

This is always an exciting time of year for the College Counseling Office as we are working with students at every phase of the college process: sophomores who are stepping into the college sphere with introductory meetings through to seniors, who, for some the application process is over, and for others, who are still considering options. Therefore, you will find this to be a longer newsletter; but it is one I trust you will find rich with information.

First, we are pleased to announce the arrival of Tess Kathryn

Seniors

“The waiting is the hardest part...” I don’t often quote musicians in the Newsletter, but I find Tom Petty’s words relevant for our seniors. It’s not easy to wait, and this is just what many seniors must do right now. The work has been done: the essays written, applications completed and submitted, test scores sent. Though the colleges take the next course of action - making the decision to admit, defer or refuse – there is still work to be done!

- Remember to **check online statuses** to make sure applications are complete. Mid-year reports and transcripts have been completed and submitted. Should you receive notices of something missing, notify the College Counseling Office immediately.
- **Grades still count!** At our last extended meeting with seniors on the January 29, we shared with seniors the story of “The Play” from the ’82 Cal-Stanford game wherein Stanford scores in the waning seconds to pull ahead in this heated rivalry. Stanford kicks off, needing only to tackle the ball carrier in order to preserve the victory. After a series of laterals and near tackles, the Cal runner finds himself heading to victory. On the way to the end zone to score the winning touchdown, the ball carrier zigzags his way through the Stanford band that has come onto the field to perform the post-game celebration. Needless to say, the band came on a little too early and the game ended painfully embarrassing for the Stanford Cardinal. Colleges are increasingly asking for the most current grades for students, including spring grades. Seniors are closing in on the homestretch and now it’s time to kick it into overdrive. Use this time to further distinguish yourself. In short, don’t let the band on the field!
- Though most applications are in, it is important for seniors to keep their college counselor apprised of any **news or updates**, particularly those that pertain to the college process.
- We asked seniors to complete a survey to verify their college list in Naviance reflects their applications submitted.
- We remain in contact with colleges to which our students apply throughout the process and February and March are critical. To that end, we ask seniors to begin thinking about the schools to which they’ve applied and indicate their level of interest.

Though seniors may be waiting for admission decisions, now is the time to complete financial aid forms. This fall, we hosted a financial aid/FAFSA workshop led by Macalester College's Director of Financial Aid, Brian Lindeman. He touched upon many pertinent topics and answered wide-ranging questions. For the complete summary, please reference our [letter](#) from October 21.

- **Financial Aid deadlines approach quickly** so be sure to stay on top of the paperwork and deadlines. It is wise to submit the required forms well in advance of deadlines. Please contact your college counselor if you have any questions.
- **Net Price Calculators** may be found on every college website. We advise you to use these to get a sense of any potential aid packages.

Admission decisions for regular decision applications will begin trickling in over the coming months. **Please notify the College Counseling Office of any decisions you receive immediately.** As you do, please keep in mind that some decisions will require action, whether you are admitted or waitlisted, and you should speak with your college counselor first. Note that enrollment deposits are not due until May 1. You should only place one deposit. If you have a question about this, please talk to your college counselor.

ADVANCED PLACEMENT EXAMS

All students in AP courses have been registered for their respective AP exams. Students who have received College Board accommodations are expected to use them on AP tests. If not, they should speak with Ms. Papillon or Mr. Nicholson immediately.

SPECIAL PARENT MEETING ON FEBRUARY 24

For the past six years, we've offered an informal conversation to help provide parents with perspectives on how they may best support their child receive admissions decisions, navigate any potential waitlists, planning spring college visits and more. Additionally, we'll offer perspective as your child transitions to college. Upper School counselor Carla Davis-Vue will be on hand to offer her insights as well.

