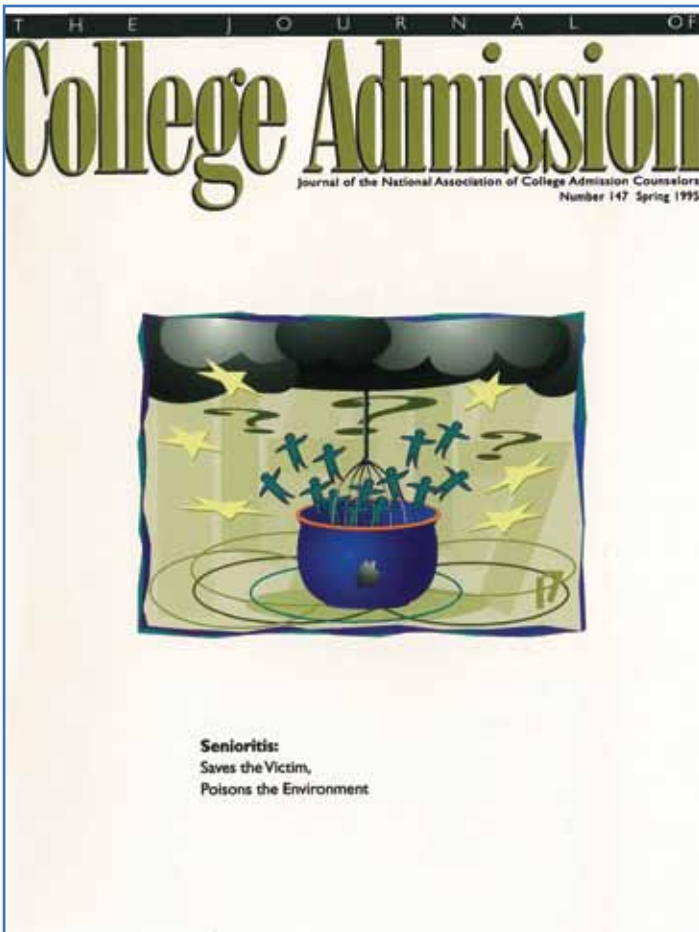


Spring 1995

# Gatekeepers or Marketers: Reclaiming the Educational Role of Chief Admission Officers

Response: "Seeking the Admissions Hybrid" Jerome A. Lucido on page 101



As we approach the turn of the century, it is important to ask how the changes in American higher education as well as the profession and practice of admission has come about and what might we learn from our past that can inform our future? This call for an informed approach to the future is especially important given that the cohort of U.S. Teenagers has again begun to grow after 15 years of decline. Current estimates are that by 2006, there will be 30.8 million teens, which is 900,000 more than the highest level of baby boom teens... our postsecondary institutions need to be prepared to face a tsunami in the early 21st century.



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Note: Tables 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14 are available upon request from the *Journal of College Admission*.

## Introduction

The U.S. college admission environment has changed enormously over the last three decades. What have those changes meant for the profession of college admission officers? In this paper we will describe the enormous changes that have taken place in high schools, colleges, and the entrepreneurial admission sector. We will describe how the profession of admission officer has changed dramatically since the early 1960s and will detail the phenomenal growth in the number of professionals in the field, their personal characteristics and qualifications, the emergence of admission specialists, and the institutionalization of a career path. We conclude with a discussion of a hybrid role of marketer and educator for chief admission officers, and a call for professional standards for both the chief admission officers and their assistants.

As we approach the turn of the century, it is important to ask how the changes in American higher education as well as the profession and practice of admission has come about and what might we learn from our past that can inform our future? This call for an informed approach to the future is especially important given that the cohort of U.S. Teenagers has again begun to grow after 15 years of decline. Current estimates are that by 2006, there will be 30.8 million teens, which is 900,000 more than the highest level of baby boom teens (Zinn, 1994). If that baby boom cohort was once called a tidal wave (Thompson, 1954), then our postsecondary institutions need to be prepared to face a tsunami in the early 21st century.

## Admission Environment Changes

After some of the most exponential growth in American higher education ever witnessed, how is college different now than 30 years ago? The number of institutions of U.S. higher education grew 57 percent from 2,008 in 1960 to 3,535 in 1990. The number of college students grew 346 percent from just over 4.1 million in 1961, to just under 14.2 million in 1991. Public institutions have solidified their position as the dominant postsecondary institution enrolling 79 percent of all students up from 62 percent in 1961 (National Center for Education Statistics, 1992).

