

Deputy Head of School Newsletter Week 1

Utahloy International School Zeng Cheng welcomed the new academic year with a full school assembly on Wednesday 18 August. It was wonderful to see the school come alive again with new and old faces, and a fresh, professional and dedicated staff.

During the first assembly the new House System was introduced to the students and I am sure that it will define the character of the school in the future. Mr Brian Jackson is the new Senior Head of House (SHOH) and is responsible for the oversight and management of the four Houses - Earth, Wind, Fire and Water. Each House has a dedicated Head of House (HOH) and a House Tutor (HT) and is based on the vertical system with each student from Year 7 – 12 assigned to one of the Houses. HOHs and HTs are responsible for the overall academic and pastoral care of each student in their House. This system is based on cutting edge research that seeks to provide younger students with mentors and role models that they can access on a daily basis. For senior students it provides leadership avenues outside the whole school model. Indeed House captains are heavily involved in the day to day operation of the House, in line with the International Baccalaureate (IB) ethos of leadership and service. They are responsible for running House meetings and co-ordinating participation in inter-House competitions. This leadership and management experience is particularly important for senior students as they compete for University positions and indeed vocational pursuits.

The program for the first three days of school was designed to consolidate the House system, allow students and staff to get to know each other, and provide students with subject expos. It was a pleasure to see the new House captains take responsibility for making sure that younger students in their charge were made welcome and in the right place at the right time. The week ended with our first inter-house competition with Earth House going down in history winning a fine team victory in the pool.

Monday saw the preliminary timetable unfold and the academic year begin. It was certainly a busy time for all the students as they began to settle into a fresh work ethos. Week 2 will see the final timetable come into effect that places a heavy emphasis on maximizing the academic time for students. In particular the Year 12 IB Diploma students will benefit from five 55 minute face to face sessions a week for all of their High Level subjects and four sessions for Standard Level placing them well above the average standard time requirements. Senior students will also benefit greatly from the small class sizes that would be the envy of any school. The small class sizes allow for a student-centered approach placing the student at the center of the learning environment and allowing teachers to dedicate time to one-on-one tuition. Finally senior students will have access to a dedicated IB Study Room that will be equipped with study tables, computers, a lounge area and timetabled staff allowing more opportunities for private academic assistance.

The Middle School will benefit from a balanced academic program with an emphasis on English, Humanities and Science in order to lift their language proficiency and therefore arming them with the skills needed to succeed in the Senior School IB Diploma program. Language testing has already begun in earnest so that students who need extra help with English mastery are identified and placed in the appropriate language program.

Finally, I would like to thank the students for their warm hearted welcome to both myself and the staff, and I look forward to getting to know each and everyone of them as the year unfolds, and be witness to their growth academically, individually and as global citizens.

Ben Hinves
Deputy Head of School
Head of Secondary