



# THE CHOATE NEWS

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## SCHOOL RETURNS TO REMOTE LEARNING AS COVID-19 CASES RISE

By **Rachel Pittman '22** and  
**Ryan Kim '23**  
*Managing Editor and Associate Editor*

After a rise in Covid-19 cases on campus, Choate's administration decided on Tuesday, December 14, that classes would be held remotely for the final two days before Winter Break. As of Tuesday evening, 15 cases of Covid had been identified on campus as well as a number of flu cases.

In what many viewed as regrettably reminiscent of the 2019-2020 school year, classes for Wednesday and Thursday were held on Zoom, with teachers scrambling to adjust their lesson plans and email Zoom links to their students. St. John Hall and academic buildings were closed to students, and the Dining Hall transitioned to takeaway service. Athletic contests were cancelled. The Holiday Program, originally scheduled for Thursday, December 16, was also cancelled.

Boarders were given the option to remain on campus until

Friday, and attend class from their dorm rooms. With permission from the Deans' Office, boarders could return home early, before the official start of break, on Friday, December 18. Day students were asked to remain off campus.

In an email Tuesday night announcing its decision, the School noted that the move was made "out of an abundance of caution in order to minimize any possible spread of illness within our campus community given our proximity to the upcoming break."

The number of Covid cases on campus has steadily risen since students returned from Fall Break. On December 4, Choate shifted its Covid-19 alert level from Blue to Yellow, after testing revealed one case on campus, but most safety guidelines remained the same, with dorm visitation being prohibited and masks required in residential spaces.

Many students expressed disappointment at the School's decision, and felt that Choate had not been adequately proactive in

monitoring the situation after students returned to campus from Fall Break. The School decided to test only international students, their close contacts, and any student who visited the Health Center showing symptoms. The rest of the community went untested.

According to Medical Director Dr. Miriam Cohen, the Health Center's decisions were guided by the recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Health Center's experience in the Fall Term.

"CDC guidelines said that if you're fully vaccinated, you do not need to undergo surveillance testing," Dr. Cohen said. "But those individuals who traveled internationally were tested because that's what the CDC said — five to seven days after international travel." That testing revealed four positive cases.

After the Fall Long Weekend, the Health Center tested only symptomatic individuals, and none were positive. "We have students traveling home all the time and coming back, and we hadn't

seen Covid on campus." Dr. Cohen said. "Knowing that peer schools had similar experiences, we decided that we wouldn't test after Thanksgiving break."

Still, many felt that the precautions weren't enough. "I am very disappointed in Choate's administration," said Sidharth Rao '23. "We pay the price with more Covid-19 cases and less in-person school."

Tuesday's announcement sent many students hurrying to adjust their plans for returning home, with varying degrees of success. Speaking on Tuesday night, Lisa Ji '22 said, "Everyone else in my dorm is making immediate plans of going home tomorrow, whereas I'm left alone to go home Friday on my scheduled flight."

Danny Yoon '24, who is from South Korea, decided against returning home over the weekend of December 12, anxious not to miss the final days of in-person learning before Winter Break. On Tuesday, he rushed to pull together last-minute plans to return home. "My opinion is that [the adminis-

tration] genuinely didn't show any respect especially to students who need to travel, especially announcing this at 9 p.m. when it's really difficult to make changes."

While many students were frustrated by the last-minute notice and the cancellation of sports, in-person clubs, and Holiday Program performances, others appreciated what they saw as the School's transparency and efficiency in its communication to students.

"My family has opted for me to leave campus tomorrow," said Aidan Gearney '24, referring to Wednesday. "I feel like the fact that we're able to make that decision given the full set of facts is great."

Dr. Cohen said that the School will support students as they navigate unstable circumstances. "We care for people until they are able to have someone come and care for them," she said. "We will work together to make a plan, and we will not leave anyone without housing."

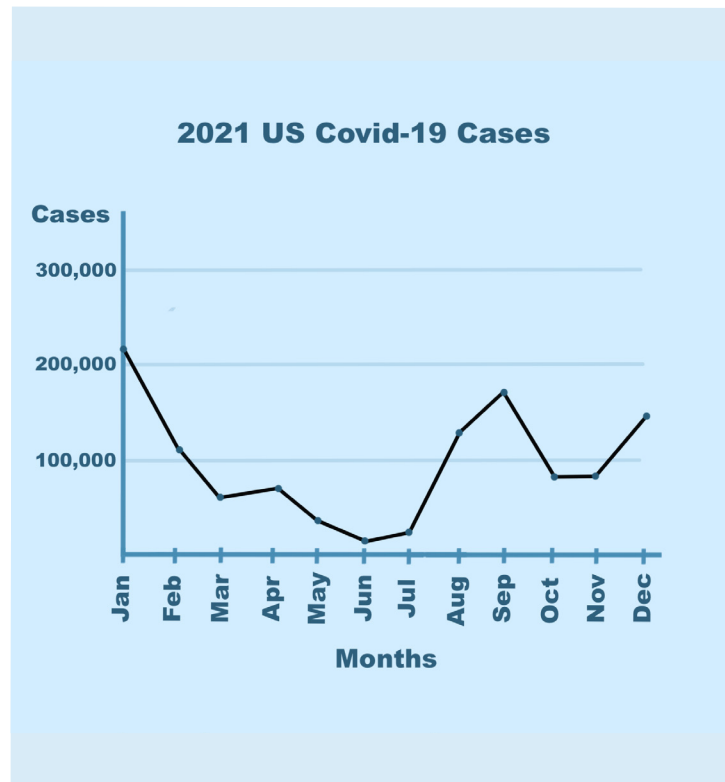
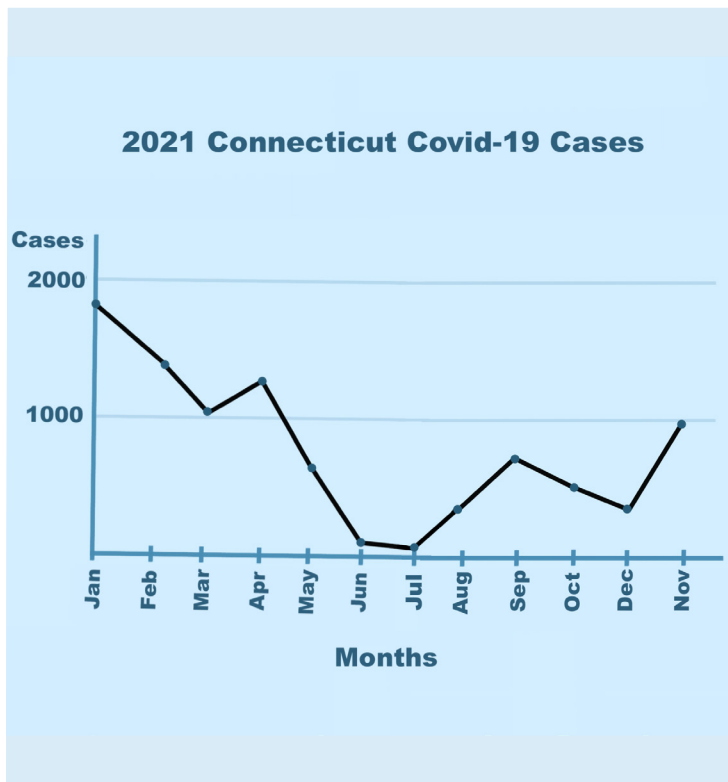
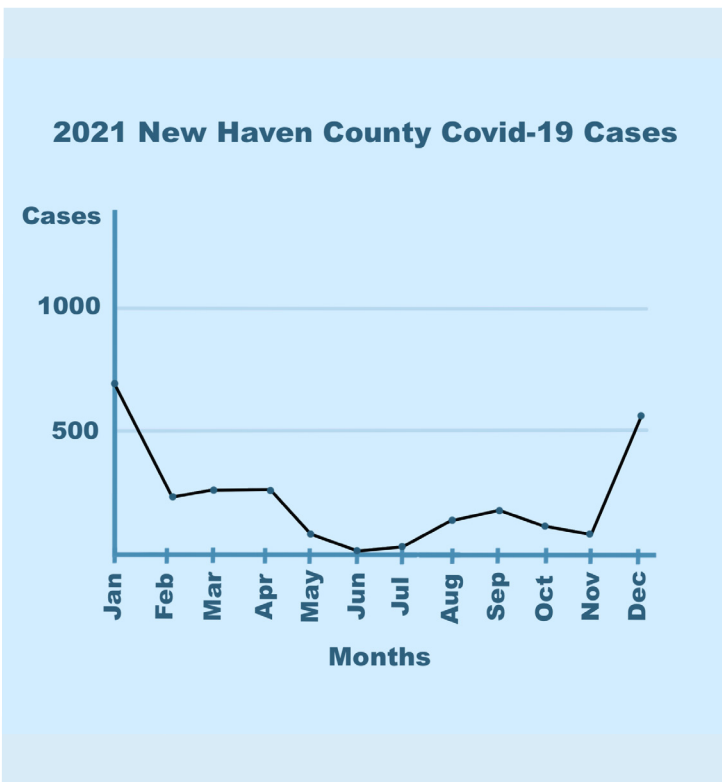
Dr. Cohen cautioned against interpreting the recent rise in Covid-19 cases on campus as a drastic escalation from a year

ago. "Last year, we were distanced everywhere on campus, including sports," Dr. Cohen said. "And we didn't allow anyone to travel on and off campus. This significantly prevented any spread on campus. But, significantly increased the mental health impact of the pandemic."

Restrictions were significantly relaxed this fall. "When we chose this year not to distance, to allow travel, to allow sports, we knew we were taking on more risk," Dr. Cohen said. "I still believe it's the correct choice, but it makes the numbers not comparable."

Before returning to campus after Winter Break, in January, students will be required to provide proof of a negative Covid-19 test. They will be tested again once they are on campus, with remote learning and takeaway meals the routine until test results are returned.

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## Ms. Jennifer Elliott, Andover Dean, Appointed First Ever Head of Student and Academic Life



Photo courtesy of Jennifer Elliott

Ms. Jennifer Elliott will assume her new position next July.

By **Alexis Lien '23**  
*Associate Editor*

Ms. Jennifer Karlen Elliott, the Assistant Head of School for Residential Life and Dean of Students at Phillips Academy Andover, has been appointed as Choate's first Head of Student and

Academic Life, a new position designed to be a surrogate Head of School when Dr. Alex Curtis, Choate's Head of School, is away from campus.

Ms. Elliott was chosen after an eight-month search. At Andover, she has taught history and social science and coached

squash. Previously, she worked at the Stevenson School and the Westminster School.

As Choate's Head of Student and Academic Life, she will work closely with Dr. Curtis but will be able to make decisions about the School's budget and other functions without consulting him.

The Dean of Faculty, the Dean of Equity and Inclusion, the Dean of College Counseling, and the Dean of Students will all report directly to Ms. Elliott.

The search process for the position began last spring with the

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## Citing Pandemic, School Allows International Students to Begin Winter Break Early

By **Tess Taetle '24**  
*Staff Reporter*

Winter break begins on December 17, but some international students are leaving campus as early as December 10 and completing the last week of December classes virtually. The School allowed this early departure because of new Covid-19 cases on campus and the worldwide changes in quarantine mandates, spurred by the Omicron Covid-19 variant, that may affect international student travel.

Students returning to countries that require strict quarantines have known since October that they could leave campus early for Winter Break. Ms. Ashley Sinclair, Director of Global Programs and Adviser to International Students, notified international students and families in an email on October 19 that "students returning to their home country whose quarantine is two weeks or longer" would be able to either "return home at the end of the fall term" or "return home at the end of the second week of classes in December."

