You,
Newark Academy
AND THE College Process
College counseling at Newark Academy involves the intersection between two remarkable groups of people – our talented and diverse student body, and the exceptionally dedicated professionals who guide them with great care through what can be a very challenging time in the life of a high school student and his or her family. Although the college counseling process officially begins during a student’s junior year, it is, in large part, a process of self-discovery that begins as soon as a student enrolls at NA. The passions and talents our students discover in themselves, from the classrooms to the playing fields to the stage, will form the foundation of their search for the college that will help them continue the journey they have begun at Newark Academy – the journey toward their future selves.
Students are assigned a college counselor during the fall of their junior year. From the moment they begin to have regular meetings, the counselor’s goal is to help each student sort through the many variables they must consider when putting together their list of potential schools. What are the student’s academic and extracurricular interests, and which schools are known to be strong in these areas? Does the student see himself in a large university or a small college? Which has more appeal, an urban campus or a rural environment? At which schools might the student have the best chance to secure undergraduate research opportunities alongside professors? Where will he or she get the most support with graduate school and pre-professional counseling in their area of interest?

The staff of the College Counseling Office at Newark Academy has expertise in helping students answer these questions, prepare for interviews, develop resumes, write compelling application essays, and develop standardized testing plans that will take advantage of each student’s strengths, while demonstrating to their chosen schools that they have the academic preparation to succeed at their institutions. In addition, the College Counseling Office teaches students how to become effective self-advocates.

NA teachers, advisors, coaches and other mentors guide students in a way that encourages them to rise to new personal and academic challenges, to take on leadership roles in various capacities, to explore their interests and develop their passions. This is what translates into applicants who are attractive to colleges and who are successful once they get there.

Each student tells a story through his or her application and each student’s story is unique.
Planning and Flexibility

Planning is crucial to a positive outcome for all college-bound students. Every NA sophomore meets with the Upper School Principal early in the school year for a personalized strategy session during which they discuss his or her course load going forward, extracurricular interests and potential opportunities to play a leadership role at NA in those areas. They also discuss timing for the various standardized tests each student will need based on when they will have completed the required courses. This road map will surely evolve and change over a student’s time at NA, but it provides a sensible and useful path to follow to ensure key requirements for college are satisfied in a timely and logical way. It is this emphasis on careful and early planning that allows students at NA to pursue their interests while keeping their higher education goals in sight at all times.
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EMMA BEECHER, Freshman, Bowdoin College

“My advisors knew that studying marine biology at The Island School in the Bahamas during my junior year had been a dream of mine since coming to Newark Academy in sixth grade, but they also knew that I was committed to playing lacrosse in college and that this would mean being away for a key part of the recruiting season.” Emma’s faculty advisors helped her design a challenging curriculum that included three IB courses and one honors-level course during her junior year. They fully supported her decision to emphasize the “student” in her “student/athlete” equation. “My college advisor was a key advocate for me during my application process,” said Emma. “She knew that I would have a lot of catching up to do when it came to lacrosse, but she believed in me and helped the colleges understand just how my commitment to both my academics and my athletics was going to work.”

MIA HUTCHINSON, Freshman, Stanford University

In addition to the practical benefits of a well-designed college application plan, Mia Hutchinson can attest to the emotional value of a solid strategy: “The College Counseling Office is great about helping students make a plan and follow through in a methodical way. There are only a handful of colleges that offer architectural engineering courses to undergraduates, and as the first person in my family to attend college in the United States, we needed a lot of guidance about how to identify the best programs for my specific interests.” For Mia, the financial aid application process was another key strategic element in her search for the right school. “Once the academic applications were completed I began the financial aid process, and having the counselors’ support and guidance throughout this overwhelming task got me through it with my emotions in check.”