Also, the student faces of U.S. higher education have changed phenomenally since the early 1960s. The gender, economic, and ethnic types of students attending our collegiate institutions thankfully have become more diverse. In 1961, only 6 percent of all college students were underrepresented minorities, while today 22 percent of all higher education students are from underrepresented groups. Moreover in 1961, males made up 62 percent of all students, while today women have surpassed their male counterparts to make up 55 percent of all undergraduates.

Meanwhile, the rates of college attendance for low socio-economic status students has been increasing: in 1972, 27 percent of the lowest socio-economic quartile of high school graduates attended college, while 35 percent of these students did in October 1980 (National Center for Education Statistics, 1992).

Those people who help secondary students make the transition to college also have changed. Although the ratio of secondary school guidance counselors to students has improved from 1:2,403 in 1960 to 1:509 in 1990 (National Center for Education Statistics, 1992), there has been a concomitant increase in the types of services they are expected to provide beyond college choice: dropout, drug, sexuality, pregnancy, suicide, and personal crisis counseling. One 1983 study found that counselors were devoting only 20 percent of their time to college guidance (Chapman and DeMasi, 1985). Today, many of the largest urban public schools have effectively divested themselves of college advisement with average high school counselor-to-student ratio of 1:740 (fitsimmons, 1991). Whether at 509 or 740, counselor caseloads of this magnitude strongly suggest that students face limited access to counselors in their search for college guidance. According to a recent survey, 60 percent of 1993 freshman said that the advice of their high school counselor was not very important to them (Astin et al., 1993).

Students applying to college today often engage in new admission management behaviors (McDonough, 1994b) attempting to enhance their admission prospects and an entrepreneurial to supplement or supplant school counselors; take entrance exam preparation course in record numbers; and buy books on college choice. Almost half (44 percent) of all first-time, full-time freshman now take college entrance exam preparation courses (Astin et al., 1993). According to the *U.S. News and World Report* (Wilder, 1989), this exam coaching industry grosses over a \$100 million a year. The Stanley Kaplan Educational Centers (owned by the *Washington Post* Corporation) is estimated to be responsible for 60 to 80 percent of the annual industry take. (*Ward's Business Directory of Private and Public Companies*, 1993). Moreover, a commodification of "college knowledge" has resulted in a tripling of books listed in *Books in Print* on college choice, college costs, or entrance exam preparation from 100 books in 1967 to 336 books in 1991 (McDonough, 1994a).

Yet, gaining admission to college now is a more intensive and volatile roulette game for many postsecondary aspirants, especially those who wish to attend "better" colleges. The most selective 32 U.S. colleges, members of the Consortium for financing Higher Education (COFHE), experienced a 29 percent increase in applications from 1983-89 with resulting declines in acceptance rates

(Schurenberg, 1989). The college application surge began in the early 1980s and is most apparent at the most selective 50-100 colleges. In the mid-1950s, Harvard admitted 60 percent of all applicants and the mean SAT test scores of its freshmen were 100 points lower than freshmen from the class of 1994. Today, Harvard, Yale, Princeton and Stanford have admit rates of between 17 and 21 percent (fitzsimmons, 1991).

Moreover, fewer college applicants are feeling secure enough of their admission chances to file a single application for their dream school. In 1967, 50 percent of all students filed one application, yet in 1993 that number had dropped to 29 percent of all freshmen. More students feel the need to hedge their application bets: in 1967 the number of students filing five or more applications was only 7.5 percent, in 1993 that number was 22 percent (Dey et al., 1991; Astin et al., 1993). These new admission practices are more pronounced for students attending elite colleges and who are second-generation (or more) college-bound: 50 percent of all students at elite institutions and 70 percent of all students whose fathers have a B.A. degree file six or more applications (Horvat, 1993.)

### The World of College Admission

What can we say about how admission officers have changed over this period of higher education expansion. Moreover, how have the aforementioned changes influenced or resulted from changes in the profession of admission? Beyond the sheer growth in the number of admission officers at U.S. colleges, there have been major changes in four areas related to admission professionals: personal characteristics, entry and promotion qualifications, role transformation from educator to admission and marketing specialist, and the institutionalization of an admission career path.

