

The Welcomer

Collegiate Information and Visitor Services Association

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In This Issue

2010 Conference Planning

page 1

CIVSA Connections

page 2

Betty's Fall Briefing

page 3

Research and Assessment:
Evaluations

page 4

Visitor-Friendly Directories

page 5

Welcome New Members!

page 6

Member Profile:

Julian Olivas

page 7

Things to Think About

page 9

CIVSA Officers

page 10



News and Information from the
Collegiate Information and
Visitor Services Association

Sneak Peak: 2010 Annual Conference

Planning for the 2010 CIVSA Annual Conference in Lexington, Kentucky is well underway. As CIVSA continues to grow, we're excited to use this year's conference as an opportunity to develop a more standardized leadership committee for the conference as well as the schedule and educational opportunities involved with the conference.

Since the 2009 Conference in Boston, the CIVSA Executive Board has compiled a more comprehensive Conference Planning Committee that allows various aspects of the conference to be shared among members of the organization. I am extremely pleased at the response of those members willing to give of their time so the entire organization can experience the best conference possible. The Conference Committee continues to grow, and I am excited to have seven members who have agreed to serve as Chairs for a sub-committee of the full committee. Those members include Trang Do, University of Houston – Information Fair/Exhibits; Becky Nemeth and Sarah Walz, George Mason University – Member Relations; Janey Wheeler, Oklahoma City University – Programming and Education; Ebony Smith, The Ohio State University – Publicity/Promotions; Dorie Ain, The George Washington University – Regional Activities; Brittney Joyce, University of Texas at Arlington – Sponsorships. The complete list of the Conference Committee can be found at www.civsa.org/committees/full_committee.html.



You will hear much more about what is currently being planned for the conference in the coming months, but most important on the list is to provide strong, applicable educational opportunities that will assist all of us in our everyday work at Information and Visitor Centers across the country. We aim to provide a top-notch educational conference as in years past, and we

Conference, continued on next page

Conference, continued from previous page

also hope to allow you to get a sampling of our Kentucky traditions while you are here. Our city is preparing to host the 2010 Alltech FEI World Equestrian Games at the Kentucky Horse Park beginning in September and while you are here in June you will see a city in transition that is preparing to welcome the world. The Central Kentucky area promises to be a spectacular place to visit in 2010 and there will really be no greater time for you to be in Lexington and see everything the Bluegrass has to offer.

Be on the lookout for the conference registration website that will go live in January as well as continual updates on what we anticipate to be an informative and exciting 2010 CIVSA Annual Conference. Can't wait to see you in the Bluegrass in June!

For more conference updates follow us on Twitter @CIVSALex2010 or join the CIVSA Lexington 2010 group on Facebook.

*Stephen Barnett
University of Kentucky*



Downtown Lexington skyline

CIVSA Connections

by Janey Wheeler, MLA

What is the connection between our two member schools, Baylor University and Howard Payne University? Besides both schools being private Baptist affiliated universities in Region 2, they also both know how to hire great folks to work for them!

Test your knowledge and name the members from these two schools below who attended the 2009 conference in Boston last June! While you are at it...name which school they are from as well!

Alexa Maddox
Brad Johnson
Carrie Singleton
Kelly Devoe
Kevin Kirk
Ross VanDyke

What a blessing that these two schools understand the true value of being a member of CIVSA. Why else then would it be so special to learn that Kevin Kirk of the executive board has moved from Baylor where he graduated and worked as Director of Campus Visits to Howard Payne with a new role as Assistant Vice President of Enrollment Management? Kevin has indicated that CIVSA was definitely a factor in his overall decision.

Congratulations to Kevin on his new position and thanks to Vice President Brad Johnson of Howard Payne for insuring that Kevin can continue his involvement in CIVSA!

Thinking about moving to a new spot in higher ed? It is a valuable asset to consider how your networking in CIVSA might come in to play! You never know how your CIVSA connections might work to serve you and your future!

