FIRST IMPRESSIONS
FROM THE DIRECTOR OF THE INTERNATIONAL
BACCALAUREATE DIPLOMA PROGRAMME

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With 102 candidates registered for the Diploma and a further 39 registered for Anticipated Subjects, 2019 once again broke the record for Trinity Grammar School’s largest cohort. The challenge to match this growth in number of candidates with continued growth in quality of outcome for all students has remained Trinity’s number one goal for staff and students.

To achieve a ‘perfect score’ is a goal that schools often work decades to achieve, and this year two Trinity students achieved the maximum score of 45, laying claim to the prestigious title of ‘Equal first in the World’ as well as an ATAR of 99.95. These two young men were Christyon Hayek and Nicholas Bouletos. Demonstrating the depth of talent at the top of this group, are the 7 students earning 44/45, an agonising one point short of the ultimate goal, but no less worthy of acclaim. To illustrate how close these students came to earning the top place in the world, five of these 44’s missed out on the 45 by less than 2 marks. We still hold out hope that remarks might lift these boys to the highest goal. Despite having missed out on the perfect score, all of these students have demonstrated mastery of the critical thinking skills that will bring them success in tertiary study.

Probably as much, if not more exciting, is the fact that 61 students (60%) improved their IB Diploma grade from the School’s predicted grade in at least one of their subjects. This kind of improvement in a little over the month long final study period reflects the all-important self-motivation and self-management skills students acquired during their time at Trinity. A further 35 (34%) improved their IB Diploma grade in two of their subjects and an impressive 22 students (22%) improved in 3 or more subjects. Particular mention must go to Linh Pham who improved 7 grade points from his Trials and Mark Makram who improved by 6 grade points.

Our cohort of 102 averaged an IB score of 37 which far outstrips the 2018 world average of 29.21 and exceeds that of the 2018 Asia Pacific average (34.82) and the 2018 Australian average (34.56). 88% of our candidates obtained scores in excess of the IB world average showing our dominance in the international sphere and why our students are in such high demand overseas.

Domestically our average equates to an ATAR of 95.45, mainly the result of 39 students who achieved an IB score of 40 or above, considered the equivalent of the Premier’s All-Rounder award and earning an IB Certificate of Distinction.

74 out of our 102 candidates (73%) achieved an IB score of 34+ and, therefore, an ATAR equivalent of 90+.

Our students continued a Trinity tradition of selecting their Extended Essay topics from a wide range of subjects. Thirteen different subjects were represented in our cohort this year, demonstrating a clear culture of following one’s individual passion as a guiding principle of this challenging but rewarding aspect of the Diploma.

Worldwide, only 8.5% of IB candidates receive the full 3 marks from the Core. This has long been a source of strength for Trinity students as 21% of the 2019 cohort reached this milestone. This was due to the two-pronged attack provided by the Theory of Knowledge course and the Extended Essay programme. 58% of the cohort achieved an A or B in their extended essay, and in the extremely challenging Theory of Knowledge course, 61% of candidates received a B or A.
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All students completed the compulsory CAS component achieving all seven CAS outcomes across an impressive range of activities. The most impressive must be Kevin Rathore whose portfolio registered 726 hours across all three strands and included such worthy Service activities as volunteering at his local hospital and raising funds for World Vision. Konny Lee also deserves mention for his 803 hours including an incredibly heavy musical commitment to the school, alongside of working in Aged Care and Soup Kitchens in his spare time.

We look forward to hearing of the success of several students with aspirations for study abroad. This year a record number have spread their net wider than NSW or Australia and as they attempt to reflect the trait of International Mindedness imbedded in the IB Mission. We wish them success in these ambitions. Overall, this was an incredibly positive year for Trinity IB students.

