

Why consider SLOCA HS?

The high school years are formative in the development of students - they are years which define a student's approach to and passion for learning, their commitment to hard work, their future goals and their relational skills and choices. While it is tempting to see high school merely as a time for fun, social blooming and athletics, focusing on these elements alone at the expense of considering more deeply what will truly prepare students for the future is shortsighted. Similarly, it is common to see high school as a mere stepping stone to college; while admittance into excellent colleges is a priority of SLOCA, we believe that the HS years are not to be wasted on this task alone - rich, wonderful and excellent education should and can occur now for all students.

SLO Classical Academy believes that the high school years have the potential to be far more than a time of "good" classes and social exploration. We offer courses that will both engage and challenge students, that will inspire a lifetime of learning, and that will solidify their strong critical thinking skills and their ability to speak for themselves. The quality of instruction and approach to academics is unrivaled in our local area.

Our small class size allows students to be known and invites them to reach their full potential. The smaller setting also helps students develop real-life relational skills and appreciation for each other's unique personalities, and it provides a safe place to grow, make mistakes, and be encouraged by their classmates. Truly, our students bloom during these years at all levels.

Is SLOCA HS home schooling?

Our goal for students on the high school level is that they become independent learners. Our program is set up in a "university model" style. Students attend classes two to three times a week and have flexibility in which classes to take. Just like at the college level, this allows some full days at home to get school work done. For most students, this work will be done independently; however, for those students needing the extra tutoring, it allows more time for working with a tutor or parent.

What is the parent's role in High School?

The role of a HS parent is greatly altered after the middle school years. Students take responsibility for classes, assignments, studying, etc. However, the role of a parent can vary according to individual classes and student/parent dynamics and needs - for instance, students may ask parents to edit papers, or a parent may set up tutoring if a student would benefit from this service. Independence is important and we want each high schooler to take responsibility for their own education, which can be challenging for parents who are used to a more hands-on approach, but a relief to others who feel they are no longer up for homeschooling. Although we consider students independent, we still highly encourage parents to stay engaged in their high schooler's education - from asking about what their child is learning to reading with their child, to providing some editing of papers, to encouraging them to speak and meet with teachers. Again and again, research highlights the benefits of engaged parents in the academic arena.

What are the Graduation Requirements?

We require a minimum of 40 credits. Most classes are one credit per semester for a total of two credits over the year. Our History/Literature classes, while one class, count as two credits - one for history and one for English.

English - 8
Math - 8

History - 8
Foreign Lang - 4

Art - 2
Science - 6

Electives - 4

Advanced Mathematics, Science and Foreign Language are encouraged for college-bound seniors, but not required for graduation. Other specialized electives will be offered as well.

Credit is given for 8th grade Latin and Algebra I.

Students must take a minimum of seven units at SLO Classical Academy in their senior year to qualify for graduation from SLOCA.

My student desires a large social pool and we feel that is important.

High School is a time of social development, exploration and challenges. Ideally, it is a time to develop friendships that will last for years to come. While a smaller setting can bring its own challenges, it also brings opportunities for what we believe are at the heart of social growth — students form a peer group in which they can know and be known; virtue is seen as admirable; they must face relational challenges rather than run from them; they experience support from teachers and peers; they feel safe to truly be who they are; they are an important part of the community. Social interactions are characterized by naturalness and good humor, a challenge by peers to be all they can be, and a commitment to seeing each other through the ups and downs of being a teenager.

SLOCA High School does not offer a perfect high school social environment - there will always be difficulties and hurdles; but it does offer a different approach to these challenges - one where staff and students alike are committed to growing through each season together.

Some have wondered if the smaller social setting can prepare students for “real life” beyond high school. There are many “real life” skills to learn for us all, and we’ve found that the smaller setting creates more opportunities for learning social and relational skills than does a larger pool. The normal high school social challenges are presented to each HS student at SLOCA, but those challenges are faced with support and encouragement in the context of community. In addition, because SLO Classical Academy HS students are so equipped with the ability to think and to stand firm in beliefs and convictions, and because they were given the gift of having their minds and hearts expanded and prepared with a strong liberal arts education, they will be more prepared for “real life” than the average high school student. They leave confident in who they are and prepared to deal with other environments.

How does SLOCA help students prepare for college?

