

JOHN MARSHALL HIGH SCHOOL
FMSAS GENERAL MEETING #2
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2014
6:30 P.M.--8:00 P.M.
MINUTES

Meeting called to order at 6:50 P.M.

Quorum was established. All board members present: Peter McNulty, President; Christine Tucker, VP; Marylou Mejia, VP of Fundraising; Cindy Solovei, Treasurer; Josie Contratto, Secretary.

Student Leadership Cabinet: Robina Henson, Grace Martinez, Lynda Martinez, Kenny Yamaguchi.

SAS coordinator, Larry Welch.

Various SAS parents. (Sign-in sheet available.)

Peter McNulty and Marylou Mejia discuss the launching of The Giving Campaign. Flyers to be sent home with students. Also available through FMSAS.NET.

Brief discussion about calculators and ability of some families to afford them and some that are not.

Introduction of Miss Tricia Bryan, college counselor. Presentation lasted the duration of the meeting.

(Transcript of Ms. Bryan's presentation is attached.)

Next general meeting: November 18, 2014.

Peter McNulty made a motion to adjourn; seconded by Josie Contratto. (8:00 P.M.)

1 TUESDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2014; LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

2 JOHN MARSHALL HIGH SCHOOL

3 (FACULTY CAFETERIA)

4 7:00 P.M.

5
6 (Prior discussion held; refer to
7 general meeting minutes.)
8

9 MR. McNULTY: All right. I'd like to introduce
10 Marshall's college counselor, Miss Tricia Bryan.
11

12 (Applause.)
13

14 MS. BRYAN: Thank you for such a warm welcome. So I
15 think this is a range of grade levels here; so I won't
16 speak specifics to a particular grade level. I know that
17 what questions -- I invited questions, and I got a few
18 questions back that kind of range. The first question I
19 remember -- I left my paper -- was about stress and
20 anxiety about the whole college application process.

21 And so, yes, especially in the senior year, I
22 see that students are becoming very anxious about whether
23 or not they're going to get in. Obviously, you know,
24 college is kind of that pinnacle of -- defining moment of
25 everyone. This is what I've been raising my child for in
26 this way and having them go to this school and do all of
27 these extra things to get to this end point.

28 And so I think that students and parents and

1 teachers and myself are all looking for, you know, this
2 rewarding thing at the end, which is, "I got into my dream
3 college," essentially. And with that comes a lot of
4 stress and anxiety.

5 And what I would like to express to you, as
6 parents, for you to kind of also help with your children
7 is having an open heart about this process. Because when
8 you're identifying that stress factor when it comes to the
9 college application process, it's feeling like you have to
10 win the big ticket to this particular college, and somehow
11 that equates to a certain level of success or being able
12 to say, "I got into this college."

13 You know, some students are applying to
14 colleges, knowing that they can't get in but just trying
15 to see if they can get in. And to me, that is misused
16 energy and focus. So one of the things that I really want
17 you to try to do is have an open heart.

18 There are so many colleges out there. It's not
19 just UCLA; it's not just Stanford or Harvard or the Ivies.
20 There are many other colleges out there that may provide
21 your child with a rewarding experience not only
22 academically, but socially, and help them develop into an
23 adult that's a productive member of society.

24 So I just want you to realize that the school
25 itself doesn't do that. It's also their experiences and
26 the amount of support they receive, and how they feel
27 welcome, and how they fit in into that particular college.
28 And just because a college has a well-renowned name

1 doesn't mean that it's a good fit for your particular
2 child; okay? And that is what is causing a lot of anxiety
3 especially amongst peers where School for Advanced Studies
4 and other SLC's at our school have a range of students.

5 Students can be -- some are extremely high
6 achieving, 4.5 GPA. And some of them are not, but they
7 are in the same circle of friends or in the same
8 classrooms. So when you have one student sitting next to
9 a GPA of 4.5, but there's maybe a 3.3, and they're
10 discussing, "Well, what schools are you applying to?" you
11 know, either that 3.3 student may not feel like being --
12 telling other students, or they may go into this mode,
13 what I see in the beginning of senior year, where it's
14 kind of, like, "Well, yeah, I'm going to apply to Stanford
15 even though I have a 3.3 just to see if I can get in."

16 And they don't like when I tell them, "Well,
17 maybe we should look at some other school," because
18 there's this frenzy going on with getting into these
19 big-name schools. So what I'm asking for you to do as
20 parents is not really feed into that frenzy or put any
21 pressure on them to get into a particular school, whether
22 it be based on location because it's close to you and you
23 want them to stay close to home or whether it's you went
24 to that particular school, or your cousin or somebody in
25 your family did.

26 There are too many colleges that are available
27 to our students for them to just be looking at 20 or so,
28 that, you know, they know of either because of sports

1 teams or what-have-you. So one of the things that I have
2 included in here is a program called "Colleges that Change
3 Lives." It's based on a book by The New York Times
4 editor, his name is Loren Pope. And he wrote a book about
5 colleges that are doing a little bit more in terms of
6 educating students.

7 What I found when I talked to students, and they
8 come back, and I'll say, "Well, how is Berkeley?"

9 And they're like "Oh, it's so hard." You know,
10 it's really a sink-or-swim type environment, which may be
11 good for some students. You know, if they're wanting to
12 do pre-med and they're at Berkeley, they may find that
13 they don't end up doing that just because it's a
14 sink-or-swim environment. Whereas, if they went to
15 another school like Ursinus, which had a 90 percent med
16 school admit rate, but probably very few people have heard
17 of that school, you know, they would not go for that.

18 And so, Colleges that Change Lives kind of
19 discusses things to look for when you are in the college
20 search process. So the one that I really want to point
21 out to you is No. 3, "A Name-Brand College Will Not
22 Guarantee Success." Okay. Now, one of the things that I
23 would say is defining what "success" means for you or your
24 child.

25 Okay. Success is not one thing. Success for
26 some people may be making a lot of money. Success for
27 some people may be having a fulfilling career. Some may
28 have both. And it may be helping other people. So my

1 thing is trying to also define what the end goal is for
2 your child and kind of acting accordingly and not having
3 just a very streamlined idea of what "success" means,
4 first and foremost.

