

## **More About the Advanced Placement Curriculum at Holland Hall**

**Dennis L. Calkins**  
**Head of the Upper School**

Holland Hall continues to find itself at the forefront of the movement away from the Advanced Placement (A.P.) program in independent schools across the country. During the 2000-2001 school year, we offered 17 A.P. courses in the Upper School. As we begin the 2008-09 school year, only five of our courses are designated with the A.P. label. In those five courses, (Calculus AB, Calculus BC, Statistics, Physics C, and Chemistry) students are required to take the A.P. exam in May 2009. In addition, students may sit for A.P. exams in several other advanced level courses if they choose to do so.

The five A.P. courses we teach at Holland Hall remain in our curriculum for three reasons:

- The syllabus for each course is reasonable, does not attempt to cover too much material and is in line with our institutional goals about the kinds of learning experiences we want our students to have.
- Students can enroll in each course with a reasonable expectation of success on the exam in May.
- Colleges and universities are willing to award advanced placement status to students who score well on the A.P. exam, and our students regularly take advantage of this opportunity.

In a report by the Haverford School in January 2006, their committee of department chairs addressed many of the concerns expressed by their parent community when they made the decision to drop the A.P. program. I invite you to pick up a copy of the summary of that report in the Upper School office.

I also invite you to go online at [www.excellencewithoutap.org](http://www.excellencewithoutap.org) to learn more about why the A.P. program in general is failing to offer the kinds of educational experiences we believe are necessary for the graduates of Holland Hall. This website, as well as the report from the Haverford School, will also explain the stance of many colleges and universities toward the A.P. program and how admission to those universities is no longer contingent upon A.P. results.