



SEATTLE ACADEMY COLLEGE ADVISING

Through its college advising professionals, Seattle Academy College Advising combines decades 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 diverse, "best match" colleges include the nation's most selective.

Seattle Academy's College Advisors brings to their work with Seattle Academy students extensive experience in colleges and universities. College Advisors Melanie Reed (mreed@seattleacademy.org) and Dave Thomas (dthomas@seattleacademy.org) served on fast-paced, highly selective college admission teams. Working in college admission, they made tough admission decisions, formed policy, represented colleges to demanding constituents, worked closely with families, and developed comprehensive knowledge of the admission profession as a whole. Each College Advisor accrued graduate school experience that greatly increased both higher education and subject matter expertise. The College Advisors work shoulder-to-shoulder with faculty who also understand the academic and extra-curricular lives of students. As both College Advising Associate and 12th Grade Coordinator, Stacie Cone (scone@seattleacademy.org) contributes exceptional organizational and technical skills with oversight for seniors in general. This unique and powerful background arms Seattle Academy and its families with broad, deep, and first-hand "college-side" experience, everyday understanding of students in Seattle Academy's classrooms, myth-busting perspective, and an informed, humane, successful college advising philosophy that cuts through media hype to help 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 after which juniors "kick-off" the formal college process, marking the official shift from College Advising's deep attention to the current senior class and its application processing, to the junior class and its needs. College Advisors, 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 ensure questions are answered and to set the foundation for the teamwork to come. The structure of Seattle Academy's advisory system permits college advisors dedicated time for grade-level and individual meetings. 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 attractive to colleges and 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 and revises college lists
- refreshes continually its knowledge of selective college admission
- stocks an up-to-date on-site college center
- suggests and monitors travel plans to see colleges
- organizes special sessions on everything from STEM applications, to the athletic recruiting process, to the arts admission process, to Early Decision, to college interviews, and more
- 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 (College Advisors have read tens of thousands of 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 families on such topics as financial aid and scholarships, learning differences and the college search, 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 as well as with visiting college representatives. Students also take advantage of unstructured time where they ask quick questions, drop off forms, stop by for dedicated space to work on a college application project, or connect with College Advising.

Network

In addition to the Association of College Counselors in Independent Schools (ACCIS), the College Advisors are current members of the National Association of College Admission Counseling (NACAC) and its Pacific Northwest counterpart, PNACAC, of which Melanie is a past board member. In the College Advisors' admission work, they traveled broadly, visiting colleges and establishing long-term professional relationships with other college deans and directors. College Advisors increase their knowledge regularly through attendance at national and regional admission counseling conferences and through visits to colleges nationally. In a given year, Seattle Academy College Advising visits approximately fifty colleges nationally and internationally,

many of them on tours reserved especially for college advisors based at high-schools, as well as attends the College Board Forum, the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC), annual conference (presented in 2015), the Association of College Counselors in Independent Schools (ACCIS) annual conference (presented in 2015) and the Clambake Institute at St. George's School in Newport, RI (presented in 2016) which brings together innovative and experienced deans of admission and college counselors from some of the most visible colleges and schools nationally.

As the home base for students' college investigations, Seattle Academy hosts on-site nearly 150 college representatives yearly (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. Ongoing relationships with these college admission professionals and friends helps contextualize and understand new initiatives and behaviors in college admission offices around the country and world.

Seattle Academy College Advising partners with its counterparts at Seattle's independent schools for conversation, shared experience, joint-presentations, and the organization of the annual Seattle Area Independent Schools Fair, which draws approximately 150 selective colleges and universities to Seattle to meet our schools' students exclusively.

Starting in 2015, Seattle Academy partnered with The Bush School to host an annual "Case Studies" (or mock admission committee) event where students and parents worked directly with deans of admission to see first-hand how admission decisions are made. Northwest School and University Prep will join this program in 2017.

Community

Seattle Academy College Advising extends beyond the walls of Seattle Academy. Its work 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.

I am so pleased for the great relationship [student] has with you. Her connection to you has been a big part of what made the college search relatively easy and fun. So if you are ever feeling you aren't doing GREAT work in the world...THINK AGAIN! What you did mattered to at least one (and I know many, many, many more) student and to some very thankful parents. – Recent Seattle Academy family