

THE WICK

Ms. Fredlund Joins Westover as Eighth Head of School

By Natalie DiCostanzo '24, Managing Editor

Polly Fredlund, Westover's eighth Head of School, shares her vision for the year, thoughts on traditions, plans to increase enrollment and more.



Photo courtesy of Lindsay Osborn
Polly Fredlund outside Westover School

Ms. Fredlund is an avid book-reader, a younger sister, and a dog-lover, in addition to Westover's new Head of School. She has traveled from Seattle to accept this job after being recommended by the Search Committee and unanimously approved by the Board of Trustees. Ms. Fredlund is excited to start her first academic year, though her work has already begun through visiting alumnae, hosting the senior team, and meeting with faculty and staff.

"In year one, my goal is to really get to know the community by meeting with students, faculty, staff, and families," says Ms. Fredlund. She is excited to participate in traditions, attend weekly Luminas and assemblies, and be present on campus. Her goals for future years are to tell Westover's story "in a way that inspires students and faculty both locally and globally," and to understand the elements of a meaningful education.

"In year one, my goal is to really get to know the community by meeting with students, faculty, staff, and families" —Ms. Fredlund

"When I asked students what their favorite thing was about Westover, almost all said traditions," says Ms. Fredlund. She, too, thinks "traditions to create and connect communities through the generations" are important. She believes traditions are a great way to connect the community from the students in the class of 1994 to students in the class of 2024, because "the things you do every year tie you together."

With a background in admissions, Ms. Fredlund plans to focus on increasing enrollment by telling Westover's story and getting the word out. "Westover is a little bit of a hidden jewel," says Ms. Fredlund, and with a goal of increasing enrollment, she plans to go on listening tours. These tours will include speaking to students who have and haven't chosen to apply to Westover to find out why. Ms. Fredlund also believes it is important to engage with current families and alumni about their Westover experiences. Her goal is to "reach around the globe to tell Westover's story."

Ms. Fredlund's first experience visiting Westover was overwhelmingly positive. She said it felt like where she was supposed to be. She met a community of people who were caring, thoughtful, and made an effort to get to know her. It felt like home. Westover is "a place [you] ... feel empowered by the people you are here with," Ms. Fredlund says.

Originally an English teacher, Ms. Fredlund loves reading and she excitedly shared her plans for a Head of School mini-library located right outside her office. Ms. Fredlund's 'free mini-library' will feature books with rotating themes, starting with coming-of-age stories this fall. Ms. Fredlund hopes people will stop by for a book and to say hi.

On behalf of The Wick Team, the senior class, and the Westover community, we welcome Ms. Fredlund to Westover.

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Interested in writing, editing, or taking photos for The Wick? Attend our interest meeting for prospective editors on Thursday, August 31 or sign up to be a writer/photographer at the Club Fair! For more information, contact
Angela Moon at
angela.moon@westoverschool.org.

Welcome Week 101

By Angela Moon '24, Editor-in-Chief

For newcomers and returners alike, Welcome Week is a jam-packed, action-filled, fun start to the school year.

Here is a glossary of terms that may be unfamiliar on your Welcome Week schedule:

AA: Not your average battery, AA stands for Athletics Association. This is a term that has carried on from Westover's history, but doesn't have any specific meaning today. In other words, our AA Heads are simply our Heads of Athletics.

AA Germans: The antiquated definition of a german is a "complex dance in which one couple leads the other couples through a variety of figures and [with] a continual change of partners." AA Germans is not this, nor is it related to athletics. This event is a celebration of new students and seniors. New students' spirit teams are officially announced, Rallying awards are given out, and seniors reunite with the musty rug they haven't touched since their first Welcome Week! It's very sentimental.

AA Olympics: An event planned by the AA Heads. All students dress up in a class-specific color (seniors are blue, of course) and participate in a field-day-type event. Games played in the past include the "Thread the Needle" hula hoop game, jumbo Jenga, tug of war, and hyper-competitive musical chairs. There has also been a pop-culture-related game every year I've been at Westover, with a finish-the-lyric game last year and a TikTok dance competition the year before. AA Olympics is the perfect time to warm up your vocal chords for Rallying and for seniors, their opportunity at last, to be the class that cheats to the top. Fun fact, the seniors have won every AA Olympics in history!

Athletics and Activities: The block dedicated to your fall Afternoon Activity. Welcome Week acts as a shopping period for this activity, so feel free to jump around until you decide which afternoon activity you're happiest with. If you're doing a sport, this week will largely be tryouts. If you're in theater, this week will be used to study the fall play and prepare for auditions (usually the week after).

Belonging at Westover: An orientation session that involves community bonding and norm setting.

College Bootcamp: A study hall for seniors dedicated to preparing college applications.

Dirge: The first secret tradition of the year. New students dress in all-white and all other students dress in black. The woods are involved, but if anyone tells you that you'll be pushed into the pond, don't believe them (or do, you never know).

Rallying: A celebration of spirit! For new students, this is the first time you can reveal your spirit team to the rest of the school. Wests dress in green, Overs in red and Seniors in blue. Prepare for shouting, stomping and more Silly String than you might think.

