

# The Iona Project

*As the fall of Rome saw literacy and education collapse throughout Europe, only a few small monasteries were able to keep scholarship alive. The Abbey on Iona was founded in 563 on a rocky island off the coast of Scotland. It would go on to be a key gateway to the reintroduction of literacy and Christianity to England.*

## The Problem

Civilizational decline is all around us. The Marxist “Long March Through The Institutions” has been largely successful. But now in power, the socialists have shown that they have no idea what to do with it, and their aimless floundering is significantly responsible for the woes of our age.

We live in an era where The Prevailing View has collapsed, and not just in the sense of being widely rejected, but also in the sense of being *actively harmful* to anyone who believes it. There has never been a time in history when it was more dangerous to believe the things that are most socially acceptable to say.

Children are being taught that drugs, social media addiction, and sexual depravity are liberation, and that discipline is oppression. Parents are being advised and even bullied into doing terrible things to their children. Even such mundane topics as healthy eating have become infected with transparently bad advice, couched with pseudoscientific and liberationist drivel.

The counter-culture is also broken because while it is able to see the problems of modernity, it lacks the cultural foundations to offer a compelling alternative. Instead the counter-culture only offers anger. While it may not be constructive, anger is very real, and there is no evidence that it will do anything but grow in the future - creating what will most likely prove to be a very dangerous world.

Nowhere is the poisonous nature of modernity more apparent than in the economic success of the Amish. While the average person receives 12-14 or even 18 years of education, provided by specially trained educational professionals, the Amish receive only 8 years, and these are taught by an average Amish person who received the same 8 years of school. Then after their education they often take up farming, a business where it's famously difficult to make money. As if that wasn't hard enough, they do it with almost none of the modern labor-saving technologies we use today. The amount of handicaps that the Amish subject themselves to is truly staggering, and anyone unfamiliar with them would rationally assume that they are some anomalous group of dirt-poor illiterates, too stupid for modern society, and who will soon vanish due to uncompetitiveness. So the fact that these people own large houses and thriving businesses is an absolutely damning criticism of modernity.

## The Insight

We are not going to solve this for ourselves because we are too old. We're all set in our ways, we've been molded to what we are, and we're never going to be able to entirely extricate ourselves from this saga of civilizational decay. But, our kids have a chance.

If you can remember the 90s, you at least lived some of your formative years before the entire mainstream culture became deadly poison. People back then still valued excellence, but the information they had to work with then wasn't even 1/1000th of what we have now. We now understand Uncertainty, Game Theory, and behavioral differences of race and gender. We finally understand how to design a society that works, even if we're living in one that manifestly does not.

## The Mission

Create a boarding school which will combine pedagogical techniques of the past, with knowledge we have gained in the present, to graduate adults capable of protecting themselves, each other, and the spark of western civilization, from the storm of social decay.

## The Design

1. Students are selected based on a holistic evaluation with attention to physical, mental, and emotional excellence, and it is required that they are enough of a cultural fit that they would achieve long term success as a husband/wife for any of the girls/boys in the school.
2. Students are not excluded based on religious affiliation, however:
  - a. They are expected to keep their religious and cultural affiliations discrete (for example to avoid jewelry or hair styles), so that other students do not feel different. Religious background is part of one's history, and it is considered normal that one will share such history with their friends or councilors, the meaning of discretion is that affiliations are not being shown publicly.
  - b. Students are expected not to coordinate any religious or cultural events or ceremonies with each other, either on or off campus. Prayer in private, or during the video calls with one's parents is tolerated.
  - c. Western cultural observances such as Christmas and Easter are to be celebrated in a non-denominational way.
  - d. The culture of the school is led by the philosophy that each person's relationship to God is a private matter, and that behavior is what's important, not belief.
3. Girls and boys are educated on different topics which are complementary to each other. This is because it is expected that everyone will find a mate, and therefore the total knowledge that will be accessible to them will be effectively doubled.

