

The Welcomer

Collegiate Information and Visitor Services Association

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News and Information from the
Collegiate Information and
Visitor Services Association

It's Almost Conference Time!



The rose garden at Cal Poly Pomona

The 2008 CiVSA Annual Conference is almost here! Steve and Rosa, our hosts at Cal Poly Pomona, as well as our two Program Chairs, Anne and Bryan, have been hard at work planning and organizing (and organizing and planning) to get everything ready for our arrival. From the concurrent sessions to the roundtable discussions, the keynote addresses and the special trips, the regional meetings and the free time to mingle with other visitor services professionals, this year's conference is packed with opportunities for learning and professional development. There is plenty of fun to be had as well - did we mention dinner on the Queen Mary and the optional trip to Disneyland? You only have until June 5 to register if you haven't already, so don't miss your chance to attend the 2008 conference!

Conference hotel reservations should be made by calling the **Shilo Inn Suites Hilltop** at (800) 334-1049. Please make your reservation by phone and mention The Collegiate Information and Visitor Services Association to get our special rate of \$109 plus tax per night.

Research and Assessment: Survey of Campus Visit Programming

by Clark Lee and Denise Wellman

Thank you to those who participated in the survey - we had 59 responses! We will be discussing the results at the 2008 Annual Conference in California so come prepared to discuss.

The purpose of this study is to describe campus visit programs among member institutions of the Collegiate Information and Visitor Services Association (CiVSA). This study has been approved by the CiVSA Research and Assessment Committee and was intentionally designed to support the needs of the organization as expressed at the 2007 Annual Conference. During the conference, the Research and Assessment Committee distributed a survey to conference attendees to determine their information needs. In the spring of 2008, The University of South Carolina Visitor Center responded by developing a study of campus visit programming at CiVSA member institutions to specifically address the information needs expressed during the June 2007 Annual Conference. A survey was conducted through Survey Monkey, web-based software for survey administration. This research team hopes that this study will further lay a foundation for: 1) the development of a searchable database, ideally residing on the CiVSA webpage, that would not only make this information available to CiVSA members but enable them to identify colleagues throughout the country that might assist them with specific programmatic questions, and 2) a system for the identification of "Best Practices" within the field of campus visit programming.

Interest in campus visits is expanding both within the admissions environment as well as among college-bound students. Today's high school students can now choose from any number of post-secondary educational opportunities which not only adds to the competitive environment which exists in higher education but also adds to the stress involved in the college search process. Despite the fact that today's students exist in a highly computerized world, recent research highlights the campus visit as the most trusted source of information by high school juniors

and seniors and often the only opportunity for a college-bound student and their parents to come face-to-face with the people who make up a college environment (Eduventures, 2007). This same study also found that the majority of college bound students enter the college search process earlier than ever before, apply to more colleges than in the past, and that they consider their parents to be key influencers on the decision about where they apply to college (Eduventures, 2007). Other research has highlighted the importance of the campus visit and reported that visiting a campus significantly increases the likelihood that a student will apply and then subsequently enroll (Noel-Levitz, 2005). Not only does the campus visit hold the potential to support critical enrollment goals, it may represent an untapped opportunity for many campuses looking to find ways to present the attributes of its people and programs in a setting in which students are most receptive (Eduventures, 2007).

As a result of the dynamic environment which now exists in the college choice process, the campus visit programs available on many college campuses today are having to adapt and offer a larger variety of services and activities that are focused on illuminating the institutional environment for prospective students and their parents. Consequently, the professionals that manage these programs are asking more questions and seeking information on how to establish or enhance their campus visit program and support all stakeholders involved in college choice.

To address this need, this study will specifically focus on issues of the organization (i.e., organizational reporting lines, staff and level of faculty support for campus visit programs, facilities (i.e., stand alone Visitor Center or part of Admissions), and procedures (i.e., types of tour programs offered, types of visit participants served, methods utilized to capture campus visit reservations and feedback), in addition to programmatic issues of the campus tour guide

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CiVSA Best Practices

West Virginia University's Special Tours

by Susan Petsko

The Visitors Resource Center at West Virginia University provides specialized tours for group visits.

This type of visit is arranged around a specific request from a group. Schools from West Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Maryland bring elementary, middle school, and high school students to visit West Virginia University. Alumni and senior citizens also often want to see the campus.

Our office receives requests typically from Upward Bound, Educational Talent Search, and National Honor Society Programs to see different aspects of the WVU campus. These programs want to introduce their students to a college atmosphere. Our goal is to illustrate to these students the academic and student life experiences on campus.

The agenda for these special tours is based on the requests from a school counselor or teacher – whoever happens to be the contact from the school.

