



SCOTTSDALE PREPARATORY ACADEMY

A Great Hearts Academy

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Happy New Year! Welcome back, as we embark on the second semester of the school year. While the holiday season provides a well-needed opportunity for rest, relaxation, and connection with the people and traditions we love, it is always rewarding to return to the worthy pursuits that school provides.

One cherished tradition here at Scottsdale Prep is an alumni panel on the first day of our return from the holiday break. On Tuesday, we were honored to welcome back former SPA students who are currently studying at institutions such as Arizona State, Duke University, Baylor, Grand Canyon, Harvard, Princeton, and Purdue. The majors that these students are pursuing ranged from engineering, classics, marketing, politics, theater, pre-med, pre-law, and others. Their college experiences also include internships, clubs, societies, fraternities and sororities, and professional organizations.

We are deeply grateful to these SPA graduates who took time out of their holiday break to share valuable insights with our students and parents about what to expect in college and how to best prepare for a successful college experience. Despite attending a diverse array of schools and having unique experiences, they shared several common themes that can serve as a blueprint for success in higher education and beyond.

A recurring point raised by our alumni was the value of SPA's Humane Letters classes as a foundation for "learning how to learn." They highlighted how the expectation to articulate ideas clearly, develop strong writing skills, and reason through complex issues with evidence has served them well in college. These skills, combined with the confidence and rhetorical abilities they gained, have helped them advocate for themselves and seize new opportunities. Even those pursuing STEM fields acknowledged the advantage their well-rounded liberal arts education provided them when compared to their college classmates.

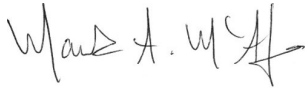
Many of our alumni expressed the concept of delayed gratification. There were many humble admissions that they did not understand at the time why they had to endure a rigorous curriculum and learn painful lessons. However, they are now extremely grateful, as the SPA experience has made their college journey, thus far, not only more manageable, but more meaningful. The scope, size, and mission of SPA compelled our graduates to participate in many varied activities and allowed them to assume leadership roles. This has translated into a much easier assimilation into the college life.

Lastly, the alumni shared reflections on the wealth of opportunities available to college students. Several of them entered college with a clear career path in mind, only to discover new passions and fields they hadn't previously considered, or even knew existed. Their advice? Stay open-minded and curious. They encouraged current students to be attentive to

experiences that resonate with them, emphasizing that the critical thinking and adaptability they cultivated at SPA have equipped them to explore diverse academic and professional avenues.

We will soon have a video of the event available, and if you couldn't attend, we highly encourage you to watch it. The Alumni Panel is always an inspiring way to begin the new year!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark A. McAfee". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Mark" and last name "McAfee" clearly legible.

Mark McAfee
Headmaster