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Choate Implements Boarding-Only Model for Remainder of Term

By **Sabrina Wang '23**
Staff Reporter

Because of the rising numbers of Covid-19 cases in Connecticut and across the country, the many hospitals at or near capacity, and the emergence of a new, more contagious strain of the virus, Choate delayed students' return to campus from January 3 to the weekend of January 29.

The administration also announced that the School will be implementing a boarding-only model — all students will either live in a dorm or remain remote learners for the rest of the winter term, giving day students the opportunity to convert to boarding status.

"We looked at a variety of models, and from the perspective of health and safety, we felt that if we could create a bubble, it would be the best model for us to pursue," said Dean of Students Mr. Mike Velez '00.

Because many boarding students chose to remain remote for the winter term, the School will have enough beds to accommodate the number of day students who opted to board on campus. A survey for housing preferences and personal details, such as allergies and dietary restrictions, was sent to day students who chose to board. Once the Deans'



Graphic by Yujin Kim/The Choate News

Office announces housing assignments, programming will be offered for new boarders to learn what to expect in residential life.

Additionally, house advisers will hold dorm meetings prior to reopening so day students can familiarize themselves with their dorms. Day student advisers will also connect with residential advisers to continue supporting day students throughout this process.

Because many day students are transitioning to boarding

status, day student prefects also have the opportunity to join the team of boarding prefects in the dorms as an additional in-house resource for students. This option will be available in every dorm in which a prefect is remote for the winter term.

The decision of whether to become a boarding student has not been an easy one for many day students. Some recalled tough choices they had to make earlier this year, such as when

day students from towns with high Covid-19 positivity rates had to decide whether to become remote learners or quarantine from their families at home while continuing to take classes in-person.

"The decision to board was a tough choice because it was pretty short notice and we only had a few weeks to really think about it," said Maya Chiravuri '23. "It was a good choice for me because I do orchestra and ath-

letics, which are both really hard to participate in remotely."

Chiara Vessicchio '22 echoed that sentiment: "I only live a mile away from campus, but I'm excited to be boarding after being a day student for the past two years. Everything feels so rushed and last minute, though; I still don't know any details of my move-in and living situation."

Those who chose not to board, such as Cory Williams '23, expressed concerns for their

safety and disappointment in the way the administration handled the situation. "I am disappointed that I can't be with my friends," said Williams. "I wish I could return to campus. However, I believe I made the right decision to not board because of the increasing risks."

Kayce Madancy '22 said, "I think Choate is trying to control too many things. I understand they are trying to keep everyone safe, but making day students decide whether to board or remain virtual puts students in a tough spot."

Still, many students have expressed gratitude for the chance to physically join the campus when possible. "As a new third former, I feel lucky that I have three years ahead of me to enjoy a full Choate experience," said Elsa Franks '24. "However, I know that my prefects and other older students are having their last months stripped away from them. From the two months I had on campus, I was in awe of the positive outlook that the Choate community had. Instead of complaining about not having enough time, we all hope to enjoy the time we do have."

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COMMUNITY CONVENES FOR FIRST-EVER VIRTUAL DIVERSITY DAY



Photo by Tobi Oyinloye/The Choate News

Students and faculty participated in workshops related to diversity and social justice.

By **Kate Bailey '22**
Associate Editor

Last Monday, January 18, the School hosted Diversity Day virtually for the first time. Choate's longstanding catchphrase, "A Place of Many Paths," inspired this year's theme: "A Place of Many Voices."

Through 53 Zoom workshops, students and faculty came together on Martin Luther King Jr. Day to discuss diversity, equity, and inclusion. Associate Director of Equity and Inclusion Mr. Filipe Camarotti, who helped plan the day of events, said, "We wanted to make it accessible to everybody — people are all over the globe, in many different time zones."

Each of the 23 different workshop options occurred during one of four time slots, which spanned twelve hours, between 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m., Wallingford time.

To cap the discussion group sizes at around 20 participants, some workshops occurred during

two or three time slots. In addition, this year's keynote speaker, Dr. Kyle Mays, Assistant Professor of African American Studies, American Indian Studies, and History at UCLA, gave a recorded presentation titled "The King We Love to Hate: Reflections on Martin Luther King Jr.'s Radical Dreams."

Apart from scheduling challenges, facilitators had to reimagine aspects of these workshops for a virtual format. In past years, third-form workshops had participants on their feet, moving around a room to answer questions posed by facilitators. Claire Hong '22, a member of the student planning committee, said, "We had to come up with a lot of different small solutions to replace previous physical activities." For example, the committee considered having participants turn off their cameras to answer Yes / No questions and join breakout rooms for smaller group discussions.

Beyond pandemic-related adjustments, the Equity and Inclusion Office also worked with students to update the workshops' content. While introductory third-form workshops remained echoed previous years, this year, fourth, fifth, and sixth-formers could choose among workshops focused on specific topics such as racism in Wallingford, unconscious bias, and the history of white supremacy. Additionally, in a new workshop format, students watched and discussed a movie that spoke to Diversity Day's themes. Nearly 250 students signed up for one of the three movie workshops, which included viewings of "Rising Phoenix" and "The Death and Life of Marsha P. Johnson."

This year's biggest change, however, was the inclusion of faculty as some of the "many voices" in Diversity Day's workshops. In the past, students and faculty were

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COSA REOPENS CLUB-PROPOSAL PROCESS

By **Adam Carroll '23**
Reporter

Last Friday, the Committee on Student Activities (COSA) announced that it will resume the club proposal process, allowing students to submit applications for new clubs. According to COSA Chair Allen Zheng '21, the Committee reopened the process after receiving comments on COSA's feedback form last December from students expressing their interest in starting new clubs.

Assistant Director of Student Activities Ms. Colleen Kazar said that the club proposal process was suspended in the fall term to gain insight into how to better support and communicate with existing clubs amid the Covid-19 pandemic, which has upended the ways students learn and socialize.

COSA member Rhea Shah '22, also mentioned that newly formed clubs in the fall would have had a noticeable disadvantage. "Since we saw returning, well-established clubs having trouble maintaining attendance throughout the spring of last year, we wanted to wait until we got further into this school year to start the club proposal process, in order to give new clubs their best shot at success."

After monitoring clubs throughout the fall term and receiving feedback from club leaders, the committee members felt that they should reopen the application process to support new clubs, all of which will have to start with virtual meetings.

COSA is optimistic that clubs will be able to navigate this process and continue to successfully operate virtually. Ms. Kazar encouraged

students to start new clubs for their interests and offered some advice for those looking to do so. "Tell your classmates or the kids that live in [your] dorm what [you're] trying to initiate on campus, and try to get as much interest ahead of time so that once the club is accepted or approved, you'll have good club membership," she said.

Ms. Kazar also noted that students interested in joining these newly created clubs can access COSA's new Club and Organization Zoom Meeting Directory to find meeting times and Zoom links for existing clubs. She said, "We'll post that on BoarCast every week, so students who are new or students who are just looking for ways to get involved should go to that directory."

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CHOATE HOSTS PROGRAMMING FOR 59TH PRESIDENTIAL INAUGURATION

By **Lauren Hsu '24**
Reporter

On Wednesday, January 20, President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris were sworn into office during the 59th United States Presidential Inauguration. The School celebrated this historic occurrence with inauguration programming events on Tuesday, January 19 and an Inauguration broadcast on the day of the event.

The BIPOC Community Support Group — co-chaired by Ms. Tanisha Clark and Ms. Kathleen Wallace — planned the inauguration programming. Students were offered a choice of ten sessions for the



Photo by Gretchen MacLean/The Choate News

Ten different inauguration programming sessions were offered.

inauguration programming on Tuesday morning.

Each session aimed to support and educate students about the process of the hand-off of presidential power. One session, focused on women in

politics, featuring a discussion about Vice President Harris, former Georgia House Minority Leader Stacey Abrams, and Kristen Clarke '93, who has

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Virtual Inauguration Programming

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been nominated as Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice.

Another session, led by teachers in the language department, provided a space for participants to analyze and discuss newspaper headlines about the Inauguration.

In addition to Ms. Wallace and Ms. Clark, the faculty members of the BIPOC Community Support Group include Mr. Jim Davidson, Ms. Brooke Fichera, Ms. Kyra Jenney, Dr. Katie Jewett, Ms. Rachel Kessler, Ms. Karen Klein, Mr. Joe Lampe, Ms. Smita Sen, and Ms. Megan Shea.

The School has not traditionally organized programs around Inauguration. Dean of Students Mr. Mike Velez '00 said that this year's sessions were arranged largely because "the traditional peaceful transition of power from one president to the next is very much in question."

The educational workshops also provided a chance for the community to better understand how inaugurations can set the tone for a presidency. "I had the opportunity to use an algorithm to compare the themes of past speeches based on word choices. I noticed the word 'fight' often appeared at times of war or un-

rest. Compared to all other inaugural speeches, the word "fight" was proportionately higher in 2017 than any except two — the speeches at the end of the second world war, and the war of 1812," said John Reach '24.

In planning for the events, Ms. Wallace and the BIPOC Community Support Group wanted "to come up with something that is celebratory, informative, and uplifting." Ms. Wallace said it was valuable to "pause for a small bit of time to celebrate this occasion, which only happens every four years." This inauguration also marks the introduction of the first woman, and woman of color, to hold the position of Vice President.

While the inauguration programming was not mandatory, the School hopes that those who did not attend the events took a moment to reflect on the presidential transition. Ms. Wallace wanted students to "learn a little bit more about what this event is and what it means to this country — why we pause every four years to hold an inauguration — and I think this is true of every student, no matter their age, no matter their nationality and citizenship."