Target Run/Shuttle: When 10+ Westover students get on a white Westover van or bus to head to the Waterbury Target. A perfect time to buy snacks, toiletries or anything else you forgot to bring from home. Alternatively, the time to cross the parking lot for some evening Taco Bell or McDonalds. Don't worry if you miss the ones this week, a shuttle to Target or Walmart happens every weekend.

See WELCOME, page 2

Student Leaders Bond Our Community

By Ximena Alvarez Hanon '24, Co-Head Visuals and Layout Editor

Whether that be the friendly competition between the Wests and Overs or learning songs with our Glee Heads, most students will agree that Westover's spirit is something that fuels our community. There's no denying the passion and leadership Westover is full of. As the year is approaching and students are getting ready to go back to school, it is time to start thinking about Westover again and the different components that keep our community running.

Our Heads of School, made up of eight students (pictured below) elected by the community, collaborate with the Dean of Students and other faculty to create a sense of community and connection with the entire student body. Whether that be a simple "good morning" every Monday, Wednesday and Friday at assembly or announcing the long-awaited Heads Holiday and giving the school a surprise day off, our Heads of School work hard to create special moments for our community. Vivi Munasinghe '24 has a primary role as Head Proctor to make sure all boarding students feel represented throughout the school. Her main focus for the next school year is creating a bond with day students and making boarder life more comfortable and exciting. Similarly, Natalie DiCostanzo '24, this year's Day Head, will represent the day students and work alongside Munasinghe and the Student Life Team to plan events for our entire community. DiCostanzo especially wants to increase our connections with neighboring schools and promote student feedback for the activity planning process. Ximena Hanon '24 serves a leading role as Art Head is to increase student engagement and connection through art. Working alongside the Art Department, she is passionate about encouraging the creativity and artistry this community offers through more opportunities for the students to showcase what they have created.

The Spirit Heads are six members of the junior class, West Heads Emma Moozar '25, Gabby Devanny '25 and Olivia Brown '25 and Over Heads Zoe Goldman '25, Josie Andreoli '25 and Sydney Rodriguez '25, and the driving force of spirit at Westover. As Moozar, mentioned, "the Spirit Heads play an essential role in helping to foster a community of belonging and inclusivity." Andreoli, believes that "this leadership role is vital to our community because it keeps students engaged, excited, and involved in their school in ways beyond academics." With traditions, such as Lantern and A.A. Germans, we embrace our school and spirit teams. Moozar and Andreoli's main goals next year are to help the student body form strong community bonds and to make every student feel comfortable and confident.



Photo courtesy of Heads of School
Heads of School, from left to right: First AA Head Maya Taylor '24, DEI Head Sasha Barbosa '24, Art Head Ximena Alvarez Hanon '24, Second AA Head Sarah Harlow '24, Second Head of School Sofia Daddona '24, Head Proctor Vivi Munasinghe '24, Day Head Natalie DiCostanzo '24, and First Head of School Lyla Tavares '24

The Dorcas Heads elected to lead the junior class in organizing the Dorcas Fair this year are Logan Altenburger '25, Kendra Graf '25 and Vivian Lin '25. As one of Westover's most long-standing traditions, Dorcas has the ability to unite the community. It also gives everyone the opportunity to do good beyond the walls of our school, which Altenburger, said is important and meaningful. Dorcas is an opportunity for juniors to be involved in community service organizations they are passionate about. "Through partnerships with local businesses and non-profit organizations, Dorcas Heads utilize their organizational and communication skills," mentioned Lin. Overall, Dorcas Heads are passionate about furthering the bonds of their class, and making Dorcas fun and engaging.

Finally, the Proctors are selected juniors and seniors who enrich dorm life. After a long day of school, sports, and other activities, Westover's Proctors are some of the biggest support our boarding community has. "Goodnights" have become part of a boarder's routine, and they create a sense of familiarization to our community. A Proctor's primary role is to assist dorm parents, support students on corridor, and encourage growth and engagement from all members of the Westover community, as Bahar Atayeva '25 and Lucy Li '25 mentioned. This upcoming academic year, Atayeva and Li want to make the new students feel welcomed in our community.

The Wick Staff

Angela Moon '24
Editor-in-Chief

Natalie DiCostanzo '24
Co-Managing Editor

Ellie Nappi '24
Head Copy Editor and Co-Managing Editor

Natalia German '24
Co-Head Visuals and Layout Editor

Ximena Hanon '24
Co-Head Visuals and Layout Editor

Nancy Florio
Faculty Advisor

Founded in 1945, The Wick is Westover School's student news publication dedicated to uplifting student voices and perspectives. The Wick includes thought-provoking articles, features, editorials, and art, both visual and literary, to inform and entertain our community. As a whole, the Wick aims to accurately represent the diverse voices of Westover and encourage conversations amongst them.

Hi Wick Fans!

I am so happy to say that The Wick is re-starting! Working on The Wick last fall was an exciting and rewarding experience. I loved speaking to different community members about newsworthy topics and having the freedom to write about what excites me. Hearing all the positive feedback from students, faculty and parents was an impactful experience, especially as a first-time journalist. I am grateful for all of our loyal fans who have patiently waited for The Wick's return.