5 So they say "Think about the people in your life
6 who are happy and successful" and find out where they went
7 to college. And if so, why they attended -- where they
8 attended and why. Okay. And so you'll find that success
9 in life has less to do with one's choice of college than
10 with personal qualities and traits and the experience and
11 the opportunities one has in college.

12 Okay. So I can use myself as an example of
13 that. I would say that in high school, although I was
14 somewhat confident, when put in situations outside my
15 comfort zone, I didn't know how to interact with people.
16 And I went to a school in New York City, based on
17 location. I wanted to be in New York City, which many
18 students like the idea of. They want to be in the City.

19 And I did like my experience for the first year
20 in New York City. I got to do all those things that I
21 wanted to do socially. But then I started to realize that
22 I was unfulfilled in so many other ways, whether it be in
23 my connection to other students or professors. It was
24 very much a commuter school where students were coming and
25 going, and there was no sense of community there.

26 So I transferred out and went to Howard
27 University in Washington, D.C. And what that school did
28 for me was instill a sense of confidence that I can stand

1 here before you and talk very normally and feel like I
2 know what I'm doing.

3 And that was not something I learned in a
4 psychology class or a math class. It was the school
5 environment that instilled that in me. Okay. And that's
6 what I took from that school more so than anything I
7 learned in a book.

8 And so one of the things your students have to
9 look for in their college search is not just what they're
10 learning academically, but what other things they can pull
11 from the school in terms of opportunities. Okay. So I'm
12 not blasting the UC system, but I'm just saying that there
13 are other schools out there that students should have an
14 open heart about applying to and having options about
15 where they get into.

16 Knowing that you will get into a school, right,
17 should take most of the stress out. So the stress
18 shouldn't be coming from which school you go to. Know
19 that you will get into a school. Are we clear on that?
20 Yeah? Okay.

21 So Colleges that Change Lives, they have a tour.
22 They do a college tour. There's a group of colleges that
23 do that in the summer. It's usually like July 31st,
24 August 1st. If you are in town over the summer, please
25 think about attending. They have a website, CTCL.ORG,
26 that has the dates and the locations for where their
27 college tours are.

28 And they give a really nice talk in the

1 beginning about the whole frenzy of the college
2 application process and, you know, the U.S. News & World
3 Report rankings list and how you should really try to
4 avoid that. You know, that list, what colleges do to get
5 on that list, it's not based on how great of a school they
6 are.

7 One of the main things that you'll find that
8 seniors get is a lot of free applications from random
9 colleges. And they say, "Why did I get this application?"
10 And I'll find them applying to these schools like in
11 South Dakota just because it was a free application.

12 And one of the strategies for bumping yourself
13 up on the list is to get a lot of applications so that you
14 can deny people. What does that do? It makes you more
15 selective. So now more people think that you're a great
16 school because you're more selective. It has very little
17 to do with what they're teaching, what they're doing, what
18 their graduates are doing. It's just about being more
19 selective, and that's how they get on that list.

20 So be very wary of those rank lists in terms of
21 deciding what schools to apply to. It's an easy search,
22 but I would ask that you dig a little bit deeper.

23 Visiting as well is one of the best ways to find
24 a good-fit school. Some of you may have what we call
25 under-represented minorities or under-represented
26 students, who are students that are not traditionally
27 going to this particular school. It could be a female
28 that's going to a tech school, or it could be an ethnic

1 minority, so to say, or it could be a first-generation
2 college student.

3 And many of those schools have fly-in programs,
4 where they will pay for a plane ticket or a partial --
5 give you a partial reimbursement for a plane ticket for
6 the students to go and visit. And they do that every
7 fall. Usually for seniors; sometimes for juniors.

8 And they do it also after you apply for the
9 spring and been accepted for you to kind of make your
10 decision. Okay. So please take advantage of the
11 opportunity to visit because that will become very
12 apparent whether or not you like that school.

13 PARENT: So how is -- is that done through Marhsall,
14 or you contact the school?

15 MS. BRYAN: They usually have -- it's on the school's
16 website --

17 PARENT: Okay.

18 MS. BRYAN: -- or you can simply call them and ask
19 them if they have funding for it. But a lot of them may
20 have programs designated with an application; so through
21 introductions and even into how the application works,
22 because they have to get a letter of recommendation or
23 something of the sort.

24 So pretty much most colleges have it. Not
25 talking about UC's and Cal State, but most private
26 colleges have it, where they're called Fly-In Programs or
27 Diversity Programs things of the sort. Okay.

28 Okay. So in terms of the academic stress part

1 of it and students feeling pressure to take those five,
2 six AP's so that they can look impressive to a college,
3 you know, it's really kind of a fine line for me to say
4 don't do that. Yes, colleges do look at AP's as an
5 indicator for college readiness; so students should be
6 taking AP courses.

7 I have some cynical views about that and how
8 much money College Board is making off of this program,
9 but the colleges, as of now, are still using AP exams as
10 an indicator. So I do encourage students to take AP
11 exams -- AP classes.

12 You will hear -- most colleges will say that
13 they will prefer that a student has challenged themselves,
14 even if they hadn't done so well in that class, than for
15 them to have an "A" in a regular course.

16 Some colleges will say, "Well, we want them to
17 get an 'A' in the AP Exam." That's how they'll answer the
18 question of "Do you prefer this or that," which is not
19 really, you know, an honest way of doing it. But students
20 are getting the preparation for the level of rigor that
21 they will encounter in college.

22 So it's better that they're prepared now versus
23 being in shock when they go to college and, you know, end
24 up dropping out or something of the sort. So I would say
25 yes, they should be encouraged to take as many AP classes
26 as they can handle. Okay.

27 We are finding that, you know, students are
28 having some difficulties dealing with that balancing of

1 school and all the other responsibilities they have going
2 on in their lives. So we have a social worker who's on
3 our campus now who has created a stress group, where
4 they're going to discuss stress management, time
5 management, and those type of things. How to identify
6 what is the cause of your stress, and then deal with it
7 effectively.

