REGIS

FOR ALUMNI, FAMILIES, AND FRIENDS OF
REGIS HIGH SCHOOL | FALL 2026



VOLUME 93 | NUMBER 1
FALL 2026

Contents

3 President's Report
4 The Office of Advancement
6 News & Notes
8 Our New STEAM Home!
12 Shaping Our Vision
14 Class of 2026 College Destinations
16 Five Questions for Sandro Santagata '89
17 Prowlings
46 Milestones
46 Events Calendar
47 From the Archives

REGIS

Rev. Christopher J. Devron, SJ
President

Charles W. Heintz
Principal

Maureen Barry P'21
Vice President for Advancement

Sandra Brigode P'25
Events Manager

Matthew Cappabianca '17
Associate Director for Alumni Engagement

Adriane Castillo
Associate Director for Annual Giving

Joe DeLessio '02
Director of Communications

Kofi Frimpong
Communications Coordinator

Rev. Vinny Marchionni, SJ
Major Gifts Officer and Special Assistant to the President

Bobby Meyer
Senior Director of Advancement Operations and Strategy

Giancarlo Milea '11
Major Gifts Officer, Grant Writer

Daria Moringiello Mulhall
Senior Director of Advancement

Marie Orraca
Administrative Assistant

Julian Zeitlinger '22
Communications Associate

Some photographs for Regis publications are provided by Harisch Studios and the staff of *The Regian*, the school yearbook. Regis reserves the right to publish and edit all submissions.

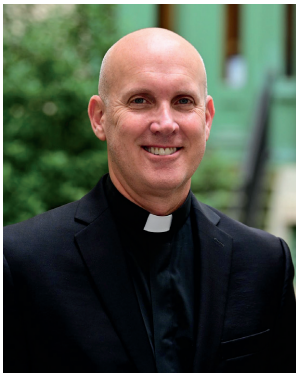


Above: Over the summer, Regians traveled to five continents on service and learning trips, including an exchange trip to Paris in June. While in France, students visited a range of cultural and religious sites, including Claude Monet's house and gardens, Notre Dame Cathedral, the Louvre (pictured), the Paris Catacombs, and the gardens of Versailles.

On the Cover: Students in Regis's new STEAM Lab, located in the space formerly occupied by the chemistry lecture hall. To read more about the new $8 million STEAM Center on the transformed fifth floor, see page 8.

President's Report

Critical Thinking in an A.I. World



In this issue of *Regis* Magazine, you will learn about Regis's new $8 million fifth-floor STEAM Center. Envisioned during our last cycle of strategic planning and funded by generous gifts to *Ready to Do*, the Center significantly expands teaching and research in science, technology, engineering, the arts, and mathematics.

Regis faculty can now introduce students to emerging fields such as artificial intelligence and robotics while expanding our exceptional Science Research Project. Through this program, students conduct independent research with individualized mentorship from Regis faculty and leading scientists and technology entrepreneurs.

Our investment in STEAM may leave some wondering whether Regis is pivoting away from its traditional emphasis on the humanities. But Jesuit education rejects this either/or thinking.

At Regis, we cultivate curiosity, disciplined thinking, depth of understanding, and the confidence to engage complex questions. We teach students to think deeply within disciplines — in the humanities as well as in STEAM — and to make connections across them. We need broadly educated critical thinkers and principled leaders today as much as ever.

Artificial intelligence offers a compelling example. As I write, a debate rages about the pace and direction of its development. Recent incidents in which autonomous A.I. systems escaped their containers and gained access to real-world computer systems have brought new urgency to questions that once seemed theoretical.

Should A.I. development be paused, slowed, or accelerated? Who should guide it? What safeguards do we need? What ends should this powerful technology serve? And what risks do we face if the United States falls behind competitors who do not share our values of human dignity, freedom, and the common good?

For Regians, these questions are not merely theoretical. They reach the heart of our mission: to transform Catholic young men into leaders devoted to *Deo et Patriae* and lifelong service as Men for Others. Answering them demands interdisciplinary thinking informed by Catholic social teaching.

Our upcoming Deo et Patriae Dialogue will take up these questions. At last spring's inaugural event, two alumni offered different interpretations of the U.S. war with Iran through the lens of the Catholic just-war tradition.

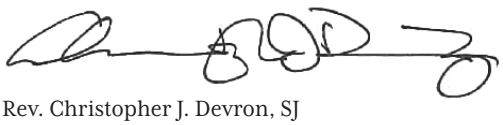
This fall, in a schoolwide dialogue moderated by retired ABC News correspondent John Donvan '73, Ben Buchanan '08 and George Sivulka '16 will explore how A.I. can advance — or undermine — the common good, a concern at the heart of Pope Leo's first encyclical, *Magnifica Humanitas*.

