



# St. John's College's NEWSLETTER

| August 2021

## A New Generation Rejuvenating - A New St. John's

With our belief of unity in diversity throughout the past 109 years, the College has finally come out from the end of the tunnel of change.

In this warm and conducive environment, students from all around the world can freely exchange good ideas. St. Johnians continue to support each other and push themselves as far as they are able.



With sunrise comes the cacophony of the 82 gang of young rowdy cockatoos in trees and on Aw boon Haw rooftop. On College podium, shouts, screams and laughter, multi-culture face masked boys and girls practicing lacrosse, hockey, volleyball, football, cricket, calisthenic workout, wright-lifting and kundalini yoga contorting. And in all this confusion of jesting and coy flirting, reels and spills, bruises and sweat, come little kids screaming, chasing, running, roller-blading and cycling; while kites, eagles, Aquila above in the sky hovering, diving, soaring!

In common rooms, library, billiard room and workshop: investment banking and startup seminars, speakers espousing, St Johnians enthusing and discussing. Scholars bent over laptops with assignment deadline hours, minutes, fast ending. Minimum CGPAs 2.6? no! 3.3, .... 3.5, ... 4 and rising! Small groups project planning, responsibilities assigned and implementing, sponging and contributing. Choir and drama: voices tried, selected, trained and performing; scripts rejected, retrieved, rewriting; untested thespians memorizing, emotions spilling, despair and soaring. Debaters and orators, high



sounding philosophic and stoic, cynical and untenable, failing points and desperate alternate facts creating. But for facts of life undiluted, "Ouch!" bloodied fingers plastered, valentine rose bouquet created, for Down Syndrome kids mentoring and fundraising.

In rooms and vestry, chapel and SCR, tense and sombre, quiet calculated moves, Chess and Go pieces paced, forked, eliminated, while slighted pawns moving and gambit sleuthing. Bridge players calling out "2 hearts!" "2 spades!" and in desperation "3 no trump!", bewildered silence.... "What!?!... Bloody Hell!" wailing. In college chapel God's purpose for college life religious St Johnians were sharing, while Socratics in world affairs, Plato, Aristotle and Cicero, Confucius, Augustine and Aquinas, Hanfei, Machiavelli and Montesquieu, Madison, Hegel and Marxist philosophic conversations deep reflecting. Bankers, entrepreneurs and alumni sharing and challenging investment banking and start-up wannabee creating.

All, powerful reminders, regardless of upheavals and viruses, College life must go on, prevail and rise defeating despair, economic and pandemic. Thunder drums booming, lions, silver and gold, with greens spewing and good fortune displaying, prancing and dancing. The New Year. Comes the Golden Ox!

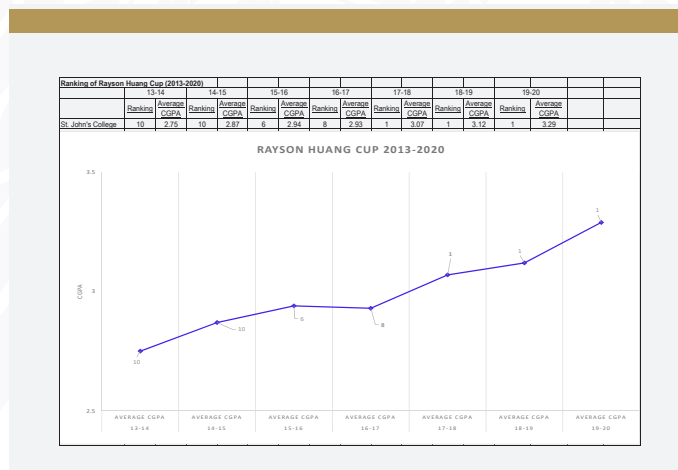
**Dr. Eric CHONG** Master of the College



