

STAFFER OF THE WEEK

Brittany Martensen

College adviser from the Missouri College Advising Corps

How did your life path lead you to St. James?

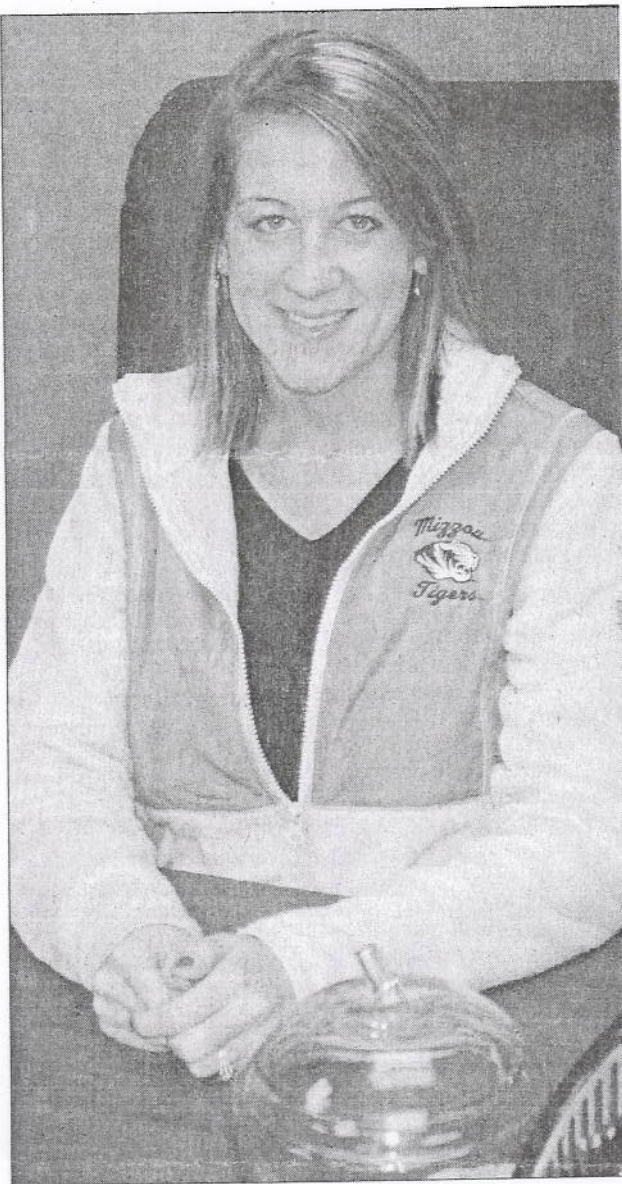
I went where the job was offered! My senior year of college I was forwarded an email regarding the job description of a college adviser and felt more than prepared to apply for the position. After the application process, I was awarded the advisory role in St. James, which was a new partner school to the rural south central cluster. Before accepting the position, I visited the community, and the school district, and immediately felt like this was a great fit for me and my fiancé.

Can you describe the duties and responsibilities associated with your job?

As part of the Missouri College Advising Corps, I provide full-time advisement primarily amongst juniors and seniors in the high school to prepare them for their post-secondary plans. My goal is to help students and their families see college as an attainable goal and to create a college-going atmosphere in the school setting, as well as the community. Likewise, I am available to provide information regarding the college application and financial aid processes. Other duties include ACT registration and preparation, FAFSA completion, financial aid information, scholarship searches and applications, tours to provide exposure to a diverse array of campuses, and outreach to parents/families.

What is your favorite part about your job?

This job has given me the opportunity to build



relationships with the student body, as well as the faculty and staff, which are all very supportive of the program and the services I provide. Most of all, my favorite part of the job has been working alongside the students and seeing each senior progress through the application process, while receiving their acceptance letters!

What do you find most challenging?

Many of these students don't believe in themselves, or they don't think

they are "college ready," either because of their academics or financial need. It's my responsibility to encourage these students and address each one on an individual basis so that we are able to find a "best-fit" postsecondary opportunity. In addition, a portion of these students are first-generation to college or at risk of not going to college, which means I really have to dedicate my time to informing the students and parents how college can be affordable and attainable.

What are you most excited about for the rest of this semester and the start of next semester?

For me, it's going to be getting these students accepted into the college of their choice and applying for as much financial aid/scholarships as we can get! Several students from the senior class have already been accepted to one or more colleges and seeing their excitement and hard work paid off gets me thrilled for the remainder of the year. As for the underclassmen, I look forward to more college outreach and facilitating a variety of campus visits.

What has most surprised you about working in your current position in St. James?

Coming into a new school and new community, I was most surprised by how supportive the faculty and staff welcomed me. From day one, the teachers, counselors and administration have made me feel especially included and a part of the team. I'm very grateful that the school allocates resources to support our student and staff success, making my job much more collaborative in a way that impacts the entire student population.

ADDITIONAL INFO

Education:

University of Missouri, Bachelor of Journalism with an emphasis in Strategic Communication from the School of Journalism

Hometown:

California, Mo.

Favorite sports team:

Missouri Tigers

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