



April 21, 2008

Dear Senior School Parents,

I received some questions about faculty turnover at the Senior School this year, and I appreciate parents sharing this feedback. At the moment, we have seven positions that are currently in transition. This is not an extraordinarily high number for a school the size of the Senior School. As I understand it, the Senior School has seen very little turnover in recent years and this year some people are leaving the school for a variety of reasons. For example, one faculty member is going to the seminary, another to take on a larger administrative role at another school, and a third will be teaching at the college level. In each of these cases, the teacher has done yeomen work at the Senior School, and we appreciate this important contribution. Still, their lives, much like our Sixth Formers, have grown beyond the Senior School and they look for experience beyond the bounds of our campus.

As sad as I am to see these wonderful teachers leave, I am also excited about the folks who will be replacing this August group. Five of the positions will be filled from outside of the Academy, and two will be filled by current members of our community. As several of these searches are in process, I will let you know in my May letter of the specifics of who is arriving and what their responsibilities will be. Please do know that we have worked diligently to find the right people to fit these positions, and I appreciate the work of the various departments and department chairs in finding wonderful candidates and helping to support those candidates in their transition to Shady Side.

As ever, transition is a difficult thing, and I know that the Sixth Formers are feeling the spring air and counting the days until graduation. The underformers are thinking to next year and the work they must complete between now and then. For the Fifth Formers, they are on the brink of taking on greater responsibility for the Senior School community. We will be holding a Leadership Training Seminar on the afternoon of June 3, after Exam Review Day. This is open first to current Fifth Formers, and I hope that they choose to participate in this afternoon's worth of insight into leadership. Other underformers can pass along that they are interested, and I will certainly make sure they are included, if space permits.

One of the elements of this leadership work is to talk about how students choose behaviors. I and other members of the faculty have been speaking with the Sixth Formers about making good decisions as we finish out the year. Should you have a Sixth Former, please remind your child about the importance of making good decisions throughout the remainder of the year (and beyond). We will have many opportunities for fun and reflection, and students need to do their part to make this a productive educational time.

Please know that I am paying careful attention to how the spring is unfolding, both in terms of how we end this year and the preparations already underway for next year. Your feedback is critical to our being able to take into account the perspectives of our families and to support the learning of your children. Please let me know if you have questions or concerns, and I hope all is well with all of you.

All the best,

Jeremy LaCasse

Head of Senior School

jlacasse@shadysideacademy.org

**Senior School Commencement
June 6, 2008 – 10:00 AM Senior Quad**

Dress for Commencement

Graduating Students

Male: White trousers and white dress shirt, coordinating tie, navy jacket, dress shoes and coordinating socks. *

Female: White dress, with sleeves and knee length, white shoes and coordinating hosiery. *

Form III, IV and V Students (Formal Dress Code as per handbook)

Male Navy blue blazer, white dress shirt, tie, khaki dress slacks (no cargo pants), dress shoes, a belt or suspenders.

Female: Navy blue blazer, white dress shirt (with sleeves and appropriate neckline), khaki dress skirt (no shorter than two inches above the knee), or full length khaki dress slacks (no cargo pants). Shoes – dress pumps, flats, loafers, dress boots or sling back shoes. Hosiery is suggested – natural shade tights or knee socks.

Timetable

9:00 AM Graduating students report to Benedum Visual Arts Center.

9:30 AM Class Photograph (Hillman Plaza).

9:45 AM Platform Party, Trustees and Faculty assemble (Quad by Bayard House).
Form III, IV and V students assemble (Quad between Croft House and Hunt Hall).

10:00 AM Commencement begins with the march to the Senior Quad.

Reminders

All students are required to attend Commencement.

Traffic on Fox Chapel Road will be congested. Please plan to arrive early and follow the directions of the parking coordinators. There will be a drop off spot for students and a second drop off spot for guests. The road to the quad will be blocked at 9:45 AM. Some parking spots have been reserved for handicapped parking (please have PA approved placard visible if car does not have a handicapped license plate). If the driver is not disabled, please use the drop off spot to discharge passengers and park the car in the general parking locations.

