

**Saint Ignatius College Prep
Parent Organization General Meeting
Minutes of: November 11, 2008**

The meeting began at 7:05 p.m. with John Chandler extending warm greetings on behalf of Fr. Paulson and Dr. Karl who were involved in off campus responsibilities. Mr. Chandler asked for a time of silent prayer for All Souls. He thanked everyone who donated food for the Holy Family food pantry and expressed the increased need for food in the current economic situation. He noted that there was a volunteer signup sheet for the upcoming auction and promoted it as a social event, a great way for families to come together, and a way to achieve parent pledges. He extended his wishes and those of Fr. Paulson and Dr. Karl to everyone for a blessed Thanksgiving.

Brianna Latko, assistant principal of academics, introduced the evening's topic: college counseling. She noted how the process of choosing and applying to college can seem daunting, but we have an amazing college counseling staff to help. She introduced Kurt Schmidt and Bob Zigmund of the College Counseling Department. Mr. Schmidt has 11 years of recruiting experience in New York and Ohio prior to coming to Saint Ignatius College Prep.

Mr. Schmidt thanked Ann and Pat McAloon for inviting the department to talk with parents. Topics he would cover included trends in college counseling and selectivity at colleges. Check online at www.ignatius.org under College Counseling to view his full PowerPoint presentation. He asked how many attendees had been at a similar talk in spring 2008. Sixty-percent had not attended.

High points of his presentation:

Selectivity on the part of colleges is increasing (there are 3.3 million graduates this year, which is one million more than 15 years ago.)

An overview of high school students in general and Saint Ignatius College Prep students in particular:

STUDENTS IN GENERAL	SAINT IGNATIUS STUDENTS
Apply to 5 -6 colleges	Apply to 7.3 colleges
61% attend a four-year school	91% attend four-year schools prepared to be successful
	62% attend private institutions
	72% go to out-of-state schools
	56% attend a Catholic institution
	23% attend a Jesuit university

Mr. Schmidt explained that Illinois is second in the nation in net migration of students to out-of-state colleges. Chicago is the number one city recruited in the country and 162 colleges recruit at Saint Ignatius College Prep. There will be a College Fair at Saint Ignatius College Prep on March 18, 2009 where students can talk one-on-one with recruiters. It is an ideal opportunity to learn who will read applications and build a

relationship with that person. He also stressed that it is important when assessing colleges to pay attention to the percentage of incoming freshman that graduate and the percentage that graduate in four years. It is important to couple retention with graduation rates. When a graduation rate is stated, confirm if it is a four-year or six-year rate.

Mr. Schmidt introduced Naviance, an on-line college admissions tool, which contains nine years of data tracking where Saint Ignatius College Prep students attend college, plus much more.

Marquette University was number one in 2008 for Saint Ignatius College Prep applications. Saint Ignatius College Prep has a student/college counselor ratio of 86:1. The public school ratio is 315:1. Saint Ignatius College Prep counselors work with parents and students to find a good fit.

Mr. Schmidt introduced Mr. Zigmund who is in his second year in the College Counseling Department.

Mr. Zigmund stressed that the number one thing is for students to do well in their classes each year. He suggested combining college visits with other activities, like visiting family members. He described the many options for ACT/SAT test preparation classes. He also explained that there are free practice tests on the ACT and SAT websites and that the College Counseling Department has materials. On November 22, there will be a mock ACT test at Saint Ignatius College Prep.

If your student has special talents, there may be special processes to be followed, for instance, in athletics; the student should be in touch with his or her coach as well as the College Counseling Department. If a student is interested in the performing or fine arts, auditions and portfolios are required, and students should talk with teachers for information on putting materials together.

Mr Zigmund discussed scholarships (for academic talent or merit) and financial aid (based on need). Every school has different criteria, so students should apply to a variety of schools. He pointed out that 80+ schools have endowments of over \$1 billion each. He offered the insight that at times, if a student “reaches” for entrance to a college (grade point average and ACT/SAT scores of those accepted are above the applicant’s) that student may also be “leaping” for a scholarship. That student’s application for a scholarship could get much more interest at a school that is a better fit.

He then gave an in-depth tour of Family Connection, Naviance. It is accessed through ignatious.org under the College Counseling tab, Family Connection link. Second semester juniors and seniors receive a password that allows full access to the tool. Mr. Zigmund toured the site for those in attendance, visiting pages such as: my profile, my checklist, my resume, my game plan, my test scores, my colleges, college search, a list of scholarship opportunities, a school visit schedule and more. Mr. Zigmund suggested using the program early as a tool for motivating students to achieve and maintain good grades.

Gini Marziani commented on how useful Naviance was to her son in preparing and printing a professional looking resume. The common application allows room for only

five extra activities. Her son was able to send a follow-up letter to the admissions office, which included his complete list of activities.

A discussion followed on the pros and cons of early action, early decision I, and early decision II. Early decision requires that a student apply to only one school and any commitment to attend that school is binding. This type of application takes a lot of research to ensure it is the right college for a student. Mr. Zigmund pointed out that students and parents should also understand that they would not see a financial package before they have to make a commitment. Early action applications speed up the process and answers are returned sooner.

The College Counseling office writes personalized recommendations for each student and includes a school profile.

The average GPA for Saint Ignatius College Prep students is usually 3.2 – 3.25. In 2008, it is 3.37, and this senior class' ACT average is the highest in the school's history at 27.1.

Mr. Zigmund recommended using the college admission process as a way to empower students to take responsibility by contacting colleges and completing the applications.

Juniors will begin the admissions process with a kick-off Junior Family Night in the spring of 2009.

The college counseling process is all about empowerment and understanding the process, Mr. Schmidt said in closing. He promised that students would be prepared and do successful work. He emphasized that there are resources in the College Counseling office and that the counselors are happy to work with parents. He discussed "name brand" colleges versus other colleges. There are over 4,000 colleges from which to choose. He pointed out that Saint Ignatius College Prep's "Grad at Grad" program does not talk about going to a "name brand" college. It does talk about discernment. The College Counseling Department looks at the big picture.

He finished with a summary of key dates:

11/22/08: Mock ACT

12/10/08: Financial Aid Night

02/09: Junior Family Night

3/18/09: College Fair

Next General Meeting is scheduled for March 10, 2009, at 7 p.m.

Meeting adjourned at 8:17 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mary Ellen Prindiville
Recording Secretary