8 I mean, I can say, like, last week, I
9 encountered three students who were thinking about harming
10 themselves because of stress. So it is a very real thing.
11 I've seen, you know, the ending of junior year, the
12 current senior class, kids that, you know, got A's
13 freshman year, sophomore year. Then their junior year,
14 they just tanked. Okay. And it was like, "Oh, I was in
15 track and field and I was in this."

16 So it's good to be able to just -- even if they
17 don't want to be a part of a long-term commitment group,
18 just to get some ideas and tips on how to deal with this
19 stress factor that's going on and how to deal with their
20 time effectively, because it's really about time
21 management when you think about it.

22 And it only gets harder in their senior year
23 when they're balancing more AP classes and college
24 applications and all the other responsibilities they have
25 at home or the extra curricular. So I do have a flyer for
26 that if anyone is interested in having their child join
27 the stress group. It's very informal. So they come
28 during lunch in Room 146, which is by the basketball

1 courts. I'll leave this over here if anyone is
2 interested.

3 Okay. Another question I remember was about,
4 like, college prep programs and what we at Marshall have.
5 One question was about Eagle Rock High School and their
6 partnership with Occidental College, and another one was
7 about Upward Bound and QuestBridge and Posse. So I'll
8 address that all together.

9 I am meeting with Occidental College next week
10 to discuss having a partnership with them. We have had
11 that in the past. From what I believe, they offered us to
12 be a partnership school, but then that program on their
13 end dissolved. So we're meeting next week to see what we
14 can do again together.

15 Essentially, as it was described last time, they
16 would come in and be available to talk with students and
17 parents about the college application process, about
18 financial aid, and things like that. So it wasn't the
19 same thing as what Eagle Rock had with the scholarship
20 attached to it, but I will bring that up in the meeting to
21 see if we can be one of those type of partner schools.

22 But one thing that I want to ask them to do is
23 to do like a mock admissions committee, where parents can
24 come in and sit at tables, just as you are now, with
25 applications and decide who gets in and who doesn't. So
26 you can see for yourself how that decision is made, how
27 hard it is when you have, you know, wonderful students to
28 choose from, and kind of get more of an inside look into

1 that. So that's one of the things that I want to arrange
2 with Occidental.

3 Outside of that, we are not a partner school
4 with any Upward Bound programs, but we do have, basically,
5 an in-house program called College Path L.A. And they are
6 a group of volunteers throughout the community that come
7 in and help me during critical moments, the main one being
8 our personal statement workshops.

9 So it's virtually impossible for me to help
10 every student to develop a story and polish their college
11 essays. And so what they're doing is pulling in their
12 resources of people in our community to come in and sit
13 down, one on one, with seniors, and go over possible
14 topics for the personal statement.

15 This year, we've had three workshops so far. We
16 have another one on October 28, which is where students
17 are going to now bring in their drafts after meeting with
18 them and have that reviewed and get feedback on it.

19 And what's good about that is that they're
20 working with a stranger. And so, essentially, when you
21 think about the college application and the fact that a
22 stranger is reading your essay, you can kind of get a
23 sense of whether they're getting a feel for who you are
24 through your essay right away. Right? So -- yes?

25 PARENT: Is that -- that's open to all Marshall
26 students, not just SAS; right?

27 MS. BRYAN: It's open to all Marshall students, yeah.
28 But we keep it limited to seniors. Okay. And I know that

1 some teachers work with students on their personal
2 statements as well. So it's just a good way to kind of
3 get an outside opinion.

4 They also do career panels in the spring. So
5 they invite professionals from our local area, again, to
6 talk with students. We've had health care panels, arts
7 and entertainment panels, engineering panels. So students
8 can come in and kind of meet with professionals and get an
9 idea of what it took for them to get into what they think
10 right now of their future career, which might change,
11 possibly.

12 So I really like that partnership versus Upward
13 Bound, which is off campus, and it's specific to students
14 who are first generation, low income. These are -- this
15 program is open to everyone.

16 Upward Bound is nice because they do field trips
17 to colleges and things of the sort, which we don't have
18 the funding to do. But I'm more than happy, if you wanted
19 to fund a bus, to go on a field trip to a particular
20 college. I would be more than happy to chaperone that.
21 So depending on what you as parents want for your
22 students, those things are possible.

23 Posse and QuestBridge, Posse is a program that
24 sends a group of students from the Los Angeles area to
25 their partner colleges on a full tuition scholarship. And
26 the partner colleges change every year. But some, off the
27 top of my head, are Middlebury, Syracuse, University of
28 Wisconsin-Madison, Hobart and William Smith, Tulane,

1 and --

2 STUDENT: UC Berkeley.

3 MS. BRYAN: UC Berkeley. Right. Thank you.

4 And this scholarship is different because it's
5 not based on merit; it's based on leadership potential.
6 The students go through a series of interviews. There are
7 hundreds of students nominated from Los Angeles County
8 schools. We get to nominate about -- it changes from year
9 to year, but we nominate about 15 to 20 kids. And from
10 that, they will whittle it down to 10 students per
11 college. So we have gotten anywhere between one and three
12 students --

13 PARENT: That happens in the senior year?

14 MS. BRYAN: Yes. I nominate actually in the junior
15 year, in the junior year. So at the ending of the junior
16 year is when I nominate.

17 All right. So I'm looking for students who are
18 charismatic, outgoing, kind of stand out in a crowd.
19 Although they do look at grades, it's not the primary
20 thing that they are considering. But I have found that
21 the students that we selected do have admissible grades,
22 so to say. So it's a small factor, but not the main
23 factor.

24 QuestBridge is a national program. QuestBridge
25 is very enticing because they have these wonderful partner
26 schools that are Ivies like Princeton and Yale and all the
27 schools that students dream about. But it is more
28 competitive because it's a national program. That is

1 independent of our school. As many students that has
2 desire can apply to QuestBridge. So it's not something I
3 have to nominate or set up a partnership with.

4 What QuestBridge does have is called college
5 prep scholarships. So for juniors, parents of juniors,
6 they will fund for those students to go to a summer
7 program. Most colleges have summer programs where you can
8 do a range of things. You get your college credit or just
9 kind of experience being on a college campus. And they
10 usually cost money, anywhere from \$3,000 and up. And so
11 QuestBridge has a program to help cover that. Okay.

