



AHS

ALUMNI

REVIEW

2024

FOREWORD

Dear Alumni Community,

How fantastic to see the foundation of the AHS Alumni Review! At Akademeia, we pride ourselves on the strength of our community and this extends to all our graduates who are making their way into the world. It is wonderful to witness from up close and from afar how you continue to grow and succeed academically and personally. So many of you have already been getting involved in all aspects of our school; from leading clubs and electives, working for the Academic Enrichment Programme, helping with the university preparation, to attending our alumni events. Thank you! I very much hope that we continue to see more of you in the future. Remember that Akademeia will always be a home to you and that we are always keen to hear your news and are proud of your achievements.

With warm wishes,

Dr Karolina Watras, Headmaster



A LOOK BACK AT AHS

REFLECTIONS OF AN ALUMNUS-TURNED-TEACHER

Krystian Schneyder

So much has changed, and at the same time, so much remains the same. Working at my old school does not feel weird. The experience is different, and the place has changed so much. On the other hand, I am thrilled to see familiar faces, like the many former teachers from my time whom I now proudly call my colleagues. The sense of community I felt from my time remains – even as the community has gotten bigger, the many little “traditions” persist. Amongst others, Akademeia has kept the unofficial Year 13 table in the canteen and Mr Domoradzki is still universally referred to as “Boss”.

When starting a new job, one always feels a mix of excitement and nervousness. The idea of teaching and potentially making a difference was thrilling, yet I was anxious about my ability to teach and combine this with my other commitments. However, in the end, it was a fantastic experience and a great adventure. I was able to step into the boots of the great Kinga Stańczuk and teach politics, my favourite subject. Whilst not everything went according to plan and surprises, both pleasant and unpleasant, were constant, I felt the great support of my team, Kasia and Julia, Marysia Głowacka, and had at my disposal the friendly advice of fellow teachers.

My main role was to liaise with alumni and cultivate the strong bonds they have with the school and vice versa. However, I ended up being involved in many diverse initiatives. For example, the Akademeia Fundraiser was a real pleasure. This is a new tradition and one I was thrilled to participate in. I also had the pleasure to teach Politics and at one point English Literature. This was a great opportunity, as I had always considered teaching, and now I have finally had the chance to experience it by working at Akademeia.

My main reflection is the degree to which things have changed. The musical, for example, could compete with Broadway and West End. Most of the electives in my time, like drama, were insightful but, despite the passion of the teachers and students, lacked professionalism. It's great to see how much the school progressed. On the other hand, some things have not changed. The great atmosphere I felt during my time here has been scaled up to a community of over 330 students. This has been an amazing experience, and I am glad I returned to witness it.



CONTINUING HER AHS MUSIC PROJECT IN PARIS

AN INTERVIEW WITH AGATA KOŻUCHOWSKA

What are you doing in life at the moment?

I'm finishing a 4-month internship at the Frank Horvat Studio in Paris, where I am working as an assistant archivist under the direction of the photographer's daughter, Fiammetta Horvat, and entirely in French. This incredible experience has allowed me to take a peek behind the scenes of the art world and the personal archives of one of the most versatile fashion photographers of the 1950s and 60s.

This internship is part of my MA in History & Philosophy of Art (2023-4) at the University of Kent | Paris School of Arts & Culture, where I am currently researching for my thesis on the subversive photography of the 1950s under the direction of Dr Hans Maes. In the meantime and alongside my degree, I'm running Fotoaesthetica, a blog devoted to history and philosophy of photography.

What is your latest project?

In January of 2024, my first peer-reviewed publication was published in the 1st issue of the International Journal of Surrealism co-edited by Alyce Mahon (University of Cambridge) and Kate Conley (William & Mary). My exhibition review "Verge of Divergence: review of Toyen: l'écart absolu, Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris, 25 March–24 July 2022" was published in the online segment of the journal.



Agata, Class of 2019

In October of this year, I will be participating in the Surrealisms 2024 academic conference organised by the International Society for Studies of Surrealism, celebrating the hundred-year anniversary of the first manifesto of Surrealism by André Breton. There, I will be sharing my music project Manifæsto, which I had started back at Akademeia in 2018, in an academic setting; and I must say I am beyond excited for this event, which will take place from 28 to 30 October, at my alma mater, the American University of Paris.

Can you share your favourite memories from Akademeia?