4. Electronic devices are strictly controlled, with portable devices like phones and laptops forbidden on campus. Software development and internet usage is taught, but the use of the internet for leisure is forbidden.
5. The choice of what topics to teach is made based on two criteria:
  - a. Teach what will make the individual most successful in the current environment
  - b. Teach what will make the group most successful in the medium-long term

## Teams and Collaboration

Boys are placed in teams from the beginning. They eat, sleep, and train with their team. They elect a leader who represents them and is responsible for their coordination. Boys' teams stay the same from 1st grade until graduation.

Girls are not placed in teams, they are given private dorms and individual assignments. The difference between the education of boys and that of girls is because boys have an evolved ability to collaborate in hunting / war parties, and we aim to play everyone to their strengths.

Assignments which would be given to one person are often given to a randomly selected girl+boy. This is to help them build skills collaborating with the opposite sex, something that they will need later in life. At the end of each assignment, they are asked to privately rate each other. Over time, those with higher average ratings are more often paired with each other.

Romantic relationships between students are not required or expected. But when they emerge, they are supported in the hope that they may develop into happy and fruitful marriages. Boys and girls who wish to co-habit are transferred into an apartment style dorm and some of their assignments transition into elements of the maintenance of a home.

## Representation and Governance

The elected leaders of each boys' team form a Senate, this includes leaders of teams of all years as well as alumni who choose to maintain connections with the school. Together they elect a president and adopt a plan for the entire student body and alumni to work on together.

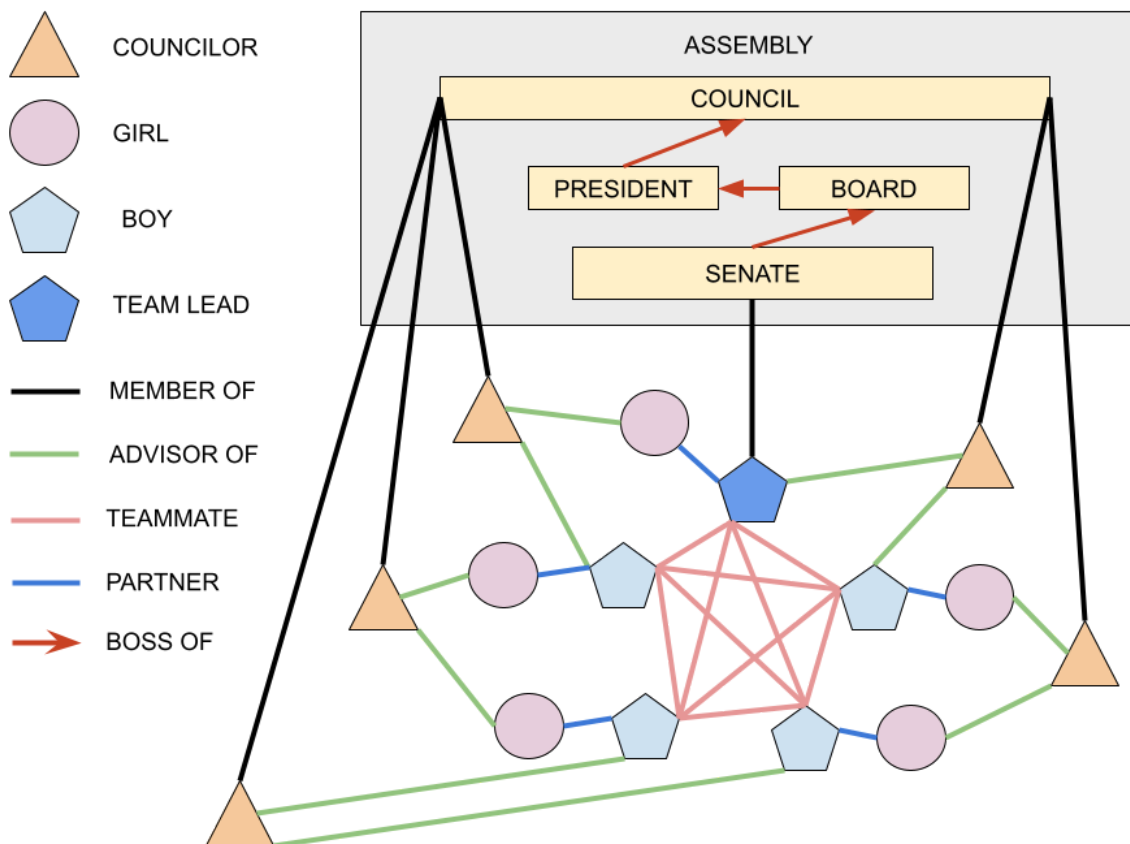
Everyone is brought together via a system of *councilors*. Every student, girl and boy, is assigned a councilor who is a specially selected and trained boy two years their senior. The councilors are given a special curriculum and a special mandate: They are to meet with everyone who they have assigned once per week. They will talk about that person's needs and wants, objectives, problems and whatever else they may feel the need to discuss.

