



Verb in Action

From the Desk of Dr. Odom...

Monitoring Student Progress

Success at Verbum Dei is defined as ensuring achievement for *every* student. To reach this goal, Verbum Dei will monitor student progress two times a year using a standardized assessment. This assessment will a) provide parents and student with information about the students' areas of strength and those areas of improvement b) provide teachers with data that will allow them to make more informed instructional decisions and c) provide the school with information that will allow us to continually evaluate the effectiveness of our academic program.

Extending the School Day

For the 2016-2017 school year, Verbum Dei will be moving to a 7th period schedule for all students. Please see the description of the additional courses below:

	Course description
9 th grade	Physical Education: In accordance to the California Department of Education requirement, 9 th grade students will take 1 year of Physical Education.
10 th grade	Physical Education (<i>see above</i>)
11 th grade	SAT/ ACT Test Preparation: This course is designed to increase verbal and math skills of students prior to the SAT/ ACT tests (Spring)
12 th grade	College Guidance Course: This course will focus on completing college applications, financial aid and scholarships applications, pre-college workshops, and college acceptance discernment.

As a result of the additional 7th period course, our bell schedules are different. Students will be dismissed at 3:25pm unless we have a liturgy or are on special schedule. We are excited about the additions of these classes and look forward to seeing how they benefit our students.

FIRST Flight Program

The Flight Program is a comprehensive program that seeks to ensure all Verbum Dei students have the academic, emotional, social, and spiritual tools and resources they need to graduate from Verbum Dei and a 4-year college/ university. Some aspects of this program include, but are not limited to:

- 1-year College Guidance Course
- Identity formation
- College visits/ campus exposure
- Mentorship opportunities
- Spiritual formation
- Leadership development
- Parent education

We are excited about these new initiatives and look forward with great anticipation to support our students to reach their academic goals. As always, if you have any questions, please contact me.

Navajo Service Immersion Trip: March 19 – March 25

Each spring we take students on our week-long Navajo Service Immersion Trip. This March, eleven students and four adult leaders had the great privilege of spending time in Arizona and Utah performing community service and getting to know Navajo culture. The group left for Arizona early (5 am!) on Saturday and made a pit stop at the Grand Canyon. The whole group was blown away by the beauty of God’s creation. It was a ‘grand’ start to the trip.



Once we entered the Navajo reservation in Utah, we met up with Nelson, a Navajo elder and our great and gracious guide. Nelson not only offered us places to stay but he also shared his knowledge of Navajo culture and his wisdom. He told stories of his youth, shared the struggles of his tribe, and explained to us the different customs, values, and ceremonies of the Navajo, or “Diné,” people. That night, Nelson let us sleep in a hogan – a traditional Navajo dwelling place made of wood beams and packed dirt. We all laid our sleeping bags on the ground and listened to a traditional Navajo story before going to bed.

Nelson also allowed us to use one of his sweat lodges. The sweat lodge is a Native spiritual activity. The students were able to go into the lodge, reflect and pray, and have Nelson pray over them in his Diné language. Senior Luis Velasco remarked that during this “amazing experience, I was able to feel a separation between self and body and felt the negative energy leave my body.” The experience in the sweat lodge was certainly a highlight of the trip.

In addition to immersing themselves in the Navajo culture, the students performed service. The group spent three hours one afternoon at a Diné community called Westwater picking up trash that had been dumped by outsiders. We also learned about how Westwater came about, the many problems it faces including lack of electricity and running water, and the amazing strides they have taken as a community to achieve their goals – when we go back to Westwater next year they will have running water! It was an inspiring conversation!

The group also spent two mornings visiting a place called Transitions, a gift shop which also serves as a center for adults with mental and physical disabilities. The students put on a show for the people of Transitions and then had great fun singing and dancing with them. We visited, read books, and played games with the adults there. Most importantly, we laughed and smiled with them. This was a very special experience for our students. One student, Edgar Rivera, explained that “the way the smiles lit up on their faces when we interacted with them made the entire trip for me.” I couldn’t have said it better myself.

The trip concluded with a daylong hike at Natural Bridges National Monument. Not only was this hike absolutely beautiful, it was a real test since many of us had never hiked very far. Senior Angel Vazquez called the hike “phenomenal,” sharing that after the nine mile hike he felt “invincible; mentally and physically prepared for any challenge.”



