



*Leading the Way*  
New York State Association for  
College Admission Counseling

## Message from the President

**David Coates**

**President, NYSACAC**

**School Counselor, Kenmore East High School**

As I reflect back on the past couple of months and the holiday season, I realize how important it is to be surrounded by family and friends. The people I have met first through membership, and now my leadership, in NYSACAC, have in many instances become good friends, with more than a few relationships as strong as extended family.

If you have ever thought about becoming involved in a professional association, I strongly encourage you to think about NYSACAC. The professional growth and incredible programs are a given, but the greatest benefit could be the mutually beneficial relationships and friendships you create over the years of volunteering. The ability to work with some of the most dynamic and motivated people in the state and country is very rewarding, while the ability to create friendships that will last a lifetime is priceless. The satisfaction and laughs more than compensate for your time as you help organize and plan worthwhile professional development programs for high school and college admission professionals, fulfilling our organization’s mission, and through them, benefitting the students and families we serve.



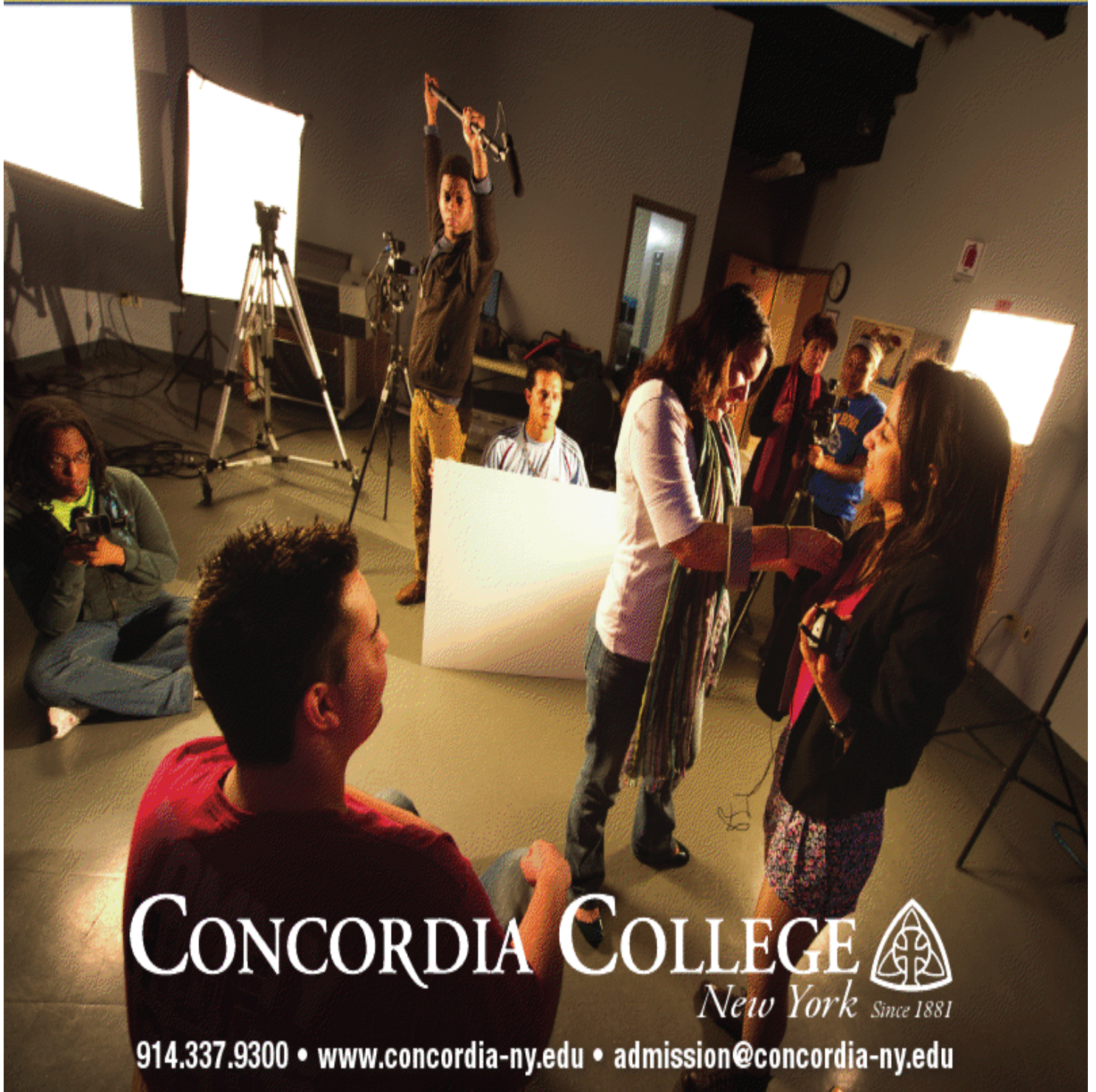
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## ***Message from the President, continued***

