

# The Monthly Mentor

## CREATING A CULTURE OF MEMBERS HELPING MEMBERS

By: **Mentor Year Committee**

In several countries, January has been designated as National Mentoring Month, and while this feels a little bit like a made-up "holiday", you can bet that we are going to embrace the heck out of celebrating connections that support our journeys and propel us forward in our professional and personal lives.

This month's focus is on the beauty of relationships. As most of us know, we lost one of our own recently - our dear colleague, Paul Yap. This sudden and shocking loss impacted many in our community, and we mourned with and for Paul's family. We celebrate his life in this month's newsletter.

We are over halfway through our MYP and our school year! We will meet up for our mid-year check in this month and want to look at: **relationships, rejuvenation, and reflection.**

**Relationships:** My favorite mentor forever said "It's all about relationships". Simple, yet true. The people that life connects us to and with remains to be more important than ever.

**Rejuvenation:** In some ways, this is actually a time of *beginnings* for a lot of our work in this field -- as many of us enter a cycle of working through applications for the NEW entering class, or start working with Grade 11 and Grade 10 students.

**Reflection:** We pause to reflect on what you set out to accomplish through MYP and check in on what is going well and what needs attention. We will spend our time doing this together this month at our Feb 23rd check-in. Dan has emailed the invite with Zoom link!

MYP Shared Resources



## Links of interest:

**Into podcasts?** Check out this professor's work re: hints about how to make wiser choices and live a life that's happier & more fulfilling ([link here](#))

**For Counselors & IECs**  
(NACAC) Best Practices for [developing a School Profile](#) (and examples)

Did you know that BridgeU offers free online resources on a wide range of topics? [Check them out here.](#)

**For University Admissions**  
Does your campus offer summer programs? [Don't forget to share them here](#) so that we can all spread the word to our HS students!

The Admissions Directors [Lunchcast podcast](#)

INSIGHT Into Diversity [website and newsletter](#)

## International ACAC - What's on for Feb/March:

Don't forget to check out the schedule for upcoming **Regional Roundups** for 2022!

**Annual Conference mode continues!**

**More info updated here.**

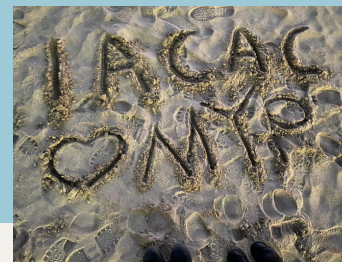
Can't wait to get "Out of Office", July 12-15

**Executive Board Elections** roll out on March 1st - **more info soon**

## Mentor/Mentee Spotlight

**GJ Johnson, College Counselor, International School of Busan (South Korea)**

**Rin Kim, College Counselor, Stamford American International School (Singapore)**



### **GJ**

Rin reminded me of myself when I first started my career as a college counselor five years ago, being extremely curious, enthusiastic, and passionate about the new position. I couldn't have come this far without many kind-hearted mentors I met at annual IACAC conferences. They were selflessly helpful and supportive and fed me lots of hope, advice, and encouragement. I always wanted to pay forward the kindness, and was thrilled to be paired with Rin to walk along in her exciting journey as college counselor. I want to acknowledge the mentor/mentee relationship has been a win-win. Since the launch of the program, we have met virtually every two weeks to discuss various topics ranging from grade 10 subject-selection to the management of multiple roles. As we work in different school contexts, it was interesting to learn how each school handles certain situations and we exchanged perspectives and opinions on various topics. Moreover, our relationship has grown, not only professionally, but also personally. Her bubbly personality and positive attitude have always made me smile and cheered me up after a long, busy day. In particular, I was pleasantly surprised when she contacted me while visiting her family in Korea. Although I shared my phone number with her, I did not expect her to come to my town to see me. She had not been home for almost two years, due to the pandemic, and her schedule was tight catching up with family and friends. We had an amazing time together eating seafood, having afternoon tea, walking along the beach, watching a beautiful sunset, taking selfies together, and chatting for almost 5 hours. We really appreciate the IACAC MYP committee members for this blessed opportunity for us to move forward as college counselors... and friends.



### **Rin**

It was a pleasant surprise to know that both GJ and I had much in common, including having studied abroad as a Korean national, holding onto our cultural identity as an international student, and choosing a life-long profession based on this experience. After our first virtual encounter last fall, we immediately bonded as we shared wholeheartedly where we started and why we aspired to grow. During our Zoom sessions, I sometimes felt short of breath as an hour was never sufficient for me to share all the questions I had in mind – I vented about moments of struggles that went beyond my tolerance level and many times where I felt like I was at a dead end. One highlight of the conversation was when we exchanged our perspectives being a female Asian educator/counselor in the industry and the kind of roles associated with this identity. Through this I learned the importance of recognizing alternative perspectives and learning from those differences.

I believe that a mentor is someone who allows you to see the hope inside yourself, and GJ has earned all credibility in that regard. Over the winter break, I had a chance to travel home to Korea briefly, and made a conscious effort to carve out time for meeting GJ. Having a grilled clam brunch over beautiful sunsets at Haeundae Beach, the five-hour talk included topics ranging from career to life in general. The Mentor Year Program has provided such a formative opportunity for me to connect and grow, and to believe in myself. I am tremendously grateful for being part of this initiative, and look forward to being the proud graduate of the first cohort soon (and hopefully becoming the Mentor myself someday!).



## A WARM TRIBUTE FROM:

**Kristoffer Toribbio, President-Elect of International ACAC**

Mentorship is the essence of admissions college counseling. What I love most about our field, and what has kept me in it is the culture of community that we built to help each other. I was thrilled that International ACAC established the Mentor Year Program as a platform to support the next generation of college counselors, promote college access, and also a vehicle for new voices and perspectives that can support a diversity of student needs.

I would like to share a short story of how mentorship impacted me. About 10 years ago, I did my first recruitment trip to the Philippines led by then LMU Admission Counselor, Dwayne Zamora. I was pretty green at that time - a brand-new international admissions counselor, the only one from my institution in fact, and longing for guidance. He introduced me to a counselor named Paul Anthony Yap. He was a name-sake in counseling in the Philippines and was the "go-to-guy" for advice, insight, and counseling resources in his country.

From my first visit to his former school, British School of Manila, we connected instantly. He was one of the few fellow *mga Kababayan* in the field but most importantly he was just a stand-up guy. I addressed him as *Kuya Paul*, which is a term of respect and endearment in Tagalog for "Big Brother". He was so generous with his time to help and always checked in to see if I was well - in good times and also challenging times. What I learned most from *Kuya Paul* was how to serve students with compassion and understanding and how just one "hello" or "what's up" can make a person's day. He was so passionate to help his students and also help fellow counselors serve their students - which is only matched by his lifelong passion for Marvel. Right before Christmas of 2021, Paul passed unexpectedly leaving behind his wife Nikka, son Ty, and Daughter Hero.



**Kristoffer Toribbio**

It's still a shock, and it's going to take awhile for me to fully process this incredible loss to our community. But what brings comfort is hearing stories of his impact echoed over and over again by so many across the world - bridging people from many walks of life. He was a *Kuya* to all, including as a mentor in the Inaugural Mentor Year Program. He embodies everything a mentor is and I will commit to always leading by his example.

***Maraming Salamat Kuya Paul sa Lahat ng nagawa mo para ating komunidad.*** You are a shining example of how one person with pure heart can make a difference. *Aloha 'oe a hui hou kakou* - until we meet again.