

The Student Voice

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Supreme Court Ruling Alters College Application Landscape

Zachary Klein '24
editor-in-chief

On June 29, 2023, the United States Supreme Court voted 6-3 and 6-2 in favor of banning affirmative action in cases brought against both Harvard and the University of North Carolina, directly impacting every high school student in the United States.

These decisions came after both colleges were sued by the Students for Fair Admissions, a legal advocacy group founded by conservative activists, due to what they claimed were unfair admissions practices.

According to CNN, the ruling was "a landmark decision overturning long-standing precedent that has benefited Black and Latino students in higher education."

The opinion for the majority was written by Chief Justice John Roberts, who was appointed by George W. Bush. "Both programs lack sufficiently focused and measurable objectives warranting the use of race, unavoidably employ race in a negative manner, involve racial stereotyping, and lack meaningful end points. We have never permitted admissions programs to work in that way, and we will not do so today," Roberts wrote.

For the minority, Justice Sonia Sotomayor, who was appointed by Barack Obama, wrote a scathing dissent. "At its core, today's decision exacerbates segregation and diminishes the inclusivity of our Nation's institutions in service of superficial neutrality that promotes indifference to inequality and ignores the reality of race," Sotomayor wrote.

The term "affirmative action" was coined in 1961 when then-President John F. Kennedy signed Executive Order 10925 which made government employers "take affirmative action to ensure that applicants are employed, and that employees are treated during employment, without regard to their race, creed, color or national origin."

In practice, affirmative action programs meant that "colleges were considering race (as one factor out of many) in the admissions process," Director of College Counseling Anthony Shin said. "(Affirmative action) gets a lot of attention, but it has always been only one piece of the bigger picture. To put it really simply, race-conscious admissions helps colleges maintain racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic diversity on their campuses."

Shin believes that affirmative action has been used with a goal "to reflect the diversity of the population in the high schools (and the real world) the students come from. But this never became the dominating factor," Shin said.

Even though affirmative action affects students' chances of admission to colleges, Shin said that "colleges always care more about the student's academic component to determine whether they feel the student will be able to be successful in their school."

Now that the Supreme Court has banned colleges from using race-based

admissions, how is it going to affect Buckley students?

Head of the Upper School Sherrie Singer sees a potential systematic harm arising from the Supreme Court's affirmative action ruling. "The pendulum (of college admissions) can swing in the other direction to where (students of color) would be discriminated

against in the admissions process. We know that things like standardized tests have built-in biases for students of color," Singer said.

While the ban on affirmative action might have a large impact on students of color, some forget about the impact that it might also have on women. "I think it'll have a

really huge impact on young women,

because it's been well documented that affirmative action really benefited, specifically young white women getting into colleges,"

Assistant Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Minjung Pai said.

Affirmative action might also change the common admissions practices that go on at many universities. "What may happen is how other factors such as legacy or athletic recruitment can be scrutinized and banned from admissions practices," Shin said.

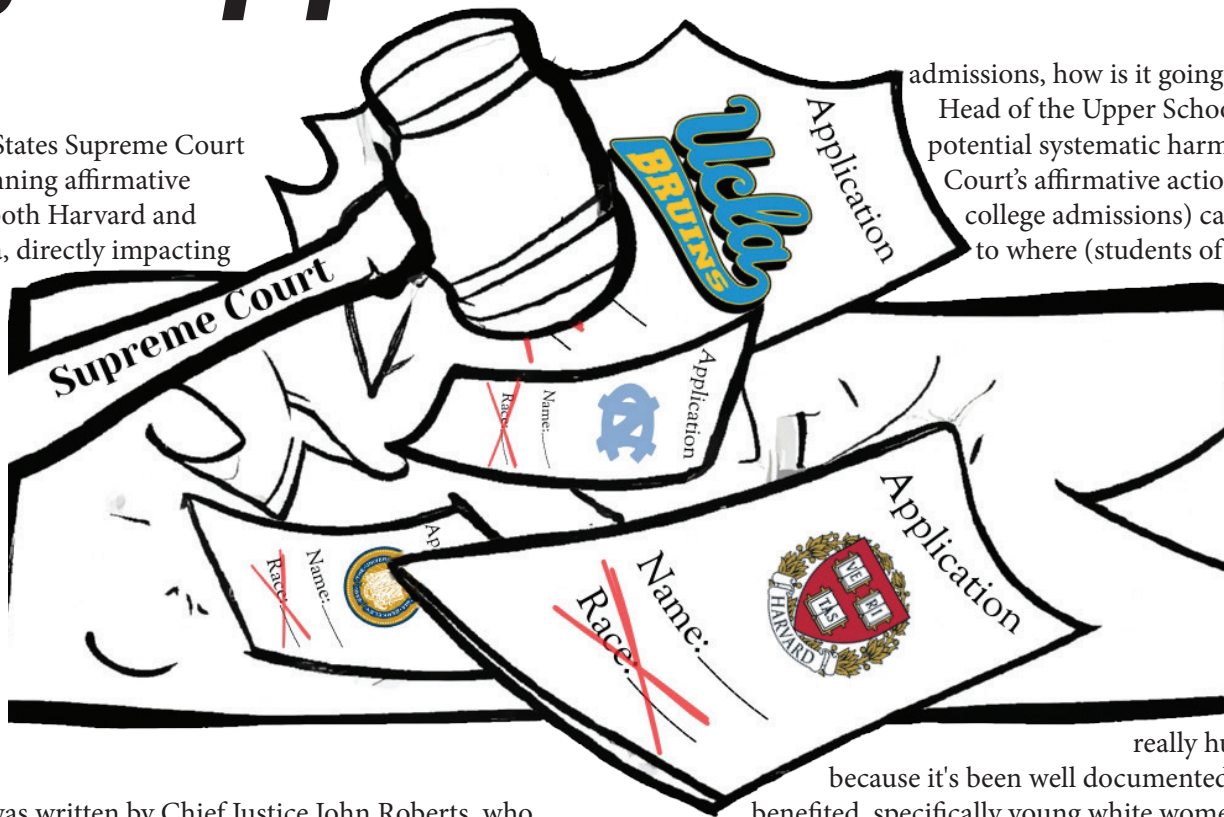
The banning of affirmative action is not unfamiliar to schools in California. "The UC system here in California banned race-conscious admissions over 20 years ago, and they are still constantly reevaluating and updating their admissions practices so they can maintain a diverse student body," Shin said.

Pai believes that even though affirmative action was helpful, "it was very much a Band-Aid on a huge or systemic structural issue," Pai said.

Within the Buckley community, the administration is working to address issues of diversity on campus in terms of its own classroom practices and admissions processes. "We just had some professional development which was focused on anti-bias education and making sure that in our classroom spaces and our campus we are addressing and speaking up and out against biases that we see and hear," Singer said.

Singer said Buckley is always working to create a more inclusive community, "We are looking at our admissions practices and making sure that we have representation from all kinds of students. We know that there is a gender imbalance at Buckley, so we are looking at ways to encourage more young women to apply," Singer said.

Although affirmative action will affect all students applying to colleges, Buckley's college counselors "don't think this will directly change anything in our approach in guiding students, but we will see," Shin said. "But we will still be fully committed to helping all our students through this process and make sure that their full story will be seen and heard by the colleges."



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Buckley Students Rocket Towards MIT Inventeam Finals

Ava Goldsmith '25
opinion editor

Seniors Paul Holschneider and Addison Fisher are extremely passionate about aerospace and this year have formed a team of seniors and juniors and are in the running for a grant from MIT.

Anat Fernandes, chair of the science department, noticed the ambitious students and encouraged them to apply for the grant. "Paul and Addison were both students in my Applied Science course last school year. They did phenomenal work, and they're very science research-oriented, really focused on engineering aspects of research," Fernandes said.

MIT Inventeams is a program that sponsors groups of high school students to pursue independent research. Since research is usually expensive, MIT Inventeams provides funding for students to pursue research on a collegiate academic level.

"I was aware that MIT held a student competition called MIT Inventeams, and something that I suggested to (Fisher and Holschneider) during their Applied Science class is to put together a team of students that they could lead, that could correlate to the research they had worked on, but now on a broader spectrum that's also connected to the MIT faculty and the MIT program," said Fernandes.

Holschneider and Fisher have been researching for a long time. "We are continuing research that we have completed over the past year and a half on the aerodynamics of wheel

fairings, which are coverings to make aircraft wheels more efficient," Holschneider said. "With climate change becoming an increasingly pressing issue, it is imperative that we maximize the efficiency of these aircraft through the

leaders Holschneider and Fisher, and the team members: seniors Katie Ha, Maxwell Wainwright, Leainn Sabbagh, Maxim Sarkar, Zachary Klein, and Pearly Wong, and juniors Tucker Collins, Ethan Lassner, and Lauren Park.

is to use simulations to continue their research. "We're researching aircraft wheel fairings and plan to move forward using a combination of technologies ranging from the simulation interface called computational fluid dynam-

know much about aerospace, so taking part in different aspects of science and incorporating them into new things is interesting."

For some, it's their first time conducting research. "I am very excited. This is my first research project, and I think our project is cool, and if we do get through the next stage of applications, that would be great," Ha said. "I am excited to be a part of the team and be able to have this opportunity. Especially since this will be my first official research project," Park said.

The team researched over the summer. "Students worked on the application the entire summer, and they are the ones that completely put everything together. It was just minor details that I had to get some documents from the school to add in, and then collectively, we sat down together and submitted it through the online portal and turned in the application," Fernandes said.

After submitting the application's first parts, they were selected as a final top 10 team in the competition. "We are currently Finalists for MIT InvenTeams and are in the final round of the application process. We hope to receive the grant in the next couple of weeks or so," Holschneider said.

"MIT gets about 300 applicants yearly; only about 10 become finalists, and we were part of that 10," Fernandes said.



Photos Courtesy of Anat Fernandes

research we are doing, leading towards sustainable aviation."

To discover more about their research on airplane fairings, both students put together a team to help them tackle more concepts and apply for the competition. "Through the opportunity with MIT, we hope to continue our research with the newly expanded group," Holschneider said. "We recently added nine members to our research team. Currently, we plan on continuing our research throughout the school year."

The group consists of the team mentor Fernandes, team

The team is researching a highly underexplored scientific topic. "We're doing a research paper on airplane wheel fairings because there is not a lot of research out there about the drag and different aspects of airplane wheel fairings for small aircrafts, ones that don't have landing gear that can retract and come out," Wainwright said. "We're testing all of them in a wind tunnel, getting a lot of data, and plotting it to show what different aspects of wheel fairings actually affect the drag and flying of planes."

Their plan for the future

ics to the more hands-on wind tunnel," Sarkar said.

Many members are incredibly excited to participate in the competition and learn about a new scientific subject. "This was a really amazing opportunity. I'm appreciative of everything I learned about aerodynamics and this new field of science," Sabbagh said.

Wainwright agreed. "It's fascinating to work with a group of people working with MIT, which is such a prestigious school. It's a really cool topic that we're researching, and I think it will hopefully go far," Wainwright said. "I don't

The Test Optional Tango

Julia Waldman '24
profiles editor

Ever since the COVID-19 pandemic, many colleges and universities around the world have implemented a test-optional policy giving students a choice to either include their ACT or SAT scores in their application or to proceed without submitting them for consideration. Each year, this policy drives many questions that students may have about how this policy is beneficial or if they would be at a disadvantage if they choose to not submit scores.

For some seniors, the college major they are applying for may depend more on their scores. "I'd like to go into engineering which is very reliant on math ability so it made sense for me to keep working on my ACT scores and I ended up getting a score that I liked so I figured why not submit it," senior Addison Fisher said.

Likewise, senior Maxim Sarkar has also chosen to submit his test scores. "I don't think not sending my scores would negatively impact me, but since I performed well I believe it'll strengthen my application," said Sarkar. On the other hand, senior Robyn Vasquez wants colleges to view her application holistically, without a test score. "I wanted to focus on my extracurriculars more and what I write in my essay," said Vasquez.



Photo Courtesy of Alexander Ramin '25

A common misconception with the test-optional policy is that students will be at a disadvantage if they choose not to submit test scores. "[Colleges] will not hold anything against a student who does not submit test scores over one who does, but they will scrutinize the other parts of the application more closely. Without the testing piece, the concentration of everything else needs to be strong," Director of College Counseling Anthony Shin said.

Some colleges have already committed to being test-optional due to positive results from their policy. "Most colleges have been thrilled with their test-optional admissions policies. Many have already committed to becoming test optional moving forward and others are now starting to look at the data of the classes of students who have enrolled as test optional and assessing their success in college," said Shin.

According to colleges, the test-optional students do just as well as the ones with scores. "In conversations with colleges, they are enrolling a more diverse group of students without the prohibitive test scores," Shin said.

Many students believe that a number from a test score does not make up who a student is. "I think that testing is really not a good way to determine someone's ability in school. There's so much stress that's around testing," said Fisher. Vasquez agreed. "I am just personally not a really good test taker and I think [the test-optional policy] is great because I don't think a score really defines someone's intelligence."

Shin believes that it is the overall profile of the student that matters most. "Testing is just a piece of the puzzle," said Shin.

Circle of Change: Transforming Education

Ava Goldsmith '25

opinions editor

It's the first day of school and you walk into advisory; however instead of the usual row-tiered desks, they are in a circle, leaving a wide gap in the middle. Since the start of the school year, many faculty have begun incorporating a more structured approach to communication in the classroom through these circles.

Middle School Assistant Dean of Student Life Clarissa Shinn has organized a training for all Middle and Upper School faculty from a company called The Circle Way. "Last year was the first year in my role, and one of my responsibilities was our advisory program. I had heard from colleagues who had studied or worked with the organization and learned a little about this circle practice," Shinn said. "I thought our advisory program needed something a bit more substantial, to give us some structure, and so I thought it would be great for us to try and see how it goes."

The circle training teaches faculty and staff how to facilitate conversations in a circle structure, meaning participants gather together in a circle and speak.

"We're learning about why it's a beneficial structure to use for conversation, how it equalizes everybody in the circle, and that it increases engagement. We're also learning how to facilitate conversations that invite everyone to share their personal experiences and their stories," Shinn said.

Many teachers believe this training is a precious tool in connecting with their students and colleagues.

Dance teacher Laura Bamford has hugely enjoyed the process of the training. "This specific Circleway training we are doing as a faculty is giving me new perspectives on how to incorporate new approaches to the practice into my classes. I am enjoying the training and having the chance to do this work with my colleagues because usually I only get to do it with my students," Bamford said. "Teachers are used to leading and facilitating activities, but when we have the chance to be the students or to be on the learning side of an activity, it reminds us how our students often feel in our classes."

Like Bamford, English teacher Kerry Roche-Hisel found the training to be a way to connect with others. "The circle training was an exercise where we got into three small groups across the whole staff (about 20-25). We started off with very light activities, funny activities, and bonding activities," Roche-Hisel said.

Multiple faculty members agree that the training has assisted the growth of the Buckley community; whether it is facilitating collaboration, communication, or trust, Circleways has profoundly impacted

the school.

Mindful Movement teacher Judith Sekler is one teacher who believes the training has impacted the school. "In circles, we're able to hear other people, understand their experience, even if it isn't our own. Even if we don't agree all the time, we as a community can have a means to communicate," Sekler said.

Roche-Hisel agrees on the impactfulness of the training. "I found, in general, the act of sitting in a circle is very powerful. Not being able to hide from each other, letting yourself out there, and on the same level as everybody else."

"Circles are powerful – there is no beginning, there is no end, everyone has a place; if you enter the middle, you are surrounded and supported by the rest of the group. It's very symbolic, but also very healing. There is an energy in a circle that flows through everyone in it – and it becomes a safe space for people to speak and exist and just be who they are, and feel known and embraced," Bamford said.

Humanities teacher Andrew McElwee believes that circle training has given faculty valuable tools. "Teachers can use (the training) as a tool to build community and relationships with the students and interrelationships with the students themselves, but also being able to implement it when having discussions perhaps more related to the content you're using in your classes," McElwee said.

