

REGIS

FOR ALUMNI, FAMILIES, AND FRIENDS OF REGIS HIGH SCHOOL | SPRING 2024



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Above: The Regis Repertory captivated audiences with its spring production of *Macbeth* during three performances from March 21–23.

On the Cover: The varsity basketball team sings the alma mater in front of the student section after winning the CHSAA state championship on March 8. For more on the team, see page 6.

President's Report

A Transformational Experience



The word “vocation” derives from the Latin vocāre, which means “to call.”

In his recovery from his famous cannonball injury and later in the cave at Manresa, St. Ignatius Loyola experiences a new call from God: away from his previous life of honors, riches, and glory, and toward one of

contemplative action, emulating the great saints like Francis and Dominic who committed their lives to God and service in the Church.

Ignatius's conversion could best be summed up in three parts. First, during his convalescence at Loyola, he discovers that God deals with him directly and loves him unconditionally. Second, he finds a new purpose in his life: to give himself over completely to God's greater glory. Third, he gradually comes to realize that this purpose includes a necessary commitment to help souls — i.e., a commitment to become ever more a Man for Others, and one who goes to the margins to serve those in need.

Echoing Ignatius's experience, Regis's mission statement uses the powerful verb “transform” to describe what we hope and work to accomplish in the lives of our students through a Regis education: *Regis High School transforms Catholic young men through an academically exceptional Jesuit education in a caring community which inspires leadership, generosity, and a lifelong passion for service as Men for Others.*

In the pages of this issue of *Regis Magazine*, you will find several examples of how our mission helps students find their calling and a transformational sense of purpose.

Mr. Pedro Acosta, profiled on page 10, is retiring at the end of this school year. During my first assignment in the early 2000s, Mr. Acosta and I joined the faculty around the same time. As Mr. Acosta built our Chinese program, he quickly became known as a challenging teacher whose patience and care for students

moved them to a love for learning and a deep appreciation for Chinese culture and language.

Today, when I meet Mr. Acosta's former students at alumni events throughout the country, I hear about his influence on their lives — how he helped them develop their passions and how they pursued careers that incorporated what they learned in his classroom. This spring, I had the pleasure of speaking with John Rindone '16, a graduate of Georgetown's School of Foreign Service and a Presidential Management Fellow in the U.S. Treasury Department. He credits Mr. Acosta's Chinese class for inspiring him to use his foreign language skills to pursue a career in public service. Transformation indeed.

You will also read about three Regis alumni who are answering God's call to life as a Jesuit: Melvin Rayappa, SJ, '08; Brian Englehard, SJ, '12; and David Said, SJ, '14.

Melvin was a Regis student when I was launching the REACH Program. Enthusiastic to give back even at a young age, he was in one of the early cohorts of mentors to our REACH middle schoolers. Melvin, Brian, and David describe the transformative experience of a Regis education: witnessing the joy of the Jesuits who taught them and receiving a Catholic education that allowed them to ask deep questions about their faith through retreats and reflection.

Jesuit education is an act of faith. We believe that God is calling each Regis student to a unique purpose — a path on which he will find the meeting place between his desires, his talents, and service to God's people. May God continue to bless Regis's mission of transformation for God's greater glory and the help of souls.

Sincerely,

Rev. Christopher J. Devron, SJ
President

The Office of Advancement Why I Give

Bill Armbruster '67 has been giving to the Annual Fund every year for more than four decades. He shares why supporting Regis is so meaningful to him.

The main reason why I give to Regis is quite simple: It's the right thing to do. I'm very grateful for the excellent education I received, and my family would have been hard-pressed to afford tuition at another Catholic high school.

I also give because I believe that Regis is even better today than it was back in the mid-1960s. I like the strong emphasis on community service, in keeping with the Jesuit motto of teaching students to be "men for others." In addition, the student body is far more diverse, as is the faculty and staff. REACH has been a transformative program, and I'm proud that Regis has invested in it. The curriculum is more flexible now, too: As someone who did not care for my Latin classes, I like that students can choose the language they'll study, and I'm delighted that Regis has been offering Chinese now for many years.

I'm proud that Regis consistently ranks among the top Catholic high schools in the country. As I'm sure many alumni have done, I've mentioned on more than a few occasions that I went to the

same high school as Dr. Anthony Fauci '58. Whenever I meet a Fordham alumnus, I'm always proud to mention my classmate, Rev. Joseph McShane, SJ, '67, who served as President of Fordham from 2004 to 2023. And when I meet recent Regis alumni, I always mention that Rev. Arthur Bender, SJ, '67 was a classmate, as well.

I'm also deeply grateful for the friendships with my classmates as well as other Regis alumni. I cherish these friendships, which is why I always try to make JUG Night and our class reunions. In fact, I feel much closer to many classmates than I did during my student days some 60 years ago.

Donating to Regis is a way of expressing this gratitude and paying it forward to help ensure that young men of today — and far into the future — can also receive an outstanding education.

