

# THE WILDCAT TRIBUNE

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ILLUSTRATIONS BY DRISHTI UPADHYAYA & ELAINE PARK



# BRAINS TO BASKETS: BEHIND DV'S QUIRKIEST BATHROOM PASSES

BY SARAH KIM & ANIKA GARG  
Co-Features Editors

"Bathroom passes are so interesting," said no one ever.

Sometimes bathroom passes may be stowed away by sneaky classmates, or are just barely sticky enough to be disturbing, but otherwise, they usually aren't all that interesting. A handful of DV teachers, however, have completely turned the concept of bathroom passes on its head and made them defining characteristics of their classrooms. Here are the stories behind DV's most bizarre bathroom passes.

## Mr. Albert Kim

"Don't tell my students, or they'll break them on purpose," Kim said.

He lounged back on his wheeled office chair with one leg folded underneath him and the other stretched out towards an empty desk, his sock-clad toes braced against surface. His posture seemed faintly reminiscent of a 14th-century Renaissance painting.

"My first year here I taught math, and I didn't have a restroom pass. The [previous] teacher had left a pencil sharpener, one of the kinds of you hand crank, in the classroom," Kim said. "And so that was my first restroom pass."

However, Kim realized this was a safety risk when one of his students dropped the 'pass,' cracking the sharpener open and exposing the razors underneath. While most teachers might have simply switched to the standard laminated hall pass at that point, Kim was determined to make the pencil sharpener work — he built a protective cube around the pencil sharpener so his students wouldn't be in danger of cutting themselves every time they needed the restroom. To his dismay, his solution didn't last.

"One day, I just looked and on the desk was the pencil sharpener with the cube in pieces. So then, obviously, I got upset because they did something to my cube. I realized I needed a better way to carry all that stuff. So I put the pencil sharpener and the cube into this black, wheeled crate. And the students had to wheel it to the restroom," Kim shared.

Somewhat regretfully, Kim described how his female students had to lug the heavy cart up a flight of stairs to the bathroom, because his classroom had been situated in the 3000 building at the time.

Due to student complaints about the cart, Kim eventually switched the pass to an extension cord the following year, until yet another incident arose.

"I stopped using the extension cord because someone plugged it into the wall and took a selfie and posted it on Instagram," Kim said.

Offhandedly, Kim also remarked on a period of time during which a hole puncher was used as a makeshift pass, right up until a student was intercepted by a supervisor one day. Apparently, the office tool didn't sufficiently indicate that [students] were supposed to be going to the restroom.

Gesturing around, Kim explained that most of the other objects in the room have likely been used as a pass at one point or another. We laughed, slightly nervous that Kim wasn't joking.

"What about the computers?" we dared to ask.

"Oh, no," Kim intoned dramatically, shaking his head and even rising from his chair a little bit, as if horrified by the notion. "Not the computers."

On our way out, however, we could swear we saw him lean back again to eye one of his keyboards contemplatively.

## Mr. Samir Khatri

"So far, nobody has ripped it or destroyed it, but it's only October."

Khatri's bathroom pass is a wire basket that is traditionally used to turn in papers. He attempted conventional passes for years but found that they didn't last nearly long enough.

"I used to use [a] traditional pass, but someone stole it. I tried to use a cardboard paper pass, but students ripped it to pieces. Then I tried to use something big, like a Xerox box lid, and they ripped that into pieces. So I decided to use something metal, because you cannot rip that to pieces easily," Khatri said.

It sounded a bit challenging, but we inquired further about the reason he chose a metal basket in particular.

"It is difficult to destroy," Khatri repeated (perhaps too confidently). "I like that it's large, so students won't forget it in the bathroom. It also has a lanyard, so students can hang it wherever they need to hang it."

We examined the metal basket closely once again, noting scratches already visible on the dark metal surface. "Good luck with your pass, Mr. Khatri," we said.

## Mr. Roberto Clemente

Clemente's room is adorned with a disco light, a Chinese lantern and a number of miscellaneous display screens along the far wall. Evidently, his unique bathroom pass isn't an isolated spark of inspiration.

"Originally my pass for when I was teaching middle school was a toilet seat," Clemente said.

Unfortunately, DV administration didn't approve of the upcycled bathroom pass. Clemente's solution was to use a skateboard instead and, at one point, a real rock.

"I've had a big rock as a bathroom pass but one time a kid put it outside and I saw the rock in one of the gardens and I'm like, 'Wait a minute, is that my bathroom pass?' So that didn't work out."

Just in time, however, even more embarrassing and bulky alternatives caught Clemente's eye.

"I found this hand, one Halloween." We glanced at the appendage that dangled from the top of Clemente's whiteboard.

"And then another year, a kid had a brain hanging down from his Halloween costume." Sure enough, it was there, connected to the hand by a string of glittering mardi gras beads.

Clearly, Clemente had taken that organ, as well.

Clemente continued, "Hopefully this year some kid comes in with a foot in their costume and I'll take that and put it in. At some point I'll make a whole human being out of that pass."

## Mr. Justin Worley

"It's called the 'Greater Longsword of Urination,'" Worley paused briefly. "I only realized after the fact that there's a double entendre there."

Worley's notorious bathroom pass sits sheathed in its rock by the door to his classroom across the room from his desk.

"I wanted a bathroom pass that was cool, and it was my first year teaching Sci-Fi Fantasy, so I wanted something to go with that," Worley said. "I had some extra prop swords from when I used to teach 'Romeo & Juliet,' so I turned that into a bathroom pass."

The plastic rock was a gift courtesy of Clemente. The string attached to it was a direct consequence of Worley's horrified reaction to learning that his students were "just putting [the sword] on the floor" of the bathrooms.

The finishing touch came in the form of a passphrase that one of his sci-fi students doomed all of Worley's future students to repeat in order to leave the classroom.

Pained upperclassmen yelling or muttering the words, "My quest for relief begins!", with sword in hand is now a regular affair in Worley's classes. Although the Dungeon & Dragons-inspired longsword doesn't grant every student who lifts it from its plastic stone anything nearly as fancy as the throne of England, it continues to bestow unforgettable memories.

## Ms. Jill Wharton

Wharton smiled as she brandished the slightly tattered but mostly intact box containing an untouched Jane Austen action figure.

"My two daughters and I all love to read. And we share a lot of book titles. And so somebody gave [one of my daughters] for her birthday this random Jane Austen action figure," she explained. When her daughter moved away for college, however, Wharton repurposed the doll for her newly developed British Literature class.

"So now I take great pleasure in making especially young adult boys walk around with a Jane Austen," Wharton laughed. "Once they've read ['Pride and Prejudice'] and they love it, then they're okay proudly carrying her around."

"But my juniors don't particularly love it," she admitted before adding delightedly, "I get a kick out of it though."

## Mr. Jeff Vangene

Vangene explained that he hadn't had a particularly nefarious reason behind his baseball bathroom passes, but he had been exasperated by the vanishing of his lanyards. Between the perfectly spherical shape of the current bathroom pass and the interesting shade of its once-white hide, the baseballs have discouraged dishonest students from stealing any more passes.

"I always wonder how you don't lose the baseballs but you lose the lanyard. And the lanyard goes around your neck and the baseball — I don't know what you guys do with it when you're peeing and I don't really care, I don't touch them."

Besides the odd baseball that gets stuck on the roof, Vangene has managed to keep most of his baseballs.

"It was one of my students. I was down by PE and playing catch with it and it got stuck in the rain gutter. Besides that, they've all ended up back here."

As far as student reactions went, Vangene said they were mild.

"Sometimes the students look at the baseballs like 'What am I supposed to do with this thing?' And I always kind of tell them, 'I don't know.'"

//SHEYDA LADJEVARDI

# MS. HANCOCK BRINGS HER UNIQUE TEACHING PHILOSOPHY TO DOUGHERTY

BY ANANDA CHAKKENCHATH  
Staff Writer

The clock struck midnight, and the last email was sent. But her day wasn't over quite yet, as the looming pile of quizzes were still stacked on her desk — quizzes that had to be graded so her students could use them to study for their upcoming test.

Hard work and dedication — these values, drilled deep into Ms. Shannon Hancock, are reflected in her lifestyle and ethics as a math teacher. It also means that she expects the same from her students. Perseverance and dedication are a must. From a young age, her father has taught her to live by these principles.

"I would say my dad, he has worked. Hard work and dedication has always been part of our family. And he has instilled that in all of us ... even in hard times, he has always continued to support us ... in continuing to think about what are you going to do next? You know, it's not a time to give up," Hancock recalled.

She continues to instill the drive in her students that her father.

A few years ago Hancock introduced a standards-based grading system to the math department. Her purpose in implementing this system was to eliminate the fact that students' grades don't reflect their knowledge and understanding.

She explains that students frequently approach her with questions like, "I need 10 points for my grade to be an A; how do I get those points?"

The real philosophy behind the system is that

communication should be effective and that learning should be an experience, not a race or competition to be labeled with letters.

Hancock considers herself a passionate teacher, someone who cares about her students' knowledge and success: not just in scoring and grades, but in experience and growth.

Mr. Jackson, a good friend and colleague of Hancock's and someone who has known her for more than 15 years, has nothing but approval for her methods and her grading system.

"My perfect world wouldn't have letter grades. We would get rid of those entirely because they're labels. And, I think sometimes we spend too much time trying to place a label on ourselves."

As a teacher, he conveys how it bothers him that kids could "squeak out a C because they turned in enough homework and participated in class, but then they failed every test. Yeah, it made no sense to me." He describes Hancock as "intelligent, driven and passionate about teaching."

Jackson elaborates that she challenges him with strong opinions and that they focus on giving students a stronger grasp on mathematical concepts. Their goal is to emphasize understanding of the course material more than scoring points.

