



Head of College's Newsletter May 2010

Dear Parents and Community,

I have now returned from India having finished with my responsibilities there. It was lovely to go and to be able to finalise the school year but it is also wonderful to return and to be able to focus solely on this school and its needs.

I hope that you all had a wonderful holiday and are enjoying the final term of the year. There is not long to go before the summer begins. The reports from those doing exams for the IB Diploma and the IGCSE's is that they have or are going well and that the students are looking forward to getting their results. I would like to wish all of the Year 11's and 13's every success in their future studies.

This is also a busy term. The primary school is awash with activities including the Walk the World Event and the Maastricht Mooiste Run. Examinations, the finalisation of reports and many events including the Creative Arts Show which is on the 16th June. Please contact the school if you would like tickets.

UWC

The last couple of months have been a very busy time for us as we have received the names and details of the new boarding students. We have 52 students coming from over 40 nations, male, female and coming from all sorts of backgrounds. We are busy trying to finalise the details with them all for visas, subject choices and making the proper arrangements for their travel, lodging, health care etc. It is a fun but challenging task. The other challenge we face is the planning for the arrival of these and the new day students in September. The planning is well advanced I am glad to say and includes a camp for all students of the secondary new and old. It will be nice to see the new group of students and see how they take to life in Maastricht.

Participation Council (MR)

You will all know by now that we are planning to have one participation council. You will have all received an invitation to stand for either of the two divisional participation councils which will make up the UWC participation council for next year. We hope to hold the elections soon and would ask any of you who have not yet nominated but who are interested to get your nominations in as soon as possible.

Parent Support Groups

The two previous PSGs have now joined into one group with the aim of supporting the College and the parent body in a variety of ways. If anybody is interested in

joining this group please let us know and we will make sure that you are put in touch with the right people

Facilities

We continue to examine a number of possibilities to meet our facility needs for next year. As the College is growing we will need six additional teaching spaces for the new academic year. We are exploring building additional space within the current building or looking at acquiring the space we need in the local vicinity. We need to bring this stage of our investigation to a conclusion as soon as possible as we need to plan around the new space. We are being supported in this search by LVO and the Municipality and will keep you up to date with our progress.

Fees

I realise that there is a lot of concern about the fee increases in both the pre-school and the primary.

We have written separately to the pre-school parents but need to point out here that we get no subsidy from the government for the preschool and therefore the fees have to meet the total cost to the staff and program in that section of the school.

The primary fees were discussed over a year ago within the primary and the fee of 4000 Euros for the year 2010-11 was suggested then. This figure was also sent out to parents in a news letter. I do need to clarify that approximately 80% of the fee is spent on staff salaries. Under the Dutch system the government contribution provides for 12 full time staff we currently have the equivalent of 28 full time staff and this is where your fees go. Over the last few years MosaLira has invested heavily in increasing and improving our staff and the classroom experience in the primary. We now have a high quality staff including a large number from overseas, have taken on the IPC curriculum and developed the classroom experience via smart board technology, team teaching, reading schemes and the like. I can see that we have a very high quality classroom experience and high quality of teaching areas that we will continue to develop. Over the recent past the primary has been subsidised by Mosa Lira but that needs to end and we need to present a balanced budget. The primary fee remains well within the DIS guidelines. I and the Board realise that the fees have risen significantly over the last two years but they had not changed for the five previous years. Now that we have a properly balanced budget we anticipate fee increases in the future to be much smaller and, as I mentioned in my letter, related to inflation and other government guidelines.

We are aware that there continue to be frustrations with parking and other facility issues however we continue to work with the Municipality to try to resolve these.



New Campus

The planning for the new campus continues to move along at a good pace. The Municipality held a meeting for the neighbours to outline the plans and they were well received. We continue to work with the architects and other designers to ensure that we get the best facility possible within the constraints of finance and planning. I am very pleased with how things are progressing and look forward to sharing the final version with the community.

Geoff Fisher
Head of College
United World College Maastricht