Summit View College Success: Q & A with Head of School Keri Borzello

Summit View School graduates have a long track record of college acceptances from top-tier public and private universities and success in college and beyond. Summit View Head of School Keri Borzello takes a closer look at the reasons behind this success.

**Q: The Summit View Class of 2016 had an impressive list of college acceptances!**

A: Yes, we are so proud of our senior class. This year’s graduates received acceptances from outstanding public schools like UC-Berkeley, UC–Irvine, UC–Santa Cruz, UC–Riverside, and UC-Santa Barbara, University of Arizona, University of Colorado – Boulder, University of Oregon and most of the California State Universities. We also did well with private universities, including USC, Columbia College-Chicago and Loyola Marymount University. A number of our students have both great talent and passion for the arts, and that was reflected in this year’s acceptances as well – the Art Center College of Design, California College of the Arts, the Southern California Institute of Architecture and North Carolina School of the Arts.

We’re also thrilled at the generous scholarship offers our students received this year. Between our Summit View West and Summit View Valley campuses, our students have been offered over half a million dollars in scholarship money.

**Q: The press is filled with stories about how competitive the college admissions process has become. The UC Schools received a record number of applications this year, more than 200,000. How do you explain Summit View students’ success within California and beyond?**

A: Our students show a level of resiliency and a work ethic that is appealing to colleges and universities. They have achieved great success, despite having a difficult journey, and their tenacity and dedication makes them very attractive candidates. Our curriculum involves rigor as well as a focus on self-advocacy and balance. Our comprehensive, college prep program develops the whole child and sets the table well for post-secondary success. We work very hard to match the college to the student.

**Q: Tell me about college counseling at Summit View.**

Each Summit View campus has a principal serving as college counselor. Both have many years of experience working in college counseling and have built great relationships with colleges and universities throughout the United States. The college counselor starts working with students and parents beginning in 8th grade with transition/college information events, which continue year after year.

Individual college counseling meetings with students and parents begin in 11th grade. At this time, students typically start exploring and visiting colleges and researching accommodations, and we make recommendations to guide the process. College reps visit our campuses to meet with 11th and 12th graders, and we also take students to visit local colleges. Starting in 12th grade, students work with our college counselors to complete their applications. Summit View supports each student and family through every step of the process, and I’m pleased that very rarely do our families feel the need to work with private college counselors.

**Q: The college admissions process values students who are well-rounded. How does Summit View provide opportunities for learning and growth outside the classroom?**

A: We encourage students to create experiences during their time with us. Playing on our CIF sports teams, participating in our drama programs, taking part in a community service project – all these activities help build strong relationships among peers, build self-confidence, and give our students the opportunity to develop and utilize their unique strengths and talents. Our small and nurturing environment provides a safe place for students to step outside their comfort zone and get involved in a myriad of activities. Often it’s these experiences that students remember well beyond graduation day.

**Q: Summit View provides students with a lot of individualized support, whether it’s working on executive functioning skills, time management, test-taking strategies, or integrating technology and assistive technology to allow them to better access the curriculum. What happens to your graduates when they’re on their own?**

A: Our students thrive in college. From the beginning, self-advocacy is a critical part of the Summit View program. Our students develop an understanding of who they are as learners, which is necessary for their success with us, as well as in college. They need to understand what will benefit them most, whether it be pulling from a toolbox or seeking the assistance of a resource officer or professor. Knowing who they are, what supports they need, and how to get those supports in college and beyond are skills we build over the course of a student’s time with us. And the good news is that most colleges and universities do now have resources and support offices for students with learning differences, in response to increased awareness and understanding.

Summit View School is dedicated to educating young people with learning differences who possess average to superior intellectual capabilities. Recognizing the unique strengths, aptitudes, and natural gifts of each student, the program fosters academic growth, creativity, and a sense of mastery and accomplishment. A commitment to maximizing each student’s potential and performance forms the foundation of the school’s educational program. To learn more or schedule a tour, please visit [www.summitview.org](http://www.summitview.org)