The School hoped to ensure that quarantines did not limit students' time with family during a "well-deserved break," as Ms. Sinclair put it. Students who have left campus early will join classes remotely on Zoom or asynchronously watch a recording of the class.

On December 8, in a second email, Ms. Sinclair extended the offer of leaving campus early to all international students, regardless of the quarantine measures imposed by the home countries. The offer was precipitated by a rise in on-campus Covid-19 cases and the spread of the Omicron variant across the globe.

International students must return to campus on the original date of January 3. The School will test all students for Covid-19 upon their return to campus.

Dean of Students Mr. Mike Velez '00 acknowledged the challenges that come with the return to a semi-hybrid model. With the class schedule not as adap-

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## NEW HEAD OF STUDENT AND ACADEMIC LIFE

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organization of a search committee. The committee consisted of Dr. Curtis, members of the Board of Trustees, Dean of Students Mr. Mike Velez '00, Dean of Equity and Inclusion Dr. Rachel Myers, and HPRSS Teacher Ms. Tiffany Rivera. Additionally, the School partnered with the consulting firm Storbeck Search.

By the end of the spring term of 2020, the Search Committee whittled its pool of candidates to a smaller group that Storbeck further vetted over the summer. This pool included a diverse group of candidates with a wide range of backgrounds and interests. By the beginning of the 2021-2022 academic year, the pool had been further reduced to a group of semi-finalists who each participated in a series of Zoom sessions. That group was narrowed to three finalists who visited campus in October. Ms. Elliott

was unanimously recommended by the Board of Trustees.

Ms. Elliott first became interested in Choate after getting to know Mr. Velez and former Dean of Students Mr. James Stanley during occasional meetings with other boarding school deans. "It's been awesome to learn about Choate's community and Choate's values and see the different ways that the work we're doing overlaps," she said.

Mr. Raynard Kington, Andover's Head of School, said that Ms. Elliott is "energetic, thoughtful, and committed." He continued, "She is very devoted to students and ensuring that students' experiences are at the center of everything."

Mr. Velez said, "She had an excellent track record of being a person who puts the needs of the community before any individual ones. I think she is someone who is aligned with our mission and values as a person, and I think

that that is really important when you look at positions of leadership at a school. You want somebody who shares the values and visions of the School, not only professionally but also personally."

Upon reading her responses in her application, Dr. Curtis shared similar sentiments regarding her Choate-like spirit. "There's a great combination in her personality that came across — an enthusiasm that shines through," he said. "She reflected in the material I saw that she had listened very well to other people and ... [taken action] based on both her experience and also the input from others."

Dr. Myers was interested in Ms. Elliott because of her "deep understanding and love and appreciation for the boarding school environment and teenagers." She added, "Any school of our caliber has to be wary of some well-intentioned applicants who might,

however, not really like kids all that much. [Ms. Elliott] wants this job for the right reasons."

Ms. Elliott will formally begin her new position on July 1, 2022. She most looks forward to continuing "to talk to as many kids, colleagues, parents, and alumni to get a sense of what Choate wants to do, and what feels most core or special to Choate's identity." Ms. Elliott said she thinks of herself as a learner and aims to expand her skillset and gain valuable experience while at Choate. "There's a part of me that just feels really excited to be in that stage of intense learning for a stretch," she said. More importantly, she is eager to devote her energy and time to developing and maintaining initiatives at Choate, and hopes for the community to dream big.

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## International Students Depart Early for Winter Break

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tive as last year's and catered to the students on campus, he said that virtual learning complicates assessments, especially with the time zone differences.

Dr. Carol Chen-Lin, a Chinese teacher at Choate, has a student planning to learn virtually starting on the week of December 13. Dr. Chen-Lin said, "I understand how important it is for families to get together during the holiday season." However, she is confident in Choate's ability to integrate virtual students, seeing how Choate has developed remote-teaching strategies in the past two years.

Madison Lee '22, an international student from South Korea, is thankful that the School allowed her to leave early. "We have to quarantine for ten days,

and I was initially worried that I wouldn't be able to return home at all if I stayed for the whole week," she said.

Lee noted that teachers have been understanding of her needs while living in a different time zone by allowing her to learn asynchronously and meet outside of class time during the last week of school. However, she acknowledges that it will be challenging for teachers to ensure that the remote and in-person students are under similar conditions for completing assessments. Still, since Lee is only taking classes virtually for four days, she believes that learning remotely will not be much of a challenge for her.

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## The Trouble When Choate's Wi-Fi Shuts Down

By **Yoyo Zhang '24**  
Associate Editor

Since the beginning of the winter term, interruptions to the campus Wi-Fi network have hindered access to the internet — an essential part of Choate students' everyday routine. To many, the ways students have attempted to resolve the issue have revealed inequities across campus.

Sophia Berdon '24, a day student, has struggled with connecting her laptop to Choate Wi-Fi throughout the majority of this academic year. She also experienced trouble loading websites on her phone and iPad, which has regularly prolonged the time she spent on homework. As a day student, Berdon has had the option to save online assignments for when she gets home.

Not all students have the privilege to return home every day, though, and many, when the School's Wi-Fi is not working, are forced to connect their devices to the data plan on their phones, known as a personal hotspot. However, these data plans are expensive, and not all students at Choate can access mobile data — assuming that it is available to all can cause discomfort in classroom settings.

"I was in my classes and my teacher would mention the fact that we all had hotspots," said Cadence Secreto '23. "She didn't take into account that some of us didn't. It was unsettling, and I had to speak up and be like, 'Oh, I don't have one.'"

"Hotspot isn't just something you can choose to get whenever you want," said David Garsten '23. "You have to pay extra money in a long term plan for it." As someone who doesn't have a personal hotspot, Garsten often has to "ask other people for a hotspot, which has been very annoying." Not long ago, he attended the Student Diversity Leadership Conference (SDLC), and the Choate internet was unstable. Garsten said that he "needed to be at a ton of Zoom meetings,

making it impossible to attend a large portion of the conference."

Jeff Kim '23, a boarding student from South Korea, did not have a robust hotspot and was forced to depend on unreliable troubleshooting methods such as constantly turning the Wi-Fi on and off on his computer. Especially in his research-intensive U.S. History class, Kim said "without any hotspot during Wi-Fi shutdowns, it was impossible to get all the material I needed for that completely ready."

The Wi-Fi issue also added stress to seniors scrambling to complete their college applications. "The Wi-Fi went out while I was submitting my college app last week," Samuel Qin '22 said. "It caused a lot of anxiety, as I could not find any workarounds at the moment." The application eventually went through.

Teachers appeared to vary in their approach to accommodate for the technological inconveniences. HPRSS teacher Ms. Emily Kaplan said, "I was in a dorm that did happen to have Wi-Fi that week, so a lot of non-Hall students scrambled in, asking our residents if they could study here."

Ms. Kaplan went on, "The Wi-Fi outage seemed to add a layer of stress to students impacted. Many of the boarding students who I teach understandably came to class not fully prepared, so I think a lot of teachers had to adjust lesson plans as well."

There appears to have been at least one benefit from the Wi-Fi disruption. Some students remarked that because everyone had to congregate in the handful of areas that offered a stable internet connection, there was a spontaneous sense of camaraderie among students.

"I had a couple of friends who couldn't access their virtual textbooks," said Gaby Nirmal '23, "so we all got together and shared pictures of the physical pages."

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## PARTICIPATION IN SAC ACTIVITIES SKYROCKETS FROM COVID-19 LOW



Graphic by Yujin Kim/The Choate News

By **Lauren Hsu '24**  
Staff Reporter

In the spring of 2020, when the pandemic first forced the School to turn fully virtual, the Student Activities Center (SAC) scrambled to find a way for students to stay connected over Zoom. As Choate has slowly transitioned to in-person learning, the SAC followed suit. Although the transition was not always easy or straightforward, students are once again beginning to convene for various clubs and social events on campus.

During the 2020-2021 academic year, events held in the SAC were limited by strict masking, physical-distancing protocols, and a period of remote learning. According to the SAC, between the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 academic year, the number of students who belonged to clubs dropped by 40%, from 1,980 to 1,178.

Chair of the Committee on Student Activities (COSA) and President of GirlUp Rhea Shah '22 realized the importance of club life in meeting new people during the pandemic. "Club meetings and events over Zoom reported lower attendance rates than we have seen in past years, and I think we felt that effect on our community," she said.

This year, however, the SAC has seen the number of students attending events rebound. "It's clear that students are craving social interaction, so we have seen them at events more this year," said Ms. Al-

exandra Long, the Director of Student Activities.

The SAC is currently hosting events at the rate it did before Covid-19 struck. Twenty clubs have already hosted school-wide events during the weekend and many clubs have consistently scheduled weekly meetings.

"I think I've seen pretty much every club has hosted a meeting, if not multiple meetings, whether it's weekly or biweekly this term, which was definitely not something we were even seeing before Covid-19," said Ms. Colleen Kazar, the Assistant Director of Student Activities and Adviser to COSA.

With the SAC also granting a \$200 budget for each club, turnout at meetings has increased. *The Lit* Editor-in-Chief Marcus Ding '22 highlighted the benefits of ordering food as incentives to get new club members and making meetings more enjoyable. Similarly, Finance and Investment Club found 238 students signed up to their email list at Club Fair, and of those, 70 are active members — numbers much higher than pre-Covid times.

President of Spectrum, Jess Zhao '23, also enjoyed the increased club engagement and experienced fresh solidarity missing during Zoom meetings. "Spectrum's first meeting of the year overwhelmed me in many ways. For one, I had never seen that many people in the project room before. The crowd was full of newcomers to Spectrum —

something that we, in previous years, had struggled with — and everyone was restless," they said. "There's an outpouring of camaraderie at every meeting, and people seem readier to compliment each other, to affirm even complete strangers."

Still, with campus life returning to normal again, so are the busy schedules for all the students. Vice President of the Environmental Action Coalition (EAC) Lauren Ben-Ezra '22 reflected on the fast-paced life at Choate, especially since "students have very little time for clubs, planning events, and meetings at times that work for all people."

However, Zhao has appreciated how clubs have been a space to vent about the transition to the rapid pace of Choate life. "I've noticed a lot of bonding over adjusting to the Choate workload, confusion about Choate traditions, and trying to find a place at Choate. I think that feeling is especially prominent for LGBTQIA+ members who are navigating how Choate impacts their identity after a long time stuck at home," they said.

Indeed, many clubs have created spaces for students to unpack and heal from the events of the past two years, including mass grief over the pandemic, racial trauma, political unrest, and the struggle of being quarantined at home. "For many, Choate offers a place to experiment with expressing your identity, but the pandemic has taken away

much of our sense of security," said Zhao. "Almost every meeting has a moment that touches on pandemic fatigue and the fear of suddenly being confined to remote learning in unsupportive spaces."

Similarly, before the start of the year, the GirlUp cabinet had a meeting to discuss their vision of the year and decided that they wanted to develop a space where people felt comfortable to speak openly about gender inequality and brainstorm ideas to enact significant change.

Particularly through joint meetings, many clubs have found ways to connect students across different corners of campus through healing conversation. For example, during Ally Week, Spectrum hosted a joint meeting with The Body Project to discuss how body image intersects with gender identity and sexuality — a topic related to the family pressures more explicitly experienced during quarantine.

As winter term continues, Shah, too, hopes that club life will help heal and rebuild community. She said, "Club life at Choate has always, in my opinion, been essential in creating bonds between people. Covid-19 put physical and emotional distance between us, leaving us unable to foster as a community as we traditionally had in the past. In-person club life is one way to begin to bridge this distance."

