

Dear Parents,

I just returned from a counselor visit to Southwestern University and am happy to report that what I learned affirmed what we are doing at all levels of St. Catherine's.

A faculty panel was asked to describe what skills students need for college. These were their responses:

Time management – how to plan and pace work during the week and how to focus on quality of study rather than quantity.

Confidence to advocate for themselves – students need to be unafraid to talk to adults, especially their professors.

Independence – how to generate one's own plans and possibilities.

Reading & Writing – being comfortable with a high volume of reading, writing and critical thinking, not the regurgitation of facts that is so common in many high school curricula.

Moderate amount of AP courses only- many students are arriving on campuses “mentally exhausted” from high school and colleges have to “undo that damage.” Another comment related to high school was, “Why are students in such a hurry? We need to slow down.”

One professor described how she has changed her Biology courses to focus more on group learning and hands-on problem solving in the classroom. She said, “Kinesthetic learning is best for science classes,” and that she has learned a lot from what is going on in early education. Similarly, one of the admissions representatives spoke to me specifically about how well Montessori education prepares students for college.

This experience at Southwestern echoes what I have heard during other campus visits and in conversations with college admissions professionals. You are welcome to stop by the library any time if you'd like to hear more!

Sarah Lewis
College Counselor