

Trinity Classical Academy

Rhetoric School House System

What is the House System?

The house system is a traditional feature of British schools. Though historically associated with boarding schools, where a student's "house" was also his dormitory, it more broadly indicates a basic grouping of pupils. Designed to organize and enrich student life while allowing older students to assume leadership amongst their peers, house systems are gaining increased attention among universities, public and private schools (classical Christian schools in particular).

At Trinity, houses are led by senior captains, appointed on the basis of their character and leadership. Captains in turn are assisted by representatives from the various Rhetoric School grades. Houses are also supervised by House Deans selected from the Trinity faculty. Over the course of the year, all students in the house will formally and informally contribute to their house's flourishing and success. In addition to their place within the cultural life of the school, providing occasion for mentoring and encouragement, houses also compete throughout the year in a variety of activities. Reflecting the holistic life of the school, houses will engage in contests centered on school spirit, academics, sports, and more. Points for their conduct and successes will be awarded throughout the year, with the highest achieving house ultimately winning the annual House Cup.

What is the purpose of a House System?

The house system at Trinity is designed to help build smaller communities within the larger school community so that all may belong to something meaningful; all may grow in faith, friendship, and charity, and that all may thrive as they strive to live life to the fullest, now and in years to come. Through the houses, friendships are strengthened, faith is lived, and school is more fun!

At Trinity, education works to invest in its students a culture of virtue, wisdom, purpose, and courage. All parts of our institution bear a responsibility to advance this culture, discipling students in their mind, spirit, and body to excellence for the sake of Christ and his kingdom. The chemistry class, the basketball squad, the bell choir, and the debate team all exist because they can uniquely offer students a valuable way of becoming more virtuous, wise, purposeful, and courageous - a means of more wholly becoming true and faithful disciples.

The house system follows in this same vein. The community and relationships of Trinity have long been a hallmark of the institution. As Trinity grows, the community that lives out this culture grows larger. While that growth brings great encouragement and opportunity, it also presents dangers. We never want students to be anonymous to, unaccountable to, or unchallenged by their peers. Teaching, exhortation, accountability, leadership, and challenge come in the forms of relationships. To preserve and enrich a community with students reaching across lines of grades, classes, and interests in order to establish meaningful relationships that manifest encouragement, accountability, leadership, challenge, and joy, is the house system's primary goal. By organizing the Rhetoric School into houses, a way is made for the students themselves to take ownership of and leadership in pursuing these aims.

The House System is not intended to instigate division or strife within Trinity. Rather, houses seek to counteract natural divisions by making a place for all students (regardless of their grade, interest, inclination, or circle of friends) to know and edify one another.

What's behind the Houses' names?

Traditionally students are divided into a number of houses, which are often named after saints, famous historical alumni or notable regional landmarks. At Trinity, each house is named for an outstanding figure in Western culture that represents an ideal, a cultural “archetype”, for the kind of men and women Trinity seeks to produce: Dante, the poet and artist; Patrick, the missionary and saint; Cincinnatus, the warrior and leader; Boethius, the philosopher and theologian. These names recognize and highlight the distinct way that art, ministry, scholarship, and leadership can transform the world. Though students are not assigned to houses on the basis of any perceived personal characteristics, the houses seek to impact their worlds by following in the path of excellence illuminated by their namesakes.

How are House points earned?

Houses earn points towards the House Cup based on the achievements of their members as a whole. Points will be tallied on a monthly, quarterly, semester, and annual basis; here are some of the categories in which points are earned:

- Powder Puff/Powder Puff Cheer contests
- Spirit Week Competitions
- The House Homecoming Competition
- Quarterly House Games
- Spiritual Emphasis Day
- TONITRA TESTUDO

The house with the most points will be honored at the end of the year for their accomplishments with possession of the House Cup, and a party for the House members.

How does leadership in the Houses work?

House leadership is structured around the principle of active student direction in the life of the school. Each House has a faculty member who serves as Head of the House, championing culture and mentoring their student leaders. There are two Captains for each House, serving as executive leaders of their Houses and overseeing the calendar of events through the year; additionally serving the Houses there are three Lieutenants (a senior, junior, and sophomore, respectively) who work in support of the House Captains. The Dean of the House System oversees all four Houses.

Students who seek formal leadership within our school may apply for House leadership in the spring prior to the year they desire to serve. Captains are selected from the current junior class; Lieutenants are drawn from current sophomores and freshmen; the senior Lieutenant is selected from applicants who were not chosen for captaincy. Prospective Captains are interviewed by the Heads, the Dean,

and the Principal of the Upper School. The selection criteria is based on the interview, the application, peer and faculty reviews, and the history the student has in supporting and leading within the school prior to their application.