To support the 2024 Annual Fund, visit regis.org/give

Your support fuels innovation, nurtures potential, and transforms lives. **Support the 2024 Annual Fund through June 30** and play a pivotal role in sustaining Regis's programs and initiatives.

Your generous contributions directly impact the lives of our students every day by:

Enriching Academic Programs

Your support enables us to continue to attract exceptional educators and offer advanced courses that challenge and inspire our students.

Cultivating the Arts and Athletics

Through your donations, we can continue to offer a wide range of extracurricular activities that enable students to explore their passions, from performing arts to competitive sports.

Investing in Technology and Innovation

In a rapidly changing world, your support helps us equip our students with the technological skills and resources they need to thrive in the digital age.

Promoting Spiritual Growth

Through theology studies, liturgies, retreats, and service projects, Regis helps students develop both intellectually and spiritually as they deepen their relationship with Jesus Christ.

Keeping Regis Tuition-Free

The generosity of our community helps sustain our unique merit-based, all-scholarship model.



Auction Challenge Shatters Record

During the Parents' Club Auction on March 9, the annual Auction Challenge raised a record-breaking \$300,000 thanks to the extraordinary generosity of our community. Each year, the Auction Challenge raises money to support an enhancement that directly benefits students. As we prepare to renovate our lower gym and relocate and expand our fitness center over the summer, the 2024 Auction Challenge will fund new equipment for our physical education classes and athletics programs. This year's challenge ensures that when our students return in the fall, they'll enjoy upgraded equipment and modern amenities as they play and train. Thank you to everyone who made the 2024 Auction Challenge such a success!



News & Notes

FOR EXPANDED COVERAGE OF THESE AND OTHER NEWS STORIES, VISIT [NEWS.REGIS.ORG](https://news.regis.org)



Varsity Basketball Wins CHSAA Class B State Championship

Regis's varsity basketball team won the CHSAA Class B state championship on March 8 with a 76-59 victory over St. Mary's of Buffalo at Fordham University's Rose Hill Gymnasium. With students, families, faculty, and alumni forming of a sea of red in the stands, the team claimed Regis's seventh state title and first since 2018.

Austin Mejia '24 led the Raiders in scoring with 20 points to go along with 7 rebounds. Brendon O'Keefe '24 added 19 points (including a buzzer-beating three-pointer to end the third quarter) and 7 rebounds. Alex Sepe '24 scored 17 points, and Caleb Garutti '26 had 9 points and 6 rebounds. John Duffin '24 scored 7 points to go along with his team-best 8 rebounds.

The state title is the fourth for head coach Mr. Kevin Cullen in his 23 seasons leading the varsity team.

Later in March, the team also won the inaugural PSAL vs. CHSAA Championship. In a matchup of the champions of the city's public school and Catholic school leagues, Regis defeated PSAL Class 2A champion South Bronx Prep 67-53 to cap a remarkable 23-4 season.

Regis Wins State Debate Championship for 33rd Time in 40 Years

At the New York State Forensic League Championship in April, the Hearn Speech and Debate Society won the state debate championship for the 33rd time in the past 40 years. Several members of the Hearn were also awarded prizes for their outstanding individual performances.

In the category of public forum debate, seniors Danny Bajada '24 and Kai-Shan Kwek-Rupp '24 won the varsity division, while juniors Emmet O'Sullivan '25 and Owen O'Toole '25 took the top prize in the intermediate division.

In the speech categories, juniors Ryder Kirby '25 and Jack Rice '25 won first place in duo interpretation, while Henry Perduto '25 placed second in varsity extemporaneous speaking.

Adhy Agarwala '24 and Mark Quaglia '24 finished third in varsity public forum, and Joseph Mora '26 and Antonio Takata '26 placed fifth in intermediate public forum.

In novice public forum, Henry Feldman '27 and Remy Picciano '27 placed fifth, while Alessandro Cupido Carolosi '27 and Andrew Moszuti '27 finished sixth.

Paul Asari '24 and Jonah Kennedy '24 finished fourth in duo interpretation, while Asari also took sixth in program oral interpretation. David Solano '25 placed fourth in program oral interpretation and sixth in dramatic interpretation. Johnny Germak '26 placed third in junior varsity extemporaneous speaking and Michael Mayta '25 finished sixth in humorous interpretation.



Regions Travel to Jamaica for Service Trip

Over the winter recess, 12 Regians traveled to Jamaica to work with the Mustard Seed Communities, a faith-based non-profit organization that cares for more than 500 children and adults with disabilities or HIV/AIDS.

The group was lodged at one of the MSC apostolates and split time doing landscaping work for the community and spending time with the residents — who were mostly children — housed at their apostolate. Many of the children require the constant attention of caregivers, and the Regians helped feed the residents, played with them, and walked them to Mass and prayer services.

Assistant Principal for Student Life Mr. Christian Mariano '99, one of the chaperones of the trip, complimented the students for their selfless engagement with the communities. "The students responded really well to the trip," Mr. Mariano said. "Some want to do it again next year. Some might even be interested in starting an MSC trip when they go to college. I think it was a very impactful trip."

