

## Being part of the Senior Common Room at Newman College

I returned to Newman College after being there as a young medical student – and I returned because I had a sense that I had only merely glimpsed the essence and the richness of Newman back then, and I wanted to delve in more deeply. I had since finished my degree, explored the world, started specialty training, lived in share houses, tried to write a novel, plunged into the deepest questions of philosophy and theology, and worked for a year in a small Cambodian clinic – and I felt that, at last, I could offer something back. Newman provided a heady blend of academia, spirituality and fun. Full of challenging minds and welcoming hearts, the SCR was dynamic, eclectic, and a true community. By being part of it, taught me to be more fully me, and it was never boring.



***Luke Ainsworth, Newman College (1999), B.Med/Sur/MedSci (2008-2009); M. Psychiatry***

I joined Newman College as an international student from Singapore in 2009. Having completed my undergraduate degree while in the Junior Common Room, I joined the Senior Common Room in 2011 to continue my postgraduate studies. During my time so far in the SCR, I have no doubt treasured every opportunity that being in such a diverse and nurturing environment has provided. For example, I have enjoyed particularly my role as a mentor and tutor for students in the college. It is always a joy to watch these individuals flourish whilst at college to become mature, responsible and passionate young adults.



Newman College also has the largest number of postgraduate students around the crescent; this makes for a truly diverse SCR community. Coming from different academic fields, counties of origin and cultural backgrounds makes for an amalgam of individuals with endless possibilities to learn from each other. Through the many social, cultural and sporting events at college, I have formed many friendships that that I will definitely carry forwards with me long after I leave the Newman SCR.

My time in the SCR has enriched my life, and without question helped to me to evolve as a person. It has truly been a wonderful experience and I could not be more thankful.

***Jessica Beh, Newman College (2009-2015 ), B. Biomedicine; MD***

I look back on the years I spent in the Newman College Senior Common Room with genuine fondness. A community within a community, a place I called home. It was a privilege to learn from some of the greatest educators, humbling to tutor some of the brightest young minds. These years have helped define the person I am, challenged and refined the values by which I live, cultivated a curious mind, and unmasked a passion to teach. I am eternally grateful.



***Yingda Li, Newman College (2004-2008), B.Med/Sur/Med Sci***

I often find myself reflecting on my time in residence at Newman College. I have been blessed with friendship and support from all members of the college community, which has enabled me to pursue my studies to the best of my abilities. Furthermore, I have been challenged to do new and different things that have helped me to grow as an individual.

I came to fully appreciate that time and thought are the true gifts of Newman. I have been blessed with time to learn, time to play sports and music, time to love others, time to make mistakes and time to learn from them. I have been able to share thoughts on subjects that I would otherwise have never encountered in my own studies, and have been able to develop a personal understanding on how the world is and how it ought to be.



As a graduate student, this opportunity to live and learn with a cohort of peers from different disciplines has greatly strengthened my knowledge and appreciation for ‘the greater issues’. The foundations laid by the College through public debate, tutorial programs, active seminars and guest speakers have invoked thought and inspiration in my own field of study.

In addition to providing a support network as I navigated through the challenges of tertiary education, Newman also networked me with the wider university. Having lived in the Newman community, I feel equipped to face any challenges that the future may hold.

***Mitchell Black, Newman College (2006- ), BSc, MSc, PhD Candidate***

I joined Newman College as an international student from Sri Lanka in 2007. After being in the JCR for 3 years, I joined the SCR to complete my final year of University and then stayed on until the completion of my Master’s degree in 2010. I thoroughly enjoyed my time in the SCR as it presented a supportive and stimulating environment as a student and taught me many skills to utilise in my future endeavours.

I consider my time at Newman one of the most significant learning experiences of my life. The opportunity to meet other students of diverse academic and cultural backgrounds deepened my knowledge outside of my usual study allowing me to broaden my intellectual knowledge. Some of the experiences I enjoyed the most were being a ‘mentor’ for first year students and attending social club events which ranged from bake-offs, chocolate tastings to presentations on various types of research from other graduate students.



I will carry the relationships and skills I have formed through Newman for life. I feel extremely lucky and privileged to have been a part of such a stimulating and supportive environment. Each year I have had at Newman has been unique and I am truly grateful for the variety of experiences I have had over the years.

***Shanika Cabraal, Newman College (2007-2011), Bachelor of Engineering (Engineering Management) Civil***

I came to Newman in the first year of my medical degree because I was looking for a university residence that offered more than board and lodging. Newman offered so much more that I stayed on happily for the duration of my studies. Joining the Newman SCR meant becoming a member of a stimulating community of scholars from diverse disciplines and backgrounds. I found it particularly valuable to have senior medical students and junior doctors in the SCR whom I could approach for career and study advice. The junior doctors also run formal tutorials which I attended right up to my final exams. Now that I am one of the junior doctors I hope to help those in the earlier stages of medicine. In addition to the academic side, being in the Newman SCR means a delightful calendar of social, sporting and spiritual events alongside regular formal dinners where you will dine on three courses while having your horizons broadened by lawyers, physicists and philosophers. I am grateful for every semester I have spent here and I have no reservations in recommending Newman to graduate students at any stage of their degree.



***Sophie Gascoigne-Cohen, Newman College (2007-2013), MBBS***

It is an enviable thing to be surrounded by so many talented and dedicated peers in the pursuit of a graduate or postgraduate degree. In my experience as both a non-resident and a resident member of the Senior Common Room, I have come to appreciate the encouragement and genuine interest people have in each other's lives and work.