Sekler thinks similarly. "I use circles all the time. I love circles. I think that they're powerful tools in education. I don't think that they need to be done ev-

learning opportunities. I think (the training) is a way to sort of introduce the faculty at large at Buckley into practices that build community, trust, and engagement in our classes," McElwee said.

Bamford and Roche-Hisel have also found themselves using similar tactics in past classes. "Circle work is an essential and organic part of arts education and something we arts educators incorporate in our teaching without hesitation. In dance class, for example, we gather in circles regularly for discussions, to share feelings and experiences, to explore course ideas, and to check in with each other," Bamford said.

"I've done another version of this before called restorative practices. They're basically the same, and I've always found it helpful. I found that Circleways is a little bit deeper where people are telling stories, whereas the restorative circles were more like expressing an emotion," Roche-Hisel said.

Shinn believes the circle-structured communication approach is a great way to engage students in discussions. "I think it's easier as a student to slip through the cracks or sort of fade into the background when you're just sitting in rows, but if everyone's sitting in a circle, everyone gets the chance to speak if you want to," Shinn said.

McElwee has found that this program also has a beneficial effect on students. "I know some students have voiced that discussion feels intimidating or can feel weird, so I think Circleway was good in introducing the faculty some ways to make that process feel a little bit more accessible to all students," McElwee said.

Upper School Assistant Dean of Student Life Matthew Cano agrees with McElwee. "Every culture has what a circle means, some view it as the symbol of life, death, rebirth. Some cultures use it as a way to share a story. So, it's giving voice to people who don't always feel like they have a voice. It's an opportunity to be heard."

Usually, when a teacher is at the front of a room sitting in front of a group of students, it indicates a hierarchy. "Circle seating naturally lends itself to discussion, and there is no one seat that is 'dignified' above the others," science teacher Nicholas Carillo said.

Shinn believes this program allows everyone to have a voice "In a circle, everyone has something important to share, and so I think the message that structure sends is really valuable," Shinn said. "You don't have to speak if you don't want to speak, but everyone is given that opportunity, and that doesn't always happen in other structures."



Image Courtesy of Ava Goldsmith '25

ery single day. But I think having some consistency by participating at least once a week in a circle really ingrains that practice in our community," she said. Roche-Hisel agrees that the training assists with constructing a community. "It humanizes people, making them vulnerable, allowing for better learning," Roche-Hisel.

McElwee has already utilized the circular structure in his classes. "I'm a huge fan of Harkness Discussions and Socratic Seminars. So, I believe in student collaboration and discussion for building

Seniors Struggle to Secure Signature Shirts

Eli Barkon '24

staff reporter

With every new school year comes a new senior class who gets many privileges and experiences that students look forward to every year. These privileges include the ability to wear the exclusive black polo and plaid skirt. But unfortunately, many seniors couldn't get their hands on these commodities for the start of the year.

All Buckley students get their uniforms from the Dennis Uniform Company, including seniors. This year Dennis lacked inventory to what they called in an email "seasonal demand," despite students from numerous schools ordering uniforms at this time every year.

One of the seniors who was unable to obtain a black polo was Charlie Vitner. "I ordered the shirts at the start of summer, and they came three weeks into the year," said Vitner. "Not only that, but the shirts were extremely oversized."



Photo Courtesy of Alexander Ramin '25

Much of Vitner's disappointment did not come from the sizing of the shirt, but from not having one

to start the year. "It was upsetting because it took away from the senior experience of having a black polo at the start of the year," said Vitner. "It's something that you look forward to, and I didn't get to do it at first."

Max Reitman was another senior who started the year off without a black polo. Much like Vitner, Reitman's uniforms were on backorder for months. "I was worried I wouldn't have a uniform in time," said Reitman. "I thought I might be the only senior without a black uniform."

While Reitman's uniforms did not arrive by the start of the school year, it was not because he ordered them too late. "I ordered them at the end of last year and got them a week after school started," said Reitman. "My uniforms arrived three months after I ordered them."

Black polos were not the only uniform item on backorder. The senior plaid skirts did not arrive in time for the school year for multiple seniors, including Annabelle Shamam.

"Since I'm a senior, I needed to get new uniforms, specifically skirts," said Shamam. "I ordered them mid-July, and they arrived two weeks into school."

Because the skirts arrived late, Shamam was forced to wear her gray skirts from previous years and not the plaid version. "I wish I had a plaid skirt the entire school year," said Shamam. "Sometimes I felt like I stood out."

BSC Leaps into the School Year with Vision & Determination

JoshMahboubi'25
staff reporter

Four people a school year are elected to the Buckley Student Council Executive Board, a prestigious position that comes with a lot of responsibility. For this school year, seniors Reyane Riordan and Sienna Simantob lead the way as president and vice president with juniors Ava Goldsmith and Mali Lord serving as treasurer and secretary.

Although the school year has just begun, the executive board has been busy with many proposals in progress, activities, and even dances being planned. Both Simantob and Riordan are helping with the planning of the senior dance along with collaborating with other schools on events and trying to push proposals through.

Among the proposals being discussed is one to bring back the vending machines that were removed from Buckley's campus in 2021, due to COVID.

"I know that many people wanted to bring back vending machines, so I created the vending machine proposal. I am the committee leader and am heading it," said Goldsmith. "Which means I am in charge of making sure everyone is writing their part, getting the correct research in, and collecting actual responses from the student body."

"The vending machine proposal is one that is being discussed, and something we are working really hard to bring back," said Lord.

Unfortunately, the proposal to add sweatpants to the dress code that many students wanted didn't go through. That doesn't mean BSC is finished attempting to get this passed.

"As hard as we worked on it, it's something that isn't going to fit right now," said Riordan. "But I think when we are told 'no,' that doesn't mean a permanent 'no.' I think there is still room for compromise and revision of the proposal."

"We are revising (the proposal) and hope to come to a compromise soon," said Simantob.

As the year progresses, BSC will continue to have responsibilities in the student council but the workload in classes will also increase, so it's important that they schedule their time correctly. One idea Riordan had was making BSC a class so it would open up more time for more activities.

"I think treating BSC like it is a class or even more than a class is important for me because, when I see

assignments and things to do by the hour so whatever free time I have goes to planning BSC events," said Simantob.

Although BSC has many proposals and events in progress, there are primary goals the board aims to accomplish by the end of the school year. "An important goal for this year for me is to create a town hall where students are open to join in on BSC meetings to ask questions and ask for proposals to be made," said Simantob.

Riordan believes that listening to the students is one of the most important goals.

"One of the most important goals for me is, BSC being informed about what the student body wants and us being able to live up to everybody's expectations" said Riordan.

"A main goal for me throughout the year is to start incorporating and listening to more student voices, and keeping those in mind when planning proposals," said Lord.

The board made it clear what a successful year would look like in the student council.

"A successful year is not only us getting everything done, but also having everybody within student council feel like they're playing a vital role," said Riordan. "Everybody in student council participating is important because that results in fun events."

"Our theme for this year's BSC is accountability, so a successful year would be to ensure as much as possible that we follow through with our promises and make this the best school year possible," said Lord.

"A successful year in student council looks like communicating with each other in a way that is respectful, but also allows us, as a whole, to progress and move forward," said Goldsmith. "Building a sense of camaraderie is something that I feel needs to be done to build a proper foundation of the student council. This would further enable us to achieve our goals and succeed."



Photo Courtesy of Buckley Instagram

something BSC related on my planner, I can't just neglect it and be like, 'oh, I'll do that at some point,'" said Riordan.

The executive board has found different strategies to keep track of their homework along with their BSC duties.

"I have learned over the years to create a manageable schedule that gives me time to work on my individual tasks whether it's doing homework, completing BSC tasks, or hanging out with friends," said Goldsmith. "I'm at a stage where I am able to balance multiple tasks, which is definitely a good thing."

"I made a Google calendar for myself with all my

New Club Guidelines: Passion Meets Purpose

TylerShuter'24
staff reporter

Clubs have returned this year to Buckley, but with a twist: Each club now must complete its own community service that correlates to the interests of the club.

Sophomore Lucy Biddle is the co-founder of the new dance club at Buckley. Biddle mentioned that she wanted to create a club that would raise school spirit. "We are a dance team that I created with my friend (sophomore) Jordan Zinman as a way to increase school spirit. We will perform dances at Big Red Days, certain games, and other events," Biddle said. "We both love dance and noticed a big lack in school spirit, so we decided to use dance to help bring more spirit to Buckley."

Biddle is excited about the new community service aspect of the club and



Photo Courtesy of Yearbook Staff

has found a way to incorporate her interests into the service. "For service, we want to volunteer with Ballet for All Kids and Everybody Dance LA. Ballet for All Kids is a non-profit that teaches ballet to kids who are differently abled, and Everybody Dance LA is a company that teaches dance to kids living in low-income neighborhoods who aren't able to afford dance classes," Biddle said. "I had researched different places we could volunteer at that combine service and dance, and that's how I found Everybody Dance LA. We found out about Ballet for All

Kids through Mrs. Abadou."

Senior Will McClinton started the Cheese Around the World Club. McClinton's main goal for the club is to find Buckley's favorite cheese. "Every two weeks, the club will bring in two different cheeses and put them head-to-head in a March Madness-style bracket," McClinton said. "On top of that, we will also be discussing the cultural and economic impact of the cheese on the region where it's produced. By the end of the year, we will have a definitive best cheese."

In terms of community service, McClinton plans to tie it to food. "We plan to partner with food banks and food drives around Los Angeles," McClinton said. Junior Jonathan Karp is one of the presidents of the new Buckley Surf Club. Karp plans to cover a variety of important topics when it comes to the sport. "We have bi-monthly meetings in which we will meet in Mr. Lynch's room and discuss surf days," Karp said. "We cover ocean-related safety and surfing topics such as different surf locations, surfboard types, and WSL events."

Karp wants to do multiple types of service to help not only the beaches but also help children learn safe surfing techniques. "We plan to do beach clean-ups and possibly teach underprivileged people how to surf," Karp said. "We were thinking about what community service we could do at the beach before or after surfing, leading us to beach clean-ups."

Sophomore Emma Davis started the Rescue Dog Club this year. The club focuses on the importance of rescuing dogs and finding a safe shelter for them. Davis wants the focus to be the community service aspect of the club. "To incorporate community service into the club, we will do some activities like making toys and blankets for shelter dogs, and then I will donate them to a shelter in need," Davis said. "Something else we plan on doing this year is setting up a donation drive on campus consisting of food, toys, leashes, etc. and donating them."

Davis used her first-hand experience with rescue dogs to help for her idea for the club. "I got the idea for this type of community service from prior experience of working with dogs in shelters, and something I noticed is that many of these animal institutions tend to lack comfort, food, and other necessities for the animals living there," Davis said. "A typical meeting will consist of getting a look at different shelters that we plan to partner and work with, and what we will do for those rescues."

If you are interested in joining any of these clubs, check the club calendar to see when these clubs are meeting.

Fireside Chat with Ms. Scott

JosetteEstes'24
a&e editor

After three months of summer, Buckley students have found themselves back at school, welcomed by new and old faces, as well as the countless opportunities in the year ahead. As everyone settles into their new routines on campus, Head of School Alona Scott anticipates great things going forward.

Scott is especially eager to see students take on the school's themes for the year. "Our first theme, which comes from the Portrait of the Graduate, is all about asking a better question, which means pausing to think about what you're really looking to learn and how you say it," said Scott. "I'm also a huge proponent and believer in curiosity, and if we invite students to be the ones asking the questions, research shows that you will all learn a lot more and be more excited about the learning that you are doing."

In terms of exhibiting curious behavior, Scott notes that the community is off to a great start. "I see teachers happy because they're seeing students engage more and all of us thinking about who we are, how we want to be known among each other, and how we can get to know people that we live and work and study with, and value them for who they are," said Scott.

The other theme for this year, also emphasizing the importance of recognizing the value of our thoughts and actions, is centered around belonging and connection. "We want to help each student think 'who am I' because when we get

prompted by questions we don't normally think about, we learn something about ourselves we aren't aware of," said Scott. "Part of it is also helping students get to know their classmates and things that are normally under the surface."

Scott is especially hopeful that the Buckley campus will be a spirited and optimistic place. "Ultimately, school should be this place that feels bubbly and popcorny, where you feel this vibrant energy," said Scott.

Scott also emphasizes the importance of circulating kindness around the community. "The most important thing is figuring out how we have empathy for other people. We don't ever know what somebody else's story is, what we could learn from them, what we can honor in them, or where we could extend a hand," said Scott.

The freshmen, especially, have been practicing empathy and kindness in living up to Head of Upper School Sherrie Singer's challenge to make sure that nobody eats alone. "It's been fun the last couple of days to walk around campus and see the beginnings of new things happening and seeing students and teachers happy," said Scott. "Part of this is seeing the freshmen's embrace of Dr. Singer's (lunch) challenge."

On the subject of lunch, she also answered one of the most widely-debated questions on campus: is a hot dog a sandwich? "A hot dog is its own being," said Scott.

This is not Scott's only insightful food opinion. "I love cottage cheese and tomatoes with

chives. It's delicious."

During summer vacation, Scott not only enjoyed eating tomatoes and cottage cheese, she also took in a few movies and TV series with her family. "Most recently we watched *Band of Brothers*, which is about a band of soldiers caring for one another, and the Beanie Baby movie on Apple TV," said Scott. "I also tried to watch *Barbie* like 17 times, but it just never worked out."

However Buckley students spent their summer, Scott's hope is that students have come back excited, especially now that after Covid-19 "we're back to the habit of traditions and rituals because those are the things we all look forward to and look back on with warm feelings," said Scott.



Photo courtesy of Josette Estes'24

Beyond the Books: Humanities Head Downtown

TylerShuter'24
staff reporter

On Friday, September 15, the Los Angeles History, and American Literature classes took a field trip to downtown Los Angeles where they visited City Hall, the Disney Concert Hall, the Bradbury Building, and other important landmarks.

Senior Adonia Anene is a part of the Los Angeles History class and liked walking around and learning about Bidy Mason, who was born enslaved then became a prominent figure in early Los Angeles. "I enjoyed the field trip. I don't think I've been on an actual field trip since like sixth grade, so it was great to have this opportunity. I've driven past most of these places but I've never really been inside most of the buildings we went to," Anene said. Anene further noted that "the most interesting thing I learned on the trip was about Bidy Mason and her story. We got to see her memorial, which was this long wall that you could walk along and read her story."

Anene believes this kind of trip will have a positive impact on the subjects students study. "I think in the future if we learn more about any of the places we visited, it will help to have actually seen these places in order to be able to fully understand what we're talking about," Anene said.

Senior Ryan Sampras also really enjoyed learning about the history of different buildings in downtown Los Angeles. "The field trip definitely sparked a new interest and appreciation for the history of a city that seems

so modern all the time," Sampras said. "I learned a lot about Los Angeles' history and the steps it took in order to build such a big city. Also I learned the significance of certain buildings, like City Hall and Disney Hall."

Senior Lily Tricarico thought the field trip was a really good way to bond with her class. "I thought the field trip was super fun. It was a good way to bond with the other students in my class outside of the classroom, while also providing an engaging way



Photo courtesy of Tyler Shuter'24

of learning history in real life," Tricarico said. "I have been to a few places, like the downtown market and the Disney Concert hall, however, there were a few places I hadn't been to before. It was interesting to see places I had never heard of before, but were very important parts of LA history."

Tricarico thought the field trip will really benefit her in class this year. "This field trip helped me with the class because sometimes it's hard to focus in class when it's not directly in front of you," Tricarico said. "However,

getting a real life view of historical sites helped me to get a better grasp on the site while also engaging me in person, rather than an image."

Junior Luke Gratiot went on the field trip as a part of the American Literature class. Gratiot really enjoyed visiting the different LA landmarks, including Grand Central Market. "I enjoyed the field trip primarily due to the Grand Central Market always being a fun place to go with its good food and what not," Gratiot said.

