

Assabet Valley Regional Technical High School

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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Assabet Hosts Annual Alumni Panel

Traditionally the day before the Thanksgiving break, Principal Mark Hollick hosts a panel discussion for the juniors and seniors, reaching out to several Assabet Valley alumni to come in and discuss their experiences at college to better prepare the current students for life after Assabet. This year was no exception, as six former graduates talked about their personal decisions with regard to college and majors, and fielded questions from the audience.

Priscilla Aguilar, from Hudson, is a senior at Westfield State, with a double major in Social Work and Ethnic Gender Studies, and a minor in Business Management. She is currently doing an internship in the KEY program, a non-profit in the Springfield area, and also does Work Study. Aguilar was in the Business Technology program while at Assabet Valley. Taylor Doonan, from West Boylston, is majoring in History at Worcester State, and graduated from the Design and Visual Communications program at Assabet. Jennifer Casavant, from Hudson, is a current sophomore at Framingham State, and was also in the Design and Visual Communications program, and is now majoring in Mathematics with a minor in Secondary Education. Casavant can often be seen in the halls at Assabet as she is doing an observation in Mrs. McCann's math classes. Johnson and Wales is the current home for Tyler Charbonneau, a sophomore majoring in Culinary Arts and Food Service Management. Charbonneau is also from Hudson, and was in Assabet's Culinary Arts program. Melissa Duarte, from Marlborough, is a sophomore at UMass Amherst, majoring in Public Health and is in an accelerated nursing program, having graduated from Assabet's Health Technologies program. Hailey Escobar, from Shrewsbury, graduated from Assabet's Auto Collision Technologies program, and ranked 8th in the nation at her SkillsUSA competition. She is currently on a full scholarship to Smith College where she is double majoring in Sociology and Education, with a concentration in Poetry. Escobar also has owned her own company,

RahRahReplica, for several years, selling patches that she has designed and made online through Etsy.

Each student had some words of wisdom for the audience, with a common theme of recommending doing the college visits as early as possible, being involved in extracurricular activities while at Assabet, and taking advantage of the many scholarship opportunities out there. Aguilar commented that time management was something everyone has to master, and confessed that her planner and phone calendar have become her best friends! “Don’t wait to apply,” Casavant urged. “Tour the school, meet with advisors, and apply for scholarships.” Both Escobar and Charbonneau also encouraged students to go to the freshman activities the colleges have planned. “No matter how lame they sound, that is how you are going to make friends and acclimate quickly,” urged Charbonneau. “Get involved right away, do the Orientation programs and put yourself out there. Remember that everyone is in the same position, so people tend to be friendly,” added Escobar.

The panel as a group agreed that Assabet’s schedule of academics/technical program every other week was very helpful in making the transition to a college schedule, and they also urged the juniors to sign up for Assabet’s Advanced Placement classes. “They look good on the transcript and prepare you for the quality of work you will encounter at college. Challenge yourself in high school. Apply for early decision, you might even get more financial aid that way,” continued Duarte.

“Having these suggestions come directly from the students who are currently in college carries far more weight than anything we as educators (or even as parents) can say. This is why we enjoy doing these panel discussions year after year, and encourage our students to ask as many questions as they can,” said Hollick.

Tagline for picture:

Hailey Escobar, Taylor Doonan, Tyler Charbonneau, Jennifer Casavant, Priscilla Aguilar and Melissa Duarte visit Assabet Valley to discuss their college experiences with current juniors and seniors.