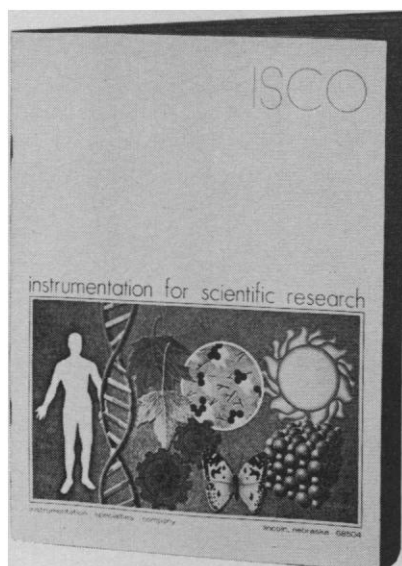


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We are pleased to learn of the American Association of Medical Colleges' research project correlating the present system's results with a theoretical matching program. It must be pointed out that their study did not test the value of uniform reply dates, preference lists before the fact, or the mechanics of a "rounding" procedure to fill all available spaces. If the conclusions of that study demonstrate, as we believe, the assumptive simplicity, reliability, and feasibility of admissions matching, we urge immediate adoption of such a plan to facilitate the notification process.

Replying to the criticisms of Ceithaml and Dalrymple requires brief reiteration of several key points stated in our editorial. Matching of accepted applicants is an expedient to medical school admissions; we do not offer it as a replacement for the traditional committee method by which students are selected to attend medical school. The ultimate success of admissions matching is predicated on significant overhauling of advising programs and on firm statements by medical schools concerning minimum qualifications for serious consideration, so that undergraduate students may have the clearest knowledge of how and where to apply, what to expect in terms of acceptances, and even whether they should attempt application to medical school. Thus, until definite action is begun by undergraduate and medical schools to alleviate the ills of current counseling efforts, we think it *impossible* to predict without presumptions what will happen to application-per-student ratios. We are convinced that blind belief in the inevitable increase in these ratios is erroneous and unfounded.

Institution of admissions matching by no means precludes use of the Early Decision Plan (EDP) as it now exists, since "if not accepted [under EDP], the student still has ample time to submit other applications." Should, as Ceithaml suggests, the EDP be held as the panacea for the ails of medical school admissions, we foresee problems at least as grave as those he portends for a matching program. Widespread use of EDP would certainly decrease the number of applications initially each year, as students are allowed to apply to but one school; the subsequent torrent of applications received after 1 October could only delay the admissions process.

We recognize that there are numer-

ous proposals for modifying admissions procedures, and it seems fairly obvious that no single plan is yet sufficiently broad or flexible to afford both uniformity and individuality mandatory in admissions decisions. Our purpose is to present a scheme by which one phase of the process can be expedited. While the perfect solution to accommodate all interests is not apparent, we are encouraged that new ideas are in the offing.

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Publishing Costs

Ralph D. Tanz suggests (30 Aug., p. 735) that it is improper for publishers to charge authors for reprints of their own articles, and he supports legal action which would prevent the loss of copyright by authors to publishers.

In fact, we already have mechanisms which allow the author to retain control of his own work. If we accept the notion that the author raises his own funds, does the thinking, does the laboratory work, and does the writing (all this, presumably, on salary), then we must note that the author is free to go to any printer of his choice and arrange to have his work printed.

If he objects to paying the printer, he may write out copies in longhand for distribution to students. If he objects to paying for paper and ink, he may scratch the text into wet clay with a twig.

I cannot, offhand, think of any way around the necessity of paying a small filing fee to the Copyright Office or of spending some cash for postage (greater in the case of clay tablets than in the case of ink on paper), but if the author is willing to bear that expense, it is not difficult under the present rules to obtain a copyright.

The author may then present copies of his article to students if he deems it necessary. If he charges his students or interested colleagues for copies of the article, he may be cursed as a money-grubbing publisher, but those are the breaks.

There is still no free lunch.

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