Mitch Kohn teaches the American Literature class, and was one of the teachers that created the field trip. Kohn wanted students

to have the opportunity to experience downtown Los Angeles before learning about it. "The major essays in the class are personal journey papers using the guidelines of creative nonfiction. I wanted my students to have the experience of walking around downtown rather than just reading about it," Kohn said. "I had worked with Mike Sonksen (Mike the Poet) before, and he's great at mixing the history of Los Angeles with his own compelling poetry. And it's great to get out of the classroom and into the city!"

Kohn really wanted students to be in a new place that they had never visited before, so it could help them throughout the year. "I hope they got to see a part of the city they hadn't seen before. And I hope they got a sense of the kind of journey I'm going to be asking them to write about. Maybe they'll even look forward to taking their own trips around Los Angeles and writing about them," Kohn said.

Michael Ochs teaches the Los Angeles history class that also went on the field trip. Ochs has a similar philosophy to Kohn about wanting students to experience Los Angeles. "The idea was that we would go and get to see a lot of the places we are going to learn about this year," Ochs said. "I think a lot of students have not been downtown before our trip, or seen a lot of places that we visited, and it was important for students to see what they are learning about."

Ochs thought the field wtrip was very successful. "I felt the trip was great. Before our trip, I did not know a lot about our tour guide Mike. I was really impressed with his knowledge of public art. It was something I hadn't really thought about, but I never really noticed before he pointed it out," Ochs said. "I also thought he chose some really good spots, like the Bradbury Building, Angel's Flight, and of course City Hall. These are all some iconic landmarks that are important to see."

Humanities Split into Two

Iris Kim '26
DEIJ editor

After three years of being united as the humanities department, English and social sciences were divided back into their own academic departments at the beginning of this school year. Middle and Upper School English teacher and chair of the English department Jill Dash and Middle School social science teacher and chair of the social science department Ryan Bache stepped into new positions to lead the departments.

So far, the two chairs have had a smooth transition taking on their roles.

“The transition of becoming the chair of just social science has been relatively easy, as the department is much smaller than it was a year ago as a united humanities (department),” said Bache.

“When I worked at my old school, I was assistant department chair of English, so the idea of being chair of an English department is not very new to me,” Dash said.

Both chairs are satisfied with the split because they can fully focus on their respective departments.

“Having two separate departments works because it's that way across most of the campus in terms of academic disciplines,” Bache said. He further added that “to have English teachers in an English department and social science teachers in the social science department makes a lot of sense.”

“Now that we are two separate departments, I can focus English meetings on things that are specific to English as a discipline and Mr. Bache can focus his meetings on things that are specific to social sciences,” Dash said.

Bache and Dash appreciate the benefits of an interdisciplinary department, because they can still collaborate when necessary.

“Honestly, I love the idea of an interdisciplinary department,” said Dash. “We will still collaborate when it makes sense to. It is not like we're going to stop talking to each other as departments.”

“We can still integrate with each other and look for interdisciplinary opportunities, but we don't need to force a union through a department structure,” Bache said.

The chairs' ultimate goals are to shape their scope and sequence and grow their departments as they enhance the curriculum.

“Within the (English) department, we need to work on something called the scope and sequence,” Dash said. “We worked on it last year as a double

department, but now we are going to focus on (the subject of) English. Getting all of it laid out is my number one goal for the school year.”

“Our goal this year is to take what is a relatively young department and see it grow,” said Bache. “There is still a lot of room to grow with each other and strengthen our curriculum as we build our scope and sequence.”

In terms of connecting from chair to student, Bache and Dash envision ways students can be successful in learning the subjects of their respective departments.

Bache believes that when “students use their critical thinking skills and look at history from multiple lenses to practice historical thinking,” it is a sign they are learning history effectively.

“We should always ask questions and not take

porting students and their academic growth in a wide variety of ways.

“For Middle and Upper School students, we would like to see them grow through exploration, collaboration, communication, and critical thinking. For the Upper School students, we want to help them find their passions and understand how to be an overall better student by building skills such as research and writing,” Bache said. “Ultimately, we offer a wide array of social science electives for upperclassmen and I'd like to see them take those classes voluntarily, because they're interested in the subject matter.”

“I want to plan lessons that are relevant to students, listen to what they need, and show them avenues to texts that are easier or more accessible for them,” Dash said, “I want to take into account what they want to read and see if there are changes we should make in the curriculum.”

As leaders, Dash and Bache want to maintain a healthy environment for faculty and support the professional growth of them.

“I trust everyone in the department as professionals since we are all experts in our field. As a leader, I feel that I am in some ways a conduit for information and tasks that need to be done,” Dash said. “I take into account what the faculty wants to do in meetings and listen to their questions and concerns.”

“I am an inclusive leader who likes to see people's talents being fostered and have a sense of autonomy. I like to consider myself a servant leader who leads by example through actions, not just by words,” Bache said. “We will support the professional growth of our faculty by giving them opportunities to collaborate and share their strengths. As we practice a sort of synchronicity, we can see our own strengths influence those of others, and become stronger together.”

In relation to their positions, Dash and Bache have great appreciation and passion for their academic subjects.

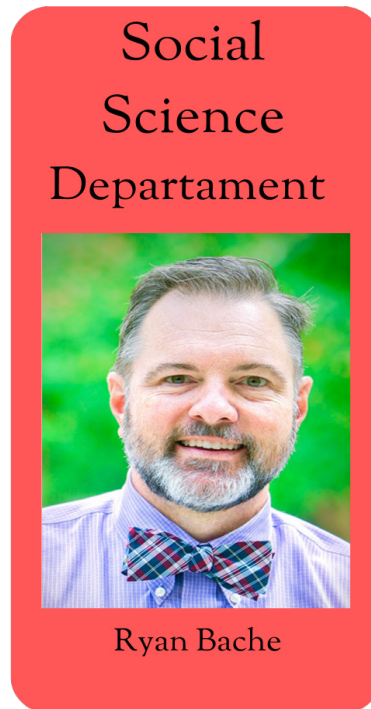
“I love reading books and writing – I always have. I want to help students understand that they are readers and writers even if they don't feel that way,” Dash said. “That comes through in the way I lead the department and the conversations I have with other department members.”

“There's an old saying, ‘if you don't learn from history, you're doomed to repeat it,’ and we see history repeat itself,” Bache said, “All of our students as empathetic global citizens need to be aware of their past, how it relates to the present, and how it might influence the future. I love social sciences for the fact that we learn from the past so that we are better informed for today.”



English Department

Jill Dash



Social Science Department

Ryan Bache

Photo courtesy of Buckley Communications

what has been written about the past on face value, but analyze it,” said Bache. “This year, the teachers have been tasked by Ms. Scott to encourage all of our students to ask a better question to really tap into the creative thinking of our Portrait of a Graduate and have students question more so now than ever.”

Dash hopes for students to learn English effectively and connect with it. “I want students to leave English class at the end of the year feeling like they learned something about a text. The future of the English department is not five paragraph essays all the time,” Dash said. “We are all coming up with more unique and authentic ways for students to express themselves when it comes to the books that they are reading.”

In addition, Bache and Dash will continue sup-

Seniors Look into the Future

Julia Waldman '24
profiles editor

With the school year now in full swing, there are many things the class of 2024 is looking forward to. Whether it's prom, Spirit Week, or getting into their dream colleges, this monumental year is known to be full of adrenaline and excitement as the seniors gear up for their last year both in high school and at Buckley.

One of the most notable parts of senior year is when all the students start to bond more as a class, knowing that their months left on campus together are limited. Senior Sophia Parsi has already experienced the effects of this. “I feel like I have seen a difference since Outdoor Ed, our grade has been very held together like a family.”

Additionally, seniors are beginning to reflect on the fact that soon enough they will not be able to see their peers daily. “We know that this time next year we will have to book flights to see each other,” Parsi said.

Senior year is notorious for having an extremely busy first semester as students balance advanced classes, college applications, and extracurricular commitments. “I'm definitely looking forward to the second semester the most because I am excited for college applications and the stress of the beginning of the year to be behind us,” said Student Body President and senior Reyanne Riordan.

At the beginning of the first semester, the senior class is granted their senior privileges which are special, earned opportunities. At this time, the seniors have been given off-campus lunch twice per-week and free dress on the second and fourth Fridays of each month. “Right now my favorite thing is our senior privileges. I love having my car on campus and not having to catch a bus or get dropped off. Being able to go off campus during the day is great too,” said senior

Sawyer Stanford-Hill.

Looking ahead to the spring, the annual senior prom will take place which is planned and coordinated by the senior grade representatives. “I hope that it will be a fun and classic experience. We have a great location planned and I think that the seniors will really like it,” said Stanford-Hill. There is one surprise highlight that the reps can hint at. “Hopefully we don't get too sandy!” Stanford-Hill said.

Many seniors are also excited to see all their hard work finally pay off as they get admitted to college. “I'm most looking forward to when all of my friends get into a college that they want to go to and then we can just have a good time together,” said senior Luke Goldberg.

Although it is a bittersweet date to think about the Class of 2024 commencement will be taking place on Gilley Field on May 31. Graduation is a time for the senior class to celebrate each other's successes while also closing out their Buckley journey's in a meaningful way.

“I'm looking forward to graduation because I'm excited to see where I end up in the future, start a new chapter in my life, and meet new people,” said senior Khadija Emma Neumann.



Photo courtesy of George Russo

Graphic Novels in the Curriculum: To Read and See?

IrisKim'26
DEIJ editor

Through a combination of text and illustrations, graphic novels create an entertaining way for visual learners to read, but it also requires students to use both their literary and artistic knowledge when it comes to reading them for school.

The class of 2026 has read the most graphic novels compared to the other grades in Upper School. During the summer of 2023, they read *V for Vendetta*; while during their ninth-grade school year, they read *Persepolis*. English teacher Maria O'Driscoll included *V for Vendetta* in the tenth-grade course this year. "The traditional novel, novella, poetry, etcetera has its place, but I really felt that there needed to be more inclusion of graphic novels," O'Driscoll said. "It was a summer read. I don't quite think that I would include it in the yearly curriculum, but the skill that you're developing is to look at the image and words and then synthesize the ideas."

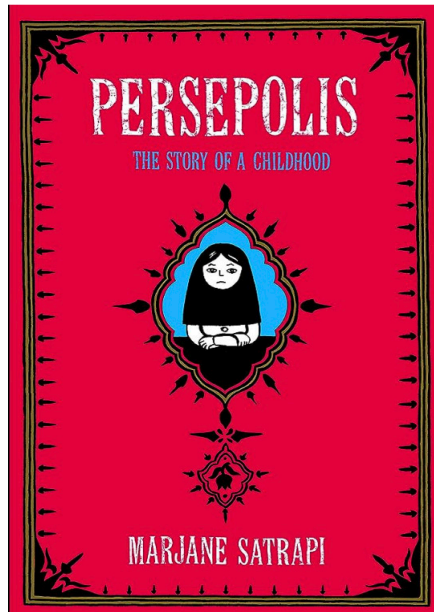
English and social science teacher Andrew McElwee thinks the reason why teachers assign students to read graphic novels is because "as teachers, we want to expose students to a breadth of artistic media pertaining to text and literature. Often by having two different formats that students can engage with often expose the inherent strengths and weaknesses in either form," said McElwee. "Perhaps in looking at a graphic novel prior to looking at a more traditional form of literature, you can see what is lost and gained by visual representation or lack of visual representation."

English teacher and chair of the department Jill Dash believes that students can effectively read graphic novels because they "are like a midway point between text and TV, which students consume a lot of. I've noticed in my experience that students are already very skilled at reading graphic

novels because of how much visual media they consume already," said Dash.

Essentially this means that many students can enjoy reading graphic novels and learn better from them since they have strong visual components.

Sophomore Leelu Lambros resonates with Dash's beliefs. "I love graphic novels. The reason is because I get to see both artwork and writing together. It really just puts two and two together and makes everything make more sense to me," said Lambros. "I've always been a visual learner, so I think that graphic novels have always helped me retain and learn information better."



Another pro about graphic novels is that they keep the reader's attention span.

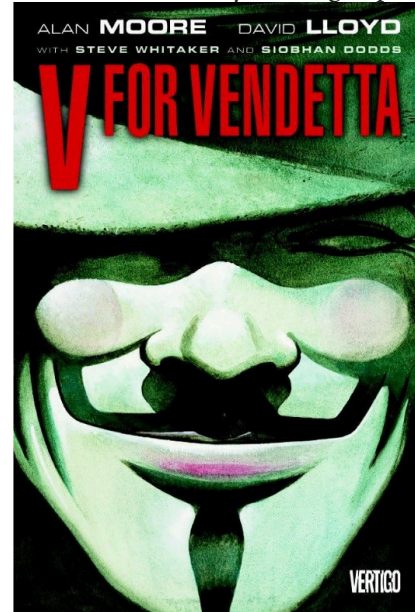
Sophomore Noah Davis finds graphic novels engaging to read. "Sometimes I get lost in the book and start to only read with my eyes and not my brain. But with the pictures, it helps me understand what's going on."

Because of the clarity of the graphic novels, students find them easier to read and interpret too. Sophomore London Buford, who reads graphic novels outside of school, finds them more engaging than novels with just text because he "can actually see what the characters are doing and under-

stand their emotions more clearly. It also helps me see the author's point of view."

Though many students can read graphic novels more productively, there are still a couple of complications that they come with. Specifically, the illustrations help and hinder the student's ability to interpret the story.

"Although I do recognize the importance of reading and learning them and their significant meanings, I didn't really love any of the graphic novels we read in our English curriculum," said sophomore Emma Haronian, "It was a bit harder to analyze and grasp the ac-



tual meaning of the book because a lot of the people in the graphic novel look the same, so it was harder to differentiate the characters and really understand what's going on."

Sophomore Madison Poage feels that regular novels with text are ideal for visualizing book scenes. "I like that you can see what's going on (in graphic novels), but I also don't like how it can be kind of hard when you have to pick up on situations or context clues in the images, which can be harder than in text," said Poage. "It's hard to imagine the characters by yourself, because the author has already imagined it and drawn it out for you."

When students primarily read books with only text in the past, they became more used to imagining book scenarios out of words on their own.

"I sometimes dislike how things can be interpreted for you through the images or text. Some things are already illustrated and written out for you, so you can't really imagine anything or create a symbolism for them," said Lambros.

O'Driscoll understood this and said, "It's the explicit nature of a graphic novel which you have to be careful about. Often, when a student reads a conventional novel, their imaginations create images for them. With a graphic novel, it dictates those images. In one way, I think a part of the brain shuts down for that."

Davis would not like it if the English department made students read graphic novels as much as novels with text because "with the writing assignments, it's harder. It's not as clear of a purpose or a theme behind the book."

Dash understands that students have to take an extra step when reading graphic novels, which is taking the illustrations into account and learning them – something that some students are not used to doing.

"The challenge is switching back and forth between interpreting images and interpreting text, which is a lot of work and can be daunting (for students)," said Dash. "It's a matter of slowing down, checking in for understanding, and maybe even just trying to look at it in a different way."

In the end, it comes down to students honing their visual analysis skills by consistently reading graphic novels more often. Though it is not entirely conventional to read graphic novels in the Upper School English curriculum, variety is not an unfamiliar term in the world of English.

Ninth-Graders Make the Leap to Upper School

IzzyUwins'24
opinion editor

"I feel like you hear a lot about high school on TV shows like Disney Channel, and there's just so much excitement around it because it seems like a big change," said ninth-grader Caroline Henderson when discussing starting high school.

However, many students feel that their Upper School experiences have been extremely successful so far and that it wasn't a big jump. "I think that it's been a pretty smooth transition and just really good so far as I feel that the workload isn't too much yet, but actually the same," said ninth-grader Mia Cardillo.

"In general, it doesn't feel like a big change from eighth grade. I think that we were well prepared and the teachers were doing a good job with easing us into the workload," said Henderson.

Ninth-grader Andrew Ormond has also had a successful transition to Upper School. "It's been very fun as I'm learning a lot, and it's a very different environment and in my opinion, in a good way," said Ormond.

Ormond expressed how Upper School has been a more positive environment as students mature. "I didn't like Middle School because everyone was changing very fast. A lot of people became mean or cocky and everyone was trying to find out who they were," said Ormond.

