To the 2011-2012 S-PREP Cohort,

Once again, it has been my pleasure to serve as the Program Coordinator for S-PREP. You are all incredibly talented and gifted students who should be commended for your dedication to academic excellence. You were lucky to be taught by some of Columbia University’s most dedicated medical, dental, and graduate students. I hope your classes inspired your academic goals. Your preceptors are living proof that you too can do it.

To the freshman, sophomores, and juniors: I hope to see you again next year.
To our Seniors: Congratulations
To the S-PREP Staff: THANK YOU!

Sincerely,
Damaris Javier, M.A.
Director

A message from the Program Assistant

Dear All,

I’m happy to say that another year of S-PREP has come to a close. It’s been a pleasure to spend Saturday mornings with such driven students. Thank you for making this year wonderful!

Best,
Eva Maria Saavedra, M.F.A.
Program Assistant
Everyone will reach the time when they have to decide what college to attend. Picking the right college that’s fit for you will be one of the most important decisions you make in your life. It is after all, the beginning of adulthood. You make your own decisions now; you’re the one in control of your future. It sounds scary but it does not have to be. If you plan ahead and work your way towards this goal, you will be ready to embark on this new chapter of your life.

Planning for college should be started as early as ninth grade. The first thing to do is meet with your guidance counselor. Ask your guidance counselor how many credits you need to pass on to the next grade and if there are any Advanced Placement classes you can be placed in. Advanced Placement classes are great for college preparation because they are actual college courses that make you work as if you were in college. Good grades are also an important factor. You should maintain a GPA of 80 or above. Grades will be your entrance to apply for a specific college but extracurricular activities will be one of the determinants of whether the college accepts you or not. Colleges like to see students who are active in their school and community. They like to see that you have an interest in something else other than school. Find a club or team you enjoy and commit to it. If there is no club for your particular interest, start a club for it. Ask your guidance counselor or whoever is in charge of your school’s extracurricular activities and find out how to make this club. Colleges love students who show initiative and have a passion for a particular interest.

Sophomore year of high school is continuing to enhance your college application. Continue with the clubs or sports team you joined in freshman year and keep those grades up. Another extracurricular activity you can do is volunteer. If you know the career field you are interested in, volunteer somewhere where you will be exposed to the environment of this career. For example, if you are interested in the medical field, volunteer at a local hospital. Not only does this show colleges that you are thinking about your future, but it helps you gain a perspective of what it would be like in that career field. Internships are great as well. They are like volunteering but you get paid to help. During sophomore year you should also begin preparing for the SAT. The SAT measures how well you would do as a college freshman. You will take the PSAT (practice SAT) in the fall of your sophomore year. The results of the PSAT will show you what sections you need to work on. You should sign up for SAT Prep classes to help you improve in your weak areas. The prep classes are expensive, but there are places that hold classes for free. You can look online for free SAT Prep classes or ask your guidance counselor if they know of any free classes. If you feel that you do better studying on your own, there is a great book “Hack the SAT” by Eliot Schrefer that guides you through the sections of the SAT and provides you with strategies to solve reading and math problems. Obtaining a high score on the SAT can increase your chances of being accepted to your dream college.
Marquis Austin will be attending Dartmouth College.

Amaris Brown will be attending Brandeis University.

Angeliki Chiti will be attending NYU Poly.

Ayrton Cardora will be attending St. John’s University.

Jalia Dash will be attending Cornell University.

Bryan Dominguez will be attending Cornell University.

Kevin Fernandes will be attending Hofstra University.

Rachel Franchi-Pereira will attending Fordham University.

Crystal Franklin will be attending Wesleyan University.

Zain Javaid will be attending New York University.

Gabrielle Jean-Baptiste will be attending New York University.

Graphira Jean-Baptiste will be attending Fordham University.

Andre Lawes will be attending Rutgers University.

Gregory Mathelier will be attending Columbia University.

Itzel Medina will be attending New York University.

Yasmin Namnum will be attending Fordham University.

