



The CLARION

Wisconsin Association for College Admission Counseling

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE- WE'RE IN THIS TOGETHER

Recently I presented at the WSCA Conference in Madison with WACAC Member Lauren Schultz, a school counselor from Menasha High School. It was a great opportunity to collaborate with a great colleague, friend, and professional. We presented on counselor connections and the importance of collaboration on all sides of the college search table. We closed the session, albeit late, with a simple reminder that ***we are all in this thing together.***

School counselors have a wide breath of knowledge they use to counsel their students. Admission counselors have in-depth knowledge on their college that we use to counsel students. Independent counselors are specialists on the college admissions process to guide their students. Community Based Organizations seek to increase access and opportunity for their students

All of our work is student-centered and ***keeping students at the heart of what we do*** is the key to ensuring our success. While my 'day' job is to recruit students to the University of Alabama, I feel my 'night' job is to ensure students are finding the right fit institution for themselves. Every info session I host ends with me asking students "What is important to you? What do you want to accomplish in college? What is on your must-haves list? If you think an institution cannot help you achieve that, then don't go there." This conversation is not only beneficial to the students I'm engaging, but helps support my colleagues on the other sides of the table by reinforcing their message.



These conversations with students and the ability to collaborate with colleagues is what drives me forward. I get excited when my phone rings and it's someone looking to create a new program or event to help students and are seeking my opinion. I challenge you all this spring to think about ways to connect and grow with each other as we continue to do this big, important work of guiding students and the next generation on their education journey. With everything we do ***a rising tide raises all ships*** and together we can accomplish so very much!

In your service,

John
WACAC President

P.S. Check out the great [article](#) Lauren shared with me from the School Counselor of the Year in 2019.

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RECRUITING RURAL POPULATIONS

Alex Patterson, Inclusion, Access, and Success Committee

Institutions of higher education are always working to support students of all backgrounds, but it is important that students in rural populations are not left out of the equation.

While students in these areas are often able to achieve a suitable level of academic readiness for college, many do not have access to the same amount of information about the college search that their urban peers have. Urban schools often co-exist with a network of community-based organizations, such as Upward Bound or College Possible, which do amazing work in helping students with the college search process.

It is no secret that family members and the environment a student has grown up in have significant implications on that student's perspective of college. This is even more prevalent for rural students, as shown in a 2009 study of students in rural North Carolina (Brown, Copeland, Costello, Erkanli, & Worthman, 2009). For rural students, parental involvement in the college search is a vital contributor to a student's likelihood to matriculate. Parents should be engaged early on and repeatedly throughout the search process in order to help them see how your institution values and cares for their student.

This most certainly extends to communicating about financial aid. While being a rural student does not equate poverty, a recent study indicates that one in six rural students lives below the poverty line—which, along with misconceptions about cost and financial aid, has a significant impact on a student's willingness to engage in the college search process. Whitney Rundell, interim director of admissions at Northland College, has been recruiting in northern Wisconsin for almost eight years. "I've worked with a lot of rural families who are concerned about affording college—especially a private school like Northland," Rundell said. "They're usually surprised to learn that we're more affordable than they expected. And they're always grateful we took time to sit down and have a focused conversation about affordability."

Institutions can also serve rural students by encouraging their admissions teams to maintain close relationships with the school counselors in more rural recruitment territories. Recruiters who actively work to cultivate awareness of their institution in rural schools are by extension also supporting the creation of a college-going culture for students at those schools.

In the end, it is about consistently reminding your rural students that you are someone they can rely on as a resource in their college search. It is about showing dedication to supporting the student and their individual narrative as they prepare for their transition into college.

Citations:

Brown, R., Copeland, W. E., Costello, E. J., Erkanli, A., & Worthman, C. M. (2009). Family and community influences on educational outcomes among Appalachian youth. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 37(7), 795 – 808.

MIDWest 2020 UPDATE

Registration, Keynote Speaker, and Pre-Conference News

Kate Hooper, Conference Planning

Registration for the MIDWest 2020 Conference in Madison, WI May 17 – 19 is officially open! Registration can be completed online at wacac.com/MIDWest-Conference. Early bird rates are open until April 15. A block of hotel rooms has been reserved for our group at the location of the conference, the Madison Concourse Hotel. Another block of rooms has been reserved at the Best Western Premier Park Hotel, which is within walking distance of the Concourse. Rooms can be reserved online on the conference website (cut off dates approach mid-April for each hotel).