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Graphic by Brian Yip/The Choate News

## OVER 500 ATHLETES COMPETE IN LOCAL SPECIAL OLYMPICS

By **Eva Li '24**  
Staff Reporter

The Special Olympics is “the world’s largest sports organization for children and adults with intellectual and physical disabilities,” according to its website. The organization provides training and activities year-round to 5,000,000 participants in 172 countries. Special Olympics Connecticut is one of the many branches of the organization and operates around the state in Fairfield, Hartford, Litchfield, Middlesex, New Haven, New London, Tolland, and Windham counties.

Throughout November, Special Olympics Connecticut hosted a range of activities to engage athletes with disabilities and special needs. Events included the Basketball Skills Jamboree at Quinnipiac University, powerlifting at the Special Abilities, Wellness, Arts & Health (SAWAH) non-profit center, and the Unified Sports Volleyball Competition at Hamden Hall Country Day School’s Beckerman Athletic Center. Overall, more than 550 athletes and partners participated in the events.

On November 20, the Connecticut Elks Association — a non-profit that raises money for children, veterans, and people with disabilities — presented the Unified Sports Holiday Classic prize that is awarded at Special Olympics Connecticut. The awards had the hallmarks of an Olympic competition: giving recognition to the hosts and sponsors of the games and a



Photo by Ryan Kim / The Choate News

Athletes compete at the Quinnipiac University Basketball Skills Jamboree.

ceremonial lighting of a replica Olympic torch.

A significant portion of the Basketball Skills Jamboree was dedicated to education on physical and mental health. It included a Healthy Habit Station that provided education on healthy snacks and served as an opportunity for athletes to enjoy a short break after each competition. Following the presentation of the MyPlate nutrition guide published by the U.S. Department of Agriculture for nutrition policy and promotion, athletes were given the option to choose from

a variety of healthy snacks, such as string cheese, Belvita, fruit pouches, and Veggie Straws.

Mr. Derrick Ford, Coordinator of Sports and Local Programs at Special Olympics Connecticut, outlined the success of this campaign: “The program is designed to improve each athlete’s ability to train and compete by providing resources to advance their overall quality of health and reinforce the importance of developing a healthy lifestyle.”

In addition, the Healthy Athletes program provided health screenings, education, and pre-

ventative care to athletes in eight categories, including dental, vision, and mental health. Mr. Ford said, “Through Healthy Athletes, Special Olympics, Inc. has become the largest public health organization dedicated to serving people with intellectual disabilities.”

Mr. Ford served as the planner and director of the Basketball Skills Jamboree. He explained that the event “consisted of a traditional [but] modified foul shot competition warming athletes up, a traditional [but] modified three-point shooting competition increasing their movement and level of competition, and

finally a modified version of the NBA All-Stars competition, which pushed athletes to their highest potential.”

Mr. Ford also stressed the Covid-19 protocols in place at the event. Participants were required to wear masks regardless of vaccination status, and anyone that was not vaccinated had to be screened, which included answering four standard questions and submitting to a temperature check. Likewise, social distancing was maintained throughout the event, with the final awards ceremony modified so that athletes were hand-

ed their medal or ribbon rather than having it placed around their neck. The Jamboree had awards ceremonies that took place after each event to recognize the “hard work and skills that each athlete had accomplished,” said Mr. Ford.

Volunteers at the Basketball Jamboree event were titled “Class A volunteers.” They were present in the form of coaches, local coordinators, chaperones, and unified partners — those not living with a disability that train and compete as teammates with Special Olympics athletes. These volunteers worked with athletes for up to eight weeks before the event to practice their sport. Many volunteers came on the day of the Jamboree to serve as scorekeepers, check-in helpers, and food servers. Notably, many volunteers were medical staff who had also served on the event’s planning committee. “They have made a deeper commitment to our athletes and in some cases have volunteered for years or decades. We couldn’t run the event without any of them” Mr. Ford said. The contests of the Jamboree proved to be nail-biting, with the gymnasium erupting in cheers throughout. Pleased by the motivation and encouragement shared between all athletes, Mr. Ford said, “The camaraderie and bonds the athletes made with each other, as well as volunteers throughout this event, was truly a pleasure to be a part of.”

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## Wallingford Holiday Stroll Recommences

By **Sabrina Wang '23**  
Associate Editor

On Friday, December 3, Wallingford residents flooded Main Street and Center Street for the Wallingford Holiday Stroll. Festive lights lit up storefronts and sidewalks, and people of all ages greeted store owners and carolling children. The event began 12 years ago as a way for the town to celebrate the holidays and support local businesses. Since then, the Holiday Stroll has come to be known as an annual community gathering filled with fun events, great deals, and storied rituals.

Last year, the stroll didn’t take place as businesses could not open their storefronts or welcome customers inside. Now that businesses are back open, the stroll aims to celebrate and revive small businesses looking to welcome

back customers. Forgoing the stroll meant not only missing out on a fun community event, but also a large body of clients.

This year, the Holiday Stroll garnered greater attention than expected. Ms. Chris Olin, Co-founder of Hidden Gem On Main, a store that aims to support local artists and fair trade said: “I found that the crowd was larger. It was a big party, people were so happy to be out together. Families and friends, the weather was great, so it was ... wonderful, there were kids of all ages. We had our heater outside, so people were also able to sit, and we had coffee, tea, and hot chocolate that we gave away to whoever wanted it.”

“Seeing everyone out and going to shops hasn’t happened in a long time, and it was really nice to see that,” said Hadley Rogers ’22, a resident of Wallingford. Some noted that the larger crowds may also be due

to the relaxed Covid-19 guidelines; this year, masks were optional, and a limit of no more than 100 people were allowed inside a store at one time.

With the return of the big crowd came the return of many traditions. “The stroll had a DJ at the Fishbein Park, free kettle-corn for the community, chestnuts being roasted, and food trucks selling hot chocolate and coffee,” said Ms. Michelle Bjorkman, Head of the Wallingford Parks and Recreation Department, a co-sponsor of the event.

Another tradition that fosters camaraderie between businesses, clients, and the general community is the raffle. Businesses that are a part of the stroll donated gift cards to be auctioned off, along with the larger prizes — three gift baskets containing goodies from the businesses that participated. For many smaller establishments, it was also a

time to hand out some special holiday treats and sales.

Ms. Olin said, “It wasn’t really the time for us to do another sale because we already had a couple of really good big day sales, but we did have a raffle. We did offer discounts, but they weren’t storewide. It was more like if you found a magical candy cane with 25% off, you could use that towards your purchase.”

The small-town nature of Wallingford fosters this tradition, Ms. Olin concluded, “Wallingford is a wonderful community town, and that’s what I believe the drive is, to really help support the small businesses in town. You have really big box stores like Walmart on Route 5, but the stroll is a way for the community center to come together.”

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Photo courtesy of My Record Journal

Santa Claus fields a request at the Wallingford Holiday Stroll.

## OMICRON VARIANT REACHES CONNECTICUT

By **Analy Vega '25**  
Reporter

On November 24, a new variant of Covid-19 — Omicron — was reported to the World Health Organization (WHO). First detected in specimens collected on November 11 in Botswana, the WHO classified the variant as a Variant of Concern (VOC) on November 26.

On December 10, the Connecticut Department of Public Health (CDPH) announced that there have been eleven cases of Omicron identified among Connecticut residents, four men and five women aged 20 to 85. Among the infected were residents of Hartford, New Haven, and Fairfield counties, eight of whom were fully vaccinated. Specimen collection released by the Yale School of Public Health dates the spread from November 28 to December 7. Generally, Covid cases have been increasing statewide, with the most current CDPH data showing that there has been an 8.3% increase in positive cases, with hospitalization rates up almost 30% since April of 2021.

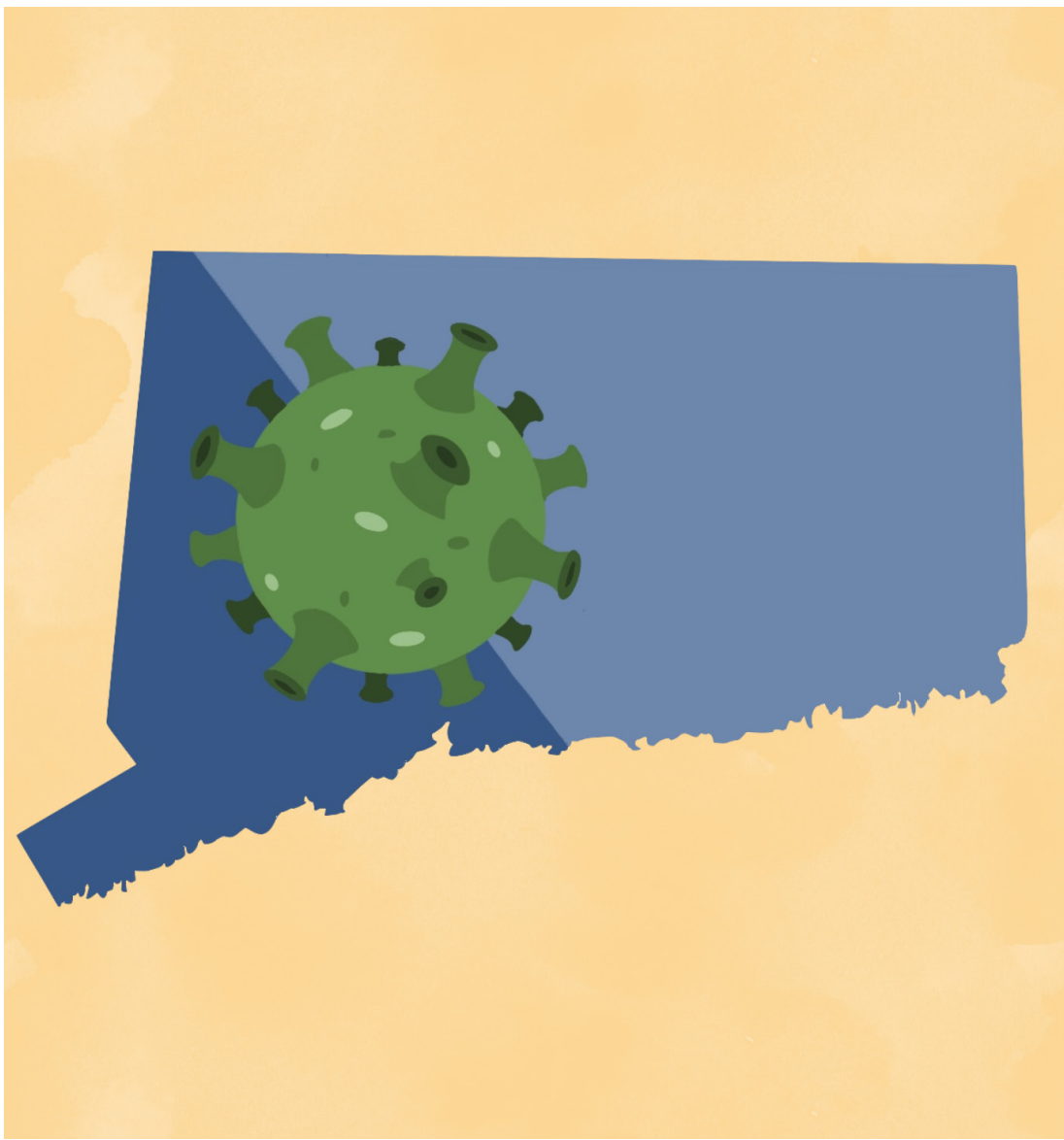
The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has little information so far on how rapidly the Omicron variant spreads and how to best mitigate it. Current vaccines are expected to protect against severe illness, hospitalizations, and deaths from the Omicron variant. However, breakthrough infections — which happen after a person is fully vaccinated — are more likely to occur from infection with the Omicron strain than the original Covid-19 virus. CDC data recorded that as of December 10, 79% of those who have contracted the Omicron variant are fully vaccinated. Furthermore, 14 of those who contracted Omicron received their booster dose, and five of those with the booster received it more than two weeks prior to being infected.