Using data collected in the 1962-63 academic year, the authors of a first-ever comprehensive study of admission officers in four-year colleges and universities described admission work as an emerging occupation because it was changing from being a subsidiary function of the registrar's office to "being a full-time, specialized" function (Hauser and Lazarsfeld, 1964). This study gave us a picture of chief admission officers at a time when colleges and universities were trying to cope with the flood of baby boomers who were seeking collegiate opportunities. In a 1965 College and University article, higher education practitioners were warned of an impending crush of students: "when the students are finally enrolled and attending classes, there are more of them than expected." (Hitt).

A decade later, Vinson replicated the Hauser and Lazarsfeld study, using data collected in the 1975-76 academic year and documented a profession continuing to undergo many changes

(1976). Providing the first longitudinal view of this profession, Vinson's work again came at a crucial time. This time colleges and universities were being warned about the temptations of succumbing to crass commercialism in student recruitment:

During the coming decade there will be temptation to engage in ever sharper institutional competition for the shrinking student pool. I do not believe that 'Darwinism' is the answer to our problems: it results in survival of the slickest, not the fittest (Crossland, 1980).

We present here evidence from a third admission study (Robertson, 1989), a database generated from a questionnaire mailed to the director of admission at all U.S., not-for-profit, baccalaureate-degree-granting colleges and universities in 1987-88 (Robertson, 1989). The response rates for the three surveys ranged from 62 percent to 79 percent, and the universe of four-year institutions grew over the period of the three studies by 24 percent. The total number of usable responses for the 1988 survey was 1,146.

This third study was undertaken when: the decline in the number of traditional college-age students had been underway for eight years; the decline was six years from reaching its 1993 low point; and one major foci of college admission officers was competition for the shrinking number of traditional college-age students. Also, between the time of this study and the Vinson study, admission professionals had already begun to describe the shift in orientation among admission officers from gatekeeper to marketing consultant (Riehl, 1982). The following quote not only reflects concerns about an admission context of increased competition among colleges and universities, but also the problems such an environment breeds:

Unsavory methods of competition...can also infect the academic enterprise, especially in difficult times when money and students are in short supply. Some colleges create attractive-sounding programs with little real substance. Others issue propaganda with misleading statements about the institution's own programs or with disparaging remarks about its competitors (Bok, 1986).

### Quarter Century of Change

In 1963 the average admission office had two staff people: a chief admission officer and a clerical assistant. The chief admission officer was most likely to be male, aged 41-50, whose highest educational attainment was a master's degree, more often than not in a field other than education. He most likely was called a director of admission or registrar, had a modal experience of 3-6 years in admission, and his prior job was most likely in college or secondary school teaching or administration.

In 1988 the average admission office had 12 staff people: one chief admission officer, approximately 6 professional assistants, and 5 clerical assistants. The chief admission officer was still likely to be male and white, although a slightly younger 31-40 year old, again with a master's degree but by now it was usually in education. He most likely was called a director of admission and had a modal experience of over 10 years in admission, more than likely at the same college. These two snapshots spanning the last quarter century suggest that admission offices and staffing in this time underwent many major changes.

Table One offers evidence of a steady and significant upward trend in terms of the number of clerical and professional personnel involved in admission work.

**Table 1. Numbers and Types of Admission Personnel**

#of Employees	1988	1976	1963
<b>Professional</b>			
0-1	10	15	56
2-3	19	32	30
≥ 4	71	53	14
<b>Clerical</b>			
0-1	18	19	41
2-3	36	43	36
≥ 4	46	38	23

The largest single change is the increase in the proportion of offices operating with four or more professional assistants, an increase of 57 percent since the 1964 study, with 18 percent of that growth occurring since the 1976 study. The Second greatest change is the increase in the proportion of offices operating with four or more clerical employees, an increase of 23 percent since the 1964 study, with 8 percent of that growth occurring since the 1967 study. Again, these changes indicate that admission offices have been steadily increasing in size since the 1964 study, and that the growth in the number of personnel involved in admission work continues to grow.

As Table 2 indicates, in the 1963 and 1976 studies, clerical staffs were more plentiful than professional staff. Given the fourfold increase in the number of offices with more professional assistants, Table 2 shows clear evidence of a growing professionalization trend in admission: more work in 1988 required professional expertise than clerical processing as compared to 1963.

