

# Leading the way

## Meet Marty Anderson

Director of the College Center, Albany High School



Selecting a college can be a challenge. Since 2003, Marty Anderson has been helping Albany High School students navigate the process as director of the College Center. An experienced, full-time counselor, Mr. Anderson is the only guidance counselor in the Capital Region dedicated solely to the college search process. He helps connect students, families and teachers with access to information about college selection and admissions, careers, pre-college testing, financial aid and scholarships.

**Q:** What makes the College Center unique, and how does it complement Albany High's Guidance Department?

**A:** The College Center is truly one of a kind. No other high school in our area has this many resources in one location. The College Center complements the Guidance Department by giving all the counselors a place to direct students who need help researching careers, college majors, college choices, scholarships and summer programs. We also collaborate with our health teachers, who bring their classes into the College Center for a three-day lesson on careers. This is a great way for students to begin thinking about life after high school and it ensures that all students have been introduced to the College Center.

**Q:** What types of resources are available at the College Center?

**A:** The College Center has 12 computers that give students access to a multitude of college, career and financial search engines. We have updated college catalogs, SAT and ACT prep materials, college videos and DVDs. We organize and host several mini college fairs in the fall, which give our students a chance to speak first-hand with representatives from nearly 100 colleges and universities.

**Q:** What is your biggest challenge?

**A:** The biggest challenge for me is trying to get students to start the college process early. While some come into their senior year with an idea of their college choices and begin filling out applications, there are many who procrastinate. Students need to begin thinking about life after high school. By putting some thought into it now, they can assure themselves a career in which they are happy. I think the old saying is, "If you truly love what you do, you won't have to work a day in your life."

**Q:** What do you find most rewarding about your work?

**A:** I enjoy the FAFSA Help Nights we hold in February and March. Many parents have a hard time filling out these financial aid forms, which can be confusing. Professional staff from Siena College's Financial Aid Department are on hand to assist parents and students. We fill out the forms online and transmit them the same evening. This year nearly 50 families came and all were very grateful for the help.

**Q:** What's the story with those three big, fancy chairs in the College Center?

**A:** They were gifts from Albany High graduating classes. The big chair in the middle was a gift from the Class of 1901 and the two smaller chairs were from the Class of 1905. They have Latin inscriptions on them, which loosely translated say, "Step by Step to the Top" and "You Reap What You Sow." Occasionally students will sit on them, but most will tell you they aren't too comfortable.