Dear Seniors and Parents of Seniors,

As of early January, Secondary School Reports for all 131 students have been submitted from this office, thus completing the application process. But the work of "college selection" is by no means over; it just becomes more subtle and intricate. This Update, for example, is very important for both parents and seniors. We hope you will read it carefully and respond if necessary.

The Class of 2018 did quite well in early admissions. About 75% of the one hundred and twenty early applicants were admitted, a number of whom will not be filing additional applications. Our impression is that the success rate is quite high. The seniors should be proud of their record of early admits, as they should be proud of their excellent grades, good spirit, and outstanding leadership of the school.

In January, we fine tune the selection process. On the one hand, we all must be sensitive to how the total pool of Delbarton applicants looks to the colleges, watching out for "bunching up" when too many boys use the same schools for "safeties." With the help of parents, Mr. Rosenhaus, Mr. Flanagan and Mr. Linfante, seniors during early January must make a final and realistic review of their college lists. Do the ACT, SAT Reasoning and SAT Subject scores of November and December, as well as the fall term and winter mid-term grades, suggest that we should add another "long shot" or another "safety" to the list of colleges? Now is the time to make that review. Late January may be too late to open additional applications.

At this time of the year, there is always a great deal of talk about the "senior slide" or "senioritis." After the Mid-Year Reports are compiled and forwarded to colleges at the end of January, some like to think that the work of the year for which the seniors are accountable is complete. Not so. In the first place, we are always accountable for our responsibilities regardless of whether or not someone in authority is checking on us. And, in the second place, colleges are very much aware of and interested in how seniors do in the last few months of their secondary school careers. Performance at that time, they have learned, is often the best predictor of performance in the first few months of college, sometimes the earliest a young adult is not under the thumb of an observant parent or high school teacher. Consequently, we can count on a college, particularly a competitive one, to react negatively to a senior's poor performance from January through May.

Relative to this, note the following. If a student is wait-listed at a college in late March or early April, and occasionally candidates are wait-listed at their first choice colleges, that student may not be admitted at that college when it goes to the wait-list in mid-May if the student's winter term and spring mid-term grades are lower than his fall term grades. Finally, seniors whose end-of-year grades are somewhat lower than the fall term grades may have to answer to the colleges for this. In our experience, every year at least a couple of seniors have to respond to their college's angry query regarding lower end-of-year grades. To be sure, some colleges have been known to withdraw acceptances because of spring term zeros or multiple ones, or because of major disciplinary difficulties. "To be fair warned is fair armed."
January is also the month each senior must take care that he not be regarded as a "ghost applicant." This is especially important at the "safety" schools. If you have not visited a college to which you are applying, yet if it is physically convenient to do so, you stand a good chance of being wait-listed there because the college may regard you as not serious about the application. January is the last month for college visits. Let's have no surprises in April.

To repeat, now is the time to finalize the list. Also, each senior should check their submissions with us. Have all corresponding secondary school reports gone off for all applications, and vice versa? Once again, we are happy to serve you. Be in touch with us, Mr. Rosenhaus (Ext. 3012), Mr. Flanagan (Ext. 2340) or Mr. Linfante (Ext. 2335) at any time.