

Mercy High School
Counseling Department

GOOD NEWS

February 2019



A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

February 2019

mercy high school counseling department

Good News

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Sh♥W Y♥URSELF S♥ME L♥VE

When February nears, I cannot help but think of love and all of the mushy-gushy-gooiness that Valentine's Day often promotes. Rather than go down the road leading to romance and boxes of mystery chocolates, I'd like to steer our focus toward a different kind of love this February: Self-care.

Self-care can mean many things. First and foremost, caring for oneself can mean ensuring one strives toward quality, basic needs such as a healthy amount of sleep and nourishing food choices. On a psychological level, self-care includes tending to one's social, emotional, and physical needs in an effort to maintain or improve one's mental health.

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Are you caring for yourself? When assessing your answer to this question, I suggest asking yourself some additional questions (*typical Counselor/Therapist, right?!),* such as:

♥ **What do I love to do? Am I creating time or space in my life to do those things?**

Self-care can be as simple as promising yourself you will not live a life that is all work and no play. What are your interests, hobbies, skills, and talents? What are the activities that bring you joy or recharge you? It is easy to fill our days with responsibility and neglect the need to stimulate our brains and bodies in this manner. Too busy? Start with 5 minutes a day!

♥ **Where am I spending my energy and time? Is this serving me well?**

If you made a list of everything you did yesterday from the the moment you woke up, through the moment you went to sleep, what would you find? How much time are you spending on tasks that are not moving you toward being positively productive, bettering yourself, or accomplishing a goal? Further, how much time do you spend on activities that are barriers in the way of a self-caring life? Are you expending energy on unhealthy relationships? Do any of the roles you have in your life negatively impact your self-worth? If yes (*to any of these*), it may be time to make a change!

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♥ **What are my bad habits or unhealthy practices?**

How are those behaviors impacting my life?

We all make mistakes and should permit ourselves to make a bad choice or two in life. Often times, when we neglect to learn from our errors or grow from our past choices, bad habits develop. The sooner you can put a stop to these practices, the sooner you will be on your way to a self-caring life. Sometimes breaking a habit requires a little help (*from family, friends, a support group, Counselor, or health care professional*), which is always, totally okay and many times, completely wonderful.

To conclude, there is much about life that is outside of our control. Living a life of self-care simply means that where there is space to make a choice, one strives to make beneficial ones. Love, Me.

♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ **Please remember:** ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥

Mercy's Counseling Department
is always available to assist you in finding
your own path to a life of self-care!

Mindful Monday

FEBRUARY

Art Therapy

Spend your off-hours coloring and bracelet making

TREAT YOURSELF

Help yourself to a calming, hot tea



Ms. Moore's Broadcasting course will entertain us with calming music and mental health facts during passing time

W O R K I T O U T

Open Gym will be offered throughout the day. Hours TBD

Get Inspired

Another Staff Talks video will be shared during Adviser Group

Monday, February 11th

COLLEGE CORNER

Making the Most of Your College Campus Visits

Why are campus visits such an important part of the college search process? For all the online research and virtual tours that a student may do, there really is no better way to get a sense of how you truly feel about a college until you step foot on campus. The experience of visiting a college campus is significant. It can help you determine whether the college is the right place for you. Visiting a college or university will help a student get a feel for the campus, for the student body, and whether or not they see themselves on that campus. I can still remember the first time I visited the university I attended and the feeling that came over me when we first drove through the gates that entered into campus. That feeling stayed with me throughout my visit and I knew that I could see myself living and learning in this new place. You too will have a gut reaction (positive or negative), and that's something you just can't get by looking in a guidebook or researching online.

One of the primary tasks a student has planning for college is building a college list. Visiting schools is going to help a student create their college list and widdle it down to a manageable list of schools to apply to. Visiting schools may also help the student later on in the process when it comes time to writing college specific essays. It is common for selective and highly selective colleges to ask essay questions specific to their institution. Therefore, if the applicant has been on that campus it may help them answer short answer or essay questions.