Ben served as the White House Special Advisor for Artificial Intelligence during the Biden administration and now teaches at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies. George earned degrees in mathematics and applied physics from Stanford University and now leads Hebbia, an A.I. company he founded that is changing how organizations analyze information and make decisions.

Now, we could stage such a dialogue between A.I. agents. Instead, three flesh-and-blood Regians will lead it. John, Ben, George, bring more than technical expertise to the conversation. They bring human experience and the capacity to examine problems from multiple perspectives, communicate ideas, test competing claims, and recognize the human consequences of technological choices. They ask not only what A.I. *can* do, but what it *should* do — and whom it should serve.

Regis's investment in STEAM is neither a retreat from the humanities nor a departure from our Catholic and Jesuit identity. It embodies the Jesuit conviction that scientific and humanistic inquiry belong together. The new STEAM Center gives students powerful tools to understand and shape the world. Across the curriculum — from science and mathematics to literature, history, philosophy, theology, and the arts — Regis grounds education in Catholic faith and Ignatian spirituality and teaches students to discern how, why, and for whom those tools should be used.

The most important question raised by our new STEAM Center, then, is not simply what our students will build there. It is what kind of men they will become — and what kind of world they will help build for others.



Rev. Christopher J. Devron, SJ
President

The Office of Advancement

Reunited!

Last spring, Regis welcomed more than 400 alumni back to 84th Street to celebrate their reunions. Each reunion gave attendees the chance to attend Mass, see what's new around the building, and of course, reconnect with one another.





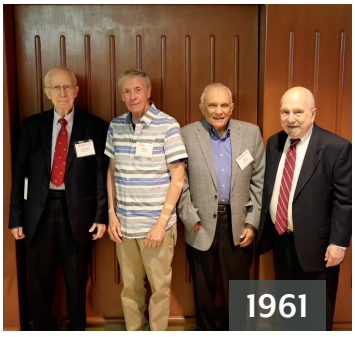










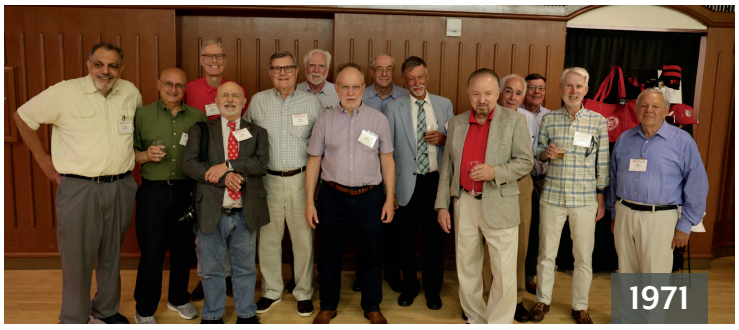














327 Saturdays

Reunions offer an opportunity for alumni to catch up, particularly with classmates they haven't spoken to in years. But when the Class of 1966 gathered for their 60th Reunion in June, many Regians were able to pick up conversations from just days earlier.

Since March of 2020, the Class of 1966 has met nearly every Saturday afternoon for Zoom calls that are regularly joined by more than a dozen alumni. As of this writing, they've gathered 327 times, missing only one week — for their in-person reunion this spring.

"Most reunions happen every five or 10 years, but ours never really ends," said Rich Corelli '66. "Every week we pick up the conversation as though the bell for fourth period had just rung. The only noticeable difference is that we've traded crew cuts for reading glasses — and our stories have become much better. The greatest gift Regis gave us wasn't merely an education; it was a group of friends who still make one another laugh more than 60 years later."



Join Us for Our 2027 Reunions!

MAY 1
25-, 30-, 35-, 40-, and 45-Year Reunion
Classes of 2002, 1997, 1992, 1987, and 1982

MAY 8
5-, 10-, 15-, and 20-Year Reunion
Classes of 2022, 2017, 2012, and 2007

MAY 22
50-Year Reunion
Class of 1977

OCTOBER 23
Golden Owls Reunion
Classes of 1972, 1967, 1962, 1957, and 1952

News&Notes

FOR MORE NEWS FROM REGIS, VISIT REGIS.ORG/NEWS

Paul Frimpong-Manso '28 Wins National Championship in Declamation



Paul Frimpong-Manso '28 won first place in declamation at the National Catholic Forensic League's Grand National Tournament in Washington, D.C., on May 24, leading an outstanding showing by Regis's Hearn Speech and Debate Society.

