



# SEATTLE ACADEMY

## COLLEGE ADVISING

Through its three college advising professionals, Seattle Academy College Advising fuses twenty-five years of college admission and advising experience with deep knowledge of Seattle Academy and students' day-to-day life therein. As a result, one hundred percent of Seattle Academy's seniors enroll in four-year colleges, universities and conservatories within two years of graduation, as up to five percent elect to take a gap year prior to college matriculation. These colleges include the nation's most selective.

Melanie Reed, Director of College Advising ([mreed@seattleacademy.org](mailto:mreed@seattleacademy.org)) and Jason Gough, Associate College Advisor ([jgough@seattleacademy.org](mailto:jgough@seattleacademy.org)) both served on the fast-paced, selective college admission team at the University of Puget Sound. Together, they made tough admission decisions, formed policy, represented the college to demanding constituents, and worked directly and personally with families. In her role as Director of Freshman Admission at Puget Sound, Melanie supervised the admission counseling staff and developed a comprehensive knowledge of the admission profession. Following his years at Puget Sound, Jason earned graduate degrees and taught at several selective independent schools nationwide. Reunited at Seattle Academy, Melanie and Jason work shoulder-to-shoulder with faculty who have direct knowledge of the academic and extra-curricular lives of students. Stacie Cone ([scone@seattleacademy.org](mailto:scone@seattleacademy.org)) adds to the team exceptional organizational and technical skills, as well as excellent rapport with families and college representatives alike. This collective experience arms Seattle Academy and its families with real "college-side" experience, everyday understanding of students in Seattle Academy's own classrooms, myth-busting perspective, and informed, humane college advising pedagogy that cuts through mystifying media hype to organize and find the right destinations for kids.

### Conversation

In Seattle Academy's dynamic college-preparatory setting, it's no surprise energetic conversations about college occur regularly and informally. Seattle Academy College Advising welcomes questions and conversation at any time. In eleventh grade, juniors and their families formally kick-off the college process, marking the official shift from College Advising's deep and intentional attention to the current senior class and its application processing, to the junior class and its needs. Melanie and Jason, however, meet with parents as a group during the spring of students' sophomore year and with families during the fall of students' junior year to set the foundation for the teamwork to come. The critical focus, however, is on the real foundation of students' college applications: *the academic and co-curricular transcript*. College Advising establishes this essential balance to maintain proper focus on the actual core of college advising success: not artificial and transparent packaging, but instead material shaped directly through Seattle Academy's Culture of Performance. The college search is the naturally culminating event of the Seattle Academy experience, and the practical application of the Culture of Performance. Each student discusses at length the college process with College Advising, both in scheduled meetings and in Seattle Academy's classrooms and hallways. The benefit of these on-site conversations is clear: Seattle Academy College Advising functions as part of a broader network of faculty and staff who know and advise each student, formally and informally.

### Service, Education, and Representation

Seattle Academy College Advising stands at the intersection of students' and families' college-going desires and the reality of the national admission landscape as it:

- forms the organizational "home base" for each student's college search
- structures a college-seeking program customized to the individual student's needs and style
- evaluates each student's college needs via day-to-day interactions, official and unofficial conversations, detailed questionnaires, and College Advising assessments
- develops college lists and revises college lists
- stocks an up-to-date on-site college media center
- suggests and monitors travel plans to see colleges
- provides college interview practice and tips
- advises regarding test prep and test planning
- answers questions about necessary and unnecessary "a la carte" services for fee outside the Seattle Academy network
- advises about financial aid and scholarships
- helps each student translate his or her strengths to the applications themselves
- reviews and provides feedback on college essays and résumés (Melanie and Jason have read nearly fifteen thousand college essays in their combined years)
- sets due dates for completion of college tasks
- helps coordinate teacher recommendation writing

- writes each student's official "counselor letter," drawing on daily knowledge of the student
- arranges and submits thousands of Seattle Academy-specific materials for students (including the "counselor letter," the "secondary school report," teacher recommendations, context for Seattle Academy's policies on AP/honors classes and on disciplinary reporting, the "report to colleges" or school profile, the school transcript, an outline of the applicant's current academic course load and more)
- advocates directly with admission offices\* where appropriate and where genuinely beneficial
- guides students in self-advocacy, critical to student success in college
- organizes and leads after-hours workshops for parents and students on such topics as college athletics and athletic recruitment, financial aid, learning differences and the college search, college essay writing, and transition to college
- helps sort through various admission decisions and possible college choices in the senior spring

#### **Availability**

Seattle Academy College Advising not only sees and knows students through College Advising appointments, but accompanies students on school retreats and events, attends students' artistic and athletic events, witnesses first-hand student successes, and has contact with students throughout the school day. College Advising truly knows Seattle Academy students. This personal, flexible, everyday approach complements College Advising's regularly scheduled appointments. "Working where students live" during the Seattle Academy school day, Seattle Academy College Advising meets each day with various Seattle Academy students and families, and with visiting college representatives. Additionally, students regularly take advantage of periodic and informal office hours where they ask quick questions, drop off forms, stop by for dedicated time and space to work on a college application project, or simply connect with College Advising.

#### **Network**

Bothe Melanie and Jason are current members of the National Association of College Admission Counseling (NACAC) and its Pacific Northwest counterpart, PNACAC. Melanie is a past board member of PNACAC and also assumes leadership roles in the National Association of College Admission Counseling. In Melanie and Jason's admission work at the University of

Puget Sound, they traveled broadly, visiting colleges and establishing long-term professional relationships with other college deans and directors. Melanie and Jason both increase their knowledge regularly through attendance at national and regional admission counseling conferences and through visits to colleges nationally. In the past year, Seattle Academy College Advising visited officially over fifty colleges nationally and internationally, many of them on tours reserved especially for college advisors based at high-schools, as well as the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) annual conference in New Orleans and the Clambake Institute at St. George's School in Newport, RI.

As the home base for students' college investigations, Seattle Academy hosts on-site well over one hundred college representatives yearly (far more than the number of Seattle Academy graduates each year). These college representatives not only visit the school directly, they witness Seattle Academy students where they learn and live, and benefit from post-meeting face-to-face conversations with College Advising which puts into even greater context the students they just met and their academic environment. Visiting college representatives also host College Advising for meals and conversation about the school itself and about the state of the profession.

Seattle Academy College Advising partners with its counterparts at Seattle's independent schools for conversation, shared experience, joint-presentations, and the organization of the fourth annual Seattle Area Independent Schools Fair in fall 2011, which will draw approximately 140 selective colleges and universities to Seattle to meet our students exclusively.

#### **Community**

Seattle Academy College Advising extends beyond the walls of Seattle Academy. Its partnership with Rainier Scholars results in consulting conversations between Seattle Academy College Advising, Seattle Academy's Rainier Scholars, and the Rainier Scholars staff, from one not-for-profit college advising office to another, to ensure the best in not-for-profit college advising for Seattle's kids, regardless of income. Regardless of home high school, Rainier Scholars students are invited to Seattle Academy College Advising workshops scheduled throughout the academic year.

\* Note: Often, admission offices have policies where they communicate only with a College Advisor based at the high school.

#### **College materials often request the following information:**

CEEB/ACT Code: 481154      FAX: (206) 323-6618      PHONE (both Jason and Melanie): (206)676-6805

For guest access to a list of colleges visiting Seattle Academy between mid-September and mid-November, click:

<http://connection.naviance.com/seattleacademy> and enter "saas" as the guest password.