

# OUR MISSION

Published online daily and in magazine form twice a year, *The Talon* strives to be an innovative student magazine that is entertaining, intellectually provocative, and visually engaging. We are conscious of the responsibility of writing and publishing, and we seek to create a dynamic magazine that is worthy of its readers. We show respect for our readers by exposing them to a variety of perspectives. Ultimately, *The Talon* seeks to bring Graded to the world and the world to Graded.

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# SUBMISSIONS

*The Talon* wants to hear from you! We encourage submissions and ideas for articles from all members of the Graded community. We publish in English, Portuguese, French, and Spanish. We reserve the right to edit submissions for length and clarity. The opinions expressed in the articles are those of the writers and not necessarily of *The Talon*. For this reason, we do not accept anonymous submissions. Send submissions and ideas to [talon@graded.br](mailto:talon@graded.br).

# About the Cover

As is tradition, the *Talon* staff's last cover every school year, and the last one I am responsible for in my cover artist role, includes pictures of all the graduating seniors, including myself. This edition's cover features each of us at least twice, once on the back (where the *Talon* staff are emphasized with a sepia color background), and at least once distorted on the front (although some people are covered by the "G", sorry/your welcome). The idea came when I was trying to show my friend how to freeze a computer with Photoshop and realized my computer could actually handle what I was doing. From a distance the ensemble is pattern-like, but up close the faces are pretty funny, some even recalling the face from Edvard Munch's painting *The Scream* (at least according to Ms. Pfeiffer). This cover's creation was a struggle because I was testing the limits of my computer, forcing me to stay organized and exercise patience.

— Alejandro Torres

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You hold in your hand the commemorative Senior edition of the magazine, but since January, *The Talon* has been online ([gradedtalon.com](http://gradedtalon.com))—please bookmark us. And don't forget to follow us on Twitter (@[gradedtalon](https://twitter.com/gradedtalon))!



# Why I Hate Myself for Hating *Fargo*

*And why you should care*

Adam Hunt Fertig

**F***argo* is one of the best movies to ever grace this good Earth. That's not up for debate, and I will fight anyone who says otherwise (or, you know, at least give them a stern look).

When I heard that FX was making a new miniseries based on the movie, I was pretty skeptical. The fact that Martin Freeman, of *Sherlock* fame, would play a Midwesterner also worried me. Still, I had an unspoken duty to start watching the show, and after finishing the first episode I was actually pleasantly surprised. Modern television's production values are ridiculously high, and it shows—the episode featured some gorgeous cinematography and top-notch editing. The writer, Noah Hawley, recreated Minnesotans' passive-aggressiveness to a t, deftly peppering the dialogue with “aw, jeez,” “you betcha,” and other mannerisms. The cast members fit their roles like home-knit gloves, and Martin Freeman actually managed to hide his British accent.

In short, the show is a witty, competent, respectful homage to the film. But it isn't the *Fargo* I know and love. It's great, but in my mind it will never step out of the shadow of the original. This thought bothered me. Am I really so close-minded that I'm unforgivingly biased towards something just because it came first?

As humans, we're hardwired to dislike change. Our rubric for reality is based on what we already know. As psychologist Norman H. Anderson argues in his essay *Foundations of Information Integration Theory*, we tend to link objects and experiences to emotions. We do this to be able to mentally process them, but it also means that we become strongly attached to what's around us. That's why the Coke/Pepsi rivalry is so fiery. It's why you smile when you smell lemons, and it's why your uncle keeps thinking back to that damn fumble in the last minute of his last football game. We don't just like the things we like; we trust them, believe in them, worship them.

The author Milan Kundera explains this much better in his novel *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* through the word “kitsch.” I can't quote his exact definition because it involves some well-placed profanity, but essentially it is simplifying things to be aesthetically pleasing. Kitsch can be positive or negative, but it is always poetic and never boring. In a kitschy world the rain is always beautiful, people are either madly in love or heartbroken, and they eat and sleep for posterity only. Again, humans love to think this way. Seeing the world with all its tedious flaws is enough to drive some of the novel's characters to their deaths (and probably send their accomplices through the wood chipper, too).

However, living in a state of brand-name kitsch (and, by extension, egocentrism) doesn't sound very fulfilling. That's the topic of a 2005 commencement speech the author David Foster Wallace delivered at Kenyon College, entitled “This is Water.” He starts out by warning the graduates-to-be about how menial a lot of adult routine is. There's a lot of waiting in grocery store lines, he says, and a lot of petty frustration. What Wallace later emphasizes, though, is the importance of choosing to appreciate these unfamiliar and uncomfortable experiences. According to him, this ability to choose is “the real value of a real education, which has almost nothing to do with knowledge and everything to do with simple awareness.” He doesn't reject kitsch; in fact, he points out the value of “banal, everyday platitudes” in adult life. His advice is simply to use education to approach life's problems and possibilities with an open mind.

That's where Graded comes in. When the seniors go off to college in a few months, they'll probably face some radical changes in environment, whether they're geographic, academic, or gastronomical. And, as I said above, it's tempting to reject anything new, especially since a lot of it will be uninteresting. In my opinion, the best skill an elite institution like Graded can teach its students is how to work past that urge. That's the power to embrace change and brace for the mundane, and I think it's incredibly valuable. After all, I have a sneaking sensation that life isn't all it's cracked up to be. And that's just fine. Because what makes either *Fargo* great is how it's able to tell stories in quirky, gloriously drab detail. In a world of constant remakes, reboots, makeovers and changes of management, perspective is everything. It's the only way to keep up.

As all you East Coast-bound seniors trudge through the snow, realizing that what you maybe thought was picturesque turns out to be a pain in the neck, consider perspective. Consider your gift of giving meaning. Armed with that, you can take on the dragons at the end of the map, the skeletons in your closet, and the Babel-esque stack of papers on your desk waiting to be photocopied. Just watch out for those Midwestern serial killer types. Boy, aren't those guys kooky, don't ya know. 🐼

Sources: [gizmodo.com](http://gizmodo.com), [youtube.com](http://youtube.com), [avclub.com](http://avclub.com)

# The Highs and Lows of Graded

*Reflections from a departing student*

Daniel Almeida

In my thirteen years of being a Graded student, some things I have stuck to my mental list of the best and worst of the Graded experience. On one end of the spectrum, there are events and aspects of student life that are unappealing and straight-up infuriating in that “love-to-hate” kind of way. On the other, there are the activities, people and places here on campus that we love.

**Graded Technology:** We all know the dreaded feeling of having to rely on the campus printers or computers for an extremely important assignment. Yes, I’m looking at you, faulty internet system that disconnects at least once every day, and you too, primitive printing system plagued with errors, paper jams, and witchcraft that prevents me from successfully printing. You are responsible for the many tears, exasperated sighs and angry growls that can be heard around any technology hub here on campus.

**Cafeteria Food:** Stop complaining. The food is the best and you know it. Skimming over the April menu, I see a variety of high-quality dishes that range from the rare *feijoada* to the classic *filé de peixe na chapa*. I see gourmet soups and salads, expertly cooked by the kind cafeteria staff. Don’t get me started on the desserts; pumpkin pie, apple crumble and the delicious *arroz doce* are dishes I look forward to every month.

**International Baccalaureate :** For eleven years of my education I had a strong belief that the Welsh were a caring, humble and kind folk dedicated to the good of humanity. I was mistaken. Now, don’t get me wrong, the International Baccalaureate does create a student that is “knowledgeable, principled, open-minded, caring, balanced, reflective, a risk-taker, a thinker, an inquirer, and a communicator.” But do the ends justify the means? Will eighteen-hour workdays, stress, sleepless nights, and endless tears create the perfect student? Is it even this bad? That will be left for you to decide. I, for one, think it was worth it. I’d probably do it all over again; the IB isn’t that bad, really.

**Lower School Playground:** I cannot say this enough: the Lower School playground is an amazing place. Younger me would have never believed that the playground could have gotten any better, but the Graded 2020 Project has seen to it that young students were given a space to have fun, be creative, and enjoy, while denying entrance to upper-classmen. With its assortment of swings, slides, and sandboxes, the LS playground is a prime hangout that every student should frequent at least once during their time at Graded.

**Stress-Level Surveys:** “Wow! That survey we took last semester on stress really paid off. I can definitely see how my life has

improved,” said no one ever. But really, who can forget the barrage of stress-related surveys that we took over the past couple of years or how they amounted to very little. I’ll be honest, I’m glad the administration took the time to investigate an issue that is very important to many students. But come on, administration, step up your game. I would love to see some sort of payoff.

**Sleep:** As one IB Physics student awkwardly phrased it, sleep is the best. The average Graded student is very familiar with six or seven hours of sleep. With so much on our plates, of course, I’d gladly exchange an hour of sleep for CAS, the Extended Essay or the twenty other activities that we have to plan for in a typical week. However, even when we have the opportunity to get some much-needed sleep, we then choose to stay up and watch a funny video on YouTube.

**Senioritis:** I have mixed feelings about this one. On one hand, I’ve been told of the allure of senioritis, a world where homework matters very little and schoolwork is just a laughing matter. On the other, it’s not like the course load ever slows down, so why should you? I’ll give this one a “try at your own risk” disclaimer. I won’t be held accountable for your good or bad decisions.

**Cops and robbers in the Art Center:** As a disclaimer, I do not condone nor am I suggesting that a student do any of the following. With that said, three words: Cops. And. Robbers. Yes! I’m talking about the common after-school-twenty-people-no-rules-last-man-standing-wins Cops and Robbers game we used to play in Middle School. Nothing was as fun as hiding in one of the many rooms, closets or crawl spaces that could be found in the Art Center. My only regret is that, after the game was met with repression from the administration (can’t really blame them), the games just sort of fizzled out. Whatever happened to that, guys?

And finally...

**Saudade:** Maybe you miss a class, a relationship, a dessert, an activity or any of the hundreds of things you can feel *saudade* for, but during your time at Graded, you are bound to feel *saudade* for something. Nothing beats surrendering to that elated state of *saudade* and nostalgia for what once was. And so I remind everyone to try feeling *saudade* for something at least once; it’s worth it. I know that I will miss all of the friends and memories I’ve made during my time at Graded. I think I’ll even miss the faulty printers, the sleepless nights, and the comforting cafeteria food. 🍌

# The Worst Thing About Senior Year

*Not sure, but it is probably self-doubt*

Annie Groth

The common conception that college is going to be so difficult often overshadows how tough the process of getting into a university is. I am not referring to trying to maintain a 98.3 average, doing at least eight different extra-curricular activities or trying to maintain a leadership position in at least seven of them. No, what I mean is that moment when you first set up an account for the common app to that afternoon when you receive an email with the heading “your dream school admissions decision is Schrodinger’s cat—you’re either in or out!”

The biggest problem with this process—or rather, all of senior year—is self-doubt. It began at first with what I thought were simple prompts: writing supplements. But somewhere in-between asking me what a mantis shrimp really saw and what #YOLO even is, I began to ask myself the big question: *who am I?* The more colleges kept asking me that question, the less it seemed I knew how to answer it. I am... Annie Groth, right? A girl. Seventeen. Brazilian. American. Curly-haired. Near-sighted.

Other than that, it seemed like I knew nothing else about myself. I was asked to answer in creative ways what my general thought-process was, what were some of the most important things in my life, whether I would continue to work with them in college, and how pivotal moments in my life affected me. Though I consider myself a reflective person, I seldom ponder *me*. I do not ask myself on a daily basis what makes up my identity. And, I most certainly do not separate those characteristics into good and bad according to what I think a college rep thinks.

Yet for about eight months I judged myself. Admittedly, I also judged myself according to others. “Will admissions officer X think this will be good to say?” “Should I have taken the same IB courses as admitted-student Y?” “Is genius-person going to have a better essay than mine?”

What I failed to realize at the time was that the answers to those questions do not matter. It should not matter what an admissions officer thinks about my essay on my mother, but rather that my choice reflects who I care about. If I had taken the same courses as person Y, would I even have enjoyed them? And finally, I guarantee that somewhere in the world there is someone with a better essay than genius-person’s or mine.

Because really it is not just about the essay. Really, it may not even be about you! If there is one thing I’ve learned it is that in high school and in life you may be the ripest, juiciest peach on Earth—but there will always be someone who hates the taste of peach.

Even as I write this, though, I cannot rid myself of self-doubt. Now that the college admissions process is over I still find myself asking whether the university I am choosing is right for me, if my dorm is going to be the best one, or even if the program I was accepted in will be the best fit. At some points during my day, I am absolutely convinced I have found the perfect place for me, while at others I picture myself going to another school.

Finally, I have come to the realization that self-doubt is natural and permanent. If you do not doubt some of the decisions you are making, especially those in senior year, then I would worry about you being too sure of yourself. If you have no insecurities, how can you improve? It would be hard to change if you never doubted any of your decisions. The

wonderful thing, though, is that that doubt could lead you to the right place. At least for me, if it were not for my doubt of looking into a university a friend was accepted to, I would not have ended up going to where I am going now.

Therefore, embrace self-doubt. For the incoming senior-classes, I hope that they are completely unsure of themselves. I encourage them to challenge their own decisions, never be able to fully answer the question “who am I?” Try to keep in mind that self-doubt does not stop existing after you decide on the college you will attend. It will remain with you throughout your life. But when you are doubting yourself too much, take a step back and admire your talents. Embrace the good. Accept the bad. Doubt yourself in order to recreate who you are. ❶

***“But somewhere in-between asking me what a mantis shrimp really saw and what #YOLO even is, I began to ask myself the big question: who am I?”***

# Worth it

*Sixteen years of memories*

Mendel Schwarz

I do not remember arriving at Graded for the first time. Geralda probably greeted me with a smile, picked me up, and handed me over to Isa, who made me feel at home with a warm embrace. I probably started wondering why my mother left and stared for half an hour at Sofia, who sat next to me on the car pickup bench wondering why I could not take my eyes off of her or anyone else around me. At that age, I did not realize that my brothers and I were going to the same school. For me kindergarten and high school were two completely different things. At that age, I did not realize that my mother was continuing a twenty-eight-year-long relationship with Graded that is about to end. Everything was so strange, so different and that was all I could think about. While drooling, of course.

A couple of years later, when all my brothers had graduated from Graded and I had learned to spell my name, Mom asked me a question that could have altered the course of my life: “Do you want to change schools?” Simple and unwarranted. You can guess what my answer was. However, with little less than a month left before I graduate, I wonder whether that was the *right* answer.

