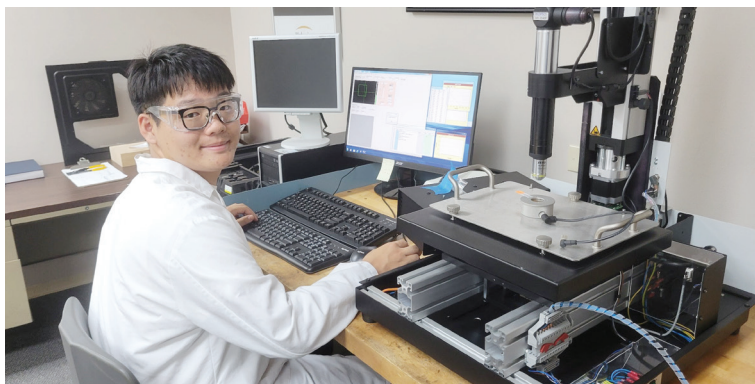


Editors Column

To Intern Again: What Changes?



Derrick Ahn
Grade 12
Oxford Academy



In a typical intern's second time around, many advanced technologies become easier to understand!
[Source: Author, Derrick Ahn]

One summer ago, I was invited to intern at an ophthalmic manufacturer by the name of Medennium. This recent summer, I was brought back to the role; but what would be different? With the status quo dynamically changing and interns becoming commonplace in corporate structure, how will the future of returning interns pan out?

Contrary to the preceding summer, when I was designated to basic data management and keeping track of inventory, I was given the same

role, but with more flexibility. My prior experience with the company opened up new windows, allowing me to work hybrid. I was called for two days a week to manage data and carry out basic procedures on-site, and the remaining work hours were carried out remotely, off-site.

The additional leeway was not all that was granted. Upon my return, I met many familiar faces—and new ones! As a result of being accustomed to the company already, I had a better engagement with my coworkers,

truly appreciated the environment each of them brought, and let my respect for them grow, especially since I now knew the sheer challenge their respective roles brought. Harboring this sentiment of respect toward my senior employees bolstered my understanding of what makes a workplace harmonious and productive.

Values aside, working as a returning intern left room for my passion to bloom. Adjustable working schedules provided advantageous opportunities to integrate and practice data analytics into my work, allowing me to efficiently manage and organize data. With sufficient elbow room to proceed with menial tasks, such as configuring machinery or transporting products, the career-orientated, harder skills were much more accessible. While flexibility and financial merits are irremovable from what most value in a workplace, a severely undervalued aspect reflects how much passion an individual can express in their work.

Looking for a second opinion on returning internships, I interviewed a close friend of mine, Eric,

a returning intern at a political campaign. He remarks, "I feel that the advantage of returning to a familiar workplace helps me with my productivity and personal satisfaction of my working environment." These advantages mentioned resemble the experience I had, which justifies the merits of a returning intern.

With the ever-growing pool of vigorous interns from numerous industries, young and loyal interns are increasingly sought out, as the lifeline of a company ends with the employees. Amongst the younger stratosphere, ambitious graduates have frequently bounced between renowned corporations to increase their value, lighting fire to a new-found trend. As a result, companies have incrementally valued returning interns, providing a win-win for both the businesses and the interns.

My return to Medennium for a second summer not only enriched my first internship but proved that returning internships can empower career development, and construct bridges—bridges that bridge the workforce gap.

Student Reporter

A Deep Dive into Student Mental Health Challenges



Christine Baek
Grade 11
Western Reserve Academy

Well-being consists of two different parts: physical and mental. Only recently, however, has the public developed a growing sense of awareness for mental health. In today's world, teenage suicide rates are consistently increasing, with over 47,000 American teens having lost their lives due to suicide in the past two decades. However, as pediatric researchers wrote in the journal JAMA Network Open, "An overall increasing trend was observed across all demographics."

At a time like this, it should be the top priority for schools to emphasize the importance of mental health and help to guide their students through tough times. Academic stress comes as a huge burden in teenagers' everyday lives. The fast-paced academic environment, pressures of school, extracurricular activities, and looming college application process all weigh heavily on students.

The pursuit of high grades and the competition for college admissions



Morgan Hall, at Western Reserve Academy, where counseling services take place.
[Source: Author, Christine Baek]

can often lead to anxiety and burnout, which heavily affects life outside of classes. The constant push for academic success can make it difficult for students to maintain a healthy balance between schoolwork and personal life. "[The] pressure of having good grades makes it almost impossible to balance with healthy social interactions," mentioned Andrea Zhang, class of '26, a junior student, as she expressed her academic stress.

