

Highlights

SY 2024-25
VOL. 92



MISSION

Seoul International School develops inquisitive, independent thinkers and collaborative learners, who acquire the essential knowledge necessary to be caring and creative contributors to the world around them.

VISION

Seoul International School will foster an earnest passion for learning that inspires students to work with others in creating a better world for all.

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HIGHLIGHTS VOL. 92



CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE ACROSS OUR CAMPUS

By Dr. James Gerhard
Head of School



As we reflect on another remarkable year at Seoul International School, our commitment to 우수성 (U-suseong) – excellence – continues to shine through every aspect of our educational journey. Our strategic plan's

four pillars – Empathy & Care, Collective Efficacy, Belonging, and High Expectations – have guided our community toward exceptional achievements across academics, athletics, arts, and service.

This year, our Tigers demonstrated that true excellence emerges when challenge meets support. Our rigorous academic program maintained the highest standards while our enhanced student support systems ensured every learner could reach their potential. From the National History Day Korea competitions to AP courses, from STEM innovations to arts performances, our students embraced challenges with determination and purpose.

Community has become more than just a word at SIS – it's our living ethos. The collaborative spirit between students, faculty, parents, and leadership has created an environment where everyone contributes to our collective success. Our commitment to safety, well-being, and meaningful learning experiences remains unwavering, even as we continually raise our expectations.

The vibrant tapestry of athletics, activities, and experiential learning opportunities has allowed each student to discover and develop their unique talents. As we celebrate these achievements, we remain thankful for our supportive community and dedicated to making each year as an SIS Tiger the best it can be.

We are especially proud of our renewed commitment to alumni engagement, with expanded events both on campus and internationally that reconnect our graduates with the SIS family. Their continued involvement and support enrich our community and provide invaluable mentorship to current students.

We hope you enjoy exploring this year's Highlights magazine, which captures just a glimpse of our community's remarkable accomplishments. As you turn these pages, you'll discover stories that exemplify our tradition of excellence and preview the exciting journey ahead as Seoul International School continues to prepare global leaders for tomorrow's challenges.



A FIVE-YEAR JOURNEY OF PURPOSEFUL TRANSFORMATION

By Mrs. Young Ok Chi
Business Manager



Since the leadership transition at Seoul International School in 2020, the institution has undergone a quiet yet profound transformation. Marking its fifth year under new management,

SIS stands at a significant moment of reflection and pride, not only for its recent achievements but also for the promising direction it is now firmly pursuing.

The changes implemented since 2020 were neither rushed nor superficial. Instead, they were intentional, measured, and grounded in a long-term vision to enhance the overall school environment. This steady approach has yielded meaningful results. Today, SIS enjoys an even more positive and cohesive atmosphere, one in which both students and faculty thrive. The school community has evolved, with a more engaged student body and faculty members who are increasingly choosing to extend their tenure at the institution. This shift is a clear indicator of the improvement in overall morale and satisfaction among stakeholders.

One of the most impactful developments during this period has been the adoption of a new digital administrative system. This upgrade has improved the school's operational transparency and procedural clarity. Parents, faculty, and staff can now experience a more open and accountable system, enhancing trust and efficiency across departments.

Beyond administrative improvements, there has been an inspiring cultural transformation within the faculty and staff community. What was once a more cautious approach to change has blossomed into a vibrant culture of

innovation and forward-thinking. Pride in the institution has flourished remarkably. Faculty members are now deeply motivated and enthusiastically invested in contributing to an exciting shared vision for the school's future. This cultural renaissance reflects years of dedicated collaboration and demonstrates the power of genuine community-building.

The recent celebration of SIS's 50th anniversary served as both a milestone and a moment of introspection. It provided an opportunity to reflect on the school's history and identify areas where growth was possible. With renewed purpose, SIS now moves forward with fresh ideas and a clear vision for its future.

As Seoul International School enters its second half-century, it does so with confidence and ambition. The changes of the past five years have laid a solid foundation for continued excellence. Guided by steady leadership, supported by efficient systems, and united by a strong community spirit, SIS will continue to shape the future of international education in Korea, one purposeful step at a time.