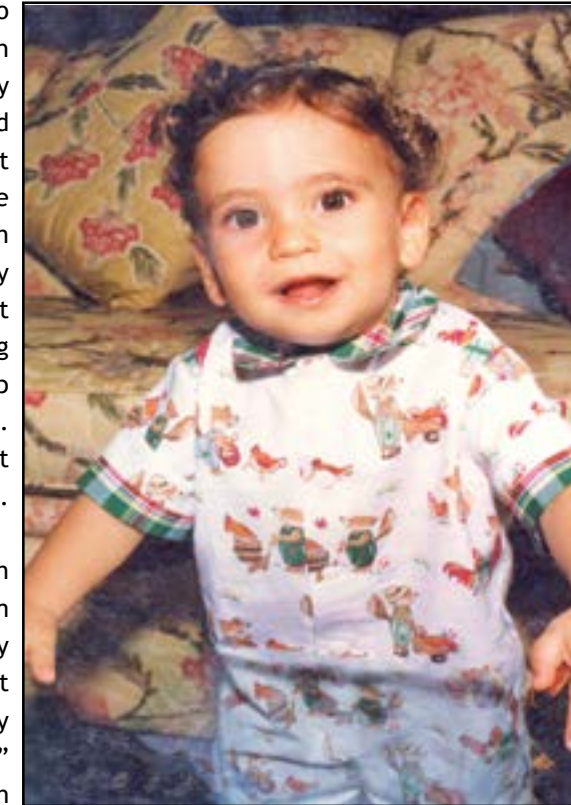
My eyes skim the classroom as I write these words. Sitting next to me is Helio, with a beard as big as a rabbi’s. Looking to my left, I see Luke, Alfredo, Gabi, and Nabila conversing about something I cannot quite decipher. Graded’s allure is not just in brochures and admissions packages. It is right in front of my eyes. It is the reason why I have adored these past sixteen years. It is the reason why I made the right decision back then.

People are what kept me at Graded. The prospect of a harsh academic curriculum that kept my brother and sisters awake at night did not entice me; not having recess scared me; and college only became a priority a year ago. People kept me here, but many did not stay for graduation. Friends come and go at Graded. The thought of waving good-bye as someone I care about leaves this place gives me goosebumps.

The thought of me leaving paralyzes me. The thought only occurred to me months ago as I sighed in relief at the final click of the “submit application” button. Many of the faces that made the last fifteen and a half years special might disappear for another fifteen years, or forever. Still, they made my experience worth it. The people did. They created the memories that I will always hold on to. These recollections, many of which I am not proud of, still constitute who I am today. They extend past the school’s walls and return with feverish intensity as graduation approaches. Sitting in the auditorium staring at a crowd of caps and gowns ahead of me, I am sure that names written in flames on Max’s backyard, tumbling bicycles and golf carts, and nights slept on the streets of Laranjeiras will all return accompanied by faces that I grew up to love.

I have always taken things for granted and never given any of it much thought. As a half-meter tall elementary schooler, the years ahead seemed like an terrifying, over-simplified progression: you have recess on the field in Elementary School, you search for couples making out on the bleachers in Middle School, and in High School you take your own girlfriend there. I have witnessed a part of Graded’s history and it has seen all of mine.

Leaving is hard, but it is made easier by the certainty that decade-old bonds will remain. We may leave Graded, but it will never leave us. Ugh, cliché, I know. I hate it when the truth is oversimplified and repeated so many times you want to barf; nonetheless, I am thankful, because going out into the world without the compass that is this school would be impossible. The people that this school harbors have given me some of the greatest years I will ever live. And I am ready for four more. I hope that this time, at my new home, I won’t stand and drool. ❶



Mendel Schwarz

## On Being a Senior

An interview with seniors Matt Dias and Jakob Naegeli

Andrea Ferreira

**Who are you as a senior? What have you done as a senior?**

**Matt Dias:** Lately I've come to the conclusion that people don't change—they evolve. So I'd say that I am, in essence, the same person that I was as a freshman, but I've evolved and learned through the experiences I've had throughout these four years. What have I done? Nothing big. I just ... you know ... got into college. [Editor's Note: *Matt Dias will be attending New York University in the fall*]. But in all seriousness, as a senior, I have a better idea of what I want to pursue after leaving Graded and what will make me happy in the long-term. While I haven't reached the answer to this enigma, at least it's a step in the right direction.

**Jakob Naegeli:** As a senior I think I'm a friendly guy that has successfully brought his high school career to a healthy close. This entire year I've worked as hard as possible to reach my end goal, university and higher education, while trying not to lose myself entirely in the academic side of life. I believe I've been able to maintain old friendships while cultivating new ones this year and have, for the most part, kept a decent balance between my life in and outside of school.

**What is being a senior like?**

**MD:** Bittersweet. It's nice to think that I'm going to go somewhere different—a change of scenery is always nice, especially after spending many years in the same place. The bitter part comes from leaving behind a part of my life and a part of myself without knowing what I'll find where I'm headed. But then again, it wouldn't be interesting any other way.

**JN:** Being a senior is both a great deal of fun and hard work at the same time. As a part of the oldest group of students in the entire school I find that I've gained a lot of confidence in

reaching out to make new friendships before I ship off to the United States. That's always something weighing on my mind, the fact that I'll be face to face with very few of my friends after graduation, but that's no reason to stop talking to new people. Senior year is also the time when the workload starts demanding the most attention from you. The Internal Assessments really pile up while all you can think about is a countdown until the next day off. Finally, I find that I'm going to bed earlier and earlier. As a freshman I never understood why my senior sister would go to sleep so early when she could stay up for as long as she wanted—after four years of demanding work, I get it now.

**Knowing what you know now would you rather be a senior or a freshman?**

**MD:** Now that I think about it, this is a bad question. For me, there is no “rather.” I would not change the place and time I'm in for anything or anyone—not now, not ever.

So, as a freshman, I would have rather been a freshman because it is where I needed to be; as a senior, I would rather be where I am because it is where I need to be. Things are only worth doing and experiencing because they're ephemeral.

**JN:** Although there is a huge amount of work that comes with it and I don't enjoy the prospect of “the end” of high school, I would definitely prefer to be a senior. I don't think I quite realized the scope of the responsibility being a senior came with until our high school trip to Recife, where we literally spent an entire day on the beach doing pretty much whatever we wanted. Ms. Stoneman even lets us call her by her first name because we needed to get used to that after school ends. In addition, my mom wasn't knocking on my door anymore to make sure that I was finishing up my homework before playing video games (not as often, that is). Earning this much responsibility and respect has made me really enjoy this year the most out of my last four. 🗨️



Compiled by Adam Hunt Fertig

## I Am More Than My SAT Score

My thoughts on the college application process

Clara Bezerra

**E**mpathy used to be a central part of my character. For as long as I can remember, putting myself in someone else's shoes was my natural reaction to situations, perhaps even a defense mechanism to avoid being disappointed in others. So, a few months ago, when people asking for advice started to make me want to rip my ears off, I knew something had changed. I realized that these feelings I initially couldn't recognize were the first stages of an absolutely pessimistic outlook on life. I felt I like was much more like David Lurie in *Disgrace* than I wanted to admit—if anyone were to analyze the thoughts I didn't voice, they would probably want to arrest me or put me in an insane asylum. What bothered me the most, though, was that I couldn't identify what had caused such a drastic change in my personality.

After April 1, when I heard back from the last college I applied to, I had the opportunity and time to reflect on the past months of my life and try to find the empathy I had lost. While doing this, I increasingly understood what it was that led me to value the wrong things for a while. It was all the questions that threw me off: “What's your top choice?” “How many times did you edit your college essay?” “What did you get on your SAT? Isn't that too low for the colleges you want to get into?” “Did you try hard enough?” It was the offhand remarks: “This application process must be so hard for you...I mean your chances must be so small since everyone in your grade is smart.” “If you get into Dartmouth it's only because your brother is there.” And the deadlines, deadlines. I let the pressure of college applications get to me. I developed a warped sense of personal worth. I thought that my value was determined by my SAT score, by how impressive my GPA sounded, by my ability to collect labels like “Top 10” or “Ivy League student.” I couldn't have been more wrong. I was straying from what I believed in to reach an objective that I only made my own because it seemed to be what everyone else was doing. It took a while for me to realize that, truthfully,

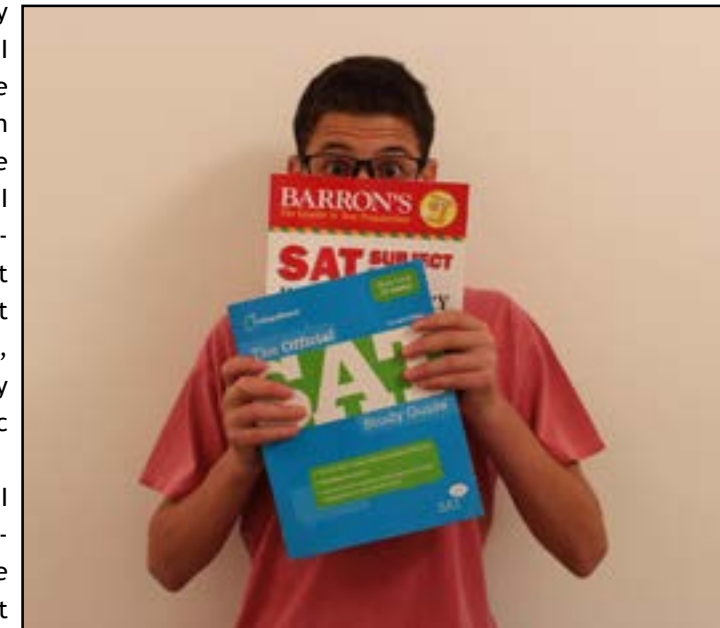
my success at college won't be determined by which college I go to, but by what I make of the experience.

A couple weeks ago I traveled to the United States to visit the schools to which I was accepted. Although my decision is not final, the college I was the most drawn to is the lowest-ranked of the three. This shows me that a high-ranked school may not be the best choice for everyone; general rankings cannot determine which college is best for someone *individually*. Looking past the name of a college and objectively analyzing whether or not it meets one's interests is extremely important when deciding where to go.

I was so busy worrying about my failure to meet the standards of an Ivy League throughout the past year, I didn't realize that I couldn't care less about a ridiculous ranking. After all, who was I trying to impress by working to get into difficult schools that have nothing to do with me? Not my parents, who told me they'd be

proud of me even if I chose to go to a school that isn't even ranked. Not the rest of my family, who loves me unconditionally. Not my true friends, who wouldn't judge my worth by labels. Not my teachers, not myself. I was trying to impress people who didn't really matter.

So many words get thrown around as if nothing else in the world matters. PhD, BA, BS, MBA, EdD, MD, JD. I must have heard each of those acronyms at least twice in the past months. You know what they *stand* for, I thought to myself, but do you know what they *mean*? I wish I had developed this awareness before I lost sight of who I am. I wish I had received a warning before plunging headfirst into scholarly mud. So, here's my advice: don't give into shallow competition—you are more than any of the numbers admissions officers use to judge your application. Giving up your identity and your happiness for a label isn't worth it. 🗨️



Rafaela Grabert Goldlust

# Let's See How Far We've Come

*A self-inspecting retrospective*

Felipe Marques

Way back in my Freshman Year, we had to write an essay that had voice in it. It could be anything that would completely describe how you were feeling right there and then and that sounded like you. I decided to write about how I was feeling about the fact that after twelve years living abroad, I was finally returning to Brazil. I even had the gall to compare myself to Caesar, though I dismissed any criticism that I was inflating my ego (yeah, right). To further the analogy, I said that São Paulo was my “city of invincible Gauls,” a little nod to Asterix, and said that it was going to be a difficult challenge—I kind of forgot that over the course of the Asterix comics Caesar never defeated Asterix (whoops). Now that I’m a Senior, I’ve asked myself: was I right?

Well, I can’t say I was wrong. Re-adapting to my patria mãe wasn’t the easiest task; after so much time abroad, I couldn’t quite identify with the people and the culture.

Sure, I used to visit every June, but there’s a huge difference between occasionally visiting a place and living there. Once you live there, you see everything about the place, the good and the bad, and that’s exactly what happened. I saw São Paulo not “as it really is” but more like “as it is through my eyes.” Even though I was born here, even though I came back so many times, living in São Paulo still proved to be completely new to me. The funk music, the protests, the political turmoil, all of it was unusual—it was my country, yet it felt as foreign as France or the US did the first time I moved to those countries.

The IB program was also unexpected. Sure, it was similar to American system that I was more or less used to, but it caught me off guard. CAS gave me a reason to come back to school every day, my grades dropped quite a bit, I started actually stressing out over college... It seemed like the challenge I had written about back in 9th grade had finally caught up to me. Time and again I thought I’d be completely

defeated by what was before me, yet through sheer effort, I believe I managed to cope with my situation. I can’t say I surpassed it, though. I took some hits. Actually, I took a lot of hits, but somehow I managed to get to the end somewhat unscathed.

Finally, I guess that coming back here was essential to see that here really wasn’t my place. I don’t mean this in a bad way - I still really love Brazil and São Paulo - but in



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the end it only took me a moment back in my home country to see that I actually fit better elsewhere. Maybe it seems like I just think the grass is greener on the other side, but I have years of experience outside of Brazil to be able to say that honestly, this isn’t my place. I wouldn’t be able to fit here if I stayed. I bet I’ll probably return someday, sometime when it’ll be completely necessary, but at this point in time I personally believe that I would not be able to

re-adapt well if I stayed to live and study in Brazil. By choosing to study abroad I feel like I’m giving myself some closure. I’m ending a huge phase of my life where my life began, and now it’s time to move on to other enterprises, to other places. I guess that’s why I chose a college in a city I’ve never been to - if I want to experience something new, it has to be 100% new, somewhere I’ve never set foot, a truly unexplored land for me.

I guess through all these convoluted phrases and ridiculous metaphors I’ve been trying to convey how I feel after all this: confused and sad. That said, I’m somehow glad that it happened and that I managed to reach the finish line. It’s been four years of Brazil, São Paulo, the IB and High School, and I believe that while it was unique to say the least, the time has come to move on. 🗨️

# To Eagles Leaving the Nest

*Advice from some Talon alumni*

Clara Bezerra

Throughout the months of April and May, some members of The Talon decided to hunt down previous staff members and coerce them into telling us what they wish they had known going into their freshmen year of college. Those who didn’t have time for us faced serious consequences. Just kidding, this is only partially true; let’s just say you should count yourself lucky for not being in The Talon’s hit list. Whether or not you will be going to college this year, we hope you can take advantage of this valuable advice.

