted help us yield a greater harvest; serving our students better in the year to come.



As a steward of this organization, reach out to me if you have a new idea or concept you want to talk through. I can also be reached on Twitter @JFMcGreal, by email at [John.mcgreal@ua.edu](mailto:John.mcgreal@ua.edu), or by phone at 414-335-4588.

I wish you all a great summer of preparing and planting.

Sincerely,

John McGreal  
WACAC President

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## BRIDGING THE DIVIDE: WACAC CONFERENCE 2019 RECAP

*Kate Hooper, WACAC Conference Committee Member*

The 2019 WACAC Conference in La Crosse was packed with learning, idea-sharing, and bonding among high school counselors, admission professionals, IECs, CBOs and vendors. Viterbo helped us kick off the conference with a sponsored Sunday Social at the Weber Center located on the picturesque Mississippi River. All enjoyed food and drink, and camaraderie; catching up with one another after yet another cycle. One of the themes of discussion many seemed to be having with everyone was “how slow” this class was in making decisions on where to attend college. There was also reflection: What did you do different this year? What could I have done differently?



On Monday morning, we were welcomed by NACAC Immediate Past-president, David Burge, joking about the “indecisiveness” of the Class of 2019. Jokes aside, David enlightened us with some solid research on this generation (because can we really do enough to understand them?) He helped simplify what we are all REALLY trying to do: serve our students. The keynote speaker, Dr. Betsy Nesbit, gave conference participants some new insights on generational differences and how we bridge the divide among the different generations, as well.

At the WACAC business meeting, there was discussion of a few important updates, including changing by-laws language to be more inclusive, and discussing the WACAC investment draw, which you can read more in this issue. WACAC also went through a new presidential cycle. We said good-bye and a big thank you to our out-going past-president, Teege Mettille. Christine Voice, officially handed off the gavel to John McGreal, who effectively took up his new role as current president. Nick Spaeth was voted as president-elect. As Christine closed her last meeting, she shared a personal story of how being involved and connected with everyone in WACAC has helped HER serve her students better, reminding us we serve our students best when we work together.

Personally, I left with some great ideas for the next cycle of how to help students and families “bridge the divide,” thanks to our insightful presenters. We had a great line-up with topics ranging from high school-admission counselor collaboration, working with Latinx students and gap financing. In the sessions I attended, there were some collaborative discussions that always circled back to concerns of helping students understand the process, getting them connected to the right people and expressions of how to do it better next time. This is yet another example of how great things (and ideas) happen when we come together!

We closed our conference Tuesday morning with a new format called Ignite, where we heard from three different leaders in our profession on what they see for the road ahead in our profession. Ken Anslemant wrapped everything up perfectly when he pointed out how we will all be here to serve our students no matter how slow, or fast, they seem to be in making their decisions. Conference is always a great time to come together, celebrate the year we just finished, and reinvigorate each other for the next class with new ideas and ways to reach each other “around” the desk (thanks to Chuck Erickson for that parting thought; He reminded all of us during the closing there are four sides to a desk!)

On behalf of the Conference Planning Committee, thank you to all the familiar and new faces who helped make this conference a success. We hope to see everyone at the MIDWest Conference in Madison next year, along with some more new faces (and ideas!) too!

### Save-the-Date

2020 MIDWest Conference in Madison!

May 17 - 19, 2020

Madison Concourse Hotel

This is a joint conference with the Minnesota, Iowa and Dakotas ACACs.

# WACAC PROFESSIONAL AWARDS

Each year, WACAC honors our members who have made an impact in our profession through the work they do with students and families. The awards were presented at the conference dinner in La Crosse, and this year's WACAC Professional Award recipients are as follows:



**WACAC Rising Star**  
Mark Swenson  
University of Wisconsin - Madison



**Admission Professional of the Year**  
Mary Beth Petrie  
Lawrence University



**Support Staff of the Year**  
Gail Sahagun  
Marquette University High School



**High School Professional of the Year**  
Susan Zarwell  
University School of Milwaukee  
(Colleague Perry Robinson accepted the award on Susan's behalf)

**Jim Miller**  
**Commitment to Service**  
Jenn Machacek  
Ripon College  
(Jenn is pictured left with Jim Miller and Nominations & Awards Chair Annette Cleary)