I encourage you to read our newsletter and explore our website to learn more about how NYSACAC can assist you, and how you can in turn help others by getting involved. This spring, we have six regional forums entitled “Working with Students with Learning Differences in the College Admission Process” being offered across the state.

We are launching two inaugural college fairs in Ithaca and Fredonia in late March, and our first annual Empire State College Tour for high school counselors will take place at the end of June. In addition, we will be awarding our second annual student scholarship in May. We conclude the school year with our annual conference during the first week of June, this year at Canisius College in Buffalo.

Also, we are hosting two Camp College three-day pre-college programs for students in July, and Summer Institute for college counselors and college admissions professionals with three or less years of experience in early August. Our calendar is a busy one, all with the goal of serving the college admission professionals on both sides of the desk.

Please visit our website at [nysacac.org](http://nysacac.org) to get information about these and other NYSACAC initiatives. If you are interested in assisting us in organizing any of our events please email us at [nysacac@nysacac.org](mailto:nysacac@nysacac.org). You will be amazed at the networking and the personal satisfaction you gain through volunteering within an organization like NYSACAC. The more I have become involved in NYSACAC, the more I realize how much I have gained and learned from others. Please consider joining our “extended family” and experience what I am describing for yourself.

**David P. Coates**  
**President, NYSACAC**

## **Professional Development Forums Are Around The Corner!**

The Professional Development Committee is happy to announce the topic for the spring 2013 forums: “The College Process: Working with Students with Learning Differences”. The forums will be broken down into two sessions discussing the college search process and the application process. The locations for the forums are as follows:

- Rochester Region- Thursday, March 14, 2013 at Rush-Henrietta High School
- Syracuse Region- Monday, March 18, 2013 at Fayetteville-Manlius High School
- Buffalo Region- Friday, March 22, 2013 at Nardin Academy
- Albany Region– Tuesday, April 2, 2013 at Emma Willard School
- New York City Region- Tuesday, April 30, 2013 at Fordham Preparatory, Bronx
- Long Island Region- Friday, April 26, 2013 at The Wheatley School

Please visit [www.nysacac.org](http://www.nysacac.org) to register for any of these forums. There is no fee for NYSACAC members; however, non-members will be charged \$20 upon check-in at the forum site. Each location will accept either cash or check. Any non-members who have not paid this fee at check-in will not be allowed to attend the forum.

If you would like to participate as a panelist, please email:

[Professional.Development@nysacac.org](mailto:Professional.Development@nysacac.org)

We look forward to seeing you in the spring!

**Kristen Collins & Lauren Sangimino**

**Co-Chairs, Professional Development  
Committee**

**NYSACAC Spring Regional College Fairs at  
Ithaca College and SUNY Fredonia**

The New York State Association for College Admissions Counseling (NYSACAC) is pleased to sponsor two regional college fairs to be hosted by Ithaca College on Sunday, March 24<sup>th</sup> from 1:00pm-4:00pm and SUNY Fredonia on Wednesday, March 27<sup>th</sup> from 6:00pm-8:00pm.

For your convenience these fairs will take place before and after the Buffalo NACAC College Fair scheduled for Tuesday, March 26<sup>th</sup>.

The registration fees for the fairs are the following:

- \$100 for one fair only (NYSACAC member)
- \$125 for one fair only (non-member)
- \$200 for both fairs (NYSACAC member)
- \$250 for both fairs (non-member)

For more information or to register for these programs, please visit [www.nysacac.org](http://www.nysacac.org).

Payment may be made online or you can opt to be invoiced. Please register early as we have limited space for both events.