## Rejuvenating

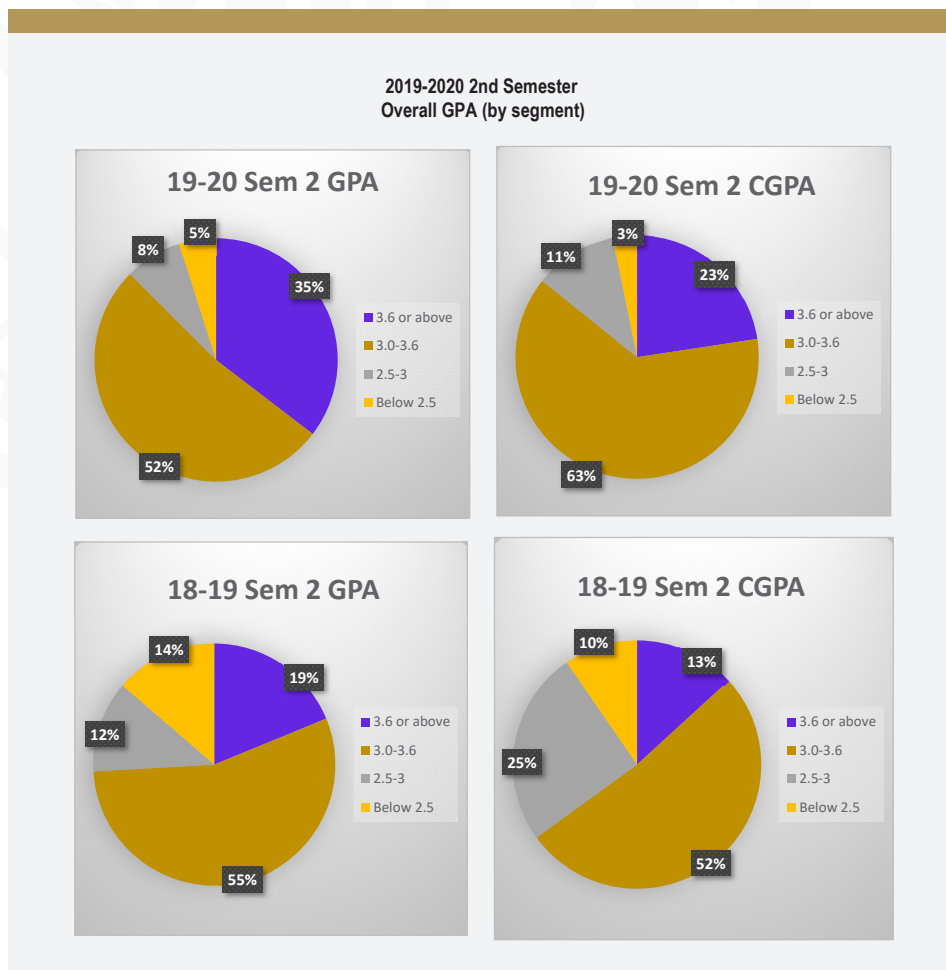
Having been through the dark period, the College has finally come out from the end of the tunnel.

Leaving behind the past incidents of bullying and not being as academically strong as other halls' residents, the College has come to its new era.



## Academic Performance

St. Johnians continue to support each other and push themselves as far as they are able. Apart from the increased CGPA, it is also reflected by the achievements of the Centennial Cup's Champion in 2013-14, 14-15, 15-16 and the First Runner-Up in 2016-17, as well as the Rayson Huang Cup in 2017-18, 18-19 and 19-20.





## Internationalisation

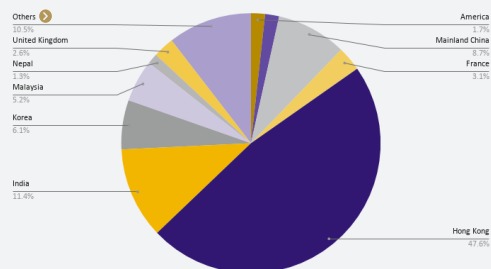
The community embraces the new norm of diversity with a 50:50 proportion of local students and international students of 29 nationalities.

The community is diverse and inclusive; students can learn from each others' cultures through the co-living College life and activities like Chinese New Year and Diwali Night.