The ninth-graders feel that their successful start is attributed to the preparation from teachers in eighth grade. "I felt really prepared from Middle School, especially from Ms. DeLilly's class because there was a lot of work in that class, so I'm not as shocked with the workload and therefore I can handle it," said Henderson.

Angela Lee, a new student, was helped by skills learned at her middle school as well "At my old school, they really helped us manage our time effectively, which benefited me for high school," said Lee.

Nevertheless, initially, students were quite nervous about the transition. "I was really scared before starting because I didn't know what it was like as a lot of my friends left," said Ormond. "So I didn't know whether I'd still have friends anymore, but I was also worried that my grades would drop because of the harder classes."

Lee expressed that it was hard being a new kid at a new school but felt that Outdoor Ed successfully bonded her to the rest of the class. "I was nervous of course but before the first day of school there was Outdoor Ed, so I feel like since I was rooming with a lot of new people, I got closer with them," said Lee.

Ninth-grade lifers agree and believe every year Outdoor Ed has successfully bonded them to the new kids. "[Outdoor Ed] is always a great way to get to know our new students and our whole grade," said

Cardillo. "I think we do a lot of good team bonding with the new students which was really beneficial."

Students feel that there are only a couple of differences between Upper School and Middle School. "Free periods is something that we didn't have in Middle School, and it is a big privilege that I love because you can get so much homework done," said Henderson. "Also, I think it's really exciting that we get to participate in clubs, which was something that we didn't get to be a part of in Middle School."

Lee appreciates the freedom given in Upper School but understands that it comes with more pressure. "I think a positive difference in high school is that teachers just kind of let you be and let you find your own ways of managing your time," said Lee. "But, it's definitely a lot more pressure than Middle School because it's like from here on to four years, all of these grades matter, so I think I would definitely try harder."



Photo courtesy of George Russo

Surfing through a Sea of Pollution

LiubovKrugliakova '24
news editor

A few times during the day, we scroll through the news posts on our Instagram feeds. And yet, it never fails to surprise us with environmental disasters, some of which we could have never expected a few years ago. Excess debris in the ocean, rising sea levels, and even sea otters attacking surfers have become strangely routine.

While surfing on the coasts of Southern California, Buckley students have also witnessed some of these environmental changes, ranging from ocean toxification to ocean pollution.

"There is undoubtedly an increase in plastic waste on beaches, and once in a while, I will see pieces of plastic floating around in the surf," said junior Davin Donay, who has been surfing on and off for around three years. He noted that during the recent hurricane, "surfing wasn't safe as the rain brought a lot of hazardous runoff into the ocean that was bad for skin."

"It is truly devastating to see," said junior Jonathan Karp. "Ever since I started surfing, I have not only noticed a massive amount of trash on beaches but also in the water itself."

Senior Reyanne Riordan had a similar experience to Karp and Donay. "I swim in Santa Monica very often, and I always end up having to duck from plastic bags or bottles in the waves," said Riordan.

"The problem really stems from consumerism, littering, and everyone's constant use of disposable plastics," Karp further noted that "the waves are much more powerful than they used to be due to the rising sea level and increased occurrence of hurricanes."

While the pollution of the ocean doesn't affect the size or shape of the waves, Karp highlighted that "it has made some past surf locations unsur-

single-use plastic in the water near me. Not only did that gross me out, but it also is always concerning to see so much litter—both on the sand and in the water," said Riordan. "I assumed that there was more trash because the storm had blown it around. But even so, it's disappointing to see discarded plastic in places it doesn't belong."

Donay agreed with Riordan. "It is a huge mood killer to see plastic or trash floating around when surfing," said Donay. He added that "pollution has motivated the local surf community, like Buckley's Surf Club, to try and clean up our beaches as much as possible."

Karp additionally noted that "the increase in plastic waste and chemical runoff being dumped into the water has brought a lot of attention to the quality of our oceans among the surf communities."

While Donay and Karp often spend time by the Pacific Ocean, both think it's important for everyone to recognize these environmental effects.

"I think on a personal level, we just need to make sure we are disposing of our waste properly and not buying a lot of synthetic chemicals," said Karp.



photo courtesy of Liubov Krugliakova '25

fable due to plastic in the water or unhealthy water qualities."

Although not an avid surfer, Riordan went surfing about five or six days after a recent tropical storm in Los Angeles. "I noticed notably more

Sam Seizes the Day in Alaska

SophiaFotter '25
staff reporter



photo courtesy of Sam Day '24
changing their interests in hiking.

Day went on this trip through an organization called NOLS (National Outdoor Leadership School) that brought 12 kids from around the world to go on this month-long trip. "I didn't really know what to expect since they could be from anywhere," Day said, "but I got really lucky and by the end of the trip we all got along, learned to rely on each other, and still keep in touch to this day."

One of Day's biggest challenges on this trip was the first long hike while wear-

ing his 60-pound backpack. "I hiked uphill for five miles, and it made me feel like I was going to collapse," said Day. "Even though it was brutal and made me think 'why am I on this trip,' I pushed through and seeing the view on the top of the mountain was totally worth it."

While the trip included hiking, Day also went sea kayaking from beach to beach in Alaska as well. On the kayaks, Day and the other kids who went on the trip kept fishing lines in hope of catching fish out in the ocean.

"My favorite memory from the trip was catching fresh Alaskan salmon one night when we found a random old fishing rod on a beach we were camping on," said Day. "We cooked three salmon over the campfire, and it brought up the excitement of everyone because we got to eat something we caught that was different from what we had been eating every single day."

Day originally wanted to go on this trip to challenge himself, and now he has achieved that. "I would definitely do it again to continue working on my skills and expose myself to different kinds of places," Day said.

Day never thought he would ever go to Alaska because it is such an extreme place, but over the month he was there, Day said, "I learned a lot about myself and being more at peace with change."

ReyanneRiordan '24
green editor

Hurricane Hilary Creates Climate Concerns

The end of summer usually marks the beginning of fire season in Southern California, but this year we were bracing for a hurricane instead.

While Hurricane Hilary (category 4) did not hit land in Los Angeles, the city was still preparing for the unexpected. In the end, Angelenos were met with a tropical storm, which consisted of heavy rain and winds, causing mudslides, floods, and rock slides.

Although the hurricane did not cause excessive destruction in the LA area, the storm was still very uncharacteristic of the weather in this area. "I believe the last major tropical storm that hit California was in 1939. California rarely is impacted by these major storms because of our climate," junior Casey Novack, a member of Buckley's Climate Action Team (CAT), said.

The climate in Los Angeles is a desert, not usually susceptible to this kind of natural disaster or tropical

weather. "When I first heard about the hurricane, I was definitely worried. I wasn't sure how strong it would be, but I was concerned since this is something we've never seen (to this severity) before," Climate Action Team member senior Addison Fisher said.

So what does this mean going forward? "A storm this intense may be as a result of rising sea temperatures in the Pacific. Tropical storms are both more intense and more common when ocean temperatures rise, due to an increased amount of water vapor in the air. If ocean temperatures keep warming, we can expect more tropical storms making landfall in California," Fisher said.

In terms of Buckley, what can students do to help? English teacher Eric Peterson, who taught a climate awareness class called "How To Save The Planet," commented on his ideal approach to the problem.



photo courtesy of Reyanne Riordan '24

"I think we need to take classes about climate change ... we need to get involved politically if we want to stop it from becoming a total disaster," Peterson said.

Gender Disparity in Classes

Zach Klein '24
editor-in-chief

Senior Jordyn Bental walks into her E-period AP Microeconomics class, ready to start the year. She puts her notebooks down and looks around the classroom, seeing that she is the only female in a class of 20 students.

"On the first day when I walked in, I felt a little out of place, but [the boys in the class are] very nice," Bental said. "I'm not worried for the rest of the year. I've grown used to it."

Bental does not relate to everything people say in the class but that doesn't hurt her. "Obviously, there are some things I don't relate to in that class, but nothing is too harsh." Her classmate senior Max Wainwright believes that Bental being the only female in the class isn't the biggest deal, "I think it only matters once people say they are the only girl," Wainwright said.

Bental ended up as the only female in her class due to a scheduling issue. "This was a scheduling quirk - ids got moved around at the last minute, and we don't involuntarily move students to another section once classes start meeting without their 'okay,'" history teacher and scheduling coordinator Michael Petrella said. "Over the summer I move people around to keep classes balanced. (These changes) ended on the first day of class."

This gender imbalance is not only happening in

AP Microeconomics as other classes are also male-dominated. "I'm still getting to know Buckley, and I'm still hearing that the band is heavily skewed male as well," assistant director of diversity, equity, and inclusion Minjung Pai said. "I really do believe that lack of representation makes it difficult for girls to take those classes."

Pai puts herself in Bental's shoes. "If I, at that age, walked into a room, and I only saw men, whether I was conscious of it or not, I would think 'I don't belong here,' or maybe even 'I don't feel safe here.'"

Pai believes that there is a "misconception out there in the wider culture that somehow teaching math and science is purely objective and neutral. Just by seeing the gender imbalance in the economics class, I think it shows that it's not." To help aid this issue, head of the Upper School Dr.

Sherrie Singer believes that it's important to "make sure that our young women and female students who are under-represented in the certain classes see models of themselves in those disciplines."

Even though Pai wants more girls to join classes like AP Microeconomics, she wants to emphasize that "if there isn't an interest, we're not going to force some artificial gender balance."

Representation in classes is extremely important for Pai. "I think in the classroom, curriculum, and content, there needs to be a better representation of mathematicians and scientists, across all different kinds of identifiers, so that all students can really see themselves in that subject that if they do have an interest, that they are definitely invited in," Pai said.

Singer believes that a way to help this issue is to "bring in people in the field to speak because representation matters," Dr. Singer said.

Bental wants the girls who aren't sure if they want to take classes like economics to know that "just because it's a male-dominated field doesn't mean we shouldn't do it. There's women in STEM, there should be women in the economics field."



Photo courtesy of Zach Klein '24

Follow-up with Diversity Club Executive Board

Emily Lorimer '26
staff reporter

As the school year begins, students are eager to find out what's in store for the Diversity Club executive board.

President of Diversity Club junior Zoha Pattanaik returns to the council for a second year and said the board plans on having more "service and action-based" work in store this year.

"First of all, [this year] we want to focus on uplifting marginalized communities through understanding and shared education. Education is definitely a priority, especially within an academic system. By educating a broader community, we can effectively pass that information along to other streams of circles, and therefore educate a broader group of people," Pattanaik said.

Although Pattanaik is the only returning member to the executive board this year, the year is off to a smooth start.

Sophomore and symposium chair Emma Haronian is new to the board and loves the sense of community. "It's great having a board where all of the participants are really passionate about what we're doing. Everybody here has a mission that they're looking to accomplish. I think that drive and motivation is really going to help us with our mission this year," said Haronian.

Sophomore and Vice President Leelu Lambros shared a similar perspective and believes the close relationship of the board will lead to a productive year. "Our board this year is really good because we all collaborate and work well together. We

all have different perspectives and opinions on certain topics," Lambros said.

Junior and secretary Maggie Messer believes a successful year is one that "implements change and creates a community that understands each other better" while junior and treasurer Noble Morris hopes this year is one where "people's views are changed."

Pattanaik shared the new Diversity Club motto for 2023-2024. "It's very important to acknowledge that as a school and as an institution, we are privileged just



Photo courtesy of the yearbook staff:
Zoha Pattanaik '25 and Maggie Messer '25 in the DEC

being in this bubble, but the whole point is to look outside the bubble, use that privilege, and acknowledge that privilege to help underrepresented communities," Pattanaik said.

Diversity Club Board

President: Zoha Pattanaik (2025)

Vice President: Leelu Lambros (2026)

Secretary: Maggie Messer (2025)

Treasurer: Noble Morris (2025)

Symposium Chair: Emma Haronian (2026)

Club Goals

- more action-based work
- uplifting marginalized communities
- educating a broader community
- effectively pass information
- implement change
- creating a community that understands each other better

DIVERSITY CLUB MOTTO 2023-2024

"It's very important to acknowledge that as a school and an institution, we are privileged just being in this bubble, but the whole point is to look outside the bubble, use that privilege and acknowledge that privilege to help underrepresented communities."



Hispanic Heritage Month



Andrea Bisellach '26
a&e editor

On September 15, to mark the start of Hispanic Heritage Month, Buckley held its first symposium of the year. In this symposium, students in Latinos Unidos were joined by Mister Cartoon, a guest speaker, to present about some of their own experiences and the importance that this month holds for them.

Co-president of Latinos Unidos senior Karina Guaderrama started the assembly off by speaking about some important Hispanic figures like musical superstar Selena and baseball Hall-of-Famer Roberto Clemente. "There aren't a lot of us on campus. It is important that we're seen," said Guaderrama.

Hispanics have withstood negative stereotypes and have made a huge impact in many ways in the United States and around the world. "I think it's important to celebrate all the hard workers who have defied stereotypes and flaws within their industry and became powerful role models for the younger generation to look up to," said junior Liz Caballeros.

Junior Maya Delgado then talked about her Mexican and Cuban heritage, the hardships, and all of the good things that come with being part of this community. She got to talk about some traditions that her family does, and about the perseverance it took for her family to go on a difficult journey to get from Cuba to the United States.

Mister Cartoon, a very sought-out tattoo artist, was then introduced. Cartoon grew up in San Pedro and his family is of Mexican descent, which inspired his artwork.

He talked about how working with his father from a young age created a spark and inspired him to start doing art and tattooing. Cartoon has done a variety of different Chicano art pieces that express the Mexican-American perspective and has gotten to travel around the world while making art.

Cartoon has accomplished many things like having his art exhibited around the world and creating limited-edition Nike shoes. He has become a prominent tattoo artist, having tattooed many famous celebrities, including

Kobe Bryant, Eminem, Travis Scott, Beyonce, and Christina Aguilera.

There is a huge importance of having assemblies like these to educate people about different cultures and bring light to all of the accomplishments that people from different backgrounds have made. "I want people to inform themselves of Hispanic culture and what a huge impact it has had on our community. Latinos and Hispanics make up a huge part of the minority community creating a huge impact on Los Angeles culture," said Caballeros.

Photo Courtesy of Albert Park



Members of Latinos Unidos pose with Mister Cartoon

It's a Pleasure to Meet You, Mister Cartoon!



Photos courtesy of Albert Park



Students often complain about the long lines during Common Lunch...Imagine being on the other side...

Photo Essay by *Matias Garcia '25*



Swifties' Takeover

BUCKLEY'S STUDENTS AND FACULTY TAKE IN TAYLOR SWIFT'S ERAS TOUR

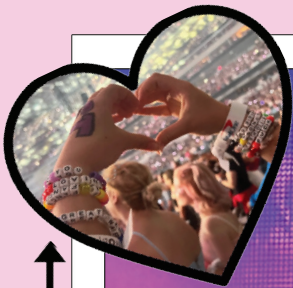


Photo Courtesy Mendez Berman '25



Penelope Swisher's view

Photo Courtesy Penelope Swisher '26



Lindsey Chen and Stella Myers

Photo Courtesy Stella Myers '25



Clarissa Shinn and Friend

Photo Courtesy of Clarissa Shinn

Artist of the Month: Olivia Pink



EloiseMorovati'26
associate editor

Q: When did you start getting into photography?

A: I got my first camera in fifth grade, but I never really did it seriously. I would just take photos here and there, but in 9th grade, I took Photography I at Buckley, but it was on Zoom so I wasn't motivated to push myself creatively. It wasn't really something that I found fun to do, but when I came in person in 10th grade (returning from online school), I started developing film in person and I finally started to like my work, which motivated me to continue to create and develop my skills as a photographer.

Q: Where do you get ideas of what to photograph or find inspiration for what to photograph?

A: A lot of the inspiration comes from my own ideas (and) my own experiences. Last year I explored the theme of girlhood, while also exploring my own inner mental health through the concepts and ideas I was shooting. I was posing my models as myself, and I was able to look into my life from the outside. My inspiration comes from the feelings and emotions that I want to make peace with.

