Oxbridge Today

THE ANNUAL MAGAZINE OF OXBRIDGE ACADEMY • VOLUME 4



College Counseling Paves the Way

Health & Wellness Takes an Integrated Approach




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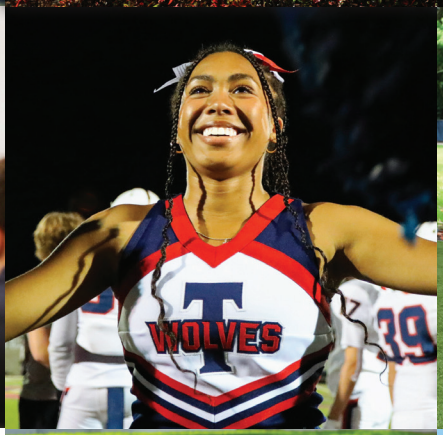
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Welcome Message from Our Head of School



At Oxbridge Academy, every year brings new opportunities for growth, connection, and accomplishment. This year is no exception. Our commitment to **Leading with Kindness and Acting with Courage** drives everything we do, from expanding programs to deepening our community's impact. Whether you're a returning member of the Oxbridge family, a proud alum, or someone just getting to know us, this issue of *Oxbridge Today* is filled with stories that reflect the heart of our school.

One of the most rewarding aspects of this past year has been seeing how our students thrive when given opportunities to learn and grow beyond the traditional classroom. Watching their excitement as they prepared for transformative experiences—like our cultural immersion and service-learning trip in Thailand or the inaugural eighth-grade journey to Washington, D.C.—was a highlight of the year. These programs, alongside our Cambridge Scholars program, a summer language immersion trip to Spain, and various academic and extracurricular field trips across the United States, have broadened our students' perspectives and enriched their Oxbridge journey. They've fostered intellectual and personal growth that prepares them to make meaningful contributions in the world. This year, we're introducing even more international opportunities, including trips to France and Vietnam, and I can't wait to see how these new experiences will shape our students' lives.

Under the leadership of Dean of Students Jason Glick, our community service initiatives have grown significantly. Our Middle School students participated in their second annual Day of Service, working with Feeding South Florida to help those in need. We also held our first Senior Day of Service in March, where Seniors volunteered across Palm Beach County. Other school-wide service initiatives included beach cleanups, gleaning at local farms, and food distribution events. Through these efforts, our students are making meaningful contributions to the broader community while building a strong sense of social responsibility and citizenship.

Our growing Middle School is thriving in every way, from dynamic academic programming like our interdisciplinary humanities courses to active participation in competitive athletics, arts, clubs, and student government. A highlight of our new sixth-grade experience is the FAU Team Building Ropes Course Program, introduced this fall, providing our youngest ThunderWolves with a foundation in communication, teamwork, and leadership.

In the Upper School, our graduates continue to earn admission to an impressive array of outstanding U.S. and international colleges and universities, reflecting the breadth of their talents, ambitions, and academic achievements. From Ivy League institutions to specialized programs in the arts and sciences, the Class of 2024 demonstrated remarkable dedication and versatility in pursuing their goals. Numerous members received scholarships in the arts, athletics, and academics, including National Merit Scholarships, Scholastic Art Awards, and four-year scholarships to the universities of their choice. These accomplishments are a testament to their hard work, determination, and the opportunities they embraced during their time at Oxbridge.

Oxbridge's continued success is also evident in the achievements of our alumni. Keidron Smith '18, now a safety for the NFL's Denver Broncos, returned to campus to speak about the importance of maintaining balance as a student-athlete. Riley Smith '16 visited with his media company, N8TV Productions. Musician Joe Noto '17 performed across Central and South Florida, including a show at the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino in Hollywood. We're also incredibly proud of siblings Shirah '20 and Michael Benarde '15, whose innovative company, NightCap, earned them a spot on *Forbes* magazine's 2024 30 Under 30 list in Retail & E-Commerce, following their 2021 win on *Shark Tank* and reaching over $2 million in sales in 2023.

Of course, none of this would be possible without our dedicated faculty and staff, who continually reimagine traditional teaching methods to find new ways to inspire and challenge our students. Several educators were recognized this past year for their exceptional contributions. Dr. Andy Johnson was a finalist for *Palm Beach Illustrated's* Educator of the Year, recognized for his teaching in both our physics curriculum and our signature Artificial Intelligence program, which equips students with essential skills for the future in fields like machine learning and natural language processing. The Free Enterprise Institute, led by Rob Frackelton, was a finalist for *Palm Beach Illustrated's* Outstanding Academic Program, while both Mr. Frackelton and Dr. Marjorie Chiarolanzio were honored with REEL (Regional Economic Educator and Leadership) Awards from the Florida Council on Economic Education. Oxbridge Middle School art teacher Brenda Hatter had her painting, *Recuperacion de la Muerto*, featured in a Día de los Muertos exhibition in Orlando. Dr. Kelly Prisco, our Health & Wellness Director, and an award-winning ballroom dancer, competed in the Dance as Fire Championships in Rome, Italy, achieving first- and second-place finishes in multiple categories.

I am filled with gratitude for the talented faculty and staff here at Oxbridge; they truly make a difference in our students' lives. I also want to thank you for your unwavering support and trust in our school. Together, we're building on the successes of the past year, and I'm excited to see what we will accomplish in the year ahead. I hope you'll take the time to explore this issue of *Oxbridge Today* and see firsthand the incredible achievements of our students, faculty, and staff.



Ralph E. Maurer, Ph.D.
Head of School

Oxbridge Today Wins Regional Magazine Award

The Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) has named *Oxbridge Today* a 2024 "Best of CASE District III" winner. CASE is an international nonprofit association with a 50-year history of supporting advancement professionals in alum relations, communications, development, and marketing within educational institutions.

CASE District III includes schools across Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia. This year, six publications received the Best of CASE District III award, five of which were published by colleges and universities. *Oxbridge Today* stood out as the only non-college publication to earn this honor.



A Message from Our Founder

As I write this, it's hard for me to believe that Oxbridge Academy is in its 13th year of providing a stellar education to Palm Beach County children. The school has come so far, so quickly, not in a slap-dash hurried sense, but in a thoughtful, measured way, expanding as the needs arise and the community dictates. When Oxbridge Academy opened in 2011, I envisioned a school that would provide life-defining educational experiences, one that would benefit all students and their families—regardless of economic backgrounds.

Since then, I am thrilled to say that the school has met my expectations and often surpassed them. I love the fact that Oxbridge does not rest on its laurels, that the school is always looking to improve in every way: faculty, curriculum, service, travel, and internship possibilities and opportunities. During the past 13 years, we've added a middle school and programs within the middle school. We've embraced the teaching of AI. As you will see in these pages, we continue to add international travel opportunities, creating a student body of global citizens. (The students who participate in our unique, annual Cambridge Scholars program are complimented by the Cambridge faculty on their scholarship and maturity.) Our debate and Model UN teams have forged national reputations. Oxbridge boasts two alumni playing in the NFL, several in major league baseball, and about eight seniors a year heading to college on athletic scholarships. We continue to upgrade the Arts programs, hiring this year a Theater Director who has shared the stage and screen with A-list actors and written for stage and screen as well.

As always, we focus on character-building. From the moment a student enters Oxbridge we want them to **Lead with Kindness and Act with Courage** and succeed beyond these walls after graduation. You'll see, especially in the Class Notes section of this magazine, that our graduates are doing just that. We even have marriages to report – in some cases to other alumni, and some are starting families!

We are exceptionally proud of the reputation Oxbridge has at universities and colleges across the nation. Over 50% of graduates, since inception, have been accepted and attended the top 100 Universities and 50 top Liberal Arts Colleges! In my mind, that is a testament to our faculty, leadership, curriculum and to those wonderful students who have worked hard, and to their parents who have guided their children throughout their education. Fundamentally, it is a great report card for Oxbridge!

I hope that at Oxbridge nothing changes (as far as our philosophy) and everything changes (to embrace new technology, teaching methods, and how we interact in an evolving society). We have created something special here and have a strategic plan in place through 2029. I thank you for joining me in supporting this school, which now has deep roots, an excellent reputation, and lofty goals, but which must be continuously nourished. I will continue to do what I can, and I look forward to congratulating another class of smiling graduates in May. However, it's just as much your school now and I know it's in good hands.



William Koch
Founder, Oxbridge Academy

Oxbridge Academy Takes an Integrated Approach to Health & Wellness

At Oxbridge Academy, a transformative shift is underway in how the school approaches student well-being. To create a more comprehensive, integrated support system, Oxbridge is uniting its **Health & Wellness Clinic, Mental Health Support Team,** and **Learning Support Team** under one collaborative umbrella. This innovative approach holistically addresses each student's physical, mental, emotional, and academic needs.

"We've found that the challenges students face are often interconnected," says Dr. Ralph Maurer, Head of School. "By merging these departments, we can ensure that students get the support they need from multiple angles more seamlessly and effectively."



Director of Health & Wellness Dr. Kelly Prisco tends to a student.

This new initiative comes in response to growing research showing a direct relationship between physical health, mental well-being, and academic performance. In fact, 60% of the student body has utilized at least two of these services at some point during their time at Oxbridge. The goal is to streamline communication between the teams so that if a physical injury leads to emotional stress or if academic struggles contribute to mental health challenges, we can catch it earlier and treat it more comprehensively.

Dr. Kelly Prisco, who will oversee the Health & Wellness Center, explains, "We're bringing together three departments that already serve a critical role in students' lives. By improving communication and working together as one unit, we'll be able to provide a higher level of care. This approach will also allow us to offer a range of wellness programming—from individual support to small group sessions and school-wide initiatives—so that students are engaged on multiple levels."

In addition to combining resources, Oxbridge is launching new initiatives aimed at promoting a proactive approach to health and wellness. These will include speaker series on mental health and resilience, wellness workshops, and preventive programming designed to equip students with the skills and knowledge they need to thrive both in and out of the classroom.

One of the most important aspects of this new model is the emphasis on destigmatizing mental health issues. Too often, students hesitate to seek help because of the stigma surrounding mental health. But that stigma is beginning to fade thanks to high-profile athletes and entertainers speaking openly about their struggles. Olympic superstars Simone Biles and Michael Phelps, tennis champion Naomi Osaka, and NFL players Dak Prescott, A.J. Brown, and Hayden Hurst have all been vocal advocates for mental health awareness. Their willingness to share their stories has paved the way for students to feel more comfortable asking for support.

At Oxbridge, the roles of the three departments remain distinct but are more interconnected than ever:

- The Health & Wellness Clinic provides top-quality individual health care for students and staff. Its mission is rooted in integrity, respect, and compassion, and it focuses on prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation.
- The Mental Health Support Team creates a culture where mental health is discussed, and stigma is challenged. The team ensures that every student feels valued and supported by fostering resilience, self-awareness, and social connections.
- The Learning Support Team offers students with documented learning differences personalized academic assistance. The team helps each student reach their full potential through individualized support plans and accommodations while maintaining academic rigor.

By unifying these essential departments, Oxbridge Academy is creating a support network that prioritizes every aspect of a student's well-being. This multi-faceted approach ensures that a cohesive, collaborative system meets physical, mental, emotional, and academic needs. As the school continues to break new ground in student wellness, it fosters a healthy, supportive, and inclusive environment where every student can thrive.

COLLEGE BOUND

Class of 2024

American University

Auburn University

Babson College

Barry University



Brown University

Carleton College

Clemson University

College of Charleston

Columbia University

Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University

Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University

Florida Atlantic University

Florida Gulf Coast University

Florida Institute of Technology

Florida International University

Florida Southern College

Florida State University

Furman University

Harvard University

High Point University

Howard University

Indiana University

Istituto Marangoni Miami

Johnson & Wales University

Keiser University

Louisiana State University

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Miami University

Morehouse College

Norland College

North Carolina A & T State University

Northeastern University







Southern Methodist University

Southern University and A & M College

St. Bonaventure University

St. Thomas University

Syracuse University

Tallahassee Community College

The University of Alabama



Nova Southeastern University

Palm Beach Atlantic University

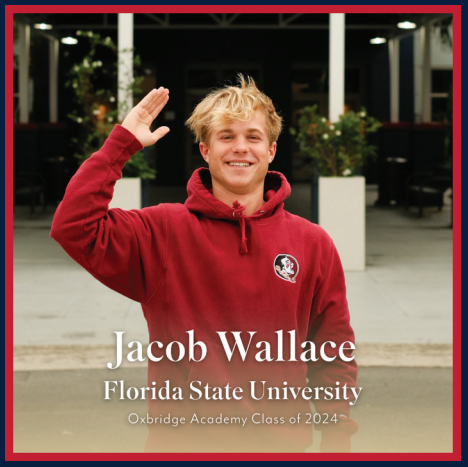
Palm Beach State College

Pennsylvania State University

Rochester Institute of Technology

Rutgers University

Savannah College of Art and Design



The University of Tampa

Trinity College

Tulane University of Louisiana

United States Naval Academy

University of Central Florida

University of Colorado

University of Essex





University of Florida

University of Georgia

University of Kentucky

University of Miami

University of Mississippi

University of Missouri-Columbia

University of Pennsylvania

University of Richmond

University of South Florida

University of Virginia

Vanderbilt University

Villanova University

Western Carolina University

Western University







College counselors, from left, Shannon Duff, Kerry Avakian, Zoe Losada, Wendy Beato, and coordinator Monica Hammett

College Counseling Paves the Way to Colleges and Universities

Oxbridge Academy Director of College Counseling Zoe Losada sits at her desk searching for an answer to this question: Is it common for a school that is only 13 years old to place so many of its graduates in elite institutions of higher education? "I've never worked in a school so young," answers Losada, who joined Oxbridge in 2017 but has been in the college counseling field since 1986. "We are establishing a record," she adds.

This is an understatement; for quite some time, Oxbridge Academy graduates have been accepted to the country's most prestigious schools as well as several highly regarded institutions overseas, including Princeton, Yale, MIT, Harvard, Brown, Cornell, Tufts, Vanderbilt, the University of Edinburgh, and ESCP Business School in Paris, France, to name a few. Three Oxbridge siblings—Walker, Carter, and Wilson Stewart—hit a trifecta and were accepted to Stanford, Harvard, and MIT.

So, what's the Oxbridge college admission secret? Part of it is that Oxbridge Academy has a four-counselor department dedicated to college admissions. Aside from Director Losada, they are Senior Associate Director Shannon Duff, Associate Director Kerry Avakian, Assistant Director Wendy Beato and College Counseling Coordinator Monica Hammett. "At Oxbridge Academy," Losada explains, "our department can strictly focus on college admissions. At other schools, counselors must deal with many other responsibilities." That ability to guide students individually is vital to producing college applications highlighting our ThunderWolves' unique values, skills, and qualities and enabling them to stand out.

Head of School Dr. Ralph Maurer adds, "There's a certain allure to how our college counselors expertly navigate the nuances of college admissions while helping each student find the right fit. A unique mix of skill, intuition, deep experience, and a personalized approach ensures each student is supported in finding a college that aligns with their goals, values, and aspirations." He adds, "The counselors' work is as much about building confidence and perspective as it is about securing admission."

Losada recalls an admissions officer from Northwestern University telling her that Oxbridge "has the kind of students Northwestern wants." He explained that this was because of the school's diverse student body, the diversity of their interests, and the opportunity Oxbridge offers students to pursue those interests. "Colleges see that our students are not stuck in academic channels," Losada says. "Oxbridge offers depth and breadth in its curriculum and electives, and students are encouraged to explore and experiment." The result, according to Losada: "There are so many ways for a student to stand out. Each has a unique transcript. They start their own companies or go off to Brown to play the classical harp."

Rigor is also important. The top schools want to see success in challenging classes, electives, and clubs, which Oxbridge offers with its Honors Seminar classes, Signature Programs such as The Free Enterprise Institute (FEI), Aviation and A.I., plus Debate and Model UN teams, among others. Many of those schools also want to see students performing at the highest levels in athletics. The Class of 2024 included students accepted by Harvard to play softball, MIT to play football, and Brown to join its sailing team.

Students are assigned a college counselor at the beginning of ninth grade and attend college admission

workshops with their families. By tenth grade, students work on resumes and essays, which the counselors continuously evaluate. By their junior year, ThunderWolves are filling out questionnaires to help determine the best fit for college and learning how to prepare admission applications through "boot camps," individual meetings, and meetings with the whole family. In grade 12, students work closely with their counselors on applications and get assigned a personal reader to assist with college essays and supplements. Losada emphasizes that parents are integral to the application process and "can contact us throughout the year."

Throughout their Oxbridge tenure, students are notified of a stream of on-campus and online visits by college representatives, alerted to free practice SAT and ACT prep, and provided information on how and where to research colleges and potential scholarships and financial aid.

There are in-person meetings with the counselors to discuss where each student is in the application process. The counseling process begins by imagining the finish line. "You start with the end in mind," Losada says, "and ask, 'What are you looking forward to after high school?'"

Students Awarded Major College Scholarships

Oxbridge graduates have not only been getting accepted to top 100 colleges and universities on a regular basis, they're also being awarded impressive scholarships that cover tuition, room, board, and more. According to a College Counseling department survey completed by the Class of 2024, students received $15 million in merit scholarships and need-based aid, in addition to scholarships awarded by the Bright Futures Scholarship Program. Here are several examples:

Emily Arron Receives Scholarships from Amazon, Horatio Alger Association

Emily Arron '24 is among the select 400 students nationwide to receive the Amazon Future Engineer Scholarship. This award provides $10,000 per year towards her education at Columbia University. It also includes a paid summer internship at Amazon after her freshman year, where she will gain practical work experience and mentorship from Amazon leaders. Additionally, recipients participate in networking opportunities with peers and Amazon employees. Arron also earned a $10,000 scholarship from the Horatio Alger Association. This organization supports young people who demonstrate integrity, overcome adversity, and show strong academic potential and a commitment to making a unique contribution to society.

Sophia Derrin Receives Four-Year Scholarship to Furman University

Sophia Derrin '24 received the James B. Duke Scholarship from Furman University. This all-inclusive scholarship is awarded to incoming first-year students in recognition of their exceptional academic accomplishments, significant leadership, service, and co-curricular involvement. The award, described as "one of Furman's most prestigious academic awards," also includes participation in a three-day residential program for incoming students to discuss real-world issues and build community. Additionally, recipients become members of Furman's Community of Scholars, which offers social and intellectual programming through various opportunities throughout the year.

Ryan Farinas Receives Four-Year Scholarship to Tulane

Ryan Farinas '24 was awarded a distinguished Stamps Scholarship to Tulane University, where he was also named an Honors Scholar. He plans to major in biochemistry with a minor in mathematics. The Stamps Scholarship covers the full cost of attendance, including tuition, fees, housing, and meals, for all four years. Additionally, it provides an enrichment fund to support endeavors such as study abroad, undergraduate research, academic or co-curricular conferences, and unpaid internships. Tulane awards only five of these scholarships annually, making it a highly competitive honor.

Gabriela Matzen Receives Four-Year Scholarship to University of Florida

Congratulations to Gabriela Matzen '24 who was awarded a Benacquisto Scholarship that will cover four years of tuition, room, and board at the University of Florida. These scholarships are only awarded to National Merit Scholars (for which she will receive additional scholarship money). Matzen was also accepted into UF's Honors College and was asked to join its invitation-only University Research Scholars Program.

For the Stewart Brothers, Oxbridge Academy Was the Gateway to Stanford, Harvard, and MIT



From left: Walker, Carter and Wilson Stewart

Siblings Walker, Carter, and Wilson Stewart—all Oxbridge Academy alumni—applied to similar universities, but it wasn't planned, nor was it a competition to be accepted to three of the most prestigious universities in the country. But that's what happened. Youngest brother, Wilson, Class of 2024, is now a freshman at MIT and a member of its football team. Middle brother Carter, Class of 2021, is in his final year at Harvard, majoring in Classics—"the study of the ancient Greek and Roman cultures in all their manifestations." Oldest brother, Walker, Class of 2019, graduated from Stanford in 2024 with a degree in Computer Science.

Reflecting on their journey, the Stewart siblings express their gratitude to Oxbridge Academy. Their acceptance into Harvard, MIT, and Stanford was not a planned outcome, but a result of their shared academic aspirations. As Wilson puts it, 'We all wanted to challenge ourselves academically, and it just worked out that way.' For the Stewarts, a victory for one is truly a victory for all, a sentiment that echoes their shared journey at Oxbridge.

While each has different interests and personalities and sought different college experiences, all three siblings agree that Oxbridge Academy provided the foundation for their academic success. "The independence Oxbridge affords its students was quite helpful in preparing me to make the most of my time at Stanford," says Walker. "The unstructured nature of college means that being industrious and self-starting makes the experience much more fruitful. Oxbridge, making it easy to start clubs and leaving open time for students, was helpful in preparing me to make the most of my time in college."

Walker, the oldest Stewart sibling, fondly recalls his time at Oxbridge Academy. Five years since his graduation, his closest friends are still those he met in high school. The memories of classroom discussions, lacrosse matches, and shared meals are a testament to the strong community that Oxbridge fosters. In a world where high school can often feel like a pressure cooker, Walker is grateful for the supportive environment Oxbridge provided.

About the advantages of being a ThunderWolf, Carter says, "At Oxbridge, I had great teachers, and I gained a lot of knowledge, which inspired me to love learning. Oxbridge uniquely supports its most ambitious students by allowing them to balance their academic workload with athletics and social life without sacrificing sleep or health. We played lacrosse and other varsity sports, debated, and made great friends we will have for life."

Carter adds another vital characteristic exemplified by the Stewart brothers and others: "Something that has been a great benefit to Oxbridge is its community. Whether it's two siblings or six, having a family giving to and receiving from the Oxbridge community over a long period strengthens the fabric of the school in significant and often unseen ways. The continuity it creates unifies our culture and helps to bring the past, present, and future together."



A World View: Oxbridge Academy is Creating Global Citizens One Trip at a Time

Travel is fatal to bigotry, prejudice, and narrow-mindedness — Mark Twain

Birdy stood patiently in the water, awaiting her bath. A group of Oxbridge Academy students slowly waded into the pond, approaching the nearly six-foot-tall, 3,000-pound resident of the Elephant Retirement Park in Chiang Mai, Thailand. Washing and feeding this gentle giant was one of many unforgettable experiences that ten students and a handful of faculty members had during their two-week visit to Thailand in spring 2024. During this eye-opening adventure 10,000 miles from home, an intrepid cohort of ThunderWolves experienced a diverse set of Thai educational and cultural offerings, ranging from shopping at a night market in Bangkok, visiting museums, touring Buddhist temples, mountain biking, kayaking, jungle hiking, taking a barge river tour, and more.

