From the Principal's Desk

It is hard to believe that over half of this term is over and we are now staring down the end of the year. Needless to say this is an extremely important time for students and teachers as they navigate their way through the final stages of the work for the various studies. For all of the folio based studies, students have been busy finalizing their products in all of the school’s specialist spaces; art and photography studios, rehearsal spaces for music, drama and theatre studies, the food centre, technology centre and fashion room.

Elevate Workshops
In preparation for the end of year exams we have engaged the services of Elevate Education to provide workshops for all students in exam preparation called Ace Your Exams. The skills covered include Working Effectively, Fixing Mistakes, Allocation of Time and Exam Room Techniques.

The workshops will take place for all Year 12 students on Thursday 4 September with all Year 11 students the following Thursday (11/09).

Semester Reports
By now I would expect that all parents have accessed their child’s semester one report on Compass School Manager. These reports are very detailed and give you valuable information on the progress made throughout the semester and some advice about how work may be improved in the later half of the year.

Parent-Teacher Interviews
A very well supported Parent-Teacher Interview evening was conducted on Wednesday 13 August with just over half of all parents attending. Teachers really value the opportunity of speaking with parents and sharing their plans for the remainder of the year. Thank you to everyone who was able to attend on such a cold and miserable late afternoon and evening.

Peer Review
Later in term 4 this year the school will be undertaking a Peer Review of its operation over the past four years. The DEECD has put a new process in place for school reviews and I look forward to working with a panel of education experts over the coming months. I have selected an independent reviewer, Graeme Seamer, to manage the review. Graeme has extensive experience in education and is a former principal of Box Hill Senior Secondary College.

The reviewing panel will meet on Monday 1 December and will examine all elements of our practice. The findings of the review will form the basis of the college’s next Strategic Plan 2015-2018.

Building Project
A small building project began at the college over the last school holidays. The project involves the creation of a new façade for the administration/library building facing Burwood Road, a new entrance, reception area and general office. I hope that students will also appreciate the bridge, joining the main teaching block to the library, being completely enclosed and becoming weather proof.

The works are expected to be completed in mid-October. I would like to extend my thanks to all members of the Swinburne community for their goodwill towards the project. Everyone has had to adjust to finding new ways to navigate around the school due to the works. Your co-operation with this has been much appreciated.

Michael O'Brien
Principal
Assistant Principal’s News

Semester two is well underway with students already completing assessed coursework. The Parent Teacher Interviews last week offered an opportunity for teachers to meet with parents and take account of where students are at and how well this aligns with their further study aspirations moving forward.

Annelyn Bolle, in Careers, has been working hard looking at 2015 pathways for students including applications through VTAC for university degrees and TAFE diploma courses. The career night earlier this semester was a successful event where a number of university staff attended and outlined course programs and requirements for entry.

Annelyn is running course counselling interviews for Year 12 students outlining all pathway options for next year.

A “dress to impress event” was the theme for this year’s school formal with over 370 students attending Leonda by the River. This event was a great success. We have photo booths, great music and lots of dancing. I would like to thank all those who participated in this fabulous night. All photographs taken on the night are accessible on the Happy Medium website. www.happymedium.com.au

Robert Lewkowicz
Assistant Principal

Study Support Opportunities

Exams aren’t far away! And now’s the time to start regular revision to make it much more manageable later on!

Start now by making a weekly study time dedicated for each subject. But balance is important! Study in 50 minute blocks and then have a short break – have a snack (walnuts and blueberries are well-known brain foods!), walk the dog or watch some TV. Then get back to the books!

Don’t stop revising! The most forgetting of learned information happens within the first 20 minutes. By 1 hour, pretty much half of what has been learned has been forgotten. But you can slow this by constantly revising information and relating it meaningfully to stuff you already know. Even re-reading your notes on the train home will make a big difference come October.

Homework is important! Homework consolidates what you have learned in class and allows you to revise your knowledge and practice your skills. You’ll find that you also get much more out of your classes when you’ve done the homework and you know what’s going on.

And use your teachers! They know what you need to know and their feedback is to help you improve! Make sure you have read your Semester One report and know what you can do.

Study Support is available in the library every school day including Wednesdays. We offer support with organisation, time management, SAC and exam preparation, maths, essay writing, comprehension and reading skills. If you would like some help or advice please drop in and see Rachel Baxendale or any of the Study Support staff.

UBS Finance Academy 2014

My name is Paul Krause and I am a year 11 student at Swinburne Senior Secondary College. Over the second week of the past school holidays I was lucky enough to be accepted to participate in a 5 day financial academy in Sydney hosted by the Union Bank of Switzerland (UBS).

UBS provides financial services to private, corporate and institutional clients such as NAB and Nine Entertainment. They have operations in countries such as Shanghai, USA and Great Britain. However in Australia they are renowned for investment banking, wealth management and asset management.

