

# Career Paths for Admission Officers: A Survey Report

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National Association for  
College Admission Counseling

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This report was commissioned by the National Association for College Admission Counseling as part of an ongoing effort to inform the association and the public about current issues in college admission.

The views and opinions expressed in this report are solely those of the author and not necessarily those of NACAC.



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# INTRODUCTION

Since NACAC’s founding in 1937, the number of men and women in the admission profession at colleges and universities has increased dramatically, particularly as evidenced by the increase in association membership. Fifteen institutions were represented at the meeting that founded the association, and 47 individuals attended the first annual conference in 1947. Today, NACAC has more than 13,000 members representing both secondary and postsecondary institutions, as well as independent counselors and community-based organizations.

As higher education has changed in scope, structure and mission, the admission profession has been called to perform new functions, take on new responsibilities, and, in some instances, bear the burden for the institution’s very survival. As the *Chronicle of Higher Education* noted, just a few decades ago, admission officers counseled students instead of crunching numbers. The job was more academic than marketing-oriented, and enrollment management barely existed in anyone’s vocabulary. Today, the *Chronicle* observed, the admission (or enrollment management) office is a drastically different operation, and its success or failure “often determines a college’s financial health and prestige.”<sup>1</sup>

The changes in the admission function have opened up new opportunities for those who pursue a career in this area. At the same time, these aspiring professionals are finding that they need to constantly acquire new skills and master new disciplines without a formal or explicitly-defined career path, such as certification or licensing, in order to advance. For example, they may have responsibility for overseeing marketing and social media campaigns, conducting complicated statistical analyses, and learning and applying new technologies—along with continuing to build trust and develop relationships with prospective students, their parents, high school counselors and the broader education community.

How can an admission professional at the entry, mid-point or senior level of his or her career navigate the changes in higher education and the admission profession and acquire the knowledge and skills needed to succeed? What must be done to attract and retain bright and talented individuals to the profession? What resources and support will be needed to enable the advancement of the profession and its leaders?

*Career Paths for Admission Officers: A Survey Report* is designed to help admission professionals at all levels by providing information that will:

- assist entry and mid-level professionals in charting their career paths
- identify barriers and incentives to staying and succeeding in the field
- indicate changing needs, expectations, and opportunities
- identify resources for professional and personal development
- preview short- and long-term trends that will affect the field.

## PROJECT DESIGN AND RESPONSE

*Career Paths for Admission Officers* presents the results of both a survey of all NACAC member admission professionals at four-year schools and follow-up telephone interviews with 40 admission professionals. The report



also includes commissioned essays by 10 NACAC members that offer insightful observations on their career experiences and advice to others seeking to advance in the profession.

The online survey of NACAC member admission professionals was conducted in October and November 2011. The 23-question survey collected information about job responsibilities, reporting structures, and short-term career plans, as well as detailed information about respondents’ education background and job history. The survey also included both rating scale questions and open-ended response questions relating to skills, experiences and resources respondents have found most helpful in their admission careers, as well as additional resources they would have appreciated.

A total of 1,492 NACAC members took the survey, yielding a response rate of 31 percent. Women accounted for 61 percent of the sample, and men 39 percent. Other characteristics of the survey respondents, including gender, race and ethnicity, are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1. Personal characteristics of survey respondents**

<b>Gender</b>	
Male	39.3%
Female	60.7
<b>Age</b>	
30 or under	30.3
31 to 40	33.0
41 to 50	20.0
51 to 60	13.8
Over 60	3.0
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>	
White, non-Hispanic	79.7
Black, non-Hispanic	9.2
Hispanic	4.5
Multi-racial	3.7
Asian/Pacific Islander	2.4
American Indian/Alaskan Native	0.3
Other	0.2

Source: NACAC Admission Officer Career Path Survey, 2011.

<sup>1</sup> Hoover, Eric. (June 26, 2011). Those Tweedy Old Admissions Deans? They’re All Business Now. *Chronicle of Higher Education*. <http://chronicle.com/article/The-Evolution-of-the/128035/>. Accessed May 9, 2014.

**Table 2. Professional characteristics of survey respondents**

<b>Current position hierarchy</b>	
Admission counselor	14.3%
Assistant/associate director of admission	45.2
Director of admission	23.0
Vice president/dean of admission and/or enrollment management	17.5
<b>Time in current position</b>	
Less than 3 years	43.9
3 to 5	28.2
6 to 8	12.6
9 to 12	8.6
13 to 15	3.1
16 to 20	1.6
21 to 25	0.9
More than 25	1.2
<b>Time in profession</b>	
Less than 3 years	11.9
3 to 5	16.9
6 to 8	17.0
9 to 12	15.9
13 to 15	9.9
16 to 20	9.9
21 to 25	7.5
More than 25	11.1

Source: NACAC Admission Officer Career Path Survey, 2011.

The greatest percentage of survey respondents (45 percent) were assistant/associate directors of admission, and the most common time respondents had worked in their *current position* was less than three years (44 percent). The total time in the *admission profession* was more evenly distributed (see Table 2).

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Survey participants were also asked if they would be willing to participate in telephone interviews to provide additional information about their career paths and experiences. Among those who agreed to be interviewed, 10 people were randomly chosen to represent each of the following categories, with substitutions made as needed to ensure inclusion by gender and race/ethnicity. A total of 40 interviews were conducted.

- Admission counselors—generally one to five years of admission experience
- Assistant/associate directors—generally six to eight years of experience in admission
- Directors—generally six to twelve years of admission experience
- Vice Presidents/Deans—admission experience ranging from six to more than 25 years

This report incorporates data from the survey, the interviews and invited essays.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The new world of college and university admission and enrollment management is more all-encompassing and demanding, with greater potential to shape the future of higher education than most NACAC members could have imagined 20 years ago. Yet, the profession remains somewhat ill-defined, especially for young professionals confused and even turned off by uncertainty about how to enter it in the first place. They also lack information about what degrees and skills are required for advancement, and even what advancement in the field looks like. These refrains came from many professionals: “I didn’t know it was a profession...I stumbled into it...There was a job opening at my alma mater and I needed a job.”

Perhaps one of the greatest challenges to attracting and keeping talented and qualified men and women who will determine the future of the profession—and, quite possibly higher education—is raising awareness of admission as a career option and starting to outline a viable career path. Through their responses in the Admission Officer Career Path survey, interviews, and essays, professionals have cast light upon some highly critical facts, trends, opportunities and challenges that should help the profession and professionals succeed in this changing professional world.

Key findings include:

### **Women and minority racial/ethnic groups are under-represented in key segments of the admission profession:**

- Women are overrepresented at entry- and mid-level positions, comprising about 70 percent of counselors and assistant/associate directors, but they become increasingly underrepresented at more senior positions.
- Although women comprised 59 percent of all college undergraduates, they represent 53 percent of directors of admission and only 40 percent of vice presidents/deans of admission or enrollment management.
- Non-whites are underrepresented at all points on the admission career trajectory, and the issue only becomes more pronounced at higher position levels.
- The proportion of blacks in the admission profession decreases from 11 percent of counselors and assistant/associate directors to 5 percent of vice presidents/deans, while Hispanics decrease from 8 percent to only 2 percent.

### **There is no defined career path in college/university admission, something that rising professionals seek:**

- Many admission officers describe “falling into” the admission profession.
- Lack of information about a career path and concerns about work life balance, among other factors, make many undecided about staying in the field. Admission counselors were mostly likely to be seeking a career opportunity within three years, and of those, 24 percent planned to look outside of the admission field and 43 percent were unsure about staying in admission.

- Important resources that can make a difference include on-the-job training, professional development, and mentoring.
- Some women see an “old boys club” as a deterrent to their chances for advancement.

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### **Communications and writing skills are critical, though requirements for success in admission are diversifying:**

- Verbal communication, interpersonal skills, and writing are ranked most important by admission professionals for entry-level candidates.
- For advancement at the mid- and senior-levels, writing is second only to previous admission experience as the most desired skill, and is followed closely by statistics and data analysis.
- Technology skills are important, but senior professionals caution against “substituting technology for personal contact.”
- The changing role of the admission operation means changing requirements. Senior professionals said they valued management and budget experience, a knowledge of higher education overall, and political acumen.
- The lowest-ranked skills for advancement were multicultural, transfer, international, and non-traditional recruitment.
- Master’s degrees are held by almost 70 percent of directors and 61 percent of assistant and associate directors.
- Twenty-three percent of vice presidents and deans have doctoral degrees; 65 percent have master’s degrees.
- The greatest proportion of advanced degrees (43 percent) are in education, followed by business at 16 percent.

### **Mobility is a key factor—though not necessarily required—for advancement in admission:**

- The average admission professional has just four jobs in his or her career and two employers.
- More than half of survey respondents (55 percent) plan to seek a new/different position with the next three years. Vice presidents and deans are the most likely to stay put, at 69 percent.

- Within racial and ethnic groups, Hispanic-Americans are the most mobile (only 18 percent expect to stay in their current position for the next three years).
- Many cite an opening at a large institution with a national reputation as the biggest incentive to move.
- Most professionals get job leads from friends in the field; at the senior level, most are recruited for a new position by search firms.



**Admission officers' responsibilities are increasingly integrated across other areas of institutional responsibility:**

- The top person in most admission operations is now a vice president or dean; 72 percent report directly to the provost or president.
  - “Enrollment management” appears in the title of 32 percent of these operation leaders; “admission” is in 46 percent of job titles.
  - The responsibilities of more VPs/deans of admission and enrollment management now include financial aid (73 percent), communications and marketing (54 percent), and even registrar operations (21 percent)
  - Such factors as social media, legal rulings in diversity recruitment and international recruitment have complicated carrying out traditional responsibilities.
  - The expanding scope of the admission/enrollment management operation has been accompanied by both a growing status within the organizational structure and a growing pressure to help balance the budget through enrollment.
  - The majority of admission professionals described a supportive university environment that let them succeed in their work and raised recognition and support of the operation across campus.
  - Faculty involvement can make an important difference in the ability of admission officers to effectively recruit and retain students—but the degree and quality of that involvement varies greatly, according to admission professionals.
- Changes in the scope and structure are opening up new opportunities for advancement, including specializations in international research and recruitment, marketing and branding, and enrollment management.

**Beyond institutional, on-the-job training, admission professionals gain significant professional development from external resources in order to advance in their careers:**

- On-the-job training at work and mentoring rate highest as resources for mid- and senior-level admission professionals.
- Many young professionals say they don't get enough exposure to national and regional conferences – those that do consider these experiences highly valuable.
- Involvement with professional organizations, such as NACAC, can help new professionals identify a career path and assist mid-level professionals in advancing their careers.
- Desired resources included more training programs for new counselors and academic courses—at the undergraduate and graduate level—in enrollment management, financial aid, management and leadership.

**As external and internal changes influence higher education, admission professionals face challenges to their traditional practices:**

- Senior professionals see an opportunity to become “creative and innovative thought leaders” who can place admission in the broader context of higher education.
- As the emphasis on international recruitment and partnerships in higher education increases, admission leaders will need to become more globally-focused and knowledgeable to advance themselves and the profession.
- Demographic trends will continue to place more pressure on the admission office at many institutions to deliver results that will ensure financial health; some worry that this pressure will heighten a “sales” approach to recruitment.
- While admission operations are asked to do more, funds for hiring, promotion and compensation policies have been cut at many institutions, making staff retention more difficult.
- Senior leaders envision the profession playing a critical role in ensuring that higher education remains accessible to all qualified students. By the same token, some express concern that tight budgets are threatening financial aid and creating barriers to access and completion.
- Enhanced visibility of the admission operation on campus has brought more involvement in university leadership and recognition, but also more pressure. “Most [on campus] really don't understand how hard it is to do our job,” said one senior professional.
- Tailored academic programs for admission professionals and a more defined career path will increase acceptance of admission/enrollment management as a “profession” with status inside and outside academe.

## CHAPTER 1: ENTRY INTO THE ADMISSION PROFESSION

Admission professionals, as evidenced by the survey data and interviews, are generally proud of their work and the role they play in expanding access to higher education. However, few reported actively seeking an admission career. Several described “stumbling into” their first position, usually knowing little about what it involved or where it could lead. In the words of one senior admission professional, “No one says in high school ‘I want to be an admission counselor.’”

Those who go into the admission field generally enter from two routes. For some, an admission job is their first or second after college graduation. Others enter later in their work life, usually making a conscious career switch. They are more informed about what admission involves and the role it plays in the institution, and they may begin at levels ranging from assistant director to vice president.

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For some, an admission job is their first or second after college graduation. Others enter later in their work life, usually making a conscious career switch.

Many survey respondents entered the field immediately after graduation from college or after a short-term first job.<sup>2</sup> Conventional wisdom in the admission profession suggests that people tend to “fall into” careers in admission rather than methodically seeking them. Interviews suggested that often, the selection of an admission job was more a matter of convenience than commitment. It usually wasn’t a career decision, as many said they had not considered admission as a profession they could pursue for the long term.

Although high school students have significant exposure to admission personnel, they don’t seem to relate that experience with the concept of career. Mused one senior administrator, “It’s ironic that students have so much contact with the admission office but don’t see the possibilities. I didn’t see it as a profession when I was in high school either.” Students don’t realize the potential, and no one is actively making the case to them.

In addition to lack of awareness, other factors may contribute to the low recognition of admission as a viable career. For example, interviewees noted that getting a job in admission didn’t seem to require a particular course of study, such as a career in medicine, law, accounting and even student affairs. One senior professional noted, “In the 1990s, admission was easier to enter than financial aid or student affairs.” Another left a job to pursue

a career in admission, because “admission seemed more interesting,” and because “I could qualify with just a B.A.” A colleague commented, “You didn’t need much training, unlike student affairs jobs that required specific experiences.”

Many said that the lack of a specific career path sometimes contributed to an unclear and even vague sense of what admission involved and where it could take you. As one professional observed, with no “formal training” for entry level admission counselor work, “it’s not surprising that they don’t know if admission is a profession or just another job...young people need to see a career track.”

### DEFINING THE ADMISSION PROFESSION

Despite the very real concern among interviewees about the status and awareness of admission as a profession, relatively consistent information about the roles and responsibilities of admission officers is available through both professional organizations and the US Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). In the BLS Occupational Outlook Handbook, admission officers are classified within postsecondary education administrators, which are expected to grow by 15 percent between 2012 and 2022 due to increases in enrollment. The BLS handbook briefly defines the role of postsecondary administrators who work in admission to include determining how many students to admit, preparing promotional material, meeting with prospective students, reviewing applications, and analyzing data.<sup>3</sup>

Although the BLS Occupational Outlook Handbook provides some information about education and qualities required for postsecondary education administrators, as well as the job outlook, the information is limited, particularly as it relates specifically to the admission profession. The O\*Net database, which is sponsored by the US Department of Labor and based on a regular survey of workers, provides additional information about positions within the broader postsecondary education administrator category, as well as a career exploration tool for students. The information provided includes ratings of the importance of various tasks, knowledge, skills, abilities, work activities, and work content, in addition to information about the work context, styles and values for each profession.<sup>4</sup>

The most detailed information, specifically as it relates directly to the admission profession, is available from professional associations like NACAC, the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admission Officers (AACRAO), and the College and University Professional Association for Human Resources (CUPA-HR). AACRAO’s “The College Admission Officer’s Guide” addresses at length the variety of responsibilities of admission officers at various levels and different types of institutions.<sup>5</sup> CUPA-HR conducts an annual salary survey of colleges and universities, and they define various admission positions as follows:

NACAC has two policy statements that define the work of college admission officers. The first, “Statement on Counselor Competencies,” outlines core competencies that should result in maximum effectiveness in serving students. In brief, they include the following:

<sup>2</sup> A follow-up report will provide more in-depth analysis of the career path trajectories of survey respondents.

<sup>3</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor. *Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2014-15 Edition*, Postsecondary Education Administrators. <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/management/postsecondary-education-administrators.htm>. Accessed May 9, 2014.

<sup>4</sup> National Center for O\*NET Development. O\*NET OnLine. (Sponsored by U.S. Department of Labor.) <http://www.onetonline.org/link/summary/11-9033.00>. Accessed May 9, 2014.

<sup>5</sup> *The College Admissions Officer’s Guide*. Ed. Barbara Lauren. Washington, DC: American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admission Officers (AACRAO), 2008.

**Table 3. Description of Admission Positions from CUPA-HR Salary Surveys**

<b>Admissions Counselor</b>	Recruits freshmen and transfer students from high schools and community colleges. Makes presentations to student groups. Counsels students and parents regarding the admissions process. Requires a bachelor's degree or equivalent plus 2-3 years' related experience.
<b>Chief Admissions Officer</b>	Responsible for the admission of undergraduates. May also be responsible for recruitment and selection and for the admission of graduate and professional students or for scholarship administration or similar functions.
<b>Chief, Enrollment Management Officer</b>	Responsible for development of marketing plans for the recruitment and retention of students. Also coordinates institutional efforts in admissions, financial aid, records and registration and advising.
<b>Associate Director, Admissions</b>	Responsible for one or several areas of student admissions. Reports to the Director of Admissions.
<b>Director, Admissions and Registrar</b>	Combines the major duties and responsibilities of the admissions director and registrar.
<b>Director, Admissions and Financial Aid</b>	Combines the major duties and responsibilities of the admissions director and financial aid director.

Source: College and University Professional Association for Human Resources (CUPA-HR) 2010-11 Mid-Level Salary Survey and 2010-11 Administrative Compensation Survey

- The possession and demonstration of exemplary counseling and communication skills
- The ability to understand and promote student development and achievement
- The ability to facilitate transitions and counsel students toward the realization of their full educational potential
- The ability to recognize, appreciate, and serve cultural differences and the special needs of students and families
- The demonstration of appropriate ethical behavior and professional conduct in the fulfillment of roles and responsibilities
- The ability to develop, collect, analyze, and interpret data
- The demonstration of advocacy and leadership in advancing the concerns of students
- The ability to organize and support a college admission counseling program<sup>6</sup>

NACAC also emphasizes the primary importance of the counseling function of the admission profession through the “Statement on the Counseling Dimension of the Admission Process at the College/University Level.” While acknowledging the ascendance and role of enrollment management and marketing techniques in the recruitment process, NACAC states that counseling is essential to the college admission process and that the “foundation for counseling students...is the emphasis on meeting students’ needs...by helping [them] understand their personal aptitudes, abilities, interest, and values in relation to the offerings of a particular college or

university.”<sup>7</sup> NACAC’s “Statement of Principles of Good Practice” outlines in great detail the mandatory ethical practices that member institutions (colleges and secondary schools) agree to abide by in order to support the mission of serving students in the college transition, as well as a set of best practices that support that mission.<sup>8</sup>

### ACADEMIC PREPARATION

The lack of any designated preparation for working in admission may have some disadvantages, but interviewees also noted that, as a result, the profession is enriched with well-rounded individuals from a wide variety of academic backgrounds. The educational backgrounds of survey respondents indicate that no area of study predominated at the bachelor’s degree level. The most common degrees were in humanities and liberal arts; social science; business; communications and journalism; and psychology and social work (see Table 4). Admission professionals also pursued engineering, anthropology, foreign languages, biological sciences and numerous other disciplines as undergraduates.

Many survey respondents reported receiving their graduate degrees after they had decided upon an admission career, so here the range of concentrations is considerably narrower. As shown in Table 4, for those with advanced degrees, education was by far the most prevalent concentration, (43 percent), followed distantly by business (16 percent), humanities and liberal arts (15 percent), and law and public policy (5 percent). (See Appendix Table 1 for a complete list of admission officers’ fields of study by degree level.)

<sup>6</sup> National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC). Statement on Counselor Competencies. (2000). <http://www.nacacnet.org/about/Governance/Policies/Pages/default.aspx>. Accessed May 9, 2010.

<sup>7</sup> National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC). Statement of the Counseling Dimension of the Admission Process at the College/University Level. (1990). <http://www.nacacnet.org/about/Governance/Policies/Pages/default.aspx>. Accessed May 9, 2014.

<sup>8</sup> National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC). Statement of Principles of Good Practice. 2013. <http://www.nacacnet.org/about/Governance/Policies/Pages/default.aspx>. Accessed May 9, 2014.



**Table 4. Five most popular fields of study, by degree level**

<b>Bachelor's degree</b>	
Humanities/Liberal arts	24.5%
Social science	15.5
Business	14.4
Communications and journalism	12.1
Psychology and social work	10.3
<b>Master's, PhD or professional degree</b>	
Education	42.5
Business	15.5
Other	15.4
Humanities and Liberal arts	8.0
Law and public policy	5.2

Source: NACAC Admission Officer Career Path Survey, 2011.

### IMPACT OF STUDENT VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT

Some additional common threads have emerged that may be valuable in raising visibility and interest in the profession. For example, the majority of interviewees at all levels had been involved with the student life/admission side of the university as undergraduates. They served as tour guides, student assistants, student directors of Greek life, orientation chairs, residence hall directors, and the like. Some said these experiences gradually opened their eyes to a future career: “I worked as a volunteer tour guide. I had some ideas about what didn’t work and I wanted to give prospective students a better experience,” said one admission counselor. Others made connections through these experiences with professionals who would become mentors and would guide them to early jobs and often continue to give counsel throughout their careers.