Juniors

JUNIOR APPLICATION CASE STUDIES WORKSHOP

As noted on the school calendar, the Case Studies Workshop, the highlight of our programming, will be Wednesday, April 1 from 6:30 – 8:30 pm. Be sure to attend as we will have admissions leaders from across the country on hand for this interactive and behind-the-scenes activity. It's something you will not want to miss! We will be in touch before spring break with additional information, and, yes, some homework to prepare for the big night!

COUNSELOR MEETINGS

Juniors should see Ms. Papillon immediately to schedule an appointment with their counselor prior to Upper School Conferences. They have been reminded numerous times in various formats. Not only do counselor schedules fill quickly, but the conversation may require some reflection, thought, and discussions with faculty members, department heads and parents. These meetings will reflect back on the MISF Fair, college rep visits, and campus visits and research

along with the various questionnaires students have completed to lay the ground work for the college list, revisit the testing plan, look ahead to May Program and summer, and to discuss scheduling. The goal of a senior year schedule – as well as activities and involvement - is to maximize the balance of challenge and success, revealing the breadth and depth of your child’s interests and abilities, and to reflect strengths in areas of interest.

COFFEE TALKS

The College Counseling Office will host a series of informal meetings for junior parents at 8:00 AM in the Heritage Room at Anderson Ice Arena throughout the spring semester. Each meeting will address a specific topic. If you are unable to make it, do not worry! These meetings are not intended to replace personal conversations with a college counselor, but rather to provide information about the specific topic. A summary of the conversation will be emailed shortly after each Coffee Talk.

The topic of the next Coffee Talk slated for March 5 is “Developing a Balanced List.”

Additional Coffee Talks are currently scheduled for April 23 and May 21. Please watch your email and the College Counseling Newsletter for further details.

PARENT SURVEYS!

There is a parent surveys to complete; we ask that you complete it in a timely manner. On April 1st we will open the 2nd parent questionnaire that you should complete at least 48 hours before your spring meeting with your counselor.

Each parent/guardian should have a personal account to access Naviance. The surveys seek information and insights directly from each parent. Therefore, we ask each parent to use their personalized link to offer his/her insights. Should you wish to work collaboratively, you may work together to complete one parent's survey. If you need help accessing your Naviance account, please contact [Carrie Papillon](#) (information may be found below).

SPRING FAMILY MEETINGS

Speaking of spring counselor meetings, your counselor expects to meet with each family – parent(s)/guardian(s) and student this spring, after Spring Break and before May Program. Contact Carrie Papillon to schedule a time as counselor schedules fill up quickly, particularly those times before and after school.

TESTING

At this point, all juniors should have worked with their college counselor to develop a testing plan. Remember, the student registers with the SAT (collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat) and ACT (actstudent.org). If in doubt, students should take the ACT with Writing. [Here](#) is the best compilation of college polices regarding the Writing section. If you have questions about testing or accommodations on standardized testing, please see your college counselor as soon as possible.

Upcoming test dates are (registration deadlines fall about a month prior to the test date, so plan ahead!):

- March 14 SAT test (offsite)
- April 4 ACT test (offsite)
- May 2 SAT test (offsite)
- June 6 SAT test at Breck School
- June 13 ACT test at Breck School
- July 18 ACT test (offsite)

SPRING BREAK PLANS

Whether you are traveling or staying local, this time may be a good opportunity to visit colleges. At this time, it's important to visit a range of colleges and universities. Your college counselor can help you plan your spring break trip. However, you do not need to travel to accomplish this! There are a lot of great options locally.

MAY PROGRAM can be a great opportunity for our students. This is the first opportunity for Class of 2021 to take advantage of a few choices: pursuing an internship, participating in service, or delving into a special project. Juniors will want to think seriously at how they want to utilize this opportunity. The college counselors are ready to talk.

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NCAA ELIGIBILITY CENTER

Interested in playing Division I or II athletics? Please register with the NCAA Eligibility Center: www.eligibilitycenter.org and be sure to speak with your counselor about the recruiting process.