Q: What do you like the most about photography?

A: I love that I can capture a moment in time and express a story that shows what myself or others might relate to. My favorite thing about photography is when I look at my photos and I can really see that I made a story come to life. I really love when my

photos look cool and I can see myself through my own work.

Q: Where do you typically take most of your photographs?

A: I typically take them anywhere I think is cool. I've done a lot of (work) in my house, in my room, in my bathroom, on my dining room table, and in my yard.

Q: Do you plan on continuing photography in your future life?

A: I definitely want to continue photography in college. It's definitely something that I'm really passionate and it brings me joy to create photos and bring my ideas to life, and I also want to pursue my other academic interests. I definitely do still want to focus on my photography because it's something that I'm really excited about and it makes me happy to create (art) in this medium.

Q: Is there an artist or photographer you look up to or get inspiration from?

A: I feel like I, with my themes of girlhood look up to photographers Justine Kirkland and Lauren Greenfield. I look up to people who are exploring the themes of girlhood and documenting how it is to be a girl or a woman.

Q: Is there something you specifically like photographing the most?

A: I love people. I love photographing people. Also a lot of women. I don't have a single picture of a guy in my (portfolio). I mean, I definitely want to do that, but right now I'm exploring what it means to be a girl and a woman in this world.

Q: Is there a favorite photo of yours that you've taken and a certain story behind it or meaning?

A: My favorite photo right now is one I took in my bathroom with an alumni of Buckley, Carys who graduated a couple of years ago. In the photo, I posed Carys on the floor and her friend Cate on the sink, and directed Cate to shake her head. I posed Carys to look up at Cate on the sink in front of the mirror, which represents a reflection of herself. It's like she doesn't really know what she looks like, or how the world perceives her in a certain way. I used my fish-eye lens, so (it has) a cool, weird, rounded effect on it that I really like about it.

Q: Where did you get these ideas?

A: I don't know. I think it's just, sometimes the ideas come to me naturally. Thinking back I'm just, like, Oh, what if I do this? Or, what if I do that? I have a bunch of ideas that I want to continue working with. I'm in AP Studio Art this year, and I want to do a portfolio, exploring unconventional portraiture. I've been printing photos on napkins with a photography method called cyanotype. This year I want to work out of my comfort zone and be more experimental and try different photographic formats.

Starting Up Hip-Hop

Mendez Berman'25
DEIJ editor

A new course called Global Hip Hop, Urban, and Social Dance has been added to Buckley's Upper School drama and dance department. The teacher, Angela Moran, says she feels "pure excitement to share with students and to see who's interested."

Moran is not the only one excited about this class. "I am excited to dive deeper into our society's current version of hip-hop because it is my personal favorite style," said junior Honor Macually.

Freshman Giavanna Scilmenti also shares a love for hip-hop. "For hip-hop, you really have to add personality to all the moves you do," said Scilmenti. "My favorite part of this class is the confidence dance gives you."

Another aspect Scilmenti enjoys about hip-hop class is being able to learn more about the style. "I really enjoy...the conversations we have about this style before class, learning about the history of hip-hop and the moves we are using."

Sophomore Leila Algee enjoys this part of class as well. "Understanding the history of hip hop makes dancing it so much more fun! I look forward to class every week," said Algee.

Each student has their own story about how they came to try this class. "I took Ms. Moran's hip-hop workshop at the beginning of last year, and she subbed our class a few times, every time she taught, I had so much fun with the style of dance and loved how much exercise we got out of the course," junior Cora Burch said.

Junior Edvina Elfase had a similar reason for joining hip-hop. "I wanted to take a dance class because I wanted to be able to do performances and shows outside the musicals and plays," said Elfase. "After seeing the dance concert last year, it just looked so much fun and hip-hop is a dance style that I'm naturally attracted to because it's so flowy and cool."

Moran taught Middle School dance last year, so this is her first year teaching the Upper School dance class at Buckley. "The Upper School students are so enthusiastic and very present, we also have great discussions," Moran says. "Hip-hop creates a rich environment that helps build a community about self-expression and connecting with each other in the dance space."



Photo Courtesy of Mendez Berman '25

Fall Musical: Little Shop of Horrors



Photo Courtesy of Eloise Morovati '26

EloiseMorovati'26
associate editor

This fall's musical will be Howard Ashman's *Little Shop of Horrors*, directed by Michael Spound, choreographed by Laura Bamford with musical direction by John Touchton, and the costumes will be made and designed by Wendy Wells.

In 1982, *Little Shop of Horrors* opened off-Broadway and was the third-longest running off-Broadway show during the time. The musical is an award-winning cult favorite, and this will be the first time Buckley will be producing it.

"It's really *Romeo and Juliet* meets a monster movie, sci fi movie, mashed together in a Broadway musical," Spound said.

The monstrous role of the plant, also known as Audrey II, is filled by two actors, junior Ezra Iovenko and sophomore John Riley. Riley will give the voice of Au-

drey II and Iovenko will manipulate the puppet to give it life.

Spound explained what he was looking for to fill the role of Audrey II. "Ezra is smart. He's funny. I've seen him in Ms. Simpson's improv class and he was fantastically creative...someone who looks like they wanted to work really hard," Spound said.

Though the puppet calls for an operator, the puppet also needs a voice. "I needed the biggest voice I could find. And big talent. It's a really difficult role to sing and John Riley was the perfect person for it," said Spound.

Senior Lilo Bier, who will be playing Audrey, is thrilled to be in the show. "It's a lot of work, but I'm really excited because it's going to be a really good show...I'm excited about the blocking and actually doing it (performing the play) in the CCA and doing full rehearsals and costume and makeup and everything," said Baier.

Sophomore Lochlan McGowan earned the role of

Seymour and says he's very excited for the process of getting ready for performances. "The entire experience leading up to the show is honestly fantastic. I'm really looking forward to working with this super talented cast and the amazing directors," said McGowan.

One important reminder from the cast is to come and watch the show! "Come support the show when it happens (November 9-11). We put so much work into it, and so it would mean the world to all of us if you guys had an opportunity to come out and just say hi," said McGowan.

"It's going to be different to all previous shows we've had...and it's going to be really cool, and it's really funny, and (there's) a touch of horror so it's going to be really good," said Baier.



Rey's Reads: *Post Traumatic*

Reyanne Riordan '24
green editor

Post-Traumatic by Chantal V. Johnson is a journey through the dark, twisted world of a protagonist named Vivian who lives in New York City and works as a lawyer in a mental hospital. When Vivian goes to work, she not only empathizes with her clients but also sees part of herself in them.

Vivian's life hasn't been exactly easy and her coping mechanisms consist of smoking, restricting her food intake, and serial-dating. While I usually try to root for the protagonist in a novel, Vivian was incredibly hard to defend at first. She handled her friendships childishly, and she held an entitled sense of superiority over everyone around her—despite the intense insecurities she had tucked beneath the surface. Despite the empathy I had for her traumatic past, it was difficult to justify her selfish behavior and judgemental outlook on the world.

Turning each page felt like getting more and more entangled in

the character's mind, both an enthralling and overwhelming experience. Each chapter brought more insight to her childhood – which dove into her interactions with racism growing up, her complicated family situation, and her survival of sexual abuse.

With these challenges, Vivian's bad habits and judgmental internal dialogue begin to make more sense to the reader – she is a very intellectual woman, she just struggles deeply with comparison and paranoia. Her tendencies are her only way to find control in her chaotic life.

This novel made me question the extent to which difficult situations are excuses for one's actions. Is trauma sometimes a valid justification for poor behavior or merely an explanation?

Her negative outlook on the world around her beautifully illustrates society's emphasis on perfection and external beauty. Vivian is raw and messy and real, consumed by the idea that women are “sup-

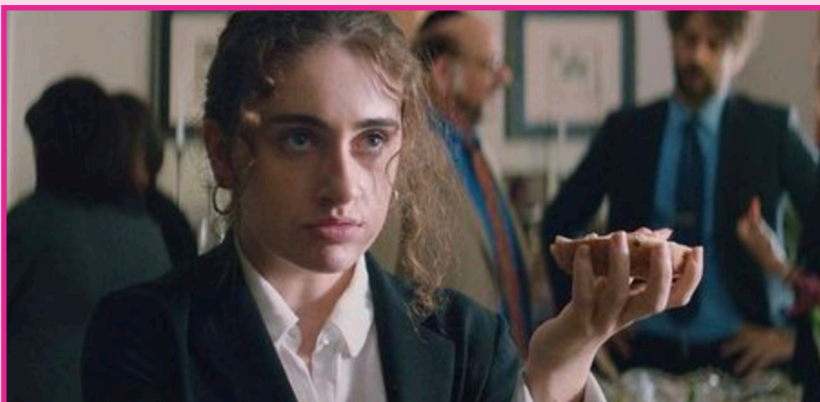
posed to look” perfect all the time.

Vivian's evolution as a character is inspiring; her potential is slowly revealed, giving way to a period of growth and reflection where she confronts her past traumas and gains maturity. This novel encapsulates the fact that no matter how forcefully someone is shoved to the ground, there will always be the chance for them to get back up. In the end, she is able to feel more comfort in herself, and becomes more passionate about her intellectual pursuits, instead of trying to compensate for her existence by only caring about her body or being desirable to men.

Post-Traumatic is a novel I would recommend to those who can tolerate content-heavy stories and are interested in being a witness to a character's tremendous growth.



Joseph's Gems: *Shiva Baby*



Paulina Joseph '24
editor-in-chief

Warning: This movie is for mature audiences.

What would you do if you saw your secret sugar daddy at your family shiva? For young Danielle, that's exactly what happens and everything that could go wrong goes wrong. Emma Seligman's directorial debut, *Shiva Baby*, turns a family gathering into a minefield of awkward and anxiety-inducing interactions.

I chose to review *Shiva Baby* as the inaugural Joseph's Gem of the school year because you may have come across the names Rachel Sennott and Emma Seligman recently. Perhaps this is due to their latest film, *Bottoms*, currently in theaters (WHICH EVERYONE SHOULD GO WATCH AND SUPPORT). However, before their big-screen debut, they made a little movie called *Shiva Baby*.

The film's setting almost entirely takes place within the confines of a cramped suburban home during a Shiva (a Jewish mourning ritual). The fact that it's set in one place, allows the film to unfold like a well-structured play. Seligman is able to create a narrative that keeps building and building until it finally

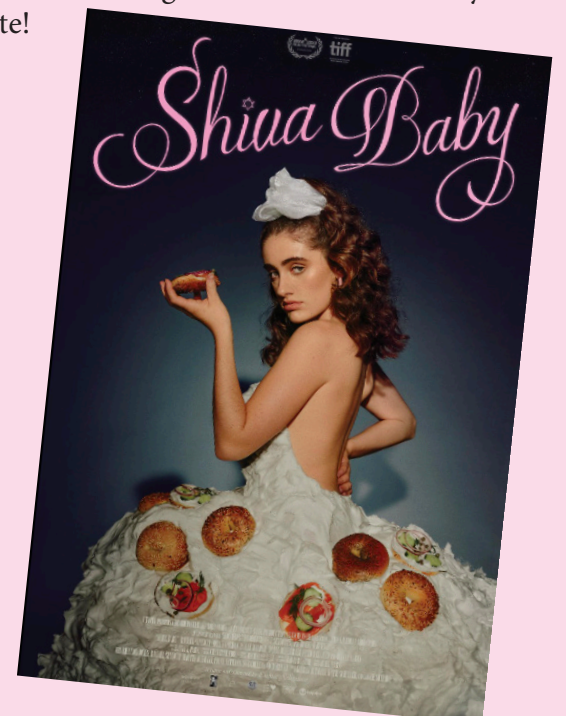
explodes. This tension is heightened by jittery camera work, startling sound effects, and a discordant musical score that adds to the unease.

Danielle, played by Rachel Sennott, is experiencing a sense of directionlessness as her parents continue to cover her expenses, and the income she claims to earn from babysitting is, in reality, sourced from “sugar daddies” – older men who provide financial support in exchange for companionship and intimacy. As she navigates the shiva, she is bombarded with questions and comments about her appearance, her school, her job, and her love life. Sennott is incredible as she portrays how anxiety-inducing these family events can be. She carries the film with an incredible blend of vulnerability and wit that makes her character wholly relatable.

One of the film's standout elements is its ability to explore the intricacies of family dynamics and societal pressures while maintaining a sharp sense of humor. The dialogue is razor-sharp and filled with biting one-liners. Seligman's direction emphasizes the discomfort, creating a palpable sense of tension and unease, yet never losing sight of the humor that lies within these situations. The brilliant

writing is of course helped by Sennott's delivery which is nothing less than perfect. She is my IT girl.

There isn't much else to say about *Shiva Baby* besides the fact that it's an absolute gem. *Bottoms* was equally amazing, and I think everyone needs to watch both of these immediately. Like ASAP. Also make sure to catch the Emma Seligman train now, before you're late!



NEWMAN'S OWN MUSIC RECS: BLUE

Luca Newman '24
staff reporter

As of late, Buckley students cannot get enough of Taylor Swift, due to her Eras tour and her last album *Midnights*. When it comes to female singer-songwriters, she is definitely one of the most popular and influential of the last ten years.

For students who love Swift, there is another major figure in this genre, who is popular but not as well-known by many Buckley students. This artist is Joni Mitchell.

Mitchell's folk album *Blue* paved the way for artists such as Swift and its emotional impact changed the game for musicians as well. The album is called *Blue* for a reason, as its themes evoke sadness through Mitchell's lyrical confessions of various private elements of her life, including her relationships and feelings of loneliness.

Songs such as "All I Want" and

"Little Green" cover the close relationships in Mitchell's life. More specifically, they discuss her struggling relationships with her at-the-time boyfriend and her publicly unknown daughter. The pure rawness of these tracks sends home powerful messages of honesty and sincerity that are seldom seen (or at least to this degree) in music across all genres.

Later on in the album, Mitchell's songs "California" and "This Flight Tonight" display the idea of longing

for a return to a familiar place ("California") or person ("This Flight Tonight"). Mitchell's sadness when it comes to her regrets and loneliness are brilliantly portrayed in the

two tracks. The second half of the project continues to showcase her life with complete transparency while carrying the same impact as the songs closer to the beginning



of the album.

The final track, "The Last Time I Saw Richard," perfectly ends the heart-wrenching ride of the master-

piece *Blue*. It is a track about complicated romanticism that is sung about through the narrator's mixed experiences with a man named Richard. It ultimately ends in what can only be described as optimism in the face of darkness, as she recognizes that her sadness will only be short-term.

Blue transcends the confines of singer-songwriter music with its transparent content and brilliant storytelling. It is certainly up there when it comes to my all time favorites, and I strongly suggest that anyone who considers themselves not only a fan of Taylor Swift, but a fan of music as a whole, to give it a good listen.

Rating: 10/10

String Students Savor Special Summer

Paulina Joseph '24
editor-in-chief

This summer, in the heart of Michigan's lush forests, two Buckley students found themselves at Interlochen Center for the Arts, a rigorous summer program for young musicians dedicated to improving their craft. Sophomore Ella Weber-Small and freshman Connor Riley embarked on a musical journey where they honed their skills amidst other talented students and dedicated teachers.

The audition process differs based on which program you're doing, but for the Orchestra program, there were three auditions in total. "There's one that you submit online. And then once you get accepted, there are two auditions while you're at the camp, which are seating auditions," said Weber-Small. Both Riley and Weber-Small were part of the Orchestra and Wind Ensemble.

Weber-Small performed as a violinist in the Interlochen Philharmonic, while Riley played as a bassist in the Intermediate Concert Orchestra.

Getting into an Interlochen summer program is no small feat. Thousands of students from all around the globe audition to join one of the world's premier music programs. "I was really excited when I found out I got in," said Riley. "I've heard so many great things about the camp, especially the opportunities and the campus."

Though being in nature and forests might sound relaxing, there was still a lot of learning and hard work to be done. "We woke up at 6:30 and by 8:30 we began our first orchestra practice of the day, and after that were sectionals. I ended up playing five to six hours every day," said Weber-Small.

