

## **THE SPGP & ETHICAL CHALLENGES IN ADMISSIONS**

**Illinois Admissions Practices Committee**

Thursday May 1, 11:00 am- 12:00 pm

Today's Participants: Margaret Miranda, Gwen Kanelos, Michelle Schlack, Tony Bankston, Carlene Klass, David Bennett

# MEMBERS OF ILLINOIS AP

**David Bennett**, Director of Admissions, Lake Forest College

**Anita Carpenter**, Counselor, Downers Grove South High School

**Gwen Kanelos**, Assistant VP for Enrollment, Concordia University Chicago

**Deb Michellini**, Assistant Director of Enrollment Services, College of Lake County

**Tony Bankston**, Dean of Admissions, Illinois Wesleyan University

**Lisa Micele**, Director of College Counseling, University Lab High School

**Tom Shorrock**, Post-High School Counselor, New Trier High School

**Michelle Schlack**, Counselor, Niles North High School

**Amy Belstra**, College Counselor, Libertyville High School

**Carlene Klaas**, Dean of Undergraduate Admission, DePaul University

**Margaret Miranda**, College Counselor, Saint Ignatius College Prep

# STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE

NACAC's *Statement of Principles of Good Practice* brings focus to principled conduct among **colleges and universities** as well as **high school and independent counselors** in the recruitment of students and their transition to postsecondary education.

**“Philosophy of Doing the Right Thing!”**

# SPGP INCLUDES

- ❖ Core Values
- ❖ Member Conventions
- ❖ Mandatory Statements
- ❖ Interpretations of Mandatory Practices
- ❖ Best Practices
- ❖ Education, Monitoring Procedures and Penalties

# WHY ARE THESE IMPORTANT?

- ❖ It is a code of conduct created to ensure **equity and fairness** in the college admissions process.
- ❖ It is a document that promotes **responsibility and integrity** on the part of individuals who are engaged in college counseling.
- ❖ It is a document that strives to “**level the playing field**” among all types of educational institutions.
- ❖ It is a document that **protects the best interests of students**.

# PURPOSE OF THE NATIONAL AND AFFILIATE ADMISSION PRACTICES COMMITTEES

- ❖ **Educate admission and counseling professionals** and their institutions regarding ethical college admission standards adopted and promoted by NACAC.
- ❖ **Assist them in fully integrating** policies and procedures into their practices.
- ❖ **Review, formulate and recommend changes** to the Statement of Principles of Good Practice (SPGP) and policies about Education; Monitoring Procedures; and Penalties.
- ❖ **Monitor compliance** with the SPGP.
- ❖ **Promote the adoption** of ethical admission standards **by non-members** within the profession and promote awareness of these practices among affected publics.

# HANDLING COMPLAINTS

- ❖ If anyone - counselor, student, parent, admission officer - has a concern that the SPGP has been violated, it is important that the **individual file a complaint** with their affiliate Admission Practices Committee.
- ❖ To help ensure that all allegations are properly tracked and followed-up, it is asked that the person filing the complaint **complete a Confidential Complaint Form [available on the NACAC website]**.
- ❖ A new link to the complaint form will also be shared with each affiliate for posting on their websites.

# EDUCATION, MONITORING & PENALTIES

## Procedures for Reporting an Allegation:

- ❖ Name of institution where alleged violation occurred
- ❖ Nature of the violation
- ❖ Deliver to Chair or Co-Chairs of your Affiliate
- ❖ Include supporting documentation for your claim
- ❖ Remember that names and contact information remain confidential
- ❖ Notify party of alleged violation

# PROCESS FOR FILING COMPLAINTS

## What Happens Next?

- ❖ The form will be sent electronically to NACAC and a delivery receipt will be sent from the NACAC headquarters.
- ❖ The complaint will be delivered to the appropriate affiliate AP Chair. They will then check the membership status of the institution or individual whom the allegation was filed against.
- ❖ If the allegation is against a member of that affiliate, the Admission Practices Committee will begin researching the case.
- ❖ The affiliate AP chair will contact the Dean/Director of the accused institution to begin an inquiry.

# PROCESS FOR FILING COMPLAINTS

## What Happens Next?

- ❖ If the allegation is against the member of another affiliate, the case will be forwarded to that affiliate's Admission Practices Committee.
- ❖ If the allegation is against an institution or individual who is not a member of an affiliate but a member of NACAC, the case will be referred to the National Admissions Practices Committee for handling.
- ❖ If the allegation is made against a non-NACAC member, the Chief Executive Officer will handle the case.