What does it mean to have an increasingly more professional staff? Hauser and Lazarsfeld described the normative organizational structure of admission operations in the early 1960s as bureaucratic and

involving more processing and headcount accounting functions since there was an abundance of clerical staff. Today, to have an admission staff that consists of more professional assistants indicates that staff activities are not easily routinized and require autonomous professionals with specialized skills and discretionary authority. We contend that the 1964 mix of a preponderance of clerical admission personnel reflected, in part, the need to process the flood of students seeking admission to institutions of higher education. Further, we contend that the steady upward progression in the number of admission professionals reflects the need of colleges and universities to attract students to their campuses and to engage more in recruitment and selection processes, far less routinized endeavors than simply processing large numbers of students.

**Table 2. Types of Admission Employees**

	1988	1976	1963
<b>No Clerks or Assistants</b>	1%	1%	9%
<b>More Clerks</b>	26%	37%	43%
<b>Equal Clerks &amp; Assistants</b>	14%	17%	33%
<b>More Assistants</b>	60%	45%	15%
<b>Ave. Number of Clerks</b>	5.3	5.2%	*
<b>Ave. Number of Assistants</b>	5.8	4	*
*Data not collected			

What follows is a description of the major trends in the profession of admission officers describing the growth, personal characteristics and qualifications of chief admission officers and their assistants, the emergence of a dominant organizational model of admission chiefs, and the institutionalization of an admission career path.

## Affiliate Achiever

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### What is a typical day like?

There are no such things as typical days when you work at an all-boys school of 1,600 students. Some days, the guys make me laugh so hard my sides hurt with their witty, well-written essays. Then next day, I am left wondering how they will ever survive college when I see them wear the same sweatpants and shirt for the fourth day in a row. With that said, the boys continue to amaze me when they ask questions that are thoughtful and forward-thinking. They actually listen.

### Diversification of the Admission Staff

Table 3 shows that the gender diversification of chief admission officers has only quite modestly increased over the quarter century of this study; in 1988 there was only a 7 percent increase in female chief admission officers over the number in 1963. Today, even though women make up 55 percent of the undergraduate student body, 7 out of 10 chief admission officers are male. In the mid-1970s, the goal of gender diversity was farther out of reach than it is now, but this probably had to do with a coeducational trend in enrollment and a decline in single-sex colleges which may have cut into women's traditional chief admission positions: directors at women's colleges.

**Table 3. Gender of Chief Admission Officers**

	1988	1976	1963
<b>Male</b>	71%	82%	78%
<b>Female</b>	29%	18%	22%

The 1988 and 1976 surveys collected information on the racial heritage of chief admission officers. Table 4 shows that underrepresented minorities, specifically African Americans and Latinos, have not increased their representation as chief admission officers since the 1976 study.

**Table 4. Racial Heritage of Chief Admission Officer**

Race	% - 1988	% - 1976
<b>African American</b>	5	5
<b>Asian</b>	<1	1
<b>Latino</b>	<1	1
<b>White</b>	94	93
<b>Native American</b>	<1	—

In addition, the 1988 study collected information about the racial heritage of assistants. There is a far greater racial diversity demonstrated at the professional staff level, especially for African Americans and Latinos. Table 5 indicates the number of chief admission officers who have members of the following ethnic groups on their professional staffs.

**Table 5. Racial Heritage of Admission Staff**

Race	% - 1988
<b>African American</b>	45
<b>Asian</b>	8
<b>Latino</b>	18
<b>Native American</b>	6

### Educational Backgrounds of Chief Admission Officers and Staff

This section reports on the educational attainment of chief admission officers and the courses that those chief officers have taken or consider useful preparation for admission work. Although the educational background of chief admission officers has been relatively stable since 1963, the modal educational attainment—a master's degree—has become more likely and doctorates less likely. As Table 6 indicates, over the last 25 years that modal master's degree has become more likely to be in education.

Each of the three studies sought information about particular course subjects taken by chief admission officers or considered especially helpful for admission officers (whether or not they had taken such of course). Table 7 provides a list of course subjects and the proportion of chief admission officers who have taken such courses, while Table 8 presents the proportions of chief admission officers who consider such course training especially helpful for admission officers. Two course subjects were new listings in 1988, marketing and general business, so no comparative data is available.