Newman College and the SCR cater for both the big-picture and small-picture aspects of student life. Our serious commitment to excellence in education is demonstrated by donning academic dress for formal dinners. Our devotion to community service is typified by offering to fetch hot drinks for each other at mealtimes. Our respect for each other is shown in our role as Duty Tutor in maintaining a safe and peaceful environment. And there is much more. In applying for the SCR, you should be prepared for an exciting, sometimes exhausting, and challenging experience. Newman College is a marvellous place to live and study, and the rewards are reaped from the seeds you sow.



***Charlotte Kavenagh, Newman College (2008 - 2014), B.Arts; Grad.Dip.Teaching***

Living at Newman as a member of the Senior Common Room was an enriching experience I am so grateful to have had. What made the experience so special was the diverse range of interests and expertise of the common room's members that came together to make the SCR a challenging, stimulating and dynamic group to be a part of. The community provides a strong support network for students in their graduate and post-graduate studies, and the diversity of its members is also its great strength. Since leaving Newman, I have most often described the Newman community in one way - as being rich in its members and its traditions. I learned an enormous amount from my peers at the College and being a part of the Senior Common Room gave my Melbourne experience an extra dimension I could not have imagined prior to commencing at the University. I feel so thankful to have come to know the people I met at Newman within the Senior Common Room - it is a membership that is embracing and fosters a genuine respect for what it really means to share the journey of life and education.



***Sarah Steele, Newman College (2006-2008), JD***

Having completed my undergraduate degree while in residence at Newman College and having joined the Senior Common Room while undertaking my graduate medical degree, I can safely say that Newman has offered something very different, but always something heartening, with every year. The opportunities it provides are tremendous and eclectic, often as unexpected as they are palpable. Very few places allow you to both get and deliver the academic support you want, engage in humanitarian and community development work internationally beyond unsustainable 'voluntourism' or years of work in the field, casually immerse yourself in a multitude of cultural and volunteering opportunities, play competitive sport on a safe and amateur level while being cheered by hundreds of your peers, listen to some truly mesmerising musical pieces, take a lead role in a theatrical production, and organise or attend a black tie dinner... all in the same week. Certainly, very few would offer that mix and be so welcoming and encouraging. It is dynamic and it is never boring.

Membership in the Senior Common Room provides all the perks of residential life at Newman College – a warm and engaging community, cultural and community service initiatives, sports and music opportunities, academic support, friends and fun times galore – with one additional and special, opportunity.

Much of what you can do here pivots on mentorship. It is a challenge, to be fair, but enriching in a plethora of ways. No matter your background or experience, regardless of whether you seek to tutor undergraduates or provide pastoral support, and irrespective of whether that ever-looming 'mentorship' word represents an opportunity to upskill to you, or engage in what you have always wanted to do, or even appears intimidating: you have something truly special to offer the community, and we are here for you. Learn from some of the best, support your colleagues and friends through tumultuous times, take tutorials, and lead outreach and educational initiatives. Share the evening with some of the most interesting people you would never had met outside the confines of your own disciplines at university. Engaging here can ignite something truly wonderful and wondrous in others.

In many ways, Newman pivots on nurturing and developing the abilities, enthusiasm and talents of each of its hugely diverse residents to foster cultural and academic exchange on the local, national and international levels. It is about getting together, doing something small for others, and sharing that moment together. The capacity here to galvanise each other is formidable; with a warm smile, the opportunities for advocacy are staggering. You can inspire the best from others and in turn be stirred. Or you can enjoy the support of the College and your friends while undertaking your studies, knowing that someone here looks up to your example. It's powerful stuff.

***Michael Keem, Newman College (2009 -2015), B.Biomedicine; MD***

Being a member of the Senior Common Room offers a wide variety of experiences, friendships and activities. If you are looking for personal development the SCR offers plenty of musical, artistic and spiritual opportunities. It is also valuable just getting to know other scholars whose hard work and diverse life experiences are always inspiring. There can be times when studies are particularly consuming, and it makes a great difference living in a quiet and respectful community. The SCR offers academic support resources and peer support, but also welcome distractions like a relaxing meal.

***Paul King, Newman College (2010 - 2014 ), B.Journalism, JD***



I joined the SCR of Newman College in 2013 when I started my Master of Public Policy studies. This was the first time I came to Australia. Coming from China, I still remember how nervous and worried I was when I first arrived here. Living in Newman College helped me to adapt well to study and life. As a second-language student, I have been provided with ESL tutorials where I received detailed comments on my essays and valuable advice on academic writing.

Having breakfast, lunch and dinner with other students helped to improve my conversational English as well as familiarised me with Australian culture. Thanks to that, I didn't need to feel nervous when I had a lunch interview for one of my job applications! I also very much enjoyed meeting SCR members from various cultural and academic backgrounds. Sharing the time at Newman makes us students from different countries close to each other. Formal dinners and sunset seminars provide wonderful opportunities to hear from guest speakers and other students about their research, studies or interesting life experiences. I even met our professor of Business and Government at a Newman dinner! In addition, I like the mentoring program: every SCR member is arranged to be a 'mentor' for a first-year undergraduate student. It makes me feel I am helpful and valuable rather than just being helped. I am thankful for being in such a supportive, understanding and welcoming community where I feel I am not lonely, not afraid of making mistakes, comfortable to ask for help and can happily be myself. It means everything to a person coming to a new country.



*Xiaoping Zhu, Newman College (2013 - 2014), Master of Public Policy*

