



WHAT HAPPENS BETWEEN NOW AND JUNIOR YEAR?

- **Students focus mostly on being, well, students.** We can't stress this enough: This deserves and needs more attention than the college search now and in the future. It'll pay off in the college search.
- Over 100 **colleges and universities** visit Seattle Academy annually. Juniors are allowed to attend (we'll explain).
- Students attend various **college fairs** (we'll list these on a comprehensive schedule we mail at the end of the year), including the Colleges that Change Lives Tour/Fair, the National Association of College Admission Counseling (NACAC) National College Fair, and the NACAC Performing and Visual Arts Fair.
- After enormous turn-out in its first three years, Seattle Academy hosts, along with other area independent schools, an **invite-only independent school college fair** exclusively and intentionally for juniors and seniors and their families with well over 100 selective college attendees.
- Sophomores and juniors **take or retake the PSAT**, the outcome of which guides us and families toward possible test prep.
- Melanie and Jason, college advisors, speak with juniors and their families at an optional evening meeting in October. At that time, they will lay the foundation for her individual work with students and families.
- Melanie and Jason **answer questions anytime** as they arise (all the while ensuring the application process for current applicants gets significant attention... believe us, you'll be glad for all the attention when your students submit their applications).
- Immediately after winter break, at **Junior College Night**, College Advising transitions from filing applications with the current senior class to working intensely with the junior class, introducing students and their families to SAAS' web-based college counseling program and arranging individual meetings to address the college search at the most developmentally and academically appropriate, healthy, and advantageous time.

WE'RE STILL "DEEP" IN OUR FIRST YEAR OR TWO OF UPPER SCHOOL. WHAT CAN WE DO NOW?

- Support your student in a **consistent and/or improving academic close to sophomore year** and an equally supportive beginning to junior year. What goes on the transcript comes first, before the "college searching."
- Urge students to **save writing** and record interests and activities in a paper file or Word doc for a later extra-curricular **résumé**.
- Know that your student's **authentic academic and personal individualism** (his or her academic and co-curricular **résumés**, so to speak) represents best to colleges, not an overly "planned" and "groomed" package of Something that Looks and Sounds Like Johnny But Isn't Quite Johnny. The true (or untrue) Johnny is clear to admission committees. Summer activities, for example, need not be expensive and need not be out of the country. The experiences should genuinely grab student participants/volunteers, and give them a jumping off point for further (local?) service.
- Attend those **college advising events** (on topics ranging from college financing, to college athletics, to addressing learning/emotional/physical differences in the college search process) open to the entire parent-body.
- **Read *Colleges that Change Lives* and *Looking Beyond the Ivy League*** by Loren Pope.
- Families occasionally have questions about spring break or summer **college tours**. These visits can, and should, remain informal at this point, not exhaustive tours of all small Northeast liberal arts colleges. Consider doing a "drive by" of a college (or three) at your vacation destination. If your student knows s/he wants to see a particular college, that's great! Plan a trip. If s/he has no idea, that's fine, too. If your first college visits occur next spring, or even after your student is admitted to a few of his/her colleges, you are not behind.
- Know that every student (and every family member, for that matter) is on a **continuum** in the college search... as in life. When the time comes, Seattle Academy will not let you or your student fall behind. A proven record of college advising history, structure, and success informs your student's process.

WHAT SHOULD WE NOT DO NOW?

- Push your student toward college faster than necessary by discussing college ad nauseam. Even if you're thinking, "C'mon, I know my sophomore is as interested in this as I am!" --- too much, too early, can backfire. Burnout, for all kids, related to all activities (college "searching" among them), is extremely real. Seattle Academy draws on years of experience to time its process intentionally to maximize the high school period in which kids are developmentally, emotionally, mentally, and strategically best suited for the task.
- Don't get fixed on any one "thing" --- any one type, location, or selectivity of school. We will insist the eventual college list is (strategically) varied.
- Recognize that the genuine (not manufactured) academic and personal record is paramount, obvious, and attractive to colleges.
- Allow the media, the next door neighbor, or the for-profit college "industry" make you crazy or make you feel like you should have done fourteen things already. College Advising is here to tell you when you need to do the first of the fourteen.
- Sign-up, or pay for, outside college services other than test prep. This happens now very infrequently at Seattle Academy (no current junior families contracted outside college advising), and we want to save you from duplication of efforts and unnecessary spending in an already spendy process.
- Choose as a family to address the newness and seeming ambiguity of an otherwise extremely exciting (and at Seattle Academy, extremely well organized and successful!) process in ways that model great coping and problem-solving skills for students.

**REMEMBER – YOU HAVE
ALREADY STARTED THE
COLLEGE SEARCH PROCESS
JUST BY CHOOSING
SEATTLE ACADEMY!**