**Larissa Chern:** The most important advice I could give to an incoming college freshman is to keep an open mind. You’ll meet so many different people in college who might behave in ways you are not used to, say things you would never say, or stand up for something you would never support. But these people might turn out to be amazing friends if you let them. Step out of your comfort zone and be nice to everyone. Don’t judge. And if you are nervous about this upcoming change in your life, don’t be. Know that no one is ready for college—you’ll notice that during the first few weeks of class. All you have to do is make the most out of it and have a positive attitude.



blog.chegg.com

**Victor Lee:** After being rejected from my top universities last year, I chose to go to UBC. Though Vancouver is an amazing city and UBC is a top school, something was missing. I knew that UBC’s colors did not really blend with mine. I tried to deal with this, doing my best to adapt, and learn how to love UBC. But after months in Vancouver, I decided I had to go live my dream and transfer to another school. This turned out to be 1) more common than expected, and 2) absolutely one of the best decisions I’ve made so far. In the last instance, I approached professors for a recommendation letter and did my

best to rocket my grades. I finally got an acceptance letter to NYU. Now I feel like I’m home. People deal with adapting in different ways, and they’re all valid—the next step after senior year is one of the biggest challenges in life. My advice? Stay true to yourself. Don’t give up on your dreams and seize every opportunity you have to accomplish your goals. Cliché, but true.

**Julia Greenwald:** Don’t be afraid to get involved and put yourself out there. College is different from high school, especially

Graded, because you don’t come in with a reputation that precedes you, like “good at soccer, great leader, talented musician.” No one knows who you are and you need to start from scratch. Don’t be afraid to make friends, especially American friends. Rush

Greek Life if you’re interested; don’t let stereotypes keep you from it. If you know it’s not for you, don’t let peer pressure force you into it. Play intramural sports—you are good enough. Sign up for clubs you find interesting—you have nothing to lose (if you don’t like them, you just stop showing up at meetings). And don’t be afraid of having to prove yourself—if you want a position in a club you like one day, you have to work for it. Show up at meetings, lead a project or event and get to know people so that when the time comes to reach for a leadership position, people know you are trustworthy. While all four years of college are unique, your freshman year will set the tone for the rest of your experience. Have fun and don’t be afraid. It will be the best year of your life!

**Kevin Wolfson:** Buy a dictionary. People say big words in college, and I feel dumb sometimes. 🗨️

# Candy, Colored Pencils, and Apartheid

A life lesson

Mariana Lepecki

**P**rompt: *Some students have a background or story that is so central to their identity that they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.*

It is not usual for fifth graders to rebel, but deprive them of candy or colored pencils and you might ignite an elementary revolution. Although a spark of insubordination conflicted with my fifth grade goody-goody nature, it was all that I needed in order to comprehend the injustice of racism.

Studying at the American International School of Johannesburg, I had the opportunity to learn about the country's harsh history of racial segregation during its Apartheid era. Perhaps "learning" is an understatement, for the lesson that my fifth grade teacher crafted went far beyond the average classroom experience.

Mr. Martin decided to randomly appoint new ethnicities to everyone in class and have us embody them for an entire week. Our first assignment was to design a poster representing our new group. As a member of the "whites," I was granted a selection of pencils of every color imaginable and various containers of glitter begging to be sloppily splashed on poster paper. However, as I looked around, I realized that the same privilege was not extended to other classmates. Those embodying "coloreds" were simply supplied with a box of markers, while "blacks" received a regular pencil and were told to find the rest of their materials in our trash.

The stinging pairs of eyes aimed at my direction, in addition to the guilt bubbling like acid inside my stomach, hit me hard. What did they expect me to do—share? I couldn't just go against Mr. Martin's orders... he was my *teacher*.

My classmate's jealousy and indignation only intensified with every piece of candy and extra recess time only my group was privileged to receive. As the week passed, the line between simulation and reality became less defined, and tension heightened. Never before had I been so enraged with social barriers; never before had I been so afraid to look directly at

the rest of my classmates.

Reluctant to accept Mr. Martin's "gifts" any longer, my group and I decided to take matters into our own hands. Distributing our leftover candy as a symbol of conciliation, we persuaded the rest of the class to join our rebellious schemes, founding the Kids Against Apartheid Association.

Thus, on the final day of the activity, it was with shaking voices and fire in our hearts that we stormed into our classroom demanding racial equality—and it was with complete shock that we observed Mr. Martin's eyes well with tears within minutes of our revolution, exclaiming that he had never been prouder of his students. Our microcosmic apartheid was finally over.

Though this simulation obviously provided only a glimpse of the Apartheid era, it enabled me to comprehend the indignation that led the African National Congress to rebel against white supremacy for over forty years. More significantly, it allowed me to realize that rules and ideologies sometimes need to be challenged to ensure justice, whether in a fifth-grade classroom or in an entire nation. That's why I never regretted my decision of standing up against my teacher, even if that meant the end of my "white privileges."

There is an ancient Bantu concept that I now hold dear to my heart: *Ubuntu*, in the words of Nelson Mandela, means "that we are human only through the humanity of other human beings." Today, when I see protests in places like Greece, Egypt and even in my own country, Brazil, I recall both these words and my fifth-grade experience. Though I may not truly know what it's like to live through social, economic or religious conflicts, I can use what I have learned to better understand these diverse voices that yearn for change. Thus, as I embark on a new era of my life, I see myself not as a revolutionary, but as someone who understands the importance of speaking up even if my voice shakes, as well as the beauty of empathy and human connection. 🗣️



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# My Life as a Six-Year-Old Man-Child

A college essay

Adam Hunt Fertig

**P**rompt: *Discuss an accomplishment or event, formal or informal, that marked your transition from childhood to adulthood within your culture, community, or family.*

I transitioned into adulthood at age six. That may seem a bit young for a coming-of-age, but I was a strange kid (too much PBS and organic ice cream will do that). I was so pensive and levelheaded that my relatives joked that I was born old and have been getting more immature as time goes on. My transition into adulthood came in the form of a question I asked my parents at the dinner table: "Which is stronger, God or Grabbity?" I meant gravity, but I thought it was called "grabbity" because it grabs people and pulls them down to earth. To their credit, my parents weren't really that surprised by the question. They'd lived through six years of my quirks, and for a kid who'd spent four months carrying a spatula with him at all times, this was pretty standard fare.

The question really bugged me, though. From my six-year-old point of view, everything had a category. A faithful *Thomas the Tank Engine* fan, I knew that a train was the sum of its nameable parts, and damn it, I could name them all. More importantly, conflicts had clear winners and losers. I knew that in a fight, Batman would beat Superman and a giraffe would beat a wolverine. This God vs. Grabbity showdown was trickier, though. My Jewish preschool had offered some strong arguments in favor of the Lord, arguments that were supported (although from a different denomination) by my libertarian great-aunt. On the other hand, my Unitarian Sunday school had advised me to embrace the mystery, and my chemist neighbor, to whom I directed my science questions, assured me that it was gravity that had more influence.

This bout of dinner table existentialism was the climax of a particularly inquisitive couple of weeks. I read a lot; so much, in fact, that I had begun to narrate my life. To try to

somehow channel this, a few weeks prior I had submitted a book for a *Reading Rainbow* competition. This 15-page debut, *What Life is All About*, won the state prize for kindergarten writing. I had spent forever curating those pages, wondering what events really mattered, but just when I thought I had figured it out, God and grabbity came along and kept me guessing. Apparently some questions didn't have clear-cut, Lego-shaped answers.

I know that a transition into adulthood usually takes place between the ages of thirteen and eighteen, but honestly, I can't think of any landmark event in that time frame. As a kid who's spent over half his life overseas, my community and culture aren't rooted anywhere, so there's nothing to grow into. I've never had a bar mitzvah, driver's license or graduation (unless you count eighth grade promotion, which I don't). My most recent formal rite of passage was birth. Instead, since both my parents are teachers, in my family adulthood comes through inquisitiveness. We've hauled our wooden dinner table from continent to continent like snails, and use mealtime as a hub of knowledge. Our discussions over spaghetti are more intense than any seminar I've ever attended. Once you can hold your own in the dinner table crossfire in an adult way, that's how you're treated. I proved myself with my God/Grabbity dilemma.

I now have an almost unhealthy curiosity. Pure academics is just the tip of that iceberg: I want to know how the world works, all of it. Curiosity is what led me away from safe, interlocking answers and towards real life. That one dinner conversation at age six sparked many more, and to this day I spout ideas over the table's oak surface. I've gotten taller and less obsessed with trains, but I've never stopped yearning to learn. That question was the event that put me on my adult quest for meaning. A quest to understand something or other starting with G. 🗣️



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# The Friendship Circle

Learning from failure

Pooja Singhi

**P**rompt: Recount an incident or time when you experienced failure. How did it affect you, and what lessons did you learn?

“Ouch!”

I felt his nails scratch my skin and then the searing pain. His screams filled the room around me, and he bolted out of the music room into the hallway. Clutching my arm to stop the bleeding, I chased him. With the help of Mushki, the adult supervisor, Rohit spent the next two hours rolling on scooters in the gym. And when his mom came to pick him up, I forced myself to smile and told her what a pleasure it was to be his buddy at summer camp, one of the many activities for children with special needs at the Friendship Circle.

I walked home. Got a Band-Aid. And then sat in my room, sobbing. Every morning I got up at 6 a.m., made my lunch, and drove on a dirt road to a big white bus. Then I took Rohit everywhere from the swimming pool to the art museum to the public library to the ice cream shop. I apologized to a workman when Rohit jumped onto his tractor at a local water park. I picked over 300 Lego pieces off the ground when Rohit threw the robotic lizard I had made for him at the wall. And, for what? To be scratched and yelled at? No “thank you.” No “sorry.” Nothing. I never wanted to go there again.

Still as furious the next morning, I told Mushki that I was sick and did not go to the Friendship Circle. I went out to eat, watched TV, read a little. I was blinded by my anger towards Rohit, so I never actually reflected on how I felt and what I *should* have done.

A couple days later, it was the last day of camp. Since I was moving to Brazil in two weeks, I decided to go to say goodbye to the other volunteers. As soon as I walked through the bright purple doorway filled with “Defeat the Label” mer-

chandise, Mushki came up to me.

“Hey Pooja, glad you could make it today. Rohit didn’t do so well without you.”

I was dumbfounded. *Rohit didn’t do so well without me?* In that moment, I realized what my failure had been. I had been the type of person who expected a verbal “thank you” for gestures like holding the door open or buying a soda for someone; and, I had expected this same verbal “thank you” from Rohit. So, when he scratched me, I thought I wasn’t needed, wasn’t valued. I thought I had failed. But my real failure had been in seeing autism as a label rather than a condition. Autism is a developmental brain disorder that disrupts verbal and nonverbal communication. It acts as a barrier between feelings and their expression; it doesn’t fit with our cultural expectation of outward gratification. This experience shifted my focus from the end result to the process.

I wanted to help make Rohit’s life fun and meaningful and special despite the barrier he was faced with. And, beyond that, the outward gratification didn’t matter. Because playing with him despite all those borrowed tractors and broken robot lizards and scratches on the arm is what made me happy, what made me volunteer at the Friendship Circle.

I spent that day with Rohit. I spent two weeks in December with Lila. I spent six Wednesdays the next summer with Tong. And when each of their parents came to pick them up, I didn’t have to put on a fake smile. I could honestly say that it was a pleasure to be their buddy. 🗨️



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# The Things I Carry

What makes me who I am

Julia Abreu

**P**rompt: Some students have a background or story that is so central to their identity that they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.

I carry an interchanging past. São Paulo and California and São Paulo and Florida and then back. From this past, I carry my present self. With my shoes I carry the soil: in part grass, in part sand, in part cement. Cold nights with nearly frozen toes under a blanket; hot, humid nights barely able to sleep as sweat drips down my neck. I carry distinct Latin warmth and an American hunger for comfort food and pride. I carry dried tears from old friends I left behind. I also carry a loving smile from new ones I’m glad I met.

I carry a legitimate copy of my mother’s appearance, and on the inside, I carry thoughts of achievement, like my dad. I carry my parents’ virtues, and they carry me through life. I carry an unfathomable grudge against my brother’s annoyance, but I also carry the laughter we get out of being “partners in crime.” I carry my maternal grandmother’s determination: I never give up without a fight. I carry the shocking memory of my father’s myocardial infarction; I carry the guilt of having failed as a daughter, for having once taken him for granted. He could’ve *died*. I now carry relief from what felt like a stab to both our hearts. I also carry the lesson of telling him, “I’m all right, Dad” every now and then—that’s *all* he ever asked of me.

I carry my singing voice, arranged in musical patterns of all sorts. I carry dreams of performing for an audience that occasionally becomes real. I carry the feeling of weightlessness among what seems like millions of flicking lights and heads. They receive all of me as I expose my flesh out to them, musical notes oozing out from my blood and soul. I also carry my writing voice, and the beauty of creating multiple stories. I carry the real and the imaginary, in unison, at the tips of my fingers.

Along with school, I carry the responsibility of effort. I carry heavy books and notebooks, weighed down by the necessary knowledge. I carry my favorite novel, *The Things They Carried*. I carry an internal voice of rephension for not being *better, faster, and stronger* than the universe itself. But I also carry intangible medals stamped to my chest, which remind me; *You’ve achieved your best*. I’ll *always* carry confidence.

As a natural guardian, I carry the weight of my world and of those around me. I carry the hopes and fears and smiles and tears of the girls I coach in the Middle School cheerleading squad. I carry all this immeasurable weight, but it only hunches my shoulders an inch or so. I carry help, like an ambulance with blinking lights. I carry others’ broken dreams and hearts. I carry their fears on top of mine, stacked too high to measure. I carry their silence, ringing in my ears and faintly yelling at me; I carry thoughtful words that quell their silence and leave them at peace.

