

the
CIVSA WELCOMER
 Collegiate Information and Visitor Services Association

Spring Update

By Julian Olivas, CIVSA President
 Texas Tech University



Pictured above: Natural hot springs in San Antonio, Texas.

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This is the last article I'll write as president of CIVSA so I want to take the opportunity to thank you for the privilege of serving as president. I've thoroughly enjoyed working with each member I've encountered, especially the board and committee members. Before long, many of us will gather in San Antonio for our annual conference along the banks of the beautiful San Antonio River and I cannot wait to see my CIVSA friends and colleagues at what should be the best and biggest CIVSA conference yet!

Over the past year, the executive board has focused on several key projects that we are currently in the process of finalizing and I am pleased to update you on these tasks. As you know, CIVSA was incorporated in 2010 and since then we've been working hard on revising our By-laws and developing a member operations manual that will complement the Association's Articles of Incorporation and By-laws. The operations handbook will be an organic publication that will document the processes that make CIVSA function as an organization and will change over time as CIVSA continues to grow. I especially want to thank our Secretary, Stephen Barnett, for leading these efforts.

Our Past President's Council was charged with the task of developing an operating budget for CIVSA that will be approved at the business meeting during the conference. The operating budget will allow us to adequately fund the necessary areas of CIVSA without jeopardizing the organization financially. I want to thank Past President's Council and Chair Nancy Franco, for their work on this important matter. Lastly, the executive board has recently considered six proposals for new association management since our current association management company, Runyon Incorporated, will dissolve. Three finalists were selected to provide a formal presentation to the Executive Board and I am happy to report that we've reached an agreement, in principle, with McKenna Management of Chelmsford, Massachusetts.

(Continued on next page...)

McKenna Management will become the new CIVSA headquarters effective July 1 while transitional activity will begin in May. The experience and enthusiasm that McKenna Management brings to the table will help CIVSA continue our momentum moving forward and that is what drew us to their company. We certainly look forward to working with them. McKenna Management will handle the daily operational functions and also bookkeeping responsibilities for CIVSA. It is my hope that the membership will not be impacted by this transition. We will continue to provide excellent service and meet the needs of our membership in a timely manner. I want to thank Ryan Leigh Runyon for her support to CIVSA through the years. We are sad to see Runyon Incorporated dissolve as an agency and wish them the best!

The future of CIVSA is in great hands with the new leadership that we'll have moving forward. In this membership year, CIVSA has seen phenomenal growth as we have almost reached 400 members! Our members continuously tell us that their relationship with CIVSA and its members is among the best of any professional organization that they belong to and I certainly share this point of view. I believe the reason for this is because of the relevant work that we do in higher education and the support we can obtain as members of this great organization. I want to thank you for your continued membership and hope that you've found it beneficial both professionally and personally.

Hopefully I'll see you in San Antonio! Remember, it's not too late to register if you haven't already!

Cheers,

Julian Olivas



A Conference Update from our Local Arrangement Chairs

Howdy CIVSA! The excitement of the local arrangements committee is continuing to grow as we are only 7 weeks away from welcoming you all to San Antonio. Our city is in major celebration mode as we are currently in our 10-day celebration, FIESTA! In this time frame, there will be over 100 events from small neighborhood parades to three large parades held downtown. Our Monday night River parade will pass by our host hotel, the Omni La Mansion del Rio. At the conference, you will have the opportunity to walk right out onto the Riverwalk from the hotel and take in our local flavor.

As we kick off the conference, we will take in the rich heritage of the state of Texas at the Institute of Texan Cultures, and as the conference continues, you will have the opportunity to ride a River Barge and get a 360 degree view of the Alamo City.

Last but not least, we have arranged for you all to take advantage of a variety of institutional tours offered by our local schools. There are tours of public and private schools, large and small schools. Some will be held Monday before the conference officially kicks off and others will be offered on Thursday and Friday morning. Be sure to think about these tours as you make your travel plans and continue to check the website for updates to the conference schedule. We can't wait to see you all and know that this year's conference will be the greatest one yet!