All colleges will be emailed a confirmation which will include directions and hotel information for the Ithaca and Fredonia area.

Contact [college.fairs@nysacac.org](mailto:college.fairs@nysacac.org) for additional information.

We look forward to seeing you in March for these exciting recruitment events.

Sincerely,

Lisa Searle-Ithaca College

Kimberlie Ball-SUNY Fredonia

Victoria Haydock-Academy of Holy Angels

Dave Follick-St. Johns University

**Introducing the College Admission Process to  
Stressed-Out Teens:**

**Balancing “Product Development” vs.  
“Adolescent Development” in the Digital Age**

By: William J. Cardamone, Director of College Counseling,  
Manlius Pebble Hill School

The perspective of an independent school college counselor is somewhat unique when contemplating the correct time to start the conversation about college admissions with our students. Many public high school and community based organization counselors emphasize starting early to assure their students, regardless of background or family circumstances, access higher education. Independent school counselors often work with student populations that are keenly aware of the high stakes of 21<sup>st</sup> century college admissions. Traditionally, independent school counselors are reticent to discuss the “whole college thing” too early lest their students unduly focus on becoming “the product” they think will earn them admission into the “right” highly selective college.

Due to incredible growth in teen access to the social media and other forms of electronic information in the digital age, nearly all public and private high school students are more aware of the college admission process than they were a generation ago. I assert it makes sense for counselors in all school settings to appropriately engage students starting at the end of middle school. Yet, this begs the question: How do counselors effectively introduce this charged topic to adolescents in a developmentally appropriate manner?

At my school, we begin the college admissions discussion at the end of eighth grade. We offer a very general description of the process and the services we provide throughout high school to assist them with the process.

*Continued on page 5*

# GET THE INSIDE STORY

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a person.

Matt Lamb, senior, Buffalo NY

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### *Introducing the College Admission Process , continued*

While we point out that beginning in ninth grade, grades appearing on the transcript will eventually be viewed by college admission officers, we heartily remind our rising freshman that they will only be fourteen once and must remember to experience the simple joys of being fourteen.

In our small group meetings with students in grades nine and ten, we are very mindful to keep the tone relatively light hearted and avoid overloading these young high school students with too much unnecessary information. We keep it simple, providing only essential/time sensitive information about testing and course selection.

Our overriding mantra at this early juncture and moving forward is to focus on a *“thoughtful admission process”* vs. *“an admission process leading to a particular outcome”*. Finally, we listen and look carefully for signs of anxiety and duress during the Q & A at the end of each session.

Though students report learning about the college admission process is initially *“a little scary”*, they also tell us that demystifying the process and giving the appropriate amount of information at the appropriate time actually reduces stress.

# Love Among the Ruins of the College

## Application Process

By Lucia Tyler Ph.D.

“I’m not applying to the colleges we talked about,” states the student flatly as they avoid my gaze. This is my first inkling that the student I am counseling may have some kind of emotional upheaval. As we chat further, I discover that this student wants to apply to all engineering colleges when they told me earlier that they don’t really like math. More times than I care to count, this is a student who has fallen in love and changed their plans to fit with those of their new “soul-mate.”