This year, I have carried the new experience of living alone in São Paulo to finish high school, while my parents live in Rio de Janeiro and carry their hearts on their hands. I carry responsibility, maturity, and sometimes loneliness. I will always carry a picture of me as a child, hung on the wall directly to the right of my bed. I’m in a white dress and a rose tiara, sitting in a beautiful floral chair. My right arm supports the weight of my head, which is filled with love and weightless innocence. It sings me a soft, comforting lullaby—every night before I sleep. In that portrait I see myself. I weigh no more than a white, soft, floating feather in the daylight breeze. All the things I once carried, simultaneously carried me to where I am now. Who knows what I’ll carry next... 🗨️



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## English Lessons

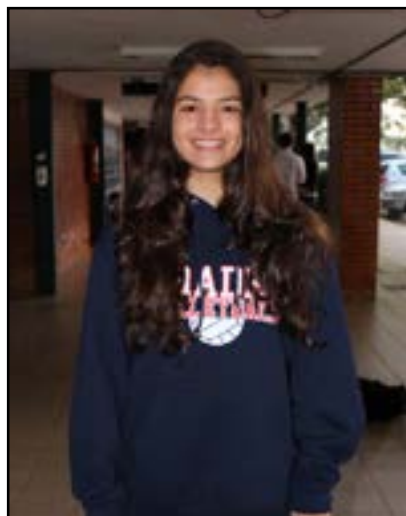
*Adventures in language and identity*

Luiza Gundim

**P**rompt: *Some students have a background or story that is so central to their identity that they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.*

There is one object that I always carry with me—pencils. Triangular pencils, the ones used when I learned to write in cursive; number 2 pencils, the ones used for standardized tests in junior year; and even mechanical pencils, which I always would forget at home in eighth grade. At the time, my thirteen-year-old self still didn't know the verbal difference between *bad* and *bed*, *feel* and *fill*, *think* and *sink*.

"Can I borrow a pencil, please?" I kindly asked my friend, and she burst into laughter. My cheeks were the color of the red Algebra I textbook on my desk. "Luiza," she condescendingly replied, "it's not *penseel*. It's *pencil*."



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bottom of the academic food chain. Throughout the year, I developed a sick obsession in acquiring the perfect American accent. My unconscious and yet utopian dream was to go to the United States of America and have people think I was a native speaker. This, needless to say, never happened.

As I was exposed to the American Revolution and Langston Hughes' poetry, I was also tested on my ability to abolish my Brazilian accent and absorb all aspects of the European Portuguese variant. Forget Machado de Assis, read Camões instead. Don't write *fato*, it is *facto*. "Amo-te" is right and

"te amo" is wrong. It was practically as if the lusophone adults in school were trying to brainwash me, but I categorically refused. It was as clear to me then as it is now that my mother tongue is a critical part of who I am. It defines me. It is not an old toy I can sell at a garage sale. *Here, take some high-quality Brazilian Portuguese for twenty-five dollars a piece!* No—I simply was not willing to give away

the one part of my culture that I was able to keep eight thousand kilometers away from home. And so I kept it.

*You had an offer, madam? I'm sorry; my identity is not for sale.* Only then I realized that having an accent, no matter in what language, isn't such a horrid trait. It is not a sign of vulnerability, let alone a reason to feel inferior to others. My preoccupation with flawless English became a source of pride and uniqueness, as I embraced my dissimilar accent and accepted being different from my American-educated friends.

Studying *Hamlet*, reading *The Economist*, talking to friends. As I immerse myself in the world of English, I understand that I will gradually lose part of my individuality, as has happened in the past four years. The language that once made me uncomfortable turned into my ticket to facing in-class essays and calculus tests, writing for the *Talon* and becoming Secretary General in MUN. Portuguese is my hand and heart, but English is the sharpest pencil I carry. ❶

## Lunch With the Family

*A college essay*

Kevin Shimba Bengtsson

**P**rompt: *Some students have a background or story that is so central to their identity that they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.*

*Yonsei*: fourth generation. *Salada*: a mix of raw vegetables. It's funny how tradition and gastronomy can both come to define a person.

As I sit down to have my mouth-watering plate of *feijoada*, a delicious Brazilian dish, I peruse the faces around me, their teeth clattering as their mouths, crowded with bits of rice, beans, pork and god-knows-what else, blabber on about the weather (or just about anything else to fill the air). It is a foul image, but it reminds me of one thing: I don't belong here. I *shouldn't* belong here.

No, it's not because they're somehow gross and I'm not; it's something else. Their chattering lips utter nothing but the melodic intricacies of the Portuguese language while their oblique eyes and the jet-black hair above them give away their Japanese heritage. I am, if nothing else, an alien within my own family.

Sitting directly across from me is my 20-year-old cousin who has yet to set foot outside the country. Her younger sister, sitting right beside her, has stayed within a two hundred kilometer radius of her house for her entire life.

The distance between us on that table separates us. Brazil is their home, a place where they have found solace. *Shimba* is their family name, a constant reminder of a past they have inherited. That is their world.

I don't have a home. Brazil? The United States? The Netherlands? Switzerland? A good chunk of my life has been spent in each country—calling any one of them my home would be like picking a favorite child. My family name... *Shimba Bengtsson*. The Japanese samurais and Swedish vikings clash as their histories fight for relevance, right there, in my own

name. It would be pretty cool if it didn't confuse the hell out of me. What is *my* world? What am I?

"You are a *yonsei*." The statement strikes my left ear. It's my grandmother. She's talking to me. *Yonsei*. I am the fourth generation of Japanese immigration to Brazil. Strange. Why would such a word define me? It binds me to a past I can barely relate to—my birth certificate and my two passports say nothing about Japan. My appearance alone surely is not enough to justify an attachment to a culture I'm alien to.

"Could you please pass me the salad?" Another voice hits me, this time from the right. Salad. In Portuguese, *Salada*.

I recall the moment from my younger days at a camp when a girl tauntingly called me that. She thought I was strange, a foreign creature. To her, it was unimaginable that I had arms made in Japan, legs imported directly from Sweden and a body sculpted in Brazil. "What a weirdo," she must have thought.

"Who am I?" is a question I tend to ask myself. Am I Japanese? *Svensk*? *Um brasileiro*? I think I have finally found the answer: I am none of the above.

*Yonsei, salada...* These words are not how I define myself; rather, they are how others try to define me. I could accept being a fourth-generational salad, but I won't. My experiences dictate who I am, not a couple of presumptuous words. Every place I've lived in, every culture I've been exposed to has pulled me in different directions and, like Play-Doh, I keep changing shape. My home is not a single place—it is where I arrive at next. This uncertainty excites me.

I used to not really know who I was and my mind longed for the day it would find out. Now the mystery is gone, but a curiosity remains. My mind is curious to know the answer to another, perhaps more important, question: "what's next?"

It wants more to feed on. It's hungry, not just for the *feijoada* that calls me toward it, but also for an experience that will bring me closer to understanding myself and my surroundings. ❶



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collegelight.com

# A Bridge Under Construction

A college essay

Mendel Schwarz

**P**rompt: *Some students have a background or story that is so central to their identity that they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.*

My thoughts are jumbled as I replay Ms. Hunt's words. What did she mean when she called me a "bridge person"? When first evoked, the phrase did not strike me, but as I stare at this computer screen, the words call out like footsteps I am meant to follow. The subtle phrase, stated without further explanation, puzzles me.

Being the youngest in my family, I am a bridge between generations. I am the countless hours spent at sea aboard an inconspicuous ship slipping out of the communist Soviet Union. I am my grandfather's hurried footsteps that scampered through Berlin's train station at the dawn of the Second World War. Through him I suffered poverty in the southernmost tip of Brazil and spent exhausting hours under the tropical sun ringing hundreds of doorbells to sell yarn. I am my one-year-old nephew's first staggering steps, his arms extended in a lifelong pursuit of equilibrium, his yelps of joy. The span between my ancestor's determination, grit, luck, and wits and my generation's lively openness is central to my identity.

Likewise, I am the Brazilian people, a bridge between different communities, geographies, and ethnic backgrounds: the *capoeira* circles brought to us by the four million African slaves; the *chimarrão*, the folk songs and dances kept alive by Germanic descendants; the portly pink slabs of sashimi introduced by the two million Japanese immigrants; the unheard voices of the indigenous peoples. The man sleeping on Rio de Janeiro's beach, the girl dancing to samba in Carnival, and the kid banging his drum to Olodum's Afro-Brazilian beat in Salvador all represent parts of my spirit.

I am also the bridge between my passions. The 76,000 voices crying at Morumbi Stadium celebrating a São Paulo Football Club championship still reverberate within me. I am the

long, unwashed hair of a crowd of underground heavy-metal fans who thrash and bob in unison like unlikely ballerinas. My fingers fumbling over the guitar during my first live performance in eighth grade, my classmates' roar, and the attempts to swoop me up and pass me aloft through the crowd after the final song linger indelibly in my head. I am Holden's dismay, Walter White's despair, Ondaatje's journey into Sri Lanka and himself, and Othello's grief. These passions—like columns, anchoring pins, and steel cables—keep me from falling.

Finally, I am the heroes that came before me. I am the singsong voice of the rabbi, Eric Clapton's bluesy riffs, Slash's raging guitar solos, pacifist Zumbi dos Palmares' blood, goalkeeper Rogério Ceni's tears, scholar Edward Said and Yitzhak Rabin's attempts to bring peace to the Middle East, and the protestors' cries for justice in Brazil. I am a bridge constructed over the years by the ideas, talents, and courage of these giants.

This meditation on three syllables—"bridge person"—has brought me to a conclusion. I am a bridge between different people, passions, and generations because I believe that a person who exists only within himself does not fully live. Hundreds of different stories made me who I am and brought me here to this chair. You, reader, are now part of my story. Truthfully, I secretly long for the opportunity to become a meaningful vignette in a stranger's life. Perhaps I might turn into a vinyl record playing in someone's room, or a book on someone's shelf, or a dotting kiss, or a provocative thought. After all, I still am a bridge under construction. 🗨️



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(Middlebury College) wikipedia.org

# The Rhythm of Living

Light from darkness

Paty Kim

**P**rompt: *Some students have a background or story that is so central to their identity that they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.*

I was walking to the local market when two men, who both appeared to be in their thirties, confronted me. Immediately, I felt the heaviness of their presence. Before I could think of anything else, one of them lifted his jacket to reveal a pistol tucked in his pants. "Na boa, me passa a bolsa" ("Just give me your bag"), he said in a coarse yet disturbingly calm voice. I handed him my bag, and then both men slid into their Fiat Uno like snakes. As I watched the old car clunk away, I stood there unable to move a muscle.

Those men, I realized a few days after the event, had stolen not only material things but also something intangible yet precious to me: my peace of mind. After my first real contact with violence, my reality shifted. What once was a mere walk to the local market, was now a dangerous journey. Even waiting for my mother in front of my building felt too risky. The feeling of uneasiness lurked beneath my skin—I couldn't escape it; I couldn't escape from myself. For days I felt hopeless, thinking I would not be able to get my peace of mind back.

One night, my mother sat down to have a talk with me. "Don't let it happen," she said. I gave her a puzzled look. "Don't let it traumatize you. I know it was a terrible experience but you can't let that make you live in fear for the rest of your life," she explained as she tucked a strand of hair behind my ear. At that moment, I realized that the way I dealt with the experience would define not only the way I perceived my community but also my character.

During this healing process I found a quote from American author Bruce Barton that reads, "Action and reaction, ebb and flow, trial and error, change—this is the rhythm of living." This quote made me realize that through my subconscious

denial of Brazil's issues of crime, I was ignoring a terrible yet undeniable part of the rhythm of living here. Within my circle of friends and family, the vast majority had already been mugged. But thinking about the quote also made me notice the bright nuances of the Brazilian rhythm of living—the warmth and gratitude with which "brasileiros" carry themselves, the samba that floods the streets during Friday nights, and the celebratory fireworks that crackle during weekly soccer matches.

Realizing both sides of the rhythm of living gave me a sense of balance. At the same time, however, it made me see that I could dance to this rhythm in a different way. It was a play on perspective. Just as I understood that the violence in Brazil was and still is overwhelmingly common, I now believe in something that is much greater than myself. I believe in my neighbors. I believe in my community. I believe in my country. Through my exposure to violence, I found myself hoping more, hoping better, hoping stronger.

The chance to study in the United States is the best opportunity to externalize my hope and help make Brazil a better, safer and more equal country. Leaving Brazil to study in the United States will probably be one of the most challenging yet exciting things I will ever do and I know that it will help me make the change that I want to see in my home country. As the college experience draws closer and closer, I sometimes feel overwhelmed by the thought of having so many resources and opportunities that will enable me to finally reach my goal: to help my country be the best that it can be. 🗨️



Rafaela Grabert Goldlust



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# In 20 Years

*Our tongue-in-cheek predictions for this year's seniors*

Talon Senior Staff

**Adam Fertig:** After successfully pursuing his education at Brown University, Adam finally decided it was time for him to stop being idle and apply for a job. Brown also asked him for refunds for all the free food he was caught eating at Brown's festivals (just so he wouldn't have to pay a few extra bucks for a coffee or slice of pound cake). He realized majoring in economics was not the best idea for him, but it was too late, and he was clearly too lazy to go back to college, so he decided to open his own business, filming children's birthday parties and editing the movies to perfection. He found the love of his life, Diana, a short, hippie woman who appreciated his surprisingly white hair at such young age. They decided kids were not in their plans, so they were content with two sluggish cats and an overly energetic Doberman.

**Adriana Kim:** Dri spent four years at Parsons, New York, and each semester received letters from the Dean, saying that she would have been at the top of the Dean's List all four years had it not been for her inability to get out of bed and attend all classes every day. Even so, she invented a new style of art: a mixture of scissors, glue, paper, crayons, and paint. Some call it "kindergarten madness" others call it "grown-up genius," and Adriana has been able to sell her pieces for more than 50,000 dollars each. She decided New York was the place to be, so she worked as much as she could on her art and purchased a chic apartment along Fifth Avenue. Considered a prodigy, she is, like Mark Zuckerberg, one of the youngest billionaires. She spends her afternoons sipping martinis and flirting with trendy guys at the Plaza Hotel's cocktail lounge.

**Alejandro Torres:** Known for his innovative ways of visualizing math and physics problems, Alejandro felt inspired by his experience in the IB diploma and decided to create his own textbooks for each subject. Nevertheless, unlike regular textbooks, Alejandro's had few-to-no words, but rather were filled with conceptual-art drawings that he created while earning a degree in Entertainment Design at ACCD. After completing his books, he then began to sell them online, and they became extremely popular among desperate IB students whose grades increased exponentially afterwards. Scientists are still trying to explain how teenagers can learn so much from so little writing; some are reaching the conclusion that a picture may literally be worth a thousand words.

