



## JULIE ZHU '25

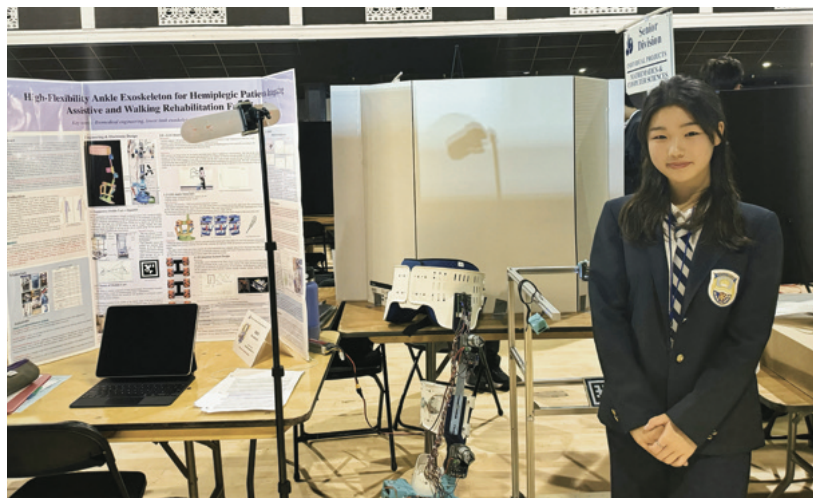
### *Learning to Be Fearless*

In her freshman humanities classroom, Julie Zhu '25 encountered the "ominous feeling" that sometimes accompanies students' introduction to Harkness discussions. "I remember getting a 1 out of 4 early on because I only mustered the courage to speak up in the final five minutes of class," she shared. But she was determined to meet her fear head-on, challenging herself with small, sequential goals to "speak once, then twice, then thrice." With the encouragement of her teachers and peers, she quickly began to thrive. "Turns out, it wasn't that scary after all."

**"I discovered not only the deeper messages behind thriller films, but also the art of crafting horror effects in literature and movies."**

Despite her fear of horror films, Julie's favorite class is Advanced Studies in Gothic and Horror Literature & Culture, where students delve deep into the genre's themes and devices. *Psycho* and *Get Out* especially "left a strong impression" on her.

After steeling her bravery in Webb's humanities classrooms, Julie set herself to supporting others through her scientific ingenuity. She designed a highly flexible ankle joint lower limb exoskeleton that integrates assistive and rehabilitation functions. Her exoskeleton helps hemiplegic patients. Regeneron recognized Julie as a 2025 Science Talent Search Scholar for her project, making her one of the top 300 STEM students in the US.



"Science unravels the mysteries of life, from every atom to every cell," Julie shared. "It's how I make sense of myself and the world, and it holds the power to heal, help, and create a better future."



## SAIRA BHAGAT '25

### *Becoming Better Together*

When preparing her speech for this year's convocation, student body co-president Saira Bhagat '25 felt a serious responsibility: "To me, it was a culmination of my time at Webb and commitment to the school, as well as a valuable opportunity to give advice I would have liked to hear freshman year."



Saira has dedicated her time at Webb to nurturing the community that she loves. Through her four years of involvement in student government, she has learned how to plan fun events that engage her peers, carry on beloved traditions, and reflect the community's growth. "I have realized over the years that being a part of student government is not only about keeping Webb traditions alive but also making changes to support a growing community with diverse interests," said Saira. As Webb entered its first year as one school, student government led the way with spirit, declaring the school year's theme to be **Better Together**.

Even when studying, Saira prefers to be amongst the Webb community. "I love studying with Webbies around me," she said, "knowing I can always take a break or ask questions if I need help." When she manages the girls' soccer team in the winter, she likes to study on the Faculty Field benches, even if it might come with some distractions like running after soccer balls or watching the sunset.



**"Webb cultivates a close community that is always willing and happy to help."**





## GWEN KEITHLEY '27

### *Discovering More*

Gwen Keithley '27 has been interested in paleontology for as long as she can remember. "My oldest memories would be when I was a little kid drawing dinosaurs and visiting the Alf Museum," she shared. "There was some sort of wonder to the ancient rocks and bones that captivated me, and I have had that with me ever since."

Now that Gwen is at Webb, she has the chance to directly contribute to the museum she grew up visiting. Her favorite activity is interacting with the specimens found on Peccary Trips.



Gwen has also found new experiences on the theater stage, starring as Jo March this past fall in Webb's production of *Little Women*. "The thing that excites me most about theater is the ability to become completely immersed within another person's story and character alongside others," she said.

Amid the challenge of balancing all her activities, she delights in the adventure of creative and hands-on learning in classes at Webb. "It's unlike what I had at my old schools," she said. Heading out on class retreats, Unbounded Days, and Peccary Trips have especially been a highlight of her first two years.



"When on the stage, you're not quite yourself anymore, rather a whole new person with a story to continue."



## HANBO XU '25

### *Limitless Opportunities*

Readers might know Hanbo Xu '25 as an award-winning clarinetist, but he has challenged himself to engage with his many passions while at Webb.

"A truly unique thing about Webb is that here, you can truly do anything you want," shared Hanbo Xu '25. "There are no stereotypical high school archetypes: no band kids, no jocks, no debate kids. Everyone can be a variety of different things, and Webb offers the opportunity to pursue a variety of different hobbies and interests without being limited to doing a singular thing."

**"What I've learned [at Webb] has changed the way I see my own identity and the world around me."**

Hanbo has definitely not limited himself to a singular thing while at Webb. In the last year alone, he was the Grand Prize Winner in the 37th Annual Pasadena Showcase House Instrumental Competition, argued

on a national champion debate team, was named a Finalist for *From the Top!* musicians competition, and earned a Semifinalist spot in the 2025 National Merit Scholarship Competition.



Despite the expanse of Hanbo's accomplishments, the highlights of his time at Webb remain the "small moments" he has shared with peers and faculty. "I will miss the people," he said.

The diverse, interesting course offerings of Webb's humanities program inspired Hanbo. "Webb's humanities program has transformed me as a thinker and writer," he said. "Also, what I've learned in classes like Advanced Studies Thesis Seminar and Advanced Studies Creative Non-Fiction has changed the way I see my own identity and the world around me."