Oxbridge Academy Dean of Students Jason Glick, who organized the trip, complimented the trip-goers, saying, "Our young ThunderWolves did a terrific job serving as both cultural ambassadors and representatives of our school. I was incredibly proud of how our group embraced new experiences and threw themselves into all elements of the journey."

While students described the encounter with the elephants as "truly amazing," the most rewarding aspects of the trip were the community service projects and interactions with the locals. While in Thailand, this pack of ThunderWolves, in addition to their cultural explorations, also taught English to schoolchildren and took on the primary service project of building a concrete walkway for the city's Ban Mae Mae School. "The time we spent at the Mae Mae school doing service and hanging out with the young kids was truly life-changing," says Brandon Martindale '27. "We had the opportunity to do something important and make friends."

The trip to Thailand was a part of Oxbridge Academy's continuous efforts to expand its international travel opportunities. In 2013, Oxbridge partnered with Cambridge University to establish the Cambridge Scholars Program, a rigorous, two-week educational experience at the legendary 800-year-old institution. In the decade since, our Cambridge Scholars have had the opportunity to study British history, philosophy, and literature, attend lectures with Cambridge's world-renowned faculty, and complete impressive, scholarly research on topics such as "Britain: The First World War to 1939," *"The Treaty of Versailles," "War Poets,"* "Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein,"* and the theories of philosophers Thomas Hobbes and John Locke, among others.

Oxbridge Academy has since developed other recurring international programs. In the spring of 2016, the school launched an immersive cultural experience in Cadiz, Spain, for students studying Spanish. Collaborating with the Spanish Language School Centro Mundo Lengua, students are paired with host families, take various classes, and explore history-drenched locales such as the cities of Seville, Granada, and the British territory of Gibraltar. Plans call for adding a similar immersive, two-week program in Nice, France, this spring.

Because of the growing global impact of Artificial Intelligence, 14 students and faculty from Oxbridge's Artificial Intelligence classes attended the Seventh Annual International Technology Fair in Shanghai, China, in the spring of 2019 with plans to participate in upcoming international conferences on the subject. According to Head of School Dr. Ralph Maurer, who co-teaches an AI ethics class, one of the many advantages of offering AI instruction "is it allows students to make international connections and broaden their horizons."

Dean Glick sums up the importance and positive impact of international travel this way: "A child's education must extend beyond the four walls of the classroom. Our students have gained invaluable experiences that will always remain with them, helping them grow into exceptional young adults."







Round Square: The Shape of Things to Come at Oxbridge Academy

By the end of the 2024-2025 school year, Oxbridge Academy hopes to become a full member of an international educational organization called Round Square. Founded nearly 60 years ago in Europe, Round Square is a growing consortium of more than 250 private schools in 50 countries whose educational philosophy is based on ideals that promote mutual understanding, working toward a common good, and developing young, like-minded leaders. Oxbridge is currently in the application/candidacy process. By becoming a member of Round Square, says Oxbridge Academy Dean of Students Jason Glick, "We hope to instill a sense of global citizenship and global mindfulness in our students."

To get better acquainted, Oxbridge is taking a group of seven students to a Round Square program at England's Oxford University in April where they will participate in noncompetitive debate, discuss important global issues facing their generation, share cultures through performance and art, and improve their ability to "confidently and respectfully articulate their thoughts and contribute their opinions to the conversations."

With a mission to **Lead with Kindness and Act with Courage**, Oxbridge is the perfect candidate for membership. Round Square schools highlight character education and experiential learning built around six "ideals" vital to maintaining and promoting peace, civil society, and a sustainable planet including: **International Understanding, Democracy, Environmental Stewardship, Adventure, Leadership, and Service**. This combination of educational priorities aims to develop compassion, responsible leadership, and a deeper understanding of democratic practices.

According to the Round Square website, in exploring the organization's six ideals, students will discover and develop 12 important characteristics including: **inquisitiveness, tenacity, courage, compassion, inventiveness, ability to solve problems, self-awareness, sense of responsibility, appreciation of diversity, commitment to sustainability, communication, and team-working skills**. Throughout the year, students can act on the ideals and develop these traits through exchange programs, conferences, local and international service projects, and in-person and virtual meetings. Full members can attend the Round Square International Conference, an annual marquee event set in a different city each year, which Glick describes as "the best student leadership conference in the world."

The goal of Round Square is, "to inspire and draw out every student's capacity for self-discovery, personal development, achievement, and excellence, with an approach that is practical, cross-cultural, and collaborative. Throughout the initial inquiry and application process, we work with potential candidates to determine if this is the right step for their school." Glick believes the Round Square philosophy and activities provide the perfect step to advance Oxbridge Academy's goals and "invoke the full potential of our students."

Oxbridge is already practicing what Round Square requires of its members, guiding students to:

- Seek to discover and embrace similarities and differences in ways that promote meaningful and lasting understanding and respect.
- Develop a sense of equality, fairness, justice, and a desire to do what is right.
- Understand the significance of humanity's place in the universe, and their impact on those surroundings.
- Recognize that great leaders are driven by a desire to serve others and nurture, guide, develop, and help them improve and succeed.
- Celebrate personal development through practical experience that brings sustainable support and benefit to others.



A playful Ben Matzen at the Sternberg Museum of Natural History in Kansas

Faculty Vacations

For Oxbridge Faculty, Summer Break Is a Quest for Knowledge

After nine months of teaching, it's inspiring to see the dedication of Oxbridge faculty to their professional development during the summer break. This commitment, often called 'continuing education,' takes various forms, from teaching to writing study guides used by many other schools. French teacher Dr. Sheilagh Riordan spent nearly a month in Rome studying Italian. Science Department Chair Dr. Anne Reilly traveled to the Cornwall region of England to learn more about the legend of King Arthur. And while music teacher Kallina Chin "escaped" across the country to discover the raw beauty of Alaska, she also took an online course offered by the Berklee School of Music. Closer to home, humanities teacher Bryan Kessler attended professional development programs in New Hampshire and New York. Academic Dean Amy Jurskis did what she's done for over a dozen summers – create educational guides for English literature curricula. And science teacher Ben Matzen spent a week at a Kansas camp teaching a paleontology class.

Here are details of their experiences in their own words:



Academic Dean and English Teacher Amy Jurskis

I write teaching guides for novels and nonfiction books. This past summer, I wrote a guide for a novel called *Lifeboat 5* by Susan Hood, published in October. It tells the true story of two young girls who were on an evacuation ship during WWII that was torpedoed. The girls survived 19 hours in the freezing Atlantic by clinging to a capsized lifeboat and each other. Before I came to Oxbridge, I worked for Fulton County Schools—the largest school district in Georgia. One of my responsibilities was coordinating summer reading for the county, which put me in contact with the academic marketing departments of most major publishers. In 2011, Random House asked if I would be interested in writing the guide to *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* by Rebecca Skloot. The book took off, and I got offers to write guides for other publishers. At this point, I have probably written close to 50 guides. I've written guides for classic texts like *Murder on the Orient Express, Brave New World,* and *Their Eyes Were Watching God,* and by contemporary writers like Neil Gaiman, Andy Weir, Derek Jeter, and Jason Reynolds—including the most recent Miles Morales (*Spiderman*) book. I have not written guides specifically for Oxbridge, but we teach *Long Way Down* by Jason Reynolds and *Call Me Athena* by Colby Cedar Smith, and I wrote the guides for both books. I used the guide I wrote for Maria Dhavana Headly's translation of *Beowulf* in my classes. Before Harper Lee died, I wrote a new guide for *To Kill a Mockingbird* that she personally approved. That was a highlight for me. I also wrote the guide for Lee's novel, *Go Set a Watchman*.

Science Teacher Ben Matzen

This summer, I traveled to Hays, Kansas, to teach a group of gifted students who were taking part in the Sternberg Museum of Natural History High School Science Camps. This camp is a museum-based program focused on topics in academic paleontology. I utilized museum resources to guide students through hands-on, inquiry-based lessons on systematically investigating three unknown predatory dinosaurs. Students were tasked with applying their understanding of comparative anatomy to gather the data necessary to identify the organisms to whom the unknown skulls belong. At the end of the week, three groups of students presented their findings to their peers and others, utilizing social media to record and broadcast their presentations. I found the experience of teaching at the Sternberg Science Camps very rewarding. I was able to use my teaching experiences at Oxbridge to make the camp successful, and at the same time, I learned a great deal from my time in Kansas, which I am excited to bring back to Oxbridge. I hope to continue working with the camps in the future! Note: The Society of Vertebrate Paleontology selected Matzen to present at its annual conference, which was held in Minneapolis from October 30-November 2. The paper was based on his camp teaching



experience and titled: *Change in Student Perception of Science as a Practice—An Initial Study from the Sternberg Museum of Natural History Paleontology Academy: Kansas Summer Program*.

French Teacher Dr. Sheilagh Riordan

I spent almost four weeks in Rome to learn as much Italian as possible. I invested in some one-to-one Italian lessons that were truly the highlight of my experience. I eschewed public transportation and walked the four

miles to class each way, going around, over, or through roads, temples, marketplaces, and homes of Ancient Rome several times a week. I spent a lot of time in the Jewish Quarter and made a couple of long visits to the Jewish Museum. That experience added great depth to my understanding of Jewish civilizations in Europe. I expected Italian-Jewish history to be similar to that of France. For example, in France, there is an imaginary horizontal line across France with predominantly Ashkenazim above and Sephardim below. Instead, I discovered that the Ebrei Italiani has been in Italy since 70 CE (and some even say 161 BCE)! They have a rich history and their own Jewish-Italian



cuisine and dialect. Their history is often tragic but also beautiful and triumphant. Many historic buildings and synagogues have been destroyed, but artifacts like columns, furniture, and sacred ceremonial objects are displayed at the Jewish Museum.

I was constantly comparing everything in Rome to what I know of the big cities in France: architecture, religion, history, food, language, and the placement and development of mountain villages outside the cities. My month in Rome was life-changing, and I hope to return next summer. I certainly can't brag about the state of my Italian by the time I left, but I continue to work on it daily. I have a different relationship with each language I have learned. I've been learning French forever, and it feels like a beloved sister. I learned Swedish in my 20s. That language continues to charm and delight me the way a more experienced and fascinating colleague might. My relationship with Italian is more like that great friend I never expected to meet, the one I can stay out all night with talking and laughing. I feel so lucky that Italian has come into my life.

Science Department Chair and Teacher Dr. Anne Reilly

This summer, I embarked on a memorable adventure in Cornwall, England. Drawn by the legends of King Arthur, I set off to uncover the mythical tales and immerse myself in the region's breathtaking landscapes and rich history. My journey began with a hike along the Southwest Coastal Path, a trail that meanders along the dramatic cliffs and offers stunning views of the sea. As I walked, I was captivated by the diverse and beautiful plant life that adorned the path, each step revealing a new botanical treasure. This area is home to various unique and interesting plant species, some of which are endemic due to the area's climate and geology.

The highlight of my trip was the hike to Tintagel Castle, a place steeped in Arthurian legend. The area's rugged beauty was spellbinding, and as I explored, I found myself standing at



the entrance of Merlin's Cave, feeling the whispers of ancient stories in the air. Tintagel's atmosphere was further enriched by a magical moment: My son proposed to his girlfriend, making it a place our family will always cherish. Leaving Tintagel, we headed to the St. Ives area, where we saw remnants of the tin mining industry. My husband's great, great grandparents worked in this area over 200 years ago. The history of the mines was fascinating, and we enjoyed a picnic on-site with traditional Cornish pastries.

We also traveled to Lyme Regis to hunt for fossils with Dr. Richard Edmonds, a geologist known as the "Jurassic Coast Rock Star." This area is a UNESCO World Heritage site renowned for its rich geological history

and abundance of well-preserved fossils. Exploring the cliffs and beaches, I marveled at the remnants of ancient life. My trip to Cornwall was a blend of exploration, nature, history, and cherished family moments, creating memories that will inspire my teaching and stories for years to come.

Humanities Teacher



Bryan Kessler

This summer, I attended two professional development institutes: the Exeter Humanities Institute (EHI) at Philips Exeter Academy in Exeter, New Hampshire, and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) Summer Institute based at the New York Historical Society. These programs allowed me to grow both pedagogically and professionally.

I spent two weeks in New York for the NEH Summer Institute in mid-July. The NEH institutes attract thousands of applications each year. I was grateful to be one of 30 K-12 teachers from across the country and the only one from Florida chosen for the "American Women, American Citizens" Institute. As a U.S. history teacher, I was interested in the institute's topic, which would "examine how a diverse array of women redefined what it meant to be an American in the 1920s-1940s." I also looked forward to spending time with other teachers, thinking about ways to create meaningful lessons and assignments for this historical era. Based in New York, it allowed us to go on field trips connected to the period and topics, including trips to the Tenement Museum, the Met, the Brooklyn Navy Yard, the FDR Presidential Library, and the homes of Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt in Hyde Park. These trips allowed us to experience first-hand the places we were discussing, enhancing our ability to engage deeply with the course content. This NEH institute provided an excellent opportunity to delve deeper into the interwar years and engage with fellow teachers in complex pedagogical discussions.

The Exeter Humanities Institute focused on training in the Harkness model of discussion, a teaching method where students and a teacher sit around an oval table and collaboratively discuss a subject, with readings this year themed around "Rivers." Each morning, I participated in two classes where I experienced the Harkness model as a student, leader, and observer. In the afternoon, I attended various workshops themed around topics such as "Writing at the Table," "Teaching History Through Discussion," and "Assessment of Student Work in Discussion." This institute offered new ideas and methods to incorporate into my discussion-based history curriculum at Oxbridge.



Kallina Chin, right, with her mother Judy

Music Teacher
Kallina Chin

I began the summer with a beautiful escape to Alaska/Canada via Norwegian Cruise Lines. I love the opportunity to be surrounded by nature, which allows me to disconnect from all technology. I flew into Anchorage and took the Alaska Railroad, with stunning views, to our departing port. My favorite part was spending time with family and sipping warm tea, hoping to catch sight of whales off the side of the ship. I ended the year fully connecting back to technology, taking an online course offered by the Berklee School of Music to deepen my understanding of AI's influence on digital music. I'm excited to share these new findings with my digital music students!



Meet John Perlette, Assistant Head of School

John Perlette, Oxbridge Academy's new Assistant Head of School, joined the community this summer. With a passion for academic excellence, inclusivity, and innovation, Perlette brings decades of experience, including 23 years at Oak Hall School, where he served as a teacher, coach, and senior administrator. In this interview, Perlette reflects on his journey in education, key accomplishments, and vision for Oxbridge Academy.

Q: What inspired you to pursue a career in education?

A: My journey began as a graduate student teaching math and chemistry at the University of Florida. I loved helping students tackle challenging concepts, whether in Calculus or Organic Chemistry labs. While teaching at the collegiate level was rewarding, I found it transactional, with limited opportunities to connect personally with students. This led me to apply for a high school teaching position at Oak Hall School, where I discovered an environment that aligned with my professional goals. I spent 23 fulfilling years there, growing as a teacher, coach, and leader.

Q: What motivates you in this field?

A: I'm driven by the opportunity to help students and faculty reach their full potential. Watching a student achieve something they thought impossible, whether academically, athletically, or creatively, never gets old. The same applies to faculty—supporting their growth and creating an environment where they can thrive is a critical part of my role.

Q: Can you share key accomplishments from your tenure at Oak Hall?

A: I was privileged to oversee the Upper School, managing 250 students and leading a team of 33 faculty and staff. Key initiatives included implementing an Upper School Learning Center with dedicated support staff, overhauling the Honor Code, and enhancing college counseling and academic advising programs. Additionally, my involvement in coaching cross country and track was incredibly rewarding, with our teams earning numerous district, regional, and state championships.



Q: What excites you most about joining Oxbridge Academy?

A: Oxbridge met all my non-negotiables: an exceptional faculty, a diverse student body, and visionary leadership. I'm excited to collaborate with this dynamic community and build on the school's strong foundation to elevate the student experience further.

Q: How do you approach creating a supportive environment for students and faculty?

A: Building strong, meaningful connections is essential. I prioritize open communication, active listening, and fostering a culture of respect and collaboration. By understanding the unique needs and aspirations of our community, we can create an environment where everyone feels valued and empowered.

Q: What are your goals for Oxbridge in the coming years?

A: My primary goal is to build on Oxbridge's success by promoting academic excellence, fostering kindness and inclusivity, and driving innovation. I'm committed to preparing students to be well-rounded individuals ready for future challenges and opportunities.

Three Alumni Return to Teach at Oxbridge Academy

Three former ThunderWolves are now teaching at Oxbridge: Joan Fyfe '17 arrived in 2022, Jason McCleod '18 in 2023, and Lily Jurskis '17 in 2024. Joan Fyfe is a Strength & Conditioning coach and Health & Fitness teacher. As a student at Oxbridge, Fyfe lettered in soccer, lacrosse, and cross country. She went on to earn a B.S. in Exercise Science and Health Promotion from FAU in 2021. "Teaching at the school where I was a student has been a truly special experience," she says. "It's amazing to return to the place that shaped me and where I can help shape the next generation. I feel a deep connection to the school's values and traditions, which enriches my teaching and strengthens my commitment to supporting our students' growth and success."





A graduate of the University of Pennsylvania and Sacred Heart University, Jason McCleod teaches Middle School Humanities and Essential Skills to sixth-grade students and is an assistant coach for the ThunderWolves football team. As a senior on the University of Pennsylvania football team in 2021, he earned All-Ivy League Second Team honors. During his junior year at Oxbridge, McCleod, a defensive back, was an All-County football first-team selection, second-team All-State selection, and was named a scholar-athlete. During his senior year at Oxbridge, he served as class vice president. He calls his return to Oxbridge "an amazing experience" and adds, "I enjoy teaching and connecting with and learning from each student. As a second-year teacher, I feel so supported by my colleagues, especially those who have played roles in my academic journey."



Lily Jurskis teaches 11th-grade English and Honors Seminar English classes to 12th-grade students. She attended Marshall University as a prestigious Yeager Scholar, served as the Editor-in-Chief of the school's literary journal, *Et Cetera*, and graduated with a 4.0 GPA and a B.A. in Literary Studies and Creative Writing. She says of her return to Oxbridge, "There are parts of it that are very surreal. Learning to call my coworkers by their first names is the hardest part. The best part has been relating to the students and sharing that I really understand what they're going through."

Esports: More Than Just Playing Games



In continuing with a history of offering exceptional educational experiences, Oxbridge Academy's Esports, one of our newest and most engaging programs, has seen remarkable growth since its launch three years ago. The team's improvement and increasing popularity are a testament to its potential. Esports, or electronic sports, refers to organized, competitive video gaming, and its demand is growing in high schools and colleges nationwide. Thousands of schools are forming gaming clubs on their campuses. "We're pleased to see the continued growth of the Oxbridge Esports program," says Dr. Ralph Maurer, Head of School. "What started as an idea from Oxbridge alum Alex Bories '23 has grown into a thriving community. Now in its third year, the program continues to attract a wide range of students, showcasing both its broad appeal and its potential to engage students in meaningful ways."

Esports, like football, lacrosse, and basketball, are recognized as official sports by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS). Like traditional sports, Esports requires regular team practices, scrimmages, and critical-thinking skills to compete in tournaments. Coaches emphasize strategic planning, time management, and communication, preparing team members to excel in online competitions while enhancing their academic experience in a dynamic and engaging environment.

At Oxbridge, players have a dedicated Esports room with top-of-the-line gaming chairs, interactive LED lighting, and dynamic decor, all adding to a spirited and competitive atmosphere. Thanks to these upgrades and positive word of mouth, student interest in Esports increased. The team competes in regional leagues through the High School Esports League (HSEL), primarily playing Super Smash Bros. Ultimate, a platform-fighting game featuring various characters, Valorant, a 5v5 first-person shooter set in the future, and newest game addition of the ever-popular Fortnite, a battle royal that implements building structures to maneuver around the battlefield.

Former coach Arden Jurskis, states, "The sense of community and structure Esports provides is helpful for academic success. It complements Oxbridge's existing programs by promoting strategic and critical thinking, fostering good sportsmanship, and building self-confidence.

The program is currently led by physics teacher Mr. Tobias Nelson who continues to develop the team's skills and foster its growth. "I am proud of what we have accomplished with the strong community of competitive gamers here at Oxbridge Academy. Esports programs continue to grow in high schools and colleges throughout the nation. Oxbridge should be at the forefront; I am excited to see our program continue to grow and flourish. We are teaching students important skills that can be applied to other areas of their lives, such as critical thinking, teamwork, communication, and sportsmanship, through the lens of gaming. Our program also provides structure, mentorship, and inclusivity to students by providing a space to foster personal growth and social skills while students engage in something they enjoy," said Nelson.

Participating in Esports helps develop valuable skills in technology, science, math, and engineering and is a way to connect with peers. For students who might not play traditional athletics, an Esports team is the perfect place to find and build a strong community.

Beyond high school, Esports is an emerging industry with exciting opportunities for college scholarships and careers in fields like STEM, finance, marketing, and communications. Being part of an Esports team teaches students how to communicate and collaborate effectively, skills essential for success in both personal and professional settings. The fast-paced nature of many video games requires quick decision-making, which helps prepare students for high-pressure careers.

As Oxbridge Academy's Esports program continues to grow, it offers a dynamic outlet for competition and skill-building while paving the way for future opportunities in academics, teamwork, and industry beyond the classroom.



Diego Oms '27



Oxbridge Academy Eighth-Grade Makes the Most of Inaugural Visit to the Nation's Capital

Henry, the 13-foot-tall, 22,000-pound African elephant, hovered over Oxbridge Academy's eighth-grade class. This mammoth creature—proudly displayed in the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History's rotunda, was the perfect symbol for this four-day exploration of the nation's capital. Like Henry, the trip was enormous in scope and covered a lot of ground.

