

The Holidays Beckon

A veritable flurry of activity has rounded off a busy but very rewarding term. The final fortnight was bisected by *Riverview in Bowral*, which provided the opportunity to re-connect with generations of Old Boys and their families who have had long term associations with the College, as well as spend time with a number of current families who have boys in boarding. One of the more interesting revelations on the weekend was that one young man – Charles de Lauret (OR 1882) from Goulburn in the Southern Highlands, was one of the original 26 students in the first class at St Ignatius' in 1880, and that tragically, he was the first student who died while on holidays on his family property at Wynella in 1882. One senior statesman, Dr John Roche (OR 1944) attended with his wife as part of the Roche dynasty whose enrolment over many generations spanned 1891 to 1996. As is always the case on such occasions, the sense of community was palpable and it was memorable and enriching to spend time with the boarding community and their families in their own regional context. Special thanks are extended to Christine Zimbulis who coordinates these functions and to Cathy Hobbs, the College archivist, whose meticulous work enables Riverview to draw on its rich past.

A Leadership Assembly was conducted on the Regis Campus last Friday to induct the boys who have taken on the role of Class Captains for 2016. These young men have been popularly elected by their peers to shoulder the important responsibilities associated with leadership in an Ignatian tradition, which ultimately means being of service to their fellow students and the wider school community. As part of the investiture process, School Captain, Bennett Walsh, addressed the boys about his vision of leadership and shared his conviction that by giving witness to the values of the College the leaders build a community where, in Ignatian vernacular, 'men for others' hold pride of place. While all the boys who have accepted leadership roles are to be congratulated, special congratulations are extended to James Craig (6.2) who has been elected Captain of the Regis campus over the course of the coming year.

At the other end of the College, the boys in Year 12 concluded their Mid-Year Examinations on Monday and headed off to different destinations to engage in individualised retreat programs. A Kairos Retreat was held at Canisius House at Pymble, an Ignatian Prayer Retreat on the south coast at Gerroa, a Life Reflection Retreat at Mittagong, and a Street Retreat at Cana Farm for those young men who chose the faith in service program. In all, the boys gave witness to and pondered the big questions – faith, family, friendships and futures. It was a fitting way to end what has been a particularly busy term.

The Elevate Study Skills program was delivered to the students in Year 11 during the week to widespread affirmation. Young, high-achieving graduates deliver the program which focusses on independent learning, mind mapping, structured note taking, personal organisation and effective use of time. It was instructive to see the evaluations of the program by the students, which returned a 98% approval rating for the third year in succession, which by any standards is truly exceptional. The senior program that Elevate deliver capitalises on the work of the Salter Institute, which promote a range of study skills in the junior and middle secondary school.

Drama has held its own share of prominence over recent times. Theatresports pulsed their way through the O'Kelly Theatre on Wednesday evening with some compelling performances in the Intermediate and Senior divisions against Monte St Angelo. The wit, creativity and sheer audacity of some of the skits was something to behold to a point where the audience were as much a part of the action as the thespians. A sizeable number of boys in Year 7 took their first courageous steps onto the stage with their Drama Performance Evening. Three separate scripts – *Going Up*, *The Information Super Highway* and *Tea?...Coffee?...* enabled the boys to show their creative and artistic talents, with a particularly memorable performance by Peter Gunter who showed that the SEIP boys can match it with any of the boys in the year level. While the boys should be proud of their performance, special thanks are

extended to Paul Bevis, Alice Ossowski and Justine Murray who have inducted the boys into the challenging but rewarding field of the theatre.

Congratulations are extended to the boys who represented the College with distinction at the New South Wales Schools Teams Sailing Championship over the weekend. Thirteen talented Riverview sailors competed in a total of 198 races against 23 other teams and performed admirably, taking out 2nd Place after being defeated by the narrowest of margins. The Riverview Second Division Team also can be very proud of their efforts being placed 16th out of the 24 teams which competed. Another Riverview vignette to round off the term, this time on the pristine waters of Sydney Harbour.

Over the break major school excursions are being undertaken with 22 boys travelling to China for a language immersion, 34 boys travelling to Europe for a Music tour and a sizeable contingent of boys in Senior Soccer travelling to Spain, Ireland and England. In the case of the former, the boys will spend time with families in Beijing and attend classes in the Beijing Affiliated Polytechnical School, as they have done for the last 14 years. While there will be immense growth in proficiency with Chinese language and acute insights into the prism of Chinese culture, there will also be some time to experience the richness of the Orient with day tours around some of the biggest and busiest cities in China. The boys on the Music tour will perform in a number of schools and parishes, but the highlight will no doubt be the Riverview Choir who have been invited to sing at a liturgical mass in the Vatican, accompanied by organist, Christine Moriarty. What extravagant and memorable experiences lie ahead. For the boys on the Senior Soccer tour, they will have the special opportunity to travel to a number of Ignatian sites, including Manresa and Montserrat. We wish the boys well as they head off on travels and act as ambassadors of their school and their country.

Very best wishes for a safe and restful break and I look forward to the resumption of classes on Wednesday 27th April.