

ELIZABETH MOIR SCHOOL

RECORD FINANCIAL AID AT US UNIVERSITIES



Seth Jayawardane, Johns Hopkins



Rivi Wijsekera, Yale



Atheek Azmi, Amherst

Moir students have been offered places next year at six universities ranked in the top ten in the world in one of the main university rankings – Oxford, Yale, Columbia, Imperial, UCL and Johns Hopkins – as well as two of the top four Liberal Arts colleges in the US, Amherst and Wellesley. This includes Rachel Hayward and Kaavya Gnanam who will be starting at Oxford and Columbia, respectively, in September after taking Gap Years.

Rivi Wijsekera has been offered a place at Yale, one of the best known universities in the world, with financial aid worth \$70,000 per year. He was also offered highly prestigious merit scholarships (as opposed to needs-based financial aid) by Emory and by Washington and Lee University, the former being worth a total of \$275,000 over the entire course.

Seth Jayawardane was offered places by both Johns Hopkins and Ivy League Brown. Given his interest in biotechnology and medical research, he chose Hopkins, which is a world leader in these areas with its famous hospital and public health school. Seth was helped by being part of our team that won a Bronze medal for Sri Lanka in last year's Robotics Olympiad in Dubai, highlighting the importance of achievements that make an application stand out.

Zara Kulatunga was offered places at Tufts, Wellesley and Mount Holyoke and has chosen to go to Wellesley, which offers dual degrees with MIT and is one of the historic Seven Sisters Colleges.

Atheek Azmi was offered places at Imperial College London and Amherst College but chose Amherst, one of only five universities in the US to be need-blind for international students and to offer full-need financial aid, along with MIT, Harvard, Princeton and Yale. This led to him receiving aid worth \$320,000.

Our two Head Prefects, Yumna Hussain and Areeb Atheequ, received aid worth over \$500,000 in total from Lafayette College, one of the 'Little Ivies', along with Amherst and other leading Liberal Arts colleges. Lafayette's International Admissions Counselor said she

could 'not remember another time when two students from the same school overseas, both needing significant financial aid, were accepted in the same year'. She also said 'what stood out to the committee were the letters of recommendation ... they really can make a difference.'

Other students to receive financial aid to enable them to attend university overseas were Ruqayyah Irshadeen and Janindu Nanayakkara, who will both be going to NYUAD in September, with aid worth over \$75,000 per year each. Sishir Surjit, meanwhile, will be going to NYU in New York.

A large number of students have been offered places at top UK universities, including Shaadia Cader at Imperial; Navik Bandara, Dinsara Ginige and Ameli Vidanearachchi at UCL; and Siumi Abeywickrema at LSE. Students have also received offers from almost all the Russell Group universities including Bristol, Durham, Edinburgh, King's College London, Leeds, Manchester, Nottingham, Southampton and Warwick.

Our students can be especially proud of earning places at top universities as this has been the most competitive year ever for university admissions, with many colleges reporting an increase in applications of 40%, after students deferred university for a year due to COVID-19.

Perhaps even more important than our students' exceptional record of winning places at top universities is their success at university and after. One measure of this is the number of former students currently doing postgraduate research at top universities. Former Head Prefect Sanush Nukshan, who graduated from Ivy League Cornell, is currently doing a Master's at Stanford part-time, while continuing to work for Apple. Insaif Bakeer Markar will start a Master's in Diplomatic Studies at Oxford University, where he will join Alesha De Fonseka, who will be doing an MSc in Learning and Teaching, after completing her PGCE at Oxford this year. After graduating from NYU Shanghai, Safia Kariapper has started a PhD in Chemistry at Georgetown in Washington DC, while another former student is about to begin her PhD in History at Ivy League Columbia.



**THE QUEEN'S
COMMONWEALTH ESSAY
COMPETITION**

Congratulations to our students for winning a record number of Gold Awards in The Queen's Commonwealth Essay Competition for 2020. Well done, in particular, to Anna Shearer and Niara Wijeyasinghe for winning their second Gold Award, only our 3rd and 4th students ever to win two Golds.

Bronze: Malith Gunawardena, Emma Jayasinghe, Luke Jayasinghe, Rumi Nagpal, Anjalie Perera, Nimeth Ranwala, Di Xie, Yumna Zaheed

Silver: Raveen Akuretiyagama, Louisa Deemer, Kamille Le Berre, Navendra Marcelline, Hannah Nallathamby, Muhammad Zaid

Gold: Clementina Deane, Linara Gunasekera, Insiya Lukmanjee, Annika Perera, Savaira Sammoon, Anna Shearer, Niara Wijeyasinghe

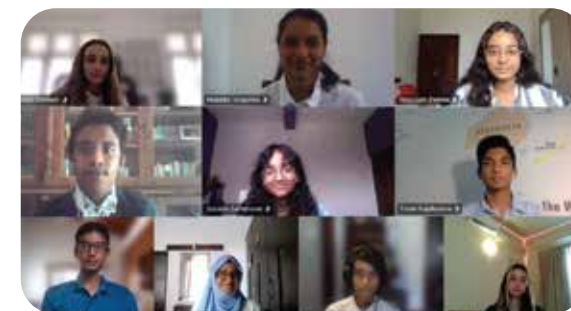
**RECORD
SAT
RESULTS**

Every year, classes are organised for Lower 6th students to prepare them for the SAT exams, which are the first step in the admissions process for students applying to US universities. Congratulations to this year's class, who have earned a record number of scores above 1500, ranking them within the top 1% of students taking the test, and especially to Dineth Wijayawardana, who scored 1590 out of a possible 1600, the second-highest score possible, with 790/800 in Reading & Writing and 800/800 in Maths.