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SENIORS REFLECT ON AN UNUSUAL FINAL YEAR

By Jonathan Zhuo '23
Reporter

While this unconventional school year has presented challenges for all, it has especially affected the sixth-formers, who entered their final year of high school empty of the expected traditions.

Tilden Jackson '21 said, "Being a prefect and tutor has been really difficult this year because both require pretty close contact. Prefecting behind a screen is not the same because forming tight bonds and connections is more difficult."

Jackson added that one of the hardest aspects of being a senior this year was the increased uncertainty. "We never know what is going to happen — so much more than just Covid has caused our schedules to shift. Applying to colleges this year already creates that uncertainty, but with everything else going on, it has been much harder."

In addition to a modified school year, the pandemic has also led to an unprecedented college admissions season. "I think the most difficult part of being a senior right now in terms of the college process is that we don't have the opportunity to visit college campuses. It's scary for a lot of seniors," said Taylor Mitchell '21.

Despite the challenges, many members of the Class of 2021 have recognized the silver linings in their current situations. Patrick Finnerty '21 said, "I knew

I would be a day student prefect before senior year started, and I remembered from my freshman year that the prefect meetings wouldn't have that many people show up — it would be ten-minute talks before everyone went their separate ways. But, now, after being online, my prefect group has really built a strong bond with each other over Zoom."

Finnerty added, "I've also definitely been able to get more involved in some clubs and get to know a lot of different people better since I have more time on my hands with remote learning. Even though it isn't a year everybody expected, the mindset among a lot of seniors right now is to make the most of our last few months."

Many seniors who returned to campus for hybrid learning in the fall appreciated the opportunity to be on campus. "The thing I enjoyed the most was being with my friends," said Justin González Cruz '21. "Being with them physically really makes a big difference emotionally."

Other seniors have also tried to take advantage of the unusual chance to stay at home for a much longer period of time. Natarsha Yan '21 said, "Having lived at Choate for the past three years, I have really enjoyed being home this year as I have been able to spend so much more time with my family."

As they reflected, several seniors shared words of advice. "To the younger students, my ad-



Graphic by Sesame Gaetsaloe/The Choate News

vice would be to prioritize your well-being," said Jaime Gonzalez '21. "There will be days where you will feel exhausted or drained, and that's okay. It happens to everyone. So, take a break and do what you love. Hang out with your buddies, listen to music, read a book, start a Netflix series, or take up a new hobby. The important thing here is that you give yourself some space so you can bounce back stronger."

Bradley Wang '21 noted that his Choate experience passed much more quickly than anticipated. He said, "Even though I was told this countless times when I was an underclassmen,

I still am surprised at how fast these four years have passed. As Mr. [John] Cobb said, 'Days pass slow, weeks pass fast, months even faster.' Before you know it, you'll be a senior as well."

Wang added, "Cherish the little moments, whether it be that one night in the dining hall surrounded by friends or the afternoon on Mem Field kicking or throwing around a ball until the sun sets. Those are the little moments that make the Choate experience memorable."

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CURRENT EVENTS RESOURCE GROUP ACTIVATED AFTER CAPITOL RIOT

By Richard Chen '22
Associate Editor

Following the violent attack on Capitol Hill on January 6, Director of Equity and Inclusion Dr. Rachel Myers sent an email to students and faculty condemning the actions of the rioters, providing resources compiled by the Current Events Resource Group (CERG), and offering a Zoom event as an opportunity to process and reflect on the attack as a community. Committees such as CERG and Driving Equity at Choate (DEC) work in tandem to provide support to the Choate community in such situations.

"The charge of CERG is to provide resources and support to the Choate community when events in our local community, nation, or world prove challenging, divisive, or especially complex," said Dr. Myers in her email.

CERG is not a standing committee, but instead may be activated when events demand it. CERG prepared resources in response to last June's Black Lives Matters protests, and, more recently, Head of School Dr. Alex Curtis asked that CERG be activated in anticipation that the 2020 U.S. Presidential Election would prove divisive.

Once CERG was activated after the attack on the Capitol, members of the group began or-

ganizing events and compiling resources. "My role was to help plan [the] community event that occurred on Saturday," said Chinese teacher Mr. Ian Wollman. The community conversation, which began at 10:00 a.m., was held on Zoom. Adult facilitators, including members of CERG, Counseling, Equity and Inclusion, and Spiritual Life, were present during the entire conversation to help members of the community discuss their reactions and feelings as well as gain a better understanding of recent events.

Collaboration between teachers helped organize a faculty response and coordinate class discussions. "Many people shared

resources among the faculty using Microsoft Teams," said Mr. Wollman. Resources included tips on how to address students' concerns about the attack and its historical context.

Many teachers rely on the resources provided by CERG for guidance on how to approach complex issues in their classrooms. "My math teacher dedicated our class on Friday to smaller breakout discussions and larger discussions on how we were feeling, what facts we knew, and implications of this for the future," said Luke Barrett '21.

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DIVERSITY DAY MOVES ONLINE

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separated to create comfortable spaces for discussion, but this year, faculty members joined students in certain fourth, fifth, and sixth-form workshops. Mr. Camarotti said, "We've gotten feedback in the past from students [saying] that they'd appreciate having adults involved, so that faculty and students' conversations aren't so separated."

Rachael Lin Wheeler '21, a member of the student planning committee, added, "These topics impact the entire community, not just students, [and] I think it's important that Diversity Day reflect this."

In addition to participating in workshops, faculty also had the opportunity to design and facilitate their own diversity-oriented workshops on topics of personal interest. Director of Curricular Initiatives Mr. Deron Chang, for example, hosted a workshop on potential changes to the curriculum. Students were encouraged to propose suggestions for shifts in Choate's course offerings and diploma requirements, particularly regarding diversity and inclusion. Mr. Chang, whose curricular role typically has him working only with the faculty, said, "I realized that this would be a great opportunity for me to be able to collect information from students."

As adults took on new roles in Monday's workshops, the Diversity Day student planning committee also played a significant role in developing workshop content. The committee, composed of leaders from several diversity-oriented clubs and organizations, worked with the Equity and Inclusion Office to create engaging workshops aligned with

student interests. Hong, a member of the Choate Diversity Student Association (CDSA), said, "We felt that, over the years, Diversity Day had become more distant [from students] and felt so obviously planned by adults, adding, "We wanted to bring in more of the student voice."

If Diversity Day is a critical aspect of the School's ongoing conversations about identity and inclusion, student and faculty planners alike pointed out that a 90-minute Diversity Day workshop alone isn't enough. All agreed that students and faculty must continue discussing and reflecting outside of these workshops in order to bring full awareness to Choate around these issues.

Mr. Camarotti said, "You can't just have one-off conversations. They have to be woven into the fabric of an institution. They have to be a cultural norm and expectation."

Over the past several months, Director of Equity and Inclusion Dr. Rachel Myers has worked to bring such conversations to the entire community with the new Community Conversations series and has continued to encourage participation in national events like the Student Diversity Leadership Conference.

Mr. Camarotti said that, whether in planned Diversity Day workshops or impromptu encounters among students and faculty, discussions about diversity are essential "to gain a better understanding of others' lived experiences — because if we only have ourselves to reference, we'll never be able to fully appreciate what the world is and who we are as a community."

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Parent-Teacher Conferences Held Virtually

By Harper Knight '23
Reporter

This year, parent-teacher conferences occurred in an all-virtual format during the first week of January. These conferences are normally held in-person as a part of Parents' Weekend in October, which was canceled because of the Covid-19 pandemic. Regardless of the virtual format of the conferences, parents and teachers alike were excited about the opportunity to connect with one another.

Science teacher and Director of Sustainability Ms. Katrina Linthorst-Homan said, "Conferences provide a great opportunity for collaboration in support of the student. The parents and/or guardians obviously know the student far better than we as the teachers do partway into the year. So, learning more about a student as an individual and their history as a learner — their strengths and the areas they are working on — is very helpful in supporting their academic growth."

After this year's virtual conferences, some are considering the idea of replacing in-person parent-teacher conferences with Zoom conversations, even when the pandemic is over. For many parents and teachers, virtual conferences offer several advantages over

in-person ones. Traditionally, conferences take place in the cacophonous gym. This year's Zoom sessions allowed for fewer distractions, and parents no longer had to hustle between meetings. In addition, the virtual format gave families who typically cannot travel to campus the opportunity to meet with their children's teachers.

Latin teacher Ms. Diana Beste said, "The extra time meant being able to comfortably chit chat and connect with parents on a personal level, which is important. I also think because everyone was in their own element, people seemed more comfortable and at ease."

HPRSS teacher Mr. John Connelly said, "I would recommend that Parents' Weekend, going forward, consist of class visits, informational gathering sessions for parents, and the enjoyment of attending extracurricular events. And I feel very strongly that parent-teacher conferences should be held thereafter. The current structure of a greatly compact and intense Parents' Weekend takes quite a toll on those involved, and the benefit of this is not clear." Holding parent-teacher conferences later in the year may also mean that teachers know students better before speaking with their parents.



Graphic by Rose Shen/The Choate News

One of the organizers of the conferences, Ms. Jordan Abbott, will survey the faculty to better understand their feelings about the online meetings. This could result in a general push into online conferences in the future. Ms. Abbott said that "the feedback from parents was overwhelmingly positive, so I definitely see virtual conferences being a part of Choate moving forward, whether it's a hybrid situation, or they could be offered at another point in the year outside of Parents' Weekend."

Although virtual conferences provide several benefits, some parents feel that on-campus conferences are an integral part of connecting with their child's life on campus, especially for parents of boarding students. Ms. Cara Hermancinski P '22 said, "As a

boarding school parent, it feels like there is so much about your child's high-school experience you have to experience from afar. I relish all opportunities to come to campus and gain insight into my child's day-to-day life."

