Professional Ethics:
At Home and On the Road

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Making strategic enrollment management WORK for you

Definitions
Ethics 
1: a discipline when dealing with good and evil and with moral duty
2: moral principles or practice

Profession 
3: the whole body of persons engaged in a calling

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary

Scenario
During a campus tour, the parent of a prospective student asks you about violent crime in the area. You are aware that two XYZ University students have been robbed at gunpoint just off-campus in the last three weeks.

How do you respond?
NACAC

- National Association for College Admission Counseling (www.nacac.org)
- Created 1937, currently includes more than 6,500 members including 1,550 public, private, and independent postsecondary institutions
- Statement of Principles of Good Practice: "the code of ethical conduct for all individuals and institutions involved in the admission process."

Statement of Principles of Good Practice

- Recognized by NACAC members, the American Association of Collegiate Registrar and Admissions Officers (AACRAO), and The College Board
- Endorsed by the American Council on Education, the National Association of Secondary School Principals, the National Student Association, and the American School Counselor Association

Statement of Principles of Good Practice

- Contains both mandatory and recommended admissions practices
- Fundamental principle underlying the SPGP: each student is to be treated equitably and with dignity during the college admissions process
Scenario

Prospective Student to Admissions Counselor: "Tell me why I should attend ABC University instead of XYZ College?"

What's your response?

Encourage student to visit as many schools as possible to find a suitable fit.

SPGP: Statement of Core Values

Professionalism: the extent to which we practice ethical behavior
Collaboration: to enhance profession's effectiveness
Trust: with one another and students
Education: belief in educating various populations about the transition to and within postsecondary education
Fairness/Equity: with one another and students
Social Responsibility: by safeguarding students' rights and access to postsecondary education

Scenario

You are meeting with a prospective student and during the conversation it becomes apparent the student does not have the credentials to be admitted to your institution.

Your next move is to

Check to your guns
SPGP Topics

- "responsible for development of ... written communications, and presentations, i.e., ... college fairs used for their institution's promotional and recruitment activity." (5.2)
- "state clearly the admissions requirements ... so that candidates will not be adversely affected in the admission process." (5.2.4.2)
- "notify candidates as soon as possible if they are clearly inadmissible." (5.1.A.17)

Scenario

What's wrong with this statement?

"Excellencia University has been ranked by US News & World Report as one of the top three public universities (bachelor's) in the South."

SPGP Topics

- "will identify the source and year of study when ... cit(ing) published rankings of academic programs." (5.2)
- "will not use disparaging comparisons of secondary or postsecondary institutions." (5.4.6)
- "will refrain from recruiting students who are enrolled, registered, or have declared their intent ... with other institutions unless the students initiate inquiries themselves." (5.6)
Scenario

Josh,
Congratulations on your admission to Incomparable University on January 15. We're finalizing our plans for our freshman class and need to receive your $1500 enrollment deposit no later than March 15 in order to hold a spot for you here at Incomparable. Please let us know ASAP!

Best wishes,
Your Admissions Rep

What's wrong with this statement?

SPGP Topics

- "will permit first-year candidates for full admission to choose...among offers...until May 1. Colleges that solicit commitments prior to May 1 may do so provided those offers include a clear statement that written requests for extensions until May 1 will be granted." (2.A.6)

SPGP Topics

- "will provide precise information about their academic majors ..." (2.c)

- "will not discriminate...based on the particular application form ..., provided the college or university has agreed explicitly ... or implicitly, to accept the particular version of the application." (2.A.14)
SPGP Topics

- "will accept...only official transcripts in the admission...process which come directly from the counseling, guidance, or registrar's offices of the institution(s) the candidate attends or has attended ...." (R.A.12)

- "will receive information about candidates in confidence...and will respect completely the confidential nature of such data." (R.A.2)

FERPA

Federal Education Right To Privacy Act of 1974

- Student education records may not be disclosed unless the student has given written consent or the request fits one of the legal exceptions

- Exception: consent is generally not required for the release of directory information

- Other exceptions: health/safety emergencies, subpoena, violation of drug/alcohol policy or federal/state/local law

Scenario

You receive a frantic phone call from an individual claiming to be a student's mother, and she must find her son immediately because of a family emergency. Can you tell this person when and where the student's next class is today?

