



May 2004

President's Corner



*Grant Thatcher
Onondaga
Community
College*

Dear Friends and Colleagues:

Although, according to the calendar, Spring has officially arrived, you would never know it in Syracuse at the moment. As I write, it is April 5th, and the wind and snow have been blowing here most of the day. No matter. Spring flowers had begun to appear before last night's 3 to 6-inch snowstorm, and I'm sure they will make themselves known again before long. Despite what the weather may be doing, spring activities in the college selection cycle continue to proceed apace. Students are still making their decisions as to what colleges and universities to attend. It's the time of year when high school students, guidance counselors, and admissions officers are working on the imminent transition of students from high school to college. It's always been a time that I find exciting. It represents the culmination of at least a year and a half of collaboration: collaboration between students and guidance counselors; guidance counselors and admissions officers; and admissions officers and students. How exciting to see so much work and planning come to fruition. At the same time, I also find it just a little bittersweet. The students who will soon be leaving their high schools at graduation are making the transition not just from high school to college, but in many ways from kid to young adult. Who doesn't get just a little misty-eyed at a high school graduation? Still, this is a time to celebrate and congratulate, and I congratulate you all on a job well done.

The past couple of months have been a busy time in more ways than one, of course. In addition to the usual late winter/early spring activities that come with our jobs, there have been a variety of other professional endeavors. March saw the NYSACAC Regional Forums, which were held on eight campuses across the state (one of the eight Forums was actually held in early April). Attendance this year was at a record high, exceeding last year's by over 100 participants. Thank you to SUNY New Paltz, Molloy College, University at Buffalo, College of Staten Island, St. John Fisher College, Syracuse University, Fordham University, and Pace University for the fine work that went into this year's Regional Forums. Thank you must also go to Maryelizabeth Amico and Patricia Peek, Co-Chairs of the Professional Development Committee, for coordinating the Regional Forums this year. Great job!

Late February/early March also saw the 2004 NACAC National Legislative Conference in Washington, DC. Jon Westover, NYSACAC Government Relations Chair and member of the National Government Relations Committee, led the New York contingent. I had the privilege of participating this year, along with Lisa Sohmer, Sandy Behrend, and Maryelizabeth Amico. We met with legislators and their education aides to lobby for increased funding for aid programs that support students seeking the financial means to attend college. The NACAC National Legislative Conference is open to all members of NACAC, so if you are interested in becoming involved and would like to participate in next year's Legislative Conference, contact Jon Westover at The College of St. Rose in Albany, NY. I highly recommend it!

June is just around the corner, and that means it's almost time for NYSACAC's 26th Annual Conference. The Conference is being held at LeMoyne College in Syracuse, NY, June 2-4. This year's Conference promises to be bigger and better than ever. Lisa Sohmer,

NYSACAC President-elect and Conference Chair, reported at our most recent Executive Board meeting that there will be over fifty workshops (a new record). There are many other activities and surprises in store. If you haven't received a registration booklet, contact our administrative assistant, Michele Vagianelis, at nysacac@hotmail.com to request one, or visit our Website, www.nysacac.org for information and to download a registration form. I hope to see as many of you there as possible.

Spring is also the time when we will be electing new officers and delegates for NYSACAC, and when some committee chairs end their terms. This year's slate is exceptional, and I hope that everyone has voted. Many thanks to Scott Hooker for stepping in to coordinate this year's election process, and to the Nominating Committee for their hard work. It is work of which all can be proud.

And finally, as I pass the gavel to Lisa Sohmer at the Annual Conference, I must acknowledge the fact that, in June, my term as president ends. I know that the Association will continue to thrive and grow during Lisa's presidency. This has been a year of incredible personal and professional growth, and of great professional reward. I have had the opportunity to work with an Executive Board that never ceases to amaze me. They are an extraordinary group of people whose energy, intelligence, and passion for students is always inspiring and awesome. Thank you all for your support and the great work you do on behalf of NYSACAC and the students of New York State. Best wishes to all.

Sincerely,

Grant Thatcher

Grant Thatcher
President, NYSACAC

Delegates' Corner

By Michael J. Konopski, Niagara University

Your NYSACAC Delegates— Working for You!

The 18 delegates of the New York State Association for College Admission Counseling are elected to a 3-year term to serve the school counselors and college admission counselors of New York State.

What do they do? The primary function of a delegate is to represent New York State at the annual National Association for College Admission Counseling Conference each fall. During the Conference, delegates meet and interview candidates for national office; and propose, review, and pass resolutions which impact the future of college counseling. They also amend and update the SPGP—the Statement of Principles of Good Practice—the document that guides the proper and ethical process of college admissions for the student, school counselor, and admission counselor.