This four-day immersive history and government lesson required elephant-like stamina. The group followed an ambitious itinerary each day, visiting an average of three museums, three memorials, and one historical site while journeying between eight to ten miles a day on foot. "It was a big ask for our eighth-graders to pay attention and absorb information for that long," Oxbridge Middle Director Rainey Wyatt said, "but they rose to the occasion with their unique eighth-grade spectrum of emotions and thoughts." This inaugural trip aligns with the Oxbridge eighth-grade Humanities curriculum (U.S. History) and allows students to see in person what they have been studying all year. The trip also served as a template for future eighth-grade trips to Washington, D.C.

The first day of the trip included a visit to the Smithsonian's Natural History Museum and a tour of the National Museum of American History. Students viewed artifacts such as the flag that inspired the 'Star-Spangled Banner' and the historic Greensboro Lunch Counter, a key



site of a Civil Rights sit-in. The day also featured a visit to the White House and stops at the Iwo Jima and Air Force Memorials.

Day two began at the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial, where the students learned about the four-term president and the tumultuous period of history during which he served. Traversing the four "rooms" that represented each of his terms, the students saw artistic representations of The Great Depression, the Second World War, and The New Deal. Oxbridge Academy Dean of Students Jason Glick, also a trip chaperone, noted, "Many students were surprised to learn that FDR used a wheelchair during his adult life, but was equally proud of the fact that this obstacle did not diminish his ability to lead the United States during some of the most challenging times of the 20th Century." The day also included viewing the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial, which Glick shared students found both inspiring and bittersweet. The day's exploration continued with visits to the National Air and Space Museum, George Washington's home and tomb at Mount Vernon, and the Jefferson and World War II memorials.

While most visitors to D.C. would take a week to see what this group packed into two days, the ThunderWolves' adventure was far from over. On the third day, the group explored Arlington National Cemetery, paying their respects at the gravesites of Ruth Bader Ginsburg, President John F. Kennedy, and the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, among others. From there, they embarked on an emotional journey through the National Museum of African American History and Culture, encountering haunting artifacts from our nation's past, including a segregated train car, Emmett Till's casket, and a reconstructed slave cabin. They were also captivated by the works of artist Jean-Michel Basquiat, a guitar belonging to the multi-talented Prince, and treasured memorabilia from sports legends like Kobe Bryant and Muhammad Ali.

The group then proceeded to the Capitol Building for lunch and an insightful tour. The educational journey continued at the National Archives, where the class viewed the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights—the day concluded with poignant visits to the Korean and Vietnam memorials and the iconic Lincoln Memorial.

The trip's final day featured a visit to the infamous Ford's Theatre. The location where President Lincoln was assassinated includes an exhibit displaying the weapon John Wilkes Booth used to murder the president. Across the street, the group toured the Petersen Boarding House, where they observed the room where Lincoln took his last breaths. A sobering tour of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum followed, illuminating how the 20th Century's greatest example of man's inhumanity to man unfolded, culminating with "the final solution" and eventually liberation. The trip wrapped up on a much more uplifting note at the National Gallery of Art for lunch and a tour. While there, middle school art teacher and trip chaperone Brenda Hatter added insight to works by legendary artists such as Leonardo Da Vinci and Edward Hopper.

Dean Glick summed up the experience, calling it "a roaring success of a trip while making Oxbridge Academy history along the way!"



Summer Finance Experience Offers Unique Look Inside Finance Sector

A dozen Oxbridge Academy Upper School students participated in the second annual Oxbridge Academy Summer Finance Experience. The program aims to give students involved with Oxbridge Academy's Free Enterprise Institute (FEI) a unique peek inside the finance sector through engaging field trips and presentations by guest speakers from the local business community. The program is gaining popularity, with the number of participants nearly doubling from last year.

Off-campus experiences included a visit to Palm Beach Capital to learn about private equity firms and a trip to Lighthouse Partners to take a closer look at the inner workings of the hedge fund industry. These visits to financial institutions were particularly eye-opening for senior Madison Martin who says, "it was fascinating to see how the companies we toured have grown their businesses, developed their economic strategies, and utilized different trade methods."

Students also gained valuable insights from a diverse range of on-campus guest speakers, each bringing a unique perspective to the table. These included Aldo Palles, Senior Managing Partner at Evercore Wealth Management; Jeremy Salsburg, owner of high-frequency trading firm ALPHABOND, LLC; and John Smyth, Managing Director of Merrill Lynch Private Wealth Management. Key takeaways from the experts included the need to maintain good character and ethics, the importance of paying attention to current events, and the transformative implications of AI.

Oxbridge Academy Economics Teacher and FEI Coordinator Rob Frackelton was thrilled by the program's success. "Our students got to experience a world that many students their age don't even know exists," he said. "It's highly beneficial for students to hear diverse viewpoints in finance and explore different careers in the field. This year, a great group embraced the journey and participated fully in the experience."

In the summer of 2024, participating students included Taj Amato-Heape '25, Aidan Brown '27, Tucker Cullinan '27, Jackson Gerardi '26, Win Ward '25, Sophia Durso '27, Dylan Freishtat '26, Madison Martin '25, Thomas Murray '26, Jack Nelson '27, Katherine Pottash '25, and Noah Rabiei '25.



From left: moderator Lorianne Woldehanna and panelists Joena Bartolini, Kasia Marczyk, Nina Fitzpatrick, and Margaret Betten

Program Inspires Young Women to Venture into the Field of Finance

Last spring, Becky Lightman, the founder of Lightman Capital, which advises clients on all aspects of their wealth management strategy—including investments, credit, manager selection, retirement planning, and complex trust and estate services—stood before 30 female students and told them: "Yes, you can!" Lightman was a keynote speaker for a daylong program called Invest in Girls. In conjunction with the Oxbridge Free Enterprise Institute (FEI)—a learning hub for the next generation of business leaders and entrepreneurs—and the Florida Council on Economic Education (FCEE), the new program's goal is to make women aware of their economic opportunities in business and finance, fields that men have long dominated. Created by the federal Council on Economic Education, Invest in Girls was first introduced in Florida at Miami-Dade College and the University of South Florida, says the FCEE's Joeley Luter, who attended the Oxbridge presentation.

Lightman reminded the girls that women have only had the right to vote for little more than 100 years that it wasn't so long ago that a husband had to sign for a woman to get a credit card, that there was an unshakeable stereotype that women didn't know how to handle money. And there was a frequent denial of promotions for women who fought their way into corporate boardrooms. "Do you think these biases exist today," Lightman asked. Her audience unanimously nodded and responded, "Yes!."

Lightman also reminded them that while there's still the prevailing attitude that a woman can't become president of the United States, there often remains a male-female salary gap, and women sometimes have to pay higher interest rates for loans, women have come a very long way. Today, Lightman explained, 12 million women own a business. These companies employ 9.4 million people and generate two trillion dollars in sales annually.

She noted that many of those businesses are in the finance industry and include an array of different jobs—lenders, portfolio managers, wealth management, legal—some of which, believe it or not, "don't require an expertise or a love of numbers."

The different paths available in finance were discussed during a panel discussion comprised of local businesswomen Nina Fitzpatrick, General Counsel, Lighthouse Partners; Margaret Betten, Executive Director for Palm Beach and Ft. Lauderdale, JP Morgan Private Bank; Joena Bartolini Mitchell, President & Founder, JBM Advisors, a boutique consulting firm focused on coaching financial services professionals; and Kasia Marczyk, a Certified Financial Planner. Lorianne Woldehanna, Compliance Training Lead at the financial services company Block, moderated the panel.



They all confidently and candidly shared experience and advice: “Don’t be afraid to fail.” “Find mentors and champions.” “Create a support network.” “Don’t be afraid to ask questions.” “During job interviews, remember you’re interviewing the company, too.” “In 25-30 years, women will dominate the finance field.”

Both FCEE coordinator Joeley Luter and FEI coordinator Rob Frackelton were thrilled with the program. “During the panel segment of the event,” said Luter, “the girls displayed a remarkable level of engagement and curiosity, asking insightful and hard-hitting questions to the accomplished women representing various sectors of the finance industry.” She added, “The girls sought advice on navigating college paths focused on finance and economics, as well as insights into the possibilities of pursuing careers in finance-related fields, especially noting how to navigate getting into those professions with them being male-dominated.” Frackelton added, “Engaging students with the outside financial community is at the heart of the FEI mission, and this program delivered,” he said. “Leading local female professionals inspired our girls to challenge themselves.”

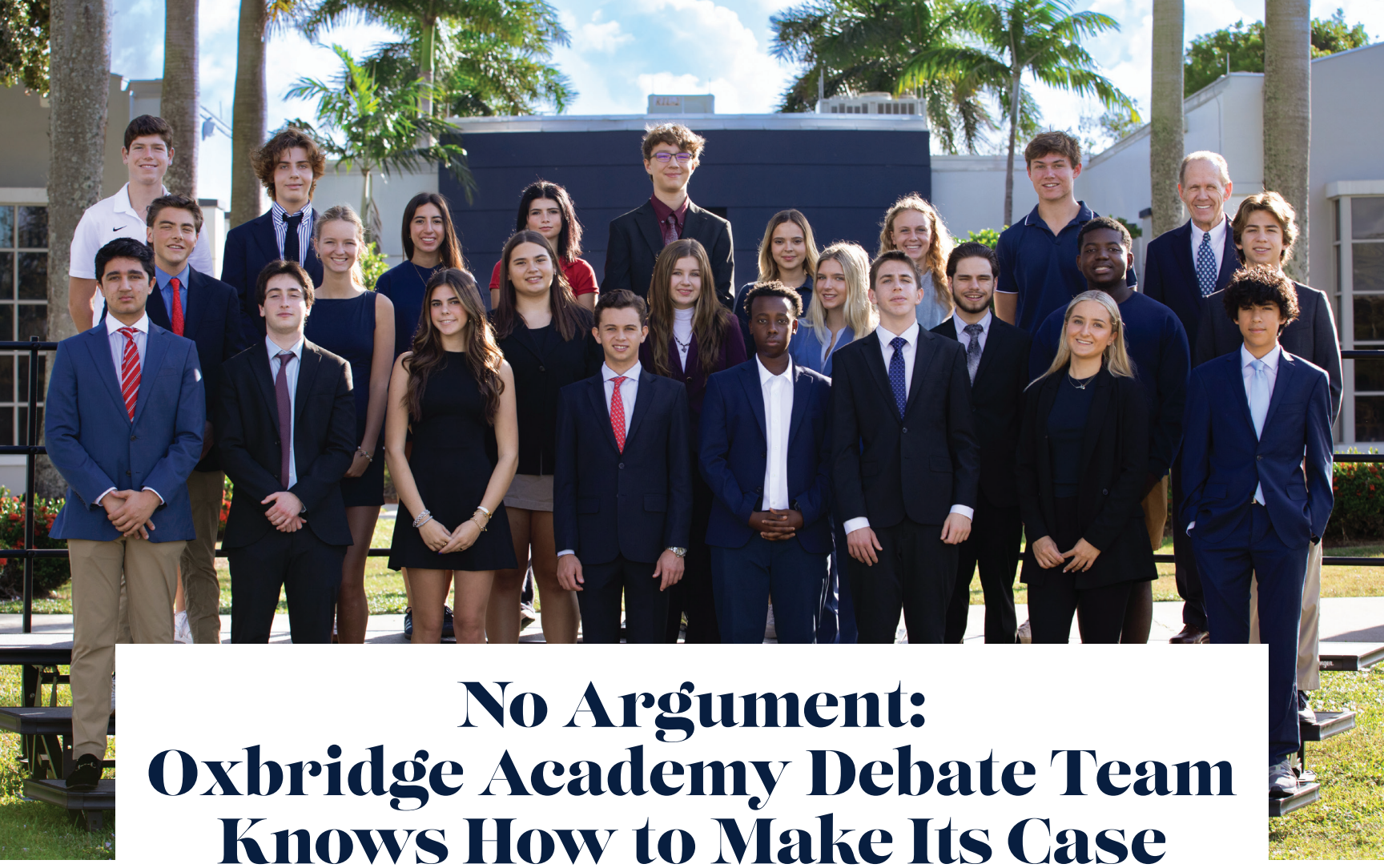
Listening to the panelists in various fields of finance struck a chord with attendees. “I really did enjoy it,” says Emily Arron ’24. “It was an amazing opportunity to pick the brains of a variety of successful women in finance. It opened my eyes to a field I would have never considered.” Carly Ross ’25 added, “having all those women during the panel



Becky Lightman, founder of Lightman Capital

talk to us about their experiences and current jobs was enough inspiration. It was amazing to see other women in the position that I hope to be in when I get older.”

Maya Krishtul ’25 took much of the panelists’ counsel to heart. After the program, she approached Lighthouse General Counsel Nina Fitzpatrick—and ended up with a summer internship!



No Argument: Oxbridge Academy Debate Team Knows How to Make Its Case

Golden, gleaming debate trophies stand like proud redwoods on the desk of second-year Oxbridge Academy Debate Coach Dr. Matthew Brandstetter. A thin smile spreads across his face as he surveys the statuettes and plaques that signal two seasons of the team's impressive accomplishments, but also serve as proof of Oxbridge Academy's continuing tradition of developing exemplary debaters. Part of the proof is the Leading Chapter Award—one of the team's newest on display—that the National Speech and Debate Association (NSDA) recently presented to Oxbridge for "sustained, outstanding participation" and in "National Recognition for Excellence in Speech and Debate, Oxbridge Academy, Florida, 2014-2023." That impressive period of excellence continued into 2024.

Oxbridge Academy has developed a reputation for first-rate orators. Team captain Mitchell Bernstein '25 enrolled in the school because of "its impressive history of developing high-level speech and debate talent." In 2017, then-Senior Terrell Seabrooks was named the national champion in Congressional Debate at the National Speech and Debate Association's Nationals Tournament. Alyson Brusie '18 and Robbie Linck '18 finished eighth in the Public Forum Debate tournament, earning scholarships and a trophy. Seabrooks went on to attend Princeton University, where he served as Vice President of the American Whig-Cliosophic Society—the nation's oldest collegiate debating society—and tournament director for the Princeton Debate Panel.

Fast forward to today, and the Oxbridge Academy Debate Team continues to distinguish itself, placing in county, regional, and national competitions. Their achievements include reaching the semifinals at a national competition at Princeton University, where they competed against 99 teams nationwide. Bettina Gannon '27 also had the rare distinction of not only qualifying as a freshman for last summer's NSDA National Speech & Debate Tournament in Des Moines, Iowa, but also reaching the semifinals in the Congressional Debate category. Brandstetter describes this competition, which drew over 5,000 competitors from 1,200 schools, as "the granddaddy of all national tournaments." He adds, "While making the cut to the national tournament and reaching the semifinals is remarkable, even more remarkable is that Bettina did so as a freshman. She is going to be a real leader."

While this is only Brandstetter's second year as a member of the Oxbridge faculty, he has been mentoring debaters at various schools for more than 25 years.



Debate Coach Dr. Matthew Brandstetter and Bettina Gannon ’27.

In 2021, the National Speech and Debate Association (NSDA) presented him with its prestigious Fourth Diamond Coach Award for excellence in teaching public speaking and debate. Oxbridge Academy is an excellent match for Dr. Brandstetter, as the Debate Team members have consistently demonstrated the qualities he believes are required of great debaters: curiosity, perseverance, dedication, determination to learn, and unwavering commitment. The secret to the team’s success, he says, is that “[the] students have done the hard work before competitions, which has ultimately allowed them to shine and earn awards.”

Judging from tournament results, that dedication is paying off. Bernstein and teammates Gannon and Gianna Di Leo ‘28 advanced to the semifinal round of the Congressional Debate category of the Princeton University Classic in 2023. Bernstein and Gannon also advanced to the finals of the Florida Forensic League (FFL) Regional Tournament. Their teammates, Patrick Conroy ‘25 and Sarah Silver ‘25, placed second in the Novice Public Forum Debate category of the 40th Annual Florida Blue Key Tournament, where nearly 100 schools competed.

“Any success I have been fortunate to have,” Gannon says, “has been because of Dr. Brandstetter. I came into debate with no prior knowledge besides the desire to learn. He worked with me for countless hours to prepare for competitions.” She adds, “His dedication to his students and their success is admirable. From our morning meetings to his motivating words right before my rounds, Dr. Brandstetter has been the best coach, mentor, and teacher I could have ever hoped.”

Brandstetter’s teaching philosophy is built around the idea that he is not only teaching his students how to win an argument but also helping them develop as confident citizens and future leaders. He says debate “offers significant advantages that help students academically and in real life.” Debate prep, he adds, improves focus, listening, public and impromptu speaking skills, and “an ability to think on one’s feet.”



Bernstein agrees. “Debate,” he says, “has aided me in refining how to deliver thoughts to evoke a specific outcome and helped me confidently participate in any conversation, interview, or other situation I may be in.” Gannon believes the presentation skills she learned in the debate were key to winning the election for sophomore class president. The confidence those skills provided her in speech writing and public speaking, she says, “helped greatly with my on-stage presence and my overall campaign because I could set myself apart from other candidates and have a sense of relatability.” She realizes those skills will serve her well beyond high school and college. “They are incredibly valuable for college and the rest of your professional life. In summation, the skill set I’ve gained from debate is essential to all aspects of life, which is why I was initially drawn to it.”

Opposite, team photo from left, front row: Nikhil Ramprasad ‘25, Ethan Miller ‘25, Kendall Renna ’26, Brandon Martindale ‘27, Mau Thiga ’27, Matthew Sosin ’27, Allora Lockwood ‘26, Marco Raffinengo ‘26; Second row from left: Patrick Conroy, Lily Thomas ’26, Chloe Caraffa ‘27, Bettina Gannon ‘27, Charlotte Bruneau ‘27, Mitchell Bernstein ‘25, Khalil Washington ‘26, Asher Levitt ‘26; Top row from left: Paul Baier ‘26, David Partheniou ’28, Camila Contreras ‘25, Sarah Silver ‘25, Ulysses Multack ’28, Gabriela Lasky ‘25, Siena Huey ‘27, John Lagae ‘25, Matthew F. Brandstetter, Ed.D.
Not pictured: Sophia Srb ’27, Maria Zoumas ’27, Leo Graham ’28, Daniella Brown ’28, Carter Molbert ’28, Declan Coates ’25, Avery Esterson ’25, Harlow Klann ’25, Winthrop Ward ’25, James Flynn ’25, Jimmy Rivas-Padilla ’28, Lolly Taylor ’25, Zarielle Lis ‘25, Shaya Burns ’28,



Model UN Team Shines; Wins National Award of Distinction

Last March, the Oxbridge Academy Model UN Team concluded another stellar season by excelling in the 50th National High School Model United Nations Conference in New York. The ThunderWolves delegation achieved its highest ranking in Oxbridge Academy history, garnering several awards, including the prestigious Award of Distinction for Overall Performance. This accolade is the highest commendation of the conference, attended by 3,000-plus students representing more than 180 schools from 70 countries.

The Oxbridge Model UN Delegation included: Paul Baier ‘26, Jesse Berg ‘27, Matthew Brodner ‘24, Patrick Conroy ‘25, Sarah Dagher ‘26, Harriet Falkoff ‘25, Liam Guzzanti ‘25, Molly Kapp ‘25, Oliver Kerkorian ‘26, John Lagae ‘25, Gabriela Lasky ‘25, Zarielle Lis ‘25, Ethan Miller ‘25, Nikhil Ramprasad ‘25, Kaden Renna ‘24, Matthew Sosin ‘27, Lily Thomas ‘27, and Enrique Tomeu ‘25.

Several Oxbridge Academy delegates earned individual accolades for their impressive performances in their respective committees, including:

- Matthew Brodner and Ethan Miller: Award of Merit in the Security Council
- Patrick Conroy and Zarielle Lis: Award of Distinction in The UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP)
- Gabriela Lasky and Lily Thomas: Award of Distinction in the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species (CMS) Committee



- Sarah Dagher and Nikhil Ramprasad: Award of Excellence in the UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) Committee

Oxbridge Academy delegates were further recognized for their outstanding speaking abilities and were chosen to address the entire conference at closing ceremonies. The following student teams received Plenary Awards for this honor:

- Kaden Renna and Matthew Sosin
- Matthew Brodner and Ethan Miller
- Nikhil Ramprasad and Sarah Dagher

“I cannot thank our students enough for the tireless hours they put into Conference preparation,” said Model UN Coach Dr. Marjorie Chiarolanzio, “I am proud of the way our team represented Oxbridge Academy!”

Twice as Nice: Patrick Conroy Enjoys the Simultaneous Challenges of Model UN and Debate



One of the reasons for the dual success of Oxbridge Academy's Model UN (MUN) and Debate teams might be that a number of ThunderWolves are members of both teams. Patrick Conroy '25 is one of them, winning awards and citations in both arenas.

As a junior on the Debate team, he won second place in Novice Public Forum Debate and third place in the Best Overall Speaker category at the 2023 Florida Blue Key Speech and Debate Tournament in Gainesville, Florida. He continued his winning streak during the spring semester, earning a Diplomatic Commendation at the 2024 Harvard Model United Nations Conference and an Award of Distinction at the 2024 National High School Model United Nations Conference in New York City for his notable work participating in the conference's UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific.

He joined both, he says, "because these two programs provide me the opportunity to competitively engage in two subjects I have always enjoyed -- international relations and current affairs. Debate provides each competitor the chance to specialize in what they do best, whether it be researching, writing, or in my case, public speaking. Similarly, Model UN provides me the opportunity to represent a country to resolve global conflicts and legislate international law for the community of nations."

While both Model UN and Debate require similar skills, participants utilize them to achieve different goals. In debate, team members have to argue a point of view and persuade a judge to vote your way. Model UN requires similar skills to lobby fellow delegates to adopt your resolutions. "Both clubs have unique challenges," Conroy explains. "In debate, one must prove your opponent wrong and yourself right, and in Model UN, one must try to get others to agree with you without being disagreeable."

For Conroy, learning how to do both has proved beneficial both in and out of competitions. The research and analytical skills honed through preparing for Model UN conferences and debate competitions have helped him succeed across academic and personal endeavors. "The depth of research required to understand and effectively represent a country's position on various global issues has translated into improved academic performance and critical thinking abilities across the board," Conroy says. "The public speaking and research skills I've developed in Oxbridge Academy's Model UN and Debate programs have boosted my confidence and articulation in presentations, class discussions, and even job interviews."

