

# Tradition as Inspiration

International Boys' Schools Coalition  
18<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference / London, UK

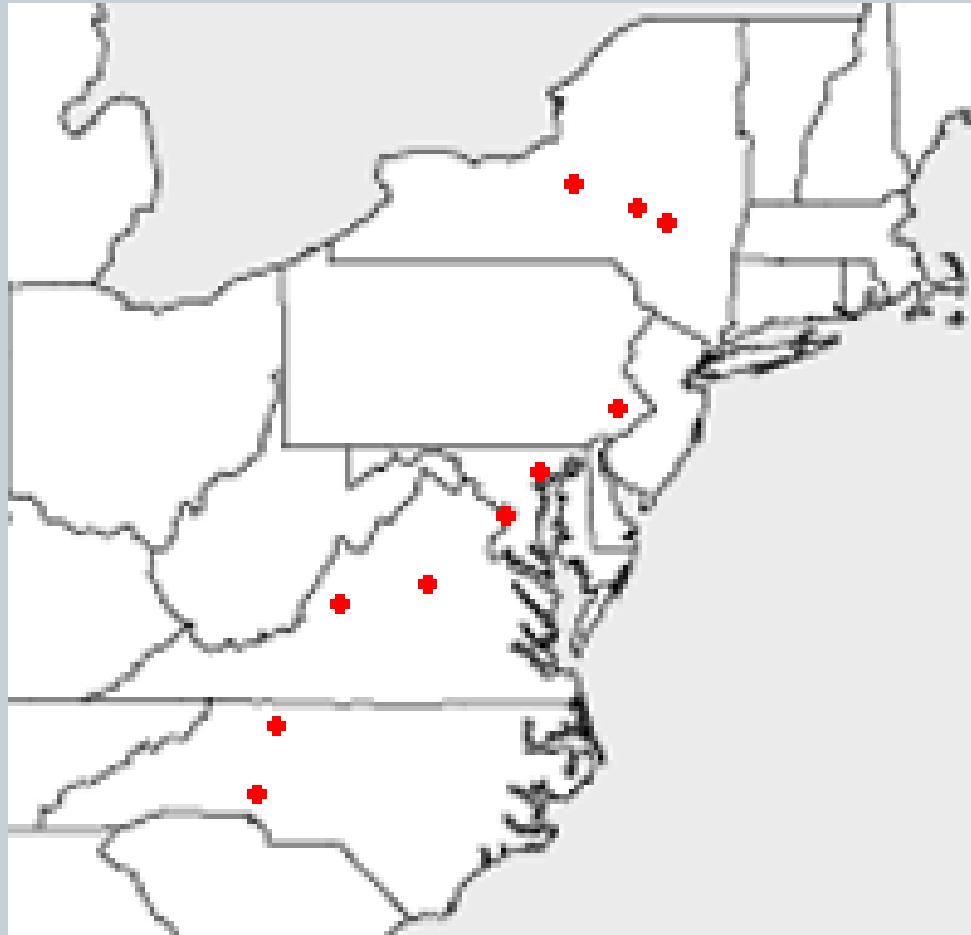


**Phil Kokotailo**  
Roxbury Latin School  
Boston, Massachusetts



**Patrick Gallagher**  
University School  
Cleveland, Ohio

# The College Tour Tradition



# Davidson College



- **Student Enrollment: 1,700**
- **Location: Davidson, North Carolina**
- **Town Population: 7,200**
- **Distance to a Major Metropolitan Area: 19 miles to Charlotte, North Carolina**

# A Davidson Tradition



**Eumenean Hall**

**Philanthropic Hall**



# 2010 IBSC Annual Conference



INTERNATIONAL BOYS' SCHOOLS COALITION  
**INVENTIONS IN TEACHING**



**JUNE 27-30,  
2010**

**17TH ANNUAL  
CONFERENCE  
PHILADELPHIA**

# Action Research Workshop



- **Who's Reading My Writing**

*Simon Curtis, The Ridge School, South Africa*

This workshop examines the influence of audience and feedback on boy writers. Members of the IBSC 2010 Action Research Team explore a variety of ways of providing an authentic audience and worthwhile feedback to encourage boys to write more prolifically, powerfully, and with confidence.

# Guiding Question



- **Is it possible that boys value tradition as much as, if not more than, innovation?**

# Roxbury Latin Survey



- Which of the following concepts is more important to you? (Circle one):

**Tradition or Innovation?**

- What do you consider to be the five best traditions at Roxbury Latin?
- What do you consider to be the five best innovations during your time at Roxbury Latin?



# Discussion Question



- Please share with the members of your group what you consider to be the best tradition at your school.

