

Mercy High School
Counseling Department

GOOD NEWS

January 2019



A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

January 2019

mercy high school counseling department

Good News

january 2019



YOU
can be
OPTIMISTIC
and
REALISTIC.

@POSITIVELYPRESENT

New Year Resolutions

Yay or Nay?

Yay!

Many approach January 1st with a “New Year, New You” attitude; setting goals, or maybe striving to be a better, more productive, healthier, or insert-other-descriptive-word-here person. If you have a habit or practice in your life that does not serve you, the New Year can provide a natural opportunity to let that toxicity go. January can be a chance to hit the reset button. This time of year can also feel like an organic time to start or try something new. One may find validation, learning, or a feeling of accomplishment through setting and working toward a goal. In my professional (*and slightly personal*) opinion, I think that setting goals at any time of the year can be a wonderful thing, **if approached intelligently and intentionally**. Goals need to be SMART: Specific, Measureable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timely. The end results one desires must be doable (*let's not set a goal to be Beyonce, rather, maybe we aim to learn some of her dance moves*), and expected within a reasonable time-frame (*the longer term the goal, the more likely we are to jump-ship at some point*). Goals (*and the necessary steps to take along the way*) should also be as specific as possible (*rather than: “My goal is to read more”, try something like: “My goal is to read 3 books in the next 6 months”*)

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Really, every day is an opportunity to level up our personal development, not just at the start of the year. As long as we are smart about our goals and how we work toward achieving them, why not join the resolution party?!

Nay!

A site I frequent called *Pocket mindfulness* presented the following New Year's Resolution advice: **Do nothing. Don't set any resolutions or goals.** Further, this site recommends: "Enter the New Year with zero pressure on your back to do anything, other than remain open to the possibility of your potential, be receptive to change and ready to show compassion to yourself for your shortcomings."

I like it.

Author Tim Ferriss recommend rather, conducting a "Past Year Review", a practice he claims to share in common with Oprah Winfrey and Melinda Gates. Essentially, Ferriss recommends self-evaluation, looking at the ups and downs of the past year and identifying patterns. *What did I do that brought me joy? Who did I spend time with? Who brought me stress? Where did I feel my best? My worst?* Once one inventories the details, the goal becomes: **strive to bring more of the awesome stuff into life this year and less of the toxic mess.**

My professional/personal opinion? I think either way, we are better when we do better. So, this year: do better.

LIFE LESSONS from 2018



by @POSITIVELYPRESENT

Used with permission by @positivelypresent, Dani DiPirro

COLLEGE CORNER

LET'S TALK ABOUT A

G a p

y e a r

What is a Gap Year?

A Gap Year is a personally planned, post-high school program that “gaps” a student’s educational experience. A Gap

Year can be an excellent opportunity for students who feel like they would like to participate in something different after graduation, before they begin college and eventually a career. A Gap Year is most successful when intended to be a planned, enrichment experience. Students may also Gap for medical, family, or other personal reasons.

How does the process work?

A student will still apply to college in the senior year if they choose to Gap. That way a student can explore all options during the second semester of the senior year to determine which path is best for them. Students may apply to schools that operate their own Gap Year programs! If a college does not operate their own Gap Year program, then a student will apply to a program through a Gap Program, such as USA Gap Years.

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If I decide to Gap after I am accepted to my schools – then what do I do?

Students who decide to Gap will work with their counselor to request a deferral to their institution. It is rare that a school denies a deferral request for a Gap Year. The student accepts their spot for the following academic year and plans for their Gap.

Are there any downsides to Gapping?

Typically, students who Gap arrive on campus more mature than their first-year counterparts, not only are they physically one year older, but they also have had an experience that creates limitless opportunities for personal growth. This can be mitigated by making sure your college list has schools that are Gap friendly - meaning there is a significant population of students who have Gapped. How do you find this out? Stop by and see your Counselor! She can assist in reaching out the university admissions office.

How do I learn more?

Colorado College has just launched a Gap Year consortium - look at their work [here](#).

Each January, USA Gap Year hosts a fair in Ann Arbor. This year the fair is January 28th and includes a presentation on Gap Years and then an opportunity to learn more in the fair. Follow this link to [register](#).

Navigating a College Admission Deferral

Opening an admission decision and seeing the word “deferred” can bring about a range of emotions, varying from anger, to rejection, to relief. It is crucial to note that a deferral is not a “no”; it is simply a “not yet.” While we do not always know why some students are accepted, deferred, or redirected, we do know what a student can do to respond to a deferral decision.

Early Decision

If you applied Early Decision (this is the binding decision) you have likely been released from the binding agreement when you were deferred. Reach out to your Mercy Counselor if you have questions regarding this.