The following students also successfully took on the challenge of participating on both the Debate and Model UN teams: Paul Baier '26, John Lagae '25, Gabriela Lasky '25, Zarielle Lis '25, Ethan Miller '25, Nikhil Ramprasad '25, Matthew Sosin '27, Lolly Taylor '25, Lily Thomas '26, and Win Ward '25.

Science Teacher Andrew Johnson Leading the Charge in AI (and Physics) Education

As Artificial Intelligence (AI) flexes its muscles in just about all facets of our lives on a global scale, Oxbridge Academy's Dr. Andrew Johnson has been leading the school in ensuring students have the knowledge, confidence, and understanding of how to use it, and how it is affecting society. Oxbridge is fortunate to have such an experienced teacher—a trained theoretical and computational physicist, to lead the way in understanding this vast and fast-growing field.



Photo credit: Capehart Photography

However, it almost didn't work out this way. Early on, Andrew Johnson envisioned being a professional tennis player, photographer—or even a rock star, not a physics teacher with expertise in math modeling, digital logic, and nuclear weapons simulations. Barely into his teens, Johnson was already a budding jazz drummer and photographer when he discovered a passion for tennis at Sheridan Junior High School in Sheridan, Wyoming. (His parents, Edwin and Joan, who he describes as "literary and theater people," taught English and other subjects at a nearby community college.) He'd win a state singles title as a high school junior in 1984 and was named an All-American tennis player in 1985. The Sheridan High School tennis team also won back-to-back state championships in those years. "I harbored a dream of going pro for a while," Johnson says.

Tennis, however, wasn't his only focus during high school. He was the lead photographer on the yearbook staff and, even before high school, had been pitching freelance photos to the local newspaper, getting published on occasion. While in elementary school, he took photojournalism courses at the community college and, with the help of his father, had set up a darkroom in his bathroom. Somehow, he also found time to join a local jazz band, eventually switching to playing blues and rock when he arrived at the University of Colorado in 1986.

Johnson credits his arts-loving father for instilling a love of science and problem-solving. His father, Johnson says, "loved working on electronics and taught me a lot about problem-solving…and he also loved physics." So, in college, the almost tennis pro, would-be professional photographer, and potential rock star, inspired by his father's broad interests, decided to major in physics. "Though I've pursued formal education in science and math," Johnson says, "inspired by my parents, I'm a lifelong autodidact in literature and the arts. I love learning about all the facets of human understanding through history, art, literature, science, and philosophy."

Press Johnson a bit more, and you'll discover he had an early, untapped fascination with science. That bug was planted by his fourth-grade teacher, Mr. Compton, whose lesson about The Big Bang Theory caused a secondary big bang in Johnson's brain. "I always remember that experience as an early resonance with science and the scientific method," Johnson says. "It was amazing that we could know such things, and I had to understand how to

do it." The pull of science continued the following year, in 1979—the centenary of Albert Einstein's birth. All ten years old, Johnson spearheaded an Einstein celebration in his school. "I made a giant poster with a portrait of Einstein and equations all around it that we hung in the hallway on March 14 (Einstein's birthday and Pi Day)," he recalls.

It appears Johnson is a Renaissance Man disguised as a physics teacher. His background in science is as broad and deep as his love and curiosity for all things. To hear him describe his work history is like conversing with someone speaking another language. Try this: "My work in grad school and the first few years afterward was basic research in strong interaction physics, including nuclear physics and nuclear astrophysics. Then, I worked on nuclear weapons simulations and computer codes that analyze various aspects of nuclear detonations. After that, I got into neuroscience, developing a web-based tool for archiving, pipelining, and analyzing neuron morphology data collected in rat brains. All very different areas, but one common thread is the use of data to get insights." (The titles of his research papers also call for interpreters, such as New Radiochemistry Data Interface Capability.)

To be clear, Johnson is not living and breathing scientific data and interface capability 24/7. He is the father of three daughters and two sons. The youngest is studying occupational therapy at the University of Florida. He works out daily and loves hiking, biking, camping, and kayaking with his wife, Christina. During the past summer, they spent time hiking the mountains of Peru. "I love to travel," Johnson says, "and being immersed in different cultures."

Johnson joined Oxbridge in 2017 after teaching introductory and upper-division physics at the University of New Mexico and the Florida Atlantic University Honors College. He also previously worked in industry, doing research for the Los Alamos National Laboratory, NextEra Energy Resources, and the Max Planck Florida Institute. He holds a bachelor's degree in physics and mathematics from the University of Colorado and a Doctorate in Applied Physics from the Colorado School of Mines.

Believe it or not, this brings us to Johnson's interest in AI and his ability to explain its impact and inspire his students to care about its ramifications. "In recent years," says Johnson, who has been teaching AI classes at Oxbridge since 2019, "Artificial Intelligence (AI) has morphed from a relatively obscure preoccupation of computer science researchers and cognitive neuroscientists to a field having a major impact in many sectors of our lives and livelihoods." He adds, "My fascination and experience with AI stems intellectually from the confluence of math, physics, philosophy, and neuroscience. There are deep questions about how consciousness relates to computation and physical laws. I've worked a lot on data analysis throughout my career, and increasingly, this is being dominated by machine learning and other algorithms that form the current state of the art in implementations of AI."

At Oxbridge, Johnson teaches courses in Artificial Intelligence & Math Modeling, and Digital Logic as well as classes for on-level and honors ninth-grade physics, calculus-based physics (Mechanics and Electricity and Magnetism), and a new class in introductory modern physics (Special Relativity and Quantum Mechanics). "Through the study of physics," Johnson says, "I hope to build and reinforce my students' problem-solving skills and critical faculties as well as help them build their fact-based knowledge about the world." He adds, "My favorite thing to see in the classroom is curiosity fueled by new knowledge. I love when I see students talking with each other about what they've just learned and discussing different points of view."

Fundamental scientific wisdom is included in all his classes. "Since life is long and I know my students are young and will have many experiences after high school, the key lessons I want to stick with them are very general. In a nutshell, I'd repeat a quote from the physicist Richard Feynman: "The first rule is don't fool yourself. And you are the easiest person to fool." To elaborate:

- The world is comprehensible, except when it isn't, and your impressions can easily fool you. Be wary of being misled and use your mind and any available data to determine your opinions.
- You get better at thinking through practice. Never stop practicing; you are a work in progress.
- Stay curious and mentally flexible; it's the only way to ensure you can adapt to a dynamic world.

This teaching philosophy should serve Johnson's students well, as AI has caused institutions, from local schools to the federal government, to contend with its unknown and unpredictable ripple effects. Perhaps the biggest concern is that AI will supplant humans in many ways. Of that, Johnson is not too fearful. "I suspect what happens will be different and more interesting and less apocalyptic," he says. "I think that AI will always be a tool that humans use, but it will develop into a tool unlike any we've ever seen. It will open new possibilities for what humans can accomplish, but there will also be pitfalls. Overcoming those pitfalls will challenge us as a species to see further and see better."



AI and Math Modeling class, from left, Katherine Pottash, Ariella Hershfield, Rebecca Schwarzberg, Dr. Andrew Johnson, Gabi Farinas, Joseph Hershfield, and Micah Kapp.

Nothing Artificial About It

Oxbridge Academy is Ahead of the Curve in AI Education

Artificial Intelligence (AI) programs like ChatGPT may seem to have emerged suddenly, but their development spans several decades. Alan Turing, a legendary British mathematician and cryptographer known for breaking the Nazi Enigma code, was an early advocate of "machine intelligence." His 1950 paper, "Computing Machinery and Intelligence," laid the groundwork for AI research, which became an established academic discipline in 1956.

In recent years, AI research has evolved from a relatively obscure field of computer science researchers and cognitive neuroscientists to one that is transforming many sectors of our lives and livelihoods. Oxbridge Academy's first foray into the study of AI was a trip to the Seventh Annual International Technology Fair in Shanghai, China, in the spring of 2019. That experience led to Oxbridge offering formal AI classes the following fall. Dr. Andrew Johnson, an instructor at Oxbridge who has taught the AI Curriculum since its inception, explains, "We are rapidly moving into a world where every student entering the workforce or continuing to the next level of education should have at least a basic understanding of AI."

Oxbridge Academy's Artificial Intelligence Signature Program fills this gap at the Upper School level with courses covering the basic applications, history, and current issues of AI. Dr. Johnson emphasizes, "Students in this program have the opportunity to gain a basic understanding of the evolving impact of AI in their daily lives and learn skills that they can leverage further to become AI engineers and scientists."

Dr. Ralph Maurer, Head of School and co-teacher for many of Oxbridge's AI courses, highlights the necessity of this curriculum: "For our advanced math, statistics, and computer science students, engaging with AI-related areas such as machine learning and natural language processing is essential. These tools are prevalent in university courses and industry, crucial for data analysis, model building, and solving real-world problems. Familiarity with these tools is vital."

Courses like Honors Seminar Artificial Intelligence and Math Modeling 1 and 2 allow students to develop math modeling skills through 2D motion, population dynamics, and linear regression examples. They then explore big data to understand predictive models and descriptive data analysis, studying multi-dimensional data sets and applying regression techniques.

Oxbridge has invited outside experts in the field to address the school community. In 2024, University of Virginia Professor of Business Ethics Dr. Dorothy Leidner, who holds a Ph.D. in Information Systems from

the University of Texas at Austin, gave a highly relevant presentation on the ethics of AI. Her talk concentrated on the potential impact of AI on humanity and how technology will transform all sectors of the economy. Both students and parents were challenged with important ethical questions on the possible use of data and were struck by how fast the economy is changing.

One of the Oxbridge AI program's success stories is Ryan Farinas, an alumn from the class of 2024 who is now at Tulane University. He shares his excitement about applying AI in his biochemistry studies: "AI can significantly reduce development time for many products and treatments. I plan to use AI to test potential products made from biological materials, like bamboo, and I'm eager to explore its potential in college."

Oxbridge Academy's commitment to pioneering AI education equips students with the knowledge and skills necessary to navigate and shape the future. By integrating AI into its curriculum, Oxbridge prepares students for higher education and careers and empowers them to be innovative leaders in a rapidly evolving technological landscape. As AI continues to influence countless aspects of our lives, Oxbridge Academy is ensuring that its students are not just participants in this transformation but pioneers who drive it forward.



Oxbridge Alum Is Looking Forward to the Benefits of AI

Ryan Farinas '24, now an "Honors Scholar" and freshman biochemistry major on a full scholarship at Tulane University, embraced Oxbridge's Artificial Intelligence (AI) classes and plans on using AI as a research tool. Here's what Farinas, who is minoring in math, had to say about AI:

Q: How did you first become interested in AI?
A: I became interested in AI a few years ago when it started integrating into camera software. I love taking photos, and AI has helped a ton with mobile photography, especially in low-light environments such as nighttime.

Q: How did the Oxbridge AI courses help you implement AI in your schoolwork and life?
A: Taking the AI class with Dr. Johnson taught me more about the coding behind AI and all the processes involved. I even developed a few basic algorithms in the class.

Q: Where do you think AI is taking society?
A: I don't think anyone can answer that. Humans are notoriously awful at predicting the future, but I believe AI will be a net positive. It could do many things, from significantly increasing patient survivability in surgeries to optimizing shipping traffic for e-commerce companies, that will benefit humanity.

Q: What do you think are some of the pros and cons of AI?
A: I've already mentioned some of the pros, but the two major cons are that one, many people will lose their jobs to AI, and two, it will make an already easy life for many even easier. There are ways to avoid both issues, however. This issue will lessen if AI is used primarily to augment jobs instead of outright replacement. Also, the slowing increase in population in many countries (and even population decline in others) will mean that there will be less demand for jobs as well. As for making lives easier argument, if people use their extra time to enrich their lives, whether through learning new skills or contributing to society in other ways, this issue will become a positive thing for society.

Q: How do you plan to use AI in the future?
A: I will be studying biochemistry in college, and some of my ideas include using AI to test potential products made of biological material (in my case, bamboo). AI has the potential to cut the development time of many products and treatments by a few orders of magnitude, and I can't wait to use it more in college.



Exploring History and Literature

Celebrating 10 Years, Oxbridge Academy Scholars Continue Journey to Cambridge University

During spring break 2024, a group of juniors from Oxbridge Academy embarked on an extraordinary journey to rigorously study British literature and history at the prestigious Cambridge University. As the only high school in the United States to collaborate with this illustrious institution, Oxbridge has offered this unique experience since 2014, allowing students to engage directly with esteemed faculty at one of the world's most iconic educational environments.

The Adventure Begins

The excitement was palpable at Miami International Airport as the sun shone brightly over South Florida. The group gathered excitedly before boarding an Airbus A330 for their nine-hour flight to London. The journey was filled with laughter, card games, and the occasional attempt at sleep. Upon landing at London Heathrow, a surprise encounter with Miami Dolphins superstar Tyreek Hill added a touch of excitement to the start of their adventure.

After a smooth transition through customs, the scholars boarded a bus bound for Madingley Hall, their home for the week. After a warm welcome and a hearty lunch, the group ventured into Cambridge. The stunning architecture of the university left them in awe, setting the perfect tone for their immersive experience in British culture.

Engaging with Literature

The next day began with a hearty breakfast and a stroll around Madingley Hall's picturesque grounds. Their first lecture focused on Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, sparking lively discussions about the novel's controversial themes. Breaks featured an assortment of tea, coffee, and cake, providing a refreshing interlude before diving into deeper analyses of education and politics in the 19th century.

During lectures, the students engaged in activities challenging their understanding of historical contexts. They played rugby on the lawn, embodying the very essence of the British educational experience they were living.

A Deeper Dive into History

The following days were filled with enlightening lectures and activities. One session on Thomas Hardy's *Jude the Obscure* invited students to analyze the controversial aspects of class and marriage in Victorian England. Group discussions and close-reading activities enriched their understanding, showcasing the relevance of these texts to contemporary society.

The group visited the Fitzwilliam Museum, exploring a rich tapestry of art and history. From ancient artifacts to masterpieces by Van Gogh and Monet, the students were mesmerized by the beauty and depth of the collections. The museum's stunning architecture was a highlight, providing an inspiring backdrop to their learning.

A Taste of Cambridge Life

Amid their academic pursuits, students also relished the joys of daily life in Cambridge. They enjoyed British cuisine, which included hearty dishes like lamb stew and delicious

desserts. In the evenings, they worked on essays or enjoyed leisure time exploring the beautiful surroundings of Madingley Hall.

As the week progressed, the students visited the libraries of the Faculty of English and the Faculty of History. Working among Cambridge students was exhilarating as they delved into texts that fueled their essays. The vast collections inspired their research and brought history to life in new and exciting ways.

A Day in Oxford

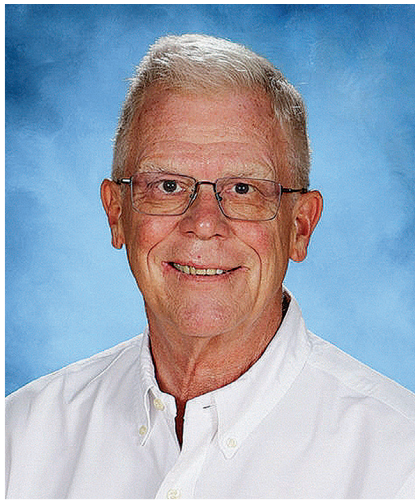
The scholars also visited Oxford University, touring iconic sites like Christ Church College and the Bodleian Library. Afternoon tea at the Ashmolean Museum capped off a day of exploration and discovery, with many spots echoing scenes from the beloved *Harry Potter* films.

A Transformative Experience

The journey to Cambridge University was not merely an academic endeavor but a transformative experience that enriched the students' understanding of literature, history, and culture. The collaboration between Oxbridge Academy and Cambridge University continues to open doors for young scholars, offering them unparalleled opportunities to immerse themselves in academia, other cultures, and foreign travel.

As they returned home, each student had a renewed passion for learning, a sense of accomplishment, and an increased understanding of the world. The Oxbridge Academy Cambridge Scholars program is a testament to education's power in shaping young minds and inspiring lifelong curiosity.

John Klemme: In Memorium



In late October, we announced the passing of our beloved English Department Chair and Honors Seminar English teacher, Mr. John Klemme. Mr. Klemme served Oxbridge Academy with dedication, wisdom, and compassion since the school's founding in 2011.

Driven by his enduring love for teaching, Mr. Klemme joined Oxbridge Academy after retiring as the principal of Scarsdale High School in New York. Throughout his career, he inspired countless students and faculty with his passion for literature and the Great Books—timeless works like Dante's *Divine Comedy*, Aeschylus's *Oresteia*, Shakespeare's *King Lear*, and Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick*. Mr. Klemme taught students not only to read and understand these classics but also to love and appreciate them. He believed that literature elevates our understanding of the world. Many of his former students credit him with transforming how they read and interpret books, often describing him as the teacher who had the most significant impact on their writing and speaking, helping them become more insightful and precise thinkers.

Beyond the classroom, Mr. Klemme was instrumental in establishing the Cambridge Scholars Program in 2014, forging an exclusive partnership with Cambridge University. Each year, this rigorous two-week course allows 15 qualified juniors to study British history and literature at one of the world's most prestigious universities. Through this program, Mr. Klemme helped students engage deeply with complex ideas and hone their critical writing and analytical skills. His work on the Cambridge program has left students with a lasting appreciation for history, literature, and the interconnectedness of global issues.

From 2016 to 2018, Mr. Klemme also served as Oxbridge Academy's interim Head of School, leading the school with integrity and a solid commitment to students, faculty, and staff. As a colleague, he was one of the kindest individuals, known for his warmth and generosity. He loved opera, Broadway theater, and his family. He cherished his son and grandchildren, proudly sharing their photos whenever possible.

Mr. Klemme's influence and unwavering commitment to academic excellence have helped shape our school's mission, growth, innovation, and success. His legacy is woven into the fabric of our school, and his impact on everyone who knew him is profound. He will be deeply missed, and our hearts go out to his family, friends, and all who were touched and inspired by his wisdom, dedication, leadership, and kindness.

Oxbridge News



Rob Frackelton proudly shows his Outstanding Educator award while flanked by award presenters, FCEE members Brett Burkey and Joeley Luter.

Rob Frackelton Named Outstanding Economics Educator

In 2024, during an awards reception at Florida Atlantic University's Economic Education Center, Rob Frackelton, Oxbridge Academy economics teacher and Free Enterprise Institute Coordinator, received a Regional Economic Educator and Leadership Award from the Florida Council on Economic Education (FCEE), which recognizes outstanding classroom teachers in economics. The Free Enterprise Institute was also a finalist in the Innovative Program category at the Sixth Annual Palm Beach Illustrated Education Awards.



Dr. Andrew Johnson, a Finalist for Palm Beach Illustrated's Educator of the Year

Dr. Andrew Johnson, who teaches physics and AI, was a finalist in the Educator of the Year category at the Sixth Annual Palm Beach Illustrated Education Awards held in September. Johnson was also featured in the September issue of *Palm Beach Illustrated* magazine and participated in a panel discussion about the impact of AI on education during the event.

Dr. Kelly Prisco Wins International Dance Competition

During spring break 2024, Oxbridge Academy's Health & Wellness Director, Dr. Kelly Prisco, an award-winning ballroom dancer, participated in her first international competition and returned home with an armful of trophies. Competing in the international "Dance as Fire" Championships in Rome, Italy, Prisco and her dance partner Paolo DiLorenzo finished first in the ProAm Ladies B Open Smooth Championship category, first in the ProAm Dance as Fire Challenge, and second in the Ladies B Open Scholarship category. This is no small feat, considering that dozens of dance teams from more than a dozen countries vied for the prizes. Take a bow, Dr. Prisco!



Dr. Kelly Prisco and partner Paolo DiLorenzo give her first international competition a spin.



Art Teacher Brenda Hatter Exhibits in Dia De Los Muertos Show in Orlando

Oxbridge Middle School art teacher Brenda Hatter's painting, Recuperacion de la Muerto, is one of about 35 works by Florida artists selected in fall 2023 for inclusion in the 14th Annual Dia de los Muertos (Day of the Dead) exhibition presented by City Arts, a contemporary gallery in Orlando. Despite its macabre title, the centuries-old holiday, which has roots in Mexico, is more joyful than solemn. Hatter explained her interest in the holiday: "The Day of the Dead is fascinating because it represents a unique blend of cultural traditions, is visually stunning, celebrates life and death simultaneously, promotes family and community ties, and has a rich history." Bravo for being selected for this exhibition!

Ethan Miller is a 2025 National Merit Scholarship Semifinalist

Ethan Miller '25 was selected as a 2025 National Merit Scholarship (NMS) semifinalist. This accomplishment is no small feat; the selection process is rigorous, and approximately 1.3 million students apply annually. Based on test results, the selection shrinks to 50,000 students. Then, 16,000 are selected as NMS semifinalists; from that group, 15,000 finalists are chosen, and a percentage of those students receive college scholarships.



Miller is also a key member of the Oxbridge debate team and the Model UN team, which last March won the Award of Distinction for Overall Performance at the 50th National High School Model United Nations Conference in New York. More than 3,000 students representing more than 180 schools from 70 countries attended.

Three Members of the Class of 2024 are National Merit Scholars

Class of 2024 members Vicente Ryan Farinas, Gabriela Matzen, and Wilson Stewart were named National Merit Scholars, each receiving a certificate of merit and a $2,500 scholarship. This prestigious program rewards the students' hard work, showcases their strong academic performance, and allows them to share their academic achievements with colleges and other scholarship programs. Students are selected based on their PSAT/NMSQT scores and, in 2024, were competing for 7,870 National Merit Scholarships worth nearly $28 million. About 1.3 million students apply for the NMS each year. Based on test results, that number shrinks to 50,000, and then 16,000 are selected as NMS Semi-Finalists, 15,000 become finalists, and less than half—6,870 receive scholarships.



PATHFINDERS
The Palm Beach Post



Arabella Sanchez-Garcia is a 2024 Pathfinder Award Winner

Arabella Sanchez-Garcia '24 won a $2,000 2024 Pathfinder Scholarship for her second-place finish in the Art category. A select group of fewer than 600 high school seniors in Palm Beach and Martin counties compete for this award, nominated by their schools and reviewed by a panel of outside judges in each category. Sanchez-Garcia is now studying industrial design at Savannah College of Art & Design (SCAD).