# WACAC INVESTMENT DRAW: FEEDBACK REQUESTED

*Leigh Mlodzik, Treasurer*

During the spring conference, an informational proposal regarding an investment withdrawal policy was brought forward during the membership meeting. A brief history of the WACAC investment account was presented along with policy recommendations. The proposal in full was as follows:

**History:** In April of 2007, WACAC was in the position to allocate \$25,000 to an investment account with LPL Financial based on excess revenue and the operational budget at the time. In September of 2012, an additional \$25,000 was allocated to a separate investment account with LPL Financial. The second account was created with the intention of providing an annual sum of money, as was to be determined by a draw policy, to fund initiatives that support the mission of WACAC that went beyond annual operating budgets. This would allow the original fund to be left alone as a fallback should the association fall into financial distress.

Since the inception of the accounts, a spending policy has not been approved by the membership and a withdrawal has never been made. Each year from 2012 until now, the annual return on the accounts has been over 7%. In February of 2019, based on the recommendation from our LPL financial consultant and approval from the executive committee, the two accounts were combined into one.

**Policy Recommendation I:** A yearly one time draw of 5% will be made on the balance of the investment account as of May 31 as long as all of the following criteria are met:

1. The balance of the account is at least \$50,000.
2. The return on the principal of the account was not negative for the prior fiscal year.
3. The draw will be spent on non-operational initiatives that support the mission of the association.

**Rationale:**

- Simplicity is important in setting up a policy with an ever-changing executive board and membership. This policy is easily documented and easy to follow.
- 5% is less than the annual return over the past seven years which still allows for a sizeable draw while not depleting funds for when the return is not as good.
- An annual percentage allows for more stability and longevity in the funds being available.
- The clause regarding the negative return on principal assures that the account is not hit twice by a loss and then a withdrawal on top of that.
- The \$50,000 floor holds the executive board and treasurer accountable for the initial investment of WACAC.

**Policy Recommendation II:** The yearly draw from the investment account will be used to fund IDEA Scholarships for the upcoming academic year. The value of each scholarship will be \$500. The number of scholarships will be determined by the amount of dollars available in \$500 increments.

Discussion took place regarding the proposal and the fact that it was a first draft. There was not much discussion on the withdrawal policy itself however more discussion on what the funds should be used for. As a follow up to the meeting, our investment consultant was contacted and he believed the proposal was solid however he would recommend a more conservative withdrawal of 4%.

In terms of the funds that would become available, an idea was brought forth to use them for grants to attend the upcoming NACAC conference in 2020 that will be taking place in Minneapolis. As the discussion continued, this idea began to gain a lot of momentum. The purpose of this article is to solicit any additional recommendations or support for the withdrawal policy itself or for what the funds should be used for. Information will be compiled and presented to the executive board during their retreat in July with the intention of developing a policy that can be voted on during the membership meeting at NACAC in Louisville. If you would like to provide any feedback please email Leigh Mlodzik, WACAC Treasurer, at [mlodziki@ripon.edu](mailto:mlodziki@ripon.edu).



## COLLEGE FAIR - CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS



The National College Fair Committee is looking for volunteers on the day of the fair. Volunteers will have some great opportunities to interact with students and families. You do not need to volunteer for the entire fair, as we can create shifts. A list of volunteer opportunities are below. If you are interested in helping out and making an even greater impact, the College Fair Committee is always looking for new and contributing members with ideas to improve the National Fair.

### Volunteer Opportunities

Info/Check-in Booth- General questions from attendees/college representatives. The NACAC staff will also be to assist volunteers.

Greeters- Welcoming fair attendees. Pretty simple, arrive with a smile!

Counseling Center- Answering general questions about the college search process, majors, etc.

If you have any feedback or suggestions, please feel free to email one of the committee chairs. We are always looking for ways to improve to bring in more attendees.

Best wishes this summer,

Samantha Martens  
Regional Recruiter for University of Nebraska-Lincoln  
[smartens@unl.edu](mailto:smartens@unl.edu) 402-318-8591

Mark Swenson  
Alumni Relations Manager, Office of Admissions  
UW-Madison  
[Mark.swenson@wisc.edu](mailto:Mark.swenson@wisc.edu) 608-262-3961

### Milwaukee National College Fair

Sunday, October 6, 2019

12 - 3 p.m.