# PROCESS FOR FILING COMPLAINTS

## How to Resolve a Case:

- ❖ The vast majority of cases are resolved amicably with a simple communication between an Admission Practices Affiliate Chair and a senior member of the admission office against which the allegation was made.
- ❖ In many cases the office that was not in compliance remediates the issue as soon as it is brought to their attention.
- ❖ If a case cannot be resolved at the affiliate level, the case is referred to the national committee for consideration.
- ❖ Upon the resolution of the case, the necessary paperwork is filed with NACAC headquarters and the person who filed the allegation is notified of the resolution.

# EDUCATION, MONITORING & PENALTIES

## Outcomes:

- ❖ **Best Case** – After being notified, practices are amended to come into compliance – case closed.
- ❖ **Worst Case** – Violation sent to national committee and recommendations for penalties are imposed by the Board of Directors.

## Penalties may include:

- ❖ Recommendation to the Board of Directors for:
  - Issuance of a Statement of Noncompliance
  - Exclusion from NACAC sponsored events
  - Suspension of membership & membership privileges
  - Termination of membership

# PROFILE OF COMPLAINTS FILED

- ❖ **Complaints or cases over the past five years have fallen under the following areas within the SPGP:**
  - Asking students to rank choices of colleges
  - May 1 - National Candidates Reply Date
  - Use of incentives to compensate international agents
  - Student information and privacy
  - Wait list issues
  - Financial Aid offers with earlier deadlines
  - Admission/scholarships based on test scores only
  - Application deadlines before October 15<sup>th</sup>
  - Disparaging comparisons

**APPROVED CHANGES  
TO THE  
*STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES  
OF GOOD PRACTICE***

**BY THE 2013 ASSEMBLY**

# COMMISSION ON INTERNATIONAL STUDENT RECRUITMENT

NACAC appointed a special 30-member Commission on International Student Recruitment in 2011 to:

- Study and provide recommendations on the use of incentive compensation (or commission-based compensation) related to international recruitment.
- Identify other challenges with international recruitment
- Identify government policies critical to international recruitment

# COMMISSION ON INTERNATIONAL STUDENT RECRUITMENT

## Key Elements of Commission Process and Report

A comprehensive report was provided to the association in fall 2012. The report is a record of the Commission's deliberations and is organized as follows:

- History of incentive compensation in the U.S.
- Discussion of risk factors associated with incentive compensation
- International marketplace for student recruitment
- The United States context
- Methods of international student recruitment at U.S. institutions
- Use of agents in international recruitment at U.S. institutions
- Institutional responsibility for international student recruitment

# COMMISSION ON INTERNATIONAL STUDENT RECRUITMENT

## Key Elements of Commission Process and Report

The report offers the following set of recommendations:

- The Association should maintain a mandatory ban on incentive compensation domestically
- The Association should advise against incentivized recruitment of international students, but acknowledged the breadth of agent use and tuition-based payments
- If institutions use third-party agents, they need to maintain a commitment to accountability, transparency and integrity

# APPROVED SPGP CHANGES BY THE 2013 ASSEMBLY

## *Mandatory Practices*

### **I. All Members—Mandatory Practices**

#### **A. Promotion and Recruitment**

##### **All members agree that they will:**

1. accurately represent and promote their schools, institutions, organizations, and services;
2. not use disparaging comparisons of secondary or postsecondary institutions;
3. not offer or accept any reward or remuneration from a secondary school, college, university, agency, or organization for placement or recruitment of students **in the United States. Members who choose to use incentive-based agents when recruiting students outside the US will ensure accountability, transparency and integrity.**<sup>1</sup>

*1 Proposed 1. A. 3. and the interpretations on page 6 – 7 will be further clarified by the work of the Admission Practices Committee and International Advisory Committee in Indianapolis in 2014.*

*\*Red denotes new text added and approved by the Assembly.*

# APPROVED SPGP CHANGES BY THE 2013 ASSEMBLY

## *Interpretations of Mandatory Practices*

3. Not offer or accept any reward or remuneration from a secondary school, college, university, agency, or organization for placement or recruitment of students in the United States. Members who choose to use incentive-based agents when recruiting students outside the US will ensure accountability, transparency and integrity.<sup>1</sup>

Members will:

- a. be compensated in the form of a fixed salary, rather than commissions or bonuses based on the number of students recruited.
- b. not contract with secondary school personnel for remunerations for referred students.
- c. assure institutional accountability by monitoring the actions of those acting on their behalf.
- d. assure transparency by ensuring that the transactions between agents, institutions and students are clear.
- e. assure integrity through the actions of all involved in recruiting by following legal and ethical guidelines.
- f. define permanent residents and international students by their immigration status.