As a team, Regis was one of five schools to receive the Daniel S. Masterson Jr. Award for Excellence in Forensics, presented for strong all-around performance. Regis was also one of five schools to receive the Founders Award for Speech. Eighteen members of the Hearn qualified for the tournament.

In addition to Frimpong-Manso, several Regians turned in exceptional individual performances. C.J. Ackermann '29 placed seventh in declamation, while Aidan Shrekgast '27 reached the semifinals in student congress and Luca Pellizzoni '26 reached the semifinals in reading. In extemporaneous speaking, Danny Lobato '26 reached the quarterfinals and Johnny Germak '26 reached the octofinals. The duos of Desmond Augustine '26/Sam Lauriello '26 and Phil Liew '26/Will Napoli '26 had strong performances in the doubles competition of public forum debate.



Regians Stand Out at National Speech & Debate Tournament

Desmond Augustine '26, Will Napoli '26, and George Pace '26 were part of the five-person New York team that took sixth place in World Schools Debate at the 2026 National Speech & Debate Tournament in Richmond, Va., in June. The tournament, operated by the National Speech & Debate Association, is the largest academic competition in the United States.

Varsity Tennis Wins First City Championship in School History

Regis's varsity tennis team won the CHSAA city championship on May 26, capturing the title for the first time in school history. With students and faculty members cheering them on, the top-seeded Raiders defeated second seed Fordham Prep 4-1 at the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center in Queens. In singles action, Calvin Gonzalez '26 and Roshan Duggal '28 both won in straight sets. Meanwhile, both doubles matches went to 10-point tiebreakers. Gabe Troiano '27 and Lucas Jimenez-Chavez '28 won their tiebreaker 10-3, while Alex Lorenzo '26 and Rémy Picciano '27 won their tiebreaker 10-6. Lucas Ciordas '27 also put forward a strong effort in a tight singles match.



Outdoor Track and Field Wins Fourth Straight Division Championship

Regis's outdoor track and field team won its fourth consecutive CHSAA A Division title in May with an outstanding showing at Icahn Stadium on Randall's Island. Several members of the Regis team turned in exceptional individual performances, including Griffin Conway '28, who won the A Division championship in the 3,000-meter steeplechase. Conway's time of 9:48.07 set a new school record, breaking the previous record held by his father, Shane Conway '97. Conway was also named the meet's MVP.



Ultimate Team Wins Fourth Straight City Interscholastic Division Championship

Regis's ultimate team won the DiscNY Interscholastic Division city championship on May 31, capturing the title for the fourth consecutive year. Regis defeated SAR High School 15-12 in the championship match. Game MVP Brendan Moran '26 led the way for Regis with two goals and two assists to go along with excellent defensive play. Jim Scanlon '26, who assisted on Xavier Neptune '27's game-winning goal, took home spirit MVP honors, while James Masterson '26 kept the offense running smoothly and Gavin Sweeney '27 played the entire game. Regis also received strong contributions from sophomores Justin Park '28, Lucas Koehler '28, and Mateo Koo '28, who helped ensure the championship victory.



Ms. Lee Chua Honored With Patricia Hannon Ignatian Educator Award

Assistant Principal for Academics Ms. Lee Chua was honored with the 2026 Patricia Hannon Ignatian Educator Award at the annual Spring Convocation on May 4. Ms. Chua, who joined Regis as a math teacher in 2004, was celebrated for her leadership, her care for each individual in our community, and her dedication to the Jesuit value of *cura personalis*, or care for the whole person.



Nicholas Kim '27 Wins Gold on USA Archery Team



Nicholas Kim '27 won a gold medal in May as part of the USA Archery team at the 2026 Pan American Youth and Masters Championships in Medellin, Colombia. Kim won gold as one of three members of the recurve U18 men's team.



Pablo Torre '03 Delivers Keynote Address at 2026 Hearn Dinner

Pablo Torre '03 addressed students and their families at the 2026 Hearn Dinner on June 10. Torre, the Pulitzer-prize winning host of the podcast *Pablo Torre Finds Out*, spoke to Hearn members about his career and the paths that lie ahead for them. The evening also included performances by Paul Frimpong-Manso '28, C.J. Ackermann '29, and the team of Luke Connolly '26 and Benny Noble '26.



Regis's transformed fifth-floor facilities for science, mathematics, engineering, and computer science mark a major investment in these vital fields.

OUR NEW STEAM HOME!