In addition, delegates sit on the executive board of NYSACAC, which meets 6 times a year to conduct the business of the organization. Delegates are also encouraged to attend the annual Legislative Forum in Albany and the Spring Professional Development Forums in their region.

Delegates also represent you and are your voice in the state and national development of college admission policy. Each delegate is assigned to one or more counties (see left column) and is responsible for relaying questions, comments, and information between school/college counselors and the state and national associations. So, use your delegates and help yourself and others in the world of college admission counseling.

NYS Legislative Forum— A First-Timers View

Although I had been in college admission counseling for nearly 20 years, I had never attended a state legislative forum designed to promote issues important to students in the college admission process.

The first thing that surprised me yet made me feel proud was the attendees—students; public and private secondary school counselors; college admission personnel from SUNY, CUNY, and the private colleges and universities; as well as state and national organizations such as the College Board and CICU. Even though,

in some cases, these groups are competitors, they united to make their case that college-bound students and the organizations supporting them need proper funding.

After a luncheon and a primer on what to expect at the capital, as well as a “how to lobby 101,” we were treated to workshops discussing the political atmosphere in Albany, the changing climate in education, and budget and legislative priorities. Lise Bang-Jenson, co-host of the television program “Inside Albany,” was our featured speaker.

For those of you who have never had the opportunity to attend a State Legislative Forum, I hope you will consider joining us in Albany in February 2005.

Delegate Names and Regional Assignments

College Delegates:

Alison Almasian
aalmasian@st.awu.edu
St. Lawrence University
Representing: Clinton, St. Lawrence, Essex, Franklin, Hamilton, Warren, Fulton, Washington, Montgomery

Maryelizabeth Amico
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College of St. Rose
Representing: Saratoga, Schenectady, Schoharie, Greene, Columbia, Delaware

Catherine DeLorenzo
delorc@rpi.edu
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
Representing: Broome, Cayuga, Chemung, Cortland, Tompkins, Seneca, Tioga

Peter Farrell
Hofstra University
Representing: Nassau, Suffolk

Deborah Goodrich
GoodriDJ@AlfredState.edu
Alfred State College
Representing: Allegeny, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Steuben

Kelly Herrington
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Union College
Representing: Ontario, Livingston, Rockland, Dutchess

Beryl Jeffers
jefferbe@sysadm.suny.edu
SUNY System Administration, Metro Recruitment Center
Representing: Kings

Michael J. Konopski
mjk@niagara.edu
Niagara University
Representing: Genesee, Niagara, Orleans, Schuyler, Wyoming

Meryl Wiener
mwiener@uamail.albany.edu
SUNY at Albany
Representing: Lewis, Onondaga, Oswego, Madison, Oneida, Jefferson, Herkimer

High School Delegates:

Michael Acquilano
macquilano@statenislandacademy.org
Staten Island Academy
Representing: Richmond, Bronx

Trey Gardner
tgardner@clar.wnyric.org
Clarence High School
Representing: Erie

Beverly Kent
beverly_kent@er.monroe.edu
East Rochester High School
Representing: Monroe, Wayne, Yates

Steve Marcisz
smarcisz@bedford.k12.ny.us
Fox Lane High School
Representing: Orange, Putnam, Sullivan, Ulster, Westchester

Elenor Reid
ereid@brearley.org
The Brearley School
Representing: New York, Queens

Courtney Black-Swisher
swiscour@shenet.org
Shenendehowa High School
Representing: Albany, Chenango, Otsego, Rensselaer

Alternate Delegates:

Richard Alvarez
Ralvarez@uapc.cuny.edu
City University of New York

Scott Hooker
Hooker@alfred.edu
Alfred University

Marjorie Jacobs
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Scarsdale High School

**26th Annual NYSACAC
Conference
June 2-4, 2004**

The 26th Annual NYSACAC Conference is almost here! As the Conference Steering Committee prepares to put the finishing touches on the event, it is clearly shaping up as one of our fullest and most exciting Conferences ever.

The Annual Conference is the highlight of the NYSACAC professional development calendar, and it is an opportunity for professionals at every stage of their careers. With more than 50 workshops, every attendee should find a variety of appropriate and interesting sessions. In the evenings, the social events offer a range of activities and settings, and their proximity will allow attendees to participate in more than one each night.

Every effort is being made to assure that the Conference is an event that is interesting, productive, and fun. Details are available in the Conference registration booklet and at www.nysacac.org. Highlights include:

- Assemblyman Felix Ortiz will be the Legislative Session's keynote speaker.
- All of the fundraising events will benefit NYSACAC's *Fund for the 21st Century*. The *Fund for the 21st Century* supports NYSACAC's programs, such as Camp College, as well as professional grants and scholarships.

The Coming Together Conference (June 1-2) will have 4 workshop sessions and 3 plenary sessions.