A SUCCESSFUL YEAR IN ADMISSIONS

By Ms. Nirmala Jayaram
Director of Admissions & Advancement

The Office of Admissions and Advancement has just completed a successful admissions season, with over 100 new students admitted. We received and reviewed nearly 400 applications - a clear testament to the continued confidence in SIS as a premier educational institution.

A Thoughtful Admissions Process

Our admissions process reflects the same care and attention we bring to education itself. Once we receive a complete application, it undergoes an initial review. Candidates who advance to the next stage are invited to campus for an admissions assessment that includes standardized math and English tests, allowing us to understand how applicants might fit within our academic environment. Additionally, students complete a writing prompt that gives us insight into their creativity, writing skills, and ability to think on their feet.

The final component is what I like to call a "chat with the Admissions Director" rather than a formal interview. After twenty years in admissions, I've learned that the most genuine conversations happen when students feel comfortable being themselves, rather than delivering rehearsed responses. I'm interested in discovering who our applicants truly are - their curiosity, their character, and their authentic voice. Sometimes the most thoughtful students are those who take a moment to consider their responses rather than rushing to impress with quick answers.

Our decision-making process involves multiple perspectives, including input from our divisional principals, ensuring that each admission decision considers the whole child.

What We Look For: Building Our Community

While I won't reveal all our secrets, I'm happy to share what matters most to us. We seek students who will genuinely add to our community - young people who want to belong, grow alongside their peers, and help foster the caring environment that defines SIS.

Academic brilliance, while wonderful, isn't our only criterion. We value students who demonstrate a strong work ethic, maintain a positive attitude, and show genuine enthusiasm for contributing to something larger than themselves. We look for future community members who will lift others up, not just focus on their own success.

Every student and family who joins SIS becomes part of our story. We're looking for families who want to partner with us as we continue building our legacy as the leading American-curriculum school in the Republic of Korea.

As we welcome new families to SIS, we're excited about the fresh perspectives, talents, and energy they'll bring to our community. Each new student represents not just individual potential, but the continued growth and strength of our school family. Thank you to all the families who trust us with their children's education. Together, we're creating something truly special at SIS.



BEYOND THE NUMBERS:

What Makes SIS Students Stand Out

By Ms. Kelcey Edwards
Director of Guidance and College Counseling

In the world of college admissions, SIS stands out for its academic reputation. For nearly 50 years, our graduates have exemplified excellence in global education, leveraging the strong foundation built at SIS to excel at the top universities and thrive in their chosen careers.

Colleges know that our students push themselves both in and out of the classroom and rise to the occasion. The numerical pieces of applications from our seniors (e.g., number of APs, classroom grades, GPA, test scores) are objectively amazing and remarkably similar to one another.

That is both our blessing...and our challenge. Our students are squeezed into an extremely narrow, very high band in terms of grades, number of APs, and test scores. College admission outcomes in the United States are rarely linear. Who receives an offer of admission is not about who has the highest GPA or test scores or the most APs.

Our applicants are considered “academically qualified for admission” nearly everywhere they apply, as are 80+% of the applicant pool at any selective institution. However, admission offices often struggle to understand who our students are as people...in our classrooms and as part of the SIS community as a whole. Does the student connect with their peers and the adults in the building? Are they comfortable communicating with others, asking questions, offering opinions, or contributing to class discussion? Do they actively engage with others in and/or out of the classroom? Those qualities reflect who that student might be on their campus which is extremely important to selective institutions. They are in a privileged position to pick from the best, brightest, most interesting candidates from around the world to craft a vibrant incoming freshman class.

When Yale visited campus last fall, a senior asked what they were looking for. Our rep stated, “We know SIS. We know you are great students. We want to admit students who are collaborative and kind.” Collaborative learning is central to the student experience across the three divisions at SIS. In fact, it was my primary take-away from a recent learning walk where I, along with other administrators and teachers, observed classes throughout campus. The emphasis on student interaction and group participation was remarkable.

Qualitative factors such as these are not reflected on the transcript. Other parts of the application...revealing dimensions that aren't reflected on a numerical scale...arguably matter more in the context of SIS. They come through in the student's essay, how they present their extracurricular story, perhaps an interview, and through their recommendations. Teachers and I help bring the student to life in our letters. We shine a light on the characteristics that help the admission readers understand who that student might be in their community.