The students benefited from the generous contributions of the entire Regis community. In total, the group raised over \$15,000, in addition to collecting donations of clothing, bedsheets, and toiletries.

Leo Lee '25 Wins Top Prize in Elite Science Competition



Regis junior Leo Lee '25 won first prize in his category in the highly competitive New York State Science and Engineering Fair. With his victory in the March competition, which draws thousands of student participants from across the state, Lee qualified for the Regeneron International Science and Engineering Fair. Started in 1942 as the Westinghouse Science Talent Search, the ISEF is the largest international STEM competition for high school students.

Lee, a student in Regis's Science Research Project, won in the Biomedical and Health Sciences category for an image segmentation machine-learning model that is capable of detecting gastrointestinal polyps in colonoscopies. As part of the state competition, he presented his project in front of a panel of judges at the New York Hall of Science.

Michael Cameron '24 Publishes Research Paper in History Journal

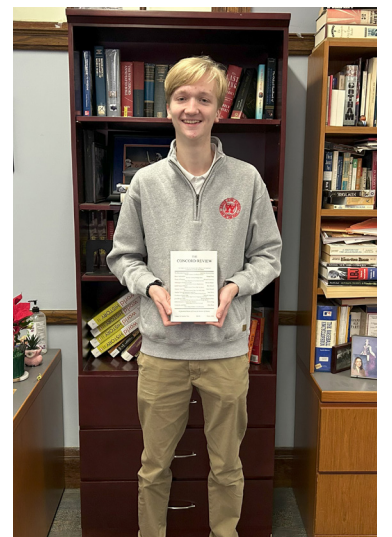
A research paper written by Michael Cameron '24 was published in the winter 2023 edition of *The Concord Review*, a quarterly journal that features history research papers by high school students. Cameron's paper, written during his junior year, focused on the Treaty of Trianon that ended World War I with the Kingdom of Hungary and cost it about two-thirds of its land. In the paper, Cameron describes the rise of Hungarian nationalism caused by the treaty, as well as the resulting diaspora.

As part of the junior history curriculum, students spend much of the year researching and writing a substantial research paper on the topic of their choosing. Cameron was inspired to write about the treaty as a Hungarian-American who wanted to better understand his heritage. Cameron's junior history teacher, Ms. Gena Reisig, encouraged him to expand the paper he wrote and submit it to *The Concord Review*.

"Writing for *The Concord Review* taught me the value of pursuing a project based on passion," said Cameron. "Since I felt a personal connection to my topic of research, I was committed to making the project worthwhile, which is why I readily accepted the invitation from Ms. Reisig to submit my paper for publication."

Since its founding in 1987, *The Concord Review* has published papers by students from 48 different countries. The journal only publishes about 6 percent of the papers that are submitted each quarter.

"Michael's incredibly hard work and intensive research are being recognized internationally, which is very exciting," said Ms. Reisig. "It inspires our students and gets them focused on the idea that their work can be more meaningful than just writing a paper for their history class."





Mr. Kevin Cullen to Be Inducted Into CHSAA Hall of Fame

In recognition of his decades of service to both Regis and the city's Catholic high school athletic community, Mr. Kevin Cullen will be inducted into the New York Catholic High School Athletic Association Hall of Fame. Mr. Cullen, who joined Regis in the fall of 1990, serves as Director of Athletics in addition to teaching physical education and coaching the varsity basketball team.

"I'm both honored and humbled to be going into the CHSAA Hall of Fame, a league that I've been a part of since I was 13 years old," said Mr. Cullen. "I'm also excited to be joining Mr. Andre Anselme and Mr. John Donodeo as a Regis coach in the Hall of Fame."

In 2001, Mr. Cullen began coaching the varsity basketball team, which has won seven city championships, four state championships, and one federation championship under his leadership. He has also served as a CHSAA vice president.

During his 34-year tenure at Regis, Mr. Cullen has also spent time as the coach of the freshman basketball, JV soccer, JV baseball, and varsity volleyball teams.

"Kevin is a caring and tireless advocate for student-athletes, and he is committed to promoting the mission and values of Catholic Jesuit secondary education," said President Rev. Christopher Devron, SJ.



Regis Community Gathers for Record-Breaking Parents' Club Auction

The Regis Parents' Club held its annual auction on March 9, with more than 500 people gathering on 84th Street for a night of bidding and camaraderie. With a theme of "Embracing Difference, Celebrating Unity," this year's auction paid tribute to the close-knit Regis community that makes such an evening possible.

The auction's prizes included an array of gift baskets, art, and experiences for attendees to bid on during the silent auction as they mingled throughout the building. The live auction, emceed once again by Eugene Flinn P'10 and Mr. Eric DiMichele, offered fabulous prizes like a trip to Hawaii and tickets to this year's World Series.

The evening also featured a performance of the alma mater by Regis students, as well as an original song by Tony, Emmy, Grammy, and Pulitzer Prize winner Tom Kitt P'24.