I am so happy to be rejoining The Wick this year as a member of the Chief Editorial Board. As a Managing Editor I oversee The Wick's staff, send communications, and help train new editors. I also work with Ellie to organize stories and assign editors. We have an amazing team who has been working all summer to re-start The Wick and bring back this essential and historic part of Westover. We are so excited to start publishing student voices, so if you have a story to tell, an art piece to share, or a project you're working on, please reach out! The Wick is ready to publish, and we want to establish systems of student writers and editors that will ensure The Wick's survival for many years. I can't wait to see what stories you write.

From,
Natalie DiCostanzo '24, Co-Managing Editor

Hello everyone!

My name is Ellie, and I'm a senior day student. I'm so excited to be on the Chief Editorial Board of The Wick this year! I hold the position of Head Copy Editor, which means I overlook not only the quality of individual articles, but also the quality of each issue put out.

In my past years of leadership at Westover, I've come to understand how crucial lifting student voices is within the community. I was drawn to my position on The Wick because I wanted to contribute in any way possible to providing students with a platform upon which they can voice their opinions, whether they may be in regards to community issues or their favorite movies!

I'm truly looking forward to seeing everyone's reception of The Wick in the coming year!

Sincerely,
Ellie Nappi '24, Co-Managing and Head Copy Editor

From the Heads of School:

As Head Proctor and Day Student Head, we, Vivi and Natalie, have been working with Chelsea Brown, Amy Kolman and other administrators to write a proposal for the new day lounge policy. We are in the process of revising our draft and have several meetings scheduled throughout Welcome Week and early September. We are proposing the reinstating of day student lounges on Corridor and are working to get it approved in early fall.

The goal of our proposal is to give day students designated community spaces where day and boarding students can belong, socialize, and study. For now, the previous year's rules still apply: day students are allowed on Corridor when with a boarder.

Thank you for your patience during this process. We are working hard on a proposal that will benefit the entire student body.

From,
Vivi Munasinghe '24 and Natalie DiCostanzo '24
Head Proctor and Day Student Head 2023-2024

Hello Westover!

It is my absolute pleasure to welcome you to this year's first issue of The Wick! After a year of turbulence and uncertainty, I'm so proud to say that The Wick is back for good.

To quickly introduce myself: my name is Angela Moon and I will be the Editor-in-Chief of The Wick for the 2023-2024 school year! I've always loved writing and reading, but being a part of The Wick and last year's Journalism elective led me to have a greater appreciation for world news, politics, and investigative journalism. As Editor-in-Chief, I oversee all aspects of the publication's operations, but this year, my primary goals are to establish The Wick's presence at Westover and to document our processes to ensure smooth transitions for new Editors-in-Chief to come.

This summer, the rest of the Chief Editorial Board and I have worked incredibly hard to focus the goals of our publication and compile a back-to-school issue that shows off all of The Wick's potential.

Our primary mission is to uplift your voice. The Wick email, thewick@westoverschool.org, is an open inbox all year round for your art, poems, short stories, comics, articles, comments, questions, really anything you want us to see and potentially publish. Writing for The Wick does not have to be a full-year commitment if you don't wish it to be, and if you have something to say, we hope to see you at our first pitch meeting this year!

This issue is uniquely full of articles exclusively written by our Chief Editors. With an exclusive interview with our new Head of School, Ms. Fredlund, explanations of student leadership and spirit teams, and stories from our faculty, staff, and students' summers, we hope you'll enjoy catching up with Westover as we settle into campus.

Finally, please look forward to more information about an initial Wick interest meeting this September. We hope you have a great Welcome Week and we're looking forward to seeing everyone on campus for an exciting, jam-packed Welcome Week!

Without further ado, I present to you the first issue of the 79th volume of The Wick!

Sincerely,
Angela Moon '24, Editor-in-Chief

Dear Westover,

I'm so excited to share the first 2023-2024 issue of The Wick with you all; there are many fun stories and interviews we collected from the community throughout this summer.

My name is Natalia German. I am this year's Co-Head of Design and Layout for The Wick. Journalism has always been fascinating and important to me since it is our primary source of getting the truth about the world. Taking the Journalism elective course last year helped me discover every element of it and I became immensely interested, so I am very grateful for that opportunity. As a head of Design and Layout, Ximena and I oversee the aesthetics, the arts, and the photojournalism of The Wick. I can't wait to display Westover students' artwork in our following issues throughout the year.

This year for The Wick we are inviting students to take photos for The Wick articles as well and also galleries. We understand the importance of photography being included in news stories, such as moments from plays, games, and anything else. We want to display important memories from this school year.

Enjoy reading the first issue of the 79th volume of The Wick!

Sincerely,
Natalia German '24, Co-Head Visuals and Layout Editor

Hi,

My name is Ximena and I am going to be a part of this year's Chief Editorial Board for The Wick as the Co-Head of Layout and Visuals.

In this role, I'll collaborate with the rest of the board to create a newspaper that focuses on uplifting student voices while informing and entertaining our community. Having only been at Westover for a year, I can't describe how excited I am to be a part of The Wick for my senior year, as well as working with a group of people that is passionate about promoting student voices and designing a newspaper that all students can look forward to.