When I look around the SIS campus, evidence of those non-numeric factors is readily apparent, both in and out of the classroom. I see it when our sports teams play, on the stage in the auditorium, during club activities, in the senior lounge, and in the way our students interact with each other and teachers in the halls. Our students develop communication, leadership, social, problem solving, and organizational skills that will serve them well, long after they leave these doors.



MAKING A DIFFERENCE WITH THE TERRY FOX RUN



On September 13, 2024, Seoul International School hosted its 2nd Annual Terry Fox Run, raising over 10 million Korean won for the Korean Association for Children with Leukemia and Cancer. The event saw students, parents, faculty, and staff all joining in, not for medals, but for meaning.

Inspired by Terry Fox, who began his Marathon of Hope in 1980 after losing his leg to cancer, the SIS community came together to honor a legacy of courage and compassion. As Terry once said, "I'm not a dreamer. I just believe in miracles." The 2024 run at SIS reminded us that every little step can make a difference. In the elementary school, teachers shared Terry's story and the qualities that he embodies - perseverance, empathy and kindness. In the middle and high school, student leadership groups led the initiatives to raise awareness and funds for the Korean institution the school supports.

We will have our 3rd annual Terry Fox Run on September 12, 2025, and we invite the SIS community to join us again. This event isn't just about running. It's about empathy, action, and keeping Terry's dream alive. So get ready to participate and contribute as a community to a good cause. And remember: hope is a marathon, not a sprint. We'll see you at the starting line!



Student Leadership members with the representative from the Korean Association for Children with Leukemia & Cancer



TIGER BUDDIES: Building Bridges Through Mentorship

By Ms. Alyssa Haugen
Middle School Counselor

Ms. Jennifer Kurbel
Elementary School Counselor

This fall, the Elementary Counselor, Jennifer Kurbel and the Middle School Counselor, Alyssa Haugen, launched a new mentorship program called “Tiger Buddies.” Through this program, 7th and 8th grade students were given the opportunity to serve as a leader and positive mentor to elementary students. Middle school students completed an interest survey to participate as a Tiger Buddy. The Elementary students were selected in collaboration with teachers, counselors and student interest. We had a total of 44 students in the program this year. We had 22 ES students (six in 3rd grade, ten in 4th grade and six in 5th grade) and 22 MS students (seventeen in 7th grade and five in 8th grade).

The Tiger Buddy Program met on Fridays during advisory/first recess. Ms. Kurbel and Ms. Haugen provided a variety of options each week for the buddies to do together. Some of the activities that were offered this year were: larger group games like tag and basketball, board games, kahoots, weekly check-ins, and snacks (a group favorite). Through these activities we saw the Tiger Buddies transform from strangers to friends with a deeper connection and care for one another.

This program provides an excellent opportunity for middle school students to develop leadership skills including listening, patience and facilitating a conversation while serving as positive role models for the elementary

students. For elementary students it provides more connections within our SIS community. It also gives them someone to look up to and a friend who can understand the experiences they are having at SIS.

Tiger Buddies has been successful in bridging our elementary and middle school communities this year. We look forward to continuing this partnership and watching the program grow and develop in the future.

Student Feedback on the Tiger Buddies Program



What has been something positive about the Tiger Buddy Program?

My buddy was very kind to me, told me what Middle school was like and told me not to be afraid. At first, I was scared about going to Middle school but after he said that it wasn't scary, I gained more confidence.

Hajun Lee (5)



What is something you have learned from your buddy?

How to solve friendship problems.

Zoe Park (3)

What has been something positive about the Tiger Buddy Program?

The buddies are very kind and have a positive attitude.

Ryan Lee (4)

Student Feedback on the Tiger Buddies Program



What has been something positive about the Tiger Buddy Program?

It helped me to get to know more people from different grades. It also made me to feel more included and comfortable to share personal stuff with my Tiger Buddy.

ChaeWon Lee (5)

What is something you have learned from your buddy?

I learned that even when friendships are hard, you have to power through it. I also learned that when you feel sad, remember that you are not the only one.