Essay winners, from left, Alex Timperman, Gabriella Farinas, and Aiden Lynch, with Sons of the Revolution's Bill Richards

Annual Sons of the Revolution Essay Contest Winners Announced

Five years ago, the Palm Beach Chapter of the Sons of the Revolution in the State of Florida established an annual essay contest for Oxbridge Academy's 10th-grade students to deepen their knowledge and understanding of the U.S. Constitution and the rights it guarantees. The 2023-2024 school year's essay contest topic was: "The Seventh Amendment to the Constitution is as important today as when it was first adopted." (The amendment deals with the right to a jury trial in certain civil cases). The winners of the 2024 contest were Aidan Lynch (first place), Gabriella Farinas (second place), and Alex Timperman (third place). They received prizes of $300, $200, and $100, respectively.



Emerson Smethhurst Wins 2024 Klemme Award

Emerson Smethurst '25 was selected for the 2024 John Klemme Arts and Literature Award, which annually recognizes and celebrates a junior who "demonstrates a devotion to, a profound passion for, and excellence in the study of the arts and literature." The board of Trustees established the award to commemorate Klemme's tenure as Head of School and Academic Dean (2016-2018).

Rebecca Schwarzberg Wins the 2024 Harvard Book Award



Rebecca Schwarzberg '25 received the 2024 Harvard Book Award (aka Harvard Book Prize), which has been given annually since 1910 to outstanding students in "the next-to-graduating high school class who display excellence in scholarship and high character, combined with achievement in other fields." Initially donated by Harvard clubs and "Shared Interest Groups" to students in New England, Prize Books are now presented to a select student in 1,000 high schools around the world. Titles vary, and all books presented by an officially recognized club come with an official Harvard bookplate to record the names of the donors and award recipients.



Micah Kapp Receives School's First Yale Book Award

Micah Kapp '25 was the first Oxbridge Academy student to receive the Yale University Book Award, presented by regional Yale clubs, "to celebrate and recognize outstanding secondary school junior class scholar-citizens." The award includes an appropriate book affixed to a Yale bookplate inscribed with the student's name, date of award, Yale club sponsor, and award donor.



Five Oxbridge Singers Named to District Honor Choir

Each year, students from area high schools are selected to join the District Honor Choir "based upon assessments of vocal independence, harmonization abilities, and sight-singing skills." Congratulations to Alex Timperman '26, Jacob Padilla '26, Sammy Pincus '26, Gerald Valvano '27, and Alexis Goodson '27 on being selected for the choir!

Oxbridge Announces 2024-2025 Cambridge Scholars

Congratulations to the students selected to participate in the 10th Annual Oxbridge Academy Cambridge Scholars Program. These juniors will travel to Cambridge University in the spring of 2025 to participate in a two-week academic program titled "1066: The Norman Conquest and National Identity" for an immersive study of British history and its global influence. Cambridge Scholars are selected through a competitive process that requires the submission of a research project. This year's participating students are Paul Baier, Juliet Baum, Brooke Buchbinder, Sarah Dagher, Natalia Dorsey, Landyn Exarhos, Oliver Kerkorian, Hadley Krasulak, Thomas Murray, Ella-Ross Lang, Ella Sobocinski, Treasure Stein, Lily Thomas, Patrick Tighe, and Mercer Ward. Alternates are Grace Bennett and Jackson Gerardi. Oxbridge Academy is the only secondary school in the country that has this partnership with Cambridge.



Samantha Pastorius Authors Debut Novel

During her junior year, Samantha Pastorius ‘25 published her debut novel, *Reign of the Goddaughter*, a story of family infighting, jealousy, power, and intrigue. Demonstrating patience and tenacity, Pastorius began writing *Reign* during the summer after eighth-grade. “With the pandemic still in effect, I had time to write the beginning of my story,” she says. “Once I entered my freshman year, I used the time from Oxbridge Academy’s NaNoWriMo project to finish my book.” After two years of editing and preparation, it is now a tale between two covers and, at 296 pages, is no slim tome. Pastorius is working on her second novel, which she says, “will be a completely different genre.” *Reign* is available for purchase on Amazon.

Amanda Baratta Performs at St. Patrick’s Cathedral in New York

In December 2023, Amanda Baratta, then an Oxbridge sophomore, performed an instrumental flute arrangement of Franz Schubert’s “Ava Maria” at St. Patrick’s Cathedral in New York in front of an audience of about 1,000 during a Spanish mass. Baratta’s performance was so impressive she was invited to perform again in December of 2024. “It truly was an honor being chosen to play in a church that some musicians only dream of—and I got to practice my Spanish!” she said of her inaugural performance.



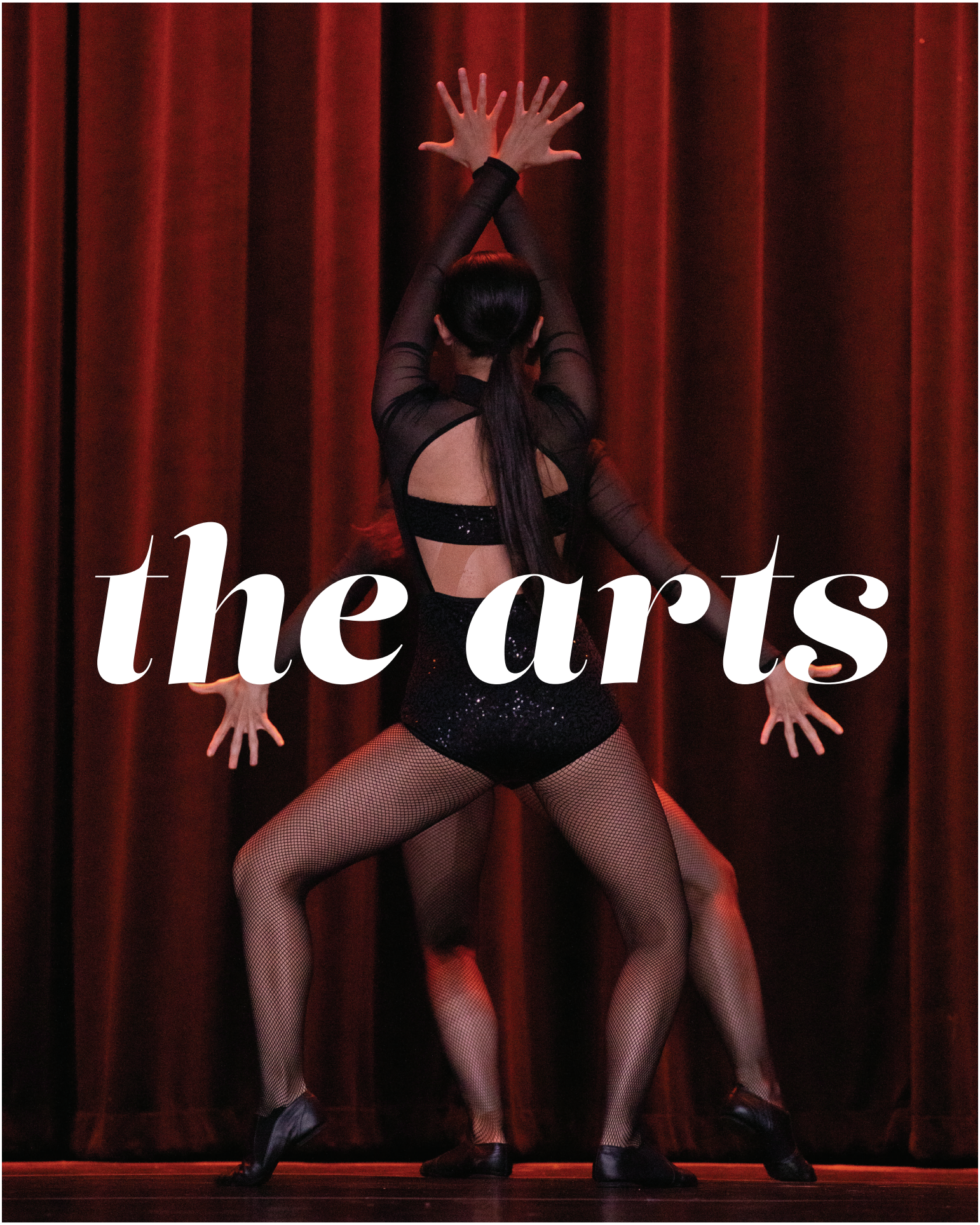
Miller, Pastorius, Schwarzberg Selected for 2023-2024 Leadership Program

Ethan Miller and Samantha Pastorius were selected during their junior year to represent Oxbridge Academy in the annual Palm Beach County Leadership Grow program. Rebecca Schwarzberg was chosen as the alternate. They joined peers from two dozen other high schools participating in the program. The Leadership Grow Program is designed to encourage high school juniors to think about critical issues faced by Palm Beach County, expand their leadership roles, and build a foundation of community involvement. Led by a team of dedicated Leadership Palm Beach County alumni, students gained real-life experience by meeting leaders from various fields. Once a month, the students spent a day visiting a government office, business, farm, nonprofit, media company, and civic organization to learn how they connect to create a community. The students were encouraged to interact, learn, and reflect on their future as community leaders, and build skills such as public speaking and resume-writing to prepare them for future education and employment.



Oxbridge Esports Makes the Playoffs

Congratulations to Matthew Stoessel ‘25, Ethan Geraghty ‘28, and Dylan Donigan ‘25 for making the High School Esports League (HSEL) Fall Major Silver Bracket Playoffs for Super Smash Bros.™ Ultimate! Donigan and Stoessel have been members of the team since its inception three years ago.


the arts



Theater Director Jacobi Howard Makes His Oxbridge Debut

Jacobi Howard, a seasoned professional, joined the Oxbridge Academy faculty as the school's new theater director in August. With over two decades of experience as an actor, writer, and director in theater, film, and television, Howard has shared stage and screen with stars such as Idris Elba and Kathleen Turner, and his credits include roles in films such as *The Book of Clarence* and the Netflix movie *The Harder They Fall* (both directed by Jeymes Samuel). Another project Howard worked on with Samuel—as a writer—is scheduled to start production in the spring.

Howard's creative journey began with a love of poetry that sparked in the seventh-grade in his hometown of Charlotte, North Carolina. This love led him to writing plays, with titles such as *'Pants on Fire,' 'Dirt,'* and *'Souls Amid the Iron Partition,'* which have been performed in venues throughout North Carolina. In interviews, he has expressed that his 'need to write' has been inspired by 'The authors I've loved for so long: Shel Silverstein, August Wilson, William Shakespeare, Alice Walker, and Zora Neale Hurston.'

A graduate of the University of North Carolina School of the Arts in Winston-Salem, where he received his Bachelor of Fine Arts, Howard has instructed youth master classes, audition workshops, television and film camera techniques, cold readings, and résumé preparation for professional auditions. "Art," he says, "is how we celebrate humanity and the mark people make on the world." As a teacher, he says, "I strive to create a safe and inclusive space where students can express themselves authentically and explore their creativity."

His first stage production at Oxbridge was the 1976 play *Vinegar Tom* by British playwright Caryl Churchill. The work, which presented at Oxbridge in November, explores the repression of women and the struggle for women's rights using the metaphor of 17th-century witchcraft trials in England.

"I first encountered this play in college when it was directed by my professor and mentor, Robert Francesconi, and it left a lasting impact on me," Howard says. "I chose *Vinegar Tom* as the first work to do at Oxbridge because it embodies a combination of elements that resonate deeply with both the season and the themes I wanted to explore. As a horror genre fan, I was on the lookout for plays that carried spooky undertones … At the same time, I needed a play that highlighted dynamic female characters to complement the female-heavy ensemble I'm working with."

Howard adds that, "*Vinegar Tom* stood out, not only because of its eerie atmosphere and connection to the 17th-century witch trials, but also because it delves into themes like power, patriarchal oppression, domestic violence, and body autonomy—issues that young women are still grappling with today. "Keep in mind that my cast members are not far from the characters' ages, making it easier for the performers to connect with the material."







2024 Regional Scholastic Arts Awards Gold & Silver Key Winners

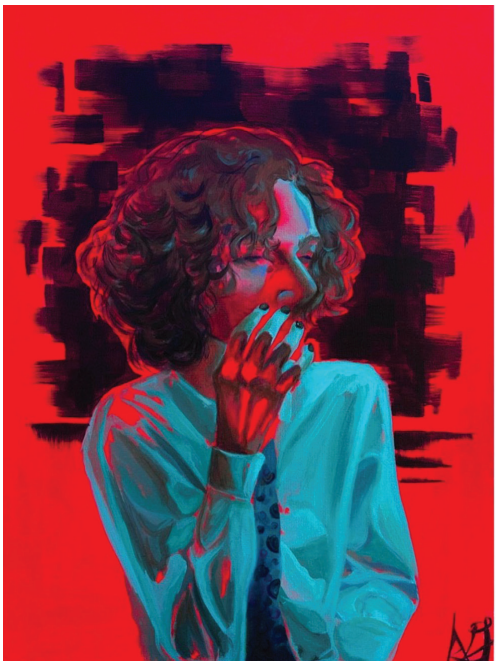
Scholastic Art & Writing Awards regional competition judges awarded three Gold Keys, 25 Silver Keys, and 50+ Honorable Mentions in the art category to Oxbridge Academy students in 2024. The three regional Gold Key winners were: Santiago Campuzano ‘26, who won for a photograph titled *“Colombian Sunrise,”* Gavin Norton ‘26, who won for a photograph titled *“Perched Mockingbird,”* and Evan Rearick ‘24, who won for a painting titled, *“Drowning.”*

Of the many Oxbridge Silver Key winners, Ellis Daggs ’24, Arabella Sanchez-Garcia ’24, and Alex Aboukhaled ‘24 were awarded two Silver Keys apiece. Daggs, who also received an impressive five Honorable Mentions for his work, won for his architecture & industrial design submissions. Sanchez-Garcia was cited for her paintings. She also received a pair of Honorable Mentions for painting and drawing & illustration submissions. Aboukhaled won for 3D mixed media sculpture and a work in ceramics and glass. (Camila Garcia ’24 and Haydn Bonner ’25 each received a Silver Key, as well as four and three Honorable Mentions, respectively.) Twins Alexis and Alicia Loynd, who were in eighth-grade at the time, pulled off the rare feat of winning Silver Keys as middle school students, both for ceramics works.

Founded in 1923, the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards are presented annually by the Alliance for Young Artists & Writers. The Alliance is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to identify students with exceptional artistic and literary talent and present their remarkable work through the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards. The competition bills itself as, “The nation’s longest-running, most prestigious recognition program for creative teens.”

Gold Key winners from top: Colombian Sunrise, photograph by Santiago Campuzano ’26; *Perched Mockingbird*, photograph by Gavin Norton ‘26; *Drowning*, painting by Evan Rearick ‘24



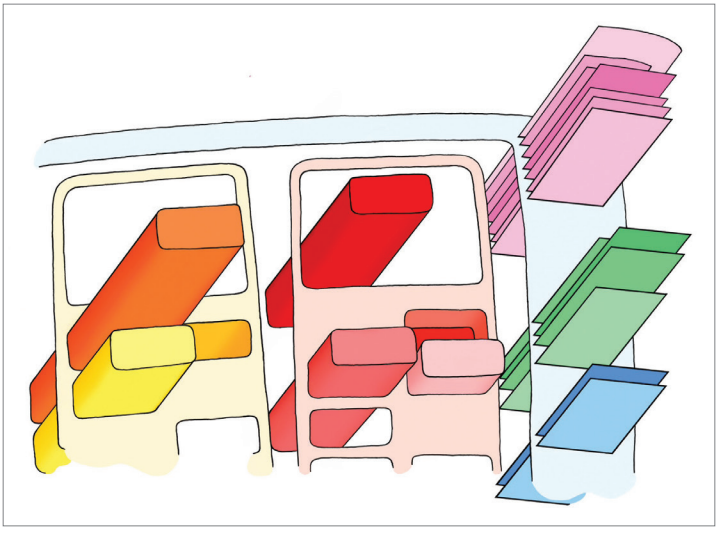






Silver Key winners clockwise from top left, include: *Cradle of the Renaissance*, photograph by Norton Gavin ‘26; *Introspection*, painting by Arabella Sanchez-Garcia ‘24; *Neoclassical* 3D sculpture by Alex Aboukhaled ’24; *Control Panel as Neighborhood*, architecture and industrial design by Ellis Daggs ‘24; *Cherry Pie,* ceramics, by Alicia Loynd ‘28; *Key Lime Pie*, ceramics and glass, by Alexis Loynd ‘28.







From left: Brenda Hatter, Hank Winter, Gabriel Abelha, and Harrison Thornton

Art Teacher Brenda Hatter's Unusual Journey

"She's a unicorn!" Oxbridge Middle School Director Rainey Wyatt bestows the ultimate praise for art teacher Brenda Hatter. "While most teachers excel or focus on one genre," Wyatt adds, "Brenda can teach it all—and loves to." Upon hearing this, Hatter humbly prefers to describe herself as a "jack-of-all-trades-master-of-none."

That Hatter is a beloved art teacher skilled in teaching and working in so many of its genres—painting, sculpture, ceramics, 3D, pencil, collage, paper mâché, and more—might be a bit surprising when you discover that in elementary school and high school, her favorite subject was history. Then, again, great teachers inspire, no matter the subject.

"My World History teacher, Mr. Collazo, was incredible," Hatter exclaims as if she were back in his classroom. "He was a gifted storyteller, and I'd usually be on the edge of my seat listening to him describe events in great detail, almost like he was there!"

Hatter also loved theater classes, painting sets for shows and acting in them. She also acted in a TV commercial for the Busch Gardens theme park a long, long time ago. "Now I get nervous in front of an audience," she confides. She says she was drawn to working with clay and 3D design as early as middle school.

In college, art still wasn't her primary color or calling, even though that talent was blossoming. Hatter majored in anthropology and earned a degree in that field from the University of South Florida, which is not far from Tampa, where she grew up.

An art gene, however, might have been lurking in her DNA. Her father designs and builds furniture, and her mother is a now-retired interior decorator. "They owned a furniture store in Ybor City, Tampa, when I was growing up," Hatter says. "My sister and I traveled with them each summer on their shopping trips to Europe. They imported furniture from Germany and Italy, so I have amazing memories from our travels."

In college, she and a friend created a comic strip called Circa Elvis "that floated around campus." It contained everything from dating advice to tips on surviving college, such as, never take a class with a professor who wrote the textbook or never take an 8 a.m. class. "We learned the hard

way on both of those," Hatter recalls. After graduating, Hatter was hired to work for an Italian American decorative arts company, creating dinnerware, vases, and other household goods. The company sent her to Italy for two summers to learn how to slip cast and paint in the traditional majolica style. "Learning about this traditional ceramic art form felt like uncovering a hidden treasure," Hatter says. "It represented more than mere décor and craftsmanship—it embodied centuries of history, culture, and heritage passed down through generations."

For Hatter, art began to intersect with everything she was interested in history, culture, anthropology, and travel. Add to that conservation, environmental protection, and a love of all creatures, great and small. "I'm deeply inspired by artists as environmental activists, using their art to raise awareness and inspire change, says Hatter, who "grew up on the water," has been an avid scuba diver for years, and has traveled to diving locations around the world. "When I'm underwater exploring, it's transformational. I feel a sense of awe and wonder with each dive experience." (She's also been long involved with animal rescue groups and fostering dog—she and her husband have four!)

But teaching art? That hadn't occurred to her. In fact, she fell into teaching by happy accident.

The high school in her neighborhood didn't have an art program, so she volunteered to host an after-school art club. It wasn't long before she fell in love with "teaching those incredible high school kiddos." And it wasn't long before the school principal asked Hatter if she would take a full-time teaching position the following school year. That was 24 years ago.





Top: Brenda at work; bottom: library mural.

Since then, teaching art has been about more than learning to draw or sculpt; art runs deeper than making an image or an item. Hatter believes art is as essential a skill as math and writing. "In a world that values innovation," she says, "allowing students to explore the arts helps them develop unique perspectives. Creating art allows students to process feelings and experiences, providing an outlet for self-expression and personal growth." Art, she adds, also provides "a lens to other worlds and cultures, promoting diverse perspectives and fostering empathy and understanding."

In her classes, making art is a pathway to "a-ha moments," encouraging curiosity and developing the skills to become creative thinkers and problem-solvers. "I want students to take risks and experiment, knowing that failures are part of the artistic journey," she says. "Mistakes can lead to unexpected successes!" Hatter probably doesn't realize it, but looking back, one of her earliest artworks hinted at her own artistic journey and unexpected success: In the seventh grade, she painted her first mural—a majestic unicorn.



Oxbridge Academy Fine Arts Department Takes Another Bow

The Oxbridge Academy Fine Arts Department had a bustling year, showcasing plays and concerts, entering competitions, exhibiting artwork, and embarking on inspiring field trips.

In January 2024, the annual Regional Scholastic Art & Writing Awards recognized Oxbridge students with three Gold Keys, 25 Silver Keys, and over 50 Honorable Mentions. Notably, Ellis Daggs ‘24 earned two Silver Keys and five Honorable Mentions! (See article on page 46.)

Also in January, five Oxbridge singers—Alex Timperman ‘26, Jacob Padilla ‘26, Sammy Pincus ‘26, Gerald Valvano ‘27, and Alexis Goodson ’27—were selected for the District Honor Choir based on their vocal independence, harmonization skills, and sight-singing abilities. They worked with Dr. Marshall Haning, a High School Honor Choir Clinician from the University of Florida, rehearsing several songs before performing at Lake Worth Community High School. “It was fantastic to see the students engage with a large-scale choir and respond quickly to the clinician,” said Oxbridge Choir Director Kallina Chin. “It has been years since we participated in such an event, and we’re eager to continue elevating our program.”

In February 2024, the Oxbridge Repertory Dance Ensemble qualified to compete in the 20th Annual Future Stars Performing Arts Competition, presented by the Rotary Club of Boca Raton. On March 5, at Boca’s Mizner Park Amphitheatre, the ensemble showcased an energetic piece titled “Right Now,” choreographed by Jon Lehrer. Emme Gerardi ‘27 was highlighted as a soloist, performing “The Yearning.”

