

Connecting Aspirations to a Plan *continued*

for a luncheon and to give feedback about their post-Erskine experiences. This fall, the Guidance Office arranged for seniors to visit Maine colleges and universities for tours and admissions sessions, often having the admissions fee waived by completing an application on the spot. The institutions visited included Colby College; University of Maine at Augusta; Kennebec Valley Community College; University of Maine at Farmington; St. Joseph's College; Washington County Community College; Eastern Maine Community College, Southern Maine Community College, and the University of Southern Maine. Often, the expense of traveling to visit colleges and the application fee is prohibitive for some students.

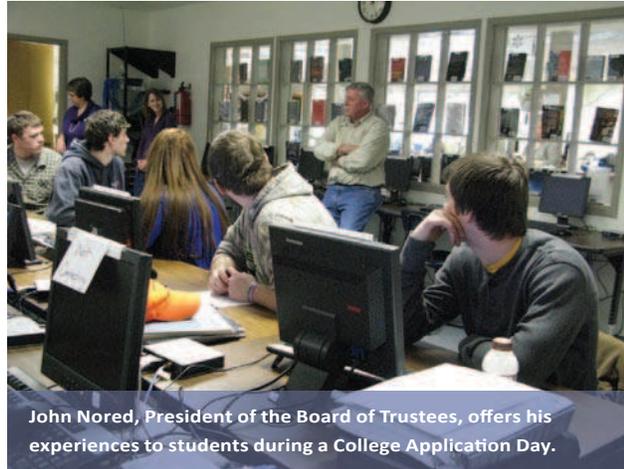
In early December, the Guidance Office, in partnership with MaineCAN (College Access Network) offered two College Application Days. MaineCAN is a group of volunteer educators consisting of members of the Finance Authority of Maine (FAME), MELMAC, and Maine Education Services (MES), which invited two schools to participate in the College Application Days as a pilot project. MaineCAN had a training session in September with a representative from the American College Application campaign. Several states are already involved in this process.

The guest presenters were Pauline Stevens from Early College for ME; Jim Bourgoin, Admissions Director at Kennebec Valley Community College; Kate Leveille, MES College and Career Access Program Director, and Rick Wilson, a volunteer with MaineCAN and a former educator.

Over 35 students attended the two-day event, which was held in the Erskine's computer lab. The goal of the sessions were for students, particularly those who might not do so otherwise, to submit their applications online with help from the MaineCAN volunteers and Guidance Office staff.

A special guest speaker was Board of Trustees President John Nored '70,

who shared his story about waiting 13 years to attend college after graduation because he had to work on his family's farm. He urged the students to value and take advantage of the opportunities being offered



John Nored, President of the Board of Trustees, offers his experiences to students during a College Application Day.



Sue Lagasse, Director of Guidance, assists students during a College Application Day.

for post-secondary education. He explained that the world is a different place today than in his time and without a post-secondary education, making a living is very difficult.

Guidance Office Director Sue Lagasse commented that the students who took part were pleased and thankful to receive the help. She was excited to see how many students were applying, and it made her realize how much help students need to maneuver through the application process.

Some examples of their career goals are precision machining; culinary arts; energy services; marine studies, criminal justice, international

business, business management; biology/pre-med; pre-law; nursing; and engineering. Ms. Lagasse said that the biggest change in the college application process over the course of her career has been the increase in technology—more applications are accessed online and some only online—and many more students are applying, particularly to community colleges.

Headmaster McQuarrie offered positive observations about the successful College Application Days: Seeing students who only a few years ago would be less than confident about postsecondary education but are now being engaged in various aspects of the process; the individualized attention students are receiving, even when being in a group; the use of experts and resources from outside of our program; the introduction provided by the president of the board; and the t-shirts used as incentives and to reinforce the program.

Ms. Lagasse says that Erskine students' attitudes about

post-secondary education have changed over the years—more have had the initiative to apply than even ten years ago. The students are better prepared to make college and career choices due to classes like Sophomore Selections and Junior Judgment as well as parent evenings and classroom guidance presentations. The students that do not apply often do not know where to begin the process, feel they cannot be successful in college, or their parents tell them it is not affordable.

The Guidance Office held a financial aid night on January 15 during which