

The College Board Advocacy
& Policy Center's
**Symposium on Admissions
in the 21st Century**

July 2012 Meeting Notes

Reston, VA

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Executive Summary

On July 24 and 25, 2012, members of the Task Force on Admissions in the 21st Century gathered in Reston, Va., to discuss the progress made by the implementation team in addressing action items from the Task Force's Preserving the Dream of America 2008 report; the current environment for admission; and actions to be taken to further the task force's work in the months ahead.

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Symposium Keynote

John T. Casteen, president emeritus of the University of Virginia, and former College Board Trustee, gave the keynote address: “Admissions Past, Present, and Future: Have We Made Progress; A Review of the Key Issues Confronting the Profession.” Casteen used Alden Thresher’s 1966 book, *Admissions and the Public Interest*, as the foundation of his insights.

Casteen described his particular relationship with Thresher’s book, indicating that when Casteen was considering whether to make the move from professor of English to dean of admission at the University of Virginia in 1975, he was urged to read *Admissions and the Public Interest* for context about admission; Casteen later wrote the introduction to the 1989 edition of the book. Casteen appreciates the “sense of the context of college admission in the larger social continuum, and the quantitative, but even more, the qualitative and political” aspects of admission outlined by Thresher. Thresher saw admission as a social process, where decisions should be related to social values, not test scores or academic prerequisites. While “a bit academic and dated,” the book is, Casteen believes, “clear-headed and unapologetically unsettling and as profound an influence as ever” on how to think about the transition between high school and college.

Casteen shared some of Thresher’s opinions, which continue to have relevance and resonance today:

- Diversity is good *per se* and a chief source of progress.
- Change is good.
- All education is useful, even in areas where it is not necessarily quantifiable.
- Education has to be grounded in the society as it is, and take students where they are (Casteen said that Thresher stated in another book, when talking about graduation requirements, that educators “should find out what students are taking voluntarily and require that.”)
- Higher education has to be both useful and broadening; it serves the cause of employment but is also the great generator of human happiness.
- The top 10 percent of the student body at any institution is equally strong and capable of success.
- No one has proved that competitive admission works.
- The quantitative predictors of success can only add to the narrow margins of predictable performance.
- Students who have further to travel need better teachers.
- Tests are ultimately good if they are good tests: the issue is how the tests are used.

- Geography is the prime determiner of enrollment; “Thresher said this to get some folks to come down a peg or two.”
- An “Iron Curtain“ exists between high schools and colleges; Casteen sees this as “still as big a problem as it was then.”
- Spectator sports, though sedentary, have a place in higher education, but “it is questionable how far the colleges ought to exploit students to provide them.”
- Education *can* remedy disadvantages and *can* be the great leveler.

Casteen said, “Thresher believes that higher education can and ought to be ruled by pure reason. He becomes iconoclastic, radical, and utopian. Yet he is wonderfully laid-back: he likes scholars, people who work, people who study people in general. And he doesn’t care if admissions is or is not a profession.”

Casteen went on to cite Sidney and Beatrice Webb’s definition of a profession, which appeared in a 1917 issue of the *New Statesman*, as “a vocation founded upon specialized high educational training, the purpose of which is to supply objective counsel and service to others, for a direct and definite compensation, wholly apart from expectation of other business gain.” Casteen stated, “We abuse the term; we no longer see as our primary function to supply objective counsel and service to others.”

But then what are some of the measures of admission work, the admission profession? Casteen sees the following elements as at least part of what admission professionals should consider their work:

- Maintaining relationships with schools
- Public advocacy
- An obligation to be political
- Institutional research: shape the data to be used and the conclusions reached
- Broader dissemination of clear information to the public
- Be in dialogue with faculty all the time
- Professional communication about being a profession
- Involvement in K–12 issues and standards

Casteen sees the best admission professionals as being “competent, critical, impassioned, and informed.” He concluded, “I understand the practice of admissions is different than Thresher’s arguments — and yet his arguments are deeply important.” He urged the participants to remember that they can accomplish incredible things as admission professionals.

A panel of Task Force Implementation Committee members followed up Casteen’s remarks. Randy Deike, vice president for enrollment management and university

institutional research, New York University, referred to Thresher's belief that college admission reflects the values of the society and that it is hard to rise above them; Deike said that it often seems more difficult to rise above the values of an individual institution and its leadership. Casteen agreed: "Presidents all too often do not look beyond their institution and they also do not hear enough from admissions professionals on their campuses about the bigger picture and school relations issues; they just hear about selection issues."

Chat Leonard, director of college counseling, Metro Academic and Classical High School, St. Louis Public Schools, indicated that the original Task Force found that students felt the admission process was not transparent. "How would Thresher respond about the lack of transparency?" Casteen replied that Thresher was "long on theory but short on practice." His book fails to address how the admission process works and does not really address how to tackle practical issues, other than to point out that a number of aspects of the selection process, such as testing and course requirements, are artificial hurdles that do not add definitive value to an institution.

Joellen Silberman, vice president of enrollment (retired), Kalamazoo College, said she "was struck by the passage in Thresher's book suggesting that faculty should be asking who *didn't* get in, rather than focusing on who did. As I have aged, I have become less certain that potential can be clearly assessed in the selection process; young admissions officers seem more certain that they can spot a 'Kalamazoo student.'" Silberman wonders what we can do to keep young people in the profession and help them develop a broader societal view. Casteen responded, "Thresher would say that if we can spot a Kalamazoo student we are not doing our job. The most useful part of training would have to be how to discover talent without using a standard rubric. How do institutions carry out the process of transformation? Faculty and students have to work harder to do better. These topics ought to be part of how to learn how to be a recognizer of talent."