From March 7 to 9, the Theater Department presented the classic Rodgers & Hammerstein musical *Carousel*, a highlight of the school’s performing arts season. Set in a



seaside amusement park, it tells the story of a carousel barker who falls in love with a young millworker. Co-directed by Oxbridge’s Director



of Instrumental Music Ernie Mills and guest artist Alexandra Dow, the production featured a dedicated cast of nearly two dozen students, including Gigi Chaney ‘26, Mina Lipman ‘26, Addison Ryan ‘25 (who also served as an associate director), Sophia Srb ‘27, and Xavier Walker ‘27. The talented student stage crew was led by stage manager Angel Stephens ‘25.

In late April, performing arts students visited Disney’s Magic Kingdom and Hollywood Studios, participating in team-building activities and dance workshops, including “Teamwork the Disney Way” at Disney’s Hollywood Studios and “Dance Disney” at Disney’s Saratoga Springs Resort.

May was a whirlwind of performances. The annual Spring Dance Concert on May 2 featured the Repertory Dance Ensemble, Dance Foundations, Middle School Dance Ensemble, and Ballroom Club, showcasing vibrant choreography set to contemporary music, primarily crafted by Dance Director Alyssa Thompson and student dancers. Following this, the Spring Music Concert on May 7 included performances by the Oxbridge Singers, Oxbridge String Orchestra, and Oxbridge Winds & Percussion, with selections ranging from Verdi and Tchaikovsky to the Mamas & the Papas and Dolly Parton. The Oxbridge Rock Band also performed in May, featuring guest musician Mark Damon from The Pretty Reckless. Led by seniors Henry Hagerman, Denver Matthews, Ariana Prophete, Alex Smyth, and Jacob Wallace, the band played hits by the Cranberries, the Cars, and Green Day.

Also in May, the annual Palm Beach Post-sponsored Pathfinder Awards were announced. Senior Arabella Sanchez-Garcia won second place and a $2,000 scholarship in the Art category. She is currently thriving at the Savannah College of Art & Design (SCAD).

On May 21, seventh-grade thespians presented *Aladdin*. Attendees were greeted by a stunning middle school art exhibition featuring drawings and sculptures, including Silver Key-winning ceramic works by eighth-grade twins Alexis and Alicia Loynd. Two days later, Oxbridge Middle held its annual Moving Up ceremony. Sophia Banford received the Moving Up Emerging Artist Award for her dedication and craftsmanship in visual arts, along with a $75 check for her artwork to be included in the school’s collection.

In late May, Lily Golish ‘25 was nominated for a Kravis Center Dream Award in the Outstanding Featured Dancer category. This annual competition celebrates exceptional student achievement in musical theater. Golish performed a number from *Carousel* in a showcase that featured students from 16 area high schools at the Kravis Center’s Dreyfoos Hall.

The 2024-2025 school year is proving to be just as exciting. In October 2024, Oxbridge Arts presented the annual Halloween-themed extravaganza known as the Hauntedtorium, featuring performances by the Oxbridge Rock Band, Concert Band, String Ensemble, Repertory Dance Ensemble, Intermediate and Dance Foundations classes, and the Oxbridge Singers.



In November, Jacobi Howard made his debut as Oxbridge’s new theater director with a production of *Vinegar Tom*, a powerful play by







British playwright Caryl Churchill. This 17th-century tale explores the lives of ordinary women accused of witchcraft, tackling themes of fear, superstition, and the ongoing struggle against prejudice and injustice. The production featured talented students, including Gigi Chaney ‘26, Mina Lipman ‘26, Addison Ryan ‘25, Sophia Srb ‘27, Jaxson Breztlaff ‘25, and Harriet Falkoff ‘25.

December was filled with the sights and sounds of art and music. On December 4, the Oxbridge Singers performed carols at the VA Medical Center in West Palm Beach as part of the school’s community service mission. On December 6, eighth-grade and upper-school visual art students made their annual pilgrimage to Miami Beach for Art Basel, visiting offshoot exhibitions like Art Miami Context and Art Miami Aqua. “Art Basel is the largest art fair in the world and serves as a significant source of inspiration for artists of all ages,” says Kendra Brodsky, head of the Oxbridge Fine Arts Department. “This trip allows students to experience museum-quality artwork and engage with emerging and established contemporary artists.”

On December 13, the Oxbridge Singers performed at the Norton Museum of Art. As 2024 came to a close, the school’s annual Winter Concert on December 18 featured performances of classical music, contemporary dance, and seasonal songs, setting the stage for a joyful winter break.

Performing Arts Calendar

September 27: Dance Ensemble at Norton Museum of Art

October 23: *Hauntedtorium*

November 7-9: Fall play, *Vinegar Tom*

December 18: Winter Concert

February 20-22: Winter Musical

March 13: Art & Jazz Night

April (date TBA): Spring Rock Concert

April 10-11: Spring One Act

April 25: Spring Dance Concert

May 7: Spring Music Concert



From left, Taj Amato-Heape, Samantha Pastorius, and Angel Stephens

No Lights? No Sound? No Show!

At Oxbridge Theater, the Behind-the-Scenes Theatre Tech Crew is as Important as the Cast

During the past four years, the Oxbridge Theater Department has been fortunate to have a group of students working behind-the-scenes dedicated to making the school's productions shine. They design, manage, and coordinate the sound, lighting, and cue cast members and performers for all plays, concerts, and productions. Their work supports the performers and significantly impacts the audience's experience with proper and appropriate lighting and crisp, clear sound and sound effects delivered on cue. These three tech crew members are in the graduating Class of '25. They deserve an introduction—and a standing ovation.

Angel Stephens: Stage Manager

Responsibility: As the Stage Manager at the Oxbridge Theatre, Stephens is the crucial liaison between the director and technical crew, ensuring seamless communication. She precisely calls cues for lighting and sound effects while efficiently managing actors to maintain the flow and timing of the performance.

Comment: "Watching the Oxbridge theater program grow and change has been my favorite part of the experience. I started as an assistant stage manager in my freshman year under my mentor, Bijou Joaseus. I've spent a lot of time working in and around the theater. Working as a stage manager is rewarding and has allowed me to learn how to balance many responsibilities at once. Unlike the other technicians, I am involved in every step of the show process."

Taj Amato-Heape: Sound Technician

Responsibility: As the lead sound technician at Oxbridge, Amato-Heape balances audio levels to prevent feedback and technical issues while seamlessly operating sound effects during live shows. He oversees the operation and maintenance of sophisticated audio equipment, including microphones, speakers, mixers, and sound systems, ensuring all equipment performs flawlessly for a smooth and immersive audience experience.

Comment: "I am the head of sound engineering and audio development at Oxbridge Academy. I enjoy my role because sound plays such a significant role in bringing the shows to life. I also work well under pressure and feel it adds to the fun."

Samantha "Sam" Pastorius: Lighting Technician

Responsibility: As the crew's lighting techinician, Pastorious designs lighting that enhances the mood and vision of each show and musical performance. Her extensive experience includes designing lighting for numerous productions, notably *Into the Woods*, for which she earned a nomination for the prestigious Kravis Center Dream Award in the Lighting category.

Comment: "Over the last four years, I have spent many hours backstage and in the booth, working various roles in the crew. Through this time, the technicians have built a tight-knit family. We spend so much time together, so I'm glad it was with these dedicated people. Lighting work has been enjoyable, and many lessons learned. Ultimately, my experience with this program has brought me many bonds and a lot of wisdom."



Jayden St. Fort ‘27



Oxbridge Football Team's Offense Powered by Sophomores

By Jaxson Bretzlaff '25

When watching Oxbridge Academy's 2024 varsity football team, it's clear that leadership and productivity aren't limited to upperclassmen. During the past season, three sophomores emerged as key components, powering the team's success with their impressive play. Quarterback Dorian Fauntleroy and wide receivers Jayden St. Fort and Edmyer St. Jean have been pivotal players, proving that age is just a number when performing on the field.

Fauntleroy has led the team with his strong arm, precise passing, and quick feet, consistently pushing the offense forward. Averaging 13 yards per passing attempt and around 165 total yards per game, Fauntleroy has thrown for ten touchdowns and rushed for two more. His dual-threat capabilities keep defenses on their toes, creating opportunities for the rest of the team. "I always try to stay calm and focused, no matter the situation," Fauntleroy says. "My goal is to put my teammates in the best position to succeed."

On the receiving end of many of those passes are Jayden St. Fort and Edmyer St. Jean. St. Fort averages nearly 60 receiving yards per game, including a team-long 75-yard touchdown reception. He's also made an impact on the defensive side of the ball, adding an interception on the season. "I love making those big plays when the team needs them," St. Fort says. "It's all about staying hungry and always looking for another big play."

St. Jean also has been a versatile asset for Oxbridge, making big plays as a receiver, rusher, and kick returner. He averages nearly 50 receiving yards and 25 rushing yards per game and leads the team with eight total touchdowns—five receiving and three rushing. His standout performance includes a 94-yard rushing touchdown, showcasing his speed and vision. With 257 kick return yards and 615 all-purpose yards this season, St. Jean is a threat whenever he touches the ball. "I just want to do whatever it takes to help us win," St. Jean says. "Whether it's catching, running, or returning, I'm ready for it."

Despite their youth, these sophomores have stepped up as team leaders. Their strong work ethic and determination inspire their teammates, and they consistently deliver when the team needs them. Head Football Coach Jonathan Stellman has been impressed by their example. "Dorian,

Jayden, and Edmyer approach every day with a sense of maturity not often found with younger players," Stellman says. Their businesslike approach is contagious and has contributed to excellent practices."



As the season progressed, opposing teams realized they needed to prepare for the challenges posed by these three sophomores—their combined talents—Fauntleroy's arm, St. Fort's route-running, and St. Jean's all-purpose abilities—have made them a dominant force on the field. With their sights always set on a successful season, these sophomores are proving that they have what it takes to lead Oxbridge football now and in the future.



Top photo: Edmyer St. Jean; bottom: Dorian Fauntleroy, No. 12

Senior Leadership: Dowd Anchors Oxbridge Defense

Koury Dowd, senior linebacker and captain of the ThunderWolves football team, has been a driving force on the field since the program's revival in 2022. Over three seasons, Dowd has been a cornerstone of the defense, leading by example with his physical play and unwavering determination. With 53 total tackles (20 solo), 4.5 tackles for loss, and 10.5 tackles per game during the past season, he sets the tone for the team's defensive efforts.

Dowd's leadership extends beyond his stats. As a captain, he motivates underclassmen and seniors, helping bridge the gap between younger players and the rest of the squad. "It's great being a senior and having the opportunity to lead the football team. Seeing the team come together, no matter players' ages, shows how far we have come since the start of the season," he says, reflecting on his role.

Coach Jonathan Stellman sees Dowd as a crucial leader on and off the field. "Since the program restarted, Koury has been the anchor of our defense, dedicating himself to perfecting his craft as a linebacker," Stellman says. "While always a leader by his actions, we are hearing more and more of his voice this year, a testament to his growth as a leader." Dowd's dedication extends into the spring, where he also excels as the starting goalie for the lacrosse team. As the football season progressed, he focused on guiding Oxbridge's defense and pushing the team towards its goals.



Now A Member of the Denver Broncos, Oxbridge Alum Keidron Smith is the Definition of Student-Athlete



Last March, during the NFL off-season, Oxbridge Academy alumni Keidron Smith '18 returned to campus to work out and prepare for the coming season as a member of the Denver Broncos. He took time out from his conditioning regimen to speak to current student-athletes. Smith, who played football and basketball for the ThunderWolves, conveyed honesty and wise counsel during his remarks.

When introducing Smith, Athletic Director Stan Ross said, "When you define the term student-athlete, Kedron Smith is it." He added, "He worked hard and received As and Bs all four years at Oxbridge. Anything less than As or Bs was not an option … and he didn't get in trouble…"

Demonstrating that candor, Smith immediately corrected. "I did get in trouble," he confessed, "but I grew up." At Oxbridge, he learned the three keys to success: discipline, time management, and sacrifice. He might not have realized it at the time, but he was also utilizing a fourth key: accountability. This becomes evident as Smith tells his story: He initially arrived at Oxbridge to play basketball and started at point guard as a freshman. Every morning before school, he would stop at an LA Fitness gym to practice his shots. Why? Because, he says, "I didn't want to come to the Oxbridge gym, put on a ThunderWolves uniform, and let my teammates down. The people next to you can't do their jobs if you're not doing yours." An injury during his sophomore year frustrated him. Still, he counseled his audience of attentive ThunderWolves, "You've got to stay motivated… You do it for your brothers next to you." He later joined the football team and quickly established himself as a starting defensive back with Division I potential.

During his talk, Smith also advised our athletes to treat academics the same way they approach sports. "How you are in the classroom," Smith said, "is how you're going to be on the field." Smith, in fact, was a competitor in all phases of school. Being the best even in his art class mattered as much as athletics. He took time during lunch to improve his art skills, competing with other athletes in the class. Art teacher Melissa Lemus recalls those lunchtime practices, "Keidron exemplified a strong work ethic as a student; consistently making the effort to create his best artwork," she recalled. "I am so proud of all he has accomplished!"

Smith's accomplishments include performing as a standout defensive back for the ThunderWolves football team. In his senior year, *The Palm Beach Post* and *South Florida Sun Sentinel* named him Defensive Player of the Year. He went on to spend four years at Ole Miss, where he was the 2021 recipient of the Chucky Mullins Courage Award, given annually to the upperclassman defensive player who embodies Mullins' spirit of "courage, leadership, perseverance, and determination." With a year of college eligibility remaining, Smith transferred to the University of Kentucky, where he was a significant contributor to the Wildcats defense, earning second-team All-SEC honors during his lone season with the team.

Smith's biggest disappointment, he confided, was being passed over in the NFL draft. However, he persevered and was signed as an undrafted rookie, first with the Miami Dolphins and now with the Denver Broncos. He is grateful to be on an NFL team and is putting in the work to ensure he stays on the team. He knows, however, that a professional athlete's career can be short and is already thinking about life after pro ball. "My goal is to play in the NFL, then become a sports agent or financial advisor."

Based on past performance, his ThunderWolves Football Coach, Jonathan Stellman, has no doubt that Smith will accomplish whatever he sets out to do. "Keidron Smith is, by far, one of the most impressive young men I have had the pleasure of working with in my fifteen years in education," Stellman said. "The true embodiment of a student-athlete, Keidron never shirked his responsibilities, showing up equally prepared in the classroom and on the practice field. Keidron is a best practice example of what it means to be a student-athlete at Oxbridge Academy."

Athletic Achievements 2023-2024

Alum Bella Ruggiero to Play for Team USA in Softball World Cup in 2025

As a junior at Oxbridge, Bella Ruggiero ‘24 had already committed to playing softball for FSU. As a senior, Ruggiero not only was named PBC Softball Player of the Year by *The Palm Beach Post* and the *South Florida Sun Sentinel* but was one of 16 student-athletes from across the country selected to join Team USA and compete in the World Baseball Softball Confederation’s U18 Women’s Softball World Cup. With a Labor Day Weekend 7-0 victory over Canada, Team USA’s U-18 Women’s National Team (WNT) went undefeated - 5-0 against teams from Mexico, Ireland, Australia, and the Philippines as well as Canada—and will play in the World Cup Finals in Dallas, Texas in 2025. In the victory over Canada, Ruggiero, who plays catcher for the team, smacked a double that drove in two runs. In her senior year at Oxbridge, she led all softball players in the state in home runs with 16 and finished first in the state with a slugging percentage of 1.617. She also drove in a stunning 50 runs, placing her third in the state in the RBI category. Her team-leading .617 batting average helped power the ThunderWolves to a 16-10 record and a playoff berth.



Kaiya Glucksman Stars for Team Israel in International Softball Tournament

Kaiya Glucksman ‘26 was selected to play for Team Israel in the Triple Crown International Challenge. The global softball competition, held in June, drew about two dozen countries to Westminster, Colorado. Team Israel competed against others from the United States, Spain, South Korea, Puerto Rico, Central America, and Polynesia (which won the whole competition). “Our team did not do as well as I hoped ... (but) I made some great offensive and defensive plays ...,” said Glucksman, who was Team Israel’s shortstop and, as a key member of the ThunderWolves softball team, is unaccustomed to losing. The experience, however, had plenty of positive aspects, she said, “such as making new friends, seeing the countries show so much pride when out on the field together, and playing for a country important to my family.” In 2024, both *The Post* and *The Sentinel* awarded Glucksman, who has played second base for the ThunderWolves softball team since eighth-grade, First Team All-County accolades. In her third year playing varsity ball, Glucksman was second on the ThunderWolves with a .430 batting average and 34 hits. She scored 41 times and led the team with 18 stolen bases.



Sun Sentinel Names Octavia Massena Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year

Octavia Massena ‘24, the *Sun Sentinel’s* 2024 Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year, helped the ThunderWolves finish fifth in the state championships as one of just two competing athletes on the Oxbridge team. Massena, who worked hard to recover



from an ankle injury earlier in the season, won the triple jump (which she dominated all season long), took sixth in the 400 meters, and ninth in both the long jump and 200 meters. "We came up short," Massena told *The Sentinel,* "But it's okay because I thought it was a great performance with just two girls." Massena's personal bests in each event were 56.37 (400), 24.92 (200), 17'-11 ½" (long jump), and 38'-11" (triple jump). She is now a member of the Western Carolina University (WCU) track & field team. WCU Track & Field head Coach Jesse Norman called Massena, "A great addition to our program," adding that "Octavia can do it all. She will be a solid contributor in the horizontal jumps and long sprints. She very likely could be a cornerstone of both event groups moving forward here at WCU."



Tyler and Drew Lamm with the prestigious Trevor Moore Trophy.

Lamm Brothers Win U.S. Youth Sailing Championship for Unprecedented Third Year In a Row

In June, sailors from around the country under age 20 gathered in Bristol, Rhode Island, for the annual U.S. Youth Sailing Championship, a three-day regatta of 10 races. The sailors faced wind speeds from five to 25 knots throughout the regatta. On the first day of racing, they had extreme wind conditions, which seemed a breeze (pun intended) for the Lamm brothers, Tyler '24 and Drew '26, who won all three of their races that day. The sibling ThunderWolves won the regatta in their category (two-person skiff) by nine points. That earned them the prestigious Trevor Moore Trophy for the third year straight, achieving an unprecedented "three-peat" in this competition. Recent Oxbridge Academy graduate Tyler will sail for the Brown University team in the fall. Drew will continue to lead the Oxbridge sailing team.





Travis Homer, above left, and Keidron Smith.

Oxbridge Has Two Alumni in the NFL: Travis Homer with the Chicago Bears and Keidron Smith with the Denver Broncos!

Travis Homer '16 was a scoring machine during his three years at Oxbridge Academy. He went on to star for the University of Miami Hurricanes, then went to the NFL Seattle Seahawks in 2019, where he became a stalwart on special teams. He signed this year as a free agent with the Chicago Bears, with the team looking to him to excel on special teams. Keidron Smith '18, a defensive back who works out at Oxbridge in the off-season, made the Denver Broncos roster after a strong pre-season, including a pair of interceptions and a fumble recovery. During his senior year at Oxbridge, both *The Palm Beach Post* and *South Florida Sun Sentinel* named him Defensive Football Player of the Year. After graduation, he starred in college at Ole Miss and the University of Kentucky.

All-County Athletics Awards 2023-2024

Palm Beach Post

Boys and Girls Swimming and Diving

- Arturo Campuzano ‘24: Honorable Mention Boys Swimming / Diving
- Sean Dowling ‘26: First Team Boys Swimming / Diving
- Raine Hopkins ’24: Honorable Mention Girls Swimming

Volleyball

- Lily Ciarfella ’24: Girls Volleyball Second Team
- Amber McClain ’26: Girls Volleyball Second Team
- Rebecca Schwarzberg ’25: Girls Volleyball Honorable Mention

Boys and Girls Golf

- Hampton Beebe ’27: Boys Golf Player of the Year Nominee / First Team
- AJ Colonna ’26: Boys Golf Player of the Year Nominee / First Team
- Maddie Hyndman ’26: Girls Golf Player of the Year Nominee / First Team
- Ajax LaNasa ’27: Boys Golf Honorable Mention
- Claire Luce ’25: Girls Golf Second Team
- Andrew Stein ’27: Boys Golf Second Team

Football

- John “H” Beadles ‘25: Defense Second Team
- Remington DeOrsey ‘26: Offense First Team, Player of the Year Nominee
- Brandon Johnson ‘25: Defense Second Team
- Wilson Stewart ‘24: Defense Second Team

Soccer

- Chris Cano ‘25: First Team
- Julien Dorsey ‘24: Second Team
- Remington DeOrsey ‘26: Second Team
- Villads Gudbrand ‘25: Second Team

Boys Lacrosse

- Ryan Stowell ‘24: First Team
- JD Ross ’24: Honorable Mention



Kaiya Glucksman ‘26

Softball

- Gabrielle Edwards ’24: Second Team
- Kaiya Glucksman ‘26: First Team
- Madison Jennings ’24: Second Team
- Alexa Muller ’24: Second Team
- Ashlyn Nevarez ’26: Honorable Mention
- Taylor Priske ‘27: Honorable Mention
- Bella Ruggiero ’24: First Team, Softball Player of the Year
- Ila Trueblood ‘27: Honorable Mention



Santi Campuzano ’26

South Florida Sun Sentinel

Boys and Girls Swimming and Diving

- Gabriela Campuzano ’28: Honorable Mention
- Santiago Campuzano ’26: Honorable Mention
- Sean Dowling ’26: First Team
- Camila Garcia ’24: Honorable Mention
- Valentina Hernandez ’25: Honorable Mention
- Brooke Hopkins ’24: Honorable Mention
- Cali Jerabek ’28: Honorable Mention
- Eamon Lappas-Ford ’27: Honorable Mention

Volleyball

- Lily Ciarfella ’24: Honorable Mention
- Amber McClain ’26: Honorable Mention
- Rebecca Schwarzberg ’25: Honorable Mention

Boys and Girls Golf

- AJ Colonna ’26: Second Team
- Corinne de Nigris ’27: Honorable Mention

- Maddie Hyndman ’26: Second Team
- Claire Luce ’25: Honorable Mention
- Logan Stachkunas ’24: Honorable Mention
- Andrew Stein ’27: Honorable Mention

Football

- Nico Aloi ’24: Offense Honorable Mention
- John “H” Beadles ‘25: Defense Honorable Mention
- Remington DeOrsey ‘26: Offense Second Team
- Julien Dorsey ’24: Offense Honorable Mention
- Koury Dowd ’25: Defense Honorable Mention
- Branden Johnson ’25: Defense Honorable Mention
- Connor McKenna ’25: Offense Honorable Mention
- Jayden St. Fort ’27: Offense Honorable Mention
- Wilson Stewart ’24: Defense Second Team

Soccer

- Chris Cano ‘25: First Team
- Julien Dorsey ‘24: First Team

Boys and Girls Lacrosse

(All Honorable Mention)

- Ava Eavenson ‘24
- Emily Falk ‘25
- Chris Lawrence ‘24
- Reagan Peck ‘26
- Noah Prissert ‘24
- JD Ross ‘24
- Ryan Stowell ‘24
- Colin Wade ‘24

Softball

- Gabby Edwards ’24: Second Team
- Kaiya Glucksman ‘26: First Team
- Madison Jennings ’24: First Team
- Hadley Krasulak ’26: Honorable Mention
- Ash Nevarez ‘26: Honorable Mention
- Elle Perrotto ’24: Honorable Mention
- Taylor Priske ’27: Honorable Mention
- Bella Ruggiero ’24: First Team, Co-Softball Player of the Year
- Ila Trueblood ‘27: Honorable Mention

Thunderwolves Make History with First-Ever Varsity Golf State Championship

Oxbridge Academy’s boys golf team brought their A-game—and plenty of excitement—to the Class 1A State Championship at Mission Inn Resort & Club in November. In a thrilling two-day tournament, the ThunderWolves surpassed first-round leader Pine Crest and fended off a fierce final push from The Benjamin School to secure the title. With an impressive total score of 587, the team finished nine shots ahead of the runner-up, etching their names in Oxbridge Academy history as the school’s first-ever boys state champions in any sport.