RAJ MERCHANT, Sophomore, Cornell University

For Raj, the staff of the College Counseling Office functioned as a “second family” – a safe zone in which he could weather the ups and downs of the application process. “They helped me see the big picture and not get too caught up in minor setbacks,” he said. “They always made me feel welcome whenever I stopped by and the emotional support I received from the college counselors made a huge difference.”
An especially helpful and innovative feature of the college counseling process at Newark Academy is the College Counseling Workshop (CCW), a series of hour-long sessions that students attend six times during junior year and four times during senior year. During these sessions, students meet in small groups to learn about such topics as: how to develop a compelling college resume, what to expect from a college interview, and how to navigate college websites and brochures to find out what they want to know about a school's strengths, its culture, and the likelihood that it is a match for them. Students analyze successful college application essays from NA graduates and brainstorm ideas for their own essays, which they will then have the opportunity to explore one-on-one with their college counselor.

PAUL DILLON, Freshman, University of Chicago

Paul Dillon had already established a strong literary focus at NA and knew that finding the right intellectual environment was a top priority during his college search. But he and his college counselor had to determine the right fit from a distance. “I was studying abroad in Vietnam during my junior year so my college counselor had to spend a lot of time meeting with me through Skype to hash out the types of schools I wanted to consider and where I could see myself spending the next four years.”

Every year the College Counseling Office hosts “Junior College Night,” convening admissions representatives from four different schools to speak to NA students. Most recently the event was attended by officials from Muhlenberg College and from Lehigh, Yale and George Washington universities. Through this interactive session, students are introduced to schools of various sizes, environments, and degrees of selectivity in order to learn how the application process may differ at each one. In the spring, juniors and their parents have the opportunity to participate in a roundtable discussion with college admission representatives to discuss what to expect from a campus visit and how to make the most of each experience. In the fall of their senior year, students and parents meet as a group with a college financial aid officer to learn more about the specific requirements of that process.

Naviance®, a popular online resource used in many college preparatory schools, is integral to managing the many pieces of the application process. The NA College Counseling Office uses Naviance® to manage all the data the college process requires; students and parents can also take advantage of its search engine and journaling functions to fine tune their online search for schools and even to record their impressions of each school following a visit. Perhaps the most widely used feature of Naviance® is the “Comparative Statistics” function, which analyzes testing and GPA data for NA students and shows them the admission results for past graduates with similar profiles at any given college or university.

TARA GADDE, Sophomore, Cornell University

Leadership opportunities for NA students abound, and the experiences they have here can shape their college search in very specific ways. Tara Gadde has always been passionate about public health – an interest that motivated her to establish NA’s first Red Cross Club. “I focused my college search on schools that offer a multi-dimensional approach to health science. Through my college counselors, and my research on Naviance® I was able to identify the schools that offered the unique course of study I wanted to pursue, and found that Cornell’s School of Human Ecology was a perfect fit.”
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WHIT HARWOOD, Sophomore, Colby College

For Whit Harwood, being a college athlete was important but he knew it couldn't be the only factor in his college selection. "My college counselor helped me to consider the big picture: where would I want to go to school even if an injury or some other unforeseen event prevented me from playing?" Whit began by developing two parallel college lists; one with the assumption that he would pursue athletics, and the other with a focus on his academic priorities. "Through this process I realized that a Division III school would be the best fit for me since I kept gravitating toward smaller school communities."

He added, "Colby College, where I play both basketball and lacrosse, has been an excellent choice for me."
> Athletics in the College Process

The College Counseling Office works closely with Newark Academy’s Athletic Department and its coaching staff so that together they can effectively advocate for NA student-athletes, while also providing numerous resources to students who are interested in continuing their athletic pursuits at the college level. The annual “NCAA Night at NA” is an event open to sophomores and juniors and their parents and includes a panel discussion and Q&A session with a variety of high school and college coaches who share their expertise. Students with athletic aspirations need to learn what to expect, how to prepare, and what they can do to advocate for themselves with help from their coaches both at NA and outside of the school. Many of NA’s student-athletes gravitate toward Division III schools, where applicants, rather than coaches, drive the process, making it crucial that students understand the rules governing recruitment and how to manage their expectations as well as those of interested colleges.