Bruce Walker, vice provost for special projects, The University of Texas at Austin, said he has tried to get his staff to read Thresher's book without much success. "If all you care about in the admissions process is the mechanical aspect, Thresher has nothing to say to you. As you are in the profession longer, you have the opportunity to have your values get abraded." Casteen believes that one reason admission staffs often "don't 'get' Thresher is because he shields readers from the practical aspects of the profession."

Michael Heintze, associate vice president for enrollment management and marketing, Texas State University–San Marcos, asked, "If Thresher says selection should not be based on this or on that, then what should inform our decisions? And what do you think he would think of this Task Force?" Casteen replied, "He would probably think natural selection would work just as well; in fact, it is hard to say if the question would interest him. As for the Task Force, Thresher was primarily an academic, not an admissions person. He would accept that there is a professional admissions officer, and would probably be pragmatic enough to see that this is a practical approach."

Gordon Stanley, director of counseling, Marist School, Dunwoody, Ga., said the following about public land grant institutions: “Thresher liked them. But have land grants lost their way over time, as they have become less state-focused and more expensive?” Casteen responded, “My experience of those institutions is limited. I think the fundamental problem with them is the unreliability of their sponsorship. It is hard for them to maintain their direction with so much political maneuvering in the states, and the capricious nature of the overall political environment.”

Day Two Opening Remarks

Christen Pollock, vice president of the College Board Advocacy & Policy Center, welcomed the group to the second day of the Symposium. “I am eager to listen to all of you. The 21st Century Task Force and the Commission on Access, Admissions, and Success in Higher Education led to the development of the Advocacy & Policy Center, and our work is an outgrowth of what you all began. I thank those of you here who made it happen and want the Center to be a trusted resource for all of us who are focused on underserved students. Today is about the future. We want to know what your questions, concerns, and needs are. What we hear today will shape the work of the Advocacy & Policy Center.”

Thomas Rudin, senior vice president, Advocacy, Government Relations and Development, The College Board, welcomed and thanked the participants for their work as part of the Task Force. “This meeting is critically important to the College Board, and we look forward to the insights it will provide into the needs of the admission, aid, and counseling community.”

Bradley Quin, executive director, higher education advocacy, The College Board, provided some background on the Admissions in the 21st Century Task Force. When the Task Force issued its final report in 2008, there were 45 members in the group. Since then, an Implementation Committee, chaired by Bruce Walker, vice provost for special projects, The University of Texas at Austin, has worked to be sure that the Task Force’s recommendations did not simply gather dust. Quin said that today will provide an opportunity both to learn what has been happening in regard to implementation of those recommendations and to help set the implementation agenda going forward.

Participants’ Current Concerns

Brad Quin asked symposium participants (see Symposium Attendees list at end of report) to share those concerns that “keep you up at night” as they relate to the current college admission environment and the Task Force’s 10 principles associated with our profession “at its best.” Among their concerns are the following:

Education is essential in the new century.

- Students from lower-middle-income families who cannot **access resources** for higher education: What will society be like if we do not get them access?
- Colleges and universities are no longer engines of social mobility but perpetrators of the division between haves and have-nots
- Access to higher education: **Will things ever really change?**
- **What will higher education look like 10–20 years from now**, given advances in technology?

Institutional diversity is one of our greatest assets.

- The **increasing complexity of diversity**: How to balance domestic and international student admission
- **Public universities shifting missions** because they must enroll more out-of-state students to cover budget gaps
- Still fighting the same battles on **affirmative action**
- **Access to higher education for undocumented students**: How do we address both the financial aspects and the multi-generational hopelessness of families?
- The continuing **domination of the national discussion on college admission by institutions enrolling only 3 percent of students**
- **Community college access and transferability** of community college work to four-year programs

Education is a process, not a product.

- What do we do to **help parents of first-generation students** be navigators for their children?
- Private, **for-profit schools** that prey on our students
- **Families not willing to invest in education**, shopping around in order to pay less
- The **false dichotomy between liberal arts and practical study**
- The **questioning of the value of higher education**
- How do we **define and communicate academic excellence**?

The school-to-college transition should be seen as a learning opportunity.

- Given the stress level of families and students **in the current economy, how do we counsel students effectively**?
- Finding energy as a counselor to **manage family expectations** when they can no longer afford to do what they are used to doing for their children

Student preparation must be improved.

- Persistent **gaps in educational preparation among low-SES and underrepresented students**
- **Access and persistence issues for women and underrepresented students in STEM areas**

School-university partnerships are essential and should be expanded and strengthened.

- What are the **barriers to cooperation** between institutions?

- Colleges and universities need to **develop relationships with underserved high schools**

Professional norms must govern student admission.

- Ongoing needs for staff development for college guidance staff in public high schools
- The **training and knowledge base of school counselors** at schools with students who are most needy
- **Lack of leadership**; politicians derailing education and college presidents who are leaving institutional mission behind in the quest for Research 1 status.
- How do we help high school **counselors be better trained and more effective?**
- How do we **pass on the values of the profession** to those who will be replacing the many retirees?
- **Overloaded counselors** at public schools
- Concerns about the **proliferation of independent counselors**
- **Teacher quality and leadership quality**
- **Educating trustees** about the trade-offs that underlie policies and goals

Financial aid processes should be simplified and focused.

- Need for **transparency in the merit-based financial aid process**
- The financial aid “**shopping sheet**”
- How can we **wean ourselves away from merit aid?**
- We **need a clear voice on affordability** in the current election season
- **Underfunded state mandates** that lead to tuition increases

Access to success, not simply access, must be the goal.

- How to **help students succeed** once they are in college
- The impact of the economy on student success: we have aid and support programs for the stars and the remedial students, but **how do we get the middle of the class to graduation?**
- What do we do to **support the most at-risk students** to graduate?
- How to **improve the college completion rate**
- **Limited financial resources at state and federal levels** to help students finish their higher education programs in a timely manner

Setting the Stage, Landscape Review: The Current State of Affairs

Thanos Patelis, vice president, Research and Development, The College Board, and Kelcey Edwards, senior research analyst, Research and Development, The College Board, presented information about the current state of affairs in college admission; see also the College Board research review, *The College Admission Landscape, 2012*.