According to the CDC, more than 25% of vaccinated people in Connecticut have received booster shots, with local vaccine providers advocating that all who are eligible get their booster shots to increase immunity. On December 10, Dr. Ashley Losier, a clinician administering Pfizer booster shots at

the New Haven Public Library stated, “It is important now more than ever that people over the ages of 18 get booster shots. With the new variants, you may never know who has symptoms or not.” As of December 10, booster shots are available for people 16 years and older. She continued, “There are many locations in which you can get them for free.” Local residents can get their free booster shot at New Haven Public Library, Jackie Robinson Park, Trumbull Mall, Waterbury, CT, and Bradley Airport, and should check the ct.gov webpage to see when clinics are open.

In a December 4 press release, Governor Ned Lamont said, “We have life-saving tools like vaccines and boosters available to fight this pandemic — including the Delta and Omicron variants — and I urge everyone to take the necessary precautions to protect themselves and everyone around them.”

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Graphic by Evelyn Stanley/The Choate News

# THE CHOATE NEWS



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## C'mon, People, Wear Your Masks Properly!

By **Eva Swanson '25**

*Opinions Writer*

It's been nearly two years since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, and if there's one thing that's proved to be difficult for a lot of Americans it's wearing their masks. Although the majority of the Choate population is fully vaccinated, 15 positive cases of Covid-19 have been reported in the weeks since we've come back from Thanksgiving break. In the face of a highly infectious and contagious virus, it is crucial to take precautions to control what we can: washing hands, social distancing, and, most important, wearing masks properly.

We are so used to wearing masks that it has become second nature for many. But we've seen the results of a creeping indifference across campus, with masks slipping under the noses (or even under the chins) of many students as they walk through the SAC or sit in classrooms. But proper mask-wearing, especially in the face of the new Omicron



Graphic by Chloe Jacobs/The Choate News

variant, should be anything but casual. That is to say, masks should fit securely over the nose, over the mouth, and tightly around the face.

Many members of the Choate community are fortunate enough to be able-bodied and healthy.

However, because of a lack of proper mask-wearing, we are not only putting vulnerable community members in danger, but also their roommates, families, neighbors, and friends. Especially as a boarding school with a significant day student population,

it's important to recognize that not wearing your mask could lead to an infection spreading to and from communities outside of the Choate campus.

According to the *New York Times*, for every 600 people who wear a mask in public spaces, one death from Covid-19 is prevented. But for this to happen, 600 people need to equally contribute to wearing their masks and wearing them correctly. I believe that we, as a community, can do such a simple, altruistic task by looking past our own minor inconveniences for the greater good of our community.

As stated in Choate's Statement of Character, "the personal commitment to moral sensibility ... [is] an integral part of who a person is." Proper mask-wearing is a selfless gesture — one that's frustrating at times, but one that we all must do to protect our peers, teachers, and community.

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## Untech Me! A Nod to the Analog

By **Michael Korvyakov '23**

*Associate Editor*

Peek inside any classroom on campus, and you'll notice everyone staring at their screens, either aggressively scribbling on iPads or typing away at their computer. Choate's use of technology — specifically, the School's one-to-one iPad program — is touted in nearly every promotion. Modern technology has replaced paper in almost every part of the classroom; teachers assign almost all of their class assignments using platforms like Canvas or Google Classroom and many have even shifted to giving online assessments. Paper has become a thing of the past — so much so that I've found myself trying to do Notability functions on paper.

There are certainly great things about this change. With the use of technology, Choate can better fulfill its mission of becoming a more environmentally friendly school reducing paper use. Technology also serves to make classwork and homework more efficient. Tests can be distributed more easily, and test-taking can be monitored digitally. Digital drawing software allows us to take more robust and comprehensive notes.

Communication platforms allow faculty and students to send messages with ease. The benefits are endless.

But this technological shift isn't without concern. The main issue is the overuse of screens and the impact it has on our brains and bodies. Most students and teachers spend hours looking at screens daily. I've recently been checking my daily screen time across all of my devices, and it frequently exceeded 12 hours — about two-thirds of the time I'm awake. This number is relatively consistent among my peers.

The use of technology in classrooms, coupled with teenagers' already heightened use of screens for social media, communication, and games, forces students' screen times to exceed the healthy amount for someone of their age: no more

than two hours daily says the American Academy of Pediatrics. And while your parents may tell you to stop using your phone for the sake of your vision, in reality, the detrimental effects can be much worse. An ongoing study of thousands of children and teenagers by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) found that heavy screen time can have a harmful impact on a kid's emotional, psychological, and cognitive development. Sure, it depends what, precisely, the user is doing, but, ultimately, this kind of excessive use of screens harms students' brains.

What makes this problem even worse is that students tend to use their devices late into the night, often turning them off just minutes before they go to bed. A 2011 Sleep Health Foundation report found that the bright light from screens inhibits the production of melatonin, the chemical in your brain that is responsible for getting you to fall asleep. Not to mention, notifications and other distractions emitted from students' devices encourage procrastination and prolong the length of time it takes to get assignments done. This means that students, who already struggle to

get sufficient sleep, now have another obstacle to getting a good night's rest.

But, banning all screens on the School's campus and assuming the two-hour limit is impossible with technology so heavily integrated into our lives. What would be beneficial is for teachers to offer work that can be done without technology. This could mean assigning a math problem set that is done on paper instead of Notability or an English essay written by hand instead of typed. These modifications would go a long way in improving students' mental and physical health, allowing a better and brighter future for all of Choate.

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## KEEP PERSPECTIVE ON COLLEGE ADMISSIONS

By **Sofia Muñoz '23**

*Opinions Writer*

When carefully considering all the options I had for high school back in eighth grade, I made an extensive pros-and-cons list of each school and its academic programs. In retrospect, applying to private boarding schools was a choice of immense privilege that I did not recognize at the time. On the one hand, my local public high school, which is academically rigorous and provides many opportunities to its students, would have given me a variety of tools to succeed.

However, I realized that the resources provided by my local high school and Choate were far from even, especially in the department of college counseling. Had I attended my local high school, I would've had 900 peers in my grade, which meant that each of the six guidance counselors would have to juggle some 600 students across all four grades. I have to admit that this is one aspect of Choate that attracted me as an applicant. Every student would have their own counselor who would only deal with a handful of other students.

Of course, Choate offers a million other advantages. Taking a glance at Choate's 2021-2022 course catalog, the number of college-level classes, beyond the typical advanced classes one

might find at other schools, is astounding. Choate offers Inorganic Chemistry, Monetary Theory, and Cognitive Neuroscience, among other high-level courses. We are given opportunities to play on varsity level teams, start new clubs, write for publications, hold significant leadership positions, and try activities most of us wouldn't have the option to try elsewhere.

However, as seniors begin to receive their college decisions, and juniors are taking the first steps in their admissions process, tensions are understandably high. Highly ranked colleges that already have extremely low acceptance rates dwindling each year are willing to accept only so many Choate students. It can feel like college decisions come down to a coin toss. The majority of Choate students are already immensely qualified, so the decisions lie in what type of person each college is seeking. While this process is consuming and stressful for any high school senior, its tensions are particularly high here — Naviance, College Confidential threads, and acceptance threads are invariably open on senior laptops.

This concern is understandable, yet these days I am trying to keep my perspective. The reality is that all of us are awfully fortunate to have access to Choate's resources, and many of us, myself



Graphic by Yujin Kim/The Choate News

included, wouldn't have been dealt the same cards if we had stayed at a public school. Choate students have a clear advantage in the college process, a fact sometimes forgotten in the everyday rush.

Choate's college matriculation rate and high college placement year after year should allow us to acknowledge the opportunities we gain at Choate and how that plays into the college admissions process. According to *College Transitions*, Choate has had 53 students matriculate at Yale and 41 at Columbia within the past five years. Choate is also called a "prep school" for a reason — seniors leave with a greater sense of independence and an ability to support themselves in all types of college situations, allowing them to find success beyond high school.

I sometimes think of the five years I spent living in Colombia, where most students aren't even aware of boarding schools, let alone the resources available if they were able to attend one.

I hope that I and my fellow students will remain conscious of the tensions and stress that the senior class may be feeling, especially because each person deals with the process differently. At the same time, I hope that we remember how lucky we are to have the privilege to be given advice and guidance throughout this process, and how many students dream of being in our shoes.

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## IS TAKING A SIXTH CLASS WORTH THE STRESS?

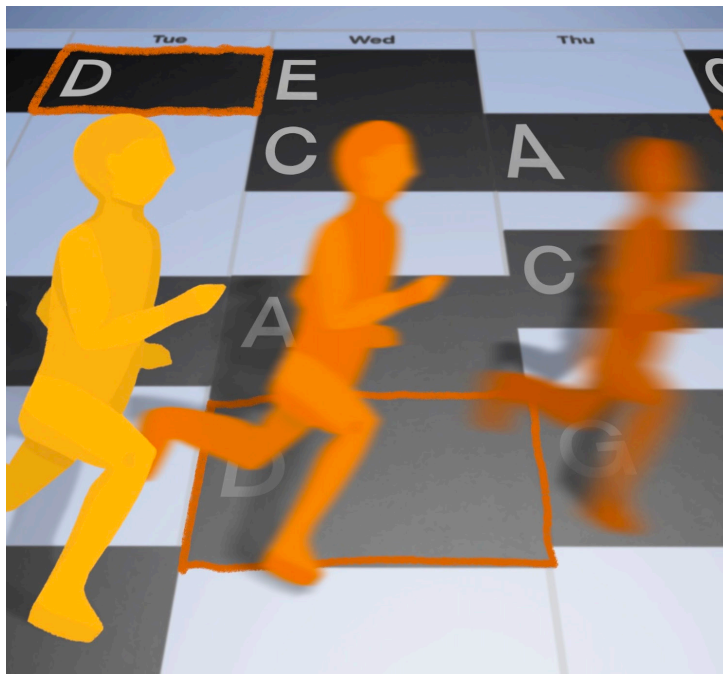
By **Anissa Wang '24**

*Opinions Writer*

There is a reason that Choate allows new students to take only five classes. At such an academically rigorous school, taking five subjects is already a heavy workload. On top of that, students join sports teams, clubs, ensembles, and other extracurriculars as they become acclimated to the school's

demands. Often, these demands and the pressures of attending a school like Choate cause students to take up a sixth class.

This academic rigor is ubiquitous on campus. Choate students feel a constant pressure to participate in everything they can. This culture promotes community engagement and intellectual curiosity, but there is no denying that it comes at a hefty cost: students are overworked.



Graphic by Katherine Chong/The Choate News

During my first term at Choate, I took five courses, played JV Field Hockey, and joined several clubs. Although this was a decent start for a new student, I never felt like I was doing enough. Instead of focusing on the small achievements I had made throughout the term, I was constantly pressuring myself to sign up for more. I was always asking upperclassmen about electives or clubs that they were in and thinking about participating myself. It was a mixture of interest and excitement, but I also felt an obligation to meet Choate's ever-accelerating standard of rigor.

While I don't think Choate intentionally encourages students to overwork themselves, students nonetheless sense an unspoken standard of what is "doing enough" — that is, a standard impossible to meet. And so, despite the challenging time commitment of taking six classes, the majority of students still register, whether to explore something new, deepen their understanding of a subject, or, yes, boost their transcript.