Creating the layout and writing articles for The Wick has pushed me outside of my comfort zone, and I can't wait to keep improving the newspaper. My goals for The Wick are to create something that helps build community at Westover and reinstate the newspaper as something all students can look back on in a few years.

Sincerely,
Ximena Alvarez Hanon '24, Co-Head Visuals and Layout Editor

Westover News

Welcome Week 101

Continued from Page 1

Traditions Prep: Led by Spirit Heads, you'll learn more in-depth about the traditions occurring this week. You'll also find out whether you're a West (boo 🗣️) or an Over (yay 🗣️), learn your team chants for Rallying, and paint posters!

Tudor Rose Society: The new name for the groups previously known as STARs (Student to Alum Representatives) and Admissions Ambassadors (tour guides).

Speak Up!: An organization newly partnering with Westover "to promote vulnerable, healthy discussion within our community and encourage dialogue."

To close out, some advice for new students:

Welcome Week is a turbulent time for all, but I hope this guide demystifies it for you. In my opinion, homesickness hits the hardest the first few days, then goes away immediately. It's very hard to be bored at Westover, and with all of the exciting things going on, you'll be much busier than you are sad. Hopefully. Sooner than you realize, you'll be relishing in Westover's hot showers with optimal (and I do mean optimal) water pressure and that sweet, sweet independence. Ultimately, Welcome Week is a time to settle into boarding life before classes begin, so make use of it the best you can. Talk to people! Explore campus! Eat breakfast!

I promise you, it will be fine. Good luck! And welcome to Westover.

West vs. Over: Spirit at Westover

By Ellie Nappi '24, Head Copy and Managing Editor

If you were to ask any member of the Westover community what the school's driving force is, the likely unanimous answer would be the sense of spirit. The student community at Westover is ultimately bonded by the shared sense of spirit, specifically for everyone's respective spirit teams. I can say with certainty that every member of the student body is able to chant their spirit team's fight song at the drop of a hat. Every year, the returning Westover students make an overwhelming effort to familiarize the new students with the idea of spirit teams. As a former Spirit Head (go Wests!), I've been able to gain multiple perspectives on how spirit is truly the life blood of our student body. The idea of the West and Over spirit teams are common knowledge to everyone in the Westover community, but the new students may not know the significance that they hold in regards to the traditions that take place throughout the year.



Photo courtesy of Spirit Heads
2022-2023 Spirit Heads from left to right: Lexie Gallini '24, Sarah Turner '24, Sofia Daddona '24, Sasha Barbosa '24, Ellie Nappi '24 and Sadie Tscheppé '24



Photo courtesy of Caleb Portfolio
Students around the West tree during traditions.

The friendly competition that exists between the Wests and the Overs plays a part in most, if not all, of the school traditions (see Angela's **Traditions Prep** above). The rivalry began with Westover's founding when the school was limited exclusively to intramural sports due to the lack of a women's athletic division. The spirit was so strong within the school community, however, that even when a women's division was eventually implemented, the Wests and Overs remained in existence as teams that were there simply for the purpose of boosting spirit and morale. Nowadays, most competition that takes place between the opposing spirit teams typically ends in the Seniors, who are considered a third spirit team, winning and being praised.

The traditions that revolve around the spirit teams tend to harbor the most excitement out of any of our annual school events. The jittery and anticipatory energy around the time of a spirit team tradition is unmatched. Terms such as "Germans season" and "Rallying outfits" are thrown around, and friends playfully bicker about which team is superior. The shared love for the traditions has the ability to bring students together in community. Students bond with each other over their spirit team or their excitement regarding an upcoming tradition, regardless of how well they may know each other or not. That enthusiasm is such an important demonstration of how school spirit and spirit teams ultimately tie us all together.

Throughout your time at Westover, you'll grow more and more connected to your spirit teams, whether you're holding hands and singing your spirit team's tree song in the quad, or screaming chants at the opposing team at Rallying. Whether you're the class of 1964 or 2024, you'll always carry the identity of your spirit team with you.

Fun Facts About Ms. Fredlund...

By Natalie DiCostanzo '24, Managing Editor

Three things I can't live without on a deserted island

A flint, a knife, and a fishing net.

Three things I can't live without that bring me joy

Nachos, my camera, and my dogs (Flip, Blue and Trib).

Favorite Summer Movie

“Barbie” directed by Greta Gerwig because I got to see it with 26 Westover faculty and staff members and their families. (See below for a review from our own Wick team!)

Currently Reading

"Finding Me" by Viola Davis.

Favorite Class in High School

English, specifically tenth grade English with Dr. Thornton. She was an amazing teacher who connected with me as a person and a thinker. She opened my mind to the worlds that awaited me behind the great prose by authors like Alice Walker, Chinua Achebe, Homer, F. Scott Fitzgerald and more.

Favorite fruit

Raspberries.

Coffee or tea?

Coffee.

Favorite ice cream

Coffee Heath Bar Crunch.

Place I was born

Cleveland, Ohio.

Names of pets

Flip, Trib and Blue.

Number of cities I lived in

Seven.

