

Hello Seniors and parents!

Welcome back to your final year at AHS- our senior team is excited to guide you through this last leg of your journey, and to launch you out of the nest (ready or not!) in May. To get us off to a strong start, we will be engaging in Senior Orientation on Thursday and Friday of Orientation Week. Here is our plan and schedule for those two days.

Please note that while it may seem early to start thinking about Senior Project, if you ask any of the seniors from last year, they would emphatically disagree! The earlier the better.

Senior Orientation Goals:

1. Students will understand the basic structure and parts of Senior Project, and will have some initial ideas of what they want to get out of the project, and how their unique qualities might play into this.
2. Students will understand some of the ins and outs of Senior Project from the student perspective, and will internalize the sage advice of our experienced alumni and teachers.
3. Students will be inspired to have initial big crazy ideas about what they might do for Senior Project (please note, you do not actually have to decide yet!).

Senior Orientation Schedule

Thursday, 8/25	Friday, 8/26
8:30-9:00 Senior Project Overview Welcome, introductions, and a basic breakdown of how Senior Project works.	<i>All times except the start time are tentative and will vary depending on hiking speed!</i>
9:00-10:30 Paseo and Discussion Various interactive activities to think about what you want to get out of senior year, and how you might want to approach your year.	9:00 Be at the base of Animas Mountain! We will meet at the base of Animas Mountain at 9:00 to take attendance, and then will take off on a hike up the mountain. Be careful where you park...
10:30-11:30 College Breakdown Jess Adams runs a college resource and Q&A session for all the seniors.	9:00-11:00 Hiking, hiking, hiking Walk and talk.
11:30-12:30 Lunch You provide your own!	11:00-11:30 Lunch! Eat lunch at the top of the mountain. You bring your own lunch!
12:30-1:30 Senior Project Alumni Panel Listen to the wisdom of those who have gone before you. Learn of the traps we will lay for you, and how to avoid getting your leg caught in a metaphorical bear trap.	11:30-12:30 Senior Project Brainstorm Brainstorm for Senior Project! The crazier and bigger the ideas, the better.
1:30-2:00 Reflection/Wrap Up	12:30-2:00 Hike on down Hike down, having excited conversations about your amazing ideas for Senior Project.

Necessary Supplies for Thursday:

1. Writing utensil
2. Excerpt from "Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance," which is attached to this letter. You should read this BEFORE you arrive on Thursday! Don't worry, it's short. :)
3. A lunch, or means to acquire a lunch on your lunch break

Necessary Supplies for Friday:

1. Appropriate hiking attire (bring layers, comfortable shoes, sunglasses)
2. Water, lots of it!
3. A packed lunch to eat on the mountain
4. Big ideas and enthusiasm

Please feel free to email us if you have any questions- we are really looking forward to working with all of you, and to make the senior year more real and ambitious than ever before.

Sincerely,

The Senior Team

- Lori Fisher (Senior Humanities)
- Ashley Carruth (Senior Humanities)
- Kyle Edmondson (Senior Math)
- Kurt Pattison (Senior Science Electives)
- Jess Adams (College Counselor)

SENIORS! Please read this before you get to school on THURSDAY!!!**From Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance:**

[His] argument for the abolition of the degree and grading system produced a nonplussed or negative reaction in all but a few students at first, since it seemed, on first judgment, to destroy the whole University system. One student laid it wide open when she said with complete candor, "Of course you can't eliminate the degree and grading system. After all, that's what we're here for."

She spoke the complete truth. The idea that the majority of students attend a university for an education independent of the degree and grades is a little hypocrisy everyone is happier not to expose. Occasionally some students do arrive for an education but rote and the mechanical nature of the institution soon converts them to a less idealistic attitude.

The demonstrator was an argument that elimination of grades and degrees would destroy this hypocrisy. Rather than deal with generalities it dealt with the specific career of an imaginary student who more or less typified what was found in the classroom, a student completely conditioned to work for a grade rather than for the knowledge the grade was supposed to represent.

Such a student, the demonstrator hypothesized, would go to his first class, get his first assignment and probably do it out of habit. He might go to his second and third as well. But eventually the novelty of the course

would wear off and, because his academic life was not his only life, the pressure of other obligations or events would create circumstances where he just would not be able to get an assignment completed adequately.

Since there was no degree or grading system he would incur no penalty for this. Subsequent lectures which presumed he'd completed the assignment might be a little more difficult to understand, however, and this difficulty, in turn, might weaken his interest to a point where the next assignment, which he would find quite hard, would also be dropped. Again no penalty.

In time his weaker and weaker understanding of what the lectures were about would make it more and more difficult for him to pay attention in class. Eventually he would see he wasn't learning much; and facing the continual pressure of outside obligations, he would stop studying, feel guilty about this and stop attending class. Again, no penalty would be attached.