SUMMER PLANS

Some of the greatest times for growth for high school students are the summers after their sophomore and junior years. We strongly encourage students to plan significant experiences that take them away from their school friends and Breck's academic work and get them in a different atmosphere where they learn about themselves and the world in which they live. There are many wonderful programs out there for students, and our city offers a richness of local experiences. Take a class at a local university or art center, join an archaeological dig, join a local political campaign, or design your own reading list with a Breck faculty member. Think big. Think broad. Find something that will allow you to pursue a passion or something in which you are curious.

Sophomores

COLLEGE COUNSELOR ASSIGNMENTS AND 1ST MEETINGS

College Counselor assignments were sent to families in December. We ask that all sophomores see [Carrie Papillon](#) in the College Counseling Office to schedule an appointment with their college counselor. Counselor schedules are filling up as many juniors have already done so and sophomores have now begun scheduling meetings as well. We ask these first meetings include only the student and counselor as they serve as an opportunity to get to know each other a bit.

They also serve as a preliminary discussion on scheduling and testing and you may want to be a part of these conversations. We ask that your child come to the meeting with some ideas and having had some conversations at home prior to the meeting and to return home with follow up discussions after this meeting. This will allow the counselors to begin forming a relationship with your child and provide an opportunity for your child to try on the responsibility this process requires. Counselors are more than happy to connect with parents. Feel free to email or call or to schedule an appointment through Carrie Papillon. If your family needs to find out their college counselor, please contact [Carrie Papillon](#) in the College office.

GRADE 9-10 STUDENT PARENT COLLEGE COUNSELING MEETING

On Wednesday, January 29, many families joined us for our annual Grades 9-10 Student Parent Forum. Chris George, St. Olaf's Dean of Admissions, Karen Sieben Backes, College of St. Benedict and St. John's University's Dean of Admission, and other members of the Breck community joined us for a series of conversations on a variety of topics. It was a great night to learn how artists and athletes can optimize their process as well as how to finance a college education, approach standardized testing, and thoughts on maximizing and personalizing their Breck experience. The handouts and PowerPoints will be shared with parents shortly.

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A NOTE ON PRACTICE TESTS, PRACTICE TEST RESULTS, & COLLEGE EMAILS

We distributed Practice ACT booklets and scores and Practice SAT booklets during the January 29 College Forum. If your child was absent or missed this event, they should have received the materials from Dr. Graham. The scores are informative, but should be reviewed within context. Reviewing these results and possible action items with your college counselor will be beneficial. Our focus is on skills, not scores. We will send a note shortly with additional context.

The correspondence from colleges will increase in the next year and can be as informative as it is overwhelming. A student need not reply to every email that is sent. A student need not read every letter. Rather, set the items aside to review as a study break or when a student has more time. Just because a school has sent material may not mean the student will be admitted to the

institution; likewise, a college to which your child will be admitted may not yet have your child's contact information and has therefore not sent information.

Students should not feel compelled to respond to inquiries or contacts from colleges. If there is a school that piques their interest, they should respond or request more information in order to remain on the college's mailing list. There are many times a student can enter into the communication flow, this happens to be the first time. A student may always request information via a college's website, an email, a campus visit, or other means.

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Freshmen

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A NOTE ON PRACTICE TESTS AND PRACTICE TEST RESULTS

We distributed the practice PSAT9 results and booklets during the January 29 College Forum. If your child was absent or missed this event, they should have received them from Mr. Ohm. The scores are informative, but should be reviewed within context. Rather than focusing on scores, it is the skills assessed that are most worth reviewing. We will send a note shortly with additional context.

SUMMER

With one semester in the rearview mirror, now is the time to reflect and make some goals for the future, both in the classroom and out. Students should continue to develop good study habits, get to know teachers, and step out of their comfort zone to take on a leadership role, try a new activity, and to find other outlets for their talents and interests. As you complete scheduling requests for next year, make summer plans, be mindful that how students spend their time reflects their interests and passions!

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