Number of siblings

One, and I am 100% the little sister. My big sister did all the hard work, and I followed her lead.

Favorite book to teach

"Wild Swans" by Jung Chang. I taught this book in my first year of teaching an Asian literature class at Forest Ridge, an all-girls school in Bellevue, Washington. I loved how the interconnected stories of three generations of women from the same family in China opened up an important history and culture to myself and my students. My daughter is reading it now almost thirty years later in her History of China class this semester.

Highest Peak Climbed

Mt. Kenya, Meru County, Kenya (1994).

Best piece of advice received

Knowing storms will pass, and that life can get hard sometimes. As humans we will go through hard things. This is a part of coexisting in a community, growing up, and living a full life. I use this advice as I try new things like becoming a Head of School. There are moments where things can feel stormy and hard as life changes around us. Just hold on and the storm will pass.

Most famous person who went to my high school

Margaret Hamilton (Wicked Witch of the West).

If you weren't working in education, what would you do?

I have always loved photography and idealized National Geographic photographers' life and purpose. I would love to travel the world with a camera. I am also intrigued by the technical aspects of how great photographers are able to capture emotion, connection, and our shared humanity through the lens of a camera. I am an Annie Leibovitz fan girl - how does she do it?

Barbies and Bombs

A review of the two contrasting films that took over summer '23

By Natalia German '24, Co-Head Visuals and Layout Editor

As we all know by now, “Barbie” by Greta Gerwig and “Oppenheimer” by Christopher Nolan were a hot topic this summer. “Barbenheimer” and other variations of the name were all over the internet even before the two films were released on July 21st.

Going into “Oppenheimer,” I thought it would be like one of those boring documentaries we used to watch when we had a History class sub. However, my opinion changed in the first 30 minutes. I never really knew the process behind the atomic bomb and the scandals that came after it, so it was very interesting to learn about it. Throughout the film, we see Robert J. Oppenheimer, a.k.a “Oppy,” go through stages of guilt and realization that he has truly changed the world for the worse with the creation of the atomic bomb. I thought Cillian Murphy’s incredible acting (I hope he gets the Oscar) helped me see this clearly with his intense display of emotions for the entire duration of the film. Although the film was three hours in length, I never got bored while watching. I especially enjoyed the interrogation scenes in the final part and Rami Malek’s cameo at the very end. Overall, it was a complex film filled with quantum physics, but the journey was very clear.

On the other hand, “Barbie” by Greta Gerwig is a wonderful film about motherhood, girlhood, and all the things mixed in between. I went through a rollercoaster of emotions while watching this film, which was really unexpected from a film called “Barbie.” Margot Robbie and Ryan Gosling’s performances were refreshing to watch, especially Gosling’s very entertaining portrayal of Ken. The entire cast made this movie great to watch, and I could rewatch it about 30 times before I got bored. My favorite parts were the “Ken Civil War” and America Ferrera’s monologue about what it is like to be a woman. While watching that speech, the majority of the audience in my theater applauded for her. I especially loved the compilation of women at the very end of the film - it left me very teary eyed.

“Barbie” and “Oppenheimer” are both incredible movies that embark on journeys of discovering one's sense of self, and the complexities of life and death.

“And now I am become death, the destroyer of worlds.” —“Oppenheimer” (2023)

“Humans only have one ending. Ideas live forever.” —“Barbie” (2023)

Keeping Up with Alumnae: College Advice

By Ellie Nappi '24, Head Copy and Managing Editor

As much of a cliché as it is to hear, transition is nearly always scary—whether you’re a freshman coming into Westover not knowing what to expect, or you’re a senior, and the college process is starting to feel a little bit too real for comfort. As a current senior, I feel as though I have a firm grasp on the anxiety of the transition that we’re collectively experiencing as a class. It’s a feeling that every Westover student that has been through the college application process has experienced, whether it’s in regards to the pressure of writing a remarkable personal essay, or not knowing what to expect in terms of the actual college experience itself. That being said, who is more qualified to offer advice than former Westover students who’ve just navigated their freshman year? We asked some alumnae from the class of 2022 for their advice; Fatima Nasir, Emma Dobrovich, Sophia Nappi, and Tate Dunbar. During their time at Westover, each alumna contributed significantly to the community through their leadership, advocacy, and spirit, and they didn’t hesitate to offer their wisdom.

What were the biggest differences you noticed when you came to college after Westover?

Nasir: Adjusting to the amount of new people you are going to meet, and the fact that you are expected to become so independent all of a sudden after leaving everything that you know and venturing out to a whole foreign chapter in your life.

Dobrovich: The first semester will be a bit of a culture shock. Westover is very small, and no matter how small of a college you go to, there are different ways/things work and student bodies vibe. Food too. I wish I could go back to Westover food. I took it for granted.

Nappi: In classes particularly, the amount of reading there is. On average, I would say I had 40-80 pages of reading a night per class. I just had to pace myself, but I would be spending most of my free time in the library doing work when I wasn’t in clubs.

Dunbar: At least at my school, there’s a lot more academic freedom. No one is checking to make sure I go to lectures and, because I only have several large assignments/assessments for a class, I have to make sure that I’m doing my own additional work along the way. And besides that there is, of course, just more general freedom! You can do pretty much whatever you want, which is definitely fun but can also be hard at times.