Chris Barnes | Director of IBDP

Important statistics
Total number of TGS candidates: 102 (Largest ever at Trinity)
Total number obtaining the IB Diploma: 98 (96%)
Average IB score of TGS candidates: 37 (which equates to an ATAR of 95.45)
39 out of 102 candidates (38%) received an ATAR equivalent of 98+ (40/45+ IB Certificate of Distinction)
64 out of 102 candidates (63%) received an ATAR equivalent of 95+
74 out of 102 candidates (73%) received an ATAR equivalent of 90+
87 out of 102 candidates (85%) received an ATAR equivalent of 85+

Outstanding Individual Results

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>IB Score</th>
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<tr>
<td>Nick Boulelos</td>
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<td>Christy Hayek</td>
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<td>Nabeel Hatoum</td>
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<tr>
<td>Martin Xu</td>
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<td>Isaac Sharwood</td>
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<td>Bill Zhu</td>
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Nick Bouletos from Hunters Hill joined Trinity in Pre-Kindergarten and describes it “as being like a second home.” It was the experience of being part of a large and thriving community that impacted his schooling: “Everyday there was something new going on at the school; there were always new opportunities to get to know other people, take part in house activities, or enjoy the work of other students.”

His favourite academic subjects included English. “I loved unpacking the texts that we would read, especially in high school where we were exposed to a greater range of genres. Yet during my final years at school I gravitated more to the sciences, particularly Chemistry and Biology, as these were more relevant to my dream of studying Medicine.”

Nick dived into a number of co-curricular activities during his time at Trinity, including debating, Cartesians Society, oratory, Archaeological Society, Mock Trial, Charity Committee, and Science Club. “My favourite co-curricular was Berea, the senior Christian leadership group of the school,” said Nick. “Being able to spread the gospel within Trinity and beyond was not only most important use of my time, but it also allowed me to develop some of my closest relationships at school.”

While he enjoyed reading and watching movies for study breaks, it was physical exercise that best helped him unwind after a stressful - and sedentary - period of study. “Usually I would go for a jog around the neighbourhood while listening to music. This not only helped break up long periods sitting at my desk, but it also allowed me to recollect my thoughts and control my anxieties.”

Nick cites his greatest achievement as being elected as School Captain of 2019. “This was a great opportunity to give back to the school and also serve my peers who had brought me so much joy over the years.”

For IB, he studied SL Mathematics (Anticipated), SL Chemistry, SL French, HL English, HL Biology, and HL History. “The IB seemed to better suit my skillset as it requires a broad range of subjects and abilities. Furthermore, the focus on independence and self-motivated research within the IB was appealing as it allowed me to have a greater control over what I learnt.”

Nick’s immediate goal is to become a doctor, but he also is interested in film directing and studying full time at Moonee Theological College. He credits his parents and his Christian faith for his successes: “My parents inspire me through their hard work and dedication to their family. I hope to be half the parents they are if I ever have a family of my own. I am also inspired by the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The gospel gives me my main purpose in life and Christ’s servant leadership is the best model for how I want to treat those around me.”

Christyon Hayek, from Strathfield, has attended Trinity Grammar School since pre-Kindergarten. As the School Vice-Captain, he said he was proud to offer leadership to peers and younger students: “I am very glad I was able to serve as a role model and as someone who younger students could speak to when they needed to express their concerns and anxieties.”

Completing HL English Literature, HL Sports Exercise and Health Science, HL Business and Management, SL German, SL Economics, SL Mathematics, Christyon chose the IB because it offers an international approach to learning. “I think the IB encourages students to engage in many different types of learning styles, requiring students to think creatively and independently.”

“One of the benefits of the IB is the research and critical thinking skills that we gain by completing the Extended Essay, TOK assignments and Internal Assessments, which prepare us well for the tasks which we will be expected to undertake at university. I also think that by studying a foreign language and by learning about internationally debated topics, IB students emerge from the diploma with an ability to construct informed perspectives of global concerns and foreign cultures.”

One of Christyon’s favourite subjects was English, “because I felt that it combined knowledge from numerous fields of study, including History, Philosophy, and Psychology into one academic discipline.” He also enjoyed German, “as it opened my eyes to the unique features of a language and culture that is not my own.”