ANSWERS: Test your skill at searching the CIVSA database in the Members Only section

*Janey Wheeler
Oklahoma City University*

Betty's Fall Briefing...

People who know me well will tell you I hold on to the last remnants of summer with all my might. When the last official day of summer comes I'm like the little kid who doesn't want to leave the carnival - kicking and screaming - refusing to acknowledge the sun is setting earlier and cool weather has arrived to stay a while. A few things happen once that realization does set in: I start making lists, plan a trip (or two or three) and I put away my flip flops. While I still haven't given up on the idea of another flip flop day in my immediate future, I do have a few lists going and one trip destination that is a definite - Lexington, Kentucky next June!

I was there a few weeks ago for a site visit to check it out for our CIVSA conference and I can't wait to go back. I can't give away too many details because we are in the early stage of planning but there are some exciting ideas in the works that will make you feel you've enhanced your professional skill set and experienced Kentucky bluegrass hospitality by the time you head home. I will tell you the hotel is newly renovated and we have made arrangements for complimentary internet in our guest and meeting rooms. This means you can stay connected to what's going on back at your workplace throughout the business day since the majority of our educational programming will take place at the hotel. There's a Starbucks right around the corner and great places to eat within walking distance. Speaking of good food, Goodfella's Pizzeria is a two minute walk from the hotel and the pizza is awesome - big, New York style slices of cheesy goodness! Their website (www.goodfellaspizzeria.com) - is almost as entertaining as waiting for pizza at midnight in a line that goes out the door and down the street!

As for the lists I've been working on, you probably wouldn't find them very interesting. I do have one I found online about professional development that might come in handy when the time comes to sit down with your decision makers to discuss your conference trip to Lexington.

Top Ten Reasons for Professional Development
(List adapted from www.nsta.org/conferences/top10reasons.aspx)

1. **Performance** – you deserve to be excellent and learn from others
2. **Leadership** – new skills, knowledge and activities help build leaders who influence and motivate others
3. **Discovery** – learning from others helps develop new perspective, innovation and creativity
4. **Motivation** – educational sessions serve to inspire and stimulate
5. **Passion** – sharing it with your peers is contagious
6. **Expertise** – we are best when we are well versed in our field
7. **Inspiration** – you will hear ideas from others that you can implement
8. **Growth** – your conference experience will help you grow professionally
9. **Connections** – you'll connect with peers and make new acquaintances who will offer support and friendship
10. **Fun** – Okay so this isn't a good professional reason to pitch to your boss, but it will be fun!

Conference registration will open in January and the website (www.civsa.org/conference) will be updated as information becomes available and plans are finalized. Meanwhile, thoughts of rolling green pastures, white fences, and a cloudless blue Kentucky sky will help keep me warm!

Betty

Research and Assessment: An Evaluative Look at How CIVSA Members Evaluate

by Andrew Parrish

Evaluation. Merriam-Webster defines evaluation as “to determine the significance, worth, or condition of, usually by careful appraisal and study.” This article is a brief summary of some of the ways that CIVSA member institutions determine the significance or condition of the programs they run and how their findings are used for future planning. This survey was administered by the CIVSA Research & Assessment Committee, and it specifically targeted how student employees/volunteers are evaluated.

Most of the respondents said that they supervise campus tour guides. When asked how they evaluate their campus tour guides, most said that they administer a paper survey to everyone after each tour. Most institutions follow this same frequency of evaluation, but one institution indicated it mails out a survey at the end of every month and another said it e-mails out a survey link once a quarter. One information center said that students and supervisors evaluate each other once per year.

While data from the surveys is used slightly differently from institution to institution, many schools reported sharing the data with their campus tour guides to help them improve their performance: “Our students receive evaluation reports at least twice a year with statistics from the evaluations corresponding to their tours as well as comments made by the visitors. Staff members from the visitor center review the reports with the students and make suggestions for improvement.”