Overall, this experience was great. It was truly awesome to see our students walking a mile in the shoes of others, learning about different cultures and peoples, serving those in need, and being transformed themselves. Here are some words from senior Angel Carrillo by way of concluding: “Utah was amazing! Helping the community was a great experience. I recommend that anyone who has the opportunity to attend does so!”

Applications for the 2017 trip will come out in Campus Ministry during early second semester of next year! More details will be made available when the trip gets closer.

CWSP Spotlight



Congratulations to freshman Joshua Aguilar, Student Intern of the Month, December!

Corporate Partner – Loyola Law School

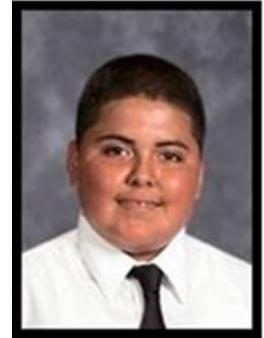


His supervisor, Stephanie, wrote:

“Josh has a very strong work ethic and he is so great to have in the office. He is always happy to do whatever we ask of him and is always eager to do more. He is mature beyond his years to say the least. He even came to work when he was ill which says a lot about his commitment and integrity for the job. He is truly a pleasure to work with and we thank him for all that he does for the office.”

Congratulations to sophomore Christian Mejia, Student Intern of the Month, January!

Corporate Partner – Allen Lund Company



His supervisor Pam wrote:

“Christian is a fast learner, ambitious, hard-working and very dependable. Not only is he a joy to work with, but I admire his amazing work ethic at such a young age. I look forward to the days when he comes in, as I can trust he will get his job done and be a great help to our department and all of his co-workers. While he is professional and mature beyond his years, we have also enjoyed his genuinely friendly and fun personality.”

Congratulations to junior Luis Mercado, Student Intern of the Month, February!

Corporate Partner – BNY Mellon



His supervisor, Siew Foo, wrote:

“Tikisha and I want to nominate Luis for student of the month. We want to nominate him because of his dedication and diligence the he exhibits. He is not afraid to tackle the work and projects we assign him. We come to depend on him to assist with various projects that can be tedious and time consuming. He can be counted on to complete the assignments accurately and in a timely manner without supervision.

Luis has been with BNY Mellon since his freshman year and he is an integral part of the BNY Mellon family.”

Congratulations to senior Jesus Alvarez, Student Intern of the Month, March!

Corporate Partner – Latham & Watkins



His supervisor, Francis Kipp, wrote:

“Jesus joined us in his Freshman year and is now a Senior. He quickly learned the operations of the Library here at Latham & Watkins. Jesus consistently excels in whatever assignments he is given and follows all guidelines regarding decorum, punctuality and attendance. He has lately also become a go-to person for our Technology Department. Jesus has actually been our “student of the month” every month for the last four years! We are very grateful for the opportunity to work with him.

He is very mature and reliable, not to mention hard-working and a self-starting individual. Jesus has been very dependable, trust worthy, efficient, always punctual and ready to take on his duties and assignments. Jesus is also respectful, cheerful and brightens up the Library when he arrives. There is never a hesitation in assigning Jesus complicated assignments. We have assigned him projects that require attention to detail and he has always asked questions when in doubt. Jesus has also been helping out in our Technology Support Department with various projects. The supervisor of the department asks for Jesus by name. The Technology Department reports that they are very happy with his work and hope to continue working with Jesus.

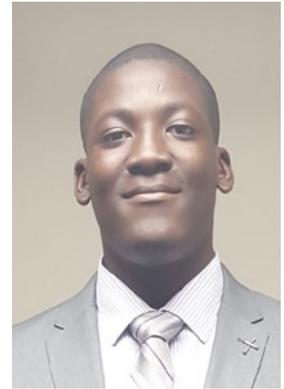
He has always performed beyond our expectations in the Library, Records Department and the Technology Support Department. He is truly a joy to have at Latham & Watkins.”

Athletics Spotlight...Christopher Clarkston

Senior Football player, Christopher Clarkston Jr., is excited about the opportunity to get a college education and continue his football career in the fall. Chris has been accepted to the following colleges and universities:

Baylor, Colorado State, San Jose State, Hofstra, Fordham, Marquette, Xavier, Drexel, Marist, Humbolt, Grand Canyon, Willamette, Miles, St. Johns, Cal Lutheran, Chapman, La Verne, Cal State Northridge, and Cal State Dominguez Hills.

His top three choices are Baylor, Willamette, and St. Johns. Look for Chris on National Commitment Day and see which university he chooses!



VERBUM DEI HIGH SCHOOL
CLASS OF 2016