Kevin Ortiz will be attending SUNY Maritime.

Astrid Ovalles will be attending Hunter College.

Patricia Vargas will be attending Sophie Davis School of Biomedical Education.

Bria Wallace will be attending MIT.

Kevin Wilson will be attending Fairfield University.

Tenzin Yingsal will be attending St. Joseph’s College.

Efosa Uwa-Omede will be attending Milwaukee School of Engineering.

Congratulations to the rest of the S-PREP Seniors as well! *

Wishing you all continued success*
The Breath to Take
By Yasmin Namnum

Oh, troublesome times of grief
suspense, despair and disbelief
we hear the clock; tick tock, tick tock
waiting for the final blow.

Then comes marching the flock.
some follow horrified, others start to rock
all wondering what next step to take,
will it all turn out okay?

College planning
Continued from page 2

Junior year is the fun year where you begin visiting colleges and finding information on whether they have your major, clubs, athletic teams you like, etc. You should begin making a list of the colleges you are interested in and find out the requirements for applying. Most colleges require at least two teacher recommendations. Find teachers who know your academic strengths and who know you on a personal level. Have a copy of your transcript with you for reference when looking at college requirements. Junior year is also SAT year. This is the year where you take the actual SAT. A couple of months before you are set to take the test, take practice tests on your own and find out what sections you need more improvement on. If the results of your first SAT are not that great, don’t worry, you can take the test again. It is recommended to take the test twice because colleges will take the higher score of each section. You should also begin writing rough drafts of college essays. Ask teachers to edit your essays and see what else you can add to make the essay interesting. You want to have a great essay ready for when you begin the college application process the following year.

Finally, senior year; your last year of high school. Now begins the process of completing college applications. Most colleges use the common application in which one essay and two teacher recommendations are required for all the colleges. Some colleges may have supplements, extra questions or information they need. Your SAT scores need to be sent to the colleges you apply through the College Board and high school transcripts can be mailed. It is a long process but once you’re done, you will feel a sense of relief and achievement. You should also begin applying for scholarships. You should start applying for scholarships your junior year. Questbridge is a great scholarship for low income high school seniors who are interested in attending private 4-year Ivy League schools. There are tons of scholarships out there for every type of student; you just have to look for them. Scholarship search engines like FastWeb are extremely helpful as they match you with scholarships that match your profile and interests. Apply to as many scholarships as you can, you have nothing to lose.

All of this planning may seem overwhelming, but it’s really not. If you write down your plans for each year and take it step by step, you will be in great shape when the time comes to apply for college. Always keep in mind the end goal of your dream college motivating you to work harder. It will all be worth it when you’re receiving the long awaited ac-
The Blizzard
By Yasmin Namnum

Lost, confused, not knowing what to do
I headed to find my place in life,
following the set path of my heart,
I found myself on a peak.

On top of all I scouted the land only to
descend back into the violent storm of confusion,
the blizzard, on my road, but...
at least now I know the direction I must head.

S-Prep To Me
By Lydia Nieto

Stepping up to greater days,
that makes a student like me gaze
through the windows of those hospital walls.
Walking through and standing tall.
Feeling proud with my volunteer card.
Wanting, wishing to be part of the ward.
That is what S-Prep gives to me,
A way of life that will make me free.
Free to work all night with a crying child
Or hold an elder’s hand till they smile.
Listen to a heart’s beating soul.
Reading people’s charts to console.

Babies crying their first breath,
Elderly weeping at a death.
Nurses, aides, volunteers cope,
People waiting to heal in hope.
These sounds are pounding in my heart,
Rhythmically singing for me to take part.
The snake around the staff of Asclepius
is a symbol of honor that is ageless.
The Hippocratic oath resounds the word
of a promise that will always be anchored.
This is what S-Prep means to me.
A chance to have a medical degree.
Remember

By Lin Ying S-PREP ‘11

It’s easy looking back at our good times
Remembering the smiles and the joke lines
You were there when I needed you
Wiping away my tears and my sorrow

I still remember the day that we walked our separate roads
Our tears surrounded our young souls
When we waved our last good bye
One last hug one last time

I remember the dream you told me at the stair
How you desire to be a doctor
But God was unfair
He took your life before you can save others

Listening to the time
I wanted to finish what you have left behind
Saving others like how I could off saved you
You gave me a reason to live and to continue
Where to eat during you breaks….

