After serving as Buckley's associate director of college counseling for the past six years, Joseph "Joe" Blassberg has been named director of college counseling. Throughout his tenure, Joe has guided hundreds of students successfully through the academic advising and college process and has brought new programs and innovations, including the annual college application and essay workshop and PSAT 8/9. He also assisted in the redesign and revision of the Upper School profile and the college counseling materials.

Q: What do you hope to bring to the new position?

A: First and foremost, I would like to continue to capitalize on the college counseling department’s solid reputation that Julie Taylor-Vaz has worked so diligently to establish over the past seven years. Through conversations with students, parents/guardians, faculty, and administrators, I have come to realize that Buckley’s college counseling department is respected and well-regarded as a caring, compassionate, collaborative, and ethical branch of the school’s overall support system. I also hope to emphasize cultural competency in the college application process. Over the past couple of years, an increasing number of colleges and universities have underscored their desires to curate culturally and globally aware student bodies, and they are asking each applicant to articulate that degree of awareness in the application. Buckley has such great resources—our DEI initiatives, the ninth-grade Intersections of Identity course, Diversity Club, affinity groups, and symposia, just to name a few—our students are well-equipped with very tangible opportunities to become highly-skilled citizens and advocates in this regard.

Q: What excites you most about your new position?

A: As I am every school year, I am most excited to shepherd each student through a thoughtful and deliberate process of discovery—not just about college, but about themselves. As I often tell families, it’s so easy to advocate for Buckley students because I have such great raw material to work with.

Q: How would you sum up your general philosophy about college?

A: I know it seems a bit old-fashioned in this era of innovation and technology, but I still espouse John Stuart Mill’s view of “the institution [i.e. college/university] as an experiment in living, a place to test ideas and ideals.” College should be about the experience rather than the name, about building relationships as much as skills. The finest colleges aspire to be microcosms of the greater world, welcoming all perspectives and embracing both the joys and tensions inherent in a diverse community. The best graduates come out of the college experience with a sophisticated awareness of the world around them. Our department aims to assist each student in exploring those college communities where the aforementioned “experiment in living” however a student chooses to define it, can be achieved.