

# Kassy Fritz to lead College Counseling Office

Peter Hoopes, Jul 30 2009

Kassy Fritz takes the reins of the College Counseling office in 2009, as Terence Gilheany wraps up a four-year stint that recently included being named Delaware Counselor of the Year by the Potomac and Chesapeake Association for College Admission Counseling. Kassy served as an associate director for two years with Gilheany, in addition to teaching French and coaching girls' lacrosse, and has a diverse background in college counseling prior to arriving at St. Andrew's.

Kassy was first exposed to college counseling when she was asked to serve on a college letter writing committee at one of the first schools at which she taught. "We reviewed each senior's letter as a committee comprised of several teachers and coaches," says Kassy, "and I became both intrigued and excited about the work." She later served as the director of college counseling at the Marymount School, a private Catholic school for girls in Manhattan. "Marymount was a terrific school to grow as a college counselor and to learn the work first-hand," says Kassy. "The network of college and admissions counselors with whom I worked was incredibly helpful, and I learned a great deal working in a Manhattan day school."

After five years at Marymount, Kassy worked as an associate director of admission at Barnard College of Columbia University. "This was an incredibly important part of my evolution as a college counselor," Kassy admits. "Working on the other side of the desk and being part of the process from start to finish--travel, student recruitment, folder reading, committee review--was invaluable," says Kassy. At Barnard, Fritz was also the athletic liaison to the Division I Columbia University Athletic Department, as Barnard students are recruited by and play for Columbia teams. This experience provided Kassy with great insights into how athletic recruitment plays out in the college admission process.

After her time at Barnard, Kassy and her husband, Tom, moved to the Taft School in Connecticut, where she returned to the school side of the college process and continued to develop a network of contacts. She found the experience of working at a larger independent school, compared to Marymount, was helpful and formative.

Working in the St. Andrew's College Counseling office has been "terrific," as Kassy explains. "Our office reflects the goals and character of the School," says Kassy, "and we work closely with students to find a college that will further the intellectual, moral and community values that St. Andrew's espouses." Kassy welcomes the opportunity to help students learn about themselves as well as the incredible opportunities available to them at so many great colleges and universities. She also enjoys meeting college representatives and sharing with them the story of St. Andrew's School, its students and the dynamic work that happens in the community.

This summer, Kassy has been working with Nathan Costa on the annual revisions to the school profile sheet, a companion printed piece sent with every transcript or application to colleges in an effort to articulate what makes the St. Andrew's curriculum unique. Last year, the College Counseling department initiated an "Experience SAS" event, inviting several college representatives to spend a day at St. Andrew's meeting with teachers, students and administrators and attending classes. The college visitors also attended family-style lunch, the community Thanksgiving dinner and Chapel services. "It was a wonderful way to show a group of colleges who we are and what we do," Kassy reflects. This same group of college representatives then served as the facilitators the following day at our V Form Parents' College Meeting. "These kinds of initiatives are exciting," says Kassy, "and I hope to continue to build toward finding more ways to develop that type of interactive exchange."

Looking forward, Kassy points to several areas of particular interest. "There is no question that the economy will impact the college process as it has all other aspects of life," explains Kassy. "Staying current with the impact and any shifts that may result will be vitally important." Kassy recently attended a conference of independent school counselors where the consensus reached identified the economy and gender demographics as the two greatest challenges facing schools and students today. Alternative college paths are also becoming more frequent considerations. "We have seven students in the Class of 2009 who plan on taking 'gap' years," says Kassy. "Some are travelling, living abroad or combining educational experiences with volunteer efforts," says Kassy. She also believes more students will be looking carefully at state institutions, both for the economical tuition as well as outstanding and nationally-recognized academic programs.