Several survey respondents and interviewees also credited involvement with university athletics as athletes and coaches for their introduction to the admission profession. A sizable number of interviewees were involved as undergraduates and/or returned as graduate students to help coach varsity or intercollegiate teams, from baseball to swimming to ice hockey. In these mainly part-time jobs, they frequently became involved with recruiting students and discovered they enjoyed the experience. Because of their increased visibility with campus administrators, they were often approached when vacancies occurred. Reported one admission officer who coached part-time at his alma mater while working in sales, “My head coach recommended me when a job for assistant director of admission opened up. I did the interview and immediately realized it was my career path. It played to my competitive side and I knew I liked the product.”

### STARTING IN ADMISSION

As might be expected, landing an admission job was a significantly different experience for those who entered the profession early in their professional lives and those who had already spent time in another career.

Many survey respondents and interviewees who entered admission early in their professional lives did not envision it as a long-term career choice. One interviewee reported, “I was looking for a job and this opened up. I went to talk to the admission director and was intrigued. I didn’t know what it involved.” Another found, after finishing a master’s degree in student affairs administration, that no positions were available. He located an opening in admission at an area university and found a new career.

First-time job-seekers learned about admission opportunities in several ways. Some who had maintained connections with their undergraduate institutions received leads from friends or mentors on campus or the alumni office. Indeed, several interviewees began their careers at their alma mater. University web sites were another source of information. In general, head-hunters or employment agencies were not resources for first-time job-seekers.

### ENTERING ADMISSION FROM ANOTHER FIELD

Those who came to the admission field after spending at least a few years in another career and/or receiving a graduate degree generally started at a higher level and were better informed about the profession and opportunities for career advancement. This was especially true for those who were serving in other positions on campus. Commented one interviewee, who had initially worked in development and alumni relations: “My previous jobs were great preparation for admission. I understood the importance of alumni, and I had experience in relationship-building and large direct mail programs and operations.” In fact, a few interviewees had held senior positions in other departments, including an athletics director, associate dean of students, and director of financial aid. In these instances, they generally learned of openings through friends on campus or were approached by admission personnel. Some recounted applying for admission positions earlier in their careers and being rejected. After acquiring work experience and graduate degrees, they decided to try again, and succeeded.

Colleges and universities were the most frequent former employers of those who switched into admission careers. They had served as faculty, administrators, academic advisors, and financial aid and student affairs professionals, among other assignments. Several also came from positions in secondary education, most often as teachers and counselors. Others cited backgrounds in such areas as corporate sales, psychology, retail management, public relations and marketing, technology and television sports reporting.

### ENTRY-LEVEL SKILLS

Verbal communication and interpersonal skills were clearly considered to be critical for entry-level admission professionals, with nearly all survey respondents rating them as “very important.” A majority of respondents (56 percent) also rated writing skills as very important. As shown in Table 5, survey respondents rated the remainder of the entry-level skills as moderately to somewhat important. Being an alumna/alumnus of the employer institution was the lowest rated skill/experience.

**Table 5. Importance of various skills for entry-level admission positions**

	Very important	Moderately important	Somewhat important	Not important	Mean rating
Verbal communication skills	98.3%	1.6%	0.1%	0.0%	4.0
Interpersonal skills	97.4	2.4	0.1	0.0	4.0
Writing skills	56.4	38.1	5.4	0.1	3.5
Undergraduate involvement in student life/leadership	14.4	41.1	34.7	9.9	2.6
Technology/Web design/Social media	10.5	40.9	39.5	9.1	2.5
Marketing/Public relations	9.9	33.0	42.5	14.5	2.4
Event planning	8.7	32.7	46.5	12.1	2.4
Statistics/Data analysis	8.9	27.4	46.7	17.0	2.3
Undergraduate volunteer/intern in admission office	6.4	26.0	44.7	22.9	2.2
Alumna/alumnus of the employer institution	5.1	21.0	40.2	33.7	2.0

Source: NACAC Admission Officer Career Path Survey, 2011.

When reviewing Table 5, it is also important to note that while verbal communication, interpersonal, and writing skills are clearly ‘musts’ for admission officers, the remainder of skills or attributes are also important requirement for an admission professional to possess. Undergraduate involvement in student affairs/admission, technology/social media skills, marketing and public relations, event planning, and an understanding of statistical analysis are all considered at least somewhat important by a large majority of admission officers.

Overall, survey respondents at all levels rated the entry-level skills in similar ways, with verbal and interpersonal skills at the top, followed by writing and other skills. However, there were some interesting differences worth noting, especially regarding writing skills. Nearly two-thirds of senior admission professionals (63 percent of directors and 64 percent of VPs and Deans) rated writing skills as very important compared to fewer than half of admission counselors (47 percent). Admission counselors were also twice as likely to rate undergraduate involvement in student life as very important compared to those at the senior level (22 percent versus 10 to 11 percent). The same is true for being an alumna/alumnus of the employing institution (12 percent versus 5 percent) (see Figure 1). These young professionals also considered marketing and public relations skills as more important than more experienced admission professionals. Many early-career interviewees said these skills played a strong role in their daily work. Knowing these differences could be important to young people who are developing and marketing themselves for entry-level admission positions. It is also important for supervisors to be aware of what skills admission counselors find most helpful in their day-to-day work. (See Table 6 for a summary of all entry-level skills ratings by position level.)

Looking to the future, interviewees at all levels offered some additional ideas on needed skills for young professionals, along with some words of caution. While all agreed that technology skills would continue to be

important, some expressed concern that “young professionals need to understand technology—and its limits.” “Recent college graduates think they understand 16 and 17 year-olds because they know technology and social media—and they don’t,” cautioned one interviewee. Another emphasized “don’t substitute technology for personal contact.”

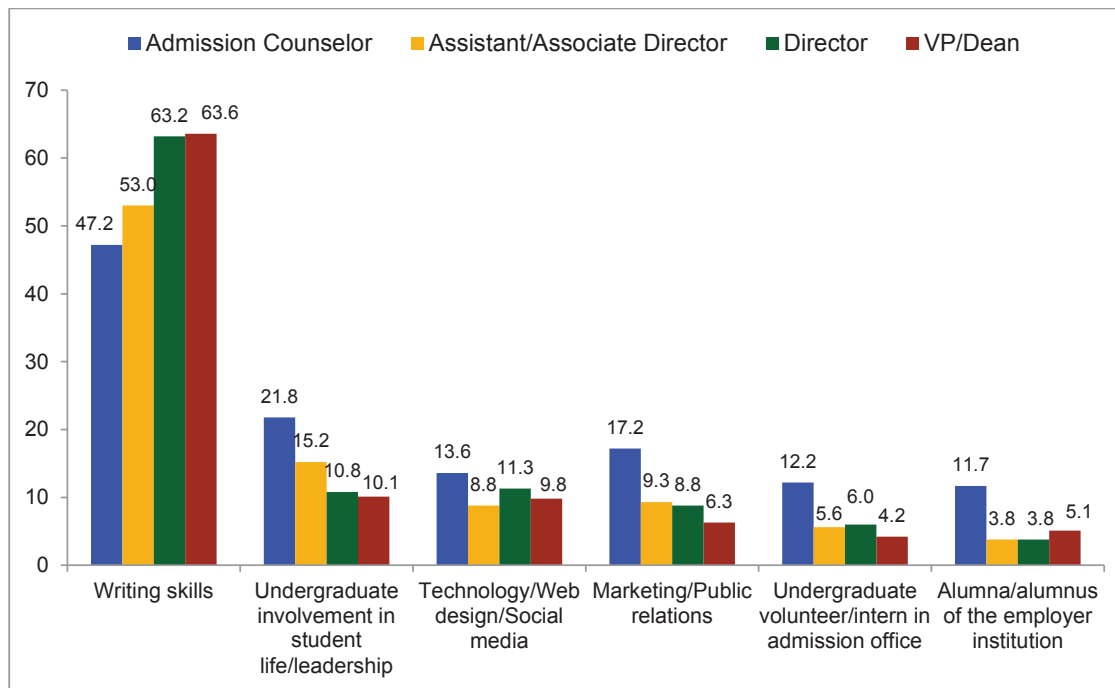
Some worried about the “people skills” of new professionals, noting, “It’s not all technical skills...you need to know how to manage statistics as well as speak to students and their families.” Others stressed the importance of a strong work ethic and developing “listening skills” and “learning to collaborate. We need to remind young staff of this all the time.”

**FINDING THE RIGHT RESOURCES**

For entry-level professionals who, by their own description, often know little about the role of admission as a profession and have no particular training for their jobs, access to the right resources can make an enormous difference in initial success and ultimate career choice. Both admission counselors and assistant/associate directors rated on-the-job training as the most valuable resource available to them, followed by professional mentoring and knowledge acquired through college or graduate coursework (see Table 7). Results of the survey also revealed some interesting variations in the value of resources to professionals at different points in their careers, which will be discussed in Chapter 2.

In interviews, admission counselors elaborated on the role of mentoring in their careers. Young professionals who had mentors attached high value to the experience, and those who didn’t often “felt adrift.” “I could use help on office etiquette, diplomacy and conflict management. I’d definitely like more mentoring,” one counselor reported in an interview. Another said she wished “I’d had a good mentor at the start...later I was paired with a more experienced counselor and it was very valuable.” On-the-job training was rated more highly than mentoring, which makes in an environment where

**Figure 1. Percentage of respondents' rating various entry-level skills as "considerably important" (shows skills with significant differences by position level)**



Source: NACAC Admission Officer Career Path Survey, 2011.

**Table 6. Respondents' ratings of the importance of various entry-level skills, by position level**

	Admission Counselor		Assistant/Associate Director		Director		Vice President/Dean	
	Percent very imp.	Mean rating	Percent very imp.	Mean rating	Percent very imp.	Mean rating	Percent very imp.	Mean rating
Verbal communication skills	98.5	4.0	98.2	4.0	97.8	4.0	99.2	4.0
Interpersonal skills	99.0	4.0	96.1	4.0	97.5	4.0	99.6	4.0
<i>Writing skills</i>	47.2	3.4	53.0	3.5	63.2	3.6	63.6	3.6
<i>Undergraduate involvement in student life/leadership</i>	21.8	2.8	15.2	2.6	10.8	2.6	10.1	2.6
<i>Technology/Web design/Social media</i>	13.6	2.5	8.8	2.5	11.3	2.6	9.8	2.6
<i>Marketing/Public relations</i>	17.2	2.6	9.3	2.3	8.8	2.4	6.3	2.3
Event planning	9.6	2.4	9.7	2.4	8.9	2.4	5.1	2.3
Statistics/Data analysis	10.6	2.3	8.5	2.2	9.4	2.3	7.2	2.3
<i>Undergraduate volunteer/intern in admission office</i>	12.2	2.2	5.6	2.1	6.0	2.2	4.2	2.2
<i>Alumna/alumnus of the employer institution</i>	11.7	2.3	3.8	1.9	3.8	2.0	5.1	2.0

Note: For skills in italics, statistically significant differences were found in the mean ratings by position level.

Source: NACAC Admission Officer Career Path Survey, 2011.

**Table 7. Percentage of respondents rating various resources as “very important” in admission career, by position level**

	All Respondents	Position Level			
		Admission Counselor	Assistant/ Associate Director	Director	VP/Dean
<i>On-the job training provided by employer institution(s)</i>	67.1%	69.1%	71.1%	65.0%	57.6%
<i>Professional mentor</i>	54.7	46.2	52.7	58.9	61.3
<i>Knowledge/skills acquired in undergraduate or graduate courses</i>	23.2	34.2	23.1	19.9	18.1
Resources/training provided by professional associations (e.g. NACAC/Affiliates, AACRAO/Affiliates, or College Board/ACT)	21.1	16.9	21.3	21.8	21.9

Note: For resources in italics, statistically significant differences were found by position level.

Source: NACAC Admission Officer Career Path Survey, 2011.

institutional policy and practice constitute the bulk of what entry-level admission officers are required to master. However, mentoring clearly serves as an informal structure through which aspiring admission professionals acquire advice and instruction on their way up the career ladder.

One vice president described a two-week on-the-job training program that he has designed for new professionals. The program covers the mission of the university, the office’s strategic plan, work expectations, time management, presentations and collaboration/contact with high school counselors, among other areas.

Several admission counselors said they would have liked specific training, especially in such areas as making presentations and giving career counseling. A few interviewees echoed one counselor’s experience, “I wasn’t prepared to do career counseling, and we do it a lot. Prospective students expect it.”

Young professionals who attended national and regional conferences had high praise for these experiences, and some offices clearly make such ex-

posure a priority. Noted one senior professional, “I counsel our employees to get involved in professional organizations as well as to learn as much as they can about the campus, get to know people in other offices and build relationships.”

On the other hand, some counselors criticized their lack of access to conferences and other professional development activities, as well as to development opportunities on campus. One suggested allowing young professionals to attend “at least one trustee meeting, president’s cabinet meeting and senior admission meeting so you can see the big picture.”

Such early exposure to the depth of the profession could reap benefits in raising its visibility and starting talented young practitioners on the road to a career. “The changing landscape of admission is strengthening its definition as a profession,” said a senior professional. “Right now we don’t have a way of growing our own. We need to prepare the next generation.”

## CHAPTER 2: RETENTION IN THE ADMISSION PROFESSION

Despite the lack of a well-marked career path, the majority of mid- and senior-level survey respondents have managed to carve out career trajectories that have enabled them to stay in and progress in the admission profession. Will that be the case for today's entry-level professionals? Will their talents benefit the profession or will they take those talents elsewhere?

Indeed, admission counselors and all admission professionals age 30 or younger were the most likely to be seeking a new career opportunity outside of admission. The challenge may be convincing those from a new “millennial” generation that is not accustomed or inclined to wait for career rewards to stay around long enough to reap those rewards and realize their potential. What lessons can they learn from the career trajectories of those who have gone ahead, and can those careers provide a template for the future? And what support will be needed to retain and nurture a promising new breed of admission professionals?

It is also important to examine the resources and skills that have proven valuable thus far for mid-career professionals, as well as what they will need in order to continue to grow in a rapidly changing global and academic environment.

### CHOOSING TO MOVE AHEAD—OR OUT

Admission professionals, just as those in other careers, encounter challenges and obstacles as they move ahead, and these can be exacerbated by the lack of an understood career path. Both survey results and interviews show that the most serious threat to a long-term career occurs for those at the entry level. Most are not yet fully committed to the field and are still learning about its rewards and challenges. Some professional “melt” is to be expected in any profession, so it is unreasonable to expect that all who enter the admission profession will choose to remain in it for the rest of their career. However, it is in the interest of the profession, and of colleges and universities more broadly, to attract an able and diverse workforce. Addressing barriers to recruitment or retention of highly-qualified and committed professionals is a key step toward the success of the profession itself.

Fifty-five percent of survey respondents reported that they plan to seek a new career opportunity within two to three years. Of those, 15 percent are seeking or will seek an opportunity outside of the admission profession and 39 percent are unsure if they will remain in the profession or enter a different profession. As expected, admission counselors and admission professionals age 30 or younger were most likely to be seeking a new career opportunity within three years—76 percent and 78 percent, respectively. Nearly one-quarter of admission counselors seeking new opportunities were doing so outside of the admission profession, as were 21 percent of professionals 30 or younger. Forty-two percent in each of these groups were unsure about staying in admission (see Tables 8a and 8b).

The decision to move ahead, especially in the early years of an admission career, may not be clear-cut, and that's where patience and helpful col-

leagues can play an important role. As Angel Perez reports in his essay (page 47), after his first year, “I didn't want to do the job anymore.” He was beset by many of the problems young professionals still find frustrating: an “insane” travel pace, too many files to read, never-ending other demands. His boss convinced him to stay another year “because one year in admission was not enough to understand why the work matters.”



Another essayist, Kathleen Massey, also says the two-year mark was when she finally realized “the work we were doing was helping people transform their lives through education...my values were really well-connected to what I was doing at work on a daily basis.” Another senior professional who was interviewed attributed her decision to stay in the field to two factors: she said she was “doing something truly worthwhile” in helping students navigate college choice, and that she “really enjoyed my colleagues” in the profession.

A high proportion of assistant/associate directors also plan to seek a new career opportunity within three years, and fewer than half (45 percent) of those job seekers definitely plan to stay in the admission field. Sixty-nine percent of vice presidents/deans do not plan to leave their positions within three years, and among those only 11 percent plan to look outside of admission, which could limit opportunities for mid-career professionals to advance (see Table 8a and 8b).

Survey results revealed small differences between the short-term career plans of men and women. Fifty-one percent of men and 57 percent of women planned to leave their current positions within three years. Of those, 55 percent of men planned to seek an opportunity in admission compared to

40 percent of women. As evidenced later in the report (see Figure 3), women are under-represented in more senior admission positions, suggesting the need to examine ways to retain and encourage women in the admission leadership pipeline.

There also were important differences based on race/ethnicity. Fifty-one percent of white, non-Hispanic admission professionals planned to move on from their current position compared to approximately two-thirds of Black, non-Hispanics, Asian/Pacific Islanders and multi-racial respondents and 82 percent of Hispanics. However, Hispanics were most likely to be seeking a new opportunity in admission (54 percent), compared to only 35 percent of black professionals (see Table 8a and 8b).

### A HIGH TURNOVER RATE

As evidenced in the next chapter, turnover in the admission profession—for those whose responses were captured by the survey and/or who choose to stay in the profession—appears similar to turnover in the educational workplace overall. However, entry-level professionals who are not offered NACAC membership by their institutions and would not have had the opportunity to respond to this survey, appear (based on interviews and anecdote) to exit the profession in relatively large numbers. In interviews, senior administrators expressed concern about the high rate of turnover for young professionals and its implications for the field. “I worry about the relentless pace today. There used to be occasional slow periods, but that’s a thing of the past,” commented one. They noted that the traditional job requirements for admission counselors, such as spending weeks on the road meeting with and recruiting prospective students, have become more grueling and less rewarding. One respondent observed, “The road is different today. Instead of socializing and networking with colleagues from other schools after a long day, they [counselors] go back to their rooms and do email and write reports.” Another director described corporate “poaching” of talented young staffers: “We train them and they get recruited away by corporations who like their ability to do sales with compassion.”

The young admission professionals voiced concerns about work-life balance more frequently than any other group. This may result from the heavier travel schedules of newer professionals. Among the young professionals interviewed, the most frequently-cited frustrations and complaints included burn-out resulting from a hectic pace and long periods of travel, growing emphasis on encouraging more students to apply, low salaries, no upward mobility and lack of work-life balance. At the same time, most clearly enjoyed certain aspects of their work, especially the opportunities to “develop relationships with students and their families...help them navigate the process...make a difference in a student’s life.” Expressing the conflict between frustration and rewards, a counselor reported, “I could use a sounding board, someone to talk to about my career and to give me advice.”

Some liked the life of an admission counselor: “Just when you’re ready to stop traveling, it’s time to read applications. I enjoy the variety and challenge.” But for others, long periods of time on the road were difficult

and isolating. Many young interviewees were recently married or engaged and worried about the impact of a counselor’s life on their spouses and potential children. Family concerns were frequently linked to comments on low salaries. Said one counselor, “I’d like to stay [in the field], but I can’t have a family on my current salary.”

The millennial generation has frequently been characterized as eager to move ahead, and the concern with lack of upward mobility by those under 30 may be a reflection of both ambition and impatience. At the same time, many younger interviewees commented that an economy in recession meant those above them were inclined to stay put, and the creation of new jobs and promotions were rare.

In fact, survey results indicated that those at the most senior levels of the admission hierarchy were least likely to be looking for a new career opportunity within three years. This seemed to be a more frequent complaint at larger institutions. “Admission counseling is a perfect job for someone right out of college,” one counselor commented, “but the way the system is structured here, there is no future.” Some women described an “old boys club” atmosphere as detrimental to advancement. Again, as Figures 3 and 4 will show, there are important considerations for individual institutions and the profession as a whole, particularly as the student population seeking entry into higher education continues to change and become more diverse, with respect to the admission office as the face(s) of higher education to prospective students.

### DECIDING TO LEAVE THE FIELD

If no one is there to intervene, such as a trusted mentor or boss, it’s not surprising that those who don’t see the career potential, or feel stalled at the gate, may decide to seek another option. Interviews with entry-level professionals revealed varying reasons for moving out. A few wanted to return to their original career choice, such as the musician who was going to graduate school and an eventual career in music education. Changing over to student affairs offered an attractive alternative to some who liked working in academe but wanted less travel.

The majority of interviewees who said they were likely to leave admission worried about how to balance work demands with family life. These young professionals enjoyed helping students and their families with college choices, but thought they might find the same rewards with less pressure by counseling or teaching on the secondary school level. One counselor explained her dilemma: “I want to help students who are stressed, to provide a voice of sanity, to help them navigate the decision.” She was debating changing to secondary school counseling, which she thought would be less stressful as she started a family, or staying on in admission with the real possibility of advancement at her university from a boss who wanted to groom her as a successor.

A look at the career histories of mid-level and senior professionals, along with the education, skills, and resources that have helped them move ahead, may help those who are considering a different career to take a fresh look at existing and future career options.