There will be no special seating for guest requiring access accommodations since all seats can be made to accommodate wheelchairs, walkers, etc. Ushers will assist guests requiring an adjustment to the seating.

Please leave ample time

- to reach assembly areas;
- for guests to be seated;
- for those with special needs to be transported to seating area.

Packets of ten invitations have been prepared for each graduating student. Students may pick up their packets at the Tuck Shop. If additional invitations were ordered earlier in the year, these orders will also be available at the Tuck Shop.

In the event of inclement weather, Commencement will be moved to the Roy McKnight Ice Hockey Center.

* Questions regarding appropriate dress can be directed to the Dean of Students' Office.

Announcements and News from the Faculty and Students:

From Jeremy LaCasse:

We will have a Parent Coffee on Tuesday, May 20, at 8:00 in Scott Common. I appreciate your feedback about how things are going and how we can work together to educate your child. If you would like to catch up with me and several other parents to talk about how things are going at the Senior School, this is an opportunity to do so.

We have a major project underway inside and around the football field and track. By graduation, we hope, we will have a new all weather turf field allowing us to play a variety of sports, even in wet weather. As a result, we have some heavy machinery on and about campus. If you have questions, please pass them along.

From Donna Giel:

We are changing our yearly physical policy. From this year forward, we will require students to have a physical after June 1 and before the start of the school year. I recognize that this may be a hardship for some as you may have a yearly physical that happens or has happened before June 1 and that your health insurance may not cover one at another point in the year. Unfortunately, the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic League (PIAA) requires physicals after that June 1 and we need to adjust to meet their requirements. If you have questions or concerns about this, please contact Donna Giel.

From Stanley Nevola:

The Instrumental Senior Honors Concert will be held on April 30, at 8:00 pm, in the Rauh Theater. The instrumental seniors are at their best and really show us some musicianship rarely seen on our stage. Jessica Chang is featured on the piano and will dazzle us with her piano skills.

From Dan Brill:

The Choirs and Strings Senior Honors Concert will be May 7, at 8:00 pm, in the Rauh Theater. Come see the members of the Class of 2008 in this wonderful concert.

From David Liebmann:

If you are looking for a fun and productive activity for your child this summer, please consider registering now for Summer School Discovery. Credit bearing courses are available in math, science, computer science, and studio art. Please visit www.shadysideacademy.org/discovery for details and to register.

From Student Council:

Looking for a wonderful gift for a soon-to-be-graduate? Consider Vineyard Vines Shady Side Academy ties (\$50) and totes (\$60) being sold by Student Council. If you are interested in purchasing either of these items, please contact Bonnie McCarthy (bmcCarthy@shadysideacademy.org) or Michele Ament (mament@shadysideacademy.org).

From Charlene Blair:

The last Blood Drive of the academic year is Thursday, April 24 in Morewood Commons. Sixteen years olds are now eligible to donate with written parental permission. Your child has email access to the required form. Please remind all potential donors to bring a photo I.D that also includes date of birth.

The Scouting for Food drive continues until the end of April. The Student Council dance last Friday netted a considerable amount of peanut butter—and many other items have already been contributed.

Rebuilding Together Pittsburgh is Saturday, April 26. The SSA crew will be painting at a house in Bloomfield. Students can sign up on the Service Learning bulletin board in Hunt. Permission slips are required and available from Mrs. Blair.

From Scott Aiken:

The Spring Student Art Show is currently on display in the Benedum Center for the Visual Arts. The show will be on display until the end of May, so please stop by to see the latest artwork created by our many talented students!

From Mary Krauland:

Two of our Sixth Form debaters, Matt Moran and Vijay Kedar, will represent Pittsburgh District 2 at the National tournament sponsored by the National Forensics League (NFL) this summer in Las Vegas. They placed first in public debate over 22 local teams. If your child is interested in speech and debate for next year, please have him or her speak with Mary Krauland.

From Jim Perry:

We encourage SSA families to sign up for the **SSA Race For The Cure Team**. This can be done on-line at http://race.pittsburghraceforthecure.org/site/TR/Race/General/2062506585?pg=team&fr_id=1060&team_id=11230. We hope to see lots of you out running and walking for a great cause on Mother's Day!