Pictured: The new fifth floor west hallway


"Go forth and set
the world on fire."
EXIT

The fifth floor of Regis's landmarked building has been used for science instruction since the school's earliest days. Blueprints from the 1910s show spaces designated as "Physics Lecture Room," "Physics Laboratory," and "Chemical Laboratory," and generations of Regians will recall taking science classes in labs and classrooms on the fifth floor.

But the sciences have come a long way since the Class of 1918 studied chemistry under instructor Rev. Richard Martin, SJ. Through the years, the fifth floor has adapted to the times to best serve our students as scientific and technological advances have been made. And when students arrived back at school in September, they got their first look at the school's largest-ever investment in STEAM learning.

Earlier this fall, Regis proudly unveiled its new STEAM Center, a project made possible by the generosity of our community through the *Ready to Do* campaign. This new Center will revolutionize STEAM education at Regis, giving students access to spaces and technologies that will enhance their ability to learn and conduct research.

Among the new spaces is a new STEAM Lab in the former chemistry lecture hall space (which itself had been the "Chemical Laboratory" upon the school's opening). Students are able to use this new lab throughout the day and have access to 3-D printers, laser engravers, CNC routers, a Wazer, and other equipment to support hands-on study and experimentation.

"These new STEAM spaces have the potential to shift the learning experience from passive to active," said Dr. Marta Baldassarri, a mathematics and engineering teacher who serves as Regis's STEAM Coordinator and as chair of the new Arts & Engineering Department. "When students have access to well-equipped labs, a collaborative STEAM maker space, and flexible classrooms designed for hands-on activities, learning becomes more meaningful and student-driven."





Clockwise, from top left: the new flexible lab classroom for physics and engineering; the new fifth floor south hallway; the renovated Science Resource Center; students in the Engineering Club using the STEAM Lab's laser engraver





Pictured, right: the renovated Mathematics Resource Center, which has access to a new breakout room and conference room; the new computer science and engineering classroom; one of two new gathering spaces for students; one of two new natural science lab classrooms for biology and chemistry









The new spaces were designed with input from faculty members to enhance the values of collaboration, project-based learning, and interdisciplinary connections.

"As an engineer and scientist who spent many years working in research labs by designing experiments, operating specialized equipment, and fabricating parts for my own research, I can say that the place where a student with the love for STEAM is truly transformative is a well-equipped lab," said Dr. Baldassarri. "It is there that interdisciplinary work becomes possible and that the theoretical concepts taught in the classroom finally take on meaning."

The STEAM Center also includes two natural science lab classrooms for biology and chemistry, a flexible lab classroom for physics and engineering, a completely rebuilt Science Research Project room, a lab prep room, a rebuilt Science Research Project Room, a renovated Science Resource Center, a renovated Mathematics Resource Center with access to a new breakout room and conference room, a new computer science and engineering classroom, and two student gathering spaces.

"I'm so excited," said Dr. Luca Matone, chair of the Science Department. "We have more ability to do hands-on work now, and by exposing the students to all these disciplines in high school, they will be so much better prepared for whatever path they choose in college."

As part of the fifth floor's transformation, the hallways were designed to include a display on the history of SRP at Regis, another on the many contributions that Jesuits have made to scientific discovery, and a wall featuring quotes highlighting the intersection of science and spirituality.

"Science and math play a vital role in Jesuit education," said Mr. Casey Quinn '08, the chair of the Mathematics Department. "Regis hopes to form students fluent in both the sciences and humanities, and as the world becomes more technologically advanced, it will be imperative to balance progress with ethical behavior. That Pope Leo's first encyclical focuses on artificial intelligence highlights the timeliness, importance, and struggle of balancing technological advances with our faith."


SHAPING
OUR
VISION

Roger Knight ’00 begins his term as Chair of the Board of Trustees as Regis plans for the future.

When Roger T. Knight ’00 was an undergraduate studying at Cornell University, Mr. Frank Walsh — a legend of Regis then serving as a school counselor — encouraged him to connect with Rev. Christopher Devron, SJ, about an important new initiative he was working on. Fr. Devron had recently joined the Regis community to found the REACH Program, and he was looking for an assistant director to work with REACH students over the summer at the University of Scranton. Knight enthusiastically accepted.

Two years later, Regis came calling again. This time, Fr. Devron encouraged Knight to return to 84th Street to serve for a year in the Alumni Mentoring Program, while also helping part-time with REACH. Knight accepted this offer, as well.