**Table 8a. Percentage of admission professionals seeking a new career opportunity**

	Seeking a new career opportunity right now	Plan to seek a new opportunity within one year	Plan to seek a new opportunity within two to three years	Do not plan to leave my current position within three years
<b>Total</b>	<b>8.5%</b>	<b>17.8%</b>	<b>28.4%</b>	<b>45.3%</b>
<b>Gender</b>				
Male	8.8	14.2	28.0	49.1
Female	8.1	20.2	28.8	42.9
<b>Age</b>				
30 or under	10.8	27.1	40.4	21.7
31-40	8.3	16.7	28.7	46.3
41-50	8.2	11.9	17.3	62.6
51-60	5.9	7.9	20.8	65.3
61 or over	2.3	22.7	11.4	63.6
<b>Position hierarchy</b>				
Admission counselor	12.4	27.6	36.2	23.8
Assistant/Associate director of admission	10.3	20.5	32.8	36.4
Director of admission	5.0	12.5	24.3	58.2
Vice president/Dean of admission and/or enrollment management	5.9	9.0	16.5	68.6
<b>Time in profession</b>				
Fewer than 3 years	7.3	26.6	36.2	29.9
3-5 years	11.4	25.2	38.2	25.2
6-8 years	12.4	19.2	37.2	31.2
9-12 years	8.5	21.2	26.3	44.1
13-20 years	5.5	9.3	21.7	63.4
More than 20 years	6.2	10.6	15.4	67.8
<b>Previous position in admission</b>				
Yes	7.7	16.3	27.2	48.7
No	10.4	18.9	28.6	42.1
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>				
White, non-Hispanic	7.1	15.7	28.1	49.0
Black, non-Hispanic	14.3	26.3	25.6	33.8
American Indian/ Alaskan Native	<i>0.0</i>	<i>50.0</i>	<i>0.0</i>	<i>50.0</i>
Asian/Pacific Islander	5.6	16.7	41.7	36.1
Hispanic	19.7	30.3	31.8	18.2
Multi-racial	13.0	25.9	25.9	35.2

Note: Figures in italics should be interpreted with caution due to low sample size (fewer than 15 per cell). Differences by previous position in admission are not statistically significant.

Source: NACAC Admission Officer Career Path Survey, 2011.

**Table 8b. Among admission professionals seeking a new career opportunity, percentage looking in or out of admission field**

	Seeking a new career opportunity in admission field	Seeking a new career opportunity outside admission field	Unsure if seeking career opportunity in admission field
<b>Total</b>	<b>45.9%</b>	<b>15.2%</b>	<b>38.9%</b>
<b>Gender</b>			
Male	55.4	9.1	35.5
Female	40.2	18.7	41.1
<b>Age</b>			
30 or under	37.2	20.9	41.8
31-40	54.6	9.6	35.8
41-50	62.2	6.3	31.5
51-60	34.3	17.1	48.6
61 or over	31.3	31.3	37.5
<b>Position hierarchy</b>			
Admission counselor	33.1	23.8	43.1
Assistant/associate director of admission	45.7	14.9	39.3
Director of admission	61.0	7.8	31.2
Vice president/Dean of admission and/or enrollment management	48.8	11.3	40.0
<b>Time in profession</b>			
Fewer than 3 years	23.4	27.4	49.2
3-5 years	38.6	19.0	42.4
6-8 years	50.0	12.8	37.2
9-12 years	55.6	6.8	37.6
13-20 years	63.2	7.5	29.2
More than 20 years	50.0	15.9	34.1
<b>Previous position in admission</b>			
Yes	53.6	34.1	12.3
No	31.5	50.0	18.5
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>			
White, non-Hispanic	47.0	14.0	39.0
Black, non-Hispanic	34.8	22.5	42.7
American Indian/ Alaskan Native	<i>50.0</i>	<i>0.0</i>	<i>50.0</i>
Asian/Pacific Islander	43.5	17.4	39.1
Hispanic	53.7	16.7	29.6
Multi-racial	40.0	17.1	42.9

NOTE: Figures in italics should be interpreted with caution due to low sample size (fewer than 15 per cell).

Differences by race/ethnicity are not statistically significant.

Source: NACAC Admission Officer Career Path Survey, 2011.



**Table 8c. Simplified look at admission officer career plans, by selected characteristics**

	<u>Staying in admission:</u> Not seeking or seeking in admission field	<u>Unsure:</u> Seeking but unsure about staying in admission field	<u>Leaving admission:</u> Seeking outside admission field
<b>Total</b>	<b>70.4%</b>	<b>21.3%</b>	<b>8.3%</b>
<b>Gender</b>			
Male	77.2	18.1	4.7
Female	65.8	23.5	10.7
<b>Age</b>			
30 or under	50.9	32.7	16.4
31-40	75.6	19.2	5.2
41-50	85.7	11.9	2.4
51-60	77.2	16.8	5.9
61 or over	75.0	13.6	11.4
<b>Position hierarchy</b>			
Admission counselor	49.0	32.9	18.1
Assistant/Associate director of admission	65.4	25.1	9.5
Director of admission	83.7	13.1	3.3
Vice president/Dean of admission and/or enrollment management	83.9	12.5	3.5
<b>Time in profession</b>			
Fewer than 3 years	46.3	34.5	19.2
3-5 years	54.1	31.7	14.2
6-8 years	65.6	25.6	8.8
9-12 years	75.0	21.2	3.8
13-20 years	86.6	10.7	2.8
More than 20 years	83.9	11.0	5.1
<b>Previous position in admission</b>			
Yes	76.2	17.5	6.3
No	60.4	28.9	10.7
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>			
White, non-Hispanic	73.0	19.9	7.1
Black, non-Hispanic	56.4	28.6	15.0
American Indian/ Alaskan Native	75.0	25.0	0.0
Asian/ Pacific Islander	63.9	25.0	11.1
Hispanic	62.1	24.2	13.6
Multi-racial	61.1	27.8	11.1

NOTE: Figures in italics should be interpreted with caution due to low sample size (fewer than 15 per cell).  
Source: NACAC Admission Officer Career Path Survey, 2011.

# MOVING UP IN THE PROFESSION: PERSONAL ESSAY 1

by **Kathleen Massey**, *university registrar and executive director, enrollment services, McGill University*

People arrive at being a leader in our field via many different paths. I'm proud of my record so far, but I think one of my strengths has been that I have never intended to model my career on that of others. I tend not to promote the traditional way of doing things; I've always wanted to differentiate myself.

As a young person, I did not originally plan to be a registrar, executive director of enrollment services or assistant vice president of enrollment. Who does? My plan was to study political science and make politics my career. At a key point in my life, I became disenchanted with politics. To expand my horizons, I plunged into the "real world" after graduating with my BA, trying several different work and volunteer positions—including positions in marketing and government—and I opened my own business. Eventually, for very practical reasons, I applied to work in the registrar's office at a university in Toronto. To my surprise, I landed the job. With bills to pay, this was going to be a two-year stint while I found my "real passion" and "true calling."

That was in 1989. It is mildly shocking to me that 25 years have passed since then. My decision to stay in this field was deliberate, and I continue to learn as my career evolves. Here's why I made that decision and what I've learned.

- I gradually became clear about my values and principles.

About two years into the entry-level role, I realized that the work we were doing was helping people transform their lives through education. It occurred to me that I could buy into that for the long term. My values were really well connected to what I was doing at work on a daily basis. This is a bit ironic, because I had avoided the registrar's office when I was an undergraduate out of sheer fear of the power of the registrar to de-register me for my own administrative slip-ups. It never occurred to me that the people in that office were actually interested in my academic success. Now I realized that many of them did care, and I wanted to be part of that process. Today, I actively and routinely reach out to students to let them know we care about them and the quality of their postsecondary experiences.

- I have found ways of furthering my knowledge, skills and experience.

I sought out a variety of work experiences in the registrar's office, including in recruitment and admission. I actively diversified my knowledge, skills and experience and worked to avoid being pigeonholed in a particular area.

I began to say "yes" to virtually every new opportunity that came my way. A new project? A new system implementation? A chance to integrate teams to create a new service area? Work closely with students on a project? Yes to all. I learned while doing, and I continue to learn this way.

Albert Einstein said, "We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them."

I try to explore new ways of thinking and doing. I try to make sense of people's needs, opinions, new technologies, and new research, facilitating the emergence of a new vision. In our world, that can mean creating new service models, a new organizational structure, new technologies, new policies, or eliminating bureaucracy.

I have also taken responsibility for my own formal learning. While working full time, I returned to school to complete an MA in Leadership. I have also completed a senior university administrators' program. Each year I set formal learning goals and achieve them.

- I take risks; I support risk-taking in others.

Albert Einstein said, "We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them." I try to explore new ways of thinking and doing. I try to make sense of people's needs, opinions, new technologies, and new research, facilitating the emergence of a new vision. In our world, that can mean creating new service models, a new organizational structure, new technologies, new policies, or eliminating bureaucracy. Risk is a necessary aspect of thinking and doing in new ways.

- I ask the people who do the work and who experience the services to share their ideas; I have learned that it's important to hold people accountable for achieving goals.

My career evolved, and I joined the admission and recruitment team. I loved the work in this area, too. The first thing I did

was meet with my new team to ask them what they thought should be improved in order to provide better service to prospective students and applicants. We created a new service vision and an action plan using those ideas. And we delivered on it.

I learned through this experience that the wisdom and experience to make changes and improvements often exists within the community doing the work and benefiting from the services. It's our job as leaders to find a way to unleash that knowledge and create a setting where people are empowered to make changes. This means developing the courage to let your own ideas be transformed by the influence of those around you. It also means being comfortable with crystallizing and communicating a vision and setting the bar high for performance and holding people accountable to it.

Learning that I should avoid conflating my self-identity and my ideas was fundamental to my development as a leader. The changes I've seen since 1989 have been significant, and it has been critical to be open to new ways of doing things, new ideas and new influences, and to be comfortable with shifting sands.

- I've learned the hard way that one must be well to do well.

In 2001, I decided to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the postsecondary system by accepting the role of registrar at a large Toronto community college. This was my first "registrar" gig, and I was responsible for everything from recruitment to graduation for all students. I also had senior responsibility for strategic enrollment management. I learned a lot about the community college system, particularly about how accessible programs and student diversity made for a wonderful learning experience for the students. It was a resource-strained environment, which meant that we had to be very resourceful.

I routinely worked into the middle of the night and on weekends. The long hours at the office had a negative effect on me personally. Curtailing my hours, exercising, spending more time with family, eating right—I wasn't doing all of this, but I was aware that I needed to start.

Things are completely different now. Every day I make deliberate choices to preserve my well-being. This allows me to be more effective on the job and in my life outside the university.

- I continue to seek new opportunities.

An opportunity to transfer to a university across the country arose about three years later, and I accepted it. It was a promotion and a chance to learn about another educational jurisdiction and institutional culture. I became the assistant vice president (enrollment) at a university in western Canada. Several years later, I was invited to join McGill University in Montreal, Quebec. I welcomed the chance to work at a very special and internationally well-regarded Anglophone university in a Francophone milieu. These opportunities have been transformative learning experiences for me. I continue to be open to opportunities to have new career experiences and to learn.

- I've learned that it's okay, but not easy, to turn down an opportunity.

As eager as I have been to accept a new role at a new school or to take on a new project, there have been times when it has been appropriate to decline the opportunity. I've learned to trust my instincts and to take the time to thoroughly analyze a situation before jumping in. I've used my heart and my head to make decisions.

- I value my community of practice—an international network of friends and colleagues.

I have volunteered on national and international committees to expand and share my knowledge. I am proud of having served as President of the Association of Registrars of the Universities and Colleges of Canada (ARUCC). I'm proud of the work McGill University is doing to share international credential evaluation knowledge and tools with Quebec colleagues. I count on my network when trouble-shooting challenges or developing new ideas.

- The most important lesson I've learned is that people come first.

The work will always be there. It's important to set new, aspirational goals (and achieve them), but at the end of the day, people matter most—whether they are your colleagues, your clients, your friends, or your family. Be human, connect meaningfully, and say "thank you."

We have an important role, one that affords us the chance to help students and families achieve lifetime educational goals. For me, it continues to be a very special privilege to facilitate even a small part of that big dream.

## CHAPTER 3: ADVANCEMENT IN THE ADMISSION PROFESSION

### TAKING AN ADMISSION CAREER TO THE NEXT LEVEL

The common wisdom, expressed in interviews by several professionals at all levels, is that “you have to move out if you want to move up.” Based on the findings in this study, and due to the hierarchical nature of the admission office, there is some truth to this statement. According to the detailed job histories collected through the survey, admission professionals across all levels reported holding an average of four positions in their careers and having had an average of two employers. The numbers are relatively even across different subgroups, including gender, age and race/ethnicity. Only nine respondents almost all at the senior level—had held 10 positions (see Table 9).

That admission counselors would report the same average number of positions as senior admission professionals is a surprising finding. A cursory look at the detailed job histories confirmed a suspicion that younger professionals were more likely to report short-term jobs and internships, while senior professionals with longer resumes were not likely to report these early short-terms jobs.<sup>9</sup> An analysis of the average number of years at each position, displayed in Table 9, shows that admission counselors had on average spent only 1.6 years in each position, while senior admission professionals had held positions for an average of almost 13 years. Still, it is remarkable that those at the level of vice president/dean would have reported, on average, only four positions at two employers.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau’s Current Population Survey, the median employment tenure among all college graduates was 5.5 years. Among college graduates who are 25-34 years of age in 2012, the median tenure was 3.1 years. For those who were 35-44 years old, the average length of employee tenure was 5.7 years. For workers who were between 45-54, average tenure was 8.2 years. For workers 55 to 64, the average length of tenure with their current employer was 10.5 years (see Table 10).<sup>10</sup>

For all individuals (age 16 and over) working in educational services, the average length of employee tenure from 2002 to 2012 was 4.3 years. For employees working in the public sector, tenure was nearly double the median of private sector employees: 7.8 years versus 4.2 years.<sup>11</sup> This discrepancy is partially explained by the worker profile. Workers in the public and educational sector are generally older and more educated.

When NACAC career path survey respondents were asked about their short-term career plans, a large majority (70 percent) reported that they were staying in admission (either not seeking a new career opportunity within 3 years or looking within the admission field). About another 20 percent planned to seek a career opportunity within 3 years, but were unsure about whether to stay in admission. Several factors were related to plans to stay in the field, including gender, age, race/ethnicity, time in the profession,

**Table 9. Average number of positions, years in each position, and number of employers**

	Average number of positions	Average number of years per position	Average number of employers
<b>Total</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>4.6</b>	<b>2.3</b>
<b>Gender</b>			
Male	3.9	5.4	2.3
Female	4.0	4.0	2.3
<b>Age</b>			
30 or under	3.9	1.6	2.4
31-40	3.9	4.0	2.3
41-50	4.0	5.9	2.3
51-60	4.2	8.7	2.4
61 or over	3.8	12.7	2.5
<b>Position hierarchy</b>			
Admission counselor	4.0	1.7	2.3
Assistant/Associate director of admission	4.0	3.6	2.4
Director of admission	3.9	5.6	2.3
Vice president/Dean of admission and/or enrollment management	3.9	8.1	2.3
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>			
White, non-Hispanic	4.0	4.8	2.3
Black, non-Hispanic	4.0	4.2	2.5
American Indian/Alaskan Native	4.0	3.6	3.8
Asian/Pacific Islander	4.1	3.9	2.4
Hispanic	3.6	3.7	2.0
Multi-racial	3.7	3.1	2.1

Source: NACAC Admission Officer Career Path Survey, 2011.

<sup>9</sup> NACAC plans to conduct further analysis with the considerable data collected during the study to examine career paths in greater detail.

<sup>10</sup> U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration. Current Population Survey (CPS), 2012 Displaced Workers Supplement. <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/tenure.nr0.htm>. Accessed May 9, 2014. (Table 4).

<sup>11</sup> U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration. Current Population Survey, 2012 Displaced Workers Supplement. <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/tenure.nr0.htm>. Accessed May 9, 2014. (Table 5).

**Table 10. Median years of tenure with current employer for college graduates age 25 and older, by age and gender, January 2012**

	Median years with current employer		
	All	Men	Women
<b>Total (25 and Older)</b>	<b>5.5</b>	<b>5.7</b>	<b>5.3</b>
25 to 34 years	3.1	3.1	3.1
35 to 44 years	5.7	5.7	5.7
45 to 54 years	8.2	8.6	7.9
55 to 64 years	10.5	11.3	10.2
65 years and over	11.0	11.3	10.7

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration. Current Population Survey (CPS), 2012 Displaced Workers Supplement. <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/tenure.nr0.htm>. Accessed May 9, 2014. (Table 4).

and having a previous position in admission. For example, 84 percent of directors of admission planned to stay in the field, compared to 65 percent of assistant/associate directors and 49 percent of admission counselors. In terms of age, there was a stark difference between the plans of professionals 30 and under (only half planned to stay in the field) in comparison to those over 30, when the percentage climbs past 75 percent. Consequently, mentoring promising young professionals for advancement opportunities could greatly benefit retention in the field, particularly since they are also the most likely to be unsure about their career plans. Men also are more likely than women to plan to stay in the field, though only slightly, while women are more likely to be unsure of their plans (see Table 8c).

**FINDING AND FOLLOWING A CAREER PATH**

Perhaps the most interesting and exciting aspect of career trajectories in the admission field today is that changes in the profession have opened up a much greater set of advancement options for professionals, even without explicit credentials or pathways for advancement. This may include moving into international research and recruitment, assuming a leading role in marketing and branding responsibilities or focusing on enrollment management. During interviews, some professionals said that their career goals don't necessarily require becoming a vice president or dean, noting that those jobs may take them away from the work they do best and enjoy most. By the same token, most vice presidents, vice provosts or deans ruled out a university presidency as their next step, primarily because of its "all-consuming" nature. A few said they did consider it as a possible, perhaps desirable, goal.

The development of a career path for admission professionals may, in fact, include one with many branches. This structure could prove especially attractive to entry and mid-career professionals who may not be interested in what they perceive to be their next logical job or worry about being caught in a predictable pattern. In listing their last few positions, survey respondents at mid- and senior-levels indicated considerable variety and a few interesting patterns. For example, some advanced by leaving the field for a while (generally for a position which was connected to admission work

in some form, such as high school counselor, university administrator in another department, or professional at a non-profit organization) and then coming back at a higher level. Others moved into a comparable job at a new institution, but one that was generally larger and/or more nationally recognized than their former employer.<sup>12</sup>

A look at some experiences of essayists and interviewees provides a sense of the way traditional and non-traditional approaches can advance a career and may address some of the questions asked by young professionals about mobility and work-life balance. One vice president described leaving college admission for a while to work in a community-based organization and a public high school. He said these jobs enhanced his professional skills and his understanding of how college admission policies and practices impact high schools and their students. Essayist Sundar Kumarasamy was intrigued early on by the relatively new and rapidly-evolving specialty of enrollment management. He then proceeded to build his expertise at three different universities, religious and secular, in the East and Midwest.

**WHEN TO TAKE THE NEXT STEP AND WHY**

Move up by staying put or move up by moving out? These are among the questions that mid-career and senior professionals have wrestled with and those interviewed have chosen, at various times, both options.

Some said that moving out was a matter of necessity. An assistant director we interviewed would prefer to stay at her current institution but depicted an established/rigid atmosphere and insular environment that precluded internal promotion. A director at a mid-sized private university said she would need to go to a larger institution in order to have access to "the resources, professional development and mentoring" she would need to meet her long-term career goals. A director advised, "Be willing to move. I wouldn't be where I am if I had not moved."

Indeed, many interviewees who have moved or are contemplating moving said they needed to be at a different type of institution—most frequently

<sup>12</sup> NACAC plans to conduct further analysis with the considerable data collected during the study to examine career paths in greater detail.

a large public or private with a more national reputation—in order to advance their careers, whether or not the job was a significant advancement. A director who moved from assistant director at a small state university to his current position at another small state university is ready to begin searching for a position as vice president or associate vice president for enrollment management. To expand his future career prospects, he has decided that the next post should be at “a small or mid-sized college that is more national in scope.”

Another director has stayed at one institution and managed to focus on his special interests in marketing and enrollment management. Now he’s interested in a vice presidency and thinks it may be time to look to a larger flagship public university. A Big Ten university is the goal of a director who has already moved a few times, with a mix of public and private institutions in his background. He chose his current job because it was “a career changer—it’s given me more management experience and challenges.” Now he wants “to be successful in a larger setting.”

The challenge of building a new program, division or operation may motivate a move, even for those who have been in one place for a long time. A long-time vice president who had built her university’s enrollment management operation took a “bold career leap”—and a considerable geographic jump—to take on a similar challenge at a new university.



Essayist David Burge, who has been at his current university for two years, credited his seven years at one institution with playing a major role in his career success: “I had told myself I would be at the University of Nebraska for five years but it turned into seven. During those...years I had the privilege of working with a number of incredibly talented men and women in a culture that promoted from within...there are now five of us that are directors of admission or enrollment at large public universities.”

