



THE BEAR FACTS

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BRENTWOOD CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

MAY 2020



BCS campus shut down *COVID-19 pandemic cancels spring events*

By Aurora Tyson

This is the school year that will have no Junior/Senior Formal, no trip to the U.S.S. Lexington or to NASA, and no TCSIT competitions. There will be no spring sports games and no spring band or choir concerts.

At least there will be a graduation.

Brentwood Christian School officials announced on May 6 that after an entire fourth quarter of online school, governmental restrictions have been relaxed enough to allow seniors to receive their faculty blessings in person on May 24, and to have a graduation ceremony on the football field on June 13.

Since leaving for spring break on March 6, students have not returned to campus. During the next few weeks, more than 50 of Brentwood's school events were cancelled as a result of the mandatory quarantine and social-distancing rules enacted due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"It's been a strange situation for all of us,"

said junior Molly Stewart, who is missing out on softball season and band competitions. "I'm disappointed and sad about all of the cancellations, but I'm hoping everyone remains safe and healthy."

In the early weeks of quarantine, the school administration was hopeful for a quick end to the virus' effects, and looked toward being back on campus by April 6. However, as the situation escalated and state governments began to issue lockdowns, it became clear that things would not return to normal for quite some time.

With the announcement on Friday, April 17, that the school would continue online for the rest of the year, student, staff, and parent concerns that nearly all of the remaining school events would be cancelled were confirmed.

School president Jay Burcham, though, made it clear that he intended for the important school events to take place one way or another.

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photo: Brandy Gauthier

New celebration Graduate Coby Best and his mother, teacher Summer Best, pause during their parade on May 15. Seniors drove caravan-style through the campus while teachers and staff cheered them on. Many showed their college colors as they picked up their caps and gowns and a gift box from senior moms.

Familiar faces say goodbye

By Evelyn Lee

While the circumstances surrounding the end of the school year are unfamiliar, one tradition, sadly, remains in place: Several BCS leaders are saying goodbye.

Elementary principal **Mara Ashley** announced early in the spring semester that this is her final year at Brentwood Christian. She and her husband plan to move to the Northeast to be close to grandchildren.



Mara Ashley

with students and staff alike.

"I will miss the children most of all," Ashley said. "I will miss the hugs from students in the

hallways and watching students grow up during their elementary years.

"I will also miss the professionals – the teachers, staff, and administrators – with whom I have been privileged to work."

Ashley says her fondest memories include getting to read to elementary students.

"Each year at Christmastime, I read a Christmas story to every elementary class, and this is absolutely one of my favorite things to do each year," she said.

Another event Ashley said she loved was worshipping with students in elementary chapel, where she would also get to announce special events, students' birthdays, and students' achievements.

Elementary librarian Tere Hager said she will remember the many hours the two would spend talking about a professional book or a conference they had attended.

"We could talk for hours about the exciting things we learned and how to implement them at BCS," Hager said. "It probably

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School moved entirely online

By Aurora Tyson

With the transition to online learning, BCS teachers and administration worked hard behind the screens to prepare YouTube videos, Google Classroom assignments, Zoom meetings, and more so students could continue learning.

School president Jay Burcham frequently updated BCS families and staff through YouTube videos that explained in detail the steps being taken to ensure students are equipped with the skills they need to advance.

"Our teachers are teaching the core subjects that align with the TEKS so that the kids are ready for advancement next year or placement should they be exiting school this year for college," Burcham wrote.

Teachers and staff met at the school three times during the two extra weeks that students had between spring break and the start of online school on March 30. Everyone was instructed to clean out their classrooms and not return to the school, taking home everything they needed.

The elementary teachers attempted to recreate the cozy classroom feel with props, posters, stuffed-animals, and extra decorations. And for secondary students, teachers continued to teach using white-boards, virtual backgrounds, music, photos, and more in their videos.

Teachers used Zoom for recording their videos, which they then uploaded to Brentwood's YouTube channel. Classes also used Zoom for daily meetings, where they went over material and enjoyed some social time.

First-grade teacher Suzy Benton said she and her colleagues wanted to make students feel as if they were in a learning environment instead of someone's kitchen or bedroom.

"We knew that it would be difficult for younger students to pay attention to a video," Benton said, "so we tried to make it feel as authentic as possible by decorating our recording spaces in a bright and happy way."

High school history and Bible teacher Jimmie Harper filmed his YouTube videos in a television-style way that treated the units as

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You Can Believe: Genevieve Graessle

New circumstances bring new plans, opportunities

I’ve been thinking a lot about plans lately. I definitely had plans for the last semester of my 13 years at Brentwood, and this is not what they looked like. I had plans of performing my senior solo with Encore – something I have been looking forward to since I was in elementary school at Brentwood. I had plans of studying hard for my AP classes and acing my tests in May. I had plans of going to New York to visit schools with my mom over Easter weekend. I even had plans to deliberately talk to every person in my grade, and make sure that I didn’t miss out on any relationships with people I won’t be seeing next year.

As you might have guessed, a lot of these things are not happening the way I wanted them to. I have been inside my house almost completely for the last eight weeks, self-isolating with my mom ever since we got back from the senior trip. I remember when we were in

France and we found out that we would have to quarantine ourselves for 14 days and our group would get an extra week of spring break; our innocent selves celebrated in the bowling alley with no clue of what was to come.

Well here we are, two months later, and I just finished my senior year taking YouTube classes and attending daily Zoom sessions, relying on Google Classroom and Renweb as my best friends. In the last eight weeks I have only left my house to walk my dog and pick up P. Terry’s. For the first time in my life, I haven’t been on the Brentwood campus in two and a half months.

Writing this all down, it seems like a major disappointment of a senior year; honestly to some people it might have been. All of our school years have led up to this last semester, and it feels like our high school careers are being left unresolved. Next fall – if all goes well - we will be attending classes on different campuses scattered across the nation.

And yet - *here we are*. So much of the nation is more united than they have been in years. Churches are being streamed live each week, allowing new or shy believers to worship with a worldwide community. Families, while being forced to spend all their time together, are able to bond in ways they probably never have before. The requirement of blocking ourselves off from socializing has fermented so much new free time for people to do the things they love.

