



The High School View

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Seniors scramble to meet early college deadlines

BY PENELOPE HADDAD

As early application deadlines for colleges loomed over the past two weeks at Martha's Vineyard Regional High School (MVRHS), seniors have been scrambling to submit their applications. Numerous factors can influence the decision to apply early, including a strong connection to a particular school, as well as family and financial considerations.

With deadlines ranging from mid-October to mid-November, seniors applying for early admission (EA) or early decision (ED) juggle essays and application forms while also finishing the end of the academic quarter in early November.

Many colleges and universities offer ED and EA application options to interested

students. Typically, to accept an ED offer means that you are committed to attending that school, whereas an EA offer is nonbinding, which allows students to apply to multiple schools.

Early application in general offers the convenience of knowing a student's acceptance status months in advance, and often comes with the benefit of a higher admission rate.

Guidance counselor Erika Mulvey said there are pros and cons to applying early. "I do believe that students who apply early are doing that in the hopes of having a better chance of getting in," she said. "Early decision can be a bigger benefit. Early action is a little bit more mixed as to whether or not it actually helps [a student's] chances of getting in, versus



MATT DAY

Ms. Mulvey reviews the Common App platform with senior Kestutis Biskis.

just the convenience of finding out early."

Senior Olympia Hall applied for ED to one school in part because her sister attends the school and in part because she believes it would be a great fit: "It's kind of a hard school to get into, so I wanted to make

sure that I have better chances of getting in by ED-ing."

Senior Lyla Solway applied EA to six schools. "I wanted to get [applying to college] out of the way," she said. "I visited some of the schools, and I felt like I could see myself there. I liked the atmo-

sphere and the campus itself, and all the schools that I applied early to have exactly what I'm looking for."

Lyla also mentioned the fact that financial considerations are a factor in eligibility for merit scholarships when applying EA. "You actually have to apply early in order to be eligible for merit scholarships," she said.

Senior Molly Sylvia wasn't initially going to apply early action to Johnson and Wales, but changed her mind after she learned about the benefits. "What prompted me [to apply early] was that Johnson and Wales offers grants, like chances to win grants and scholarships," Sylvia said. "They also offer priority housing for incoming freshmen and better chances for financial aid."

Lyla advised any student who is considering applying

early to plan ahead. "Try to start early in terms of your essays, and then also do not get behind in schoolwork because once it piles up, it piles up," she said.

Ms. Mulvey sees the increase in student stress around the coinciding college and end-of-quarter deadlines. "Not only are [the seniors] scrambling to get all of their applications done, but it's also the end of first quarter right around the same time," she said. "It can be a lot, and that's why I advise students to take a step back and think about what's best for them at that moment. Maybe the priority is focusing on grades versus getting those applications out the door."

Once early applications are submitted, students will hear back from schools between December and late January. **HSV**

New electives spark excitement

BY LULU WHITE

Students and teachers alike are excited about new elective courses being offered this year at Martha's Vineyard Regional High School (MVRHS). Junior Seminar, Astronomy, and Art History seem to be popular with students so far. Creating new elective courses that reflect students' interests can be a process, and ideas can sometimes exist for years before a course is listed on the master schedule.

Astronomy is a course that was born out of both necessity and interest. Because she needed a course to run in the spring opposite the Island Natural History course offered in the fall, science teacher Anna Cotton thought astronomy would be a great complement to the science curriculum.

"One of the things that happens in Earth Science is that we never get enough time for astronomy, and students are always really interested in it."

Science department head Mike Joyce added that the school recently received an anonymous donation of a \$3,000 telescope. Mr. Joyce said, "New courses like this usually continue to be offered yearly if they maintain engagement."

History teacher Corinne Kurtz and art teacher Tiffiney Shoquist have been wanting to collaborate on a class for a while. "The idea of an Art History course had been in my head for years," Ms. Kurtz said.

Ms. Shoquist wanted students to be able to connect with an art history class in a way that she couldn't when she learned it in college. "I didn't like how art history was —

and often is — focused on a timeline. I wanted it to be relatable to students," she said.

Their combined motivations influenced the way they designed the course curriculum, which is focused around themes in history like power and revolution. Ms. Shoquist said she's been enjoying discussing art with students and learning more about its history and historical context from Ms. Kurtz.

Ms. Kurtz said, "I feel like I've been learning a lot about artistic methods, and it's made me even better at evaluating art and how the materials affect how you examine it. I am also seeing some of these students, who don't necessarily love history — they're so in their element [in Art History]. I wish I could do more of this in my [history] classes."

Junior Seminar is a semester-long elective course that centers around college and career readiness, and includes a P.E. component that allows students to earn P.E. credit. Students cycle through four rotations that focus on different aspects of preparing for life after high school — from preparing basic taxes to understanding career options on- and off-Island, and navigating the process of applying to college. The course was developed with input from students and the guidance department, with the goal of students feeling more confidence and clarity going into their postsecondary planning meetings during spring of junior year.

Junior Seminar has had a positive reception so far. Junior Nyoka Walters said, "I really like Junior Seminar because I feel very lost every



LULU WHITE

Axel Abrams prepares ink for a print in his Art History course.

time someone asks me about the future and what I want to do. I didn't know the first thing about being an adult. I think getting familiar with Naviance [readiness software] has been the most helpful thing so far."

In elective courses, the focus is often on helping students discover their interests and

providing them with more perspective on the paths their lives might take. Whether it's art, science, history, or just preparing for life, these new courses are helping students figure out what they might want to do, and broadening their ideas about what is possible. **HSV**

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