The night culminated with the reveal of the Auction Challenge, which each year funds an enhancement that directly benefits students. This year's record-breaking challenge raised more than \$300,000 for new equipment for our physical education classes and athletics programs. To read more about this year's Auction Challenge, see page 5.

James Stappenbeck '25 Breaks Indoor 1,600-Meter School Record

James Stappenbeck '25 broke the school's indoor 1,600-meter record at the New York State Federation Track & Field Championship on March 2 with a time of 4:17.20, lowering the school mark he'd set the month prior. Stappenbeck's time was the best of any junior in the event.

In February, Stappenbeck won the 1,600-meter race at the CHSAA Intersectional Championship with a time of 4:17:81, breaking the previous school mark held by Sean Phillips '15. Stappenbeck is the first Regian to win the indoor track and field 1,600-meter race at the intersectional championship.

Regis's indoor track and field team this year won its second consecutive CHSAA A Division Championship.

"It's great to see the team perform so well when I know the effort that they put into their events," said Mr. Christopher Febles, one of Regis's track and field coaches. "With all the work they have to do to be a varsity athlete at Regis, it is testament to their effort when the athletes perform as well as they did."



Regis Hosts Inaugural Ricci Forum on U.S.-China Relations

On April 16, the Hearn Speech and Debate Society and the Ricci-Xu Young Scholars Program jointly hosted the inaugural Ricci Forum on technology and the U.S.-China relationship. A three-person guest panel of academic and policy experts were invited to judge a parliamentary-style debate between two pairs of Hearn debaters on the following resolution: "This house regrets the recent technological decoupling between the United States and China."

Taking the proposition side were seniors Danny Bajada '24 and Mark Quaglia '24, while William Carragher '24 and Michael Cameron '24 represented the opposition. The spirited debate centered on the role of emergent technologies such as artificial intelligence in the current geopolitical arena.

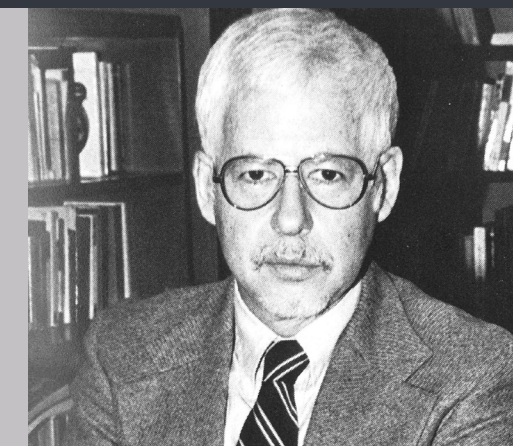
The debate's judging panel featured Dr. Susan Shirk, former deputy assistant secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs and director emeritus of the University of California San Diego's 21st Century China Center; Dr. Zongyuan Liu, Maurice R. Greenberg fellow for China studies at the Council on Foreign Relations; and Peter Vanderslice '16, research advisor at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University. At the conclusion of the debate, each of the three panelists offered brief but rich commentary on the arguments proposed by the two teams.

The Ricci Forum is the creation of senior Kai-Shan Kwok-Rupp '24, who emceed the event. He initially conceived of the Ricci Forum — named for Matteo Ricci, SJ, a pioneer of intellectual exchange with China — a year ago with the intention to create a space for open and honest conversation about China among his peers.

The importance of dialogue as the basis for learning is a core principle of the Ricci-Xu Young Scholars Program, a cultural leadership and exchange program that brings together students from Regis, Dominican Academy, and Nanjing Foreign Language School in China for regular conversations.



IN MEMORIAM



Regis Mourns the Passing of Mr. Jerry Kappes '52

It was with great sadness that Regis shared news of the February 15 passing of Mr. Jerry Kappes '52, an alumnus and longtime English teacher who made wonderful contributions of wisdom and care to the Regis community even after leaving the faculty.

Mr. Kappes, who graduated from Manhattan College and earned a master's degree from NYU, taught English at Regis from 1957 to 1982. During that time, he was instrumental in ending the use of what he called "tedious" anthology textbooks, allowing teachers to design their own courses and assign paperbacks. In 1972, Mr. Kappes co-founded the Theater in New York elective for seniors that is still offered today, and he was the moderator of *Folio*, the school's literary magazine at the time.

Even after leaving Regis to edit textbooks, Mr. Kappes remained close to the school, attending alumni events, contributing updates on his class to *Regis Magazine*, and keeping in touch with former colleagues.