The councilor has in effect four jobs, firstly he is tasked with providing good guidance and emotional support. Secondly, he is the eyes and ears of the institution, who is able to identify problems at an early stage. Third, he can work with other councillors to mediate disputes between any two people in the student body. Fourth and finally, he can suggest ways to

integrate one's own ambitions into the overall goals of the group, thereby acting as the driving force of coordination for both students and alumni.

## Social Graph

If we suppose that at graduation time, everyone in the school has a romantic partner who also attends, then every person has no less than *two* trust relationships linking them to the overall student body. The drawing below shows one boys' team, with their leader, girlfriends/wives, and councilors so you can see how this system ensures everyone has a "social safety net".



## The Senate, Board and President

The Senate is made up of all of the elected team leads of every team currently at the school, and alumni teams who continue to remain active. The Senate meets at least once per year to re-elect the board and to vote on major decisions, as would the shareholders in an annual general assembly.

The board nominates, evaluates and (if necessary) dismisses the president. They also approve the strategic plan and make decisions that are beyond the authority of the president, but not great enough to require the involvement of the Senate.

## The Council

The Council are the “permanent secretaries” of the institution, they have deep personal connections with the people who they council and for this reason they cannot easily be replaced.

The councilors form a chain-of-command which begins with the idea that the councilor of a councilor is his master. All councilors answer to the president, and with the approval of the board, the president may adjust the chain-of-command as he sees fit. Adjustments are necessary as senior councilors who have graduated may stop their participation. The chain-of-command is the path by which instruction is passed down and concerns or observations are passed up.

While councilors are given formal instruction which must be obeyed, those who they council (their “assignees”) are only given light suggestions in what is a discovery process to find the intersection between things that they *want* to do and what the group needs. Strong willed and rebellious students are highly valued, only not as councilors.

The selection and training of councilors is a topic of the utmost priority. Councilors are selected based on intelligence, empathy, honor, and lack of any strong family, cultural, community, religious or other bonds - because such bonds might challenge their loyalty to their position, and the institution.

Councilor training begins at grade 6 and counseling begins in grade 7 (the assignees are grade 5). The councilor is trained to follow a formal process with those topics that must be covered, and how to gently but firmly uphold councilor ethics. This includes keeping their personal business strictly removed from that of their assignee, and guiding the assignee always toward stability of mind, so that they may achieve their goals most efficiently.

As exemplary boys are selected for the role of councilor, exemplary girls are at the same time selected to be *conseillère* (female councilor). They are likewise trained beginning in grade 6, to begin their assignment in grade 7, but the *conseillères* are assigned students from grade 1, and their mission is complete when their assignee reaches grade 5 to be transferred to a councilor. This happens as she is completing grade 10 and as *her* councilor is graduating. A *conseillère* does not take formal part in the Council, but instead she is able to communicate through her councilor.

The graduation of councilors creates a moment of decision for them and their assignees. If they agree to continue the counseling then they will remain a part of the cohesive student body, if they break it off then they will drift apart. Councilors are given the training and tools that they

need to start a therapy or life-coaching business, so that they may continue with their assignees and expand to taking other clients as well.

## Curricular Goals

Once the school is well established with a robust governance system, the curriculum is the matter for the president and the board to decide. But at the founding, the curriculum will need to be set up in such a way as to set things off well with the two goals:

1. Teach what will make the individual most successful in the current environment
2. Teach what will make the group most successful in the medium-long term

Boys are expected to choose a minor and a major. The minor is a licensed trade for which they will have a license on graduation and more-or-less guaranteed employment (albeit physical labor). The major is a riskier endeavor which will most likely result in founding a business, or taking a position of trust such as judge or bank officer.

