Finally back: In-person classes begin

First hybrid day opens with relief, smiles, nerves

By ELLA REISSER & AMANDA CASSEL
EDITORS-IN-CHIEF

In an effort to welcome students to campus for their first day of hybrid learning, seniors and faculty returned to campus for their first day of hybrid learning.

Dean of Students Ana Campos said it was wonderful to see students, but that she knew that, but it was really noticeable today in terms of the number of people that were around.” Ms. Campos said.

For the rest of the spring, students opted into hybrid learning will come to school in person for two consecutive days every two weeks — an “A” day and a “B” day — following the same block schedule in place for the last two weeks. Students will continue to have online office hours, assemblies and counseling programs.

English teacher Steven Gevinson was impressed with the administration’s organization and described the first day as a success. “The technology is pretty fabulous really, and even someone who’s not very good at it, I still did it,” Mr. Gevinson said. “I don’t think we lost much time, so as a whole it’s pretty great. It’s a lot of disadvantages as there are, and all the safety issues it just seems to me like it was well thought out and well put together.”

Mr. Gevinson also appreciated seeing his students face-to-face for the first time all year. “It felt natural to be back together, to be able to even just to look people in the eye. I mean, it’s not nearly the same as an actual face,” Mr. Gevinson said.

Junior Aniana Vazquez chose hybrid learning and said watching the seniors return in person built her anticipation for her own return after spring break.

“I’m pretty excited because at least I’ll get 12 days of a normal junior year,” Aniana said.

Senior Isha Nakay returned to school to achieve some normalcy for the second year of school.

“I thought it was really cool to be in class because when a teacher made a joke you could laugh and they would hear it,” Isha said. “Both of my parents are vaccinated, so I thought it was pretty safe at home for me to come back.”

Isha was not disappointed and found that in-person school was similar to how she remembered.

“I am a fan of in-person,” Isha said. “I just think it’s different when you can actually see people and make eye contact, just things you normally do.”

Ms. Campos also enjoyed seeing students in the halls interacting.

“It’s just real. I can’t even describe it,” Ms. Campos said. “We’re coming up on the year anniversary when we all had our last day, so the idea that we are finally back is just really special, especially seniors.”

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Quick Q

How was the return to school different from your expectations?

NOOR ASAD:
It exceeded my expectations. I thought it was going to be really awkward and there would be a disconnect between the teachers and the people at home and the people at school, but it’s actually been a lot better and seeing my friends has been way better than I thought it would.”

ETHAN LEE:
I didn’t really expect to be in Zoom that much. It’s kind of disappointing to be in a class with your friends, but still on Zoom. Other than that, it was good to see my friends again.”

JAVIER SAEZ:
When you have this different setting, you feel like you have to start again. I’m always nervous before classes start, because I don’t know the students and it’s exciting. And, last year when we went remote, we had already met. But this year, today, was like the first time we met.”

Student Council plans welcome-back activities

by SAHANA UNNI

In an effort to welcome students back to in-person school after almost a year of distance learning, members of the student Council are planning grade-specific and interest activities for the spring.

Many of these activities will focus on introducing ninth graders and new students, as well as making the campus feel welcoming through decorations.

“There’s a lot of trying to infuse life back into the physical campus, and we’ve been working on creating videos and tours for freshmen, because a lot of the new kids haven’t been to Lab yet,” Omar Siddiqui, all-school president, said.

The administration has already held Friday afternoon grade activities, which have given many students the opportunity to socialize. This is something the Student Council activities will also focus on.

“It was nice to see people that I hadn’t seen in a long time and to socialize with people I don’t usually talk to,” junior Kira Sokhar, who attended a Friday in-person event, said.

Student Council is working to ensure students feel welcomed as they transition into hybrid, and that they get to know each other and their grade’s representatives.

Omar said, “We have a lot of Lab School traditions that we’re trying to carry over in whatever way that we can.”

Student Council members also published a video where they outlined various back-to-school guidelines, from rules to follow when eating to an Australian voice Q:A section impersonating Principal Paul Beekmeyer.

