

**COLLEGE  
WISE**

**Tom's International  
Adventure to**

# **Washington and Lee University**

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**Class of 2027**



## TOM M.

Washington and Lee University  
Class of 2027

### AT A GLANCE

#### BEFORE COLLEGEWISE

- Tom found the US application process challenging
- Had a knack for writing
- Was enrolled in the IB program
- Scored an 25 on the ACT

#### AFTER COLLEGEWISE

- Scored a 31 on the ACT
- Applied Early Decision
- Was accepted to his #1 college choice



"Tom's high school hadn't had many previous applicants to U.S. colleges, so I worked closely with his family and school counselor to ensure the materials we were sending in his applications reflected him in the best light and captured his unique educational experience."

**KATIE KONRAD MOORE**  
COLLEGEWISE COUNSELOR

### AN OVERVIEW

Tom was born in Seattle but lived in Iceland for much of his life. He always knew he wanted to attend college in the United States and sought out Collegewise's support after entering sophomore year and needing more resources on the admissions process.

### HOW COLLEGEWISE HELPED

Collegewise allowed Tom to understand the expectations and requirements of the admissions process. With his counselor, Tom spent many hours on college research and school selection while also receiving academic support from our Tutoring and Test Preparation department, which helped Tom prepare for standardized tests.

### THE OUTCOME

After receiving his acceptance, Tom was set on attending Washington and Lee University, where he studies History and Film.

Reflecting on his experience with Collegewise, Tom offered future applicants a piece of advice.

"As much as college is the next step, there are steps after. There's life after. You have to keep that in mind. When I started, I did not have that perspective."

That's why, Tom says, "it's important to have people around you who know what they're doing."

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## STUDENT PROFILE

 Tom M.

 Washington and Lee University

 Class of 2027

 Selected Major: History and Film

 Collegewise Counselor: Katie Konrad Moore

 2 years with Collegewise

## THE ICELANDIC WAY

Tom was born in Seattle but lived in Iceland for some of his life. Attending high school in Iceland was similar to what students could expect in the United States. He had close friends, fantastic teachers, challenging classes, and a summer internship in the marketing department of a medical device company.

Although Iceland had been his home for nearly his whole life, Tom knew that his next adventure would take him back to the US for college and in a warmer climate.

Tom enrolled in the International Baccalaureate (IB) program in high school, an internationally recognized academic enrichment program. During that time, Tom developed a true knack for writing while exploring his interest in history and film studies.

Tom's writing skills made preparing for the essay components of the application a breeze. His skills became the foundation for his written work on comparing trope usage in the work of Akira Kurosawa and the remake of his movies by Western directors, which he wrote about in his Extended Essay, a 4,000+ word academic research paper.

When it was time for Tom to start preparing for college applications, he found himself limited with resources to help him navigate the process. It was at this time that he and his family sought after Collegewise's services.



## THE COLLEGEWISE WAY

Tom began working with Collegewise in his sophomore year and was paired with his counselor, [Katie Konrad Moore](#). Starting this process early gave Tom enough time to thoroughly research colleges and be thoughtful through the entire application process.

At Collegewise, we strive to help students achieve a simpler application process and allow them to enjoy their senior year while alleviating parents of their project management responsibilities. With Collegewise, families find themselves in the driver's seat and with more family time before students set off to college.

This was exactly the experience Tom had with Collegewise. From start to finish, Katie worked closely with Tom to offer different perspectives on colleges, help him identify important factors, and work through application components in a timely manner. Rather than overload an already full plate (as many students can relate to), Tom had a longer runway to complete essays and fill out applications, ultimately leading to a simpler, stress-free college application experience.

# TUTORING SUPPORT

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Tom was also introduced to Stefanie Toye, Collegewise's Dean of Tutoring, who helped him prepare for standardized tests. Since the ACT or SAT are not required for Icelandic residents applying to the European Union (EU), Tom looked for outside support to prepare for his upcoming tests.

Although many colleges continue executing test-optional policies and stress to students that their application will not be penalized should they choose to apply without test scores Tom understood the value his test results would add to his application, especially as an international applicant.

With Collegewise's tutoring and test prep, students are offered free diagnostic exams that aim to help students find the right test for them. Tom took both diagnostics and determined that the ACT was the right test. After his first diagnostic, Tom scored 25 out of 36, but after regular tutoring with Stefanie, Tom scored 31! Learning how to prepare and implement the knowledge transformed the process for Tom.

"The ACT is not for the faint of heart," admits Tom, but the support he received from Stefanie built up his confidence and ultimately led him to success. Just like the full-circle support Katie provided, Stefanie started working with Tom on deciding which standardized test best suited him, the SAT or the ACT, and then on strategies for *how* to take the test. "Without her help, I wouldn't have done half as well," Tom shares after reflecting on his 6-point increase since working with Stefanie.

"Tom was successful because he was a great ACT tutee. That means many things.

First, Tom was open to learning about the test's structure and the reasoning behind why the test-makers ask what they do. Students who express that type of curiosity and genuinely listen often understand the test more holistically. He began to see how the writers were trying to trick him and became better at identifying wrong answers.