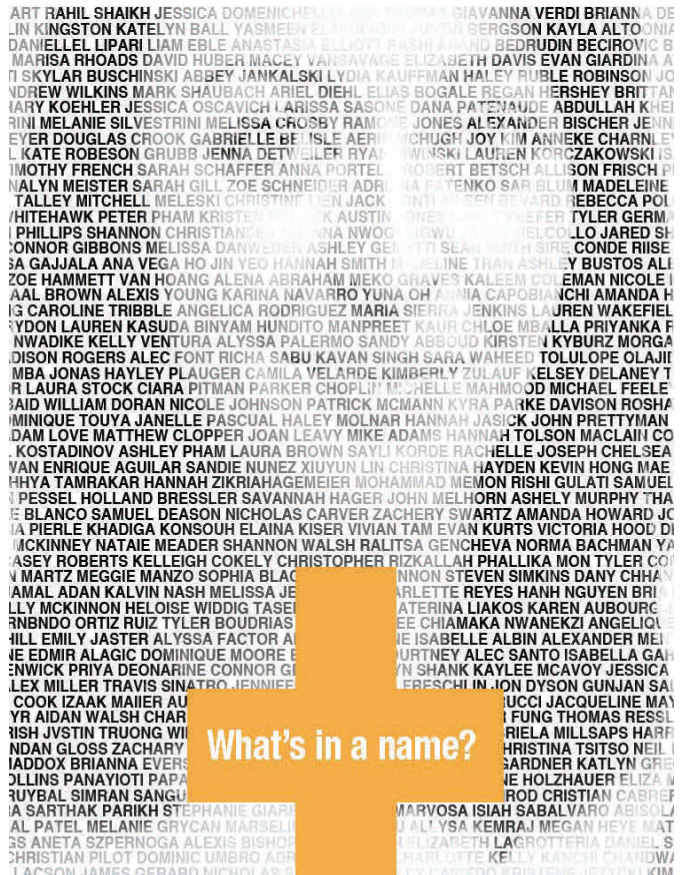
At this point, I ask the student to list the pros and cons of the colleges on their list. If they reveal that a relationship is influencing the process, I try to get them to consider colleges nearby the ones that their friend is looking at. If the colleges are totally unsuitable, I may even ask them if a friend has affected their choices. However, when the heart trumps the mind, I can see that my words of advice are about as meaningful to the student as a stream of bubbles floating away.

I usually ask the student if they have shared their new college list with their parents, and they tell me that “it’s all good.” Of course, “all good” may actually mean that the parents are tearing out tufts of their hair! Parents can be extremely anxious and even angry and may even call me, wanting me to do something. They may even refuse to contribute college funding if they feel their child is making a mistake. I have seen this “big stick” approach backfire, as the child tries to assert their independence at all costs.

This scenario is extremely frustrating to those of us in the college counseling world.

*Continued at right*

It is not great for college admissions people either, because the student may flunk out or transfer if the high school relationship ends badly in college. College choice is really the first “big” decision that a high school student makes, and it is hard to watch them choose a poor fit. Because of the financial risk involved with a mismatch, I may suggest to the student that they try taking a few classes at a community college since they aren’t focused on the process. Deferring college attendance for a gap year experience of work or volunteering could also help the student to mature enough to make a better choice. Unfortunately, it is my experience that most students will not listen when they are in a love-struck frame of mind. I am interested in an “anti-love potion” for students in their junior and senior years of high school. Any providers out there?



**Tough Call: A Challenging College  
Admissions Case  
By Eric Neutuch  
Project Director for the College Connections Project**

A well publicized part of college advising involves assisting college aspirants to figure out who they are and what they want to become. A less public part of the college advisor's job is technical navigation around complicated college admission and financial aid issues.

A tough college admission case for an adult student might look like this: A twenty-one-year-old asks for assistance applying to CUNY and begins by saying that she graduated from a high school in a foreign country and that she's not sure if she has a copy of her high school transcript. Even if she can find it, she says that it hasn't been translated into English. She says that after high school that she attended college in her country for one year, and she goes on to say that her country is plagued by political violence that has temporarily forced her former university to close, making it hard for her to get an official transcript. Then she says that after she arrived in the United States that she spent a year going to a proprietary college for ESL classes that has since been shuttered by the New York State Education Department.

Though, she says, that she was living with her father when she was attending the proprietary college and that she received financial aid while at that school to cover tuition costs, she says that she is no longer living with him after an incident of family violence. She says that she's been staying with her aunt for the past nine months, but can't think of any documents that prove her residence there or document the violence by her father. She says that she was required to file taxes by April 15<sup>th</sup> but hasn't filed yet. Also, while at the proprietary school, she says that she took out a loan but cannot recall the amount of the loan, the lender, or the loan's status.

When asked about vaccinations, she says that she has been vaccinated against measles, mumps, and rubella but that she cannot find records of those immunizations.

Throughout the entire conversation, her oral English will be halting, and it will appear that she might benefit from higher level ESL instruction before undertaking credit-bearing coursework. She says that she's heard about CUNY's Language Immersion Program (an intensive ESL program open to CUNY entrants), though she does not know much about it.