On the other hand, sometimes students have no choice

but to take six classes. Choate has seemingly endless credit requirements, and to fulfill them students can be required to add additional courses. In this way, the rigor that students feel appears written into the curriculum at Choate, permeating the academic culture with stress and competitiveness.

While taking six classes allows students to take full advantage of Choate's thorough and expansive course catalogue, the lifestyle that taking a sixth course results in — of pulling all-nighters for homework or drinking way too much coffee and still nodding off in class — is not sustainable. The struggle behind a 4.0 GPA can easily go unacknowledged, while enrollment in tough courses and glowing term reports are flaunted. So, next time, before you decide to sign up for that sixth class, think about whether or not you're sacrificing your mental health to reach an unattainable expectation of Choate rigor.

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# UIGHUR MUSLIMS PERSECUTED IN XINJIANG CRACKDOWN



Chinese troops rally in the autonomous region of Xinjiang in 2017.

By **Tyler Kuo '23**  
*Staff Opinions Writer*

In the far west corner of China lies the territory of Xinjiang, which is three times the size of France and covers a vast expanse of deserts, mountains, and grasslands. This territory, home to more than one million Uighur Muslims, has been the center of numerous major human rights controversies.

Uighur Muslims in Xinjiang have been detained in “re-education” camps and are subject to indoctrination, torture, and forced labor by the Chinese government. Government officials have defended the camps’ policies, claiming that, by isolating the Uighurs, they are managing ethnic tensions, fighting terrorism, and reducing poverty. Yet, there is irrefutable evidence that the Uighur crackdown’s stated goal of protection is nothing more than a xenophobic facade. The Chinese government’s actions are a clear violation of human rights, and governments across the world should take a harder stance in opposition to the issue.

The Uighurs are a Turkic ethnic group originally from Central and East Asia who speak their own developed languages. In 1949, Uighurs made up roughly 76% of Xinjiang’s population, while Han Chinese made up 6%. By 2018, 40% of the population was Han Chinese and 51% were Uighur Muslims. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) set up the Xinjiang Uighur autonomous region in 1955, following a Soviet model that provided minorities autonomy in their own affairs.

After the events of 9/11, the Chinese government defended the maintenance of the region and other Xinjiang policies by accrediting them to counterterrorism efforts. The government

claimed that Xinjiang was vulnerable to foreign-influenced separatist movements that could undermine national security. There were sporadic clashes between Uighur rights movements and the local police in the 1990s and early 2000s. In 2009, a fight between Han and Uighur factory workers in the Guangdong Province resulted in the death of two Uighurs and triggered hundreds to take to the streets in Urumqi, Xinjiang’s capital. The fight devolved into a bloody riot that left 200 people dead.

In response, Chinese President Xi Jinping declared a people’s war on terror. According to the BBC, China has detained around a million Uighurs without trial, forcing these ethnic minorities to assimilate into Han Chinese civilization. Even outside of the over 350 detention camps that the Chinese government constructed to house the Uighur people, the millions of Uighurs living in the Xinjiang region live under constant surveillance, including facial recognition tracking, mobile phone monitoring, and even DNA tracking.

Powerful countries can use influential measures to apply pressure on the Chinese government. The U.S and its allies could unite in employing a combination of economic sanctions and embargoes.

The size and influence of the Chinese market has made other countries reluctant to criticize them, lest they lose potential market access. As such, states have turned a blind eye against the blatant human rights violations that China has committed. To combat this, like-minded allies should provide support to civil-service groups and promote access to independent media and information for the Chinese people. American allies should strive to engage with Chinese dissidents and activists

without putting them in danger. This could include meeting with Chinese dissidents living in allied and partner countries, calling attention to the cases of unjustly imprisoned political activists and encouraging their release. This would not only pressure China to respond, but also shine a light on the human rights violations.

The United Nations could serve as an important mediator, clearly establishing the facts of the situation, which could spur collective action. The U.N. response to the Xinjiang issue has been limited, compounded by the U.S.’s decision to leave the U.N. Human Rights Council in 2018. Beijing has taken advantage of the U.S.’s absence to further its influence on various countries. China increased its funding to the U.N. and secured top positions there. In October 2021, Beijing won a seat on the Human Rights Council, where it continues to drive its non-interference agenda that severely undermines the U.N. human rights system. However, if the U.N. could provide analysis on the CCP’s misconduct, in addition to continued reporting by U.N. experts, it could establish a commonly accepted set of facts on this situation.

Addressing the current Xinjiang situation will be fraught with tension and will require ongoing, collective action. Coordinated initiatives and statements will not only help diminish the risk of Chinese retaliation against individual countries but also lend a stronger voice to smaller countries. Elevating the voices of other nations and supporting them as they navigate this issue could help them come to a resolution that addresses the concerns of all parties.

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# Covid-19 Exacerbates Latin America’s Food Crisis

By **Helen Ryan '24**  
*Opinions Writer*

Covid-19 is not the only pandemic that Latin America is facing. Latin America’s nutrition crisis has grown increasingly worse over the past year, and unfortunately, Covid has not helped the situation. In just the past year, the number of people without access to adequate food has reached 59.7 million people across Latin American countries. The first step to aiding this situation is raising awareness. Other countries should know the struggle that Latin America is currently facing and proactively work to provide aid to help support both the people and the government.

Hunger has been a prevalent issue since 2014, and the number of people who are living with hunger in Latin American countries rose by 30% or 13.8 million people. By 2020, the population who had ran out of food or had to go a day or more without eating had reached 14% or 92.8 million people. Covid has caused many people lose their jobs, making it very difficult for people to buy food. Poverty frequently stems from widespread food insecurity, namely the limited access to healthy foods.

However, for many families, the issue is a of lack of resources, but rather their inaccessible costs. Latin America is the leading exporter of many foods, such as agriculture and fish. The inflation brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic has increased the costs of these goods — leading many families without a reliable source

of sustenance. Furthermore, women were much more likely than men to experience food insecurity. Almost 41.8% women in Latin America experience issues with food insecurity as opposed to 32.2% of men.

On the other end of food instability, many people are experiencing limited access to nutritious, healthy foods. Without having access to these nutrients, there are issues with health because of the lack of nutrition. “We continue losing the battle against all forms of malnutrition, and we are far from being able to guarantee healthy nutrition for the whole population,” said Dr. Carissa F. Etienne, Director of Pan-American Health Organization. Almost 1 in 3 people in Latin America are continually forced to not only reduce the amount of food they ate, but also the quality of the food. In order to find a solution to this widespread issue of hunger, there must be more accessible and healthy foods.

The UN is urging countries to change their agri-food systems to make them more accessible and sustainable in order to provide nutritious, healthy, and affordable foods for everyone. In order to solve the food crisis in Latin America, other countries should help by providing necessary aid through raise awareness and providing useful resources.

Raising awareness will help prevent this situation in the future while bringing international coverage to an issue that has been burgeoning for years. Another way to prevent this issue in the future is by making healthy foods more accessible.

It is unfair for only non-nutritious foods to be affordable for families. Everyone should have a right to food that is beneficial to them.

Other countries have a duty to help out Latin America in their time of need. Since many other countries have stability in their food, allowing them to aid Latin America which is suffering from this issue. It is unfair for countries, like the United States, to allow Latin America to face such extreme hunger while they have the resources to help. Countries can help by pooling resources and setting up systems to provide healthy but affordable food in Latin America. Hunger-Free Latin America and the Caribbean Initiative “is a commitment from the countries and organizations of the region, supported by the Food and Agricultural Organization from the United Nations (FAO), to contribute to create the conditions that will allow eradicating hunger permanently by 2025.” Initiatives like this will help to mitigate the hunger crisis in Latin America.

To protect people and make sure that families and children are not going hungry, it is essential for industrialized countries to help out. Making it known that this is an issue opens doors for countries to provide aid.

If countries work together and further initiatives like the aforementioned, great progress could be made to end hunger in Latin America and make sure that not only do people have food on their plates.

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Graphic by Ujin Kim/The Choate News

# ELIZABETH HOLMES MAY BE A FRAUD, BUT SEXISM IN STEM STILL EXISTS

By **Campbell Pflaum '23**  
*Opinions Writer*

Once the darling of Silicon Valley, Elizabeth Holmes, the founder of the failed startup Theranos, is currently facing 11 counts of fraud and conspiracy. Her trial is expected to get a ruling sometime after December 17. The public first grew suspicious of Holmes in 2015, when journalist John Carreyrou published a scathing article in the Wall Street Journal exposing the illegitimacy of Theranos’s supposedly revolutionary technologies. Six years later, Holmes faces up to twenty years in prison.

Holmes, now 37, dropped out of Stanford at 19 to start her company on the basis of a major advancement in medical technology — the ability to conduct crucial medical tests, including those for cancer and cholesterol, simply by pricking a patient’s finger. There was just one problem: the technology didn’t work. Still, Holmes raised \$9 billion in funding, which made her, at one point, the youngest female self-made billionaire in history. Reportedly, she spent over a decade building her brand on

her company in secret, without any product release, while simultaneously growing a mountain of funding. In 2015, whistleblowers leaked the technological failings of her products.

Regardless of the results of the current trial, Holmes’s story already has, and will continue to, demonize women working in the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM).

Women make up just 28% of the workforce in the STEM industry, and at higher-level corporate positions, that percentage is even lower. Female-led companies are less likely to receive funding, good press, and early market success. Holmes built her brand on

being a successful woman in this industry despite these obstacles. She frequently tweeted affirmations such as #looklikeanengineer, discussed feminist issues, and considered herself an advocate for women in her field. She was once considered the next Steve Jobs — turtlenecks, deep blunt voice and all. So what does Holmes’s career, which, for many female-identifying individuals

in STEM, was a roadmap for success, come to mean if she is guilty of the fraud she stands accused of? Is the wide press coverage of her accused shortcomings as a business person in part a consequence of her sex?

Widespread cases of white-collar crime are nothing new in STEM. From cases like Josh Tetrick’s sales inflation to Ronny Abovitz’s over-evaluation, it would seem that Theranos isn’t

the only music man on the block. And, indeed, many believe that the widespread backlash against Holmes, which has spurred millions in profit for media corporations, is in part a result of sexism. In Holmes’s statements this week, she accused her ex-partner, former Theranos CEO Ramesh Balwani, a man 20 years her senior, of domestic abuse and framing her for fraud, a fraud she claims he committed.

The response to her closing statements from major news conglomerates ranged from smug disbelief to outright sexism and victim-shaming. Whether Balwani is actually guilty of these crimes is unclear, but the backlash against Holmes echoes backlash used to silence victims who come forward in cases of

domestic violence. Regardless of the verdict in Holmes’s case, the brutal media rhetoric she faces serves to discourage women from being leaders in the STEM field and coming forward about situations of abuse.

When a movement, like ‘women in STEM,’ has so few icons, the downfall of one can hold back so many others. We, as a society, are just now recognizing the fraught relationship that public women have always had with the American press. From Britney Spears to Monica Lewinsky, the media has a long track record of ruining women’s lives over mistakes considered commonplace for men. While the implications of Holmes’s mistakes may be greater, so is what she represents. She is a woman who achieved early success in a field that is the backbone of innovation the world over. So when she brutally and publically fell, she served as a warning for women trying to make it in the valley — this is what a mistake will cost.

**Campbell Pflaum** is a fifth-former from Nashville. She may be reached at [cpflaum23@choate.edu](mailto:cpflaum23@choate.edu)



Photo courtesy of The Boston Globe

Elizabeth Holmes, on trial for fraud and conspiracy, was once the face of women in STEM.

## I WILL FOLLOW @CRH\_AFFIRMATIONS



Graphic by Yujin Kim/The Choate News

@crh\_affirmations has adapted the Internet's latest absurd trend for the Choate community.