Despite the rigorous demands of being part of an Interlochen music program, it was undeniably rewarding. "We had a concert every week, so every week we'd have to learn a whole new set of music to perform. Even though we had to learn the music super fast, it felt cool how it still came out really well!" said Riley.

The camp pushes its young musicians out of their comfort zone. Almost every week a new guest conductor stepped onto the podium, forcing the musicians to adjust to the conductors' demands and expectations. "Being introduced to different conducting styles was tricky because each one had their own approach. However, by the end of the week, we'd learned how to work with them."

Amidst the intensity of rehearsals and performances, Interlochen also serves as a place to forge friendships with people from all over the world. "I think a great part of the program was the diversity. Not only did I meet people from all over the world, but I also made friends with people who were passionate about different things since Interlochen doesn't only offer programs in music," said Riley.

The final week of camp is when the camp's rigor reaches its crescendo. "The program ends with a final concert of the summer, which is on top of the weekly concert. So you're basically preparing

for two concerts and I ended up playing for eight hours a day," said Weber-Small.

However, all the hard work pays off because "the end-of-season concert was my favorite experience I had at Interlochen. All three high school orchestras performed and then there were dancers performing on the roof. It's this whole big spectacle, but I just remember thinking 'this is one of the most incredible things I've ever been in!'" said Weber-Small.



Photos Courtesy of Ella Weber-Small '26

BUCKLEY'S MUSIC MEN: ONE OUT, ONE ENCORE!

Notes of Renewal: Houser Returns

IzzyUwins'26
opinion editor

Towards the end of last school year, Orchestra teacher Vincent Houser, a familiar and friendly face at Buckley for 44 years, left to have back surgery that would determine if he would be able to continue walking.

"As you might remember, I was actually on crutches during school and I wasn't walking well," said Houser. "I've had back problems for three years now, so it was a necessity to have back surgery."

Even though surgery was necessary, it was still difficult for Houser as he missed his students. "When I left, I was extremely sad," said Houser. "I missed the students, and I just really wanted to come back and see the concert, but unfortunately, I just couldn't because of the slow recovery."

When Houser left, it affected many of his students, so everyone was thrilled to have him back this year.

"Mr. Houser is important to the Buckley community because he represents the sense of community that we have at school," said junior and orchestra president Brian Bahrami. "I feel like he's a great representation of how the Buckley values are really lifelong values as he is an adult who's used those values for a very long period of time throughout his life."

When Houser left, it was a shock to everyone. "Mr. Houser's been part of the Buckley community for a very long time, so I think it was a surprise to all of us," said sophomore Leelu Lambros.

Students had many emotions when Houser left. "I was really worried about his health and just wanted him to get as better as possible," said senior Pearly Wong. "Also, I was just sad and I wanted him to come back."

While Bahrami missed Houser, he was glad

Houser took care of his health.. "I was shocked and, of course, sad, but at the same time I was happy because obviously Mr. Houser was prioritizing his health for the first time in a while as he always prioritized teaching and the students rather than himself," said Bahrami. "I was happy to see that he was doing something for himself but at the same time, I knew it was for us because he wanted to come back stronger and better so he could teach."



Photo Courtesy of of Izzy Uwins '26

Since students worried about Houser, many of them reached out. "My family and I went over to his house and spent time with him while he was recovering," said Lambros.

Houser loved when students reached out as it helped his recovery. "It made me feel much better as I had a card from almost every one of my students and many of them even came to visit me," said Houser. "I even had classes that didn't have students

of mine write get-well cards which just meant so much."

Though it was a difficult time for Houser's health, coming back was an easy decision due to his love for the students. "I missed all of you, I missed the students, and that's why I'm here, because of the students," said Houser. "But I generally just missed teaching because I enjoy it so I was super excited to come back."

Even though Houser is excited to come back and teach, it requires a lot of time and effort. "Since [the recovery] is slow, it is hard to get around and I look like the Hunchback of Notre Dame, but [the physical therapists] are working hard with me, so I'm getting stronger," said Houser.

Students are beyond thrilled that Houser came back. "I was truly so happy that Mr. Houser came back not only because he is recovering but also because I think one of his strengths is that he is really great at cracking jokes which always brightens up the mood," said Wong.

Lambros was excited as well. "He is truly a one-of-a-kind teacher, and we are all so lucky to have him back," said Lambros.

Students are also inspired by his journey so want to have new plans for the orchestra. "His face just inspires me to do good for our orchestra and to be a man of self integrity so, when I heard that he was back, I was just ready to make it the best year yet," said Bahrami.

Houser agrees on making this year the best yet. "This year, I have many plans installed for our orchestra to be extremely successful."

End of an Era: Marino Plays His Final Note At Buckley

AndreaBisellach'26
a&e editor

At the beginning of the school year, students were sad to hear that Tom Marino, Buckley's band and AP Music Composition teacher who had been with some students since Lower School, would not be returning for the upcoming school year.

"What I miss the most about having Mr. Marino as a teacher is the energy he brought to each class. Every music comp class he always came in with a smile," said senior Sam Terr.

Other students talked about how well he worked with students and how he always cared about their opinions. "He wanted us to succeed, but he also was so flexible with how we worked and how we did stuff that it just made the class so enjoyable. He cared about us and asked us for our opinions," said senior Sawyer Stanford-Hill.

Senior Jordyn Bental agreed. "We had him as a teacher for eight years. We had known him for so long, and he listened to us."

Students also expressed how musically talented Marino was. "He had a lot of experience in the industry and was really skilled musically too. He knew a lot about music theory and music composition, and had a really good ear for telling you how you could improve," said junior Jonathan Karp.

Students who had Marino for years shared a variety of their favorite moments from when they had him as a teacher.

"He just brought such a light to the classroom and made it so fun and engaging to play the instruments and music," said senior Cameron Cohen. "It was more than just playing music, it was playing as a group, playing with him. I made a bunch of friends in that class, and it was an incredible experience for concerts and practices."

Marino also loved talking about how he played the trumpet in the Modern Family opening theme song, which was something that a lot of students enjoyed hearing about. "Mr. Marino talking about his trumpet playing in the Modern Family show was probably the highlight (of some of his favorite moments)," said senior Luca Newman.

It is safe to say that students will never forget the laughs shared during class and the impact Marino made. "I'll miss the way that he taught and who he was as a person. He made the transition between those years so much easier because he was just kind of the staple," said junior Ellington Meyers,

who had Marino in Lower, Middle, and Upper School. "My favorite moment is when we surprised him by playing 'Happy Birthday' during a concert. He cried, and he was so grateful. He was always just so proud of us. He wanted to see all of us succeed."



Photo Courtesy of Ava Goldsmith'25

UNPLUGGED AND UNHAPPY

Matias Garcia '25
sports editor

As Buckley students returned to campus this school year, we were shocked at the discovery of a new and stricter phone policy which restricts all phone usage from 8:15 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. Last year, before school started, we were allowed to use our phones, but this year, they must be put away in our lockers even before school starts. This new policy prohibits all cell phone usage once we step onto school grounds.

While administrators and faculty may argue that this new cell phone policy is intended to help us socialize and unplug from our phones, I feel this new rule isn't beneficial to productivity at school.

However, I understand the reasoning behind this policy. Administrators and teachers want to make school a learning environment, and believe that phones are distractions that will prevent students from socializing and learning.

But I believe that flat-out banning cell phone usage on campus isn't preparing us for the real world. Phones have become one of the most essential tools we use on a daily basis. I, like many people, use a phone from the second I wake up. Without the alarm on my phone, I wouldn't be ready in time for school. Therefore, I wouldn't know what class I had first or if there was an assembly. Cell phones hold a wealth of knowledge and information; they serve as a lifeline to our families, a source of information about anything happening in the world, and even an educational resource.

Cell phones also allow students to relax and focus on having a productive day. For example, junior Harris Levi often listens to music before school but now has to resort to other methods to start off his day, including reading the newspaper on his computer and walking around campus.

Photo Courtesy of Matias Garcia '25



Juan De La Cruz's collects phones at the beginning of class

I believe that banning cell phones at school altogether to increase learning and minimize distractions is highly unrealistic for students. Just as in the real world where there are various distractions, we will have our phones on us 24/7. Phones are also a great way to bond with our classmates through social media and filmed videos, such as on platforms like TikTok and Snapchat.

Instead of banning them, teachers and administration should help students with their self-discipline and learn how to balance using their devices. For example, some teachers already collect phones at the start of class to make sure students aren't using them throughout class.

In other classes, if necessary, phones can be used as a learning tool like in Journalism where students have the chance to use their devices to record interviews and transcribe them.

This same principle applies to various classes like language classes. In my Chinese class we are allowed to use phones only when given permission to use an online Chinese dictionary available only on mobile devices. This system of willingly giving up our phones at the start of class sets up a basis of trust and honesty between teachers and students and then gives students the

chance to use them responsibly in class and during school.

Lastly, I think Buckley should consider a compromise with the students instead of this ban. This would consist of allowing students to openly use their phones before school starts and in exchange, students will refrain from using their phones during school hours and keep them in their lockers. This new compromise would not only be more effective in fostering responsible phone use but also allow students to develop the skills they need to succeed.

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Practice Tests for Sophomores: *Too Early?*

Joshua Mahboubi '26
staff reporter

ACT's and SAT's: two acronyms sophomores are starting to have in their nightmares... A little too early?

When I really think about it, in two and a half years from now, we sophomores will be opening up letters to see which colleges we got accepted to. Meaning that our grades are becoming more important, study habits are becoming a crucial skill, and thoughts of building our college resumés are coming to life.

Earlier in the month, sophomores also were introduced to the American College Test (ACT) and Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT).

Buckley requires sophomores and juniors to take the Practice SAT (PSAT) every fall, even though the test isn't required by the state until we are juniors. Immediately, the talk around campus amongst sophomores was: "Do we need this yet?" And then, "Do we need this at all?"

Even though taking the standardized test early is an opportunity to know what they may be like, this adds stress for us sophomores who don't need to take the test for another two years and even start practicing for another year.

Sophomore students are taking AP classes for the first time and a bunch of honors classes are being introduced to us as well, so do we need to already start thinking about ACT's and SAT's?

By making the PSAT mandatory for sophomore year, Buckley is adding this extra thought to our mind for something that should be a year away. Amongst the discussions sophomores have, it is a common theme that we are afraid that we are taking these too early since we will

have a lot of practice coming up junior year and our main priorities right now are doing well in school and taking care of outside of school hobbies, like athletics, and community service opportunities that can boost our college resumé.

According to an article by prepscholar.com, all Ivy League schools and more than 100 universities in the United States are test optional,

meaning you don't need to submit test scores to get into the school. So, they're preparing us one year earlier than they are supposed to for a test that many of us may not even take?

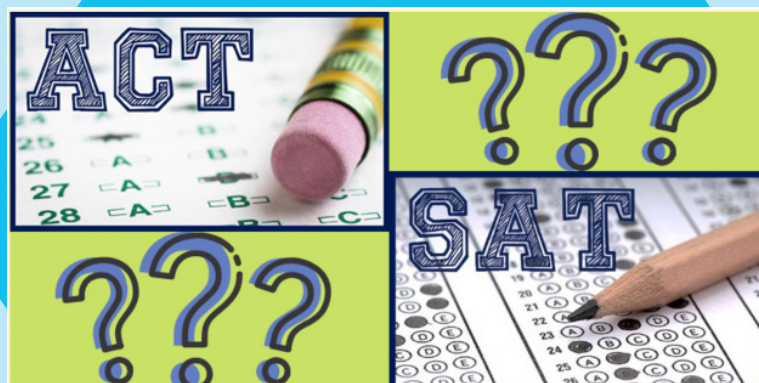


Photo Courtesy of Joshua Mahboubi '26

Fresh Faces at Buckley

There were a few new faculty who were not profiled this issue, so look for more new teacher profiles in issues to come!

Anthony Shin *director of college counseling*



Photo Courtesy of Anthony Shin

SaraMavany'25
staff reporter

"Not for one second did I think I was going to be a college counselor when I was younger," said director of college counseling Anthony Shin. "I used to teach high school and college students, falling into college counseling almost accidentally. Once I got into it, everything began to make sense," said Shin.

Prior to teaching, Shin went to college as a first-generation student. "I went to Claremont McKenna for college, and after that, I went straight into teaching English for 20 years in addition to college counseling for the last 12," said Shin.

"I think my way of growing up was similar to teenagers now," said Shin. "I'm pretty ordinary, I'm a SoCal native, but I'm from South Korea."

A few of his hobbies from when he was younger have still

stuck with him to this day, "I loved to play video games and read comic books," said Shin. "As I went into high school I became more interested in sports such as swimming, diving, water polo, camping, and skiing."

Shin believes that his experiences growing up have given him better insights into understanding students. "As an Asian kid, growing up, my parents had a lot of expectations," said Shin.

In comparison to his high school (which was a boarding school), "I can see that here at Buckley, there are so many more opportunities for other endeavors," Shin said.

Shin would like to share a message with students struggling with their anxiety while applying to colleges, "I help you manage the expectations that come from all around you, I am here to help you believe in yourself and what you are presenting to the colleges and put your best foot forward," said Shin.

Xiaojin Niu *mandarin teacher*

AshaJoh'27
staff reporter

Xiaojin Niu, the new Middle School Mandarin teacher, has been teaching on and off for approximately 10 years and has recently come to Buckley after finishing her Ed.D. study at NYU.

So far, her experience at Buckley has been positive, and she has enjoyed teaching and spending time with faculty and students. "It's been great. I really enjoy spending time with my students here, and the colleagues are really friendly and supportive to me," Niu said.

Niu finds that schools in the United States differ from schools in China. "Taking tests and exams is the biggest part of a student's life in China ... This more free environment for students to talk with their teachers and ask questions at Buckley is something I do admire," said Niu.

Her favorite part about Buckley has been the students. "I do feel they're really sweet and supportive of me; they care about me as a student to a teacher,"

Niu said.

Along with the many positives, there have been a few challenges along the way. "For example, last week, there was a back-to-school night and that was a lot of preparation ... But I think I navigated it well," Niu said.

Despite her current love for teaching, she did not always wish to pursue this as a career. "I actually started doing creative writing in college, and there was a time in my life I wanted to be an artist," Niu said.

During her time as a college student, she began taking some teaching jobs and slowly discovered her love for it. "I gradually felt I enjoyed working with young people in various educational settings. I really do think ... that's my lifelong career," Niu said.

Outside of school, Niu enjoys going hiking and appreciates the numerous scenic trails California provides. "That's another thing I love about Los Angeles, there's just so many trails," said Niu.

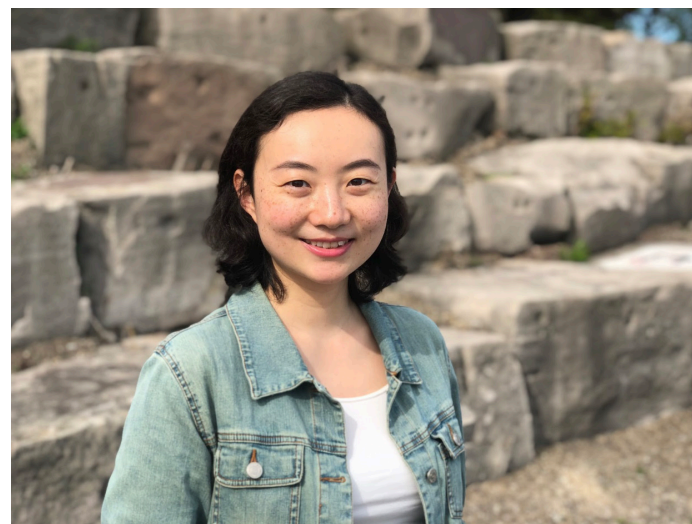


Photo Courtesy of Xiaojin Niu

Sydney Delaney *social science teacher*

ChristopherNg'26
staff reporter

New social science teacher Sydney Delaney explained her philosophy about history. "I think that history is a part of an ongoing explanation, and exploration of why we do things, the way that we do, and how sometimes we don't realize it," Delaney said.

