

Member news & Notes

BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT: Holmes Smith Consulting Services

BY CLAIRE ARMANN

» At some point everyone has likely felt some type of anxiety when planning for their future, especially when deciding to pursue higher education. This is an important decision and, potentially, a huge investment. Holmes Smith Consulting Services (HSCS) aims to make this process easier and less taxing.

HSCS offers customized college planning services, from choosing the right school to applying for financial aid and scholarships. Dr. Patricia Smith founded HSCS after noticing a need for both parents and students to receive individualized and customized college planning services. With over 30 years of experience working in higher education she saw first-hand how stressful college planning can be. She was able to identify four main issues that create the most anxiety related to college planning. Those issues are finding schools aligned with specific academic, career, and financial needs; locating scholarships and other financial resources; navigating through the college planning process; and investing well to get a return. With these issues in mind and a goal to ease the college planning process, she founded HSCS.

Though they are small in size, HSCS proves that they are able to handle the need for college planning services in Delaware by working with families all over the state. At first, HSCS used their connections through the Delaware State Chamber of Commerce to network with other business leaders, receive insight

on how to use resources for small businesses, and find mentors. They also signed an agreement with the Boys & Girls Clubs of Delaware, one of their first major clients, to develop and offer a statewide community-based College Awareness and Planning (CAP) program.

After founding HSCS, Dr. Smith continued to make an impact on the college planning industry, establishing the Parents & Guardians College Planning Conference in 2013 in partnership with HSCS. The conference was founded to provide parents and guardians of middle

and high school students with resources to effectively navigate the college planning process. Each year, scholarships are awarded to high school students whose parents and guardians attend the conference. Over \$40,000 in college scholarships have been awarded to date thanks to the generosity of the business community and individual donors. The 7th Annual College Planning Conference for Parents and Guardians will be held on May 18, 2019, at the Greater Dover Boys & Girls Club.

Students all over Delaware have been positively impacted by Dr. Smith's



"One of my biggest fears was always being in debt. I considered not going to college at all if I couldn't find a way to pay for it. If it weren't for Dr. Pat I don't think I would have even gone to college... Now I have everything paid for and have opportunities like studying abroad. Dr. Pat has also given me the chance to intern at Holmes Smith Consulting Services so that I can build my resume and get bigger opportunities in the future. Whatever career I end up having, I will owe Dr. Pat a lot of credit for helping me get to that point." – Jhaney Hamlett, student

passion for aiding in the college planning process. Her expertise in the field and her extensive experience in higher education has allowed HSCS to help over 300 families over eight years through direct college planning services, and over 900 Boys & Girls Club members through the CAP program. HSCS services students from public, private and charter schools and have also extended their services to families of middle and elementary school age children and businesses and employees who wish to pursue continuing education.