Another respondent indicated they go to great lengths to track their survey data: “We enter the information into an SPSS database and can track students who are not scoring well.” Other respondents indicated they use their results to set strategic goals, another mentioned they use it to measure message resonance with their prospective students and others mentioned they use their surveys to see what visitors want to see more and less of on the campus tour.

While the complexity of the survey methods, and use of the results, varies slightly from school to school, the positive to take away is that at least these schools are evaluating their programs. If you aren’t evaluating your program, then how do you measure success? To learn more about how to evaluate your program, contact the Research and Assessment Committee chair, Denise Wellman, at DENISEW@mailbox.sc.edu or any member of the CIVSA Research & Assessment Committee (see <http://civsa.org/committees/#research>). You can also see examples of some member schools’ evaluation forms online at <http://civsa.org/research/evaluations.html>

Andrew Parrish
University of North Carolina



Updated CAS Standards!

CAS is undertaking a project to make sure that members have easy access to the most-recently updated version of their standards. To that end, the link to the CIVS standards on the CIVSA website (http://civsa.org/about_us/cas.html) is now a link to a .pdf on the CAS website that they automatically update every time the standards are revised. If you have an old version of the CIVS standards (the most recent version was updated in 2008), then download a new copy today!

Is Your Building's Directory Visitor Friendly?

by Nick Kovalakides

Do you remember your first day on your campus? Could you easily find the building where you were to interview for your job? Once you found the building, was it easy to find the office?

Now that time has passed, if you were in that position again, would it be just as easy or difficult to find your way?

At the time, what was it that you knew and what was it that you needed to learn? More than likely, you knew the name of the department or office or the interviewer's name and what you needed to learn was their room number.

Before I retired from the University of Maryland in 2000, I tried to get each of our campus buildings to become more visitor-friendly – even for our students. I must admit that I had only modest success. But that's not why I retired! ☺

I found the personnel directory in each building's main lobby to be the culprit. Most often, the directory's glass-enclosed board had a dark background in which white letters were placed in narrow, horizontal slots.

While the listing was attractive, it became impractical when one or more staff members moved to another building or left the university. If their last names were "Carson" and "Davis" and they were replaced by "Thompson" and "Williams," the whole alphabetical listing had to be redone in order to accommodate the few changes.

After going through that hassle more than twice a year, the board's listing usually became a hodge-podge with the "alphabetical" list starting with Adams and Benson, followed by Thompson and Williams, and then Edwards, Kingston, Norris, Reynolds, et al. As a result, it meant that visitors would be forced to scan the entire list in order to find their host.

Then, there are those who list their building's staff in ranking order or by floor. Sure, if visitors are looking for the dean or department head, that name would be at the top of the list, but what if they're looking for some other staff member? If everyone is listed according to the floor their office is on, visitors still have to scan each floor's list in order to find their host and his/her office number. Furthermore, listing staff members in numerical order according to their room numbers also forces visitors to scan the entire list to locate the individual they seek.

So, what's the answer?

My recommendation is to type up (on Microsoft Word, for example) an alphabetical listing by last name of everyone in the building, regardless of rank. Place their office number to the right of their name. Each updated list would then be enlarged on poster-size paper and displayed inside the glass-enclosed board in the lobby.

Nick Kovalakides
Emeritus Member



The Welcomer is a quarterly publication of the Collegiate Information and Visitor Services Association. Please send comments, suggestions, or photos to:

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Welcome New Members!

