

Does artificial intelligence undermine academic integrity?

An anonymous Record poll found 2/3s of respondents use AI for schoolwork

EVELYN GROSS & CIANA TZUO
Staff Writers

"AI is still so new, and it has so many different applications that we need to start having more open conversations in classrooms about how it should be used," Neeya Gupta (10) said. "It's not just a yes-or-no issue, there's a wide range of ways students might turn to AI, from generating practice questions to writing entire essays."

The Horace Mann School Family Handbook outlines the Upper Division (UD)'s prohibition of Artificial Intelligence (AI) use for schoolwork, "unless explicitly given permission to do so by their teacher." The section of the Family Handbook titled Use of Artificial Intelligence further explains: "Horace Mann forbids the use of Artificial Intelligence for writing assistance, including applications like Grammarly that suggest revisions to a student's language. The school's policies and practices regarding plagiarism may also apply."

Despite the school's policy, according to an anonymous Record

the school community, primarily uses AI to complete homework that feels tedious or time-consuming. For history assignments, Peach typically uses ChatGPT to summarize the reading and then answers the questions herself. "With sports, clubs, other homework, and studying for tests, it's hard to find the motivation to finish assignments that are only graded for completion when shortcuts exist."

While Peach's* approach directly violates the school's Honor Code, some students disregard it to an even greater extent. Hubert*, for example, who chose to stay anonymous due to the threat of repercussions from the school, uses AI regularly. "I use it mainly for humanities classes," he said. "Once you have created an outline, it's very easy to copy the outline and say, 'put this into an essay.' Once you have the idea, it's very easy to use Chat[GPT]."

Hubert* is well aware of the rules and consequences against the use of AI at school; however, he still finds a way to get around them. "I know that teachers have a way to detect if you copy and paste something into a doc,

critical thinking and writing skills, is a highly effective way to confront the challenges generative AI presents and to uphold the integrity of students' work," he said.

Regardless, Wilson acknowledges the drawbacks of this approach: students no longer get the chance to sit with an idea over time, write a draft, step away from it, and later return with a fresh perspective. "You miss that moment when, after thinking

that AI usually has a more mature voice than students, she said. "There's a veneer of professionalism, but it feels empty," she said. "There's nothing wrong with writing like a 10th grader, because that's how you learn how to write like an 11th grader."

Conversely, science and computer science classes view AI as a tool rather than a threat. Berry* finds AI extremely helpful and uses it for almost everything, especially in

students and they don't always feel like they have the time to complete everything on time, Claude* said. "Being able to shorten that time by using AI and using the time for a subject you might be struggling on may seem more important to most students."

Additionally, some students use AI as a tool to support, rather than replace, their thinking. Doe*, who chose to remain anonymous to avoid

"I know that teachers have a way to detect if you copy and paste something into a doc, but what I do is just type out what ChatGPT says into the document."

- Anonymous Student

about something for 24 hours, you realize exactly how to reshape a sentence or tweak a paragraph," he said. "In-class writing takes that away, and that's a vital part of writing."

To complement these in-class adjustments, departments have also codified AI-related policies. The current official syllabi for English and history classes now state that "students may not use AI (including consulting AI) to complete work for their classes unless explicitly given permission to do so by their teacher." To reinforce this policy, teachers require students to submit the version history of each of their graded assignments. "We've become very intentional about making sure we can see students' work develop over time, rather than just receiving a finished piece that appears all at once," History Department Chair Dr. Emily Straus said.

However, the tactics have proven ineffective as teachers underestimate how far students are willing to go to get a good grade, Berry*, who chose to remain anonymous to avoid penalization, said. "People are desperate to get good grades and are willing to open up a new document and type out the answers onto the official document just to avoid detection."

In classroom discussions, Straus explains to her students why they shouldn't rely on AI for anything, noting that it often flattens their voice by avoiding specific examples and lacks the nuance that comes from being in class, she said. "While I can usually tell when something sounds off, like when a student doesn't include examples, I'm sure I haven't caught every case," she said.

Similarly to Straus, Head of Upper Division Dr. Jessica Levenstein finds

science and programming, where teachers tend to be more accepting of its use, he said. "Teachers in the Computer Science department see it as more of a tool that students should learn how to adapt to," Berry* said. "You can either get hit by the force of AI and get caught off guard, or embrace the changes and learn to adapt."

Several students noted that AI usage has become more prevalent among students. Gemini*, who chose to remain anonymous for fear of judgment from her peers, knows that many people in her grade use AI for schoolwork and essays, typically to make time for other subjects, she said. While AI was more stigmatized before, it has gradually become normalized with students using it out in the open, showing their friends, or even using it in class, she said. "Especially at a school like Horace Mann, where it's very competitive, students want to strive to get the best grades possible and they rely on AI in order to do so."

There's a mutual understanding that everyone is just trying to manage their workload as best they possibly can, especially given the rigorous nature of the school, Peach* said. "We go to a school where the workload can be overwhelming: constant assessments, extracurriculars, and the expectation to always perform at your best," they said. "Using AI isn't about cutting corners; it's about staying afloat and being efficient."

Moreover, Claude*, who chose to remain anonymous for fear of potential repercussions, believes that AI usage is fueled not by the difficulty of assignments, but rather how time consuming they can be. Humanities classes usually limit homework to 45 minutes, but the time varies among

recognition from teachers, uses AI to help articulate his ideas. When writing essays, he often compiles a list of bullet points based on his own thoughts and then asks ChatGPT to shape them into full paragraphs. "When you attend such a demanding school, the reality is that you sometimes have to get creative," he said. "I always use my own ideas—I just rely on AI to help me express them clearly."

As attitudes toward AI have shifted, so have the ways students talk about it: AI isn't just used in private or in secret; it's often joked about openly in casual conversations, Peach said. "There are constantly jokes flying around, like if someone's struggling with a question or assignment, people will just say, 'Why don't you ask ChatGPT?'" she said. "It's become so ingrained in how we talk about schoolwork that no one really bats an eye when it comes up."

What stands out to Peach* is not just how commonly AI is used, but how openly students are willing to discuss it. "It's very normal for me to have a conversation with my friends where we're all just casually talking about how we've used AI," she said. "One of my friends might say, 'oh, I used it to make an outline,' or 'I had it rephrase a paragraph for clarity,' and nobody judges each other."

Still, according to the poll, a notable 33% say they've never used AI for a range of reasons, from concerns



Sarah Cohen/Art Director

poll with 119 responses, 67% of respondents admitted to using AI to assist with their schoolwork. From brainstorming essay ideas to proofreading written work, explaining concepts, completing homework, and even writing full essays, students admit turning to AI for a variety of tasks.

Peach*, who chose to remain anonymous to avoid judgment from

but what I do is just type out what ChatGPT says into the document," he said. "It's longer, but you still get the appeal of using ChatGPT."

In order to minimize the use of AI, English teacher Vernon Wilson has significantly increased his amount of in-class writing for major assessments this year. "In-class writing, where students must depend on their own

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May the research be with you: Students present at SciTech

LUCAS KE & SACHA ADLER
Staff Writers

"The energy was electric—everyone was rushing around, trying to catch every research presentation they could," Anyi Sharma (11) said. On April 15th, Science Research 1 and 2 students showcased their findings from their multiple year projects at the annual SciTech symposium. The event invites classmates, faculty, and parents to get an exclusive peek into the cutting-edge discoveries of Upper Division (UD) science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics (STEAM) students. This year's projects spanned various topics, from robotic arms to experimental cancer treatments.

