

The Year is in Our Hands

Axel de Vernou '21

While the thought of going to school online until December might be frightening right now, we have to keep one thought in mind: The amount of effort we put into this semester will decide how much we get out of it. We have the power to create a memorable fall semester from our very own computer screens, and the best way to do so is to take advantage of the comprehensive schedule that Sacred Heart is offering.

Last spring, when we had to make the quick pivot to an online education, our schedule was only composed of our classes, with a little bit of time to meet with clubs on Wednesday morning. Certain projects, like the Student Art Exhibit, virtual class gatherings, and the Daily Drop were necessary to reestablish a sense of community that was lacking in a schedule solely organized around academic classes.

This time around, however, SHP is making an effort to address student life with commu-

nity gatherings, robust H-period offerings, club fairs and meetings, and expanded use of new technologies. While these offerings are far from what is possible when we are together on campus, and have still not been fully experimented with this early in the year, they have the potential to keep us deeply engaged with the community despite the virtual format. It all depends on how much effort we are willing to put into the process.

This might mean that instead of sleeping in until 11am on Monday morning, we take advantage of the structured work blocks and adequately prepare ourselves for the week ahead. Or it could mean using the H-period blocks to meet with other students who are exploring a similar interest instead of viewing this time as an hour where you can log off your computer. Most of the lessons that we were taught from in-person school apply even in this new context:

make good use of Office Hours and your teachers who are giving up their time in the mornings/evenings, participate during community gatherings, and use independent work spaces to get ready for class. Without bells reminding us to get from place to place, or buildings that act as physical structures for these activities, we have to constantly check ourselves to ensure that we are making the best use of our time.

On that note, as we prepare to tackle the uncertainty of the school year ahead of us, we have to be ready to step out of our comfort zones. Fill your clubs list to the brim, send photos and videos to SHPTV or the Quad, share your art or writing to our publications— whatever it takes for you to become an active participant in online school. Only in this way will we be prepared when we return to campus, since the work of establishing community will have been completed.

A Revamped Community and Education

Anisha Menath '21

The lockdown, the shelter in place order, and all the social restrictions that have developed and changed since March have been isolating for many people. We thrive on social interactions with others and need them in order to maintain a healthy balance in our lives. Even though many have adapted to seeing friends and family less often, socially distanced and masked, it is still hard to think about the possibility of this situation continuing longer than it has been. Focusing on community life throughout the year can help change that by introducing more opportunities for interaction.

As SHP starts the school year online, community life is being taken into account this school year in a more permanent way than the last. When SHP first moved to a distanced learning environment, many clubs and organizations still met via zoom but there was little consistency. Weekly espacios and student life time were not exactly translated online in a similar way to how it worked in-person. In the upcoming school year, SHP will be dedicating time within the weekly schedule for community life and student groups.

The new period within the schedule, H period, will be a time completely dedicated to student organizations, clubs, and extracurricular activities. Additionally, we will be gathering virtually on Mondays to spend time together as a school community. Though these meetings are not the same as last year or even what we envisioned for this upcoming year, they are still

meant to provide a sense of normalcy and consistency.

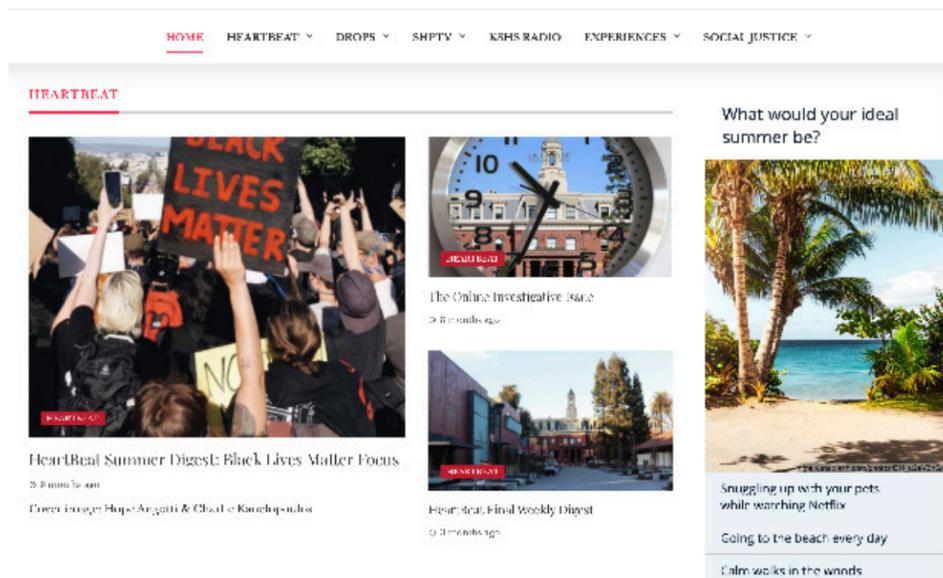
An important aspect of community life is the inclusion of all of the SHP community. Over the past months, the country has reckoned with questions of racial justice and institutionalized oppression. SHP has used both student and faculty feedback to develop anti-racist educational

is now piloting and rebranding different affinity spaces on campus as well as planning events throughout the year. SHP is rooted in the goals and criteria which identify social justice and action as the foundation of community life and therefore it is vital that we have important conversations about inclusion on campus and dedicate time for it through virtual platforms.

Lastly, we sympathize and empathize with the newest members of the SHP community, the Class of 2024. All of us remember what it is like to be a freshman in high school and the excitement of new opportunities as well as nerves about the new environment and making friends. We hope that opportunities to engage with student life virtually are fulfilling and impactful while providing connection to the school community. For the class of 2024 in particular, the Quad leaders are integrating a new Freshman Feature page where they will be able to share their work, or even just a humorous video, to

the rest of the community so that students and teachers can get to know them better through the virtual format.”

At the end of the day, we are all figuring out the school year together and we are being pushed into a situation that is new for all of us. The new community life aspect of this year's schedule is meant to help ease the transition into starting classes online and to create spaces to acknowledge the discomfort and disconnection we all might be experiencing.



The Quad website will include content from student media, highlight the work from various affinity groups, and provide ways for students and teachers to engage with the community.

plans and policies for the upcoming school year. Students have taken serious initiatives to facilitate diversity, inclusion, and cultural awareness on campus. SURJ (Social Unity Rooted in Justice) was formed throughout last school year and

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