But thousands of people have died or lost their loved ones; they’ve lost their jobs or been sent home from college; they’ve struggled to stay afloat in their mental health or relationships. While senior year getting cut short may have felt like the end of the world occasionally, my misfortunes during this crisis pale in comparison to what many others have suffered.

I also do not want to minimize how hard this quarter has been for so many students and their families. It is so easy to despair when we are required to stay in our homes away from others, and it can be so challenging to see the bright side of life when so much of what we enjoy has been taken away. This is a time where it can be so easy to feel lonely, because we have been literally mandated to be alone.

I think one of the only reasons I was able to remain positive in the first few weeks of online learning was because I was able to read my Bible so much more than I usually do. With all of my newfound free time, I had so many more opportunities to do the things that I love: studying my Bible, reading books, watching movies, playing piano, writing letters, and even walking my dog. While it has been so hard to be okay with a quarantined senior year, I have

been so grateful for the opportunity to slow down and rediscover God in the little things.

A theme that is continuously being shown to me in my Bible studies recently is that of finding joy. Paul tells us to rejoice in the Lord! For he has shown us what it is to see abundance and need, and in both we can find joy in his provisions. James commands us to find joy in suffering – a daily challenge – because faithful steadfastness is how we are made perfect. We are told by the preacher in Ecclesiastes that there is nothing better than to be joyful as long as we live!

When I was really trying to apply this in my life for the first few weeks of the pandemic, I thought I was doing a fantastic job; I was able to find joy in the small things and felt like I was a master at “rejoicing in all circumstances.” But then, I would have moments – maybe if I started thinking about all that was cancelled, the relationships that have fallen off in quarantine, about the inconclusive future – where I was overwhelmed with sadness. I would think, “How am I supposed to rejoice in *all* circumstances?” It has taken me so long to realize that, even though my problems might not be as bad as other people’s, it is okay for me to grieve the things that have been lost in this

spring semester. You can let yourself mourn for the quarter that could have been.

I have slowly been realizing that it is okay to let myself do this, because I know that God grieves with us; he is walking us through this valley and holding our hand the entire time. But not only is he showing us the way right now, he will continue to guide us when we escape the valley and reach the next mountain. We can rejoice because we are assured that God will continue to bring us to new highs, just as he has guided us through heartbreaking lows. The times may be difficult and scary and confusing right now, but there is greatness to come.

“This too shall pass.” This phrase has been constantly comforting many of us in the past few months. We cannot know whether it will pass in a week, a month, or a year; but we know that there is a light at the end of this tunnel. I know there is so much uncertainty right now. Seniors, my heart longs for the day that we can have another game night or birthday party together. I am so thankful for the time we had, and though this was not our ideal final quarter, I am positive that we will come out on the other side stronger. I sincerely hope that you are able to find your joy in this time, and thank you so much for contributing to mine.

Field trips, contests, concerts lost

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“We are going to reschedule everything we can within the parameters,” Burcham said.

Unfortunately, no one will be able to reverse the events and give students back what they have missed.

Elementary students who had been anticipating special field trips had to accept that they would not be making these trips. These destinations include the Austin Nature Center, Crowe’s Nest Farm, SeaWorld, the Pacific War Museum and the U.S.S. Lexington.

“I think that it is a major bummer that we can’t go on our Lexington trip,” fifth-grader Skyla Jiminez said, “but it also makes us realize how many blessings we have that we don’t recognize every day.”

Among the missed experiences for middle school students are the sixth-grade NASA trip and the eighth-grade Holocaust Museum trip.

After spending many hours every week preparing for PSIA and TCSIT academic competitions, students of all ages were forced to accept the fact that they would not be able to showcase their academic skills this year.

“So many students and coaches had worked so hard for so long, and then it was just over,”

TCSIT coordinator Michele Broadway said.

Band and choir members will also be missing out on memorable competitions, concerts, and festivals.

“In many ways the experience of making music together during our rehearsal time is more important to musicians than our actual performances,” band director Travis Pollard said. “To me, that’s the biggest loss to our band.”

Other cancelled activities include major events such as Partnership Dinner and Grandparents’ Day – traditions that have been at the heart of BCS culture since the mid-1990s and early 1980s, respectively.

“We will do everything that we can to help minimize the impact of what our students have lost,” Burcham said.

Burcham held true to these words by implementing many online events to make up for the loss of these traditions and community events. Virtual events during the last few weeks of school included weekly chapel, Grandparents’ Day, art shows, awards ceremonies, Field Day, Talent Show, Monday Night Lights, a video yearbook presentation, and StuCo announcements.

THE BEAR FACTS

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The Bear Facts is published monthly by the journalism classes of BCHS. The paper is a learning tool which informs the student body while teaching students to become critical observers of their environment and to validate Truth within the context of the Christian world view.

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The Bear Facts is available online at www.brentwoodchristian.org.

Pandemic causes rapid, drastic changes

By Zoe Cooper

When the 2019 strain of the novel coronavirus, or COVID-19, started making news in January, few Americans were worried. Through February and even into March, students at BCS and all across the nation were much more concerned about getting to spring break than they were about COVID-19.

By March 10, most students had returned from their vacations, America’s cases neared 1,000, and Italy became the first country outside of China to shut down. The next day the World Health Organization (WHO) announced the coronavirus crisis was classified as a pandemic. Most people had started to recognize COVID-19 as a real threat.

Two and a half months later, students from preschool through college have not returned to their campuses, the nation’s unemployment rate is the highest it’s been since the Great Depression, and many businesses have closed their doors forever. Although the changes happened rapidly in the beginning of March, many people didn’t foresee life being changed so much for so long.

Some of the earliest changes to everyday life involved governments limiting gatherings to less than 2,500 people. The number was quick-

ly lowered, and in just a few more days it was down to 10. With the number of COVID-19 cases in the U.S. still barely above 1,000, major shutdowns began. For the first time in its history, the popular Austin music festival SXSW was canceled. Everything from Disney World to the NBA soon followed suit.

Businesses deemed “nonessential” were closed, while those considered “essential” were limited. Many people, in a phenomenon known as “panic buying,” began to stock up on items like hand sanitizer and toilet paper in bulk. This led to a huge shortage of many of these items in stores across the nation, which only furthered the panic.

Grocery stores and other businesses left open were required to follow new “social distancing” regulations and limit not only the amount of people allowed in the store, but also the length of time the stores are open.