A vice president who has moved three times in order to advance ultimately expects to leave his mid-sized private university for a similar but more nationally-recognized university to “get to the next level.” However, he commented, “I don’t want to leave too soon or stay too long. I need to keep my ego from getting in the way.”

For one vice president, education, professional development and a few strategic moves defined a successful career trajectory. Beginning his career as a counselor, he credited the NACAC Middle Manager Institute with providing “a broad perspective of how admission fits into the financial side of the house.” A master’s degree, a move from a large state university to a mid-size private university in order to move up, and finally, “when I was ready for my own ship,” a cross-country journey for a position where he is part of the president’s cabinet, marked his path to achieving his goals. “I tell my staff that you are in a profession. There is a trajectory,” he noted.

Not surprisingly, most professionals said they received job leads from friends in the field. At the senior level in particular, most were recruited by search firms, often on the recommendation of friends and colleagues.

#### ADVANCING IN PLACE

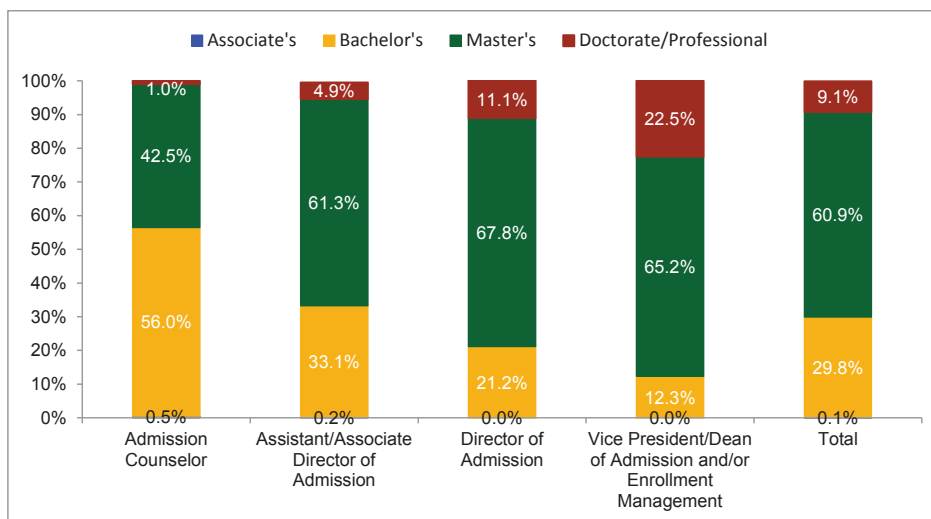
Those who’ve stayed in one place often cite both professional and personal reasons: “There are some options for promotion...this is a value and trust-centered environment, a great community for raising children, the university supports PD [professional development],” reported an associate director in an interview. A current director who has spent 14 years at his small college said he has no plans to leave: “I love what I do because the business is always changing.”

A vice president who has worked for his alma mater since receiving his master’s degree has been able to expand his portfolio to include expertise in nontraditional and graduate admission, financial aid and marketing. He plans to stay put for the near future. However, he said he recognized he may need to relocate eventually, preferably when his children are older, for career advancement.

#### LIMITS OF TRAJECTORY

As the survey responses indicated, a successful career is not necessarily defined by constant advancement. Not every senior professional is a vice president or wants to be. And some professionals have capped their careers at the associate or director levels. Interviews provide additional insights into this topic. A former counselor who is now an associate director and still does a lot of recruiting, “because I enjoy it,” expressed some ambivalence about moving up to a director’s spot. She said she knows it’s a next step but worries that her strengths are not in policy and budget and that a directorship could mean fewer connections with students and families. An associate director who is also a Ph.D. student voiced similar ambivalence: “I changed institutions to go from assistant to associate director, but I don’t know if I want to be a director. I wonder if it will sustain my interest. Will I still be able to work with students?”

Figure 2. Highest degree earned, by position level



Source: NACAC Admission Officer Career Path Survey, 2011.

A director with 12 years of experience thought he could have the greatest impact at the vice president’s level but was unsure about the effect on family and work-life balance. “I’d like to talk to deans and vice presidents and find out what it takes to be successful,” he admitted. Another director who has spent his entire career, beginning as a counselor, in one institution, said he’s not interested in a vice presidency and was happy with “a supportive environment at work and a good place for my family to live.”

**EDUCATION AND ADVANCEMENT**

Survey data show that a significant number of admission professionals identified that graduate education is important in order to move ahead in the field. They are not certain, however, about what form that education should take, including level and type of degree. Forty-three percent of admission counselors have a master’s degree, compared to 61 percent of assistant/associate directors. The percentage of professionals with Ph.D.s also increases with higher-level positions: five percent of assistant/associate directors, 11 percent of directors and 23 percent of vice presidents/deans (see Figure 2).

As noted earlier, master’s degrees are more likely to be concentrated in fewer disciplines than bachelor’s degrees. A master’s in education was the most prevalent at 41 percent. At the doctoral level, 56 percent of degrees were in education. Still, there is no documentation indicating what might be the best concentration for a master’s for those in admission. Commented one counselor who was interviewed, “I hear that you need a master’s to move ahead, but it can be in anything.” In his essay

(Appendix A), Ken Anselment recalled being counseled by his dean to take advantage of his university’s offer of free graduate education and “get a degree in something you love.” Mr. Anselment chose British and American literature.

Some senior-level interviewees expressed concern about the lack of tailored graduate degree programs to match the expansion of admission office responsibilities and, in particular, the growth of enrollment management as a specialization. They indicated that developing such programs would provide a needed element in creating a career path for advancement and building recognition of admission as a profession.

Many interviewees who have decided to pursue vice presidencies are enrolled in or planning to enroll in Ph.D. programs, and several said they are not completely satisfied with the offerings available. Most of these professionals want expertise in enrollment management, but complained that no one is offering such a program. The majority are studying such areas as higher education leadership and organizational development. One vice president urged NACAC to develop a graduate program in enrollment management, perhaps in conjunction with a university. Still, another vice president observed, “In the final analysis, there is no VP school. You have to learn to negotiate the land mines yourself.”

Is a high-level admission position a career ladder to a college or university presidency? With very few exceptions, most vice presidents pronounce themselves “not interested,” citing the extraordinary demands on a president in today’s higher education world.

**MID-CAREER SKILLS AND RESOURCES FOR ADVANCEMENT**

Not surprisingly, the preferred skills for advancement at the mid-career and senior levels differ markedly from those most preferred for entry-level professionals and indicate the growing scope and complexity of the profession. The survey measured the importance of 13 different skills for advancement in the profession, and, across all respondents, previous admission experience and writing were rated as the most important skills. Skills in data analysis, personnel/resource management, and marketing/public relations also were all rated highly (see Table 11a). As noted earlier, all skill sets included in Table 11a are at least somewhat important, suggesting the diverse range of skills needed in the modern admission office. In open-ended responses and interviews, NACAC members also mentioned management and budget experience, an understanding of higher educational overall, and political acumen.

Examining ratings by position revealed some interesting differences. For example, although previous admission experience was rated highly overall, the percentage of professionals who rated it as very important decreased from the entry-level admission counselor to vice president/dean. Those at more senior levels also rated personnel/resource management, business management and higher education administration as less important compared to admission counselors (see Tables 11b and 12).

It is interesting to note that the most frequently low-ranked skills are multicultural, transfer, international and non-traditional recruitment, which are all areas of tremendous projected growth at colleges and universities for the short and long-term. However, each of these skills was much more highly rated by admission counselors compared to vice presidents/deans.

Admission counselors were between three and five times more likely to rate these skills as very important (see Table 12).

As shown in Table 7 earlier in this chapter, admission professionals at all levels considered on-the-job training programs provided by their institutions to be a highly valued resource. However, vice presidents/deans rated professional mentors as being even more important to them, although only slightly so. Approximately two-thirds of all respondents (67 percent) ranked on-the-job training as very important, compared to only 58 percent of vice presidents/deans. Knowledge and skills acquired in undergraduate and graduate coursework also became less important as professionals moved from entry-level to senior positions. Conversely, having a mentor became more important as people advanced in the profession. Sixty-one percent of VPs/deans rated professional mentoring as very important compared to 59 percent of directors, 53 percent of assistant/associate directors and 46 percent of admission counselors.

In interviews and essays (Appendix A), mentoring has been cited consistently as a critical element in career advancement and development. One mid-level professional commented, “I wish I had had a good mentor from the start...I have a good mentor on campus now and that has helped me a lot.” Another described the advantages of having mentors with dissimilar personalities, noting that knowledge acquired from both were complementary and valuable.

Mentors were variously categorized as bosses, office co-workers, campus colleagues and professional contacts outside the office. “My best mentor

**Table 11a. Importance of various skills for mid- and senior-level admission positions, all respondent ratings**

	Percentage of respondents				Mean rating
	Very important	Moderately important	Somewhat important	Not important	
Previous admission experience	77.3%	17.7%	4.5%	0.4%	3.7
Writing skills	74.1	23.5	2.3	0.1	3.7
Statistics/Data analysis	69.4	26.8	3.6	0.3	3.7
Personnel/Resource management	62.7	27.2	8.9	1.2	3.5
Marketing/Public relations	56.9	37.0	5.8	0.3	3.5
Business management	50.5	37.4	10.7	1.3	3.4
Higher education administration	40.0	42.2	14.4	3.4	3.2
Advanced degree (Master's or Doctorate)	37.8	37.6	17.0	7.6	3.1
Technology/Web design/Social media	26.4	55.8	16.5	1.3	3.1
Multicultural recruitment	22.3	48.3	26.0	3.4	2.9
Transfer recruitment	16.7	44.2	34.0	5.2	2.7
International recruitment	13.6	41.9	37.8	6.6	2.6
Non-traditional student recruitment	11.9	35.5	40.2	12.4	2.5

Source: NACAC Admission Officer Career Path Survey, 2011.



listened to my ideas and adopted some. He also taught me not to let ego get in the way of a good idea,” commented a senior professional. Several expressed a desire for a more formal networking program so that professionals can take maximum advantage of its benefits at all stages of their careers.

Survey results indicated that skills acquired through professional associations, such as NACAC, AACRAO, or the College Board/ACT, were rated as moderately to somewhat important. Fewer than one-quarter of admission professionals at any position level rated these resources as “very important (see Table 7).”

**DIVERSITY IN THE PIPELINE**

Survey results suggest that both gender and race/ethnicity have an effect on the career trajectories of admission professionals. Although women are overrepresented in entry- and mid-level positions, comprising approximately 70 percent of admission counselors and assistant/associate directors, they become increasing less prominent at more senior positions. Although women comprised 59 percent of all college undergraduates, they represent 53 percent of directors of admission and only 40 percent of vice presidents/deans of admission or enrollment management (see

**Table 11b. Importance of various skills for mid- and senior-level admission positions, Director and Dean/VP ratings**

	Percentage of respondents				Mean rating
	Very important	Moderately important	Somewhat important	Not important	
Writing skills	76.6%	21.4%	2.0%	0.0%	3.7
Previous admission experience	73.5	20.8	5.6	0.2	3.7
Statistics/Data analysis	72.1	25.8	2.2	0.0	3.7
Personnel/Resource management	58.2	29.0	11.5	1.3	3.4
Marketing/Public relations	58.0	36.9	5.1	0.0	3.5
Business management	45.4	42.3	11.8	0.5	3.3
Advanced degree (Master's or Doctorate)	36.9	39.6	15.7	7.7	3.1
Higher education administration	34.7	46.9	14.8	3.6	3.1
Technology/Web design/Social media	27.7	58.6	13.0	0.7	3.1
Multicultural recruitment	14.8	51.2	29.7	4.3	2.8
Transfer recruitment	12.5	45.1	35.5	6.9	2.6
International recruitment	8.7	40.0	43.4	8.0	2.5
Non-traditional student recruitment	8.4	31.8	44.3	15.5	2.3

Source: NACAC Admission Officer Career Path Survey, 2011.

**Table 12. Percentage of respondents rating various mid- and senior-level skills as "very important," by position level (continued)**

	Previous admission experience	Writing skills	Statistics/Data analysis	Personnel/Resource management	Marketing/Public relations	Business management	Higher education administration
<b>Total</b>	<b>77.3%</b>	<b>74.1%</b>	<b>69.4%</b>	<b>62.7%</b>	<b>56.9%</b>	<b>50.5%</b>	<b>40.0%</b>
<b>Current Position</b>							
Admission Counselor	85.6	69.4	68.4	74.5	60.7	67.3	55.9
Assistant/Associate Director	78.0	73.2	67.2	63.0	54.3	49.7	39.3
Director	75.1	76.1	74.8	63.2	61.5	44.6	35.6
Vice President/Dean	71.3	77.2	68.4	51.5	53.4	46.4	33.3

**Table 12 (continued). Percentage of respondents rating various mid- and senior-level skills as "very important," by position level**

	Advanced degree (Master's or Doctorate)	Technology/ Web design/ Social media	Multicultural recruitment	Transfer recruitment	International recruitment	Non-traditional student recruitment
<b>Total</b>	<b>37.8%</b>	<b>26.4%</b>	<b>22.3%</b>	<b>16.7%</b>	<b>13.6%</b>	<b>11.9%</b>
<b>Current Position</b>						
Admission Counselor	43.9	31.1	41.3	31.6	31.6	29.7
Assistant/ Associate Director	36.6	23.4	23.1	15.4	12.3	9.4
Director	35.2	32.3	18.9	14.6	10.8	9.9
Vice President/ Dean	39.2	21.5	9.3	9.7	5.9	6.4

Note: For skills in italics, statistically significant differences were found between respondents position level.

Source: NACAC Admission Officer Career Path Survey, 2011.

Figure 3).<sup>13</sup> This pattern suggests that women are choosing to remain at the associate/assistant director level, finding it difficult to advance beyond the mid-level position, or leaving the profession at this point on the career path. Consequently, improving the gender balance in the most senior-level admission positions may require focused education, training and mentorship for promising women at the assistant/associate director and director levels.

Increasing racial/ethnic diversity in the admission profession poses a different challenge, as survey data indicates that non-whites are underrepresented at all points on the admission career trajectory, and the issue only becomes more pronounced at higher levels. The representation of whites steadily increases along the career path from 71 percent of admission counselors to 88 percent of vice presidents/deans. Conversely, the proportion of blacks decreases from 11 percent of counselors and assistant/associate directors to 5 percent of vice presidents/deans, while Hispanics decrease from 8 percent to only 2 percent (see Figure 4). Improved access to career development resources and mentoring may be an essential part to increasing the presence of minorities in senior positions, but the effects will be limited without increasing the pool of underrepresented minorities entering the profession.

**MORE RESOURCES AT ALL LEVELS**

Through responses to an open-ended survey question and in interviews, members advocated for a variety of additional resources that would lessen confusion among professionals seeking to move ahead, help create formalized advancement pathways, and contribute to establishing admission as “a profession, not just another job.” Among needed resources mentioned most often were:

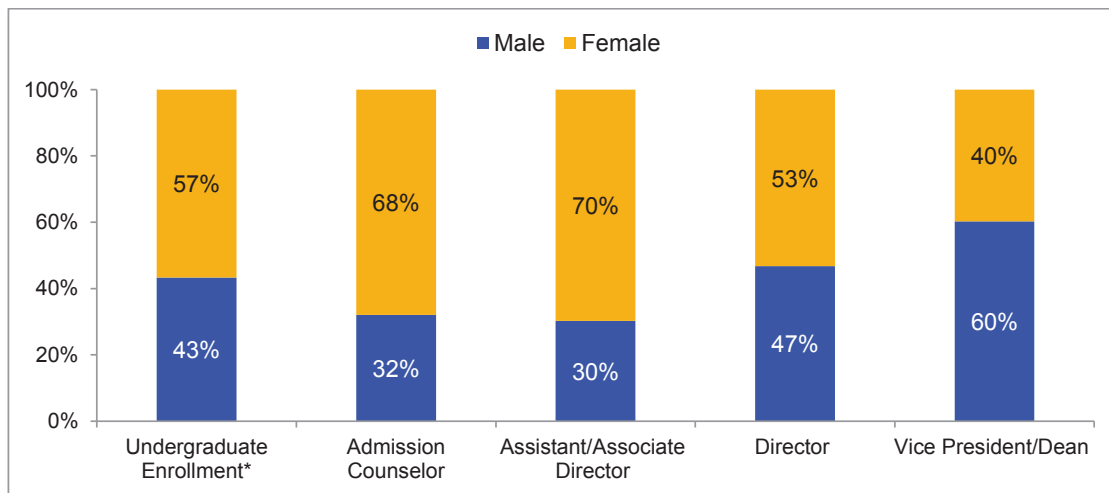
- Training programs for new counselors
- Academic programs, including undergraduate courses, in enrollment management
- Financial aid training
- Management training
- Leadership training

Some senior professionals said they would appreciate counsel on planning their next steps leading up to and following retirement.

Young professionals asked for greater access to NACAC conferences and programs at the regional and state level. Some noted that as “junior” staff members they did not get to attend such events at all. Both counselors and mid-level professionals expressed interest in programs that would help them learn more about pathways to advancement. Some expressed interest in more conferences and seminars on specific developing areas in admission, including recruiting for online learning and recruiting/counseling low-income and first generation college students.

<sup>13</sup> Refers to all undergraduates enrolled in degree-granting colleges in the U.S. in 2012. Source: U.S. Department of Education. *Digest of Education Statistics*. (2012). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics. (Table 263).

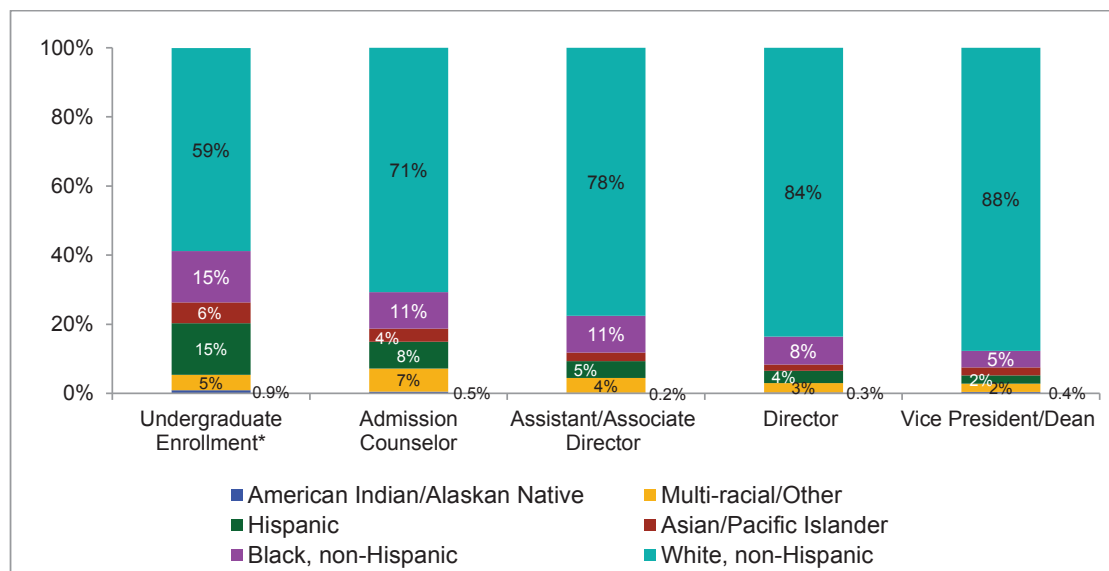
**Figure 3. Gender of survey respondents, by position level, compared to undergraduate enrollment**



Source: NACAC Admission Officer Career Path Survey, 2011.

\**Digest of Education Statistics*. (2012). U.S. Department of Education, Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics. (Table 263).

**Figure 4. Race/ethnicity of survey respondents, by position level, compared to undergraduate enrollment**



Source: NACAC Admission Officer Career Path Survey, 2011.

\**Projections of Education Statistics to 2020*. (2011). US Department of Education, Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics.

## MOVING UP IN THE PROFESSION: PERSONAL ESSAY 2

by **David Burge**, executive director, undergraduate admissions, Arizona State University

I was a senior at the University of Kansas in Lawrence, KS, when I happened upon an advertisement for a position as a telecounselor in the admission office. Since it paid more than the job I already had, I reasoned, “Even if I hate it, I can tough it out for one semester.” I took the position. I didn’t fall in love with admission or recruiting while making my phone calls, but at least it was on campus and allowed me to eat pizza instead of Ramen noodles.

Two years after graduation, after slowly learning that I wasn’t cut out to be a star actor in Wichita, KS, I got married. We moved back to Lawrence; I was one of “those alumni” who thought that life couldn’t be better than living in my old college town. I applied for two jobs in college admission and landed the one at my alma mater. I was especially happy, as I believe that alumni do make the best admission representatives.

I was excited about my job as an admission/scholarship counselor and gave some serious thought to how I was going to recruit the National Merit students in my charge. We were just beginning to use email, and a new and then-revolutionary website, MapQuest, had all the representatives buzzing about how easy it was to find your high schools.