In general, there is relative consistency among the three studies in the proportions of chief admission officers who reported taking particular types of courses. Measurement and statistics, sociology, and history of education are areas where over two-thirds of all current chief admission officers have taken courses, while guidance, teaching methods, and adolescent psychology are decreasingly taken.

In terms of courses that chief admission officers considered especially helpful for admission staff, only two course subjects received a positive response from over half of the respondents at all three points in time: measurement and statistics as well as educational administration. The largest proportion of positive responses (73 percent) in 1988 however, was for marketing, a course subject not thought to be an important educational background in either 1963 or 1976 as is evidenced by its lack of inclusion as a survey response. The steady decline in the perceived value of guidance and adolescent psychology and the overwhelming percentage of chief admission officers who noted the primacy of marketing coursework indicates the ascendancy of the recruitment role over either the gatekeeper or educator roles for admission officers as we face the twenty-first century. It is further evidence that as the bubble of baby boom students burst, the role of overseeing the routine processing of new students evolved into the less routine function of recruiting students.



## Admission Career Paths

Over the last three decades, admission work has become a distinct occupation with some clear indications of entry qualification and pathways to top positions. In this section we offer insight into the characteristics that chief admission officers look for in professional staff assistants, the type of jobs previously held by chief admission officers, and the average length of tenure of those chief admission officers in their current positions.

Since the number of assistants has increased so substantially, it is important to examine the characteristics that chief admission officers evaluate when hiring assistants. Table 9 provides a list of characteristics in professional assistants that chief admission officers ranked as highly important. Three characteristics are new with the 1988 study and help to develop a more complete picture of the current role of assistants that chief admission ranked as highly important. Three characteristics are new with the 1988 study and help to develop a more complete picture of the current role of assistants in admission operations: willingness to travel, marketing knowledge, and knowledge of computers. The 1976 study did not ask for any data on assistants' characteristics. Also provided in Table 9 are the rankings for those characteristics deemed important for assistants. By 1988, willingness to travel ranked third ahead of educational beliefs and marketing knowledge ranked fifth, ahead of familiarity with high schools.

**Table 9. Important Characteristics for Assistants**

Characteristic	1988	1963	Rank in 1988	Rank in 1963
Friendliness	87%	83%	1	1
Poise	81%	77%	2	2
Willingness to Travel	70%	*	3	*
Educational Beliefs	55%	70%	4	3
Marketing Knowledge	34%	*	5	*
Familiarity with High Schools	20%	43%	6	4
Guidance Experience	17%	37%	7	5
Knowledge of Computers	14%	*	8	*
Alumnus	9%	8%	9	9
Statistical Training	7%	13%	10	8
Training in Psychology	4%	14%	11	7
Teaching Experience	4%	17%	11	6
*Data not collected				

Both studies indicate that personal qualities such as poise, friendliness, and educational beliefs are sought over technical skills such as statistical training, guidance experience, or teaching experience. This is underscored when one examines the responses of the 26 percent of chief admission officers who took the time to

list other characteristics that they considered important. Personal characteristics such as “articulate,” “possessing common sense,” “willing to work hard,” and “able to communicate” were the most common type of responses for those who provided characteristics not included in the list.

The career pathway to chief admission positions appears to be a bit more formalized than for assistants and different than for admission chiefs in the past. As is detailed in Table 10, 70 percent of chief admission officers in 1988 reported holding an admission position immediately prior to becoming the chief admission officer. Moreover, there appears to be a growing tendency for that previous admission experience to have been at the chief admission officer's current institution.

In 1963, the kinds of previous jobs held by chief admission officers varied and were widely distributed across teaching, research, and administration. By 1988, the path to chief admission positions was through other admission work. The number of chief officers who had held prior admission positions had grown from 24 percent in 1963 to 70 percent in 1988, an increase of 291 percent. Although there has been a decline in the proportion of chief admission officers who come from other types of college administration (Table 10) positions, nonetheless admission and other college administration positions accounted for 88 percent of the prior jobs of all chief admission officers responding. There have been steady and significant declines for the other position classifications: college teaching and research, secondary school teaching and administration, nonacademic work, and first job. Of particular note is the strong, steady decline in the proportion coming directly from college teaching and research. In general, Table 10 indicates that the career pattern of chief admission officers reveals greater homogeneity in the professional background of chief admission officers and is becoming increasingly institutionalized. Moreover, there is also a loyalty factor in chief admission officers' career path: more than half (55 percent) of the people occupying the chief admission position come from within the same institution and most of those come from the admission office (41 percent).

