



# The CLARION

Wisconsin Association for College Admission Counseling

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Simply put, WACAC keeps improving. Even in these extraordinary times that have crippled much of the collective norm in post-secondary education, WACAC has managed to grow and strengthen its role in our lives. We should consider ourselves lucky to be a part of such an association right now, one that has long prided itself on being a relevant and vital component of properly helping Wisconsin high school students continue their path in education. The time is now to maintain that long-standing and appropriately placed pride, while also being a part of all the new and exciting growth. Nothing else quite encapsulates this as well as our recent Virtual College Exploration program. With the help of countless volunteers (you all!), this first-ever program took place earlier this year, before the school year was underway. Even with the tricky variable of timing, there were over 2,100 registered attendees, and we realized an 80% show-rate. By both StriveScan and the Executive Board's assessment, these are impressive figures! Speaking on behalf of the Class of 2021, which has been robbed of so much already, having the opportunity to engage with colleges and universities in advance of beginning the application process was huge.

Fueled by the revenue our association earned through that virtual program (more than \$7,500, or about a third our or typical annual budgetary expenditures!), the Executive Board recently made perhaps one of the most impactful changes to WACAC in recent history. Offering free membership to all secondary school and CBO partners has become a popular endeavor at other affiliates around the country, but WACAC's modest financial model previously never allowed for such serious consideration of this noble cause. The resulting increase in membership (nearly a 50% increase!), strengthens our association like never before.



On top of all this, we've started the tough but necessary conversations concerning systemic racism in our great country. I challenge all of you to continue to be a part of the programming that IAS is putting forward. If we can learn from each other, we can play an active role in contributing to our collective improvement.

The phrase 'stick to what you know' has been used repeatedly over the course of history. And I think it oftentimes can appropriately apply to what we all do as a part of WACAC. Our mission statement is clear, "...serves professionals who help college-bound students prepare for and make successful transitions to higher education."

WACAC is poised to continue to make that our focus; we serve to help you help your students. But we can also respond to changes that present themselves, ensuring we as professionals are continually in a position to respond, grow, and improve.

Thanks for all you do for students!

Nick Spaeth  
WACAC President

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## WACAC Urges Governor Evers to Support College Access

*Teege Mettelle, Government Relations Committee*

Earlier this month, WACAC submitted a letter of advocacy to Governor Evers as he prepares his draft of Wisconsin's biennial budget. In Wisconsin, the state budget is completed for a two-year cycle. The next budget will fund state programs from 2021 to 2023.

The legislative process historically works like this: The Governor's Office proposes an initial budget. This proposal gets sent to a Joint Finance Committee of the state legislature for review and revisions. After that, the entire legislature will vote on the budget proposal, again with the option for revisions. Since the Governor's budget proposal is the starting point, influencing his initial recommendation represents the best chance to impact the final budget.

WACAC's letter of advocacy is built on the Governor's Task Force on Student Debt Final Report, and specifically underscores the importance of five key areas:

**Emergency Grants.** After successfully distributing CARES Act funding directly to students, institutions can and should be entrusted to allocate emergency grant funding for small expenses that inhibit a student's persistence to graduation.

**Increases to the Wisconsin Grant.** WACAC joined the Higher Education Authorization Board (HEAB), Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS), Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (WAICU), and the University of Wisconsin (UW) System in highlighting the need for funding levels more in line with neighboring states for this need-based aid program.

**Provide Support for Foster Youth.** While not a major pillar of the Governor's Task Force on Student Debt Final Report, WACAC elevated the concerns and needs of foster youth to one of the five areas we would like to see support for. Most tangibly, 2017 A.B. 777 would help foster youth overcome their unique barriers to college.

**Develop a College Promise Program.** During Governor Doyle's administration, the budgetary process was used to create the Wisconsin Covenant – a guarantee of future funding for students who do well in Wisconsin schools. While not taking a position on the budget as the vehicle, WACAC outlined the importance of a college promise program in creating a college going culture in our schools.

**Loan Forgiveness Options.** WACAC supported existing ideas put forward for a student loan forgiveness program in Wisconsin. By targeting specific professions of need in Wisconsin, we could alleviate the student loan debt burden carried in Wisconsin while also staffing areas most in need.

WACAC will continue to monitor the biennial budget process in the coming months. Be on the look out for opportunities for your personal advocacy after the November election!

## Professional Development Updates

*Justin Stigler, Professional Development Committee Co-Chair*

The Professional Development Committee, like all of us, has had to be swift and flexible with providing our membership the programming they have come to expect from WACAC.

This summer the New Counselor Institute (NCI) committee made the decision to move from an in-person three day boot camp for new admissions professionals to an online two-day format. Historically, NCI has provided these participants the opportunity to learn from some of the best in-state professionals on important topics while providing them the safe environment to ask questions, meet new professionals, and build confidence before the stressful fall travel season. The committee provided a two-day online format for the new professionals that includes additional training throughout the fall that couldn't be touched upon during the two-day event. The ongoing programming is sure to be a boon to the value of NCI.