Knight would remain connected to Regis in the years that followed, including as an interviewer of prospective students each January. And his path would continue to intersect with Fr. Devron’s. In 2017, Knight would join Fr. Devron on the Regis Board of Trustees, and Knight would later serve on the search committee that invited Fr. Devron to return to Regis as President in 2022. Now, as Knight begins his term as Chair of the Board of Trustees, they’ll work together to lead Regis into the future.

“I’m really excited,” said Knight. “We have a talented leadership team, and our community’s affinity for Regis is quite strong. There are immediate opportunities to invest in that, with prudent planning, will propel Regis forward.”

Fr. Devron echoes this excitement.

“When I worked with Roger in the REACH Program, his commitment to its students, its mission, and its growth was generous and impactful,” said Fr. Devron. “I know that REACH and Regis can count on his continued support as he prepares to lead our Board of Trustees, and I’m profoundly grateful for his partnership in this work.”

Knight succeeds Anthony J. DiNovi ’80, who had served as Chair of the Board of Trustees since 2019. Knight praised DiNovi for his strong leadership and for his immense devotion to Regis — a dedication for which he received the 2024 Deo et Patriae Award.

“I’ve always admired the courage Tony displayed in making tough decisions, and those decisions were always delivered with clarity,” said Knight. “It’s remarkable to me how resilient the school has been, and the majority of the credit goes to Tony and the rest of the team.”

Knight begins his tenure as Board Chair at an exciting moment of forward-thinking for Regis. This fall, Regis opened its new STEAM Center, a reimagining of the fifth floor that is transforming STEAM education at Regis and preparing students to be leaders and men of character in a world undergoing rapid technological changes. (To read more about the STEAM Center, see page 8.) And earlier this year, Regis unveiled both a revised mission statement and a new vision statement that will guide the development of the school’s next Strategic Plan.

As Regis prepares this Strategic Plan following years of rigorous reflection, Knight says that at its core, Regis will remain the school envisioned by its Foundress more than a century ago while thoughtfully adapting to the times.

“We are destined to be tuition-free,” said Knight. “We are destined to be merit-based. We are destined to support families of economic need. But the ways in which we form young men to be leaders will be different than when I was a student. For that, we need to consider societal change outside of Regis.”

Indeed, access to A.I. has never been so abundant, and as technologies advance and industries evolve, Regis has an opportunity to reflect on how it approaches the formation of tomorrow’s leaders. As he begins his term as Chair of the Board of Trustees, Knight has been pondering what all of this means for the school. Regis’s advanced curriculum will always be a key part of the student experience, but Knight sees an opportunity in this moment to reflect on the Jesuit value of *cura personalis*, or care for the whole person.

“How do we approach making decisions with our faith and morality as the cornerstone?” said Knight. “What are the implications for how we form well-rounded individuals in the future? Rigorous academics remain our core focus, but how do we adapt with the communities in which our families live, our faculty and staff work, and our students serve.”

CLASS OF 2026

College Destinations



Amherst College
Robert Hayes Fellingham

Bates College
William Bracken Kolani

Binghamton University
Modest Myxajlo Burchak
Joshua Chambers
Ramsey Colon
Adrian Javier Ithurralde
Evan Jae Yong Lee
Jaime K. Pacheco
Julio Cedric Tapia

Boston College
Aiden Hillaert Cauley
Finbar Drake Doyle
Leo Peter Fanuele
Christopher Ryan Gilfond
Joshua Bahda Kim
Brayden James Kiraly
Matthew Thomas McDonough
Alex Ruggiero

Boston University
Michael Leandro Cascetta

Brown University
Quinn Paul Kessler
Ryan Patrick Levens

Case Western Reserve University
GianMarco Joseph Miraglia

Clemson University
Ronan Carr Krauss

College of the Holy Cross
Robert Henry Quinn

Columbia University
Sebastian Logan Eng
Gyula Laszlo Marka
Benicio Patrick Noble
Luca Pellizzoni

Cornell University
Gerard Francis Beleckas
Liam Sullivan Charest
Leo Robert DeCock
Caleb James Garutti
Ezekiel Eugene Gonzalez
Chrystopher Alfonso Guevara
Brendan Paul Moran
James Francis Scanlon

Dartmouth College
Calvin Henri Gonzalez

Emerson College
Zachary Jacques

Fairfield University
Thomas Patrick Adamson
Kevin Corraj
Arsi Tinaj
Julian Franklin Valdez

Fordham University
Shane Quadras

Franklin & Marshall College
Evan Alexander Rosado

Georgetown University
William Malachy Brennan
Daniel Liao Lobato
Liam Fitz Michael Prucher