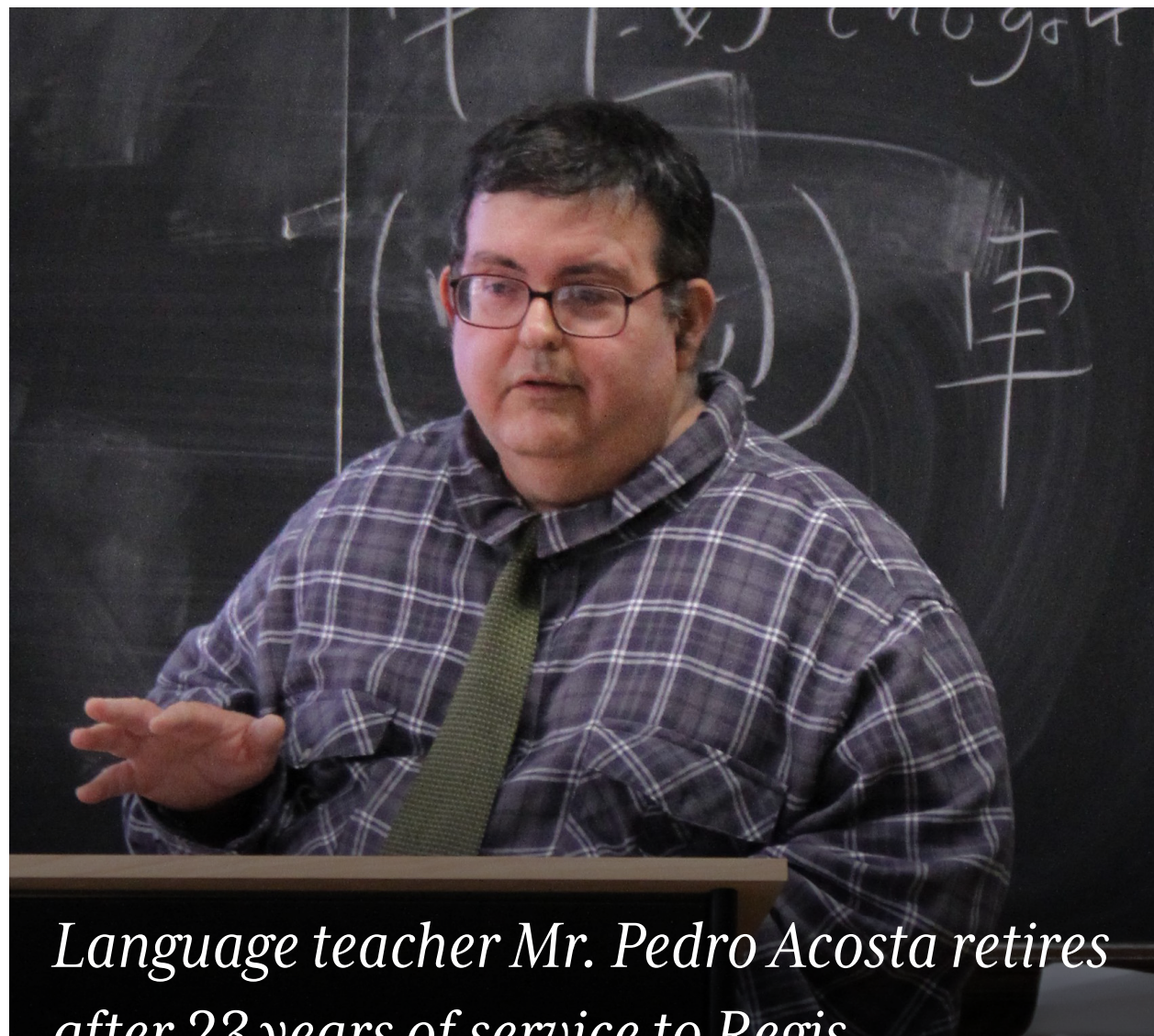
In recent years, he often returned to Regis to visit with Dr. Allison Tyndall, the English Department Chair who joined the faculty in 2018. The two struck up a friendship after meeting at a Christmas gathering in 2022, and Mr. Kappes would sit in on occasional classes to discuss works like *The Great Gatsby* or *Waiting for Godot* and attend outings to shows with Dr. Tyndall's Theater of New York class. (While teaching at Regis, he'd once staged a successful one-night-only performance of *Godot* "on kind of a dare" after his students said it would be impossible to put on.)

In Winter 2023 issue of *Regis Magazine*, Mr. Kappes and Dr. Tyndall spoke about theater, books, and the ways the school has and hasn't changed since Mr. Kappes was on the faculty.

"In the classrooms I've visited, I sense the same eagerness to speak up and voice an opinion," said Mr. Kappes during that conversation. "It's still very much there, and that's what you want in an English class. You don't want to be standing there lecturing."

In advance of their chat for the magazine, Dr. Tyndall reflected on the bond they shared.

"I think it's safe to say we're in sympathy on a lot of impressions about what to teach and how to teach it," said Dr. Tyndall. "I count it a singular privilege that I've been able to have a friendship with Jerry."



Language teacher Mr. Pedro Acosta retires after 23 years of service to Regis.

For more than two decades, Mr. Pedro Acosta has taught French, Spanish, and Mandarin Chinese to Regis students, but these are just a few of the seven languages he speaks. Indeed, Mr. Acosta, who is retiring this spring after 23 years of service to Regis, often engages with students outside the classroom in a multitude of languages, including ones not offered in the curriculum. And he does it all with a warm demeanor that encourages students to further challenge themselves in a new language.