Registration continues by mail and online at www.nysacac.org. Please call Le Moyne College's Conference hotline at (315) 445-5432 with any questions you may have about Conference registration, events, or special needs.

Le Moyne College and the Conference Steering Committee look forward to welcoming you to the Conference. See you in June!

Save the Date!

NACAC Conference

Sept. 30—Oct. 2, 2004

Milwaukee, WI

**I Laugh, I Cry, I'd Love
to Admit Them All**

*By Kelly Herrington
Associate Dean of Admissions,
Union College*

They tell me their greatest accomplishments. They discuss their life goals. They say who inspires them. They address their weaknesses. They make me laugh. They cause me to shed a few tears. And they consistently evoke my admiration.

I am not their parent. I am not their teacher. I am not their coach, sibling, grandparent, best friend, or religious leader. I am a college admissions officer, and "they" are my applicants.

I know that for thousands of them the mystery of selective admissions provokes immense anxiety. But they should rest assured that their files are being read by admissions counselors who are both humbled and exhilarated by what they find inside. Every winter, when I sit for hours at a stretch at the small desk in my apartment reading the applications, I find myself entering a world of hope, hard work, resiliency, accomplishment, and promise.

I learn about students like Sarah, whose college counselor describes her as a combination of "Jane Goodall, Mother Theresa, Diane Sawyer, and Jodie Foster." I'm intrigued by essays from students like Matt, who begins, "The person I admire most in life is a convicted felon." (The felon turns out to be an international human rights advocate, and Matt's ultimate goal is to become a human rights lawyer.) I review college interview reports that describe students like Dave explaining how their classroom experiences have been "transformed" by teachers who "dress up as Einstein to make physics cool." I smile when students like John send articles about contests they have won. "The six hundred crazed students crammed into the gym were incredibly loud," John explains. "The training was endless, but the war would be decided in an instant. I vied for the crowd's undivided attention and nothing would stand in my way. In two short minutes I stood up and proclaimed victory. I won East High School's Pie Eating Contest."

"Reading season," as that time of year is called, allows those of us in college admissions access not only to outstanding students, but also to altruistic, artistic, athletic, ambitious, and downright zany young men and women. We spend our days with

students, teachers, communities, and families at their best.

If only it would last. But reading season culminates inevitably in "decision time." The delight I have just found in students and educators quickly evaporates. Parents force their children to make last-minute visits to campuses before deposit deadlines. Principals proudly tout the numbers of their students who were admitted to select institutions, thereby devaluing the rest. Admissions deans rave to their trustees about the increased SAT averages in the admitted applicant pool, yet gloss over the creativity, leadership, and commitments to community service unmeasured by standardized test scores. Journalists run articles about the stress related to making "one of life's most important decisions."

It is at this time of year, in the dreaded month of April, that I long to return to the cocoon of my apartment. And I want to invite the world to join me there. I would like the panicked parents, the sensationalizing reporters, the worried students, and the SAT-obsessed admissions deans to sit down and read the applications of the students I have spent several months admiring.

Oh, I know that in the competitive college marketplace, where the supply of talented applicants far exceeds openings, the students I must reject will often include some of my favorites. But I would like others who have a stake in the process to understand that, whatever the outcome, the work ethic, kindness, and, yes, creative craziness these students have already shown will continue in college and for the rest of their lives.

Keep that in mind this spring and, if you know a few college-bound seniors, please congratulate them not on where they are headed in the fall, but on what they have accomplished so far and will undoubtedly achieve in the future.

*To have a program
listed in the
NYSACAC
College Fair Directory,
please complete the
enclosed form by
June 4, 2004.*

Coming Together Conference

By Jo Anne Phang

The 7th annual Coming Together Conference is an ideal professional development opportunity for counselors of color and counselors who work with, mentor, and/or recruit diverse populations. Sponsored by the Human Relations Committee, the Coming Together Conference is conveniently scheduled prior to the annual Spring Conference on June 1st and 2nd at LeMoyne College. It does not conflict with other events and offers a smooth transition into the Conference. Coming Together participants who plan to attend the NYSACAC Conference will keep the same room for both events. You may conveniently register for both Coming Together and the Spring Conference on the same form in your booklet or on the NYSACAC website.

Topics to be covered include:

- **The Michigan Case: One Year Later**
- **Students are Prepared. But Are They Qualified?**
- **Bridging the Generational Gap: Counseling Generation Y**
- **How Passionate Are You (About Your Profession)?**
- **Keep Them Home or Let Them Go**

The Coming Together Conference promises to be an informative and energizing event for high school, college, independent, and community-based counselors alike.

Questions? Contact Carl Forbes (Co-Chair) via e-mail at forbesca@lemoyne.edu or (315) 445-4305. You may also contact Jo Anne Phang (Co-Chair) via e-mail at japhang@syr.edu or (315) 443-1595. We hope to see you there!



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