Dean of Students Mr. Mike Velez '00 said, "The virtual component is definitely an approach that can be considered for the future and will be examined more thoroughly through surveys and other mechanisms to gather feedback. If we shifted away from in-person conferences over the fall Parents' Weekend, the School could re-imagine the programming around that event, which is an exciting prospect."

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Photo by Jenny Guo/The Choate News

A new Diversity Day change involved joint student-faculty workshops.

WALLINGFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY GOES VIRTUAL



Photo by Peter Di Natale/The Choate News

The Wallingford Public Library has shut down in-person services amid a local rise in Covid-19 cases.

By **Nathan Lang '22**
Reporter

With the spread of a new, more contagious Covid-19 strain, many Connecticut businesses have begun to reevaluate their recent reopenings. The Wallingford Public Library reopened in July after a four-month closure, but it has recently closed its doors again, citing concerns about the increasing rate of infection and the public's non-compliance with Covid-19 guidelines.

In the past few months, the library has been eager to serve the community. One program that began after the first closure in March was the Park 'n Pickup service, which allows residents to reserve and check out books without entering the library or interacting with other library members and staff. Other pickup programs have been created to provide tech equipment, such as Chromebooks and WiFi hotspots, as well as recreational equipment like board games, jigsaw puzzles, and arts supplies to the community. Members can request materials and sign up for a pick-up slot by calling the library.

Library Director Ms. Jane Fisher said that the main concern that led to the library's most recent closure was "the new [Covid-19] variant and the feeling that we could be doing more to protect our staff and the public."

In the past few months, the library staff has had to deal with many patrons who have not worn a mask inside the building. "Sometimes people forget or walk completely into the library before they put their mask on," said Ms. Fisher. These actions raised concerns for staff members at the greeter desk, which is situated at the entrance of the library.

Connecticut's positivity rate has also been escalating since the new strain of Covid-19 was identified, and this proved to be the last straw for the library's Board of Managers as they finalized the decision to temporarily close. The state's test positivity rate jumped to 10.72% on January 12 and is now at 6.29% as of January 20.

Since the library's closure, Ms. Fisher has reported a rise in popularity for the Park 'n Pickup program. Even readers from neighboring towns travel to the Wallingford Public Library to take advantage of the program.

Given the great demand for the library's resources and services, the team is planning to reopen on January 25 with stricter enforcement of social distancing regulations. Working with the Wallingford Health Department, state health officials, and Governor Ned Lamont, the library has begun to implement slight changes in preparation for the reopening. The library has installed thicker glass protection around staff members' workspaces and placed additional signs outside the building to remind the public about the importance of wearing masks both inside and outside the library.

Until then, the library will continue to be available to the public through the main phone line, digital selections, and the multiple resource pick-up programs. Although operating hours have been slightly adjusted, there are still plenty of slots for book pick-up throughout the week, allowing residents to select a new read to keep them occupied and entertained during this pandemic.

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Teacher Residency Program Aims to Improve Diversity in CT Schools

By **Linda Phan '22**
Copy Editor

Within Connecticut's public school system, non-white teachers represent only a small fraction of educators, even though those institutions serve diverse populations. According to the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE), while 48% of Connecticut public school students identify as people of color, only 9.6% of the state's educators do the same. This disparity has led to the establishment of the Teacher Residency Program (TRP), an initiative run by Regional Educational Service Centers (RESCs) located in Hamden, Hartford, Old Lyme, and Trumbull.

The TRP provides college graduates of color an alternative route to receiving a teacher certification for elementary school education. Traditionally, the state of Connecticut requires public school teachers to have a teacher certification, a license often obtained as part of their bachelor's or master's degree. TRP residents, however, are able to obtain their certification through a condensed program that includes 18 months of coursework, professional-development workshops, and a year of residency training with an assigned mentor teacher. Graduates of the program commit to a classroom teaching position in a partnered elementary school for three years.

Approved by the CSDE in May of 2019, the TRP is nearing the end of its second year and has partnered with school districts that include East Lyme, Norwich, and Groton. "Working adults may not have the resources or time to return to school to take a traditional route to teacher certification due to family or financial commitments," said Ms. Laurie LePine, Director of

Human Resources at Groton Public Schools. "By allowing these programs to advance, we can get motivated individuals of color into our workforce and create future teachers."

Although the program, which is estimated to cost around \$4.4 million next year, requires that school districts help out with funding through their own budgets, Ms. LePine says that it was a "no-brainer" for the Groton School District to opt into the program. She said, "Participation in the program directly aligns to our DEI [Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion] plans and initiatives in our school district. Our diverse students need to see teachers and role models who look like them and whom they can relate to culturally." In the 2021-2022 academic year, the Groton School District will work with two participants in the TRP.

I hope to see a diverse workforce in our schools and inclusive, welcoming environments for people of color.

Ms. Marlene Megos
Director of the TRP

Diversifying the state's teacher workforce will allow more students to learn from individuals who, in many ways, share their life experiences. Connecticut's students of color need "educators of colors who are role models for them," said Director of the TRP Ms. Marlene Megos.

Ms. Megos believes that a critical piece in making institutions anti-racist is to hire a diverse staff. "One of the challenges that we are facing right

now is systemic racism in our schools. If all of our teachers and most of our administrators are white, it's hard to really identify and grasp different ways of doing things," she said.

Increased diversity in schools will also better reflect the environment that students will encounter later in life. "Our teacher communities are mostly white, yet when you look out in the broader community — when you go to college, when you move to a different city or area of the nation — people are more diverse than that," said Ms. Megos. "Having a diverse workforce allows us to have diversity in perspectives, [which] students would gain based on the differences that each of our teachers [bring] to the table."

Teachers will also benefit from working with a diverse set of colleagues. "When various perspectives are brought to the table, it allows us to be more creative and utilize others' perspectives to solve problems, address students' needs, and creatively teach our students," said Ms. Megos.

With the collective efforts of school districts, RESCs, and sponsors, the TRP is now focusing on expanding its reach and recruiting its third cohort of program residents, with applications due in March.

"I hope to see a diverse workforce in our schools and inclusive, welcoming environments for people of color to not only attend our schools but to work within them," said Ms. Megos. "Ultimately, I want this program to be so successful that we don't need to do this work anymore, that our staff and educators in Connecticut are just as diverse as our student population."

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Wallingford Small Businesses Receive Financial Assistance from Barstool Sports's Covid-Relief Fund

By **Trista LeBlanc-Serbyn '22**
Staff Reporter

Launched by the digital media company Barstool Sports to support small businesses during the pandemic, the Barstool Fund is a nationwide effort that has now reached two Wallingford restaurants: Laskara Restaurant and Gaetano's Tavern on Main.

Both establishments received support from the fund following their submission of a video describing the adverse impacts of the pandemic on their business. The grant is given on a monthly basis and will continue to support these restaurants for the duration of the pandemic and until certain Covid-19 restrictions are lifted.

Government-enforced safety guidelines have significantly altered the way restaurants control in-house dining, making it more difficult for them to attract customers. "The pandemic was a huge hit to every small business — having restrictions, having to close, and not being able to serve our customers the way we were always used to," said Ms. Maria Riopel, co-owner of Laskara Restaurant. "We've adapted by using all the regulations that the CDC has given us: putting plexiglass up, separating tables. We understand the disease is very important, but it does put a stress on every local business."

Perhaps one of the most difficult challenges that small business owners have faced during the pandemic is having to turn away customers who do not comply with health



Photo by Peter Di Natale/The Choate News

Gaetano's Tavern on Main received financial assistance from the Barstool Fund, a nationwide effort to support small businesses struggling amid the pandemic.

guidelines. "In the customer service business, you're always telling people yes, trying to make them happy, and giving them whatever they want," Ms. Riopel said. "With the guidelines that we're given now, we had to turn it around and tell people, 'no,' for a lot of things." She added, "With the restrictions, you almost have to police everybody."

Ms. Debbie Pacileo, co-owner of Gaetano's Tavern on Main,

said that the pandemic "has definitely made our business a lot slower." She estimates that Gaetano's now receives 40% fewer customers in a week than they did before the pandemic. In the last week of December, Ms. Pacileo submitted a video requesting assistance from the Barstool Fund. "You just really had to tell them your story about the struggles you had," Ms. Pacileo said. "And we had a lot of health problems here, so I

think that might have been one of the reasons they decided to help us out."

The process of applying to the fund was simple, requiring only two other conditions outside of the video submission: the applicants had to prove that their restaurant was successful prior to the pandemic and that the payroll has experienced no deductions over a certain number of months. Just a couple of days after their videos were

submitted, the owners of Laskara's Restaurant and Gaetano's Tavern on Main received a FaceTime call from Mr. Dave Portnoy, founder of Barstool Sports, who congratulated them on receiving aid from the Barstool Fund.

In response to the FaceTime call, Ms. Pacileo said, "As soon as I saw him, I knew that this was actually going to happen. What he's doing is amazing, and he was very sincere."

Ms. Riopel was likewise shocked. "You don't think that anyone's ever really going to see you when you're a small business," she said. "When I received the call, and I realized that it was real and that we were actually going to get some help, it gave us a little bit of breath for the first time in a year."

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THE 59TH PRESIDENT

TRUMP LIT THE FUSE OF THE CAPITOL RIOT

By **Maggie McCabe '22**
Opinions Writer

On Wednesday, January 6, the Capitol, the United States, and democracy as a whole were attacked. Thousands of supporters of former President Donald Trump P'OO marched towards Capitol Hill, smashing windows, climbing barricades, and pilfering furniture in an attempt to delegitimize one of the most celebrated democratic processes in U.S. history: the presidential election. Five Americans died from the attack. Throughout all of this, the former president sat in the Oval Office, eyes glued to the television screen, watching democracy crumble. And yet Trump did nothing to stop the violence, disregarding his obligation to this country.