This groundbreaking victory is the culmination of hard work, perseverance, and exceptional teamwork displayed by the players and coaches throughout the season.



“This championship represents dedication and commitment from our athletes and coaching staff,” said Stan Ross, Athletic Director. “To see their efforts pay off in such a historic way is truly incredible.”

Congratulations to the ThunderWolves on this remarkable achievement—your legacy as state champions will inspire future Oxbridge athletes for years to come! This milestone is a win for the golf team and a proud moment for the entire Oxbridge community, celebrating the spirit of excellence that drives the ThunderWolves to new heights.

Boys & Girls Track & Field

- Bayardo Sinclair: Coach of the Year
- Chris Cano ’25: Honorable Mention
- Octavia Massena ’24: Girls Track Athlete of the Year
- Akari Marshal ‘26: First Team

Flag Football

- Leilani Benzing ‘27: Honorable Mention
- Liani Gil ’25: First Team
- Caroline Johnson ‘24: Honorable Mention
- Chloe Reimer ‘25: Honorable Mention

Boys & Girls Tennis

(All Honorable Mention)

- Ella Brenner ‘27
- Miles Lee ‘24
- Barbara Taylor ‘25



Back row, from left: Ryan Stowell, Tyler Lamm, JD Ross, Colin Wade, Christopher Lawrence; front row: Isabella Ruggiero, Alexa Muller

Persistence and Preparedness Define ThunderWolves Joining College Teams

Student-athletes from the Class of 2024 who plan to compete in sports at the college level are quite an accomplished group. They also appear to share traits that point to success: persistence, preparedness, and leadership. Examples include Bella Ruggiero, who joined the Florida State University softball team as both *The Palm Beach Post* and *Sun Sentinel* 2024 Palm Beach County Softball Player of the Year! Oxbridge Head Softball Coach Kevin Drake described her as, "The best hitter I ever coached. She respects the game, never takes a day off, is always prepared to play, and is a team leader."

Octavia Massena was the Sentinel's 2024 Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year and has taken her substantial talents in the triple jump and other events to Western Kentucky University. Her Oxbridge track coach, Bayardo Sinclair said, "Octavia is one of the most gifted athletes I've had the pleasure of training. Despite a late start in the sport, her perseverance and drive allowed her to accomplish so much quickly."

Both *The Post* and *Sun Sentinel* named Wilson Stewart to their 2023-2024 All-County Football Second Team on defense. The National Merit Scholarship finalist is now a member of the MIT football team. Stewart leaves an indelible mark at Oxbridge. At his signing day ceremony during the last school year, ThunderWolves Head Football Coach Jonathan Stellman remarked, "Wilson proved to be one of the most impressive players I have been around in my coaching career. Cerebral and intensely competitive,



Miles Lee





Wilson Stewart, above; Octavia Massena, left.

Wilson took preparation to another level, sifting through hours of film and meetings to ensure he and his teammates were prepared for action. Our program matters to him. Oxbridge Academy matters to him; it was refreshing to coach a young man who showed up because he is a fierce competitor who loves his school."

Here are the Class of 2024 ThunderWolves planning to compete at the next level:

- Tyler Lamm – Brown University, Sailing
- Christopher Lawrence – St. Bonaventure University, Lacrosse
- Miles Lee – Carleton College, Tennis
- Octavia Massena – Western Carolina University, Track & Field
- Alexa Muller – Harvard University, Softball
- JD Ross – Florida Institute of Technology, Lacrosse
- Isabella "Bella" Ruggiero – Florida State University, Softball
- Wilson Stewart – MIT, Football
- Ryan Stowell – Keiser University, Lacrosse
- Colin Wade – Rutgers University, Lacrosse



A Word to the Wise

Successful College Athlete Angelina Coelho '22 Offers Advice

Alumna Angelina Coelho '22 is a highly regarded All-County soccer player and Oxbridge Academy alum who played lacrosse, softball, and swimming. After Oxbridge, she played soccer for Florida Southern College in Lakeland, Florida, on a full scholarship. The team won its conference, made it to the second round of the NCAA tournament, and—calling it "a dream come true"—Coelho was named the conference's Freshman Player of the Year. Scoring four game-winning goals during the season added to her rewarding first year. "My hard work paid off," she says.

According to her, ThunderWolves playing at the next level will need all the persistence and preparation they can muster to succeed. She says balancing athletics and academics as a college freshman was "harder than I expected." Soccer, she says, "was my everything." Successfully handling college academics and college soccer meant behavior and attitude adjustments that led to long nights of studying and early morning practices. "My mindset was wrong when I went to college," Coelho explains, "and it quickly changed the first two weeks of school." Having a social life was hard, too, she adds.

Still, she wouldn't trade the experience. Her advice to ThunderWolves just beginning college sports: "Prepare for the worst and hope for the best. It's hard; don't let anyone tell you differently, but that hard work is the most satisfying thing in the world."



Sean Dowling '26



Eighth-graders Charly Mason and Niko Goldstein volunteer to distribute food.

Community of Compassion

Oxbridge Academy is a Center of Service and Philanthropy

Oxbridge Academy has always prided itself on a "culture of kindness," with community service in the school's DNA. The 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 school years have seen the school ramp up its community service initiatives and significantly increase student volunteer participation. Many students have also launched their own service initiatives, ranging from donating supplies to underserved schools, collecting basic necessities for homeless veterans, packaging and distributing donations at local food banks, befriending pediatric cancer patients, and cleaning up sections of local beaches and parks.

"Our robust service program is at the very heart of Oxbridge's commitment to cultivating a culture of kindness," explains Dean of Students Jason Glick, who plans and initiates many of Oxbridge's service projects. He adds, "The benefits of taking part in service initiatives extend beyond their impact at local organizations and nonprofits. Students learn to utilize their passions to make an impact, hone their leadership skills, and develop a sense of moral obligation." Some of these opportunities to give back are fixtures of Oxbridge Academy's annual calendar. March 2024 marked the 10th anniversary of the school's St. Baldrick's Day assembly, which supports the St. Baldrick's Foundation, a nonprofit that raises money for childhood cancer research, treatment, and prevention. The event raises awareness of the fight against pediatric cancer with a "bald is beautiful" demonstration where student, faculty, and staff volunteers "brave the shave" or cut their hair to show solidarity with those combating the disease.



This year also saw the continuation of Oxbridge Academy's longstanding partnership with Palm Beach Harvest, a local nonprofit that "rescues and re-directs food" to those in need. According to Palm Beach Harvest, the food Oxbridge donates to the organization twice a week during the school year provides more than 1,000 meals a month to hungry families throughout South Florida.

One of Oxbridge Academy's newest initiatives is the Senior Day of Service, a required, in-school service-learning experience for 12th-grade students designed to make a positive impact on the community—and the students. Seniors were divided into half a dozen groups to do everything from gleaning—collecting leftover produce from fields after harvesting and donating it to the hungry—to painting and

beautifying area park buildings and benches to visiting the elderly at an assisted living facility. "We started the Senior Day of Service because we wanted our graduating class to experience the power of service while addressing the needs of our community," says Dean Glick.

The volunteer and service activities and projects in which Oxbridge students have participated is broad. Here are more examples:



- Designing and painting murals in the VA Medical Center. A group of about 20 Oxbridge students, ranging from sophomores to seniors, conceived and painted 8-foot by 9-foot patriotic, military, and tropic-themed murals on 10 of the medical center's stairwell landings. The purpose behind murals in the stairwells was "to provide motivational imagery and brighten the path of the staff and guests that utilize them," said Oxbridge art teacher Melissa Lemus. "Choosing to use the stairs keeps people active and can positively contribute to physical and mental health."
- The Oxbridge Cancer Awareness Club "adopted" 12 families—a total of 27 kids—to brighten the holidays of families in need. Collaborating with St. Mary's Medical Center Pediatric Oncology Support Team (POST), club members bought multiple gifts for each child based on a wish list the parents provided.
- Supporting homeless veterans in Palm Beach County, Noah Rabiei '25, in collaboration with VITAS Hospice, organized a drive to collect basic necessities—toothbrushes, toothpaste, soap, nail clippers, deodorant, razors, shampoo, etc.—for those in need. (This project so moved Oxbridge Trustee Bob Kaufmann that he contacted Rabiei and donated to it.)



- A separate student-led drive, dubbed "Operation Gratitude: Feed Our Veterans", was launched to collect bottled water, canned drinks, fruit, and vegetables, rice, instant mashed potatoes, as well as pans and foil. The items were donated to several nonprofits that serve veterans in need.



- Last fall, nearly two dozen Oxbridge students participated in a food distribution program organized by Restoration Bridge at the Church by The Glades in Lake Worth Beach. Student volunteers packaged and distributed boxes of fresh produce, meat, and dry goods that that was distributed to over 1,000 people.
- The Oxbridge Academy Spanish Honor Society "adopted" Jupiter Elementary School via the Education Foundation and organized a drive that collected backpacks, notebooks, and other school supplies and donated them to students in need.
- Students organized a drive to collect new or lightly worn shoes of all sizes, styles, and colors for men, women, and children. The drive was conducted in partnership with Shoes2You, a non-profit founded in 2013 by Oxbridge alum Joseph Rubsamen '19. Since its inception, Shoes2You has expanded internationally, operating in at least half a dozen countries. The collected shoes were donated to the Achievement Centers of Delray Beach and the Volunteer Services at the Palm Beach County Health Department,

where they were distributed to those in need.

- Spearheaded by the Dean of Students office, student volunteers worked with Adopt-A-Family of the Palm Beaches, interacting with children in the fourth and fifth grades in Lake Worth, making light crafts together, playing get-to-know-you games, and participating in outdoor free play. This after-school program serves the residents of the agency's housing initiative as well as the surrounding





community and is designed to help address the needs of low-income and formerly homeless students.

- In collaboration with the Institute for Regional Conservation, Oxbridge students participated in an "eco-planting and restoration project" to remove invasive plants and trees from Atlantic Dunes Park in Delray Beach and replace them with native species.
- A group of student volunteers participated in a gleaning activity at Mecca Farms in Boynton Beach. Collaborating with CROS Ministries, which serves the hungry in Palm Beach and Martin counties, the students picked hundreds of pounds of tomatoes that were then delivered to about 150 social service agencies aimed at feeding the hungry in Palm Beach and Martin counties.
- Oxbridge students participated in the nationally observed "Great American Cleanup" and removed litter, trash, and invasive plants from the Arthur R. Marshall Wildlife Refuge in Boynton Beach.
- The Oxbridge Black Student Union led a school-wide drive to collect LEGOs for the STEM Club at Dr. Mary McLeod elementary School in Riviera Beach.







Senior Day of Service

Last March, Oxbridge Academy launched a new program called Senior Day of Service to inspire and encourage students to **Lead with Kindness and Act with Courage.** Oxbridge takes community service seriously, and Senior Day of Service is no exception. All seniors are required to participate unless circumstances prevent it.

Dean of Students Jason Glick explains his motivation for instituting the program: "The Oxbridge experience is very much about learning to channel one's enthusiasm into meaningful action while honing leadership skills and developing a sense of moral obligation. As such, I started the Senior Day of Service because I wanted our eldest students to experience the power of service while also learning about and assessing the needs of our local community." He adds, "It was also a fabulous way to provide yet another culminating experience for our eldest students while also providing them with a significant leadership opportunity."

For the inaugural program, seniors were supervised by Oxbridge faculty and staff members and worked at half a dozen locations around Palm Beach County including:

- Bedner Farms in Delray Beach for gleaning, which is the act of collecting excess fresh produce from farms, gardens, and other sources to provide to people in need
- Pleasant City Park in West Palm Beach to remove trash and plant shrubs, add mulch, and do some planting
- Coleman Park Community Garden in West Palm Beach to beautify the area
- Feeding South Florida in Boynton Beach to sort and package donated food for distribution to those in need
- MorseLife Residences, an assisted living and healthcare center in West Palm Beach, to interact with residents
- Howard Park in West Palm Beach to do some landscaping around athletic fields and paint benches needing an upgrade



The Senior Day of Service concept appealed to students and faculty alike and was everything Dean Glick hoped it would be. Senior Emma Jassenoff was with the group that spent the day at Pleasant City Park, pulling weeds, putting down mulch, and planting sunflower seeds. Traveling outside her routine was an eye-opener for her. “I’m glad I got to work at Pleasant City Park,” she said, “because it was a good learning experience to witness the poverty the community faces. I live only 15 minutes from Pleasant City, and I had no idea about the struggles they were dealing with.” She adds that one of the most memorable moments occurred when a group of local children walked by. “They looked so happy to see us helping out in the garden.” At Howard Park, senior Brooke Hopkins did something for the first time: planted flowers. “It was a new, enjoyable experience being able to give life to the building by putting beautiful, pink flowers around the front.”



Senior Daelan Pinsky participated in the gleaning activity in Delray Beach, proudly proclaiming, “We picked poblano peppers at a farm and filled up three trucks with peppers!” He adds that he was surprised “to see a group of kindergarteners having a math class out in the fields with us and using picking peppers as a learning experience.” The gleaning experience instilled a sense of accomplishment and a feeling of gratitude for the opportunity to help his community. “I feel every senior should be able to do this and to have the feeling many of us did after we finished,” Pinsky said.

Oxbridge Team Wins Leukemia & Lymphoma Society’s Fundraising Challenge

Oxbridge Academy students Harlow Klann ‘25, H (John) Beadles ‘25, and their teammate Chloe McGann were named Student Visionaries of the Year at the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society’s (LLS) “Grand Finale Celebration” in March 2024. This event, held at the Wyndham Grand Jupiter, recognized high school students participating in a philanthropic leadership development program aimed at creating a world without blood cancers. Over a seven-week fundraising period, the trio raised an impressive $161,000. “We had been preparing for the LLS campaign kickoff since the summer of 2023,” Klann shared. “We reached out to our communities and local businesses. We were thrilled to have raised so much money for patient education and support.” The team leaders received letters of recommendation from LLS, community service hours, and a shared $2,000 college scholarship for their outstanding efforts.

The day of service was satisfying for faculty and staff as well. Assistant Dean of Students Nick Agress said, “I thought the inaugural Senior Day of Service was an absolute success. My students participated in the gleaning event and did an incredible job. The students’ kindness and love for community service shone brightly. I was proud of how they ‘bought-in’ and made the most of the first-ever Senior Day of Service, which I hope becomes a tradition at Oxbridge Academy.”

Remarks like these were up-tempo music to the ears of Dean Glick. It appears that, indeed, a new Oxbridge tradition had been born. “This comprehensive day of service not only benefited the community,” he said, “but also reinforced the core value of Oxbridge Academy, emphasizing that community service and giving back are integral aspects of our educational experience.”

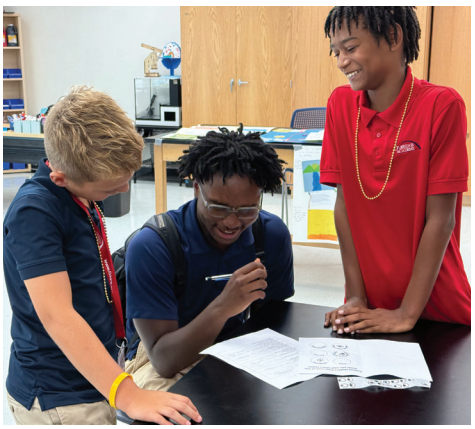


From left: Madison Faugue, Jaden Wolfe, Jane Fogg, Laura Gonzalez, Brielle Harbur, Madison Hyndman, and Charlotte Baeumler; Below, from left: Ben Holcroft, Sebastien St. Jean, Junior Noukelak

At Oxbridge Academy, Seniors Mentor Sixth Graders to Build Confidence and Community

Oxbridge Academy introduced the Grade 6 Buddies program in the 2023-2024 school year with the goal of bridging the gap between middle and upper school students. This program pairs seniors with sixth-graders to provide mentorship, serve as role models, and foster belonging among the youngest students to the greater Oxbridge community.

According to Dean of Students Jason Glick, “The program really helps them see what’s possible,” who co-founded the program with Middle School Director Rainey Wyatt. “By giving the sixth-graders a chance to connect with seniors, they can envision what they might become in the years ahead.”



The Grade 6 Buddies meet once a month, and seniors take on the role of mentors to sixth-graders in a 2:3 senior-to-sixth grader ratio. The meetings center around fun activities like games and art projects, and sometimes includes having lunch together. Incorporating community service activities into the mix is also being considered.

To join the program, seniors must apply and undergo training sessions with Middle School Director Rainey Wyatt and Dean Glick. The qualities sought in a senior buddy include leadership, empathy, and a genuine desire to help younger students grow.

The Grade 6 Buddies program has already left a significant mark. “One of the most rewarding moments was witnessing seniors guide sixth-graders through an art project and seeing their joint ideas take shape,” Wyatt shared. The bond formed during these sessions extends beyond the meetings, as younger students often light up when they spot their senior buddy in school hallways. “Being able to be a part of this program has really shown me a different perspective of how Oxbridge’s middle school is,” said senior Charlotte Baeumler, who participates in the program. “Although my brother, Lincoln, is an eighth-grader, the program has shown me how much the younger students actually look up to not just the seniors, but all upper school students.”

As the Grade 6 Buddies program evolves, it will foster a more profound sense of community across all grade levels. The ultimate goal is for sixth-graders to become senior buddies in the future, perpetuating a cycle of mentorship, friendship, and support within the Oxbridge family.

A Business Started at Oxbridge Allows Alum to Give Back



Director of Advancement Scott Siegfried, left, and Shawn O'Sullivan '22

Shawn O'Sullivan, a member of the Oxbridge Academy Class of 2022, embarked on a unique journey. It all started in his entrepreneurship class during his junior year when a class assignment transformed into his life's work. What was once Sully's Junk Removal has now evolved into Sully's Enterprises, a company that offers moving, packing, and storage services. Despite its growth, the company remains true to its roots as a fully licensed and insured junk removal service in Palm Beach County.

While several Oxbridge students and alums have gone on to found businesses, O'Sullivan stands out as the first alum to give back to Oxbridge by sponsoring a fundraising event. In fact, he began sponsoring Oxbridge's annual Golf & Tennis Classic during his senior year and has continued his sponsorship for three years. He has dual reasons for doing so. "I wanted to get my company name out in the Oxbridge community," he explains, "while also giving back to the school that helped me start that very same company."

His motivation for keeping close ties to Oxbridge Academy is personal and business. "Oxbridge enabled me to grow as an individual, student, businessman, and athlete," he adds. "I think it's important not to forget where you come from and to maintain strong roots."

O'Sullivan was giving back to Oxbridge long before he graduated. Few showed more school spirit and leadership than he did. The anonymous student in the life-size ThunderWolves mascot costume at events, assemblies, and games was often O'Sullivan. At graduation, he was awarded Oxbridge Academy's Leadership Award as the senior who made the most significant contribution to the overall enhancement of student life through extra-curricular and community activities. "I got into school spirit early in my time at Oxbridge, and it is rooted in my love for sports and supporting the school. A school without spirit turns into a job," says O'Sullivan, who played varsity lacrosse and basketball, serving as a two-year team captain for the latter.

He eventually discovered his passion for business in Oxbridge's entrepreneurship class. One assignment required students to create "a business that was actionable." He did just that, then took the next step doing junk removal and moving jobs. "Little by little, work started to pick up, and I was able to come back to class and discuss my struggles while sharing the wins of each job." During the last months of his senior year, he took advantage of study halls at the beginning and end of the school day to complete small jobs.

Since graduating in 2022, he says, "the business has grown immensely." Upon graduation, though accepted to Florida Atlantic University (FAU) in Boca Raton, he began running his business six days a week. A year later, he says, he was able to "set up Sully's to have steady growth." He now has full-time crews and a marketing department and offers clients a storage option, which has allowed Sully's Enterprises to provide interior design firms the ability to ship directly to him and handle the installation of their projects along the East Coast.

O'Sullivan's future goals include maintaining ties with Oxbridge Academy and completing his college degree online. "I appreciate the continued support that Oxbridge has given me over the years," he says. "I can directly correlate the relationships I built at Oxbridge to the growth of Sully's Enterprises, including Oxbridge parents, teachers, coaches, and administrators. I cannot thank the Oxbridge community enough for the families that have trusted me with their house moves, furniture deliveries, and junk removal needs. Due to this success, I have been able to employ numerous current and former students."



CLASS NOTES

Allie Taylor '17

2014

Briana Tautivia Pavlotsky attended Washington University in St. Louis, then went to Babson College, a private business school in Wellesley, Massachusetts graduating with an MBA in 2018. Now a resident of Roxbury, Massachusetts, she works for Wayfair, the home furnishings company, and recently was promoted to lead her department, "running



an innovation team for the B2B business." Aside from the big news of her promotion, she married Daniel Pavlotsky in August. With gratitude, she says: "Thanks for everything, Oxbridge!"

