

September  
2017

**Important  
Dates**

**FAFSA  
Workshop  
With Jim Welch**

**September 29  
8 AM-9 AM  
Welcome Center  
Conference Room**

**Cup of  
College**

**October 5  
8 AM-9 AM  
Welcome Center  
Conference Room**

**PSAT  
October 11  
for all students in  
grades  
9-11**

**Inside this issue:**

Fall 2017 Campus Visit Schedule **2**

Scholarship Spotlight **3**

Food for Thought: The benefits of attending a less selective college **3**

St. David's School

# Collegebeat...

An Update from the College Counseling Office

## **The Real Campus Scourge** by Frank Bruni *September 2, 2017 The New York Times*

Across the country, college freshmen are settling into their new lives and grappling with something that doesn't compete with protests and political correctness for the media's attention, something that no one prepared them for, something that has nothing to do with being "snowflakes" and everything to do with being human.

They're lonely.

In a sea of people, they find themselves adrift. The technology that keeps them connected to parents and high school friends only reminds them of their physical separation from just about everyone they know best. That estrangement can be a gateway to binge drinking and other self-destructive behavior. And it's as likely to derail their ambitions as almost anything else.

Brett Epstein felt it. "I spent my first night in the dorm and it hit me like a pile of bricks: It's just me here," Epstein, a 21-year-old senior at the College of Charleston, told me about his start there three years ago. "I was completely freaked out."

Clara Nguyen felt it, too. "It's a lot more difficult to make friends than people make it out to be," Nguyen, a 19-year-old sophomore at U.C.L.A., told me about her experience last year. "I didn't know how to be someone new while at the same time being who I always was."

The problem sounds so ordinary, so obvious: People in an unfamiliar location confront dislocation. On their own two legs for the first time, they're wobbly. Who would expect otherwise?

Well, most of them did, because college isn't sold to teenagers as just any place or passage. It's a gaudily painted promise. The time of their lives! The disparity between myth and reality stuns many of them, and various facets of youth today — from social media to a secondary-school narrative that frames admission to college as the *end* of all worry — worsen the impact.

Harry Rockland-Miller, who just retired as the director for the Center for Counseling and Psychological Health at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, told me the emblematic story of a freshman he treated:

"He was 18. He came to school and was invited to a party his first weekend, and he didn't know anybody. So he started to drink. He drank way too much and ended up lying on a bench in his residential hall, feeling very sick. Nobody stopped and said, 'How are you doing? Are you O.K.?' And he felt so isolated. When he came in to speak with me the next day, the thing that struck him — what he said — was, 'There I was, alone, with all these people around.'"

*Alone, with all these people around.* In a survey of nearly 28,000 students on 51 campuses by the American College Health Association last year, more than 60 percent said that they had "felt very lonely" in the previous 12 months. Nearly 30 percent said that they had felt that way in the previous two weeks.

Victor Schwartz, the medical director of the Jed Foundation, which is one of the nation's leading advocacy groups for the mental health of teenagers and young adults, said that those findings were consistent with his own observation of college students today. "While they expected that academics and finances would be sources of stress," he told me, "many *continued on page 4*