The insurrection and ensuing events raise many questions.

First, how was this event different from the Black Lives Matter (B.L.M.) protests that occurred this past summer? Many GOP officials have compared the Capitol riots to the B.L.M. protests; however, there are two fundamental differences. For one, the B.L.M. protests were mostly peaceful gatherings that raised awareness about police brutality against Black people. The Capitol insurrection was driven by right-wing Trump supporters and the reactionary terrorist group QAnon with hopes of blocking the certification of the U.S. presidential election. While the first movement aimed to strengthen U.S. democracy, the latter imperiled it.

The second difference is the presence of law enforcement

during these two events. The B.L.M. protests were crowded with Washington, D.C., and Capitol police and the National Guard, armed to the teeth and in uniform, ready to jump in at the smallest hint of unrest. President Trump himself called in forces to clear out B.L.M. protesters using tear gas and rubber bullets. Why? So he could walk from the White House to a local church, where he brandished a Bible and took a photograph. During the Capitol insurrection, we saw a wholly unprepared U.S. Capitol police force unable to repel rioters. Trump initially refused to call in the National Guard.

Last summer, law enforcement was more than ready to attack peaceful protesters, but on January 6, they took their time to control a crowd of white su-

premacists attacking the Capitol. This disparity shows a marked difference in how the government treats people of color speaking out against discrimination and oppression than it does people fighting for Trump to stay in office despite his evident electoral loss.

The next question is: Should Trump be blamed for the insurrection? Yes. Just hours before members of QAnon invaded the Capitol, Trump spoke at the "March to Save America" rally. At the end of his long, rambling speech, he said, "We are going to walk down Pennsylvania Avenue ... and we are going to the Capitol, and we are going to try and give ... them [Republicans] the kind of pride and boldness that they need to take back our country."

Trump has long been using his social media accounts and

campaign events to spread false propaganda. Most recently, he's brainwashed his supporters into denying the results of the U.S. presidential election, precipitating the violence we saw on January 6.

Trump's prominent role in the insurrection raises a new question: Should he be penalized? The House seems to think so. On Wednesday, January 13, members voted to impeach Trump for the second time. Now, the trial goes to the Senate. In order for Trump to be convicted, there must be a supermajority in the Senate — 67 votes.

The GOP's main argument against Trump's impeachment is that he is no longer in office, so it's not worth the effort and disruption as President Joe Biden transitions to power.

Although Trump is no longer president, there are long-term benefits to impeaching him. For one, if he's convicted, Trump loses the ability to run for a second term. In addition, he would be cut off from his yearly pension, travel allowance, and lifetime Secret Service detail. With all these things on the line, it is completely worth trying to convict him.

More important, convicting Trump sets the precedent that the leader of our country cannot incite his followers to commit acts of domestic terrorism without repercussions. No person is above the law.

Maggie McCabe is a fifth-former from Broadlands, Va. She may be reached at mmccabe22@choate.edu

America's Disease: White Supremacy

By **Adrienne Chacón '22**
Associate Editor

Over the past four years, I have come to see the United States of America as a postcard picture of Mount Rushmore. A feat to create, yes, but also a desecration of a Lakota Sioux landmark, the Six Grandfathers Mountain — a tribute to some of the greatest and most distinguished figures in American history, but one that is simultaneously a portrait of enslavers and superintendents of genocide.

Of course, the past four years have brought us the leadership of thankfully former President Donald Trump P'OO. This period in American history — strife-filled, terrifying, and increasingly hateful — is indicative of a much larger problem: the debilitating sickness of white supremacy that plagues the United States. This illness produced Donald Trump, but he is merely a symptom, not the disease. Like a festering sore, Trump has brought the sickness into full view.

To diagnose the disease, we must consider its origin. The United States is a country founded on the principles that rich, white men are superior and equal to one another; Black people are not full people; Native people do not have rights worth respecting; and women are second to men. In a country so built on white supremacy, racism has infiltrated America's makeup, replicating and spreading throughout society like a virus.

Donald Trump personified this disease. He began his rise to political prominence by promulgating the racist lie that former President Barack Obama was born in Kenya and not an American citizen. Once in office, he only doubled down on his bigotry — among other actions, Trump referred to Senator Elizabeth Warren with the racist epithet "Pocahontas"; mocked the threat of the coronavirus with an anti-Asian moniker; restarted federal executions that disproportionately affect Black people; and spewed xenophobic rhetoric against people who identify as Hispanic and Islamic. Trump refused to condemn white supremacy — infamously claiming that there were "very fine people on both sides" of a lethal encounter in Charlottesville, Virginia, between anti-racist protesters and white nationalists who shouted, "Jews will not replace us!"

I heard about Charlottesville on vacation in Florida when I was thirteen years old. The news led to a deep sense of insecurity and a forced realization that there was a disease of white supremacy in the United States, and this was

its manifestation. When my family drove home through Virginia, I worried for the first time for my safety. As Trump's presidency continued, my fear only grew.

This summer, as racial tensions heightened, I looked like an outsider biking in my majority white neighborhood. Living under a president who provoked such hatred and intolerance of "outsiders," I felt painfully mortal. I was aware that someone confused or upset by my presence might devalue my life the way that Black people continue to be devalued in this country. In a country where the president emboldens racial violence and white supremacists, my fear is that much more realized.

The worst moment of Trump's reign was when a white mob stormed the U.S. Capitol, hailing America while undermining it. The traitorous and racist Confederate flag, one that tells me that I am not a person, breached the Capitol for the first time in American history. Now, I fear the most, because despite Trump's undermining of this democracy's core, he is still massively popular and even has a nationwide network of people willing to act on his violent rhetoric.

There is a house in our neighborhood that my mom always avoids because inside live the kind of people who she fears were at the Capitol on January 6. That is the worst thing about a disease — your community could be infected, and you will not know until there is a positive test. Having received word of a positive case on our campus last fall — the anonymous death threat against our School's Black people — I couldn't leave my dorm room. Now, after neo-Nazis plundered the Capitol, the disease has been laid out before our society, irrefutable and uncured. The extremist ideology that Trump fomented will certainly outlast him; the scars will stay long after the sore heals.

The past four years have been horrific. The Covid-19 pandemic has killed more than 400,000 people in the U.S., and the disease of white supremacy continues to infiltrate the highest positions in our government. Even if some other politician or ideologue doesn't reopen the sore, the disease will only go into remission. Now, at every four-year checkup, I fear that America will be again diagnosed and that my Black body, along with our nation as a whole, will bear the scars of white supremacy.

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On January 6, 2021, insurrectionists attacked the U.S. Capitol hoping to overturn Trump's defeat in the 2020 presidential election. As the Confederate flag breached the Capitol for the first time in history, millions feared for the future of the American democratic process.

Photo courtesy of the Wall Street Journal



In August of 2017, just seven months into Trump's presidency, white supremacists flooded Charlottesville to protest the city's decision to remove Confederate monuments. When peaceful counterprotesters arrived at the scene, the white supremacists erupted with violence.

Photo courtesy of Vox



Over the summer, Black Lives Matter protests swept the globe. As people grappled with the deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and others, protesters raised signs reading "Defund The Police" and "Color Is Not A Crime."

Photo courtesy of the New York Times

Redefining Patriotism in the Era of Trump

By **Jessica Wu '22**
Associate Editor

This summer, as I drove past a row of houses proudly displaying the American flag, I pondered when the symbol of America became so distorted. Has it always been this way? No; when I was younger, I loved celebrating the Fourth of July and dressing up for America Day during school spirit week. I never saw an American flag and wondered if the person flying it had malicious intent. Yet, at some point over Donald Trump P'OO's presidency, the American flag came to stand for something ugly, far from the unifying patriotism of my childhood.

As Black Lives Matter (B.L.M.) protests erupted across the nation this summer — rallying against the long pattern of police brutality and racial injustice in our country's history — it became hard for me to feel patriotic. How could I be proud to be an American when my country continues to oppress minorities and our own president has failed to condemn white supremacists?

After seeing the American flag at white supremacist rallies and in the backs of cars disrupting B.L.M. protests, how could I ignore the flag's racist connotations?

For much of the left-leaning half of the country, the past four years under Trump have marked a sharp decline in patriotism, with each of Trump's xenophobic tweets, sexist comments, and reckless actions deepening America's partisan divide. However, for both the left and the right, the polarization of Trump's presidency has spurred an equally sharp surge in political activism.

For his opponents, Trump's infringement on the rights of minorities, neglect for environment, and attack on the healthcare system could not go on ignored. People could no longer remain bystanders to the systemic problems that our country faces. Anger toward Trump inspired millions of people to stage protests and oppose him at marches and other rallies.

And yet, to right-leaning Americans, Trump has provided a voice not heard in decades, cementing

their reactionary beliefs, inspiring them to sport "Make America Great Again" gear, and rousing them to attend Trump rallies. With increased political engagement on both sides, the 2020 presidential election had the highest rate of voter turnout in recent history.

Prior to Trump's presidency, I knew little about politics. As a seventh grader in the fall of 2016, I never expected that the reality TV show host who I heard spewing derogatory comments on the news would become my next president. When he did, I felt compelled to learn about politics and what his presidency would mean for me and other minorities. This summer, spurred by the blatant racism perpetuated by Trump and other politicians, I began interning for a local Democratic candidate, along with more than forty other high-school and college students.