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Communication

The close and easy communication between NA students and their college advisors is something NA kids are “trained” for from their earliest days at the Academy. They are encouraged to work with their teachers outside of class, whether it is to seek extra help on a challenging topic, or to pursue an intellectual passion to its fullest extent. NA’s college counselors, too, value the opportunity to communicate the essence of Newark Academy’s curriculum, culture and values through regular visits to the many schools to which our students apply. Each fall, Newark Academy hosts visits from admission representatives from nearly 100 colleges and universities. NA counselors visit more than 20 schools each year, continually updating their knowledge of the school’s admission processes as well as keeping the college community apprised of developments at Newark Academy.

ALLIE HYANS, Sophomore, Duke University

“If I could give one piece of advice to students applying to college now it would be, ‘get to know your college reps!’” Allie had her heart set on Duke from an early age, and made a point of reaching out to the Duke campus representative who came to NA to meet with interested candidates. “We established a rapport by e-mail long before she came to campus and I was able to help her get to know me beyond the black and white facts on the application.” When Allie was deferred in the Early Decision process, she was disappointed but not deterred. “I continued to update the Duke rep on my progress at NA and even shared with her my decision to switch to an engineering focus in college. I was so accustomed to having frequent and open conversations with my NA teachers – this was just a natural extension of that same kind of relationship. Through it all I made it very clear that Duke was my first choice and that they could count on me to enroll if accepted.” Allie’s persistence paid off – she will graduate from Duke with a degree in bio-engineering.
**ALLIE HANS, Sophomore, Duke University**

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**TAMMER ABIYU, Junior, Yale University**

Tammer Abiyu had settled on a first-choice school but he wanted to be sure to have a range of options. He and his college counselor decided on an early action application so that he could maximize his chances of going to his first-choice school but still have the opportunity to consider other schools’ financial aid packages. In the end, Tammer was able to choose among several Ivy League schools. “NA is like a pipeline toward college,” Tammer said. The faculty makes sure you don’t get lost in the process – they have all the resources you need!”

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**REBECCA ELLIS, Sophomore, Harvard University**

From her very first experiences as a sixth grader and throughout the next seven years at NA, Rebecca learned to forge relationships with teachers that went well beyond their interactions during class time. “I had so many mentors on the faculty and they always took the time to help me, even when it came to reading through drafts of my college essays. The sense of support I had from my teachers and from the College Counseling Office was just awesome!” Rebecca applied to a whopping 13 schools. Her bi-lingual course of study at NA and her International Baccalaureate diploma led her to strongly consider attending Sciences Po University in Paris, but ultimately decided that Harvard University would give her the most opportunities, including participating in a University-sponsored exchange program in Paris during her junior year. “I got to know myself better throughout the process, and the encouragement I received from my NA teachers kept me going.” Another thing Rebecca learned at NA was how to manage her time. “Working with the deadlines we needed to stick to for the college process, and for my academic life at NA in general, was such great preparation for college. It made all the difference when I got to Harvard.”
Newark Academy's comprehensive college counseling program is staffed by three college counselors and an office manager. A full range of programs and services are provided including:

- Junior College Night — a kick-off to the college search process for students and their parents
- A series of roundtable discussions and information sessions for parents covering topics ranging from conducting college research and making the most of college visits, to navigating the college financial aid process and the athletic recruitment process
- College Counseling Workshop — a series of school-day sessions designed to assist students in each stage of the college search and through the transition to college. At each step of the process, the college counselors are available to students and parents to provide individual support and guidance when questions or concerns arise.

The program emphasizes the personalized nature of the college search and application process and the development of self-awareness, self-discovery and self-advocacy. As a result, students feel empowered by the process, are proud of their accomplishments, and are excited about their college choices.

Newark Academy's College Counseling Office

YOU, NEWARK ACADEMY AND THE COLLEGE PROCESS

JORDAN JETT, Freshman, University of Pennsylvania

“When I got to UPenn, I was amazed at how prepared and ready I was to handle the workload. Writing was a skill I practiced so often at NA and as a result, I can organize my thoughts and compose written assignments with ease. I am so grateful for that preparation now.”
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- Johns Hopkins University
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- Lafayette College
- Lehigh University
- Loyola Marymount University
- Macalester College
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- University of Maryland, College Park
- Massachusetts Institute of Technology
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– Pat Budziak, NA Parent