**Alfredo Hahn:** After four years of non-stop partying at the

University of Miami, Alfredo realized partying wasn't his future anymore. To everyone's surprise, he pursued a career in business and opened a highly successful bar in Sunny Isles, Florida, filled with attractive bartenders and servers, and lots of caipirinhas. He refused to drink along with his customers, but ended up giving in after ten years of hard work, so he hired his own private chef/bartender to make him the most exotic drinks while he enjoyed the view of a beachfront apartment. His wife, a high-maintenance, extravagant Venezuelan, gave him the joy of triplets, whom she dressed with lots of bling and leopard print. He is viewed as the most successful Brazilian businessman in Miami, and is considering whether to maintain his splendid life at the beach or move up to Orlando with his family and open up a new theme park to compete with Disney's Magic Kingdom. They say those who dream big, achieve big!

**Ali Zamat:** After getting his MD-PhD from Stanford, Dr. Zamat was hired by the UCLA Medical Center to head the Cardiology Department. After a few years of simultaneously saving lives and doing research, Ali followed in his father's footsteps and became an inventor. Building on the invention of the artificial heart, he invented the artificial circulatory system for which he earned millions of dollars. Dr. Zamat used this money to finally have the lavish wedding in front of the Hollywood sign that he and Hollywood nutritionist Camila Isern always dreamed of. The wedding guests included Kevin Hart and Kanye West, whose hearts Dr. Zamat operated on, and Jed Oksness, the best man. Dr. and Mrs. Zamat continued to express their love for The Golden State by naming their three children Cali, For, and Nia.

**Aliyah Kingsley:** After graduating from Emory, Aliyah moved back to New York and founded a restaurant which serves only gluten- and lactose-free kosher foods. Named after her Yorkshire, Indie Restaurant is a highly prized location known for its success in meeting many dietary restrictions. Both Aliyah and her adorable dog are currently known in New York as "The Power Duo."

**Ana Elisa Pacheco:** Too comfortable at home to apply to college in the United States, Ana decided to attend ESPM and major in Marketing. With her energetic personality, she attracted several lonely hearts around São Paulo, especially when seen having the time of her life on the dance floors of the city's most memorable nightclubs. She met the love of her life, a rich, good-looking boy from Rio, who moved to São Paulo to make his living. She

did not even wait three months to marry the man, and they threw a lavish wedding for about 800 guests at Fasano. They then bought an apartment with a marvelous view of Parque Ibirapuera, and Ana spent her afternoons working out with her personal trainer. She was featured in *Vogue Brasil* for having a closet with at least 300 purses and is now aiming for a spot in the Guinness World Record book for the women with the most purses in the world. She lives a happy, fulfilled life alongside her hubby, and still has no plans to have children any time soon.

**Anais loschpe:** Anais made the front page of the *New York Times* as "The Trashcan Baby" when her biological parents decided to hunt her down and tell her the truth about her birth. Turns out she was left in a Taiwanese dump at two days of age, with a note that said "Please save Anais." Upon realizing that her name actually does not have an umlaut, Anais fought a severe identity crisis that led her to reconnect to her roots. She went back to Taiwan and built the first edible hospital in the world. She is a highly successful doctor, whose only trouble is staying away from those delicious gummy walls. At the end of this year, she and Clara will get married at an edible Taiwanese temple.

**Andrea Ferreira:** After graduating summa cum laude, Andrea Ferreira celebrated her official nomination from the Guinness Book of World Records as the smallest bi-racial woman alive. Andrea is now famously known for her cube of cheese diet, inspired by Emily from *Devil Wears Prada (2006)*, and lives an opulent life of partying, gossiping, and calling people "friends." She was last seen in with her fourth fiancé, who looked eerily like Kaue's long-lost twin brother.

**Annie Groth:** After being scouted by a professional soccer team during her college years, Annie began her successful career as a goalie, achieving international acclaim for her ability to, as quoted from *Time Magazine's* Player of the Year editorial, "stand there and do something only when the ball is on her half of the court." But a couple of years of the excitement of the sporting life was enough for Annie, who moved back to Brasilia after retiring from her soccer career to become a successful diplomat, scholar, and business woman. "She's still a jack of all trades," reported a close friend of hers.

**Beatriz de Campos:** Bia was quickly exiled from modern society for disliking chocolate—as eyewitnesses reportedly commented, "What is wrong with you?"—and she retreated to a cave in the Appalachian mountains. There, she put on several extremely well-rehearsed plays with her two cats as the main actors. However, the fact that she frequently injured herself and had an intimidating tone meant that the cats quit, and she ended up

just binge-watching *Game of Thrones* for the next four years.

**Beatriz Soares:** At art school, Bia was able to specialize in drawing, painting and sculpting lifesize representations of Matt Dias. She went on to earn her M.F.A. in etchings of Matt Dias' profile, which prompted her to create her first exhibiton, entitled "The Beautiful Side of Life: Matt Dias' Right Half." Audiences were stunned, with the exhibit's protagonist even quoted as saying "wow, my right side has never been more beautiful, and I'm already gorgeous!"

**Brian Wolfson:** Having survived Junioritis and Senioritis in high school, Brian went on to suffer from college-itis during university. Although he cared little about school and completed most of his assignments at the last minute, he continued to outperform the vast majority of his peers, graduating in the top ten of his class. Currently, he tells his closest friends the dreaded story of how he contracted life-itis, a dangerous disease which threatens one's ability to fully complete the tasks required of life. Still, he lives life better than most.

**Camila Ferreira:** Graduating from New York University, Camila was voted the Most Awesome Person ever by just about everyone for being the life of all the parties she attended. However, it was not long before her hairline began to recede, leading to a completely bald head before she was 30. Thankfully (and painfully), her brother Nicky donated all of his luscious hair to her in time for her wedding to Jorge. During the reception, she twerked too hard and ripped her ACL joint, ending her dance career. She now owns three koalas, a manatee and a seahorse.

**Camila Isern:** After earning her bachelor's degree in nutrition and her PhD in Saving Fish Studies, Camila was named the healthiest person alive. The glow of the accolade was diminished, though, because she was forced to present a speech in order to receive her award. She currently owns a chain of vegan sushi restaurants, selling tofu sashimi and rice-only temakis.

**Carlo Krell:** During his sophomore year at Cornell, Carlo was chosen as the college's Propaganda Boy. Five years after graduating, he has been working as Cornell's Director of Admissions, but plans to move back to São Paulo this year with his wife and son Charles Jr. Hired to work at Graded, the Krells have already enrolled Charles Jr at the school. Carlo bought 365 Cornell shirts so that his son doesn't ever need to wear anything different.

**Carolina Lengyel:** After graduating from UM, Carol decided

that, being too good to inherit her father’s sushi restaurant conglomerate, she would go off and reinvent the Brazilian sushi. She planned to travel back to her (newfound) Asian roots, but came to a realization right before boarding her private plane. Carol soon launched the new sushi brand “SushiGo” that would cater only to high-school students all over Brazil. She was last seen shopping with her best friend Jessica Vieira, as they discussed plans to expand Carol’s brand to encompass sushi fashion and designer temakis.

**Carolina Yoo:** After completing graduate art school and achieving global acclaim for her, now famous, “Lamb head on a woman’s body” body-length portrait, Carol disappeared for seven years. Legend is that she achieved a state of metaphysical omniscience, where she became one with her art, roaming the streets of London, Paris and New York inspiring art-students to follow their dreams of producing animal-related art. Carol, however, was last spotted buying more raw chickens for her newest exhibition of animal carcasses mumbling to herself, “I don’t even know what I’m doing anymore.”

**Caroline Cassinelli:** While in her sophomore year of college, Caroline became the second wealthiest woman under 20 after creating a Harry Potter-inspired trend. The owners of the store Topshop currently sponsor both her fashion line and blog—called That’s All—that merged the best features of Twitter and Tumblr. Caroline is commonly referred to as the “new Zuckerberg.”

**Catarina Santiago:** After Catarina’s closet exploded with all her designer clothes, she created a separate house, “Maison Santiago,” to keep her personal belongings. With a butler corps of 150, Catarina’s shoes are always perfectly arranged by color. When she is travelling, “Maison Santiago” also serves as a museum. Catarina, or Mrs. Santiago as the press calls her, became a billionaire after transforming her house in Laranjeiras into a hotel and running it on her own. The next movie of the *Twilight* saga will be filmed there.

**Cray Murray:** While studying genetics at Western State Colorado University, Cray discovered a way that humans can live forever. These special pills have gone on to be a huge success and he is now one of the youngest billionaires at only age 38. In his spare time, Cray pursued his one true passion—archaeology—and on vacation in Mexico he accidentally dug up a dinosaur. Cray is now praised all over the world for his academic scholarship and his amazing find.

**Daniel Almeida:** After graduating with a degree in economics from Georgetown University, Daniel used his Daniel charm and winning personality to become ruler of his very own island. He now resides there alone with his high-school sweetheart,

Clarinha, her wife Anais, and their dogs. When he decided that being dictator of a small island wasn’t enough, Daniel started his own company that manufactured absolutely everything. “Delightfully Daniel” was quite a success according to Daniel himself, who claims that it is recognized by 100% of the global population.

**Edward Sanchez:** Through his four years at Haverford College, Eddie surprised everyone he knew by earning perfect attendance. He then became a self-proclaimed relationship expert and love guru, teaching people how to insert Shakespearean lines into normal conversations to impress their crushes. At 38, he still finds time to hit all of the newest *baladas* with his clients.

**Eric Bissell:** After graduating from RPI, Eric went on to become a doctor devoting his life to saving the future of the planet with his own charity, Eric’s Enfants. With his former classmates-urgings, Eric retook the EQ test he failed junior year. It turns out that his TOK teacher misread the results, and he was actually in the 1% of the kindest people in the universe. He now travels the world with his wife and the twenty children he adopted.

**Fabricio Oddone:** After making a bizarre noise—eyewitnesses reported the sound to be along the lines of “pah pou pei, te peguei”—while sleeping on a park bench in Boston, Fabricio was mistaken for a zombie hobo and was shot by a police officer. Nursing his wounds, he travelled to Rio de Janeiro to play soccer on the beach and eat nonstop.

**Fabio Rocco:** After finishing in first place on every single Vestibular and becoming Graded’s best “vestibulando” of all time, Fabinho earned a degree at FGV. He later founded Gorilão da Bola Azul Inc., which rapidly became Brazil’s most successful entertainment company where people earn bonuses according to how many Porta dos Fundos phrases they can recite in a one-minute interval. He now lives in Greece with Neta Magal and their children, who immitate their father’s “tiozão” way of living. They never go out in the sun without sunscreen, nor do they go outside on cloudy days without a jacket.

**Felipe Marques:** Shortly after graduating from Graded, Felipe went on to transcend our dimensional realm and exist on a parallel plane of reality. Marvel acquired the rights to his story, and *Felipe Marques: Man of a Thousand Puns* © is set to be released in July. His catchphrase was a pun that nobody understood.

**Fernando Abdon:** Fernando thought he had arrived on time to his own graduation, only to discover that he had actually showed up to the class of 2018’s. He didn’t mind, and threw a graduation party for them anyway. Recently, on a dare, Fernando jumped

off the face of the Earth and filmed it with his GoPro.

**Fernando Moon:** Moony was committed to a hospital for four years for his chronic senioritis. After recovering from the debilitating disease, Moony went on a quest to prove his life-long belief that dragons are real. His travels accidentally led him to the Golden Dragon club in Bangkok, and he has been on a nonstop rave there for the past six years.

**Fernando Van Otterloo:** Otterloo pursued his dream of becoming a professional wrestler under the stage name “El Manfred Loco.” Unfortunately, he didn’t qualify for even the lightest weight class. His trainer suggested that he joined the underground cockfighting business (as the cock), but after a brief stint he realized that it wasn’t Kosher. He went on to marry the first blonde he met that was shorter and younger than him, and they have four anatomically perfect children.

**Fernão Mesquita:** In a sudden twist of events, Fernão realized he never liked Brazil. Luckily, the epiphany came just in time for him to still be able to enroll in the University of Miami, to which Fernão had secretly applied on impulse. He spent a total of seven years there before finally graduating due to too many nights waking up in Bangkok and never understanding how he got there. One night, he woke up in Brazil and decided to stay. He currently runs *O Estado do Rio de Janeiro*, the newspaper he founded because he could no longer stand the São-Paulo-focused *Estadão*. In a published interview, Fernão states he is happy with his newspaper’s ascending success at least “for now.”

**Ga Kyung Kwon:** Alice decided that after 4 years, Georgia Tech had had enough of her typical subtle sarcasm and decided to perfect the art during a year-long sabbatical. She can be spotted travelling the world, stopping at every new restaurant with her pet dog, probably scrolling the Internet on her phone to be up-to-date on the latest movies and TV series.

**Gabriel Borger:** After a frustrating career in engineering and research, Gabe decided to write up all of the jokes he has ever made and publish them for the world at large. After being laughed at by six different publishers, Gabe finally managed to publish his 6,969-page book of jokes. *How to Be Jewbacca* was surprisingly well received, quickly turning Gabe into one of the richest authors on Earth. Who can argue now that “a pastatute is a hooker who gets paid in spaghetti” is not a funny joke?

**Gabriella Marrufo:** Once able to return to track in college, Gaby decided to pursue her life-long dream of becoming a professional marathon runner. After only two years competing in races, Gaby went on to breaking the world record for most

marathons run in a day: 13. Currently, Gaby is taking a break from exercise, as she is married and expecting her fourth child, a girl. The Marrufo family could not be happier with one more added to the family, and though the family has grown exponentially, each year they reunite on Christmas and their annual Karaoke Night.

**Gaston Eguren:** Gaston “El Mayor” Eguren, as he is currently addressed, now lives in Mexico in four different mansions scattered around the country. It is rumored he owns at least five Ferraris and gives the best parties at least six times a week, depending on his mood. People from all over the world have started to go to Mexico City as the world’s center of partying because of him. When asked to comment on how he could afford such grandiose events, he preferred to not answer, but said that he’s the guy who can hook people up.

**Helio Garcia:** Soon after high school, Helio used all his money to buy a Harley Davidson and a leather jacket, and spent the next five years road tripping across the Americas. After that, he became famous by being the lead singer, composer, song writer, and bassist in the internationally acclaimed heavy metal band TBONTB (To Beard Or Not To Beard). If that wasn’t enough success, his carefully trimmed, perfectly groomed beard was chosen as Time Person of the Year in 2032.

**Ignacio Sanchez:** After high school Ignacio found that college was more his speed. He completed all his class readings in two months and graduating from Webster University in two years because he spent the remaining 22 months browsing Reddit and sleeping. During the summer, he got an internship at the Royal Palace of Amsterdam as the princesses’ babysitter, who were even worse-behaved than his sisters. Due to his incredible ability to manipulate the young royals he gained tremendous political influence in the Netherlands. Since his family already secretly owned half of Spain, he now sits comfortably upon both nations’ thrones, which have been united under the name Ignacioland.