Wisconsin Center  
400 W. Wisconsin Ave.  
Milwaukee, WI 53203

## Inclusion, Access and Success Award Recipients

The Committee for Inclusion, Access, and Success is thrilled to announce that the 2019 Project Possible Grant recipient is Rufus King International High School in Milwaukee. Rufus King intends to use this one-time, \$1,000 grant to fund college essay writing workshops for all seniors, as well as a financial aid workshop for undocumented students and their families.

IAS is also excited to announce the three 2019 IDEA Scholarship recipients:

- Anita Ayala—Brookfield Central High School (Milwaukee)
- Gorejer Her—Hmong American Peace Academy (Milwaukee)
- Rafael Pacheco Alcantara—Lafollette High School (Madison)

The IDEA Scholarships are one-time, \$500 awards provided to first generation, low-income students intending to pursue a college education at a WACAC member institution. Each recipient is enrolled at a Wisconsin college or university for the upcoming fall term.

## A YEAR IN REVIEW WITH A FIRST TIME ADMISSIONS COUNSELOR

*Sean Devlin, Communications Committee Member*

One year ago, I was sitting in Harrison Township, New Jersey municipal building reporting on the potential construction of multi-million dollar project to build a new athletic facility on Rowan University's campus. That was just one of a mass of stories that dealt with education in some capacity during my time as a reporter.

Other stories concerned school district budgets, high achieving students accruing mounds of scholarships, and, of course, the all too common tragedies we hear about.

Despite the content, I always felt the pull towards education— getting the word out about what was affecting the lives of students and educators.

Journalism was an interest, not a passion. The more I found myself within the walls of a high school or strolling a college campus on the way to interview someone, I knew I needed to make a change.

Now, I find myself at my alma-mater, with the birds singing their June songs from the trees in Northland College's ravine. To be honest, I wasn't quite sure what the full job of admissions counselor meant when I applied. I knew I was going to work with students, and that was good enough for me.

It has been nearly a year since I traded in my reporter's cap for a wheeling suitcase stuffed with view books and bits of Lake Superior driftwood to place on tables at college fairs. During this 'cycle', I've found that this gig is more than just rattling off facts about my college: small class sizes, hands-on learning, and the benefits of engaged professors who put teaching before research.

It's about seeing each student as a person rather than a potential enrollment figure that requires the same information. It's about hearing what they need and what I can do as a counselor to help them decide if my school is the place for them.

So, I've stuffed my admissions toolbox with ready ears, a sincere tone, and a splash of empathy for each student I speak with (and their families).

I'm nervous about leaving home, some say. I am terrified of social interactions, others explain. I need to get out of where I am and start again... I know I can be better, a few confess.

Putting aside all of the facts about the school, the success stories that ring loud at a certain time in the months-long conversations, I listen to what their fears are and ask myself, Is this community the right one for them? Of course, I help them to an answer, I don't impose my judgement. These anxieties are common amongst freshman and can serve as a glue to form friendships when they arrive.

One of the most memorable comments made to me from a student was, in part, '... Thank you for all of your help in my decision process and for always being real and honest with me and not just the school's propaganda machine...'. This came in a text from Hayden in Ohio.

All of this is a reflection on the last 10.5 months and probably not new to most people who have been doing this job longer than I have.

However, the other thing I should mention that I've learned is, unlike journalism, this field is not one where competition and speed rule the universe. Of course, we all want students to pick the schools we represent and are saddened when a student chooses our 'rival' school; however, while at college fairs, conferences, and the occasional after work meal or drink, I've discovered that this field is one of compassion rather than anything else.

Drop the name of the school— we just want students to be successful. So, in a few words: we learn from each other and that is what I've been doing all year: from counselors at other schools, and, without a doubt, from the silly and passionate group up here in the Northwoods.

Cheers to another cycle and if any counselors would like to connect, I will be relocating to Milwaukee to serve as a Northland admissions counselor there and give our school more of a presence 'down south.'

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