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campus is considered a form of demonstrated interest. Many

From a college admissions perspective, the student's visit onto campus is considered a form of demonstrated interest. Many colleges will use demonstrated interest in the admissions review process, but some of them will not. Colleges that do not use demonstrated interest in the admissions process are typically schools that follow a 100% need-blind process, meaning they meet 100% of a student's financial need. Examples of these schools are the Ivy's and Ivy-type colleges. Think of a visit to the campus as a touch point. Other examples of touch points include an open house, a local presentation about a college, an interview, and opening emails from the college --- all are ways to show a college that you are interested in them. However, the campus visit is the most important way to show that you are interested in them. For colleges that use demonstrated interest, it is a factor that helps them discern which applicants are genuinely interested in their school versus applicants that are just applying for the sake of applying.

What can a prospective student and family take advantage of when they visit a college campus?

Typically, the college's website will outline the various opportunities available. Most campus visits will include the following:

1. **An information session.** An admission representative talks to you or your group about the college before the campus tour. Topics that will likely be discussed include but are not limited to the academic programs, curriculum, extracurricular options, residential life of the campus, the admissions process, and how to apply for financial aid.
2. **A campus tour.** These are usually led by current students. You'll see the main parts of the campus and have a chance to ask questions.

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At many colleges, you can also arrange to do the following:

- Attend a class.
- Meet with a professor.
- Meet with an admission officer.
- Meet with a financial aid officer.
- Attend a club meeting or a sports practice session.
- Eat in the dining hall.
- Spend the night in a residence hall.
- Visit the student center
- Talk to a faculty member in an academic area of interest

Before you go, make a list of questions. Visiting gives you the opportunity to get answers to important questions. Here is a sampling:

- What is the average class size and the student-to-faculty ratio?
- Are most classes taught by professors or by teaching assistants?
- What academic support services are available to students?
- What is the placement rate for medical/law/dental school? Do you track all applicants or only those in an honors/special program?
- What percentage of students receives financial aid?
- What's the average percentage of financial need that is met?
- What is the campus meal plan like? How is the food?
- How many dorms are there and how do they differ?
- Do most students live on or off campus?
- What's the social scene like? What do students do for fun on and off campus?
- What is the campus crime rate like?

Document your experience. It may be hard to remember specifics about each school that you visit. Don't be shy -- take pictures while on the campus tour and jot down notes of things that stand out to you (positive or negative).

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You may be asking yourself, “What if I can’t visit a school?” It’s understandable that a prospective college student is not able to visit all of the schools they have an interest in learning about. There are other things that a student can do instead:

- #1 Sign-up for the college’s mailing list.
- #2 Go to a college fair or information event in your local area. While there, fill out an interest form, collect information materials, and potentially speak with an admissions representative.
- #3 Meet with the admissions representative if they come to visit at your high school. Colleges typically visit high schools in the early fall. During the months of September and October, 60+ colleges visit Mercy High School. This is an ideal time for students to learn about different schools without having to go anywhere.

These experiences also provide you the opportunity to get answers to important questions that you may have and will help you get closer to building and finalizing your college list. Remember, you are visiting a college to learn if it is a good match for you. Decide what factors are most important to you, whether it be the philosophy of the academic program, the size of the school and the classes, or the awesome extracurricular opportunities. This can be a fun and exciting part of the college planning process. Stay open-minded and listen to your gut. Eventually, the pieces will come together and you will be able to identify your right fit colleges!

Written by Mercy Counselor, Mrs. Kristen Casey

COLLEGE SEARCH RESOURCES

The college process can at times feel daunting, between emails from the colleges, college visits, conversations and myriad of resources online. One of the first things to consider is how colleges make application decisions. Each year the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) conducts a study of admission trends for the previous year. The data is collected from community colleges, four-year colleges, and high schools. The schools represented in the sample reflect the range of institutions in our country. The [State of College Admissions](#) is an excellent resource to begin your research.

Other resources or information to consider is contained below.