To keep the presentations concise and exciting, students delivered a condensed two to three minute summary of their research, called an elevator pitch. Afterwards, attendees could ask questions directly into the microphone, which allowed for more interactive exchanges, Eva Onur (11) said.

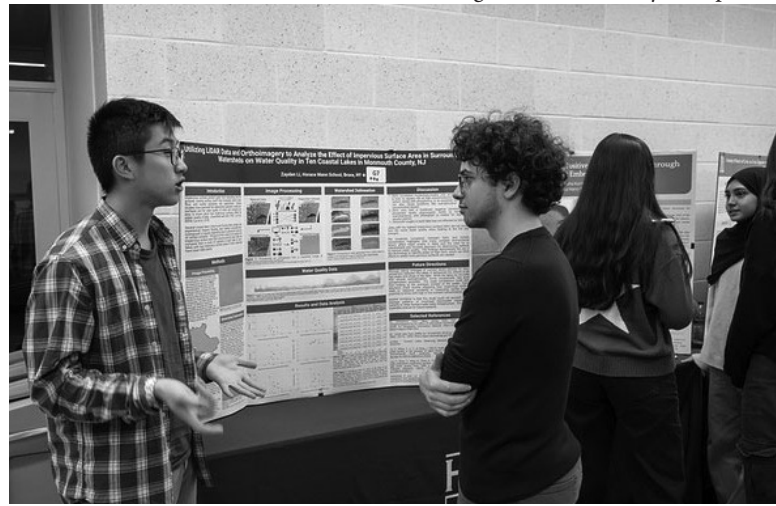
SciTech included presentations from students who were not involved in the Science Research Program, like independent researcher Will Han (9). "[SciTech] allows kids to share their passions and it really gives them a good experience of sharing research with other people," Han said. Han spent two years researching and preparing his project

on geometric combinatorics—a highly theoretical topic—which he is very proud to have finally shared with others, he said.

In most cases, however, the students who presented at the event were enrolled in a Science Research class, Fan said. Over the summer, Fan tested experimental cancer treatments, authoring a paper and creating a poster under Shearer's guidance to present at SciTech.

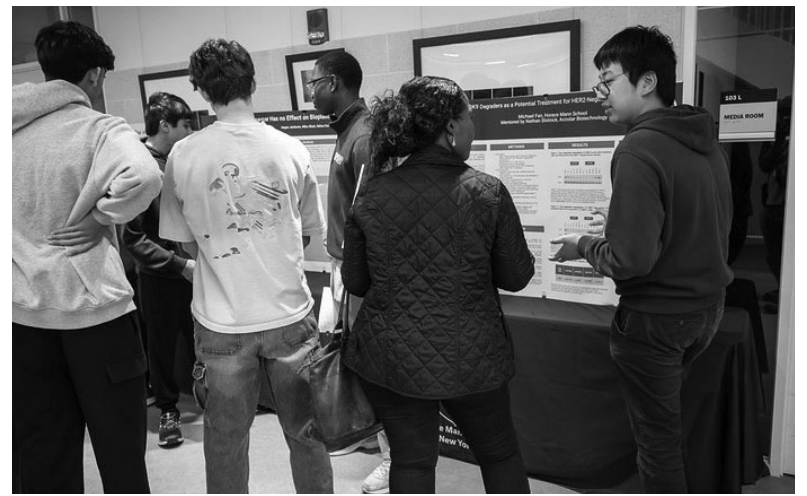
While Science Research 1 focuses on specific guided topics, Science Research 2 allows students to explore any research topic they are passionate about. "For the past two years, Science Research 1 has followed a structured path," Science Research teacher and SciTech organizer Dr. Alyssa Shearer said. "Students begin by studying bioplastics in the fall to build foundational research skills. In the spring, they transition to developing their own research questions and projects on this topic." In Science Research 2, Students dive into independent research on topics of their choosing, many of which introduced ideas and innovations that SciTech had never showcased before, Shearer said.

In his project, Fan investigated the use of a degrader—a drug that destroys proteins—to treat different types of cancer. The degrader marks proteins in cancerous cells with a biomarker called ubiquitin. This protein acts as a "red flag," causing the cell to destroy vital proteins



STUDENTS AT WORK

Courtesy of Barry Mason



SCIENCE IN MOTION

Courtesy of Barry Mason

marked with ubiquitin and ultimately die. Fan concluded that the degraders he tested demonstrated efficacy across multiple types of cancer, he said. "Our drug hasn't been tested in humans yet, but the results are certainly very promising."

Some students in Science Research 2, such as Onur, saw the event as a great first step to conducting research and presentations for graduate schools, companies, and other future endeavors, she said. "I know that without SciTech, especially in the first year [of Science Research], I would have a hard time communicating what I was interested in, especially in the sciences."

Onur's project tested the efficacy of a natural compound in treating diabetes in rat cancer cell lines, ultimately finding that it was an ineffective treatment. Although the prospect of presenting in front of a crowd was initially stressful, Onur quickly eased into a flow, she said. "It was super relaxed and everyone was really supportive."

Almost all members of the science department attended, with many teachers visiting their former students. Menya Obia (12) had the chance to present his research to his former teachers, a full-circle moment he described as deeply fulfilling. With his experience in robotics, Obia built a robotic arm, allowing him to deliver an easily understandable and interactive presentation.

Presenters also found the atmosphere

to be pleasantly informal, especially since they had practiced beforehand for their peers, Onur said. "It's low stakes when you're talking to people in the community who are really supportive."

SciTech would not have been possible without the efforts of organizers Shearer and science teacher Dr. Lisa Rosenblum. "We usually set the date for [SciTech] a whole year in advance, because the Horace Mann calendar becomes quite full," Shearer said. Bringing SciTech to life involves coordination with the maintenance team, Flik for the food at the event, the tech department, and the Alumni Office to connect them with an alumni who can visit as a keynote speaker, Shearer said.

The keynote speaker, astrophysicist Dr. Rebecca Oppenheimer '90, was chosen based on this year's Star Wars theme. "Dr. Oppenheimer spoke about exo-planets, which was really new and fun to see for me," Han said.

Events like SciTech are valuable because they encourage young scientists to communicate their work to the public in a constructive and celebratory setting. SciTech also gives students the opportunity to take on the responsibility of conducting scientific research, something typically reserved for later stages of education, Shearer said. "[SciTech] empowers students to contribute to future innovation from an early age."

Packed stands and nail-biting goals: CC futsal frenzy returns

JACK ROSENBERG
Contributing Writer

On April 10th, students packed into the Richard A. Friedman '75 Gymnasium in anticipation of the kickoff of this year's futsal tournament. Futsal is a modified form of indoor soccer and is a fan-favorite among the school community. Organized by Community Council (CC) members Ahaan Chabba (11), Kofi Boadu (11), and Kai Seifan (9), the tournament features 12 teams, totalling 87 members, with numerous matches taking place throughout the spring.

Due to limited gym space, this year's CC had to decide whether to continue the dodgeball or futsal tournament, which took place simultaneously last year, Chabba said. The CC voted 11-3 in favor of continuing the tourna-

ment for a second year.

End-of-year community events, like the futsal and spikeball tournaments, are the most effective ways for the CC to gather student support, Seifan said. These competitions also allow for community interaction and provide a source of enjoyment during the busiest and most stressful times of the year, he said.

Since the start of the tournament, the gym's bleachers have been full with students across grades every I period. Playing in such an exhilarating atmosphere is what makes the tournament special, Kofi Asante-Abedi (10).

Beyond its entertainment, the tournament gives students who don't usually play soccer or futsal the opportunity to compete with their peers. "One of my favorite parts of this tournament has been

playing my favorite sport with people who I never get the chance to compete with," Boys Varsity Soccer (BVS) and Hey Baby member Alban Maurel (11) said.