UBS gave fifty students from NSW, ACT and Victoria a chance to take part in a 5-day program based around developing students’ life skills as well as giving them an insight into the financial world. They also provided an insight into what goes on at UBS. We were accommodated at Dunmore Lang College, which was located roughly 15 minutes out of the CBD. We were provided with our meals and given a whole dorm to ourselves, which was rather nice. Each morning began with a brisk 6 am walk and we would then catch a bus to take us to UBS. The format for the days was based around presentations and activities from various people, some of which were really inspiring as they delivered some great messages. Others just covered financial matters and we would take notes that would later on help us with the case study we had to complete in groups.
Some locations we went to included the National Gallery of Sydney and a financial news channel called CNBC where we got a behind the scenes glimpse as well as meeting the news anchor. The week was capped off with presentations from each of the groups on their case study. We presented to a panel of UBS employees and they chose a winner that would later be announced at the graduation dinner.

Overall it was a great experience that I ended up really enjoying. It was great to get out of Melbourne for a bit and be a part of a totally different environment as well as meeting lots of interesting people. I’m keen to stay in touch with many of them. There were a lot of valuable lessons and messages that I learnt throughout the five days and I will carry them throughout my life. I am so glad I took the opportunity the school and my Business Management teacher offered me.

**Mental Health Awareness Week**

For the past two terms the Year 12 Senior VCAL class have been preparing a week to raise awareness for beyondblue. We will be running a week long awareness campaign from Monday 8th to Friday 12th of September. We want to give our fellow students and the local community a better understanding of mental health, as well as fundraising to support beyondblue and assist in making sure all the hard work they do for mental health can continue into the future.

We are supporting beyondblue because depression often emerges during adolescence, with long-standing research suggesting 1 in 5 adolescents experience depression by the time they reach 18 years.

The week will start with a Pyjama Day, where students are asked to bring a gold coin donation for wearing pyjamas. A sausage sizzle will be provided and basketball competition heats will be run. Thursday will be our main event day, where many activities will be taking place around the school. We have organized face painting, music performances, egg games and a food market will also be held. Both Senior and Intermediate VCAL classes will run our food market and there will be a variety of food available. Thursday will include an extended lunch from 1-2pm. The finals of the basketball competition will also be held on the Thursday.

Throughout the whole week a mental health awareness art exhibition will be held for people to view, this will be taking place in the gallery outside the auditorium. A lot of work is been put into this exhibition by the year 12 art students.

**VETiS Enrolment for 2015**

Students are able to submit their Expression of Interest in their choice of VET program for 2015 now. I would encourage students who are planning to continue or begin a VET program in 2015 to do so as soon as possible. Students need to complete a hard copy form and an online process through the IMVC website. The hard copy form can be obtained from the college or from the back pages of the IMVC handbook which may be downloaded from the IMVC website.

Online process:

imvc.com.au ➔ Quick links ➔ VETiS Student ➔

login ➔ Register for a first time

I am available during school hours for any assistance with this process.

Gail Bailey
VETiS Manager

**The Careers Centre News: VTAC update**

Year 12 students have again been briefed and given handouts about the VTAC Tertiary Application Process, Change of Preference, and Course Offers at the Year 12 assembly and in mentoring sessions. The Year 12 Level Manager, Joel Guye and Mentors have been assisting students with their registrations. The students’ conversations after attendance at University and TAFE Open Days have demonstrated the importance of taking advantage of this opportunity. The process clarifies for students many of the issues associated with the diversity of options.
and available courses as well as alleviating any concerns.

It is pleasing to see the number of Year 12 students who have submitted their applications and to all who haven’t, please do so soon. The Careers Centre will be open at lunch times on set dates from August 26 for any students who would like assistance to complete their application. Students are encouraged to book a career appointment to discuss career options. Parents are most welcome to attend these appointments.

Annelyn Bolle
Year 12 Career /Pathway Advisor

New Look for the Student Lounge
The SRC have the responsibility for operating the Student Lounge and it’s clear that they have taken this seriously. The furniture that had served the room well for the last three years has been “retired” and replaced with brand new lounges, stools and tables. It appears quality hasn’t been overlooked as the new pieces are very robust.

Victorian State Schools Spectacular
Congratulations to Alexis Didelis on her selection in the Victorian State Schools Choir. The choir will be performing at this year’s event at Hisense Arena on Saturday 13 September. The event will be broadcast by Channel 7 in October.