Upon analyzing the system with which she grades her students, it's evident that Hancock's priorities lie in her students' conceptual understanding and their preparation for success in higher level courses. This requires hard work from not only her but her students as well.

Hancock also mentions how her grading system is useful in reference to students wondering what they missed on tests or how they can improve their grade in the future.

"It helps students figure out what they need to work on. Because otherwise, seeing a B or C or whatever doesn't communicate that effectively," Hancock stated.

Hannah Wang, a student who studied Algebra 2 with Hancock, states, "You have to do a lot of extra studying. But she really does prepare you for pre-calculus, because the work ethic that's required to pass this class really carries on to the next class, and it makes it a lot easier to go through pre-calculus."

She also mentions how having a strict teacher is beneficial for the future, because it's the same rigorous work ethic that's required to pass future classes with stricter teachers.

Though Hancock emphasizes drive and motivation most as a teacher, standing in a high school classroom isn't all that she does.

After school hours, she's someone who enjoys sports and food. She aspires to travel the world, and go to concerts with friends.

As much as she pushes herself and her students to work harder and learn better, she enjoys relaxing as well, including Friday nights out with her



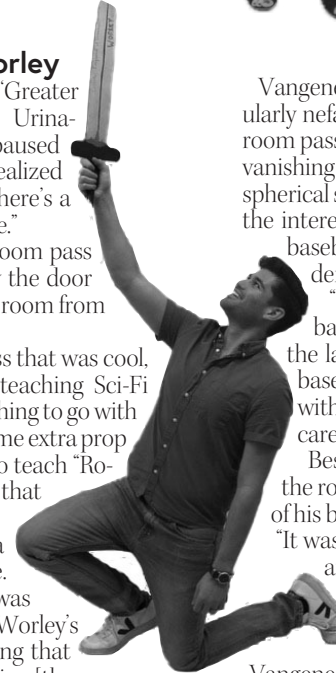
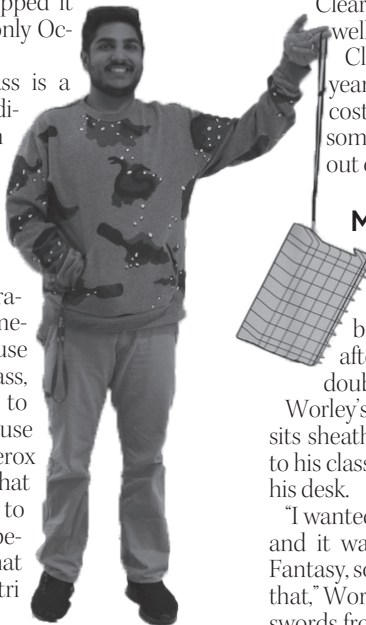
Ms. Hancock shares her grading philosophy //SKYLER SPEARS

mom and gardening over the summer.

"My tomatoes are still growing as we speak; I can't figure out when they're going to stop," Hancock shared.

Behind the deadlines and difficult math problems, Hancock believes that one bad test day shouldn't define your grade, and that a grade shouldn't define a student, as grades are nothing more than labels.

As the door creaks open, the slivers of early morning light peeking through the blinds signal that her first class is starting soon. When the familiar ringing of the bell pierces the air and students file into the classroom with a chorus of "hello's" and "good mornings," she can't help but wish that she is one step closer to helping her students reach their full potential.





## NO LAUGHING MATTER: THE HEALTH BENEFITS OF HUMOR

BY LAUREN CHEN & AMRITA HIMMATRAOPET  
Copy Editors

"Laughter is the best medicine" is a common cliché, but countless clinical trials and years of research demonstrate that laughing can actually improve your mental health in a variety of ways. In fact, even at Dougherty Valley, many use laughter as a coping mechanism on a daily basis.

Researchers conducted a study that exposed college students to "depression-inducing stimuli" followed by humorous or non-humorous audio, finding that students who listened to humorous audio exhibited faster reduction in depression levels. According to an article from Newport Academy, "Leading benefits of laughter include stress reduction, strengthened social connections and the release of your body's 'feel good' chemical, endorphins."

Additional research shows that laughter can have the same effect on your mental health as meditation.

"Joyful laughter immediately produces the same brain wave frequencies experienced by people in a true meditative state," Dr. Lee Berk, who has studied laughter and health for nearly thirty years, said.

Even "fake" joviality has demonstrated similar benefits. Researchers at the University of Kansas found that smiling helps reduce the body's response to stress and even lower heart rate in some situations. Forcing themselves to smile for just 30 seconds daily has been proven to help people feel less stressed and more in control of their life.

David Granirer, a Vancouver-based college counselor and stand-up comedian, founded the program Stand Up for Mental Health in 2004. Granirer, who lives with depression, trains people with mental health issues to perform stand-up comedy in venues across North America.

"Laughing at our setbacks raises us above them," Granirer says. "It makes people go from despair to hope, and hope is crucial to anyone struggling with adversity."

He has noticed that after performing their routines, the stand-up comedians "overcome long standing depressions and phobias, not to mention [increase] their confidence and self-esteem."

Dr. Madan Kataria has also explored the therapeutic applications of laughter. He designed Laughter Yoga as a way to promote happiness through "playful group exercises and deep breathing," according to a CNN article. During a typical session, participants in a Laughter Yoga session simulate laughter. Despite the initial awkward

and often forced laughter, the class eventually settles into a comfortable, relaxed environment. The laughter of the participants gradually becomes genuine, helping them connect with others and lift their spirits. The class also incorporates breathing and clapping exercises into the routine, creating a fluid and spontaneous class. Laughter Yoga has spread to locations across the country, and although some are skeptical about this growing trend, regular attendees claim that the sessions were successful in alleviating their stress and depression.

"Laughing at our setbacks raises us above them. It makes people go from despair to hope, and hope is crucial to anyone struggling with adversity."

However, not all laughter has positive impacts. Matt Newton, a Dougherty Valley psychologist, asserts that humor is only beneficial in certain situations.

"It needs to be paired with the right clients...[a sense of humor] is unique to the individual. But find what you like, and make sure that you incorporate it into your life," Newton stated.

Similarly, sophomore Sophie Davis\* thinks that using humor can be an effective method to relieve stress but only in limited amounts.

She found that her own use of humor, specifically a dark, self-deprecating humor, substantially harmed her mental health, especially when it led to feelings of insecurity. Davis reports that talking to people was a better outlet for her.

"It's a lot better, because it gives you an idea of what you can do — instead of just doing it by yourself," she says.

Newton also gave his input on students' use of self-deprecating humor. Like Davis, he believes that self-deprecating humor should be controlled and limited.

"It's just a way to cope and lighten the mood, and it's easier than just being stern," he says. "[But] there's that cliché, 'too much of a good thing.' [There are] people that are overly critical of themselves...I don't think that's healthy."

There are both benefits and drawbacks to the medicine that we call humor, but it seems that in the end, it all comes down to the individual. But thanks to new research, people are using humor to treat mental illness and boost people's moods. With millions of Americans struggling with mental health issues every day, new ways to alleviate symptoms and improve lives are always welcome.

\*Name has been changed to protect identity.

## INSTAGRAM TIGHTENS THE BELT AGAINST TOXIC DIET CULTURE

BY MEGAN DHILLON  
Treasurer

Instagram recently announced new policies that will prevent users under 18 from viewing posts that promote weight-loss products and cosmetic procedures. Specifically, posts that include incentives to buy products and those that are linked with commercial offers will be heavily scrutinized. The policies will begin to take effect throughout the next few weeks. Although the policy is led by Instagram, Facebook has similar plans.

Instagram public policy manager Emma Collins states, "We want Instagram to be a positive place for everyone that uses it and this policy is part of our ongoing work to reduce the pressure that people can sometimes feel as a result of social media."

Collins emphasizes that these changes are because of the increasing amount of influencers on the app and their impact on the social media community.

However, Instagram didn't make this move spontaneously. Actress and activist Jameela Jamil has been open about her criticism of celebrities, especially the Kardashians, for using their influence to spread "toxic diet culture." Jamil also started the "I WEIGH" campaign and account on Instagram to share her body-positivity message, which is one of the accounts that Instagram has worked with to create their policies.

Jamil calls their collaboration a great experience, and adds that, "Instagram was supportive and helpful when I brought them my protests and petitions; they listened, they cared, they moved so efficiently, and communicated with us throughout the process."

Instagram also worked with others to fine-tune these policies. Ysabel Gerrard, a digital media lecturer, was another contributor.

Gerrard mentions that Instagram's new policy is meant to protect youth who have developing body images and personalities from the influence of celebrities who seem to have the perfect body and lifestyle.

She states that, "This won't be the last you

hear of Instagram's efforts to minimize dangerous diet and cosmetic surgery-related content, and I will keep working with the other experts to push this in the best possible direction."

However, some believe that Instagram's policy isn't enough to stop the arising problems with diet culture.

Cara Rosenbloom, president of Words to Eat By, a nutrition communications company that focuses on nutrition education, argues that social media has done as much as it can.

She writes, "It's up to every individual, therefore, to recognize that diet culture is problematic, and to realize that we don't have to wait for Instagram to do something about it. Social media platforms, after all, simply show us more of what they think we want to see. When we search for posts about diet and weight control, Instagram will continue to fill our feeds with ads in these categories."

Rosenbloom believes that instead of looking to social media to make a difference, we should instead look at ourselves to recognize that diet culture is problematic, and shouldn't be something that influences our thoughts or actions.

"The real change we need is a societal shift to end diet culture. And while social media platforms can help,

that's beyond any policy that Instagram can implement."