This was my first “grown-up” job, and I found the transition difficult. I didn’t like my job. My office mate, who remains a friend, and I talked about our plans to work for two years and then move on to something better. My boss expected results; to me, the expectations seemed unrealistic. As I reflect today on this challenging first step into an adult world, I am grateful that I had someone in my early professional life who didn’t accept mediocrity.

Of course, I didn’t understand that then, and I decided to quit. I applied for several jobs, both on campus and in the community, and was offered one outside of higher education. When I told my boss, her immediate response was to send me in to see Alan Cerveny, the director of admission—a man who later proved to be one of the most influential people in my professional life.

He asked me why I wanted to leave and I responded—falsely—that there was “more money elsewhere.” He made me an offer, which did not include a bigger salary. He told me that, as a first-year counselor, I hadn’t tapped all I could do with admission. “Stick with us one more year, and see what you think,” he said. “There is potential for you here and definitely potential in this profession.”

I didn’t know if he was right, but it felt good to have someone say that he liked what he saw in me. Three months later, he promoted me to interim assistant director. Nine months after that, he made the position permanent, and three years later, I followed him to the University of Nebraska, where he had been named dean of admission. I was on my career path.

Those of us who are committed to the profession are also responsible for sustaining it. We need to think about ultimately replacing ourselves...

I had told myself that I would be at the University of Nebraska for five years, but it turned into seven. During that time, I had the privilege of working with a number of incredibly talented men and women in a culture that promoted from within. Counselors became assistant directors and assistant directors became members of the senior leadership team. Five of us who worked in the admissions office from 2003 to 2005 are now directors of admission or enrollment managers at large public universities.

I have been executive director of undergraduate admissions at Arizona State University for the past two years. Over the last 15 years, I have seen my fair share of younger versions of me—men and women—who I have tried to keep in the profession during challenging times. Some of those I’ve lost have returned after a few years to report that admission work was their home after all.

Those of us who are committed to the profession are also responsible for sustaining it. We need to think about ultimately replacing ourselves with someone just as good, or even better. At times, it seems to me, we labor to make things overly academic. We implement formal mentorship programs to get at what we should be doing on a regular basis: engaging younger staff in a positive way. We do more than serve our own immediate needs by attracting and retaining talent.

This work is hard, and young professionals entering the field should expect to produce and demonstrate results. One of the best ways to ensure your own success is to surround yourself with good people and to make a personal investment in them and their well-being. Reward good work with specific compliments; challenge your staff members to become more than they thought they could be. Ask questions, and offer opinions. Above all, when you see potential, communicate it.

# MOVING UP IN THE PROFESSION: PERSONAL ESSAY 3

by **Sundar Kumarasamy**, vice president for enrollment management and marketing, University of Dayton

I admit it—I love admission. I love the excitement of being at the start of someone’s academic journey as well as the satisfaction of helping to secure my institution’s future by bringing talented students and resources to campus.

In my more than 20 years in higher education, I have seen how enrollment management contributes to the greater good. I started my career working in the Philadelphia University Admission Office as an international student, and then continued in enrollment management at St. Joseph’s University. Seven years ago, my journey led me to the University of Dayton, an institution with a mission and identity that resonates on a deep level and offers me the chance every day to have a positive impact on the future.

Admission work energizes and excites me because to thrive in admission, you must be prepared for continual change. Admission professionals should constantly challenge themselves to move from good to great, to take risks and to ask the big questions that lead to innovation. By doing this, I believe you become a leader rather than a follower in best practices.



In enrollment management, our audience of teenagers challenges us to be change agents for our institutions. Each year, we have to reach a new cohort of high school students who communicate at sometimes head-spinning speeds through ever-changing media, asking new and different questions and expecting more than ever from their collegiate experience.

As leaders, our task is to discover how students process information, what inspires them, and what catches and captures their attention. We must reach out to them through the information clutter and help generate new energy in higher education.

It is the duty of those who work in higher education to be ready for the next generation of learners and leaders. As educators, we need to ask whether we are leveraging all the tools students are using to help them learn. In admission, we need to be looking ahead, beyond the next admission cycle, to the profound changes on the horizon. Our job does not end when a prospective student enrolls; we also must help them navigate their sometimes-rocky first years to make sure they are on the path to becoming successful alumni. To do that, we must be partners with academic units, informing faculty and staff about career trends and expected outcomes and pushing for innovation in teaching and curriculum to meet the needs of a broader and more globally-conscious student body.

How do we accomplish this? We need leaders who are always discovering, who find joy in discovery, and who create that environment for others. Leaders in higher education must be willing to always ask “What’s next?” and to have the courage to say “yes” to the possibilities.

That philosophy is at work here at the University of Dayton in the living legacy and philosophy of Blessed William Joseph Chaminade, who established the Society of Mary, which in turn founded the University of Dayton. Father Chaminade said that new times and new opportunities call for new methods.

If you look back at the last decade of enrollment management, you can see we have faced new times by changing ourselves. We’re attracting many different skill sets into the field, because at its heart, enrollment management is about nurturing relationships and making connections—and using technology to better understand and manage those connections.

Data and relationship building have to work in tandem. The data can help us understand and look for new patterns and new meaning, but personal attention in the admission process allows us to use that data in different ways to create and cultivate meaningful relationships.

For example, at Dayton, as at many colleges and universities, we are always analyzing data for differences and patterns among prospective students who inquire, visit, apply, or enroll. Recently, we noticed that students who had multiple visits were yielding at a higher rate, but we were giving them the same experience as first-time visitors. So we asked, “How do we mindfully change the second-visit experience?”

Armed with that knowledge, we created a second-visit experience that is different, more in-depth and individualized.

We asked students what they wanted to see and who they wanted to meet. The data led us to create an experience that is more attuned to deepening our relationship with individual students.

The team that delved into the data that led to the creation of this individualized experience came from different educational backgrounds. The common thread was their talent, passion and curiosity. They excelled at teamwork

and communication and shared an appreciation for both data analysis and relationship building. This is the future of enrollment management.

There is great joy in the process of discovery and applying it to create new and better outcomes. We should always be asking “What’s next?” and working with passion and joy. We can make a difference for others while also benefitting our institution and society.

## MOVING UP IN THE PROFESSION: PERSONAL ESSAY 4

by **Ken Anselment**, dean of admissions and financial aid, Lawrence University

I didn't want to be a college admission professional when I grew up. Like most of the kids in my Milwaukee neighborhood, I dreamed of becoming Spider-Man. Or Batman. Or Superman. It wasn't until I met with my college guidance counselor at Marquette University High School late in the spring of my junior year that it became clear I should start exploring other options.

After a very brief period of discernment, I decided to apply to two colleges: Notre Dame and Marquette. Like the college-bound students I would work with later in life, my final decision was a financial one: Marquette made me an offer that evokes a familiar line from *The Godfather*—and I accepted.

It wasn't just about money. My Marquette University admission counselor, Jane Eddy Casper, was the difference maker. Never before had I met a complete stranger who knew more—and, astonishingly, seemed to care more—about who I was, what I thought I wanted and how Marquette and I had this thing called “fit.”

Vocations rarely come with shining lights and blaring trumpets. More often they come as quiet whispers or gentle nudges, which is why I did not realize until many years later that Jane was instrumental not only in helping me choose my college, but also in easing me onto a real career path.

Just before Christmas break of my first term at Marquette, Jane helped me land a gig as a tour guide. I was hooked. I spent the next three and a half years providing information for prospective students and their families while walking backwards. When I wasn't giving tours, I worked on projects around the admissions office: stuffing search mailings, taking care of daily mail and running errands across campus. It was great career preparation for someone thinking about working in higher education. However, at that point, I was more interested in becoming a “captain of industry.”

Graduating from college in the early 1990s was, unfortunately, similar to the situation students face today. A poor economy meant a lean job market for freshly-minted marketing and English majors. After interviewing with advertising firms, insurance companies and management training programs, I applied for a job at the place that knew me better than anybody: the Marquette Admissions Office. The counselor position seemed to be perfect, but I didn't get it. Instead, I landed a position in the Marquette Alumni Relations Office.

A year later, I jumped at the opportunity to apply for a newly created job in the admissions office for a hybrid alumni-admissions position. With more than a year of experience in alumni relations to go along with my undergraduate tour guide experience, it seemed to be a perfect fit, but I lost to another internal candidate.

After three years on the job, I received a not-so-gentle nudge from the dean, who told me that if I wanted to advance in an admission career, I needed to get a graduate degree. He also urged me to, “Get it in something you love because it'll be harder to quit it when you want to quit. And you'll want to quit.”

To my surprise, shortly afterwards, I received a visit from Ray Brown, then Marquette's dean of admissions, who asked if I'd be interested in filling the position vacated by the internal candidate. I felt like a minor-leaguer who had just been called up to the majors, and I accepted the offer.

After three years on the job, I received a not-so-gentle nudge from the dean, who told me that if I wanted to advance in an admission career, I needed to get a graduate degree. He also urged me to, “Get it in something you love because it'll be harder to quit it when you want to quit. And you'll want to quit.” I took his advice and began working on a master's degree in British and American literature while continuing my full-time position.

The process took seven years. It might have taken less time, but full-time admission work has a funny way of overtaking one's life. I loved the program, which helped, because I definitely wanted to quit on several occasions. But I didn't, which is why I have had few prouder moments than on that Sunday afternoon when I waved from the stage at commencement to our two children who had been born during my long educational journey.

By the time I had finished the degree, I asked to (a) join the Wisconsin ACAC leadership, despite having only been a member to that point, and (b) become the government relations chair recently vacated by Jim Miller, who had just

ascended to the NACAC board. I had never been seriously politically engaged before, but I was interested in the opportunity to serve the association, so I signed on.

I would soon learn—at the first of many NACAC legislative conferences in Washington, D.C., as well as interactions with like-minded NACAC members around the country—that serving NACAC through government relations was only part of the deal. Our real work was serving students by advocating on their behalf at the state and federal level for access to college. I always knew that NACAC was a massive network of admission professionals, but formal service connected me on a more personal level with hundreds of bright, engaged, passionate folks committed to making the college search more humane.

One of them was Steve Syverson, then dean of admissions and financial aid at Lawrence University, just 90 miles up the road from where I had spent my entire educational and professional life. On a Friday afternoon in June 2004, Steve left me a voice message that would change my life. He told me that Lawrence was conducting a search for an admission director and that Ray Brown had recommended that he call me—also warning that I would probably find it difficult to leave Marquette.

I answered the call. The boy who would be Spider-Man, the college student who would be a captain of industry, was now—fully, deeply and unmistakably—a college admission professional.



## CHAPTER 4: THE CHANGING LANDSCAPE OF THE ADMISSION PROFESSION

In recent years, the admission profession has changed dramatically in scope, responsibility and complexity and become more important to the university's bottom line. As a result, the role of the admission professional has expanded significantly. A closer look at the scope of the admission/enrollment management office today, the reporting relationships and responsibilities of admission professionals, and their rewards and challenges highlights the profession's current state. It also provides a glimpse into the future of admission and helps identify possible markers for current and emerging career paths.

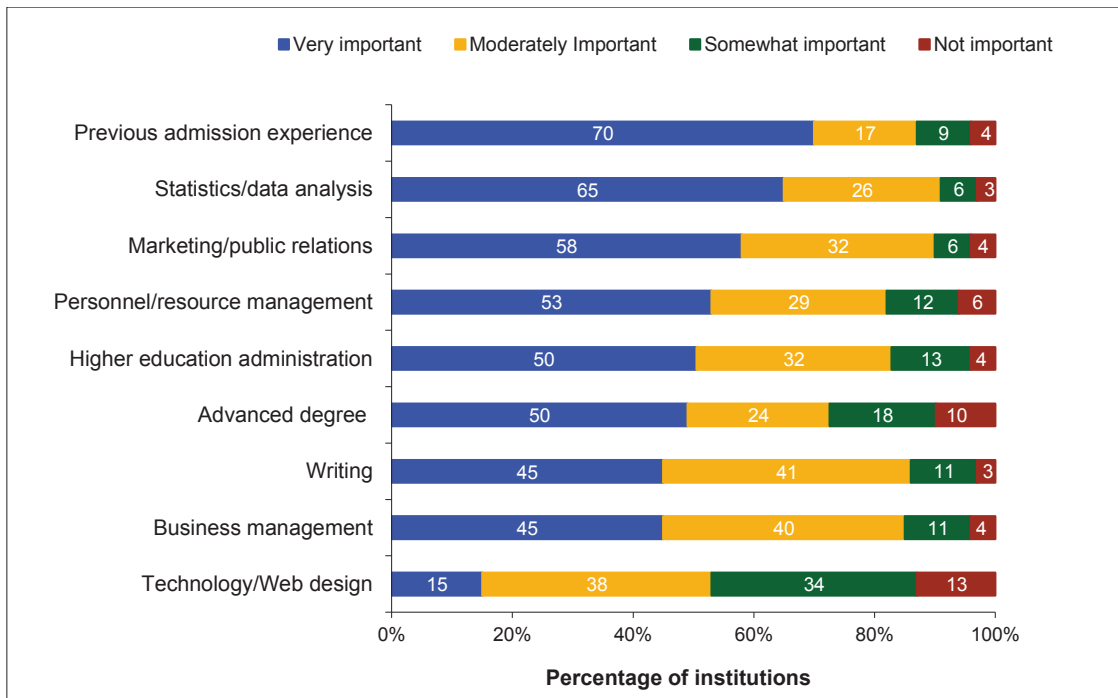
### ADMISSION'S EXPANDED SCOPE

An examination of the responsibilities of NACAC members at the vice president or dean's level of admission/enrollment management offices provides strong evidence of the expanded role and increased prominence of the admission function in higher education institutions. Traditional recruitment responsibilities have not gone away, but they have been made more complicated by expanded technology, the popularity of social media, pressure to increase numbers to balance the institutional budget and various legal rulings in such areas as diversity and recruitment. Responses to NACAC's 2012 Admission Trends Survey indicate that a variety of skills are considered to be moderately or very important for chief enrollment officers, including statistics/data analysis, marketing/public relations, personnel/resource management, higher education adminis-

tration, writing, and business management. The percentage of colleges rating statistics/data analysis as 'very important' increased from 49 percent in 2002 to 65 percent in 2012 (see Figure 5), while marketing/public relations actually decreased from 77 percent to 58 percent.<sup>14</sup> As Greg Roberts, dean of admission at the University of Virginia, pointed out in his essay, "The evolution of the admission office from a one-stop shop to a larger, more complex business operation involving multiple divisions and departments has been rapid...Admission offices and officers no longer work in a vacuum."

Many functions that were formerly independent within the university structure have been incorporated into admission so that, as Roberts has observed, "Conversations pertaining to admission and enrollment targets, retention, financial aid, tuition setting and annual budgets take place in the same room." For example, 73 percent of career path survey respondents at the most senior level are responsible for the financial aid function. In fact, more than one-quarter (28 percent) of public institutions and nearly one-half (49 percent) of private institutions indicated on the 2007 NACAC Admission Trends Survey that the admission office at their institutions had *principal* authority over setting financial aid policy. This is a particularly critical responsibility for private institutions, where student aid expenditures, which represent 26 percent of all educational and general spending, on average, play a larger role in the overall recruitment strategy.<sup>15</sup>

**Figure 5. Institutional ratings of the importance of various qualifications for the position of chief enrollment officer: 2012**



SOURCE: NACAC Admission Trends Survey, 2012.

<sup>14</sup> Hawkins, David A. *2003 State of College Admission*. 2003. Arlington, VA: National Association for College Admission Counseling.

Clinedinst, Melissa E., Hurley, Sarah F., and Hawkins, David A. *2013 State of College Admission*. 2014. Arlington, VA: National Association for College Admission Counseling.

<sup>15</sup> Heller, Donald E. *Financial Aid and Admission: Tuition Discounting, Merit Aid and Need-Aware Admission*. 2008. Arlington, VA: National Association for College Admission Counseling.

More surprisingly, 54 percent of vice presidents/deans and 64 percent of directors handle communications and marketing. In some instances, the admission function is responsible only for communications and marketing directly related to its work, but some vice presidents reported in interviews that the entire university communications/marketing operation reports to them. Registrar/records/scheduling are part of the charge of 21 percent of senior leaders, and 9 percent have added student affairs to their portfolios (see Figure 6).

These changes are evidence of the evolving concept of “enrollment management” that encompasses all areas related to fully managing the entire admission-related process. Greater involvement for some with student affairs may indicate a stronger, more direct connection with matriculation and retention. As more colleges and universities have developed or expanded online degree programs and international recruitment, many senior admission officers said they had added staff at both entry- and mid-levels with specific responsibilities in these areas.

**VARIED RESPONSIBILITIES**

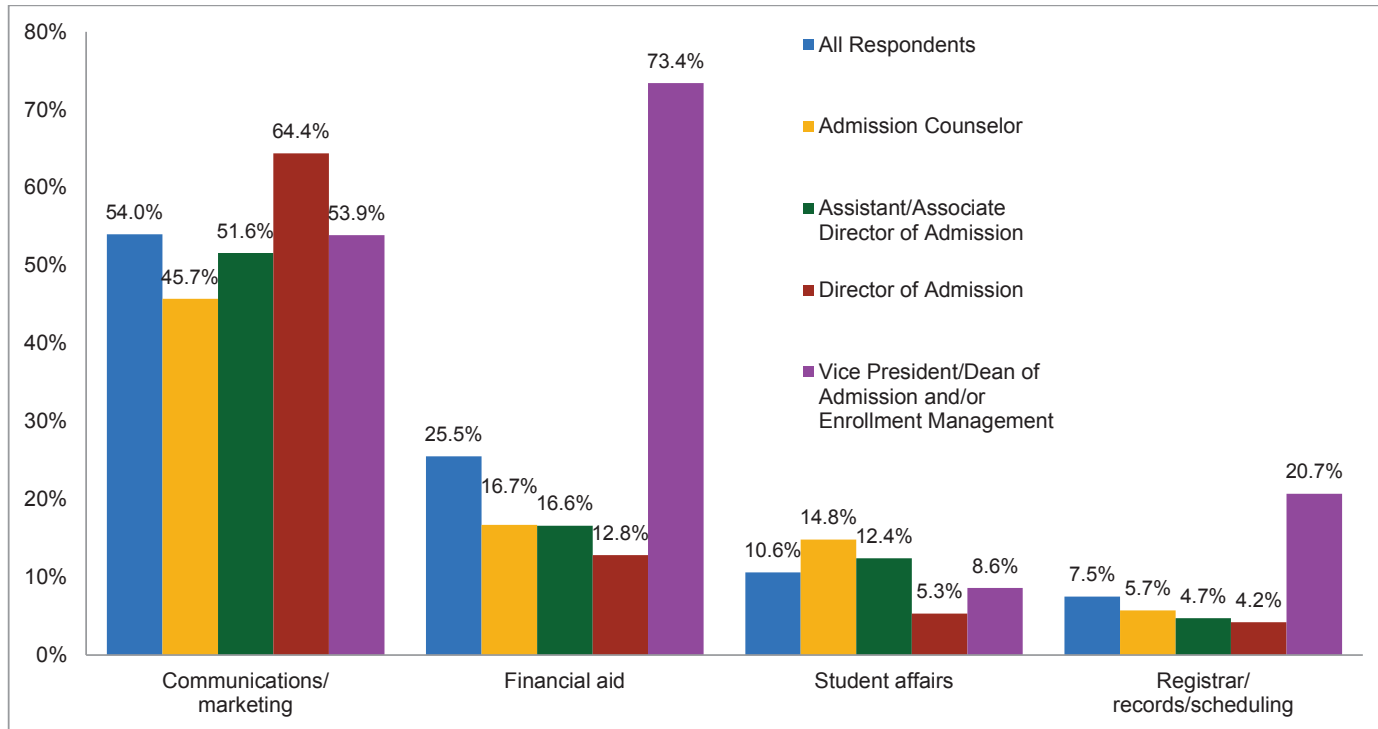
At one time, a day in the life of a counselor, an associate/assistant director, a director and a dean or vice president was somewhat predictable, depending on the size and type of institution. Such traditional tasks as visiting high schools, going to college fairs, meeting with students and parents, hosting

special events on and off-campus, reading files and making decisions are still part of the portfolio, but so are many other activities.

While financial aid responsibilities primarily rest with the dean or vice president (73 percent), 17 percent of both admission counselors and assistant/associate directors say it is also part of their job descriptions, as do 13 percent of directors (see Figure 6). Several counselors who were interviewed said that families are more worried than ever about finances and, as a result, want information about financial aid as quickly as possible. They don’t want to wait for a later discussion with a financial aid officer. Counselors who cannot provide that information may lose a promising prospect, some added.

For those departments with student affairs responsibilities, admission counselors are the most involved on a daily basis (15 percent), followed by assistant and associate directors at 12 percent. In contrast, staff members below the vice presidential level have little involvement with registrar/records/scheduling assignments. On the other hand, the growing involvement of admission/enrollment management functions with communications and marketing has resulted in responsibilities for this area being the most spread out among all staff. In fact, 46 percent of counselors, 52 percent of assistant/associate directors, 64 percent of directors and 54 percent of vice presidents say it is part of their job functions (see Figure 6).

**Figure 6. Areas of responsibility, by position level**



Source: NACAC Admission Officer Career Path Survey, 2011.