Delaney originally taught at Qualia School in Calabasas, California, as an English and history teacher, and she has been teaching for nine years. "It was an alternative school for kids who are on the spectrum and have severe learning disabilities, but who are also gifted," she said.

One of the main motivations that prompted Delaney to teach at Buckley was the school's approach to teaching. "Buckley's approach is exactly what I believe in, and what I want to be a part of," Delaney said.

This year, one of the main activities that Delaney is looking forward to is being an advisor. "I'm teaching all the ninth graders but am also an advisor, so it's good to have a slice or a group of those young people and create an opportunity for them to relax and be themselves as well as doing things that contribute to Buckley as a community, allowing me to help guide them through the process," Delaney said.

Delaney's profound passion for writing stems from her unique interest in the topic. "Writing should be a way to be free and to express freedom within ourselves, not just something that's graded in an essay," Delaney said.

Among Delaney's favorite authors, one of hers is C.S. Lewis because of the British author's famous series, *The Chronicles of Narnia*. "I started reading *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* when I

was in kindergarten, and I read all the books and thought it was great," Delaney said.

When Delaney is outside of school, she particularly enjoys travel as it occupies the majority of her bucket list. "I want to go to India and observe and study the caste system," Delaney said. She also mentioned that she wants to revisit Japan and Korea and explore China.

Delaney's inspiration in life stems from her parents. "I think what inspires me the most in life is what inspired my parents, [especially my mom], which is to take the road less traveled and to take [on] really challenging situations. You know the cliché phrase that some people say, 'When life gives you lemons, make lemonade?' I have to bring the sugar; I have to bring what sweetens life," Delaney said.



Photo Courtesy of Sydney Delaney

Maureen McNicholl *history teacher*

EmilKestenbaum'27
staff reporter

New eighth-grade history teacher Maureen McNicholl has quite the background. Her adventurous journey to Buckley is remarkable having lived in numerous countries throughout the world, along with many U.S. states.

Her adventure started in Connecticut, where she was born and raised, and continued when she moved to Boston for higher education. She earned a Bachelor's Degree from Boston College and then went on to earn two master's degrees from Northwestern and Harvard.

After teaching across the United States for some years, McNicholl applied to be a diplomat. She described the application process as a "rigorous year-long process" that only accepts three percent of applicants. Then you are posted in countries overseas, to represent America.

McNicholl was posted in Caracas, Venezuela, and Bangkok, Thailand. She

also taught in Vienna, Austria, and then in Madrid, Spain. During her travels, she learned to speak Spanish, Thai, Italian, and German, fluently.

McNicholl always had a love for history since she was a kid. Growing up, she says that her parents also gave her a passion for the past. "Often for family trips, a lot of times my family would take trips to historic places like Washington DC and Boston's Freedom Trail," McNicholl said.

Outside of teaching, McNicholl has various hobbies, like photography, bike riding, and yoga. Although she has lived in many different parts of the world, she is still an active traveler by choice.

One aspect of Buckley that McNicholl particularly touched on was the community. "I like the faculty and staff. I think it is a really warm, welcoming place," McNicholl said.



Photo Courtesy of Maureen McNicholl

Sarah Pang *school nurse*



Photo Courtesy of Christopher Ounjian

ChristopherOunjian'26
staff reporter

Staying healthy is a top priority here at Buckley, and thankfully, Sarah Pang, the new school nurse, is here to ensure we maintain peak physical health.

Hailing from Toronto, Canada, Pang worked at the Hospital for Sick Children but moved to California for a change, where she first worked at the San Diego French American School.

One thing she looks forward to this year is exploring Los Angeles. "I've never even been to California before I decided to move here, so I think just being open-minded, exploring what LA has to offer, and just keeping busy," said Pang.

She also looks forward to meeting new students at Buckley. "Being able to get to know the students. I've actually never worked with a high school, and I think it's nice to be able to connect with older students and see that dynamic," Pang said.

Pang said the hardest part about becoming a school nurse compared to a hospital nurse is the independence and self-reliance required because there is no head doctor to report to. Despite this added responsibility, Pang looks

forward to getting closer to her patients and the Buckley community.

Pang entered the medical field to help people recover and stay safe. "I think I really liked the idea of helping people, so I just chose nursing. And then, throughout my time at university and doing nursing, I slowly started to like it," said Pang.

Some hobbies Pang has are fitness and a healthy lifestyle, which she does by dancing and doing pilates. Pang enjoys the focus on nutrients and fitness so much that she even considered becoming a kinesiology major.

During the COVID years, Pang started embroidery and sewing. Committing to her passion, Pang even started selling bags on Etsy, which shows that our new nurse isn't only reliable but is resourceful as well.

Some tips Pang has for staying healthy are focusing on hygiene and sleep. "Eating healthy is important, and I know I find my body really affected when I don't get enough sleep. And then just trying to stay happy in terms of finding something that you enjoy, staying connected with your friends, and just overall like mental health and well-being is really important as well," Pang said.

MinjungPai *assistant director of DEI*

ZaiyaAlgee'27
staff reporter

Minjung Pai, the new Assistant Director of DEI, strives to bring equity and inclusion issues into the classroom. In addition to her position as an Assistant Director of DEI, she is also the new Intersections of Identity instructor and a Middle School advisor.

Prior to coming to Buckley, Pai was a teacher before leaving the classroom to do some consultant work. But after a couple of years, she found herself missing the classroom setting. Buckley seemed like a perfect fit for her needs and now she's here! "I wasn't sure if I wanted to come back into the classroom full time. So when this opportunity came up at Buckley, as an Assistant Director of DEI, it kind of felt like a perfect fit," Pai said.

Pai was born in Seoul, South Korea and moved to the United States with her family when she was about three years old. She lived in New York for a year

then southern California up until she was in seventh grade when she and her family decided to move back to South Korea. She stayed in Korea for middle and high school until moving back to California for college at UCLA.

Pai described her move back to South Korea as a "pivotal experience," teaching her how to embrace her and others' differences. "It was an interesting thing for me to be in my heritage country where everybody looked like me, but not knowing the language that well," Pai said. Pai explained that moving to Korea gave her a new perspective on what it meant to be different and has learned to embrace differences.

When asked how the transition to Buckley has been, Pai expressed the struggles of new experiences. "For me it almost felt like I was being not just thrown into the deep end, but like thrown out of an airplane," Pai said.

Still, Pai is getting all kinds of support from the Buckley community and

is so excited to take on these challenges and connect with students and younger generations. "It's been exhilarating, scary, wonderful, kind of all of these things rolled into one," Pai said.

Pai regularly enjoys listening to music, trying out new foods and binge watching TV shows. "I'll watch anything from anime to K-dramas to mindless high school TV shows, Hallmark movies to serious dramas," Pai said. Pai also describes herself as an "adventurous eater."

Pai describes herself as silly, loyal, and strives to be compassionate. She welcomes all students to drop by the DEC and introduce themselves. "I strive to be compassionate, because I think that's really what at the core of DEI is compassion, right?" Pai said. "It's not just to be empathetic, but to take action when I see myself or others in any kind of distress."



Photo Courtesy of Julia Waldman

Savannah Ludwig *health assistant*

SophiaFotter '25
staff reporter

Savannah Ludwig, Buckley's new health assistant, is the perfect example of a warm, welcoming person you would want to talk to going to the nurse's office if you are not feeling well.

She has just started working at Buckley and is happy with how things are going. "It's been great and I think all the staff, faculty and students have been so welcoming," Ludwig said.

Ludwig previously worked as the receptionist at Champs Charter High School's nurse's office and says her favorite part about Buckley is the community. "I thrive in a place where I feel supported and since the first day I got here, I've felt supported in everything I do, especially since this job is a bit of a learning curve for me," Ludwig said.

Champs didn't have a certified nurse, so Ludwig took

over that role last year. Coming to Buckley, she assists head nurse, Sara Pang with things like paperwork, which is, "very helpful to nurse Sara because she hasn't had that in the past," Ludwig said.

In addition to working at Buckley, Ludwig also enjoys singing and performing, since she was a musical theater major in college. "I actually just got cast into a Musical called Catch Me If You Can and the shows are in November and December, so I am currently going to those rehearsals," Ludwig said. Health assistant by day, actress by night.

Music must run in her family because her brother was the trumpet player for the band Capital Cities. "The famous trumpet part in their song Safe and Sound was my brother," said Ludwig.



PHOTO COURTESY OF SOPHIA FOTTER '25

Eanna O'Dowd *library worker*

PHOTO COURTESY OF EANNA O'DOWD



JossetteEstes '24
a&e editor

Buckley's newest library worker Eanna O'Dowd greets students at the door of the library every morning with a bright and infectious smile. Inspired by his wife, a Buckley alum, and her love for the school,

O'Dowd was excited to become a part of the community. "She and her friends from Buckley would talk so fondly of the times there, and the people they met, once an opportunity to work here came up, I jumped at it," said O'Dowd.

Having recently relocated from Vancou-

ver in March, O'Dowd has found his transition to Los Angeles life relatively easy. "Generally it's been pretty smooth. The rest of the staff and faculty have been wonderful in welcoming me (big shout out to Alex Schwartz and Matt Wittmer in the library), and the students have also been very accommodating and helpful," said O'Dowd.

While moving to a different place does mean a significant amount of change, there are a few activities that O'Dowd has continued to pursue. "One of the constants is running a theater company and acting classes with my wife. We've been keeping them both operating for close to eight years now, and are still looking to grow," said O'Dowd.

The move-in process has led O'Dowd to get into new hobbies as well. "Lately I have been focused on home improvement and gardening projects," said O'Dowd.

O'Dowd has also decided to add a dog to their new Los Angeles lifestyle. "She's a beautiful rescue who we named Dalí, because her ears look like they were designed by Salvador Dalí," said O'Dowd.

When O'Dowd isn't gardening or caring for his new dog, he enjoys reading. "There are many I go back to for comfort, from

books by Terry Pratchett to Michael Crichton," said O'Dowd. "I am more a fan of audiobooks than text, and the Harry Potter series read by Stephen Fry probably still sits at my top spot."

When he was a child, O'Dowd had many dream jobs. "I had loads-all the usual stuff, soldier, astronaut, doctor, superhero. The list can go on. Then I realized you can do all that, and more as an actor, so that became my dream job," said O'Dowd.

As for his favorite snacks, O'Dowd admits he is not as impressed with American food as he is with Irish food. "I have to be biased, the snacks back in Ireland are better than the United States. I know it's a bold statement to make, but on average they just are. I will say that See's Candies are my kryptonite though," said O'Dowd.

Going forward, O'Dowd will maintain an enthusiasm for what may come. "If the last few years have taught me anything, it's that things can change very quickly. I'm excited to try and roll with the tide and see what happens," said O'Dowd.

Jana Mohammed *Assistant Head of Middle School*

EliBarkon '24
staff reporter

This year, Buckley welcomed the new Assistant Head of Middle School Jana Mohammed. Mohammed joins us from Citizens of the World Charter School in Hollywood where she was the Assistant Principal.

Mohammed got into teaching because of two very important people in her childhood. "My mom is an educator and so was my auntie," said Mohammed. "It was almost as if this is what I was supposed to do!"

Teaching is a true passion of Mohammed's, especially helping children unlock their full potential. "I love working

with children and inspiring them to do wonderful things they never thought they could do," said Mohammed.

While transitioning to a new school can be difficult for students and teachers alike, Mohammed feels her transition has been as smooth as possible. "My first weeks have been great," said Mohammed. "Everyone has been very welcoming and kind."

Outside of school, Mohammed spends her free time participating in various hobbies. "I love to travel to new places... Hawaii and Disney Paris being my two favorites...and meet new people, and learn about different cultures," said Mohammed. "I love photography, shoe

shopping, and spending time with my family and friends."

While Mohammed has only been at Buckley for a short period, she has a list of goals to complete. "My goals at Buckley are to get to know the Middle School students and their families and to work closely with the faculty."

In addition to meeting everyone in the Buckley community, Mohammed has goals for the Middle School as a whole. "I want to create an identity for the Middle School," said Mohammed. "As well as ensure the students have lots of fun."



PHOTO COURTESY OF BUCKLEY COMMUNICATIONS

Ramsey Lawrence *History Teacher*

OliviaToTeras '27
staff reporter

Ramsey Lawrence, the new seventh grade history teacher, hails from Chile and attended an international school in

Santiago that has many similarities to Buckley.

"I love it, I feel at home. It's crazy. Like the organizational culture, the kids, and the teaching staff has very much the vibe of the International American school I attended," Lawrence said about Buckley.

While working towards his master's degree, Lawrence started teaching at the University of Virginia where he taught Spanish to undergraduate students. He started teaching middle school and got a second degree in educational leadership.

Lawrence values having a relationship with his students. "Hopefully, I teach the

students something that's transformative. And that helps them see the world in a new way that they hadn't seen before. And that's what history has done for me. And I hope to transmit that," Lawrence said.

When he's not teaching, one of Lawrence's hobbies is gardening, more specifically, tending to bonsai trees. "It takes a lot of patience and a special disposition. I took a course in 2001, but it stuck with me and I loved it," Lawrence said.

When asked who his biggest inspiration is, Lawrence has many people he admires. "I draw inspiration from so many educators. Deborah Meier, she's a New York public school educator,

John Dewey, and Elizabeth Anderson. She talks a lot about democratic equality. There's so many people that I draw inspiration from, it's just not one single person," Lawrence said.

If Lawrence could travel anywhere in the world, he would go to Japan and Portugal. "I would want to live there for at least a year," he said about Japan. "You know, I don't know how that's gonna happen. But I would love to do that," Lawrence said.

My Journey Back from Long Covid

Eli Gabbay '25
focus editor

“What happened to you, Eli? How are you feeling?” These are two questions I’ve been asked constantly in my time back on campus.

I was still experiencing COVID symptoms after the stage of contagiousness - defined as, “Long Covid.” More specifically, 10 months of Long Covid. My two most severe symptoms were brain fog and fatigue, which completely flipped my life upside down. As a result of these symptoms, I couldn’t participate in school and now I am redoing my junior year.

So, how did I get from going to what felt like hundreds of doctors over the past 10 months to writing this article today?

My recovery process has been long and complex. I could write a 10-page essay about all of the doctors I went to and what they did that worked and didn’t work, but there are only so many pages in the newspaper, so I’ll summarize it the best I can: time healed me.

There is no cure. During my recovery, the only thing I could do was try to be the best version of myself and push myself to the limit every day. If that meant getting out of bed at 1:00 p.m. to take my supplements, or if it meant going on an hour-long walk and then taking a nap, then that’s what I was going to do.

So, how am I feeling? Better, but not entirely back to full strength. Over the past nine months, I fantasized about what it would be like when I recovered. I envisioned it as a gift from God. Maybe I would be out with my friends, and everything would just click; maybe I would be reading a book, and I feel like I could do some sort of literary analysis again, but I definitely thought it was just going to happen.

Well, as I’ve learned in my 18 years of life, nothing in life is just given, and my recovery would be a fight. And it won’t be a fight similar to arguing with

a close friend; it would be more comparable to a 12-round brawl against Mike Tyson in his prime. But instead of trying to dodge punches, I am fighting my own limits to catch up to the productivity and ability of my former self.

How does it feel to be back in school? Is it hard taking four AP classes when some days I go home to study, and I feel like I can’t read? Yes, everything is much harder for me than before. Every page I read, every math problem I do, and every paragraph I write is harder than it has ever been for me; however, every day I am back on campus, it feels like a dream. Every lecture I’m in, every conversation I have with a friend, every assembly, and even every study session of Calculus I do, I thank God that I am back in this position.

What is it like to be a junior...again? Before the school year, that was the least of my concerns because I would still see my friends on a daily basis, but I miss my old grade. Although I love the class of 2025, I miss my peers in my old classes. I miss hearing Maxim ramble on in AP English Language or cracking jokes with Griffin in AP United States History.

What did I learn most from my experience with Long Covid? It might sound cliché, but to put it simply, don’t give up. No matter what you’re going through, no matter how hard and dark the road is in front of you, don’t ever give up.