Groups can experience:

- A tour of the **West Virginia University campuses** – Downtown, Evansdale, and Health Sciences. Groups can visit a classroom, laboratory facilities, the WVU student union, a model residence hall room, and/or the Downtown Library Complex.
- A full-loop ride on the **Personal Rapid Transit (PRT)** – a monorail transportation system that is unique to WVU. Students use the PRT to travel between the WVU campuses in Morgantown, WV.
- **Mountaineer Field** – home of the Mountaineer football team. Students have the opportunity to run on the football field and visit the Hall of Traditions where trophies and memorabilia are displayed.
- **WVU Coliseum** – home of Mountaineer basketball, wrestling, gymnastics, and volleyball.
- **Admissions and Financial Aid** - informative

presentations are arranged.

- **Academic presentations** that can be arranged include:
 - **Challenge X** – a presentation on current research on increasing fuel efficiency. Students will view a vehicle and learn about the alterations made to it in order to make it more fuel-efficient.
 - **Planetarium** – an audiovisual session in the Tomchin Planetarium focuses on the study of astronomy.
 - **WVU Farm Experience** - tour the WVU Farm and learn about farm animals through first hand experiences.
 - **U-92** – tour WVU's radio station.
 - **Daily Athenaeum** – tour WVU's student newspaper. See how students arrange the paper for publication.

In 2007, the WVU Visitors Resource Center hosted over 3100 visitors on these special tours. Schools continue to return to campus for these fun-filled and educational experiences. No matter what the age of the person who visits campus – whether it be Alumni or elementary students – all become connected to the Mountaineer family and enjoy coming back to visit!

Susan Petsko
West Virginia University

CiVSA Says Goodbye

Three giants in CiVSA history have recently retired: Fran Lane, Sandy Roberts, and Sherry Case, and another, Leslie Baumert, is set to join them on June 30. Among them, they have served in every position on the Executive Board, been conference hosts and conference presenters, and been tireless advocates for our organization. With them goes a piece of CiVSA history, and their energy, enthusiasm, passion, dedication, and above all their friendly faces will be sorely missed.

To celebrate their retirement, four former CiVSA presidents have each written a tribute to one of our retirees. Whether or not you know Fran, Sandy, Sherry, or Leslie personally, I hope that you enjoy these tributes and the legacy that these four women have left for us.

Jennifer McGowan
University of Michigan

Sherry Case

It is certainly a pleasure, although a bittersweet one, to wish Sherry Case all of the very best as she enters one of the most anticipated parts of life: retirement. I have been honored to know Sherry since the early 1990s and the very beginnings of our professional organization, which later came to be known as the Collegiate Information and Visitor Services Association.

At various critical points in this organization's early life, Sherry stood up and made a difference when it mattered the most. One example of this determination was her decision to host the third national conference at Colorado State: this was not only a professional and educational triumph, but moved CiVSA to a more secure operational level and ensured its future. At several points when it was difficult to find leaders to take on positions within the organization, Sherry was always available and willing to help. Whether the job was small or large—committee chair position or acting secretary—she was always ready and willing to help. She went far above and beyond the call of duty, and was always a premier representative of Colorado State University.

I am sure that CSU will miss Sherry as much as her colleagues within CiVSA will. On a personal note, Sherry was always a delight to be with, always looking for the most positive ways of seeing people and situations and always reminding us of the importance of humanity and the personal in the work that we do.

Again, I wish her the very best and know that her positive outlook and energy will guarantee the very best and exciting retirement anyone has ever had. Best wishes to you, Sherry.

Matt Weismantel
Rutgers – The State University of New Jersey



Veterans of the very first CiVSA conference reunite in 2002 - Sherry Case, Matt Weismantel, David Watters, and Nick Kovalakides

Leslie Baumert

Whenever I think of the epitome of grace and charm and hospitality, I think of Leslie Baumert. A true “gentlewoman” from Oklahoma, Leslie joined the CiVSA family 100% giving it all her heart, soul and dedication. Her work began right away as the Director of Communications and culminated with her presidential role. I was very fortunate to have Leslie in the role of one of my CiVSA mentors during my early years with the organization. I was also honored to serve as president-elect under Leslie and benefited from her guidance (not to mention her fabulous binder of information!). Leslie proudly guided our organization through one of our more tumultuous times when prior to taking office, the incoming president suddenly left the organization. Through the forethought and unselfishness of both Leslie and Sandy Roberts, they ensured the continuity and stability needed for the growth and survival of our very young organization by both serving 18 month appointments. She’s frequently a resource people call when problems arise and decisions need to be made.

My fondest memories of Leslie, however, are the personal ones; the times we’ve traveled together under the guise of business when really it was more fun than work. Truly a hostess extraordinaire for our mid-year Executive Board meeting in Oklahoma, she fed us in her home and showed us the local highlights on top of the usual business that needed tending. Perhaps her most courageous moment was giving several members of her executive board the keys to her personal vehicle and letting us “take off” to the Oklahoma City Memorial some 30 miles away to spend the morning alone. Now that is CiVSA trust! Gave us the keys, pointed us in the right direction and said have fun. I’ll also never forget helping with her luggage, asking what the heck she had in there that was so heavy, and finding out she travels with her own personal weight room in that suitcase!