Silverio Barrera
University of Maine

Karyn Blaser
Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Mariama Boney
George Mason University

Jacqueline Brewer
North Carolina State University

Ope Bukola
New York University

Jill Byers
University of Cincinnati

Joe Coen
Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Lee Corbett
Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Michael Crook
Colorado State University

Jennifer Dillingham
University of Cincinnati

Rachel Gibson
University of Colorado, Colorado Springs

Rachel Graves
Southern Nazarene University

Ryan Harder
University of Cincinnati

Robert Hassel
Hunter College

Lacey Henderson
Seattle Pacific University

Amber Keefer
Saint Vincent College

Margaret Kelly
American University

Janie Kerzan
University of South Carolina

Ryan Keytack
Case Western Reserve University

Penny Klimas
Oklahoma Baptist University

Ashley Lamoreau
University of Maine

Patrick Macaraeg
Saint Mary's College of California

Cynthia MacDonald
Purdue University

Jennifer McKenzie
Hendrix College

Gina Meneni
Saint Mary's College of California

Kirsten Molstad
The University of British Columbia

Graham Morsch
Southern Nazarene University

Natasha Neal
Georgia State University

Welcome New Members, continued on page 8

CIVSA Member Profile

Julian Olivas, Texas Tech University

In a CIVSA communication survey, several members suggested a "get-to-know-other-members" or "get-to-know-the-Board" feature for the newsletter. This is the fifth column in the series; look for more profiles of other members in future issues.

Job Title: Manager of Visitors Center Programs

How long have you been in the information/visitor services world? I began working in the Visitors Center in 2003 as a graduate assistant for former CIVSA member Karen Hamel. I went into the recruitment world for a little while until I had the opportunity to come back and manage the Visitors Center and have been loving it ever since.

When did you join CIVSA? I joined CIVSA in 2006 as soon as I became the Visitors Center manager. The previous managers, Karen Hamel and Kelly Terrill, were active members in the organization and encouraged me to become a member and be involved. It helped that they shared wonderful stories about the awesome people and places they had visited while they were in this role and I have not been disappointed!

How many CIVSA conferences have you attended?

I've had the opportunity to attend the last 4 CIVSA conferences with my first being our Washington, DC conference at American University in 2006. I have wonderful memories from each conference and all have proven to be very beneficial to me and our program at Texas Tech. CIVSA conferences have become extra fun over the last few years since they seem to always fall on the week of my birthday. The last conference in Boston was especially fun because I turned 30! My staff, who usually attends our confer-

ences with me, managed to purchase "standing room only" tickets on the Green Monster at Fenway Park for the Boston Red Sox and New York Yankees game on the evening of my birthday. While they were watching the biggest rivalry in sports on my 30th birthday, I was at the First Timers Dinner back at the Hyatt Regency Hotel. It was a small sacrifice I had to make in order to make sure our first time conference attendees had a wonderful experience and knew that we were glad they were there. Betty did a great job of putting together a wonderful evening. It was a lot of fun!

What are your major job responsibilities? I am responsible for managing our campus visitors center, the staff and our 60 member ambassador group, President's Select. We are an entity of the Office of Undergraduate Admissions and our responsibilities are focused on the recruitment of new students to Texas Tech. In addition to coordinating our daily campus tours, we program a variety of special events for prospective students and other constituents of our office.

What is a typical day like at your job?

First thing in the morning we usually have a quick informal meeting that usually involves whoever is working at the time and go over what we have going on that day. Sometimes it's work related and sometimes its updating each other about our crazy lives. The rest of the time we spend accommodating our in-house visitors that day or making arrangements for future visitors and groups. Coordinating our special events along with our normal admissions duties and returning emails and phone calls usually consumes whatever other time there is.



Julian in Rome

Julian, continued on next page

What is your best piece of advice for other CIVSA members (about student training, customer service, unique traditions, your website, or anything!)? Make sure that your staff is always updated on anything that is relevant to your daily operations. It is always good to empower your staff to do their jobs and provide them with the necessary tools to do so. Good communication is key. The more informed your staff is, the more likely it is that they will be able to see the big picture and where they fit in this picture and how they contribute to the overall goals of your institution. Hire funny, positive and/or highly enthusiastic student assistants.

