

**SPOTLIGHT ON:**



***Helen Valine, Campus Director, University of San Francisco—San Jose Campus. Helen has been a member since 2009, and is on the NAGAP Membership Committee. She is also a member of NAGAP chapters JGAP and BAGAP.***

**In your own words, what is the greatest benefit of your NAGAP membership (i.e. Professional Development, Networking) and why?**

I feel strongly about professional development and networking. I think they are two of the most important building blocks in one's career. NAGAP has offered me both. The topics of the workshops at the national conferences, especially as they pertain to best practices, have given me a point of comparison and expanded my knowledge. Similarly, networking has offered me the opportunity to collaborate and exchange ideas with colleagues nationwide.

**If you have attended the NAGAP Annual Conference, chapter events, and/or NAGAP receptions, please describe how/if these experience enhanced your professional development.**

The experience was successful and productive in that I was able to customize my attendance to the various workshops through early selection of offerings that matched my needs.

**What do you see as the biggest challenge for GEM professionals today?**

Competition. A school/program must differentiate from others on a very substantive level in order to recruit and retain students.

**What advice would you give to a new GEM professional who is just entering the field?**

Network. Networking is vital in admissions and recruitment. It offers support, information on best practices, and collaboration.

**How would you suggest a new member can make the most of their NAGAP membership?**

Attend the conference, reach out to colleagues for shared practices, information, and register for webinars. This source of information is invaluable!

**Which idea or ideas have you taken and implemented from a NAGAP conference, Professional Development Institute (PDI) or Pre-Conference Institute (PCI)?**

I have borrowed multiple ideas from the conferences I have attended, and identifying only one is rather difficult.

That said, there are three ideas that have been addressed at the annual conferences, which have made an impact on me as a professional and as a person: Leadership, mentoring, and use of alumni as ambassadors for recruitment.

While these concepts appear separate, I believe they overlap. Mentoring and coaching are components of good leadership, as is leading with humility. It allows one to listen, value, and appreciate one's staff while helping them to grow as professionals. It fosters collaboration and cohesion. Similarly, working with alumni as ambassadors has enhanced alumni engagement, recruitment events, and the mentoring of in-coming students.

The annual conferences have contributed greatly to my professional development, and I hope every admissions professional has the opportunity to attend at least one.