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## Application Management and Supporting Students

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The Admissions Corner is designed to help programs with the admissions process for graduate education programs in audiology and speech-language pathology. We want to provide information related to WebAdMIT (the program-facing program), CSDCAS (the applicant-facing program), application management, and multiple other issues related to admissions. We are focusing the next few Admissions Corner articles on preparing for different stages of the application process.

Last month we talked about early preparation for the review process. Strategies include identifying your program's past areas of concern, communicating with other university units for admissions support, organizing your admissions committee, and asking for advice.

This month's focus is on application management and supporting students.

Given the nationwide decline in undergraduate majors in Communication Sciences and Disorders, it is essential that all programs develop strategies to attract, engage, and hold on to applicants.

An important concept in business is "churn," which can be understood simply as customer turnover over time. Some customers leave a business because they no longer need its products, had a negative experience, or found a business with a better product. We can look at admissions the same way. Our "customers" are applicants to our graduate education programs. There are multiple things that we as programs can do to improve applicants' experience. Here are just a few ideas:

(1) Use the tools that are already built into WebAdMIT. You can email every applicant from WebAdMIT with acknowledgements, program updates, and—of course—acceptance information. In this early stage, you can use this system to acknowledge an applicant's interest. You can provide "tips and tricks" before an applicant submits the application. You can communicate regularly with an applicant before and during every step of your program's application process. Applicants appreciate the help. They are already stressed enough, especially those who are behind the curve in applying.

(2) Be objective and evaluate your application process. You can't do anything about it this year, but this will help you plan for next year's cycle. Are there aspects of your application process that are confusing to applicants? Get feedback about any confusion and fix it. If you have a supplemental application (for example, through your Graduate School), make it as easy as possible. The value of CSDCAS is that applicants only request one official transcript from each university attended, one set of GRE scores (if needed), and one set of letters of recommendation. Don't require it for your supplemental application. Don't make applicants spend extra money.

(3) Support your own undergraduate CSD students in the application process. Your largest application pool is likely the students in your own undergraduate program. If you follow the trends, you know that your undergraduate students are applying to your MA/MS and AuD

programs, even if they hope to be admitted somewhere else. There are many reasons for this. Are you meeting with them individually or in groups to help them apply? It is worth your time to do so, particularly if you are in a high-program-density area where you are competing with local/regional programs for the same applicants. A little bit of support might convince students on the fence to choose you over another program.

If you need help with the admissions processes for your MA/MS and/or AuD graduate education programs, or you need help with WebAdMIT or CSDCAS, please do not hesitate to reach out to the Admissions Committee and CAPCSD's Director of Centralized Admissions.