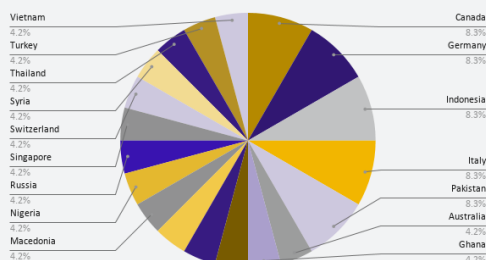
St. Johnians are allowed to freely join any sports and cultural teams they like without being forced to do so.



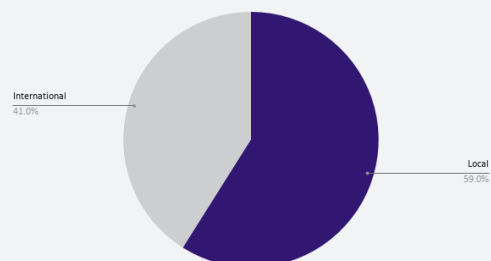
### Nationalities



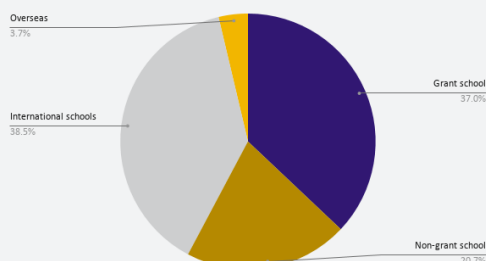
### Others



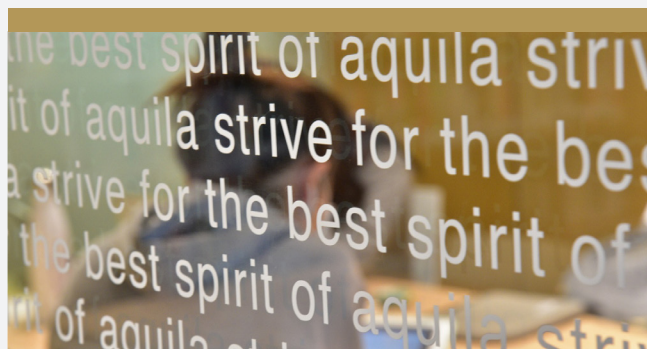
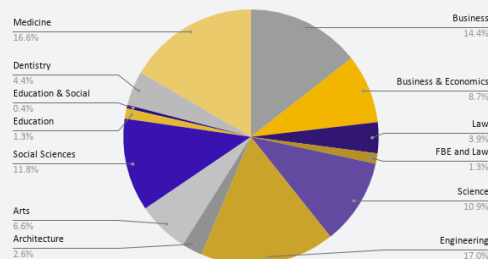
### Local & International Students



### Last School Attended by Locals



### Faculties







One's 20s might not be defining, but they play a role in who we will become personally and professionally. Having spent half of my 20s at the College, I am grateful for experiencing her evolution alongside my learnings. Running for the student association back in 2018 was a brave decision. It was my earliest chance to speak out on the visions and concerns I had over this community. I was first afflicted coping with the opposing voices and the criticisms, especially from



whom I shared this tight-knit family. It took me time to believe that debates are unavoidable sometimes at St. John's, as we are creating changes to overcome obstacles instead to circumvent problems. Dare to say no, think open, and always show my care were all the big lessons to me. The struggles made



### Ryan PAN

- Williamson Prizeman (Class of 2020)
- BEng (CivE) (Hons 1st) & BBA Year5
- SJCSA's Director of Integration (2018-2019)
- 1/F Chairperson (2019-2020)
- Director of SJCAA
- 2/F Tutor
- Incoming Analyst at Goldman Sachs Private Wealth Management

ways honing my personality in those days, and they continue to shape my attitudes to date as a floor tutor, also outside our hilltop at school and workplaces. St. John's diversity embraces the endeavors on our terms. We strive because we believe in, not because others expect or we think we should.



Founding FinMinds with fellow UG students, Ryan shares his knowledge of finance with others. The discussion group encourages St. Johnians to exchange ideas and learn from each other.



Ryan has been an active member of the SJC community since 2016.