Leslie Baumert, Matt Weismantel, and Barb Dallinger

Despite her small stature, Leslie stands out in a crowd. Her leadership glows around her and her welcoming smile draws people in. I’ve been so blessed to have her guiding me along my CiVSA path. I know we wish her much happiness as she moves on to the new challenges of retirement, but I for one will be missing that special glow she brings (along with that very heavy suitcase) in California this year. Good luck, Leslie and thank you for all you’ve done for us.

*Barb Dallinger
Illinois State University*

Sandy Roberts

Walk and Talk with Sandy

All of the early birds at our CiVSA conferences will remember that the first item on the agenda each day was “Walk and Talk with Sandy.” Nothing got your day off to a brisk start like a walk around each beautiful campus with Sandy Roberts leading the way. For years Sandy’s dedication to health and fitness rubbed off on us, even if it was only for a few days!

My personal experience was joining Sandy on her trip to the local grocery store in each city. There she would seek out her revered stash of healthful goodies that she kept in her room. Sandy was always trying to woo me over to the healthy side with a “here, try this, it tastes like chicken!”



Sandy shows that there is nothing she can't handle!

Not only did Sandy motivate us to take better care of ourselves, she motivated us to be better in our profession. Sandy served as our president from August 2000 until December 2001. She served an 18-month term due to the unexpected departure of our president elect. Without hesitation, she agreed to serve an additional six months for the good of the organization, regardless of the fact that she was already beginning to relax into the role of past president.

She was one of the first members to create an audio self-guided walking tour for her campus. We all jumped at the opportunity to appropriate such a novel and high tech idea and Sandy willingly shared every detail. Wonderful presentations and countless questions were fielded so that our profession could move forward in providing information and services for visitors.

As the cutline under her picture states, “there is nothing she can’t handle!” Sandy handled everything with grace and diplomacy and will be missed by all of us. Her dedication to the growth and development of CiVSA will forever be a part of our foundation. Sandy, enjoy every minute of your retirement! Your service to CiVSA will not be forgotten!

*Leslie Baumert
University of Oklahoma*

Fran Lane

The older I get, the harder it is to remember that defining moment when you first met someone and knew you would be friends for life. Without question though, I remember the moment I met Fran Lane, the former director of the University of Georgia Visitor Center. For those of you who know Fran, you know that being in her company is totally entertaining and most certainly a blessing. My first encounter with Fran offered a colorful introduction and through each encounter over the last 14 years, I am convinced that I walk away a better person each time I am in her company.

We first met in 1995 as we traveled to the CiVSA Annual Conference at Baylor University. We both arrived in Dallas on separate planes in the midst of a rather violent storm. The weather necessitated that the airport virtually shut down and both of us spent the night in Dallas without fresh clothing or even our toothbrush. As you can image, we were both fresh as daisies when we entered our little plane (let me emphasize *little*) early the next morning that would take us to Waco, Texas and Baylor University. At the time, I was pretty green to visitor services and about 5 minutes into the flight, I was a beautiful shade of “puce.” It felt as though the bottom of the plane was dropping out every 10 seconds as we flew through thunder and around lightning. As professionally as I could, I looked around the plane to see who else might be turning unusual colors and my eyes rested on this one individual who shared a similar color and looked a bit wrinkled. We immediately bonded through this experience, and as they say, the rest was history. At the time, I didn’t know that Fran was a part time comedian but it was her humor and delightful personality that got our entire plane to Waco, Texas and has blessed my life ever since.



Fran Lane and Denise Wellman during the 2004 conference

Fran and I served on the CiVSA Executive Board for three years at a point when CiVSA was getting reestablished. Together with Matt Weismantel, we wrote the CAS Standards and agonized over each draft of the CiVSA Constitution and Bylaws with many other members who are also retired or have moved on to other work. “Life with Fran” was never dull - from our first executive board meetings together, various impromptu strategy meetings at a Waffle House midway between Athens, Georgia and Columbia, South Carolina, our consulting trips to various universities, almost every conference since 1995, and frequent phone calls, Fran has given me a beautiful example of a professional in higher education and has constantly reminded me of the value of humor in the midst of our stressful lives. Fran, we wish you well as you enter the next phase of your life and know that your beautiful spirit will forever be a part of CiVSA and the many individuals who you touched! Miss you girl!

*Denise Wellman
University of South Carolina*

Welcome New Members!