Under the limelight, unexpected stars have emerged. For example, Kofi FC member Kaleb Taylor (10), the only non-soccer player on his team, scored the game-winner against a far more experienced team. "The feeling was electrifying when running with my teammates and peers on the sideline," Taylor said. Although only bragging rights are at stake, the players put their all into each match. Hey Baby's Jude Nye-Wenner (11) described the electric atmosphere as it reached a fever pitch when fans burst onto the court, roaring with excitement and rallying around after his last-second game-winner.

Next week, the semi-finals and finals are to take place. The teams remaining are Kofi FC, Begaluru FC, BVS Bench '23, and La Pasi3n, providing a diverse demographic of experience and grade. As the tournament comes to a close, it has proven to be a great success, providing an escape from the stress of spring at the school.

For seniors about to part ways with the UD, this tournament is especially meaningful. Events such as these give the seniors a last chance to add to their numerous memories made at the school, Logan Scharlatt (12) said. "This was a good opportunity to kick a ball around with my school friends for one last time."



GAME ON

Photo by Alexander James

Laughter, late night, and lion legacy: Rebecca Shaw '14 returns to share her story

ANUSHA GOEL &
ELLE SMAGUINE
Staff & Contributing Writers

"Wherever it is, inside or outside the classroom, you have to do that thing that makes you feel like, 'God, if only I can do this one day,'" Rebecca Shaw '14 said. On Tuesday, Upper Division (UD) students gathered in the Alfred Gross Theater to listen to Shaw share her experience in the entertainment industry as a comedy writer. Shaw and her writing partner Ben Kronengold worked as staff writers for *The Tonight Show* Starring Jimmy Fallon for two years, before they moved on to create a TV sitcom, *Adults*, which will be released later this year.

Shaw first discovered her passion for comedy when she was able to drop her physics class during her senior year at the school to write *Upper West Side Story*, a satirical play poking fun at the school's culture. Although she was scared to take the risk, Shaw was thankful that she stepped outside her comfort zone to pursue her passion, she said. "Opportunities are really only constrained by how much you're willing to try things out."

Even though Shaw originally thought that she wanted to be a psychologist, her talent for comedy was clear throughout high school. "She was an extremely strong English student," English teacher Dr. Wendy Steiner said. "She did her end-of-year independent reading project on several works by Oscar Wilde and Dorothy Parker, so she was clearly drawn to comedy even if she didn't yet know she would pursue it as a profession."

After graduating from the school, Shaw attended Yale University, where she joined 'Red Hot Poker,' a sketch comedy group with live shows and performances. In 2018, Shaw delivered a comedic commencement speech at her graduation alongside her classmate, writing partner, and future fiancé, Ben Kronengold. The speech went viral on YouTube, amassing over seven million views. Following her moment of fame, Shaw officially told her peers she was pursuing comedy, using the monologue to get a manager and eventually a spot writing on Fallon's show.

Shaw credits a lot of her success to the work ethic she was taught while at the school, she said. "My Horace Mann education shaped me into the person I am today."

Shaw's return to the school has been long awaited, English teacher and organizer of the assembly Dr. Adam Casdin said. "She's just one of those alums who's just been super successful and an interesting person, so we've wanted her to come for a while," Casdin said. Casdin reached out to Shaw last year, but her busy schedule prevented her attendance until this year.

Many students appreciated how Shaw struck a balance between the importance of working hard and finding humor in life. "It [the assembly] was motivational and a little inspiring—I liked the Yale speech a lot," Anisa Javaid (9) said. "You'd think that she'd have to give a super serious speech about how you've grown, but she made it funny and that was really cool."

Furthermore, Shaw's alumna background helped students relate and connect to her, Jordan Capla-Wasserman (12) said. "I think bringing [in] alumni is one of the best things we can do to learn about the workforce," he said. "Coming from a similar background, it is valuable to hear how they take what they learned at Horace Mann and apply it to the real world."

Students also appreciated how she highlighted that pursuits outside of the

classroom can often lead to successful careers just as much as academic passions. "Personally comedy is not my passion, but I've done some creative writing as a hobby before and I can relate to how important it is to explore outside of the classroom," Helena Zhang (11) said.

Curious about her journey as a comedian, students attending her Q&A talkback session during D period asked her about different challenges she faced along the way. "I found it incredibly

helpful as I am working on screenwriting myself and hearing the perspective and process of a successful writer shifted my approach," Jameson Ibrahim (10) said.

Shaw's insights about careers allowed students to imagine their lives after college and see how the school's lessons stay with them even after high school, Ellie Park (10) said. "I learned how our Core Values carry on in the future even after college."



COMEDY WITH REBBECA SHAW

Photo by Will Gonzalez

Museums and Marshes: Exploring the MoMA, Newton Creek, and the Whitney

VED DAGA & GRACE KINNEY
Staff & Contributing Writers

"It was really cool to see the art we've been discussing and looking at in person. It's a completely different experience than seeing it on the board," Jordan Capla-Wasserman (12) said. On April 14th, students in Art History teacher Dr. Anne Monahan's half-credit Contemporary Art History class traveled to the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), visiting the Jack Whitten exhibition and Christian Marclay's *The Clock*.

Prior to the trip, Monahan informed students that they would be participating in a group project to discuss President Donald J. Trump's recent ex-

ecutive order titled, "Restoring Truth and Sanity to American History." The executive order attempts to restrict what subjects about which museums can display pieces.

In the past, students in the class have visited museums through field trips and independent projects, but Monahan specifically chose the MoMA because of its exhibition program, she said. "[The Jack Whitten exhibit] is a model in terms of the quality of the work—which is gorgeous—and the care with which it has been curated."

When at the museum, students were asked to consider how the executive order would affect the exhibition. "The topic of race was one of the several characteristics of the Jack Whitten show we took note of," Capla-Wasserman said. "We have to create a presentation about whether or not the

guidelines or certain aspects of this museum meet the criteria [set out in Trump's executive order]."

Unlike the Whitten exhibit, *The Clock* showcases films where the time in the film is synchronous with the local time of the audience. For example, when the time is 12:30PM, the exhibit will display a clip from a film that shows that time, changing every minute. "[The Clock] moving in correlation to the actual time was very cool to see," Charlie Davis (12) said.

During the trip, Monahan hopes students learned to value the importance of seeing art in person, as it could change its impact. "I also hope they learned that art needs time to percolate—the longer you look, the more you see, and the deeper you think."



Courtesy of Jordan Capla-Wasserman (12)

Newtown Creek



Courtesy of Allison Woolford

"We went to learn how and why the ecology of Newtown Creek has changed over time due to things like industrialization and population growth," science teacher Allison Woolford said. "We also learned about innovative techniques the Newtown Creek Alliance is implementing to bioremediate the watershed like reintroducing native plant and aquatic species." On April 17th, students in Woolford's 400-level Environmental Science class visited Newtown Creek, a tidal arm of the

New York-New Jersey Harbor Estuary located in northern Brooklyn.

The visit began with a stop at a local building near the site, where the group learned about the area's history and how the land has changed over the years, Jordan Capla-Wasserman (12) said. "We went as far back as to discuss the land use over 1000 years ago, and also how it has been shaped over the development of New York City in recent centuries."

Due to increased industrial development over the past 1000 years,

the Creek has been deeply affected, and recently the area became a site of pollution and environmental damage, Capla-Wasserman said. "Newtown Creek brings up more recent environmental problems, such as an oil refinery that leached pollutants into the East River and caused severe damage."