## Yammi CHUI, 7/F

- Hockey Team Captain,
- Hong Kong Hockey Team's Vice-Captain of the U18 Junior Team,
- SA Sports Officer,
- Martin Scholarship Recipient,
- Faculty Student Ambassador

Honestly, looking back I still don't know how I manage to accomplish all these but I will say passion has led me pretty far in life. When you are enthusiastic about what you do, you will pour your hearts and souls into your work.

I remember when I was first admitted into St. John's, an alumna gave me a really insightful advice. She told me to "set my priorities straight and no matter what the others said, they have no rights to judge how you manage your time." At first, I did not understand what she means but coming to the end of an overwhelming semester, I got to realise the importance of setting an order for everything. Especially when you have a lot on your plate, but you only have 24 hours a day so you do not have time to attend everything. This is why you need to learn how to trade-off for a commitment that holds dear to you.

Through co-living with fellow St. Johnians, one of the biggest takeaways must be learning how to show compassion to others. Everyone here are dedicated individuals that have a lot going on in their lives. They might not tell you explicitly that they are busy or stressed but that just means you need to be extra accommodating when working in groups. Understanding each other's difficulties and fix the problem together is key to achieving the intended outcomes. After all, we are all adults so throwing a tantrum is just not going to work!



## Astor MAK, 10/F

- MBBS student, Martin Prize Recipient,
- DGS' Former Deputy Head Girl

Recalling the time when I decided to apply for hall just a week or two before moving in, I did not have much idea on how St. John's College was like. After scrolling through posts about the vibrant St. John's life on social media and asking a few of my seniors living in St. John's, I was impressed by the diversity and opportunities that St. John's offers in promoting all-round education and personal growth. And my own experience here definitely proves this right - choosing St. John's is a decision that I will never regret. Seniors take the initiative to reach out to us, making sure we are all doing

well under the hectic Medicine programme. My Liberata sisters are always ready to lend a helping hand, share their own opinions and learn from one another. Although we come from diverse backgrounds and our opinions may differ at times, I feel that the diversity helps us form an even closer bond. There is just so much I can learn from St. Johnians - everyone seems to have such great determination and ambition, trying their best in whatever they do. I'm forever grateful for having such motivational peers, striving our best and getting closer to our goals step by step together!

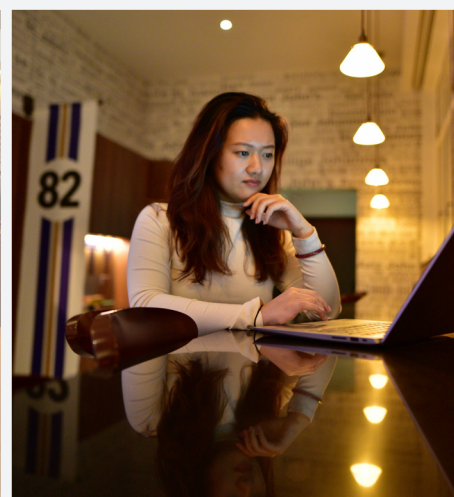




**Dr. Kwok-chun WONG**  
Dean of the College

## To Design a Space is to Design an Atmosphere: The Marden Wing Common Room

“ Sometimes you will never know  
the value of a moment until  
it becomes a memory... ”



St. John's Graduates before 1979 remember that the Marden Wing ground floor was the Dining Hall, venting out a breathtaking terrace, looking onto the golden sun setting and melting in full sea view...

It was then turned into a common room. And the nostalgic memories continue: warm welcoming receptions, overheated summer camps, unrelenting orientations, strategic sport forums, heart beating dances, ingenious talent shows, harmonious choir rehearsals,

original drama productions, sleepy overnight campaigns, current affairs forums, inter-wing debates, romantic Christmas balls, sentimental countdowns, auspicious Chinese New Years, earsplitting rock bands, overwhelming recapture celebrations, AGMs, EGMS, and never the least, our reluctant graduations ...

The 2019 renovation extends this 40 years' memory lane much further back in time, and as well leads the way to many in the distant future.