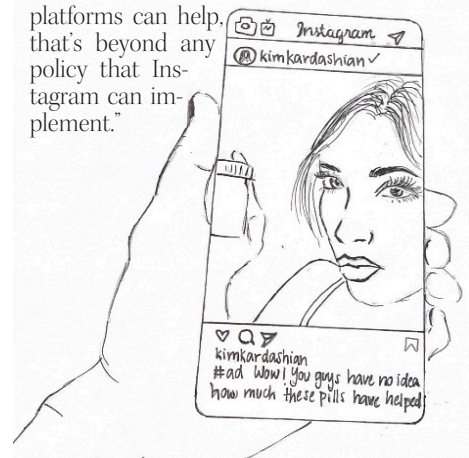


ILLUSTRATION BY DRISHTI UPADHYAYA

## COLLEGE BOARD IMPLEMENTS EARLY AP TEST REGISTRATION

BY MICHAEL HAN, CAROLINE LOBEL & VIVIAN KUANG  
Co-News Editor, Managing Editor and Public Relations Editor

College Board has updated AP test registration policies for the 2019-20 school year aimed at increasing test registration and pass rates, including a new online class code system and a fall registration deadline.

This year, all AP students are required to join their class on AP Classroom, a website where test registration occurs and College Board provides course resources. At Dougherty, the new registration deadline for the 2019-2020 school year was Sept. 27, compared to the March deadline from previous years.

"The biggest change is the registration date," said Ms. Lauren Falkner, AP coordinator and Vice Principal at Dougherty Valley. "[College Board] had done a bunch of research, and they found that they had more people follow through with completing the AP courses if the registration started in the fall. So that's what prompted them to make that change."

College Board argues that the earlier registration deadline is beneficial because it incentivizes students to remain motivated, especially underrepresented student populations.

"We've heard words like 'engaged,' 'confident' and 'less likely to give up' when students register in the fall — and that commitment translates into more students taking the exam and earning college credit," the College Board website stated.

In a fall registration pilot with 180,000 students across 800 schools, College Board saw increased test participation, especially among low-income students. Another pilot in 2017-18 with 40,000 students saw an increase in passing scores (3 or higher) amongst 20 percent of low-income students.

However, critics argue that the earlier deadline does not improve test outcomes. An analysis of the College Board data by TotalRegistration finds that though there were 3,141 additional low-income test takers at pilot schools, only 742 (23.6%) of the new low-income test takers earned passing scores. TotalRegistration argues that this data shows that the earlier deadline prematurely "coerced" students into taking the test, creating a burden for low income families.

These sentiments have gained traction amongst students and counselors around the country. A Change.org petition started by Wisconsin high school counselor Jennifer Wander called upon College Board to reverse the registration changes, and has garnered over 120,000 signatures to date. Some at Dougherty also agree with her stance.

"I'm not too sure about which classes I really need the AP test for," senior Richard Deng said. "I ended up signing up for all of mine, but I wish I had had more time to think."

However, Falkner asserts that performance on AP exams in May will not be adversely affected by early registration.

"I don't think [early registration will] affect [a student's] performance on the exams at all, because you're still

going through the class," Falkner said. "It might affect registrations and how many exams people sign up for, but in terms of their performance on their exams, are you telling me that because of a fall [registration] date, you're not going to prepare for your AP exams?"

In particular, some believe that the new deadline creates inflexibility for seniors applying for college.

"If the deadline is in February or March, people who get into college Early Decision know where they're going to go, so they know what requirements AP tests can help them fulfill," senior Glori Zheng said. "As of right now, some people don't even have their college list finalized, so they don't know what AP tests can help them."

The updated guidelines also require classroom codes from AP teachers to register, creating confusion for students who want to take an AP test without enrolling in the course. These independent study students have to rely on external sources such as parent group chats on the social media platform WeChat to receive registration information.

"You have to know the right people to get information. If my mom hadn't joined that WeChat group, I never would've gotten any information about AP Chinese," said Zheng, who plans to register for AP Chinese independently. "I feel like administration didn't share a lot of information with us and no students knew how it worked."

Ultimately, the new registration policies are a significant shift for students, teachers and administrators.

"DV is the largest school [in the district] when it comes to AP testing," Falkner explained. "I know that the changes have been tough, and I've done my job to communicate with your families, your teachers, and you students. But I'm always open to feedback or looking at making the process better. And I've already started taking notes to make changes for next year to make this an easier process."

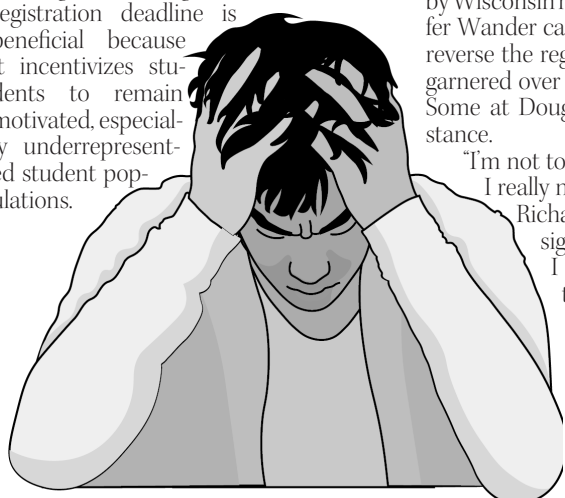


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# "THE POLITICIAN" PUSHES THE LIMITS OF THE HIGH SCHOOL TROPE

BY MAHIKA ARYA

Copy Editor

Showcasing the behind-the-scenes ugliness of the life of a leader, Ryan Murphy's "The Politician" eclipses its overused plotline with a careful eye for detail.

Murphy is most well known for his Golden Globe winning TV show, "Glee." With his background in showcasing "different," it's no surprise that his newest work uniquely highlights a life of privilege and power while trying to be ordinary.

Netflix released "The Politician" worldwide on Sept. 27, instantly gaining viewership from devout followers of the show's actors.

Tony Award-winning lead Ben Platt and actress Laura Dreyfuss previously worked together in the award-winning musical, "Dear Evan Hansen," and Dreyfuss has also individually worked with Murphy on other projects, such as the final season of "Glee."

Despite some big names, "The Politician" was built off of smaller elements. The majority of its cast consists of new actors, and its close attention to detail is what elevates the show from cliché to abnormally fantastic.

The show follows near-sociopathic Beverly Hills teenagers who aspire to win the position of student body president. These students embody real politicians, with their impassive faces and impressive facades, clawing their way to victory with no thought about the ways they scar the people around them.

In the ring that is St. Sebastian High School, Payton Hobart (Platt) and Astrid Sloan (Lucy Boynton) fight to the death, with the circus masters being their own insecurities and uncontrollable ambitions.

**"From the nearly unnoticeable symbolism with color to the play on words that become more obvious as the pilot progresses, "The Politician" makes itself unique by placing its standard for cinematography at the highest pedestal."**

They are supported by their loyal teams: the best-dressed advisor McAfee Westbrook (Dreyfuss), best friend James Sullivan (Theo Germaine) and cunning girlfriend Alice Charles (Julia Schlaepfer) on team Payton, and gender non-conforming Skye Leighton (Rahne Jones) supporting Astrid.

Payton has dreams of becoming the President of the United States, and according to his incessant research, the only thing left to do is to become the student body president.

The trope trying to

of teens dominate



"The Politician" makes up for its overused plot line with its attention to detail. // NETFLIX

their high school is demonstrated in just about every piece of cinema and it seemed like "The Politician" was going to fall into that

trap.

But that thought is demolished within the show's first few minutes. From the nearly unnoticeable symbolism with color to the play on words that become more obvious as the pilot progresses, "The Politician" makes itself unique by placing its standard for cinematography at the highest pedestal.

Within the first five minutes, a major color contrast is shown with River, a charismatic boy for whom Payton slowly develops feelings. River's room is shown with dark colors — navy blue, brown and black — whereas the rest of his house and his girlfriend are in pastels. This stark difference is akin to his personality, the happiness he portrays versus the darkness inside him which is revealed later in the episode.

The characters are three-dimensional, while somehow remaining machine-like in their quests to reach the top. This lack of emotion adds distance from the characters, but when their flaws and true nature are revealed, the parallels between their and a spectator's life come through.

Payton himself is a perfect example of this. He remains mechanical, stating that he doesn't know how to feel emotions throughout the season, not even flinching when he sees his girlfriend cheating on him. However, there are small pockets of feelings, like when he sheds a tear as his mom departs from a train station, which makes the audience empathetic towards him.

"The Politician" also showcases Platt's musical ability. His rendition of Joni Mitchell's "River" breaks hearts, and his lead in the school musical definitely allows him to show off a bit.

However, a brighter gem was hidden amongst the grief of the initial episodes. Platt came out with his first album "Sing to Me Instead" this year, and he subtly played the chorus of his song "Run Away" on the piano multiple times while near River.

Aside from its conversations about the necessity of emotional release, "The Politician" lightly touches on a variety of topics from gun control to the LGBTQ+ community. They develop these sensitive topics by allowing each one to be reserved for a specific character.

A topic dear to the show is mental health as suicide is shown in the first episode. Many characters mention experiencing depression as well, bringing light to this struggle in high school students' lives.

By allowing viewers to engage in these heavy topics with a hint of comedy, "The Politician" ensures that its overarching message of over-ambition is heard by a wide range of audiences.

"The Politician" may seem ordinary at first glance, but the depth and drama associated with it cannot go unnoticed by anyone. A second season is confirmed to release early fall 2020.

# NBC'S "THE GOOD PLACE" BLENDS INTRICACY INTO ITS FINAL SEASON

BY LAUREN CHEN

Copy Editor

The two-part season premiere of NBC's afterlife comedy "The Good Place" fulfilled its purpose of establishing this fourth and final season's plots, but left viewers unsatisfied by packing too much information into the first episode. However, the second episode saved face by combining bitter-sweet dialogue with plenty of the show's signature humor.

"A Girl from Arizona," Parts 1 and 2, were standard half-hour episodes that aired on Sept. 26 and Oct. 3, respectively. If you haven't watched "The Good Place," be forewarned that major Season 3 spoilers, as well as minor Season 4 spoilers and references to running jokes, will be discussed.