**By Olympia Wolff '23**  
Reporter

@crh\_affirmations' popularity has skyrocketed since its first post on November 25, which reads, "I will not check ChoateSIS every five minutes for my term grades," over a sparkling photo of campus. Choate's latest anonymous Instagram jokester derives their humor from the cheekily ironic to the downright absurd, from various events such as unstable Wi-Fi, Veg-Out Monday, and even the recent rise in Covid-19 cases. With over 400 followers to boot, the account's eerily upbeat posts have found their way into students' conversations both online and offline.

Originally used to describe a spiritual method of self-endorsement, the term "affirmation" has snuck its way into Gen-Z's ever-expanding Internet-inspired lexicon. These simple mantras are intended to be repeated to oneself in order to stop worrying about such mundane things as Thursday lunch lines or one's yearbook photo. Although @crh\_affirmations' maxims are far more sardonic than serious, the account "makes us feel like more of a community," said Kenadi Waymire '22, a fan of the account. In fact, the account's

Instagram bio claims that it is a "Mental Health Service."

To Taylor Rossiter '25, @crh\_affirmations is the funniest and most relatable Instagram account on campus. She said, "The post about [fall-term] grades was the most relatable post the affirmations account has." Cait Ahn '25 agreed that it is one of Choate's "coolest accounts with enjoyable content. It doesn't beat @ChoateAthletics, but out of the unofficial student-run pages, it's among the top three on campus."

Because students are not technically allowed to maintain social media accounts bearing the School's name, the student behind @crh\_affirmations has concealed their identity, including for this interview. "I am the admin of an Instagram page called CRH Affirmations. Why students at a school called Choate like my posts so much is beyond me," they said. Waymire has her own theories, though: "I think it's a junior. It's a lot of fun."

A couple of witty affirmations that have appeared on @crh\_affirmations include, "I won't blame it on freshmen" and "I am undefinable," a play on Choate's new marketing slogan. A particularly uncanny affirmation reads "The Choate Plague will

NOT return on Hol Ball weekend."

The words, placed above an unexplained photo of the actor Timothée Chalamet, were posted five days before the administration officially postponed the annual dance.

In fact, several of the account's posts have come to fruition in the opposite direction. For example, an affirmation reading "Choate Wi-Fi is stable and consistent across campus" premiered on November 30. The next day, Dean of Students Mr. Mike Velez '00 emailed all students about the Wi-Fi issues on campus.

The account creator, who spoke mostly in cryptic non sequiturs, said, "My posts age like the milk cartons in my dorm room — the ones that I take one sip of and then forget to throw away."

Rossiter said, "@crh\_affirmations is full of mischief." Ahn thinks of the account as a way to laugh about Choate students' communal experiences and highlight the absurdities of boarding-school life.

Finally, @crh\_affirmations would like to leave readers of *The Choate News* with one more affirmation: "I will follow @crh\_affirmations."

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## Some Embrace New Terms of Identity; Others Hesitate

**By Sabrina Wang '23**  
Associate Editor

Vocabulary associated with describing marginalized communities is constantly evolving to encompass increasingly diverse groups and represent ever-changing societal values. Since the protests for social justice in the summer of 2020, these phrases, what some call progressive terminology, have received heightened attention as many people try to enact change through their words.

Even before the summer of 2020, many of these so-called progressive words were being used among some groups on campus. "I didn't start using the language until freshman year [in 2019–20]," said Adama Sowe '23. "In middle school, I'd never heard of any of these terms, even though I went to a predominately Black and Hispanic school. I got here, and I went to SDLC [Student Diversity Leadership Conference] where I learned terms such as BIPOC that I was never taught."

During that summer, social media accounts such as @BlackatChoate and @QueeratChoate greatly affected the community with the stories they shared and the words that they chose to use. For example, many of @BlackatChoate's posts used the term "BIPOC" [Black, Indigenous, People of Color] instead of "POC," and the bio of @QueeratChoate's Instagram account reads "an anonymous safe space for LGBTQIA+ [lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual, with the '+' allowing for additional inclusivity] members of the Choate community," rather than the once-prevalent "LGBTQ."

Since then, the drive for the use of more progressive terminology has been reflected in the wider Choate community. "Last year specifically had a spike in social activism — people were concerned about how they were perceived," said Noah McBride '23.

These terms have further permeated the community via recent all-school gatherings, where faculty members and students alike use the words to describe the experiences of minority groups, or even

to name events, such as the Community Conversation on "Hispanic/Latinx Identity." Additionally, this publication's official style guide now advises using the abbreviation "LGBTQIA+" and capitalizing the word "Black" — another widespread syntactic shift.

However, as such vocabulary receives more attention, people around the world have argued that these new "inclusive" terms have become a code used only by a small, highly educated group in the country. This trend feels applicable to Choate, a community marked by both its diversity and privilege. Even though these terminologies can provide support for students, some have criticized what they believe is misguided usage of progressive terminology.

McBride, for instance, is slightly skeptical of the intention behind the usage of these newly popular terms in communities like Choate. "The term 'BIPOC' is supposed to be more specific to groups that are disproportionately impacted in America, instead of just 'POC,' but there are still some issues with it. I think some people might use the term to pass themselves off as educated," he said.

Additionally, the word "Latinx," which is intended to be a progressive, gender-neutral term that replaces "Latino" or "Latina," has been met with scrutiny lately.

Ixchel Hernandez '23 said, "Honestly, I rarely use 'Latinx,' because I feel like the term doesn't fit Spanish too well. The term was made by 'woke' activists in the United States as a way to make gender-neutral terms in the Spanish language, but it was done without taking into account that the letter 'x' is rarely used in our language."

In the past, HLF stood for the Hispanic-Latinx Forum, but Hernandez and other cabinet members began to question whether the club's name accurately represented its membership. "We changed our club name to the Hispanic-Latiné Forum last spring, and that's when I noticed a lot more people, myself included, started using that term [Latiné] instead of Latinx," she said. According to Hernandez, Latiné — still an ungendered term — flows much better in Spanish.

To mitigate any unintended harm, some teachers have begun to actively convey how and why they use these words. Associate Dean of Equity and Inclusion Mr. Filipe Camarotti said, "We have to understand why we do the things we do ... I think there's the part of saying the right thing [but also] going deeper why saying the right thing is right."

Mr. Camarotti believes that this deeper understanding goes beyond seeing these words in official announcements and emails. "The understanding of the right term to use requires learning about a person's story [and] knowing about their identity," he said. "By giving them the opportunities to express how they identify both implicitly and explicitly, then you'll know how they want to be identified and referred to."

He believes that teachers should feel comfortable having open dialogues with their students about which terms best encapsulate the students' identities. He said, "I share stories about my life and ask to hear stories about their lives. Through having many of these conversations and establishing a level of trust, I have noticed that people open up and share many aspects of their identity — not because I'm explicitly asking, but because it tends to naturally come up."

The point of these terms, many students emphasized, is not to make oneself appear "woke." "It doesn't have to be some grand gesture on social media, but you have to be constantly working to help achieve those goals," said McBride. "When change needs to happen, simply supporting isn't enough. It should be a constant struggle against whatever you're trying to help fix."

However, progressive terminology is constantly evolving — there is not one eternally perfect word to best represent identities on what is, fundamentally, an individual level. Mr. Camarotti said, "Language and terminology that reflects a person's identity [is] really positive and necessary in order for us to see people how they want to be seen."

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## Choate's Power Couples Team Up to Tackle Work and Life

**By Jacqueline Yan '24**  
Reporter

You might know them separately as your teachers, but pay attention, and you'll see that many of Choate's most beloved faculty members work at the same place as their spouse. The School has played a key role in bringing several matches together in addition to welcoming even more existing couples. Here are five of Choate's many power couples.

**Ms. Julie Oxborough-Yankus & Mr. Tom Yankus '52**

Well-known on campus for both their individual roles and loving marriage, Ms. Julie Oxborough-Yankus and her husband, the now-retired former Dean of Students Mr. Tom Yankus, met at Choate in Mr. Yankus's office on February 13, 1986. They began their relationship a few years later. For both Mr. Yankus and Ms. Oxborough, having their spouse's support in both their personal and professional lives was an immense blessing. "It was about knowing that there was someone there that always had your back and watches out for you. It was always good to know that there was someone you could trust," Ms. Oxborough said. "One time, someone was really unfair to me, and Tom goes, 'Stop it! She is an amazing teacher, and she works her butt off.'"

**Ms. Megan Shea & Mr. Cyrus Cook**

Similarly, Ms. Megan Shea and Mr. Cyrus Cook, both En-

glish teachers, met and began their relationship at Choate. Ms. Shea mentioned how her and Mr. Cook's lives were intricately interwoven because of their shared roles as English teachers and, for six years, third-form deans. At that time, their daily routine consisted of walking back and forth together in a line from Nichols (their home) to Memorial House (their offices) to Humanities (their classrooms) to the dining hall. Upon reflecting on their "lifestyle choice" of working in the same place, Ms. Shea said, "Our personalities complement each other: he was reasonable when I was emotional, and patient when I was impulsive, and reflective when I was anxious." Though Mr. Cook retired in 2020, she said, "While I still bring the job home, he is now a sounding board, freed of the daily responsibilities, whose perspective helps me with my roles here."

**Ms. Michelle Dennehy & Mr. Pat Dennehy**

Beyond its role as unintentional matchmaker, Choate has also become home to many faculty couples who were already in their relationships taking up positions here. Director of Residential Life and Associate Dean of Students Mr. Pat Dennehy and Sixth Form Deans' Assistant Ms. Michelle Dennehy met 25 years ago at Phillips Exeter Academy's summer hockey school and had worked together at Holderness School in Plymouth, N.H., for seven years before coming to

**Mr. Tom Yankus '52 and Ms. Julie Oxborough-Yankus** met as teachers. Later on, she proposed — and simultaneously revealed their relationship to the student body — during a 1988 school meeting.



**Ms. Michelle Dennehy and Mr. Pat Dennehy** met at Exeter before coming to Choate. Mr. Dennehy described his wife as "the boss in our family" — at least it keeps him in line at home and at work, he said.



**Ms. Grace McGee and Mr. Morgan Harris** have worked together for nearly ten years. At this point, he said, "it's become so normal for us that it would be more of a transition to not work at the same place."

Photos courtesy of Julie Oxborough-Yankus, Megan Shea, Michelle Dennehy, Claire Minneman, and Morgan Harris



**Ms. Megan Shea and Mr. Cyrus Cook** raised two kids on campus. After school at Moses Y. Beach, they'd often hang out in her Memorial office, poring over Ms. Madeline Perkins' old Choate yearbooks.



**Ms. Claire Minneman and Mr. Jesse Minneman** live in Mead. Now, they have "a very cute awareness" of what the senior girls like to do — 14+ Lego sets, of course.



Choate. Regarding his favorite part about working with his wife, Mr. Dennehy said, "I think having the opportunity to eat meals together during the day is a benefit. Michelle is my closest friend, so it is always nice to have that person around and especially during challenging moments. I am especially fortunate now since we both work in the same office [the Student Activities Center] — I don't think I would change a thing about it."

**Ms. Claire Minneman & Mr. Jesse Minneman**

Ms. Claire Minneman, a college counselor, and Mr. Jesse Minneman, an HPRSS teacher, also met, worked together, and eventually got married at another boarding school, the Kent School, before assuming their positions at Choate. Ms. Minneman enjoys how the similarity of their jobs allows them to understand the demands and intensity of boarding-school life, while the lack of overlap in their respective busier times of the year also fosters a balance in their relationship. Outside of the office and the classroom, Mr. and Ms. Minneman have been able to create some special moments out of the overlap between their personal and professional lives. Ms. Minneman said, "When Mr. Minneman proposed, he was living in a large boys' dorm, and the school newspaper ran a cartoon showing him down on one knee, with his bubble saying, 'Ms. Larchen, will you please get me out of North Dorm?'"