Season Two of the Wednesday Webinar series kicked off on September 16th. Our presenters, Mary Beth Patrie, Lawrence University, Brian Troyer, Marquette University, and Leigh Mlodzick, Ripon College reviewed test optional policies in college admissions.

In the future it is our hope that we are able to return to in-person professional development and continue to offer great speakers and highlight important topics that impact both sides of the desk. Please know that the Professional Development Committee is always open to discussing new topics, speaker suggestions, or fresh ideas – if you have something that you would like to share or mimic please share that with the committee!

### SAVE THE DATE! 2020-2021 WACAC WEDNESDAY WEBINARS

**October 21** – DACA, the Election, and You

**November 18** – Government Relations

**December 16** – Women in Leadership

**February 17** – Virtual Environment: What Have We Learned?

**March 17** – TBD

**April 21** – IAS Programming

**May 19** – TBD

Listen to past webinars: [www.wacac.com/wacac\\_webinars](http://www.wacac.com/wacac_webinars)

## Counseling in the age of COVID-19

Lindsay Barbeau, Membership Committee

Recently, I presented at the New Counselor Institute which is geared toward our newest college admission counselors. At this conference, I was tasked with presenting on virtual visit opportunities. As I sat down to figure out what to say, I realized there was no way that I could present on visit opportunities when everyone is doing something different. So instead I embarked on a research mission to learn about what sort of virtual tips could be uniform no matter what your position, school, or experience is. What I came up with was a cleverly named acronym called IROC (said I Rock because even when you don't think it, you are an amazing person).

**I stands for Intentional.** As our world has become more and more virtual, it is hard to meet people in different mediums. Think, if you are a school counselor, you were able to see your students in the hallways, talk to parents during a college night, correspond with college reps during a college fair. Now all of this is often done virtually. Being intentional is making sure that your virtual event/conversation has a purpose and you stick to that purpose.

**R stands for Rejuvenate.** Zoom fatigue is real and I am sure we are all experiencing it. Being in video meetings constantly is exhausting because you overcompensate your micro expressions to appear interested or engaged, you probably find yourself consistently looking at your reflective video, and many people carry the anxieties of people looking into their personal lives (seeing their living room, their kids). Harvard Book Review has some great suggestions when combating zoom fatigue—talking on the phone instead of a video call, stop multitasking, hiding your reflective face on a video call, and making sure you take true breaks (not breaks where you quick do the dishes and fold laundry, but taking a walk). Self-care is one of the best ways to be rejuvenated.

**O stands for Own your Technology.** Not everyone likes technology or the change that can come with technology. The first step in owning your technology is having confidence in your comfort level with technology (even if it is low). The second step is opening your mind and being willing to learn new technology. The final step is finding an empathetic confidant who can support you in your technology learning journey. Being a WACAC member is a great networking tool to gain a confidant with technology experiences.

**C stands for Creativity.** Our world has become considerably more creative throughout these past few months—think of the NBA bubble, virtual audiences for talk shows, or a drive thru state fair. If you don't think you are a creative person, start by doing something creative—go on a walk to a new place, do a puzzle, make up a story for your kids. Then take these creative ideas and embed them into your work—have an anonymous office ideas books. We are all creative. Being innovative often brews amazing results.

## High School Visits Database

WACAC strives to find ways to support our members, especially during challenging times. We know this academic year is presenting all of us with unprecedented challenges. To assist in one small part of the process, WACAC has put together a resource guide for high schools to update college representatives on their college visit plans and school policies for the upcoming year. Thank you if you have already added your information to the database!

To have your school's policies on college visits added to the database, please complete the Google Form below. If there are updates to your school's policy that are not currently represented please complete the form and changes will be made on the web. To keep form submissions as clean as possible, please designate one person from your school to submit the form.

Members can locate this form under the Members Only Section of the website. We hope to keep the database as updated as possible, but it can take 24-48 hours to update on the web.

**[High School Visit Update](#)**

## Intentionality in Troublesome Times

*Alex Patterson, Inclusion, Access, and Success Committee*

As students all over the state return to the classroom in times of economic, racial and political uncertainty many higher education professionals are left wondering how to best to support their students. Many of whom are simply seeking a sense of normalcy in their college search. This is particularly true for students who have concerns related to access to things such as internet and technology. This is an ever rising need for students who may otherwise depend on the resources their schools provide to them. Many find they are in a situation of dependence on unconventional methods of access and support to pursue their dreams in college. How do we as caring stewards for these students help them navigate unprecedented times?

Low income students see escalated fears in a time when tensions run high in the country. As professional staff, we have an ever-growing need to understand empathy and its role in supporting students. Understanding our own privileges is more important than ever to recognize and to reflect on. I challenge you to reflect on how your individual privilege or experiences impact your work supporting students in their college search process as we approach a particularly difficult year. Intentionality is key to understanding the way you can make a difference for that student. Consider our admissions practices in the ever challenging realities for all of our students, particularly those who struggle with access. Be empathetic to their realities that they face and be cognizant of your own bias. Help connect them to resources and provide reassurance that they will still succeed in college. Spend extra time getting to know your students, their parents, and their search process.