The Demographic Wave:

Patelis and Edwards shared data regarding the demographics ahead. There will be great growth in the number and diversity of high school graduates, and these changes will vary markedly by region. The Hispanic student population in particular is growing very fast. From 1996 to 2022, the percentage of U.S. public high school graduates who are Hispanic will grow from 10 percent to 28 percent. An increasing percentage of students are attending colleges outside their home state; this varies by region as well, with about 30 percent outmigration from New England, compared to only 5 percent outmigration among California students.

Trends in Student Characteristics and Academic Preparation:

SAT® takers reflect this increasing diversity, with more test-takers whose native language is not English. There has been a steady rise in academic preparation across all groups, as measured by class rank and GPA, but persistent gaps remain by race and ethnicity. This holds true as well for students taking AP® and honors classes or STEM classes. In terms of AP, there is an 11 percent gender gap, with more women taking English and a 4 percent gender gap, with more men taking math. These gender gaps persist in calculus and physics classes, but there is an even bigger gap in all areas for underrepresented students.

Access and Success in Rigorous Courses:

The trend is up for the percentage of students taking at least one AP Exam, with the Midwest lowest in this category by region. When viewed by racial/ethnic category, the data show Asian students have the greatest access/participation, and black students have the lowest (based on taking at least one AP Exam).

Participants then had the opportunity to discuss the data with the presenters.

- What do the AP Exam result figures say about the mastery of content? About the quality of teaching? Is there a relationship between the increase in the number of A's being earned by students and the fact that the increase is not reflected in AP Exam scores?
- The College Board needs to take a closer look at what seems to be a “secret number” for AP success.
- We should talk about the value of AP as it relates to classroom invigoration.
- We should review what happens to students who scored 1's on AP Exams when they go to college. And we should review whether students who receive a 1 or 2 subsequently drop out of the AP track at their high school.
- Some increases in the number of students taking AP Exams are among ninth-graders who as a group do not score as highly as older students.
- A number of students every year take AP Exams without taking an AP class first, at the discretion of their schools; these scores are included in the overall data.
- AP is now another type of high-stakes testing.
- Schools and school districts are embarrassed when a cohort of their students scores 1's or 2's, and this can lead to the ratcheting back of state funding. Some states offer incentives for schools with students scoring 3–5 and disincentives for schools with students scoring 1–2.
- There is proactive outreach by the regional office staff to schools with low AP Exam scorers, offering to help without striking fear in teachers; they offer interventions such as getting teachers into summer AP workshops and the like.
- More research will be done on the cohort of students scoring 1's and 2's on AP Exams.

The Work of the Task Force Since 2008

Christen Pollock introduced this session, which focused on some of the key programs developed as a direct result of the 21st Century task force.

Complexity in Admission Research Findings:

Brad Quin described the findings of his research into complexity in college admission, which was conducted at two levels.

Complexity I Findings (research focused on mechanics of the admission process; sampled students and parents in three regions):

- The application process is **not** overly complex but moderately stressful
- Most confusing: Understanding how admission decisions were made
- Primary stressor: Different applications with different requirements
- “Common” applications receive high marks
- School counselors and teachers are extremely influential in the process

Complexity II Findings (research focused on perceptions of the process by lower-income students and parents). Lower-income students:

- Aspire to college and are confident about navigating the process
- Receive a substantial amount of information about college and are more likely to be influenced by it
- Especially value parental support in making application decisions; value contact from “students like me”
- Are more likely to be concerned about costs
- Are more likely to apply to fewer colleges
- Are more likely to apply to “less competitive” colleges than their credentials might allow

The bottom line: The stress in the admission process comes not from complexity in the application process but from lack of understanding of the decision-making process.

National Office for School Counselor Advocacy (NOSCA) Eight Components of College and Career Readiness Counseling:

Patricia Martin, assistant vice president, National Office for School Counselor Advocacy, The College Board Advocacy & Policy Center, indicated that College Board staff worked with school counselors and practitioners and counselor educators to determine what students really need, starting in elementary school, to be on track for college and careers. They developed eight components:

1. College Aspirations
2. Academic Planning for College and Career Readiness
3. Enrichment and Extracurricular Engagement
4. College and Career Exploration and Selection Processes
5. College and Career Assessments
6. College Affordability Planning
7. College and Career Admission Processes
8. Transition from High School Graduation to College Enrollment

To implement each component successfully, school counselors:

- Use strategies and interventions that take into account the context of the diverse populations in the school and community
- Encourage multilevel interventions involving students, parents, schools, and community
- Use data effectively

Martin also shared findings from the College Board's *2011 National Survey of School Counselors: Counseling at a Crossroads*:

- More than eight in 10 counselors report a top mission of schools should be to ensure all students complete 12th grade ready to succeed in college and careers
- Nearly all counselors — 9 in 10 (93 percent) — support a strategic approach to promote college and career readiness by 12th grade
- More than **seven in 10 counselors** rate as very important:
 - College and Career Exploration and Selection Processes (72%)
 - College and Career Admission Processes (73%)
 - Academic Planning for College and Career Readiness (71%)

- Only a small minority feel very well trained for their jobs
 - Only **16 percent** rate their training as a 9 or 10 on a 10-point scale
 - Nearly **three in 10 (28 percent)** believe their training did not prepare them well for their job
 - **More than half (56 percent)** feel only somewhat well trained
- In near unanimous agreement, **99 percent of school counselors agreed** that it is **“important for school counselors to exercise leadership in advocating for students’ access to rigorous academic preparation, as well as for college and career-readiness counseling.”**

Based on the leadership finding, NOSCA launched the “**Own the Turf**” campaign, a national advocacy campaign to galvanize and mobilize school counselors to own the turf of college and career readiness counseling and take the lead in establishing a college-going culture in their schools, districts, communities, and/or states. Over 11,000 counselors have signed up with the campaign to date.