Season 3 ends with Eleanor Shellstrop (Kristen Bell) as the architect of an improved version of the Good Place experiment with help from her friends, the Soul Squad: Michael (Ted Danson), a reformed demon; Tahani (Jameela Jamil), a British socialite; Chidi (William Jackson Harper), a moral philosophy professor; Jason (Manny Jacinto), a Floridian goofball and Janet (D'Arcy Carden), an all-knowing artificial assistant.

Four flawed humans, who ordinarily would have gone to the Bad Place, unknowingly participate in the afterlife experiment designed in hopes that treating them like those in the Good Place will help them naturally reform their behavior. If the four humans improve themselves, then the Soul Squad will be allowed into the true Good Place. However, the experiment orders the evil Bad Place demons to choose the four humans in the experiment. When

one of their choices is Chidi's ex-girlfriend, he sacrifices all his memories, including the erasure of his current relationship with Eleanor, to avoid a conflict of interest and potentially ruin the experiment.

"A Girl from Arizona (Part 1)" starts with a heavy mood as Eleanor welcomes the amnesic Chidi into the Good Place. The moment when Chidi forgets Eleanor's name is heartbreaking, and Bell's performance in this scene perfectly captures viewers' emotions.

Unfortunately, the rest of the episode is reminiscent of Neutral Janet from Season 3 — a bit boring and to-the-point, existing only to provide necessary information for the subsequent episodes.

Too many subplots are set up in the episode, making it convoluted even for a seasoned fan of the show.

Part 2 rather than packing it all into the first hour of the season. The episode exists almost solely for the purpose of furthering the plot, overloading viewers with information. Part 1 lacks flavor as a whole.

In contrast, "A Girl from Arizona (Part 2)" is more poignant and reflective. The Soul Squad has survived many impossible challenges, yet the episode portrays the characters as they are: humans. Janet informs Jason that it isn't always best to make decisions based on our first impulses. This seems almost laughable, considering all the risks the Soul Squad has taken; however, it feels like a much needed moral refresher and emphasizes the danger that the characters put themselves through.

Additionally, during Eleanor's breakdown, we realize that she, in a rare moment of vulnerability, isn't superhuman. Even though she's literally been to hell and back to save her friends, she remains the "girl from Arizona" she's always been. Her struggles adjusting to her new role as the architect are completely plausible. Bell and Danson's performances in this scene are raw and masterful. Michael's reassurance to Eleanor: "You think you can't do this, Eleanor? You're the only one who can do this," is one of the stand-out moments of the episode.

Even with their flaws, Part 1 and 2 still play to the show's strengths with running gags and tongue-in-cheek pop culture allusions. Jason's wild Florida adventure stories continue when he offers to throw a Jacksonville carnival: "All I need is a bouncy house, some ninja stars and a bunch of ambulances!" And naturally, the Bad Place demons' theme song is the "Kars for Kids" jingle. These oddball elements give "The Good Place" its signature humor and style. The episodes would have been much more engaging with more of these elements sprinkled in, but there will be plenty more opportunities for jokes as the season progresses.

Overall, "A Girl From Arizona" Part 1 and 2 were satisfactory and provide a strong foundation for the rest of the season. Season 4 of "The Good Place" is set to continue whisking viewers through a roller coaster of emotional scenes. In an interview with Entertainment Weekly, Kristen Bell said in regard to the finale: "don't watch it alone and hold the hand of the person next to you."

However, through the season's ups and downs, it's almost guaranteed that "The Good Place," as always, will come out on top.



ILLUSTRATION BY LAUREN CHEN

Ranging from acts of demonic sabotage to unresolved romantic conflict, some plotlines would have been better developed in

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ILLUSTRATION BY ELAINE PARK



BY AMRITA HIMMATRAOPET & DRISHTI UPADHYAYA

Copy Editor & Co-Arts & Graphics Editor

### "IT'S THE GREAT PUMPKIN, CHARLIE BROWN"

There's a being who watches as we dream. A critic who judges our every move. One who gifts the generous and stands indifferent to the cruel. And every Halloween night, this deity rises out of the pumpkin patch harboring the purest of heart, and gives presents to all the good children who dare to believe. His name? The Great Pumpkin.

Portraying the famous "Great Pumpkin" for the first time on the big screen, "It's the Great Pumpkin, Charlie Brown" has become a Halloween classic for its charming simplicity. There's nothing daring about the plot. In fact, the movie would have been incredibly boring had it been executed differently in the slightest.

In telling the story of a common Halloween night, Charles Schulz somehow captures the joy and innocence of trick-or-treating and standing in a pumpkin patch all night. The tale is so ordinary, and yet, not. Every character serves as an overexaggerated caricature of a childhood trait we can all align ourselves with. It's ridiculous and painfully normal.

The movie is a timeless oxymoron loved by all who have watched it. It truly is one of the greatest Halloween classics.

### "DRACULA (1931)"

Vampires are one of the greatest symbols of Halloween. Their sleek elegance and foreboding demeanor remain unforgettable. Though common in myths and literature, vampires would never have become the iconic symbols they are today had it not been for their big-screen adaptations.

No Halloween movie list would be complete without a vampire movie, and this is the one that started it all. "Dracula" captures love, horror, and pain in just a little over an hour.

Made nearly a century ago, "Dracula" is a masterpiece in terms of plot, acting and costume design, but cannot even rival a school production in terms of special effects. What once was a terrifying staple of the horror genre is now best characterized as a comedy for their tacky sets and props. It's hilariously bad when it comes to basic effects but incredibly good at making the best with what they had. The terrible props do not slow down the actors at all, and make their acting seem godly in comparison.

This isn't a movie that will leave you with nightmares; it seems far too fake to invoke lasting fear. But as you watch it, you can't help feeling unnerved. The actors' performance pulls the viewer in and leaves them fearful despite how clearly unreal the movie is.

The unintentional comedy is a great way to

distract from how scary the film can be at times. "Dracula" is a staple of horror and comedy that will forever be a Halloween classic.

### "THE NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRISTMAS"

Since its debut in 1993, Tim Burton's "The Nightmare Before Christmas" has been a staple during both fall and winter. With contrasting elements of both darkness and warmth, this idiosyncratic movie tells a tale of Jack Skellington, Halloween-town's beloved pumpkin king, and his discovery of a brand new world: Christmastown.

A delightful movie, it features several hilariously scripted songs, such as "This is Halloween," "What's This?" and "Kidnap the Sandy Claws," paired with characters like Oogie Boogie, Dr. Finkelstein and Sally.



## THESE HALLOWEEN MOVIES ARE WORTH GHOSTING YOUR FRIENDS FOR

In addition to the beautifully written story, soundtrack and characters, the spectacular stop-motion animation took a jaw-dropping three years to create. This movie is worth watching just to appreciate that, if not for anything else.

In general, watching the bag of bones that is Jack Skellington stumble around as he tries to recreate Christmas while Oogie Boogie tortures the befuddled "Sandy Claws" is hilarious and sure to route laughter from anyone.

### "GHOSTBUSTERS"

The true faces of Halloween will forever be ghosts. Haunting us since the dawn of humanity, ghosts have always been seen as midnight terrors. And with every threat comes defenders. Warriors, fighting on behalf of mankind, protecting the innocent

from malevolent spirits. We can always count on these heroes to answer the cry of someone in need. So, "if there's something strange in your neighborhood, who you gonna call?"

That's right. The Ghostbusters.

We have used the word "classic" quite loosely, but this film truly does embody that term. The now well-known plot was refreshingly original and unique for its time. Spawning several sequels and remakes, "Ghostbusters" is clearly one of the most iconic Halloween films of all time.

Organic comedy and great chemistry between actors breathed life into the already exciting script. Backed by an incredible music score, the movie exaggerates minor actions and dances on the line between comedic and on-the-nose. Its humor has shaped generations, and with every remake, will continue to do so.

and his younger sister Dani, along with Allison, the inevitable love interest, go on a mission to defeat the aforementioned witches.

**"It's the Great Pumpkin, Charlie Brown" is a timeless oxymoron loved by all who have watched it."**

From comical dancing numbers to daring escapes from the evil witch sisters and colorful special effects, this movie is perfect for a night of laughter and anticipation.

### "JOKER"

It's dark. It's bright. It's startling loud. It's eerily quiet. It's painful. It's hilarious. It's a paradoxical, insane representation of the monsters carved by society's knife — the very society we live in.

It is the Joker.

DC takes a turn to the dark side with "Joker," showcasing how every villain sees himself as the hero in their own story. Tackling the role of the Clown Prince of Gotham, actor Joaquin Phoenix serves as no side character to another Batman. Phoenix takes the center stage with his unforgettable, bold take on the iconic clown. He portrays him as a cautionary tale, both a victim and villain in his own sense.

The stunning visuals do nothing to deter from his acting, but rather, enhance it. After watching, we start

to wonder: is the Joker the real clown? Or is it...society?

Reinventing the superhero genre, Joker manages to feel dramatically real, despite its clear roots in fiction. The excellent acting, gorgeous cinematography and dark script breathe life into a two-dimensional character. You'll cry, you'll laugh and cry again. The gritty and dark details will leave you with nightmares.

Joaquin Phoenix's laugh deserves an Oscar. The end. But really, if there's anything one should take away from this movie, it's that truly, we do live in a reversed society.

A mixture of psychotic thrill and humor as perfect as a peanut butter jelly sandwich, the movie is perfectly executed. Raising controversies from the beginning, "Joker" intrigues its viewers.

They say curiosity killed the cat, but satisfaction brought it back — this movie is worth watching, even if just to answer all our questions about the infamous clown. How did such a sadistic yet eerily captivating man come to become the way he is? What makes the Joker the Joker?