What do you think best helped you transition from Westover to college?

Nasir: Doing at least one thing that you can look forward to all day. Just something small that makes you happy because it is easy to lose yourself.

Dobrovich: Knowing my priorities.

Nappi: Westover equipped me with the ability to make strong connections with professors, which has been incredibly helpful. The conference culture at Westover made me unafraid to attend office hours in college, and I have now made connections with professors that I will cherish as I specialize in my field and move closer to grad school.

Dunbar: Westover’s classes are difficult enough that, while college classes are definitely harder, it’s not a terrible adjustment of difficulty.

How can current Westover students best prepare for college?

Nasir: Soak up all the moments you have left at WO and with your loved ones. Look on TikTok! TikTok is such a good place for guidance where a lot of current college students will talk about things to bring to college, what your schedule should look like, and it just helps you realize that you aren’t going through this alone. Also, make sure you do your research on the college, and take advantage of all the resources you are given.

Dobrovich: Remember that a degree is a degree, no matter what college you get it from. At the end of the day you got the same slip of paper as the person next to you. Buy a Brita water bottle. Put yourself in therapy early on, school therapists fill up and their schedules are ridiculous.

Nappi: I would say to tune into yourself and your values. Look inward and get clear on what you really want— what your life looks like when you’re feeling like the most content version of yourself. Try to figure out your goals and values, the energy you want to attract when you start college.

Dunbar: My biggest piece of advice is to manage your expectations. College is great most of the time. It’s fun and it’s new and you also (depending on your school) finally get to focus on academic subjects you love. But sometimes it will be hard. So basically just be aware that it won’t be perfect all the time, and if you know that from the start it’ll be easier to get through those times.

Seniors, as you navigate this vast, intimidating transitional period, find comfort in knowing that you’re not alone in your anxiety. Everyone around you is in the exact same transitional position that you are!

In what ways, if any, did you feel unprepared for college?

Nasir: I just was not prepared to experience the amount of FOMO (fear of missing out) I did. And adjusting to meeting so many new people, I definitely needed a lot of social battery (a lot more than I expected).

Dobrovich: Finding a balance between social life and academics was incredibly hard. Know your priorities. People might have differing opinions than you, sometimes it’s important to listen first, completely and entirely without bias, and then continue with your own opinion. I’m not sure Westover really provided students with opinions that differed from their own.

Nappi: I definitely feel like people at Westover make it seem like because of Westover’s academic rigor, the transition to college academics will be easy; but I did not find this to be the case. Westover definitely equipped me with the work ethic I needed in order to keep up with all the work in my classes, but I had to keep myself motivated in order to keep up with all the work. No one is there holding you accountable but yourself.

Dunbar: I don’t think I was prepared for just how difficult it can be to be constantly socializing. This might be easier for boarders who’ve basically done the same thing, but I definitely needed to learn to find time for myself. Being with and living with friends is fun, but it’s also exhausting if you’re not super extroverted.

Extra Insight

Nasir: Just make sure that you are taking care of yourself! do things that you know make you happy, and don't let yourself fall into the loophole of FOMO!

Dobrovich: Remember, it’s not the end of the world to transfer. Sometimes finances get in the way of your first choice, but things will work out and you will end up where you’re meant to be. I’m transferring to a different school and don’t get me wrong, it sucks to have to start all over again, but I know that I learned some very valuable lessons at my old school and I will make even more friends and memories at my new one. If you want to go to grad school, always consider how much debt you’re putting yourself in with student loans.

Nappi: A lot of people I spoke to about college before I went described their experience as dream-like — a place where they found themselves and their lifelong friends and lived out their best lives. I am here to tell you that the experience of college looks different for everyone. Upon finishing my freshman year, I have spoken to those same adults who idealized college, and they began to recall the difficulty of their freshman year. Everybody goes through difficult times in college, and it’s okay if you’re not living that dream right away. Everybody is feeling lonely, everybody is trying to find their place. You’re not the only one who’s just trying to figure yourself out. If it’s not clicking immediately, it will. Be patient and be gentle with yourself.

Dunbar: Have fun in college! It’s a great time and a big step forward in life.



Photo courtesy of Dunbar, Nasir, Dobrovich, and Nappi
Top: Tate Dunbar '22; Left to right: Fatima Nasir '22, Emma Dobrovich '22; Bottom: Sophia Nappi '22

Teacher's Talk: Summer Edition

By Angela Moon '24, Editor-in-Chief

The Wick's newest column, "Teacher's Talk," features discussions and updates from the various adults at Westover! In this back-to-school issue, we asked teachers one burning question: What did you do this summer?

Assistant Athletic Director and dorm parent Marcie Bruder has been living it up in St. Andrew's, Scotland, working with the Global Citizen Initiative! This residential program brought together 35 high school fellows from all around the world who are devoted to social entrepreneurship. Marcie says that "being in Scotland itself is such a great experience and a bit cooler than the weather we have been having in Connecticut. I look forward to seeing everyone back in the dorms!"