**SO you have an hour to eat between classes and don’t know exactly where to go. Here is a list of a few places that are close and some even deliver!! Bon Appétit!**

Jou Jou Café (212)781-2222 168 Street and Broadway. Salads, wraps, cakes, Delivery

Shangri-La (212)927-6685 228 Fort Washington Ave. at 169 St. Sushi Bar, Asian, Delivery

Mike’s Bagels (212) 928-2300 168th on Broadway. Bagels and Sandwiches, Delivery

Dallas BBQ (212)568-3700. 166th and Broadway. BBQ, Chicken, Steaks, Delivery

McDonald’s (212)923-9582, 4036 Broadway (169 street)

Domino’s Pizza 736W. 181 Street (212)781-3700. Delivery

Famous Famiglia, 4007 Broadway (168 Street) (212) 927-3333. Pizzeria, Delivery

Wendy’s 3939 Broadway (on 165 Street)

King Palace Chicken and Gyro 4045 Broadway (170 Street) (212)928-6729, Delivery

Starbucks 168th street and Broadway (corner of 168 Street)

El Presidente (212) 927-7011. 3938 Broadway (165 St) Spanish & American Food, Delivery

Empire Szechuan Noodle House (212) 568-1600. 4041 Broadway (170 Street). Delivery

Coogan’s Broadway and 169 Street (212)928-1234 Int’l Cuisine, Daily Specials, Delivery

X-Café 3952 Broadway (212)543-1999 Coffee House
S-PREP 2010-2011 Preceptor Interview: Ashley Pender

By Bryan Dominguez

Ashley, one of our S-Prep preceptors, teaches Genetics in the morning. (FYI: She’s a really great teacher!) Besides teaching Genetics on Saturdays, she is currently attending Columbia Medical School as a Sophomore.

What made you interested in becoming a preceptor?
During my first and second year of undergrad I would tutor students in biology and I began to feel that some students would feel intimidated by these courses and I just found it a pleasure to help them overcome this intimidation.

Could you describe to me how a typical day as a medical student is like?
A typical day as a medical student depends on what year you’re in. First year is class all day, most days from nine to twelve and break from twelve through one, then back to class for the afternoon classes. During the afternoon you may attend lectures.

How are you able to manage such a busy schedule?
By using my time wisely and by creating a schedule that I follow. I also believe in studying six days a week and having a one day for a break. Studying everyday can eliminate the chance of having everything bunch up and stored until the last minute.

What do you enjoy most about being a preceptor?
Knowing at the end of the day I can walk away knowing that students learned something from what I have taught.

What is your favorite childhood cartoon?
I would have to go with the Rugrats.

Do you have any study tips that you would like to share with the SPREP students?
As a student you should divide your work load daily by doing a little bit of studying every day instead of cramming for a test. By doing this you will be prepared for each day. If you study the material prior to your class the class will turn into reinforcement and a second exposure to the material helping you learn more and retain more information.

If you were given a plane ticket to go anywhere where would you go and why?
Japan, I like the idea of being able to go observe different cultures.

Where did you go for undergrad?
Brown University

How was your experience there and has those experiences influenced who you are today?
I really liked Brown. It was a great experience. Brown really allows you to take control of your education. It helps with the developmental process and motivates you pursue what you want to do.

To conclude, do you have any advice for those students who want to pursue a career in the medical field?
The best advice is to realize that it’s important to learn in every class but look at everything as a challenge, to do the best you can. You shouldn’t be intimidated from less than desired outcomes.
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Thank you to everyone who contributed to the Newsletter!