Marin Lee (5)



A YEAR OF GROWTH, GRATITUDE, AND GLOBAL SPIRIT

The Emanuele Family's Journey at SIS

As their first year at Seoul International School (SIS) drew to a close, the Emanuele family reflected on a season of change, challenge, and connection. Originally from Italy, Adriana, Umberto, and their daughters Sveva (10) and Clara (8) are seasoned travelers with roots also in Spain, the Netherlands, and Belgium. Their journey to Korea and SIS began with a work assignment for Umberto.

Choosing SIS was no coincidence. "When we were on the video call, we knew you were sincere," they shared. "We appreciated the transparency in both the good and the less good. That mattered."

Their daughters brought distinct personalities to the experience. Sveva, naturally social and energetic, and Clara, more reserved yet quick-witted, both embraced the move in their own unique ways. Interestingly, it was Clara who showed early strength, while Sveva felt anxious - especially about language and academics. But soon, the roles reversed: Sveva thrived, and Clara took more time finding her place. Yet both grew tremendously.

Integration was their greatest concern, along with language, school life, and distance from loved ones. But from the first day, the SIS community proved to be a welcoming anchor. "Even during the summer tour before school started, we felt heard and supported," they said. School events became treasured moments of engagement.

While SIS offered strong academic and emotional support, the family hopes the future years will include more parent-focused integration and socializing programs to help families feel even more at home.

The Emanueles praise the values their children are gaining: resilience, flexibility, and cultural openness. They see these as lifelong tools.

When asked to describe SIS, they sum it up in three words: inclusive, caring, competent for the staff, and competitive, traditionalist, difficult to interpret for the parent community.

Through this first year, one truth stands out: "It's been a great collaboration between us and the school." And as their journey continues, SIS remains not just a school, but a shared story of growth and belonging.



HONORING A LEGACY OF SERVICE AT SIS

It is both a great pleasure and a true honor to recognize two distinguished members of the SIS community who retired in 2025: Ms. Min Ja Lee of the General Affairs Team and Mr. Won Soo Lee of the Facilities Team.

Ms. Min Ja Lee began her career at SIS in 1981 as an administrative staff member and retired in 2025 as the Director of the General Affairs Team. Over the course of 41 years, she served the school with unwavering dedication, grace, and professionalism. Her colleagues will remember her not only for her deep love for SIS and tireless enthusiasm but also for her vibrant spirit as an avid mountaineer and athlete. She leaves behind a legacy of excellence and warmth that will continue to inspire those who follow.



Mr. Won Soo Lee joined the SIS Facilities Team in 1996 and officially retired in 2013. However, his service to the community did not end there. He was soon recruited as a Security Guard, where he became a beloved and trusted presence at the faculty apartment complex, the Quad. His steady commitment and kind-hearted nature earned him the affection and respect of all who knew him. His final retirement in December 2025 marks an impressive 28 years of devoted service to SIS.

On behalf of the entire SIS community, we extend our deepest gratitude to Ms. Lee and Mr. Lee for their many years of service. We wish them continued health, happiness, and fulfillment in the years ahead.



TEEING OFF A NEW ERA OF SPORTS

Tigers Golf Team

Beginning during the 2023-2024 school year, our SIS golf program, consisting of both a boys and girls team, has come a long way in just the last two years. In our inaugural season, we were one of only two international schools in the Seoul area that had an official golf team making it quite the challenge to get the program off the ground. Establishing relationships with outdoor golf courses and practice facilities with screen golf can be both challenging and expensive. After a trial season, the next goal was to establish golf as a legitimate sport at SIS.

During the second season, the SIS golf team added an international tournament in Thailand to the schedule and finished first in that tournament. SIS participated in the first ever KAIAC golf tournament at Osan also finishing in first out of 7 teams.

Beginning in 2025-2026, golf will be an official KAIAC sport after only 2 years – quite the accomplishment and speaks to the hard work and dedication of the SIS golfers as well as support from administration. SIS even led the campaign for golf to become an official part of KAIAC by writing specific by-laws and establishing a master schedule for the member schools.

The future of KAIAC Golf looks bright with four schools officially now established along with the three US Department of Defense schools. SIS will again compete in Thailand and plans are in place to even expand the tournament to Thai international schools.