Mr. Acosta joined the faculty in 2001, initially intending to teach just Spanish and French. But when Rev. Vincent Biagi, SJ, the principal at the time, learned of Mr. Acosta's background in East Asian languages, he asked Mr. Acosta if he would like to teach Chinese as well. Mr. Acosta was a published translator of Chinese and had studied and taught the language for many decades. When he taught Regis's first Chinese class in 2001, it became the first non-Western language offered to students. And for the better part of his tenure at Regis, he taught every student who took Chinese at each of the four levels, designing and redesigning the course curricula.

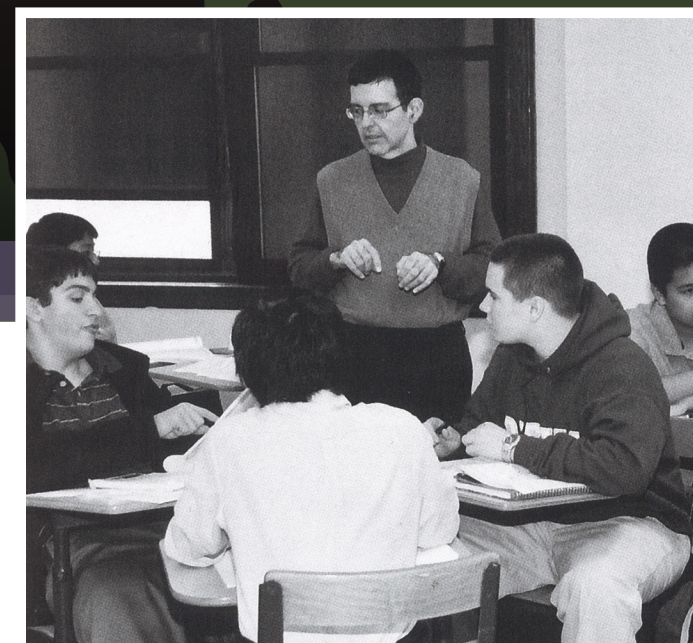
Mr. Acosta says that crafting Regis's Chinese program from scratch was a

"wonderful" experience. "I had taught Chinese in other schools, but never in a place like Regis where I actually got to create the curriculum," he said. "So it was very enjoyable."

In 1983, while he was a graduate student studying East Asian languages at Yale University, Mr. Acosta began his teaching career at East Hamden High School in central Connecticut. He later returned to his home state of New Jersey to teach Spanish and Chinese at Pope John XXIII Regional High School, before moving to Oak Knoll School of the Holy Child, where he added French to his teaching load. Taking Mandarin Chinese classes may seem like a daunting task for incoming students unfamiliar with the language, but courses have maintained a consistent enrollment under Mr. Acosta's stewardship. "Yes, it's true. Chinese is harder," said Mr. Acosta. "The students work harder to get what they need to get. And I as the teacher work harder to help them get where they need to get. But it's a good thing. If you really want to know something, you have to work at it, and that's something Regians know very well."

Mr. Acosta has spent many years working with the Chinese-speaking community in New York City, including as an English language teacher

*¡Adiós
y buena suerte!*
*Adieu
et bonne chance!*
再见,
祝你万事如意



in Chinatown and Elmhurst. When it comes to the diversity of spoken languages in New York, "you get a little bit of everything," Mr. Acosta said. "Go to a subway and sit down and perk up your ears. What are you going to hear? Different languages. And you'll see people reading in different languages. It's normal here, but you don't see that in most cities."

Regis and the many students who've passed through his classrooms over the years owe much to Mr. Acosta, but he reflects on his tenure with humility. "If there's anything I truly enjoyed about Regis, even more than creating the Chinese program, it's simply working with good students," he said. Teaching at Regis "is really a worthwhile experience. It certainly is for me, dealing with students who like to learn and work well not only with their teachers, but with each other too."

Mr. Acosta leaves a language department that will continue to bear the traces of his service, and his fellow departmental faculty are quick to praise him for all he's done inside and outside the classroom.

"Pedro is more than just a colleague; he's a mentor and a true friend," said Ms. Arianna Huergo, chair of the Language Department. "I can't even

begin to thank him for everything he has done for me. He changed my life, and I'm sure I'm not the only one whose life he has changed."

In 2009, Mr. Acosta won the Patricia Hannon Ignatian Educator Award, recognizing his passion in the classroom and his wider commitment to the education of his students.

Said Ms. Huergo: "We affectionately call him the 'Google of languages' because of the passion and incredible knowledge he shares with everyone. We are incredibly sad to see him go."

'There Are Doors Opening That Would Have Never Been Opened Before'

The new Rise Program offers mentorship for Regians who will be first-generation college students.



Members of the Rise Program were joined by their mentors, as well as Dean of Students Mr. Brian Robinson and Director of Belonging, Dignity, and Justice Ms. Belkise Dallam, at a Nets game on March 29.