**Isabella Besborodco:** Tired of having people misspell her name, Isa officially changed it to Bellu Besbo after leaving high school. This iconic name helped kick off her career as a world-class soccer player, being the youngest female athlete to win the Ballon D’or, at age 19. Twenty years after graduating from Graded, Bellu still takes her daily afternoon naps, which she claims is the secret to her smooth skin and lustrous hair.

**Isabella Ribeiro:** After an unexceptional career as a varsity basketball player, Isabella finally became famous launching her own reality TV show with her twin sister: *Keeping Up With The Ribeiros*. She currently lives in Miami and is known to enjoy the

good life like no other—on weekends she can be seen partying on her yacht with other celebrities and documenting her success on Instagram, where she has more than 2,800,000 followers.

**Jakob Naegeli:** Upon arriving at the University of Michigan as a Russian History major, Jakob Naegeli was sued by faculty and classmates for continuing his tradition of sending too many SnapChats of cats. This accusation led him to transfer in his second year to Michigan State University, where his love of cats was more widely accepted. Deciding that Michigan wasn't cold enough for him, he then moved to Siberia, where he currently lives in an igloo with two huskies. Refusing to replace his shorts and Havaianas with warmer clothes, he is yet to notice his frostbitten legs.

**Jessica Vieira:** After dropping out of University of Miami, Jessica started her reality show where she is featured lying on the beach all day and making comments on people that walk by. She continues taking pictures and has an online yearbook of Miami residents; she asks for their baby pictures so that other Miamers can guess who their fellow neighbors are.

**Jonathan Helm:** Jonathan's quiet behavior in class led some to try to figure out what was actually going on inside his head. Groundbreaking thought-to-text technology meant that what he was thinking could be shared with the world. It turned out that Jonathan's thoughts are better off inside his head, since they almost constantly involve the apocalypse, fried food, and a range of other twisted ideas. One of Jonathan's favorite bands, Phish, saw these thoughts and decided they were perfect lyrics for their new album. With his newfound income and musical ability, Jonathan formed a band with his family and went on tour; they all wear Jonathan's signature checkered and tie-die shirts.

**Jordan Walker:** After filming a documentary about the new trend of ponchos in Antarctica, Jordan continued living there indefinitely, where he has found his true habitat among fellow eskimo poncho wearers. However, he is feeling incomplete because he is very far away from his beloved German apple streudels.

**Juan Berretta:** After a brief stint at Oberlin, Juan was deported by the state of Ohio for vandalizing a locker by hitting it repeatedly. The Ohio government accidentally confused his homeland of Uruguay with Peru, where he was forced to join a folkloric band. This actually worked pretty well for him, seeing as his harmonica skills, bushy beard and extensive poncho collection prepared him for the task. The band, Los Osos Locos, became a Peruvian hit and are set to begin their international tour next year.

**Julia Abreu:** Though Julia had a brief hiatus from singing during her high school years, she decided to resume her vocal training at New York University. Things took an unexpected turn when all the NYU *a capella* groups (even the ones from other colleges!) asked her to join them after an audio recording of her singing in the shower leaked on the Internet. Though flattered, Julia declined all offers and decided to go solo. She soon became a world sensation after her very first album, which features the hit single "IB Tired, IB Sleepy," a song inspired by her experience at Graded. Proof of her talent was Adele's comment featured in *Rolling Stone* magazine: "Julia Abreu is a force of nature! IB in love!"

**Julia Ribeiro:** With several basketball championship trophies lining her shelves, Julia graduated as the greatest "hoopie" to ever walk Graded's hallways. Her talent transcended her high-school career as she launched the hit TV show *Keeping Up With The Ribeiros* with her twin sister, Isabella. She shares a flat with her sister in Miami, where she's known for throwing legendary parties. Frequent guests include Beyoncé, Jennifer Lawrence and Robert Downey Jr. Julia still plays basketball with her sister, and they often wear the same sneakers and outfit to confuse opponents.

**Kaique Castro:** A famous volleyball coach scouted Kaique after watching video recordings of Big 4 matches. After months and months of training, Kaique travelled all over the world to represent Brazil in championship matches. Though he was an immediate success in the sports industry, he wasn't satisfied. With his discerning eye and incredible taste, Kaique designed a fashionable—yet comfortable—collection of jerseys for the national volleyball teams. Many non-Brazilian teams asked him to design their jerseys, but he wanted his collection to be strictly for his beloved homeland.

**Karen Kandelman:** After graduating from New York University, Karen enjoyed a trip around the world, which included a visit to every country. When she visited China, however, she witnessed the squalid and inhumane conditions in which employees worked. Shocked and driven by her sense of justice, she started a campaign to improve working conditions in China and after several years of campaigning, Karen was able to improve their lives and received awards from not only the United Nations but also the president of China.

**Kevin Bengtsson:** After several years as the drummer of Graded's Jazz Band, Kevin pursued his love for drums at college by playing at random campus locations with an improvised drum set made up of plastic buckets and glass bottles. Though he is often confused for a homeless person trying to make a living,

Bengtsson became famous as everyone's favorite homeless street artist. Little did he know that the manager of his favorite band, Muse, had been observing him for quite some time and, before he knew it, Kevin had taken Dominic Howard's place as Muse's drummer and percussionist. His stage name? BANG!tsson.

**Kevin Kim:** Penn State was lucky to have Kevin give the speech at graduation with his British accent. Later he was the author of *How to Have a British Accent*, which he translated himself to 40 other languages. Although he thought that his theatre career was over after leaving Graded, Kevin got an incredible role as a tree in an off-off-Broadway show.

**Laura Fiuza:** After graduating from USC with a degree in business, Laura decided to follow her empire state of mind and move to New York. However, she soon became frustrated by the negative and competitive corporate environment. In addition, she found that her hyper energy was too strong to be contained by the walls of her office. Thus, she decided to return to her cheerleading roots and revolutionize Wall Street by creating "Cheer Company" (CC), an institution that cheers for other companies while they work through their projects. CC was a huge hit in NY, as many found the positive work environment established by the company as refreshing, and it soon expanded to other parts of the world. Laura earned big bucks with the success of CC and used most of the money to purchase a lifetime supply of Kellogg's Rice Crispies.

**Leonardo Oliveira:** After graduating from Skidmore College with a degree in computer science, Leo moved to New York City for work. A short six months later, he and his band, Leo & the Leonardos, were discovered. As his band toured the world, Leo gained international recognition for his ability to simultaneously play the bass guitar and the double bass perfectly. Proud that his time as a Graded lifer was the reason for his success, the school honored him by building a new, new Art Center named after Leo. Unfortunately, this construction led to the Graded 2020 facilities improvement plan being postponed yet again. Angry PTA moms protested against Leo, and he was forced to flee the country disguised as a "white chick."

**Leonardo Sabó:** Due to the success of his creation of the Graded water bottles, Sabo decided to follow his dream of becoming a water-bottle entrepreneur after graduating from NYU with a master's degree in drinking water. He then moved to New York, where he planned on establishing his own water-bottle company. Nevertheless, shocked at the sheer amount of plastic found in the streets, Sabo gave up on his childhood dream and established a new one: to remove all plastic from the world. Currently, Sabo can be found traveling around world preaching the dangers of plastic. In his spare time, he likes to return to

Graded and practice with the Varsity Boys Volleyball team so that he can reach his goal of completing one season without getting hurt.

**Leonardo Savoy:** After years well-spent in Northeastern University, Leo had the epiphany of his life and made up his mind to return to Brazil. He could not handle being away from his dear girlfriend, Vivian, and to his luck, she could not stay away from him either. They got married at a really young age, bought a cozy apartment in Itaim, and never gave up their weekends of partying and fun with their friends. He fulfilled his adolescent dream of purchasing one of Brazil's most famous nightclubs, Anzu, and made the place his second home, literally. He adapted one of the *camarotes* with a personal masseuse and a nice, warm bed, for long nights of partying. He became the true "Rei do Camarote" and was even awarded a crown by the Balada Association of Brazil.

**Lisa Tokoro:** For five years after graduation, Lisa continued on her trajectory of selflessness, caring, and hard work, mainly by adopting lost Cambodian puppies. That is, until she snapped, and her repressed anger-management issues came flooding back. She used her knowledge from History and Biology HL to invade Poland and spread a lethal virus worldwide, the RisaKold.

**Liv Wang:** After graduating from Emory University with an honorary degree in shoe decorations, Liv settled in NYC, where she quickly established her new neon-colored shoe line: Livster Feet. Yet, after designing shoes of every shade in our visual spectrum, Liv decided to travel the world in search for new colors. When visiting Australia, she was amazed at the mantis shrimp's ability to see a variety of light wavelengths and thus decided to undergo mantis-shrimp eye surgery to obtain similar traits. However, frustrated that the rest of humans weren't able to perceive the world as she was now able to, Liv decided to settle in Australia, where she currently designs shoes for the mantis shrimp population, claiming that they can better appreciate her colorful designs.

**Lucas Cabral de Menezes:** After DJing for every party in an one-thousand mile radius of his new home in Miami, Lucas created a dating website where he is able to get with as many girls as possible. He sold the website to his bro Mark Zuckerberg and made millions. Later, due to his vocal abilities and his inability to cease talking, he became a preacher for a new religion called DJ-Menezicism where one may have as many partners as one wishes. He went bald by the time he was twenty years old.

**Lucas Ryan:** After spending time in Germany, Russia and Spain studying the local soccer teams' techniques, Lucas returned to Brazil to coach Corinthians, his lifelong passion. After an odd

turn of events, Ryan managed to not only become the director of Corinthians, but garnered so much support that the team became a UN-recognized “Republica Popular.” The leader of the “Republica de Loucos” now plans to truly invade the Maracanã and claim it as Corinthiano territory.

**Lucas Zuccolo:** After deciding that regular careers were too banal for someone of his intelligence and skill, Lucas combined two of his passions and managed to write a series of sci-fi books that could only be read by transcending about 50 dimensions. They didn’t sell well here for obvious reasons—but Felipe Marques, transcendent pan-universal being, found it “quite amusing.”

**Luiza Gundim:** Though she claims she has chosen UChicago, Luiza Gundim was able to work a secret deal out that allowed her to attend Brown, Dartmouth and the University of Chicago all at once. She went on to become a successful engineer, but finally caved in to her talent as a writer and took a job at *The Economist*. After a successful few years there, Luiza was offered a real position in the United Nations as the delegate for Brazil, where she now lives and still takes frequent trips to Jundiaí.

**Luke Murkowski:** Luke honed his rapping skills and quickly became the second-best white rapper in the world (he is also the second white rapper in the world ever). His fame and the scar on his forehead meant that he was often mistaken for a blonde Harry Potter. He incorporated this struggle into his lyrics, which made him even more popular. His “Vanilla Waffer” SoundCloud account is currently the most-viewed of all time.

**Maria Clara Bezerra:** After graduating from college, Clara decided to pursue her lifelong dream: becoming a diplomat. Soon enough, all her dedication to MUN paid off, as she became the Brazilian representative at the United Nations, along with Luiza Gundim. Distraught at the inefficiency of the organization, Clara had a nervous breakdown (involving many nosebleeds) and eventually led her husband, high-school sweetheart Daniel Almeida, to conquer a small island nation that would eventually pose a threat to the security of the world. When perpetually tanned “bestie” Anaïs loschpe came to visit the tropical nation, the unhinged Clara forced both friend and husband into a three-way marriage. It is rumored among the island’s natives that Clara is actually the brain behind the Almeida Regime’s iron grip, claiming that a man with a strawberry-shaped head can be no true ruler.

**Maria Julia Galeazzi:** After three years of “cursinho” due to indecision on what to study, Juju finally decided to enroll in psychology at PUC. In her third year, she met her husband, a

man who, surprisingly, had an even bigger name than hers. Throwing caution to the wind, Juju dropped out of college to fulfill her childhood dream: becoming a mother. Her life can now be boiled down to short walks between her Cidade Jardim apartment and the local supermarket, Santa Maria (which she bought, expanding it into a successful chain throughout the country), and occasional excursions (with mythical driver, De Souza, of course) to the family farm in the middle of nowhere.

**Mariana Lepecki:** After graduating with a PhD in Bioengineering from the University of Chicago as the valedictorian of her class, Mariana decided that she would use the knowledge she acquired to prove that biology was better than physics (or any other discipline, for that matter). Becoming a teacher, she led a revolution within her own alma mater, leading the entire university to a massive institutional reform. Soon after becoming the Dean, Ms. Mariana “Bossypants” Lepecki instituted an all-new, “biology-centric” curriculum (claiming that “it only made sense”) and a system of strict deadlines devotedly monitored by the dean herself. Today, Lepecki can be seen dutifully perusing the halls of the university to reprimand any students that are late to class or who haven’t handed in their work.

**Matt Dias:** After achieving his dream of attending New York University, Matt finally felt at home. For a month. Claiming that “NYU was too mainstream and I, too gorgeous” and heavily criticizing the school’s “lack of a decent dose of black beans per meal,” Matt dropped out. He then went on to become, at the same time, the Editor and Head Photographer of *Vogue* magazine and the face of “The Beautiful Side of Life: Matt Dias’ Right Half,” the world-renowned art exhibition by friend and co-hipster Bia Soares. Today, both share an office/studio in Manhattan, from which loud indie rock music can be heard from miles away and only people with stylish fake glasses are allowed inside.

**Matt Lewis:** After enrolling at Parsons, in New York, Matt decided to make a living out of his art. Naturally, that didn’t initially turn out too well, and Matt soon found himself to be completely broke. Unable to pay for his studies, Matt rebelled against the system, founding his own, underground school of street art for prodigies like himself. Alongside partner Banksy, Lewis is now training a new, talented group of young minds to lead the latest artistic revolution.

**Max Telles:** After dropping out of college before it began to become a billionaire DJ/producer (hits include “Supercharged,” “Bonafont,” “Tree,” and “EXS”), Max bought all islands in the Caribbean and constructed mansions that house his twelve

billion one-hundred and seventy-nine thousand six-hundred and seventy-eight suits of different colors and cloths. He still sleeps in his silver suit-pijamas, which are worth approximately two-hundred thousand dollars. The Caribbean islands, which contain a statue of Barney Stinson high-fiving Max Telles on every public square, were annexed to Brazil, a country he already owned for over a decade. He married Victoria Quintino and had two children, who carried on his habit of cursing at any one who behaves slightly like a communist. A short film of Max exquisitely dancing to Shakira’s “Rabiosa” is Youtube’s most watched video.