History teacher and Junior Class Dean Megan Valenti traveled with her family on a road trip through Yellowstone and the Grand Tetons! "[It] was awesome!" she says.

Co-Head of the Art Department and art history teacher Ali Hildebrand and the Hilde-fam traveled to Australia this summer and volunteered at a wildlife sanctuary!

Science teacher and Environmental Sustainability Coordinator Heather Nuzzo has been super busy, from working as an AP reader for AP Environmental Science, to learning the art of traditional Viking hand wire weaving, and adopting new cats! Her cats are adopted from the Whiskers Pet Rescue in Southbury and are potentially to be named Daisy and Flerken, after characters in the Marvel Universe. Aren't they just adorable?



Photo courtesy of Heather Nuzzo
Daisy and Flerken.

Executive Assistant to the Head of School and Assistant Director of Dance Cristin Gordon has been busy too, working with Ms. Fredlund to "get [her] up to speed with all things Westover!" with fun events, like a picnic and soccer-viewing party.



Photo courtesy of Corky Beaulieu
Beaulieu's vegetables.

Director of College Counseling Corky Beaulieu has been spending time with her family and working in her garden. Though she says that the "hot, humid weather and significant rain have proved challenging," the veggies she's harvested look beautiful and delicious!

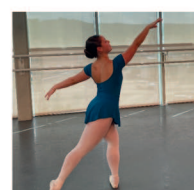
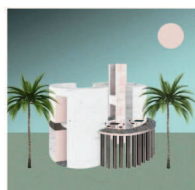
Spanish and ELL teacher Tracy Lytle was able to go to Cuernavaca, Mexico to immerse herself within Spanish language and culture. She saw many pieces of Mexican art and artifacts, and was especially excited to see the ruins and Xochicalco because of her studies in cultural anthropology as well as Spanish in college. "The depictions of Quetzalcoatl along the sides of the pyramid were spectacular," says Tracy. She loves Mesoamerican art and architecture and she looks forward to sharing her experiences with her students.



Photo courtesy of Tracy Lytle
Tracy Lytle in the ruins of Cuernavaca, Mexico.

History teacher Jack Dwiggin attended and presented at the "Facing the Future of Early American Studies" conference in Philadelphia this summer! It was held by the McNeil Center for Early American Studies in honor of his retiring Ph.D. advisor, Dan Richter. Jack was part of a roundtable on advising and mentoring, and the conference featured presentations on "new historical scholarship, mostly pertaining to Native American history." We would also like to thank Jack for sending us primary source proof that he was a part of this conference. We wouldn't have believed you otherwise!

Director of Library and Archives Nancy Florio attended a CAIS workshop called Harnessing the Power of Generative AI in Teaching and Learning with Charlie O'Donnell, Lindsay Harlow, and Tom Juvan. Along with other Connecticut independent school educators, they explored "the use and implications of generative AI tools in education." Nancy has also started a huge project in the archives beginning to digitize The Wick and The Lantern and planted 70 dahlias in her garden!



The exterior and interior of Barbosa's '24 final project, a room for reading made from letters of her name.

Photo courtesy of Sofia Daddona
Sofia Daddona '24 dancing in Nutmeg Conservatory's studios

Barbosa '24 Experiences Syracuse's Architecture Program

By Angela Moon '24, Editor-in-Chief

For three weeks this July, senior Sasha Barbosa '24 attended the Summer College Architecture Program at Syracuse University with help from the Andy Award. This scholarship is awarded to a rising junior or senior every year for participation in a summer program in the arts.

During her time in Syracuse, NY, Barbosa learned fundamental architectural terminology and practices. She made everything from physical models to architectural drawings to 3-D models. "My favorite part ... was being able to experience studio culture," she says. "All of the summer architecture students (about 40 of us) had desks in one room. Even though we all had our own projects, we were able to collaborate with others."

On the other hand, Barbosa did not enjoy the Syracuse communal

bathrooms: "As a boarding student, I am no stranger to sharing bathrooms. I think my dorm at Syracuse did it relatively well, ... [but] it was still gross."

Applications for the Andy Award (worth approximately \$1500) are typically announced in March, requiring a faculty sponsor, personal statement, and optional portfolio. For future applicants of the Andy Award, Barbosa says to "just go for it! [At first], I didn't even know if Architecture would count as an artistic field because it's between art and STEM. ... I almost didn't and would have missed out on one of the best experiences of my life. [The pre-college program] at Syracuse is amazing."

For those concerned about program costs, Barbosa noted, "While the Andy Award does not cover the full cost, I believe the experience there was worth it. I met people from all across the world who are all passionate about different things. There were constant activities and opportunities to meet new people such as ice skating, karaoke, talent shows, and a complementary Six Flags trip. It truly was an invaluable experience."

Graf '25 and Qiu '25 Work to Protect Nature Preserve

By Ximena Alvarez Hanon '24, Co-Head Visuals and Layout Editor

While some of us may have spent our summer with friends and family, working, or enjoying some downtime, Sarah Qiu '26 and Kendra Graf '25 had the opportunity to be at the Kenauk Institute for a week-long summer internship. Kenauk encompasses 65,000 acres of forest with undisturbed wilderness and over 60 lakes. The Kenauk Institute is a nonprofit charitable organization located just five hours away from Westover in Montebello, Quebec. Their mission is to use scientific research and environmental education to achieve the permanent protection of North America's largest private nature reserve.

