



ISSUE #18

20 January 2012

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Greetings

Two weeks into new year and we are enjoying a great start to 2012!

Mrs. Hanselmann and Mr. Elya have returned from the Bangkok and Hong Kong recruitment fairs having found a number of teachers eager to teach at ISU and with whom they were very impressed. I'm extremely pleased and I'm confident that our students and you will be too when you meet them in August.

Mrs. Tuul and I leave for North America next Wednesday on the same quest. We'll return in mid-February and, I hope, we'll be able to report the same level of success in securing talented and enthusiastic teachers.

At some point towards the latter part of this school year, we will introduce all of the new staff to you through short autobiographies. I always feel ambivalent about this stage of the school year; while it's exciting to meet the new teachers, it's never easy to say farewell to the colleagues who will be leaving us. Ah well, better not to think about it now – that's a long way off and until then, we will continue to enjoy working closely with all of our colleagues and to value their on-going contributions to ISU.

Since I will be away for the next few weeks, this will be my last opportunity to contribute to *The Medee* for a while. So in this issue, though it's a bit premature, I'd like to focus on our ASA programme. We have come to the end of our 2nd ASA quarter already. In a few weeks the students will be choosing options for the next round.



What are the aims of our ASA programme? What are we trying to accomplish with our students with this programme?

In some school systems, the ASA programme is intended to be a formal extension of the classroom. Students pursue intensely the development of specific skills – athletic, artistic or otherwise, in

much the same way as they pursue their classroom academics – taught and trained by masters.

This approach is sound and worthwhile, however, it is not the aim of our ASA programme. Our approach fits well with ISU's philosophy and objectives:

As stated in our ASA programme booklet -Participation in After-School-Activities (ASAs) enhances both the intellectual and social development of students. Students are encouraged to be risk-takers and have an open-minded attitude by trying to learn a new skill, develop their creativity and be part of different social groups.

FRONT PAGE— THE MEDEE IS AVAILABLE ONLINE EACH WEEK AT: WWW.ISUMONGOLIA.EDU.MN

THE MEDEE

The Weekly Newsletter of the International School of Ulaanbaatar

You no doubt recognise some important *Learner Profile* words in that statement. Our ASA programme offers varied opportunities for our students to further develop some of the characteristics outlined in the *Profile*.

Our ASA programme aims to augment student learning – either as a co-curricular activity linked to curriculum, however loosely, or as an extracurricular activity giving students opportunities to gain knowledge, skills and attitudes that are extra to their curricular learning. We wish to expose ISU students to experiences that will be new to them; to a variety of activities that may expand and inspire their future choices in their career and life pathways.

In particular, the visual and performing arts activities allow our ISU students opportunities to try their hand at creative endeavours that they might otherwise not ever have the chance to explore. Students experience the joy that comes from hearing the applause they receive after a musical or drama performance; or they benefit from the feeling of self-satisfaction that comes from expressing oneself through painting or sculpture. Once out of school and into the work world, how likely is that many of our students will have the time and opportunity for such experiences?

The another aim of our ASA sports programme is to promote healthy physical activity and to encourage our students to play competitive sports while learning the importance of teamwork and the values of good sportsmanship while having fun. They experience the thrill of winning and how to handle the disappointments of losing in a supportive environment. There are a number of sports offered in our ASA programme that are individual rather than team activities, where the personal win and sense of achievement comes from pushing one's self to one's limits, doing the best that one can possibly do with proper preparation, determination and commitment.



Whether it's learning how to string beads together to create artful jewelry, how to create fanciful balloon objects, to patiently knit or cross-stitch an article of clothing or other project, to read books or share Korean poetry together; all of our ASA activities aim to provide opportunities for students to find alternative ways to relax and find pleasure while at the same time socialising with students they likely wouldn't otherwise meet. Older and younger students, Mongolian and expats students, male and female students; all have opportunities to interact in meaningful, fun, and beneficial ways.



Teachers and students too get to know each other better and in different ways when they share an ASA activity. Teachers sometimes discover talents and abilities in their students that they can draw upon in their students' classroom learning. Students often find new appreciation for their teacher in a context outside of the classroom!

Especially in the areas of outdoor education, community service, and other forms of experiential education, our students learn how to overcome personal challenges and how valuable their personal contributions can be to others. They come to appreciate how much there is to discover in the world outside of the classroom.

Last term our leadership teams at ISU began lengthy discussion about our ASA programme – how well it fits into our Mission and Vision at ISU; its aims, its strengths and its weaknesses.

We've been looking at...

- how well our activities fit into the categories of creativity, action and service – the central threads that run through all three of our IB programmes;
- how our parents might become involved as ASA contributors or leaders;
- how well we are serving the students' interests and needs;
- how much opportunity we give our teachers to gain new experiences, learn new skills and otherwise be able to role-model risk-taking, open-mindedness, and life-long learning;
- how to find facilitators in UB whose services could be valuable to us
- how best to time the ASA cycle during the year – as quarters, trimesters, semesters, or year-long activities;
- how necessary it is that all ASAs be justified against our ISU guiding core values, our Mission and Vision.