The college access program that I direct and similar college access programs address complicated issues, like the ones presented here, ranging from foreign transcripts to dependency overrides, financial aid appeals, student loan defaults, residency denials, unpaid college bills, Selective Service registration issues, and more. We play detective, fixer, expert, and advocate as we troubleshoot college admission and financial aid obstacles for individuals who lack the navigational savvy, literacy abilities, or just sheer time and self-efficacy to sort things out on their own.

It's a great responsibility to do the work that we do, and it's a privilege to do it with the help of committed professionals from NYSACAC, CUNY, SUNY, HESC, and the U.S. Department of Education. The example illustrated above is not a typical case, but we are grateful to learn from every case, and we are *most* grateful that our typical cases are not as tough as the one imagined above.



## Planning Continues for the 35<sup>th</sup> Annual NYSACAC Conference at Canisius College

The Conference Steering Committee is continuing their work to make the 35<sup>th</sup> annual NYSACAC Conference, which will be held at Canisius College June 5-7, a memorable experience.

Conference socials are currently being planned. The Wednesday night social will be a memorable evening at the Buffalo Zoo, while Thursday's social will include a Buffalo-themed campus festival, a movie under the stars, and dancing and karaoke. College Tours are being finalized. The golf outing, legislative session, and fundraisers are ready to go.

The conference week begins with the Coming Together Conference, which will be held June 4 and 5. This year's CTC will showcase a new format using Open Space Technology. We are excited to unveil this new approach and look forward seeing what discussions and collaborations emerge from those in attendance.

With registration now open, what are some things you can do to make sure you are ready to get the most of this year's conference?

**Make sure your membership is up-to-date.** NYSACAC members with current membership receive a conference discount.

**Register early!** Don't wait to the last minute to register for the conference. Our early-bird discount is good until May 17.

**Become a mentor.** If you are an experienced conference attendee, consider becoming a mentor to a first-time conference goer. You can sign up to be a mentor during the registration process.

**Sign up for the Counselors' College Fair.** Last year, almost 100 institutions took part in the college fair portion of the conference.

**Consider helping others through a donation.** A donation can be made to sponsor a school counselor. Last year, more than 60 secondary professionals were able to attend the conference through our conference grant program. Additional sponsorship opportunities exist throughout the conference. Make sure to visit the sponsorship portion of the conference website.

Please continue to visit the 2013 conference website ([www.canisius.edu/nysacac2013](http://www.canisius.edu/nysacac2013)) for continuous conference updates, registration materials, and sponsorship opportunities.

We look forward to seeing you in June!

Sincerely,

**Tim Lee, NYSACAC President-Elect and Chair of the 2013 Conference Steering Committee**





## Tools of the Trade: Prezi

By Kaitlin Hess  
Admissions  
Advisor,  
University at  
Buffalo

This fall, I was asked to assist with re-vamping our visitors program at the University at Buffalo. Our original presentation was housed in PowerPoint, and although it looked nice, we wanted something different and exciting. As we discussed options, Prezi consistently came up in conversation.

For those of you who might not know, Prezi is a web based program that allows users to create a virtual canvas that includes text, pictures, or videos. Users then create a path to navigate through their canvas. Prezi works in terms of frames, rather than in linear slides and offers much more in terms of navigation and animation options.

One of the best functions of Prezi is its ability to zoom, pan and even flip over frames on the canvas, but doing too much can often make people feel overwhelmed. Another challenge was figuring out how to use new technology to engage prospective students while not alienating their parents. Here are some of the most important lessons I learned in this project:

### Keep it Simple

One of the easiest ways to make your presentation exciting, without making the audience feel overwhelmed is to keep your movement simple. Moving in a straight line and keeping a frame of reference in your movements makes it easier for the audience to follow your presentation.

### Customize Your Prezi Theme

Use this option to change the fonts and colors of your presentation to match the branding of all of your materials.

### Utilize All Prezi has to Offer

Prezi offers pre-made themes and presentations that can help you get started. You can also add graphics, embed videos directly into the presentation and set custom animation within a frame.

### Import from Other Programs

If you find that the design options in Prezi are limiting, import files from other programs and use Prezi to set a path for navigating through them. The possibilities are endless when you consider adding graphics from Photoshop or InDesign.

### Have fun!

Using Prezi for the first time can be overwhelming and admittedly confusing. Take some time to play around with all of the features Prezi has to offer and soon enough it will become second nature.