Complete with Joaquin Phoenix's demented cackles and enthralling performance, this movie certainly didn't fail to leave us with our jaws on the floor and our eyes wider than his smile.

ILLUSTRATION BY DRISHTI UPADHYAYA

# "AMERICAN IDIOT" REMAINS RELEVANT IN A TURBULENT TIME

ARIA KHALIQUE & SHRUTHI NARAYANAN  
Staff Writers

Green Day's "American Idiot" album, released in Sept. 2004, made a memorable statement about the political situation amidst the Iraq War. 15 years later, the album's relevance endures in its critiques about the government and American culture.

Self-described as a "punk rock opera," the concept album chronicles the story of Jesus of Suburbia, a young individual who attempts to cope with dead-end jobs, puppet presidents and other issues facing suburban citizens at the time. The album represents young individuals growing up in a turbulent time as a result of the Iraq War. With lyrics such as "I'm the son of rage and love" from the song "Jesus of Suburbia," the album portrays many Americans' mindsets as they struggled to choose between paths of love and hate at a time when mass media and the political administration were sending mixed signals.

**"The album portrays many Americans' mindsets ... at a time when mass media and the political administration were sending mixed signals."**

Today, many people find themselves still relating to the themes and concepts present in the album as a result of the current Trump administration and its policies. Many undocumented immigrants who have lived in the U.S. their entire lives now

find themselves isolated from everything they once knew. Their sentiment is similar to that of the main character of the album, Jesus of Suburbia, as he, too, could not recognize the world he was living in.

Jesus of Suburbia refers to someone who lived in the U.S. during the early 2000s. The fact that people are experiencing similar emotions towards political policies 15 years after the album debuted demonstrates how its critiques of politics and mass media are still relevant today.

The title track of the album, "American Idiot," claimed America to be "one nation controlled by the media." This line references the one-sidedness of the media and how it manipulated Americans during the Iraq war.

English teacher and Green Day fan Mr. Michael Morelli explains that the line holds equal weight today, given how polarizing the media is.

"The political right will say that the media is controlling the narrative," Morelli said. "And they're making all Republicans and the president look bad. Whenever you log onto social media, every post seems like [President Donald] Trump is bad. It's bad."

The line explains how the media portrays certain people as villains. Given the amount of influence the media has on people today, anything the media publishes can exacerbate the political divide. Left-leaning media negatively represent Trump and other Republicans, while right-leaning media negatively represent many prominent Democrats. People who consume left-leaning media tend to have negative opinions of Republicans, while people who consume right-leaning media tend to have negative opinions of Democrats, showing that if the media negatively portrays someone, the people will do the same.

Although the album criticizes mass media for spreading intolerance throughout the country, it also deals with the idea of a political administration spreading hate. In their hit single "Holiday," the band talks about a "flag wrapped around a score of men / A gag." The line indicates how the political administration hurts citizens while justifying themselves using patriotic reasons.



The album cover of American Idiot showcases the passion behind Green Day's message. // WIKIMEDIA

Morelli feels that the line demonstrates how now, people use being an American as a shield for consequences.

"People who say and do whatever they want ... They don't think about the consequences — they just wrap themselves in the flag to guard themselves by saying 'I'm an American,'" he said.

Though the line was aimed at the Bush administration and its decision to fight the Iraq war, many

feel the message applies equally today with the Trump administration's policies on immigrants and minorities.

The album's relevance to the current political climate puts the band in a unique position. Green Day has taken advantage of this by leading an anti-Trump chant whenever they play the album's title track in concerts.

Morelli feels that this chant, which goes: "No Trump. No KKK. No Fascist USA," demonstrates the band's strong distaste toward the current administration, applicable in today's political and social climate.

"A lot of artists in general just don't agree with the way the President conducts himself," Morelli said.

The album's forever-pertinent political message can still be seen through its fans. In July 2018, "American Idiot" hit no. 18 on the UK charts in anticipation of Trump's then-impending visit. Starting from a single tweet, the protest quickly spread until actual results were found. British people adopted the song, originally written about George W. Bush, to protest Trump and his policies about immigration, refugees and much more. Trump's visit was also accompanied by large protests in London, proving that the appearance of "American Idiot" on the chart was anything but a fluke.

Although many artists release music with political undertones, it is uncommon that an album is still pertinent and popular more than a decade after its release. The rarity of this proves that "American Idiot" is still important and relevant in modern-day society as its political messages continue to impact people not just in the U.S., but around the world.

"It is really a testament to the rock opera status it has," Morelli said.



# WHERE YOU GO TO COLLEGE DOES MATTER BUT NOT FOR THE REASONS YOU THINK

BY RACHEL DECKER  
Faculty Adviser



A few weeks ago, one of my Editor-in-Chief's sighed, exasperated. "I'm tired of people telling me it doesn't matter where I'll go to college, that wherever I go, I'll end up happy!"

Her defeated look saddened me. I initially disagreed, as I've often said that to hundreds of seniors, thinking it was comforting. After all, I didn't end up where I thought I would/wanted to go, and it all turned out the way it was supposed to.

The more I thought about it, I realized she might actually have a point. But maybe not in the way she, like many of you, think it does.

To explain, I need to go back to 2001. I too was a senior at an ultra-competitive high school, complete with a "where are they going?" wall and a girl named Sabine who swore she'd go to Stanford, Stanford med school, become a doctor AND be a French model. We were RANKED ... on our transcripts. There were also fewer of us, so we all knew each other and each other's rank; we too stressed about college. There were stigmas there too. P.S. You hand-wrote your college applications and colleges sent you skinny envelopes in the mail to reject you. Brutal.

For some reason, I was set on the University of Virginia and Boston College. I DEIGNED to apply to two UCs, the University of Oregon and a school called the University of Puget Sound, initially because they sent me lots of mail. My adult self looks at my judgmental 17-year-old self with

want, traversing a major metro system, learning how to budget, doing laundry for the first time.

The other reason is that it is SUCH A GREAT THING I did not get into UVA or BC. Not in the "my life was a happy pink cloud with puppies and rainbows" but more so because it DID matter where I went to college.

Why? Because UPS was the exact right place for me, for how/why I needed to grow at that time, the opportunities it gave me, the environment I needed to be in, the professors I learned from and the life skills it taught me. And so much more.

You've likely barely heard of my university. Mostly, people make bad jokes about packing boxes and driving large brown trucks. But UPS (get it?) was the absolute best place I could have attended college. Even years later, I do not regret going there and NOT somewhere else: I have never looked back and thought, damn, I wish I'd gone to UVA. Those manicured LAWNS tho! Not once.

Starting college, I was very sheltered. Naive. Confused. I may have talked a big game about why I wanted to attend UVA or BC — something about an honor code, Jesuit tradition, science programs — but I didn't have any PERSONALIZED reasons for attending. Mostly, they were very far from here (I'm a Bay Area kid), and I was obsessed with leaving, starting over and reinventing myself ("oh honey"). It was also because I thought it SOUNDED good; I daydreamed about telling people, "Oh yes, I attend an elite school".

But if you asked me why I wanted to attend UPS, I had tangible, definitive answers. While visiting, I noticed that people were always together in common areas, talking and laughing,

didn't feel overwhelmed in classes — my biggest was probably 50 — but it also wasn't so small that I felt exposed (insert Goldilocks metaphor here). I actually had relationships with my professors, because they taught their courses, not a TA, and they had office hours they actually sat in; once, my organic chemistry professor painful-

**"UPS was the exact right place for me, for how/why I needed to grow at that time, the opportunities it gave me, the environment I needed to be in, the professors I learned from and the life skills it taught me."**

ly tried to explain a semester's worth of material the day before the final. I wrote him a note at the end of it that said, "I'm sorry, I tried, but I'm giving up after three hours."

Outside of academics, I was exposed to passions I never even knew existed within me. I discovered journalism because it was a tiny program and allowed me freedom and the upward mobility to become editor-in-chief; that was my most favorite job I've ever held. I learned the all-important skill of walking backwards being a campus tour guide. UPS had a radio station where only maybe 100 kids applied for slots, instead of 1,000; I knew about Death Cab for Cutie BEFORE they WERE Death Cab for Cutie, k?

And the people I met there challenged my Bay Area bubble, exposing me to different lifestyles, music tastes, the way I saw the world. My friend Will, from the Alaskan wilderness, literally SHOT HIS OWN DINNER at home; what a world I'd never known! I met friends from all over the U.S., instead of mainly Virginia. My room was a double, with a strange roommate I ended up sitting next to at graduation, where, by the way, the Dean actually knew me (not for good reasons, but that's a different story...).

Mostly, UPS allowed me to be bold, courageous, and HONEST with myself. I challenged a faculty plagiarist; I changed my major, and thus my future career, after hearing the poet laureate breathe poetry into my blood; I camped on the beach for a weekend; I took a chance on a crazy idea and moved to DC with two suitcases and no promised job because I'd finally learned what it meant to truly challenge myself. I could go on, but overall, UPS made me, ME.

I don't presume to know all, but I know that UVA would NOT have. I would have been swallowed by its enormity and culture; I would have felt incredibly lonely at BC, in addition to being sheltered. Sure, I might have figured out how to be academically successful, made friends, had some good experiences. But I wouldn't have been as happy and I



Decker, during her first week of college, with her dormitory friends. //RACHEL DECKER

wouldn't have learned how to be ... me; I would have continued to keep up the same facade I wore while applying there.

So here's the crux: it mattered that I went to UPS because it was the right place for ME. Within that supportive but challenging environment, I thrived; I could shed my nervous, sheltered skin due to its size, culture and people. My relationships with professors and friends, who were all very different from me, pushed me out of comfort zones and exposed me to new ideas, perspectives, methods. I needed UPS to shed my supposed perception of my family's expectations of my future career and embrace what made me happiest: writing, discussing literature, critically thinking about the intersection of literature, history and culture, striving for justice, running a newspaper, singing karaoke at E9 on Thursdays, walking around that beautiful campus under a light mist, thinking, I am so lucky to be here.