The George Washington University
Brendan Timothy Waldron

Harvard University
Dylan Lane O'Sullivan

Hamilton College
Aidan Neil McClure

Hillsdale College
Rowan Judah Woodard

Hunter College
Joseph Zacharias Mora

Indiana University–Bloomington
Arjun Mazzetti Arora

Johns Hopkins University
John Russell Garnett

Lafayette College
Michael Elliot
Andrew Lahage

Lehigh University
Sebastian Krzysztof Jarka
Patrick Lyons Sullivan

Loyola University Maryland
Blake Aurelius Calandrella
Nicholas Ryan Smith

Manhattan University
Alejandro Nelson Ahmo
Joshua Arnoby Moronta

Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Alain-Christian Pawa
Nicolas Aurelio Santos-Shin

Middlebury College
Charles Peter Gibbons

New Jersey Institute of Technology
Carl Anthony Furtado

Northeastern University
Aubrey Joseph Evaristo Brown
James Thomas Halpin

Northwestern University
Ryan Sebastian Puli

The Pennsylvania State University–University Park
Matthieu Pierre Adames LaTouche

Princeton University
Jack Felipe Canaveral
Oliver Gryffin Kahng
Brian William LaMons
Antonio Takata

Purdue University
Kevin A. O'Neill

Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
Tristan Haze Evangelista
James Vincent Plunkett

Rice University
Jaume Matthew Llorca Luth

SciencesPo–Menton
Samuel John Lauriello

Stanford University
Lucas Jose Bujosa

Stevens Institute of Technology
Marco C. Primavera
Joe Alexander Zhimnay

Stony Brook University
Joaquim Anthony Dasilva
Felipe Moreno-Naya



Swarthmore College
Jared Emmanuel Diaz
Andrew Colin Watson

Temple University
Christopher Ndukwe

Tufts University
Matthew Daesung Kang

United States Naval Academy
Anselm Park

University at Buffalo
Ethan Jang

University of California–Berkeley
Hipolito Alzola

University of Cambridge
Cristian Alexander Sanders

University of Chicago
James Tongjoo Baehr
William Anthony Lepore
Nathaniel Stephen Marks
William Lamb Napoli

University of Florida
Raymond Zoilo Durante

University of Michigan
John Marciano Germak
Edward Yong Graci
Paul Louis Mangione

University of Notre Dame
Kevin Sean Brennan
Joseph Ezekiel Derrough-Salas
Benjamin Franklin Kingston
Alexander David Lorenzo
James Finlay Masterson
Theodore John Millard
Thomas Richard Mullin
Timothy Patrick O'Sullivan
Charles Howard Rao

University of Oxford
Victor Oscar Maurice Henniaux

University of Pennsylvania
Brendan Liam Hirshorn
Colin Michael Jette
Liam Frank McCarthy

University of Pittsburgh
Fausto Angelo Cavaleri

University of Rochester
Zachary Joseph Charles Louis

The University of Tennessee
Bradley Walter Crump

University of Virginia
John Michael Allegra
Thomas Albert Giordano
Phillip Jacob Liew

Vanderbilt University
Andrew Vito Giordano
Benjamin Michael Passarelli

Villanova University
Lucas Angelo Ruggiero

Washington University in St. Louis
Dylan Michael Ehret

Wesleyan University
Gabriel Robert Suarez

William & Mary
Clayton Solomon Prisament

Williams College
Desmond Moss Augustine
Luke M. Connolly
Edward Louis Napoli
George Azhikkakath Pace

Five Questions for Sandro Santagata ’89

The associate professor of pathology at Harvard Medical School and pathologist at Mass General Brigham is doing vital research into cancer treatments and more.



Courtesy of Mass General Brigham

When did you first know you wanted to do scientific research?

I think there were glimpses of it early on. I always think back to maybe the sixth grade, flipping through an encyclopedia and doing a project on the ear and being fascinated by the elaborate structure and by all the things that are hidden inside of us. It’s this beautifully engineered machine, and things have to operate with incredible precision. Then at Regis, I found a way to explore a range of topics with curiosity and to live more deeply with ideas. I learned how to ask questions, stay with difficult problems, and be comfortable not knowing the answer immediately. Regis did not teach me to know all of the answers; rather, I learned not to be afraid of the questions. That is also what excites me about the new STEAM Center — bringing different kinds of minds together so that better questions take shape. So it was a gradual process — being fascinated by biology early on, learning how to ask questions at Regis, and then later finding the dual pathway of science and medicine.

How did you get into pathology?

