

How to achieve my “Bunbu Souzen (文武双全)”

Koharu Ideno
Class of 2028

“Bunbu Souzen” is one phrase that describes how I want to live my life. I have been trying to achieve “Bunbu Souzen,” not “Bunbu Ryoudou,” and this is why I am strongly attracted to the phrase. It is also the kind of person I want to become through my experiences at Keio Academy of New York.

“Bunbu Souzen” has a unique meaning. When people hear about doing both academics and athletics, “Bunbu Ryoudou” would usually come to mind. However, as Professor Keita Yamauchi described, the phrase means “to pursue and perfect both academics and athletics”. After hearing that explanation, I interpreted it as improving myself through the synergistic effect of academic and athletic efforts. Efforts in these two areas can inspire and enhance each other. By doing both academics and athletics at the same time, people can reach a higher level of knowledge or ability that they cannot reach by focusing on only one. I have an example from my life that showed me exactly what “Bunbu Souzen” means.

In the fall of 9th grade, I joined the cross country team, even though I had never run long distances before. Looking back, what surprises me is that I signed up during the pre-entry program, before I knew anyone at the school or had much idea of what school life would be like. I was afraid of being on a team because I had no friends, the practices might be too intense, and I was worried about balancing academics and athletics. However, once the season started, it was a lot of fun. Our coach’s guidance showed me a lofty goal and the path to achieving it. The upperclassmen were very kind to us, and I was able to build friendships with my teammates. During races, we encouraged each other. Not only with the people on the same team, but everyone around me helped me a lot. For example, when I had a race, my friends encouraged me to do well. Also, when I received an award, they were as happy as if it had happened to them. With the help of my coaches, teammates, and friends, I grew stronger. Through this experience in cross-country, I grew as a person and learned the importance of encouragement and how sports connect people.

Even while I was dedicated to sports, I never gave up on studying. By seriously dedicating myself to both sports and academics, I acquired an important skill: the ability to concentrate within a limited time frame. For example, when I had a race before tests, I could not study much, especially when the race venue was far away. This forced me to study in a short amount of time. This experience taught me the most effective way of studying: focusing on one thing and giving it my full effort. What I mean by this is that, during a race, I forget about studying and fully focus on the race, and when I come back to the dorm, I start studying with full focus. This resulted in an effective study method, and I could finish my work in a short time. Additionally, the need to improve myself within a limited timeframe applies not only to academics but also to sports. I place great importance on morning practice, which I approach with both my mind and body in top condition. Getting enough sleep is essential for maintaining focus during morning practice. Thus, no matter the circumstances, I made it a point to go to bed early and get a good night’s rest. The high level of concentration I had in the early morning helped me practice more efficiently. Furthermore, engaging in morning practice with such focus also had a positive impact on my academic performance. Exercising and refreshing my mind

allowed me to approach my classes with renewed motivation and focus. I found joy in achieving my goals little by little, while also feeling a sense of synergy between my efforts.

From my experiences, I believe that fearless effort and control of energy are essential to achieving “Bunbu Souzen.”

First, it is important to seize opportunities that come your way and follow your heart. For example, if I had hesitated to start cross country because of fear, I would never have been able to achieve such great accomplishments or build such priceless friendships with my teammates. Moreover, if I had given up studying because of the lack of time, I would not have had a chance to achieve a high grade. Therefore, I believe that taking on challenges without fear is the key to growing both academically and athletically.

Second, controlling energy is important. When I was studying, I often had limited time, so I focused intensely for just one hour. During that limited time, I concentrated fully and used my time effectively. I also gave my all in my varsity team activities, even with the limited time I had. My energy comes from my feelings. When I am happy, my energy rises, but when I am not feeling well, it fades. Thus, I believe that the most important thing is to enjoy everything you do and stay highly motivated, while valuing the quality of the time you spend more than the quantity of time itself. As a result, you can fully focus on both academics and athletics with full energy.

In conclusion, I believe that achieving “Bunbu Souzen” is challenging, but not impossible. With courage and energy, anyone can achieve this goal. Now that I am a sophomore, schoolwork is much harder than it was during my freshman year, and I am fully committed to lacrosse as well. I do not know whether I can truly achieve “Bunbu Souzen,” but I believe that its true spirit comes from learning through failure. Therefore, throughout my years at this school, I want to discover the true meaning of “Bunbu Souzen” by embracing opportunities that can only be experienced here, without fearing failure and while enjoying every step of the journey.