



*The College Guidance
Program*

*at
Hill Country
Christian School of Austin*

*“Blessed is the man who finds wisdom, the
man who gains understanding.”*

Proverbs 3:13



Debby Krohmer Director of Student Services

Academic Planning College Admissions Counseling

- ❖ **College Guidance and Academic Guidance counselor at Hill Country Christian School of Austin since 2008.**
- ❖ **Prior positions held at Hill Country Christian School of Austin: Registrar & Admissions Officer, Administrative Assistant, Office Manager (2003-2008).**
- ❖ **Director of Youth Ministry, Lakeway Church (1989-2001).**
- ❖ **Founder and co-director of Lakeway Church Christian Preschool (1989-1991).**
- ❖ **Attended Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary (1995-1996). Youth Ministry concentration.**
- ❖ **Graduate of the University of Texas at Austin.**
- ❖ **Three children: Kendra (Hill Country '02 graduate, Texas State graduate and currently a Hill Country 5th grade teacher); Katie (Hill Country '04 graduate, University of Texas at Austin graduate and currently a Latin teacher at Regents Academy); Matthew (Hill Country '09 graduate and currently a student at Tarleton State University).**
- ❖ **Married to Jack Krohmer since 2005.**
- ❖ **A Charter Member of both Hill Country Bible Church Southwest and Hill Country Bible Church Leander.**



8th Grade ~Get Ready~

- ❖ **Develop good study habits.**
- ❖ **Be involved in the life of your school.**
- ❖ **Begin to develop a “passion” for something – athletics; service; a musical instrument; 4H ...**



9th Grade ~Get Studying~

- ❖ **College applications are 6 semesters away and you must learn the balance between grades, activities, etc. There are some things that you should be thinking about as you lay the foundation for a successful Hill Country Christian School experience that will lead toward college.**
- ❖ **Get involved in school! Find activities that you enjoy. Seek out leadership roles. Begin to keep account of awards, camps, etc. Building a resume will be easy later if you keep track from the beginning!**

(9th grade con't.)

- ❖ **YOUR GRADES COUNT!** You have basically 6 semesters of grades that will create your GPA (grade point average) for your college application. You will be applying in the fall of your senior year so only 9th, 10th, and 11th grades are on the transcripts when you begin to apply. Many seniors regret careless 9th grade coursework – thinking that it won't matter.

- ❖ Hill Country requires that freshmen take the PSAT (practice SAT) in October. This will be given during a school day and requires no preparation. Take the test, get a feel for a college admissions test, and most importantly, use the data that you will receive with your test results in December. CollegeBoard (the company that distributes the PSAT and the SAT) does a great job of not only helping you to understand the areas that you need to focus on, but they design study tests for you based on your weaknesses. These are free, easily available online and shouldn't be ignored!
Go to <http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/psat/about.html>

- ❖ Continued development of a student's study skills, time management, and organizational skills is key to success as the high school years progress. Student/teacher relationships begin to carry even more weight as students mature and the mentoring process progresses.

ALWAYS REMEMBER...

*...COLLEGE ADMISSION IS A PROCESS,
NOT A SENIOR YEAR ACTIVITY!*



10th Grade ~Go Deep~

- ❖ **Sophomores will again take the PSAT in October. I would still not recommend a prep course – this is still practice! Once your PSAT scores are available, and if you checked (on your PSAT answer sheet) that you wish to receive materials from colleges, you will definitely begin to receive mail from universities and colleges.**

- ❖ **It is time to begin visiting local College Fairs. Representatives from around the state and across the country are on hand to answer questions and “sell” their schools. It isn’t too soon to chat with a college representative and to sign up to receive information. Leander ISD and Round Rock ISD have college fairs in the fall. In the Spring, the sophomore class will head to downtown Austin to a national college fair.**

- ❖ **The sophomore class members spend time touring universities and colleges around Texas. We travel to a selection of different types of college campuses, small and large, public and private, rural and urban, giving students a great overview of the different types of programs that are offered even just here in Texas. Students benefit tremendously from touring other schools and learning what to look for and what questions to ask – no matter how far out of Texas you may end up!**

- ❖ **The sophomore year is a great time to read all of that mail from the various colleges. Also, I have catalogs and handbooks in my office and, of course, the internet has information on every type of college you can imagine. You may find a school that you have never thought about – that fits your future plans perfectly!**

(10th grade con't.)

- ❖ Sophomores are encouraged to attend College Rep. Visits at Hill Country. We bring in representatives from a variety of universities to discuss their school and the admissions process. Take advantage of this opportunity for invaluable one on one contacts with the representatives of colleges to whom you might soon be applying! Even if the particular university is one to which you would not apply, I guarantee you that you will learn something that will help you with the college process!**
- ❖ Most importantly, continue to build a strong academic profile in the sophomore year. Take advantage of any honors or AP courses, read, write, seek leadership opportunities, and stay involved! Think “depth” – don’t try to be involved in 10 different groups, clubs, and sports, but become “passionate” about one or two.**
- ❖ Make an appointment to meet with me, along with your parents during the 2nd semester to discuss academic plans and the college admissions process. Continue to stretch yourself with honors level courses.**
- ❖ During the summer between sophomore and junior year – first, take a break! Enjoy your family and friends. Plan to participate in meaningful activities – mission trips, church camps, leadership activities, or get a job. Don’t worry about those leadership conference invitations you may have received – those are very expensive trips that only tend to show colleges that you spent a lot of money getting there! They are only valuable if there is a specific type that is in a field in which you are serious about. Those companies get students’ names and make them feel honored to be able to attend a \$5,000 conference! Ask me if you are considering one of these trips.**

(10th grade con't.)