BigFuture™:

Roy Ben-Yoseph, executive director, digital products, The College Board, shared information about this project, the result of collaboration between the College Board and the Education Conservancy. Lloyd Thacker of the Education Conservancy provided the initial context, indicating that the process of developing BigFuture™ included a focus on integrating values with innovative technology and a goal to democratize the process and get information to the students who most need it. He pointed out that BigFuture:

- Meets students where they are
- Offers self-reflective exercises
- Allows for immediate engagement and feedback
- Provides integrated guidance in a variety of formats
- Is educational — for and about students
- Is interactive, not transactional
- Is comprehensive, free, trustworthy, accessible, and engaging

Thacker stated, “It is all about inspiration and taking the next steps. YouCanGo!™ and BigFuture combine educational vision and technological wizardry to provide trustworthy and comprehensive guidance in a highly accessible and engaging format.”

Ben-Yoseph led the participants through a partial demo of the site. BigFuture went live in early 2012, following and linked to the development of YouCanGo!, which was the first post-task-force effort to reach directly to underserved students by addressing

their perceived obstacles to college, primarily by sharing stories from students like themselves who were successful. BigFuture aims to be even more comprehensive. Elements include more student testimonials, advice from admission and guidance professionals, and a directed, individually focused college search process.

A number of participants were already familiar with using the site and all were very enthusiastic about this new tool for students. Ben-Yoseph was asked whether there would be information for undocumented students, and he responded that there will be videos up soon. He also mentioned that more information about options for undocumented students is available at the [diversity conferences website](#).

He indicated that BigFuture is still a work in progress and they are determining ways to track usage. Several participants urged the College Board to be sure that the site is marketed widely and effectively; perhaps a celebrity spokesperson or persons would be beneficial.

Affinity Network:

Annika Many, senior director, The College Board Advocacy & Policy Center, described her work on this project that is designed to increase the interaction between K–12 and higher education systems to facilitate successful transition from high school to college. The official purpose of the Affinity Network is to:

- Build and strengthen connections between K–12 and postsecondary education systems to facilitate successful transition from high school to college.
- Provide a service to membership.
- Serve as an incubator for ideas and solutions for the Advocacy & Policy Center, College Board membership, and the education field.

The network will create an annual cohort to deal with one issue, for one year, which is important to both sectors. This year's topic is Common Core Standards (CCSS), and there are two key questions:

- How could the Common Core State Standards result in changes/shifts in the alignment of high school exit expectations with postsecondary entrance expectations? And what supports (legislative, institutional, research, resources, conversations, etc.) need to be in place to successfully accomplish this alignment?
- How could the Common Core State Standards impact the design of remedial education courses on college campuses?

Many described how the cohorts are put together and how the meeting and research processes will take place. Key outcomes of the Affinity Network will be:

- **Sharing best practices** and lessons learned, the network will foster a better

understanding of how to effectively align K–12 and postsecondary efforts and improve student success

- **Monthly reports** of team progress shared within and between teams and with external stakeholders
- **Case studies** of state teams who have modeled innovative approaches to bridging the K–20 continuum and CCSS implementation
- **Final project report(s)** of lessons learned — successes and failures.
- Descriptions of **new partnerships** between K–12 and higher education.
- **Innovative approaches** to K–12 and higher education collaboration.
- **State and institution policy and program implications.**
- **Knowledge** for the field and consortia.
- The network will also track and **share results from its collaborations.**
- Shared learning across and among participating institutions provides a **learning experience for the participants, and reinforces strong communication links** across state institutions.

Many asked the participants to share with her their ideas for issues to tackle in the future, as well as names of those who would like to participate in the future. Again, participants were very enthusiastic about this approach, calling it “a hugely innovative and unique collaboration for concrete K–20 work.” One future topic that was suggested was college counseling training for counselors in public high schools.

My College Dollars:

Rohit Tandon, senior director, office of strategy management, The College Board, provided the background for **My College Dollars**, which began when the College Board partnered with a number of other entities to launch the Get Schooled College Affordability Challenge on MTV. The challenge kicked off in October 2010, when high school and college students were asked to submit ideas for using technology to simplify the financial aid process and increase awareness of funding sources. Over 200 submissions were received, and 6,000 online MTV voters chose “My College Dollars”; the winner was announced by Bill Clinton at the Clinton Global Initiative event in April 2011. Elements of the winning idea were:

- Use social networking to reduce financial barriers to college enrollment and success
 - Present scholarship opportunities on Facebook
 - Provide FAFSA help
 - Debunk myths about financial aid
 - Increase comfort level related to intelligent borrowing

- Target audience
 - High school seniors
 - Students enrolled in higher education

My College Dollars launched in January 2012 as a Facebook app, with lots of concomitant publicity. As of July 20, 2012:

- Site has had over 112,000 visits; almost 81,000 unique
- Almost 600,000 page views
- Average five-minute visit duration
- Eighty-six percent of the app users signed in
- Twenty-five percent of users were ages 13–17
- Fifty-six percent of users were 18–24

Tandon said that there is currently a 5–10-day waiting period for students to get responses to questions from College Board staff. Participants urged the College Board to get CSS members involved in responding to shorten this timeframe.

Tandon indicated that students who have their age, gender, and state of residence on Facebook will get scholarship opportunities listed on that basis; the more information a user shares, the more refined the list of scholarship options becomes. My College Dollars directs students to BigFuture for more comprehensive options for affording college. The site outlines what the FAFSA is, provides information on other ways to pay for college, etc. The calendar feature creates events and calendars information for the user based on what s/he saves on his/her profile; the calendar feature lets students know when to apply for aid, and students really seem to like this.