Asked who he credits for his commitment to study and good results, Christyon is quick to point to his faith, his family and his School: “I credit my parents for my good results, as they have supported me emotionally and financially and have worked very hard to send me to a school like Trinity. I also credit my teachers, for their wisdom and effectiveness in sharing their knowledge. Most importantly, I credit my Christian faith, which has allowed me to push through trying circumstances.”

Next, Christyon hopes to study Medicine and begin his journey of becoming a doctor: “My career aspiration is to work as an orthopaedic surgeon or physician for sports teams, so that I can enjoy travelling the country whilst working as a doctor,” he said.

His greatest inspiration is his father. “My parents came to Australia in the 1980s to escape the Lebanese Civil War and to build a better future for themselves and their families. My Father arrived with almost nothing and worked unbelievably hard to set up a secure life for his family. His work ethic is second to none and is definitely something that motivates me to work persistently to achieve my goals.”

“Christ’s servant leadership is the best model for how I want to treat those around me.”

“Asked who he credits for his commitment to study and good results, Christyon is quick to point to his faith, his family and his School.”
Nabeel Hatoum

Nabeel Hatoum, from Strathfield, combined sport, music, a love of chess and dinner out with friends to achieve his IB with “minimal stress.”

“The best thing about being a student at Trinity is the lifelong friends and relationships I have made. I’ve played multiple sports during my time at Trinity, including; swimming, basketball, water polo, football and rugby.”

Having a strong, supportive school community also contributed: “It is not only a world-class education, but a community that will change your whole family. During times of stress, the best thing was to go out and have dinner with my friends who were also doing the IB. We really worked well together to get through everything.”

Nabeel’s Mother is Australian, born and raised in the Sutherland Shire, while his Father is Palestinian, born in a Palestinian refugee camp in Beirut, Lebanon. “My Dad came to Australia at the age of 16 following civil unrest, Israeli invasion and massacres in Beirut,” said Nabeel. Through his sporting achievements at Trinity, Nabeel has been able to represent Palestine at a number of sporting events including the Swimming World Championships.

“I have competed at world championships four times, including the world championship in Canada (December 2016), Budapest (July 2017), China (December 2018), and Korea (July 2019). This journey has provided me with the opportunity to connect with my cultural heritage,” Nabeel said.

Nabeel played multiple sports during his time at Trinity; as well as swimming, he played basketball, water polo, football and rugby. “I also played piano for many years as a younger student, and reinitiated my practice of piano in year 11 while completing the IB. I also developed a love for the game of chess. Although I never joined the chess club, my friend Jorge and I would play chess during any opportunity we were given, particularly free periods and IB work periods.”

Nabeel studied Ab Initio French, Maths Studies SL, SL Economics, HL Business and Management, HL English (Literature), HL Sport Science.

“The workload was very reasonable, I experienced very minimal stress throughout my IB experience, and I believe that time management is the key to success in the IB. I managed to complete my diploma while swimming 12-16 hours a week and participating in multiple other sports and co-curricular activities. I believe it is the busy people who will always find time management the easiest.”

Nabeel hopes to progress to university in 2020 to study a double degree of law and business.

Nathan Roberts

Nathan Roberts from Annandale joined Trinity in Year 9. He said he found the IB workload challenging and credits his Dad for the support and encouragement.

“Whenever I wanted to give up or when I was feeling stressed, my Dad was always there to help me out and keep me motivated. And although I thought the IB difficult in terms of workload, I feel that I learnt lots and the sense of achievement from completing this sort of workload has been very rewarding.”

Nathan said he found it helpful to make a checklist of what he needed to do every week. “Then, it was easier to divide my time around sport and co-curricular in order to complete my checklist. I found this also made it more rewarding when completing tasks and more meaningful when doing a piece of work.”

Subjects completed were HL English Literature, HL Sports Science, HL Business Management, SL Studies Maths, SL Psychology and SL ab initio French.

“Throughout my time at Trinity I also did cadets, chess club and specialist basketball. My favourite was specialist basketball because it was a good opportunity to work towards a larger goal that was not academic related.”