In Texas most schools were closed indefinitely by mid March. Stay-at-home orders were soon enforced by fines in most counties. Many counties also placed fines on people who went out in public without masks, although that was later repealed by an executive order from the governor. Citizens were encouraged to avoid leaving their homes for unnecessary trips, and although they could no longer be

financed for not wearing masks in public, health and government officials alike advised wearing them anyway.

By the beginning of May, life was starting to settle into a new normal. Millions of Americans were without jobs, while millions of others continued working from home. People had stopped panic buying, and although it would take some time before stores were fully stocked again, progress was being made. Most of the hundreds of millions of Americans eligible for Economic Impact Payments, otherwise known as stimulus checks, had received their money. Businesses in Texas were slowly being opened up, allowing people to go back to work, so long as they stay far below capacity.

Medical experts predict a second wave of infections in the fall triggered by the “soft openings” or gradual reopenings of many states. While government leaders hope to be prepared enough to avoid more shutdowns, there is still no way to be sure what the fall will hold for everyone, including students. Leaders in the travel, sports, and entertainment industries continue to delay their return to business as usual. With the US death rate nearing 100,000 and rising in late May, experts predict the numbers to continue increasing this summer.

Spring sports cancelled

By Natalie Hargrove

It was April 17 when varsity boys’ track coach Correy Washington heard that Governor Greg Abbott closed all schools for the remainder of the school year, meaning all spring sports were officially cancelled.

Washington said he was hurt, mainly for the seniors, because he saw how far the program had come and how hard the senior class worked in these four years.

“We finally had it clicking on all cylinders,” said Washington, whose 4x200 team had already set a school record. “I truly believe that this track team would be one of the best I have ever coached at BCS.”

Katie Smith, head coach of the girls’ track team, felt a similar disappointment for the seniors and for all the athletes who missed their opportunity to compete.

“But we know that God is at work and that we learn both from successes and from difficulties,” Smith said. “I know our kids will bounce back and we will look forward to next season.”

Senior Phil Mach said he looked forward to doing his best and pushing himself for one final season.

“Knowing that I could not do these things disappoints me the most,” Mach said. “But I know God has a better plan in store.”

The Brentwood baseball team had a great start as well, opening with a record of 11-1. The boys won the BCS tournament and placed second in the San Marcos tournament. The team also won 10 games in a row, and gave Jeffrey Doege his 200th career win as a head baseball coach.

Doege said the cancelled season is “very disappointing and frustrating” for the team.

“We continued to move in the right direction this season,” Doege said. “To not be able to finish makes it extremely tough.”

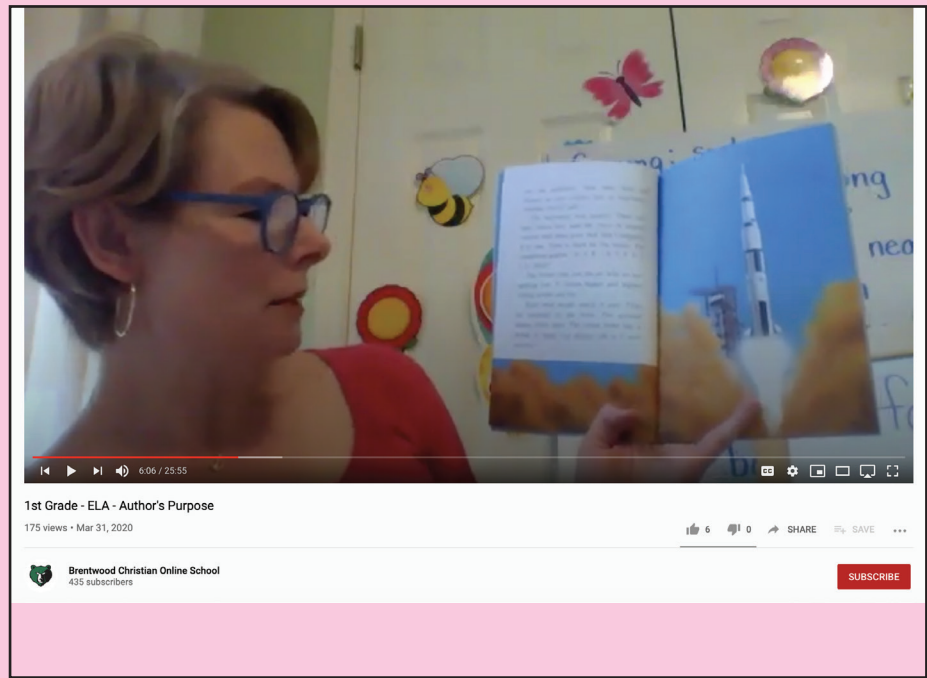
Like the rest of the senior athletes, Luke Jackson said he was very disappointed that his season ended so soon.

“We were really good this year,” Jackson said. “And I think that we were going to make a playoff run.”

The Lady Bears softball team played a total of six games and went 5-1 during their short season under new head coach Rory Tyson. The girls had one senior, Alyssa Mancias, and a lot of rookie players.

The varsity golf teams played in three tournaments with their new coach Randy Tillotson, the last one being on March 2.

BCS rolls out online school for final quarter



Virtual classroom First-grade teacher Suzy Benton teaches an English lesson in a YouTube video, something all BCS teachers became very accustomed to during the six weeks of online learning. Classes also met together daily through Zoom.

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“seasons” of a show, capturing the attention of his students.

“I wanted to make videos that reflected the vibe of my classroom, and kept students’ attention,” Harper said. “From researching material, to filming, to finding pictures, to editing, each video took on average three and a half hours. It was hard work, but always felt satisfying when a video was finished and ready for upload!”

While teachers were given clear instructions and expectations by administration, it required a lot of getting used to. The more technology-savvy adapted quickly, but perhaps none of the teachers grew completely comfortable with a new teaching format that involved staring at a computer and lacked any in-person connection with students outside of Zoom sessions.

High school science teacher Michelle Mallett addressed the struggles she faced without classroom interaction with students.

“It is so different to tell a joke to the green dot of the computer and not have the computer laugh back or roll its eyes or mercy laugh,” Mallett said. “I miss the sounds of your voices and your laughter.”

SENIOR SPOTLIGHT: *Isaac Copeland*

Seniors featured in the Bear Facts were selected by a vote held among the entire BCS Class of 2020.

