

Note from Tim Gallen:

Hello families,

My name is Tim Gallen, Director of College Counseling here at Solebury School. My work with students encompasses a range of activities, from writing an individual letter of recommendation for each senior (which I further personalize for each college they are applying to), to talking with you as you navigate the process, to arranging for representatives from colleges to visit our campus (we bring about 100 schools to campus), to organizing and supervising all standardized testing for our students (PSAT, SAT, ACT, AP, etc.).

The work starts early—working with you, your child’s advisor, and our Director of Studies to make decisions about your child’s classes. Where should your child stretch themselves and take an Honors or AP course? Are any of our signature programs (Teach2Serve, Global Education, etc.) good options for them? Is accelerating via a summer course a good idea? What balance should we strike between your child pursuing a broad-based approach to their education or being someone who is passionate about pursuing a specific discipline?

The month of January in particular highlights some of the joys of my job. Many of our seniors have heard back from colleges by this time. As they do every year, this year’s group received acceptances from some wonderful options—a range of schools, including some of the most selective ones in the nation. What is important to me, and what I view as the crux of my work, is helping a student find the right school, the place where they will be as successful as they can be, where they will simultaneously feel challenged, supported, and happy. It is exactly what you are doing now in fact.

At the same time, my work with the next class begins. Each winter, I work with the 11th grade in small groups for about six weeks in our college workshops. We go over lots of things—building a preliminary college list, discussing the timing of taking the various tests, talking about what to look for when you visit a college, putting together a resume, etc. Helping demystify this process and get them excited about it is among the most fun things I do. The work will continue with the trips I organize to a few local college fairs and as I begin to meet individually with each student, their advisor, and their parents. Then in the fall it will intensify as these students become the new seniors and we fine tune their lists, as I help process their applications, as we work with the teacher of our Personal Essay Writing elective to ensure that their essay is as powerful as possible, and as I write those letters of recommendation.

Over the years, I have made many contacts at colleges through my work with the Pennsylvania and National Associations for College Admission Counseling (serving as president of the former) and multiple national advisory boards. This helps me to better advocate for our students and spread the good word about all that our students are accomplishing during their time at Solebury.

I hope you are admitted to Solebury and that I will have the chance to work with you and your child in the years ahead to help prepare and guide them for success after Solebury.

Sincerely,

Tim Gallen  
Director of College Counseling, Solebury School