We are currently reviewing over 60 session proposals; thanks to all who submitted! We also confirmed and are excited to announce our Keynote Speaker: Marie Bigham, founder and co-leader of **ACCEPT**: Admissions Community Cultivating Equity & Peace Today. ACCEPT works to remove barriers to post-secondary education with a mission to empower “college admissions professionals who seek to center anti-racism, equity and justice in our work and communities.” With our conference theme: Share the Vision, Marie and her organization’s mission seemed a perfect fit and we are excited to have her address our group this May.

Lastly, an engaging pre- conference workshop is scheduled for Sunday, May 17 in the afternoon before our conference social. Teege Mettelle, vice president of enrollment at Carroll University and Jeremy Tiers, director of admissions services for Tudor Collegiate Strategies, will team up for this workshop titled, “How to Effectively Communicate with Prospective Students in 2020.” The content is designed for admissions professionals who want to gain ideas for reaching out to students. Participants will leave with a territory management plan they can put into effect immediately. This event must be registered for separately, and is \$35. Stay tuned for a registration announcement regarding this pre-conference event if you are interested.

For more conference updates, visit wacac.com/MIDWest-Conference, and feel free to contact conference co-chairs Mary Beth Petrie (marybeth.petrie@lawrence.edu) or Kate Hooper (kannala@nmu.edu) for any questions or concerns.

**Register for
MIDWest 2020**

BENEFITS OF ATTENDING THE MIDWest CONFERENCE

Rachel Stern, Membership Committee

Whether you work at a college or university, at a high school, or with a community-based organization, return to the end of the year energized after attending the MIDWest conference in Madison. You'll leave the conference excited about the upcoming academic year, and with new connections to be the best admissions professional you can be.

Here are some tangible benefits of attending:

Recharge your passion for the profession. As the year comes to a close, celebrate by reflecting on the past year's successes and challenges. Learn about new ideas and processes from all sides of the desk that benefits students, families, and yourself professionally!

Identify best practices in the profession. Network with colleagues to learn about issues affecting the profession and the students and families you serve. Take what you learn and apply it in your daily work to make for a more seamless process for students as they navigate the college search! What can you learn from someone at a Community Based Organization as a college admissions counselor? What can you learn from an Independent Counselor as a school counselor? We are truly in this together!

Explore new topics in sessions, seminars, and social hours.

Grow professionally. Continue your growth throughout the year by renewing your membership, maintaining new relationships, and attending further professional development workshops and events.



WACAC Members John McGreal, Susan Zarwell, Christine Voice, & Teege Mettill enjoying themselves at the 2018 MIDWest Conference in Dubuque, IA

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: UPCOMING WEBINARS

The Professional Development Committee is excited to bring you the next installment in the WACAC Wednesday Webinar series: Advocacy 101. Mark your calendar for Wednesday, March 18 at noon, when John McGreal, WACAC president, and Kevin Haas, government relations committee chair, share insights, tips, and advice related to political advocacy. Thinking about taking part in our Day on the Hill, but are you nervous as a first timer? This webinar is for you!

April Webinar: Wednesday, April 15

Presented by the Inclusion, Access, and Success Committee

Listen to past WACAC Wednesday Webinars online
www.wacac.com/wacac_webinars

WACAC SPEAKERS BUREAU

WACAC is actively working on creating a Speakers Bureau for members. The aim of this project is three-fold. First, our members who are planning events for students will have access to speakers on a variety of college search topics to aid them in their efforts. Second, members will have the opportunity to develop professionally by volunteering to be a speaker, and, finally, we hope this will continue to foster connections on all sides of the desk.

If you have an area of expertise, a passion topic, or an aspect within the college search process that you'd be willing to share more about, make sure to add your name to the **Speakers Bureau**.

Once we have names and topics the registry will be made available to all members through the **member-only section** of the web site.

NEW! MEMBER-ONLY SECTION OF THE WEB SITE

The Membership Committee is happy to announce that there is now a member-only section on the website! The Members Only area can be found by going directly to wacac.com/members OR from the home page and clicking Members Only. If you do not know your password, please use the forgot password function to reset the password and gain access to exclusive content!

WACAC MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: SOMKHIT "KIT" BOONHEUAN



Somkhith "Kit" Boonheuan
Program Manager
College Possible™ Milwaukee

What did you study in college? Was your plan to enter the higher education world?