Many admission counselors also indicated in interviews that they spend more time providing career counseling. As several noted, the counseling function has become so important because many students—and often their families do not know what career an academic program might lead to. Other students have decided upon a profession without understanding the academic courses and degree level required or the career opportunities available. Some admission professionals said they learned to be career counselors by experience and most expressed the need for more training. “I wasn’t prepared, and we do career counseling a lot,” commented a respondent. Another observed, “Counselor is an important part of my title. It would be good to have more preparation.”

The need for career counseling that admission professionals shared in interviews is validated by independent research. In a 2008 NACAC discussion paper, Schneider highlights the issue of ‘unaligned ambitions’ as a problematic phase of identity development for many adolescents. When career aspirations are not aligned appropriately with skills, interests and abilities, the college search is further complicated and can result in a focus on selectivity or prestige instead of fit. This is a particularly complex and challenging counseling task, requiring counselors to advise students without undermining students’ aspirations. Unfortunately, the varied responsibilities of secondary school counselors and often unmanageable student-to-counselor caseloads, mean that most counselors are simply unable to provide the level of individual counseling required to help students work through these issues. The average number of students per counselor in public schools in the US is 471, and counseling departments at secondary schools are only able to spend less than one-quarter of their time on postsecondary counseling.<sup>16</sup> Consequently, it is no surprise that students and families would also look to admission officers for advice on linking education with career interests.

**THE DEPARTMENTAL HIERARCHY**

In a fundamental way, changes in the structure, from top to bottom, of the admission operation reflect an evolving and increasingly critical role in relation to institutional leadership overall. For example, it is now more likely that the top person in the office or department will be a vice president or dean. Over the past two decades, enrollment management

has evolved so that it is part and parcel of many college and university structures. Indeed, about 30 percent of the most senior-level survey respondents (VPs/Deans) possess a title containing explicit reference to the term “enrollment management.”

The shift in titles is more than semantics, as survey respondents and interviewees noted a growing emphasis on mining data in the process of making critical recruitment policy and admission decisions, as well as in determining office structure and staffing. With the expanded role and prominence of the admission/enrollment management department, the great majority (71 percent) of vice presidents or deans of admission/enrollment management report directly to the provost or president.

A large majority of admission directors (90 percent) report to the vice president or dean. Among assistant or associate directors, 53 percent report to the director and 28 percent to the vice president or dean. Admission counselors have the most varied reporting relationships, with 51 percent reporting to the assistant or associate director, 38 percent to the director and 10 percent to the vice president or dean (see Table 13).

**THE FACULTY CONNECTION**

For most colleges and universities, the pressure to attract and admit the right mix of students to meet financial goals, maintain and/or enhance an academic profile, and contribute to the institution’s cultural life and energy is more important than ever. Many of these institutions are, in fact, competing for the same students, as demographic data show a downward shift in traditional college-bound students in many parts of the country.<sup>17</sup>

Faculty members can make a critical difference in students’ success during their time on campus and can help prepare them for success after graduation. They can make that same difference in the success or failure of the recruitment process. Admission officers said in interviews that they sought recruitment assistance from faculty on a regular basis. However, the results of these interactions were decidedly mixed.

In general, admission professionals interviewed agreed that academics still plays an important role in the recruitment and admission process, and good

**Table 13. Reporting structure in admission offices**

Position	Title of supervisor			
	Assistant/ Associate Director	Director	VP/Dean of Admission and/or Enrollment Management	Provost/ President
Admission Counselor	51.4%	38.0%	10.1%	0.5%
Assistant/Associate Director	18.5	53.4	27.6	0.5
Director	0.3	2.4	89.6	7.7
Vice President/Dean of Admission and/or Enrollment Management	0.0	0.4	28.2	71.4

Source: NACAC Admission Officer Career Path Survey, 2011.

<sup>16</sup> Clinedinst, Melissa E., Hurley, Sarah F., and Hawkins, David A. 2013 *State of College Admission*. 2014. Arlington, VA: National Association for College Admission Counseling.

<sup>17</sup> U.S. Department of Education. *Projections of Education Statistics to 2022*. (2014). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics.

relationships with faculty increase their ability to effectively communicate academic advantages and get faculty involved with potential students. An associate director described spending “about 30 percent” of her time with faculty members. One office has developed a program to increase the number of faculty collaborators from “a handful who are generous with their time and curious about what we do.” Interviews revealed that staff members are “sitting down with each department to explain our processes, share data on recruitment and admission and find out how we can help meet their needs.”

Most admission professionals have developed their “go to” faculty whom they call upon for participation in preview days, scholarship programs, special committee assignments and even road trips. Many noted that good relationships with faculty have a direct connection to their ability to recruit effectively for a particular program or department. “Faculty are critical to our events,” commented an associate director. “We understand they have lots of demands on their time; at the same time, we are looking for the right faculty who can tell our stories well.” While acknowledging that “you’ll never have 100 percent buy-in,” a director on one campus said he regularly plays pick-up basketball a few times a week with faculty members. He credited “talking to individuals on the court” with enhancing marketing initiatives.

Perhaps the greatest challenge of working with faculty, according to some, is creating understanding and appreciation of the process and its importance to everyone on campus. “Faculty thinks it’s our job to ‘bring them in,’” recounted a counselor. “They don’t know how important recruitment is. They don’t have our back.”

### UNIVERSITY SUPPORT

The majority of admission professionals interviewed described a supportive university environment that enabled them to be successful in their work and that raised overall status and positive awareness of the admission/enrollment management operation in the university structure.

Admission professionals attributed the support of their institutions at least in part to the growing realization of the impact of a successful admission operation on the institution’s short- and long-term financial and academic health. “We’ve grown our enrollment 60 percent. We’ve shown what a strong enrollment program can do,” said one director. Observed Essayist Gordon Chavis, “Our enrollment management profession...has gained a greater level of respect...primarily because college and university enrollments provide the necessary tuition revenue upon which many institutions have been able to sustain themselves.”

Faculty and staff at one institution were told by its leaders that there would be no cuts if the admission office met enrollment goals in the next year. The admission office staff was successful and earned the gratitude of their colleagues. A senior administrator at another university reported that, “Eighty-five percent of the revenue comes from our operations.”

The office’s enhanced visibility has, in many cases, brought more involvement in university leadership along with recognition. “We have a strong

role, and people respect what we do,” observed an interviewee, while another pointed out, “We used to be taken for granted, but that has changed.”

Admission offices aren’t taking their new-found popularity for granted. An assistant director described working “very closely” with academic and administrative departments across campus to “create more lines of communication, to facilitate bringing suggestions to us and to set up partnerships.” Even at supportive universities, a senior level professional pointed out, “Most really don’t understand how hard it is to do our job.”

When admission professionals said they did not feel strongly supported by their institutions, their complaints focused primarily on lack of funding for, and time to take part in, professional development. They also cited hiring, promotion and compensation policies that made it difficult to retain staff.

### REWARDING MOMENTS

Admission professionals pointed to the rewards of their work as a major incentive for entering and staying in the field, and, at all levels, they displayed remarkable unity in outlining those rewards. In essays and interviews, the theme of helping students and their families dominated. Supervisors were also proud of helping their staff members move forward. Admission professionals want to aid all of these groups in reaching their goals. They want to assist students in finding the right fit and in discovering the “transformational experience” that will contribute to their success.

“College transformed my life,” a mid-level professional said. “Getting to be part of that for others is such a privilege. We’re making a difference every day.” A senior administrator called the ability to “change the trajectory of a generation” one of his greatest joys.

Essayist Robin Brown offered a variation on that sentiment: “I felt like I was doing something truly worthwhile in helping students navigate where they would spend perhaps the four most important and impactful years of their lives; and I really enjoyed my colleagues who were also in the profession.”

Being a part of the bigger picture in higher education was another source of satisfaction. “We are on the front lines of university leadership,” a mid-level professional observed, “We are among the first to work on and with new programs and initiatives.” Added a senior professional, “We have the chance to create policy and build public trust for our university.” In the words of Essayist Greg Roberts, the greatest pleasures include “the honor of getting to know students through their applications and in person; the privilege of helping them and their families make life-changing decisions; and the chance to contribute to the mission of our nation’s universities.”

### DEFINING CHALLENGES

Challenges and frustrations come in all sizes for admission professionals. There is little question that the profession demands a high level of energy, a strong drive to succeed and a tolerance for long hours and sometimes-difficult “clients” (from demanding bosses to helicopter parents).

Some frustrations cited in interviews are not unique to today's professionals. "It's a 24/7 job" was frequently cited, along with "too much time on the road...the annual frenzy around rankings...budget cuts...low salaries." Other challenges and frustrations, however, reflect changes in the environment in which admission professionals work and the demands placed upon them. While budget cuts have long existed, the current economic situation poses greater threats to hiring and maintaining quality staff, and to being able to compete effectively in a high-technology, marketing-oriented environment. Tight budgets also imperil financial aid at some institutions. "Access and completion are being threatened. I wish we could do more," commented a vice president.

Technology has benefitted the admission operation in many ways, but those in the field see disadvantages too. These include managing constant and costly changes in technology and less personal contact with counselors, students and families. Counselors spoke of technology taking over connections with high school counselors, making it more difficult to build relationships and trust.

Some senior level professionals expressed concern about a more competitive and technological environment fostering a lack of community among fellow professionals. Several cited the intense pressure when "the admission office carries the entire college."

The new marketplace also has brought new challenges, from competition with often highly aggressive for-profit institutions to demands for more international recruitment. In the latter case, said one mid-level professional, "We have the charge to recruit more, but we have not, as a university, addressed cultural differences. It's a dilemma."

### THE COMPENSATION FACTOR

Given growing responsibilities and greater pressure than ever to deliver results, are admission professionals at all levels receiving compensation that reflects a new reality? Are those who plan to move on to a large public or private university with the expectation of better salaries likely to find their assumptions realized? An analysis of salaries for entry-, mid-, and senior-level professionals offers an informative and sometimes surprising snapshot of salary ranges along an ascending career path.

As with most professions, the clearest way to attain a higher salary in the admission profession is to advance to a more senior-level position. Almost all admission counselors earned \$55,000 or less, and nearly half earned 35,000 or less. Although, assistant/associate directors were most likely to earn \$35,001 – \$55,000 (54 percent), more than one-third (36 percent) had salaries about \$55,000. Half of admission directors earned more than \$75,000, and more than three-quarters (78 percent) of vice presidents/deans had salaries of \$95,000 or higher (see Appendix Table 2).

At each point on the admission career path, other factors also influence earnings. The salaries of counselors, assistant/associate directors, directors, and VPs/deans are each affected by characteristics of the institutions

where they are employed. For example, admission professionals at all levels are more likely to earn higher salaries at larger institutions, but the effect is most pronounced for admission counselors. Only 19 percent of these entry-level professionals at colleges with fewer than 1,500 full-time undergraduate students earned more than \$35,000, compared to 61 percent of counselors at colleges with 10,000 or more students. Similarly, about three-quarters of admission directors at the smallest colleges earn \$75,000 or less, while the same proportion earns more than \$75,000 at the largest colleges (see Appendix Tables 3-6).



Admission professionals employed at more selective colleges also tend to earn higher salaries. 43 percent of assistant/associate directors at the most selective colleges (defined here as those that accept fewer than 50 percent of applicants) earned more than \$55,000, compared to 27 percent of counselors at colleges accepting more than 70 percent of their applicants. For vice presidents/deans, about two-thirds earned more than 135,000 at the most selective colleges compared to 38 percent at colleges that are less selective (see Appendix Tables 3-6).

Geography seems to make a difference, too. For all admission professionals combined, as shown in Appendix Table 2, the largest proportion earning more than \$75,000 are located in the Far West (43 percent), followed by Rocky Mountains (37.9 percent), the Mid-East (35 percent), and New England (32 percent).

In addition to institutional characteristics, the analysis also looked for differences based on gender and race/ethnicity and the time admission professionals had spent in their current positions. Survey results indicated that, across all admission professionals, males were more likely to be in among the highest earners. Nearly 30 percent of male admission officers earned more than \$95,000, compared to only 11 percent of women. However, looking within position levels, a significant difference in salary ranges by gender was only found at the director level. Among VPs/deans, very similar proportions of men and women (44 percent and 47 percent, respectively, were among the highest earners—more than \$135,000. When examining the role of race/ethnicity, no statistically significant differences were found in salary ranges across all admission professionals. Small sample sizes due to underrepresentation proved problematic for examining racial/ethnic differences within position levels (see Appendix Tables 3-6).<sup>18</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Appendix Tables 2-6 show a complete breakdown of salary ranges for all admission professionals and within position levels, by gender, race/ethnicity, time in position, time in profession, control of institution, institutional selectivity, undergraduate enrollment, region, Carnegie classification, and total institutional expenses.

# MOVING UP IN THE PROFESSION: PERSONAL ESSAY 5

by **Greg W. Roberts**, dean of admission, University of Virginia

I was hopelessly lost in Washington, D.C., frantically trying to navigate rush hour traffic during a violent thunderstorm. I was already late for my first high school visit, ever—an 8 a.m. appointment at Georgetown Day School. I had a compact rental car and an obviously outdated map of D.C., with high schools highlighted in yellow, my traffic route traced in red. No one had mentioned that the school had moved years earlier to a location a few miles up the road on MacArthur Boulevard. It was 1994. No GPS, no cell phone, not even printed MapQuest directions. I was alone, I was lost, and I was late.

As I reflect on the current state of undergraduate admission, I think back to that rainy day... Is that experience a metaphor for what's happening in our field today? Are we driving in circles around an aggravated public, trying to reach a destination that is a moving target, using an outdated map and hoping for the best?

Of course, I somehow found my way, literally and figuratively, and after more than 20 years in the field at wonderful places like Woodward Academy, Emory University and Georgetown University, I now call the University of Virginia home. I've worked with, and for, some amazing people who have helped shape my views on our profession and our role in higher education. I cherish the relationships I've developed and I'm proud to be at an institution, and in a profession, that changes lives and is committed to college access and opportunity.

My colleagues here at UVA, like those in Atlanta and D.C., are hard-working professionals who are often overworked and underpaid, yet they still approach each day with enthusiasm and energy. I'm constantly inspired by those I work with, like Valerie Gregory, a former elementary school principal who has committed her life to serving underrepresented students and their families, and Lee Politis who has worked tirelessly to ensure that university support staff are educated and informed about the nuances of financial aid and admission applications. Pros like Valerie and Lee work hard to make the dream of college a reality for many first generation students. At a time of heightened public skepticism regarding equity, fairness and even ethical behavior in the college admission process, they represent everything that is right in our profession.

We face difficult decisions in our field these days and at times it seems that institutional goals and priorities can conflict with policies and programs that best serve prospective students and families. Undergraduate admission has become a high-stakes, high-pressure business. Still, we strive to be true to what drew us to the profession in the first place: the honor of getting to know students through their applications and in person; the privilege of helping them and their families make life-changing decisions; and the chance to contribute to the mission of our nation's universities.

As I reflect on the current state of undergraduate admission, I think back to that rainy day in Washington, when I was just trying to get to the students who were waiting for me. Is that experience a metaphor for what's happening in our field today? Are we driving in circles around an aggravated public, trying to reach a destination that is a moving target, using an outdated map and hoping for the best?

I don't believe that's the case (though sadly that may be how some view our process). It's true that we face profound challenges, particularly regarding access, diversity, financial pressures, and communication demands, but we also have tremendous opportunities to shape the future of the field for the better.

I offer my thoughts on a few of our most pressing challenges and how we might best address them.

## COLLEGE ACCESS

There is perhaps no issue more important to our profession, and the country, than college accessibility and affordability. While great strides have been made in the identification and recruitment of underrepresented students in recent years, many low- and middle-income families continue to feel squeezed out of the college process. Soaring tuition costs that exceed inflation and cost-of-living increases, coupled with a reduction of federal, state and even institutional financial aid—particularly at public colleges and universities—mean that the progress made in diversifying our campuses is at risk.

While there have been improvements regarding the transparency of admission and need-based aid procedures and policies, the process can still be perplexing to families, particularly those with limited resources and experience. Thankfully, access organizations like the College Advising Corp, that places recent college graduates in low-income high schools as counselors, and Achievable Dream in Newport News, Virginia or Mastery Charter in Philadelphia have been able to bridge gaps and provide support to students and families

as they navigate an often confusing process of applying to college. Posse, Questbridge, ABC, KIPPS, Cristo Rey, YES Prep and many other college bound organizations have all played instrumental roles in the lives of students who benefit from personalized college advising and mentoring, some as early as in middle school. By partnering with these organizations, colleges are able to help educate, inform and prepare families who otherwise might get lost, especially given the large student-to-counselor ratios that exist in many high schools.

Of course, once students enroll, we need to make sure they receive appropriate support and advising. Many colleges continue to struggle with lower retention and graduation rates among first generation and low-income students. The excitement of admission can be quickly replaced by frustration and isolation for some students who do not know where to turn for advice and guidance. They can be overwhelmed academically and socially. We have an obligation and a responsibility to assist the students we enroll and to provide equal access to the best classes as well as research, study abroad and internships opportunities.

As leaders in our field, we need to take an active role in advocating for equity and diversity. Regional ACACs and NACAC can also provide a forum for discussion and activism; we must unify our voices as we engage legislators and citizens on issues important not only to our universities but to the future of our country.

### INSTITUTIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE BUSINESS OF COLLEGE ADMISSION

College admission has become big business over the last decade. At some schools, vice presidents of enrollment oversee multi-million dollar admission budgets and hire high-priced marketing consultants to improve brand recognition and manage search campaigns. Our national conferences resemble trade shows, with massive vendor halls and corporate sponsors. Institutional pressures have increased in this competitive and public admission environment, leading to a shift in how admission offices operate. Institutional interest in selectivity and rankings can influence decisions on recruitment and review strategies.

While communication with institutional leadership is helpful in setting office goals and priorities, it is critical that we continue to act in accordance with our core values and set policies that benefit not only our institutions but also our prospective students. As competition intensifies, some are finding it more difficult to develop admission policies and practices that align with university priorities without placing additional stress on families and students during the college search. There may be no clear solution to this dilemma, but by educating campus leadership on the pressures we face in our field; and by engaging in meaningful dialogue with governing boards and,

in the public arena, with key state legislators and leaders, we can develop policies that serve both our institutions and our constituents.

The evolution of the admission office from a one-stop shop to a larger, more complex business operation involving multiple divisions and departments has been rapid. In this more sophisticated age of admission and enrollment management, conversations pertaining to admission and enrollment targets, communication and marketing, retention, financial aid, tuition setting, net cost, and annual budgets take place in the same room. Admission offices and officers do not work in a vacuum. Strategic admission thinking and planning that involves multiple levels of university administration can lead to more efficient and productive work. It can also contribute to a sense of shared purpose and responsibility among members of our communities.



### PUBLIC IMAGE AND CONSTITUENT RELATIONS

A final enduring challenge for our field pertains to our relationship with our constituents, particularly prospective students and their families. Much has been written about the stress of high school and the modern college search and application process. Students take more demanding courses, load up on activities and take SAT prep courses—only to be denied by a top-choice school. Each spring, we encounter frustration, confusion, disappointment, and even anger from families. While these reactions are not new, there seems to be a growing misunderstanding—and even distrust—about how our offices make admission decisions and conduct business. Increased application volume and decreasing offer rates at many institutions have contributed to an atmosphere of fear

and anxiety for teenagers. Cases of burnout or fatigue are no longer uncommon as students strategize about admission and adopt a “more is better” philosophy. Popular blogs and message boards can spread misinformation in an instant; articles in the mainstream press bring high visibility to our field.

There is no simple solution to our public relations problem, but I believe we can start by ensuring that our own offices are places of integrity and transparency. We can and should work with high schools, college access organizations, NACAC, and regional ACAC’s to find ways of easing the pressures on college applicants. Right now, we can welcome each visitor with genuine respect and enthusiasm, and we can treat each caller with seriousness and courtesy. We can reach out to a wide range of constituents; provide information that is accessible, thorough, and clear; and engage in authentic dialogue.

I believe in the integrity of my staff and our process; I hope that our earnest efforts help demystify our work and emphasize our humanity.

We are united in our efforts to make targeted, timely, positive change. We draw on the wisdom of legendary leaders in the field, like my mentors, Charlie Deacon and the late Jack Blackburn, known for their disciplined, compassionate work and ethical approach to admission. We look to the promise of a new era of admission innovators, like Jeannine Lalonde from my office, who is business-savvy and uses social media outreach to personalize the admission process for thousands of prospective students and families. With the support of peers and professional networks like NACAC, we plan strategically for the future and respond thoughtfully to the issues of the day.



## MOVING UP IN THE PROFESSION: PERSONAL ESSAY 6

by **Dr. Gordon Chavis Jr.**, *associate vice president, enrollment services, University of Central Florida*

My path to a career in admission was influenced by my decision to attend college. In fact, I was the first member of my immediate family to go to college. With scarce resources to spend on college applications, I needed to be quite efficient about applying to and planning for college.

