

November, 2009

Dear Seniors and Parents of Seniors,

These next few weeks will be busy with college selection activity for the seniors who did not apply early and for many of those who did. About eight-five percent of the class mailed early applications within the first two weeks of November, which means that between thirty and forty boys will have had their selection process completed with mid-December admits, should the percentages for acceptances be the same this year as in the past. Since these seniors cannot yet know who they are, all should pay attention to the reminders below.

IF YOU APPLIED EARLY? Discuss your additional schools with Mr. Rosenhaus, Abbot Giles and Mr. Flanagan. Determine now what essays you will have to write, and give yourself some time over Thanksgiving to get a head start on them. If you are an early action candidate, decide whether or not you will apply to additional schools if admitted. Financial aid candidates should apply to additional colleges, but try to limit the number to two or three. If you are an early decision candidate, organize your essay writing responsibilities for five or six additional applications, preparing in advance for disappointment, should it come. If the essays for your early college will not cover much of the work for the remaining five or six, get cracking on it now; if you're fairly well organized and ahead of the game, perhaps you can sit back and relax until mid-December. However, we have a last minute caution for the early applicants. Typically, the early applicant pool of candidates grows every year. If this is the case for all colleges, it could be that the bottom bar of the group to be accepted early will be raised. Consequently, our hopeful predictions for those "on the bubble" may "go south." Be prepared.

EXPENSIVE TASTES IN COLLEGES Every once in a while we counselors will tell a senior that he has "expensive tastes in colleges," which means that he may be over-reaching, over-estimating his chances for admission. We never tell a student not to apply to a college. Everyone has a right to pursue a dream, even if the odds against attaining it are long. We do feel, however, that one ought to limit those long shots and be well prepared to accept disappointment with equanimity should it come. We bother to put this in print to you, Seniors and Parents of Seniors, because in recent years we have noticed more "over-reaching" than in the past. That's fine, and admirable, so long as everyone has two or three safeties they would love to attend if they had to. When we mentioned to an Ivy League admissions officer two years ago, that we will have three dozen 800s in the class, he commented, "We have thousands of 800s in our applicant pool."

THE COLLEGE LIST Each senior should take another look at his college list. To be sure, because the November and December SATs and the first term grades are not known yet, we could well be adjusting those lists through January. We will be discussing each boy's list with him during these weeks. The important drill for us now is to make sure that each boy has 2-3 truly safe, "safeties" which he will be happy to attend if he has to.

SECONDARY SCHOOL REPORTS All seniors should give us the list of colleges to which we will submit the secondary school or counselor reports as soon as possible, but no later than **December 18**.

TEACHER RECOMMENDATIONS Be sure, also, to give a list of the colleges which your teachers will submit recommendations to. If you did not apply early this **MUST** be done within the next few days, since most teachers like to write the recommendations over the coming vacation. Remember, you must also give your teachers a resume of your accomplishments of the last three years. The resume could significantly improve the quality of the recommendation, so we have asked the teachers not to write for you without it.

COLLEGE ESSAYS Guidelines: 1) let your voice come through, be personal, be you, write what you want to write, not what you think they want to hear; 2) "show" first, then "tell," put it in a word picture, a story, then explain it - that way you draw the reader into your presentation; 3) to whatever degree this is possible, make it memorable - write your essay in such a way and so sincerely that when the reader goes home that afternoon after reading 400 that day, he will think of yours. Talk through your essay first with Mr. Rosenhaus, Abbot Giles, and/or Mr. Flanagan, and let us and your teachers read and comment on the first through final drafts.

TIMING Seniors should complete the first drafts of their essays soon. All essays and short paragraphs should be in final form, though not yet necessarily on the applications, before mid-December. That three week period from Thanksgiving through mid-December should be plenty of time for everyone to get the bulk of the creative work done. From then through December 25th, the applications should be put in final form and readied for submission on December 26 or December 27, at the latest. From December 20, until New Years, the Commons will be open morning, noon and night so the seniors can use the computers and pick the counselors' brains. We will do everything we can at Delbarton to make sure your essays and applications are the best they can be. For our part, the secondary school reports and our recommendations will be submitted from the Commons between the 26th and 29th of December.

Enough for now. Please be in touch (973-538-3231, Ext. 3060, 3012, 2340) if we can be of any help.