Eloquent Renaissance man’s future is history

By Natalie Barry

As the class period slowly drags on, sleepy students check the clock and struggle to stay engaged. But one student is not only awake, but actively bringing up new insights and reflecting on the discussion.

Intelligent, hard-working, passionate, and kind, Isaac Copeland has made his mark on the Brentwood campus excelling in almost every area from fine arts, student leadership, and sports. He is known for striving for success in every area, whether he is excelling at academics, singing his heart out on stage, or playing on the football field.

“I don’t think I have ever met a more gifted man than Isaac,” close friend and teammate Sam Orick says. “He has the ability to speak like no other and is able to change a mood by just stepping into a room.”

Isaac Chambers Copeland was born Aug. 9, 2001, in Austin. He began attending Brentwood in Pre-K and has been one of the busiest students around campus throughout the years. He is continuously involved in athletics, moving from football to basketball to baseball almost every year of high school. He is a member of Claw Crew, has starred in BCS theater productions for the last four years, has been involved with Encore throughout highschool, has been a part of choir since the fourth grade, and has played in the band since the sixth grade. He was featured as the beast in last fall’s musical *Beauty and the Beast* and has been awarded several fine arts awards including Most Dedicated Actor and All-Star Cast.

Beyond his many accomplishments, Isaac is known for his toothy grin, his kindness, and his love for others.

“Isaac is not only dedicated to academics and sports, but also those around him,” best friend since kindergarten Luke Jackson says. “He is passionate about what he believes in, cares deeply about those around him, and leaves an impact on everyone he meets.”

Luke recalls many fond memories of spending time with Isaac and his family at the Jacksons’ lake house and all of Isaac’s shenanigans and quirks along the way. While Isaac excels at a lot of things, Luke recalls the day he found out Isaac wasn’t good at everything.

“I found out that he wasn’t the best cook

when he attempted to make dinner one night on the lake,” Luke recalls. “He burnt the sausage pretty badly.”

Isaac is one of the 16 seniors who have been at BCS since kindergarten, but his family has ties that begin long before he was born. His grandmother, Marquita Moss, served as the school’s first president and led the school for nearly four decades. His mother, Christa (Moss) Copeland, was in the third graduating class and was Brentwood’s first National Merit Scholar.

Isaac’s family plays a tremendous role in his life, and he credits them in helping him become the person he is today. His family consists of his parents Todd and Christa, his 10th-grade brother Ben, and his seventh-grade brother Jack.

Isaac attends Brentwood Oaks Church of Christ and is very grateful to call it his home away from home. His faith is his biggest inspiration and motivation, and he is known for his compelling and thoughtful sermons given at senior grade-level chapels. He enjoys leading worship, and many classmates also point out how often Isaac can be seen carrying around a hymnal ready to lead a song at any moment.

“There is something so special about praising God using hymns that have been sung by generations,” Isaac says. “You can feel the faith of past generations through the songs.”

He is known by students and teachers alike for his godly character and love of the Lord.

“Isaac is a curious amalgam of characteristics: incisive thinker, sensitive musician, raucous Claw Crew leader, and reflective scholar,” Humanities teacher Mel Witcher says. “Over all of that, however, Isaac is a devoted disciple of Christ.”

Isaac’s favorite memories at Brentwood include chaotic bus rides to baseball and football games and when it snowed in the second grade and the whole class went out and played in it. Although he is very grateful for the experiences he has had and all the people he has met at Brentwood, he is very excited for the next part of his journey after graduation.

Isaac plans on attending Harding University in the fall, where he intends to graduate with a degree in history. He eventually hopes to earn a doctorate in history and become a professor. This does not come as a surprise to classmates, who have become accustomed to his constant curiosity and abundant knowledge that he gladly shares with those around him.

So whether he is singing hymns on his way to class next year or talking with the professor long after class, you know that he will continue impacting those around him with the love of Christ and a wide smile as he does it.



StuCo election results

Students who wished to run for a position in next year’s Student Council submitted videos of themselves giving campaign speeches last month. These videos were compiled and streamed to the student body, after which students voted in an online election on April 28.

Following are the results of that election – next year’s StuCo officers:

- President:** Caroline Griffith
- Vice president:** Mason Hejl
- Secretary:** Ashlynn Alvarado
- Treasurer:** Renne Cooper
- Historian:** Sam Benton
- Senior rep:** Aurora Tyson
- Junior rep:** Israel Williams
- Sophomore rep:** Dakota Johnson
- Freshman rep:** Kora Simon
- Upper rep:** Sydney Cooper
- Lower rep:** Juliet Booker

THE BEAR FACTS MAY 2020

SENIOR SPOTLIGHT: *Genevieve Graessle*

Fueled by faith, movie nut always looking to uplift

By Cade Young

Whether it's through her leading cheers on the sidelines every Friday night, organizing and writing editorials for the Bear Facts, or announcing the birthdays every morning, Genevieve is someone who is continuously focused on making the lives of those around her better in any way that she can. This desire to spread the love of the Lord and uplift others in every moment is at the core of who she is.

Genevieve Faith Graessle was born in Austin on March 11, 2002, to Scott and Kaleen. She immediately became involved in life at Brentwood Christian School, even before she was enrolled in the Children's Ark preschool program. Genevieve's two older siblings, Jackson (BCS 2013) and Isabelle (BCS 2015), also started Brentwood in preschool, and her mother has been a teacher at BCS for over 30 years.

Growing up at Brentwood, Genevieve has served as a role model to students and teachers alike. Her calm strength, unfearing love, and Biblical wisdom all prove exactly why she is so well respected and loved.

"I would not be who I am today without growing up next to Genevieve," best friend Addison Alberda says. "Her kind of motivation is infectious and can inspire anyone to chase their goals with the same intensity. We are definitely better because of her."

As everyone knows, Genevieve is certainly no stranger to extracurricular activities or leadership positions, especially at Brentwood. She has been a member on Student Council for the past four years, where she recently finished serving as vice president; she is also the editor-in-chief of the Bear Facts, captain of the cheer team, captain of the soccer team, a member of Encore, leader of weekly Church meetings, active in musicals, (two of her most memorable roles include Flounder from *Little Mermaid* and Chip from *Beauty and the Beast*), and a volunteer for Austin Pets Alive.