Additional reporting by Amanda Casell and Nicky Isahaks-Levin.
New director well liked at current school

Students call Tori Jueds approachable, friendly; will begin at Lab in August

by MEENA LEE

TOO CLOSE FOR COMFORT.

As of March 1, Laboratory School faculty and staff have received their COVID-19 vaccina-
tions from University of Chicago Medical Center. Laboratory School officials said that they were able to be vaccinat-
ed, despite some experiencing flu-
s-like symptoms. Phase 1B of the vaccine roll-
out, which includes K-12 ed-
ucators, was launched Jan. 25, and teachers were able to sign up for times
to get vaccinated at the Uni-
versity of Chicago Medical Center.

When math teacher Joseph Scroll found out he was getting vaccinated, he felt relieved and was glad that his family could be

“I think to most people the vac-
cine really represents the end of all this,” Mr. Scroll said. “So I was really just excited. It has obvious-
ly been a big part of my life over the last year, going to sleep every day and not knowing if you’re going to be OK.”

According to history teacher Christy Gerst, transparency in the process at the university hospital was well-organized and efficient. “Two vaccine clinics were set up, and employees signed patients in and out of the health information,” Ms. Gerst said. “Once you sit down for the shot, it’s a couple of minutes.” Ms. Gerst

“Then you remain 15 minutes after that observation to protect against the allergic reactions that are being
recorded, and that is in,” Mr. Scroll said.

Mr. Scroll encountered more trouble with his first vaccination. After waiting the 15 minutes allocated for ob-
servation after her shot, she said she felt a bit uncomfortable, which is an uncommon reaction to the vaccine.

“Then you enter into an observa-
tion room to lay down,” Ms. Ribbens
said. “Apparently, my blood pressure, which is always very nor-
mal, shot up very high.

From then on, Ms. Ribbens felt well enough to leave the hospital. Ms. Ribbens said the unusual re-
action went away. She returned for her second dose.

Ultimately, she had the regular symptoms associated with the sec-
ond vaccination.

“Jude had a flu and I had the chills,” Ms. Ribbens said. “My brain was in a fog and I felt ex-
tremely tired.”

Mr. Gerst also experienced side effects with her second vaccina-
tion. She said she had symptoms that according to the CDC, were expected, such as chills, fever, nausea and achiness that lasted about 24 hours. These symptoms also included a runny nose.

Mr. Scroll, on the other hand, ex-
erienced no symptoms and not-
ified that many of his colleagues also had no symptoms. Ms. Ribbens said that despite

Teachers grateful to receive vaccinations

ALL CLEAR. History teacher Christy Gerst was complimentary of the University of Chicago’s organization throughout the vaccina-
tion process. After her second dose, Ms. Gerst said she experi-
enced flu-like symptoms as expected on the CDC website.

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Omar said, “and she kind of had a clear vision of where she wanted Lab to be and where she wanted to go.”

Kavi said Ms. Jueds’ first year

at Westtown during the 2017-18

school year was mainly spent ob-
serving and trying to understand the community before deciding about the school’s direction.

According to Kavi, since Ms.

Jueds took over, the Lab community has

Westtown has hired diversity co-

ordinators and expanded DEI pro-
grams in lower, middle and high

schools.

“I think she really tries to resem-
ble that in all of her work that she’s not just an administrative figure,

“Some people in other places have" some doubts about whether surgery masks are the ideal choice for students at school. Ms. Ribbens said she is still extreme-

enough to make her feel it kept her from potentially infectious contact.

The significant benefit of dou-
ble masking is that the outer surgical mask offers substantially more protection against the coro-
navirus, as does tying knots on the ear loops of surgical masks to make the mask fit tighter.

Wearing just one mask is not enough

T he Centers for Disease Con-

The significant benefit of dou-
ble masking is that the outer surgical mask offers substantially more protection against the coro-
navirus, as does tying knots on the ear loops of surgical masks to make the mask fit tighter.

Wearing just one mask is not enough:
one should double mask, and make sure their disposable masks are securely fitted to their face.

In a test, researchers compared 4 different surgical masks around a person’s ears and made sure they fit snugly on the face to minimize the chance of infection.