



Mountainland Region Youth Advisory Council: December Meeting

On December 7th, the Mountainland Region Youth Advisory Council (MYAC) held its second meeting, bringing together youth representatives from public high schools and charter schools from across the Mountainland region. After establishing a strong foundation in the first meeting in September, the council was able to jump right into discussing important issues and performing service for the community.

Morning Session: Service Project and Discussion



The day began with a service project. The students created an assembly line where they could assemble candy cane reindeer stocking stuffers for stockings of children currently in the foster care system. The students were able to make dozens of ornaments while initially answering fun ice breaker questions before diving deep into discussions about college admission, college preparation, and the cadence of high school

counseling.

Engaging Discussions

One of the first questions that sparked serious discussion was “What motivates high schoolers in the Mountainland Region to apply for specific colleges?” Initially, all of the student representatives talked about finances. Application fees, tuition rates, and scholarship options topped their lists of reasons why they would apply to different colleges, both in-state and out-of-state. Even the students with Ivy League aspirations admitted that they would also be applying to UVU and other regional schools that had already offered them scholarships. However, the students also opened up about their desires for variety and independence – if money were no option, most of them would elect to attend a college farther away from home so they could experience new places, new people, and new scenery. Additionally, they all hoped to attend a college that already provided their desired majors/programs.



We asked the students what they knew about the new state initiative AdmitUtah. Council member Kat, who attends the Advanced Learning Center in Nebo School District, said that she had not heard of the initiative’s name, but that her school counselors had relayed all the important information about waived application fees. This evolved into a discussion on

how high schools were prepping students for college through CCA classes and concurrent enrollment courses. Jayna, who attends charter school UCAS, shared that while she appreciates how much information she receives regularly about UVU, she would like more representation from other Utah colleges and universities at events, workshops, fairs, and in CCA.

Students also discussed the timing of concurrent enrollment advertising from school counselors. Although each district in the region has slightly different grade levels assigned to middle school, junior high, and high school, the council members agreed that sophomore year (10th grade) would be the best time for school counselors to really encourage students to consider concurrent enrollment. Some council members felt a little confused and overwhelmed by concurrent enrollment being pushed in their 9th grade years, which is why they consider 10th grade to be the ideal time for this kind of messaging.

Council member Kat also raised the point that many CCA/concurrent enrollment programs are not advertised at Spectrum Academy, a charter school designed for students with autism and their siblings. She advocated for better college outreach to the Spectrum Academy locations, especially because (a) many students on the autism spectrum are fully capable and desirous of attending a four-year university, and (b) their siblings who also attend the academy who are *not* on the spectrum need college readiness resources just as much as their peers in general admission schools across the region.

The students demonstrated mature awareness when they discussed the need for more counselors at every school in the region. Many schools in the region are forced to ask their small body of counselors to service hundreds of students each. The council members know how stretched-thin their counselors are, but they expressed desires to have more counselors so they and their peers can feel more comfortable going to the counseling office to ask questions about college when they come up, instead of waiting on appointments or (in some cases) never being able to meet with their counselors at all. They agreed that having more counselors might also raise enrollment in and awareness of CTE programs.

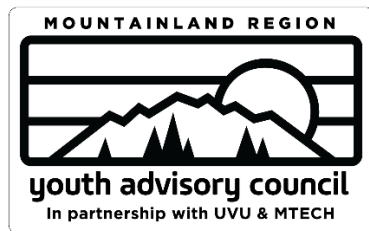


Looking Ahead

Thanks to the insight and vulnerability of the council members, the second meeting of the Mountainland Region Youth Advisory Council was incredibly successful, marked by engaging discussions and critical thinking from each council member. As more youth representatives are brought on board, they will learn from the example of current council members about how to be honest,

critical, and open as they share how the region can improve. The youth advisory council looks forward to the next meeting, which will be held on Saturday, March 15, 2025.

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