Comments from the participants in regard to My College Dollars:

- Need to add to the calendar function the admission application deadlines as well; these are generally before aid deadlines, and there is no aid for students who do not apply
- This is not set up for college students even though they are part of the intended audience; their deadlines and schedules are very college-specific
- Students should be referred to college-specific aid sites as part of My College Dollars so that they do not miss out on opportunities to learn about requirements and opportunities that are college-specific
- Undocumented students will not find info in this site, but they are referred to BigFuture

Policy Research in Support of “55% by 2025”: Important College Board Initiatives

Jess Howell, executive director of policy research, The College Board Advocacy & Policy Center, provided an overview of College Board research in support of President Obama’s goal to have 55 percent of Americans hold bachelor’s degrees by 2025. She listed some barriers to that goal:

- College readiness
- Information
- Procedure (FAFSA, transfer of credits)
- Affordability
- Resources (support systems, classes available)
- Access
- Transitions
- Success

Howell stressed the importance of causal evidence as a key to determining appropriate policy. Correlation can be useful, but it can be misleading when used to make policy decisions.

Howell’s group is working to develop causal evidence in **three broad areas**:

- Preparation and access
- College affordability and financial aid
- Admission and completion

The audience for this research consists of students and parents; educators and practitioners; K–12 and higher education decision makers; and policymakers. Howell went on to share recent research her group has undertaken.

High School Counselors and Pathways to College: What is the impact of an additional high school counselor on:

- School attendance?
- High school graduation rates?
- College enrollment rates?

Howell's group analyzed data from states that have a maximum student: counselor ratio, the Schools and Staffing Survey, and the Common Core of Data. Their findings demonstrated that:

- One additional counselor does not have an influence on attendance and graduation rates but did lead to a 10 percent increase in the number of students going on to a four-year college

“So counselors matter; they should not be cut in budget reduction. And this is just *quantity* of counselors: the effect would be even higher with increased *quality* in counseling.”

Can applying to more colleges increase enrollment rates?

- How does applying to more colleges affect enrollment?
- What mechanisms are at play?

Howell's group analyzed data from 6,000 students in the high school class of 2004:

- Of students who applied to only one college and were admitted to that college, 70 percent went there, and 30 percent did not
- If students applied to two colleges, the enrollment rose by 40 percent
- If students applied to three rather than two colleges, the enrollment rate rose another 10 percent

“We can nudge students into better college decisions and options simply by encouraging them to apply to two to three colleges.”

The role of grant aid in college choice: By how much does institutional grant aid impact the college choice of a student with demonstrated financial need? How does choice elasticity (yield) vary with family income, race/ethnicity, and college selectivity?

They analyzed 2009 data from 30 highly selective colleges and universities with substantial student overlap and found:

- The lowest-income students were the most sensitive to aid increases

Howell concluded by describing the areas in which they intend to do research going forward, and the context surrounding these research projects.

- **Gap students and summer melt:** Among low-income students who intend to enroll in college, 10–40 percent ultimately do not enroll. Is it acceptable that they see the workforce as their best option? Is there promise in improved transparency efforts? What is the role of summer counseling?

- **Postsecondary academic undermatch:** What about those students who never apply to college, despite being college ready? Choosing the workforce is a form of academic mismatch or undermatch for these students. As for academic match — how college selectivity compares with a student’s credentials — empirical evidence indicates that academically matched students have better outcomes. Undermatch affects as many as 40 percent of students, and lower-SES students are more likely to undermatch than higher-SES peers.
- **College rankings and accountability in higher education:** What form might accountability in higher education take? Increases or changes in reporting; improvement in transparency; more attention to outputs? And how do students and institutions respond to increased accountability?
- **Institutional research capacity to increase degree completion:** How can colleges and universities better use their own data to determine the most effective ways of increasing degree completion?
- **In-state tuition benefits for non-citizens:** Evaluating impact of HB 1403 in Texas (2001) on college enrollment and retention of noncitizen students at five broad-access Texas institutions.

Expanding the Collaboration: Admissions in the 21st Century Reconstituted

This panel discussed progress toward Task Force and Commission goals and suggested possible areas of focus going forward.

James Montoya, vice president, relationship development, The College Board, echoed the question Thresher raised more than 40 years ago: “Who didn’t we admit?” In this environment of cultural change, Montoya believes admission professionals need to examine the partnerships they have with faculty. “We have allowed two cultures to exist: graduate and undergraduate admission look at very different elements of a student’s preparedness” and yet the professors serving on undergraduate admission policy committees are the same as those who handle graduate admission, which is primarily data-driven. “We need to see and to involve faculty as partners in undergraduate admission.”

Barbara Gill, assistant vice president of undergraduate admissions and enrollment planning, University of Maryland at College Park and chair, Guidance and Admission Assembly Council, followed up with the comment that no faculty from the Academic Council were at this meeting. (It was pointed out that last year the first all-council joint meeting was held; one will be held again this year.) Gill’s primary concern going forward is how to support Patricia Martin’s NOSCA effort, focusing on counselors in the high schools.

David Meade, vice president, enrollment product management, The College Board, said he appreciated the insights the participants have provided on these “big and complex challenges.” The key areas he sees as needing focus going forward are financial aid, where the College Board has expertise and assets and will be able to help with solutions; data, where the College Board is working to make data available that is useful to colleges in making decisions; and partnerships, where the College Board goal is to make them as seamless as possible.

Robert Alig, vice president of the College Board’s Middle States Regional Office, said, “You all have high expectations of us on the regional offices, and I have a sense we will need to rethink how we do things to meet those expectations.” He would like to see all regional staff aware of all the issues, K–20. “We are currently too ‘siloed.’”

Bruce Walker, chair of the Task Force Implementation Committee, indicated that, in terms of implementation, the complexity issue work has been completed, and more work now needs to be done on the rest of the topics, which has led to introductory work but need deeper research and writing. He is pleased with the numbers of people who have been signing up for the webinars. “But if we were to do something new, we should think about how to engage faculty members in our work. Admission is a

discipline, and I have had some success in getting faculty interested in admissions work from that perspective. Never underestimate the importance of internal communication.”

