

Legacy Kids

FROM THE FRONT PAGE

overwhelming. "The school seemed so cool when I came to visit my sister," said junior Samia Ilias, (Shayerah '00). "I probably never would have decided to come if I hadn't been able to see how awesome it was beforehand."

So, you may ask, did these legacy students have an upper hand when coming to the school? When selecting and taking classes, there was a very mixed response. Junior Mario Piergellini (Dan, '02), said that Dan did not help him choose classes. However, Logsdon said that she frequently went to her sister for advice in picking out classes. And though you may think that teachers pick on legacy students more after teaching their siblings, most legacy students agree that their teachers don't treat them any differently than other students. Ilias agreed, saying that though the teachers did not pay her much special attention, she already knew about her SLI (Marlene Blakney) and some of the other staff members.

These legacy kids often experience the school differently than first-generation students. When senior Liz Yockey (Alex, '00) came, she already knew some of the seniors and was called "Yockey's sister" her junior year. Most

of the legacy kids agreed that they "knew where stuff was" beforehand, which helped when trying to figure out where classes were. "When I came, I was already comfortable with the layout of the school and the structure of the halls," said junior Ben Pahl (Jonathan, '98).

However, many legacy students weren't affected by their siblings as much as some may expect. "I really didn't know about it. They really didn't talk about it much," said senior Sarah Wilson (Nora, '97; Court, '99). Piergellini said that the only real effect was that he knew where things were beforehand. Senior Kelly Hoopes (Kyle '94, Scott '95) said that she was very young when she visited, and though it did influence her decision, she didn't remember much. She does remember what the school was like when she visited and could recognize changes that have occurred since then.

Sure, having a sibling who's been through this before would be a handy resource for knowing about such people as Miss Marlene or Dr. Kolena. But in the words of Samia Ilias, "There were people wearing pajamas to class. Pajamas! When I saw that, I knew that this was the school for me." Enough said.

Super Study Pays Off

BRANDON CARROLL

Though few students have noticed, the second quarter of Super Study is under way, but only for students on academic probation or those who voluntarily attend. First quarter's results are in, and the numbers make one thing clear: whether the program was enjoyable or a hassle, it paid off big.

Many participants in Super Study grew to like it over the course of the first quarter. Initially, only 32% of students in Super Study said that they valued the program moderately, highly, or very highly. By the conclusion of the first quarter, this figure had dramatically risen to 59%. According to Dr. Joan Barber, Director of Student Life, "[Some] students have chosen to take the program, [because] they like the structure."

While the increase in student appreciation of Super Study is obviously a good sign for the administration, there are more definitive indi-

cators of the program's short-term success. There is a vastly lower number of students on academic probation this quarter than in years past. For instance, one in ten juniors last year had two grades below C, compared to only seven percent of juniors this year. Furthermore, every senior who was on academic probation last quarter is now off of probation. In addition, there has been a lower incidence of students withdrawing than in past years, perhaps due in part to Super Study reducing academic stress. Some also believe that Super Study's success might have been even greater if it wasn't for 24-hour AOL Instant Messenger and dorm-room access to the Internet. Whatever the case, Super Study has left quite a mark after being in place for only one quarter.

Teachers have noticed the impact, too, and are enthusiastic about the program. According to Mrs. Marilyn Link, head of the Science

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Student Initiative: Endangered or Non-Existent?

HENRY HÉBERT

"...it seems desirable that something should be done on a scale far larger than has hitherto been attempted, and that a strenuous effort should be made to bring up this great department of inquiry to a level with other departments, in order that we may maintain the balance and harmony of our knowledge."

-H. T. Buckle

A vile beast has invaded NCSSM in the 2001-2002 school year - something that appears throughout campus, burdening conversations everywhere. What is this "thing" that has come to cripple our motivation and destroy our home? Whining. Think of all the times a student has badmouthed the van loops, laundry cards, or in-room - condemning the shortcomings of the institution without giving a thought to a viable solution. This mind-set of inaction and complaints about the state of affairs on campus has been a troubling development. Should one feel comfortable abandoning problems on the doorstep of an administrator? Everyone is guilty of a bit of whining, but have other previous classes been so content as to let only the bureaucracy deal with the problems of residential life? The answer is a very definite "No."

