

## **THURSDAY MORNING A SNAPSHOT OF LIFE IN THE UPPER SCHOOL**

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It is Thursday morning, September 2 in the Upper School, an F-Day marking the end of the second cycle of the school year. Our morning meeting in the commons has just adjourned. Some students are making their way to their first class of the day while others are deciding how to spend their first few mods of unscheduled time. Shortly after 8:30 a.m., I happen to be wandering through the school trying to locate two of my colleagues. My wandering leads me through the hallways and various study areas, into the library and study station, past the computer lab into the SMT commons and back to my office. I see students in all parts of the building so I decide to begin counting them and taking note of their activities. Here is what I discover:

- There are 42 students in the library. Some are engaged in quiet study or reading at tables and carrels in the south end while others are working together or using the school's computers in the north end.
- The study station is filled almost to capacity – 23 freshmen are busily serving their demand time. The proctor has not yet arrived because she was called away to cover a class. No problem for these freshmen; they are doing exactly what is expected of them.
- There are four students in the area on the second floor near the freshmen lockers – two are at their lockers and two are working together at a table.
- At the top of the main stairway, two students are studying in the lounge area and another is checking her Chemistry homework on the bulletin board outside the science offices.
- Six students are sitting on chairs and sofas in the SMT mini-commons – three are talking with one another and three are engaged in schoolwork.
- Four students are in the computer lab and appear to be polishing up a writing assignment for an English class.
- I count 28 students in the main commons engaged in a variety of activities. Approximately ten of them are sitting on the floor or at tables working on schoolwork. Five or six students are down on their hands and knees in the north end of the commons painting spirit signs for the volleyball and football games the next evening. The other students are talking quietly in small groups.

My observations on Thursday morning offer the strongest possible testimony that the modular schedule is alive and well in the Upper School. Our students understand that time is a precious resource and that responsible use of that resource is one of the keys to their success in the Upper School. And perhaps more important, the opportunity to learn how to manage their own time will give our students a distinct advantage as they leave Holland Hall and embark upon their careers in higher education and the world of work.

