

CGHS Academic Recognition Day Speech 2014

Since year 12, I have accomplished things I could only ever dream of doing. I gained entry into one of the top law schools in Australia at the University of New South Wales, I am completing both a law and economics degree at the same time, and I am honoured to receive the John Martin Green Scholarship in law as well the UNSW Academic Achievement Award. But the most surprising aspect of this all, was when I received a call from the Sydney Morning Herald to do an interview about my achievements. My success so far has remarkably come from one thing, simply doing my very best in the HSC. The closest thing I can compare the HSC to is the Hunger Games. It is about more than just ability, but putting on a show. What I mean by that is making your-self stand out. When you're in an arena knowing in the back of your mind that your competing against 78000 other students, it is normal for your sense of belonging to be challenged. You feel you cannot compete whether it is because of small things like self-doubt, fear of failure, expectations or something bigger, like excessive family responsibilities, financial problems or a very sick family member. I was faced with all these throughout year 12, but the reality and pressures of the HSC made me feel I could never achieve an atar above 90. I wanted to give up, but one thing I learnt was I was the only one holding myself back. When you are faced with negativity you can choose to hide behind it and use it as an excuse to not do well, or you can accept it and use it as a target where you can shoot your arrow of determination upon. I chose to use my arrow but you need to know where and how to shoot. That's what goals are for and I suggest have plenty of them. They give you direction and purpose. All you really need is a game plan that works. The most crucial tactics of all is TIME MANAGEMENT and STRESS ELIMINATION. The key is to be open-minded about your options. Do not ever be let down if your assessment marks are not what others want them to be or what you want them to be. Just move on and focus on the next step. It's okay to make mistakes, and they're better made early than late but it's all about fixing them and trying again. Personally, I didn't have much time to study as I would have liked which I think is the case for most of us but I learnt to use time wisely. Doing well in anything does not come down to how many hours you put, but how effectively you use the time available to you. The best way to stand out of the crowd is doing reading and researching beyond the scope of the syllabus. The syllabus may tell you what you need to know but it does not say how you learn it. That's where teachers come in. However I must stress a certain level of individual responsibility must be there. Teachers are mentors, they guide you, train you and teach you how to survive but at the end of the day they're not doing the exams. They are part of a large support team, which I also feel is necessary to have. If your family is not there for you, always remember the school is but more importantly, your

friends and classmates are. In essence, the HSC is a team effort just as it is individual commitment. Stress is inevitable during exam time and like flappy bird if you don't get rid of it in time, it will consume your life. From experience, I know how bad an impact stress can have on exam performance. To eliminate stress you need to replace it with something else, CONFIDENCE. Stress kicks in when you undermine your abilities or when you're under prepared. Trust yourself to do well and you will. Everyone here must remember that the HSC is not the be all end all. If for any reason you do not achieve what you really wanted all you have to do is choose another arrow and shoot it in a different direction because you can't give more than what you can. To year 12's this year, may the odds be ever in your favour and although stressful, enjoy your last year at high school because YOHSO, you only HSC once and a three month break awaits. And to everyone else, enjoy high school cause you only high school once.

Thank you.

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