HITTING ALL THE RIGHT NOTES

By Julia Jiyeon Kim
MS/ HS Music

Music education is more than learning scales or mastering an instrument - it shapes the mind, nurtures the heart, and bridges cultures. Research consistently shows that studying music enhances cognitive abilities such as memory, attention, and language processing. It also provides an outlet for emotional expression, builds creativity, fosters collaboration, and deepens cultural understanding. Today's music classrooms increasingly embrace technology, inclusivity, and global connections, while also supporting students' social and emotional growth.

Seoul International School's music program has flourished into a vibrant, multi-tiered experience. Elementary students begin their journey with general music classes, the Suzuki Program, Junior Choir, and ES Band. These early opportunities pave the way for the performance-based middle and high school ensembles - strings, band, choir, and full orchestra - culminating in winter and spring concerts as well as off-campus performances.

SIS has long been active in regional and international music circles. From the Korean American Interscholastic Activities Conference (KAIAC) events to being one of the founding members of the Korea International Music Educators Association (KIMEA) in 2010, the school has championed collaboration and excellence. Since 2016, students have participated in prestigious Association for Music in International Schools (AMIS) for HS, and, more recently, MS AMIS events - further strengthening SIS global musical footprint.

That commitment was on full display in 2025 as SIS hosted the KAIAC Large Group Orchestra Festival, welcoming 11 ensembles from 8 schools. Both the MS Coda Orchestra and HS Orchestra represented SIS brilliantly, each earning the Platinum Award - the festival's highest rating. Remarkably, this marks the HS Orchestra's 13th consecutive Platinum since 2012 and Coda Orchestra's 7th consecutive Platinum since 2013 - a testament to sustained dedication and artistry.

Looking ahead, the vision is bold and collaborative. Plans include all-division performances of iconic works like O Fortuna and interdisciplinary projects pairing music with visual art, drama, and history. Imagine an orchestra performing alongside student-created paintings or original scores, enriching school theater productions.

At SIS, music will continue to unify, cross divisions, blend disciplines, and inspire a lifelong love for the art. The program's future will be as dynamic and harmonious as the music it celebrates.



DESIGNING FOR IMPACT:

How Focused Curriculum Work Shapes Student Success

By Dr. David Mannell

Director of Curriculum and Professional Development, School Year 2022 to 2025

At Seoul International School, we understand that meaningful growth is the result of deliberate design rather than sweeping change. By making precise, intentional improvements to our curriculum and professional practices, we create powerful learning opportunities that are relevant, engaging, and responsive to student needs.

Student-centered schools foster higher engagement, interest, and responsibility. It is a fact that students in these schools are more successful learners. At SIS, we act with precision; through carefully planned interventions, we set students up for success in the real world.

This year, consultant Jennifer Abrams reminded us that “someone is learning to be a person by watching you,” which highlights that it is our responsibility to ensure students see us practice key skills. This came to life earlier this year when, after observing collaborative team-teaching, students mirrored the process in their own projects. One student reflected they were excited to “be contributors” and to “use what we learned to make an impact.”



Curriculum Development

Our approach follows a clear cycle: we gather evidence, reflect on practice, and adjust based on what we learn. This occurs every day on our campus in some way, shape, or form. On the one hand, it's really exciting to see; on the other, this systematic process ensures our curriculum remains relevant, engaging, and responsive to student needs.

Curriculum is meant to be in a state of continuous refinement, and recent highlights include:

- Early Years: implementation of an evidence-based, play-based approach that creates observable growth in our youngest learners.
- Elementary School: strategic enhancements to our Literacy program to build foundational skills, make meaningful connections across subjects, and deepen understanding.
- Middle School: curricular improvements embedding critical thinking, communication, and global citizenship – all while supporting solid relationship-building.
- High School: creating demanding, relevant paths to graduation for all students while responding to evolving educational and professional landscapes.



Professional Development: Learning Together

Learning is inherently social. This year, we've invested significantly in ourselves and our community through targeted professional development aligned with our strategic imperatives, from curriculum to collaboration and to building strong relationships.