We know that getting into college can be an intimidating process for any high school student, but especially for those who choose a non-traditional schooling option. It is encouraging to know that homeschoolers get into all different public and private colleges/universities all over the country. Also, encouraging to know that it is becoming more common for private schools to seek homeschoolers due to the high caliber of both academics and character these students demonstrate. Whether our students plan or choose to attend college after graduation, they will be well-prepared for that opportunity.

Academic Approach

SLOCA offers quality, college-preparatory classes, which will prepare our students to meet the expectations of colleges. One of our goals is to nurture a love of learning in our students which we believe makes them better learners throughout their lives. We do this by providing small classes, which enable teachers and students to better connect and work together. Our history and English classes are rich in literature and writing instruction. We provide lab science classes and math with an emphasis on learning to think mathematically. Elective classes include rhetoric, mock trial and art. All classes are designed to enable students to excel in college because they will be equipped with abilities to make connections, think critically and express themselves well.

AP Classes

Any high school student may take AP exams whether or not they have taken an AP class. Because we do not believe in creating classes to cater to tests, and because of the unusually rich and rigorous approach to education, our classes are not specific AP classes, but we feel that the education our students receive in their classes will prepare them well for the AP exams. We are working to provide extra support for preparing for specific exams as well.

Accreditation

Accreditation is a process that schools go through in order to receive a general approval of their program. It is a convenient way to assess a school and most public schools go through the accreditation process. It is a lengthy and costly endeavor for schools requiring a significant amount of extra staff, time and money.

While our program has been in its early development, we have needed to focus finances and staff time on the program; however, we will be starting the accreditation process in the next 6-12 months.

In the meantime, yes, our students can get into college and transfer to other schools. We can provide the syllabus for any classes if there is a question during the transferring process. For universities in California, when students come from a non-traditional school or homeschooling, test scores are weighed more heavily, but there are also *admission by exception* procedures. Even within the state school systems, individual schools vary in their admissions procedures, whether one comes from an accredited school or not, it is important to do research on the application requirements. We are happy to assist in this process.

How does SLOCA handle technology in HS?

SLOCA embraces technology as an incredible learning tool in the life of HS students. We allow laptops to be used in class, the teachers integrate technology into their classrooms, students use technology in presentations and grades are often posted on the Internet. However, technological training is not a primary focus on the campus. Why? Our students have proven themselves incredibly capable of learning the latest technology on their own - a task that tech companies have made almost foolproof to learn - allowing us to be about the business of challenging minds and hearts with an education that will truly prepare students for all of life.

What about athletics?

While SLO Classical Academy's focus has not been in the area of athletics, we do believe that athletics can play a vital role in a student's education by teaching him the value of self-discipline, commitment, teamwork, self-control, setting and achieving goals, perseverance, fellowship, loyalty, and cooperation. Because of these beliefs, we are working to increase our athletic opportunities each year, with plans for track and field, swimming, biking, golf and volleyball. We are also working to assess local team options for high school students who desire the rich, strong academics of SLO Classical Academy.

What about socials, dances, clubs, etc?

We have a variety of socials and continue to work on creating traditions and regular opportunities for the students to connect. Our students get together for movie nights, bonfires, holiday parties, theater performances, and an annual highlight – camping trips to Yosemite. Some of our students regularly get together to study and hang out at cafés in SLO as well. Our future plans include a debate team, connecting with some other high school clubs such as FFA (Future Farmers of America), a formal evening of some sort, and leadership and mentor opportunities as well.

Will you accept classes from other institutions? Cuesta College?

Yes, we will review the classes that have been taken to determine whether to accept those credits in order to graduate from our program. Parents are responsible for setting up those classes for their students, and for providing the appropriate proof of class completion.

Can students transfer to other institutions from SLOCA?

Yes. Students who have left SLOCA have not had problems transferring to other high schools.

What about community service for high schoolers?

While we encourage community service, we do not have a formalized community service requirement for high school. However, we are working towards the possibility of providing some experience for our high schoolers to serve the community through business opportunities.

Will you offer other foreign languages?

We believe in the value of learning classical languages. This year, we offered Latin IV/V to accommodate several of our incoming Freshman. We will continue to offer upper levels of Latin and Latin I and II with the middle school will be open to our high school as well. We are also adding Spanish to our program with a Spanish I class this year with plans to add a level each year.