"Ok, this is all really dreamy and passionate, Decker, but this is about ME," I can hear you saying. I have to go to Harvard because of their business program! I have to go to Yale for their connections! I must go to Stanford, so I can get into Stanford medical school, so I can become a doctor!

Sure, if you want to be the best engineer in the country, MIT probably should be at the top of your list. And I guess I can't argue with the idea that Harvard will facilitate connections with alumni, so you can start that investment firm you've decided at 16 you'll be the vice president of; it is a slight leg up to attend certain schools because of their connections and

**"The single most important factor, agent of change, determiner, is YOU."**

their impressive endowments.

But don't let that make you think other colleges don't. I landed my first job because my boss was so impressed with the investigative journalism I'd conducted on a faculty plagiarist that he knew I'd be a perfect fit. I went through a rigorous academic program at UPS, just like any other school. I'm still in contact with some of my old professors, some of whom wrote me letters of recommendation for graduate school. A year ago, I posted an article on Facebook about

academics and strong teachers with the comment, "Thanks to my tough AND supportive professors I am the student/teacher/thinker/resilient person I am today" and actually TAGGED them in the post. One of them responded: "Commodore Decker [that's what he called me], you graced UPS. You made it better, which was and is difficult. I think often of your courage and how you opposed pseudocourage and plagiarists." AND I RAISE YOU, HARVARD.

And sometimes, more often than not, your future plans don't turn out the way you believe they will right now (actually, it's most of the time). And I believe it is more important to attend a college for what it can do for you personally rather than for an uncertain, imaginative future you have no control over. I am by no means advocating for not planning for your future or saying it doesn't matter. But I believe that personal growth leads to a bright, happy, successful future and that college is instrumental in that process. IF you choose wisely.

Listen. If you don't buy any of this, know this: wherever you end up for college, you will inevitably do all of the following: you'll do something really embarrassing your first week; you'll have a dorm room the size of a stamp pad that you'll decorate with what you think are impossibly cool posters and string lights; you will have at least one weird friend (everyone does); you will, often, usually around 1 a.m., as you stare at a 10-page paper assignment you've written just your name on that's due in under eight hours, consider dropping out; you'll go through a "I'm trying on this new personality" phase, probably with poor wardrobe choices. You will also learn, think, study harder than you ever have in your life, read, read even more still, improve your time management skills, challenge yourself and grow.

Whatever campus you walk onto next month, the single most important factor, agent of change, determiner, is YOU. As writer Kelly Corrigan so eloquently stated in a public Facebook post last month: "You are your own good news. You can create a future for yourself, full of connection and purpose. Beneath the fear of inadequacy and the self-consciousness that suffuses public evaluation, you're in there. You have gifts and power and will develop more of both. Tend your crops, best you can, and that will be enough. I promise."

This is the first time you're (or rather someone is — a trust fund, a parent, a big bank) paying for your education. So choose wisely: it does matter where you attend college. Make it the right choice for YOU.



Decker at her college graduation with her roommates. She earned a B.A. in English and a minor in Biology. //RACHEL DECKER

shame, and a little bit of pity (that line "Oh, honey" from "How I Met Your Mother" comes to mind). I had a stellar GPA (#37 baby!), several extracurriculars, weighted classes and a fairly decent essay, but literally cried over my SAT scores. I was also hopelessly sheltered, naive and not nearly as smart as the 65% of Virginia students given admission preference.

I'll spare you the agonizing details of my senior year and the not so obvious spoiler that I did not get into UVA. Devastation. Or BC. A glazed numbness set in. All I could think about was what a loser I was, completely ignoring the fact that I got into FOUR other REALLY GREAT COLLEGES.

I mention this all-encompassing rejection for two reasons. The first is that everyone struggles with, and gets rejected from, colleges. I think of this as a literal rite of passage, along with getting rejected from a job you really

I was genuinely engaged in the class I watched and everyone was so friendly I kinda wanted to cry.

UPS is also a beautiful campus, with big trees, brick buildings, and green stuff, in a small town similar to the one I'd grown up in. They had an amazing music program, which I could be a part of but not have to major in. Their 3,500 student population felt comfortable after going to a high school of 400. It was close to Seattle, a mecca of culture, music, diverse people. Mostly though, it was because the campus felt like HOME. I could actually picture myself there, not just daydream about attending. The distinction is important: there's a difference between seeing and hoping/pretending.

Fast-forward to my actual four years at UPS, where my academic experience was personalized, comfortable, just the right kind of challenging. I

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# DV MEN'S WATER POLO STRUGGLES AGAINST LEAGUE POWERHOUSES

BY SNEHA CHEENATH & HARSHITA NERALLA  
Co-Sports Editor & Social Media Editor

Dougherty Valley Men's Water Polo lost to the Foothill High School Falcons after a neck-in-neck game on Sept. 26.

Seconds after the first quarter began, Foothill scored the first goal, showing

off their remarkable offense. The Wildcats' defense failed to keep up with the speed of the Falcons' offense as they kept hammering out goals. The first quarter ended 4-2, with the Falcons holding a narrow lead.

The Wildcats picked up their pace in the second quarter as senior Alexander Burr and sophomore Michael Gerges scored three consecutive goals. Their

defense improved remarkably as the Falcons scored only one goal, bringing the overall score to 5-5 by the end of the first half.

The second half intensified as both teams fought for the win. Falcons Daniel Kim and Sanjay Menon both carried the offense during the third quarter as the Wildcats' defense began to falter. Dougherty scored two goals while

Foothill scored four, bringing the overall score to 9-7 by the end of the third quarter.

The final quarter fell into a similar pattern of strong offense from both teams, but where Dougherty's defense faltered, Foothill's defense picked up. The Falcons' defense constantly closed in on the Wildcats throughout the quarter. Each team scored two additional goals, ending the game with an overall score of 12-9.

In their next game, they lost to Amador Valley High School with a final score of 20-10 on Oct. 10.

The first quarter started with a goal from Amador, but DV soon recovered with a goal from sophomore Gerges. Much of the quarter was neck-in-neck, with Amador gaining a lead and DV quickly bringing the score back to a tie. But another shot from Gerges put them in the lead, and the quarter ended with a score of 6-5.

In the second quarter, Amador was able to show off their defense more as they started to build their lead over Dougherty. Amador made five consecutive goals, one of them being a penalty shot to start the quarter. DV attempted a skillful shot, but the goalie was still able to block it. Before the end of the quarter, Amador scored several more times. Senior Abhigya Wangoo said that their lack of goals for much of the game was due to the stout defense.

"With this goalie, it's very difficult to get an opening, so it takes more time to analyze it well," Wangoo said.

Quarter three started favorably for the Wildcats; the goalie skillfully blocked two shots from Amador, and senior Noah Richard scored successfully. But Amador soon slammed the ball into the net, which changed the course of the game in their favor. They scored two more goals after. The quarter ended with Amador's failed attempt to score a goal from across the pool. Amador had a hefty lead by the end of the quarter, with a score of 15-7. This lead was largely due to their ability to move very quickly across the field, passing long distances. Wangoo said that this type of offense is called a fast break.

"A big part of avoiding fast breaks is situational awareness. It depends on how aware you are of the time left on the shot clock and how well you can get back on defense," Wangoo said.

In the fourth quarter, Amador started the game by once again showing off their passing skills. The goalie was able to obtain the ball, and threw it across the pool, at which point another player grabbed it and made the first goal of the quarter. But Dougherty soon redeemed themselves with three quick goals. The game ended with Amador making two more goals, making the final score 20-10.

Men's Water Polo will play their last home game of the season against California High School on Oct. 24.



Senior Noah Richard guards Amador player approaching their goal. //SNEHA CHEENATH

## DV WOMEN'S WRESTLING CHALLENGES GENDER NORMS IN SCHOOL SPORTS

BY SANJANA RANGANATHAN  
Co-Opinions Editor

Started three years ago, Dougherty Valley High School houses the only female wrestling team in the school district; it has grown rapidly since then and continues to challenge social and gender norms.

The girls' team at DVHS is not only unique for the very fact that it is the only girls team in SR-VUSD, but because female and male teams are incredibly integrated, differing from most other sports.

According to captain Shreya Balasubramanian, both genders practice together, bond together and receive similar opportunities.

The only area they differ is in tournaments and competitions, where genders are segregated for competition purposes.

The women's team has also been incredibly successful.

Balasubramanian notes that the team qualified 12 girls to NCS and one to state last year, which are relatively high numbers given how new the team is.

her initial challenges.

"In the beginning, I felt that I had to prove to myself that I was good enough for the guys. I felt like [girls] had to work harder to prove that we can do it too," she said.

Lam attributes wrestling's societal perception as an inherently "masculine" sport. She describes her initial perception of wrestling as "strong men putting each other to the ground."

"She concludes, 'It is 'normal' for a guy to wrestle, whereas if I tell someone I wrestle, they are like, 'Oh you wrestle?'"

Despite some initial pushback from existing male members, the girls team has ultimately been beneficial for DVHS wrestling as a whole.

Miles Stines, a senior male on the team, notes that while some of the guys were against it at first, the addition of the girls team has boosted DVHS' wrestling quality as a whole, overall concluding that the entire team has improved.

This positive increase can also be seen nationwide. The number of high school female wrestlers is on the rise; according to the National Wrestling Coaching Association (NWCA), there are 16,562 high school female wrestlers, growing from just 804 in 1994.