For more information on Prezi, and to start creating one of your own, visit [prezi.com](http://prezi.com)



In theaters March 22!

**OPERATION APPS – Adelphi University**  
**by: Casey J. Pedrick**  
**Director of College Counseling,**  
**Stuyvesant HS and**  
**NYSACAC High School Delegate**



When the wind from Hurricane Sandy died down and the water receded, thousands of New York residents were left to sift through what was left of their homes, their businesses, their schools. For the latter, the first week of November was a terrible time to be closed. Early decision and early action

deadlines loomed, college lists needed to be finalized, essays needed to be proofed.

Dedicated college counselors from closed schools did the best they could to maintain communication with their students via email and website updates. But for students most affected by Sandy's destruction or for those students in need of extra attention, the time away from their high school could have been detrimental to their future plans.

The Thursday after the storm, NYSACAC president, Dave Coates, received a call from Long Island native and Director of Education and Training at NACAC, Don Fraser Jr. Mr. Fraser recognized the need for an event in the hardest hit areas of New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut, to help bring counselors, admissions officers, financial aid experts, and families together, to help navigate a stressful college application process during a stressful time in their lives. Operation Apps was born!

Dave Coates then reached out to past-president and counselor at The Wheatley School, Greg Wasserman. Mr. Wasserman received the call in the midst of 13 days without power at his home on Staten Island. He and his wife moved their four year old and one year old to a friend's house that already had two other families seeking refuge there. The Wheatley School was closed for a week. When they reopened, he had to bring his kids to work because their daycare was still closed due to flooding.

Mr. Wasserman loved the idea of Operation Apps and, "recognized the need for an immediate program, but the logistics and promotion takes time. If we were going to do it, we wanted to do it right". At this time, Tim Lee, president-elect and Director of Undergraduate Admissions at University at Albany, contacted college delegate and Director of Undergraduate Admissions at Adelphi, Kristen Collins, who personally went without power for nearly two weeks post-Sandy. Dr. Lee explained the event and its goals. After reviewing details and the intended populations, he and Ms. Collins agreed that Adelphi would be a great host location for the event.

On Saturday, December 15<sup>th</sup>, volunteers and families came together to answer questions, calm fears, and make a large dent in applications and financial aid paperwork. Thomas Becker, Financial Aid Officer/Loan Counselor at Columbia University, reflected, "The families attending the event were probably emotionally and physically exhausted."

*Continued on next page*

Families shared stories of losing electricity for weeks, cutting off computers and internet—the lifelines of today’s college application landscape—setting the kids back on applications. Students’ guidance counselors were pulled in a number of different directions, dealing with the emotional fallout from Sandy. With entire communities affected; it was difficult for students or school staff to even know where to start. One student who took advantage of Operation Apps had not started on any of his applications and felt he couldn’t ask his guidance counselor where to begin because she was so busy with Sandy-related tasks. “How could I bother her with something like [college applications] when she was trying to get clothes and food donations to the students who needed it the most?” he asked.

“Most of the families I saw during the event,” Mr. Becker shared, “were dealing with similar issues of trying to clean up and sort out what their insurance will cover and what they can ask the government to reimburse them. With all of the parents, I tried to give them a map of the normal financial aid process and show them places along the way they can ask for assistance based on the financial situation and the role in which the storm has played in altering it”.

As the day wound to a close, Mr. Becker reflected, “I have done financial aid for almost eleven years. Being able to assist students and families is a big part of the job. When I am able to assist a family on any level, it makes me feel great, especially when they are pro-active in the process. Mr. Wasserman added, “For the volunteers to spend their day [at Operation Apps] was impressive and is why I am proud to be in education. In New York, especially, you see a lot of people who step up”.

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## Camp College Update

At the annual NACAC conference in Denver last October, Camp College held a voluntary 50/50 raffle to assist in covering expenses for their annual events. Tonki Downs, Associate Director of Admissions & Director of Transfer Admissions at St. Lawrence University won the raffle, and generously donated all of her winnings back to Camp College. Her generous donation will directly benefit underserved and underrepresented high school students who will attend Camp College in 2013 at St. John Fisher College and Canisius College. The success of this program is only possible through generous benefactors like Tonki, as well as educational and corporate sponsors. Camp College will run another 50/50 raffle at the NYSACAC Conference in June. Pictured at left are Tonki (right) and

Camp College Co-Director Marie Nocella (left).