After learning about the creek's history, the students visited the site itself, where staff from the Newtown Creek Alliance were able to use their experience to show the real harms of

the environmental damage. "One of the buildings we visited has converted the roof into a green roof to help with absorbing rainwater that would otherwise end up in the sewer system. We were able to go up and view the green roofs and use binoculars to view Newtown creek and the surrounding area," Woolford said. "They thought it was a really informative and enjoyable experience."

Whitney

"We studied Amy Sberald's works in various classes, so when the opportunity came to see her works in person, it felt unmissable to me," Visual Arts Department Chair Dr. Anna Hetherington said. On April 17, students from Hetherington's 400-level full credit "What is a Masterpiece?" and 400-level half credit "Seminar in Art History: Portraiture and Constructions of Identities" classes visited the Amy Sberald: *American Sublime* exhibition at the Whitney Museum.

Students were encouraged to pay specific

attention to Sberald's creative process for developing works. "[Sberald] made it very important for each of her portraits to tell a story and have a narrative behind [how the paintings were made]," Malina Patel (11) said. "It made the whole exhibit come together because we got to see why she uses grayscale paintings."

Janani Bhagat (11) was amazed when she saw familiar pieces of artwork in person, she said. "It was really exciting because it was art that I'd seen before, like Michelle Obama's

official First Lady portrait and the Brianna Taylor portrait."

Bhagat was also impressed by Sberald's ability to invoke ideas through visuals, as opposed to reading labels, she said. "It was nice, having [a visual] perspective, and seeing the process behind the art, whereas usually in exhibitions, you just see the picture, and read the text."



Courtesy of Zach Hornfeld (11)

Continued from page 1: Students’ use of AI for schoolwork

AI for a range of reasons, from concerns about academic integrity and ethical implications to simply preferring to do the work themselves without relying on external tools.

Brianna Wells (12) avoids using AI because she’s concerned about a dependence on it, she said. She’d rather self-develop the skills AI might otherwise shortcut, such as proofreading an essay, creating a study guide, or summarizing a reading. “Even though I don’t really like textbook readings, I’d rather push through them and figure out the content on my own,” she said. “There’s value in grappling with an idea until you understand it because that’s how you learn to problem solve.” Instead of AI, she turns to resources like CrashCourse videos, Khan Academy lessons, or meeting with a teacher when she needs extra support.

Similarly, Gupta refrains from using AI on any submitted or graded assignments but sees its value as a study tool. After completing review packets for chemistry or math, she sometimes inputs the material into ChatGPT and asks it to generate similar practice questions with an answer key to check her work. “I don’t think that should violate academic integrity,” she said. “Ultimately, my grade is based on how I perform on in-class assessments, and using AI for additional practice is just a way to reinforce what I’ve already learned.”

On the contrary, some students feel like they aren’t losing their skills by using AI on tasks, especially when aiming to increase productivity and save time. “When I use AI, I don’t feel like I am losing my skills in writing or research, but rather learning from AI and even improving on those skills,” Berry* said.

While Gupta uses AI for academic reinforcement, others believe the school should take a more supportive stance on its educational potential. Claude* is surprised that different departments vary in their support for AI usage, especially for research. Last year, during the end-of-year Biology project, students were allowed to use AI to

the test, and I’d rather study from that than something AI generates.”

Levenstein hopes that teachers emphasize the negative implications of AI and the benefits of learning how to write and gain confidence in the ability to express oneself, she said. Students should certainly understand where the line lies and what the consequences of AI usage are, Levenstein said. “But more powerful would be for students to understand why it’s worth working really really hard to acquire the skills that are necessary to accomplish your work on your own.”

While the academic integrity policy draws a clear line, not all students interpret the rules the same way. Some, like Peach*, take a selective approach to AI use, often turning to AI to brainstorm arguments for essay prompts. “A lot of our essay questions are so complex, and I just want to make sure I’m considering every possible angle before I start writing,” she said. Once the brainstorming is done, Peach* doesn’t use AI for writing or editing, believing that teachers can usually tell when AI has been used, she said. “Getting the ball rolling is the hardest for me, but after that, I can handle it myself.”

However, teachers are especially opposed to students using AI to generate the initial ideas for their essays, Wilson said. Wilson believes using AI for that purpose undermines the most important part of English and history classes: learning how to form and develop one’s own arguments and opinions. “Students need to work through complex problems independently if they’re going to build real critical thinking abilities,” he said.

Gupta, like Wells, avoids using AI for essays altogether, believing that it’s important to develop and express her own ideas and opinions when forming an analytical argument. “Relying on AI to write, edit, or even inspire your argument is really problematic because it limits your ability to fully engage with or understand the material,” she said. “You’re using someone else’s idea and running with it, which takes away from the creative process that’s so highly valued at our

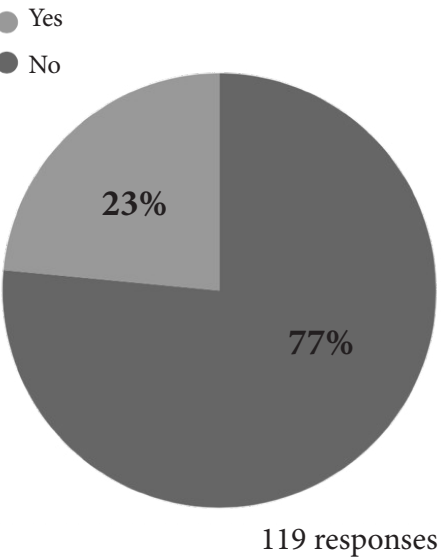
or English, a clear protocol is followed. If a teacher in the history department suspects that a student has used AI on an assignment, they bring the work to the department chair, and the two review it together. “This ensures there are two sets of eyes on the situation, rather than just one,” Straus said. After that, the teacher meets with the student to discuss the work and hear their explanation. If the student admits to using AI, the case is then referred to the Dean. “There has to be a series of conversations because these situations aren’t always black and white.”

Penalties for AI and the discussion of harms of AI have mainly been in the English and history departments, but it is important to consider the impacts and the current ideology on AI in the science department as well. Claude* feels there should be a larger integration of AI into the curriculum, especially about teaching students how to use AI responsibly or figuring out the capabilities of the tool. “AI usage in science and comp sci classes differ so greatly compared to humanities classes in terms of research and content generation that the school should have separate rules [for] English and history.”

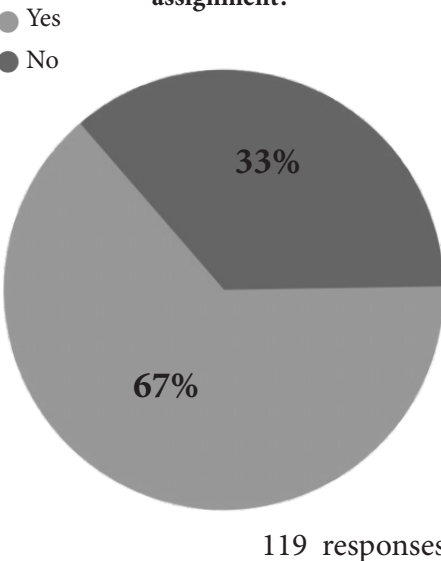
To this end, there is a continuous discussion on how AI can be better integrated amongst departments, Upper Division Dean of Students Michael Dalo said. “The main concern is figuring out how [the school] can harness AI and encourage students to use it in a productive way.”