Wrestling has also been recognized at the collegiate and Olympic levels. In 2004, female wrestling was recognized as an Olympic sport



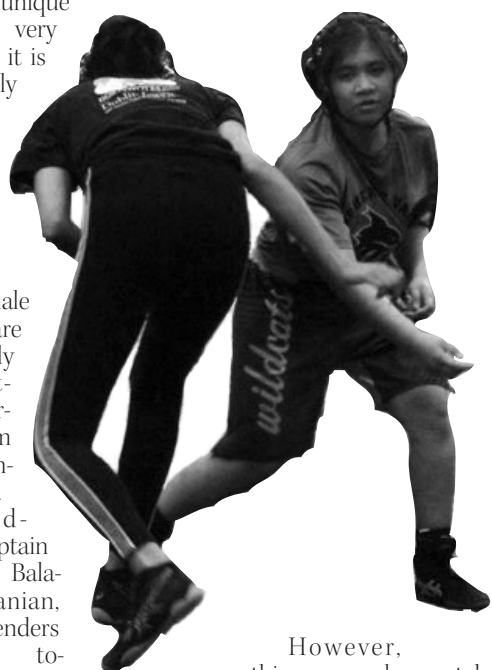
Junior Shreya Balasubramanian and senior Isabelle Ocampo face off before a match. //SHEYDA LADJEVARDI

and approximately 60 colleges currently sponsor female wrestling programs.

Gender equality is definitely improving. As the DVHS women's wrestling team's numbers grow, so does their influence in creating wider

societal change.

"More and more girls have been coming out and doing the sport ... and it is becoming more acceptable for girls to engage in such a physical activity," Lam said.



However,

this success has not been easy for females, many of whom have faced initial barriers in overcoming the masculine stereotypes surrounding the sport.

Senior Jasmine Lam recalls

//SHEYDA LADJEVARDI

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### FALL SPORTS RECORDS



**FOOTBALL**  
Season Record: 1-7  
League Record: 0-2



**TENNIS (W)**  
Season Record: 12-1  
League Record: 12-1



**WATER POLO (M)**  
Season Record: 5-5  
League Record: 2-4



**VOLLEYBALL (W)**  
Season Record: 5-11  
League Record: 5-11



**WATER POLO (W)**  
Season Record: 1-7  
League Record: 0-5



**GOLF (W)**  
Season Record: 17-1  
League Record: 16-1



**CROSS COUNTRY**  
Season Record: 17-1  
League Record: 16-1  
Men: Ashraf Abdelmagid (16:16.8)  
Women: Ritika Singh (19:46.2)



# FOOTBALL CONCEDES TO AMADOR VALLEY IN HOMECOMING GAME

BY SNEHA CHEENATH  
Co-Sports Editor

On Oct. 3, Amador beat Dougherty 56-7 during the Homecoming game, but the Wildcat spirit of the crowd never lapsed.

The first quarter started with Amador running into the end zone from 45 yards away.

They attempted a two-point conversion, but DV senior Josh Downton tackled their runner, ending their play.

Amador then made another touchdown across the field, from DV's 36-yard line. This time, they had a suc-

cessful two-point conversion, which raised the Amador lead to 15-0.

Head coach Tim Conrad said that they should improve on their offensive skills by "working on our passing game and getting out in space and getting the ball into our best, talented guys' hands so they can make things happen."

The second quarter had an auspicious start, as Dougherty got to Amador's 13-yard line. But what would have been a touchdown pass was intercepted and Amador ran all the way across the field into the end zone. Still, Dougherty brought it back, getting it to the six-yard line. Senior Jack Varni pushed through



Amador prepares to snap the ball for the upcoming drive. // HELANA GENDY



Senior Diego Barragan takes charge of his team during pregame warm-ups. // HELANA GENDY

Amador's defense, but the ball landed less than a yard away from the end zone.

In the next play, the Wildcat's O-Line soundly run blocked forward to surpass Amador's defense and got a touchdown, as well as the extra point. Amador scored two touchdowns before the quarter ended, and the first half ended at 42-7.

"The team came together and really fought for that first touchdown" Coach Conrad said.

During halftime, the intense emotion and excitement of the crowd

could be felt as Cheer and Song performed. The crowd had high energy, and "the atmosphere was really exciting," Conrad said.

The third quarter started with Amador getting a 25-yard touchdown and the extra point. Throughout the rest of the quarter, both teams had strong enough defense that no other touchdowns were scored.

"I think as a defense, we really hunkered down and really tried to make a statement," Conrad said. "On the offensive side, we were trying to run the ball against them, but I think

they made some good adjustments as well."

The fourth quarter followed a very similar pattern set by the third: it started with Amador scoring a touchdown and an extra point. Ultimately, Dougherty lost the game with a final score of 56-7.

"I know the score was tough ... but the boys played some really spirited football and they fought right till the end," Conrad said.

The Wildcats will play in their final road game and rivalry game against Dublin HS on Oct. 25.

# WOMEN'S WATER POLO LOSES THREE GAMES AGAINST POWERFUL DEFENSES

BY MAHIKA ARYA &  
SNEHA CHEENATH  
Copy Editor &  
Assistant Sports Editor

Women's water polo lost three of their last home games: 12-4 against Mission San Jose on Sept. 17, 23-2 against Foothill on Sept. 26 and 18-1 against Amador Valley on Oct. 10.

The Sept. 17 game began with a penalty shot for MSJ, which was blocked by junior goalie Abigail Bradford but was promptly followed by an MSJ goal 30 seconds later.

About a minute later, DV senior Shaurya Nyamagoudar scored, smashing the ball over the heads of many defenders.

The defense opened up 30 seconds later, and MSJ scored again.

Another MSJ player shot soon after, but it was blocked by DV's defense. DV Captain Witney Lam passed the ball, which MSJ easily intercepted. MSJ scored again with 40 seconds left in the quarter, ending at 4-1.

**"A lot of times, [the ball] overthrows because if you're throwing really fast, you don't have as much accuracy."**

**- Shama Saleem**

Lam shot instantly in the second quarter, but the ball just barely hit the rim.

After a minute of play, MSJ scored its first goal of the quarter.

Both teams made two shots, both of which were blocked. This back-and-forth action led to MSJ scoring at around four minutes, which was followed by MSJ scoring two more times.

With 53 seconds left in the quarter,

DV player Saanvi Deb scored, bringing the half-time score to 8-2 in favor of MSJ.

The second quarter began with multiple attacks on the goalie, and three minutes in, MSJ scored another goal.

DV had many slips on offense during this quarter, but their defense was strong enough to limit MSJ to only one goal for the rest of the quarter, ending 10-2.

The contentious final quarter yielded goals from both teams, with Nyamagoudar and Lam, scoring. The final whistle blew with MSJ soundly beating the Wildcats, 12-4.

Their losing streak continued against Foothill 23-2 on Sept. 26.

The first quarter began with an attempted goal from each side. Goalies blocked both shots, but Foothill scored soon after. They then scored three consecutive goals, scoring one by rapidly swimming across the pool and almost nonchalantly placing the ball in the goal.

"We should focus on grabbing the ball when the other team turns over," Saleem said.

Dougherty was able to score at the end of the quarter, ending the quarter 4-1.

In the first seconds of the second quarter, Foothill scored. They attempted another goal, and the DV goalie blocked the ball. But Foothill picked up the rebound and scored, raising Foothill's lead. In the remainder of the quarter, Foothill scored twice, resulting in a 10-point lead in Foothill's favor.

Despite having a lot of initial control over the ball, DV "had a lot of turnovers, which is the problem," junior Keya Vaidya said.

Foothill started strong in the third quarter and scored two goals. But DV's Lam soon got the ball and chucked it across the pool, where it landed in the goal, making the score 14-2. By the end of the quarter, it was 17-2.

In the fourth quarter, Foothill scored six consecutive times, making the final score 23-2.

This losing trend continued into DV's second-to-last home game against Amador, where they were blown out, 18-1.

AV started off with the ball, but captain Lam quickly intercepted it, shoot-



Junior goalie Abby Bradford attempts to block a shot from an Amador player. // SNEHA CHEENATH

ing but missing the goal within a minute of time starting.

A mere five seconds after this attempt, AV scored a goal. Lam tried following up, but the shot was blocked. Two and a half minutes later, AV scored another goal, carefully maneuvering around DV's defense.

After a few more close attempts from both teams, Amador seemed to slam another ball into the net 40 seconds later, but the goal wasn't counted. After this call by the referee, Amador scored two more consecutive shots within 30 seconds of each other.

There was little action until the last 30 seconds of the quarter, when AV scored, bringing the first quarter score to 5-0.

The second quarter began with a bang, with Amador attempting a goal within 40 seconds of the whistle blowing,

quickly followed by another goal.

There was a fight for the ball, and it resulted in Amador getting a penalty shot; however, this was caught by DV's goalie, junior Abigail Bradford. Despite this excellent block, Amador scored two more goals in the next minute.

The game remained quieter until AV scored two more goals around four and five minutes into the quarter, respectively. With just 20 seconds left in the half, Amador scored one more goal before the half ended 10-0, Amador.

The second half began with constant scoring by Amador, scoring four goals in a short five minutes.

This quarter saw many interceptions, with no one having complete control for the majority of the half. Each team intercepted each others' passes, but by the time the ball had emerged, the quar-

ter ended 14-0.

"We're not very good at ball-handling, so we can't keep the ball when we're on offense," Saleem said. "Even though we might be fast enough, we can't keep the ball."

In the final quarter, DV seemed to wake up, with Lam making a great shot in the initial minute, but the goalie just barely helped it above the time. Amador scored three more goals within three and a half minutes.

There were many more attempts, but none successful until Amador scored at six minutes. This spurred on Lam as she scored a difficult goal with 30 seconds left in the game. This closed the game at 18-1.

Women's water polo will face off in their final game against Cal High on Oct. 24 at DV at 4 p.m.