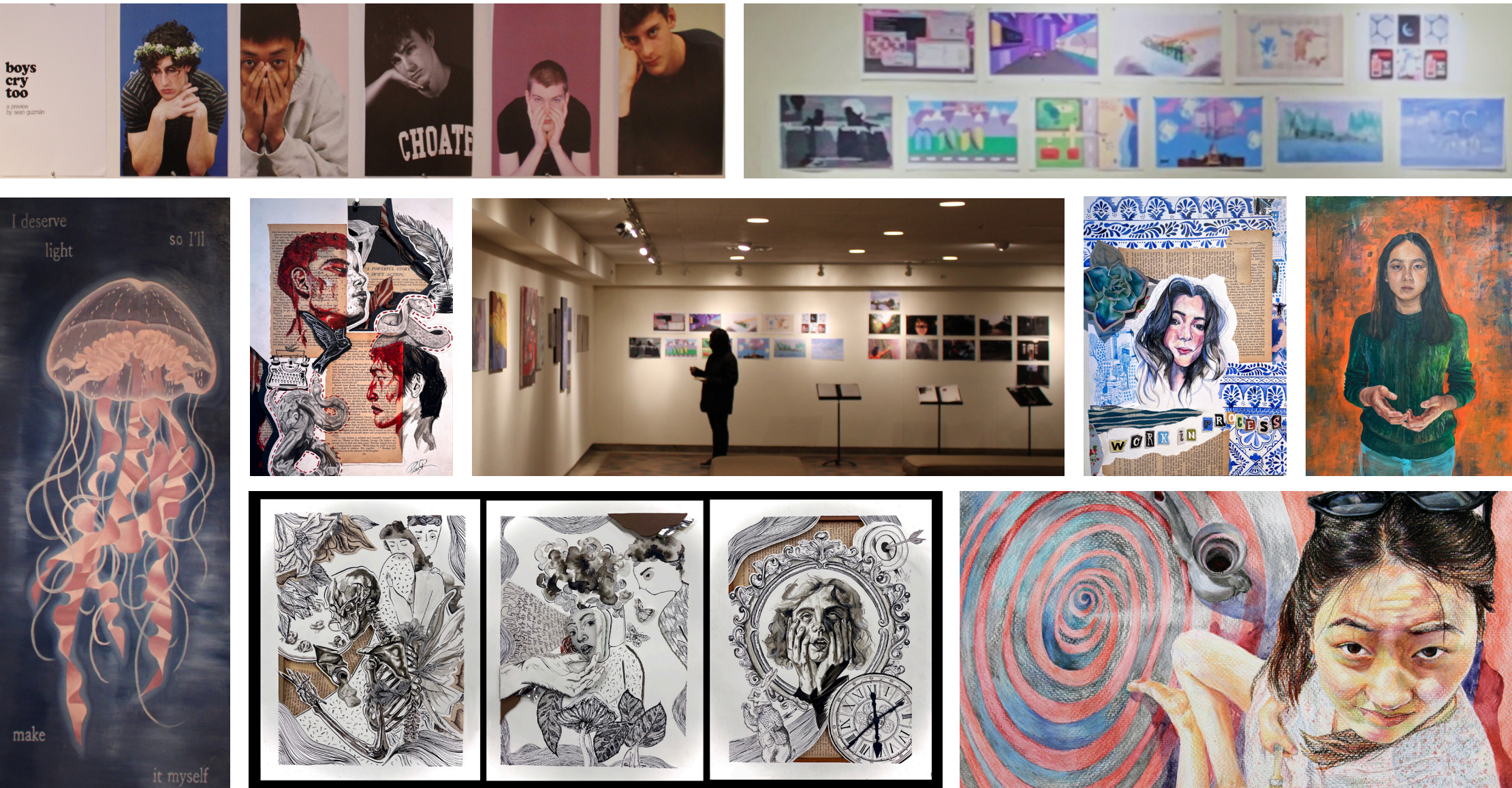
**Ms. Grace McGee & Mr. Morgan Harris**

Director of Academic Technology and HPRSS teacher Mr. Morgan Harris and Senior Associate Director of Admission Ms. Grace McGee also worked together long before their joint arrival at Choate in 2015. They first met at their alma mater, Washington and Lee University, where they worked together before moving to Avon Old Farms, another boarding school. Since their move to campus, Ms. McGee and Mr. Harris have also welcomed both of their kids — Walter and Elaine, aged three and one — to their family. One of Mr. Harris's favorite memories from the fall was the time he would spend with their kids on the outdoor basketball court, waiting for Ms. McGee, who is the head coach of Varsity Field Hockey, to walk back from practice. He loves seeing their kids' faces light up when they see their mom after a long day apart. Additionally, even though the pair's jobs don't have much day-to-day overlap, Mr. Harris said, "Recently, on Mondays, we have made a little tradition of getting takeout from the Eatery and eating it by the pond by her office — of having a nice retreat in the middle of the day."

The next time you see your teachers with their partners, give them a friendly wave and ask, "How did you meet?" Their answers might just knock you off your feet.

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## VARIATION PERVADES FALL-TERM ART EXHIBITION



Students show their paintings, photos, and more at Art Exhibition.

By **Begum Gokmen '23**  
*Associate Editor*

On Friday, December 10, the Arts Department hosted the Annual Fall Term Student Exhibition, through which students in the Arts Concentration program and all fall term visual arts courses — Design, Photography, Filmmaking, Drawing, Mixed Media, and Ceramics — displayed the fruits of their hard work at the entrance of the Paul Mellon Arts Center. Paola Diaz del Castillo Rosique '23, Macie Simmons '22, and Sean Guzman '22 were a few of the students who showcased their artwork:

Paola Diaz del Castillo Rosique '23, a newcomer in the Arts Concentration program, stepped out of her comfort zone and explored different art mediums for her project. “I had the idea that I wanted to make a series of pieces that depicted different themes of my identity and things I have been struggling with that I felt a lot of people could relate to,” she said.

She enjoyed using her flexible collage medium to add layers and depth to her work. “Each piece took between one to two weeks, but often more because of the planning and trying to figure out the most organic way to express my ideas than the actual ‘difficulty’ of the piece. There was a lot of time for introspection and asking myself what I wanted to show,” she said.

Diaz del Castillo Rosique noted that her work was profoundly inspired by the discussions in her Moral Reasoning class with Mr. Morgan Harris last term. The pieces were presented in chronological order from right to left. The first one demonstrated impostor syndrome, an internal experience where one doubts one’s competence and accomplishments. “We are influenced and corrupted by outside opinions that let us doubt ourselves,” she explained.

The second piece commented on the pressure of time and productivity one feels when

striving for lofty goals. She questioned which of her goals come from her own wants and needs and which ones are influenced by her environment. Diaz del Castillo Rosique explained that when pursuing those “goals,” one risks losing themselves in comparison to other people.

The third piece explored the extent to which one should share their personal experience. “Sometimes you want to tell the whole story but still feel like you need to keep parts of yourself just to yourself to fit into the narrative society has created for you,” she said.

The last piece signified that everyone is a “work of progress.” The continuously growing flower demonstrates individuals’ constant personal growth, while the Mexican ceramics, which are part of Diaz del Castillo Rosique’s identity and culture, indicate the importance of learning to be vulnerable. Additionally, she

deliberately designed the color scheme of her work. “The pieces go from completely black and white to more color as it becomes less about the pressure of people around you and more about yourself,” she said.

Macie Simmons '22, another student in the Visual Arts Concentration program, was inspired by a photograph. “It’s based on a photo I took of my roommate in her bed. The lighting looked really cool, and I felt like it was supposed to be a painting — so I decided to paint it.” Simmons created her piece right after midterms and college application deadlines, and the photograph encapsulated a feeling of bliss following weeks of stress.

“I was trying to catch up on all the sleep I missed the weeks before. I didn’t intend for it to, but the painting managed to capture the quietness and peace of the moment,” she said. “I used an acrylic base to lay down the main shapes and went over it with gouache paint. The hardest part was all the

folds on the comforter.” Simmons stressed the importance of paying attention to detail and illustrating the right emotions with the choice of paint and various techniques.

Sean Guzmán '22 is also a senior in the Visual Arts Concentration Program who showcased his project, “Boys Cry Too.” “I originally planned for a few male-identifying students to answer questions in a rapid-fire manner that would be displayed through illustrative type and design.” The interviews consisted of questions about perceptions of masculinity and what that means to them personally. After conducting the interviews, however, Guzmán came to a realization: “A lot of these guys had never sat down with another guy and talked openly about vulnerability — it was foreign to them. Each interview I conducted was a story. Stories that I felt deserve their individual spotlight.”

Guzmán decided to re-orient his original goal of forming “Boys Cry Too” as a mini-zine to a bigger magazine. “I learned how individ-

ual experiences manage to shape one’s perception of who they should be. The pictures I have taken are visual manifestations of the stories they’ve told me,” Guzmán added. “Each photo has its own color palette for this reason. Each story is its own.”

Reflecting on the journey of arts students, one of the advisers for the Arts Concentration Program, Ms. Smita Sen, commented, “There’s so much growth. You really see how students start to hone in on what it is they want to say and why, so then their artistic vision becomes clear, and even the kids that don’t consider themselves artists really think of themselves as a creative soul which is kind of cool.”

Ms. Jessica Cuni, another adviser for the program, added, “I think a marker of the show’s success is the variety of the work that’s up. Seeing how much diversity is on the walls is very exciting.”

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## STUDENTS CHOREOGRAPH DANCE PROGRAM

By **Harper Knight '23**  
*Reporter*

On December 4 and 5, the Choate Dance Program held its annual Student Choreography Showcase (SCS), a series of performances highlighting the School’s student performers and choreographers. For the showcase, students choreographed their own dances as either solo or group pieces. Each piece was a complex and meaningful display of the student artists.

Inspired by the loss of a family member last year, Joy An '23, one of the performers, choreographed a piece entitled “Loss,” displaying the myriad of emotions evoked by grief. “When someone is gone, the world doesn’t stop turning, although it might feel like it should,” An said. “I wanted to capture the strange cognitive dissonance that comes with feeling like the world is ending,

while having to move forward with your daily obligations.”

An also choreographed a piece titled “Cloudwatching.” To An, this piece described wonder — a feeling that evokes the inner child in everyone. In their choreography, An emphasized this idea through a series of reaching extensions and jumps, embodying the childlike feeling of amazement and profound curiosity. “I often find myself marveling at the beauty of the world we live in and how everything seems to flow together perfectly,” An said.

Another dancer and choreographer, Vicky Grechukhina '23, performed a piece entitled “Continuum,” accompanied by pianist Ramsey Scott '22. Shaping the piece with both the music and dance movements, Grechukhina created a connection with the piece that “completed the music

but also contrasted it in a harmonic way,” said Grechukhina.

“Continuum” was originally a project for her fall Dance Composition class. However, as she cultivated the piece for the showcase, “Continuum” manifested a deeper meaning. “There were some days when I couldn’t come up with any material and others where I couldn’t stop practicing. The more time I spent changing, improving, cutting, and moving around pieces of my final project, the more I understood that there is no ‘correct’ way of producing a dance of personal value,” she said.

Grechukhina’s goal was to embody the beauty of imperfection and perseverance. “Throughout our life we come across all sorts of obstacles, victories, mistakes, and gratifications,” Grechukhina said. “No matter how much they impact us, our life doesn’t stop and even though sometimes we feel like the world has ended, the only solution is to keep going.”