Since AI is still so new, the school’s policy, unfortunately, isn’t entirely clear to students, Wells said. While the official stance is essentially ‘don’t use AI,’ the policy doesn’t clearly define what exactly qualifies as a violation of academic integrity, she said. “There are so many different ways to use AI, like studying for assessments or generating practice problems, and I don’t see why those should necessarily count as violations,” she said. “I think the policy is too unclear given the wide range of ways AI can be used.”

Do you think school rules implemented to prevent student AI use are working?



Have you ever used AI to help with an assignment?



“Students need to work through complex problems independently if they’re going to build real critical thinking abilities.”

- English teacher Vernon Wilson

come up with an experiment, Claude* said. The students gave the AI a prompt detailing their background and budget limitations as a high school student and a request to create an experiment that focused on testing a specific effect on algae. “It was really effective and I think that was the first time the school really allowed us to use AI,” Claude* said. “I’d love to see more of that in the future, because I think it is really helpful and a necessary skill to learn.”

However, while using AI for non-submitted work like study guides, practice problems, or initial research may seem effective, it has its limits. AI doesn’t always create problems that reflect the material taught in class, Wells said. Since it’s not in the classroom, it can’t reliably predict what will be on an assessment and may include irrelevant information or ask overly complicated questions, she said. “It’s more effective to meet with a teacher or just rely on your class materials,” Wells said. “For me, whatever’s on my packet, I trust to be on

school.”

Levenstein believes that students lose out when they use AI. Students may be completing an assignment, but they aren’t putting it into language or an original idea that feels successful and persuasive, she said. Many students fail to recognize that writing is about communicating their own voice, and that there are many voices that can get high grades, she said. “[Students] are missing out on the enormous satisfaction of being able to express their ideas in exactly the right way,” Levenstein said.

Moreover, students who use AI to write are missing out on an incredible opportunity to learn and grow, Levenstein said. “Students at the school have an incredible privilege, which is a very experienced and devoted faculty who are here in order to help students grow intellectually,” she said. “You have to go through the stages of your development as a writer in order to get to that place organically.”

For students caught using AI in history

———— Poll responses ————

Why I use AI:

- “Homework cause I was lazy”
- “It prepares students for the real world”
- “Forcing kids to do their work without AI is like forcing students to do complicated math without a calculator”
- “I hate busy work”
- “My engineering teachers agrees that AI allows you to complete menial tasks better”
- “Because I have no time”
- “It’s the equivalent of a classmate giving you feedback”

Why I don’t use AI:

- “I realized [AI] took all the personality out”
- “Cheating is bad”
- “Because I’m better than a damn robot”
- “I find it a disrespect to our core values”
- “AI is terrible”
- “I should lowkey”
- “It defeats the whole purpose of school”
- “It’s too much work”
- “I like learning, the environment, and value the fact that I have a functioning mind :)”

Long lasting lion love: The stories of school alumni couples

MAYA RANGARAJAN
Staff Writer

"It's truly amazing to pull [the school's alumni database] up and see a roster of HM alumni who have fallen in love and got married," Director of Alumni Development Melissa Parento '90 said. Over the years, around twenty couples have found themselves living out their own Horace Mann rom-com plots. Some were classmates, others bumped into each other at alumni events, but all were brought together by familiar memories, shared roots, and a sprinkle of HM magic.

One couple, Lindsay Kaplan Kane '02 and Peter Kane '03, have been inseparable since they first met at the school's Lower Division (LD). They remained good friends throughout their time at the school and kept in touch during college and law school. Years later, they met again at their school friend group's annual dinner. Though both were in other relation-

ships at the time, they found themselves side by side and became deeply engrossed in conversation. Despite their evident connection, Lindsay waited until they were both single to make the first move a few months later, she said. "I reached out to [Jeff Price '02], nudged him, and asked him why Peter hadn't asked me out yet," she said. Price sent an email to Peter who then excitedly called her to set up a date, and they soon became official.

A few years later, the Kanes married at a wedding infused with the school's spirit. In fact, eleven of Peter's groomsmen and eight of Lindsay's bridesmaids were school alumni. "Horace Mann is so deeply ingrained in who we are, so we really wanted that to be reflected in our wedding," Lindsay said. Now, the Kanes enjoy watching their own children, Harrison '36 and Josie '39, walk the same halls where their own story began.



NICOLE '08 & MERIN '09 PASTERNAK

Courtesy of the Pasternak Family

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Much like the Kanes, Nicole Hersch '00 and Gregory Hersch '97 didn't start dating until after they

graduated, despite having crossed paths multiple times at the school. They first met when Gregory transferred to the Upper Division (UD) his sophomore year when Nicole was in seventh grade, she said. Nicole had a brother at the school who was around Gregory's age, so they often spent time together in passing. Regardless of their age difference, Nicole was smitten as Gregory's warm and friendly demeanor drew her in. "He just smiled at me and was so sweet, just like an older brother," she said.

As time went on, Nicole's feelings for Gregory only grew stronger, she said. Despite their age gap, they were able to interact more frequently when she was a freshman on the Girls Varsity Soccer (GVS) team and he was a senior captain of the Boys Varsity Soccer (BVS) team. Although she interacted with many BVS upperclassmen due to her relationships with GVS seniors, Gregory just always seemed to be the one who stuck in her mind, she said. "It was

couple, as they first started dating in the seventh grade, Benjamin said. "I remember fondly how we used to pass notes during Foundations class."

Although their relationship in the Middle Division (MD) lasted two weeks, the Litmans remained close, united not only by their shared friend groups but also by their involvement with the school's sports teams. Their senior year, Benjamin was a catcher on Boys Varsity Baseball (BVB) while Elizabeth was the team manager. Throughout the season, Elizabeth's presence was prominent, as she sat in the dugout during each game, he said. "We were very physically close—she was only five feet away from me the entire game."

Although the Litmans lost contact in college, they eventually met up a decade later while raising money for Jiavaras. Sparks flew between them at the fundraisers, and when Elizabeth took the initiative to drop off homemade cookies at Benjamin's office another few years later for his 33rd birthday, their relationship took hold. Just a week later, the pair went out to dinner. They started dating immediately and got married in 2016 at Wave Hill, right next door to the school. Now parents of Jack '35 and Aviva '38, Benjamin credits the school for bringing him and Elizabeth together, he said. "The work we did raising funds in support of [Jiavaras] reminded us of how special we were to each other."

While sports brought some couples together, others found connection through shared passions in clubs. Nicole Pasternak '08 and Merin Pasternak '09, who were a couple in high school, grew close while working side by side on The Record, Nicole as Managing Editor and Merin as Photo Editor. Despite being in different grades, they bonded over late nights in the Student Publications Center (StuPub), Nicole said. "Late nights, big decisions, and shared deadlines – it turns out The Record was basically marriage prep," she said.

The school was more than just the place where the Pasternaks first met—it was the foundation for their shared future. Their Horace Mann experience was so rewarding that they enrolled their two eldest sons, Brennen '38 and Emery '40, in the Nursery Division (ND). Since their youngest daughter, Rowen, is only a year old, the Pasternaks look forward to the day she'll be able to join her brothers at the school. "While we didn't know it at the time, HM gave us the foundation for our family. We'll always be grateful for that," Merin said.

While many couples were united by their shared time at the school, some first met as alumni, such as Jennifer Fleiss '01 and Andrew Fleiss '96. In 2006, the Fleisses met at a school alumni event in Manhattan and immediately hit it off, Jennifer said. That night, they exchanged numbers and later met up in the



NICOLE '00 & GREG '97 HERSCH

Courtesy of the Hersch Family

Hamptons to play tennis together, as their parents had houses near one another, she said. The Fleisses soon started dating, and three years later, in 2009, they tied the knot.