Along with all of these things, the current college application trend requires a great amount of extracurricular commitment through sports, clubs, and leader-

ship roles for a well-rounded resume. However, participation in these activities can lead to an overload in commitments, leading to stress. Many students find themselves juggling between multiple commitments, leaving little to no time for relaxation.

The key here is the school's role. What can the school do to help students manage their stress? How can it guide students to have good mental health? Everything starts with creating a more open discussion around mental health. Through this, schools can actively work to reduce the stigma and provide stu-

dents with accessible resources, such as counseling services that can be helpful for mental health.

At Western Reserve Academy, a group of students called "Mental Health Advocates" take part in creating initiatives to raise awareness regarding this topic. From Mental Health Awareness Week to clubs like Students Who Care, they advocate for mental health in the community. The group aims to benefit those in their area community by providing accessible opportunities for people to learn about and discuss mental health in a welcoming environment.

As the mental health crisis among teens continues to grow, schools must prioritize support. Initiatives like "mental health advocates" demonstrate how a community can commit to this cause. However, such efforts must continue, ensuring that every student has the resources and support they need to thrive. After all, although academic work is highly emphasized in our world, we need to remember that a student's well-being is the basis upon which all achievements are built.

Student Reporter

First-Time Freshmen on the Courts



Kaylyn Wee
Grade 9
Ayala High School

Recently, I was able to have the opportunity to join the tennis team at my high school. When I was first starting out, I came in with only 2 years of light training and knowledge of the game of tennis. Now, I attend practice every day and compete in matches against other schools, and because of this, I have learned numerous things. For example, gameplay, rules, and even mental aspects. I also have met lots of great people, like my team, coaches, and players from other schools. Although the season has not started officially, I can tell that I am going to enjoy playing more.

Again, I have met numerous people so far. My coach and my team are all amazing mentors and peers, and I am thankful that I was able to meet them. I have learned lots of new skills from my coach and even from my teammates. Not

just skills, but I am able to and feel comfortable talking to my coach and my team about anything, whether it is about school, friends, or anything personal going on in life. So far, other school players have also been kind and helpful.

Compared to my teammates, I have not played for a long time. I started around 2 years ago and only played once a week, for 30 minutes to 1 hour. I was not confident in the sport, not good, and did not enjoy it at all. Now, I play after school every day for 2 hours, have weekly private lessons afterward, and sometimes play on the weekend. Because of all this extra time dedicated to tennis, I feel more confident, play better, and have grown to enjoy the sport.

With all of this extra practice and experiences, I have learned so



The JV Girls Team of Ayala High School/ The first team I have been on.
[Source: Author, Kaylyn Wee]

much: not just athletic skills but also sportsmanship and mental strength. Though I used to think losing was merely a negative experience, by playing on the team, I am learning it is only part of the process of growing. I have also learned how to handle rude players and how to be more responsible, which I think are helpful for my future. Socializing has also gotten easier for me; I am able to talk to people a lot more easily now. If I didn't join the team,

I don't think I'd ever advance or learn these skills.

Even if it is my first year on the girls tennis team at my high school, and it has only been a few weeks, I know I am going to continue to participate in the team and that I am going to have a good time. I hope to continue to grow skill-wise and make bonds with both coaches and teammates, and am excited for more experiences to come.

Student Reporter

Reflecting on My First Guitar Competition



Jane Won
Grade 12
Korea Liberal Arts School



The gifts the KGF(guitar competition organization) gave me after performing. [Source: Author, Jane Won]

I anxiously waited in the holding room for the door to open for my first guitar competition. I had practiced day and night for this competition. I repeatedly told

myself that I was confident and that there was absolutely nothing I had to be afraid of. But unlike my words, my hands were stiff, and I could hear my heart thumping frantically. The door finally opened with a creaking sound, and I walked onto the stage in a room filled with silence. The bright stage lights obscured my vision. I sat down and began to play the guitar, the song I'd practiced for so long seemed distant and unfamiliar at that moment. My fingers were cold and unwilling to move according to my will. With each missed note, the anxiety grew. When I finally finished the piece, I was both relieved and devastated. I was glad that it was over, but at the same time, I realized that I hadn't shown even a small fraction of what I had practiced.