12 PARENT: You just find that online, or do we come to
13 you to get information?

14 MS. BRYAN: It's online. It's called
15 QUESTBRIDGE.ORG. Pretty much, yeah. When the application
16 opens for the summer program scholarship, I will put that
17 on my Boons for Barristers list, which is a list of
18 scholarships and program opportunities that I have. I
19 wasn't able to get that done for you guys today, but I
20 should have it ready by next week.

21 So if you guys do things on the Internet -- like
22 if I were to email it to you, you can make it available?

23 MR. McNULTY: Absolutely. We have a website.

24 MS. BRYAN: Okay. If I send it to you, you can put
25 it on the website, and you'll have what's new in terms of
26 scholarships and program opportunities. Okay. Yeah?

27 PARENT: I know another thing that's been circulating
28 or questions I keep hearing -- I'm not sure if they want

1 to go to UC -- but if they don't take three years of
2 language or if they take one -- like my daughter skipped 2
3 and went to 3 because we went to Spain over the summer.
4 So does that count for all three years, and will that give
5 them the credits they need? Or if they're going into
6 science, do they have to have three years?

7 MS. BRYAN: When it comes to math and foreign
8 language, to answer one part of your question, it's really
9 not about the number of years. It's about the level.

10 PARENT: Okay.

11 MS. BRYAN: Right? So, for example, we had an SAS
12 student that started out in calculus one year, freshman
13 calculus. Or trig maybe, and then she went to calculus.
14 So she only had, like, two or three years, but that's
15 because she maxed out the level; right?

16 Now, where it comes to bite them is the
17 graduation requirements, because you would think that
18 someone who knows calculus knows geometry or Algebra I.
19 But with graduation requirements, they were required to
20 have those two years, so to say. So there's like --
21 things are changing with graduation requirements. We're
22 now kind of A through G. So students are going to need
23 less credits to graduate.

24 And this is not part of my expertise on the
25 graduation requirements, but I know that I think for next
26 year that they don't need 230 credits to graduate. So
27 with the foreign language and school suggesting three to
28 four years, it's also about the level. So there are some

1 people who know Spanish and can just take AP Spanish
2 language and not have to take Spanish 1, 2, 3.

3 But there should be room in the student's
4 schedule if they are in freshman or sophomore year to do
5 three to four years of language now because it's required.

6 PARENT: Some of these kids are more interested in,
7 like, taking more science because that's their thing. And
8 they have sports too and sort of like -- but would they be
9 "disconsidered" from a UC if they don't have --

10 MS. BRYAN: I don't think colleges are -- the
11 language requirement is two years.

12 PARENT: Okay.

13 MS. BRYAN: Three recommended; right? So I don't
14 think that, you know, they're going to ding a student who
15 has chosen to do four years of science instead of four
16 years of foreign language. They're looking at students
17 holistically; so they're not looking to pinpoint one
18 reason to deny them, so to say.

19 So a student who may have been heavily involved
20 in athletics, for example, and that's why we have, you
21 know, a limited number of this, the student expresses that
22 in their college essays. And that's how they review them
23 holistically. So you don't want them to assume anything.
24 You want to always present your whole story to them in
25 that sense.

26 PARENT: Can I ask one more question, because I kind
27 of heard this horrifying thing. I have 10th and 11th
28 graders. Are all the records that from years past, in

1 this whole ISIS-MiSiS craziness, there's no worry of
2 things being lost?

3 MS. BRYAN: No. I think MiSiS is starting to behave
4 itself. I think it's, as complaints come in, they fix it.
5 So it's kind of like, you know, hey, this is wrong, and
6 then they fix it, basically. So I haven't seen any person
7 yet, current seniors who I'm working with, who have
8 missing records.

9 PARENT: Okay.

10 MS. BRYAN: The only thing that I haven't been able
11 to do is deal with new students because their records are
12 not entered yet.

13 PARENT: Just looking at -- my son is a freshman.

14 MS. BRYAN: Yup.

15 PARENT: Just looking at options. I think the SAS
16 program probably has a good shot of doing something like
17 if he wants to go -- something like Annapolis or something
18 like that, Air Force Academy --

19 MS. BRYAN: Okay.

20 PARENT: Does your office have experience with
21 helping with letters to a congressman or putting together
22 a --

23 MS. BRYAN: Yeah. I mean, we had someone go to the
24 Naval Academy. We had someone go to West Point. So what
25 I will say about that process is it starts earlier than
26 senior year. And so that student has to self-identify
27 because it really should start no later than junior year
28 in terms of doing like the prep academy before that.

1 And we do get invitations from the Congress
2 representatives to come for an information session about
3 getting those nominations. And they send us flyers for
4 that. Academy Nights they're called. So, yes, I have
5 helped students with that.

6 PARENT: Thank you.

7 PARENT: This is a bit left field, but I just came
8 off of five years of teaching in Canada, and I just -- I
9 don't know if you encourage students to look into Canadian
10 universities, but they're a lot easier to apply to.

11 MS. BRYAN: Yeah.

12 PARENT: And they're actually very reasonably priced.
13 They're the most American --

14 MS. BRYAN: I only know of McGill, to be honest with
15 you. I don't know of many Canadian schools outside of
16 that.

17 PARENT: Yeah.

18 MS. BRYAN: So that may be a shortcoming on me. But
19 then one of my other big challenges is trying to convince
20 students to leave home.

21 PARENT: Yeah.

22 MS. BRYAN: That's a very big challenge for me.

23 PARENT: McGill is definitely a long way away.
24 That's definitely the best deal. Quebec University. But
25 it's worth, you know, having information.

26 MS. BRYAN: Okay.

27 MR. McNULTY: Sorry. I want to make sure that it
28 dovetails quickly. That is so true. And I wonder if you

1 can address the idea of all the great colleges that are
2 probably giving our kids advantages just because they're
3 coming from California like Williams or --

4 MS. BRYAN: Oh, yeah.

5 MR. McNULTY: -- Georgetown --

6 MS. BRYAN: I mean, they're recruiting. They come to
7 our school to recruit, you know. And students apply. I
8 mean, obviously, there are different types of students.
9 We have students who are first generation and are very
10 hesitant about the idea of leaving home. They may apply,
11 but then they go with what's safe in terms of UC.

