



Photo by Amy Bryson

## Laptops crucial for efficient Super Study

The Darwinian Theory of Evolution states that in order for a species to survive, it must adjust to its changing surroundings. School policy is no different.

As technology develops and the school moves towards its ultimate goal of a "paperless" campus, it is simply illogical to continue the prohibition of laptops in

### Staff Editorial

junior Supervised Study. Printing hundreds of pages of American Studies readings and Chemistry WebAssign problems to use during Super Study is counter-productive to the admirable goal of a paperless campus, not to mention wasteful of costly paper and ink.

Every night this trimester, most juniors will complete lots of homework that is accessible only through the Internet. Web-based chemistry and physics classes are becoming increasingly popular and humanities teachers are posting required reading and assignments on the web every day. Smart policy would allow students to complete this work in a distraction-free environment.

The resistance of the administration to this change is understandable. There are many distractions at every point in the huge landscape that is the Internet. But if laptops were integrated into Super Study, the administration could allow only certain websites, like Blackboard or WebAssign, and block distractions.

More than three hundred juniors will begin Supervised Study in less than a week, and they must be equipped with every tool to make that nightly hour and a half as productive as possible. That is why now is the time to evolve.

## the stentorian

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# Choose Your Year

Should the summer service requirement be completed sooner rather than later?

## Yes

When imagining the summer before my senior year, I thought of exciting trips, summer jobs and a relaxing time before a grueling year of college applications and a full course load of APs. In my dream for this ideal summer, mandatory community service was out of place. While the majority of students who attend NCSSM will fulfill this 60-hour community service requirement the summer before their senior year, the summer before the junior year is a better option.

During the summer before senior year, many students opt to participate in internships, travel across the country or globe or become involved in an athletic or educational camp. With all these items taking over their

calendars, how do rising seniors complete their summer community service project and still have time to relax? This summer, I participated in the North Carolina Scholastic Media Institute for a week and held two summer jobs, often working 12 hours a day. If I had to fit in 60 hours of community service, I wouldn't have had time to enjoy the beach or spend time with my friends and family. I did not travel or participate in either a research program or an internship and I already found my summer packed, leaving me very thankful I had completed the requirement last summer.

The hours, the forms, the journal, the presentation were all completed before junior year. Students who choose to perform the community service before their junior year move into NESSM with one graduation requirement already complete, leaving them with one less item on their list of things to do, one less deadline to worry about, one less meeting to attend.

This community service project can be used as an experiment or a test of likes and dislikes. For example, I completed my summer community service project as a day camp counselor at my local YMCA. I was given the opportunity to work with children between the ages of 5 and 13. I became close to a camper with Tourette's Syndrome and developed an interest in finding out more about the disease's symptoms and treatments. NCSSM gave me an immediate opportunity to pursue this interest through its Embryology and Immunology courses. Mentorship plans and senior year courses must be set in place before the end of junior year. Wouldn't it be better to know earlier that you want to pursue immunology and tailor these plans around that interest?

Checking off a requirement and being introduced to a passion make the fulfillment of the 60-hour summer community service project before junior year ideal.

## No

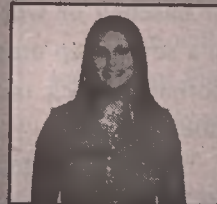
Like many Science and Math students, I chose to leave my 60-hour community service requirement, which I completed as a Red Cross volunteer at the Camp Lejeune Naval Hospital, until the summer before my senior year. I based this decision purely—some might say *blindly*—on the advice of the packet I received in my first junior mailing. But as my service project ends, I am glad I did.

For starters, the large distance between my house and the friends I made during junior year at times left me feeling bored and isolated, an experience that is not uncommon among rising NCSSM seniors. A service project provides a place to go, people to meet and something constructive to do. In addition, some students finish their junior year with new skills to put to use or a clearer career plan that leads to more specialized and meaningful service.

The previous year has also provided me with a greater understanding of why service is required. I came to Science and Math already believing in my responsibility to participate in our community, but receiving a year of truly extraordinary education at no cost personalized my social debt. The work I did felt more like actually "giving back," and less like a roadblock to graduation.

But perhaps most importantly, I have found volunteer work refreshing after a year in the Science and Math "bubble." The intensive nature of our school leaves many students focused almost exclusively on themselves while classes are in session. Yes, we work hard, but our work is, in the short term, purely for self-benefit. Our worlds narrow to Thoreau's Transcendentalism, the mathematics of a trebuchet and buffer curves. "What blood shortage?" we ask when a rogue newspaper crosses our path. "What poverty? What hurricane? I've got a physics test tomorrow!"

Performed between junior and senior years, extensive volunteer work provides a space to step outside our detailed lives and rejoin the planet. For me, social contribution has served as a reminder of why I care about getting an education in the first place—to make a difference. I am prepared to work with greater patience and focus, and am more eager to reach out to the world around me. After more than sixty hours spent on someone other than myself, I am returning for my senior year motivated to learn in a way that I would not be had I spent my senior summer lounging on the beach.



By Amy Bryson



By Mary Kohlmann