According to Table 11, chief admission officers in 1988 also on average than their predecessors: 54 percent greater than a decade's admission experience compared to 32 percent in 1963. Moreover, the proportions of those reporting six or fewer years of admission work at any college have been steadily decreasing: only 27 percent report six or less years of experience.

## Admission in an Organizational Context

In the last three decades, there have been dramatic changes in

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## Any advice for newbies?

One of the early pieces of advice that I received as a new counselor came from a quote that is familiar to many of us, "Students are not an interruption of our work, they are the purpose of it." I would tell rookie counselors to keep this in mind throughout their careers. The life of an admission professional is ever-changing and constantly busy. We can often get distracted by the "tasks" we have to accomplish daily. We must always remember that we are here to serve our students first.

the organizational context of admission within the university and college environments. Admission work is no longer an ancillary function of colleges, but is now a central operation. One indication of how central to university operations admission work has become is that in the 1988 study, 70 percent of chief admission officers reported directly to the President, Chief Academic Officer, Vice President, Vice Provost, or Vice Chancellor of their institutions.

Also, a tremendous amount of change has taken place in the titles, work concentrations, and employment policies for these professionals. Chief admission officers spend more specialized time on admission issues, have acquired titles that reflect those changes, and now resemble other college administrators more than faculty. In 1963, the lines between the admission and registrar functions at collegiate institutions were not as clear as they are now. In 1963, 27 percent of all chief admission officers had the title of registrar and 54 percent spent less than three-quarters of their work time on admission issues. Table 12 shows that more chief admission officers have an admission title than ever before: in 1988, 89 percent of all chief admission officers had a title of Dean or Director of Admission as compared to 64 percent in 1963.

In addition to changes in admission titles, another steady change over the last 25 years has been the ever-increasing number of admission chiefs who are specialists who spend the vast majority of their time on admission work. Table 13 clearly indicates that over three-quarters of all chief admission officers spend at least 75 percent of their time on admission compared to less than half who spent their time that way in 1963.

In 1963, 51 percent of all chief admission officers held academic rank within their universities. That proportion has been declining

steadily since the 1964 study. Today, 81 percent of chief admission officers hold no academic rank. With this dramatic decline, admission can safely be described as a distinctly administrative profession, as opposed to a quasi-academic one.

Given that chief admission officers overwhelmingly dedicate their time to admission issues, nine out of ten have admission titles, and eight out of ten do not have academic rank, it is obvious that admission professionals have clearly distinguished between their work from that of registrars at their institutions. Moreover, chief admission officers have established an administrative as opposed to a faculty base for their employment and thus what was labeled by Hauser and Lazarsfeld as an emerging occupation in 1963 can now be said to be an admission specialization.

## Summary and Conclusions

The world of postsecondary education today is larger and more diverse than the collegiate world of the early 1960s. The number of four-year institutions has grown 57 percent, while the number of students has grown fourfold and the number of admission staff of all kinds has grown almost fivefold. The national admission environment has changed rather dramatically over the same time period and although there are many more institutions and many more college seats, selectivity has increased (Robertson, 1989). Moreover, the admission practices of many college applicants have changed tremendously, with a growth industry of an entrepreneurial sector of college admission helping them (Gottschalk, 1986).

Add to this picture the major changes in college admission staff. Although we have made some gender and ethnic diversity gains, these have occurred mostly at the staff assistant levels. Today there is more homogeneity in both the educational backgrounds and prior admission experiences of chief admission officers. Finally as evidence of the establishment of the occupation of college admission, chief admission officers are now no longer senior academics serving a stint as chief admission officers, nor are they registrars. Instead, chief admission offices report to senior college officials and earn their leadership positions after having served many years in the admission trenches.

Also, there is greater homogeneity in professional backgrounds today than was evident in 1964: 70 percent of current chief admission officers indicated they entered their current position from admission versus only 24 percent in the 1964 study. Further, there appears to be a growing tendency for chief admission officers to have held a subordinate admission position in the institution they currently serve. Given the professionalization of admission and the number of staff from which to cultivate future admission executives, this development seems logical.

