

# Pingry

## COLLEGE COUNSELING FAQs

### College Counseling Mission Statement

**The Pingry College Counseling Office strives to empower our students as they embark on the next step in their educational journey. In helping them to think both reflectively and holistically about their college goals, the counselors partner with students and families to create balanced lists and support them in each step of the application process.**

**Below find answers to some frequently asked questions. For more in-depth information on Pingry College Counseling including our profile which lists our college matriculations, [visit our college counseling page](#).**

#### **When are students assigned a college counselor?**

We assign college counselors during January of sophomore year. Meetings with sophomores are fairly limited – we may have occasional “Form” meetings with the entire class, but will have one-on-one meetings with students in February when they are doing their course selections for their junior year. We are happy to meet with parents of sophomores (when they become “rising juniors”) during the summer months.

#### **How many college counselors work at Pingry?**

There are eight college counselors. Seven are dedicated solely to doing college counseling. The college counseling office is very collaborative.

#### **How are students assigned to a counselor?**

Our office spends a lot of time and care in assigning students to counselors, taking into consideration gender, diversity, special interests (athletics, art, music, drama, etc.), if the student had a sibling who worked with a counselor and had a positive experience), etc. There is not one counselor who is an expert on one area, we look to have a cross section of the students in each counselor’s caseload.

#### **What opportunities are there to meet with a counselor before one is assigned?**

The counselors meet in Form meeting settings periodically to discuss relevant topics. There are also College Evenings and other college-oriented events for parents. For high school students/families that have not yet been assigned a counselor, we appreciate meeting in the summer. In the fall, we must prioritize seniors and their families. We will not meet with middle school students or families. Their questions should be directed to their advisor or academic dean.

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## **When are those college counseling events?**

Dates are on the Pingry website and published in the Big Blue Bulletin.

## **When do students take standardized tests?**

The PSAT is offered to sophomores and juniors in October. For juniors, results could make students eligible for National Merit status and potential scholarships. College Counseling will also offer a Practice ACT to sophomores. Comparing the two tests can be useful for students who might wish to start test prep for one or both tests. Sitting for a “real” standardized test varies from student to student. Some are ready to take a test early in junior year, particularly for students who may be interested in athletic recruiting, but generally a ‘first test’ should be completed in winter of junior year. The CCO partners with Summit Prep for a “testing presentation” in February (audience: sophomore and junior parents/guardians). We also offer a free test-prep platform to students beginning sophomore year.

## **How important are AP tests?**

A college places more weight on how a student performs in an AP class. Pingry is not an “AP-heavy” school and it is rare that a student takes an AP class before junior year. Colleges know this as it is emphasized in our Pingry Profile. Colleges like to see students taking the highest-level classes offered that are appropriate for their interests and abilities. We recommend that AP exams taken in junior year with results of 4s and 5s be included on a student’s college application. We do not suggest that families send the scores officially to schools in the way that they might need to for SATs or ACTs – until they know where they are matriculating. In some cases, sending those AP scores before the fall of their freshman year of college could help in placement or credit, but again, this is very college-specific. One note, if a student thinks they might be interested in attending university in the UK, AP scores will most likely be an important part of their application. For US colleges, AP exams are not an important factor in the admissions process.

## **What opportunities do we offer to students working on college applications?**

Once a counselor is assigned, there will be ample opportunities to talk about interests, college research, visit opportunities, etc. in one-on-one, family, counselee, or total-grade meetings. We conduct a Jump Start in June of junior year (when various colleges come to campus to talk to students in smaller groups about essays, interviews, the Common App, etc. or the office has workshops to begin essay brainstorming or the filling out of the Common App). The college counselors work during the summer months, so we do have meetings or connect with families – even if via email. We strongly recommend that rising seniors do their essay and Common App work over the summer leading into senior year. In the fall, we hold essay writing workshops, too. At the beginning of senior year there is a retreat for the students – part fun and a little “logistical” work pertaining to college applications.

## **What about athletic recruiting?**

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Interested students can meet with anyone in the CC office, but Joe Kinney is also an excellent resource, as he is partnering with athletics and college counseling to provide advice to our student-athletes. Timing varies based on sport, NCAA Division, etc. Students should visit the athletic section of websites for colleges-of-interest and fill out a questionnaire. Camps are also a good opportunity to show coaches your skills! Also, we encourage advisees to speak to their coaches (at Pingry or club). There is not one college counselor who specifically works with recruits – we all do!

## **Does Pingry calculate a GPA for college applications?**

We do not publish GPAs; we will have an unofficial GPA for internal use only; it will be unweighted (that is, we don't include 'weight' for Honors/AP/Advanced Topics courses). If students wish to calculate a GPA for a scholarship or internship, they can simply use a 4.0 for an A+/A, 3.7 for A-, 3.4 for B+. 3.0 for B, etc. and compute an average that way (add up the #s, divide by # of classes for an average). GPAs will not be included on the college applications. For purposes of scattergrams (displayed in Scoir, our application management software) and looking at average acceptance rates, we use the Pingry 14.0 scale. (This will be explained to the students when they are assigned a college counselor.) Furthermore, we do not provide class rank to colleges.

## **Who are the college counselors?**

*In alpha order by last name:*

Amy Cooperman, Co-Director of College Counseling

Reid Cottingham, Upper School Director, College Counselor

Meghan Finegan, Senior Associate Director of College Counseling

Scott Garrow, Assistant Director of College Counseling

Joe Kinney, College Counselor, College Athletics Recruiting Coordinator

Susan Kinney, Co-Director of College Counseling

Cherilyn Reynolds, Associate Director of College Counseling

Cindy Santiago, Assistant Director of College Counseling, Form III Dean