Nathan adds that the teachers at Trinity are fantastic and believes attending school is less about academic success but being able to identify and grasp opportunities: “Attending Trinity is a tremendous opportunity, but it does require a lot of hard work. I would advise that a parent communicate to their son not that they must excel and top their classes, but that they need to be prepared to try their best to make use of the opportunity.”

Nathan plans to study business at University.
Justin Teh

“My standout memory was having the opportunity to go to the Alice Springs and help out the Indigenous community of Ti-Tree. I feel that experience helped me understand my fortunate position.”

Justin Teh, from Putney, joined Trinity in 2006 in Pre-Kindergarten. He is most inspired by his Father, who was born in a village town in Malaysia, “yet took every opportunity to develop connections and relationships to become a successful financial investor.” Similarly, Justin chose to build opportunities for himself during his time at Trinity, and says it helped him overcome shyness.

“At first, I was very shy and did not talk a lot to people. However, as I interacted more with the people around me, I have become more confident and more able to socialise with people. I participated in the Chess Club and Choir at the Preparatory School. In the Senior School, I joined the Choir, Debating, Science club and Chess club. My favourite co-curricular was the Choir, because I enjoy singing and some of my friends were in the same vocal group as me.”

Justin’s most standout memory, “was having the opportunity to go the Alice Springs and help out the Indigenous community of Ti-Tree. I feel that experience helped me understand my fortunate position. Inside school, I think that doing the Year 9 Field Studies Camp was my greatest achievement. I feel that staying at the camp for a month really helped me develop my independence as well as my skills to organise my time and study properly.”

Justin completed Business Studies HL, Economics HL, English HL, Maths SL, Mandarin SL Ab initio, Sports Science SL in the IB and chose the IB due to a larger variety of subjects and his interest in sport science.

“I feel that the IB helped me develop better time management and researching skills, both of which will most likely help me in university as well as later in life. But I do credit my mum the most for my good results, because she always reminds me to do work and prints online material for me to read and get ideas for my studying.”

While saying the workload was not too excessive, Justin said that, “proper planning and spreading the workload across a longer time period really helped me to submit my assignments on time and revise. I didn’t have a set strategy, as such, but I mainly focused on setting goals on what I wanted to achieve each day. I also found that revising subjects at least twice a week helped me to retain information better.”

His main support groups during study were friends and family: “I sometimes prepared with a group of friends in the library and we all encouraged and helped each other with material that we didn’t understand. Trinity’s teachers are always very willing to help too, especially when students engage and ask questions.”

Next, Justin hopes to study medicine, law or dentistry at University.

Aidan Tharmarajah

“Strangely, the best way for me to manage the workload of academics was to ensure that I participated in other co-curricular and sporting activities.”

Aidan Tharmarajah, from Strathfield, said that although the IB workload was initially very difficult to manage in Year 11, it became easier in Year 12 as he became more accustomed to the routine and improved his planning. The secret, he believes, is doing more with your time, not less:

“Strangely, the best way for me to manage the workload of academics was to ensure that I participated in other co-curricular and sporting activities. This ensured that I became efficient with my time whilst not burning out by spending all my time on one activity.”

Studying Maths SL, anticipated, SL French, SL Psychology, HL English, HL Sports Science and HL Business Management, he is most proud of being able to sustain his involvement in co-curriculars and sport whilst still achieving the academic results that he wanted.

He undertook Debating, Berea Christian Leadership Group, Charity and Community Committee, Duke of Edinburgh (Gold Award), Mock Trial, Oratory, Year 11 Peer Support Leader and Concert Band, as well as playing basketball and tennis for Trinity.

“My favourite co-curricular activity was Debating. Not only did it provide me with valuable critical thinking and communication skills, but I also enjoyed the comradery with my fellow debaters.”

For Aidan, the overall memory from his time at Trinity will be the friendships made, the skills developed and the knowledge he gained: “My greatest achievements included being elected House Captain and Debating Captain, completing AMEB Speech and Drama exams outside of school and being able to be an all-rounder at school.”

One of the biggest challenges he experienced was learning a foreign language. “I was able to overcome it by prioritising French and learning though a variety of ways including reading and listening to French. I drew on support from my parents and my friends. My parents provided support at home whilst collaborating with friends allowed me to consider different perspectives and approaches to my studies.”