Faculty have initiated dozens of projects aimed at improving support systems, optimizing resources, and continuing to enhance instructional approaches. We don't innovate simply for the sake of doing so; in fact, all our efforts reflect our commitment to continuous growth and real, collaborative practice.

SIS has established itself as a regional hub for educational excellence, hosting numerous international workshops and this year's KORCOS International Educators' Conference, which welcomed nearly 500 educators to our campus. These opportunities allow us to both contribute to and learn from the broader educational community.

Consistent Progress, Meaningful Change

Through consistent provocation, contextual understanding, and finely-tuned practice, we maintain our student-centered focus while making incremental yet significant improvements. The proper support systems at SIS ensure we continue to grow with integrity and purpose.

Small steps, taken consistently and intentionally, create the foundation for transformative educational experiences. As we move forward, we remain committed to the precise, strategic curriculum work that ultimately shapes student success at Seoul International School.

Our mission to ensure learners “acquire the essential knowledge necessary to be caring and creative contributors to the world around them” isn't achieved through grand gestures alone. It is realized through precise daily practice – the careful refinement of a lesson plan, the thoughtful question that provokes deeper thinking, the collaborative planning session that models problem-solving. These seemingly small moments, multiplied across classrooms, hallways, months, and years, create the foundation upon which our students build their futures as contributors to a world that will rely on their knowledge, care, and creativity.





PLANTED WITH PURPOSE

How One Student's Vision Grew into a Campus Landmark

It began with a student's vision.

At the start of his junior year, Won-Gyeom Yang quietly shared an idea: a plant-centered space where students could study, reflect, and connect with nature. His thoughtful planning and research became the starting point for what is now a beautiful new structure on campus a pavilion-like grow room located between the Annex rubber-top and the fish pond.

This wooden dome, with its elegant curves and open-air feel, is more than just a place for growing plants. It's a gathering space, a classroom, and a new landmark for our school community. Rows of plant pots will line its shelves, while a central bench welcomes visitors to sit within a circle of green. Raised garden beds will soon surround the pavilion, creating an outdoor learning environment for environmental science and biology classes, as well as student clubs and anyone drawn to the calm of a growing garden.

The design came from an open-source plan first published by IKEA, which Mr. Macklin discovered and adapted to fit the school's needs. He ordered CNC-cut plywood to bring the structure to life. From the earliest stages of construction starting with pouring the concrete foundation he worked closely with Mr. Fiess, later joined by Mr. Lambert and Ms. Campbell, who helped solve key challenges throughout the process.

But at the center of it all remains the idea that Won-Gyeom planted: that a school's green spaces can be more than beautiful they can be meaningful. His initiative, leadership, and dedication were the foundation on which this grow room was built.

This project came to life through the efforts of many faculty, staff, and students who offered time, hands, and encouragement. But its roots trace clearly back to a student who imagined what could grow if we simply made space.



SIS FACULTY HONORED AS A MERRILL SCHOLARS MENTOR AT CORNELL UNIVERSITY

We are so proud to highlight an emotional moment that touches on the great relationship we have between teachers and students at SIS. In May 2024, high school mathematics teacher, Nathan Warkentin was honored as a mentor by Cornell University's prestigious Merrill Scholars Program. Recognized by graduating senior Andie Kim from the College of Arts and Sciences, Mr. Warkentin was celebrated for the profound impact he had on Kim's early academic development and long-lasting passion for learning.

Each year, the Merrill Scholars Program recognizes 42 outstanding graduating seniors across Cornell's 10 undergraduate colleges who have demonstrated exceptional academic achievement, and leadership.

These scholars are invited to name the high school teacher or mentor who most influenced their academic journey, as well as the Cornell faculty or staff member who guided them during college.

Mr. Warkentin, known for his dedication and engaging approach to mathematics education, was invited to Cornell's Ithaca campus as part of the celebration. Alongside fellow mentors from across 15 U.S. states, South Korea, China, and Canada, he participated in a two-day program including an informal dinner with scholars, a professional development workshop, and a formal luncheon recognizing the transformative role of educators.