From then on, stepping onto the stage, particularly in a competition, was a real challenge, but I was determined to get over the fear and nervousness. I started standing on small stages. I have never missed performance opportunities given to me, whether at school or elsewhere. I was still nervous, but it was becoming much better because I had done it many times in front of my schoolmates. The more I stood on stage, the more I could feel my nervousness gradually fading. I started realizing that I was getting to know myself better, at which point my guitar skills were also improving every time I performed in front of people. Once I got on stage, I realized that even the parts I thought I had practiced perfectly hadn't been prac-

ticed enough.

Through my experiences from standing on stage, I have learned which parts I had missed and needed to work on further. The nervousness of being on stage will never completely disappear, no matter how much time passes. I realized that a certain amount of nervousness is always necessary on stage. When I asked for advice from a well-known guitar professor about ways I can overcome stage fright, he told me that he is always nervous on stage, but it is just a matter of getting used to it and learning how to hide it from the audience. If I continue to overcome my fear and keep going, I will be able to become used to being on stage and show all of my hard efforts.

Student Reporter

Exploring Mount Seorak; An Amazing Experience



Jerome (Junsoo) Kang
Grade 10
Korea Liberal Arts School

Two weeks ago, my family went to Sokcho, a city located northeast of the Gangwon Province. The most memorable place that we visited in Sokcho was Mount Seorak. Once we arrived at the entrance of the mountain, we started walking. While I was walking beside my family, I realized that the road that we were on was wider than the roads in other mountains. It was five meters wide, which allowed me to grasp the sheer scale of my surroundings.



A bird's eye view from the summit of Mount Seorak.

[Source: Author, Jerome (Junsoo) Kang]

We soon arrived at the place where we could register to ride an aerial tram that goes from the bottom of the mountain to the summit. After registration, we waited for the tram to come, excited to see the view from the top. Finally, we could see the tram approaching us. As soon as the doors of the tram opened, I went ahead and occupied the seat where I could enjoy the mountain view the most. The tram soon departed from the ground and slowly headed to-

ward the summit.

Inside the tram, I began to carefully observe the mountain. I could see that the various trees and rocks were giving the mountain its shape. Although the colors I saw were limited to green and gray hues, the mountain was still beautiful and marvelous. Even though I could not see any animals—aside from the birds sitting on the trees—the other observations

were more than enough. The slope of the mountain became steeper as the tram kept progressing toward the summit. That was probably the reason why people ride the tram to reach the top rather than walking on foot.

When we arrived at the summit, we left the tram and climbed up a small hill where we would be able to see everything in bird's eye view. Finally, we were at the peak of the hill!

Here, everything seemed so small to us. I felt as if I had become a giant and felt supreme over everything that I could see; the hills, clouds, trees, and rocks seemed to be no bigger than ants.

After an hour, we descended the hill and came back to the place where the tram had left us originally. With the tram's return, we rode it back to the bottom of the mountain. We could still see the summit from the descending tram. Once inside, I contemplated the landscape that I observed, with my eyes closed. The landscape was unforgettable.

Exploring Mount Seorak was a memorable experience for me. I will think about it for years to come because it was such a nice place to visit with my family, and a well-preserved piece of nature. Someday, I would like to revisit the mountain and its breathtaking summit.

Student Reporter

The Digital SAT: What to Expect



Claire Lee
Grade 11
La Canada High School

Since it was first officialized in 1926, the SAT, originally known as the Scholastic Aptitude Test, has undergone significant changes. The most notable is the exam's new adaptive and digital format, a relatively recent development. The exam has transitioned from being taken on paper in person to students' personal devices, which they can use in assigned testing locations. According to College Board, this major transformation was attributed to students' and teachers' feedback to digitize the test in response to our rapidly virtualizing world. A diminished reliance on paper tests also contributed to this change.

For several years, the SAT has held great scholastic value as a way to access greater educational opportunities and fortify one's chances of being accepted into a highly-ranked university. Though some colleges do not require students to report their scores, many have revived its importance, praising it as a way to "help differentiate applicants" (Forbes). Despite some schools going test-optional and the fact that some individuals

may perceive the test with indifference, it is recommended, for ambitious students, to report their scores to demonstrate their excellence and skill, standing out for their merit. Practice platforms for exam preparation (such as Khan Academy) are free and accessible to the general public, providing opportunities regardless of one's background.