As a boy, Dean of Students Mr. Brian Robinson was the first student to win a scholarship to St. Peter's Prep from Centro Amici, a community-based organization that supports education in New Jersey for students who are most underserved by existing need-based programs. He credits that support for changing his life, and when Mr. Robinson arrived at Regis in the fall, he wanted to create a program that would, in its own way, help set up Regians for success later in life.

The resulting initiative, dubbed the Rise Program, pairs current Regians who will be first-generation college students with alumni who can provide support and guidance as they prepare for life beyond 84th Street. The program is a joint venture between the Office for Belonging, Dignity, and Justice and the Student Life Office, led by Mr. Robinson.

"It's a full circle moment being able to start the Rise Program," said Mr. Robinson. "When I think of the ways that I grew up and how some of my friends grew up, I am reminded of the opportunities that were not afforded to us. Whether we were too busy in the classroom, playing a sport, or working, we didn't have the ability to be in a program like this. I am honored that I get to be a part of something that can influence these young men's lives in a positive and supportive way."

As part of the program, students meet alumni who were also first-generation college students. These alumni facilitate a group mentoring environment to help participants navigate their future scholastic pursuits and professional endeavors.

Among these mentors is Matthew Ulloa '09, who is also a graduate of the founding REACH Class of 2005. After Regis, Ulloa was the first of his immediate family to attend college, studying business at the University of Delaware.

"Being in that first REACH class, the students and their families were taking a huge leap of faith

and putting a lot of trust into a new program, which ended up being one of the most meaningful opportunities of my lifetime," said Ulloa, who joined Bloomberg as an internal auditor after college and is one of the leaders of the Regians of Color alumni affinity group. "Through my experience with REACH, I came to realize that nobody does well in a vacuum. We need that support around, and being able to give current students the tools to succeed at Regis and to eventually succeed in college and their careers is truly special."

The Rise Program formally launched in February. Among the early opportunities for Regians and their mentors to get to know each other was an outing to a Brooklyn Nets game, where they were joined by Mr. Robinson and Director of Belonging, Dignity, and Justice Ms. Belkise Dallam.

As Rise Program students graduate from Regis, they'll also be able to return as mentors for future Regians, offering the kind of guidance on college and professional life that they themselves received.

"The students are really excited about the program, and they will be helping us to build Rise and eventually be mentors for future generations of Regians," said Ms. Dallam.

Lucas Bujosa '26, a founding member of the program, says he's thankful for the opportunity.

"The one word I could use to describe the Rise Program would be 'hopeful,'" says Bujosa, who is also a REACH graduate from the Class of 2024. "With these alumni mentors, there are doors opening that would have never been opened before. Getting my start in REACH led me to think that college was not only a possibility, but a reality. Now with the Rise Program, I see that those dreams that started in the REACH Program were not only real, but I would now have the support available to help me thrive beyond Regis."

Called by God

Three Regis alumni in Jesuit formation for priesthood discuss their paths to religious life.



In 2015, David Said, SJ, '14 was a sophomore at Georgetown with plans to attend medical school after graduation. A friend had gotten him a ticket to see Pope Francis speak on Capitol Hill during his visit to the United States, and Said quickly accepted. Said says that at the time, he "wasn't so deep" in his faith, other than going to Mass on Sundays. But something changed in him that day.

"There was something about Pope Francis's presence," recalls Said. "Just seeing his example and being in his presence rekindled the faith that was always within me that never really left."

Today, Said is one of three Regis alumni currently in Jesuit formation for priesthood, a process that can take up to 12 years. The process includes two years of Novitiate and seven to 10 years of academic studies and pastoral work in preparation for ordination. A Jesuit scholastic's journey continues with

additional years of ministerial work, professional studies, and a year of preparation for Final Vows.

During his time at Regis and working at the REACH Program in Scranton, Said got to know history teacher Rev. Arthur Bender, SJ, '67; Rev. James Croghan, SJ, then the Interim President of Regis; and Rev. Mario Powell, SJ, then the Director of REACH. Said says that while he wasn't yet considering entering the Jesuits at the time, each of these men left an impression on him.

"They seemed genuinely joyful in what they're doing," remembers Said. "I didn't have an inside look at what their day looks like exactly minute-by-minute, but just based on what they were doing and how they worked, there seemed to be a real joy there."

Said, who is currently in the Regency stage of his formation and teaching at Xavier High School, had also considered becoming a diocesan priest, but he was ultimately drawn to the Jesuit order.

"I was just really drawn to the mission and this idea, which is both scary but also very inviting and exciting, of being able to be sent anywhere, of being sent to the margins," he said.

Brian Engelhart, SJ, '12, who is also in the Regency stage of his formation and teaching at Cristo Rey Atlanta Jesuit High School, recalls reading a book by Rev. James Martin, SJ, in which Martin described his day-to-day life during the Novitiate stage of formation. During the Novitiate, Jesuits take part in four fundamental experiences: a month of Spiritual Exercises, a month of service in a hospital, an extended time serving in a Jesuit ministry while living in community, and a pilgrimage in poverty.

