Our new year 9s

We were very happy to have 301 new year 9 students join us this year. In March and April we held Fast Forward Awards Evenings on four of the UWS campuses to welcome our new students and their families. It was fantastic to have strong support from families. It is important for students to recognise that they have a network of supporters at home, school and UWS all wanting them to have the best opportunities in life.

Our year 9 students have also visited us on campus for their Skills Days where they had the opportunity to reflect on their personal strengths and explore education and training options for selected career paths. Students were assisted by UWS Master of Teaching students and had the chance to find out much about university life.

The Fast Forward “Amazing Race” confirmed what a great group of year 9 students we have with us. Working in teams and using their leadership skills students solved cryptic clues and navigated their way around campus, rising to the challenge with such enthusiasm you would have thought they really were competing for a million dollar prize!

Year 9 students have also had a number of in-school mentoring sessions with the Master of Teaching students and feedback from both mentors and mentees has been very positive. A number of our mentees were quite sad to hear that their mentors would complete their placements with us at the end of semester 1. It was wonderful to have these mentors in the program. We wish them well and know they will be great teachers when they complete their studies at UWS. We hope they offered guidance to inspire their mentees to work hard and follow their dreams.

We have three new school partners in 2010 in Cranebrook HS, Parramatta HS and Strathfield South HS, giving us a total of 25 schools. We would like to extend a special welcome to them and also say thanks to our continuing partners for their support.

Remember we would love to hear from students in our newsletters so if you have something to share whether it be an inspirational quote, a study tip or a reflection on any of the Fast Forward events drop us an email at fastforward@uws.edu.au

Regards,
The Fast Forward Team

If you can dream you can do it – so shoot for the moon, even if you miss you will land among the stars.
In the Spotlight

Name: Jenny LAI

Degree: Bachelor of Arts/ Masters of Teaching (Secondary)

High School: Chifley College Bidwill Campus

How did the Fast Forward program help you in preparing for university?

Fast Forward gave me insight into university life – how the system works, what courses UWS provides, facilities, opportunities, and familiarity with the place. This helped alleviate the stress in the transition to University. It also motivated me to work harder during my HSC as I knew what was required to get into my course.

What do you hope to achieve from your studies?

I hope to become a teacher and to teach overseas to under-privileged children. I would also like to become a writer and a spokesperson for human rights, as I believe everyone deserves an equal chance in life.

Why did you choose this career path?

I want to make a difference in life. I believe everyone has a right to an education as knowledge is the foundation to success in all walks of life. I hope to inspire and motivate change in disadvantaged areas as well as helping others achieve their dreams. I believe a career in teaching will help me achieve my goal.

What are your best memories from school?

When I think of school, I think “life changing”. School shaped me into the person I am today. I have a lot of fond memories, but the most memorable moment would have to be graduation day, when I realised I could achieve anything in life; I wasn’t limited by the area I came from. This boosted my confidence and gave me a more positive outlook on life. I also had wonderful relationships with my friends and teachers, who helped me to achieve success at school. I am forever grateful to the people who helped me get to where I am today.

Getting Better Exam Results

What do you need to do?

- Practise your writing skills!
- Revise your work thoroughly
- Carefully dissect/pull apart the question so you understand what it is asking you to do and so that you answer the question correctly (this may mean that you make notes around or near the question to help you understand it)
- Identify the verb in the question (i.e. explain, assess, analyse, describe, evaluate, recount, respond etc.)
- Read any additional information in the question that explains what you will be assessed on, so that you know how to structure and what to include in your answer
- Use evidence in your answer to support your arguments
- Throughout your essay refer back to the key subject in the question, so that:
  - You don’t wander off the subject, and
  - The marker can see that you are focused on answering the actual question
- Look at the mark value of the question. Don’t spend five minutes answering a question that is only worth two marks – the marker probably only wants two things, for example, a language technique used in a poem and an example of that technique.

How do you construct an essay?

The standard, or common, format for an essay is:

- An introduction (which refers directly to the question and provides a summary of what you are going to include in your answer)
- The body of the essay – the paragraphs (each one should describe or discuss a different point or topic within your answer)
- The conclusion (this wraps up your essay, providing your final analysis and confirms to the marker that you have made and supported your response with evidence).

How do you write about an essay?

- Before you begin an essay in any exam it is worth taking the time to complete a quick dot point list, or a mindmap, of the types of things you want to cover in your essay. It is very hard to fill a blank page, however, if you have a list of things to write about it is easier to go from one paragraph to the next. It makes writing an essay in exam conditions much easier and helps to keep you focused on the question.