Girls receive a more comprehensive education focused on administering the homestead and interfacing with the regulatory state. Also girls receive education in starting a business at home, because stay-at-home moms have a unique opportunity to develop passive income even if their husband is unable to, because all of his time is implicated by his salaried job.

## Educating A Balanced Individual

Traditional high-class schools educate for what might be called *The Aristocratic Mind*. This is the person who believes all of the dogmas that are upper-class, but is utterly incapable of functioning outside of its institutions. When they are not able to find jobs at places such as NGOs, government, or education, they are often relegated to soul-crushing service labor.

We aim to educate a man with a wide array of knowledge, from tying a tie to plumbing a toilet. This is because we aim for our graduates to thrive in *every environment*. If high class jobs are either unavailable, or uninteresting to a graduate, he can still make six figures in a licensed and regulated trade - which was in fact something he chose for himself when choosing his minor.

And even when finding work is not the problem, *The Aristocratic Mind* still struggles to communicate with common people. He has an unshakable persona of snobbishness, nerdiness, and "book smarts" - which he can only suppress with an even cringier persona of a brutish highschool jock impression that is convincing to no one. The value of the ability to connect with people across demographics cannot be over-stated, and if it takes some manual labor to get that skill, it's a small price to pay.

## The Gendered Curriculum

Instinctive drives are like superpowers, one can go live their whole life never knowing they have one - but if they discover it, everything becomes easier, more fun, and more meaningful.

Everyone is of course different, but not as much as most people imagine. Your instincts match fairly closely to those of your grandfather or grandmother. Men tend to enjoy forming groups and conquering, women tend to enjoy conquering the heart of a man and building a life together, and both tend to treasure the experience of raising children.

The realities of today's world put different demands on people, so discovering how to leverage one's own superpower in modern life presents a challenge unique to our time. All too often in modernity, men end up in feminized corporate workplaces where they're unable to reach their masculine potential. Women end up chasing career paths which lead them out of their fertile years, and couples are denied the opportunity of ever having children.

This curriculum will aim to help students find an application of their superpower which is also sensitive to the life-path that they will need in order to end up with a happy family.

## The Use of Male Hierarchy

It has been well observed that once a historically patriarchal institution has a sufficient number of women in positions of authority, it experiences a cultural metamorphosis. It takes on characteristics of HR teams, emphasizing equality and safety at the cost of individual honor, excellence, and risk-taking. Feminine cultural characteristics are not inherently better or worse than masculine, but the shift from one to the other is often ruinous for an institution because it no longer has the culture which made it successful in the first place.

This project is based on the principle that everyone should achieve meaning, belonging, and self-actualization in their lives, and that the institution should be designed to most effectively help them. However, the choice of who shall serve the institution should be strictly reserved to those who will make it most effective. Even if someone feels that their self-actualization means serving, and even if their abilities are most impressive, they should not serve unless their participation would benefit the institution in the short and long term.

This project is structured around the male hierarchy because it is reliable, well understood, and has been demonstrated to be effective at creating well functioning institutions where everyone is treated with dignity and respect.

## Conclusion

When riding a bicycle, one cannot simply point it at the destination and begin peddling, they must continuously course-correct, steering a little to the left or a little to the right in order to stay balanced.

This is not a completed plan. Many of these ideas have already been implemented in schools, religions, and social clubs with varying levels of success. There is much to be studied before

even breaking ground, and responsibility for the success of the next generation (*our own children*) is a heavy burden to bear.

So many things are not yet designed. There is currently no answer to addressing the tension between digital literacy and internet addiction, or how philosophy and the great works should be valued in terms of career success. We will need to develop a detailed curriculum with learning objectives, lesson plans, and project designs.

Even after we go to production, we can never stop adapting. Everyone who has ever built a product knows that “life comes at you fast”. Even with the best laid plans, our first years will be awkward, but history will judge us by how fast we can course correct.

Forthcoming will be writing a series of memoranda as well as updates to this document. If you would like to be involved in the project, please send an email to [ionaproject@cjdns.fr](mailto:ionaproject@cjdns.fr).

Sincerely,  
Caleb James DeLisle