During the fall of my senior year, I prepared to have my one and only appointment with my high school guidance counselor. I gathered my research on all of the colleges that had caught my attention, and I courageously and proudly presented my research to him. I concluded that there were only two colleges to which I would submit an application. My guidance counselor quickly told me that the colleges I had chosen were not good choices for me and that I would most likely not gain admission to either of them. In fact, he suggested that I might consider expanding my options, perhaps adding a community college to my choices. I was horrified that he hadn't supported my plan—and I was even more motivated than ever to attend the college of my choice.

I submitted applications to the two colleges I mentioned. I anxiously awaited my offers of admission to arrive in the mail during April of my senior year; I was surprised and pleased to learn that I gained admission to both colleges. In fact, I was so thrilled that I went to my guidance counselor and told him my good news. He tried to offer advice about which college I should attend, and I politely thanked him and said that I would make that decision on my own.

Situations that bring about adversity can often provide the motivation necessary to succeed. The conversation with my guidance counselor motivated me to attend and graduate from my college of choice. It also played a role in shaping my decision to join the enrollment management profession. I wanted to help ensure that no student I encountered would ever experience that type of conversation with a guidance counselor. And, if they did, I wanted to help them obtain their educational goals, despite that conversation.

My current position as associate vice president has occurred after a career of more than 25 years in enrollment management. I have put in a great deal of hard work and dedication, but more importantly, I took the time to learn the intricacies of our profession. I spent long, hard and exhaustive hours working to develop a strong background in strategic communications, financial management, recruitment, and marketing that have given me the experience necessary to be successful in our profession. I also hope that I have enhanced my professional development with a thirst and hunger to learn as much as I could from a variety of seasoned, knowledgeable and very

caring professionals. I owe a great deal of thanks to so many who have helped me along my professional journey through the investment of their time, energy and wisdom.

...I have enhanced my professional development with a thirst and hunger to learn as much as I could from a variety of seasoned, knowledgeable and very caring professionals. I owe a great deal of thanks to so many who have helped me along my professional journey through the investment of their time, energy and wisdom.

### ADMISSION TODAY

The enrollment management profession has confronted a number of challenges over the past few years. For many of us, the most recent economic downturn has resulted in significant reductions in our professional budgets. These reductions have led to less-than-adequate resources to support the staffing and technology needed to allow enrollment management professionals and their staffs to perform their duties as effectively and efficiently as possible.

Despite these challenges, our enrollment management profession, along with the functions and services we provide on behalf of our university communities, has gained a greater level of respect. The increase in recognition has occurred primarily because college and university enrollments provide the necessary tuition revenue upon which many institutions have been able to sustain themselves through these difficult economic times.

The economy has had other consequences that pose challenges now and into the future. For example, with fewer federal and state dollars being allocated toward support for higher education in this country, families sending children to college are forced to rely more upon loans rather than grant dollars to fund a college education. Despite the efforts of enrollment management professionals to support changes in college and university aid policies that would help reverse this trend, the negative impact upon low- and middle-income families has been great. The dream of obtaining an affordable college education appears to be eroding for far too many students.

If the trend of families relying more upon student loans continues, students and families will give greater thought as to whether they can afford the cost of higher education; whether it is indeed worth the investment. In fact, plans to send their children to college may have to be deferred and that would be untenable.

I am encouraged, however, by data from a recent Pew Research Center survey that showed 94 percent of parents said they wanted their children to go to college. This is up from 72 percent some 20 years ago. In addition, the survey mentioned that 86 percent of college graduates claimed that the investment in a college education has been good for them. And further, a recent Fidelity Investments survey stated that 67 percent of parents are saving for college costs today, versus 58 percent just five years ago. These data suggest there is reason to be optimistic about the future.

### THE OUTLOOK FOR YOUNG PROFESSIONALS

I think the outlook for someone interested in our enrollment management profession is quite good.

The best advice that I can offer young professionals is to work hard, develop a good work ethic, distinguish themselves among their peers, and take the time to learn the intricacies of the profession in order to be adequately prepared once professional opportunities present themselves.

Entry-level professionals need to understand the expectations of employers. No one learns all that is necessary to become a great enrollment management professional in the first couple of years in this business. It's important to make the investment and take the time to learn, to develop, to mature, and to grow within the profession.

I also urge today's young professionals to remember two additional things as they become seasoned enrollment managers:

- Continue to encourage and nurture young professionals in our field.
- Continue to help your institution remain focused on providing access to an affordable education for all students who wish to take advantage of the opportunity to engage in the academic enterprise.

# MOVING UP IN THE PROFESSION: PERSONAL ESSAY 7

by **Robin C. Brown**, vice president for enrollment and access, Colorado State University

I stumbled into the admission profession by accident. It wasn't until I had received a Ph.D., with no idea what to do next, that one of my mentors steered me to the University of Oregon Admissions Office to speak with then-Director of Admission Jim Buch. Jim talked to me about the profession, and told me about a position advertised at Western Oregon State College (now Western Oregon University). The year was 1986 and, at the age of 31, I began my career in admission.

So why did I stay in the admission field? Two primary reasons: First, I felt I was doing something truly worthwhile in helping students navigate where they would spend perhaps the four most important and impactful years of their lives; second, I really enjoyed my colleagues who were also in the profession.



I believe I progressed to the vice presidential level in the profession because I thrive on change and challenges. I sought new arenas/campuses to test and grow my skills. In addition, I am a risk-taker. Even though the first vice presidential position I was offered scared me, the motivation to succeed kicked in, and I found myself sitting on the president's cabinet as the only female. I was exhilarated by this opportunity.

I am currently completing my seventh year at Colorado State University as vice president for enrollment and access. I love having the noun "access" in my title. As a land grant institution, CSU's guiding principle is that of access to all qualified and motivated students, regardless of ability to pay. I oversee the Office of Admission, Student Financial Services, the Access Center, and the Registrar's Office. As the first vice president appointed to this position at Colorado State, I have had great fun creating a division team that includes the offices that drive enrollment at the university.

I believe we have greater challenges, and thus opportunities, in the profession today than any of our predecessors ever faced. The volume and complexity of the changes in the environment in which we work today make it more difficult and precarious than even 10 years ago. I see the challenges of our profession as follows:

- Increased pressure to bring in full-pay nonresidents and international students
- Increased pressure to employ a more business-like model where revenue generation has the potential to trump ethics-centered practices
- Retention of staff when pay remains low and raises have been non-existent or minimal for several years; we have lost a good number of staff to other areas (continuing education and outside agencies) who have higher salaries
- Provision of access to low- and middle-income students as tuition and total cost continues to rise and state funding is reduced
- More ambitious retention and graduation goals set by university president and/or board and an increased role for enrollment managers in this realm

At the same time, the above challenges provide new opportunities for campus admission offices. For example, if the mandate is to increase nonresident and/or international students, we have an opportunity to put together a comprehensive marketing and recruitment plan targeting such students, including new funding needed to accomplish the targeted enrollment goals. Working on such a plan can re-energize staff and tap into new ideas. It can prompt us to take a hard look at what we are doing that is—and is not—producing results.

Now is a good time to advocate for staff in order to retain the best employees. Within our division at CSU, we are moving some staff from classified positions to administrative professional positions. We have also outsourced our workstation and server support to our university IT department, thus saving significant dollars, which we have re-directed to either critical positions or issues of salary equity. We have re-invested in our division systems and communications staff not only to hire the most qualified people, but also to ensure we have the tools in place to realize enrollment goals.

At the university level, in order to improve morale and show appreciation for employees, we have implemented a new employee program called Commitment to Campus. This program offers such benefits as free or reduced tickets to athletic events, performing arts events, recreation and fitness programs, software discounts, a discount on veterinary services

at our veterinary hospital, classes on GED preparation and training, and the like.

Change and opportunity go hand-in-hand. Those who are adverse to change will have a difficult time in this environment. If we embrace change and see it as a way to head in new directions, think differently and engage staff in meaningful ways, we will enjoy the future. The future also provides us with an opportunity to step up and better serve our institutions in trying times, confirming our value as enrollment managers. Dr. Tony Frank, CSU president, often reminds us that it is easy to lead in good fiscal times, but the hard times determine our merit as campus leaders. The future also holds incredible potential for our continued learning and growing.

For young professionals who plan to stay in admission, I urge you to immerse yourself in it, internally and external-

ly. In your office, ask for more responsibility and offer new ideas and ways to implement those ideas. Establish effective working relationships with everyone in the office and make connections outside the office and across the university. Seek out mentors on and off-campus. If someone is ahead of you for a promotion, do not be afraid to change institutions to get the position you desire. Each time I changed institutions I learned more about admission and enrollment.

Outside the office, get involved in your regional ACAC and NACAC. Seek out committee memberships and leadership opportunities. Find seasoned enrollment managers and pick their brains; they will be pleased that you sought them out and willing to share their experiences and advice.

Finally, if your goal is to be a vice president, get your doctorate. It is still one of the best ways to increase credibility with faculty.

## CHAPTER 5: LOOKING AHEAD—CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Changes in the scope, function and positioning of admission/enrollment management in the higher educational structure has brought, and will continue to bring, significant changes to the role and definition of the admission professional. These changes will create new markers for an evolving career path, offering more opportunities and requiring more diverse skills and knowledge. Their impact can also help carve out a clearer, though more complex, definition of the admission profession, replacing the confusion and lack of information described by many entry-level professionals with a sense of pride and purpose.

As our work with admission staff across the country suggests, competency in higher education administration is insufficient for success when leading an office that is the public face of the institution, and—for better or for worse—the gatekeeper to higher education opportunity. Visionary leadership in admission will require an understanding of how professional innovation and guidance can benefit the institution, higher education overall and the greater good of society. As one vice president observed, “Public trust is based on student success. Our work is, quite simply, service to the public.”

In the new world of higher education, noted essayist Angel Perez, “It is no longer good enough to be a well-informed leader; it is important to be a leader ready to respond with informed opinion. Learning to become a thought leader early on in one’s career is going to be essential to the success of the entire field.” He added, “We are all part of a larger movement to create access and opportunity for students across the globe.”

Essayist Kathleen Massey offered an additional perspective on leadership: “It’s our job as leaders to find a way to unleash that knowledge and create a setting where people are empowered to make the changes. This means developing the courage to let your own ideas be transformed by the influence of those around you... being comfortable with crystallizing and communicating a vision and setting the bar high for performance and holding people accountable to it.”

### NEW SKILLS FOR NEW DEMANDS

Changes in office structure are just one way in which admission operations are adjusting to a role that has broadened in scope, importance and complexity. Senior professionals cited the impact of technology, the economy, and a changing global and domestic marketplace, among other factors, in creating demand for new knowledge, skills and talents for professionals at all levels.

In thinking about the evolving definition of the admission professional, those at the senior level consistently returned to the importance of putting admission in the broader context, frequently leading other parts of the institution into new realities. Essayist Bill Fitzsimmons emphasized the critical role admission will play in ensuring that higher education remains accessible to all qualified students, tasking new professionals with the challenge of “determining whether or not our nation continues to be among the world’s leaders.” Pointing to the demographic trend of the next decade,

featuring a significantly larger portion of all students coming from “modest economic backgrounds,” Fitzsimmons predicted that college counselors in secondary schools and college admission officers “will be critically important in encouraging students from all backgrounds to develop their talents to the fullest.”

**Several senior professionals also talked about a profession that will be increasingly under the spotlight in an era of instant and often unfiltered communication... Admission has also become more connected with the promotion and marketing of the entire institution, as it helps define and communicate the institutional brand...**

The next generation of admission professionals, said Angel Perez, will need strong analytical, data and counseling skills, along with the ability to be “creative, innovative and global in their leadership.” Perez and others predicted that the current growing internationalization of recruitment is just the beginning of a much bigger trend. He envisioned a new workplace where students and staff “will come from all over the world. Our recruitment programs will be fundamentally reshaped.”

Several senior professionals also talked about a profession that will be increasingly under the spotlight in an era of instant and often unfiltered communication. They cited a growing and often highly critical focus on higher education in general by traditional and social media. Admission has also become more connected with the promotion and marketing of the entire institution, as it helps define and communicate the institutional brand to students, families and counselors. New professionals, senior leaders agree, will need to be more communications and marketing-savvy.

Senior professionals said those at all levels would need to have the ability to “gather and implement strategies based on data,” as well as “understand more about financial aid.” These leaders added that the growing diversity of campuses, including more international students, underlined the need for developing “cultural competencies.”

As the evolution from “admission” to the more all-encompassing concept of enrollment management continues to take hold, Essayist Sudhar Kumarasamy said those who will be most successful will excel at “teamwork and communication and share an appreciation for data analysis and relationship building.” New leaders, like those in the past, will need to be open to “new ways of doing things, new ideas, and new influences, and to be comfortable with shifting sands,” observed Essayist Kathleen Massey.

Some senior professionals have expressed concern about the lack of preparation of many higher education institutions and admission professionals to cope with rapidly changing demographics. As described by Essayist Bill Fitzsimmons, within a decade, the graduating high school population will be composed of “Latinos, 25 percent; African Americans, 13 percent; Asian Americans, 8 percent; and Native Americans, 2 percent,” with most from “modest economic backgrounds.” Online programs have increased dramatically at many institutions to meet the needs of the workplace and a troubled economy. Many institutions are also looking more to international recruitment to balance their budgets.

These trends mean admission professionals will need to develop expertise in marketing, recruiting and counseling in all these areas. However, across the board, survey respondents assigned the lowest rankings of importance to international, multicultural, transfer and nontraditional recruitment skills. This finding seems surprising and may indicate a lack of knowledge and/or understanding of major trends and shifts in higher education. One dean suggested that the problem permeates many institutional mindsets overall, noting that schools will need to be able to provide the services needed to retain as well as recruit students from different domestic as well as international markets and many have not begun that process. Admission professionals can “cultivate a culture of innovation,” in the words of one respondent, taking the lead in proposing and implementing solutions for a new era in higher education.

At the same time, many respondents have expressed deep concerns about the consequences of the pressure to generate more and more revenue. They cited threats to need-based financial aid and “merit aid masquerading as need-based.” Some feared the “philosophy of education getting lost” and the threat of “[The emphasis on] revenue generation having the potential to trump ethics-centered practices.” One vice president spoke of the importance of NACAC guidelines relating to ethical practices, noting “We have to be true to our profession and our institution.” Another senior leader stressed the need to “preserve access to low- and middle-income students in the face of rising tuition and budget cuts.”

The expansion of admission responsibilities also offers new opportunities for admission offices, as Essayist Robin Brown pointed out. She advocated building staff around new institutional imperatives, such as increasing non-residential and/or international students. To provide funds for such changes in her office, she outsourced workstation and server support to the university IT department. The result was savings that were then redirected to critical positions and salary equity.

Respondents agreed that more resources, including greater educational opportunities, will be critical to help those at all levels in the admission operation succeed and advance to their full potential, and to help the profession realize its potential. Such resources might include, as some have mentioned, the development of a specific doctoral level program in enrollment management. The profession could also benefit from undergraduate

courses and perhaps certification programs that approach the profession at an analytical level and deepen understanding of admission in the broader context of higher education.

Professionals at all levels expressed their need for more programming, especially at the regional level. Middle managers who were interviewed said they often felt left out of the learning curve and wanted more educational programs and networking opportunities created specifically to meet their needs, especially in today’s environment.

#### ADDRESSING CURRENT TRENDS

Are admission professionals equipped to meet the challenges ahead? What additional resources will they need to cope with and control challenges that both threaten and benefit the profession? Based on research conducted for this project, we offer the following thoughts about how to cope with issues currently facing the admission profession.

1. Establish guidance and career training resources for young professionals
2. Address shortages of women and minority racial/ethnic groups at key stages in the admission profession.
3. Identify and develop resources to address key skill sets.
4. Find ways to engage and encourage young professionals.

#### ADDRESSING FUTURE ISSUES

1. Identify ways to improve skill sets that are currently under-emphasized, but will clearly help shape the future of admission and all of higher education.
2. Emphasize professional standards as a way of ensuring consistency and ethics in professional practice amid a changing environment.
3. Develop and promote educational certificate or degree programs that can lead to successful admission careers.
4. Implement a coordinated recruitment drive to attract under-represented groups into the admission profession.

On the whole, admission professionals look at the future with some apprehension but far greater excitement. They want to be recognized as part of a profession that is critical to the success of higher education and to access and opportunity for students of all ages. Acknowledging that undergraduate admission has become a “high stakes, high pressure business,” Essayist Greg Roberts described a field with men and women who “strive to be true to what drew us to this profession in the first place: the honor of getting to know students. . .the privilege of helping them and their families. . .and the chance to contribute to the mission of our nation’s universities.”

Finally, today’s leaders want to ensure that a new generation of talented young men and women will enter and stay in the profession. As one survey respondent concluded, “We need to make this great career and profession a more desirable one.”

## MOVING UP IN THE PROFESSION: PERSONAL ESSAY 8

by **Angel B. Pérez**, vice president and dean of admission and financial aid, Pitzer College

After my first year in college admission, I went to my dean and told her I was not interested in doing the job anymore. In fact, I think I remember using the exact words, “You people are crazy.” The travel pace was insane; there were too many files to be read; and I felt like my time was no longer mine. She insisted I stay another year because one year in admission was not enough to understand why the work matters. Begrudgingly I did, and 15 years later, I understand why she was right.

Like most enrollment leaders, I didn’t realize admission was a “profession.” I applied for a job at my alma mater upon graduation because I thought it would be fun to travel, represent an institution I love and choose future students that would benefit from the education. It felt like a noble cause. What I didn’t realize at the time was that the work of an enrollment professional is much bigger than his or her institution. We are all part of a larger movement to create access and opportunity for students across the globe. The longer I did the work, the more I realized this profession was about helping institutions move forward and helping students find paths to higher learning.

After a few years in admission, I went to “the other side” of the desk and ran a community-based organization and eventually transitioned to director of college counseling at a public high school in New York City. These jobs were absolutely pivotal to my professional development. They provided me with direct service opportunities; they equipped me with counseling skills; and they allowed me to experience firsthand how higher education policies affect young people in the college pipeline. I would like to believe that I make better admission decisions because I worked in a high school, and the policies I help develop at my institution and other education organizations are shaped by my experiences as a CBO (community-based organization) director.

I eventually moved back into an admission office because I missed the global aspect of the work. I love reading an application from South Africa one day and rural Montana the next. I still get a thrill from visiting high schools globally and trying to understand the context for student and family lives. I enjoy strategic planning and helping an institution that I believe in move forward in its mission and goals. I thrive in the cultivation of policies, procedures and process. Analyzing how the decisions I make affect my institution and, more importantly, access to American higher education, is a challenge I enjoy. My greatest joy is knowing the work I do in admission and financial aid can fundamentally transform lives and change the trajectory of a generation.

Individuals interested in joining or advancing in this profession should be passionate stewards of education with an incredibly high level of energy and a zest for innovation. Higher education is an ever-changing industry and our success is contingent upon the ability to adapt to shifts, but more importantly, stay ahead of the curve. We should be leading change, not allowing change to lead us. The next generation of enrollment leaders will need to have strong analytical, data and counseling skills, but they will also need to be creative, innovative and global in their leadership. Our profession has moved toward global markets rapidly, but in the years ahead, global markets will be the rule, not the exception.



Our students and staffs will come from all over the world. Our recruitment programs will be fundamentally reshaped. Fifteen years ago I never imagined sitting in my office conducting a virtual high school visit via Skype or that I would watch student interview videos as I read applications on my computer. I often ask my staff, “What are the assumptions we make each day about how we should engage our daily work?” I then ask them to turn those assumptions upside down. We tackle things that many assume are tradition and therefore permanent. We ask ourselves, will a high school visit look the same 10 years from now as it does today? What does a campus visit look like in the future? What global assumptions do we make about students and how do we challenge those? How have we historically defined financial aid, and is it still relevant today?

The ability to cultivate innovation and turn our assumptions upside down will redefine our work and keep our institutions relevant. In addition, the success of our profession in the future relies on the ability to produce thought-leaders. Our work is riddled with the minutiae of the day-to-day, and it is rare that we have the time to stop, think and reflect on our actions. The calendar gets busier each year and what suffers is the bigger picture. If we don’t stop to think and analyze, we are working without intention.

When I first became dean of admission and financial aid, I remember driving home each night exhausted and numb. I was talked at all day long. I went from meeting to meeting where I was asked to make decisions on the spot. I would sit, listen, respond, get up, move to the next meeting and do it all over again the next day. After a few weeks of this pattern, I knew I had to change it. I wanted to be the kind of leader who took time to analyze problems, and made decisions as a result of thoughtful reflection, not emotional reaction.

I now reserve an hour of the day on my calendar (most days). I label it “catch up.” It means time to catch up on things I need to respond to, but I often use that time to think, write and reflect. I’ve also become more comfortable telling people that I need to think about something before I respond. It’s rare when someone comes to me with a problem that I respond instantly. I exercise my right—and obligation—to think about it, and I know I’m making better decisions as a result.

I also wake up early each morning and browse national newspapers and education headlines quietly before I head to work. I use my commuting time to reflect on those articles and

make the connections between what is happening nationally to the work I do on a daily basis. We live in a world where information is disseminated rapidly and the media has taken a particular interest in issues of education. It is no longer good enough to be a well-informed leader; it is important to be a leader ready to respond with informed opinion. Learning to become a thought-leader early on in one’s career is going to be essential to the success of the entire field.