Gill added that she sees the Declaration of Values from the Task Force’s 2008 report as very important, even more so than the seven action areas they proposed. “We agree on our values, but there is a disconnect with the public on those values.”

Montoya suggested that the group think more about community colleges. With the demographic and economic challenges institutions and families face, it is important to “re-imagine the pipeline to get to 55 percent.”

Mary Nucciarone, associate director, financial aid, University of Notre Dame, and chair of the College Scholarship Service Assembly Council, would like to see more focus on the Statement of Ethical Principles and Practices. “We need to be sure that our new admissions, aid, and high school counselors are aware of them. And we need to think about the major transitions of leadership ahead around these principles.” She is also concerned about what affordability means to the press, to institutions, and to families. Finally, she asked that the group think about how to develop tools that help first-generation and low-SES families in the process.

Participants then had a chance to weigh in with additional ideas:

- We compete with one another, which makes it harder to give the broader message; but we do need to give a broader message to families about higher education.
- Pleased to see the College Board being more proactive in addressing audiences, such as through the “Don’t Forget Ed” campaign.
- Affordability is influenced by choice; everyone can afford to go on to higher education somewhere.
- As for faculty involvement, consider being the one who joins *their* committees; then they will know who you are and develop an interest in your issues.
- We need to think about what we should be doing now to train new professionals and prepare for succession. What should we do to make sure people want to take on ethical leadership roles?
- The new College Board president reflects a bold choice. He will need to tap into the experience of the higher ed people here.

Taking Action

Participants broke into small groups to prioritize tasks and issues going forward. What issues will frame the Task Force Implementation Committee's work going forward?

Next Steps

Symposium participants met in small groups to outline key areas where the work of the Task Force could be further enhanced and expanded in the months ahead. The breakout groups then reported out to the full group their ideas and suggestions. Their recommendations are summarized below by topic as they relate to the Task Force's original action commitments.

Professional Development

- Build into College Board structure to include people and institutions that have not generally been part of the conversation, and work as well with NACAC, AACRO, etc.
- Counselor training for counselors who serve underserved (targeted districts)
- Enhance financial literacy for guidance counselors, students, and families
- Training for professionals
- Have the College Board partner with colleges of education to strengthen counselor training
- Training:
 - Develop scalable models that work: What is making a difference?
 - Counselor prep and then continuing education
 - Admission and aid professionals: toolkit approach; involve other associations

Advocacy

- College Board to be seen as the place to go for educational policy, information/data, research
- Emphasize the value of higher education as a public good
- Advocacy and then product: tension for regional offices
- Social justice

- Anticipating Supreme Court affirmative action case: supporting the College Board’s amicus brief and the outcomes through the work of the Access & Diversity Collaborative
- College Board should be less “product” and more “process”
- How can we make competition work for all students?
- Are there outside groups that can help us send these messages?

Communications

- Outreach to all test-takers; College Board should reach out to those whose names are not purchased
- Need to work on definitions: higher education/postsecondary education; “undermatched,” etc.
- Take back the higher ed message, boldly and in a coordinated way: help people understand there is capacity, and it is affordable
- Messaging and communications
 - Training
 - Families
 - Policymakers
 - College readiness
 - Higher education ROI: short term versus long term

Complexity in Admission and Financial Aid

- Financial aid should be transparent and simplified

Demographics/Research

- Clearinghouse for undocumented student options; need to deal with the demographics
- Find ways to connect to low-SES students
 - Leverage resources at those colleges and universities that can afford early outreach
 - Use unpurchased SAT names
 - Find a way to end the debate about TRIO for perpetual funding
 - College Board should develop interactive site to allow high schools to request high school visits
 - College Board as broker, orchestrating college guidance/planning (visits, etc.) with underserved communities

- Encourage colleges and universities to work with underserved populations in their own communities
- Is anyone open enrollment? Where are those students going?
- Definitions need clarification, such as mismatch and undermatch
- Reaching families
- Undocumented students: a single source for practitioners and families where they can go for information; bilingual
- Develop planning models for each year from kindergarten on
- Increased collaborations/distribution of studies and data
- Research ideas :
 - State requirements for retention in high school, age, etc.

Campus Leadership

- The role of faculty: involving them in better college completion, discussing what admission is about, and helping them see the process

Financial Aid and Affordability

- Address financial literacy issues
 - Perhaps a quiz format online for students, parents, and counselors to master basic information and see the value of investments
 - Develop communications about financing with more integrity, transparency, and credibility
 - Merit aid undermines these messages
- Research the relationship between internships (paid and unpaid) in relation to college persistence
- “Affordable” seems to mean “the price one is going to pay without loans” (higher education is the only area where this is true: “affordable” cars and houses require loans); affordable really means “comfortable.”
- Affordability issue
- More precise definition of affordability is needed; the issue is all related to increased cost and less funding (especially at public institutions)
- The College Board could model financing policies for national legislative and governors organizations

Alignment of Sectors: Community College, Four-Year, Proprietary

- Students are getting an education at for-profits. What do we need to do to fill the niche that is attracting those students?
- For-profits: many are preying on underserved populations
- Concern about privatization of great public institutions
- Relationships between two- and four-year colleges: The College Board can help in this collaboration
- Online and credentialing education will make a difference in the higher education environment
- Collaboration improvement needed between two-year and four-year institutions
- Include more types of institutions in ongoing work
 - Non-flagship publics
 - Colleges of education
 - Military
 - Tech colleges
 - Faculty members

Rankings, Information, and Assessments of Institutions

- Can we do rankings on issues that would inform presidents of what colleges do well and not well: educational impact studies
- How do we define higher education and the value of a bachelor's degree, a college education versus a college experience? How will the College Board help in this changing environment?
- Focus on student success; rankings, and matches may not be best for students

Symposium on Admissions in the 21st Century Agenda

July 24–25, 2012
The College Board Reston Office
Reston, Va.

