

FALL 2018

GCAC



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NEWSLETTER



Institute of Higher Education
Georgia College Advising Corps
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

OUR TEAM



Glenda Dowdy
Mays High School



Damisi Fawole
Grady High School



Lacey Flynn
Grady High School



José Fragoso
Meadowcreek High School

WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

As we enter 2019, GCAC has much to celebrate. This newsletter highlights the outstanding work of our twenty-one college advisers who are increasing opportunity for 4,543 high school seniors this year. I am constantly impressed by our advisers' creativity, passion, and perseverance as they guide students through the complex college admissions process. This adviser-produced newsletter is just one more way that GCAC college advisers leverage their time and skills to address issues of college access. I hope you enjoy learning more about their work and impact.

Jessica Robinson,
Program Director

APPLY TO COLLEGE WEEK

November is a busy month for the Georgia College Advising Corps advisers and their students. Across Georgia, seniors are hustling to complete college applications, and their preparation kicks into high gear because November is the official Apply to College Month for the state. In November, GCAC advisers must make major strides towards reaching their goals; therefore, each school and each adviser productively uses one week out of the month

to host an Apply to College Week. Advisers are tasked with planning events that generate excitement about completing college applications. Additionally, they encourage students who may or may not have applied to college to understand the benefits of postsecondary education. During this week, advisers



facilitate college panels, fairs, tours and financial aid sessions all in hopes of increasing postsecondary enrollment. Raysean Ricks, the GCAC adviser at Westside High School, hosted a college student panel that was well attended, with over 100 students coming to learn about life as a college student. In Atlanta, D.M. Therrell High School advisers Brittany Gantt and Jasmine Moorman emphasized the excitement of self-discovery behind the college admissions process, hosting different organizations and a DJ for their students as they navigated career prospects. Benjamin E. Mays advisers Jennifer Harris, Glenda Dowdy and Lekasia White hosted more than thirty college and career representatives to guide students in their postsecondary planning. Despite being a busy month, November gives advisers the opportunity to make a true impact on their students and accomplish major goals in a short amount of time.

ACADEMIC YEAR GOALS AND KPI ADVISER SPOTLIGHT

The College Advising Corps has identified eight Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that are strongly tied to increases in college enrollment. The organization and its advisers implement these performance indicators to collect data and measure the program's impact in its partner schools. The KPIs are as follows:

- **Campus Visits**
- **College Representative Visits and College Fairs**
- **SAT/ACT Registration**
- **College Workshops**
- **College Application Submissions**
- **FAFSA Completion**
- **Scholarship Dollars Awarded**
- **Parent Engagement**

Locally, the Georgia College Advising Corps advisers track activities based on the above KPIs. They collect data in relation to one-on-one meetings, test registrations, parent engagement, application submission, and FAFSA completion. In this fall issue, we spotlight GCAC advisers who are leading the program in achieving KPI benchmarks.

ONE-ON-ONE MEETINGS AND STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

One-on-one meetings are a top priority of the Georgia College Advising Corps. Currently, the program's advisers have met with an average of ninety percent of seniors in one-on-one meetings. The advising team at Benjamin E. Mays High School were the first advisers to reach their goal. Knowing that it is important to reach students as early in the year as possible, adviser Glenda Dowdy explains that they "divided the cohorts, so we could conquer the caseload quickly and efficiently." Her fellow adviser, Jennifer Harris, added that their school administration and senior counselor assisted a great deal and cultivated an environment where high school seniors were encouraged to think about postsecondary plans. Harris explained, "They gave us time to present during the senior meeting and senior parent meeting. Mr. Fowler, our principal, also stated that it was a requirement for every senior to have a post-secondary plan. The support was unmatched!" The Mays advising team also utilized a pizza party as an incentive to get students to attend a meeting. "When the students heard pizza, they were committed to doing whatever was necessary!" said adviser Lekasia White. As the program gears up for next semester, the Mays advising team hopes to maintain this momentum with their students as their postsecondary plans develop.



Brittany Gantt
Therrell High School



Jennifer Harris
Mays High School



Brionna Johnson
Clarke Central High School



Christina Justice
Social Circle High School

COLLEGE EXPOSURE: COLLEGE TOURS, COLLEGE FAIRS AND REPRESENTATIVE VISITS



Abby Mason
Drew Charter High School



Jasmine Moorman
Therrell High School



Mary Mitchell Morris
Heritage High School



Courtney Murray
Maynard Jackson High School

GCAC advisers realize that some students may not have the opportunity to visit campuses when deciding among postsecondary education options. Therefore, advisers plan field trips to expose their students to colleges that fit them academically and match their personal and financial needs. This past semester has seen GCAC advisers from Maynard Jackson High School to Drew Charter High School coordinate and chaperone trips

to colleges such as Kennesaw State University, Georgia State University and Spelman College. Advisers also plan college fairs to bring college representatives into the high schools. Earlier this semester, advisers Arnelle Vilfort and Taylor Thomas

assisted their school in coordinating the North Atlanta College Fair, which included over 100 colleges. Thomas reflects upon their experience coordinating such a large event, “Each year we are excited for the opportunities that the college fair brings to our students. For most, it is their first time interacting with collegiate professionals and for many it is their first step into the college process.”



