



INDEPENDENT
EDUCATIONAL
CONSULTANTS
ASSOCIATION

3251 Old Lee Highway, Suite 510
Fairfax, Virginia 22030-1504

Phone: 703-591-4850
Fax: 703-591-4860

E-mail: info@IECAonline.com
Web: www.IECAonline.com

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Contact:
Sarah Brachman
Manager of Communications
703-591-4850 ext. 11

College-Bound Students who work with Consultants Enroll Differently Than Peers, New Survey Shows

Fairfax, Virginia - A new survey of educational consultants shows that nearly two-thirds of their clients enroll in private colleges, a figure nearly three times the national average. At the same time, students are four times as likely as the general population to go to college out of their home state.

The survey, conducted by the Independent Educational Consultants Association during the first two weeks of July 2009, found that an average of 65% of their clients chose a private college, as compared to the national average of just over 20%. "This is even more surprising when one considers that these results reflect the most recent year when economic pressures led many more students to take a second look at their own state university," said IECA Executive Director Mark Sklarow.

Even when students enroll in larger state universities, the survey showed those working with consultants were more likely to matriculate out-of-state. In total, 80% of clients went out of their home state to attend colleges, a figure nearly four times the national average.

This is a remarkable number and one that is of great importance both to private colleges and to state universities looking to broaden the home state backgrounds of their student bodies. "Both of these kinds of institutions need to be looking to IECA member educational consultants as natural partners in identifying students that represent a great match for their school," said Sklarow.

Educational Consultants can be extremely valuable in demonstrating to families that merit and need-based aid can bring the cost of a private college down to where it's comparable in cost to public colleges. This knowledge helps increase the number of choices and potential matches for every student in profound ways.

Based on the survey, IECA members will work with more than 40,000 college-bound high school students in the coming year, of which 26,000 will enroll in private colleges and nearly 32,000 will attend school out-of-state. "Once, at a NACAC conference, a dean of admission at a small Midwest liberal arts college came up to me and said 'I used to wonder how some of these students on the coasts even heard about us, but now I know they learned about us through an IECA consultant,'" said Sklarow. "That's exactly what good consultants try to do: open up the range of possibilities, because the right fit and the best match is not always the school close by."

IECA was founded in 1976 as a nonprofit, professional association of established educational consultants. IECA member educational consultants are professionals who assist students and families with educational decision-making. Their educational backgrounds, specialized training, campus visitations, and professional experience equip them to help students choose schools, colleges, or programs that meet their individual needs and goals. Membership in the Association requires an appropriate master's degree or comparable training and a minimum of three years of experience in the profession, as well as meeting IECA's professional standards and subscribing to its Principles of Good Practice. Members continually update their knowledge and maintain skills through IECA-sponsored meetings, workshops, training programs, and information exchanges with colleges, schools, programs and other consultants.

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