Am I going to pretend that my experience with Long Covid has been easy to get through? No.

Nine months ago, I could not exercise for more than 15 minutes without feeling dizzy, I could not read and remember the previous page of what I was reading, I could not keep a train of thought to write a paragraph, any small task I would do would exhaust me for the entire day, and I would lose my phone ten times a day



PHOTO COURTESY OF ELI GABBAY '25

because my short term memory was that messed up.

Out of any part of my identity, I take most pride in my intellectual ability, and that was taken away from me.

I wondered: Would I be able to study hard for a test and feel like I nailed it? Would I ever come out of a lecture and be able to comprehend the subject? Would I be able to have a conversation and engage in it instead of just laughing because I forgot what the person I’m speaking to said? Would I be able to impress my mom at the dinner table by telling her something I learned about the economy in microeconomics at school? Would I be able to play soccer with my friends and not be exhausted for the next week? Would I be able to set my calendar for a full day of studying?

And now, for the first time in nearly a year, I can confidently say that I feel close to *me* again.

Dalle Dives Into Touring

Lubos Krugliakova '25
news editor

Over the summer, French and Philosophy teacher Olivier Dalle made a move from the classroom to the outside world by working as a Los Angeles tour guide.

“It was partly because a friend told me about this opportunity, partly for financial reasons, and partly because I do want to get more involved with everything related to visits, trips, and exchanges, inside and outside of school,” said Dalle.

Dalle guided groups of French-speaking tourists “to narrate the history of California, Los Angeles, and to show them LA’s most interesting landmarks.” Dalle mostly held tours in Downtown LA, Hollywood, and Little Tokyo/Arts District.

When he himself visited from France the first time, Dalle immediately felt at home. “I fell in love with Los Angeles the first second I came into it from the north, crossing the whole metropolis to continue on to San Diego on Freeway 101 at sunset,” Dalle said. He particularly highlighted that he “found the energy, the light, the natural landscapes, and the size of it all [LA] exhilarating, and I knew I would live here someday.”

It was especially enjoyable for Dalle when “the tourists changed their mind [about LA], especially those who started with a bad impression and then realized how amaz-

ing this city actually is, and how many hidden treasures it holds.”

While the tourists enjoyed the LA gems, they were also overwhelmed by the other parts of the city. “The impression French tourists got was the shock

when they discovered how many homeless people seem to be slowly dying in the streets of central LA, how people pass them by without a glance, how some neighborhoods feel like a zombie apocalypse movie,” Dalle

said. “It made me ashamed to reflect on how we collectively have become oblivious to the tragic reality of thousands of people dying in our streets, right here

in the richest city, the richest state, the richest country in the world.”

Despite this, Dalle thinks California continues to symbolize a dream for many. “Many Europeans still keep this dream of living in a place where you can truly become who you want to be, liberated from the rigid constraints of a classist society,” Dalle said.

Dalle further reflected on his experiences. “It was definitely helpful to have my years of experience as a teacher here when I started being a tour guide this summer. It helped me interact with every member of each group, trying to be entertaining and funny while delivering facts and analysis about LA,” said Dalle.

In return, Dalle hopes to use “this experience to enhance my activities as a trip coordinator at Buckley.”



PHOTO COURTESY OF OLIVIER DALLE

Alec’s Adventure Abroad

Alex Ramin '25
news editor

“Life-changing.” This is the term senior Alec Salomon used to describe his experience participating in an exchange program that sent him to Spain for his junior year. Salomon, a student with a passion for travel and learning, embarked on a journey that provided him with valuable insights into the transformative power of such programs.

After studying Spanish at Buckley, Salomon was interested in furthering his language development with a different approach. “I had been taking Spanish for a couple of years, and to perfect it I would have to go on this year abroad program,” Salomon said.

Other than educational purposes, Salomon’s motivation for participating in a student exchange program was rooted in his desire and thirst for adventure. “I wanted a change, I wanted to travel the world, and in my life, I felt that this program would be the perfect opportunity to do so,” Salomon said.

One of the most significant aspects of Salomon’s exchange program experience was the freedom it offered, giving him the chance to travel around the country and immerse himself in the culture. “I was able to travel the country essentially freely. I could go to a new city every

weekend and explore it however I wanted. The sense of freedom that comes with that is very liberating, and you really learn about yourself,” said Salomon

Beyond the adventures, Salomon found value in the people he met during his exchange program. “What I benefited from the most is my friends there. I learned so much from them; the people I met were truly incredible, and I will never forget them,” Salomon said.

“The culture in Spain is very focused on living your best life regardless of how much money you have. I feel that the culture there is very focused on improving yourself and being with friends and family, which is unmatched here,” said Salomon.

Living in Spain exposed Salomon to a different way of life and a unique perspective on happiness and fulfillment. This newfound perspective challenged his preconceived notions about what constitutes a fulfilling life. “The program put my life into perspective and how fortunate I am to live in luxury and accessibility. It has made me realize that I don’t necessarily need them as much,” Salomon said.

A major aspect that Salomon developed was his social skills. “I think this has enhanced or improved me socially in a way. I would describe myself as the quieter type

before I left for Spain,” Salomon said.

Prior to the program, Salomon wasn’t as outgoing as he is today. The program’s circumstances pushed him out of his comfort zone and into a new realm of confidence. “Having to move to a country where you don’t know anybody, or anything or don’t speak that language can be very isolating. Working past that and the initial roadblock where nothing makes sense really grew a sense of self-confidence within me,” said Salomon

Salomon’s experience with the student exchange program is a testament to the transformative power of stepping out of one’s comfort zone and embracing new cultures and experiences. “Do it. Without a doubt do it. It might seem scary, but it is one of the most rewarding things you can do,” Saloman said.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ALEC SALOMON '24

Senior Athletes Commit to College

Sebastian Sartirana '24
staff reporter

Fall sports have already kicked off and several senior athletes are preparing to continue their balance of academics and athletics into college.

The recruiting process is often a long and stressful journey, but these student-athletes are now relieved to have verbally committed to colleges, having found the right fit.

"I visited a lot of schools during my recruiting process and Brown was the only school that I felt the most at home with. I immediately bonded with the team and the coaches and could 100% see myself there in the future," said senior volleyball player Sophia Wolfson. Wolfson verbally committed to Brown and is preparing to continue to play volleyball next year.

"I chose NYU because it aligned with exactly what I was looking for between academics, size, and volleyball," said senior Charlotte Reff, Wolfson's teammate.

The recruiting process adds to the already existing stress for these athletes who must also juggle the demands of their schoolwork. "The recruiting process was definitely long, and, at some points, not the best, but I'm grateful for what happened and that everything worked out," Reff said.

The process also varies greatly depending on the sport. "The recruiting process was really stressful," said senior baseball player Tyler Shuter, who committed to Linfield University. "I have no idea how it works in many sports, but for baseball, I am pitching and five feet behind the catcher are around 30-40 coaches just watching me."

"Navigating the complexities of the recruiting process often left me feeling both overwhelmed and uncertain," said senior golfer Katie Ha who has committed to Yale. "Deciding where I would flourish—both academically and socially—felt like a daunting task. To hear consistent reflections about Yale's unique community

was a defining moment in my journey. It solidified Yale as not just a choice but as my dream destination. This, coupled with the other incredible opportunities Yale presents, made it stand out as my ideal academic and personal haven."

Although the road to committing to a school is hard to navigate, nothing was stopping these athletes from achieving their goals. "I always wanted to play volleyball in college. After watching my sister and other older players go and play in college, it really became my goal," Reff said.

"The recruiting process not only gave me valuable lessons in responsibility but also taught me so much about myself as a person, for which I am forever grateful," said Ha.

It's not every day that you see a sports league changing its formats just because of one person's success. "Katie raised the bar for not only our team but for the entire Prep League. In her freshman year, the Prep league had four spots for CIF Qualifiers. Now in her senior year, the league has seven spots; mostly due to her success in CIF play," said Andrew Lotts, Ha's coach.

"My family is very academic, and I will be the first person in my family to compete at the college level. My family and I are extremely grateful for this opportunity," said Wolfson.

The accomplishments that these athletes have achieved are well deserved. "Honestly, I just felt really relieved when I committed. I just felt really accomplished that I knew I achieved my goal that I had been working tirelessly at since elementary school," Shuter said.

The journey of athletics will eventually come to an end, so these athletes are enjoying every moment of their playing time. "If Katie were leaving today, I would tell her to not change a thing, be true to herself, and enjoy the ride because it will be over before you know it," Lotts said.



Athlete of the Month: Kandice Chuang



Photo Courtesy of Zachary Klein '24

Abby Dessner '24
profiles editor

Q: How did you get into golf?

A: Before doing golf, I tried many different sports, like tennis, soccer, swimming, etc. but none of them seemed to stick. From a young age, I watched my sister (alumni Vivian Chuang '22) golf and after a few years, I decided to take golf up too.

Q: What's your favorite part about golf?

A: I love the competitiveness about golf and the bonding experiences.

Q: Do you have a person you look up to in golf?

A: I look up to my sister and some

other pros out there.

Q: What's it like to be a ninth grader on a varsity team?

A: Being on the team has actually been a really rewarding and fun experience. If anyone is thinking about joining a team, they should join the golf team because it's probably one of the best experiences out there and the most fun you'll have!

Q: What advice would you give to someone just starting in golf?

A: For any sport out there, not just for golf, the key thing is to practice, practice and practice because practice makes almost perfect.

Q: Are you involved in tournaments outside of school?

A: Yes, I am involved in tournaments outside of school. I play in the Toyota Tour Cup, and I will start playing the American Junior Golf Association (AJGA) soon. In November I'll be playing in an international competition in Louisiana.

Q: What's it like to follow in your sister's footsteps of playing high school golf?

A: Following in my sister's footsteps is really scary because she has a big legacy to live up to. I do hope that one day, I will get on the Wall of Fame, just like she did.

Coach Senna Becomes Interim Athletic Director

Alex Ramin '25
news editor

Boys varsity basketball head coach Michael Senna has taken on the role of interim Athletic Director. Senna, who brings a wealth of coaching experience, shared his motivations, philosophies, and plans for the school's athletic program.

Senna's motivation for being a coach is rooted in the student-athlete-to-coach relationships. "The coaches and the players. My motivation for being a coach in general is relationships and the process of building relationships," Senna said.

His commitment to fostering a positive environment for student-athletes ties in with the relationships he has already built. "When students trust and can connect to their coaches everything runs smoothly, that's how we win trust within the program," Senna said.

Mentoring players and keeping relationships past graduation is a point of emphasis for Senna. He sees athletics as

a means to achieve this goal.

With his new role, Senna plans to bond with a broader spectrum of athletes, not limited to one sport. He expressed excitement about being present at all games. "Having the opportunity to plan to be at all the tennis matches, golf games, volleyball games is exciting, I can build relationships with more athletes," Senna said.

He views athletics as a pathway for growth and character development. Senna's coaching philosophy goes beyond winning games. "I don't just count wins as a competitor, as a school, or as a team. When an individual or a student-athlete grows and shows growth, it's an even greater win," Senna said.

Not only determined to impact the athletes lives, Senna also makes the other coaches' lives easier to ensure a winning environment. "I meet with coaches on a regular basis to give them what they need within my power to be successful. To have a cohesive and ef-

fective coaching team, communication is important," Senna said.

In addition, communication with the entire community is a priority for Senna. He is working on initiatives to keep everyone informed and engaged, especially fans. "One of the things I have been big on is the promotion of our athletics. I am trying to put together a newsletter to update people on scores and records of a team as well as learning how to utilize social media," Senna said.

Senna acknowledges the influence of mentors on his coaching style. He shared that his first athletic director played a pivotal role in his coaching journey. "My first athletic director, when I was a head coach back in Louisiana, Joe Hines, is who I first called when I decided I wanted to do this. He's a great person, people gravitated towards him, his charm, and his personality was rigid but you wanted to be around him," Senna said.

Senna has ambitious goals for

the athletic program. He has always worked to connect his varsity players in Middle School with those on the varsity team in Upper School. "One of my priorities as a basketball coach was connecting and making the transition for players between Lower, Middle, and Upper School smooth. I did that by connecting my players off of the court and help build and foster friendships," Senna said.

A final goal of Senna's is, "Connecting alumni to current athletes. I want to make Buckley athletics an even bigger timeline for being involved, one way I can do that is to promote the Hall of Fame and make that a bigger deal," Senna said.



Photo Courtesy of Alex Ramin

Fall Captains Lead the Way to Victory

Emily Lorimer '26
staff reporter

A new year means new team captains for Buckley's fall sports teams of girls' volleyball, cross country, girls' golf, and girls' tennis.

The girls' volleyball team is ready for yet another successful season with senior captains Charlotte Reff and Sophia Wolfson.

"Our team dynamic is really special," said Reff. "There's lots of seniors on the team, so it's definitely like an older sister younger sister vibe".

Although Reff is ready for the challenge and treasures her team, she admits to the difficulties of being captain. "It's definitely hard right now, being a senior and managing a successful team while also keeping grades up is sometimes hard, but it's so worth it," Reff said.

Despite that, Reff plans on leading her team to another monumental victory, describing a successful season to be "winning league for sure and also just having a really good team dynamic and bond. And us achieving our goals and going as far as we can in CIF," Reff said.

Similar to Reff, cross country captains Senior Reuben Barbarash and Junior Lorelei Barrett value the bond and spirit of their team.

"(A successful season) looks like a team with good spirit. A team where everybody shows up every day, and by the end of it, everybody has improved individually, not just as a team," Barbarash said

Both Barbarash and Barrett were team captains of the cross-country team last year, so they're familiar with the role.

"People look to you for advice, to be able to have that sort of background and lead people is good," said Barrett. "I definitely feel more attached to the people on my team".

Girls' golf team captains seniors Katie Ha and Pearly Wong are ecstatic to be sharing captaincy with one another this year. "(Being team captain) is so fun. I'm so glad that Pearly and I got to be team captains this year. I honestly don't think I would have done it with anyone else," Ha said. "We have a lot of fun together".

Wong described their team dynamic to be important. "We're super close-knit and a lot of the more experienced players are always there to help out the newbies, so we're always there for each other," Wong said.

"We all love each other so much," Ha said.
Ha and Wong talked about how the season is going so far from a captain's point

of view. "Since golf is, for the most part, a very individual sport, I am super excited seeing how all of our team is constantly dropping in their score," Wong said.

Not only has girls' golf been triumphant this season, but girls' tennis celebrate an a strong start to the season so far.

Girls' tennis team captains are seniors Abby Dessner and Zoe Biddle.

The team has been practicing for a few months now, laying the foundation for a successful season. "We started practicing mid-August to make sure we found successful doubles team pairings and set our lineup," Dessner said.

"It's up to me and Abby to make sure that all the girls feel like they belong on the team and help make the lineup with Sherm," Biddle said.

Although they have gotten the logistics of their season down, both captains emphasize the importance of their team bond.

"Our team is definitely like a family, our team has grown so close in such a short amount of time," Dessner said.

"We all do a good job of supporting each other. When you're off the court, when you're not playing we're all cheering for each other. I'm really happy with the way the team is this year," Biddle said. "Sherm does a really good job of making sure that there's no drama on the team."

Overall one thing fall teams have in common is their desire to be supported by their peers, and their pride in their teams!

"Join Golf!" Ha said.
"Come to our home games," Reff said

"(Cross country) is the best sport, it's the best vibes at Buckley for sure," Barbarash said.

"I'm really proud of the team," Biddle said.



Sophia Wolfson and Charlotte Reff celebrating a point
Photo courtesy of Liz Caballeros '25

Fall Sports Update

Girls Tennis



Photo courtesy of Zach Shuter '26

Tennis is 5-5 overall and 3-1 in league.

Girls Volleyball



Photo courtesy of Liz Caballeros '25

Volleyball is 6-3 overall and 7-0 in league.

Cross Country



Photo courtesy of Zac Struber '26

Cross Country finished third in their first meet and first in their second meet.

Girls Golf



Photo courtesy of Zachary Kleini '24

Golf is 3-3 overall