12 I see it every year. You know, students who get
13 into Brandeis will go to Santa Cruz. Okay. You know,
14 it's, like, well, why did you do that? Or, you know -- so
15 that is --

16 PARENT: Why do they do that?

17 MR. McNULTY: The surf is no good at Brandeis at all.

18 PARENT: What now?

19 MR. McNULTY: The surf is terrible at Brandeis.

20 PARENT: Surf. That's right.

21 MS. BRYAN: No. He felt like it wasn't diverse
22 enough for him, so to say. I feel like, you know,
23 sometimes East Coast has a different culture in terms of
24 how people may be cliquish according to ethnicity, and I
25 guess he felt like California would mingle more together.
26 So, you know, that was fine, I guess.

27 So, you know, I do -- I try very hard to
28 encourage students to look at those schools, especially

1 Midwest, which is what they're utterly scared of. I have
2 less of a hard time convincing about Northeast, but they
3 feel like there's nothing in the Midwest. Guess they have
4 corn fields. Well, except for the University of Chicago.
5 With the exception of that, they, you know, but --

6 MR. McNULTY: It happens to be true.

7 MS. BRYAN: Well -- but there are some schools that,
8 you know, are in St. Louis, like Washington University,
9 St. Louis. Kind of like -- you know, that is a city and
10 what-have-you.

11 PARENT: The price, though, wouldn't it be more
12 expensive for our kids to go out of state? And one of the
13 reasons they probably don't go to the Midwest is because
14 you can't get Mexican food.

15 MS. BRYAN: Well, that might be an issue. Or Korean
16 BBQ.

17 But here's my answer to that: Being outside of
18 your comfort zone is a learning experience. Even negative
19 experiences are learning experiences. And so being able
20 to say, at the very least, that you got on a plane and you
21 went to this place where you didn't know anyone, and you
22 tried and, you know, networked and interacted with other
23 people who are different from yourself is a learning
24 experience. That's what I try to get them to understand
25 in terms of that. Sometimes it works; sometimes it
26 doesn't.

27 PARENT: I just wanted to say McGill is less than
28 \$17,000.

1 MS. BRYAN: And then, also, depending on your income,
2 it kind of also determines how much you pay; right? So,
3 you know, the students who are having the most difficulty
4 with the idea of going outside of California to a private
5 school will be your upper income parents that aren't going
6 to get much assistance.

7 So unless you are going to a school that has a
8 great endowment, like Williams or Amherst or the Ivies or
9 what-have-you, that can view students whose parents make
10 \$150,000 as middle class, right, with their \$600,000
11 Silver Lake home, or up -- I'm just low-balling it. I'm
12 going back too far; right? \$800,000 Silver Lake home --
13 then those are the ones that are kind of getting a little
14 squeezed out of that process.

15 But if your student is qualifying for free or
16 reduced price lunch and admissible to schools like
17 Williams and Amherst, that's a free ride. That's one of
18 the misconceptions about going out of state, that somehow
19 being a Californian will be cheaper, and it's not
20 necessarily true.

21 PARENT: What if you're somewhere in between? You've
22 got the house, but you don't quite have the income, but
23 you're not free or reduced, but you have a kid who has a
24 4.5 or whatever, you know. Are their chances -- when they
25 fill it out, do the schools then look and say, "Oh, wow
26 this is a kid we give a scholarship to," or are they
27 meeting with you to find out whether scholarships are
28 appropriate?

1 MS. BRYAN: So those types of schools, they don't
2 give merit-based aid. They give need-based aid. So they
3 will meet whatever they identify as their need. They
4 consider parent assets at, I want to say, 10 percent of
5 your assets in terms of your ability to pay, and student
6 assets at about 20 percent.

7 PARENT: I wanted to ask one more thing. Have you
8 put any kids in Europe like London --

9 MS. BRYAN: There have been. Not from senior year
10 directly to, but we have had some students who have
11 transferred out and done that in their sophomore year.
12 And we also have a program called AFS that partners with
13 our school, and they are looking for ninth graders and
14 sophomores and juniors to do study abroad while in high
15 school.

16 So every year she comes, and she speaks with
17 sophomores and freshmen about the idea of spending a year
18 abroad while in high school or a summer abroad doing
19 community service. And they pay for that. So if anybody
20 wants information on the AFS program, she lives in the
21 area. So she's been really trying to get Marshall
22 students to do it.

23 PARENT: I have a question about capacity. So
24 there's one of you, and there's 2,600 students.

25 MS. BRYAN: Yeah.

26 PARENT: So, first of all, is that really true? And
27 how are you standing? No. So my question is, then, so
28 you have all these seniors to work with.

1 MS. BRYAN: Yeah.

2 PARENT: How do you do it? Is it the squeaky wheel
3 that gets the grease? And is there any type of program
4 for the juniors in boosting them up for their senior year
5 and getting them ready for the immersion into SAT and the
6 whole process?

7 MS. BRYAN: Right. Not really, to be honest with
8 you. I know that -- I mean, I have been using College
9 Path L.A. to help me during those key moments, but, you
10 know, it is difficult -- and add the interest, in
11 particular, private colleges have increased -- to give
12 individualized attention. I do meet with students as a
13 group in their classrooms to kind of go through the
14 eligibility, and then I do try to meet the students who
15 are interested in private colleges one on one.

16 It doesn't always happen that I meet with every
17 student. So, yeah, to a certain student, the squeaky
18 wheel does get more attention in that sense. But, yeah,
19 it's impossible to meet with every single senior. There's
20 619.

