

Academic Highlights

The class of 2015 earned admission to these colleges:





A banner year for college acceptances

RIVERDALE HIGH SCHOOL – Senior year is winding down and members of this year's graduating class have their whole lives ahead of them. And it all begins with selecting the right college.

At Riverdale, we are particularly proud that our college-going culture begins freshman year, when students envision their post-high school futures. As all students work to fulfill core graduation requirements, they also have time to design an individualized path toward college acceptance and/or career realization. Supported by rigorous academics and comprehensive college counseling services, our students experience an outstanding college acceptance rate. Equally important, our students are happy with their college choices.

"We want Riverdale students to be the strongest possible candidates to the colleges of their choice," says Michael Murray, school counselor.

Interestingly, Mr. Murray adds, three of the approximately 15 seniors who have attended Riverdale since kindergarten or 1st grade, have collectively been admitted to 26 universities, including many of the most selective colleges in the world – Duke, Yale, Dartmouth, Cornell, Johns Hopkins, Brown, Vanderbilt, Colorado College, Claremont McKenna, Pitzer, Scripps, Tulane, Northeastern, Smith and Rensselaer. The other twelve "lifers," as he calls them, add Pepperdine, University of San Francisco, Bard, Colby, Kenyon,

Oberlin and many others to the list.

Riverdale's college advisor, Jill Hall, agrees **it's been an amazing year for college acceptances – with 300 acceptances to 153 different colleges and universities** in the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom. Plus, the class of 2015 was offered **more than \$6,325,000 in merit- and need-based aid.**

"I have been so impressed by this class, not only because of their amazing accomplishments, but also because of the thought they gave to their college choices," Mrs. Hall says. **"Not one student sought out exclusivity at the expense of fit."**

Why is "fit" so important? Mrs. Hall says there are many factors that impact a college decision. "We encourage students to look for colleges that meet their academic goals, as well as those that offer the perfect learning environment for them, whether it's a large or small college, rural or urban, what extracurricular activities are important to them and, most importantly, meets their financial requirements."

For instance, one senior turned down some of the most highly ranked colleges in the U.S. in favor of a full ride at a research institution that, in addition to other perks, offers this student paid summer experiences and internships both here and abroad. "We fully expect this student to accomplish amazing things," Mrs. Hall says.

Creating a capstone

RIVERDALE HIGH SCHOOL – **Unique to our high school, Senior Exhibition is the capstone of the Riverdale education.** The experience invites students to delve into a controversial topic that engages, challenges and calls them to action.

All seniors complete an extensive interdisciplinary project – crafting an essential question, conducting research, interviewing experts, writing a lengthy academic paper and, finally, presenting their findings to an audience of teachers, students and community members.

"Students are encouraged to shadow, conduct interviews and connect with as many professionals in the field as possible to further inform their understanding of the subject," says course teacher Laura Pridmore-Brown.

This year, she says, virtually every student has reached out to renowned experts, such as Bill Gates, Gloria Steinem and Michael Pollan. "While the students may not have heard from the individuals directly, they were contacted by assistants who referred them to topic-related resources."

Examples of expert connections include:

Charlotte Loegais corresponded with race relations expert Tenishi Coates, senior editor for *The Atlantic Monthly*, regarding **"Racism and Police Brutality."**

For **"Addressing Sexual Victimization on College Campuses: Practice and Policy,"** Isabelle Gilges viewed *"The Hunting Ground,"* a documentary exposing issues surrounding sexual victimization on college campuses, and worked to bring the film to Riverdale for all students to see.

Caroline Edwards used social media to connect with Hollywood actresses and directors regarding **"The Underrepresentation of Women in the Film Industry."**

For **"Zoos: The Balance Between Captivity and the Natural Environment,"** Zach Tusing consulted experts from the Oregon Zoo about conservation and habitat creation.

Samantha Schultz connected with several high level academics and UN officials who have worked to end **"Illicit Arts and Antiquities Trafficking."**