Now, more than ever, young people have become more politically involved. At Choate, students have formed new political clubs, engaged in political discourse, educated themselves on

systemic issues, and participated in local protests. Despite some of us losing our sense of patriotism, we have remained civically active. If Trump's presidency did any good, it showed us that political engagement is a cornerstone of American patriotism.

Loving America with all of its faults is not patriotic. Exercising the privilege to be indifferent to the news and not care about how politics affect others is not patriotic. Instead, we must actively educate ourselves on politics and try to enact change out of love for the people who live here and what our country could be. Being an American means participating in our democracy and working through difficult but necessary political discussions while listening to those who have different opinions to minimize our country's polarization.

Hanging an American flag on the side of your house without discussion will never be enough.

Jessica Wu is a fifth-former from Wilton, Conn. She may be reached at jwu22@choate.edu

TRUMP INAUGURATION

GOP Wounded By Trump's Election Fraud Claims

By **Michael DiCostanzo '23**
Opinions Writer

On January 5, Republicans anxiously watched their television screens as votes poured in across the state of Georgia. With former President Donald Trump P'oo losing the U.S. presidential election on November 3, the GOP set its sights on the Georgia runoff elections, determined to retain a Republican majority in the U.S. Senate in order to block President Joe Biden's progressive agenda.

Despite Republican incumbents Senator David Perdue and Senator Kelly Loeffler remaining in the lead for much of the night, Democratic challengers Senator-Elect Reverend Raphael Warnock and Senator-Elect Jon Ossoff bounced back and secured victory in the early hours of January 6. To the GOP's disappointment, the

Democratic Party took control of the presidency and both chambers of Congress for the first time since 2008. For at least the next two years, the GOP is at the mercy of the Biden administration.

As a result, Republicans will have to cajole moderate Democrats into halting some of the Biden administration's policies.

Republicans will be tending to their wounds with no leverage in Congress until at least the midterm elections, in 2022, all the while blaming Trump for their losses. The former president's rhetoric cost the GOP the presidency, the Senate, and the House of Representatives for the first time in twelve years. This will likely be a wake-up call for Republicans, forcing the GOP to disband Trumpism and reimagine the future of the party.

The Trump administration spent November, December, and

the beginning of January attempting to steal the U.S. presidential election from President Biden. Trump engaged in pointless court battles, attempted to coerce state legislatures to not certify electoral votes, and tried to halt the certification of the electoral college results in Congress. Although Trump endorsed both Perdue and Loeffler and held rallies in their support, his baseless claims about the presidential election ruined any chance for Republican victories.

The Trump administration's cries of election fraud distracted crucial Republican voters in Georgia. One of Trump's attorneys went as far as to encourage Republicans to abstain from voting. Without the false claims made by Trump and his allies and the unfounded discussion of the legitimacy of the electoral process, the GOP would have likely

succeeded in holding onto at least one Senate seat.

Unfortunately for the party, the GOP realized far too late the dire consequences of fueling Trump's desperate claims.

While the Trump administration's policies may continue to influence the GOP, it is unlikely that a candidate with the same divisive rhetoric will become the face of the party in the future. A new path will have to be forged in order for the GOP to regain its momentum. We are likely to see a greater effort taken to work across the political aisle; the Republican Party has a lot of ground to cover in recruiting the middle-of-the-road supporters that Trump's extremism ostracized.

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On January 13, 2021, former President Trump became the only president in American history to be impeached twice. His charge? "Incitement of insurrection."

Photo courtesy of the New York Times



In the aftermath of the Capitol riot, former President Trump's Twitter, Facebook, and other social media accounts were deactivated.

Photo courtesy of POLITICO



Democratic challenger Reverend Raphael Warnock defeated Republican incumbent Senator Kelly Loeffler in the Georgia runoff election on January 5.

Photo courtesy of NPR



Off the coast of Queen Bess Island, La., a pelican was found covered in oil. It was one of the one million birds killed in the 2010 Deepwater Horizon spill.

Photo courtesy of the New York Times

TRUMP'S LAST SLAP AT ENVIRONMENT

By **Renee Jiang '22**
Associate Editor

Throughout his four years in office, former President Donald Trump P'oo dismantled hundreds of environmental policies, exacerbating the world's raging climate crisis. The weeks before President Joe Biden's inauguration have been no different. The Trump administration finalized over 47 pieces of legislation known as "midnight regulations" — policies implemented immediately before a president leaves office. It is no surprise that a majority of these regulations pertain to the environment.

Rather than rolling back Obama-era environmental policies, the Trump administration speedily implemented their own. Although all of Trump's environmental policies are major steps backward in the nation's fight against climate change, there are three regulations in particular that will drastically hinder the nation's fight for climate justice.

The most important of these three policies is an Environmen-

tal Protection Agency rule titled Strengthening Transparency in Pivotal Science Underlying Significant Regulatory Actions and Influential Scientific Information. Despite its clunky name, the legislation is simple: publicly-released scientific data should be preferred over studies that keep their data confidential. This rule will allow large corporations such as the EPA itself to twist scientific evidence in their favor by independently validating their research to implement unsustainable regulations. What's more, this EPA policy will go into effect without undergoing the traditional 30-day waiting period, which could prevent the Biden administration from immediately suspending the regulation.

A second controversial piece of legislation is the Arctic Oil Exploration Lease, which will ease environmental and safety requirements for oil exploration in the Arctic. This regulation has raised alarm across social media over the history of native environmental protection in the Arctic and the

wellbeing of the region's diverse ecosystems and wildlife. It's also another example of the Trump administration's negligence toward not only climate change but also native communities. Despite nationwide protests and even opposition from large oil corporations, the Trump administration is still adamant about moving forward with the proposal.

On the bright side, it will most likely be many weeks before these leases are finalized because of the widespread discontent concerning this policy. This delay could potentially give the Biden administration enough time to take action before the legislation is passed.

Finally, the Trump administration cemented drastic changes to the 1918 Migratory Bird Treaty Act. The changes ensure that the federal government will no longer have the power to prosecute or fine any corporations that threaten the livelihood of birds "without underlying intent." Given the staggering number of bird deaths as a result of oil spills and toxic waste ponds, this regulation will allow these compa-

nies to continue to wreak havoc without consequence.

When asked about Trump's new regulations, Director of the Center for Science and Democracy at the Union of Concerned Scientists Andrew Rosenberg said to the *Washington Post*, "These are really substantial rules that are fundamentally changing the way that regulations on very large industries are implemented." Dr. Rosenberg added that most of these regulations have also been "completely slammed" by the professional scientific community.

The haunting nature of the Trump administration's new environmental legislation has raised questions from a concerned public about the future of climate policies. Unfortunately, the Biden administration will have to embark on a lengthy process to prevent Trump's laws from taking effect, which could siphon time and energy from more urgent environmental needs.

Renee Jiang is a fifth-former from Hopkinton, Mass. She may be reached at rjiang22@choate.edu

Sense and Censors On Social Media

By **Anika Midha '22**
Associate Editor

Former President Donald Trump P'oo is currently banned from Facebook, Twitter, and other social media platforms in light of his encouragement of the riots at Capitol Hill on January 6. In a further attempt to muffle Trump's harmful, violence-inciting rhetoric, Google and Apple have removed Parler, a popular Twitter-alternative used by many Trump supporters, from their app stores.

Trump is no stranger to Twitter. Since 2009, he has tweeted more than 47,000 times to his 89 million followers. During his time in office, Trump tweeted a total of 34,000 times, all of which were considered official statements by the President of the United States.

Trump's reliance on social media is evidence of how the United States's political landscape is migrating to the digital world. He is only one of many government officials who have started to use social media as a medium to share their opinions, request donations, and more. However, as social media membership has increased, it has also been used as a platform to disseminate unverified facts and data, employ undisciplined and polarizing rhetoric, and spread hate and extremist speech.

Trump is a culprit of the latter. While the decision to expel Trump's online presence has been met with approval from his critics, some believe that the ban might be a form of censorship and a violation of the First Amendment.

Several political figures have denounced the deactivation of Trump's social media, including Polish government officials who have gone as far as to draft legislation illegalizing efforts to deplatform politicians. Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki wrote on Facebook, "Algorithms or the owners of corporate giants should not decide which views are right and which are not. There can be no consent to censorship." Given the Polish government's history of posting anti-LGBTQIA+ and anti-refugee rhetoric, this view does not come as a surprise.

In actuality, this is by no means a violation of the First Amendment. No law suspends the ability of private corporations, including private social media software, to control how their products and services are used.

RonNell Andersen Jones, a law professor at the University of Utah, said to *The New York Times*, "It's become popular — even among those who plainly know better — to label all matters restricting anyone's free speech as a 'First Amendment issue,' but the First Amendment limits only government actors, and neither a social media company nor a book publisher is the government."

There have to be checks and balances to prevent the misuse of social media by government actors. Trump wielding social media to spread election fraud propaganda is a prime example of the types of content that must be censored to maintain peace and proper democratic procedures.

On January 6, Trump supporters breached the Capitol carrying assault weapons in an attempt to overturn the outcome of the 2020 U.S. presidential election. Instead of condemning the right-wing extremists who threatened the very existence of a functioning democracy, Trump called the rioters "great patriots" and, in a video addressing his followers, said, "We love you. You're very special."

The effort to deplatform Trump has raised an important question: How should social media corporations govern their platforms?

Concerns about corporate power generally surround a company's ability to silence a politician's past, present, and future speech. Because of the monopolization of social media, these corporations would be silencing speech with little transparency and almost zero accountability. This begs a second question: How should lawmakers ensure platform governance is both constitutional and impartial?

Lawmakers and private social media corporations alike must agree to establish preventative policies that clearly outline acceptable conduct. These measures are of utmost importance in regulating political communication, ensuring a peaceful and proper democratic process, and maintaining an online atmosphere free of hateful rhetoric by political figures.