Marisol Scheer, Evelyn Betancourt-Martinez, and Marisol Mandujano
CIVSA Local Arrangement Chairs



A local private high school, Saint Mary's Hall, contributes a float to the FIESTA parades in San Antonio, Texas.

CIVSA and THE NCAA TOURNAMENT

CONGRATULATIONS to all our member institutions that made it to the Men's and Women's NCAA basketball tournaments!

Special CONGRATULATIONS to Benjamin Toll, St. Mary's College of Maryland, for winning our annual CIVSA March Madness Bracket! Ben won free registration for our annual conference in San Antonio for his on-point team selection.



Pictured right: Stephen Barnett (UK, Secretary), and Brittney Joyce (UT Arlington, Dir of Communications) spend time in Houston, Texas for the Final Four.

Pictured left: Who knew that Ben Toll was in Houston? And that he's such good friends with Kemba Walker?!



AMBER ALERT: CIVY

CIVY was last seen in Houston, Texas visiting the Final Four and then in Lexington, Kentucky. If you have details of his whereabouts, please alert the authorities.



CIVY is a civet and he is traveling the country to meet CIVSA members. If you find CIVY in your mailbox, continue his adventures by sending him to another member of CIVSA within ten days. Before you drop him in the mail, make sure to take a creative photo of him on your campus. You may also choose to teach him something unique that your office does. E-mail your photo and lesson to web@civsa.org!

CAS Update

By Matthew Weismantel
Rutgers University

The New Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) Website Has Recently Been Published

CiVSA has been an active member of the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) since the late 1990's. CAS has recently published a new website at www.cas.edu that has a greater emphasis on interaction, improved resources, and assessment guidance and support. These tools are invaluable for anyone being asked to investigate or undertake a self-assessment of their campus information and visitor services operation.

- Starting with the first page of www.cas.edu, on which you can proudly see CiVSA logo flying along with the 40 other member associations, there is information about the usefulness of CAS Standards and information about the important role this organization has played for over 30 years in the development and professionalization of higher education both in the US and internationally.
- The **FAQ section** is devoted to concerns about the use and benefits of CAS standards along with specifics about the structure and format used in the development and publication of each standard and guideline.
- The **Store link** at the top of the website provides access to all of CAS' current publications including a number of important documents available for immediate download, including *Individual Self-Assessment Guides*, *The Frameworks for Assessing Learning and Development Outcomes* and **most importantly the newly revised and approved Campus Information and Visitor Services Standards and Guidelines**.
- The **Resources section** is of great benefit to anyone even remotely interested in the assessment issue, and includes specific downloadable information about CAS, including an extensive collection of presentation and training materials that have been delivered by experts to professional associations and meetings within the last few years. A library of videos produced by the CAS leadership team is also in the process of being added to the Video section of the Resources area.
- CAS is also most proud of the new list of **CAS Consultants** that has been developed and made available on this new site for individuals and institutions undertaking the CAS self-assessment process but in need of further guidance, assistance or just plain hand-holding so as to be as successful as possible.
- I have also personally found the new **CAS Bibliography section** very helpful along with the evolving and expanding Assessment Links page.

Again, all in all, this new site should help to increase the usability and assistance that CAS can provide to self-assessment users in its larger goal of promulgation of standards, with the ultimate purpose of fostering and enhancing student learning, development and achievement in all areas of our institutions. If you have a few moments take the time and check out the new CAS website and see how it might be able to stimulate new ideas or assist you in the critically important area of self-assessment and organizational development.



LAST CHANCES TO REGISTER!
Register now for our annual conference on June 6 - 10, 2011
in San Antonio, Texas at the historic La Mansion del Rio Hotel!

March 16 - April 15: \$395 (member) / \$495 (non-member)
April 16 - May 15: \$445 (member) / \$545 (non-member)



Member Profile

Dorie Ain, The George Washington University

In the CIVSA Communications survey, several members suggested a "get-to-know-other-members" or "get-to-know-the-Board" feature for the Welcomer. This is the ninth; look for more profiles of other members in the future issues.