What is the most fun thing that your office does? We take field trips to various areas of the city and the campus to explore and learn about different attractions and random things that might be good for us to know. For example, there might be a museum that we drive by every day but have never been to. This gives us a reason to go and learn about this museum. It's fun, but it usually has to be a pretty slow day. We also tend to eat lunch together. We usually have to bring it back to the office cause someone has to cover the front desk! If you are ever in Lubbock, these are the favorites: Spanky's (get the fried cheese appetizer with your burgers), Sazon (great burrito wraps), Chimy's (get the nachos), Crickets (great burger), Sam's Place (get the spicy chicken toaster) and the Student Union Building on campus has great options too.

What is your favorite part of working in visitor/information services? My favorite thing about working in visitor/information services is the interaction with prospective students and parents that are excited about seeing what our school has to offer. I have really enjoyed the opportunity to work with many of our current students and help them achieve their goals through their volunteer efforts for our office.

How many items are on your current to-do list? Too many, but mainly because we are currently working on our large open house event called University Day with smaller special event days spread throughout the semester. Hopefully by the time you read this, we will be done with University Day and we will have relaxed a little bit.

John Nesbitt
Vanderbilt University

Michelle Pearl
Drexel University

Sarah Quin
Vanderbilt University

Dan Seneker
University of Calgary

Tonee Sherrill
California State University, Northridge

Colette Stevenson
Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Carla Thomas
Illinois State University

Elizabeth Winberry
Colorado State University

Judith Zinker
Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Members on the Move. . . .

Congratulations to Amber Campbell, Region III Director, who recently moved from the Visitor Center to the Registrar's Office at the University of Kentucky! Amber is now the Associate Registrar for Communications and we wish her well in her new position. We are also excited that her new boss, Mr. Don Witt, recognizes the value of CIVSA and encouraged her to remain active in the organization.

Huge congratulations also go out to Bobbie Fuller of George Mason University, who retired in June! We wish her all the best in this new phase of her life.

Research Proposals

The CIVSA Research & Assessment Committee is pleased to publicize the Research Grant Proposal Deadlines for 2009-10.

Any member in good standing is eligible to submit a research proposal according to the following schedule:

Proposal Deadline.....Dec. 4, 2009

Research Candidates Notified.....Dec. 18, 2009

Should a proposal be accepted, the principal researcher must be willing to:

1 – Present the research project at the 2010 Conference.

The research project does not necessarily need to be completed prior to the conference; however, a significant portion of the project must be underway and presented in a way that is meaningful to the organization. Presenting at the conference implies that the principal researcher will meet all program submission deadlines as established by the 2010 Conference Committee and conference registration deadlines as established by the Executive Board.

2 – Present final results of the research project in the Summer or Fall 2010 edition of the *Welcomer*.

The principal researcher must meet all submission deadlines as established by the newsletter editor.

The number of Research Grants is established each year by the CIVSA Executive Board. The principal researcher of the accepted grant proposal(s) will be eligible to be reimbursed for their conference registration once all requirements have been met.

If you should need assistance in preparing a Research Grant Proposal or have any questions, please contact any member of the [CIVSA Research & Assessment Committee](#).



Things to Think About

Do you have a suggestion for a member you'd like to see profiled in the next *Welcomer*? Someone you'd like to know better, or someone whose answers to the Member Profile questions you're really interested in? Please send your suggestions to Jen McGowan at mcjen@umich.edu

Don't forget about the Member Recruitment Drive currently underway! The winner will receive free registration to the 2010 CIVSA conference in Lexington and all you need to do to be eligible is recruit one new paid CIVSA member before January 15! The more people you recruit, the more chances you will have to win. Help to strengthen and diversify the membership - and the resources - of CIVSA! See complete contest rules online at civsa.org/membership/membership_drive.html

Have you given much thought to the information in the signature file at the bottom of your e-mail messages? Many people use abbreviations, which are not always recognizable, while others give the name of their school, but not the city/town in which it is located. If your information is more complete, it would help members learn who new and neighboring members are and who does what. Food for thought!

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Have a question for the Board?
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