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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
October 20, 2009

## **National Study Shows Dramatic Increase in Hiring Private College Counselors**

*Study by Lipman Hearne places percentage hiring educational consultants at 26% of High-Achieving Seniors;  
Number Affirms IECA Internal Reporting*

Fairfax, VA - Lipman Hearne, one of the nation's leading marketing and communications firms, released a new, independent survey, "High-Achieving Seniors and the College Decision." One of their findings, which they called "A Surprise": 26% of such students hired an independent educational consultant to assist in their college search. The results show a rate about triple what has been the generally assumed percentage, although consistent with numbers reported by the Independent Educational Consultants Association in recent months. IECA is the international trade association for counselors working in private practice.

Based on a nationwide survey of 1,264 students achieving an 1150 or higher on the SATI (on a 1600 point scale) and/or ACT composite of 25 or higher, those identified in the study were in the 70th percentile and higher. Assisting Lipman Hearne in the research phase was the National Research Center for College and University Admissions (NRCCUA). The study provides tremendous insight into the factors students use when deciding among many variables, and explores information gathering among students. It was the finding that more than a quarter of the students hired an educational consultant that may be most surprising.

According to IECA Executive Director Mark Sklarow, "The fast-growing percentage of students hiring consultants, evidenced in this study, may be a dramatic game-changer for college admission representatives. In recent years university admission officers have sought to expand their applicant pool, diversify applicants to include all regions of the country, and examine ways to attract applicants most likely to be a good match to

their institution. I hear often from deans and directors of admission who recognize that IECA member consultants are an excellent resource for reaching such populations.”

For many years the myth has persisted that consultants are hired only by a tiny fraction of the population—at times reported to be under 5%—suggesting an elitist bent. The new survey provides evidence that this is not the case, that educational consultants are very much being employed in the mainstream and work with approximately 160,000 college applicants each year.

The study further notes that most of the students in the survey who employed educational consultants indicated that consultants are not influential when making the final enrollment decision. Sklarow cites this as evidence of good college advising. “A consultant should NOT be influential in the final decision-making phase; rather the consultant’s value comes earlier, when creating a list that explores a student’s needs, desires, interests, preferences, along with the consultant’s extensive first-hand knowledge of colleges. Once that list is created, a great consultant, a member of the Independent Educational Consultants Association—to be sure—seeks to empower students to conduct their own research, explore the possibilities, visit campuses, and ultimately make their own decision. The consultant does create that initial list, but then acts as a coach and advisor, not the decision-maker,” said Sklarow.

IECA was founded in 1976 as a nonprofit, professional association of established educational consultants. IECA member educational consultants are professionals who assist students and families with educational decision-making. Their educational backgrounds, specialized training, campus visitations, and professional experience equip them to help students choose schools, colleges, or programs that meet their individual needs and goals. Membership in the association requires consultants to meet IECA’s professional standards and subscribe to its Principles of Good Practice. Members continually update their knowledge and maintain skills through IECA-sponsored meetings, workshops, training programs, and information exchanges with colleges, schools, programs and other consultants.

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