

## US University Admissions Alert

Dear HS Parents,

In recent months we have been hearing concerns from US based colleges and universities regarding the use of certain private college counseling agencies in Bangkok that are employing unethical practices. The unethical practices include:

- the falsification of student "achievements" both in school and out of school with respect to community service, athletic participation, leadership positions held, club involvement, and other so called "accomplishments".
- college essays written by "advisors" at these agencies and not by the students themselves.

As a consequence, US colleges and universities are becoming increasingly concerned about the authenticity of applications from Thailand. One university informed us that 25% of applications from Thailand were considered suspicious. Another highly selective university informed us that no applications from Thailand were even considered for 2013/14. We are aware that some applications from ISB students have been rejected based on suspicions of falsification.

This is a very worrying situation for students, parents and schools in Thailand and we are determined to safeguard the reputation of ISB and ensure that ISB students are not negatively impacted by these concerns about application authenticity. As a school community, we must commit to ethical practices to safeguard the college aspirations of all of our students in the present and in the future. To these ends, we are adopting the following measures:

- 1 US and Canadian application materials in 2013/14 and beyond will be sent directly from the ISB counseling office after a review by an ISB counselor. Since some parts of the application are submitted online, this will typically involve pressing the "submit" button in the counselor's office.
- 2 Students will also be required to submit a hardcopy of their applications to be kept on file in the event that verification is required. Mid year reports will not be sent to universities without submission of hard copies to the counselor.
- 3 Students and parents must sign an agreement stating they understand that counselors are obliged to report to universities any intentional misrepresentation.
- 4 Students will be required to sign a release form allowing colleges and universities to release a copy of applications to ISB.
- 5 ISB will submit a verified list of each student's extra curricular activities to universities.
- 6 Students will be required to inform ISB if outside help is being used.
- 7 US colleges and universities will be informed of these new practices through various means (the ISB counselor recommendation letters, college visits, conversations with college representatives on campus, college admission conferences, emails, and the ISB Profile).
- 8 Counselors and administrators will meet regularly with students and parents in group and individual settings to warn against the use of outside agencies, to explain the new procedures, and to make clear the consequences of non-compliance.

9 ISB will have zero tolerance for students that submit falsified application material. If it is established that a student has submitted information that is not true, colleges and universities applied to will be informed, students may not be permitted to participate in the graduation ceremony, and students will face suspension and/or expulsion.

As we move forward these measures and procedures will be reviewed and revised as necessary to ensure maximum support and protection for our students and school.

To clarify some aspects of the college application process:

- ISB submits academic transcripts, teacher and counselor recommendations and the school profile directly to colleges and universities through Naviance or EduDoc on line. This information is secure.
- Students submit additional application materials such as college essays, short answers to questions, and activity involvement on-line. This part of the application process in the future will be completed under the supervision of a counselor.
- Colleges and universities want authentic information and for the written components to be in the voice of the student applicant.

We have been in contact with leading US universities and have received very helpful support and advice. We have copied one comment below:

*"I applaud the ISB counseling office and leadership for reacting swiftly to these issues and putting in place "good practices" to assure those of us on the receiving end of ISB applications that we can trust what we have received. It has been quite a year for all of us and I hope the larger community will see the value of doing this and will follow your lead preventing these unethical counseling practices from continuing".(UPenn)*

ISB is determined to ensure that US colleges and universities are aware that applications from ISB students will be authentic and above suspicion. To help us achieve our aims, ISB will hire an additional counselor for the High School.

Parents and students with concerns or suggestions should make an appointment with the appropriate counselor. We will also address this topic at the next HS PTA meeting on May 15th at 6:00pm in the MPB.

Sincerely,

Dr. Andrew Davies  
Head of School

Mr. Philip Bradley  
HS Principal

Dr. Cathy Curtis  
Head of Counseling