The outdoor terrace is now paved in mosaics of the fifties, furnished with rattan chairs and coffee tables. The french doors are wide open, allowing the freshest of air and the steadiest of breezes. The teak floorings in the middle of the Room, which are now surrounded by new rustic concrete tiles, are the better half of the 55 years old parquet kept in meticulous conditions; while the rest are carefully reclaimed amongst the obsolete ones. Stepping into the main entrance is a prewar St. John's Hall logo newly cast in brass and carefully set into a rectangular parquet. On the upper part of the long wall facing the lift lobby, a time line is unostentatiously drawn using old photographs and subtitles provided by our Archive Team, telling the St. John's story over a centenary. The full height wall opposite displays a rare photograph of Marden Wing in the sea view, taken back in 1955.

A common room is by definition a place where we share our common lives. Every hour of the day, we see formal and informal gatherings: at the long meeting table, on the high bar stools, in comfy sofas, on casual ottomans, inside the garden glass room, or

simply shoes-off on the wooden platforms; while occasionally, if one is lucky, someone playing light music on the grand piano...

On the far side facing the main entrance are full height mirror doors, installed specifically for dance practices. These foldable doors are openable to a small but delightful stage, designed and well equipped for live performances; and when closed, rock band practices within.

To design a space is to design an atmosphere; an atmosphere in which St. Johnians would freely gather and share our thoughts, our difficulties and our joys of univer-



sity life. And from moment to moment we garner our precious memories, we feel a common spirit, a subtle sense of unity, and after all a delicate sentiment which will in time transfigure into golden remembrances.

Dr. K. C. Wong 18 Feb 2020





Despite only having lived in the College for half a year as an exchange student, I felt the need early on to give back to this wonderful community that I call my second family. My floor brothers especially accepted me as their own and I am proud to say that this bond to all my brothers, and to my TNS(同年先; i.e. student of the same academic year) especially, has endured until this day.



Max invited St. Johnians to his place in Switzerland.



**Maximilian Aaron VOGT**  
Residential Tutor, 5/F

It was ultimately this strong bond that has led me back to the College. I have always felt that I would not be a person who would change the world, but I wanted to support the people that will. This place is full of inspiring people with lots of potential, that I believe will make our world a better place. I came back as a tutor because this gives me the opportunity to use the resources of the College in such a way that

best benefits the people that I have so much faith in.

A day in the life of a St. Johnian can be very hectic, a life as member of this community will be very rich. I want to encourage everyone to take the time to go to other floors, talk to people you have never talked to and learn from them as much as you can. The people around us a truly a gift.



## Alumni

The group of alumni rejoins the floor after graduation as tutors to support current students' physical and emotional wellbeing.





Before moving to St. John's, I lived in a different hall during my freshman year. As an international student without much prior exposure to Hong Kong, I was taken aback at the divide between the local and non-local students that existed not only in my hall at the time, but also all throughout campus. It was a challenge to find a group of like-minded and ambitious peers who shared a similar drive to challenge themselves and grow both as a group and as individuals.



I did find a common theme among many of the friends I did make: St. John's College. A number of the students on scholarship I met during several briefing sessions lived in St. John's. Additionally, my floor tutor at the time was a St. John's alumni who introduced me to his friends at St. John's. I found myself spending an increasing amount of time in the college, and many of the security guards at the front desk recognized me even before I moved into the hall.

Transferring to St. John's during my sophomore year was one of the most impactful decisions I made in university. It's a concentration of the best and brightest students at HKU who excel not only inside the classroom, but also outside of it - starting businesses, creating podcasts, and engaging in interesting research projects and social movements. Living within these walls has allowed me to expand my worldview and grow both as an individual and as a member of the community.

As a tutor now, I treasure this opportunity to be able to give back to the community and further foster an environment of learning, collaboration, and growth.