# CLIMATE CHANGE:

Jakarta, Indonesia is sinking  
 the Java Sea due to rising sea levels  
 The polar vortex hitting North America, due to Arctic warming  
 2018 California "Camp Fire" erupted, burning 2 million acres  
 African droughts cause humanitarian crisis  
 40% of the Indian population expected to run out of water  
 Okjokull, an Icelandic glacier was declared dead  
 IMPENDING DOOM OR NEGLECTED REALITY?



FEATURES BY: SARAH KIM, ANIKA GARG, RIYA BINDLISH

CONTRIBUTIONS BY: SANJANA RANGANATHAN, VIVIAN KUANG, STEVEN CHEN, CLAIRE ZHANG

SOURCES: NGO CARE, WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION, THE GUARDIAN, WORLD RESOURCES INSTITUTE, CNN



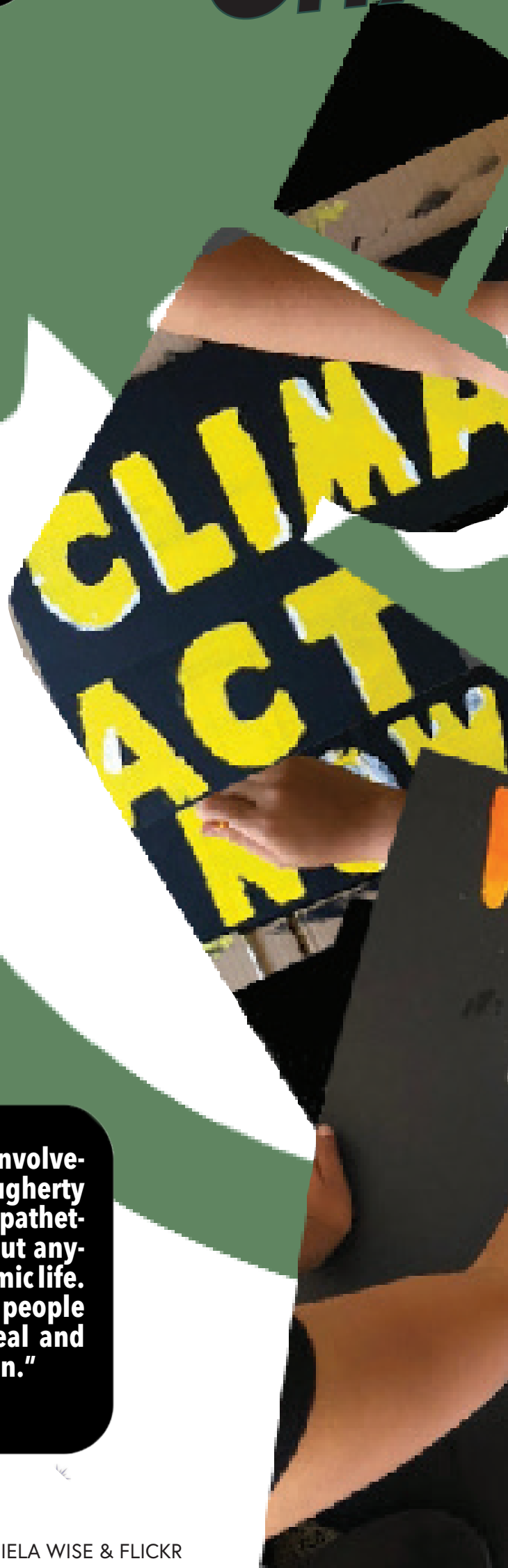
# DVH STUDENT STRIKE CLIMATE CHANGE



"We need more youth involvement, especially if you can't be in the strike, then, of course, you don't have to. But I think if there is one day you should join, this is the day."  
- climate activist Greta Thunberg



"Our second [goal] is to pressure local, state and federal politicians to take action with the Green New Deal. The last is to demand that the city of San Ramon and the SRVUSD School Board declare a climate emergency and take action with local environmental policies so what we plan to do is to have three separate campaigns."  
-lead strike coordinator Aidan Mo



"We need more youth involvement, especially at Dougherty Valley, where there is an apathetic culture of not caring about anything else other than academic life. So we did this strike to tell people that the climate crisis is real and that we must take action."  
- Mo



# STRIKES FOR CLIMATE CHANGE

"I think this also lets them know that we aren't just going to like not doing anything about this and that there will be more strikes and will be taking more action after this." The climate strike was part of a more significant movement for change – the Sunrise Movement. According to their website, they "are ordinary young people who are scared about what the climate crisis means for the people and places we love. We are gathering in classrooms, living rooms, and worship halls across the country."

- Sahiti Guduru, Data Manager



As a movement, the Sunrise Movement, we have had lots of [responses from politicians]. I think there are 17 presidential candidates who back the green New Deal, and who have taken the no fossil-fuel money pledge, including Senator Elizabeth Warren and Bernie Sanders ... We have confronted Republicans and Democrats about taking money from fossil fuels or not backing the green new deal. There have been responses from politicians from both sides of the aisle, but we hope to expand that so every local government hears us."

- Mo



"We're the future generations, so I think the youth has the biggest impact and therefore if we really speak up, then we can change things, especially in the future."

- Sindhoori Kalavacharla



BY DANIELA WISE, VAIJAYANTI ASHOK, THYRA BECKLEY, MAYURI CHAKKENCHATH & OWEN SPARGO  
Co-Social Media Editor & Staff Writers



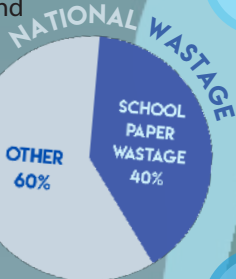
# EDITORIAL:

By The Wildcat Tribune

## DVHS SHOULD INSTITUTE A COMPOSTING PROGRAM TO REDUCE OUR ENVIRONMENTAL FOOTPRINT

### BACKGROUND OF COMPOSTING IN SCHOOLS

Composting has long been hailed as an effective means in reducing landfilling, a process which is both expensive and dangerous to the environment, producing copious amounts of the greenhouse gas methane. In fact, more than 72% of all materials entering landfills can be diverted through composting (Risse and Faucette, University of Georgia). By diverting organic waste to be broken down and eventually recycled into the earth, composting has prevented approximately 2.1 million tons of waste in the U.S. from reaching landfills in 2019 alone.



Compostable materials include most common foods except animal fats and many plant material derivatives, such as trays from the cafeteria, most food waste and paper used in classrooms.

Notably, successful composting has been conducted in many U.S. schools similar to DVHS. Lincoln School District in Nebraska, for example, began their composting initiative in May 2014 and have since had all levels of schools compost up to 90% of cafeteria waste. Bakersfield, Calif., has also implemented a composting program across its 53 schools, reducing waste by 50% and saving 33% of disposal costs with no additional labor.

Mid-sized school districts, such as SRVUSD, consume around 12,000 tons of paper annually.

In addition, San Francisco Unified School District has instituted a comprehensive composting program, which is projected to divert 85% of waste from landfills by 2025.

We believe that these composting programs can easily be translated to DVHS.

### OUR PROPOSED SOLUTION

Our composting program for DVHS, which can be implemented immediately, is as follows:

- 1 Coordinate with waste management services.** The current SRVUSD waste management service is able to handle compost, as evidenced by the ongoing composting program at Charlotte Wood Middle School and past programs at DVHS. As a prefeasibility check, the DVHS administration should contact our waste management service provider and update them of plans to compost in bulk.
- 2 Form a student-led task force to oversee implementation.** A task force comprised of interested student members from all grade levels, relevant administrators and AP Environmental Science teachers should be formed in order to oversee implementation of the DVHS composting program. This group should create and maintain a program to educate the DVHS community on composting while working closely with the custodial team to ensure that composting is running smoothly.
- 3 Purchase additional composting bins and place them wherever there is a trash can.** Composting bins should be placed in all buildings, particularly the Commons, and every major junction where there is currently a trash bin. This would give students the option of composting whenever they need to dispose of waste. These bins will not incur additional costs for the school district, according to a representative from the Alameda County Industries, which manages San Ramon collection services.
- 4 Place clearly labeled signs with easy-to-follow instructions at each compost bin.** Easily comprehensible, pictorial signs indicating what can and cannot be composted should be attached to all compost bins around the school so that students can make appropriate composting decisions.
- 5 Require teachers to compost all paper going to waste.** All DVHS faculty should be required to compost any unneeded paper materials from their classes. Additionally, the blue recycling bin in classrooms should be relabeled as a general paper waste bin, whose contents should be composted.

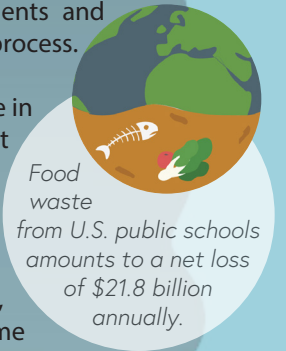
### COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGES

Voiced by DVHS custodial staff, one of the major arguments against composting at high schools is that students won't properly separate compost from other waste, nullifying the desired effects of composting.

While a learning curve is natural for any new initiative, it is not a reason not to implement it. Rather than focusing on the possible barriers to successful composting, DVHS should seek solutions to educate students who may be misinformed.

In step two of our solution, we proposed creating a student-led task force that would oversee the implementation of a composting program. Not only would this raise awareness, but it would also lift the burden of teaching waste separation from custodial staff, delegating it to the students and accelerating the learning process.

The concept of placing waste in its corresponding bin is not a difficult one; students as young as kindergarteners successfully do so. If anything, the real barrier at the high school level is apathy, one that is easily overcome by better involving students such as through the taskforce.



In the end, a small impact is still better than none. For example, in the Lincoln Public Schools, although high schools have the lowest diversion rate (the percentage of food waste which is placed in the composting bin), they still diverted more than 60% (Waste360). Composting, even if not exercised to its maximum extent, still provides an overall benefit.