**McKenna Kiiskila:** After graduating from Michigan State University, McKenna governed the state of Michigan for four years, proclaiming a law that annexed the University of Michigan to Michigan State University, thus eliminating her school’s rival university. While still in office, McKenna won the Nobel Peace Prize due to her hugs’ astounding superpowers. McKenna also opened a bakery and became the new Betty Crocker, publishing books and making the world a better place by giving out her baked goods to those in need. While she is not saving the world, baking, or governing Michigan, McKenna has obtained considerable success as a model due to her beautiful eyes and stunning smile.

**Mendel Schwarz:** In a *Monsters Inc.*-like chain of events, it was discovered that Mendel’s laugh can generate electricity. He became a billionaire almost overnight, and quickly bought SPFC, as well as the Russian Ballet. Three years after graduating from high school, his posture deteriorated to the point that he was perpendicular to the floor. However, this made him look very wise, and he was hailed as the Second Coming of the Messiah. The first order of business of this billionaire-turned-prophet was to change the traditional “Hava Nagila” to Metallica’s “Enter Sandman,” and the chair dancing at Bar Mitzvahs to a mandatory mosh pit.

**Mila Lara:** Mila became a successful Human Resources Manager, but was rumored to getting too attached to her job. After work, she would try to chat with any employee she thought needed comforting, eventually forcing her to work long hours at the office. She decided to put a hold on her job because listening to others actually started to tire Mila out. Always modest, claiming she “can’t really sing,” she released an experimental music album which skyrocketed her to the top of the billboards. “Mila’s really a great person, though I’m a little jealous she’s becoming more famous than me,” commented artist Taylor Swift.

**Neta Magal:** After finishing multiple BA degrees in Brazil and

then in the U.S, Neta moved to Greece with Fabio Rocco, who rapidly became the world’s most successful businessman. In Europe, she commenced a career as a singer offering free shows in public squares, which gained thousands of admirers due to her angelic voice. She also ended up solving the Israeli-Palestine conflict after one week in the Israeli Army. During her free time, Neta tends to three lovely children and constructs buildings around Greece and Israel, which so amazed fellow architects that the Neta Magal Prize was created to honour these creations.

**Nicole Vladimirschi:** After graduating from Johns Hopkins Medical School, Dr. Vlad joined Doctors without Borders and travelled all over the world helping people. After hearing about Dr. Vlad’s care and intellect, NASA hired her to become an intergalactic physician. She is now en route to the Sombrero Galaxy where she will nurse some seriously injured aliens back to health. In her free time, Dr. Vlad has remained devoted to pugs. Not only is she now the proud owner of 324 pugs: but she also founded Pugbook; a social network exclusively for these cute canines. Pocca Vlad gained international recognition as the first dog to leave the Milky Way when she just couldn’t leave Dr. Vlad’s side.

**Paty Kim:** After graduating from Johns Hopkins University with a degree in International Relations, Paty moved to New York and became one of the youngest Brazilian representatives in the UN alongside several Graded colleagues. However, over time she grew tired of the bureaucracy and lack of fashion in the organization, deciding to leave the political life for good in search for other ways of establishing world peace. After returning to Brazil and reuniting with her old saxophone, Paty rediscovered her love for music and decided to use it as a way to make people happy around the world. Currently, Paty travels around the world with her Peace Band, playing the beautiful score of *Les Misérables* in her tournéé titled “Les Mis: What Not to Do to Ensure a Happy Life.”

**Paula Soares:** After getting her PhD in astrophysics from Oxford, Dr. Soares was hired as the tenured Head of Astrophysics at Cambridge. After only months of research, Dr. Soares discovered the truth about dark matter: it’s just a lot of nothing. Dr. Soares was awarded a Nobel Prize for her contributions, and her color-coded notes are now displayed in the Smithsonian Museum. As a reward, she was offered a complimentary vacation to Mars, but she turned it down to focus on her newest passion: light matter. Aside from her professional glory, Dr. Soares has settled down with an Indian man, loves to cook naan, and is more interested in his culture than he is.

**Paulo Flecha:** After being the life of the party in college, Paulo buckled down and got his Master’s in Electrical Engineering. He was hired by Apple to help make the iPhone 76, and, once the product skyrocketed in popularity, he was honored around the world as the next Steve Jobs. Beside his official career, Paulo maintains a “low-profile” as a part-time rock star. After *Feel*, Paulo released four more albums: *Smell, Hear, Taste, and See*. Paulo jams every weekend, and his sold-out concerts attract millions. For his romantic life, Paulo has managed to find himself a “Pretty Girl in the White Shirt,” asked her to “Marry Me,” and settled down with this “Blondie Girl.”

**Pedro Quirino:** Pedro rose to the position of President of Brazil after turning the Corinthians soccer club into an extremist, left-wing, political organization. His swift rise to power was attributed to a joint effort between Maggie Moraes and Kaue Santos, who say Pedro is a “visionary, and not at all a puppet.” He still occasionally visits his high-school sweetheart, Carlo Krell.

**Pedro Rocha:** Pedrinho made a radical change in his life: no more parties, and no more playing FIFA. Why? His life goal was to become a doctor, more specifically, a plastic surgeon. Totally unplanned, his life became like that of Adam Sandler in the movie *Just Go With It*, a young plastic surgeon who fell in love with a much younger client and later realized she wasn’t the girl for him. He then fell in love with his secretary, and although she had a spoiled little boy, Pedrinho at least pretended that he enjoyed having a son (because he secretly didn’t really like kids, since they reminded him too much of himself). Having a son ended up being more positive than Pedro thought, because he could spend his free time playing videogames with the boy and drinking lots of strawberry Nesquik. Even though he suffers from a “Peter Pan Complex,” he earned enough money to buy a beach house in Riviera and a nice luxury cabin in Aspen, Colorado.

**Philip Fama:** Married to the now retired Maria Sharapova, Philip Fama won his fourteenth consecutive US Open tournament with the loving support of his five children. With the winnings, he has since started his own brand of clothing, SSS (Sandal Sock Shorts), which earned him the CFDA award for emerging talent after showing at Milan’s Fashion Week.

**Pooja Singhi:** After mistakenly labeling a new, deadly strain of HPV as the cure of cancer, Ms. Singhi faces charges of crimes against humanity in the International Court of Justice. The press has described these developments as “monstrous” and “only capable by somebody insecure about one’s height.” Further controversy was sparked when during an interview

Pooja stated that “the people I killed would have died anyway, deadly herpes was the least of their problems.” Attempting to evade the media storm, Pooja finally changed her legal name to Pooga, and Clara has never been happier.

**Rachel Verreault Milner:** Rachel appeared in the news at an international level after suing Felipe Marques, ex-*Talon* writer, for apparently using all of her work in his famed articles on video-gaming and society. In her own words “I didn’t want to be rude by calling him out, but the Pulitzer on MY article on the relationship between Lucario and the decline in modern media was the last straw.” Unfortunately, copyright laws are ridiculously lax for trans-dimensional beings, and Rachel faces an uphill battle.

**Renata Sayão:** After moving to New York to study at Barnard College, Renata soon became the city’s new Carrie Bradshaw, blogging about love, fashion, and, of course, neuroscience. Her blog became so popular that, soon enough, no woman in the Big Apple could survive any social occasion without her knowledge of dating, the latest spring trends, and the hypothalamus. After receiving so much attention, Renata decided to take some time off for herself and until recently has been hiding out in her apartment with her stash of ‘80s movies.

**Roberto Fajardo:** After winning a ten-year-long staring contest with his own reflection, Rob gave up on his narcissistic ways and became a hermit. He was quickly welcomed to an exclusive brotherhood of monks because of their matching orange pants. This life of not being touched and spending long hours talking to himself suited him well. Due to this self-imposed isolation, he could not be reached for 15 years.

**Se Lim Kim:** After a highly successful career in realistic, critical art earning her a *TIME* Person of the Year mention, Sally returned to anonymity. She currently draws extremely detailed anime-style reaction pictures which she uses to sarcastically reply to requests and comments on her various blogs.

**Sofia Renault:** Sofia was hired by several television networks to test their latest shows on her. Although she was very good at the job, she was unable to communicate her reviews without stuttering, and was forced to find another job making *terere* at Disney World. While on the job, she finally understood a joke told to her in third grade.

**Sruthi Viswanathan:** Having finally decided which college she would attend, Sruthi fell upon her indecisiveness once again when deciding what major to go after. To everyone’s surprise, she chose film, and upon gaining a master’s degree she set

about her grand dream—to make film versions of well-written crossover fan fiction. Her current project, *Avengers versus Attack on Titan*, is underway, with Tyler Posey as Eren, Crystal Reed as Ymir, and Tom Felton as Captain America (with the help of lots of special effects)—casting choices which got her quite the number of messages on her tumblr.

**Stephanie Averbach:** Stephanie was arrested for vandalism for attempting to redecorate several public monuments; she not only wanted to painted them red, but also planned on covering them with Audrey Hepburn posters. Upon her arrest, police discovered that she was in fact wearing a disguise under those layers of makeup, perfume, and hand sanitizer. Futher investigation revealed her to be one of the FBI’s Most Wanted, for mysterious crimes committed during a half-day layover in Miami. Since serving time in a minimum-security facility, Stephanie has moved back to Sao Paulo, living in an apartment across the street from Kosushi with her Malteses.

**Stephanie Prufer:** Midway through med school, it was discovered that Stephanie’s “inhuman” flexibility actually was inhuman; a rare modification to her B10-N3RD gene was responsible, which technically classified her as a mutant. This served as an inspiration for writing and starring in a critically-acclaimed ballet piece entitled “Age EL.” Her newfound fame unwittingly catapulted her into the middle of political debates on transhumanism and genetic alterations in humans. Though initially very vocal in the debate, she eventually got exasperated with the stubbornness of some politicians; she was noted as commenting, “I prefer things in the hospital. At least cancer doesn’t refuse to be cured because it thinks ‘it’s not natural.’”

**Tanay Agarwal:** As high school came to a close and he set off for college, Tanay Agarwal enrolled in every physics and mathematics class that freshmen were allowed to take; however, as first semester went on, he became increasingly agitated and cranky as he accepted the fact that he was suffering from biology withdrawal. He changed his major to Biochemistry, continuing on to write a Master’s thesis on the ethical issues of genetically engineered cell membranes and their effects on the Earth’s ecosystems. While earning his PhD, Tanay attended Ali Zamat’s and Camila Isern’s lavish Hollywood wedding, which inspired him to finally take up the hobby he’d dreamed of for so long: basketball painting.

**Thomas Mattar:** After a brief stint in public speaking, doomed to failure due to his abundant use of peculiar Brazilian expressions that only a handful of people ever understood, Thomas picked up his saxophone once more, and took to the

stage under the pseudonym Magnific Sax Man (due to copyright concerns). A few years into a successful music career, he met the love of his life, a fellow musician skilled at string instruments. The duo Sax and Violins went on to win great critical acclaim for its deep, if not widely understood, lyrics.

**Utkarsh Bhandari:** Utkarsh became a successful heart surgeon after 8 years of medical training—and even more playing Surgeon Simulator on his PC. His somewhat haphazard yet life-saving techniques earned him several awards, and with this fame he left his job as a surgeon to design games *about* surgery. Now living somewhere he describes as “majestic,” Utkarsh’s new goal is to perform open-heart surgery on the first alien to land on earth.

**Victoria Vergara:** Over time, Victoria’s wardrobe evolved to contain only costumes and no actual clothes. At art school, this wasn’t a problem, because most people there dress like clowns anyway. After working as an artist for a few years, Victoria ran out of lips to draw, and moved on to feet as her new muses. This didn’t tie in to her theme of feminism very well, but art critics worldwide were fascinated by her “Toe-traits.”

**Viola Naldini:** After becoming an Italian mama to eight children, Viola opened her own restaurant that makes everything *à la parmigiana*. She lives in Capri with her gorgeous husband, who is even better looking than all her other ex-boyfriends put together, which is a huge statement. She also tries to teach Italian government officials Chinese so that a new trade organization between the countries can revive a slugging Italian economy.

**Yugo Watanabe:** Worrying that normal classes would be too boring, Yugo took twice the recommended course load in college; since graduating in two years was not allowed, he ended up graduating with five different majors (and a minor in Culinary Arts). Soon after achieving his second doctorate, Yugo was secretly contacted by CIA forces hoping to recruit him to work at Groom Lake. When filling out the required paperwork, his middle name raised red flags; after confirming his ethnicity, the director of the CIA apologized personally before welcoming him to the staff. Dr. Watanabe was a valuable asset in the R&D labs in the years leading up to the ETC incident of 2028; however, the alien autopsies were performed by the second-best xenobiologist on staff, Dr. X. While the official reason was never disclosed, Dr. X was available for comment: “The aliens were pretty cool; they sort of looked like frogs. But apparently Dr. Watanabe doesn’t like touching frogs. At least that’s what I think he said; the livers he was preparing for lunch sort of distracted me.” **🗨️**

# What Next?

## Seniors tell us their plans

### Talon Senior Staff

**Adam Fertig:** I'm going to the exotic city of Providence, Rhode Island, to start my first year in a Brown/RISD dual-degree program.

**Alejandro Torres:** To pursue my dream of getting accepted into the Entertainment Design program at Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, California, I will attend Gnomon (in Hollywood) where I will do a foundation year focused on building the perfect portfolio.

**Ali Zamat:** Study biology and bio-medical engineering to create a human that will become my slave.

**Aliyah Kingsley:** Next year I'm going to Emory University in Atlanta. I'm really excited to explore a different part of the States!

**Ana Elisa Pacheco:** I'm going to go to a Brazilian college, FGV or Insper. I plan on living in Brazil for the rest of my life.

**Andrea Ferreira:** I plan to attend Wellesley College near Boston, Massachusetts.

**Annie Groth:** I plan on attending NYU next year! I can't wait to take on yet another big city, have some of the best food in the world and start living on my own. As for my career path, I have applied as undecided but am leaning heavily toward doing something associated with psychology and/or the humanities.

**Brian Wolfson:** I'll be attending Duke University. I plan on playing club tennis and ski as much as I can. In terms of academics, I'll likely study economics and finance, but who knows if I change my mind and end up majoring in Art History.