I’m sure that we all wish Alexis the very best of luck for her performance

Only Privileged People Attain Justice
Sounds of saucepans and the clashing of dishes drifted into my ears. The smell of cinnamon and garam masala wafted into my nostrils, obscuring the putrid stench of rubbish that I still hadn’t become accustomed to. I dressed in my brand new Punjabi suit but had no time to admire the brightly coloured embroidery fabric. In the dim light I dodged the randomly placed beds on the floor; all empty and neatly made. Late, I arrived at the cooking tent and joined the others in the vigorous process of rolling chapattis. An older woman from the village gave us all chai tea that she had brewed from scratch. The tea sent warmth throughout my body and I could barely comprehend the generosity of a lady who had so little. With our freshly prepared curries and chapattis we made our way throughout the village, in the hope to fill some empty stomachs.

Later in the day I was rostered on to help the sick. The volunteer crew I’m a part of set up a mini hospital to try and improve the health of the people living in the slum. The hospital consisted of precariously draped fabric over the top of a roofless building. Inside the hospital was packed, many of these people had never received medical attention in their life and mattresses lay all over the floor cramped tightly together. Back home I am halfway through a nursing degree so I am qualified to give injections and some other medications but mainly I try to cheer people up. Patients vary in age from young children to women who look to be seventy but are more likely to be around forty. I sat next to Kulmal, an older looking woman who was suffering from malnutrition. She had dark hair with streaks of grey carefully braided to half way down her back and milk chocolate lips that parted into a smile as big as the sun.

Kulmal had grown up in this very same village. When she was ten years old some young travellers from London had come and started up a school in this slum. During the short existence of the school Kulmal had learnt maths, science, history and some English that she could still remember to this day. The organisers went bankrupt and were forced to move back to London. Kulmal had hoped to move to a richer part of India to go to university but she wasn’t educated enough and didn’t have the money to travel. Kulmal had stayed and obligingly was forced into an arranged marriage with a boy from her village. Neither of them had been happy about the
arrangement but they grew to love each other and had several children. Despite her clearly difficult life she did not complain once. She couldn’t stop talking about her grandchildren and how they might get the chance to go to school and learn English just like she did.

The whole village amalgamated at night. Aromas of spices filled the air as the women from the village prepared a feast with the little provisions they had. All the women dressed up in their finest saris and after dinner everyone, with the exception of some young children and their mothers, sat together in front of a statue of some god-like figure. Seeing the rows of people dressed up in different coloured outfits was like a rainbow on my eyes. The villagers began to sing devotional prayers, some form of religious ritual that my fellow volunteers and I did not understand. A tear drop rolled slowly down an elderly woman’s weathered face. I had no clue what they were saying but I could feel the intense emotion and passionate love clinging to the air. After their prayers had finished they just sat. They kept their eyes shut and sat like this all night, as if searching for something more significant than external existence.

The next morning I made my way out of bed before sunrise to catch the bus to the airport. As I sat on the plane I was strangely content and disappointed. I was relieved to be going home to see my own family but I was going to miss the slum dwellers. Despite their incredibly unjust circumstances they still manage to maintain a sense of harmony. Many of the people are very happy and have a stronger connection to their soul than any privileged person that I know. Perhaps the key to a sense of justice and peace is to focus more on the inside rather than the superficial aspects of our environment.

Sharni Testa, Year 11

School Formal
Just over four hundred excited students, partners and staff members arrived at Leonda by the Yarra for the annual school formal on Tuesday 22 July.

From the outset it was clear that everyone was set for a fun-filled night of fine dining, dancing and generally having a damn good time. As people moved through the “red carpet” area on arrival it was evident that plenty of time, effort and expense had gone into getting the attire just right. Everyone looked quite stunning and certainly a lot different from the day to day dress around the corridors of Swinburne.

Congratulations to the SRC, supported by SRC Managers Mark and Nick, for their wonderful organisation. Thank you to Gail in the office for her advice and expertise in arranging the table bookings. Overall the night was a fabulous endorsement of everything that we all love about the magic that is Swinburne Senior Secondary College. We can’t wait for next year’s!

The photographs below have been selected from the ever popular Photo Booth.
Here's an example of one of the entries…….

SRC Camp
Last week, a group of five students from the SRC had the opportunity to attend the Vic SRC Congress 2014 at Lord Somers Camp on the Mornington Peninsula for two days.

Emily Redfern, Joel Bardwell, Monique Bordignon, Sunny Wild and Meg Tilley were able to present and discuss a range of school issues with other SRC groups from across Victorian schools in a parliamentary style forum.

'It was a great experience to see how the Vic SRC is run and how much effort they put into changing and fixing the problems in high schools' – Emily Redfern, Year 12 Captain

'We debated for stronger actions about stamping out homophobia in schools and our motion was successful. This means that the VicSRC will research it and put it forward to the Victorian Minister for Education. I found this to be fun experience that was definitely worthwhile. We got a lot of insight into how other schools run and were able to appreciate our differences.' - Sunny Wild, Year 12 SRC Member

Mark Parkes and Nick Taylor
SRC Managers