21 But, you know, not all 619 are going to apply to
22 these elite private colleges. That's more along the lines
23 of about 250 to 300, which is more, you know, easier to
24 handle than 600. But, you know, I do workshops for, like,
25 the Cal States and the UC's as a group. So that kind of
26 handles a large portion of the students, and then I try to
27 meet with students one on one --

28 MR. McNULTY: To dovetail off that question --

1 MS. BRYAN: Yeah.

2 MR. McNULTY: -- if there was something that we could
3 do to help you, obviously, focus on SAS kids. Maybe this
4 is a sort of sideline conversation for later, but is there
5 anything that we, as the parents of the SAS students,
6 financially or otherwise, do to lighten that burden and to
7 enable you to help more with our kids? Is there something
8 we can do to help you?

9 MS. BRYAN: I think that's something we should
10 discuss. I would have to kind of think about ways in
11 which we could be far reaching in that sense. I know, you
12 know, in terms of one on one, sitting down, individualized
13 attention, if that's what you're seeking to do, then
14 that -- I'm not sure how to answer that outside of hiring
15 another person. You know what I mean?

16 So I do have interns that kind of come in and
17 help me every now and then. I don't know exactly, off the
18 top of my head, how that could work, but there are certain
19 things we can do to help expose students to colleges like
20 field trips or sponsoring events for them to visit,
21 what-have-you, you know.

22 The guy in the back there.

23 PARENT: Thank you. I'm going back a few topics back
24 to the financial aid aspect. I just wanted to add
25 something when you were talking about endowments and
26 universities. I went to U.S.C. I got a financial aid
27 package, and they sent me a letter, and I looked at it and
28 said that's not enough.

1 In fact, I wrote them a note saying, "This is
2 not enough."

3 They said, "Well, based on your income" --

4 I said, "I don't make that money anymore. That
5 was last year."

6 They sent me another letter with more money, and
7 I wrote them back again. I said, "It's still not enough."
8 I said, "Here's what I'm doing. I'm not planning on
9 working full time at school." And they gave me more
10 money.

11 They said, "Okay, here's some more," until
12 finally, "Is this going to do?"

13 I was, like, okay, and they paid all my tuition.
14 Just keep saying, "Well, no, we need more."

15 MS. BRYAN: Right.

16 PARENT: You can try that sometimes.

17 PARENT: Is this for your child? This is for
18 yourself?

19 PARENT: For myself, yeah.

20 MS. BRYAN: So one of the typical things you can do
21 also is to have comparative letters. So if one school is
22 offering you more money, you can always use that and say,
23 "Well, this school is offering more money. Can you match
24 it?" Right?

25 Another thing would be to, you know, some
26 schools will have a limitation and say, "Well, there's not
27 more we can do for you, but other schools will." We had a
28 student go to Carleton last year, and what they gave her

1 was not -- you know, maybe like a \$8,000 gap. And she was
2 saying, "I can't do this," and they met the additional
3 need. It does happen.

4 But it can't be that you're just trying to get a
5 free ride, because college is not free. Right. There are
6 costs involved, and they do expect the parents to
7 contribute something to it. So that's one of the
8 differences that students also have to understand about
9 going to free public high school and going to college is,
10 you know, you have to buy books. You have to pay for
11 classes, so forth, and so forth.

12 And then you (indicating) and then you
13 (indicating).

14 PARENT: Yeah. I was going to offer that, if it
15 would be helpful, for some of us who have done admissions,
16 and in my case in the UC and Britain and Canada, I'd be
17 happy to talk to a group of kids who --

18 MS. BRYAN: Absolutely.

19 PARENT: -- might be interested in Canadian versus --

20 MS. BRYAN: Absolutely. We welcome that. I know
21 people from the College Path program, they will kind of
22 build a rapport with certain students, and they'll work
23 with them one on one through the whole process because
24 they have some exposure to different colleges. If you're
25 knowledgable about it, you're more than welcome to come in
26 and help out in that sense of maybe taking on a student
27 that you may want to work with every now and then.

28 PARENT: Yeah, I'd be happy to do that. I teach in

1 the UC system; so... One of the things I wanted to say
2 also, though, is when you think about the cost of college,
3 you have to calculate also the type of degree, because UC
4 and Cal State are not necessarily cheaper if you have to
5 go for five or six years because it's so hard to get
6 classes. I'm at Riverside.

7 MS. BRYAN: Exactly. So hearing it from you may
8 help. I don't know. But sometimes they don't listen to
9 me. I don't know why. I don't know. UC's and SAT's have
10 gotten a grip on students' brains thinking these are the
11 only two choices you have. Students ignore the idea of
12 the ACT. It's the same type of test almost in terms of
13 the purpose of the test. If a student scores perfectly on
14 the ACT, it's just as impressive as if they had done it on
15 the SAT.

16 There's also a movement by many colleges to get
17 away from testing, you know. This year I've gotten more
18 schools like Hampshire College and Lewis and Clark and
19 Brandeis and a bunch of other schools that are telling me
20 they are test optional. Or in the case of Hampshire, they
21 refuse to look at test scores. They don't even want to
22 see test scores.

23 And so there is a movement to get out of this
24 testing frenzy, but I ask you to not put in the students'
25 heads that they have to take the SAT. Some students are,
26 like, "Oh, no. That's the one I've been studying for is
27 SAT; so I don't want to take the ACT." You're studying
28 for both really.

1 PARENT: Can you --

2 MS. BRYAN: Yes. You can take both.

3 PARENT: Do you suggest they take both?

4 MS. BRYAN: Yes.

5 MR. McNULTY: It's a lot less stress if you take
6 both.

7 PARENT: When is the suggested, like, taking it --

8 MS. BRYAN: So I do recommend the students in 10th
9 and 11th grade take the PSAT. We don't offer the ACT plan
10 here, but we do offer the PSAT mainly because the school
11 district pays for 10th graders to take the tests. And so
12 what I find is that many 10th graders will take it. They
13 should pay for the PSAT both for 10th and 11th grade.
14 Because the 11th grade, they've gotten more course work
15 under their belt; so it can be a better indicator as to
16 how they can do on the actual SAT.

17 So I would recommended that students take the
18 SAT in the spring of their junior year. Any time between
19 January and June is fine. So that's why I put this in
20 your little handouts so that you can get an idea of the
21 test dates. These test dates pretty much stay the same.
22 You know, like the first Saturday of October, first
23 Saturday of November. So you can kind of plan ahead. You
24 know, junior year they can take it any time between
25 January and June.