**Camila Ferreira:** I'll be going to NYU, and my plan after that is to travel the world, starting with Asia, then Africa. I want to hike all of Santiago de Compostela and explore an Egyptian pyramid. No biggy.

**Camila Isern:** Go to college at UC Berkeley and start learning about nutrition. I also hope to travel a lot around my favorite state in the US (California) and get to know lots of awesome people.

**Carlo Krell:** I'm planning on studying business at Cornell University along with my sister, who is about to start her senior year. I want to take advantage of this opportunity living abroad to have many road trips, join many groups, play a lot of sports, become independent, and have a clear notion of what I want to do in the future.

**Carolina Lengyel:** I'm going to the University of Miami to study advertising. I'll create another group of Baking For All there.

**Caroline Cassinelli:** I'm still undecided, but will be in university either in London or New York.

**Catarina Santiago:** I am planning on attending college in New York and traveling the world.

**Cray Murray:** Go to college in Colorado, party hard, become a boss and then maybe, you know, become a mad scientist and take over the world.

**Daniel Almeida:** In a year you can find me at Georgetown University, studying economics, participating in a million things, and essentially having the time of my life!

**Edward Sanchez:** At Haverford College in Philadelphia, majoring in Mathematical Economics, while also studying the humanities, be it literature, history, philosophy, languages or any study of man.

**Eric Bissell:** I will be attending Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, New York, where I will probably end up studying engineering. I hope to build a computer, run a half-marathon, and learn to snowboard before ultimately killing myself because Troy is in the middle of nowhere.

**Fabio Rocco:** Study economics and hopefully learn a cool thing or two that I can apply to the world around me.

**Felipe Marques:** Go to Boston University, try to expand my interests, possibly become a transcendent pan-universal being (read the In 20 Years predictions, folks).

**Fernando Abdon:** I am staying in Brazil and hopefully I will

be studying in Fundação Getúlio Vargas. By then, I want to be working in some internship.

**Fernando Moon:** The real question is what am I *not* going to do? #gapyear

**Fernando Van Otterloo:** After graduation my plan academically wise is to study hard and get accepted into Insper! Adding on I look forward to my EUROTRIP with 10 friends of mine!

**Fernão Mesquita:** I plan on staying in Brazil and studying either law at GV or Economics at USP.

**Ga Kyung Kwon:** I'm going to Georgia Tech. I will meet a bunch of awesome people there. I'll be living in Atlanta. I'm going to visit famous restaurants before/after going to Atlanta, find a good dessert cafe, and have fun.

**Gabriel Borger:** Go to college. Get engineering/poli sci degree. Take over the world. Retire.

**Gabriella Marrufo:** I will be going to the University of Arkansas, where I will be studying criminal justice and joining the triathlon club.

**Gaston Eguren:** I will be in Monterrey, Mexico.

**Ignacio Sanchez:** After hopefully graduating from Graded, I plan to sleep for four months, then wake up from my hibernation to attend Webster University in Leiden, Holland. There, I plan to study business and international relations, and maybe even learn how to wake up without my mother's help.

**Isabella Ribeiro:** I do not know what my future is going to be like, but that's what makes it all even scarier and exciting. All I can do is hope that with every choice I make, I learn something new. Life's full of wonders and secrets, and it's up to us whether we find those or not.

**Jakob Naegeli:** My plan is to attend the University of Michigan. As of now I'm thinking I'd like to look into political science and/or law as possible career paths, but until I've made up my mind I'll be fine with learning more about my favorite subject,

history. Right now I'm honestly thinking being involved in politics would be a fun career, but I guess we'll have to wait and see what the future holds.

**Jessica Vieira:** My plans for next year are to move to Miami and study business at the University of Miami!

**Jordan Walker:** I'm attending Loyola Marymount (Los Angeles) School of Film & Television Production, minoring in animation.

**Juan Berretta:** Going to Oberlin. And no, I don't have a clue of what I'm going to study. Yay, liberal arts! SO yeah, hopefully get educated enough to make it raaaaaain. Nah, but enough to be happy :)

**Julia Abreu:** I am going to NYU for Liberal Studies.

**Kaique Castro:** I am going to remain in São Paulo and start my *cursinho*, prepare to try to enter USP, a prestigious college in São Paulo. I will continue to spread the love and enjoy what there is to enjoy in a city I know too little about.

**Karen Kandelman:** Being happy. Exploring my interests. Going to NYU.

**Kevin Bengtsson:** I will be attending Harvey Mudd College, chilling in the nice California sun. When I have free time (which will be never), I will continue to record music or eat pancakes. Pancakes are good.

**Kevin Kim:** I have not decided on a university as of now. However after school ends, I'll be going to visit Korea and horde lots of candy for the future.

**Laura Fiuza:** I will be attending University of Southern California at a program where the first year is in the US, the second year in Hong Kong, the third in Milan, and the last year back in California. I am super excited! I will probably major in Marketing

**Leonardo Oliveira:** I will go to Skidmore College and for the next four years I'll be living in Saratoga Springs, New York. My plan is to major in Computer Science and minor in Music; hopefully from there on out I'll be able to get into some app/



game creation and game design as well as composing original soundtracks for my fabulous creations!

**Leonardo Sabó:** Next year I shall be attending the Stern School of Business at NYU. After some years in New York City, I plan on going to Shanghai and London. At least I think so... who knows where life will take me?

**Leonardo Savoy:** I'm staying in Brazil, close to my family, friends, and my girlfriend. I'm going to do *cursinho* here, and hopefully get into FGV, where I want to study business.

**Lisa Tokoro:** I hope I can get a driver's license in the next year. I will most likely be in Japan, studying at university, so please come visit!

**Liv Wang:** I'm off to go live in beautiful, yet unknown to me, Atlanta and study at Emory University, which is pretty exciting!

**Lucas Cabral de Menezes:** I plan on enrolling at Lehigh University, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, to study business and economics. I hope I won't freeze to death so that in four years I can come back to Brazil and begin working at a big firm, and enjoy every second of the nightlife after living in the middle of nowhere for the past four years of my life.

**Luiza Gundim:** I'm going to the University of Chicago next year. I'm planning on studying economics and maybe international studies or public policy, but this is subject to change. My goal is to survive Chicago's unforgiving winter.

**Luke Murkowski:** In the summer I'm going to work on a boat in Alaska; then I'll be doing business at Colorado State University.

**Maria Clara Bezerra:** I will go to Boston University and will probably double major in Political Science and Comparative Literature. I plan on studying abroad in Africa to help with the water supply.

**Maria Julia Galeazzi:** I want to go to college in Brazil, probably at PUC (Pontificia Universidade Católica) to study psychology or in ESPM for advertising. I will be living in São Paulo and in the future travel around the world.

**Mariana Lepecki:** I will be attending the University of Chicago and probably double majoring in Economics and in a biological science (such as Biochemistry). Since I will be living in the windy city of Chicago, my plan is to do avoid freezing to death in my college years.

**Matt Dias:** I'll be going to NYU to study Liberal Arts until I transfer to something (probably) moderately art-related.

**Matt Lewis:** I'm going Parsons in NYC. I do plan on being somewhat of an activist with my art once I'm in New York, something like Banksy. But besides that I'll be doing my thing, experimenting and living in the present. And I'll probably be in a complicated relationship. Peace.

**Max Telles:** Studying at Wake Forest University, where I will produce the next hit EDM song *Jaeger*. Purchasing my own Pacific Rim Jaeger (Asking price: couple hundred billion), and, of course, yachting. In the Mediterranean. With pretty ladies. And wonderful beer.

**McKenna Kiiskila:** Attend Michigan State University. And a few years later hopefully marry a sexy Australian and open a bakery in a small town somewhere warm and sunny!

**Mila Lara:** I am probably going to study at Franklin University, an American university located in Lugano, Switzerland. After my first year of college, I will spend my summer traveling with one of the programs at the university and if I have more time I hope I get the opportunity to volunteer at an NGO.

**Neta Magal:** For now, I am staying in Brazil to gather some art credits to study architecture in the United States. I will try to pass the Vestibular and see if I can start studying Architecture here. Apart from that, I will spend some good time with my family and friends who will also stay in Brazil.

**Nicole Vladimirschi:** Next year I will be attending George Washington University, watching *House of Cards* nonstop, and stalking the White House to find Congressman Underwood. Also, I will be desperately missing my pugs.

**Paty Kim:** Next year, I will be living at Baltimore, Maryland,

studying at Johns Hopkins University. Apart from stuffing my face with crab cakes every day and making the Freshman 15 happen, I'll be focused on being involved with activities and making the best out of the opportunities I am given.

**Paula Soares:** Go to college, hopefully in England, to study astrophysics and stuff.

**Paulo Flecha:** I'm planning on attending Duke University, and am interested in majoring in Computer Science, Neuroscience and/or Mechanical Engineering & Materials Science. I'll be releasing another album in some time (many demos are already coming to life) but think about playing gigs for *Feel* for a while before that, mainly for fun. I'm interesting in developing a slightly different sound for my new music and dream about one day sharing stages with John Mayer and Slash.

**Pedro Quirino:** I will be staying in Brazil, and my dream is to get into Engineering at USP by the end of the year. So, the next year will seem pretty boring, but it is what it is. I have to study a lot, and that will also include going to the gym, playing soccer and watching Corinthians games, and taking the Vestibular to try and get into my dream college. If this is not possible, then another year of *cursinho* awaits.

**Pooja Singhi:** I will be attending Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire. Besides studying, I plan to improve my skiing and (I hope!) get off the bunny hills.

**Renata Sayão:** I plan on going to Barnard Collage. I don't know where I'm going to live but I plan to major in Neuroscience with some other major and work as a headhunter.

**Se Lim Kim:** Go to U.S and study art at college. Perhaps meet with other alumni.

**Sruthi Viswanathan:** I decided to go to the US to study neuroscience and use it to create a device that will allow me to see into the minds of directors and authors to chart a story's progress and final destination. And after I have finished earning the gigantic amount of money from selling it to a bunch of wild fangirls, I am going to take a year off to see the world. I am going to end this world tour in the English countryside where I plan to visit all the wardrobes until I find

the one that leads me to Narnia.

**Stephanie Averbach:** I am planning on staying in Brazil and studying at Fundação Getúlio Vargas.

**Stephanie Pruffer:** Next year, I'm going to study at Duke University. I'm not sure what I'll study, but I'm certain that I will be dancing and fooding quite a lot there.

**Tanay Agarwal:** Take every math and physics class freshmen are allowed to take. Suffer from Biology withdrawal. Come back and cast a curse on Dr. Amaral.

**Thomas Mattar:** I plan on adapting to the huge life change I am about to experience. College in the U.S. will be my first time living outside of Brazil. During the process I'm hoping I can make lots of new friends, make lots of good music, and simply enjoy living abroad.

**Utkarsh Bhandari:** I don't know where I will live in future, hopefully somewhere majestic, where I can find aliens, play games, and all while I eat carrots and drink beer like a sir.

**Victoria Vergara:** I will be studying at SCAD, living in Savannah, Georgia, and hopefully working at the SCAD gym as a Zumba instructor.

**Viola Naldini:** I am going to the UK to study Mandarin, my favorite language. I want to be a successful language teacher.

**Yugo Watanabe:** To be a nice and happy person. And UCLA Physics. 🍌

## Thanks for the Memories

*A farewell to an extraordinary group of seniors*

Josh Berg & Mary Pfeiffer

This print edition marks the end of a golden era, the regime of Ferpecki. We began the year with four editions of our usual paper magazine, while we researched how to transition into an online version. This big move would not have gone so smoothly without the talent, guidance, and dedication of the core team of Adam and Mariana (as Editors-in-Chief) and Nicole (as Layout Editor turned Webmaster). Their leadership enhanced the reader experience through media elements such as audio, video, and polling. Saying farewell to these 18 amazing seniors is rather painful. But as brevity is the soul of good writing (and wit, as Polonius tells us), we offer a short catalogue of what we love about them, what we will miss:

**Mariana:** Mighty Mouse, an endlessly energetic and cheerful leader, and at times beautifully bossy. Brought an exciting alliance of science & writing.

**Adam:** Our Hipster Genius, master of eccentric topics, the clever retort, and sandwiches. Keeper of the Black List and the Go(o)d List; Tweeter extraordinaire.

**Nicole:** Ms. McNugget. The Professional, marrying dependability and initiative. Lover of pugs. Entered our lives as a staff writer, then rose to reign as Layout Queen.

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**Alejandro:** Creator of one of our favorite covers in *Talon* history (last December's Chiyonofuji), along with that extraordinary 100th Edition cover in November. A prodigious talent, always positive, willing to try anything.

**Andrea:** Only surviving writer of the now-defunct Sports section. Immensely entertaining facial expressions in meetings.

**Annie:** Who *doesn't* love Annie Groth?

**Clara:** An endearing troublemaker, who campaigned to change Pooja's name and was censured for drone warfare. Clearly on her way to world domination.

**Daniel:** "Name That Talonista" champion. A nose for news and intelligent commentary, though some contend that he has a head that resembles a strawberry.

**Felipe:** The Punmaster 5000. Brought TalonToon and the world of gaming and comics to the magazine. Tough to edit because we never *really* understood what he was talking about.

**Fernão:** For Now. Elegant and perceptive social commentator. *Talon's Sexiest Man Alive.*

**Julia:** One of the long-term *Talon* veterans. Inevitably got a seat on the couch at meetings. Unnaturally obsessed with food for such a tiny person.

**Karen:** A former *Talon* photographer, who grew into her role as women's rights watcher.

**Kevin:** The (Writing) Voice, a droll mind and sophisticated music critic. We're still learning how to spell his family name.

**Lucas:** Zuke. Creative and clever. Always counted on to give the best (wrong) answers in *Talon* quiz competitions.

**Luiza:** Boss of Bilingualism, writing beautifully in both Portuguese and English. Got Alex to the meetings on time.

**Mendel:** Mendelicious. An experimenter of prose and facial hair. Our *Talon* soundtrack includes his giggle.

**Paty:** Our Blog Matriarch. More mature than most adults we know. Infallibly curious, with a range of interests.

**Pooja:** Pooga. (Clara won.) Before gracing the staff with her fine prose, the greatest Guest Contributor in *Talon* history. Everyone thinks of her as perfect, but this year we caught *four* minor errors in her articles.

To all Senior staff, you may not be with us next year in the Writing Center, but you remain part of the *Talon* family. Your only responsibility now is to continue to follow us on Twitter and check [gradedtalon.com](http://gradedtalon.com) daily.

Now go out and write yourself a wonderful life.

Pfeifferberg ①