Job Title: Senior Assistant Director of Undergraduate Admissions, Welcome Center Manager

What are your major job responsibilities? I manage the entire University Welcome Center (managing 200 volunteer tour guides, 3 paid student employees, all the front desk employees as well as 23 paid summer tour guides. At GW we see over 45,000 visitors a year! I also travel and recruit to Long Island, NY and Los Angeles, CA. Throughout the winter I am involved in the evaluation process and read close to 500 applications.

How long have you been in the information/visitor services world? As a student, I was a tour guide for 3 years. As a professional, I am finishing my fourth year.

When did you join CIVSA? 2007

How many CIVSA Conferences have you attended? 3

What is your favorite part of working in visitor/information services? MY STUDENTS! I absolutely love working with college students. They keep things exciting, keep me on my toes and definitely make me want to come to work every day. I also love working with prospective students on the road and seeing their eyes light up when they fall in love with GW.

What is the most fun thing that your office does? We take our summer tour guides to Kings Dominion (an amusement park) for a day during the summer. It is a great way to get to know the students and to let our hair down!

How many items are on your current to-do list? A million things but most importantly our admitted student days (we have 1200 signed up for April 18th) our junior visit days (we have 1100 people signed up for April 19th). Plan our end of the year student soiree for all of our student employees but most importantly make time to watch The Washington Capitals play in the playoffs! LETS GO CAPS!

What is a typical day like at your job? I make sure that the information sessions are going well, tours get dismissed and visitors are happy! I also work extremely closely with the admissions office and my supervisor on event planning and just making sure our Welcome Center doesn't burn down :) It really varies throughout the year though what my day looks like because in the fall I work alot on travel and recruitment and then during the winter I read most days for evaluation, then the spring, well, it's the spring in the visit world!

What is your best piece of advice for other CIVSA members (about student training, customer service, unique traditions, your website, or anything!)? Make sure to **talk** to your tour guides. I try my hardest to create relationships with them because then they feel a sense of connection and are more likely to be involved. No matter how bad your day is (and we all have bad days) always smile with the students because they need to feel like your number one priority. Also CIVSA related, go to as many conferences as you can! The CIVSA community also pushes me to love my job more every day and knowing that I have a community in CIVSA makes me want to do a better job in visit relations.

Colleges catering to curious parents as well as prospective students

Reprinted with permission from The Washington Post - Jenna Johnson - April 2011

When Marymount University was planning a "scholars day" a few years ago for high school seniors who had been offered admission, the Arlington County school received a phone call from a mother in Arizona. She wanted to know what was scheduled for parents.

University officials couldn't interest her in tourist attractions, and they hesitated to allow grown-ups into the student-targeted event. So they organized activities just for parents. It was a hit.

Now Marymount sends parents postcards several times a year, invites them to parent-only events and publishes a full-color "Guide for Parents." It is one of a growing number of schools to discover that it's not enough to communicate with prospective students. The colleges are also wooing parents who are digitally tethered to their offspring and want more involvement than writing a tuition check.

"When my first one went to college, all of the parents were sitting there like, 'Why won't you listen to us? We're the ones paying the bill,'" said Patrice Searl of Philadelphia, who toured Marymount last month with the youngest of her four children, Caitlin. Universities, she said, "have gotten a lot better about it."

In this spring admission season, many colleges target parents via their Web sites, and some address financial aid letters: "To the parents of . . ." Catholic University plans to have a parents-only reception with administrators, professors and alumni this month. St. Mary's College of Maryland posts letters from parents and their e-mail addresses on its admissions Web site. And Wake Forest University hosts a "mock class" for parents to pepper faculty with questions.

Students have long sought to make independent choices about college. "Now it's a family decision," said Martha Allman, dean of admissions at Wake Forest.

Sharon Alston, executive director of enrollment at American University, said: "It used to be that parents were just along for the ride, but this is a generation that feels like parents are partners."

Parents of first-generation college students often need help navigating the complicated application process. Parents whose families are steeped in college experience are savvy about the market and hungry for scholarships.