In every one of these activities, from before dawn to late nights, Genevieve is the kind of person you won't ever hear utter a complaint. Her positive outlook is derived from a deep confidence in the plans and power of the Lord. It's the type of confidence that isn't easily broken by obstacles or hardships, but rather it's one that seems to grow deeper and more

solid with every hardship that Genevieve encounters. Her gentle spirit and bright smile always serve as a reassurance to those around her that things will work out, even – no, *especially* – in the midst of great adversity.

Despite the seemingly never-ending list of responsibilities that she takes on, Genevieve has been characterized as someone who doesn't ever hesitate to take time out of her busy day to offer up a kind word. The immense amount of calmness, knowledge, and skills she brings to any situation is matched only by her own ability to bring about joy to others with her quick smile.

"She's the type of person who is always looking for ways to show God's light in this dark world through her compassion and love of laughter," says Coby Best, who has been with Genevieve since their Children's Ark days.

While it might be easy for some students to put their schoolwork on the backburner when faced with so many extracurriculars, this isn't the case with Genevieve. She excels in academics, which hasn't gone unnoticed by teachers.

"She seems to use every minute of the day purposefully. She's an avid reader and learner, she likes to learn languages, she stays

up on all the current events in our country," teacher Michele Broadway says.

Genevieve is known as a selfless leader who is constantly putting the needs of others above her own. One obvious example of this Christ-like attribute is in her creation of Quizlets for the Class of 2020. She began making these study guides for quizzes and tests back in the seventh grade, and five years later, she has made more than 400 of them.

On top of being highly involved in her studies and activities, Genevieve also remains very active in her church, Brentwood Oaks Church of Christ, where she and her family have attended all her life. Whether she is serving as a junior counselor for Camp Agape or traveling on summer mission trips, Genevieve loves to surround herself with the people and support she gains from this community. She recalls the

warmth and compassion that her church family has showered upon her over the years, particularly following the loss of her father this past summer. Genevieve actually traveled to Camp Blue Haven just a week after her father passed away, and she still recalls how much love and support she felt during those two weeks.

Genevieve's relationship with the Lord runs much deeper than simply being involved in church activities, and this is evident to everyone who knows her. She is the epitome of the phrase "actions speak louder than words," as her actions are always a reflection of Jesus.

"It's obvious that she recklessly loves others because Christ loved her first," good friend Adrie Gruis says. "She has shown me that in hard times, faith in God isn't perfect and it isn't easy, but it's worth it because the Lord never fails in His promises. Her everyday life is a testament to that message."

Genevieve has an abundance of hobbies and skills she enjoys practicing in her spare time, some of which include baking, reading classics, and filming and creating travel vlogs. However, her favorite pastime is watching movies. Genevieve has a deep love and fascination with film, and all things related to movies. Although she is currently still making her final decisions on where to attend college, she intends to major in cinema studies and minor in screenwriting, with the hopes of one day directing her own movies.

"I would honestly be so thrilled to be in any area of this industry: editing, screenwriting, film journalism," she says. "I just want to be near a movie set."

The Graessle family has had an extremely tough year, as they've been forced to deal with the loss of Genevieve's father, grandfather, and aunt, all within the span of months. While most grown adults would be overwhelmed by the

hardships, responsibilities, and loss that Genevieve has faced, she has handled them all with an abundance of grace, compassion, and friendliness. She never missed a beat in uplifting those around her, performing at a high level in all of her responsibilities, and serving the Lord with all of her heart. Her ability to remain level headed, yet simultaneously bursting with love, is an uncommon quality.

With all of her passion and commitment to spreading the love of God, it should not be a surprise if one day you look at the big screen and find Genevieve Graessle's name up there, leading people to God in a very large and entertaining way.



sounds pretty dull to most people, but I loved having those discussions with her and will always look back on them with great fondness.” While Ashley is exploring opportunities to pursue a college-level teaching job up north, she is still uncertain as to specific details. “I am not 100 percent sure what God has planned for me in the future, but I am excited by the possibilities,” she said.

Second-grade teacher **Sandy Patterson** will also be leaving BCS after 18 years of teaching, and 19 years of being connected to the Brentwood community. Her oldest son Ryan (Class of 2010) started at BCS in 2001, and Patterson started teaching at the Mother’s Day Out program where her son Brandon (Class of 2017) was enrolled. This progressed to teaching sixth

grade for two and a half years. When a second-grade teacher left for mission work in Zambia, Patterson took over and has been there ever since.

“I will miss the daily interaction with students – their hugs, smiles, and precious conversations that we have together,” she said. “They are the reason why I have taught for so many years.”

Patterson said she will also miss events at Brentwood such as weekly chapel, field trips, and football games and other sporting events.

While she plans to use her teaching skills to develop and improve curriculum for conduct and training in workplaces, Patterson still hopes to return for many future BCS events.

Colleague Sylvia Burcham describes Patterson as dedicated to her students.

“I’ve seen her work late for many years to ensure she was always prepared for the next day and to ensure each child’s academic success,” Burcham said.

Secondary English teacher **Kay Taylor** started working at BCS in 2005 when her son Allen (Class of 2010) was an eighth grader. She started out teaching ESL to Korean secondary students for two years, and then she spent six years as an assistant to Dr. Libby Weed, who was elementary principal at the time. In 2013 she moved on to middle school English and Language Arts.

Taylor is a familiar face to many on campus, even if they just drive through in the mornings. After starting the Safety Patrol program and directing it for 10 years, she stepped down two years ago.

“It’s the only one that I know of, in the nation, that trains students for spiritual leadership,” she said.

Taylor was well known by students of all ages due to both Safety Patrol and her leadership of the PSIA academic competition, which she coordinated for 13 years. It is one of her favorite memories of her time at Brentwood: directing events, making road trips to TCU, and winning both TCSIT and PSIA championships last year.

Taylor is beloved and respected by friends and students alike.

“I will miss Mrs. Taylor and her ability to be firm, fair, and consistent,” Spanish teacher Paige Reagan said.

Freshman Tynneson Allen said she is grateful for the time she spent with Taylor.

“Mrs. Taylor was not only a teacher but someone that was always there to talk to, always praying for you in your struggles and in your success,” Allen said.