Rankings:

College rankings tend to drive building a college list, however, in many cases, the rankings only tell a small portion of the picture of a college. The National Association for College Admission Counseling commissioned a study on [college rankings](#). This page includes a link to a NACAC research study and methodology of popular ranking organizations. Rankings can be based on metrics such as alumni donations, number of applicants vs. acceptances, student satisfaction, and standardized test scores. It is important to know what the ranking source uses to develop their rankings so that you are better informed in the process.

School Accreditation:

Overall, schools should be accredited by their regional accrediting body. Colleges and universities typically list their

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accreditation on their website. It is important to attend an accredited school, as this indicates the school has demonstrated a minimum standard of preparation for students, graduation rates, employability, and financial stability. Schools undergo self-study and an outside review to ensure the school is meeting these standards. Many employers and graduate schools will only consider candidates who hold a degree from an accredited school.

Overall, accreditation provides more information than ranking alone since a rigorous review process, both internal and external are a major component of accreditation.

Business Accreditation:

There are two main accreditations a business school/program can hold. Each is highlighted below with links to learn more.

[Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business](#) - or the AACSB has been issuing business school accreditation to Bachelor, Master, and Doctoral programs for over 100 years. Less than 25% of schools in the United States and 10% internationally hold the AACSB accreditation. The AACSB website has information for students, including a college search feature to help students learn more about business programs.

[Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs](#) - or the ACBSP has been issuing accreditation to the Associate, Bachelor, Master, and Doctoral programs for just over 30 years. ACBSP membership includes educational institutions, corporate partners and emeritus members.

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Engineering Programs:

[Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology](#) - or ABET is an engineering accrediting body that has been recognized since 1997.

[College Admissions Collaborative Highlighting Engineering and Technology](#) - or CACHET, is not a formal accreditation program, the work of these colleges seeks to increase opportunity for students in the engineering and technology fields. These schools offer students cooperative experiences - either through a mandatory or optional program.

The Arts

The Arts accreditation resources below include a searchable database to locate accredited programs. In general, schools/programs with this accreditation are considered to hold the highest accreditation possible.

Visual Arts:

[National Association of Schools of Art and Design](#) (NASAD)

Music:

[National Association of Schools of Music](#) (NASM)

Dance:

[National Association of Schools of Dance](#) (NASD)

Theatre:

[National Association of Schools of Theatre](#) (NAST)

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Co-Op Programs

Co-op programs provide intentional cooperative education experiences for students. These programs can be either mandatory or optional. It is recommended that students participate in co-ops or internships regardless of the requirements of the school. The [Cooperative Education and Internship Association](#) is comprised of schools with well-established Co-Op programs. In Michigan, we are lucky to have two programs that are celebrating 100 years of Cooperative Education - U Detroit Mercy and Kettering University (formerly GMI).

Additional sites of interest:

[National Center for Education Statistics](#) (NCES) - provides a college navigator tool that indicates data such as transfer rates and graduation rates. The site further breaks these statistics down based on gender and ethnicity. Data are reported for all but the 3 higher education institutions in our country that do not receive federal money (they are not required to report).

[College Data](#) - Uses the information from NCES and the Common Data Set in their college search tool to provide users with information on student satisfaction, graduation rates, and the estimated cost of attendance (based on user-provided information).

Engaging with the college

One of the best ways to learn more about a school is to connect with our admission representative. Colleges love to speak with prospective students. If you are interested in a school,

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sign up to receive information by creating an account on their page. Do this even if you are already receiving information from the college, which typically happens after you take standardized tests. Visit the campus - either in person or on a virtual tour. ***(Did you know that Mrs. Bennetts has VR goggles in her office for this purpose?)*** Ask meaningful questions when you engage with the college (And do not hesitate to ask your Counselor for help drafting questions!).

Finally, be open to the unexpected. With over 2500 4-year institutions in the US, there may be a school you have never heard of that provides the experience and environment you are looking for.

Written by Mercy Counselor, Mrs. Holly Bennetts

