

Center of **Inquiry**

WABASH COLLEGE

National Counselor Symposium

07 October 2004

The Center of Inquiry strives to provide helpful information about choosing a college. In order to better understand what students and parents are thinking about this big decision and about liberal arts education in general, we have invited high school counselors from across the country to join us in a dialogue. We will discuss issues such as supportive learning environments, college rankings, living on campus, questions students *should* ask, and what they *do* ask. We hope to establish and maintain helpful contacts which will be mutually beneficial to high school counselors and the Center of Inquiry.

Participants	Institution
Terri Coddington	Johnny Economedes High School
Barbara Gonzales	Johnny Economedes High School
Rebecca Sprinkle	Bedford North Lawrence High School
Martin Kirkwood	Blessed Theodore Guerin High School
Debbie Petro	Westlake High School
Glenn Miller	Grayslake Community High School
Amy Sosnowski	Independent Counselor
Ayanna Garrett	Indiana Academy
Julie Maugherman	Burriss Laboratory School
Drew Furuness	Merrillville High School
Dan Cormier	Los Angeles Public Library
William Durham, Jr.	Center for Leadership Development
Carroll Davis	North Central High School
Debra Page	Morresville High School
Tonya Balch	Fountain Central High School
Pam Price	Center Grove High School
Amy Thompson	York Community High School
Pat Hopper	Franklin High School
Robert Thurston	North Chicago Community High School

Agenda

Thursday, October 7th

6.00 - 6.30	Welcome and Introductions, Trippet 325
6.30 - 7.00	Reception, Trippet 3rd floor rotunda
7.00 - 8.30	Dinner, Trippet Dining Room

Friday, October 8th

7.30 - 8.30	Breakfast, Trippet Hall Dining Room
8.30 - 9.30	Campus Tour, Main Lobby 2nd floor rotunda
9.30 - 10.45	What we would like to achieve, Trippet 325
10.45 - 11.15	Coffee Break, 3rd floor rotunda
11.20 - 12.00	Visit a class
12.15 - 1.15	Lunch, Trippet Hall Dining Room
1.30 - 2.30	Student Panel, Trippet 123
2.30 - 3.15	Dialogue with Admissions staff, Trippet 123
3.15 - 3.30	Break

3.30 - 5.00 Dialogue with Center staff, Trippet 325
5:00 Closing and Departures

Summary:

We met with 17 high school guidance counselors on October 7-8, to better understand what high school students, parents, and guidance counselors think about the college choice process and to introduce symposium attendees to the Center of Inquiry's research.

These guidance counselors said they believe strongly in liberal arts education, but that parents' top concerns are cost and post-graduation opportunity. They reported students' primary college-selection considerations as cost, location, familiarity/comfort, activities/social life, prestige, and majors/interests. Our participants also said high school seniors are generally not developmentally ready to ask higher-order questions regarding learning and intellectual growth in college unless they had liberal arts primary or secondary education.

The counselors said they would like direct evidence suggesting a liberal arts education is worth the cost, specifically regarding professional opportunities and post-graduation success. Our National Study of Liberal Arts Education, now in its first phase, will address this issue. They also said a concise definition of "liberal arts education," with impact for high school students and their parents, would be useful. We are engaged in ongoing work to make our [definition](#) accessible and meaningful for various audiences.

This symposium reaffirmed that we should continue to hold events with representatives from [businesses](#), high schools, and the [general public](#). Their input helps focus our attention on the most pressing needs and issues surrounding liberal arts education, and informs and directs our research.