Although the Fleisses didn't know each other as students, growing up in similar environments gave the

alumni couples, Assistant Director of Alumni Relations Maggie Matthews created a feature on the @hmalumni Instagram page, spotlighting former members of our community who found love through the school. In celebration of Valentine's Day, Matthews kicked off the series with

"Late nights, big decisions, and shared deadlines – it turns out The Record was basically marriage prep."

- Nicole Pasternak '08

two a common foundation, which was one reason they clicked so well, Jennifer said. Their shared experience going to the same school bolstered their relationship, providing them with a common language and mutual understanding. "It helped that we shared values around education, around how we wanted to raise our kids [Daniella '30 and Julia '35], [and] even around things like sports," she said.

Ultimately, to honor all these

a handful of couples and invited the community to share their own stories and photos. The initiative quickly gained momentum, drawing in submissions and enthusiastic responses from graduates across all generations, Parento said. "Everyone was so excited about being a part of this project," she said. "They know that [the school] is more than just where they got their education—it's where their story began."



ELIZABETH & BENJAMIN LITMAN '98

Courtesy of the Litman Family

The benefits of continuing to study the classics



Zoe Manges

Studying the classics is thought of as useful for the SAT, but it has numerous additional benefits. A knowledge of Latin or Greek can help you understand the origins of unknown words and ace your vocabulary section; if you don't know what an antecedent is, but you know the words "ante" (before) and "cado, cadere, cecidi, and cadum" (to fall), you're well on your way to knowing that an antecedent is, literally, "the thing that falls before." For those who have finished or are yet to start their test-taking process, a word's origin can give you dubiously fun facts to share with others—did you know that the words euphoria, suffering, and ferret come from the same proto-Indo-European root word, meaning "to carry?"

Most people who hope to gain this knowledge will opt instead to read Barron's SAT

prep textbooks, which contains lists of Latin prefixes and suffixes to memorize; memorizing flashcards is certainly more time efficient than learning Latin. So too is memorizing a list of common literary devices so that, when the time comes that your teacher asks what in medias res means, you don't need any knowledge of fifth declension nouns to answer.

And so the study of the classics has been phased out: the Tufts Perseus Digital Library, a resource for learning about classical texts, shows that between 1960 and 1976, secondary school enrollment rate in Latin decreased from around 7.5% to around 1-1.5% and has remained like that since then. It is easy to attribute this decrease in enrollment to a decrease in the practical value of a classical education; when easy shortcuts confer the same knowledge that students formerly gained from a lengthy study of classical languages and societies, there seems to be no good reason to study the classics. I would argue, though, that the importance of studying the classics comes not from a surface-level understanding of basic facts about ancient civilizations, but rather from the humanization of people living in the past, which directly combats harmful narratives about ancient times that exist to this day.

There are plenty of reasons why classical studies are losing popularity in the world of academia. A common criticism of classical studies is that it is Eurocentric, valuing Western thought and values over all others. Why should we consider the texts of Homer, written around the 8th century BCE, as the beginning of written language and storytelling when the Rigveda, a collection of Vedic Sanskrit hymns written in modern-day India, dates back to somewhere between the 16th and 11th centuries BCE; when the Epic of Gilgamesh, an epic poem from Mesopotamia, modern day Iraq, was

written around the 22nd century BCE?

The emphasis placed on the ancient Mediterranean as the pinnacle of civilization, a Golden Age to which people living in the modern day ought always aspire, can only be harmful. As Rachel Poser writes for the New York Times in her profile of Black classics professor Dan-el Padilla Peralta, entitled "He Wants to Save Classics From Whiteness. Can the Field Survive?", the glorification of ancient Greece and Rome is often embraced by far-right white supremacists and reactionaries who hope to return to an imagined civilization not plagued by the "problems" of the modern-day. The uncritical reverence for the classics on which academics in the field have relied to lend credibility to their work has potentially deleterious effects outside the academic sphere.

If studying the classics holds no inherent moral value (and, indeed, the belief that they do might lead to harmful outcomes), and if its practical value can easily be gained through shortcuts and Google Translate, why does the field exist at all? What is the value in studying civilizations from over 2,000 years ago, whose relevance to the modern day seems as though it could be summed up in a sidebar of a textbook explaining how the architecture of Washington D.C. evokes that of ancient Greece?

The answer lies in the fact that the study of the classics is relevant beyond its influence on our grammar, vocabulary, and architecture: it reminds us that even as the people who lived millennia ago conceived of ideas and works of literature that have shaped our society today, they were ordinary people too. I fell in love with the classics in seventh grade, reading Anne Carson's translation of Aeschylus' play Agamemnon with the girl who became my best friend. In this play, the protagonist, Clytemnestra, awaits the return of her husband,

Agamemnon, from the Trojan War, which lasted ten years; when he arrives home, she plans to kill him. First, though, she greets him with a lengthy and flattering speech in front of their home. He replies, "Wife, your speech was as long as my absence."

While the line is perhaps not the most punchy, the humor of the joke still rings clearly today. My friend and I, sitting on beanbag chairs in our middle school library, laughed a little to ourselves, as the audiences watching this play performed in an amphitheater over two thousand years ago might have done. In that moment, we were connected to people who lived before us – not the idealized creators of the backbone of Western society, not the influential figures reduced to names and dates in textbooks, but ordinary people who liked to laugh with each other, as we did.

The study of the classics need not elevate ancient civilization to an otherworldly status, positioning the ancients as perfect people who lived in a golden age of knowledge and art, but rather humanizes the people who occupied the ancient world. While people who seek to decenter classical studies will often cite the idolization of the ancients as a reason for why the field is problematic, the reality is that closer study of the past leads not to idealization, but understanding. The study of ancient times reveals that many of the problems that plague us in the modern day – exploitation of workers, women, and the environment – existed many millennia ago, but also that the small moments of humor and fun that we find in our everyday lives existed then, too. Only by studying the classics can we remove it from the pedestal it occupies in our modern culture and see ourselves reflected in it, for better or for worse.

The case for a public speaking curriculum



Ethan Furman

speech than what meets the eye. It's a lifelong skill that requires time and repetition to perfect. High school is the perfect opportunity to strive for this perfection, and the school should place a greater emphasis on incorporating public speaking into its curriculum.

Firstly, speech has clear applications to many aspects of our future lives beyond school. In all occupations, you will have to use your voice in some way, as presentations, meetings, friendly interactions, and interviews are all deeply ingrained in the modern workplace. For future lawyers or politicians, public speaking and argumentation are key to professional success. If you want to be a doctor, you need to be able to communicate clearly with patients, patients' families, and students under your tutelage; how confident would you be climbing onto an operating table for a surgeon who stumbles over your diagnosis? Even if you want to become an academic in the humanities, don't think that you can become a professor or defend your doctoral thesis without first learning how to speak in a public setting.

Nevertheless, strong public speaking skills aren't just critical for work environments. These skills play crucial roles in our social lives as well. Most people naturally gravitate toward those who are confident,

charismatic, and make strong first impressions and the best way to accomplish these three qualities at once is by being an assertive and poised speaker. Through repeated speeches and presentations, you can master the art of improvisation, as you'll learn how to think on your feet and not appear overwhelmed by new information.

Additionally, public speaking plays an important role at school. In class, strong speakers can succinctly voice their opinions and constructively respond to others' perspectives; when everyone in the class effectively participates in discussions, students are exposed to a wider variety of well-spoken viewpoints, further strengthening the learning process. (It's also helpful for boosting your participation grade). So, obviously, public speaking is important. Now what?