Among those things Taylor says she will miss are working a shift at “pie in the face” for Fall Fest, hearing the stories of a Holocaust survivor with her eighth-grade class, and trying to get through the last chapter of *Where the Red Fern Grows* in her sixth-grade Reading class without shedding tears.

After Brentwood, Taylor is planning to spend more time with her family and help her husband with his practice.

Alongside that, she plans to continue coaching middle school TCSIT and help the new PSIA leaders as a consultant.

After five years as the first varsity football coach in BCS history, and 42 years coaching high school football, **Stan Caffey** is retiring. He and his wife Becky Lynn, who worked this year in the athletics office, will be spending time with a family that includes three children and five grandsons. All three of his children are coaches.

When Caffey started at Brentwood, he had a lot of work to do.

“We started with a group of guys who didn’t even know how to put equipment on,” Caffey said, “and we’ve grown to become one of the most respected programs in 5A.”

After a year of six-man football, Caffey led the Bears into the playoffs in their first year playing 11-man ball.

“Every year has gotten tougher, but we’ve stuck through it all and gotten better and better,” Caffey said.

During his third season, Caffey took a short break to have quadruple bypass surgery before

coming right back to the sidelines. Players like senior Phil Mach have observed his dedication up close, and have tremendous respect for their coach.

“I love Coach Caffey not only because he is a great coach, but because of the way he coaches,” Mach said. “He centers his coaching around God and is very optimistic when the team does not seem hopeful.”

For the past few years, Brentwood students have seen many Spanish teachers. This year students will be saying goodbye to the well loved Señorita duo.

Secondary Spanish teacher **Paige Reagan** will be heading to the University of Arkansas to obtain a master’s degree in Spanish language and culture. She will also be teaching classes as a graduate assistant.

While Reagan has only been at BCS for two years, she has grown very close to her students and holds many fun memories of her classes, including Música Miercoles.

“Mostly me singing along, but once my students learned the words and sang along, it made my teacher-heart swell!” she said.

Reagan said she will miss the hallways, the strange conversations with middle schoolers, and talking with the other teachers around her. But she will also miss the students most of all.

“I will miss high-fiving them, calling them nerds,” she said. “I will miss the stories they share, and watching them grow in their Spanish abilities and in God.”

Students likewise will miss her.

“Señorita has always been there for me, ready to listen no matter what she was doing,” freshman Kailey Willard said. “She has taught me so much about the world and how to find my place in it. She truly knows how to make someone feel valued and cared for, and she always made my days better.”

Reagan is thankful for her time at BCS, and for its Christian learning environment.

“I was really able to develop a rhythm and my own style of teaching,” she said. “BCS was a way for me to do just that.”

Elementary Spanish and Spanish II and III teacher **Hannah Stewart** is getting married on June 13 in Cleburne, and plans to move to Houston to be with her husband, Collin Elk, who is a minister at Westbury Church of Christ. While the current events of the world have cast some uncertainty on the wedding, Stewart said she does have a backup plan.

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will miss them more than anything.

“My students make me laugh and are wonderful, interesting, capable people that I will miss dearly,” she said.

Stewart has also said she is grateful for being able to teach in a Christ-centered environment, where she can talk about faith with her students.

Though only here for one year, Stewart is loved and respected by students and staff.

“My favorite thing she does is when people are talking in class she does this exaggerated frown and just stares at them till they stop,” sophomore Quentin Fowler said. “It’s hilarious!”

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“He’s more than a coach or teacher. He’s like a mentor,” senior Coby Best said. “When I need help, I turn to him for guidance and advice.”

Greene said he enjoyed opening up to the students, and that he will miss them more than anything else at Brentwood.

“I became a teacher to be a positive role model,” he said. “I had coaches growing up that I can still count on to this day, and I wanted to be that same kind of coach and teacher for these students.”

High school teacher Jimmie Harper said Greene is much more than a talented coach.

“He loves the game of basketball, but more importantly loves the kids. He cares about them and wants them to succeed,” Harper said.

Next year, Greene said he plans to be coaching and teaching, but he’s not sure where.

“This process has taught me to be patient and that some things are just out of your control,” he said. “So I’m being diligent in my faith and will be ready for my next chapter wherever it will be.”

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THE BEAR FACTS MAY 2020

French journal: a week before the world shut down

By Genevieve Graessle

Before we hunkered down for the last quarter of the school year, a group of BCS seniors and parents spent a week touring Paris. We were nearly the only tourists in the city due to COVID-19 fears, but we remained safe and were able to see wonderful sights. Here is my account of our travels.

Day 1:

We arrived at the Austin airport at around 8:30 in the morning, just after the rest of the students were starting their school day. We flew to Atlanta soon after that, where we had a short layover and a break for lunch. Then we boarded our plane for Paris!

Our tour guide, Solène, met us right when we got off the plane. Our bus driver, Jeremy, soon picked us up and drove us into Paris. After a quick city breakfast in groups, we met together again and started walking up toward Montmartre, the highest hill in the city. We visited the Sacré-Coeur cathedral, and then admired the view from the top of the hill before leaving.

At this point, we split into two groups; most people went to drop off the bags at our first hotel before some free time, but a small group walked to the Orsay Museum. While some were admiring hundreds of years of impressionistic art, others got the chance to shop the streets of Paris and try some French bread for our first lunch.

When we met again we began our picturesque trek to dinner. On the way, we took a break for coffee, and then we stopped at the Notre Dame cathedral. It was an emotional stop; even though the cathedral was still so beautiful, we could tell that the restoration was far from being finished. After our dinner, we all took the metro to our hotel. After a long day of beautiful sights and wonderful food, we all went right to sleep.

Day 2:

Our first activity of the day was a two-hour bus tour of Paris, so after breakfast we immediately got back onto our bus. We witnessed the most iconic sites: the Louvre, the Orsay, the Seine, the Notre Dame, Place de Panthéon, and we even stopped for a picture at the Eiffel Tower! Our final stop of the tour was the Arc de Triomphe, where we split up for a lunch break on the Champs-Élysées.

We headed to the Louvre right after lunch, where we almost had three hours to walk around. We had the chance to see classics like the Venus de Milo, The Winged Victory, and, of course, Mona Lisa. After the Louvre we started making our way to dinner before our visit to France's most iconic structure.

At the Eiffel Tower, we went up to the second level, and we had one of the best views of Paris. Some of us even got to walk down from there,

which was an experience I will never forget.

