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ST JOHNSBURY ACADEMY JEJU

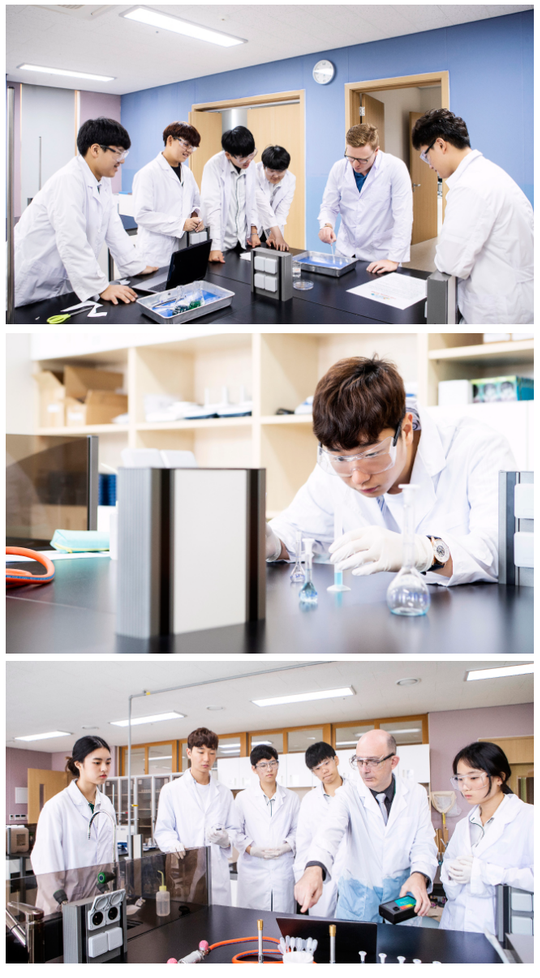
AN INTRODUCTION TO
THE COLLEGE COUNSELING PROGRAM





College Counseling Overview

The College Counseling program at St. Johnsbury Academy Jeju focuses on helping students find the best university that matches their academic abilities, career aspirations and desired location in the world. This also includes South Korean Universities. We have a dedicated College Counselor who works very closely with those students applying to Korean Universities. Each student is unique and has personal goals that need to be nurtured and developed. The process for developing a student's abilities and interests is a journey that takes many years. The College Counselor works individually with each student to explore and expand his or her knowledge of various universities that may be most appropriate for the student's future career development. Be it a university or a Gap year, each student explores possible target goals upon graduation from St. Johnsbury Academy Jeju. Students are encouraged to cultivate and explore their academic interests and research possible careers in that area.





Questions for the College Counselor:

Q1. How many universities should I apply to?

Students should research schools through MAIA Learning, our College and Career Platform and other widely available online resources, and begin to narrow their selected target universities. St. Johnsbury Academy Jeju limits the number of applications to 14 using a 12+2 system. Keep in mind, the more universities a student targets the more work they will need to do and application fees to pay. I would recommend that each student should think about targeting 1-4 "Reach" schools (schools that are highly selective), 4-6 "Target" schools (schools that your academic data qualify you for), and 3-4 "Safety" schools (schools where the student's grades are currently above those required of these universities). Students should apply to universities that they truly want to attend. By randomly selecting universities just because they are listed in the top 50 of some ranking system is not a good way to go about applying to universities. During the summers of their high school years, students should try to visit the campuses of universities to which they are considering applying. This will give them an opportunity to see the campus and meet with admissions personnel and possibly current students attending that university and it also shows a demonstrated interest in the school. This can help in developing an understanding if the university will be the right fit.

Q2. Are my chances better if I apply for an Early Action/ Decision to top universities in the US?

Universities usually accept a higher percentage of students who are committed to attending that university during the early acceptance rounds. This varies from university to university, but there are fewer students who apply early so there is a benefit of being organized and knowing which school you are committing to at the early application period. That being said, there are more and more students applying during the early rounds thus the percentage of getting in during this time is slightly decreasing. Students need to understand this trend. Competitive universities are searching for top academic students who want to commit early to their schools. If you have completed your external tests and have scored well and your high school GPA is strong, then I would recommend that you apply early (November 1st or 15th) to help your chances of acceptance. Knowing that Early Decision is a binding agreement, and Early Action is getting to know earlier if you have been accepted, being waitlisted or rejected is important to know as a possible decision.











Q3. Do universities want me to take many Advanced Placement (AP) courses?

I think it's best to first understand why a student should take an AP class. AP classes are college-level courses taken during high school. When thinking about AP's, a student should be thinking about "why" and "when". AP scores are used for College Credit. Taking AP classes will show rigor, it can help make your transcript stronger, and allows a student to experience a college-level course while still attending high school. Students should choose AP courses when they are ready. Taking a class when a student is not ready can result in a low grade which will affect their GPA. Students should take an AP course if they have a genuine interest in it. Taking out of school AP courses does not always show universities that a top student is outstanding or that the student is pursuing courses that are of interest to him or her. It may look as if a student is just checking off as many AP courses as they can so that they can impress the admissions teams at universities. Universities are more interested in how a student is learning in the classroom setting. Studying for an external exam gives Universities no information about a student. SJA Jeju offers plenty of options to meet the needs of our students in a number of different subject areas. My suggestion is to start slow and build upon the number of AP courses in high school. Remember, your GPA is one of the most important pieces of the application.

Q4. How do universities evaluate student applications?

One of the first things to understand are the Universities are evaluating a student's transcript to what is offered at the school. Universities first look at a student's Grade Point Average (GPA) at the school they are attending. They also look to see if students have taken courses that are of interest to them and that are academically challenging. After that, they will examine extra-curricular experiences, awards, and activities that the student has passionately pursued over his or her high school career as well as the impact the student has had at their school and the community. Furthermore, and I can't stress enough; the College Essay plays an important role in a university's admissions decision. A well-crafted, personal, and uniquely presented essay can make a difference with the admissions committee. Recommendation letters are also very important in providing perspective to the university about a student's academic performance as well as character and attitudes. Other factors such as legacy, cultural-ethnic heritage, socio-economic background, and interviews can sometimes play a role as well. Then they will look at a student's external exams such as SAT/ACT and TOEFL scores if it's required or if a student sends in the scores.

Q5. How do I develop my Personal Statement or Common Application Essay?

Students need to spend time thinking, nurturing and drafting their Personal Statement/Essays over a period of time. I recommend students take time during the 2nd semester of their Junior year (when the new Common Application Essays are revealed) and over the summer to explore and draft their essays/personal statements. There will be workshops to guide students through this process throughout the 2nd semester of their Junior year. It is best to start drafting your personal essay early and take the time to edit and find your voice.

Q6. What should I do in the summer between Junior and Senior year?

Rising Seniors should be demonstrating interest in the area of studies in which they are wanting to pursue in college, be that volunteering, gaining an internship, or participating in a summer experience that will help them to grow. I highly recommend that families to travel to the country that they are targeting for university acceptance. Visiting university campuses will help students get a better idea of whether they can see themselves attending that particular university or not. If students have not completed their SAT assessments, then preparing for those assessments will be critical, as students will have only a few chances to complete these assessments early during their first semester of their senior year. Also, students should prepare their personal statements and application essay answers in the summertime between their junior and senior years. The first months of senior year are very busy as students try to do their best academically while taking part in activities and events that are of interest to them and completing university applications. This will be the busiest time in their high school years. It is best for students to do as much preparation as they can during the summer months before their senior year begins.