SCS has created a platform for students to express their experience and pushed them to unveil their artistic potential, challenging them to combine their creative interpretation with choreography skills.

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## Lessons and Carols Returns to Close Out Winterlude

By **Gigi Chen '24**  
*Reporter*

When the audience joined the Lessons and Carols livestream this past Sunday, December 12, they were soothed by the sweet sound of the Chamber Chorus, the calming music from members of Symphony Orchestra, and the reading of the Nine Stories. Lessons and Carols is a traditional service of Christian worship filled with music and celebrated around Christmas Eve. Stories such as the fall of humanity, the promise of the Messiah, and the birth of Jesus are recounted in the readings threaded with the singing of Christmas carols, hymns, and choir anthems.

This tradition was first established by Archbishop Benson and presented in the Truro Cathedral in the late 19th century. It was later adapted at King’s College, Cambridge, in 1918 by Dean Eric Milner-White. Choate’s presentation is an adaptation of that version.

Mr. Evans, Head of Choral and Vocal Studies, selected songs that evoke a sense of nostalgia and comfort for the community.

“I focused on the sense of delight that comes through. Additionally, thinking about the meaning of the lyrics helps me focus on what we, as a group, are trying to convey to the audience,” said Faer Son '24, a member of the Chamber Chorus.



Photo by Suzie Kim/The Choate News

Filled with holiday spirit, Chamber Chorus dresses in vestments.

The procession started with a soprano solo by Elsa Franks '24, singing “Once in Royal David’s City,” which narrates the birth of Jesus. Then, the full choir joined and walked down the aisle of the chapel, holding lit candles.

Following “Once in Royal David’s City,” Ava Maha '23 and Aria Ramnath '24 performed a duet, “Mary Had a Baby.” Maha remarked that “I particularly like that this song mixes gospel and spiritual styles, and the piece has evolved over time to become what we are singing today, and lacks just one definite or correct version.”

Chamber chorus also performed “Ave Maria,” which was originally composed by Schubert and named “Ellen’s

Third Song.” This piece contained many challenging components, and the group spent more time perfecting those complex sections. “It was difficult to sight read at first and takes up a lot of energy, as we need to save our breath for the long ending and the sopranos’ high note, which is higher than average. The hard work we put in made it worth it, though,” said Son.

Students are ecstatic to spread the joy of the holiday season to the Choate community through the familiar carols, celebrating the near end of new year, regardless of individual religious beliefs.

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Photo by Tiffany Xiao/The Choate News

Vicky Grechukhina '23 performs her solo piece, “Continuum.”

FIELD

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Choate Winter Record

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vs. St. Paul's, 49-38

Girls' Basketball (2-0)  
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Girls' Ice Hockey (1-2-2)  
vs. Nobles, 2-6

Boys' Ice Hockey (2-2)  
vs. Loomis Chaffee, 1-7

Boys' Squash (2-2)  
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Girls' Squash (2-0)  
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Wrestling (0-4)  
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J.V. Games

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vs. Squash Haven, 4-3

Thirds Games

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Undefeated Boys' Basketball Beats Taft



Post-graduate Emmanuel Callas '22 goes for a layup.

By **Mwendwawangai Daisley '23**  
Reporter

Choate Boys' Varsity Basketball continued its winning streak on Wednesday, December 8 in a home game against Taft, beating them 50-42. Now standing at 3-0, the team has shown great potential despite several athletes playing at the varsity level for the first time. "There were two main things we did in preparation for the game against Taft," Payton Garcia '23 said. "First, we needed to make sure that we were in the right place mentally." Second, as Garcia explained, Head Coach Drew Dawson showed the team videos of Kobe Bryant and Kemba Walker to demonstrate the importance of mentality. The clips suggested that the key to success in basketball is to, as Garcia put it, "believe in yourself and your team."

These preparatory measures from Coach Dawson appeared not in vain, as the team showed great defensive tenacity as well as offensive prowess in their matchup. "We also watched a lot of film during the week," Garcia explained. "We knew [Taft was] going to be a competitive team. Planning which plays to run and what defense we were going to come out in was essential to our success on Wednesday."

The score remained close for much of the game, but Choate's this preparation and depth on the bench eventually overcame the Taft squad. Taft came out with a strong press, trying to force bad shots from the Choate offense. However, an impressive display of

composure and determination from Choate defeated Taft's defensive strategy.

With dynamic passing and well-executed offensive plays, Choate was able to get plenty of good shots at the basket in the post and around the perimeter. Choate's passing abilities, paired with consistent shooting ability, proved too much for the Taft defense as Choate started to take a convincing lead in the second period.

Choate's depth on the bench was vital to the game because Taft's offense was explosive at moments, which appeared to exhaust the Choate starters. "Me and some other guys on the bench have important roles on the team," Alan Mashensky '23 said. "Even though we don't start, being able to come in and put in a good shift is really essential to the team's success, especially against a high-energy team like Taft. I think the reinforcement that some of the guys were able to give off the bench was one of the reasons we won the game."

This was the first basketball game the Boys' Varsity team has had on its home court in almost two years. With Choate consistently hitting threes and a dunk thrown down in the first half by post-graduate Killian Gribben '22, there was a lot of action to excite the fans. The energy from the bleachers both encouraged Choate and overwhelmed Taft, especially in the latter stages when Choate started to widen the score gap.

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The Great Waiting Game of College Recruiting

By **Meredith Syms '23**  
Associate Editor

Apply, wait, wait some more, decide. This is the all-too-familiar college application process for many high-school students. For athletes intending to play at the collegiate level, however, the steps are decidedly different.

The process itself varies greatly from student-to-student as well as from sport-to-sport. Additionally, it is heavily regulated to protect students as well as ensure that colleges can select candidates that would make significant contributions to their institutions. Two athletes shared their individual experiences with the recruiting process: Morgan Skoda '22 and Adam Carroll '23.

Skoda is a four year senior and Co-captain of the Girls' Varsity Ice Hockey Team. Most recruiting journeys start with communication with college coaches, whether via telephone, brochures, or e-mail. According to the National Collegiate Athletic Association's (NCAA) Official Recruiting Guide, the earliest any direct communications can occur between athletes and coaches is June 15 following the athlete's sophomore year in high school. "You send out emails reaching out to coaches, you make phone calls and you get exposure by doing college showcases and or doing college camps at specific schools that interest you," Skoda said.

College showcases and camps are an excellent way to receive exposure. Although deals are not necessarily signed court-side at such events, they often help athletes stand out from a generic pool and increase their overall chances of being recruited. Playing with a

well-known club team may also improve the chances of being recruited. "My club team is more viewed by college coaches since it is a travel team and so sometimes when we play near or at colleges the coaches watch our games ... it's an opportunity for coaches to see [me] play," Skoda said.

Once initial interest is established, the NCAA regulates that an athlete may only have seven physical contacts with a coach in one school year, which runs officially from September 1 through May 31. Physical contacts are officially classified either as a face-to-face discussion or as an evaluative contact where an athlete may play in front of a coach. During the summer however, physical contacts are not capped, increasing the opportunities an athlete may be scouted during so-called "summer showcases."

Finally, college coaches can extend verbal offers to students, with some doing so as early as an athlete's sophomore year. "You make a decision based on your feelings from the school, depending on the talks you had with the people you've spoken to, who are either alumni or currently students," Skoda commented. After offers have been extended, the process of choosing which institution to attend is nearly analogous to non-athlete applicants.

Carroll is a junior who committed to the College of the Holy Cross to play Division 1 Men's Lacrosse this November. Although the NCAA has slightly different regulations and dates for Men's Lacrosse recruiting, the general process is very similar to Skoda's.

Lacrosse can be thought of as a yearly cycle of reaching out,

showcases, and commitments. The cycle starts in August with a period during which physical contacts between coaches and athletes are allowed. Next, there is a "dead period" during which no contact is allowed between respective parties. This dead period concludes at the beginning of the school year, where evaluations are re-opened.

Although lacrosse is a spring sport, this fall period is when most club teams play, taking advantage of this contact period. "The club and Founders' circuit is where all the skill and team development shows itself. At the end of the day, colleges are looking for [athletes] who can play and these game situations are where they see what you are made of," said Carroll. The spring is another contact period, concluding the cycle of recruiting for Lacrosse.

"Of the schools I visited, Holy Cross is where I felt most comfortable with both the guys on the team, coaches, and the atmosphere of the school," Carroll commented when asked about in-person visits to colleges. "Taking those visits and meeting the coaches and hearing their pitch was a big part of the process [for] me." Big lacrosse schools even offer banquets as a part of their school visit process in order to attract prospective athletes. Like revisit days for their normal applicant counterparts, now the burden is on the school to convince students to attend in the fall.

"My advice would be to take it easy on yourself and always remember that your sport is just a game and it should always be fun," concluded Carroll.

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Graphic by Brian Yip/The Choate News

Boys' Hockey Puts Up a Decisive Win Over Deerfield

By **Jonathan Zhou '23**  
Staff Reporter

Last Saturday, December 11, Choate Boys' Varsity Hockey beat Deerfield Academy in a nail-biting 2-1 win. Coming off a tough loss against Westminster, on December 8, the Boars were motivated for a decisive win over Deerfield.

The first half began with a fast face-off, sending the puck into Choate's side of the rink with Deerfield maintaining relative control for the first 30 seconds. However, the momentum of the game quickly shifted as Choate gained the upper hand. Board checks came from both teams as players battled for control of the puck. A shot on Choate's goal was deflected by Jack Badeer '23 before it approached the crease. A minute later, an attempt on Deerfield's goal was made by Will Henderson '25. Unfortunately, the shot was blocked.

In a second attempt on the goal by Deerfield, Henderson slid on the ice toward the winger, deflecting a shot with the bottom of his skates. Pressure ramped up as Deerfield



Choate faces off against Deerfield after a penalty.

crammed into the crease, but Goalie Primo Baldassare '23 rebuffed Deerfield's shots and put Choate back on the offensive. An aggressive board check by Deerfield against Co-captain Tom Lynch '22 earned the Boars their first penalty, slowing down Deerfield's momentum towards the beginning of the game.

Although a second face-off near Choate's goal seemed to give Deerfield hope for a goal, this aspiration was shattered

by a block from Baldassare. He blocked another shot mere seconds later, ending the first half without a goal on either side.

The second half face-off went favorably for Deerfield; however, a minor violation was called, placing the puck back with the Boars on the offensive. Deerfield earned a second minor penalty shortly after, further adding to the Boars' advantage.

Possession of the puck bounced between the teams for

the next two minutes until Henderson, seeing an opportunity, passed to Henry Kops '22, who shot the puck straight past the Deerfield goalie into the net.

"For the first goal the student section went crazy. For some hockey kids, that was the loudest they've ever heard," Ethan Opdenaker '24 said.

The face-off after Choate's goal put Deerfield in control of the puck. However, just like in the first half, the game quickly

shifted back in Choate's favor. Unfortunately, Deerfield was able to bring its offense intact to the crease, scoring with nine minutes left in the half. The score was 1-1 going in the final stretch of the game.

The next face-off brought the puck to Choate, giving the advantage back to the Boars. A body check by Owen Tunney '24 took him out of the game and gave Choate its first penalty. However, Choate speedily readjusted as George Pavlus '22 swept the puck up the rink, scoring on the Deerfield goalie with just six minutes left in the game. A couple of attempts on Choate's goal were easily stopped by Baldassare, ending the game 2-1 to Choate.

"Our team played really well," Baldassre said. "We were all blocking shots, and it was a good win all around."

A Boar Pen Instagram video featured fans shaking the sideboards at the end of the game as well as after each goal, vibrating the rink with their energy.

"It's good to be back with the boys," Baldassre said.

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