There simply isn't enough time for practicing public speaking skills in a school setting between homework, tests, essays, quizzes, and papers. While there are projects and presentations in classes, these assessments are only a small part of the curriculum. And yes, there are speech and debate clubs like Model United Nations, Public Forum Debate, and Parliamentary Debate for those who are genuinely passionate about public speaking, but

many students don't take advantage of these opportunities, likely assuming that they're too challenging or simply not worth their time.

However, rhetoric and oratory are too critical for our present and future success for us to procrastinate learning about them in college or the workplace. High school is the perfect place to instill self-confidence and effective argumentation through public speaking because it's a time when our brains and habits are still forming.

Therefore, the school should encourage public speaking in all facets of our education. It's essential to learn technical information about rhetorical devices to use in speeches: logos, appealing to logic; pathos, appealing to emotion; ethos, appealing to authority; and more. However, students should learn more than just strategies about content, as one's speaking style is just as important as the actual words coming out of their mouth. Thus, students need to learn how to effectively use hand gestures, tone variation, movement, and more stylistic choices to get their point across.

This learning could be accomplished through lectures, but it's easier and more effective to learn by seeing and by doing. The school should implement a mandatory quarter of public speaking lessons

at the start of all ninth grade History classes; this quarter would be dedicated to history through the lens of public speaking. In this class, teachers should teach important techniques for content and delivery, and show examples of famous oratory; students can test their knowledge through impromptu presentations with little preparation.

This need not be judged or graded; in fact, students are often afraid to even try public speaking because they don't want to be judged. Although this learning would take place in a History class, the skills learned can be applied to other subjects, from English to Science to Math. Some may argue that this emphasis on public speaking would take away from opportunities to learn other skills, such as writing. However, there is already ample room in our curriculum for writing; in comparison, we have a critical lack of space to practice public speech.

Every class can do a better job of incorporating public speaking in its curriculum, from speaking sections of essays aloud in History class to explaining data in Science class. It's difficult to start learning any new skill, and public speaking is no different. However, with time and effort, public speaking can be turned from a weakness into an immense strength.

Martin Luther King, Jr., John F. Kennedy, and Barack Obama have several shared qualities, the most striking being their powerful oratorical skills. Through extensive practice, these figures developed and harnessed their public speaking skills to wage arguments, win debates, and leave an indelible mark on our society. That said, you might wonder why learning to deliver some grand oration is relevant to you. Would it not be more useful to learn how to write well-structured essays, conduct innovative scientific experiments, or solve complicated equations? However, there's much more to

Conquering classics: Spring musical *Chicago* takes center stage

LUIZA MEDEIROS & OLIVIA CHOI
Staff Writers

"I was lucky enough to be included in such an amazing production where we have brought the atmosphere of

excited them, and inspired them to stage it, he said. "Producing our version of *Chicago* was something that we have been eager to do for a while," Nye said. "When we found out that there was a teen version, [Theater and Dance Department Chair Benjamin] Posner, who is the director, was inter-

music from the play I'm interested in," he said. "I also enjoy listening to music from the 1920s for inspiration, and I think about how I can incorporate both into my performance."

Furthermore, Arteaga has grown her passion for theater throughout her high school career and eagerly

and choreographer Angela Patmon. Napoletano's design program has taught students to approach design with a keen eye while Patmon's choreography has played a crucial role in making the production so impressive, Posner said.

A member of props and design, Tabassum Saleque (10) has spent several hours over the past few weeks crafting pieces for the show, she said. "I am most excited for the audience's reaction because a lot of time and effort has been put into *Chicago*, and the actual set itself is spectacular," she said. Drawing inspiration from the play's 1920s setting, Saleque hand-made old-fashioned props, most notably vintage cameras, she said. "We can't just buy vintage cameras because the actors are going to destroy them," she said, "So we have to get creative and make stuff out of whatever we can find."

A crucial step in the production, adapting Fosse's choreography has been a challenge, stage manager Lauren Schessel (12) said. "Working on translating Bob Fosse's more provocative dance moves to a highschool level has been a big focus of our team, and I am hopeful that the final product will match the high expectations that so many of the actors had going into rehearsals," Schessel said.

Given *Chicago*'s well-known and complex choreography, some of the struggles that the actors have had to overcome are the intricate dance patterns present throughout the musi-

that the audience will remember and that will resonate with them."

To ensure that the Cell Block Tango, along with other parts of the show have a clear story line and are easy to follow, Arteaga has been delving into the emotional layers of her role as Matron Mama Morton. Apart from mastering the choreography, she has worked to understand her character's mindset and motivations. "When I am making acting decisions, I have been imagining how my family members would act in certain scenarios and I have been using that for reference," she said.

Having worked tirelessly to ensure the set's detail and creativity, Schessel is especially looking forward to performance day, she said. "It's very exciting to see the rehearsals come to an end," she said. "When we start to get the lighting involved and make sure that all the set pieces are done, it starts to feel very real." This year's set is the largest that HMTTC has ever had, and throughout the staging process, the company has been very focused on living up to the acclaimed reputation of *Chicago*.

Additionally, Posner also enjoys moments in which the ensemble sees the musical start to come together. "I enjoy seeing everyone involved in the musical see the reveal of the set for the first time, or the lights hit the stage for the first time, or the first time you see people in costumes, these moments make the whole musical an unforgettable experience," he said.



PERFORMERS PRACTICE FOR FINAL PRODUCTION

Photo by Elizabeth Lam

the original production of *Chicago* to Horace Mann," said Ariana Arteaga (10), who plays Matron Mama Morton in the production.

Every year, the Horace Mann Theater Company (HMTTC) puts on a spring musical, in which students have the opportunity to enhance or discover their passion for theater. When casting for the production, students across the Upper Division (UD) are invited for auditions, where they showcase their singing, acting, and dancing capabilities in hopes of receiving a role.

This year, HMTTC will perform the

ested in producing it."

HMTTC's most recent productions include *Marian* [or the True Tale of Robin Hood] in December 2024 and *The Prom* in April 2024. However, it has been years since they have taken on a cult-classic like *Chicago*, Posner said. Posner was initially interested in staging *Chicago* due to its revered status as a theatrical classic. "*Chicago* was originally produced in 1975, it's not from the golden age, but it's still an iconic, classic Broadway show, and it draws on even older styles of performance, like vaudeville and burlesque," he said.

decided to try out when she heard the school was performing *Chicago*. "Musical theater has been something that I have always been interested in and something that I would want to pursue in my future career, and I am so grateful that I can enhance my abilities and my passion in school," she said. "This year's choice of the musical, *Chicago*, has introduced me to a theater environment where dancing and the set pieces are all just as important as the actual acting aspect of it."

Over the months spent rehearsing and planning, the HMTTC has enjoyed working under Posner's leadership, Arteaga said. "Mr. Posner helps ensure that everything runs smoothly, regardless if it is during rehearsals, prepping for the show day, or making sure that all the staff members are on the same page," she said. "He is a crucial part of the musical."

Aside from Arteaga's recognition of Posner's role, other HMTTC members voiced their appreciation for one another as well. Benson believes that all of the HMTTC staff members play critical roles in helping to create an environment where the actors feel comfortable and have the guidance to take chances outside of their comfort zones, he said. "This show is extremely avant-garde, so I feel like it's good to have a comfortable environment."