We have only just begun this discussion! At some point soon, we will ask for your thoughts and opinions as well as those of our faculty and students so that we can build a programme that best suits ISU. In the meantime, the ASA booklet for the Quarter 3 will be out soon. Please watch for it and be ready to choose options that most appeal to your sense of adventure, competitiveness, desire to learn and experience new things, and your willingness to help others.

Best wishes

Robert Stearns, Director

DIARY DATES:

January 23-25	DP Semester 1 Exams (G-11)
January 27	Semester 1 ends
January 30	Semester 2 begins
January 31	Quarter 3 ASAs start

SECONDARY NEWS

This has been a great week back for the start of 2012 for me. The students are all hard at work testing, studying and preparing their cool projects for our school. The seniors are taking Mock exams to practice for the official DP exams in May, while also generating a solid grade for their teachers to use for the semester.

The 11th graders are writing papers, presenting, and testing for the end of semester, while the 10th graders are hot on the completion trail of their personal projects. All of these pieces of learning reflect throughout the school and everyone is a bit on the edge. Please help your child to eat well, sleep plenty and drink enough water to stay hydrated.

The link to the weather station on our school roof is: <http://www.aws.com/wx.asp?id=ULNBT&units=1>
Please use this and advise your child to refer to this – it has been dangerously cold recently and we want all of our students dressed safely for the climate.

We also have several new families in our ISU community, and it is always nice to see veteran community members welcoming in the newer people. It is one of the most positive aspects of our small school – we ARE a community and everyone is welcome. All of you are invited to join in with the Parent Teacher Group {PTG} in our monthly meetings.

Lastly, we need to say good-bye to some of our families, and those people we wish well in their futures.

Betsy Hanselmann, Head of Secondary

Getting Ready for College

Wednesday 25th January 18:00

ISU Library

All grade 10 & 11 students with parents invited

Learn about the university application process
Meet our guest speaker, Bob Mansueto – brought in from
Hong Kong just to work with us!

Have your questions answered early in the game
Get a jump start on your future

See Ms Richard for further details

PRIMARY NEWS

It is great to be back at school following the holiday break and the teacher recruitment fairs. It is wonderful to see the children's excitement about learning and their sparks of energy again.

There will be some new faces in the Primary School beginning second semester. Grade 2 teacher Mrs. Reed must return to Canada for family reasons. Her final day at ISU will be on Friday, January 27. I thank her for all she has done to build a community of learners. We will welcome Mr. Jonathan Nock who will assume the grade 2 teaching responsibilities on Monday, January 30.

Also on January 27, Grade 1 teaching assistant, Mrs. Tsatsral will begin her maternity leave. We look forward to meeting the newest member of the family!

The line of students after school who wish to use the reception office phone has been growing increasingly longer. Please make afterschool play and transportation arrangements for your child **before coming to school** in the morning. The reception phone is not for student use.
Have a great weekend!

Rick Elya, Head of Primary



In 2012, we at the International School of Ulaanbaatar will be celebrating our 20th anniversary.

We are calling on you, parents and teachers, students and alumni, to help us celebrate 20 years of education, success, and community.

If you would like to be a part of the 20th Anniversary Committee, please contact Bileg at admissions@isumongolia.edu.mn

IMPORTANT NOTICE ABOUT TSAGAAN SAR HOLIDAY

Dear Parents

We have been waiting for a final decision about the timing of the Tsagaan Sar holiday and as of now, we have no definite dates.

Late in the Fall Term, we had some certainty that the holiday would fall on Wednesday/Thursday, February 22/23. Until now, this is still the information that seems most reliable.

However, we are also being informed that many offices and some schools will close on Friday, February 24.

Given the possibility that the holiday period will either extend to include that Friday, or shift to the Thursday/Friday period, we have made the decision today that we will not be open on that Friday.

Therefore our Tsagaan Sar holiday will be **February 22-23-24** (Wednesday-Thursday-Friday).

The number of school days will not be affected by this change.

We trust that you will understand why we had to make this decision at this late date.

Robert Stearns

Director

UB Events in January:

The Mongolian State Academic Theatre of Opera and Ballet

JANUARY

21th 5 pm "THE DRIFTING CLOUDS OF FATE" opera by Ts. Natsagdorj

22th 5 pm "SLEEPING BEAUTY" ballet by P.I. Tchaikovsky

27th 7 pm "Songodog Engshiglen" violin concert by violinist O. Baigal

28rd 5 pm "IL TROVATORE" opera by G. Verdi

29th 5 pm "SKILLED KHAS" ballet by J. Chuluun

Address: East side of Sukhbaatar Square

Contact Person: Otgonjargal (Manager-English Speaker)

Tel: 99024933

Contact Person: Altantsetseg (Cashier)

Tel: 70110389

For more information <http://www.opera-ballet.mn/>

Selengemurun E

The school-wide community liaison coordinator