



Morning Comment

Academic Captains: Isobel Forsey, Joe Mundy, and James Hart

Academic Awards Assembly, Friday 16 February 2024



ISOBEL

Despite not being an easy task – to write a speech and present it in front of students, parents, and teachers – we feel incredibly privileged to have this opportunity to speak as academic captains for 2024. Some of you may know us already, and a lot of you may not, so we figured we would take a minute to introduce each other.

James has always had an interest in Math and Science, and since meeting him in Year 0 at St Albans Primary School, he never got less annoying. Since joining StAC in Year 9, he has picked up debating, and found himself to be proficient at arguing. He played cricket and football for a number of years, but dropped them after seeing the insanity that was an NCEA timetable. He is an energetic person, with an oftentimes silly personality, but he's always open to help people with whatever problem they might have.

JOE

Isobel arrived at StAC in Year 5, making a dramatic entrance by showing up halfway through the year. Many of you may already know her or know of her, mostly because of her ability to always be overheard or to speak annoyingly loud. She reads very fast as shown in her apparent academic peak in Year 6 of finishing reading plus not once, but twice. She loves to argue – in debating and outside of it. She is someone that is always open to a conversation and goes out of her way to lend a helping hand. She excels in English and the humanities subjects. If you ever manage to see her walking around campus or weaving through a crowd she's always happy to see if she can do anything to help you.

JAMES



Since meeting Joe in Year 9 tutor class, it's taken over five years to get more than just a few sentences out of him. I've found him to be someone who is passionate about both Math and Digi, and not just passionate, but excellent at them too. He has committed himself to racing in absolutely every event at swimming sports to ensure Rutherford continues to win the House Cup. Joe is a reasonably quiet guy, but if you get to know him, you'll find that he is incredibly friendly and always looking to cheer people up whenever they get down. Due to his friendly nature, and his long history at StAC, dating back to Year 1, Joseph Mundy has become a household name.

We've seen Academic Captains of the past give great study tips, and ways to improve your grades and academic skill. But as much as that is helpful, it may not really give you any incentive to study, or take academics seriously. So as Academic Captains for 2024, we've written something that should give you an idea of the role that academics play in our lives, the purpose of learning and asking questions, and the importance of following your passions.

JOE

Sometimes we expect ourselves to understand everything, but that doesn't always happen. It's normal to be unsure, to not know what to do. It's normal to be lost or confused, but that's not important. What is important is what we do from there. I have always been a quiet person and couldn't imagine anything worse than speaking in front of the class, believe it or not. So, whenever something gets difficult, the absolute last thing I want to do is stick my hand up and ask a question. The solution? Ask friends, classmates, stay behind for a few minutes – there are a million people who are ready and willing to help. You'll find you don't need to be a super outgoing person to stand up in front of the class and ask questions because chances are other people are probably wondering the same thing. Asking questions now, paying attention in class now, will make studying at the end of the year so much easier. Instead of cramming 45 hours of Chemistry that you never learned into your head 35 minutes before the exam, do the work now. By learning and asking questions in class, you will only have to revise for a few hours later in the year.

JAMES

Asking questions expands far beyond the classroom though. If humans never wondered what the stars were, or never asked themselves if there was a better way to move around than running everywhere, then we would certainly not be where we are today. I believe that asking questions gives our lives meaning, whether it may lead to a career designing a better way to grow crops, a new understanding of Mathematics, or an author questioning society and its flaws. Humans have questioned anything and everything for as long as we have existed, and in all that time, nothing has been accomplished, without a question first being asked. So, I implore you, ask questions. Whether it's asking a teacher about a topic you are confused about in class, asking a worker what it's like to do their job, or asking yourself if there's something in your life that you could do better. If we don't ask questions, if we don't care enough to think about things, then society will go nowhere.



ISOBEL

Don't be afraid to show interest in things; it's not uncool to be passionate about something, especially if it could be the basis of your future career. Don't judge other people for being interested in subjects that you might not like. You're allowed to like what you like no matter what that may be. Many of the award winners and many of you here may love nothing more than to sit in a Mathematics class and work through a problem; to put it simply I would rather not. Whereas if you give me an essay to write, a topic to debate, or a genome sequence I'd be far happier. It took me a while to learn but I honestly don't care what others think about that. While that may not be necessarily 'cool' to most people, it's cool to me. Find what you like and work for it (don't neglect the necessary subjects even if that may not be your cup of tea) and keep in mind that we all have different interests.

JOE

School is not just about grades but about teaching us life skills that will help us throughout our lives. Asking questions is one of these skills. Whether it's for exams or in a work environment, we can't learn everything, but each time we ask our knowledge grows just a tiny bit. It's through these questions that we have discovered the world around us and allowed ourselves to reach our greatest potential. Don't be scared to ask questions or follow your passion just because it's not "cool" or too difficult, chase your goals now, or you'll come to regret it.