The enrollment profession has been described as a “calling.” It’s certainly not for everyone. In fact, during the month of April, I often wonder why I would choose a career where my success depends on the whims of 17 year-olds! The work involves a lot of travel and file reading, and it requires an incredible amount of stamina. The field attracts those who are comfortable with uncertainty. But those long travel days and sleepless nights in April (when you are hoping you don’t enroll too few or too many) give way to the joys of shaping a freshman class, changing lives, funding dreams, shaping national policy, and best of all creating educational opportunity for students around the globe.



# MOVING UP IN THE PROFESSION: PERSONAL ESSAY 9

by **Bill Fitzsimmons**, dean of admissions and financial aid, Harvard College

Anyone who entered the field of college admission counseling 40 years ago has been part of a revolution that has made higher education more accessible and affordable than ever before. Anyone entering the profession now can expect an adventure that is at least as exciting, if not more so.

My parents, like most of their generation, did not attend college, but they knew that changing times made higher education a priority. We ran a combination gas station and “mom and pop” store where I was able to meet a wide variety of people. I met many who, like my parents, were every bit as bright as or brighter than the people I met at Harvard, but who were not able to attend college. For their generation, there were numerous jobs that did not require a college degree, including professions in the trades, manufacturing, service industries, technology, the local ship yard, and the military. Today, many of these options are greatly reduced, require postsecondary education or are gone altogether.

For me, college seemed a wise alternative. I was able to learn more about the world that I glimpsed through the work at the gas station and the store. My undergraduate work at Harvard led naturally to courses in anthropology, psychology and sociology. My graduate work focused on the effects that social forces and economic background have on educational aspirations and attainment. A superb course in statistics and an emphasis by my undergraduate and graduate professors on writing also provided some of the skills that I needed to teach in college—which I did at Holy Cross College.

For their generation, there were numerous jobs that did not require a college degree, including professions in the trades, manufacturing, service industries, technology, the local ship yard, and the military. Today, many of these options are greatly reduced...

Then I became delightfully side-tracked—for 40-plus years—when I heard about an opportunity to work in college admission. It seemed a perfect marriage of my interests, and similar to a profession I thought I might someday enter—high school guidance counseling. As an admission officer, I could still work with students directly and also conduct the research that I enjoyed in graduate school.

In my years in admission, I have witnessed great transformation. At the Harvard I attended in the 1960s the ratio of males to females was four to one; today it is closing in on one to one. There were very few minority students—now Asian-American students comprise 19 percent of the student body, African-American students and Latinos comprise about 10 percent each, and Native Americans comprise 1 to 2 percent. While I was one of 25 percent of students on need-based financial aid, today nearly 70 percent receive some form of financial aid. Similar changes have occurred at most other institutions of higher education. The new financial aid programs of the past few years send an encouraging message to students everywhere that family financial circumstances will not get in the way of pursuing the American dream.

Still, much work remains to be done. In the years ahead, new members of our profession will go a long way in determining whether or not our nation continues to be among the world’s leaders. Within a few years, whites will comprise 50 percent of the U.S. public high school graduates, Latinos 25 percent, African Americans 13 percent, Asian Americans 8 percent, and Native Americans 2 percent. Regardless of ethnic background, a larger proportion of all students in the future will come from modest economic backgrounds. The work of college admission counselors in middle schools, secondary schools and colleges will be critically important in encouraging students from all backgrounds to develop their talents to the fullest.

As members of NACAC, each of us can make a profound difference in students’ lives. New members of the profession have an opportunity to continue the revolution in all kinds of communities, not simply those with economic challenges. There are also many middle-income students who will need their help, including those whose stressful lives leave them in danger of burn-out.

I don’t think I’ve ever met anyone who spent significant time in college admission who regretted it. Derek Bok, one of Harvard’s greatest presidents, often counseled Harvard students to find professions that they believed in and ones they loved doing on a day-to-day basis.

The education one can get in college admission from meeting students in communities around the country and the world, interviewing them and reading their applications, and following their progress throughout their lives is fascinating and immensely rewarding. I am inspired and energized by the work I have done over the past 40 years. I look forward to an even more exciting set of experiences in my next 40 years.

## APPENDIX

**Table A-1. Admission officers' degrees, by field of study**

	Bachelor's degree	Master's, Doctorate, or professional degree
Agriculture and Natural Resources	0.4%	0.2%
Architecture	0.0	0.1
Arts	3.2	1.3
Business	14.4	15.5
Communications and Journalism	12.1	4.2
Computers and Math	1.8	0.7
Education	5.2	42.5
Engineering	0.7	0.1
Health	0.8	0.5
Humanities/Liberal Arts	24.5	8.0
Industrial Arts	0.0	0.2
Law and Public Policy	1.3	5.2
Psychology and Social Work	10.3	2.0
Recreation	0.3	0.4
Science-Life/Physical Science	3.4	0.3
Social Science	15.5	3.6
Other	6.2	15.3

Source: NACAC Admission Officer Career Path Survey, 2011.

**Table A-2. Salary ranges by characteristics of respondents and employer institutions**

	\$35,000 or less	\$35,001 - 55,000	\$55,001 - 75,000	\$75,001 - 95,000	More than \$95,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>12.7%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>21.7%</b>	<b>12.3%</b>	<b>18.3%</b>
<b>Gender</b>					
Male	10.8	25.6	20.8	14.2	28.6
Female	13.8	41.3	22.5	11.0	11.3
<b>Position</b>					
Admission counselor	48.0	48.6	3.4	0.0	0.0
Assistant/associate director	10.2	53.5	28.6	6.5	1.1
Director	3.3	15.2	30.8	30.1	20.7
Vice president/dean	0.5	0.5	7.1	13.6	78.3
<b>Full-time undergraduate enrollment</b>					
Less than 1,500	21.5	31.3	20.3	12.1	14.8
1,500-2,999	12.6	39.0	17.3	11.3	19.8
3,000-9,999	8.4	35.3	25.5	14.1	16.6
10,000 or more	10.9	33.9	23.0	10.4	21.7
<b>Geographic region</b>					
New England	10.7	33.3	24.5	5.7	25.8
Mid-East	10.0	32.3	22.7	15.2	19.7
Great Lakes	19.0	38.4	15.2	11.4	16.1
Plains	18.8	39.6	25.0	10.4	6.3
Southeast	17.4	34.2	23.7	10.0	14.6
Southwest	15.3	39.0	22.0	6.8	16.9
Rocky Mountains	3.4	24.1	34.5	20.7	17.2
Far West	0.8	37.8	18.1	20.5	22.8
<b>Carnegie classification</b>					
Doctorate-granting	8.2	39.2	24.2	10.5	18.0
Master's colleges and universities	14.2	31.3	22.8	15.3	16.3
Baccalaureate colleges	17.2	35.0	16.6	10.8	20.4
Associate's colleges	<i>0.0</i>	<i>40.0</i>	<i>20.0</i>	<i>20.0</i>	<i>20.0</i>
Special focus	8.8	35.3	29.4	11.8	14.7
<b>Total expenses, public colleges (not significant)</b>					
\$141,000,000 or less	14.8	34.6	23.5	16.0	11.1
\$141,000,001 - \$336,000,000	12.9	24.7	18.8	23.5	20.0
\$336,000,001 - \$911,000,000	9.5	32.1	21.4	10.7	26.2
\$911,000,001 or more	16.2	32.4	27.0	6.8	17.6
<b>Total expenses, private colleges</b>					
\$43,979,569 or less	20.6	32.1	21.5	10.5	15.3
\$43,979,570 - \$86,860,726	13.6	36.4	16.5	14.1	19.4
\$86,860,726 - \$194,000,000	11.5	41.0	21.2	6.9	19.4
\$194,000,001 or more	5.2	38.1	25.7	13.3	17.6

Source: NACAC Admission Officer Career Path Survey, 2011; Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) Online Data Center (enrollment, region, Carnegie classification, expense variables).

Note: Figures in italics should be interpreted with caution due to low sample size (fewer than 15).

Table A-3. Salary ranges of admission counselors by characteristics of respondents and employer institutions

	\$35,000 or less	More than \$35,000
<b>Total</b>	48.0%	52.0%
<b>Gender (not significant)</b>		
Male	49.1	50.9
Female	47.1	52.9
<b>Race/ethnicity (not significant)</b>		
White, non-Hispanic	48.0	52.0
Black, non-Hispanic	42.1	57.9
American Indian/Alaskan Native		
Asian/Pacific Islander	66.7	33.3
Hispanic	46.7	53.3
Multi-racial	46.2	53.8
Other		
<b>Time in position (not significant)</b>		
Fewer than 3 years	53.8	46.2
3-5 years	39.1	60.9
6-8 years	37.5	62.5
More than 8 years	0.0	100.0
<b>Time in profession</b>		
Less than 3 years	61.7	38.3
3-5 years	38.0	62.0
6-8 years	27.3	72.7
9-12 years	0.0	100.0
13-20 years	0.0	100.0
More than 20 years	33.3	66.7
<b>Control of institution (not significant)</b>		
Public	47.6	52.4
Private	50.0	50.0
<b>Selectivity</b>		
Less than 50% accepted	34.0	66.0
50% - 70% accepted	48.2	51.8
More than 70% accepted	62.3	37.7
<b>Expenses, public colleges (not significant)</b>		
\$141,000,000 or less	57.1	42.9
\$141,000,001 - \$336,000,000	58.3	41.7
\$336,000,001 - \$911,000,000	50.0	50.0
\$911,000,001 or more	34.8	65.2
<b>Expenses, private colleges</b>		
\$43,979,569 or less	82.4	17.6
\$43,979,570 - \$86,860,726	40.0	60.0
\$86,860,726 - \$194,000,000	52.2	47.8
\$194,000,001 or more	20.0	80.0

Source: NACAC Admission Officer Career Path Survey, 2011; Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) Online Data Center (control, selectivity, enrollment, region, Carnegie classification, and expense variables).  
 Note: Figures in italics should be interpreted with caution due to low sample size (fewer than 15).

**Table A-4. Salary ranges of assistant/associate directors of admission, by characteristics of respondents and employer institutions**

	\$35,000 or less	\$35,001 - 55,000	\$55,001 - 75,000	More than \$75,000
<b>Total</b>	10.2%	53.5%	28.6%	7.6%
<b>Gender (not significant)</b>				
Male	9.5	48.2	31.0	11.3
Female	10.6	55.8	27.6	6.0
<b>Race/ethnicity (not significant)</b>				
White, non-Hispanic	10.9	53.9	27.6	7.6
Black, non-Hispanic	3.7	50.0	38.9	7.4
American Indian/Alaskan Native	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0
Asian/Pacific Islander	7.7	53.8	30.8	7.7
Hispanic	11.5	46.2	34.6	7.7
Multi-racial	15.8	68.4	15.8	0.0
Other	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
<b>Time in position</b>				
Fewer than 3 years	14.1	57.3	24.4	4.2
3-5 years	9.8	56.3	26.8	7.1
6-8 years	7.0	60.6	25.4	7.0
More than 8 years	2.8	28.2	49.3	19.7
<b>Time in profession</b>				
Less than 3 years	33.3	57.1	9.5	0.0
3-5 years	19.5	68.8	10.9	0.8
6-8 years	7.6	66.0	24.3	2.1
9-12 years	4.1	48.0	36.7	11.2
13-20 years	1.3	31.6	58.2	8.9
More than 20 years	0.0	19.1	40.4	40.4
<b>Control of institution (not significant)</b>				
Public	9.0	48.5	32.8	9.7
Private	10.9	55.8	27.2	6.1
<b>Selectivity</b>				
Less than 50% accepted	6.3	50.3	30.3	13.1
50% - 70% accepted	11.0	52.2	30.2	6.6
More than 70% accepted	14.6	58.6	26.1	0.6

	\$35,000 or less	\$35,001 - 55,000	\$55,001 - 75,000	More than \$75,000
<b>Total</b>	10.2%	53.5%	28.6%	7.6%
<b>Full-time undergraduate enrollment</b>				
Less than 1,500	18.4	59.8	18.4	3.4
1,500-2,999	15.4	62.2	19.6	2.8
3,000-9,999	5.3	49.2	35.3	10.2
10,000 or more	6.3	46.8	36.9	9.9
<b>Region</b>				
New England	9.5	51.2	32.1	7.1
Mid-East	6.0	55.2	31.9	6.9
Great Lakes	22.2	54.5	16.2	7.1
Plains	5.1	64.1	30.8	0.0
Southeast	13.0	50.0	31.0	6.0
Southwest	7.1	57.1	32.1	3.6
Rocky Mountains	0.0	50.0	50.0	0.0
Far West	2.1	55.3	25.5	17.0
<b>Carnegie classification</b>				
Doctorate-granting	4.6	49.3	34.2	11.9
Master's colleges and univ.	10.1	59.7	27.3	2.9
Baccalaureate colleges	19.4	55.5	21.3	3.9
Associate's colleges	0.0	50.0	25.0	25.0
Special focus	9.1	54.5	36.4	0.0
<b>Expenses, public colleges (not significant)</b>				
\$141,000,000 or less	10.0	60.0	23.3	6.7
\$141,000,001 - \$336,000,000	14.3	53.6	25.0	7.1
\$336,000,001 - \$911,000,000	4.9	51.2	31.7	12.2
\$911,000,001 or more	9.4	31.3	46.9	12.5
<b>Expenses, private colleges</b>				
\$43,979,569 or less	20.0	65.0	15.0	0.0
\$43,979,570 - \$86,860,726	19.3	60.2	18.1	2.4
\$86,860,726 - \$194,000,000	8.8	60.0	29.6	1.6
\$194,000,001 or more	3.1	44.1	37.0	15.7

Source: NACAC Admission Officer Career Path Survey, 2011; Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) Online Data Center (control, selectivity, enrollment, region, Carnegie classification, and expense variables).

Note: Figures in italics should be interpreted with caution due to low sample size (fewer than 15).

Table A-5. Salary ranges of directors of admission by characteristics of respondents and employer institutions

	\$55,000 or less	\$55,001-75,000	\$75,001-95,000	More than \$95,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>18.5%</b>	<b>30.8%</b>	<b>30.1%</b>	<b>20.7%</b>
<b>Full-time undergraduate enrollment</b>				
Less than 1,500	35.4	41.5	20.0	3.1
1,500-2,999	16.9	33.8	32.5	16.9
3,000-9,999	12.7	29.1	36.7	21.5
10,000 or more	8.0	18.0	30.0	44.0
<b>Region</b>				
New England	13.8	34.5	13.8	37.9
Mid-East	12.5	29.2	37.5	20.8
Great Lakes	34.7	26.5	18.4	20.4
Plains	15.8	52.6	26.3	5.3
Southeast	19.6	32.6	32.6	15.2
Southwest	30.8	30.8	23.1	15.4
Rocky Mountains	0.0	42.9	42.9	14.3
Far West	11.8	26.5	47.1	14.7
<b>Carnegie classification</b>				
Doctorate-granting	9.2	23.1	29.2	38.5
Master's colleges and univ.	15.8	38.3	35.0	10.8
Baccalaureate colleges	28.4	24.3	25.7	21.6
Associate's colleges				
Special focus	27.3	54.5	18.2	0.0
<b>Expenses, public colleges</b>				
\$141,000,000 or less	19.2	46.2	26.9	7.7
\$141,000,001 - \$336,000,000	3.1	28.1	50.0	18.8
\$336,000,001 - \$911,000,000	5.0	15.0	25.0	55.0
\$911,000,001 or more	7.7	30.8	7.7	53.8
<b>Expenses, private colleges</b>				
\$43,979,569 or less	40.7	45.8	13.6	0.0
\$43,979,570 - \$86,860,726	19.3	31.6	38.6	10.5
\$86,860,726 - \$194,000,000	11.1	25	30.6	33.3
\$194,000,001 or more	7.7	11.5	42.3	38.5

	\$55,000 or less	\$55,001-75,000	\$75,001-95,000	More than \$95,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>18.5%</b>	<b>30.8%</b>	<b>30.1%</b>	<b>20.7%</b>
<b>Gender</b>				
Male	14.5	28.2	28.2	29.0
Female	21.9	33.1	31.8	13.2
<b>Race/ethnicity (not significant)</b>				
White, non-Hispanic	19.9	32.3	27.9	19.9
Black, non-Hispanic	16.7	29.2	25.0	29.2
American Indian/Alaskan Native				
Asian/ Pacific Islander	0.0	0.0	66.7	33.3
Hispanic	10.0	10.0	50.0	30.0
Multi-racial	12.5	50.0	37.5	0.0
Other	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0
<b>Time in position (not significant)</b>				
Fewer than 3 years	22.6	33.0	30.4	13.9
3-5 years	20.3	31.1	27.0	21.6
6-8 years	15.4	33.3	28.2	23.1
More than 8 years	8.5	21.3	36.2	34.0
<b>Time in profession</b>				
Less than 3 years	22.2	22.2	22.2	33.3
3-5 years	50.0	27.8	16.7	5.6
6-8 years	31.4	45.7	22.9	0.0
9-12 years	24.2	37.9	27.3	10.6
13-20 years	9.2	28.7	40.2	21.8
More than 20 years	8.2	19.7	27.9	44.3
<b>Control of institution</b>				
Public	8.6	30.1	33.3	28.0
Private	23.6	32.0	28.7	15.7
<b>Selectivity</b>				
Less than 50% accepted	4.7	23.4	39.1	32.8
50% - 70% accepted	21.4	31.6	26.5	20.4
More than 70% accepted	23.3	35.9	29.1	11.7

Source: NACAC Admission Officer Career Path Survey, 2011; Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) Online Data Center (control, selectivity, enrollment, region, Carnegie classification, and expense variables).

Note: Figures in italics should be interpreted with caution due to low sample size (fewer than 15).

**Table A-6. Salary ranges of vice presidents/deans of admission and/or enrollment management, by characteristics of respondents and employer institutions**

	\$95,000 or less	\$95,001-\$135,000	More than \$135,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>21.7%</b>	<b>32.8%</b>	<b>45.5%</b>
<b>Gender (not significant)</b>			
Male	21.3	34.4	44.3
Female	21.6	31.1	47.3
<b>Race/ethnicity (not significant)</b>			
White, non-Hispanic	20.1	34.3	45.6
Black, non-Hispanic	20.0	40.0	40.0
American Indian/Alaskan Native	0.0	0.0	100.0
Asian/ Pacific Islander	50.0	50.0	0.0
Hispanic	50.0	25.0	25.0
Multi-racial	40.0	0.0	60.0
Other	0.0	0.0	100.0
<b>Time in position</b>			
Fewer than 3 years	31.3	28.8	40.0
3-5 years	12.8	43.6	43.6
6-8 years	24.1	13.8	62.1
More than 8 years	12.0	42.0	46.0
<b>Time in profession</b>			
Less than 3 years	66.7	33.3	0.0
3-5 years	16.7	66.7	16.7
6-8 years	60.0	30.0	10.0
9-12 years	45.0	25.0	30.0
13-20 years	27.4	33.9	38.7
More than 20 years	8.2	32.0	59.8
<b>Control of institution (not significant)</b>			
Public	17.1	43.9	39.0
Private	23.2	29.0	47.7
<b>Selectivity</b>			
Less than 50% accepted	9.8	23.5	66.7
50% - 70% accepted	27.1	34.3	38.6
More than 70% accepted	26.1	36.2	37.7
<b>Full-time undergraduate enrollment</b>			
Less than 1,500	41.0	23.0	36.1
1,500-2,999	15.5	39.7	44.8
3,000-9,999	14.0	32.0	54.0
10,000 or more	7.4	37.0	55.6
<b>Region</b>			
New England	10.0	20.0	70.0
Mid-East	15.9	34.1	50.0
Great Lakes	31.4	42.9	25.7
Plains	61.5	7.7	30.8
Southeast	21.9	50.0	28.1
Southwest	0.0	25.0	75.0
Rocky Mountains	42.9	28.6	28.6
Far West	14.8	22.2	63.0
<b>Carnegie classification (not significant)</b>			
Doctorate-granting	10.4	29.2	60.4
Master's colleges and universities	23.1	36.9	40.0
Baccalaureate colleges	27.4	28.8	43.8
Associate's colleges	0.0	100.0	0.0
Special focus	28.6	28.6	42.9
<b>Expenses, public colleges</b>			
\$141,000,000 or less	36.4	45.5	18.2
\$141,000,001 - \$336,000,000	0.0	63.6	36.4
\$336,000,001 - \$911,000,000	18.2	45.5	36.4
\$911,000,001 or more	0.0	0.0	100.0
<b>Expenses, private colleges</b>			
\$43,979,569 or less	42.9	32.1	25.0
\$43,979,570 - \$86,860,726	15.0	40.0	45.0
\$86,860,726 - \$194,000,000	9.1	18.2	72.7
\$194,000,001 or more	7.7	23.1	69.2

Source: NACAC Admission Officer Career Path Survey, 2011; Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) Online Data Center (control, selectivity, enrollment, region, Carnegie classification, and expense variables).

Note: Figures in italics should be interpreted with caution due to low sample size (fewer than 15).