<sup>1</sup> Proposed 1.A.3 and the interpretations on page 6-7 will be further clarified by the work of the Admission Practices Committee and International Advisory Committee in Indianapolis in 2014.

# COMMISSION REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

## Accountability

Recommendations:

Institutions shall oversee the actions of those acting on their behalf and recognize their responsibility for providing a high-quality educational experience for international students. As examples of requirements for institutional accountability, the commission recommends provisions such as:

- Abiding by relevant state and federal laws, as well as regional accreditation standards, for recruitment (as distinct from association good practice, as noted below)
- Protecting against misrepresentation on the part of anyone working on behalf of the institution
- Ensuring an adequate feedback loop to monitor that students receive the services they were promised during recruitment
- Fulfilling the obligation to provide resources for international students to accommodate their unique needs

# COMMISSION REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

## Integrity

Recommendations:

The actions of all involved in recruiting shall follow established legal and ethical guidelines. Where applicable, institutions acknowledge that as institutional members of professional organizations, they have agreed to abide by accepted principles of practice. As examples of requirements for integrity, the commission recommends provisions such as:

- Adhering to NACAC's Statement of Principles of Good Practice (SPGP) in international as well as domestic recruitment
- Adhering to standards set by other associations, including NAFSA: Association of International Educators, for international recruitment

# COMMISSION REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

## Transparency

Recommendations:

The terms of transactions between agents, institutions, and students shall be clear and transparent. As examples of requirements for transparency, the commission recommends provisions such as:

- Providing clear and conspicuous disclosure of arrangements by institutions with third-party agents visible to prospective students and families
- Providing clear and conspicuous disclosure of arrangements by agents with institutions for students and families
- Ensuring that terms of transactions between agents, institutions and families are clear and published

# NEXT STEPS

The International Advisory and the National Admission Practices Committees are charged to develop a document outlining best practices for incentive-based agents and agencies engaged in recruiting students outside their domestic market to serve as a template for colleges, universities and secondary schools when establishing and maintaining relationships with incentive-based agents and agencies.

*\*To be presented at the 2014 NACAC Assembly.*

# MISREPRESENTATION OF DATA

- Websites, handbooks, ratings and rankings data are increasingly reflecting inaccurate data about postsecondary educational institutions
- Additionally, secondary school student transcripts and profiles are also presenting inaccurate information
- The Admission Practices Committee proposed a new interpretation for I.A.1 to address growing concerns

# APPROVED SPGP CHANGES BY THE 2013 ASSEMBLY

## *Mandatory Practices*

### **I. All Members—Mandatory Practices**

#### **A. Promotion and Recruitment**

All members agree that they will:

1. accurately represent and promote their schools, institutions, organizations, and services;

## *Interpretations of Mandatory Practices*

### **I. All Members—Interpretations and Monitoring**

#### **A. Promotion and Recruitment**

All members agree that they will:

1. Accurately represent and promote their schools, institutions or services by:
  - a. **having and maintaining an official policy regarding the collection, calculation and reporting of institutional statistics. This must include a process for validating all institutional data;**

# **CASE STUDIES**

# CASE STUDY 1:

## CANDIDATE'S REPLY DATE

- ❖ University of Western Southeastern State (UWSS) offers admission to a student, and tells the student that they have until May 1<sup>st</sup> to accept their offer of admission by sending a refundable deposit.
- ❖ The student then receives a letter from the Office of Financial Aid, offering a scholarship of \$10,000. However, the student must let UWSS know if she will accept the scholarship by March 15, allowing another student to be offered the scholarship if she declines.
- ❖ *Is this ethical?*

## CASE STUDY 1

- ❖ **SPGP Principle II.B.3.** - Permit accepted students to choose among offers of admission, financial aid and scholarships until May 1 and will state this deadline explicitly in their offers of admission. (This applies whether a deposit is refundable or non-refundable.)
- ❖ **SPGP Principle II.B.5.** - Work with their institutions' senior administrative officers to ensure that financial aid and scholarship offers and housing options are not used to manipulate commitments prior to May 1.

