

Returning Wisdom

Ceci Bergquist '18



Alana Foster '17



Noah Halliburton-Link '18



Caroline Hammett '16



Kate Tender '18



Madie Ward '17



Isaac Werkman '16



Seven recent SGS graduates found time to return to campus on January 3rd to talk about their college experiences with current students, faculty, and parents.

It's not like they haven't been busy. Ceci Bergquist '18 is a finance major at University of Notre Dame who volunteers with Ronald McDonald House. Alana Foster '17 studies comparative literature and media at St. Andrews University in Scotland, where she's "doing a lot of writing in all my classes." Noah Halliburton-Link '18 is a business management major at Western Washington University where he's helped remove invasive species on campus. Caroline Hammett '16 sings in two choirs at Pepperdine University and is a French and economics major. Kate Tender '18 writes for the newspaper at Wake Forest University, where she is in pre-med classes. Madie Ward '17 is in the pharmacy program at University of Montana and runs on the track and cross country teams. And Isaac Werkman '16 plays on the Columbia University football team's offensive line when he's not studying evolutionary biology.

So what wisdom did they share from their time in higher education?

First, they offered a room of current juniors and seniors advice on finding the right college. "Find a couple of things you are passionate about and focus on those," said Ceci, "both at SGS and on your applications." Isaac recommended visiting schools to see if their culture is right for you. And Alana encouraged seniors to apply to international universities. "Visit the schools, because sometimes it's the ones you least expect that really appeal to you," she said, explaining how she ended up in Scotland. "And remember to be nice and ask questions of the tour guides," advised Caroline, "because they will remember you!"

Second, they told a room of parents that taking International Baccalaureate (IB) classes pays off in college. Ceci found the experience of taking five final tests in one week good preparation for Notre Dame, "and the Extended Essay was so helpful as practice for all the writing you do in every class, even math." Madie's IB courses at SGS earned her 10 credits at Montana and smoothed her entrance into their pharmacy program. "The AP tests what you don't know, while the IB lets you show what you do know," said Caroline. "Having the IB diploma helped me convince professors to let me into classes I wanted to attend."

Third, they shared some surprises they found in college with 8th-10th graders. Most said they were not allowed to use laptops to take notes in smaller classes. "I remember it better by writing out notes," added Kate. Living with your friends means making the effort to find time and space to study, noted Caroline. Noah commented on the need to organize your time between classes. Participation grades can be a big part of your grade - "I have a four-person seminar class, so you can't hide," said Alana. Several of them wore college sweatshirts, but Isaac claimed he could go a whole semester just wearing clothes from the Columbia football program!

A special thanks to these confident graduates who represent Saint George's so well at universities around the world!

— John Carter, SGS Communications

Isaac Werkman (right) explains the advantages of taking IB classes at the Alumni Forum