Ultimately, social media platforms should facilitate communication between politicians and the public, but this should all be within certain regulations to prevent violence and further damage to American values.

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LETTERS TO THE FUTURE

With daily stress from school and a new “unprecedented” event almost weekly, it can be hard to keep up with it all. To help you slow down and get some pointers along the way, we asked the Choate community a question: *If you could only give one piece of advice to your grandchildren that you’ve learned these past few months from your life or the current state of the world, what would it be?*

Compiled and condensed by Adrienne Chacón '22



Graphic by Sesame Gaetsloe/The Choate News

“Take advantage of the amazing opportunities that come your way — you never know what might happen — but don’t be anxious if they don’t work out.” — Ryan Kim '23

“In those moments when reason breaks down, hang on to hope and take things one by one, because things do get better.” — Sakura Hayakawa '21

“Be kind; open your heart and mind to meet each moment with awareness.” — Ms. Kalya Yannatos

“Enjoy your life and live it with purpose. A life with regrets is a life not lived.” — Joshua Ramon '24

“Don’t have too many expectations; try to go with the flow.” — Zainab Khokha '24

“Reject the ‘spectator mentality,’ and work with different communities to solve problems together.” — Sherry Li '23

“If you walk the same road as everyone else, your footsteps will disappear in seconds, but if you risk the road less traveled, your imprint may last for centuries.” — Payton Garcia '23

“Find the people that make you happy and keep in touch with them. Reach out for no reason every now and then, and it will make such a difference.” — Katie Gendrich '22

“Have fun. You never know when you will need the memories for a rainy day!” — Kailani Day '21

“Being on a late-night call with someone is a sign that you should go make good memories with them.” — Melody Qian '24

“Seek, accept, and act on the truth.” — Lauren Hsu '24

“If the world is burning down around you, and you’re worried about your grade (or if a teacher like me is making you worried about your grade), take a look around, put up a T, and take the timeout.” — Dr. Edrik Lopez

“It’s okay if it takes a while for you to realize things. Learning takes time.” — Andrew Crews '22

“When you are overwhelmed, make sure to listen to music, call your friends, or do whatever makes you happy, because your mental health should be a top priority.” — Zach Manzanara '21

“It’s better to work hard now than later.” — Michael Gutierrez '22

“There isn’t always next week to look forward to. You might not be able to next month. Sometimes, things that you thought you’d do for years, you suddenly lose. Live in the moment, always move forward, stay on track, and follow your goals.” — Valerie Guadian '23

“Do not work in your bed or wherever you rest and sleep. It messes with your mind, and eventually, you will neither be able to rest nor work.” — Jimena Acosta '23

“Don’t feel guilty for doing what’s best for you.” — Supriya Chang '21

“Don’t expect the truth to always be beautiful.” — Cristian Castro '22

“Pursue your heart’s deepest desires no matter how it turns out, where it takes you, or whom you encounter.” — Mia Desravines '22

“Look at each positive moment in your life and cherish it, so that in moments of worry or uncertainty, you can remember those moments and use them to be the strongest and happiest version of yourself. Don’t forget to take pictures!” — Amanda Benneh '24

“Curiosity, in fact, does NOT kill the cat. Investigate with integrity, truth, courage, and compassion.” — Ms. Alex Ashford

“Face conflicts with an open mind.” — Jacob Federowicz '24

“Go outside.” — Tigo Ponce de Leon '22

“If you can look at the mirror at the end of the day and truthfully say that you had a positive impact on someone else’s life, then you are living a life worth living.” — Patrick Finnerty '21

“Be gay; do crime.” — Avery Feingold

“Imagine that I am in the room watching and listening to you when you open your mouth to say something. Your goal should be to make me proud of my descendant’s patience and kindness.” — Mr. Deron Chang

“Talking could get you just about everywhere except Heaven.” — Ahmed Ali '21

THE UNCERTAIN FUTURE OF STANDARDIZED TESTING

By Praj Chirathivat '22
Associate Editor

At some point in their high school career, most students will face one of the most dreaded aspects of college applications: standardized testing. Colleges and universities primarily use these tests to obtain a base measurement of an applicant’s academic ability, as other measures of academic potential, such as GPA, tend to vary from school to school.

This past year, the Covid-19 pandemic has forced many standardized testing centers to shut down. Even though some students managed to take standardized tests before the pandemic, many were left with no test scores to submit to colleges. Therefore, many institutions were forced to rethink their application process.

Choate, alongside many colleges and preparatory schools, eventually decided to make standardized testing optional to accommodate students without scores. Director of Admissions Mr. Jeff Beaton said, “We were talking about going test-optional in the summer months, and we don’t want to put families into a situation where they felt they had to take a test, especially in-person where it’s not safe.”

As one of the pioneer boarding schools to make standardized testing optional for their applicants, Choate has communicated with the Ten Schools Administration and Bates College on how to approach this new change.

Initially, many prospective families were shocked about the change, as they assumed that standardized testing was a major, irreplaceable part of the application process. Although it may seem that eliminating standardized testing scores would be a huge obstacle to the admissions process, the Admission Office welcomes this new change as a step in the right direction.

“Even before this pandemic, our reading process was so much



Graphic by Yuko Tanaka/The Choate News

more than a test score,” Mr. Beaton said. “It is just one small piece of a larger holistic read. A standardized test isn’t going to tell me how a student is going to do in a transition of being away from home. I think everyone puts so much time and resource into a test. That is what we are trying to get away from and instead focus on your schoolwork.”

After reviewing the cycle of new students in this test-optional year, the Admission Office will decide whether the School will continue to require standardized testing scores for future applicants. “Standardized testing is a huge equity issue,” Mr. Beaton noted. “Not every student has the resources to get a private tutor or to buy that book to prep them. I think [test-optional] can equalize the admissions process and focus on what is most important...we are already getting so much good context from other pieces of the application.”

Similarly, Director of College Counseling Ms. Marcia Landesman said, “These tests don’t necessarily show the broad range of skills students have and how they can perform in college.”

In addition to Choate’s new test-optional policy, the College

Counseling Office has adapted to support applicants navigating a test-optional college admissions season. While students who came back during the fall were still able to take the SAT at the Worthington Johnson Athletics Center (WJAC), seating was reduced to accommodate the social distancing protocols. As a result, not every student had the opportunity to take the exam.

Although this initially seemed to be an issue, many colleges already opted out of requiring standardized testing in their applications. If colleges had continued to require standardized tests, they would end up limiting the number of applicants able to apply.

Certain institutions have already begun to eliminate standardized testing, at least temporarily, from their application process. The University of California (UC) system, for example, adopted a new standardized testing policy: admissions will be test-blind for this year due to the pandemic, test-optional next year, and once again test blind in the two years that follow. The UC system is also working towards creating its own standardized test for the 2025 admission cycle.

Undeniably, the Covid-19 pandemic has catalyzed a movement that forced institutions to reconsider the merit of standardized tests. “What’s more important is the high-school transcript,” said Ms. Landesman.

Just this past week, College Board — the company that facilitates the SAT suite of exams — announced that the optional essay on SAT tests and the SAT subject tests would be discontinued, effective immediately. This choice came in part because of their dwindling significance in college admissions and recent challenges posed by the pandemic.

With the future of standardized testing so uncertain, many are wondering what permanent changes to the application process will come of the pandemic. “Up until a few years ago, [standardized tests] kept getting more important until their peak,” said Stephanie Su '21. “Now, we are at their comedown. It will be interesting to see what applications will look like ten to fifteen years from now.”

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How to Care for Covid at Home

By Melody Qian '24
Reporter

With over 24 million reported cases of Covid-19 in the United States, new contagious variants of the virus, and an epidemic of anti-maskers, our risk of being exposed to the disease is escalating at a scary rate. While we all take precautions to prevent infection, what do you do if you or a loved one tests positive for Covid-19? We talked to the Health Center to get some advice on how to get through the coronavirus at home.

Isolate: Foremost, isolating the infected individual from the rest of the household is critical to limiting the spread. Ms. Meaghan Harkins, Medication and Nurse Manager at the Health Center, said “Bringing them food, fluids, and medicine is okay, but you should not linger in their room. They should have an easy way to contact you when they need something, and distancing, masking, and hand washing are still 100% necessary.”

Practice Self-Care: Ms. Karen Klein, Director of Nursing and Associate Director of the Health Center, encourages those who are infected to “get plenty of rest, stay hydrated, and pay attention to how you are feeling. Continue to take your regular medicines, eat foods that are good for you and comforting!” Stress-relieving activities can also help: “Give yourself permission to watch silly shows, read books for fun, and talk with people who lift you up. If you have a pet, this is a good time to spend together,” she said.

Consider Home Remedies: Ms. Klein pointed out that there is no real ‘cure’ for symptoms caused by viral infections, but they can be alleviated with home remedies. “Take a bath and drink herbal teas like ginger, which is good for digestion. Mint is good for headaches, and chamomile is good for sleep,” she said. She also suggested relieving aches and pains with a cozy blanket and heating pad or by

applying arnica oil or Tiger Balm on the skin.

Ms. Harkins also gave advice on managing coughs. She said, “Honey has also been shown to be even more effective against a cough than cough medicine, so teas with honey or just a spoonful taken as needed can help. The time-honored American tradition of chicken noodle soup is also comforting!”

An effective treatment for congestion is steam inhalation — or “magic steam” as Ms. Klein calls it. Run a hot shower with the door closed to create a makeshift steam room and fill the sink with very hot water. Then, put a towel over your head, lean over the sink, and breathe in the steam. Ms. Harkins added, “There are Vicks VapoPads you can put on the floor of your shower to help in this arena as well.”