I studied Political Science at UW-Madison. I did not have a plan post-graduation—I was interested in education, but not as a long-term thing. Therefore, I looked into a few different AmeriCorps programs where I could spend a year or two doing service work that intersected with education in some shape or form: Teach for America, City Year, Public Allies, and College Possible. College Possible stuck out the most because it was similar to a program I was a part of in high school called Upward Bound. Supporting students from low-income backgrounds, helping them earn college admission, and helping them persist to graduation felt like the perfect opportunity for me to give back. I intended to serve as an AmeriCorps member with College Possible for one year as a College Coach, supporting college students who had gone through our high school program... that turned into two years. Two years has now turned into eight years. After completing my second term of service, I was hired on as a College Program Coordinator supervising my own group of AmeriCorps members. After a few years in that position, I was promoted to Program Manager where now I oversee our college success work.

What inspires you most about your job?

What inspires me most about my job would have to be the mission and the people I work with—whether AmeriCorps members or fulltime staff. Everyone comes to College Possible for different reasons, but the one thing we all have in common is the belief in the mission. Every year, I am energized and filled with hope by the hundreds of individuals who decide to commit to make a positive impact on the world through College Possible. College Possible isn't the answer or remedy to all the injustice in this world, but it is addressing the inequality in access and success to higher education for students from low-income backgrounds. ALL students, regardless of income status, deserve all the opportunities in this world to go as far as their talents and efforts will take them. To be a part of an organization with other individuals who truly believe in the mission and give it their all for the students, it makes me feel like I'm a part of something bigger than myself; it's empowering.

What is the best part of what you do?

Seeing our students succeed. Most individuals who come to serve as coaches at College Possible usually only get to see a portion of a student's college journey as you are only able to serve two terms as an AmeriCorps member. I have had the privilege of seeing students who started our program as juniors in high school become college graduates, oftentimes hearing about the challenges and triumphs they have encountered along the way. I have even seen some of the students I worked with as a coach complete their college journey—some have even come back to pay it forward and serve as AmeriCorps members themselves. Each student has a story. Each of them have obstacles they need to overcome. Each of them is resilient in their own way. They make the hard days worth it.

WACAC MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: SOMKHIT "KIT" BOONHEUAN

How has being a member of WACAC helped you?

Being a WACAC member has definitely been helpful. I've taken advantage of different opportunities provided by WACAC -- both workshops that helped me do my job better (i.e. attending a workshop that was focused on helping college students transfer between schools successfully) and opportunities for professional development (i.e. learning about volunteer opportunities and getting connected to other organizations like College Goal Wisconsin). Being a member has expanded my knowledge and my network.

What is one piece of advice you would give a new admissions counselor or high school counselor?

I think for both admissions and high school counselors, you are working with a large number of students—sometimes it can get easy to get lost in the numbers and the various tasks, paperwork, and processes that need to be completed. Find a way to humanize the numbers and see the students individually, learn their stories, and approach everything with an asset-based lens.

What's an interesting fact about you that has nothing to do with admissions counseling?

I am a huge fan of horror movies – the original 1978 "Halloween" is easily my favorite movie.

INAUGURAL CONFERENCE GRANT RECIPIENTS ANNOUNCED

In 2019 WACAC launched a new Conference Grant application program. This endowed grant was designed to provide WACAC members the opportunity to attend either a NACAC or WACAC-specific conference. The committee overseeing the grant is pleased to announce the following members as the 2020 recipients:

Jennifer Boettner, Whitefish Bay High School: NACAC Conference

Lisbeth Martinez Sanchez, Carmen High School: MIDWest Conference

Madeline McCoy, Ripon College: NACAC Conference

Jennifer Binneboese, Washington Park High School: MIDwest Conference

Please join us in congratulating the recipients! The 2021 grant application will be made available later this year, and the committee looks forward to even more applications to review.

IDEA SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS DUE MAR. 15

WACAC will once again provide \$500 one-time IDEA scholarships for students to use towards higher education expenses during the 2021-21 school year.

To be eligible for the scholarship, students must:

- Be a first generation student (Neither parent has obtained a 4-year degree from a U.S. institution)
- Demonstrate financial need and/or be eligible for free or reduced lunch
- Have a minimum 3.0 unweighted, cumulative GPA (on a 4 point scale)
- Be a high school senior attending a WACAC member public or private high school in WI
- Plan to attend a WACAC member 2 or 4-year public or private college/university

Citizenship status is not considered in awarding this scholarship.

Forms and supplemental materials must be submitted by March 15, 2020 to be considered.

For more information and the application, visit www.wacac.com/IDEA-Scholarship.

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!

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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