At Seoul International School, Mr. Warkentin has consistently inspired students not only through his expertise but also by exposing students to the beautiful, poetic side of mathematics, encouraging analytical thinking and resilience. His recognition as a Merrill Scholars mentor highlights the far-reaching influence of dedicated teachers and the essential role they play in shaping future leaders.

For Mr. Warkentin, the honor reflects both the reward of a teaching career and the deep, lasting connections educators build with their students. As the Merrill Scholars Program celebrated its newest cohort of changemakers, it also reminded the world of the quiet, powerful impact of great teaching.



A RELENTLESS PURSUIT OF ENDURANCE AND JOY

From Olympic-level water polo to elite-level endurance racing, Director of Aquatics, Carly Wessels embodies what it means to evolve while remaining grounded in passion. Currently coaching varsity cross country and swimming at Seoul International School, Wessels is far more than a teacher, she's a living testament to perseverance, reinvention, and the healing power of sport.

Wessels' athletic journey began in the pool, where, raised in a family of swimmers and polo players, she developed a love for water sports from a young age. Her early years were filled with grueling training schedules, and by 18, she had qualified for South Africa's national women's water polo team. Competing internationally across Europe, Canada, and Africa, she represented her country with pride.

Transitioning away from professional sports was the new challenge that she welcomed. "I needed a big goal to stay motivated," she said. That realization led her to run and hybrid hyrox training, eventually sparking her current love for endurance sports. Her resume now includes ultra-marathons like the 100K Trans Jeju, a Half Ironman, and a grueling 700K KDT race from Busan to Sokcho.

But perhaps her most impressive recent achievements have come through HYROX, a global fitness competition combining 8K running with intense functional workouts. In 2024, she placed second in Korea, and by May 2025, she took first place in the Women's Pro Double category at HYROX Korea in Incheon. Her winning strategy? "Push the runs and survive the stations." That same month, she secured first place in Taipei's HYROX competition, proving her growing dominance in the field.

Training, for Wessels, is more than preparation, it's therapy. "Exercise is relaxing for me," she said. "It gives me an endorphin high. I don't watch TV. Training is my pleasure." Sponsored

by PUMA and driven by goals rather than medals, she believes participation is meaningful and that training with a friend brings unmatched joy. Her next milestone: the prestigious UTMB 52K in Switzerland and France, followed by the 108K UTMB in Jeju in October, the 44K JTBC Marathon, and the Seoul HYROX this November.

What motivates her is not just the physical challenge but the community. She emphasizes routine, variation, and rest, believing that sustainable performance comes from listening to one's body. "Even training at 60% is okay," she notes. And with aspirations to complete a triathlon next, she's showing no signs of slowing down.

Wessels advises aspiring athletes to "enjoy, keep a routine, and be happy." Her belief in women's natural endurance capacity, supported by science, is another source of empowerment in her journey. From self-funded dreams to global competition, her story proves that it's never too late to chase joy, push limits, and rediscover purpose.

We celebrate her first-place win this year at HYROX KOREA for WOMEN'S PRO DOUBLE in Incheon and HYROX Taipei. Follow her journey on Instagram: @carlywessels13.



CLASS OF 2025 COLLEGE ENROLLMENT



University	Graduates	University	Graduates
Ayrshire College (Scotland)	1	Rhode Island School of Design	1
Babson College	1	Slippery Rock University	1
Berklee College of Music	1	Stanford University	2
Boston University	2	Swarthmore College	1
Brown University	2	University at Buffalo	1
Carnegie Mellon University	1	University College London (UK)	2
Charles University (Czech Republic)	1	University of California, Berkeley	10
Columbia University	1	University of California, Davis	2
Columbia University/Trinity College Dublin	1	University of California, Irvine	2
Cornell University	3	University of California, Los Angeles	2
Dartmouth College	1	University of Chicago	1
Emory University	1	University of Michigan	1
Ewha Womans University (Korea)	1	University of Notre Dame	1
Georgetown University	1	University of Southern California	6
Harvard University	1	University of Texas at Austin	1
Johns Hopkins University	1	University of Toronto (Canada)	4
New York University	5	Washington University in St. Louis	2
Northwestern University	3	Yale University	1
Oxford College of Emory University	1	Yonsei University – Underwood (Korea)	1
Pomona College	1		





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