## Fall 2017 College Visit Schedule

<b>Mercer University</b> , Macon, GA	Thursday, September 21	Library	12:05
<b>Oglethorpe University</b> , Atlanta, GA	Thursday, September 21	Couches by PAC	12:05
<b>Furman University</b> , Greenville, SC	Thursday, September 21	Library	12:50
<b>American University</b> , Washington DC	Thursday, September 21	Library	3:15
<b>Clemson University</b> , Clemson, SC	Thursday, September 21	WCCR	3:15
<b>Appalachian State University</b> , Boone, NC	Friday, September 22	WCCR	12:40
<b>Roanoke College</b> , Roanoke, VA	Friday, September 22	Library	12:55
<b>Vanderbilt University</b> , Nashville, TN	Friday, September 22	WCCR	1:10
<b>Berry College</b> , Rome, GA	Monday, September 25	Library	12:00
<b>Hampden-Sydney College</b> , Farmville, VA	Monday, September 25	Library	12:50
<b>The King's College</b> , New York City, NY	Monday, September 25	WCCR	12:50
<b>Elon University</b> , Elon, NC	Monday, September 25	WCCR	3:15
<b>Trinity College of Dublin</b> , Dublin, Ireland	Tuesday, September 26	Library	12:10
<b>Univ. of South Carolina</b> , Columbia, SC	Tuesday, September 26	WCCR	12:50
<b>High Point University</b> , High Point, NC	Tuesday, September 26	WCCR	3:15
<b>Univ. of Southern California</b> , Los Angeles, CA	Thursday, September 28	Library	12:05
<b>Randolph-Macon College</b> , Ashland, VA	Thursday, September 28	Library	12:50
<b>UNC-Chapel Hill</b> , Chapel Hill, NC	Thursday, September 28	TBA	12:30
<b>Dartmouth College</b> , Hanover, NH	Friday, September 29	WCCR	11:00
<b>Auburn University</b> , Auburn, AL	Monday, October 2	WCCR	12:05
<b>University of Richmond</b> , Richmond, VA	Monday, October 2	WCCR	12:50
<b>Washington and Lee</b> , Lexington, VA	Monday, October 2	WCCR	3:15
<b>University of Durham</b> , Durham, England	Wednesday, October 4	WCCR	12:40
<b>University of Wisconsin</b> , Madison, WI	Thursday, October 5	WCCR	12:05
<b>University of Alabama</b> , Tuscaloosa, AL	Monday, October 9	WCCR	12:00
<b>Campbell University</b> , Buies Creek, NC	Tuesday, October 10	WCCR	3:15
*this is a special on-site admissions session; please see college counseling in advance if interested in attending*			
<b>University of Chicago</b> , Chicago, IL	Tuesday, October 10	Library	11:50
<b>Washington Univ. at St. Louis</b> , St. Louis, MO	Monday, October 16	WCCR	12:50
<b>Johns Hopkins University</b> , Baltimore, MD	Tuesday, October 17	Library	12:10
<b>Boston University</b> , Boston, MA	Wednesday, October 18	WCCR	12:40
<b>Rhodes College</b> , Memphis, TN	Monday, October 23	WCCR	12:00
<b>Univ. of California at Berkeley</b> , Berkeley, CA	Tuesday, October 24	WCCR	12:10
<b>Belmont University</b> , Nashville, TN	Tuesday, October 24	Library	12:50
<b>Univ. of Tennessee</b> , Knoxville, TN	Wednesday, October 25	Library	12:40
<b>Dickinson College</b> , Carlisle, PA	Thursday, October 26	Library	12:05
<b>Hofstra University</b> , Long Island, NY	Thursday, November 2	WCCR	3:15
<b>Ringling College of Art &amp; Design</b> , Sarasota, FL	Friday, November 17	WCCR	12:55

## Food for Thought: The benefits of attending a less selective college by Scott White *The College Solution*

I went to Swarthmore College (as did my daughter) and it was the right choice for me, except in one major area.

I had a really weak high school chemistry course and was considering pre-med. The chemistry course (at Swarthmore), as it is in many similar schools, was largely a vehicle to self-select out pre-med students. It started on page 150 of the text book, with the professor saying all of you had this first 150 pages in high school (mine got to page 25).

We couldn't have lab partners and our labs were graded by upper class international students, who were brutal.

I ended up with a W on my transcript when I realized I could never catch up. If I was truly committed to becoming a doctor, going to a less selective college would have served me better.

My son had much stronger credentials than I did, but knew that he was eligible for a Presidential Scholarship (spelled F-R-E-E) at Rutgers University and would, on each college visit to say Brown or Georgetown, observe that they were lovely places but not lovely enough to balance off going to college for free (I love that kid!).

He is a senior in college now and is constantly being sought out for awards, honors, programs and fellowships, something that would be unlikely if he had gone to a most competitive college.

So here is my top ten list of why students should not always go to the most selective college that will admit you:

### 1. Merit Money

Lynn O'Shaughnessy at [The College Solution](#) discusses how colleges will provide merit money for kids who are strong students for the school, which is generally not a student's reach school. Even without merit money, as one moves up the selectivity ladder there are higher costs and higher debt.

### 2. Meeting Professional Goals

In some highly competitive fields, like pre-med, it is often best to go to a school whose need is to make sure that every student who wants to go to med school gets in as opposed to selecting out students before they apply. The experience of being supported rather than being weeded out can change the course of your life.

### 3. Personal Attention

There is often a greater opportunity to work with professors and develop close mentoring relationships with teachers when you are a big fish in a small pond. It is often easier to get more highly supportive teacher recommendations as well.

### 4. Scholarships and Fellowships.

Students who are more distinguished in their school will be regularly sought out for awards, honors, fellowships and scholarships.

### 5. Quality Faculty.

It is really hard to get a college teaching job and you can get outstanding teachers at virtually any college. You are more likely to get teachers who are as focused in teaching undergraduates as they are in their own research at strictly undergraduate schools. You are also not taught by graduate assistants at strictly undergraduate colleges.

### 6. Graduate School.

It is much easier to shine coming from a less selective pool of students. Of two identical applicants applying from an extremely selective college and from one considerably less selective, the latter will have the advantage in admissions. This person is likely to have greater faculty support, more leadership opportunities and better grades.

### 7. Licensing.

Many of the extremely selective schools do not have opportunities to get professional licenses as an undergraduate.