Monitor For More Severe Symptoms: While taking care of yourself, pay attention to whether your symptoms are worsening. Of warning signs, Medical Director Dr. Miriam Cohen says, “Shortness of breath is the most common, but also a severe headache, inability to eat or drink, confusion. Anything that is severe and not improving with all the remedies previously discussed warrants a conversation and evaluation by a medical provider and perhaps a trip to the emergency department.”

Take Care Of Your Mind: Of course, the virus is bound to cause stress and anxiety. If you’re feeling distressed in any way, the workers at the Health Center encourage you to reach out. Ms. Harkins said, “Mental health matters just as much as physical health. We are all affected by this strange new reality — some in deeply profound ways. Your feelings matter. Honor your feelings by allowing yourself to feel them, and if you are overwhelmed, please take the courageous step of talking to someone.”

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Artwork by Senching Hsia

Sealife and the Supernatural: Senching Hsia '21 Shares Scratchboard Series

By **Angel Guo '22**
Associate Editor

Inspired by the fantastical creatures and whimsy aesthetic of “Alice in Wonderland,” Visual Arts Concentration student Senching Hsia '21 draws the audience down the rabbit hole with her recently completed scratchboard series. Solely composed of white lines with varying length and thickness, these three pieces — *Emergence*, *Floral Fantasia*, and *Palatial Coral* — depict Hsia's love for the natural world.

Hsia's use of scratchboards as the medium for this collection was a spontaneous decision after a chance encounter with the material in the Paul Mellon Arts Center studio. While cleaning up old drawers, she discovered the boards and experimented on them for practice. After noticing

that scratching on scratchboards is unexpectedly similar to drawing on regular paper — albeit requiring much more patience and precision, as each stroke permanently scratches off the dark ink to reveal the white layer underneath — Hsia decided to embark on a new project using the medium.

The first piece Hsia created, a brood of cicadas, is an artistic embodiment of Hsia's own personal growth — the emergence of cicadas after their seventeen years underground parallels how she has developed since infancy. When Hsia was around two years old, she was so fascinated by the cicadas in her backyard that she dissected them. Coincidentally, her hometown of Charleston, South Carolina experienced the once-in-seventeen-years cicada emergence that year. When Hsia came

across an article about cicadas' reemergence last summer, she recalled her growth since first discovering the cicadas in her backyard, as if the past seventeen years have also been a period of her own metamorphosis from childhood to adulthood.

Since Hsia enjoyed her experience working on the first piece, she ordered more scratchboards, aiming to explore the imaginary side of the plant world after her first realistic illustration of cicadas. The second piece, titled *Floral Fantasia*, depicts imaginary creatures fluttering around lush, exotic greenery.

“I incorporated plants that are not real, but look like they are, to illustrate a world where fantasy and nature intertwines,” Hsia said. In addition to the otherworldly flora, she chose to illustrate hawk moths — which

resemble hummingbirds with butterfly tongues — in the same piece to add to the sense of supernatural. The surrealness of this creature, Hsia noted, matches the overall landscape, embodying a lack of a definite boundary between the real and imaginary.

Her third piece is a detailed illustration of coral reefs and a school of fish. The black and white color palette of Hsia's scratchboards poses a distinctive contrast against the vibrant color of a live coral reef. “People's initial reaction regarding the artwork might often be astonished as they perceive the lively corals, but they would later recognize that this picture actually illustrates the skeletons of the corals,” Hsia said.

Hsia created this coral reef scratchboard with the hope that it would serve as an environ-

mental message for people. “I hope that when people look at my work, they realize that this is something wonderful and should be celebrated. At the same time, this is depicting something that is being destroyed through climate change and sea acidification,” Hsia said.

After completing three intricate pieces with the finicky medium, Hsia has accumulated tips and tricks for aspiring scratchboard-enthusiasts. Although the irreversible nature of the material easily intimidates many artists, Hsia found that the permanence of every mark, to some extent, alleviates the overthinking and hesitation associated with drawing. Before committing to any scratches, Hsia suggested making an outline of one's vision, such as sketching lightly on the scratchboard as a tentative

contour and drawing shapes in Notability to serve as a reference.

The two underlying messages in Hsia's artworks are to appreciate the beauty in nature, and to feel concern, worry, and hope for the health of our planet.

“I want people to be able to see the world through my eyes when they look at my art. I want them to appreciate nature and find beauty in it,” Hsia said. “Perhaps because we see nature around us all the time, it just becomes our mundane reality. But when I look at nature, I think there is still so much inspiration, so much to maintain or cultivate — especially with climate change — and so much possibility that we might lose all the beauty that there is.”

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STUDENT CHOREOGRAPHERS SHOWCASE WINTER 2020



Photos by Sesame Gaetsaloe/The Choate News

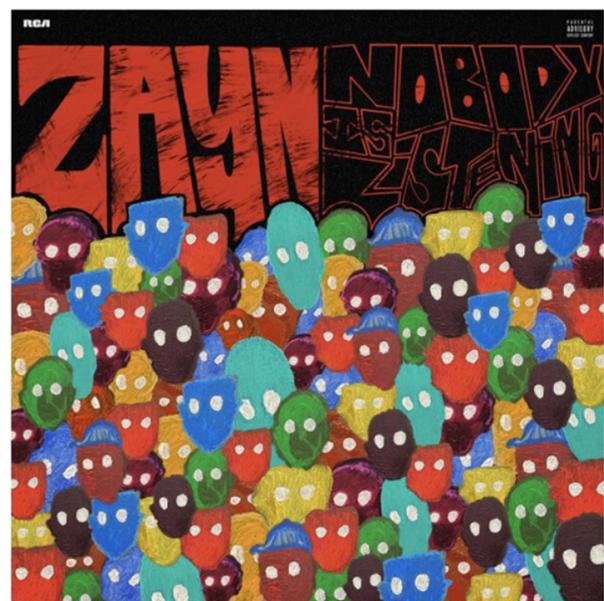
Zayn Malik Returns With Third R&B Album, “Nobody Is Listening”

By **Reagan Colton '24**
Reporter

With his long-awaited album “Nobody Is Listening,” singer-songwriter Zayn Malik delivered a selection of emotional and distinctly love-driven songs. Dedicated to his long-time partner Gigi Hadid, the album has a deeply personal touch that few artists are able to achieve. The release date coincides with Malik's 28th birthday, as if the album were his birthday gift to his fans.

“Nobody is Listening” is Malik's third solo album since his decision to separate from the critically-acclaimed boy band One Direction in March of 2015. This is the singer-songwriter's second big announcement of the year, following the birth of his daughter in September of 2020.

In his usual style, Malik teased the album a few months before its drop, releasing the lead single “Better” on September 25 of last year. He kept his fans in suspense by releasing yet another single, “Vibez,” just days before the release of the full record. In the days leading up to the release, Malik even created a hotline that fans could dial to hear excerpts of the new songs.



Album art courtesy of RCA Records

Unlike his first two solo projects, “Mind of Mine” and “Icarus Falls,” “Nobody Is Listening” is quite short with only 11 tracks and a run time of about 30 minutes. Of those tracks, Malik has two collaborations — one with American hip-hop singer-songwriter Syd, who is featured on the fifth track “When Love's Around,” and the other with English rapper Devlin on the ninth track “Windowsill.” These features continue a trend of high-profile celebrity musician collaborations for Malik, who

has previously worked with artists like Taylor Swift, Nicki Minaj, PARTYNEXTDOOR, Timbaland, Sia, and Kehlani.

Throughout the album, Malik maintains a fresh electro-pop sound — his first track, “Calamity,” even incorporates some melodic rap. Malik also plays a line of folksy electric guitar in the last track “River Road,” giving the song a polished and high-end feel. Every beat and choice of instrumental accompaniment is perfectly crafted to give the album a well-rounded electro-pop sound.

So far, Malik has released two music videos, “Better” and “Vibez.” In “Better,” we see Malik getting ready for what appears to be a black-tie affair. He sings, “Why wait to hate? Can we save love?” Some fans have speculated that Malik is expressing his intent to marry his girlfriend, Hadid, who appears to wear an engagement ring in a video she posted to Instagram. Neither Malik nor Hadid has spoken publicly about an engagement.

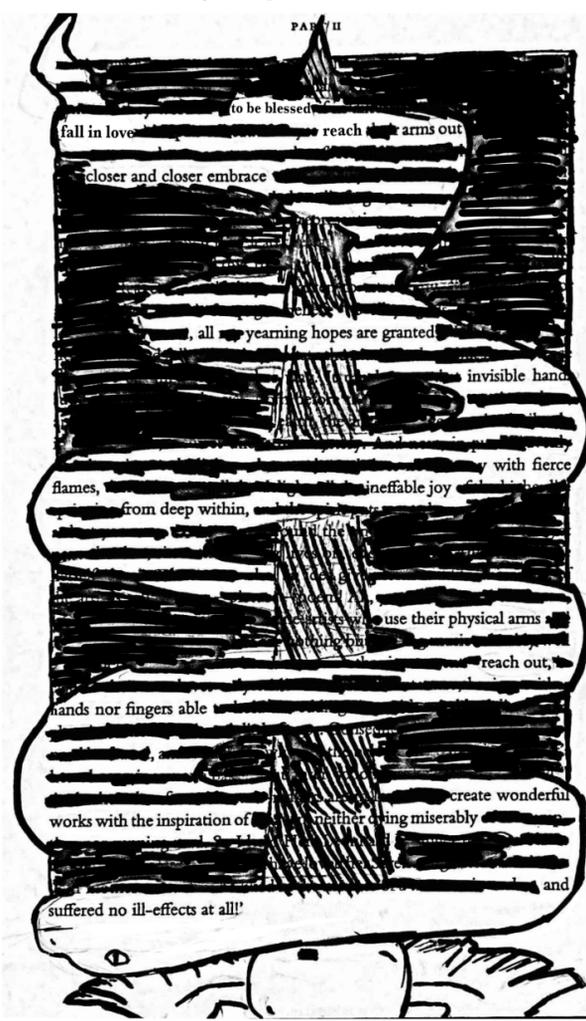
“Vibez” opens with Malik in a bedroom, but as the video progresses, he drives a car, treks through a dark forest, and rows a wooden boat across an ocean. The video ends with a shot of him sitting on a couch. Some fans have suggested that each setting — the car, the forest, and the ocean — represents a challenge that Malik endured during his time with One Direction. Malik has spoken out about the stress and anxiety that he experienced as a member of the band.