**David HAN**  
Residential Tutor, 3/F





**Steffi SZE, 9/F**  
Handball Team Captain

Since SJC started accepting international students applications and changed the whole hall into a more internationalised community, it has no doubt that many things has changed. It was definitely harder to pass on the old values and traditions that St. Johnians used to have, simply because nowadays hall is just not the top priority of students. On one hand, it is sad to see some of the collective memories me or previous students treasured could hardly be passed on, but on the other hand I am happy with how SJC has evolved into, people are smarter, more talented, each and every single one of them have their own passion and goal to strive towards. I learnt a lot from the new comers in SJC, there is surely no other places in Hong Kong where you could find such a tight-knitted community with people coming from diverse backgrounds. Frankly speaking, during the early stages of internationalisation the situation wasn't that ideal, not because of the foreign students themselves, but simply because the expectations on living in SJC was not clearly stated during admission, and when they understand and is willing to commit, there is actually no difference

between international students and local students. I am very grateful that I have the chance to experience both the "older SJC" and then newly evolved SJC nowadays, both the experience has definitely shaped me into a better person. I would say that after living for four years, I am more outspoken, critical yet open-minded, in addition, in the past people used to just put hall as their top top priority (being a hall-plastic they say), those memories are irreplaceable, but whats next after leaving SJC? Thus, the fact that stjohnians nowadays all have their own ambition and is trying to integrate their own passion into the sjc life (eg make talks, fin-minds, 82 news etc.) is surely a more healthy approach to make the most out of hall life, which I did benefit and learnt a lot from.







When I was a freshman, St John’s was rumoured to be “Chur” (demanding), arrogant and blue-blood to name a few. 5 years later today, “openness, empathy, understanding” are the three values that I have personally experienced and gained in St John’s.

In the past few years, St John’s has gone through radical changes in its demography and values. Having had the luck of listening to the stories of this increasingly diverse community, I have developed into a more inclusive, accepting individual towards unfamiliar cultures and lifestyles, such as the first hand stories about fatal incidents



**Tiffany HUI, 9/F**  
Handball Team Captain

in Syria and the fascinating discussions about Indian culture and traditional festivals. These heartfelt stories have opened me up to a world greater than what I’m used to. An echo chamber, that I otherwise would have been oblivious to, has been broken and my world view has been reconstructed.



This community has evolved into a more inclusive, accepting one where individuals are encouraged to embrace diversity. As a part of this process, I have experienced a growth that started in St. John’s but has reached myself as well.



The facilities have been redesigned to support students’ College life. The transparent Library’s Idea Room with glass walls is included for group projects and intellectual exchange.



**Lawrence WAN, 6/F**  
SA's Chairperson

2020 is a year to remember by any measure. Social movement compounded with a global pandemic caused life in St. John's, like the rest of the world, to halt abruptly. However, all of us here living in St. John's are grateful that student-life in St. John's has been resilient, and thrived despite the challenges. I would attribute the success of this community to the diverse student body, and the unique environment at St. John's College.

It has been 4 years since St. John's College made the decision to officially invite non-local students to participate in orientation, and the barrier between locals and non-locals has been slowly fading. Students are joining St. John's College wishing to be exposed to an international environment while achieving the original goals of hall education. As a result, the terms

“local” and “non-local” are disappearing from the daily lexicon of St. Johnians. Reasons may be due to the fact that we all come from a wide spectrum of backgrounds, making it increasingly difficult to define who is a “local” and who is not. Furthermore, the use of English as a common language connects JMs from around the world, broadening the horizon of St. Johnians and exposes us to people and perspectives that we wouldn't have known. Now, St. John's is a melting pot of different nationalities, opinions, and beliefs, where constructive discourse is encouraged.



UGSA Council of Directors 2020-2021



UGSA Council of Directors and Officers

In order for this strong student body to actualize their full potential, St. John's College has undergone many renovations to create a home-like environment for the students to interact and exchange ideas. Common areas such as the Junior Common Room, Bar, and the Idea Room in Library, have become hubs for students to gather. Whether for academic purpose or leisure, these venues act as a co-working and co-living space for all St. Johnians, furthering the feeling of a “Home away from home”.

Challenges are not over yet. COVID-19 still ravages the world. Thus, I wish that St. John's College would continue to cultivate the atmosphere of embracing all who chose to live in this place and treasure this unique environment that nurtured so many bright young minds. All the best in the coming year and strive for the best.

Special thanks to photographers Rocky Lee and Javis Tang, designer Li Qi as well as St. Johnians student models.