## “Becoming the ‘Go-To’ Counselor for Student Athletes”

**By: Brian Sondey, Admission Counselor/Head Men’s Basketball Coach  
Concordia College-New York**

In athletics, you often hear about the “go-to” player. Usually this term is used to describe the player coaches will call in for the most difficult or pressure filled situations. For aspiring college student athletes, the process of selecting a college to continue their academic and athletic careers involves a lot of pressure. We hope these principles can serve as an initial blueprint for high school counselors to become the “go-to” player for students who have dreams of playing college athletics.

The first step for any high school counselor is to understand the student they are working with and to be realistic. Too often, coaches or parents set unrealistic expectations of where a student athlete may be able to play in college. A student-athlete is going to trust their counselor, as long as the counselor asks the right questions. This can take place as you help the student athlete with their application process. As they are applying to schools, you can help to guide them in the right direction. For example, if they think they are going to play at a Division I school, you need to ask, “What has your contact been with the coach?” For many students the answer is that they have no idea even who the coach is. Right then and there a potential “reality check” may need to occur. Try and help the student athlete match up their application process to the schools (and/or athletic level) where they have had contact with the coaching staff.

On many occasions the student has had zero contact with college coaches, especially if they are in 10<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup> grade. This does not mean they have no chance to play in college, but the clock is ticking! It is important in these circumstances to set a game plan so that a student can create contact with the college coach. The best game plan I can give as a coach is to initiate contact with the entire coaching staff (regardless of sport or program) via email. In this introductory email include an introduction, schedule of upcoming games, & ask where the student athlete can send full game film. A big hint here is that if they haven’t had any contact they should probably start at the Division III level and work their way up!

Another initial principle is to know the rules! As a counselor it is important to take on the responsibility of understanding the NCAA Clearinghouse and some of the nuances that take place. If a student athlete has any aspirations of playing in college (regardless of level) they should be registered because you never know what can happen. Taking a bit of extra time to know some of the delicacies of the Clearinghouse could make or break a student’s eligibility. From my experiences, Counselors who are versed about the Clearinghouse process have certainly become “Go-To” Counselors for student-athletes.

Being realistic and knowing the rules are two large obstacles facing student athletes today. On a day to day basis the prospective student athletes I see having success are those that can utilize everyone around them to aid in the process of transitioning from high school to college. At the end of the day as a coach or counselor our inspiration is to help the students around us. I hope this helps as you continue to help prospective student athletes at your school.

## Introducing: Counselors' Corner

At one point or another we've all been there. After years of education and training – formal and on the job – we're pretty confident that no matter what, we know the answer. And then it happens. That student walks into our office, or that parent calls, or the administration hands us a situation that throws us for a loop. What do we do now?

In each future newsletter, we'll feature one of these questions, submitted by a NYSACAC member, along with expert advice from fellow members of our organization.