Communicating with the College

One way to express your continued interest in a school is to communicate with your admission representative at the college. It is recommended to communicate one time only. There is a fine line between demonstrating interest and being perceived as a pest. All communication needs to come from the student or Mercy Counselor. In all deferral cases, it is best to first sit back and take a moment to reflect, and then respond the deferral after letting a few weeks go by. For example, many deferrals are communicated shortly before Christmas break. In such cases, utilizing the rest of December as a restorative pause, and waiting until mid-January to supply additional information is recommended.

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Next Steps for the Deferred Student

1. Read the Deferral Carefully:

The college will tell you exactly what you need to do or what they are looking for. Also, pay close attention to what they DO NOT want. If the deferral says “Please do not submit an additional essay” or “Please do not submit an additional letter of recommendation”, follow these instructions. Your Mercy Counselor is an excellent resource for you if any piece of this process is unclear. Please note that all Counselors will send transcripts in mid-January.

2. Determine if you should call the admission office:

This is not always a necessary step and sometimes does not add value to the process. Consult with your Mercy Counselor to determine if a phone call makes sense in your specific situation. Any communication with the admission office should be done by the student and not the parent. When calling the admission office, you will want to speak to the Mercy Representative. This can be found on Naviance Student, or on the college admission website. Admissions officers are very busy during application season and you may not be able to speak with the person on the phone. If you are able to connect, clearly state your name and have your applicant ID number handy. Thank the person for taking your call, and ask if there is any additional information that might enhance your application, outside of the items requested in the deferral letter. If you do not get a return call (it is very unlikely you will be directly connected to the Rep) that’s okay.

This is not a “good” or “bad” thing, it just “is.”

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3. Let your counselor know if the school is a first choice:

A counselor advocacy call can be helpful in the process. Your counselor will speak with you about why the school is a first choice and reach out to see if any additional insight can be provided on your file. It is important to only take this step if the school is one of your top 2-3 considerations.

4. Write a letter to our admission representative:

This is a concise letter. Colleges do not have time to read pages of documentation. The letter should cover the following points:

Part One: Thank the person for reading your letter (and taking the time to speak with you if you were able to connect on the phone). State why the school is where you feel like you belong. You can indicate you were disappointed in not being accepted, but keep the letter positive. Be specific when you highlight why the campus is a great fit for you and how you will contribute to the campus.

Part Two: Provide any updates since you submitted your application packet. Updates include awards, honors, a summary of 1st-semester grades and any new, relevant information.

Part Three: Again, thank the person for taking the time to read your letter. If the school is your top choice, indicate that here. If it is your top choice and you will accept upon admission, state that as well.

Closing: Make sure you include your full name, email, Date of Birth and Applicant ID number (if you have one) in your signature.

* * * Share the letter with your counselor for feedback
before sending* * *

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5. Send 7th Semester Final Grades and Update your Naviance List with Decisions:

Please let us know your admission decisions (admitted, deferred, or denied) in your Naviance Student Portal. This helps us know where to send your transcripts.

6. Send additional information if requested:

Remember, only send additional information if it has been requested by the college.

7. Update Test Scores:

If you took a November or December test and the score is higher than those previously submitted, make sure they are sent to the college you have been deferred from.

8. Look at the other schools you have applied to:

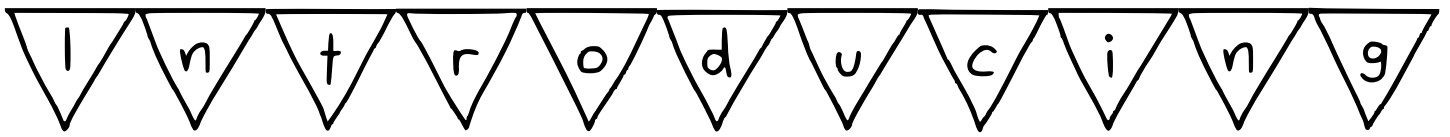
Spend some time exploring the colleges where you have been admitted. These other schools are on your list because you felt a connection or fit - spend some time revisiting these options.

9. If you are admitted:

Call or write the admission representative one last time, to express your gratitude.

Steps Summary:

- Update your decisions and test info in Naviance.
- Read the deferral to make sure you are submitting relevant/required information
- Draft an email/letter to the admission officer and share it with your counselor prior to sending
- Let your counselor know if your school is requesting 7th-semester grades
- Sit back and wait - one communication is sufficient.



Mindful Mondays

New this semester, the Mindful Monday Committee is a student lead group, partnering with Mercy's Counseling Department. The MMC aims to bring more mental health awareness, support, and education to the Mercy community. One Monday each month will be designated a "Mindful Monday". On Mindful Mondays, Mercy staff and students will be offered various personal development opportunities, messages of positivity and appreciation, helpful information, and therapeutic activities before, after, and during school. This month's Mindful Monday is January 14th. There will be much more to come from the MMC this semester, as they aim to reduce stress and anxiety at Mercy.