I remember sitting in the library at Mount Sinai, where I did my MD/Ph.D training, going through a diagnostic pathology textbook and looking at diseases whose names I could barely pronounce, even though I had quite a bit of medical training. It was exhilarating to have that experience and encounter the extraordinary richness of human disease. It was a two-volume book, with generations and generations of observations and scholarship. You could read about patterns of diseases that people had recognized, and underneath those patterns were mechanisms — some understood and many still to be defined.

As a pathologist, you can have an immediate impact on patient care. You can determine whether a lesion is benign or malignant and help guide a person’s therapy. But you can also go deeper, using that same tissue to understand disease and ultimately make people’s lives better through scientific discovery.

Is there a particular breakthrough you’ve worked on that you’re most proud of?

I’m proud of a lot of contributions along the way. In graduate school, we found the genetic basis of an immunodeficiency disorder called Omenn syndrome. It gave me an early glimpse of how biological discovery can improve both diagnosis and classification, and ultimately have an impact on people’s lives.

I’m also particularly proud of our work on rare cancers; not a lot of resources are available to study these diseases. We studied a rare brain tumor and found that it has the same genetic lesion found in melanoma. When we applied drugs developed for melanoma to this rare cancer, we saw dramatic responses. These tumors occur in a very delicate area of the brain where surgery itself can lead to significant complications. Identifying an already FDA-approved systemic therapy that could be repurposed for these patients was very gratifying.

What are you focused on at the moment?

We work pretty intensely in a field called spatial biology. It builds on what we do as pathologists. For over a century, pathology has relied on the idea that information is encoded in the organization of cells and human tissues. We take a small piece of tissue, put a thin section on a glass slide, stain it with dyes, and using a microscope a trained pathologist can recognize what the cells look like, how they’re arranged, and the structures that they form. Much of our diagnosis of cancer and other diseases is based on those patterns.

What’s changing now is that we can take that same tissue used for diagnosis, and, with new techniques that our group helps develop, we can extract deep molecular information without losing the geographical information.

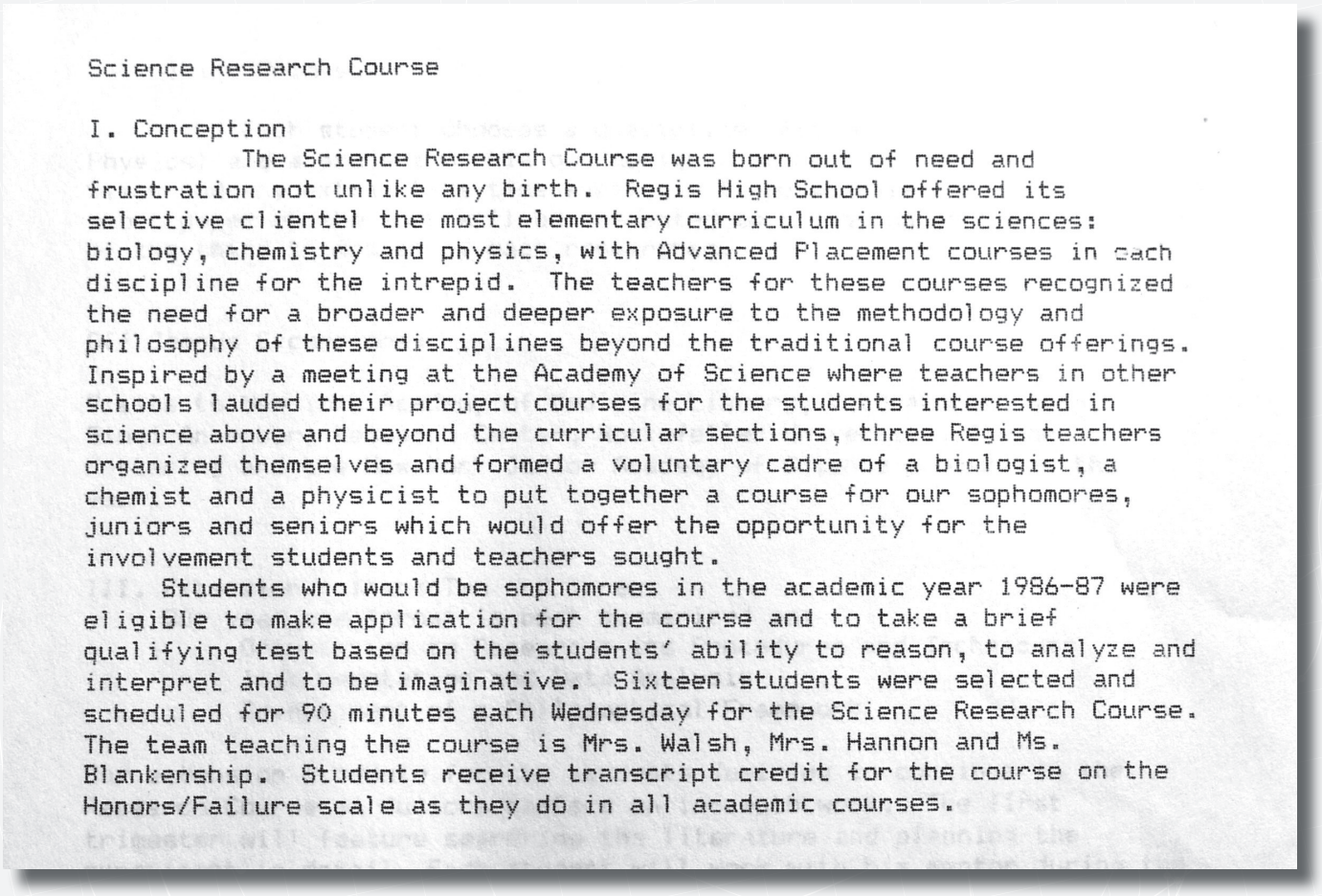
Now we can see tens, even hundreds and thousands of molecules within that same section of tissue and learn about the geographic patterns of cancers — how cells communicate and compete, and how they influence each other, and how these interactions shape tumor evolution.