Most inspired by his grandfather, who was heavily involved in relief efforts following Cyclone Tracy in 1974, Aidan believes it is really important to serve others and plans to study medicine to become a doctor.
Richard Ziade has attended Trinity since Pre-kindergarten. Surprisingly, this committed student attributes his propensity towards stress for his good results. “For me, stress acted as a signal, occurring when I had not been as productive as I should be. Therefore, the main way for me to pre-emptively negate this stress was to be productive and work diligently,” he said.

Richard particularly enjoyed language study: “English was definitely my favourite subject, especially the novels we studied, because I am fascinated by the craft of writing; how authors are able to express complex themes about the human experience in such a vivid and creative manner. However, French came in a close second as I have always been interested in the concept of different languages and their nuances. I also enjoyed the freedom and independence afforded to me because the learning of French was not limited to summarising a textbook, but instead it involved actively seeking French resources such as news articles, websites and texts.”

Keeping his hard work and stress in perspective, it is the friendships he has formed over his years at Trinity that are the most important: “The friendships I was able to make, some over 13 years, but also ones made within the last couple of years, will last long into my ‘post-school’ life. Simply joking around with my friends helped alleviate massive amounts of stress which were most prevalent during the later parts of year 12.”

Richard received a School proficiency prize and is proud of that recognition. “I had lots of late nights and early mornings of study – I had some poor academic results in the years prior to commencing the IB and I wanted to focus and do a lot better. Receiving the prize reminded me of the power of goal setting.”

Richard plans to go to university to study a Bachelor of Science and Doctor of Medicine. Like his father, he would like to become a G.P. “I am inspired by my dad, mainly because he immigrated to Australia when he was 3 years old, his father passed away when he was very young, and he grew up quite poor. Despite this, he worked diligently and excelled in his HSC achieving state rankings in multiple subjects. He then earned a scholarship to university and trained to become a doctor. Now, he is one of the most meticulous and caring general practitioners and smartest people I know.”

Until University starts, Richard plans to focus on his fitness and part-time work. “I want to spend as much time as I can with my friends and family to make up for the times I had to devote to study during year 12.”

Samuel has attended Trinity Grammar School since Year 1. He choose to study the IB partly due to the School’s long history in offering the qualification, but also because primarily because he wanted to keep open an easier pathway to study overseas.

Samuel has interviewed at the University of Cambridge for a degree in History and Politics at King’s College, with conditional offers to both the University of Durham and the School of Oriental and African Studies. He is also applying for a choral scholarship at King’s College Cambridge, based on his co-curricular experiences at Trinity:

“I participated in Choir, Academy of Music, Debating, and the Duke of Edinburgh awards scheme. My favourite activity was the choir, I have always loved singing and especially loved participating in choral singing; it makes you feel like you are participating in something greater.”

His favourite academic subjects were History and Mandarin. “I enjoy learning about the past and creating novel arguments surrounding subjective aspects of history. I also enjoyed learning about Chinese culture through learning the language, and the beauty of Chinese as a language.”

He said it is commitment that makes a difference: “I am probably most proud of my academic record. Over the years I have improved dramatically, and I put that all down to the way in which I used the resources Trinity offered. The staff and teachers are always willing to help and are incredibly kind and thoughtful. Even if they do not teach you directly, they are more than willing to offer a helping hand, going above and beyond what is expected of them.”

Samuel said that his love of reading helped him during stressful study times: “especially enjoyed re-reading Harry Potter during the most stressful times like Trials. I also found that watching comedies was an incredibly effective time waster and mode of stress relief.”

Samuel completed English HL, Mandarin Ab Initio SL, Mathematics SL, History HL, Biology HL, Music SL. His career aspiration is to become a politician, but first he, “would like to either work in foreign investment, more specifically working in the developing world to promote smart investment in infrastructure.” He is inspired by Malcolm Turnbull as a clever political operator and Margaret Thatcher for being the world’s best pragmatist.