Day 3:

After another wonderful French breakfast, we had our first long bus ride from Paris to Chartres. It was Sunday morning, so we attended mass at Chartres Cathedral. The entire service was in French, but we were able to follow the scripture readings along, and it was altogether a very powerful experience. We split up for lunch, and I decided to be a little adventurous! My waiter translated my menu for me, and was very surprised when I settled on escargot (snails). Luckily, I thoroughly enjoyed them.

We had another long bus ride, and we went to visit our first chateau. We made it to the Chateau de Chambord in the early afternoon, and we had some time to explore on our own.

I went into the castle with my mom, and we had walked around for a few minutes when I found a really cool view. My mom was taking a picture of me sitting on a ledge with the river in the background, when a chateau worker ran up and asked to see our tickets. He told us that I was being irresponsible, so he took our tickets and escorted us to the entrance. I am definitely not one to break rules, so this was probably the most rebellious thing I have ever done.

When everyone else was done wandering the chateau, we drove to dinner and had a quick devotional at the restaurant. Then we drove to our second hotel; we had some time to hang out in the hotel and some of us played cards in the lobby.

Day 4:

These French breakfasts will never get old. This morning I ate a cup of honey with my meal! Our first activity of the day was a visit to the Tours Cathédrale Saint-Gatien. After some walking around, our tour guide gave us an active lesson on flying buttresses; we built our



photo: Summer Best

Sacred During their quick trip to Montmartre, the group visited the Sacre Coeur Cathedral, meaning “sacred heart.”

own Gothic cathedral with our arms, and she proved their strength by hanging from them.

After the cathedral visit we had some free time on a famous French shopping street, the Rue Nationale. We drove for a few hours to the town of Amboise; on the way we stopped at a gas station that Solène fondly called a “French Buccee’s.” Our first stop in our new town was the Château du Clos Lucé – Leonardo da Vinci’s house! While most of the group went to lunch, a small group of us went on a self-guided tour of the house. In one room, we even saw the bed where he died.

The entire group then met in front of the Château d’Amboise, where we went on a tour and were able to see da Vinci’s grave. After that we headed to the Chateau de Chenonceau and had another interesting tour. At this chateau there was a maze! We wandered around in the labyrinth before we headed to dinner.

Tonight we ate at a Troglodyte, a cave dwelling that people have built houses and restaurants into, in the Loire Valley. We were the only group there – we had the whole cave to ourselves. Then we drove a short way to where we were sleeping for the night. When we got there we had some free time to wander around, and some of us got to eat French crepes. Another great day!

Day 5:

Today we were going to the Normandy region, with a destination of Mont Saint-Michel. This little island village was the inspiration for the Disney movie *Tangled*. We all toured a monastery at the top of the island and then had free time to wander.

After a few hours of driving we arrived at a small beach town, St. Malo. We had about an hour for shopping before walking along the beach. This beach was famous for its huge tides, so we were told to be careful. Apparently, Jonah Connor and I were not careful enough; the two of us were standing on some rocks near the shore when an unexpectedly large wave came up over us and left us completely soaked. It was a slightly scary experience, but it was also pretty funny.

In St. Malo, our touring company EF was able to upgrade our hotel, and our new hotel basically looked like a castle. We ate dinner in the lobby, and then some of us went to walk by the beach in the moonlight. When we got back to our rooms, nobody wanted to sleep again – too excited about our fancy hotel! The next day was actually my birthday, so a bunch of the group came to our room at midnight to wish me a happy birthday. We stayed up way too late, but it was a blast.

Day 6:

A small group of us woke up before the sunrise so we could walk along the beach again. We had to pack up, but then we had yet another fantastic hotel breakfast. Today we were visit-



photo: Summer Best

Bonjour! A group of excited seniors pose for a quick pic on their first day in Paris.

ing the beaches of Normandy, but we had a few hours to drive before we got there.

We visited Omaha Beach, Utah Beach, and an American cemetery. There were over 9,000 graves there; this was definitely a day full of remembrance and respect. After that we all separated for lunch. Some of us were adventurous with our choices, trying the oysters, muscles, or smoked salmon since it was right on the beach.

Before we left, Solène took us down to the shore and had us do a piggyback race. It was really fun, but she had us imagine the men that had to run on that beach with 100-pound sacks on their backs. Then we drove to a European History Museum in Caen, the town we were going to sleep in.

After our museum visit was done we had some free time to wander the city before dinner. At our restaurant, Solène had bought a cake and some small desserts for everyone to share to celebrate my birthday. It was so nice; and to continue the celebrations, we went bowling!

Day 7:

When we woke up this morning, there had been an announcement about a travel ban on Americans in France, so everyone was really nervous about having to move our flight earlier. EF and our sponsors decided that it was safe to keep our plan of flying home on Friday, so we went through with this day as planned.

We had our last long drive as we were on our way back to Paris to spend the morning at Versailles. We took a tour of the palace in two groups and then had free time to wander the gardens. It was beautiful, and it seemed like the gardens went on forever.

After dinner, we took a boat tour of Paris on the Seine River. To finish out the night we went to the Montparnasse Tower – “the best view to fall in love with Paris.” We watched the Eiffel Tower sparkle from the top, and I definitely fell in love with Paris! Then we returned to our first hotel for our last night in France.

Class of 2020 heading to more than 25 different schools

By Cade Young

This year’s senior class is certainly one that won’t be forgotten, and not just because they will be graduating in the midst of a pandemic. This class has done a lot for the school, and they will definitely be missed next year. However, the unfortunate circumstances that these seniors are in has only made this class even more excited to be starting the next chapter of their lives next year.

With a total of 58 students graduating from the Class of 2020, there are 12 students who will be attending universities out of state this year. The student traveling the farthest distance is May Tran, who will be attending school nearly 9,000 miles from Austin at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, a school located in her home country of Vietnam. Tran plans to transfer to UT-Dallas once the COVID-19 crisis has subsided.

“I feel kinda sad since most of my high school friends are staying here in Texas together, while I’m so far away,” she said. “I just hope this pandemic will be gone as soon as possible so I can find my way back.”

Here in the United States, Jenna Riley will be traveling the longest distance next year as she heads off to Seattle Pacific University in Washington. She plans on majoring in applied human biology with a minor in global ministry.