General modifications to the SAT include a shorter test-taking time, shorter passages for the Reading and Writing Section, with only one designated question per passage, adaptive modes (where students are given a more difficult second module if they perform well on the first), and calculator availability for the entirety of the math portion, featuring the Desmos Graphing Calculator, a graphing program built into the exam. The availability of Desmos is a plus, serving as an efficient tool for the immediate dispense of students. Further, cheating is unlikely due to the unique variety of exams, made possible by the new format.

I felt that the digital SAT held in



Students wait in line, anxiously anticipating the SAT with expectations and concerns. [Source: Author, Claire Lee]

August 2024 presented some challenges. Having spent much time practicing with paper-based SAT exams, and some digital, I found the difficulty between the two to be quite distinct. Because this was my first time taking the SAT, I was not familiar with the prior format. Still, the adaptive nature of the exam added to my somewhat arduous and tense experience. A fellow student who took the August exam, Dana Rhee, remarked, "The first modules on both sec-

tions were moderately easy, but the difference in difficulty between the first and second modules was too large!"

Despite the potential challenges, the new SAT format may present for some students, it reflects their dedication and efforts. The digital SAT is also symbolic of the technologically advanced society we live in today, where even standardized tests are compelled to conform.

Editors Column



Audrey Park
Grade 11
Northwood High School

Fueling the Future: Team Snacks in High School Sports



In one of Northwood's Girls Tennis games against a neighboring high school, I was in charge of bringing juices and water. [Source: Audrey Park, Author]

Whether they're chasing down a rival school's player for a ball or engaging in an hour-long match against a racket-wielding student-athlete on a court, high school athletes of solo sports typically return to a cooler full of energy drinks and a table with chips to cool off after a game, no matter if they won or lost.

Northwood High School's solo sports teams are not strangers to the idea of sharing snacks and drinks. In fact, teams that practice the act of bringing food assign

team members to be responsible for either snacks or beverages at each game, typically using Google Sheets or volunteer-based systems to organize the cycles. This level of organization allows team members and parents to see what preferences to consider when selecting foods at the store.

With all the different types of snack and drink options available for Northwood athletes of solo sports, though, there have been several returning items through-

out the years. For Girls Tennis, which I am a part of, Gatorade and CapriSuns have made their course around almost all the Junior Varsity and Frosh/Soph games, while assorted chips have stuck around for years. Similarly, all the Track and Cross Country teams have seen the frequent return of Gatorade at meets. Throughout these common selections, teams have also seen parents bring fruit cups or gummies. However, almost all Northwood sports teams will agree that energy bars reign supreme in both recurrence and effectiveness. Even group-oriented sports, that don't bring food for games, will have student-athletes who carry them to eat when convenient. Additionally, this process encourages more parent participation, opportunities for teammates to learn about each other, and altruistic interactions within the team.

For instance, the Girls Tennis team uses a shared document to re-

cord preferred snack and drink options with the students who are responsible for bringing them before games. During Northwood's Track and Field meets, on the other hand, parents coordinate with each other to provide a variety of foods. Moreover, group-oriented sports that don't have team snacks and drinks during games get together after competitions to eat. For example, Northwood's Boys Soccer recover from their games with group trips to Chipotle or local pizza restaurants. It's clear that, around those who previously supported you, the act of refueling energy after a mentally and physically straining activity is a uniting and rewarding experience.

The act of sharing team snacks has been a huge cornerstone in my athletic career at Northwood, and I don't doubt that other solo sports teams and my own teammates would agree. Not only has it provided refuge for the many dehydrated track competitors and sock-tan-boasting tennis athletes, but it has also fostered a cycle of practicing basic collaboration and integrity.

Student Reporter



Jayden Eom
Grade 11
Sunset High School

Back to School! Which Pencil is the Best?

Since school is back in session, and whether a student is in their first day or first week, everyone can agree that pencils are the most important school supply. No matter what grade you're in, a pencil is always something a student needs to have from the first day all the way to the last day. Due to this, there are many types of pencils made by many different companies—but which one is the best?

First things first, we need to differentiate between the different types of pencils. There are two main types, mechanical and graphite pencils. Of course, there are other types as well, like colored pencils and watercolor pencils, but for the purpose of this article, we will focus on pencils mainly used in a classroom. When asking students in high school whether they preferred



The Muji Mechanical Pencil is very popular in schools due to it being refillable and feeling smooth when writing. [Source: Author, Jayden Eom]

mechanical or graphite pencils, the majority responded with mechanical. Upon acquiring further reasoning, one student answered, "I like mechanical pencils more because I only need one, and I can replace the lead. They also have a smoother feel to them in general." This seemed to be a common theme among many of the students who preferred mechanical pencils: not having to sharpen it, and instead being able to place a new piece of lead in every time the pencil wore out. However, the second part of the student's an-

swer was not as common.