While higher education in general has attempted to diversify its professional staff, chief admission officers are still predominately white males, although gains have been made in increasing the number of women. Given the large number of professional staff assistants who are from underrepresented minority groups, the institutionalized career path model holds some promise for racial diversification of chief admission officers. However, the current leadership of higher education and the profession of admission needs to take steps to ensure that women and staff of color are mentored and cultivated for future openings at the chief admission officer level.

In terms of educational degrees held and courses taken, there appears to be little overall change over the past quarter century. However, the number one course that admission officers consider useful is marketing, ahead of any educational training. Taken together with the characteristics that these admission executives consider most helpful—to be friendly, poised, and willing to travel—we have displaced formerly important characteristics such as having strong educational beliefs, familiarity with high schools, or possessing guidance or teaching experience. This is worrisome when coupled with evidence from a study of 136 admission directors in the Midwest, where the researcher found that admission directors with a counseling and teaching background emphasized the gatekeeping and counseling aspects of work with prospective students over the marketing function (Franklin, 1986).

With major transformations in our postsecondary institutions, students and, professionals, what can we deduce from recent historical trends that can inform our understandings of the present and allow us to improve our future admission practice? The emerging occupation of the 1960s is now a distinct administrative specialty and has its own institutionalized career path. There are almost five times as many admission staff today than a quarter of a century ago. This growth seems fitting given the workload demands facing high school guidance counselors and the increasing competition for filling college seats.

Given the life and death issues of fiscal solvency for collegiate institutions, today's admission staff find themselves increasingly in the role of marketing professionals concerned with maintaining enrollments more so than in the role of educational or guidance professionals assisting students in making appropriate choices to foster their personal and intellectual development. This is not altogether unreasonable or unwarranted. However, this emphasis on marketing has led some high school students to respond in kind to the increased competition and institutional enrollment practices by hiring admission assistance professionals and filing numerous applications as a hedge against disappointment. What can we as concerned educators do about all this?

## Throwback: 1995

51st NACAC National Conference is held in Boston, MA. Steven R. Steinhilber (Bay High School, OH) is NACAC president.

The DVD makes its first appearance.

**The Oklahoma City bombing kills 168.**

The "Goals 2000: Educate America Act" becomes law.

The Million Man March is held in Washington, DC.

*Time Magazine's* Man of the Year is Newt Gingrich.



Photography credit: Oklahoma City Memorial by Patrick Moore



We believe that chief admission officers need to assume a hybrid role of both marketer and educator. The emerging occupation of the early 1960s has indeed blossomed into a critical function for colleges and universities. However, admission officers' marketing roles need not be limited to just recruitment. Chief admission officers need to be involved with faculty in shaping the college curriculum and with student affairs officers in shaping the student services and extracurricular areas of student life. This kind of role is consistent with what enrollment management specialists have been advocating for some time (Hossler, Bean and Associates, 1990) and more importantly, this role in affecting the educational experiences of students will reestablish an emphasis on the educational role of admission professionals.

Moreover, we are calling for professional standards for both the chief admission officers and their assistants. Admission chiefs and their assistants play crucial roles in outreach to high schools and in their contact with students and parents. Higher education and chief admission officers need to be more demanding and critical of admission professionals and require them to go beyond being poised, friendly, and willing to travel. Any professional involved in the recruitment and advisement of students making their college choices should have more background in education, understand and believe in their colleges' educational philosophies, and be able to engage with high school counselors and teachers in advising students and parents on the right college choice.

Admission assistants are the potential chief admission officers of tomorrow and given the institutionalized admission career path that exists, we have within our professional staff assistant ranks the potential for future professional leaders who will be every bit as ethnically and gender diverse as our student bodies. We must make every effort to improve the diversity of our profession and to encourage more women and underrepresented groups to consider and prepare for chief executive admission positions.

finally, admission officers need to strengthen their linkages with high schools. Even as collegiate institutions are struggling to survive and thrive in austere economic times, high schools—which are lower down the fiscal food chain—are coping with massive problems of accountability and quality. Their limited resources are directed to curriculum strengthening and other core teaching functions. Admission specialists at postsecondary institutions need to realize that they are the educational professionals who provide the most support to students making the transition to college, and as such, must reclaim their educational role.

## Reference

Any chief admission officers who had the title of Vice Presidents and whose title also included the words 'admission' or 'enrollment management,' Director of Enrollment Management, Director of Admission and financial Aid, or Coordinator of Admissions Services were placed in the Admissions Title category.

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