### 8. Employment.

After your first job, rarely do employers care where you went to undergraduate school. And if you go to graduate school, it is this imprimatur that matters more than undergraduate school. It is also well documented that higher pay is more related to college major than the selectivity of the undergraduate school (see [John Boeckstedt's High Ed Data Stories blog](#) for a thorough analysis of this).

### 9. The Community College Option.

This is a very inexpensive way to getting through the first two years of college.

Your diploma from a 4-year college does not say "community college transfer" and two years of successful community college will often open more doors than many students would have leaving high school.

This is a much better option than enrolling in a 4-year college with the plan of transferring.

### 10. Graduation:

The number of students who end up not graduating yet accumulating huge debt is staggering. Students need to be honest with themselves as to what they are prepared for emotionally, psychologically and financially. For many students, not straying far from the nest, particularly right out of high school, is more likely to guarantee future success.

## Spotlight on Scholarships

### Suntrust Off to College Scholarship Sweepstakes

Thirty winners will be chosen at random to receive a \$500 scholarship.

Starting September 12, 2017, students can enter online once during each entry period. Two \$500 scholarship winners will be randomly chosen every two weeks beginning on or about October 30, 2017 until May 14, 2018.

To enter, please visit [www.suntrust.com/offtocollege](http://www.suntrust.com/offtocollege)



## The Real Campus Scourge ...continued from page 1

students were lonely and thought this was sort of unique to them, because no one talked about it.”

Their peers in fact do something that mine couldn't back in the 1980s, when I attended college: use Facebook and Instagram to perform pantomimes of uninterrupted fun and unalloyed fabulousness. And these “highly curated selves,” as the U.C.L.A. psychologist Elizabeth Gong-Guy called them, “amplify the fact that you're sitting in your residence hall alone.”

Gong-Guy runs her university's Campus and Student Resilience program, which helps students with emotional struggles and exemplifies many schools' intensifying efforts to address loneliness, among other mental health issues.

Extended, elaborate freshmen orientation schedules are another intended prophylactic against loneliness, which is a common reason for dropping out. And as Lawrence Biemiller recently noted in an article in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, there's even a push to place and design freshmen dormitories so that solitary time is minimized and interaction maximized.

Three new residence halls at Goucher College, one of which opened last fall and two of which are nearing completion, typify this trend. Goucher's president, José Antonio Bowen, said that the center-of-hall situation of bathrooms, the glass walls of laundry rooms and even the speed of the wireless connection in common areas — much faster than in the rooms — are deliberate pushbacks against forces that can isolate students.

“Students are arriving on college campuses with all of their high school friends on their phones,” Bowen told me, referring to the technological quirks of today. They too easily substitute virtual interactions for physical ones, withdrawing from their immediate circumstances and winding up lonely as a result.

That's why the solution isn't hourly messages from concerned moms and dads, whose stubborn attentiveness, no matter how well meant, can leave their children psychologically frail. Mental health experts and college administrators recommend a more thoughtful organization of campus life and more candid conversations about the tricky transition to college.

Nguyen, the U.C.L.A. sophomore, said that in her Vietnamese-American family in Southern California, all the talk was of doing well enough in high school to get to college and not about the challenges college itself might present. Epstein, the College of Charleston senior, said that his popularity in high school in the suburbs of New York City perhaps distracted him from any awareness that “I was going 700 miles away and being dropped in a place of 10,000 people and wasn't going to know anybody.” What followed, he added, was “a long battle with anxiety and depression.”

One of the narrators of Tom Perrotta's superb new novel, “Mrs. Fletcher,” is a former high school lacrosse star who arrives on campus “after all the endless buildup” and develops a “queasy feeling” that his world has become at once more populous and a whole lot colder. “There I was, people-watching and eating my omelet,” he says of one morning in the dining hall, “and the next thing I knew my throat swelled up. And then my eyes started to water.”

We urge new college students not to party *too* hard. We warn them of weight gain (“the freshman 15”). We also need to tell them that what's often behind all that drinking and eating isn't celebration but sadness, which is normal, survivable and shared by many of the people around them, no matter how sunny their faces or their Facebook posts.



**ST. DAVID'S SCHOOL**  
FAITH • VIRTUE • KNOWLEDGE

3400 White Oak Road  
Raleigh, NC 27609

Phone: 919-782-3331 Fax: 919-232-5053  
[www.sdsd.org](http://www.sdsd.org)

**Danna Markoff**

Director of College Counseling

[dmarkoff@sdsd.org](mailto:dmarkoff@sdsd.org)

**Jamie Martin**

Assistant Director of College Counseling

[jmartin@sdsd.org](mailto:jmartin@sdsd.org)

**Priscilla Shaw**

Testing Coordinator

[pshaw@sdsd.org](mailto:pshaw@sdsd.org)