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Thomas further details that this fair not only impacts North Atlanta students, but it also is open to other APS students. The North Atlanta advisers make sure each student has an opportunity to engage with numerous types of schools. “The fair features 2-year and 4-year school options, so we love the fact that it is a well-rounded atmosphere,” states Thomas. The North Atlanta Fair is one special event that will continue to impact students for years to come.

TEST REGISTRATION

GCAC advisers excel at ensuring their students register, prepare, and complete college entrance exams. Mary Mitchell Morris, adviser at Heritage High School, serves 425 seniors. Out of those 425 seniors, 274 have registered for either the ACT or SAT. To achieve her goal, Morris states, “I have found that organized, thorough tracking and collaborative strategizing have been instrumental to meeting my KPIs, specifically test registrations.” Morris diligently tracks, with the help of her supervisors and co-advisers, to find two groups of students—students who may need that extra encouragement to sign up for a test or those students who are performing well in the classroom but have yet to take a test. Her “tracking and targeting” strategy has helped Morris “find certain populations of students who may be slipping through the cracks.”



Morris knows the importance of personalizing each conversation with her students. “I try to be mindful of tailoring my conversations about registering for the SAT or ACT to the individual student,” says Morris, “One student may need a pep talk about their testing anxieties, while another may just need the motivation to get out of bed on a Saturday to take the test.”

“I serve because I believe that every student deserves the same opportunity and resources to become their best selves.”

- Lekasia White



Courtni Reese
Cedar Shoals High School



Raysean Ricks
Westside High School



Taylor Thomas
North Atlanta High School



Sierra Thomason
Maynard Jackson High School

COLLEGE APPLICATION SUBMISSIONS

As the fall semester ends, GCAC advisers are readily preparing their students to submit college applications. Advisers encourage students to submit at least three applications, including applications to reach, target, and safety schools. When selecting colleges, paying close attention to a student's academic profile, as well as their financial and personal needs, may increase the student's chances of getting to and through college. Brandi Thompson, adviser at Rockdale County High School, has a passion for advising. College application submission rates reflect this passion clearly.



Brandi Thompson
Rockdale County High School



Arnelle Vilfort
North Atlanta High School



Ashley Westbrook
Salem High School



Lekasia White
Mays High School



Thompson credits much of her success to Rockdale's Apply to College Month initiatives: "Our Bulldogs worked hard to complete over 400 applications with 40% of our students having at least 1 application completed." To continue the momentum, she celebrated her students' accomplishments by having Augusta University stop by to announce the 15 students who were admitted during Early Action. Thompson's excellent efforts represent the various methods GCAC advisers deploy to create an active and engaging college-going environment for their students.

"I am passionate about education advocacy and breaking down barriers students will face in the college application process."

-Courtnei Reese

FAFSA SUBMISSIONS AND COMPLETIONS

One of the most important parts of the college application process is the Free Application for Financial Student Aid. To prepare for the FAFSA, GCAC advisers have attended numerous workshops to learn about the financial aid process. At Grady High School in Atlanta, advisers Damisi Fawole and Lacey Flynn have used creative measures to motivate students to fill out the FAFSA early. To promote the FAFSA, they hold “FAFSA Friday” at their school on a weekly basis. Flynn commented, “We’ve had a lot of success with our FAFSA Friday Initiative! We, along with counselors and administrators, wear our bright pink FAFSA t-shirts every Friday to promote completion of the application.” Every Friday the advisers set up outside the cafeteria with information about the FAFSA. As an incentive, they give the students prizes once they have completed the application. This is just one way that GCAC advisers go the extra mile for their students.



PARENT ENGAGEMENT

The Georgia College Advising Corps is committed to engaging parents throughout the college admissions process. Advisers complete efforts throughout the year to ensure that school staff and family members work together to create the best support system for students. As a program, the Georgia College Advising Corps works hard to engage families, having met with 1,814 total family members in schools that are currently served.

Adviser Christina Justice from Social Circle High has already exceeded her school’s parent engagement goal. When asked about the importance of parent engagement, Christina said that, “when parents are involved, you have people enforcing things at school and at home, which helps create a great support system for students.” Christina reached this goal by hosting events such as Junior & Senior Parent Night and FAFSA Night. During these events, Christina presented information to students and families about graduation requirements, college admissions and financial aid.

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This newsletter was brought to you from our wonderful Marketing Committee!

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