Graf describes the property as "gorgeous" and both girls highlighted the amazing activities they did throughout the week. Most of their

time at Kenauk was spent helping grad students with their projects, whether that meant recording environmental factors for trees or flying drones in the forest. Qiu and Graf learned about bat behavior, how fish are raised and the different kinds of predators that attack caterpillars.

Graf and Qiu enjoyed many outdoor activities as well, such as snorkeling, kayaking, paddle-boarding, and so much more. When asked what their favorite moments at Kenauk were, Graf mentioned "swimming in a waterfall in the middle of the forest," and Qiu enjoyed "jumping into the lake every evening with everyone, and the bonfires accompanied by games and lots of laughter."



Photo courtesy of Sarah Qiu
Sarah Qiu '26 and Kendra Graf '25 on their internship

Lefebvre '25 Attends Squash Program Through Keyser Athletic Award

By Ellie Nappi '24, Head Copy and Managing Editor

Athletically, Westover's most prolific sport has historically been squash. Receiving special recognition for such a sport must indicate great skill and commitment, which is why we recognize Sophia Lefebvre '25, who was selected for a week-long squash program at Yale University. "I think I was specifically chosen for the squash camp because of the progress I have made in my squash career at Westover, starting with no prior experience my freshman year to being bumped up to varsity at the end of my freshman season," she explains, "and I think I was also chosen because of my commitment to the sport." Lefebvre has consistently proven her commitment by supporting her fellow teammates, putting in extra time and effort to practice, and, according to her, she is "always looking to get better

and to take advice from any of the members of my team and coach."

Being chosen for such an opportunity doesn't come without its hard work and rigorous commitment, however. Based on her descriptions, intense conditioning played a part in her daily experience. According to her, each day at camp was vigorous in regards to training. She would undergo intense conditioning and training, play against her opponents, and workshop all throughout the day.

The hard work and dedication that Lefebvre put into her week at Yale definitely paid off in her opinion. "The week definitely gave me so much more insight into squash as a sport," she reflects, "as well as the ability to mentally train for a squash game, and insight as to how much of a mental sport squash really is." We look forward to seeing Lefebvre on the squash courts this upcoming season, and we're excited to see her apply all that she's learned from this opportunity into her playing!

Daddona '24 Dances at Nutmeg Conservatory

By Natalie DiCostanzo '24, Managing Editor

Sofia Daddona '24, one of the 2023-2024 Westover Dance Ensemble Captains, spent this summer perfecting her ballet technique at the Nutmeg Conservatory two-week ballet intensive.

Daddona has been dancing for 13 years at Main Street Ballet and is an active member of Westover's Dance Ensemble. Some of the numerous shows she has performed in are the "Nutcracker", "Swan Lake", and Westover's Spring Recital. Daddona was excited to be selected for this intensive and is ready to bring her new knowledge of ballet and dance theory to the Westover Dance program.

At Nutmeg, she "learned how to engage and properly use every single one of my muscles while dancing," says Daddona. Her two

weeks of classes included pointe, technique, variations, partnering, pilates, conditioning, and dance theory. All these classes helped Daddona improve immensely, and she noticed an immediate change after applying the skills she learned.

At Nutmeg Conservatory, Daddona had the opportunity to learn from many different teachers, which was one of her favorite experiences. She was able to hear many different opinions, and each teacher brought different skills such as "how to engage your back muscles while holding your arms" and "how to hold your core so that the rest of your body remains still."

Daddona is excited to bring her new skills and "diversified dance knowledge" to her role as Dance Captain. "Having a broader perspective with ballet as a whole will help me be a role model," Daddona says. Daddona is ready and enthusiastic to help Ensemble members learn more about ballet.

My Experience at Yale Young Global Scholars

By Ximena Alvarez Hanon '24, Co-Head Visuals and Layout Editor

I attended the Yale Young Global Scholars program this past June, held in person for the first time since 2019. YYGS is a summer program held at Yale University. My specific learning track focused on interdisciplinary courses called "Solving Global Challenges," where we learned how the humanities intertwined with STEM. With over 600 students from over 150 countries, I was always excited to meet new people and learn from everyone's unique experiences. For two weeks, I shared a suite with five other girls at the Jonathan Edwards dorm. The first couple of days were filled with meeting new people with all similar interests as me. During the day, I

attended lectures and seminars taught by college students or Yale professors. My favorite was "How to Become a Dictator: A Step-by-Step Guide." In the afternoons, we worked on group projects and research proposals. I researched and learned a lot about different immigration systems around the world and how politics are involved.

After our academic day ended, my friends and I roamed around New Haven and visited Sushi on Chapel St. as many times as we could. My friend Diego and I made it our challenge to get Willoughby's coconut latte every day. By the end of the two weeks, I was sad to leave my friends, but I was grateful for the opportunity to experience YYGS. It was really fun, and I learned more about global topics like politics, climate change and the law from passionate teachers.