2015

Stephen Berkner says, "Hello, Oxbridge! It's been almost 10 years since I graduated, and things are going great!" Those things include meeting his future wife, Emma, at the University of Florida, getting engaged in 2020, and marrying in 2023. Both work from their home in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida, where he is "a Senior Firmware Engineer and Project Lead at an embedded development firm." He also has his firm, Berkner Technologies, which develops a variety of custom electronics, from software to circuit boards. He also provides cases for the products manufactured using



3D printing. He says, "My 13 years of experience with 3D printing is one of the many things that has not only helped me professionally but also provided me with a lifelong personal passion." He adds, "To this day, I am incredibly grateful to Oxbridge for giving me the opportunity to get hands-on experience with such complex pieces of equipment during my high school years. Go ThunderWolves!"

2016



Laura Narcisse graduated *magna cum laude* from George Washington University with a degree in International Affairs and Anthropology. As the daughter of Haitian immigrants, Narcisse's background influenced her fascination with developing countries' political, economic, and cultural systems, particularly those in Africa and the Caribbean. During her time at George Washington University., she served as President of Young Black Professionals in International Affairs (YBPIA), a student organization committed to diversifying the field of international affairs by amplifying the voices of black students and professionals; Vice President of the G.W. Haitian Student Alliance; and was a fellow of the Generations Dialogue Project where she facilitated discussions with prominent figures in international affairs, most notably U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Linda Thomas-Greenfield. Professionally, Narcisse interned at the U.S. Department of State and with several international organizations, including Chemonics International, a private development firm working on food security, health, and climate change issues, and with FHI 360, a nonprofit that manages projects relating to family planning and reproductive health in 70 countries. In March 2024, Laura accepted a full-time position as a Program Associate at Counterpart International, where she supports U.S. government-funded democracy and governance programs in Francophone Africa and Haiti. Narcisse says, "I am forever grateful to Model UN Coach Marjorie Chiarolanzio, French teacher Sheilagh Riordan, and Spanish teacher Amy Jonas for nurturing my global interests and helping me to build the confidence to pursue an international career."



Allison "Allie" Taylor, a graduate of the University of Michigan, is currently a violinist with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra (BSO). Before joining the BSO, Taylor was a violin fellow and co-concertmaster of the New World Symphony in Miami. Recent performances include playing with the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, the Bach Double Violin Concerto alongside Midori, playing with the National Tour of *HADESTOWN*, and soloing with the Count Basie Orchestra. She has been awarded fellowships to participate in summer festivals, including the Music Academy of the West, Spoleto Festival USA, Aspen Music Festival and School, and the National Repertory Orchestra. She is also the co-writer of two theatrical projects: *Diseducated*, a two-act musical comedy, and *The Bachelor: The Musical: A Video*, a multi-episode Instagram-based musical. Taylor is also the creative director and founder of Music: Deconstructed LLC, an organization "dedicated to creating fresh and exciting opportunities that contribute to the diversification of voices and representation in the performing arts." She continues to engage in research and advocacy for the intersection of music, gender, education, and performance.

2017

Lily-Katherine Jurskis is the third Oxbridge Academy alumn to join the school as a full-time faculty member. Jurskis is teaching English. (Health & Wellness instructor Joan Fyfe '17 joined in 2022; middle school humanities teacher and assistant football coach Jason McCleod '18 joined in 2023.) Jurskis attended Marshall University as a prestigious Yeager Scholar and served as the Editor-in-Chief of the school's literary journal, *Et Cetera*; graduating with a 4.0 GPA and a B.A. in Literary Studies and Creative Writing. She went on to earn a Master of Divinity degree (M.Div.) at Yale University, where she also was the recipient of Yale's John A. Wade Prize for greatest originality in expository preaching. During her college career, Jurskis won multiple awards as a writer, poet, and visual artist. She also studied art history, poetry, and English literature in Italy and England.



Christopher Klein joined a fraternity at the University of Miami and "met some guys who would turn out to be my business partners today." After graduating, the group decided to find a way to earn a living from their collective lifelong passion and "keep our distance from the corporate life most of our other friends were beginning." That shared passion was boating. Today, Klein is COO of Miami-based King of the Sea Management dba as Kosyachts, which specializes in charter and yacht management and bills itself as, "Your Gateway to Unparalleled Yachting Luxury!" Beginning with one 24-foot boat about three years ago, the company has grown to where it owns two boats, directly manage/charters another eight boats for different owners, and has another 60 boats and yachts for which the company serves as a broker. The boats range from 20 feet to 120 feet and, says Klein, can accommodate all groups, budgets, and events. As of last summer, the company had booked more than 1,500 charters and is averaging about 15 trips a week. The company also hired a new marketing team and took on summer interns to augment the staff of seven already in place. It expanded to several new locations, including Ft Lauderdale, Key Largo, Stamford, Connecticut, and San Juan, Puerto Rico. "I am very excited," Klein says, "to keep growing and see what the future holds!"

Phillip Taylor graduated from Princeton University in 2022, earning a Bachelor of Science in Engineering and a Certificate in Music Performance. While there, he worked as a Computer Vision Engineer at Princeton Visual A.I. Lab, to improve accountability of policing organizations, he worked on "video understanding" projects related to police body cameras. His final thesis was exploring new generative AI methods. During the past three years, he interned at the Qatar Computing Research Institute (QCRI), a national



research institute in Qatar, and at RestAR, in Israel, where he designed programs for 3D capturing and product visualization for online retailers. Today, he is a software development engineer at Amazon in Seattle, working on automated inventory management optimization technologies. He still plays and performs jazz on piano and is an avid outdoorsman who enjoys hiking, biking, snowboarding, and camping.

2018

Charmane Gabriel graduated from Columbia University with a Bachelor of Science in Earth and Environmental Engineering in 2022. She is an environmental engineer in West Palm Beach, Florida, working on innovative projects to purify water and protect the Florida environment from pollutants. In her free time, Charmane enjoys traveling and being an auntie to her two wonderful nieces.



Kaitlyn Green graduated from Arizona State University's Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication, majoring in Sports Journalism and double minoring in Digital Audiences and History. She is now the Social Media and Content Coordinator for Golfshot, "the number one worldwide golf GPS app," where she runs all social media platforms and writes blog posts and emails for the company. Since graduating, Kaitlyn remained in Arizona and now lives in North Scottsdale.



Tara O'Brien graduated *summa cum laude* from the University of Pennsylvania. She was active in many campus groups, including the Wharton Undergraduate Founders & Funders Association, where she served as the Director of Marketing. She resides in New York City and works at the Royal Bank of Canada in its Global Investment Bank. She volunteers as a member of the New York Junior League, an ambassador for First Generation Investors, and an alum interviewer for her alma mater.

2019

Charlotte Bories graduated from the University of Connecticut in 2023 with a B.A. in Psychology. After working as a Behavioral Interventionist with special needs children and youth in Connecticut and California, Charlotte is now working toward a master's degree in forensic psychology at Roger Williams University in Rhode Island.



Ashley D'Andrea lives in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and works for Keeper Security, a global cybersecurity company, as an SEO Content Writer, penning various blogs covering topics such as password management, using AI safely, and data breaches. She says, "This job has been a dream come true—working from home, seeing my name appear in multiple digital publications, and getting paid to do what I love daily." She adds, "Working remotely gives me more time to spend with my fiancé (Simeon Phillips' 17) and our puppy Zuba! I am forever thankful to the incredible teachers at Oxbridge (special shout-out to my English teachers) for fostering my love of writing and belief in myself that I could turn it into my full-time career."

George Matthews is an example of Oxbridge's resilience. He moved to Denver after graduating from Oxbridge to attend Johnson & Wales University. Due to COVID-19, however, the school closed, so he transferred to Red Rocks Community College. After six months, unable to keep up with full online classes, he dropped out and started working as a graphic designer in Denver. After about two years, he found "a front-end developer position" at a Canadian company called Condo Management Group, where he recently started a new project and transitioned to "a full-stack developer role." Last fall, he moved into his own house in Colorado Springs and says he has "been loving it here ever since."

2020

Shirah Benarde was invited to participate in the 2024 One Young World Summit held in Montreal last September. One Young World is a UK-based nonprofit that has its Summit in a different city each year, bringing together some 2,000 young (under 35) business leaders, entrepreneurs, educators, and activists from more



than 190 countries to learn about and brainstorm on an array of global issues to create positive change. Shirah, Co-Founder and CEO of Nightcap (nightcapit.com), which manufactures products to deter and prevent drink-spiking, was selected by Summit sponsor, "global wine and spirits company" Pernod Ricard, as one of 10 Pernod Ricard Scholars (hailing from nine countries) to educate attendees about drinking responsibly and safely. Shirah, along with her brother **Michael '15**, co-founded Nightcapit LLC in 2019, got a deal on *Shark Tank* in 2021, and since then, have sold Nightcaps and related products to 190 colleges and universities, numerous health clinics, law enforcement agencies, retail outlets, and other organizations in 40 countries.



John McLay has been a pilot for PlaneSense since February 2024. According to its website, the New Hampshire-based company has been "a leading provider of private flight and fractional aircraft ownership for nearly 30 years." McLay flies the Pilatus PC-12 aircraft and recently was promoted to captain. He earned his Master of Aeronautical Science in 2022 from Liberty University.

Alex Ramsey graduated from the University of Notre Dame in 2024 with a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration (BBA) in Finance with a minor in Energy Studies. He recently moved to New York City to take a



job with the investment banking and management firm of Goldman Sachs as an analyst in its Asset Management Division. "My team," he explains, "is the External Investing Group (XIG), where I will be focusing on private equity investments. "He adds, "I am grateful for my time at Oxbridge and for the skills it helped develop for both my time in college and my new role post-grad. I look forward to continuing to connect with the Oxbridge community and helping graduates in any way I can."



2021

Mya Bodnick is pursuing her passion in musical theater, working on a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree as a member of Rider University's prestigious Musical Theatre Program, Class of 2025. She has been busy honing her acting, singing, dancing, and directing chops in and out of school. She most

recently scored the part of Frenchy in the Greater Ocean City, NJ Theatre Company's professional summer production of *Grease*. During her junior year, Bodnick, a member of the Rider Student Theatre Company, made her directorial and theater-writing debut with Coffee Hour Cabaret, guiding a cast of 15 musical theater majors. In a Rider University newspaper article, Bodnick described *Coffee Hour Cabaret* as having a "jukebox-musical feel" based on a dream influenced by her family's travels. "There's a definite love for coffee in my family," she told the paper. "Wherever we go, we always try to visit the local coffee factory, farm, or cafe." Bodnick is also a popular blogger for the New York-based theater news website broadwayworld.com, offering students tips on navigating college life successfully.



Mya Deve, after graduating from Oxbridge Academy, completed two bachelor's degrees at Florida Atlantic University in just three years—one in marketing and another in music, with a minor in French. Her passion for marketing led her to apply for and be accepted into the Kendra Scott Campus Ambassador program for the 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 school years. As an ambassador, she promoted the company's jewelry through social media. Deve collaborated with nonprofits to host various events. As one of the top 15 college ambassadors of nearly 200 students nationwide, she was invited to tour the company headquarters in Austin, Texas. In 2024, Deve was accepted into the University of Florida's Graduate Business School, where she is pursuing an MBA with a concentration in Marketing. She is set to graduate in August 2025. While working on her master's degree, she is also employed in the Oxbridge Communications Department, assisting with social media marketing.



Kaelan Morrissey Ali says, "I'm thrilled to share that I'm now married to Tommy Ali, and we have a beautiful six-month-old baby named Judah Asher Ali! I am completing my undergraduate degree in Exercise Science at the University of South Florida and plan to further my education by pursuing my Doctorate in Physical Therapy."

2023

Alex Bories is a sophomore at Chapman University's Dodge College of Film and Media (ranked Fourth Best Film School in the U.S. by *The Hollywood Reporter*), majoring in



Writing for Film and T.V. and minoring in Organismal Biology. He continues to be actively involved in Esports – which he helped found at Oxbridge —and is the co-captain of the school's Overwatch tournament team. He is also a member of the Board Games and Ultimate Frisbee clubs. He says the beautiful weather in Orange, California, has enhanced his college experience.

La'Taviona "Paticake" Parke, who plays for the Savannah State University Lady Tigers softball team, was named to the Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Conference 2024 All-SIAC Softball Second Team as a freshman! Parke, a shortstop, ranked second in doubles (15) and slugging percentage (.706), third in triples (3) and on-base & slugging percentage (1.183), sixth in batting average (.404), and seventh in on-base percentage (.477) in the SIAC during the regular season. The Wellington, Florida, native also led her team in hits (44), RBI (34), and home runs (4) and was second on the team in runs scored (32) during the season. Honorees are voted on by head coaches and sports information directors of the conference's 15 schools.



Message From the Director of Advancement

Another exciting year is unfolding as you read this publication. I am excited to share that the *Oxbridge Today* magazine was an award winner for the Best of CASE District III. The Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) is a 50-year-old international nonprofit association serving advancement professionals who work at educational institutions (Colleges, Universities, Independent Schools) in the fields of alumni relations, communications, development, and marketing. CASE gave Best of CASE District III awards to six publications, five of them were published by colleges and universities. *Oxbridge Today* was the lone non-college publication. CASE District III covers the states of Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Caroline, South Carolina, and Virginia. This is a great accomplishment and recognition for a publication that is only on its fourth edition. Congratulations to the Oxbridge Communications team and everyone who plays a role in telling our story through the *Oxbridge Today* magazine.

We are also excited to celebrate you. The Honor Roll of Donors for the 2023-2024 fiscal year, recognizes gifts made from July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024. It celebrates those who have given generously to Oxbridge Academy in support of all students and programs. Because of your generosity, we continue to meet our fundraising goals and hope you will continue to support our efforts this year.

A special thank you to all Advancement team members—Admissions, Communications, and Development—for their contributions to the success of Oxbridge Academy.

Thank you again for your continued support. Go ThunderWolves!



Scott Siegfried
Director of Advancement



Message from the Director of Development

Oxbridge Academy is thriving and gaining momentum for a bright and expanded future! As we look ahead and consider the opportunity for growth, your support is and remains essential to Oxbridge Academy's success. In 2025, we plan to share exciting opportunities seeking your involvement in maintaining the school's momentum and growth.

By supporting Oxbridge Academy, you directly make an impact! Through generous contributions, the school can maintain its unique environment, allowing the creation of transformational experiences for the students we serve. We hope you will continue to help us offer stellar academics, financial aid for those in need, the highest quality school athletics, performing and fine arts, and innovative programming each year.

We remain incredibly grateful to all the individuals, families, and organizations listed on the following pages in the Honor Roll of Donors for their gifts to the Oxbridge Fund and other specific initiatives. Your support truly makes a difference.

A very special thank you to the Oxbridge Parents Organization (OPO), led by President Amy Lagae, for its work and dedication. This wonderful group of parent ambassadors is instrumental to the success of numerous student and fundraising events and activities throughout the year.

For more information about how you can make an impact by investing in the leaders of tomorrow, contact Natalie Beck at nbeck@oapb.org.

Natalie Beck

Natalie Beck
Director of Development



Annual Fundraisers Receive Enthusiastic Support

This year, Oxbridge Academy's signature fundraising events, the Oxbridge Classic and the Spring Soirée, generated vital support for *The Oxbridge Fund*. The 2024-2025 Oxbridge Classic, featuring golf, tennis, and pickleball (new this year), held on October 30, 2024, at The Breaker's West Country Club, drew a crowd of competitors to support the



Fund for the 2024-2025 fiscal year. The 19th Hole Cocktail Party celebrated the money raised from sponsorships, event registrations, and a silent auction. Event sponsors included Sondra and David Mack, Greg Norman's Caddie Cocktail, The Kozul Family, and many others. Avery Klann, P'25, P'27, and Deborah Miller, P'26, co-chaired this year's event.

On March 2, 2024, Oxbridge held its second annual Spring Soirée at the Palm Beach home of Oxbridge Academy founder Bill Koch and his wife, Bridget. The event began with a cocktail hour featuring music by Oxbridge students and tours and explorations of Mr. Koch's world-class collections of art, 19th-century Western artifacts, America's Cup sailing memorabilia, wine, and more. The event moved to a majestic, beautifully appointed tented area for a delicious dinner prepared by Island Kitchen, an Oxbridge testimonial from alumnus Riley Harrison '15, a live auction, a Call to Heart, and dessert. Dancing







OXBRIDGE ACADEMY

Spring Soirée

2024 Table Hosts

Bill and Bridget Koch
Mary and Bob Simses
Carrie and Chris Shumway
Afsy and Carter Pottash
Melissa and Harry Lis
Jeanne and David Rosow
Simone and Peter Bonutti
Kirsten (Kiki) and Greg Norman



rounded out the magical evening, where more than $925,000 was raised to support the 2023-2024 annual fund. Bob and Mary Simses opened the Call to Heart by announcing a $200,000 gift if the audience could match the amount. Dr. Carter and Afsy Pottash were the first to answer with a significant gift towards the match, and, along with others, the match was met.

The evening's significant supporters included Bill and Bridget Koch, Bob and Mary Simses, Carter and Afsy Pottash, Chris and Carrie Shumway, Harry and Melissa Lis, Christian Benzing and Michaela Sems, Herbie Wertheim, David and Sondra Mack, David and Jeanne Rosow, Kate Lubin and Glenn Sutton, Peter and Simone Bonutti, James and Gaye Engel, and Brian and Sarah Miller.

A third event, Party with the Pack, was held on April 9, 2024, at the National Polo Center in Wellington to announce and launch the Oxbridge Academy strategic plan—*Foundations for the Future*. Guests enjoyed networking, cocktails, a silent auction, and dinner by the bite.



The Honor Roll of Donors 2023-24

Gifts made in the 2023-2024 fiscal year, starting July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024

Thank you to all who participated in this year's Oxbridge Fund, Oxbridge Academy's annual fundraising effort. The individuals, foundations, and corporations listed here have supported the 2023-2024 Oxbridge Fund through unrestricted, restricted, event, and other direct support.

The Oxbridge Fund provides support for our most pressing needs and highest priorities and ensures that our students' educational journey at Oxbridge Academy continues. The collective participation of parents, alumni, grandparents, faculty, staff, and the many friends of Oxbridge Academy sustains our school and strengthens our community. Every gift makes a difference for our students.



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Chris and Carrie Shumway

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Susan Reilly
Dr. Sheilagh Riordan
Miguelangel and Doris Roman
Kervin and Lydia Ruiz
Jennifer Santana
Jason and Stephanie Schoen
Ben and Lissa Schwab
Cassandra Sexton
Stephanie and Anthony Shaya
Scott Siegfried and Kimberly Collins-Siegfried
Jay and Kristen Smethurst
Cassandra Josephson-Sonier and David Sonier
Senn Howard and Carmen Sosin
Edvius and Myriam St. Jean
Jonathan and Kimberly Stellman
David and Lori Stenson
Ruel and Althea Stoessel
Scott Stowell and Tere Rivera-Stowell
Kristy Streete
Jason Sullivan
Richard and Regan Tarpey
Jurgen and Anne Timperman
Frank and Courtney Tito
Dan and Meghan Toner
Larielys Torrentes
TJ and Julie Van Dieken
Eric and Jane Vatterott
Vetel Vaughan
Greg and Sharon Vax
Sebastian Hidalgo and Gigi Vela
Sheri Viggiano
Euclid and Francine Walker
Robert Pyle and Vanessa Wang
John Wendel
Eric and Vanessa Wilson
David Hernandez and Arlene Wilson
Arelis and Jasen Yens
Brian and Nathalie Young
Alex Zapatier and Reigan Roan-Zapatier
Sharon Zhang
Andres Zuniga

IN-KIND

Bill Koch
Matt Abdoo
Ann Mashburn
Bahama Beach Club
Bear Lakes Country Club
Christian Benzing and Michaela Sems
Boca West Country Club
Sherriff Ric Bradshaw
Whitney and Eric Bylin
Janine and Michael De Nigris
Patrick Dillon and Lily Holt-Dillon
Dr. and Mrs. Vince Farinas
Fresh Rx
Tim Gannon
Grand Cru Hospitality
Wayne and Janet Gretzsky
Icon Chauffered Services
Island Kitchen
Julie Khanna
Khanna House Sutdios
Jody and Stephanie LaNasa
Harris and Haydee Levitt
Lindsey Potter Photography
LPD International LLC
Lux Wellington Magazine
Kasha McKee
Merryvital
Sarah and Brian Miller
Mint Eco Car Wash
National Polo Center

John Nieporte
John Nihoff
Greg and Kirsten Norman
Old Palm Golf Club
Palm Beach County Sherriff's Office
Palm Beach Yacht Club
Palm Beach Zoo
Panther National
Joseph and Martha Pietrafesa
Pig Beach BBQ
Pink Bird Car Wash
Dominik Senn and Dorte Jespersen Senn
Rob Shawger
Shell Bay Club
Skin Care of The Palm Beaches
Sloan's Ice Cream
David and Lori Stenson
David and Rachel Supple
Ilaria Tagariello
Tequesta Golf Club
The Medalist Golf Club
The Norton Museum of Art
President Donald J. Trump and Melania Trump
Trump National – Bedminster, NJ
Sharon and Greg Vax
Virginia Philip Wine, Spirits & Acadmey
Wellington National Golf Club
WPB Police Department
Greyson Wycoki
Jack Zaborowski and Jill Perry-Zaborowski



Save The Dates

for two great events

A PERFECT MATCH
Polo & Brunch

Sunday, February 2, 2025

National Polo Center

1 p.m. - Brunch | 3 p.m. - Polo Match

Put on your best red, white, and pink and join us for an elegant brunch at the National Polo Center. Enjoy exclusive access to the members' side as we watch an exhilarating polo match up close!



OXBRIDGE ACADEMY
PURPOSE · AGILITY · KINDNESS
Spring Soirée
EST. 2011 · CONFIDENCE

Friday, March 7, 2025

Lakeside at Oxbridge Academy

Join us as we share aspects of our future site expansion plans. This elegant evening will include cocktails, dinner, and entertainment.



OXBRIDGE ACADEMY

For more information contact Natalie Beck, Director of Development, at nbeck@oapb.org or 561.972.9679.



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WEST PALM BEACH, FLORIDA