No: For the safety of the student you cannot tell another person where a student is at any time.

General Rule: Contact FERPA Coordinator or campus police
FERPA

- Parents may obtain non-directory information only by obtaining a signed consent from the student (student may restrict parents obtaining directory information through an "affirmative restriction")
- Key Thought: When in doubt, do not release information - refer instead to institution's FERPA coordinator (typically Records/Registrar's Office)

Scenario

An unauthorized person comes into your office and retrieves information about a student from your computer that you left unattended. Under FERPA, are you responsible?

Yes: Info on computer screens should be treated the same as any printed material.

General Rule: The medium in which student info is held is unimportant. You are responsible for ensuring that no information is left accessible or unattended, including computer displays.

General Ideas...

- Recruiter vs. Counselor - ethical duties
  - Foundation for counseling: meeting students' needs
  - Recognize the interests/well-being of the student as paramount to those of the institution
  - Differences based on type of institution
    - first-generation students
    - high financial need
General Ideas...

- "Know who you are" as an individual and office/institution
  - What do you know about your school?
  - Alumni perspective?
    Don't know it all!
  - Will help you be able to accurately assist students/families

Office Dynamics

- Campus/Office Culture
  - Director's view
  - Institution's image to outside world
  - Senior leadership's (President!) influence(s)
- Image/Appearance matters
  - Dress code
- "Customer Service" in/outside office
  - Support staff, receptionist, physical plant
  - Being a team player matters

Office Dynamics

- Profession vs. Job
- Give more than expected
- Tact and discretion
- Communication
  - Letter writing
  - Appropriate e-mail
- Travel
  - Some do, some don't

The Golden Rule: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you!
Office Etiquette

- Use of e-mail auto reply/phone voice mail
- Making requests: don’t assume your coworkers are less busy/stressed than you
- Food: beware soda HISSES, microwave BEEPS, and food CRUNCHING, MUNCHING while others are working!

Netiquette

- Not the same as when you were a student!
- Know the basics of professional cyber culture and your office/institutional parameters (appropriate use policy)
- Respect others’ time and bandwidth (protect their privacy, avoid spamming)
- Don’t put anything into an e-mail message that you wouldn’t want the world to know about
- Remember, you have no control over where your message goes after you hit the send key!

Netiquette

- Format “official” messages the same as you would a business letter
- The Golden Rule (revised): “Type unto others as you would have them type unto you”
- You’ll be judged by the quality of your writing – be sure you’re proud of what you send
- Behave ethically, using the same standards online as you would in real life (be aware of where you are in cyberspace)
Traveling

- One of the most expensive/time consuming part of the recruitment process - important to maximize your efforts
- Know your institutional expectations
  - Making arrangements - understand your processes/Standard Operating Procedures
  - What does your director/travel coordinator expect from your efforts?
    - Field/private visits/counselor drop-offs/etc.
- Remember you're a professional: be ready (dress, attitude) to meet prospective students or parents anywhere, anytime.

Scenario

John is representing Everywhere College at an out-of-state college fair. Because his school is small and 1,000 miles away, he's not getting much "traffic" at his table. He decides to walk around the corner to visit Sally, a friend who represents another college from his state.

What's wrong with this picture?
How could it be corrected?

Suggestions

- Seek out professional development opportunities in order to develop/maintain the highest possible level of knowledge and skills
- Engage peers who challenge you professionally
- Beware negativity
- Have fun AND be professional
- Embrace Your Rolodex
Partnership

From NACAC's Statement on the Counseling Dimension of the Admissions Process:
"College admission counselors stand with school counselors at the junction between secondary and postsecondary education and together they play a pivotal role in helping to ease students' transition from one level to the next."

Final Thoughts

Remember, whether you realize it or not, all you say and do will be observed! You are representing yourself, and more importantly, your institution.

Additional Resources

- [www.nacac.org](http://www.nacac.org)
  - Statement of Principles of Good Practice (2001)
  - Statement on Counselor Competencies (July 2000)
  - Statement on the Counseling Dimension of the Admissions Process (October 1990)
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