# CASE STUDY 2:

## FUTURE ADMISSION

- ❖ A student applies to Most Popular University (MPU), and is dying to get in. As a backup, this student applies to a *Less Popular But Still Good College* (LPBSGC).
- ❖ MPU offers admission, but not until the Spring semester, because they are full for the Fall. The student is admitted to LPBSGC. The student enrolls at LPBSGC for one semester, but then moves on to MPU.
- ❖ *Is this ethical?*

## CASE STUDY 2

### Concerns/potential issues:

- ❖ Double deposit??
- ❖ Impact on retention and graduation rates
- ❖ Financial aid not available to non-degree seeking students
- ❖ Is this recruiting students from another university?

# CASE STUDY 3:

## PROVIDING ACCURATE INFORMATION

- ❖ Regional Western University (RWU), part of the state university system, lists its cost at \$10,000\*. It then says that it is the lowest-priced school in the university system.  
*(\*Parenthetically, it states that \$10,000 is based on 14 credits.)*
- ❖ However, the “basic” course load for most students in the system is 16 credits, at a cost of \$10,800.
- ❖ *Is this ethical?*

## CASE STUDY 3

- ❖ **SPGP Principle I.A.1.** - Members agree that they will accurately represent and promote their schools, institutions, organizations, and services.
- ❖ **SPGP Principle I.A.2.** - Members agree that they will not use disparaging comparisons of secondary or postsecondary institutions;

## CASE STUDY 3

### Findings:

- ❖ This is not *accurate* information, even if it is, strictly speaking, *true*.
- ❖ It may not be an insidious comparison, but it is close. The AP Committee feels that the spirit of the SPGP is to use your own information, not that of other institutions.

# CASE STUDY 4:

- ❖ Your college president wants to institute a scholarship for students with a 30 or higher ACT composite score. You are asked if you have any concerns about this plan.
- ❖ *How do you respond?*

## CASE STUDY 4

- ❖ **SPGP Principle I.B.6.** - Members agree that they will not use minimum test scores as the sole criterion for admission, advising, or for the awarding of financial aid.

# CASE STUDY 5:

- ❖ Puny Endowment College (PEC) offered a decent financial package, and the student deposited. When withdrawing his application from Humungous Endowment College (HEC), they proceeded to offer about \$14,000 in extra aid. Student called PEC to see if they would match this, but they had no additional scholarship money available. Given this large difference in cost, the student decided to ultimately enroll at HEC.
- ❖ *Did HEC commit a violation?*

## CASE STUDY 5

- ❖ **SPGP Principle II.B.10.** - Members agree that they will not *knowingly* offer financial aid packages to students who are committed to attend other institutions, unless the students initiate such inquiries.

# CASE STUDY 6:

- ❖ Following the May 1 deadline, Low Deposit University (LDU) found that their enrollment commitments were down about 30%.
- ❖ Facing budget cuts, LDU made calls to students who had been accepted but had decided to go elsewhere. In some cases, they even offered additional aid to influence a commitment.
- ❖ *Did LDU commit a violation?*

## CASE STUDY 6

- ❖ **SPGP Principle II.A.2.** - Members agree that they will not *knowingly recruit students* who are enrolled, registered, have initiated deferred admission, or have declared their intent, or submitted contractual deposits to other institutions unless the students initiate inquiries themselves or unless cooperation is sought from institutions that provide transfer programs.
- ❖ **SPGP Principle II.B.10.** - Members agree that they will not *knowingly offer financial aid packages* to students who are committed to attend other institutions, unless the students initiate such inquiries.

# CASE STUDY 7:

- ❖ Institution's efforts to recruit next year's class of students. Referral program rewarding their students iPods to refer other students to the institution and their website.
- ❖ *Did the institution commit a violation?*

## CASE STUDY 7

- ❖ **SPGP Principle I.A.3.** - Members agree that they will not *offer or accept any reward or remuneration from a secondary school, college, university, agency, or organization for placement or recruitment of students in the US.*

# TRENDS TO MONITOR

- ❖ Incentive-Based Agents
- ❖ Mid-Year Admission Offers
- ❖ HS Transcripts – Include All Coursework?
- ❖ Scholarship/Admission Offers to Deposited Students

# QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

- ❖ What issues have you encountered??
- ❖ Any issues with high schools??

**THANK YOU!**