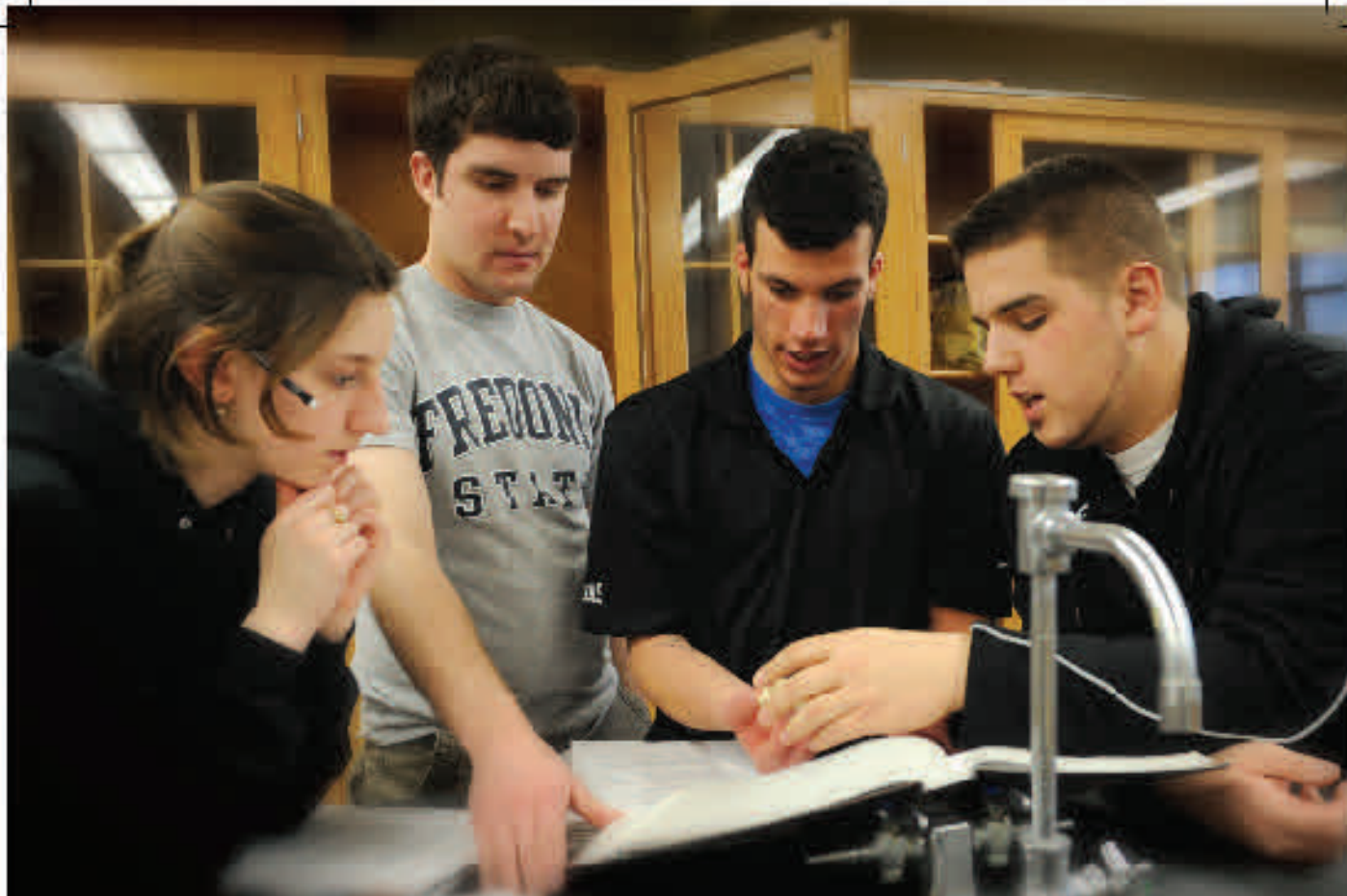
Where did this new feature come from? Recently, a NYSACAC member was confronted with a conundrum regarding an international student attending school in the US whose father had recently lost his job. Without a job, the father's visa became void and the son realized that he'd viewed by college admissions committees as an undocumented international student – and therefore not eligible for federal financial aid. The family and the school college counselor were at a loss at how to proceed.

The NYSACAC member reached out to fellow colleagues within the organization and was amazed at the outpouring of information, options, and advice received within moments. This brand-new newsletter feature was inspired by the breadth of knowledge and expertise in NYSACAC .

It's our hope that this Counselor Corner will be an opportunity for all members who encounter unique circumstances to share their experiences. We'll all be the wiser for it. There's no need to wait for conferences and forums to discuss these issues. It is also our hope that this will keep our finger on the pulse of the constantly changing nature of college admissions.

**E-mail your “situation X” to [counselorcorner@nysacac.org](mailto:counselorcorner@nysacac.org) and the experts of NYSACAC will provide you feedback in the next newsletter.**





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## Join us!

Involvement in the NYSACAC is a fun and rewarding way to develop professional skills. The organization is always open to new members on our various committees. If you have an interest in being a leader, join one of our committees today.

### NEWSLETTERS

Published in October, February, and May.

Submission deadlines:

- September 15
- January 15
- April 1

The newsletter is distributed electronically. Print copies are available upon request.

### ARTICLE SUBMISSIONS

should be concise and may be edited. Please email submissions to:

[newsletter@nysacac.org](mailto:newsletter@nysacac.org).

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