But what had happened? The student, with no hard feelings on anybody's part, would have flunked himself out. Good! This is what should have happened. A large amount of money and effort had been saved and there would be no stigma of failure and ruin to haunt him the rest of his life. No bridges had been burned.

The student's biggest problem was a slave mentality which had been built into him by years of carrot-and-whip grading, a mule mentality which said, "If you don't whip me, I won't work." He didn't get whipped. He didn't work. And the cart of civilization, which he supposedly was being trained to pull, was just going to have to creak along a little slower without him.

This is a tragedy, however, only if you presume that the cart of civilization, "the system", is pulled by mules. This is a common, vocational, "location" point of view, but it's not the [true learning]'s attitude. [True learning]'s attitude is that civilization, or "the system", or "society", or whatever you want to call it, is best served not by mules but by free men. The purpose of abolishing grades and degrees is not to punish mules or to get rid of them but to provide an environment in which that mule can turn into a free man.

The hypothetical student, still a mule, would drift around for a while. He would get another kind of education quite as valuable as the one he'd abandoned, in what used to be called the "school of hard knocks." Instead of wasting money and time as a high-status mule, he would now have to get a job as a low-status mule, maybe as a mechanic. Actually his real status would go up. He would be making a contribution for a change. Maybe that's what he would do for the rest of his life. Maybe he'd found his level. But don't count on it.

In time six months; five years, perhaps a change could easily begin to take place. He would become less and less satisfied with a kind of dumb, day-to-day shop work. His creative intelligence, stifled by too much theory and too many grades in college, would now become re-awakened by the boredom of the shop. Thousands of hours of frustrating mechanical problems would have made him more interested in machine design. He would like to design machinery himself. He'd think he could do a better job. He would try modifying a few engines, meet with success, look for more success, but feel blocked because he didn't have the theoretical information, he'd now find a brand of theoretical information which he'd have a lot of respect for, namely, mechanical engineering.

So he would come back to our degreeless and gradeless school, but with a difference. He'd no longer be a grade-motivated person. He'd be a knowledge-motivated person. He would need no external pushing to learn. His push would come from inside. He'd be a free man. He wouldn't need a lot of discipline to shape him up. In fact, if the instructors were slacking on the job he would be likely to shape them up by asking rude questions. He'd be there to learn something, would be paying to learn something and they'd better come up with it.

Motivation of this sort, once it catches hold, is a ferocious force, and in the gradeless, degreeless institution where our student would find himself, he wouldn't stop with rote engineering information. Physics and mathematics were going to come within his sphere of interest because he'd see he needed them. Metallurgy and electrical engineering would come up for attention. And, in the process of intellectual maturing that these abstract studies gave him, he would be likely to branch out into other theoretical areas that weren't directly related to machines but had become a part of a newer larger goal. This larger goal wouldn't be the imitation of education in Universities today, glossed over and concealed by grades and degrees that give the appearance of something happening when, in fact, almost nothing is going on. It would be the real thing.

ALL

Dear Osprey Families,

Please remember to turn in emergency medications (EPI Pens, Benadryl, back up inhalers, Glucagon and fast acting carbs/snacks etc. for diabetics) along with the appropriate paperwork signed by a physician to the front desk no later than Friday, August 19th. IF your student will be self-carrying these then please make sure you have notified our health consultant (Etoile.hening@animashighschool.com) of these plans and turned in a "Self-Carry Contract" (signed by all appropriate parties including physician, parent, and student).

Please remember that we can NOT legally dispense any medications (even over the counter medications like Advil) unless we have an "Authorization to Administer Medication" form for your student and you have turned in medication for your student clearly labeled in an original manufacturer labeled container.

Please remember that students are required to have "Self-Carry Contracts" in place in order to legally carry any medications during the school day, at a school sponsored events, and/or on any field trips.

Students are not permitted to self-carry anti-depressants or medications considered to be controlled substances (ex. Adderall, Ritalin etc.) at any time. If a student requires these on a field trip, during the school day or at a school sponsored event then a staff member will be in charge of transporting and administering. An "Authorization to Administer Medication" form must be turned in and signed by a physician and legal guardian.

Please make sure that your student has any emergency medication that could possibly be needed either with them on the first day of school or turned in to the front desk prior to Friday, August 19th. Please notify our health consultant of your plans if you have not already done so.

An off campus activity is planned for Tuesday, August 23. Your student will either need to have their emergency medications with them upon arrival OR a staff member will need to transport for them if you have turned them into the school. Please notify our health consultant ASAP of what your plans are (if you have not already done so) to ensure your student's safety on and off campus if he/she could possibly require emergency medications at any time.

Please notify our health consultant directly if you have any questions or concerns.

etoile.hening@animashighschool.com 970-769-9030

Thank you for doing your part to help ensure your student's safety during the school day!