Machine learning, A.I., and sophisticated computation are turning human tissue into a powerful resource for understanding how diseases happen, how they progress, and what kind of vulnerabilities we can exploit to treat them. But novelty is not the same as progress. The harder question is whether a new technology helps us see something true and valuable, and ultimately do something better for another person. Translating these observations into improvements in patient care is our main focus.

How optimistic are you for the future of cancer research?

I’m very hopeful, because I see the work of my colleagues and many, many others. We’re characterizing the properties of human tissues in ways that were never possible before, and the insights are just getting better and deeper. Those insights are also creating opportunities to detect cancers earlier and even potentially intercept them before they become advanced. Therapies are also advancing — breakthroughs in RNA vaccines, targeted therapeutics, cell-based therapies, and new treatments that deliver therapy more specifically to cancer cells. There has been amazing progress over the last couple of decades, with much more still to do. Looking to the future, there’s such a tremendous opportunity to do good in the world.

From the Archives



Science Research Course

I. Conception

The Science Research Course was born out of need and frustration not unlike any birth. Regis High School offered its selective clientel the most elementary curriculum in the sciences: biology, chemistry and physics, with Advanced Placement courses in each discipline for the intrepid. The teachers for these courses recognized the need for a broader and deeper exposure to the methodology and philosophy of these disciplines beyond the traditional course offerings. Inspired by a meeting at the Academy of Science where teachers in other schools lauded their project courses for the students interested in science above and beyond the curricular sections, three Regis teachers organized themselves and formed a voluntary cadre of a biologist, a chemist and a physicist to put together a course for our sophomores, juniors and seniors which would offer the opportunity for the involvement students and teachers sought.

Students who would be sophomores in the academic year 1986-87 were eligible to make application for the course and to take a brief qualifying test based on the students' ability to reason, to analyze and interpret and to be imaginative. Sixteen students were selected and scheduled for 90 minutes each Wednesday for the Science Research Course. The team teaching the course is Mrs. Walsh, Mrs. Hannon and Ms. Blankenship. Students receive transcript credit for the course on the Honors/Failure scale as they do in all academic courses.

40 YEARS OF SRP Since its founding in 1986 by science teachers Ms. Lynda Blankenship, Mrs. Patricia Hannon, and Mrs. Diane Walsh, the Science Research Project has offered generations of Regis students interested in scientific research the opportunity to investigate projects of their own design. Pictured here is the introduction to a document describing the program's origins and how its first year operated.

REGIS HIGH SCHOOL
DEO ET PATRIAE PIETAS CHRISTIANA EREXIT
55 East 84th Street | New York, NY 10028
ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
S. HACKENSACK, NJ
PERMIT NO. 79

www.regis.org



In June, more than 60 Regis students returned to 84th Street to participate in J-Term courses. Typically held on college campuses between semesters, J-Term allows Regians to delve into interdisciplinary topics outside the framework of the academic year, and occasionally outside of the school building itself. Pictured here are students reading in Central Park as part of Read This NOW, a course taught by Ms. Clair Quaintance and Mr. Christopher Rose.