26 Same thing for the ACT. Testing for, I would
27 say, for juniors in the spring and then again in the fall
28 of their senior year. They have until December of their

1 senior year to complete their testing and get a score that
2 they're happy with.

3 PARENT: Is it true that they can -- with the SAT, if
4 you take it twice, they can get the best of the two
5 different scores? Is that how --

6 MS. BRYAN: Well, it depends on the school. So most
7 private schools super score, which means they can take the
8 high score from different sections of different test
9 dates. UC's do highest sitting. So they're looking at
10 the highest total score from any single test. So it's a
11 little bit different, depending on the school.

12 Yes?

13 MS. SOLOVEI: I have a question. Could you address
14 nonfinancial-based-type scholarships and how you build
15 that into -- like, if your child is strong academically,
16 you might fall in that middle ground where you're not
17 going to get as much financial aid --

18 MS. BRYAN: Right.

19 MS. SOLOVEI: -- as you need, but your kid is kind of
20 talented at something. Should you be grooming them to get
21 into a really good school with some kind of other type of
22 scholarship, whether it be sports or the arts, and how
23 that is handled.

24 MS. BRYAN: So in terms of merit-based aid is what
25 that is called, there are colleges that offer merit-based
26 aid. They tend to be those colleges that are selective
27 but not super selective. For example, like Lehigh
28 University or Lafayette, those schools do have merit-based

1 aid where they might provide a partial tuition scholarship
2 based on GPA and test scores.

3 So for that type of student, what you may find
4 is it may bring the cost down for a private to the
5 equivalent of what it would cost for a UC. So comparing,
6 you know, the whole expense of a UC, how long it takes to
7 get out, what the class size is, compared to a smaller
8 private school, you then have those choices, right? So I
9 don't know about necessarily a full merit-based
10 scholarship for a student that has an upper middle income,
11 so to say. But they do have some, honestly, the partial
12 that will bring down the cost or cut it in half. Like if
13 it's \$60,000, it might end up being \$30,000.

14 MS. SOLOVEI: When you say "merit," are you just
15 talking about academic merit?

16 MS. BRYAN: Yes.

17 MS. SOLOVEI: What about extra, like, they're a
18 dancer or they're a football player or --

19 MS. BRYAN: Yeah. Well, when you're talking about
20 athletics, that's a recruitment process.

21 MS. SOLOVEI: Okay. So let's talk about something
22 else.

23 MS. BRYAN: Yeah. So for athletics they have to be
24 recruited for Division I schools or, necessarily, Division
25 II schools. But for, say, arts or what-have-you, there
26 are some schools that do have art scholarships. Mount
27 St. Mary's. That does exist where they would audition or
28 send in a portfolio. It does exist at many schools

1 actually.

2 PARENT: In fact, the UC application, when you apply,
3 I think it automatically connects you to scholarships.

4 MS. BRYAN: Yeah.

5 PARENT: And if you're at a certain income level
6 family, they have a Blue and Gold Plan.

7 MS. BRYAN: Yes. So there's the Blue and Gold Plan,
8 and there's also a Middle Class Scholarship that came into
9 practice this year. The Blue and Gold Plan is if your
10 family makes less than \$60,000, they cover tuition for UC
11 or Cal State. Essentially, what that is, is a Cal Grant.
12 So they -- what UC's found was that parents, students were
13 going to these private colleges because it was costing the
14 same, and they were losing kids, to a certain extent.
15 Like the high-achieving kids, so to say. So they created
16 the Blue and Gold Plan. Basically, if you make below
17 \$60,000, you're going to get a Cal Grant, which is the
18 cost of tuition anyway.

19 PARENT: I was told it was eighty.

20 PARENT: Yes, it's eighty.

21 MS. BRYAN: Is it eighty now? Okay. So it's eighty
22 now.

23 PARENT: It's really not that much more.

24 MS. BRYAN: Right. And then they also have the
25 Middle Class Scholarship for parents that make above
26 eighty, and that amount ranges based on income from
27 anywhere from a thousand to probably five maybe. But it's
28 really not that major at all, the Middle Class

1 Scholarship.

2 PARENT: When you're saving for your kid's college
3 like five -- whatever those things are called.

4 MS. BRYAN: 529 Plans.

5 PARENT: Does that count against them in that 20
6 percent asset? So you shouldn't save?

7 MS. BRYAN: Essentially, yes. I mean, it depends on
8 your outlook. So your outlook is do I want to be
9 responsible or have, you know, something to pay for my
10 child's education, or do I want them to pay for it all?

11 PARENT: When you say 10 percent of the parents'
12 assets --

13 MS. BRYAN: Yes.

14 PARENT: -- so if you have money in a Roth IRA, which
15 you can take out, will they count that against you? Would
16 that be considered 10 percent of it?

17 MS. BRYAN: For the Roth IRA, I have to double-check
18 on that. I'm not sure about when it comes to retirement
19 accounts.

20 MS. SOLOVEI: That's one of the reasons you are
21 allowed to take out money is for education expenses
22 without penalty.

23 MS. BRYAN: I know you can do that for Roth; right?
24 But for 529 Plans, which are, essentially, a student's
25 asset, yes, they will get dinged for that. But that's the
26 whole purpose of that, you know. So the idea that you're
27 saying, look, I shouldn't save money, I should let the
28 college pay for it all, you know, what you may put

1 yourself in a position is, is what if they don't pay for
2 it all? You know, there are some colleges that do have
3 gaps in terms of how much they give you.

4 PARENT: A financial planner told me to put it all in
5 your name.

6 PARENT: Is it the same if you have an IRA or Roth
7 IRA or you're, like, filing a 403(b) or whatever those
8 things are --

9 MS. BRYAN: No, they don't consider retirement
10 accounts. Right.

11 PARENT: They don't consider retirement?

12 MS. BRYAN: No.

13 PARENT: There's actually a good trick you can use.
14 If you maximize your 401(k), which is about \$18,000, that
15 will be deducted from that eighty, for example, that you
16 talked about earlier. So if you're closer to a hundred,
17 and you max out your 401(k), it actually brings you down
18 to qualify for the Blue and Gold, for example.