Posner also recognized the many behind-the-scenes contributors who brought *Chicago* to life, assisting with everything from set design to choreography. "The actors have been exceptionally strong vocally, thanks to the work that they've done with [Music Director] Alex Birchwale," he said. Other key contributors to this developing production have included theatrical technical director Anthony Napoletano and dance teacher

renowned musical, *Chicago*, originally directed by Bob Fosse. "The musical is set in Prohibition era Chicago and features many characters, such as Roxie Hart and Velma Kelly, who are inspired by real-life performers, criminals, and people from the 1920s," Arteaga said. The play will be staged in Alfred Gross Theater at 4:00pm, 7:00pm, and 2:00pm on May 1st, 2nd, and 3rd, allowing members of the HM community to attend at their convenience.

While deciding on the musical for this year, Manager of the Department of Theater and Dance Studies Jonathan Nye and the rest of the HMTTC faculty discovered the teen-rendition of *Chicago*. This find immediately

-Ariana Arteaga (10)

"This year's choice of the musical, Chicago, has introduced me to a theater environment where dancing and the set pieces are all just as important as the actual acting aspect of it."



SETTING THE STAGE FOR CHICAGO

Photo by Elizabeth Lam

cal, Arteaga said. "The most difficult part of the play for me has been the razzle-dazzle dance, which is right before a major court scene," she said.

Considering the difficulty of the dances, Nye is excited to see everyone's hard work pay off, he said. He is particularly looking forward to watching the iconic Cell Block Tango, a fantastic show stopper with a lot of storytelling. "I feel as though the Cell Block Tango dance will be a number

These moments are particularly important to Posner as he prioritizes making sure that everybody is enjoying their role in the play. Posner believes the strength of the show comes from its ensemble, and his fantastic group of performers. "Everybody's working hard to make sure that the story is being told, but we also have fun during the process, because, you know, if we're not having fun, why bother?"

100 and counting: Ava Parento (11) reaches new heights on GVL

ARIA PLATT & AANYA THOMAS
Staff and Contributing Writers

"Ava is an amazing teammate; she's always positive and always puts in 100% effort...she's like the glue that holds the team together," Girls' Varsity Lacrosse (GVL) player Sydney Kurtz (11) said. Last Thursday, in a match against Trinity, attacker Ava Parento (11) became the first member of the GVL team to score 100 goals in her career thus far.

Parento has always aspired to reach 100 career goals, but it was only halfway through last year's season that it became a tangible possibility for her. She came into this season with 72 career goals, motivated to reach the 100th, she said. "I had a feeling I could do it, and it just seemed to become more and more possible," she said.

Not only because of her lacrosse skills, but also because of her sportsmanship and work ethic, Parento is held in high regard by her fellow team members. "Ava is the definition of a team player," GVL Captain Ellie Romero (12) said. "She never takes any selfish goals, and she is an amazing teammate on and off the field."

Although Parento has always had a knack for lacrosse, her skill is as much the result of outside work and dedication as raw talent. She first started playing in elementary school, and later trained on an outside team through middle school, she said. "I saw some girls who I played with outside of school reaching their 100th goal when I was in middle school and thought it was so cool," Parento said.

Making preparations for the accomplishment well before last Thursday's game, the milestone was one that Parento's teammates had been eagerly awaiting. "We had a sweat-

shirt for her and a candy bouquet," Kurtz said. "We took a bunch of celebratory pictures too, it was really fun."

When the team began celebrating in the middle of the game, their opponents were so confused, Parento said. "When the goal was scored, the coaches called a timeout and everyone started celebrating."

Although they ended up losing the game, the team still made it their priority to celebrate Parento's milestone together, Romero said. "I baked brownies with little 100s and made her a sign that said 'It's your 100th goal, Ava! Smile!'" she said.

Parento's 100th career goal was a wonderful and well-deserved moment for her, and her team ensured that the event was a memorable one. "I have definitely become more confident with Lacrosse the past few seasons, and I am so grateful to have such a supportive team," Parento said.



SCORING SMILE Courtesy of Barry Mason

Game, set, match: Lions look to extend undefeated season

TESSA SIEGEL
Staff Writer

"Our expectations coming into the season were definitely pretty high. We thought we were one of the better teams in the league, and I definitely think we've lived up to that," Gray Gordon (11) said. With an undefeated 7-0 record during the regular season and a 10-0 record since pre-season, Boys Varsity Tennis (BVT) has its sights set on winning the Ivy League Championships for the first time since 2021.

BVT started the season off strong by beating the number eight ranked team in the country, the Sidwell Friends School, during a preseason game in Florida. The match has been the season's highlight for many BVT

members, Gordon said. "Seven of us got to play doubles and singles, which was unique because we don't do that in league [games]."

The preseason trip also brought players closer together, Lukas Frangenberg (12) said. "The team has incredible chemistry—we all get along, share regular team dinners, and have built a really tight-knit bond on and off the court."

In addition to the team's close-knit dynamic, support from the coaches has helped boost players' performance during games, Gordon said. "We're out there supporting each other and bringing the energy which definitely allows us to play better," he said. "Our coaches, especially Kenny, definitely make us laugh."

This year's BVT captains Aden Nathoo (11) and Gordon have also

continued to motivate players as the season progresses, Will Pietrzak (9) said. "The captains do a great job of keeping everyone energetic and trying to win for the team," he said. "Even if some people aren't playing, the captains keep them engaged and rooting for their team."

New additions to BVT have also had a major impact in driving the team's impressive growth since last season, BVT Head Coach Patric Westoo said. Frangenberg, the first singles player who rejoined the team after missing last year to focus on recruitment, and Pietrzak, in second doubles, have been crucial to the team's success, Westoo said. "Lukas is playing, which makes a big difference, so we have a legit, strong number one," he said. "Plus, Will, a freshman that came up, has contributed a lot to the overall strength of the doubles lineup."

For Pietrzak, being able to start on the team has been an unexpected but welcome opportunity, he said. "I didn't expect it to go this well as a freshman — I thought I would be on the bench, so it's just great to be with teammates," he said. Pietrzak's goals for the season are to work as hard as possible to prove himself, grow closer to the team, and constantly cheer on his teammates.

After putting together an impressive start, BVT has set its sights high for the rest of the season. "Our goal is to win the Ivies and have an undefeated session," Frangenberg said. "In order to do that, we have to play our positions well, take practice seriously, and have lots of energy."

Recently, BVT has elevated the intensity and quality of their practices leading up to matches. Two days



LUKAS FRANGENBERG (12) STRIKES Courtesy of Barry Mason

before games, they split into singles and doubles players and do drills, including serving and point play. "The day before a match, we do a bunch of practice matches so that we're prepared with a lot of point play for the matches," Gordon said.

A key moment of the season so far was a competitive match on April 17 against Dwight School, which BVT won 3-2, upsetting the second highest ranked school in the city. "That was definitely a big win for us against a tough team," Gordon said. "We were nervous going in, and we had a pretty dominant showing against them."

The Dwight game came down to the very last match, with all team members watching on from the sidelines, Westoo said. "They were all cheering for each other and so excited when we won, it was really great to see."

BVT played a pivotal match on Monday against an undefeated Collegiate team, bringing home a 4-1

win. Rabee Singh (12) scored a major victory to close it out even after the series winner had been decided. BVT faces Fieldston on Friday, and are also looking forward to facing the best teams in the Tristate area this weekend at the San Marco tournament on Saturday and Sunday in Long Island — a tournament that has been cancelled due to weather for the previous two years.

Westoo attributes the team's success to a competitive, but supportive mentality across all team members, he said. "Having some better players on the team has made practice more professional," Westoo said. "Everyone is pushing themselves a bit more and have different attitudes."

As the wins string together, the dream of an undefeated season becomes ever more tangible, Westoo said. "With each successful match, we've built confidence, leadership, and grown as a team — and we're only continuing to grow."



ALEX SLATKY (10) PREPARES TO SWING Courtesy of Barry Mason