Day 1 – Tuesday, July 24, 2012	
Hyatt Regency Hotel, 1800 Presidents Street, Reston, VA 20190	
6–7 p.m.	Reception, Grand Ballroom C Foyer
7–8 p.m.	<p>Welcome and Opening Remarks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bradley Quin, Executive Director, Higher Education Advocacy, The College Board • Tom Rudin, Senior Vice President of Advocacy, Government Relations and Development, The College Board <p>Keynote Session: Admissions Past, Present, Future: Have We Made Progress? A Review of the Key Issues Confronting the Profession (Pre-read, forwarded electronically prior to the meeting: Alden Thresher, <i>Admissions and the Public Interest; The College Admissions Landscape, 2012; Preserving the Dream of America, Task Force on Admissions in the 21st Century Report, 2008</i>)</p> <p>Speaker: John Casteen, President Emeritus, University of Virginia, Former College Board Trustee</p> <p>Employing the Alden Thresher text as foundation for a theoretical model for the admission profession, President Casteen will engage the group with his insights into in the state of admission past, present and future. Is what Thresher proposed as a profession in service to the public still relevant in the context of today’s school to college transition challenges?</p> <p>A panel of Task Force Implementation Committee members will interact with President Casteen and then the floor will be opened for general conversation.</p> <p>TFIC Panelists: Randy Deike, Michael Heintze, Jerry Lucido, Chat Leonard, Joellen Silberman, Gordon Stanley</p>
8 p.m.	Dinner, Grand Ballroom BC

Day 2 – Wednesday, July 25, 2012

The College Board - 11955 Democracy Drive, Reston, VA 20190-5662

7:30–8:30 a.m.	Continental Breakfast (9th-Floor Café)
8–8:30 a.m.	<p>Opening Remarks: Redefining our Leadership in Support of a Profession at Its Best</p> <p>Description of the Advocacy & Policy Center’s mission in support of the Task Force and the College Completion Agenda</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christen Pollock, Vice President of the The College Board Advocacy & Policy Center • Remarks from Brad Quin
8:45–9:15 a.m.	Meeting Member Introductions and Comments
9:15–9:45 a.m.	<p>Setting the Stage, Landscape Review: The Current State of Affairs</p> <p>Presenters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thanos Patelis, Vice President, Research and Development, The College Board • Kelcey Edwards, Senior Research Analyst, Research and Development, The College Board <p>A special landscape review of the current state of admission related to the key findings of the Task Force and Commission has been developed and shared in advance with meeting participants. This presentation will supplement that review advance with additional content and insight. (Pre-read: <i>The College Admissions Landscape, 2012</i>)</p>
9:45–10 a.m.	Break
10.–11:15 a.m.	<p>Roundtable Reactions and Discussion: The Work of the Task Force Since 2008</p> <p>Moderator: Christen Pollock</p> <p>Review of Five Key Achievements and Progress on Task Force Goals and Objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complexity in Admission Research – Brad Quin, Executive Director, Higher Education Advocacy , The College Board 2. NOSCA Eight Components of College and Career Readiness – Patricia Martin, Assistant Vice President, National Office for School Counselor Advocacy, The College Board Advocacy & Policy Center 3. BigFuture – Roy Ben-Yoseph, Executive Director, Digital Products, The College Board 4. Affinity Network – Annika Many, Senior Director, The College Board Advocacy & Policy Center 5. My College Dollars – Rohit Tandon, Senior Director, Office of Strategy Management, The College Board

<p>11:15–12:15 p.m.</p>	<p>Policy Research In Support of 55% by 2025: Important College Board Initiatives</p> <p>Presenter: Jessica Howell, Executive Director of Policy Research, The College Board Advocacy & Policy Center</p> <p>This session will provide insight into the status of selected Advocacy & Policy Center research activities and plans for future research to support Task Force and Commission objectives.</p>
<p>12:15–12:45 p.m.</p>	<p>Lunch (9th-Floor Café)</p>
<p>12:45–1:15 p.m.</p>	<p>Roundtable Discussion: Expanding the Collaboration: Admissions in the 21st Century Reconstituted</p> <p>Moderator: Brad Quin</p> <p>A panel of leaders from the Task Force Implementation Committee, College Scholarship Service Assembly Council, Guidance Access Admission Council and selected College Board Higher Education Units will discuss progress toward Task Force and Commission goals and suggest possible areas of focus going forward.</p> <p>This session will help frame the work of the following session with small groups.</p> <p>Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robert Alig, Vice President, Middle States Regional Office • Barbara Gill, Chair, Guidance and Admissions Assembly Council • David Meade, Vice President, Enrollment Product Management • Jim Montoya, Vice President, Relationship Development • Mary Nucciarone, Chair, College Scholarship Service Assembly Council • Bruce Walker, Chair, Task Force Implementation Committee
<p>1:15–2:30 p.m.</p>	<p>Breakout Session: Taking Action (small groups work to prioritize tasks and issues going forward)</p> <p>These small group sessions will be led by TFIC members in attendance.</p> <p>Key Question: What issues will frame our work going forward? Each group selects three to five key topics or issues and prioritizes them and indentifies them with either a former (ongoing TF goal) or a new issue not formerly addressed by the TF.</p>
<p>2:30–2:45 p.m.</p>	<p>Break</p>
<p>2:45–3:30 p.m.</p>	<p>Next Steps: Summary of Breakout Session Groups</p>
<p>3:30 p.m.</p>	<p>Adjournment</p>

Symposium Attendees

Charlene Aguilar, Director of College Counseling, Lakeside School

Robert Alig, Vice President, MSRO, The College Board

Philip Ballinger, Assistant Vice President for Enrollment, Director of Admissions, University of Washington

