Finding Opportunities for Growth and Professional Development in Admissions

Session B
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Career Paths for Admission Officers: A Survey Report

A report commissioned by NACAC designed to help professionals in the field at all levels.


Seven Key Findings

• Women and minority racial/ethnic groups are underrepresented in key segments of the admission profession.

• There is no defined career path in college/university admission, something that rising professionals seek.

• Communication and writing skills are critical, though requirements for success in admission are diversifying.

• Mobility is a key factor—though not necessarily required—for advancement in admission.

• Admission officers’ responsibilities are increasingly integrated across other areas of institutional responsibility.

• Beyond institutional, on-the-job training, admission professionals gain significant professional development from external resources in order to advance in their careers.

• As external and internal changes influence higher education, admission professionals face challenges to their traditional practices.
Key Finding #1

Women and minority racial/ethnic groups are underrepresented in key segments of the admission profession.

Non-whites are underrepresented at all points on the admission career trajectory.
Key Finding #2

There is no formal or defined career path in college/university admission, something that rising professionals seek.

The same can also be said for advancement.

Many describe “falling into” the admissions profession.

Table 4. Five most popular fields of study, by degree level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bachelor's degree</th>
<th>Master's, PhD or professional degree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Humanities/Liberal arts</td>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social science</td>
<td>Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications and journalism</td>
<td>Humanities and Liberal arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology and social work</td>
<td>Law and public policy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: NACAC Admission Officer Career Path Survey, 2011.
Key Finding #3

Communication and writing skills are critical, though requirements for success in admission are diversifying.

- Significant number of professionals rate communication/writing skills as the most important for development in the profession. With Deans and VPs ranking writing slightly higher for entry level professionals.

- Advancing in Place

- Using “other duties as assigned” as your opportunity for professional development.
Key Finding #4

Mobility is a key factor – though not necessarily required – for advancement in admission.

Diversify portfolio, types of institutions, office structures, and expand networks.

Opening at large public or private institution with a national reputation as biggest incentive to move.

Job leads from friends in the field vs. recruited by search firms.

Taking risks!
Key Finding #5

Admission officers’ responsibilities are increasingly integrated across other areas of institutional responsibility.

Changes in the profession have opened up a much greater set of advancement options for professionals.

Counseling has become increasingly important -- whether considering financial aid, possible careers or college choices.
Key Finding #6

Beyond institutional, on-the-job training, admission professionals gain significant professional development from external resources in order to advance in their careers.

• WACAC/NACAC
• Collaboration with colleagues across the desk
• Collaboration with peer institutional colleagues
• Vendor partner collaborative work/training
Key Finding #7

As external and internal changes influence higher education, admission professionals face challenges to their traditional practices.

- Emergence of enrollment management
- Global outlook
- Ensuring financial health
- Keeping pace with wages
- Access in practice
- Enhanced visibility – campus-wide, state, national
Now that we talked about it, how do we put it in action?

• Institutional Opportunities: Whittier College
• Regional and National Opportunities: WACAC and NACAC
• Membership Opportunities: The College Board
• Scholastic Opportunities: Continuing Education in Advanced Degree
• Thinking ‘outside of the box’ Opportunities
• Mentors
Questions?

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Resource Guide

NACAC
Guiding the Way to Inclusion https://www.nacacnet.org/professional-development/guiding-the-way-to-inclusion/
Volunteer https://www.nacacnet.org/professional-development/leadership-opportunities/
Admission Middle Management Institute https://www.nacacconference.org/education/preconference-workshops/admission-middle-management-institute-ammi/

WACAC
Leadership Development Institute Committees https://www.wacac.org/resources/leadership-development-institute/
Diversity Equity and Access Grants https://www.wacac.org/resources/scholarships-grants/
Professional Development Toolkit https://www.wacac.org/resources/toolkits/

Share, Learn & Connect https://www.wacac.org/share-learn-connect/
Government Relations https://www.wacac.org/committees/government-relations/
College Board
Western Regional Forum
Diversity Conferences https://lp.collegeboard.org/diversity-conferences
Enrollment Leadership Academy https://professionals.collegeboard.org/higher-ed/enrollment-leadership-academy
Graduate Education
Master’s and Doctoral Level Programs
RACC http://www.regionaladmissions.com/
Others – Please share!