Principal’s Report

Congratulations Kurt Bloomer

Congratulations to our boys School Captain, Kurt Bloomer, who competed in the regional finals of the Lions Club Youth of the Year competition. The competition involved a day of interviews before a panel of 5 judges and then an evening of public speaking. I had the privilege and pleasure of attending the evening dinner and listening to Kurt and the other finalists present 3 speeches. The first two speeches were impromptu speeches, where the contestants had the topic read to them twice and then had to begin speaking for two minutes immediately once the topic had finished being read. This is an extremely difficult task, especially in front of a large audience and judges. Both topics related to tourism and attracting people from overseas to our country, either for major events or to settle down in a county area to live. Kurt did very well in this part of the competition and also in his prepared speech on his future career aspirations in law. Kurt was the only male to make it to this level and whilst he did not win the competition, his performance shows that he will make a formidable lawyer in the future. Well done Kurt!

Congratulations Sarah Kitcher

Sarah Kitcher of year 12, has also done our school proud. Not only is Sarah an accomplished rower but, she has also been selected as one of only 12 players from across the state in the 2014 NSW Netball team. This means she will be representing our state in the National championships. The commitment required is significant as Sarah has to travel to practice each weekend in Sydney! Sarah is one of only a handful of team members living outside of the Sydney area and so this makes her commitment even greater.

It is an unfortunate reality that when our students get to higher levels in sport and other representative activities, which are largely based in capital cities, they are at a distinct financial disadvantage compared to their Sydney counterparts. The tyranny of distance leads also to increased travel times, which further increases the commitment. As representatives of Grafton and our school they do us proud and any support we can provide as a community is always of great assistance. The school provides support in two ways to students. Firstly, SRC supports students in representative activities, through applications to the SRC. Secondly, the school itself has funds set aside to support students representing Australia overseas, as this often involves an even more significant commitment. These funds are very limited and so students often engage in fundraising activities and sourcing support from the broader community. I am sure Sarah and her family would welcome any support from the community for assistance with her significant travel costs. I would be happy to pass on any offers of assistance to Sarah and acknowledge, as appropriate, in the school newsletter.

STELLAR Get Into UNU Program

The STELLAR program is an initiative of the Clarence Valley Industry Education Forum, of which Grafton High School is a part. STELLAR is about encouraging capable students to engage in tertiary studies at University. It is about ensuring parents and students are aware of the opportunities that exist and how to get to University. STELLAR has been developed in partnership with Southern Cross and New England Universities, who are both also members of the Clarence Valley Industry education forum.

There will be a number of activities occurring this year as part of the STELLAR program. Mr Bertus, our new Deputy Principal, replacing Mrs McMillan who retired last year, is the school contact for this program. The first activity will involve all Year 9 students participating in the STELLAR Recipe for Success program on Tuesday 25th March at the school MPC. This event will culminate in the official launch of the STELLAR program, to be held at the Grafton High School MPC. There will be several other events this year including competitions, parent nights, excursions and performance days at school. A parent information evening is being held on 26th March at Grafton Community Centre, specifically targeting the parents of Year 9 students. Parents/carers of years 11 and 12 students are also welcome at this event as it will provide information regarding studying at University. A note to students with more details will follow. I encourage everyone to make the most of the opportunities provided through this program.

Peter South - Principal
Year 10 Agriculture Excursion to Alpaca Farm

On Tuesday 25th February Year 10 Agriculture students visited the Wahgungary Stud Alpaca farm at Southgate.

The Glassers currently run sixty alpacas on their property. Students spent the first hour learning all about the Alpaca industry and how to look after the animals. We found out that Alpacas had only been in Australia since 1989. The industry is growing fast and supplies a range of different products for the market.

Leading the Alpacas

After morning tea we mustered the animals and selected the ones that needed to be taught how to behave and lead when wearing a halter. This is done so that the animals can be put on display and compete at various Agricultural Shows. Both students and animals soon worked out what to do and were looking very professional at the end of the session. Great job! We are now hoping to be involved in preparing and leading the Alpacas at this year’s Grafton Show.

Practical Support for Higher School Certificate Examinations

Included in this newsletter is a note to parents and students outlining the Board of Studies’ program of provisions which provides practical support for students, where required, in the HSC examinations. This support assists students to read and respond to examination questions. These may be required because of learning, visual, hearing or medical difficulties. Provisions are also made to assist students in their assessments and exams at school; these include Mid-Course, Yearly and Trial HSC Exams. If parents or students have any concerns about their child or themselves receiving this support; for either the HSC or school exams, please contact the Year Adviser, School Counsellor, class teacher or the Learning and Support Teachers.

TAFE Peer Tutor Program

In Week 4 our Year 10 tutors travelled to Grafton TAFE to commence training in the course Volunteer Literacy Tutoring. They were issued with student ID cards, and as TAFE students they are able to access facilities such as the library and computers. All students thoroughly enjoyed the day, especially the quiet and peaceful ambience of the campus – and the hot chips at the canteen! This group of students made great ambassadors for Grafton High School displaying responsible behaviour and a conscientious attitude to their learning. Working with Year 7 buddies in OnTrac each day, they have already shown commitment to helping others and it was wonderful to see them returning with even greater enthusiasm for the task. Well done tutors.

Mrs McLennan
Practical Support for Higher School Certificate Examinations

Information for Students and Parents

The Board of Studies has a program to help students with practical support in their Higher School Certificate examinations. This practical support, known as provisions, assists students to read examination questions and to write their answers. Provisions include rest breaks and extra time. The use of any provision is not written on the student’s results.

Students may need provisions for:
- a permanent condition, such as diabetes or reading difficulty
- a temporary condition, such as a broken arm, or
- an intermittent condition, such as back pain when sitting for long periods.

It is not embarrassing to apply for or use provisions. More than 5000 HSC students apply for provisions each year. Provisions help students to show the markers what they know and can do.

To apply for provisions, the school submits an online application to the Board of Studies. This application tells us which provisions the student is requesting and includes recent evidence. Evidence may include medical reports, reading results, spelling results, writing samples and teacher comments.

Much of the evidence can be collected by the school, but the parents’ role is welcome and needed. Parents help by talking with the school, describing the student’s needs, and providing the school with medical or other reports.

Applications for provisions should be submitted by the school to the Board of Studies by the end of Term 1. Late applications are accepted for an emergency, such as a broken arm, until the time of the examinations.

Once the Board of Studies has made a decision about which provisions are approved or declined, a decision letter is provided to the school. The school will provide the student with a copy of the letter.

If you or the school are not satisfied with the Board’s decision, it is possible for the school to lodge an appeal. Appeals must state why the Board’s decision is unsuitable and must include new evidence to support the appeal.

If you think that you or your child may require support in completing the Higher School Certificate examinations, please discuss the matter with the Year Adviser, School Counsellor or teacher.
University Myth #2

True or false?
University is mainly for wealthy families and their kids.

False - University education is for anyone one who is motivated to learn. Many students from low income families succeed at university. There are costs but there are also many financial assistance and support mechanisms. For example, did you know that you don’t have to pay back your university course fees until you earn over $51,309.00 per year?

Come to the STELLAR Family Event to find out how you and your family can get to university.

Wednesday 26 March
5:30pm – 6:30pm
at Grafton Community Centre
59 Duke Street

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