"I'm very involved with this whole process, almost to the point where it's too much," said Nancy Levinson of Long Island, N.Y., whose 17-year-old daughter, Shelby, recently visited American. "I'm at work in front of a computer all day, and she's at school. I look things up. I don't want her to wait to find things out."

Levinson said she participates in college-sponsored online chats and often calls or e-mails financial aid officers or department heads — things she said her parents never would have done. But college is more expensive these days.

"Even though she's going to be the one going to college, I'm paying for most of it. I do have a right, if I have a question, to call up and find out," Levinson said.

Sometimes overeager parents get in the way. Some colleges split up applicants and parents — at least for a bit — during visits so the former can soak up the campus vibe while the latter can ask about logistics and financial aid.

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Colleges catering to curious parents as well as prospective students

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"If I could ban parents from the campus visit, I would. They take the fun out of it," said Jeff Kallay, an admissions marketing consultant in Atlanta who helps colleges transform tours into "experiences." "People are still trying to figure out these parents."

At Juniata College in Pennsylvania, parents of prospective students are herded into a room with a handful of parents of current students to talk about "anything and everything," said Michelle Bartol, dean of enrollment.

In one session, a parent asked if it was all right to call a student's professor. In another, a parent questioned the lack of diversity on campus, sparking an impassioned conversation.

"It was almost like 'Oprah,'" Bartol said. "They were really into it."

Picking a college often means emptying the nest. That can get emotional for highly involved parents. American University taps those raw feelings in a new admissions video shown twice a day at its welcome center.

At the start, the video shows a fictional student named Madeline waving goodbye as her parents drive off from her freshman dormitory.

But she keeps her parents — and the rest of the world — updated about her college experience through Facebook. At the end, Madeline snaps graduation photos and reloads the family car.

"The parents are tearing up at the end of it — in a good way," said Teresa Flannery, executive director of university communications and marketing.

American seeks to please parents with small touches. The welcome center, recently remodeled, is in one of the most convenient spots on campus. There is underground parking and ample signage. And there is plenty of free coffee, in various flavors, in a lounge stocked with books written by faculty members.

Even when parents try to hang back, it's hard not to get involved, said Allen Barnett of Tuxedo Park, N.Y., who toured American with his 17-year-old son, Cameron, during spring break last month.

Barnett said he tries to keep his opinions to himself as he shows his son college options. But at the end of the search, he said, "you always want to make sure they don't make a mistake."

Send questions about this article to johnsonj@washpost.com



American University student Justin Saffar, third from right, begins a campus tour with prospective students and their parents. The tour follows a video chronicling a fictional student's journey through college at American's lavish welcome center.

Welcome New Members!

Danielle Alspaugh
Southeast Missouri State University

Krista Carson
George Mason University

Jessica Cobb
University of Alberta

Sarah Farmer
Stevenson University

Mandie Foltz
Southeast Missouri State University

Lenell Hahn
Southeast Missouri State University

Clint Havins
Angelo State University

Ryan Horne
Stephen F. Austin State University

Kristi Jilson
Savannah College of Art & Design

Erin Kelly
The College of Wooster

Stacey Lanpher
University of North Carolina - Charlotte

Candace Leake
Stevenson University

Shani Lenore-Jenkins
Maryville University of St. Louis

Katherine Louthan
Maryville University of St. Louis

Kathryn Martin
Maryville University of St. Louis

Leah Martinez
Southeast Missouri State University

Eileen McKee
Westchester Community College

Melissa O'Neal
Texas A&M University-Commerce

Ed Parker
Liberty University

Jessica Pauls
Arizona State University

Samantha Rosser
University of South Carolina

Melanie Schultz
The College of Wooster

Jennifer Shoemaker
University of North Carolina - Charlotte

Amber Short
Southern Illinois University Carbondale

**The Welcomer is a quarterly publication of the
Collegiate Information & Visitors Services
Association (CIVSA)
PO Box 971
Clemmons, NC 27012**