“While it scares me sometimes to be moving so far away and that I don’t know anyone there,

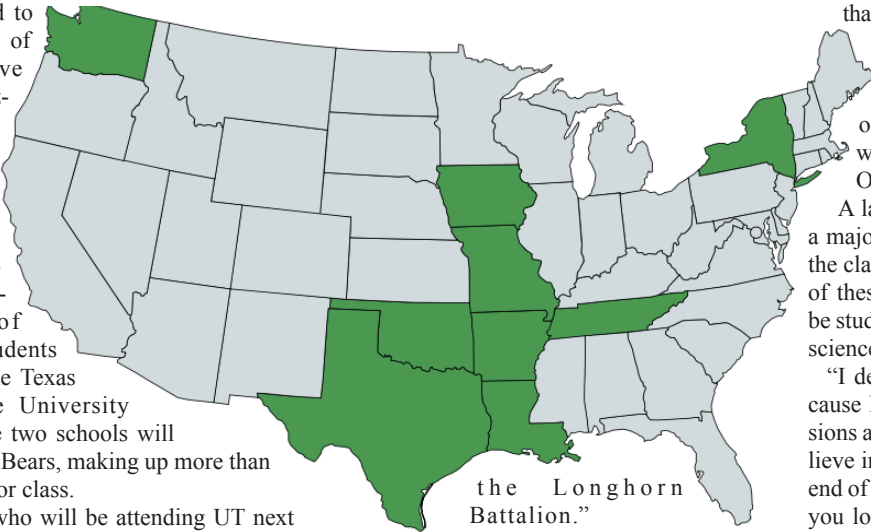
I am so excited to have a change of scenery and live in such an amazing new city like Seattle,” Riley said.

The two schools which will be receiving the largest number of Brentwood students this year include Texas A&M and the University of Texas. These two schools will get a total of 15 Bears, making up more than 25% of the senior class.

One student who will be attending UT next year is Alyssa Mancias, who has been chosen as a recipient of the National Army ROTC four-year scholarship. She will graduate college as a second lieutenant, and she will be serving either active duty or in the reserves for a total of eight years.

Mancias said she is “beyond grateful” for the academic opportunity as well as the chance to serve her country.

“I believe in a life of service, and I feel that this is exactly where I am supposed to be,” she said. “I’m extremely excited for the growth, leadership, experiences, community, and so much more that God has in store for me with



the Longhorn Battalion.”
The Class of 2020 also includes four future collegiate athletes: Jonah Connor, Luke Jackson, Sam Orick, and Kelli Tindel. Tindel will be playing soccer for Harding University in Searcy, Ark.; Connor and Orick will both play football at the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor in Belton, and Jackson will continue playing football at Dordt University in Sioux Center, Iowa.

Orick, who played quarterback for the Bears this past season, said he is excited.

“I’ve met some of my teammates and coaches and they are all super cool,” he said. “At first I was nervous but most of them have told me

that they can help me out along the way.”
Addison Alberda and Taylor Warner will both continue to focus on dance next year, as Warner will be a member of the Texas State Strutters, and Alberda will be majoring in dance universal at Oklahoma City University.

A large number of seniors intend to pursue a major in a STEM related field, with 40% of the class already declaring STEM majors. One of these students is Emma Ngyuen, who will be studying applied mathematics and computer science at A&M next year.

“I decided to major in the STEM fields because I recognized that it was one of my passions and something I excel at,” she said. “I believe in pursuing your passions, because at the end of the day, you want to be doing something you love, not something you felt obligated to do because it may bring you the most success.”

Jackson Kidd, who is traveling to Henderson, Tenn., next year, has chosen to double major in Bible and graphic design with the intent of pursuing a career in ministry.

“I wanted to go into ministry because as Christians we are called to seek and save the lost,” Kidd said.

Class sponsor Kaleen Graessle expressed her hopes for the Class of 2020.

“I pray that they will continue to develop their God-given talents for lives of Christian leadership and service. They are ready for the next step!”

Austin Community College Austin Balogh - fire science Ashton Crow - human sciences Ariana Houston - fashion design Blake Juranek - economics Johny Kennedy - accounting Elias Qussad - business Khoa Tang - business Cash Urban - business Gracen Young - radio/TV/film	Hofstra University Michael Milicia - civil engineering	Seattle Pacific University Jenna Riley - applied human biology	Texas A&M University Cooper Allen - chemical engineering Natalie Barry - psychology Adrie Gruis - biomedical sciences Daniel Hickl - electrical engineering Emma Nguyen - applied mathematics Jose Real - civil engineering Travis Whitaker - biomedical sciences
Abilene Christian University Preston Combs - biochemistry	Lipscomb University Lorenzo Rivera - theater	Tarleton State University Jillian Hamilton - agricultural business	Texas A&M University - Kingsville Savannah Jowers - kinesiology
Baylor University Zack Haswell - international studies Kennedy Reckline - marketing	Louisiana State University Emma Owens - forensic anthropology	University of Texas Jackson Baird - journalism Daniel Kim - biomedical engineering Doeun Kim - biochemistry Kevin Lu - undecided Alyssa Mancias - undecided Megha Sama - biology Renee Xiong - arts/entertainment technologies Cade Young - undecided	Texas State University Marina Murillo - aquatic biology Taylor Warner - dance education
Dordt University Luke Jackson - political science	Lubbock Christian University Coby Best - undecided	University of Texas - Arlington Gavin George - engineering	Texas Tech University Andy Ton - computer engineering
Freed-Hardeman University Jackson Kidd - Bible, graphic design	University of Mary Hardin-Baylor Jonah Connor - exercise physiology Nicholas Hunka - business Sam Orick - undecided	University of Texas - Dallas John Choi - data science Austin Mondru - computer science	United States Marines Peter Otieno
Harding University Isaac Copeland - history Kelli Tindel - sports medicine	University of Missouri Nick Weston - journalism	University of Texas - San Antonio Bru Hague - undecided Jimmy Kim - radio/TV/film Jun Park - biochemistry Seth Ziegler - radio/TV/film	Undecided Genevieve Graessle - cinema studies Bella Nguyen - biochemistry
	Oklahoma City University Addison Alberda - dance universal		
	RMIT-Ho Chi Minh May Tran - software engineering		
	Sam Houston State University Phil Mach - forensic chemistry		