



Ecole des Roches

Dear EDR Parents,

I hope that you have enjoyed the past few weeks with your children. I can fully appreciate that having lessons online again has not been easy, but fortunately this time there has been a distinct time frame, which the government appears to have every intention of maintaining.

As you are aware, some of our students opted to remain on campus during the confinement, and, in addition to the organized study times, they have enjoyed cycling and walking in the local woodlands next to the campus. We have also had another group, the IB D2 students, who have been hard at work onsite, doing the final revision before their IB exams, which start next week.

One of the difficulties that we have all faced in dealing with Covid restrictions during the past year has been that of projecting ourselves into the future – when will we be able to travel again, are we going to be able to see family and friends over the vacation, will our students be able to travel home during the next break? For our students in their final year, the big question has been whether or not universities will even be open for onsite teaching next year. Quite naturally, the students are not keen on moving to a new country and new city, and then spending the first semester confined to an apartment or residence hall while they do all of their courses online.

This past week I carried out a short survey of the IB and French bac students, in order to get a better idea of how they are facing this uncertain post-Ecole des Roches future. The good news is that they all seem to be quite optimistic: almost all of them are planning on pursuing higher education next year. Digging deeper into the responses, though, it is clear that this group is facing unique challenges. During the many years that I have worked with students transitioning from high school to university, I have always encouraged them to participate in university Open Days and use their school holidays to visit their future university destinations. My mantra to the students has always been: “You’re going to invest 3-4 years of your lives in these universities, and your parents are going to be investing a lot of money. You need to know as much as possible before you commit to going there.” Over the years I’ve spent a lot of time with students and their parents, helping them select the universities to visit, working out potential travel itineraries, helping them contact admissions offices, and discussing the questions that they should ask during their visits. For many students and their parents, the trips to visit the universities have been an excellent bonding experience, giving them a unique opportunity to spend time together in discussing the next stages in their lives.

The debriefing sessions after the visits were always very enlightening: sometimes, big name universities at the top of a student’s wish list dropped to the bottom or even off the list, and others that were not really being considered shot to the top, and usually for very good reasons. Students sometimes realized that programs that looked very attractive on the websites were not as well-organized as they’d thought they would be, or they maybe saw that a particular university culture was an excellent fit for them. In April, after





the students had invested all of the personal time and energy into visiting the colleges and universities and applying, the final selection has often been rather intense, with a lot of handwringing and uncertainty, as students weighed up the pros and cons of their choices.

In contrast with the normal process just described, this year the vast majority of our students have never visited their first-choice universities, which means that the secondary influencing factors – university rankings, opinions of parents and friends, internet research, etc. – have taken on a much greater role in the selection process. We have managed to organize a few visits from university representatives, as well as the occasional webinar, but these are not the same as actually spending time on the university campuses, and meeting with students and professors in a student's chosen course of study. For colleges and universities, the implications of this situation should be rather worrisome: it's as though a whole cohort of incoming students will have gone from blind date to marriage, with no courtship in between, and no firsthand, face-to-face interaction.

Here at Ecole des Roches, our guidance counselors, Mme Andre and Mr. Bold, have done their best to help our D2 and Terminale students make appropriate higher education choices and find the right fit. If you have any questions regarding the destinations of our graduates, please feel free to set up an appointment with them, as they would be more than happy to meet with you to discuss the process and help you and your children in planning for their futures.

For our returning students, the new re-enrolment process with Open Apply is functioning well. If you have not already completed the process, I would strongly encourage you to do this as quickly as possible, so that we can ensure the course choices and options for your children for the coming academic year. If you have any questions about the process, please do not hesitate to contact the admissions department.

With the return of our students on Sunday evening, I would like to once again remind you of **the requirement to present a recent (less than 72 hours) negative covid test**. We are doing everything possible to protect our school community, but it is important that we have your help and cooperation with this as well. Please note that the students taking the school bus must be at Porte Dauphine at 19h.

With best wishes,

David Johnson, Head of School