Science and Math began its first year with only a bare-bones program in place. With so much to prepare including a new building, new faculty, and 150 student guinea pigs, the staff was busy. Advancements in student life did not quite meet the expectations of the students - for example there was no sports program. Brad Ives, a graduate of the first class and current member of the Board of Trustees, worked to improve school programs. Brad consulted Branson Brown, a PA teacher and later Athletic Director, and then founded the Science and Math Cross-Country Team, a noteworthy example of student initiative.

In 1996 and 1997 Chloe Palenchar and Tree Calloway were not satisfied with the organization of the Hearing Board, and devised a proposal for student involvement in the hearing of disciplinary cases based on the Honor Code at the California Institute of Technology. Recalling her involvement in

the reconfiguration of the Hearing Board, Chloe said, "I don't really remember that much involvement of the administration in the initial development of ideas." The girls first gathered the opinions of students on the present structure of the board and met with the Director of Student Life, Dr. Barber, to discuss them. When problems were defined and possible solutions found, a written proposal was taken to the faculty and administration of the board. Developing their ideas and presenting them in an organized manner, Chloe and Tree succeeded in reforming the Hearing Board to include seven students.

Two years ago Dr. Barber formed the Action Plan Committee to evaluate many aspects of the school, including equality of male and female students, the Code of Conduct, and the community of Science and Math. The "APC", as it was known, consisted of parents, SLIs, faculty, and students. In the first year, it was even headed by a student - Jonathan Pahl. Pahl was able to run the committee smoothly and facilitated the cooperation of all parties involved. Throughout the semester Pahl sought input on the committee from faculty members such as John Woodmansee and Dot Doyle, and administrators, namely Dr. Barber, in order to address the concerns of all committee members. The APC made several improvements to student life, such as the establishment of van loops on weekdays and weekends. Because of Pahl's organization and dedication, the APC made important changes in areas of community and equality.

What can the classes of '02 and '03 learn from these stories? We can see that students have been involved in administrative issues in the past and should continue their participation in the future. One might think that there are definite distinctions between the 20 classes of Science and Math, but according to former Director of Admissions, John Poe, this is not true. "The number of applications changes each year, but the test scores stay the same," says Poe. What, then, set apart these heroes of student governance? Initiative. At some point it becomes necessary to publicize one's ideas and opinions, in order to protect the interests of the individual. In

the case of Science and Math, if students do not openly vocalize their opinions and suggestions, the administration is forced to find a solution on their own - one that may not cater to the tastes of the student body.

Do you have an idea concerning academics or residential life and would like to see it seriously considered? Here are some suggestions:

1) Don't go directly to the nearest administrator with your problem. Administrators cannot respond to the complaints of every individual and still complete the tasks they are assigned. "Work through SGA," suggest Doyle and Palenchar. The students on SGA are there specifically to facilitate communication between students and administration.

2) Know all sides of the story. Investigate the problem completely and develop realistic solutions. "Give praise as well as complaints," says Chloe Palenchar. "Both positive and negative feedback can help shape behavior."

3) Consult faculty and staff. The success of Ives, Palenchar, Calloway, and Pahl would not have been possible without the help of teachers and staff. Many of the employees at Science and Math are more than happy to work with students to realize their ideas.

4) Be persistent. Stimulating change, in addition to doing schoolwork, is a very difficult task. Almost any cause will require significant follow-up for long-term success.

NCSSM is an institution founded to allow students throughout the state to "Accept the Greater Challenge", but the constituents of the school cannot truthfully say they have done so when vital decisions concerning residential life are left up to the administration. Without the leadership and influence of the student body, Science and Math is only set apart from other public high schools by dorm rooms. The issue of student initiative brings to mind a certain popular saying; "Stop Whining. Start a Revolution!" In the 21st year of the North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics, the students should take this to be an unofficial motto, and replace caustic words with meaningful action.