# Tradition *or* Innovation



- Tradition: 8
- Innovation: 3

# Tradition *and* Innovation



- Tradition: but striking the right balance is key
- Innovation: though they go hand in hand
- Tradition + Innovation: not mutually exclusive
- Tradition with Innovation!
- Innovation within tradition is a sharper concept. Traditions should change organically with the times.
- Innovations that become “good” or “worthwhile” traditions
- Innovation built on Tradition
- The tradition of innovation

# How important is tradition to students?



<b>Class</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>II</b>	<b>III</b>	<b>IV</b>	<b>V</b>	<b>VI</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Not Important</b>	<b>11.8%</b>	<b>10.7%</b>	<b>14.3%</b>	<b>6.9%</b>	<b>3.1%</b>	<b>7.9%</b>	<b>8.9%</b>
<b>Somewhat Important</b>	<b>26.5%</b>	<b>60.7%</b>	<b>64.3%</b>	<b>69.8%</b>	<b>59.4%</b>	<b>55.3%</b>	<b>56.2%</b>
<b>Very Important</b>	<b>61.8%</b>	<b>28.6%</b>	<b>21.4%</b>	<b>23.3%</b>	<b>37.5%</b>	<b>36.8%</b>	<b>34.9%</b>

# How important is innovation to students?



<b>Class</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>II</b>	<b>III</b>	<b>IV</b>	<b>V</b>	<b>VI</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Not Important</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>4.5%</b>	<b>2.8%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>2.8%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>1.6%</b>
<b>Somewhat Important</b>	<b>53.%</b>	<b>40.9%</b>	<b>45.7%</b>	<b>38.8%</b>	<b>42.9%</b>	<b>66.6%</b>	<b>47.9%</b>
<b>Very Important</b>	<b>46.6%</b>	<b>54.5%</b>	<b>51.4%</b>	<b>61.1%</b>	<b>54.3%</b>	<b>33.3%</b>	<b>50.5%</b>

# The Faculty's Best Traditions



1. **Advisor System (14)**
1. **Exelauno Day (14)**
3. **Diversity (12)**
3. **Commitment to City of Boston Boys (12)**
5. **Need-Blind Admission (11)**
5. **Faculty-Student Contact in Multiple Contexts (11)**
7. **Care for Each Boy in Small Classes (10)**
8. **Single-Sex Education (9)**
9. **Generalist Education (8)**

# The Students' Best Traditions



1. Maru-a-Pula Day (205)
2. No Summer Reading (163)
3. Crustum Dies (157)
4. May Day (156)
5. Exelauno Day (131)
6. Sports Teas (123)
7. Senior Grass (121)
8. Beaver Brook (99)
9. Faculty Advisor System (93)

# Best Traditions



## Faculty

1. Advisor System
1. Exelauno Day
3. Diversity
3. Commitment to City of Boston Boys
5. Need-Blind Admission
5. Faculty-Student Contact in Multiple Contexts
7. Care for Each Boy in Small Classes
8. Single-Sex Education
9. Generalist Education

## Student

1. Maru-a-Pula Day
2. No summer reading
3. Crustum Dies
4. May Day
5. Exelauno Day
6. Sports Teas
7. Senior Grass
8. Beaver Brook
9. Faculty Advisor System



# The Faculty's Best Innovations



1. Laptops for Faculty (10)
2. Occasional Snow Days (9)
3. Expansion of Information Technology (7)
4. Building the Smith Arts Center (7)
5. Hiring Young Faculty (7)
6. Increased Opportunity for Student Travel (7)
7. Hot-Line Boards (7)
8. Seven tied at six votes

# The Students' Best Innovations



1. Snow Days (177)
2. 3-on-3 Basketball Tournament (145)
3. Hien Day (142)
4. Hot-Line Boards (142)
5. Heating/Cooling System (129)
5. Headmaster's Birthday Sundaes (129)
5. Wi-Fi (129)
6. Panini Machine (115)
7. Student Travel Programs (104)

# Best Innovations



## Faculty

1. Laptops for Faculty
2. Occasional Snow Days
3. Expansion of Information Technology
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## Student

1. Snow Days
2. 3-on-3 B-ball Tourney
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# Literature Review



- *Independent schools' cultures are rooted in tradition*
- *Teachers are agents of independent schools' traditions*
- *Tradition is frequently in tension with innovation*

*Independent schools' cultures are rooted in tradition:*

## **Deal (1991) reports:**

Private schools displayed significantly stronger communal ties among their members: (1) shared values and beliefs concerning what the school stands for and what should be learned, and visions of what students should become; (2) distinctive activities to bond people to each other and to the traditions of the school; and (3) an ethos of caring. (p. 416)

*Independent schools' cultures are rooted in tradition:*

## **Of teachers in British literature and drama McCulloch (2009) writes:**

More deeply, [representations of teachers like Mr. Chips] were conservative in a cultural sense, aligned with the traditions perceived to have been inherited from the past, whether those of the school itself or the nation as a whole. (p. 410)

*Teachers are agents of independent schools' traditions:*

**‘A host of little incidents, all deep-buried in the past’ (Hilton, 1934, p. 51)... constituted the history of the school, all too small to have meaning in themselves and too trivial to be written down, yet together embodying the institution itself. (McCulloch, 2009, p. 415)**

*Tradition is frequently in tension with innovation:*

**The roots and traditions that make these schools special can also make them inflexible and highly resistant to change.**

**(Deal, 1991, p. 422)**

**Rituals without reverence  
become empty of deep meaning.  
They become mere routines.  
(Garrison, Rud, 2009, p. 2639)**



*Tradition is frequently in tension with innovation:*

...so-called traditional schools are the mostly unintended consequence of decades of politically driven and often misguided school reforms that have accumulated like layers of wallpaper on old plaster. (Nehring, 2006, p. 32)

Indeed, if we take Cambridge University as a case, it is exactly where it is most conservative that the 'narrow and elitist academic curriculum' of English liberal education has been most innovative. (Moore, 2000, p. 23)

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