- ❖ Also during the summer, a PSAT prep course (for the junior year PSAT in October) could be taken – depending on how well you did last fall and how ambitious you are this summer! We will be offering a class with Revolution Prep for those interested. Also, the CollegeBoard has prep materials on their website that are free and extremely helpful and you could use some summer hours to study online.



11th Grade ~Get Serious~

- ❖ The Junior year PSAT (October) scores serves as the basis for the National Merit Scholarship Program. The scores qualify a student for Commended or Finalist. The top 3-4% of PSAT scores (nationally) qualify a student as a Commended National Merit Scholar and the top 1% compete to be a National Merit Finalist. Junior year PSAT results are the basis for many merit-based college scholarships during the upcoming college admissions process.
- ❖ Late winter and spring is the time to begin taking the required College Entrance Tests – the SAT and the ACT. I recommend that Juniors take both and then additional tests in the one that a student does best.

(11th grade con't.)

It is important to check the websites of universities of interest to see their test score requirements.

- **SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test) is administered by the CollegeBoard at local high schools throughout the school year. Test dates, locations, and registration is found at www.collegeboard.com.**
- **ACT (American College Test, Inc.) is administered by ACT at local high schools. For details go to www.actstudent.org.**

- ❖ **It is time for some serious college visits.**
 - **Check college websites for preview events;**
 - **Plan with your parents to take a trip during a school day or on a preview weekend (be sure to check your absence record first!)**
 - **Before your tour, make appointments with a college admissions representative, the financial aid office, and any academic department(s) in order to make the best use of your time.**
 - **Be sure to tour the campus, check out the dorms and cafeterias, and observe the universities' students.**

- ❖ **Personality and career testing will be offered at Hill Country. These tests give students, parents, teachers, and administrators an additional view into the students' talents and skill sets.**

- ❖ **Have a one on one meeting with me during the 2nd semester. Schedule an appointment and sit down to discuss your graduation and college plans.**

- ❖ **CONTINUE TO FOCUS ON YOUR GRADES AND IMPROVE YOUR STUDY HABITS!**



12th Grade ~Finish Strong~

- ❖ **As a senior continue to take the toughest academic courses that you can handle at Hill Country. As you apply to colleges, it is important that your senior year schedule is strong and that your study habits do not lessen prior to college.**
- ❖ **Pay close attention to emails and announcements about college information.**
- ❖ **Work up a list of colleges you are interested in applying to – have a reach school (your #1 pick if you had your wish) and some safety schools (ones that you think you will most likely be admitted to). Dream big – but, think of all the factors. As your college admissions counselor, I can help you think this out.**
- ❖ **The university website of the schools to which you are applying will be a main source of information from now to when you begin classes next fall. Their deadlines are crucial; their updates and requests need to be carefully read.**
- ❖ **Essays for your applications are key. Study the university websites to be well informed as to the requirements for the essay portion of the applications. You will be working with Mrs. Hechel on your application essays. These are extremely important and you need to do your best as the admissions committees read every essay!**

(12th grade con't.)

- ❖ **During the summer and early fall, you will be constructing your resume to accompany your applications. Mrs. Hechel will assist you in the format. It is time to put together all of those pieces of your accomplishments that you have been saving since your freshman year.**
- ❖ **Completed applications should be submitted to colleges by the deadline dates. I recommend that you meet a preferred deadline of November 1. You will send the applications and application fees directly to the universities. All applications are now online.**
- ❖ **Transcripts must be requested to be sent from Hill Country directly to the universities. There are Transcript Release Forms in the wall box outside of my office. Allow 2 weeks prior to a deadline for transcripts to be sent – the addresses are your responsibility to supply. If you attended high school at another school before entering Hill Country, you also need to have that school send a transcript to the universities.**
- ❖ **Letters of Recommendation from a faculty member or an administrator is a “must” as you begin to apply to colleges. I will go over the particulars with you at the beginning of the 1st semester and guide you in how to ask for recommendation letters. Universities only want one or two letters, so be purposeful in asking someone who will represent you well; giving the admissions committee an added insight into who you are. You will need to give them about a two weeks notice before you would want the letter of recommendation mailed.**
- ❖ **Watch the scholarship deadlines on the university website. They vary depending on the school and it is crucial to meet their deadlines. Even if you will be applying for merit (grade or test score based), submit a scholarship application.**

(12th grade con't.)

- ❖ After January 1 of your senior year, you will be submitting your FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) at www.fafsa.ed.gov. We will have one or more financial aid workshops – look for announcements on these and be sure to attend. Your parents will play a key role in this part of the process so be sure to include them in the workshops and work closely with them. Even if you will be responsible for the cost of your college education, your parents' income **MUST** be reported and is counted as part of your contribution to your educational costs.
- ❖ The most helpful websites for financial aid information and private (not university specific) are www.fastweb.com and www.scholarships.com. This is free information and will be extremely valuable to you at this time in the process. It takes time and energy to apply for private scholarships but can make the difference between affording and not affording to go to a college of your choice!
- ❖ Please remember, I am here to help you through all the aspects of applying for college. Stop by my office, make an appointment, give me a call, or send me an email. This can be an exciting time if you stay on top of it and stay ahead of the deadlines!
- ❖ Never forget the power of prayer. God already has the plan laid out for you – ask Him for guidance and peace as you take the next step.

“For I know the plans I have for you” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” Jeremiah 29:11