John Barnhill, Assistant Vice President for Enrollment, Florida State University

Roy Ben-Yoseph, Executive Director, Digital Products, The College Board

Joyce Brown, Counselor Consultant, Chicago Public Schools

Mae Brown, Assistant Vice Chancellor–Admissions and Enrollment Services, University of California–San Diego

Winston Brown, Dean of Admissions, Xavier University of Louisiana

Regina Brown, Educational Specialist for School Counseling, Henrico County Public Schools

Jonathan Burdick, Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid, University of Rochester

Cori Canty-Woessner, Director of Counseling, Denver Public Schools

Arlene Cash, Vice President of Enrollment Management, Spelman College

John Casteen, President Emeritus, University of Virginia

Bruce Chamberlin, Senior Associate Director of Admissions, Georgetown University

Douglas Christiansen, Vice Provost for Enrollment and Dean of Admissions, Vanderbilt University

William Conley, Vice President for Enrollment Management, Bucknell University

Karen Cooper, Director of Financial Aid, Stanford University

Antoinette Crockrell, Executive Director, SAT, The College Board

Fozz D'Aloisio, Executive Director, Higher Ed Engagement, The College Board

Randall Deike, Vice President for Enrollment Management and University Institutional Research, New York University

Jennifer Desjarlais, Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid, Wellesley College

Kelcey Edwards, Senior Research Analyst, Research and Development, The College Board

Barbara Gill, Assistant Vice President of Undergraduate Admissions and Enrollment Planning, University of Maryland at College Park

Phyllis Gill, Associate Director of College Guidance, Providence Day School

Teri Gimbel, Director of Guidance, Lincoln High School

Steve Graff, Senior Director, Admissions Services, The College Board

Steve Handel, Executive Director, Higher Education Relationship Development and Community College Initiatives, The College Board

Marc Harding, Chief Enrollment Officer, University of Pittsburgh

Michael Heintze, Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management and Marketing, Texas State University–San Marcos

Jodi Hester, College Counselor, Woodward Academy

Pamela Horne, Associate Vice Provost for Enrollment Management and Dean of Admissions, Purdue University

Jessica Howell, Executive Director, Policy Research, The College Board Advocacy & Policy Center

Esther Hugo, Outreach Coordinator (Retired), Santa Monica College

Michael Hurwitz, Associate Policy Research Scientist, The College Board Advocacy & Policy Center

Earl Johnson, Associate Vice President and Dean of Admission, The University of Tulsa

Peter Johnson, Director of Admissions, Columbia University

Yolanda Johnson, Director of Student Support Services, Springfield Public Schools

Paul Kohn, Vice Provost for Enrollment Services, Georgia Institute of Technology

Robert Lay, Dean of Enrollment Management, Boston College

Chat Leonard, Director of College Counseling, Metro Academic and Classical High School

Wayne Locust, Vice President for Enrollment Planning and Management, University of Connecticut

Annika Many, Senior Director, The College Board Advocacy & Policy Center

Jennifer Marchena, Assistant, The College Board Advocacy & Policy Center

Patricia Martin, Assistant Vice President, National Office for School Counselor Advocacy, The College Board Advocacy & Policy Center

Nancy McDuff, Associate Vice President for Admissions and Enrollment Management, University of Georgia

David Meade, Vice President, Enrollment Product Management, The College Board

Gary Meunier, School Counselor, Weston High School

Glenn Milewski, Executive Director, PSAT/NMSQT, The College Board

Jim Montoya, Vice President, Relationship Development, The College Board

Karen Neal, Supervisor of Student Services, Calvert County Public Schools

Jim Nondorf, Vice President and Dean of Admissions, University of Chicago

Mary Nucciarone, Associate Director of Financial Aid, University of Notre Dame

Thanos Patelis, Vice President, Research and Development, The College Board

Christen Pollock, Vice President, The College Board Advocacy & Policy Center

Brad Quin, Executive Director, Higher Education Advocacy, The College Board

Michael Reilly, Executive Director, AACRAO

Ileana Rodriguez, Vice President, College Board Midwest Regional Office, The College Board

Tom Rudin, Senior Vice President of Advocacy, Government Relations and Development, The College Board

Mary San Agustin, Director, Financial Aid, Veterans and Scholarship Services, Palomar College

Deb Schmidt, Consultant

Stuart Schmill, Dean of Admissions, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Scott Schulz, Interim Dean of Admissions, St. Martin's University

Joellen Silberman, President of Enrollment, (Retired), Kalamazoo College

Gordon Stanley, Director of Counseling, Marist School

Anne Sturtevant, Executive Director, Higher Education, The College Board

Alice Tanaka, College Counselor, Holy Names Academy

Rohit Tandon, Senior Director, Office of Strategy Management, The College Board

Lloyd Thacker, Executive Director, The Education Conservancy

Gil Villanueva, Assistant Vice President and Dean of Admission, University of Richmond

Bruce Walker, Vice Provost for Special Projects, The University of Texas at Austin

About the College Board

The College Board is a mission-driven not-for-profit organization that connects students to college success and opportunity. Founded in 1900, the College Board was created to expand access to higher education. Today, the membership association is made up of more than 5,900 of the world's leading educational institutions and is dedicated to promoting excellence and equity in education. Each year, the College Board helps more than seven million students prepare for a successful transition to college through programs and services in college readiness and college success — including the SAT[®] and the Advanced Placement Program[®]. The organization also serves the education community through research and advocacy on behalf of students, educators and schools.

For further information, visit www.collegeboard.org.

The College Board Advocacy & Policy Center

The College Board Advocacy & Policy Center was established to help transform education in America. Guided by the College Board's principles of excellence and equity in education, we work to ensure that students from all backgrounds have the opportunity to succeed in college and beyond. We make critical connections between policy, research and real-world practice to develop innovative solutions to the most pressing challenges in education today.

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