Many students state that the feel of a pencil is one of the most important aspects, as it can affect the speed and writing experience. This is because mechanical pencils can have a smoother feel with built-in grips in some. However, this differs from pencil to pencil, which led me to ask them what brand they liked the best. Among graphite pencil users, number 2 Ticonderoga pencils were the most popular, but among the more popular mechanical pencil users,

there was a wide range from BIC to Pentel. Despite this, the most popular brand I was told was Muji: a company that sells almost anything you could need, but is very well known for its high-quality school supplies. When asking a student why they liked Muji's pencil, they said, "The pencil writes very smoothly and it's easy on my hand. The grip also helps with long writing sessions and overall has a very nice feel to it." The Muji mechanical pencil is very light, and its grip is also very comfortable, giving a very satisfying feeling when writing which is why it is so popular.

Overall, pencils are one of the most important parts of a school experience, so having a good one is important. Pencils are all based on preference, so if you have a pencil that you like, don't worry about what others are using. All in all, whatever pencil one chooses, it is an important decision, and many factors to consider when choosing one.

Student Reporter



Jenna Kim
Grade 11
Pacifica Christian High School

GUTS World Tour: Olivia Rodrigo and My Experience

Olivia Rodrigo, the first female artist to have eleven songs featured on Billboard's Hot 100, continues to lead an impressive career in music with her new album and tour of GUTS. During her GUTS tour, she has traveled from London to Japan, and back to her hometown of LA, and it is clear that her audience is a far-reaching and global one.

In her last weeks of touring in Los Angeles, I got to experience her perform during her GUTS tour at the Kia Forum. Although the concerts leading up to my personal attendance were exciting to follow, being able to experience the performances, lights, and dances for myself made me realize how personal Olivia made her concerts feel to her audience. For example, during her performance of her GUTS song, All American B*, Rodrigo created a new performance trend herself, where she had her audience scream their loudest and turned the entire auditorium's lights off. As an audience member, this was not only surprising but very refreshing, making her concert very tailored to

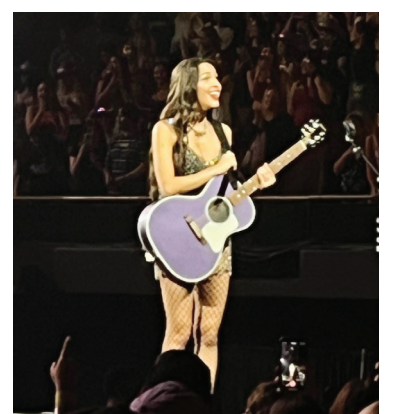


My friend and I screaming because the timer for Olivia's arrival started. [Source: Author, Jenna Kim]

her audience and their experience.

In addition, Olivia's attentiveness to the audience is expressed by the empathy she expresses towards her listeners. One of those events in her performance was her moonride across the Kia Forum. Here, Olivia sat on a purple lit-up moon and sang some of her most sad and tragic songs, and she took moments to speak to audience members about her childhood in LA, her gratefulness to be able to perform, and how she has grown as an artist. Next, when performing Teenage Dream, a song about her 21st

birthday, she shows a videotape of her younger self, talking about her dreams and aspirations of becoming a singer, as she sang about her fears of the future as a young adult. This journey that Olivia paints for her audience in both video and song felt truly personal and allowed those watching to not just connect with Olivia's music, but her as an artist and person. Lastly, Olivia placed moments between her songs for the audience members to hug or be appreciative of the people who came to the concert with them. With audience cameras all around, she spotlighted



Olivia Rodrigo, telling the audience how she loves LA, her hometown. [Source: Author, Jenna Kim]

multiple families, friends, and couples, a truly sweet sight for all those in the forum. She made individual comments about outfits, gifts, and guests, making the audience feel seen and involved in the concert experience.

All in all, Olivia Rodrigo is a wonderful artist, but the reason why her music and personhood are so beloved is because of her empathetic lyrics and nature. I am so grateful to have been able to experience such an artist's concert, and to be able to hear her music and life experiences.