

## 1.6 *Shuyuan* Program: Unparalleled Opportunities

The ISF Academy is a world-class school with a unique secondary program. Relatively small, the secondary student body receives individualized attention in the context of an IB education. One of the key components of the school's exceptionalism is the *Shuyuan* program, a remarkable goldmine of opportunities that are unparalleled at any other secondary school globally. The *Shuyuan* program is open for application to the Academy students only and provides intellectual adventures that complement and enhance the rigorous MYP and IB curriculum.

The UGC team observes a direct correlation between student participation in *Shuyuan* program options and success in the college application process. Beyond the requisite skill development, students' intellectual focus and maturity increase, as does confidence with challenging experiences that are at a university level. In an analysis of the Class of 2020, one hundred percent of students who were accepted at a top tier university had participated in at least one *Shuyuan* program. These programs include courses, participation in research, conferences, study at Cambridge, Oxford and Columbia, as well as summer options at the Academy. The UGC strongly suggests that families consider exploring the *Shuyuan* programs.

The Academy *Shuyuan* program is based on the classical Chinese learning sanctuary and the Platonic Academy; the goal of which is independent study and enquiry under the guidance of a master. Set in the 21st century, the courses that the *Shuyuan* program offers aim to promote deep and thoughtful scholarship in a multidisciplinary environment, allowing selected students to pursue challenging branches of knowledge beyond the regularly-taught curriculum. These courses require long-term dedication, as the skills being developed are cumulative and form the foundation for rigorous, lifelong learning. The courses offered are mainly geared to secondary students but have been extended to include courses and opportunities for Grades 3 to 5 as well. The ultimate goals are the development of sound scholarship, solid academic study, challenging research opportunities, intellectual curiosity and practical wisdom. A very popular option is the ***Shuyuan* Molecular Biology Laboratory (SMBL)**, which is a university-grade research

facility available to students on a full-time basis. The laboratory supports individual projects and after-school activities for students from Grades 7 to 12, outreach initiatives for primary school classes, and even short courses in molecular biology for parents and students.

With the help of *Shuyuan* partners such as the Hong Kong Jockey Club (HKJC) and the Ocean Park Conservation Foundation (OPCF), SMBL students have profiled gut bacteria associated with racehorses, penguins and other animals. They have also isolated novel environmental strains with potential uses in biotechnology, and they have begun to investigate processes that drive bacterial evolution, such as horizontal gene transfer and bacteriophage interactions.

The SMBL and all its offerings is but one of an array of choices. Some others to consider are listed by subject, please [click here](#) for details.

There are also opportunities for students to publish their research, whether through conference proceedings or the school's academic journal, the *Bauhinia* (with an International Standard Serial Number); see the latest publication [here](#). This allows the students to graduate with a citable publication.

Having your child participate in the *Shuyuan* program is an invaluable opportunity that should not be missed. For inquiries, please contact Ms Rachel Oser at [rosier@isf.edu.hk](mailto:rosier@isf.edu.hk).