



FLINTRIDGE PREPARATORY SCHOOL

Independent Counselor Statement

As the college admission climate continues to grow more complex, it is important for the Prep College Counseling Department to address the continued growth of the independent college counseling industry marketed to assist families through the college admission process. Historically, the business of independent counseling developed from the lack of resources available on public school campuses. With counseling caseloads of 800 students to one counselor, it is understandably a significant challenge for school counselors to effectively and thoughtfully counsel their students. Therefore, in such environments, outside counselors are helpful and necessary. However, this is not the case for Prep as we are a small school which provides our own comprehensive counseling program to all our students. The average student to counselor ratio at Prep is 35:1. The Department offers over 40 years of counseling and education experience, with the full-time counselors having served as former admission officers. The Prep college counseling curriculum has been thoughtfully crafted, intentionally launching junior year.

Unfortunately, it is often the case that independent counselors are parents who have gone through the process with a child, former teachers, alumni of highly selective institutions, or professional writers who lack substantive professional college admission experience. Independent counselors often provide unsophisticated and outdated advice while charging a great deal for services families are already receiving at Prep. When parents make the decision to hire an outside counselor, it is important to understand the child is being placed in the middle of two voices who are at competing odds, adding unnecessary angst to an already stressful process. It is obvious when students submit writing or follow approaches generated by an outside counselor, and most importantly it is obvious to college admission officers. ***The college counseling department strongly discourages securing outside counseling*** and the following statement expands on our position.

Prep Context

Prep's guidance counseling program is steered by the dean of students starting in grade 9. Each student's schedule is reviewed ensuring it is appropriate in rigor and balanced. The Prep college counselors are the experts in understanding Prep's academic philosophy, making them the most experienced advisors to evaluate how your student's application will be evaluated by colleges and universities.

Counseling and advising services begin the moment a student enrolls at Prep through our advisory programs and dean system. Confining and identifying an academic or career path for your child in middle school or in 9th grade; brings about challenges later in the college process. ***College admission offices are in search of authenticity; a trait which can only be presented when a student is encouraged to pursue areas in which they are genuinely interested – the work a high school college counselor is tasked to identify and support when working with their students.*** Such traits are identifiable through the questions included in a college application. Questions related to why a student is the way s/he is; or how s/he has been pushed to view the world in a different way; or what motivates him/her to bring about change. Such questions shed light on the crux of what makes the student unique, and the most compelling responses to such questions cannot be prepped or packaged. ***Thousands of college applications are competitive, but few are compelling. Guiding students to present their stories in compelling ways is the Prep college counseling difference.***

Sophomore Liaison

To support families in preparation for the college process, the college counseling department offers a sophomore liaison to answer questions from sophomore parents and students; to work closely with the sophomore dean and dean of students; to assist with summer program advising.

College Counseling Class

Prep's college counseling course begins second semester junior year, with the sole focus of guiding students to begin completing the technical and subjective aspects of the college application process. The course divides the application process into manageable pieces, allowing students to take the time to thoughtfully craft responses; and receive counsel to assist them in putting their best foot forward.

College Counseling at Prep

The college process at Prep is student-centered, developmentally appropriate and strategic. Using junior first semester grades, along with practice test scores are the quantitative measures Prep counselors use initially to begin a comprehensive counseling plan. Prep counselors travel throughout the year, interacting with colleagues in college admission offices across the country, maintaining a current pulse on the college admission climate.

Prep college counselors keep your child at the core of our work; advocating for him/her from start to finish; aiming to identify campus communities where your child will thrive. The college process is a journey that requires introspection, self-reflection and resilience. The college counselors walk alongside your children, supporting and encouraging them to be the best version of themselves throughout the college application process and beyond.

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