Remind them that this new normal is temporary and success comes from their devotion to their own achievements. While many fear for the future, we see this class's resilience as they push beyond their concerns towards their future as college students. We all have a responsibility to be thinking about that as we encourage students, of all backgrounds, to pursue their passions.

## Celebrating our 2020 IDEA Scholarship Recipients

WACAC provides scholarships to first generation, low-income students who are pursuing higher education in Wisconsin, regardless of citizenship status. Scholarship recipients receive a one-time award of \$500 to be used towards higher education expenses. These are our Fall 2020 IDEA Scholarship Recipients:



Dayana Robles

My name is Dayana Robles and I will be attending Marquette University this fall. I'm interested in studying law in the future to make better changes for my generation. I'm grateful for your contribution and for being selected as a candidate for this scholarship.



Alexander Ruiz

My name is Alexander (or Alex) Ruiz and I will be attending Marquette University in the fall. I will be majoring in Business and I am still deciding if I want to minor in Spanish.

### AMAZON SMILE

Did you know WACAC has an Amazon Smile account? Amazon Smile donates a small portion of each Amazon purchase to the non-profit organization of your choice. [Click here](#) and log into your Amazon account to begin donating to WACAC and the [IDEA Scholarship](#) with your Amazon purchases!

## Membership Update

*Lindsay Barbeau and Rachel Stern, membership committee*

WACAC is proud to announce that this fall, we have gained 74 new high school members to our WACAC Community! These 74 new high school members join 91 previous high school members and over 200 college, CBO, and independent counselors in our organization. An additional membership update from WACAC President Nick Spaeth includes WACAC offering free membership to all Wisconsin high schools and qualifying CBO's for the 2020-2021 fiscal year! Please be sure to share and pass this information along to others!

We cannot wait to support, encourage, and establish new networking opportunities among all of our members. Networking has always been such a vital and important part of our organization and we cannot wait to meet and connect with our newest members.

For those members, new and old, who have not utilized the resources on our website—we continue to add and improve these offerings. Below are some of the benefits of being a WACAC member:

**Virtual College Exploration Event.** This event was held this August before the start of the new academic year, and all session recordings are available on the WACAC Website.

**Wednesday Webinar Series.** WACAC Wednesday Webinar series is back for its second season! Mark your calendars for noon on the third Wednesday of every month for quick, yet informative, webinars concerning all manner of college admission counseling.

**Webinar Recordings.** In conjunction with the Professional Development Committee, we will continue to post webinar recordings under the Members Only section on the website.

**Membership Spotlights.** Each month we celebrate and learn about one of our WACAC Members. If you would like to be a spotlight or nominate someone to be a spotlight, please email [admin@wacac.com](mailto:admin@wacac.com)

We look forward to another great WACAC year – and for anyone who has questions about their membership, new membership, benefits, etc., please don't hesitate to contact us! Rachel Stern can be reached at [rastern@uwm.edu](mailto:rastern@uwm.edu), Lindsay Barbeau at [lindsay.barbeau@marquette.edu](mailto:lindsay.barbeau@marquette.edu).



## BE A BIGGER PART OF WACAC

Are you ready to be a bigger part of WACAC and have a hand in advancing the mission of the organization? We encourage all members to get involved through professional development, or by joining one of our committees. When we work together we can achieve greater results. Listed below are the eight committees that report to the Board of Directors. If you are interested in learning more, or joining a committee, please fill out the [WACAC Volunteer Form](#)

**Admissions Practices:** The Admissions Practices Committee annually reviews the Code of Ethics and Professional Practices (CEPP) of NACAC, the NACAC monitoring procedures for Code of Ethics and Professional Practices.

**Government Relations:** The Government Relations Committee works to keep the membership updated on government issues related to secondary and post-secondary education.

**Inclusion, Access, and Success:** The Inclusion, Access, and Success Committee develops and implements policy recommendations which will assist in the expansion and access to post-secondary opportunities for those who, for reasons of poverty or other experiences, have been denied options available to others.

**Membership:** The Membership Committee is responsible for the membership renewal process and gaining more WACAC members.

**Professional Development:** The Professional Development Committee is made up of various sub-committees that assist with planning all professional development events including New Counselor Institute, Conference Planning, and Professional Development Workshops.

**Communications:** The Communications Committee is mainly responsible for the development and publication of the WACAC newsletter (The Clarion) and the WACAC Facebook Page.

**NACAC College Fair:** The NACAC College Fair Committee is in charge of planning and executing the Milwaukee NACAC Fair which typically happens each fall semester.

**Nominations and Awards:** The Nominations and Awards Committee is in charge of gathering nominations and selecting individuals for annual awards.

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