“Nobody Is Listening” fits perfectly with the emotional vulnerability and creativity of Malik's current discography. Expect to see “Nobody Is Listening” soon topping the charts.

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Black-Out Poetry: My Dream 2021

by **Reagan Bajus '22**



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PLAYER PROFILE

Virtually on the Court with Indi DelRocco



DelRocco nails a three-point shot during last season's home game against Suffield Academy. Photo courtesy of Choate Flickr

By Sam Anastasio '23
Staff Reporter

When Girls' Varsity Basketball point guard Indi DelRocco '21 was injured last year and unable to play for the remainder of the season, she wondered how it would affect her college recruiting process. Little did she know that a raging pandemic would further complicate her opportunities for recruitment. Growing up in Branford, Connecticut, DelRocco was introduced to basketball at a young age by her parents. The sport has always been a defining part of DelRocco's life and will continue to be, as she recently committed to play Division III basketball at Trinity College.

Sam Anastasio: What age did you begin playing basketball? What was the driving force that inspired you to play?

Indi DelRocco: My parents actually coached our local high school's girls' basketball team, so I have been on the court since I was born. I started playing on a team when I was six years old — really since I could walk. My parents were the driving force behind my playing. However, watching all my brothers and the girls on the team was inspiring.

SA: How did you decide to come to Choate?

ID: I decided to come to Choate because of basketball and to get a better education. I knew that I wanted to play in college and coming to Choate was probably the best option to get me to that level.

SA: Congratulations on your recent commitment to Trinity College. How did the Covid-19 pandemic affect the recruiting process?

ID: I got hurt before the pandemic, which ended my season and hurt my recruiting. I had two Division I offers to not great academic schools going into the summer, but I wanted more of a higher education. I was waiting for games to be played for Choate so Ivy League and Patriot schools could see me play. I started reaching out to NESCAC [New England Small College Athletic Conference] schools, and luckily Trinity was willing to take a chance on me.

SA: Was it hard to learn that the last game you played for Choate was last year and that you wouldn't be able to have a senior season?

ID: Honestly, no, because it's just kind of in the pattern. Learning that I couldn't play in the last year of AAU [Amateur Athletic Union] was probably the hardest. With Choate, I kind of just

expected it with how they were reacting to the pandemic.

SA: What do you love most about the game?

ID: I really just love being with my teammates and making those connections. But I have never really thought about it — I have been playing basketball for so long, it's just natural to me. I obviously enjoy the time spent with teammates, but I honestly don't even enjoy winning that much.

SA: Is there one specific experience with the team that really sticks with you?

ID: Definitely winning the Loomis game last year, as we hadn't beat them in a really long time, and we won by 12 points. We had an underdog season, and we weren't expected to win a lot of games because we lost seven seniors and only got one recruit. But it was really cool to see a lot of people step up and see what we could accomplish.

SA: Do you have professional teams or players that you follow or inspire to be like?

ID: I don't really follow any teams, but I like Stephen Curry, as he can shoot the lights out of the ball without trying. And obviously Kevin Durant.

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A QUIET SIGNING DAY FOR COLLEGE-BOUND ATHLETES

By Meredith Syms '23
Reporter

On November 11, three Choate seniors officially signed with their future colleges, cementing their athletic and academic careers. Grace Bohan '21 committed to row at Boston College; Mia Scarpati '21 committed to play golf at Lehigh University; and Patrick Yowan '21 committed to play lacrosse at Loyola University Maryland. All three of these schools compete in NCAA Division I.

The recruitment process for high-school athletes has changed drastically since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. Ten months ago, the NCAA made the decision to suspend all in-person recruiting until April 15, 2021. Athletes can no longer visit college campuses prior to committing, nor can they easily display their talents for college scouts in person.

Bohan found the recruitment process to be "challenging this year because many college campuses didn't allow visits." Nevertheless, she was able to get to know coaches and teams through "virtual events, phone calls, and emailing back and forth."

Under normal circumstances, most athletes have the opportunity to get to know their future teammates and coaches before committing to a school. Even without that luxury, Bohan feels she found a home at Boston College. The head coach, she said, "made a great effort of making sure I knew my future teammates even though I couldn't meet them in person. She kept in constant contact." Both the coach and current athletes at Boston College answered "all of my questions and were understanding that this year and the process was very different and difficult."

Scarpati faced similar challenges after many important golf tournaments were cancelled or delayed. "I couldn't formally visit any campuses or meet with coaches because the NCAA instituted a recruiting ban on coach-to-recruit contact, and obviously



Yowan smiled as he signed his letter of intent. Photo courtesy of ChoateFlickr

campuses were closed," she said. Without the opportunity to connect with schools through the traditional recruitment avenues, Scarpati decided to focus on schools she had already talked to before the pandemic hit.

"I was fortunate enough that I had been in communication with Lehigh since early in my junior year and managed to get on campus and meet with the coach right before Covid-19 hit," Scarpati said. "It was important to me that I found a school with a great business/finance program, a motivated golf team, and a welcoming community." Luckily, Lehigh checked all of those boxes, and Scarpati will join the golf team as a finance major in the fall.

Although Yowan also struggled with limitations due to the pandemic, he was still able to establish strong relationships with both the coaches and the other new recruits. In describing his experience, he said, "The head coach always kept in touch with me and gave updates on how things were down in Baltimore. It was also nice that he set up Zoom meetings with me and the rest of the recruits in my class. Everyone already knows each other mod-

erately well without having met each other in person."

Traditionally, a signing day allows athletes to celebrate their accomplishment with friends and family. However, this year, parents were forced to attend the signing ceremony virtually, while students were joined only by coaches and a few close friends.

"I felt most badly for my parents because they were unable to be there with me," Scarpati said. "It definitely felt a lot different than I had expected. However, it was still an awesome culminating experience for my recruiting process, despite the less-than-ideal circumstances."

Similarly, Yowan had been looking forward to signing day throughout his athletic career and felt frustrated that his parents could only make it through Zoom. However, he still looked on the bright side of things. "I'm grateful for their presence nonetheless. At the end of the day, it's just watching someone sign their name, and I hope my parents understand their immense role in getting me to where I am now."

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For Many Wild Boars, Staying Home is the Only Way to Compete

By Bo Goergen '22
Staff Reporter

A number of Choate students have decided to learn remotely this year, not for fear of contracting the Covid-19 virus on a campus full of students, faculty, and staff, but in order to participate in athletic practices and games that the School has deemed too risky amid the ongoing pandemic.

For student-athletes, Choate usually provides the perfect opportunity to develop their athletic skills, compete at the highest level of competition in the Northeast region, and receive plenty of exposure to college coaches. However, with the cancellation of all fall and winter interscholastic games, Choate athletes are now only able to practice and play socially-distanced, intrasquad scrimmages. For some student-athletes, merely scrimmaging against teammates isn't enough; they desire to compete in actual matches and get real exposure from college coaches.

All athletes who were on campus in the fall witnessed the stringent health guidelines and Choate's efforts to enforce them. Although the rules protected the student body, faculty, and staff from Covid-19 outbreaks, sports



Graphic by Sesame Gaetsaloe/The Choate News

teams felt the immense drawbacks of the regulations.

Girls' Varsity Basketball point guard Kayce Madancy '22 said, "Although I think I would gain a lot from coming back campus and practicing with the team, I chose to stay online because at home I can play real games and actually

play basketball. At Choate, we will not be able to come within six feet of each other and therefore will not be able to get any real game experience."

Madancy acknowledges both the value of the boarding experience and the importance of the health guidelines, but she explained that, ultimately, the ben-

efits of staying at home and competing far outweigh returning to Choate. She added that "many of my classes will be online anyway, so it just does not make sense for me to come back."

Varsity swimmer Ben Cho '22 echoed Madancy's sentiment. "It was a difficult decision for me not to come back

to campus for the winter term, but it just doesn't make sense for my athletic career. Our coach has not specified what the exact rules will be regarding Covid-19, but I am expecting them to be strict," he said. At home in California, Cho can continue to compete and practice everyday, as he has been

doing for the past few months. "In the end, it just doesn't make sense to return to campus," he said.

A common concern among athletes, especially juniors potentially looking to get recruited, is what the exact health guidelines will be regarding practice in the winter term. Many assume that the rules may be even stricter than in the fall in terms of what coaches and players are allowed to do because almost every winter sport practices inside.

Players worry that the social distancing restrictions on campus will make it difficult for coaches to simulate competition and maximize practices. For close-contact sports like basketball and hockey, students realize practices will not come close to live games.

Glenn Halliday '21, a member of Boys' Varsity Basketball and Varsity Baseball, also elected to stay home for the winter to work on both basketball and baseball. "If I went to Choate, I would never be able to hit. Now I am able to hit at a place close by whenever I want and also work with my trainer to get stronger everyday," he said.

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