19 MS. BRYAN: You mean of, like, in terms of a pre- --

20 PARENT: Yes. Like maximize it with your own
21 contribution. So that's one way that I did.

22 PARENT: I was just going to offer a suggestion,
23 getting back to what resources you may need. Maybe you
24 can identify what you currently have --

25 MS. BRYAN: Okay.

26 PARENT: -- and what we can build off of. Because I
27 think workshops, they work really well, especially for
28 parents, financial aid workshops, so that they can maybe

1 have a guest speaker.

2 MS. BRYAN: Right. We do have one -- we do have one
3 that's called "Cash for College" where we help parents to
4 fill out the financial aid forms in January for seniors.
5 But if you are interested in doing something before that,
6 in terms of having this discussion of where to put your
7 money, then we could probably have someone come in for
8 that.

9

10 (Simultaneous speakers.)

11

12 PARENT: This is more like an opinion. I know we're
13 spinning off here.

14 MS. BRYAN: Yeah.

15 PARENT: We're talking about foreign schools. My son
16 is a dual citizen. When I was a kid, you know, things
17 were different in the world. But even if a university in
18 Italy or something has an excellent degree, but nobody
19 recognized it in the United States --

20 MS. BRYAN: Right.

21 PARENT: The guy who saved my life when I had an
22 operation couldn't practice here because he got a degree
23 in another country. So it's like -- is that changing now
24 with the international, you know, molding of the world
25 here?

26 MS. BRYAN: Well, I mean, in my experience, I would
27 say not much.

28 PARENT: Not much?

1 MS. BRYAN: I would say that, depending on maybe the
2 field --

3 PARENT: Yeah.

4 MS. BRYAN: -- you're going into, perhaps in, like,
5 the computer sciences, your degree could be considered.
6 With certain health sciences, not medicine per se, but
7 certain health sciences might still be considered. But I
8 would say that's probably okay for tech schools. The
9 alternative to that is for students to study abroad while
10 in college.

11 PARENT: I think in engineering -- I mean, when I
12 worked in that field --

13 MS. BRYAN: Yeah.

14 PARENT: I'm not a degreed engineer, but I have a lot
15 of background. It's, like, they didn't care where you got
16 your degree.

17 MS. BRYAN: Exactly.

18 PARENT: If you could do the job in engineering and
19 you can conduct yourself in a reasonably professional
20 manner --

21 MS. BRYAN: Right.

22 PARENT: -- you know, that's it.

23 MS. BRYAN: And sometimes -- I mean, we've had
24 teachers who have been educated in other countries and
25 come here and, you know, taken the tests. You still have
26 to jump through some hoops to do it. But I personally
27 would not -- there are American universities in other
28 countries --

1 PARENT: Oh, yeah.

2 MS. BRYAN: -- that are credited by, you know, our
3 government. So that can have that same level of respect,
4 so to say. So there are options for that.

5 PARENT: We're just trying to figure out things.

6 MR. McNULTY: I have one that maybe is a question
7 that we all have. I wonder if you could talk about
8 whether with these colleges that are recruiting here and
9 with the work that you do here and there for the SAS
10 students, is the SAS program recognized as a superior
11 academic program within L.A. Unified and/or...

12 MS. BRYAN: Not -- so it's not like a nationally
13 known program, so to say. So, once again, the same thing
14 that I would say is that students need to indicate that on
15 their application in terms of -- I do that in my letters
16 of recommendation. Like I will indicate that this student
17 is part of the School for Advanced Studies, and this is
18 what that program is all about. Right? So the students
19 can do that as well within their college applications.

20 But, you know, does Amherst know what School for
21 Advanced Students is or SAS just on its own? No. Right?
22 But that is of less consequence as it is looking at the
23 course work, because that's really what they're looking
24 at.

25 An AP class is supposed to be the same at all
26 schools. It's supposed to be a set curriculum, which is
27 why they like those things so much. So a student who's
28 had an AP class at our school is supposed to be the same

1 type of AP class at Harvard-Westlake or whatever other
2 school.

3 Now, is there relationships that happen with
4 certain elite private schools and these schools? Yes.
5 But I feel that students that go to the school establish
6 that relationship for us. Because what I find is if --
7 like, this year, we've gotten, you know, a lot more
8 schools coming. Every year it changes, I should say.

9 So this year we got Carnegie Mellon, for
10 example. Carnegie Mellon never came to visit before, but
11 we have sent -- had students applying in increasing
12 amounts for the past two to three years. So that's how,
13 you know, we get on their radar as an entire school. But
14 SAS in particular not -- they're not coming and saying,
15 "Oh, I want to meet with your SAS students," so to say.
16 But they just want to meet with students who are high
17 achieving, period.

18 PARENT: You brought up letters of recommendation.
19 So now you have these 600 kids that are asking you for
20 letters. How --

21 MS. BRYAN: Not 600.

22 PARENT: The 200, 250. But how -- I don't know how
23 much time -- I don't know how much time or how you get to
24 know them. So are there things that can be done to help
25 you make a better letter?

26 MS. BRYAN: Well, yeah. What I tell them,
27 essentially, is that I will borrow very heavily -- I won't
28 say plagiarize -- I will borrow very heavily. A part of

1 what I ask is that when students turn in the senior
2 questionnaire to me, which is, basically, the request for
3 me to do a letter, that they include a parent commentary
4 on it.

5 So if you want to, essentially, express to me
6 things about your child that you would like the colleges
7 to know, I would borrow from that.

8 PARENT: And we get that in the senior year?

9 MS. BRYAN: Yeah, yeah.

10 MR. McNULTY: Folks, I think we have really taken up
11 a lot of time.

12 You've been very generous. Thank you very much.

13

14 (Applause.)

15

16 MS. BRYAN: I didn't bring my cards, because I'm so
17 unprofessional; I forget them every time. But you can
18 e-mail me if you have any further questions. My e-mail is
19 COLLEGECOUN@AOL.COM. I do have an LAUSD one, but it's too
20 complicated.

21 MR. McNULTY: Thank you very much.

22

23 (Presentation concluded at 8:00 P.M.)

24

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26

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28