Annual College Week at Gateway

Huntington – The half-week of school leading into the Thanksgiving Holiday was chock full of college and career events at Gateway Regional High School.

Led by the Gateway Guidance Department, Monday offered support for seniors completing their Common Application for college admissions; a resume writing workshop for all high school students; mock interviews with Assistant Principal Deanna LeBlanc (all grades); and opportunities for instant admissions to American International College, Springfield Technical Community College, and Western New England University for seniors. All 22 applications for instant admissions were accepted, with 5 seniors receiving $18,000 - $21,000 in merit scholarships (over 4 years) from Western New England University.

Tuesday activities included help with financial aid and a scholarship workshop for seniors; and for all grades an informational session from Asnuntuck Community College, and a workshop on becoming involved on a college campus (by local economic development coordinator and entrepreneurship program advisor Jeanne LeClair). Alumna Jenna Margarites (’16) provided a workshop on taking a Gap Year. A second year student at Haverford College, Jenna took part in a gap program through Global Citizen and worked in Senegal before starting her Freshman Year. Margarites advised students to consider this extraordinary experience, seek financial aid for your gap year experience, and apply to college regardless because you can always defer enrollment, as she did.

Tuesday concluded with the Massachusetts College Application Celebration (MCAC) assembly at the end of the day. Students assembled in the auditorium and heard best wishes and congratulations from School Committee member Aaron Welch and teachers MaryAnn Shipman and Matt Collins. Welch advised those going off to college that things can get crazy, confusing and move way too fast in one’s senior year. “When that happens, take a minute to reflect on the hard work you’ve done and know that you are ready for this next step.”

Shipman reflected on her own senior year of high school and her procrastination on a spring senior English project. She’d already been accepted to college, and didn’t see the point in having to keep working. Her father told her, "That’s the thing about life. You’re never done." Shipman advised students to finish strong this year, and told them there’s still time to apply to college.

Collins, a fifth grade teacher, earned chuckles by announcing he was still waiting for assignments from some of the high school students and he would give them until Monday to get them in.

Gateway seniors who had completed at least one college application were invited up to the front of the auditorium to sign a special “I Applied to College” banner. MCAC is part of a series of strategies by the Massachusetts Division of Higher Education to support students in applying for college,
securing financial aid and being able to pursue a degree or additional training after high school. MCAC is a growing trend in the state, and Gateway was one of 14 high schools to add MCAC into their college awareness efforts last year.

Nearly 60% (24 students) of Gateway’s Class of 2017 were recognized Tuesday for having submitted total of 51 college applications already this year and were able to sign the banner!

On Wednesday, November 22 Gateway hosted its annual Alumni College Fair. All high school students were able to visit with college admissions staff and Gateway alumni representing over 30 schools. Alumni present were Maddy Bang (Bay Path University); Cameron LaBrecque and Willis Pollard (Becker College); Jenna Margarites (Haverford); Trevor Bruno (Norwich University); Brennan Foley (Saint Michael’s College); Annaka Paradis (Smith College); Charlie Sullivan (Southern New Hampshire University); Noah Paradis-Burnett and Anna Pless (UMass Amherst); Ethan Gamble (University of New England); Geoff Sobotka (University of Tampa); and Kenny Bourdon and Jesse Buckman (Westfield State University).

College Week is an annual tradition at Gateway that continues to grow every year. In June 2017, 7% of Gateway seniors reported being first generation college students in their family, a rate that has been rising steadily among graduates thanks in part to these programs.

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(Top Photo): Six of Gateway’s seniors recognized at the school’s Massachusetts College Application Celebration (#MCAC). Front row: Rebecca Lebert, Allie Clark, Michala Torres, and Madyson LaBrecque; back row: Dawson Atkin, Ryley Carleton and Joe DuBour.

(Below): some of the Gateway alumni representing their colleges at Wednesday’s College Fair. Left to right: Annaka Paradis, Noah Paradis-Burnett, Cameron LaBrecque, Geoff Sobotka, Ethan Gamble, Willis Pollard, Charlie Sullivan and Trevor Noah.