Christy Bradburn
James Madison University

Will Brown
James Madison University

Tanya Carson
Trinity Western University

Ann Cloninger
Savannah College of Art & Design

Jacquelyn Farrimond
Marion College

Shannon Fell
University of Texas-Arlington

Tricia Hawk
Bethany College

Angela Hicks
University of Texas-San Antonio

Jacob Hicks
Brigham Young University

Corrie MacKay
New Mexico State University

Angie Miller
The Ohio State University

Megan Nassau
American University

Jennifer Nicholson
Catawba College

Andrew Parrish
University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill

Marie Paulo
University of California, Irvine

Ebony Smith
The Ohio State University

Erina Tandy
Savannah College of Art & Design

Katrine Trantham
Savannah College of Art & Design

And a **Welcome Back!** to Jill Hampshire of
The Ohio State University and Reba
McCutcheon of Cornell!

As a side note, long-time CiVSA member
Shannon Kennan of James Madison Univer-
sity is leaving her position to pursue a PhD
inMass Communications. Goodbye and
good luck, Shannon!



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Have a question for the entire Board?
Reach us all at civsaboard@civsa.org



Dr. Sandra Marquez Hall and Texas Tech University recognized at CAS Board of Directors Meeting (Washington, DC)

The [Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education](#) (CAS) recently awarded Dr. Sandra Marquez Hall and Texas Tech University its most prestigious honor, the Ted K. Miller Achievement of Excellence Award. This award recognizes outstanding accomplishments in advancing standards of practice and quality assurance in educational programs and services in higher education, with the goal of enhancing student learning.

Jan Arminio, president of CAS, presented the award, joined by the award's namesake, Ted K. Miller. In her presentation, Arminio cited the selection committee's recommendation, stating that Dr. Marquez Hall "has used the CAS standards and guidelines to effectively plan and facilitate the assessment of student learning and development at Texas Tech University."

Dr. Marquez Hall presented an overview of her work at Texas Tech University and Dr. Jan Childress accepted the plaque on behalf of the student affairs division, citing the University's commitment to student achievement.

The Ted K. Miller Achievement of Excellence Award is named in honor of Ted Miller, CAS's first president from 1979-1989, a professor emeritus of the University of Georgia, and the CAS publications editor until his retirement in 2004.

The Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) is a consortium of 36 professional associations in higher education. Founded in 1979, CAS develops and disseminates standards of practice and related materials for the purpose of fostering student learning and development through enhancing the quality of programs and services.



Dr. Sandra Marquez Hall accepts her award plaque on behalf of Texas Tech University - a CiVSA member school!

program itself (i.e., campus tour guide selection, professional development and training, compensation/recognition, evaluation, and dress code).

The results of this initial survey administration will establish benchmarks within the profession of campus visit programming and then begin a foundation for the identification of “best practices” within the field. It is the intention that this survey will be administered at least once every two years and also to new members as they join the organization to insure that the information is accurate and up-to-date. While no personally-identifying information will be asked on the surveys, participants may later send their email address to the research team if they are interested in receiving a full analysis of the survey data at the conclusion of this study. Furthermore, the results of this study will also be presented at the 2008 Conference in June and posted within the “Members Only” section of the CiVSA website. Also, should the Executive Board be interested in the development of a biannual survey so that this information can be up-to-date and available through a searchable online database, this research team will also willingly work with their designee(es) to insure that the survey and database are available on an ongoing basis to all members of the organization.

It is the hope of this research team that this study will serve the members of CiVSA in addition to others in higher education who manage campus visit programs. By coupling a better understanding of campus visit programs with valuable research on the way in which prospective students and parents approach the college decision making process, all stakeholders in college choice are served and the profession of visitor services may begin to establish a professional foundation within the field of higher education.

Clark Lee and Denise Wellman
University of South Carolina

Full citation:

Eduventures. (2007). College search and the millennial generation. Boston: Author

Volunteer and Make a Difference!

The conference committee is working very hard to organize and plan everything for the conference, but they need our help to make it as successful as it can be. Please consider volunteering to:

- Work at the conference check-in table, or
- Take notes at a session so that they can be posted on the CiVSA website for those not able to attend a particular session, or
- Be a room administrator, helping to distribute and collect session evaluation forms and being available if the speaker needs anything.

If you'd like to volunteer, contact the conference committee at conference@civsa.org

Upcoming Conferences

While the 2008 conference is almost upon us, don't forget about the 2009 conference at **Boston University!** More information will be coming soon, including dates, so that you can begin to make plans to attend.

Remember too that we are still accepting bids to host the 2010 Annual Conference. If you'd like the chance to show your campus and your program to CiVSA, the bid form is online at: <http://civsa.org/2010bid.pdf> and is due to President Tami Tassler by Friday, May 30.

Disneyland!

If you'll be attending the conference this year and want to come to Disneyland but haven't yet purchased your tickets, do so soon - you only have two more days! You can get more information and buy your tickets from this website: <http://civsa.org/CPPinfo.html>