Tom also dove deeper into why questions were wrong: he didn't just want the correct answer. He wanted to understand the obscure grammar rule the ACT folks were testing. We were also very honest with each other since Tom let me know when he had a lot of academic work on his plate so he couldn't devote as much time to test prep practice. When I know this because a student has such self-awareness, I can plan accordingly and make their prep more effective.

The score is not what it's all about, but it certainly gives metrics to the work we do. I was so excited to get Tom's email saying he had gotten into his top choice and that he didn't have to meet with me anymore. That is the best news: when students have "graduated" from working with me and can get back to their regularly programmed teenage lives. I hope future students I work with are as receptive, engaged, and authentic as Tom was--it was truly wonderful getting to know him and seeing his efforts come to fruition," says Stefanie.

Working with Collegewise tutors means working with tutors who scored in the 95th percentile or higher. Having that competitive edge allows students to fully understand the ins and outs of the standardized process and approach their exams strategically and confidently.



**STEFANIE TOYE**  
**DEAN OF TUTORING**

**Looking to go from test-stress to test success?**

Browse our 1:1 and group tutoring sessions

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## THE COUNSELOR'S PERSPECTIVE

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Katie runs and owns Collegewise's Washington office and, while working with Collegewise, has helped over 500 students gain college admission.

It was a no-brainer when Katie was paired with Tom. Her years of experience with the application process and driven personality were exactly what Tom needed to apply to college confidently and finish high school strong.

"Tom's high school hadn't had many previous applicants to U.S. colleges," shares Katie, "so I worked closely with his family and school counselor to ensure the materials we were sending in his applications reflected him in the best light and captured his unique educational experience."

Over the two years that Katie and Tom worked together, Katie paved the way for Tom to feel more confident about his application and allowed him to explore colleges he hadn't considered before.



**KATIE KONRAD MOORE**  
**COLLEGEWISE COUNSELOR**

## COLLEGE CHOICES

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A large part of the application process takes place before completing any components. It starts with conducting college research and creating a shortlist of schools.

At Collegewise, counselors work with students to create a list of likely, target, and reach schools. Likely schools act as a safety net for students. Target schools are schools where they have a considerably high chance of gaining admission, and reach schools tend to have selective admission but to which the student remains a qualified candidate.

Having a balanced list of colleges is vital to student success and ensuring that they have a variety before submitting applications. That's why counselors spend a significant amount of time with students, working through what colleges best suit them.

When conducting college research, the first step is determining what factors are and aren't important. Factors such as:

- |   |  |  |   |
|---|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Location               | <input type="checkbox"/> Cost                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Size              | <input type="checkbox"/> Course offerings     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Academic opportunities | <input type="checkbox"/> Extracurricular options | <input type="checkbox"/> Job opportunities | <input type="checkbox"/> Networking potential |

Working with an expert to sift through the potential options can make this tedious process more rewarding. The college a student chooses will be their home for at least four years and become a stepping stone to who they plan to be. Making the right decision can be overwhelming without the support of an expert.

While working with Katie, Tom was able to dedicate enough time to answering some of the big questions students have about college selection. Katie started by throwing out all kinds of different schools while Tom was still deciding what factors were most important to him in finding a college fit. Tom's knowledge about Washington and Lee University from his mother, who attended the college to study Law, made the process much easier.

After visiting the campus, Tom was confident that Washington and Lee University was the right choice for him. The warm weather, smaller campus size, and academic offerings sealed the deal for Tom. The college also had a very impressive and exciting Film and Visual Culture minor that would allow Tom to explore his passions.

Tom applied to college as an Early Decision applicant and received his results on December 15, long before he finished his senior year. While other students were finalizing essays and finetuning their applications, Tom was finished!

During a holiday party with his family, Tom was able to share the excitement with his close ones, making the experience and festivities that much better.

## TOM'S ADVICE FOR STUDENTS

While reflecting on his experience, Tom had a few (wise) words as a Collegewise alumnus. His main takeaway is to keep a positive perspective. "As much as college is the next step, there are steps after. There's life after." And for Tom, having knowledgeable and supportive people around him to remind him of that fact made all the difference.

"I've enjoyed the process as much as you can enjoy applying to college," says Tom, "and I think if I hadn't had Collegewise, I wouldn't be going to the college I'm going to."

With the many application nuances, senior year coursework, and looming deadlines, students can quickly become overwhelmed and detached from the process. At Collegewise, we encourage our students to look at the application process in a positive light and as part of a bigger journey.

As Tom finishes his studies at Washington and Lee University, the skills he learned, experience he had, and foundation he built with Collegewise will undoubtedly guide him to new heights.



"I've enjoyed the process as much as you can enjoy applying to college," says Tom, "and I think if I hadn't had Collegewise, I wouldn't be going to the college I'm going to."



# **A Better Way. A Simpler Way. The Collegewise Way**

**Kickstart a simpler, stress-free experience.**

**Get Started Today**

**COLLEGE  
WISE**

The logo for Collegewise, featuring the word "COLLEGE" in white above the word "WISE" in blue. A blue horizontal line is positioned below the word "WISE".