"It was a crystal clear picture of like, oh, that's how I would like to spend my time," said Engelhart, who at the time was studying electrical engineering at Villanova. "It took a few months before I realized that the thought wasn't going

away, because as attractive as that idea was, there was a little bit of like, I didn't ask for this. I was hoping to just find an easy way to graduate from college and find a nice, comfortable, simple life as soon as possible. But when I realized it wasn't going away, I started to look into it, and I reached out to the vocation office and went from there."

Rev. Philip Florio, SJ, Director of Vocations for the USA East Province, says that for some, God can be like a "nagging puppy who is constantly nipping at your heels to get you to pay attention" and that individuals should pay attention to the signs all around them.

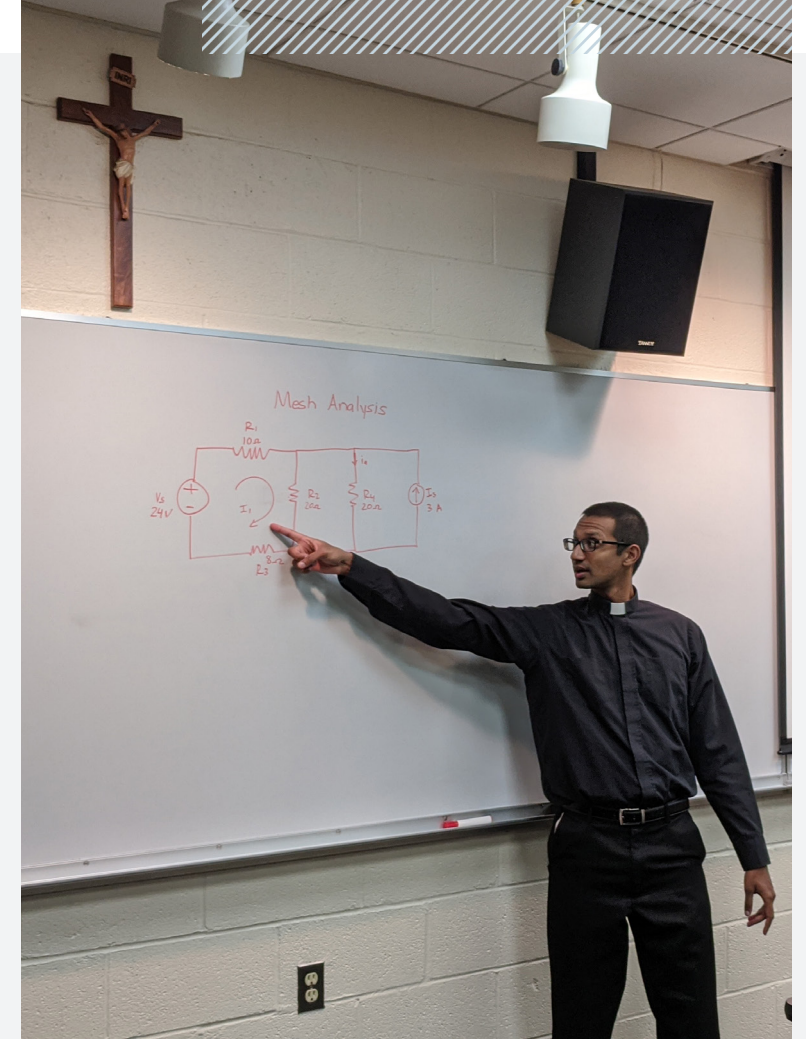
"God's call can sometimes be very subtle, and other times it can be extremely dramatic," said Florio.

He says that the vast majority of men entering the Jesuits are between 22 and 32 years old, drawn to the order's mission-focused spirituality and the community life that Jesuits are a part of. He said it's common for students to reach out to the Jesuits, as Said and Engelhart did, but the Jesuits also encourage individuals to get some life experience.

"We tend to encourage young men in high school to go to college," said Florio. "A number of college students belong to discernment groups, but we also encourage them to be college kids at the same time."

Melvin Rayappa, SJ, '08, who is currently in his second of three years of theology studies and hopes to be ordained a priest in June 2025, says that his time at Regis was an opportunity for him to grow spiritually, especially during the retreats he attended, even if he didn't know quite yet that he'd choose a religious life as a Jesuit.

"In those teenage years, you're on the cusp of being a child versus being an adult," said Rayappa. "I appreciated that Regis didn't really answer the questions for me but gave me the space to struggle with some of these questions about my faith and what it means to be an adult. I appreciate the structures and the resources that helped push me towards this good direction in my life."



From top: Melvin Rayappa, SJ, '08 teaching electrical engineering at Loyola University Maryland and Brian Engelhart, SJ, '12 teaching math at Cristo Rey Atlanta Jesuit High School.

Opposite page: David Said, SJ, '14 in the student chapel at Xavier High School, where he teaches religion and math.



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A contingent of students and faculty members traveled to Costa Rica during Easter break for Regis's annual conservation and ecology trip. The group of 35 students aided in conservation efforts and conducted research in various locations around the country, including the Manuel Antonio National Park, a crocodile farm on the Pacific Coast, and a coffee plantation in San José.

