

Seniors stress about college applications

BY CAROLINE DESAUSURE

With the start of the rest of our lives looming ahead, it is hard to remain calm about the college application process. The stress of standardized tests, transcripts, essays, teacher recommendations, maintaining good grades, and interviews has proven to be too much for many SMathers to handle.

After a long day at school and an even longer night of work, sometimes it's nice to take a break and get on Facebook. But wait! I've come to a stop on my newsfeed at the classic, "just finished all of my college applications!" status. Don't get me wrong, I wish I was you. But there's no need to advertise and brag that you're ahead of the rest of the NCSSM student body. Some may argue that this type of peer pressure and jealousy will be motivation to get your own essays written, but I think that it stresses out students unnecessarily.

Senior Vivian Chen says, "I hate it. It makes me feel super discouraged and subpar compared to the rest of my peers."

How do some people have time to apply to college? With

extracurriculars, research, athletics, academics, and a massive college to-do list, I now understand how some people manage to pull consecutive all-nighters. These superstars seem to have their lives together: pulling off good

grades, getting everything done, and managing to have a social life.

Cross country runner Adele Bernard said, "With a leadership position, a sport, teaching a seminar, and running three clubs, getting college

apps and homework done is quite the chore. My room is a mess, but my deadlines are fulfilled because I prioritize"

Other students facing more serious cases of senioritis than the average diagnosis procrastinate to no end. The

weekend of Oct. 14 proved to be nerve-racking for many stragglers who decided to save the entire UNC app for one night.

Senior Debanjali Kundu, "Even though I wrote common app essay in less than an hour, I felt really accomplished when I got it done and I felt my stress disappear when I pressed submit."

Most undergraduate admissions officers share that the essays are the most important part of an application. We are told to make ourselves, "step out of the paper" and to really paint a picture of who we are. However, most teenagers, especially at this school, are emotional, confused, occasionally lazy, and often struggle to discover the importance of all of the work we do. How is it possible to show who you are to a group of strangers when you hardly know what makes you you?

Although having someone read over your essays is beneficial, throwing them at all of your peers is a bit excessive.

Continued on page 5



Seniors stressed about their college application deadlines

Courtesy of Samantha Hartsoe

Exams conflict with holiday spirit

BY JOY HILL

Halloween is right around the corner, but many students aren't in the holiday spirit. This is most likely due to what else is fast approaching – Trimester Exams. Unfortunately for us, Halloween falls on a Monday this year, as do the Chemistry, Physics, and Humanities/Interdisciplinary Electives exams.

Although the exams do conflict with the holiday, our school does host a Halloween dance, and everyone is encouraged to dress up. When Senior Rebekah Wells was asked about last year's dance, she responded with "The dance was a lot of fun, although I only stayed for half of it because I was busy studying." I agree with this, as I remember skipping out on last year's Masquerade Mixer to study for my Saturday Physics exam.

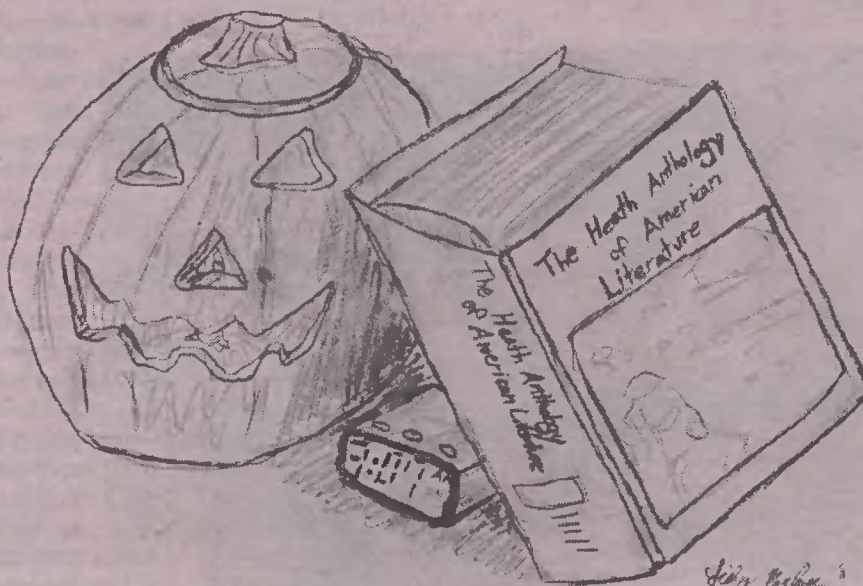
In addition to the dance, on the afternoon of the Thursday before exams begin teachers and staff handed out candy

to (hopefully dressed up) students. This is so we all can experience the classic Halloween pastime, trick-or-treating! Senior Evan Scarborough reflected on last year's trick-or-treating, and commented "It was nice of the teachers to participate in student activities."

While we do have the

thinks she'll be "too busy studying to even think about Halloween," even with the activities taking place on the weekend.

Is this situation unfair? I think so, but not unfair in the sense that the school is trying to take away our fun. So, what can be done to resolve this issue? Nothing, really. Exams



Courtesy of Sidney Parham

Halloween dance and after-school trick-or-treating, we all know it isn't the same as dressing up with friends and walking around the neighborhood on Halloween night. I can bet half of the student body skips these activities anyway to study for their exams. Junior Katie Cater

have to happen at the end of the trimester, which always occurs at the end of October. Halloween will always be on October 31st. NCSSM will continue to have the variety of Halloween Student Activities, which are great, but NCSSM will never have that authentic Halloween "feel".

Online courses enrich NCSSM experience

BY JARET DAWSON

NCSSM online courses are a somewhat popular choice among residential students. A small portion of the NCSSM Online program is open to NCSSM residential students, including such courses as Computational or Medicinal Chemistry. AP Physics B Web is taught as an online course with a classroom component.

Online classes expose residential students to the same material as residential classes. As teacher Robert Gotwals said, "I've not seen a whole lot of difference between material that is taught in an online class as opposed to a residential course." He added that, in his computational courses, "My students interact with the computers the same way whether the class is residential or online."

Online courses force students to be more self-motivated in asking for help. Gotwals said that "Students need to be more aggressive and vocal about needing help. I can look at a student in a face-to-face course and tell that they aren't doing so well. I can't do that as well in an online course."

Junior Patrick McKeen, a senior currently AP Physics B class, says that both the online and residential aspects "have their pros and cons." McKeen said, "It's a lot more open, you can do [homework] when you have the time to do it. Certain parts I could only get from a teacher, but for the work I prefer the online course."

Other students prefer a traditional classroom environment. Senior Xilin Liu, who is taking Computational Chemistry, said, "I think a classroom setting is better since you have a closer relationship to teachers and classmates, plus it's usually more hands-on." The lack of relationship between teacher and student can make it hard for those enrolled in online classes to seek help.

Another problem for residential students is online weekends. Those enrolled in an online course must stay to attend the class held on campus during extended weekends. Liu said, "It's worse for residential students, since we lose the break we were supposed to have." He also said, "It's not too big of a problem, it's only like twice and meeting with the teacher is necessary."

McKeen also said that "it's disconcerting to have an assignment due not in class." At the same time, "it allows you to work outside of class."

McKeen said that he would probably enroll in other combination online-classroom courses if they were offered in subjects such as chemistry. Liu, on the other hand, said, "I also think that more online classes should be offered as residential classes." At the same time, he would consider taking "some elective classes" online, while he would rather have a teacher for "really important ones like... AP classes or a senior English."