Dineth Wijayawardana	1590
Venumi Gamage	1580
Hanza Anver	1550
Amadie Gajanaika	1530
Arshana Welivita	1510
Jiwoo Won	1500
Sahansa Pathirana	1490
Eleanora Deemer	1460
Saad Sifar	1460

DEBATING & MODEL UNITED NATIONS

Debating and Model United Nations conferences are among the few extra-curricular activities to have been able to carry on as normal this academic year, with Debating especially well-suited to online competition. We hosted our annual Impromptu Debating Championship online, which was a great success. In the Lilian Nixon Debating Competition hosted by Ladies' College, one of the most prestigious events of the year, our B team reached the quarter-finals while Serika Siriwardhana and Seravi Harris from our A team were ranked 3rd and 5th best speakers overall. Seravi was also chosen as 2nd best speaker in a tournament organised by Royal Institute.



Three of our students were chosen to chair committees at the Sri Lanka Model United Nations in September: Areeb Atheequ was Vice-President of the Security Council, Nimeth Ranwala was Vice-President of General Assembly Committee 1 and Janindu Nanayakkara was President of the IAEA.



At the Colombo Model United Nations in March, students debated issues including preparedness for future pandemics, sustainable recovery from COVID-19 and humanitarian crises in Africa. Nimeth and Seravi were selected to be part of the Executive Committee that organised the conference.

Congratulations to our students who won awards:

SLMUN
Hamza Anver Higher Commendation
Savaira Sammoon Best Press Statement
Anna Shearer Best News Agency

COMUN
Louisa Deemer Best Novice Delegate
Tienn Kapilasena Best Novice Delegate
Mandari Perera Honorary Mention
Malaika Sequeira Honorary Mention

BAD AUDITIONS... ON CAMERA!

The Senior School staged its first ever online play in February. Nora Deemer played a casting director desperately looking for a replacement for the lead actor in a hit TV series from the array of misfits found by her over-enthusiastic assistant, Roger, played by Tienn Kapilasena. Nora and Tienn held the performance together in the central roles, bringing style and individuality to all their lines. The format provided great character roles for lots of students, from Seravi Harris advertising Moorixa foot cream, to Malaika Sequeira's exhausted actress drinking more and more Red Bull in a vain effort to learn the lines, Anna Shearer's online influencer, Avlok Wignaraja's penguin and Tae Hyun Won's technically challenged old man.

The production played with all the issues everyone has encountered over the past year with video conferencing from technical difficulties to people being too close to their camera or too quiet to be heard. For everyone who had been involved in online school for the previous year, the opening music – the ring tone that plays while you wait for a Teams call to connect – was instantly recognisable.

It was wonderful that students had the opportunity to take part in a play and collaborate despite not being able to meet up in person. By shifting the focus of rehearsals to "acting for screen", the cast were able to explore and develop their skills as screen actors, building their overall skillset as performers. They put on a great show that the whole school community enjoyed.



JUNIOR SCHOOL INTER-HOUSE BASKETBALL



Despite the pandemic, which resulted in the cancellation of our annual Inter-House A Division Basketball Tournament, we were able to host our first A Division Individual Skills Competition when we were in school in October. The competition



was opened with a speech by Basketball Captain, Sidhara Weerasooria. The B Division and KG1 to Junior 2 Skills Competitions were then completed online.

JUNIOR SCHOOL PLAY: 10 WAYS TO SURVIVE LIFE IN QUARANTINE



This year, our young actors and actresses went from being stage performers to movie stars! The show was all about surviving life in quarantine; from making unexpected friendships to ruling their own kingdom, the stars put on a show to remember. We also had a VIP preview for the cast members. It was an opportunity to share memories from rehearsals and to commend and appreciate each other's performances, albeit through the Zoom chat. We also shared yummy snacks, virtually of course!



A SOCIALLY DISTANCED *Christmas*

Christmas came early for the Junior School last year, with the teachers decorating their homes (and themselves) to put on a special Christmas performance for our students. The prefects, or in this case the 'Elves', called a meeting to bring some much-needed Christmas cheer to Santa. Santa's 'Reindeer' and the teachers sang and danced along to Christmas tunes, to liven up the mood and prove that this is indeed the most wonderful time of the year. The show ended with a surprise appearance by none other than the star cricketer, Kumar Sangakkara!