Akademeia had a rigorous work ethic that I did not see at any universities I attended, combined with a real sense of academic community. Akademeia provided me with a ‘toolbox’ which meant I didn’t have to learn things from scratch at university, I could go more in depth with a unique set of skills which continue to pay off. For me, high school and beyond is about searching, following your instincts and often taking risks. If I were to provide some advice to current Akademeia students, it would be to say ‘yes’ to a lot of ad hoc ideas – this is how I gained my opportunities. And don’t be discouraged, especially in the humanities.



What are your plans for the future?

In September I will be moving to Scotland to study an MLitt in History of Photography at the University of St Andrews, supervised by Professor Natalie Adamson. After having focused on History of Art in general until now, I am very excited for this next step as I am hoping to specialise in photography and use the practical experience from my current internship for my studies. Afterwards, I think I’m most likely to pursue a PhD in the field of modernist / fashion photography, but we shall see.



PURSUING DRAMA AT DARTMOUTH WHILST PREPARING FOR MEDICINE

AN INTERVIEW WITH ZOFIA CZERSKA

What are your plans for university?

I plan to double major in biology and music whilst also being on a pre-med track. I'm the music director of an acapella group at Dartmouth and the member of two bands that don't have a name yet.

Could you tell us about your involvement at Dartmouth?

Last term I was involved in drama. There is a theatre company at Dartmouth called the Displaced Theatre Company and it's all student-organised. The plays are mostly written, produced, directed, and acted by the students. I acted in one play called Jules and Julia. The idea is that the plays are not on stage but, for example, they take place on the green, or in corridors or on staircases. Hence the name 'The Displaced Theatre Company'. Jules and Julia is quite an abstract play about the apocalypse and cats in the apocalypse. It tackles the themes of loneliness and friendship. The play was written by a freshman, and I found all the characters really relatable.

Did you go to Dartmouth with the intention of doing drama?

Not really. I wasn't really considering it that much. I considered doing it at some point, but I did not expect to do it so soon. But many of my friends were involved. I definitely went to university knowing that I wanted to be involved with the arts. Similarly, I never considered doing acapella. For me, by going to the activities fair I got to know a lot of groups involved in performing arts. And I saw that even though it is a big time commitment, you know that in doing plays, you don't have to do it all the time and you can manage your commitment.



Zofia, Class of 2023

Could you tell me more about the combination of performative art with natural sciences?

Most universities in the US, but especially Dartmouth, give you the opportunity to tailor your education to your career aspirations. It gives you a lot of freedom. You have a huge breadth of choice. Each term I have been at Dartmouth, I've tried to take a STEM course with a humanities course. In my first term, I did neuroscience with a writing course, for example. There are hundreds of courses at Dartmouth. You get a lot of freedom regarding where you want to invest your time here. Extracurricular clubs include everything. Within every discipline there is a club.

Could you share any memories of AHS?

Oh gosh, so many. I miss Akademeia so much when I'm here. But Dartmouth reminds me of Akademeia too. It's like an Ivy version of Akademeia. I have to mention musical theatre. I recently saw the production of *The Greatest Showman*. A lot of it was our own work. Obviously with the help of Dr Anders. It was such a beautiful thing to see it finished. The musical theatre club at Akademeia has grown massively and it's great to see.

What are your plans for the future?

I'm still preparing for med school. I am pretty set for that, but that's in the distant future. Next year, if all goes well, I would love to write a play. I want to do that at some point. In the immediate future, I am preparing for a music show with my acapella group. I am arranging a lot of things for that.



ALUMNI EVENTS

2024

Throughout the 2023/2024 academic year, we hosted many events with the help of our amazing alumni. The AHS Fundraiser, Alumni Reunion, and of course, our Insider Stories, were all examples of the enduring sense of community fostered by our school's alumni. We are thrilled that they continue to contribute to Akademeia with their skills and experiences from all over the world.

Scholarship Fundraiser, 7 June 2024

It was great to see this year's event attended and supported by many alumni. During the AHS Fundraiser for Graduating Scholars, we came together as a community to support our current students and celebrate their achievements. This year's fundraiser was truly an unforgettable event, featuring a captivating student fashion show, an enchanting music concert, and an exhilarating live auction, which included artwork donated by alumni. It was an opportunity to relive cherished memories, catch up with old friends, and most importantly, contribute to a cause close to our hearts. We hope for more events like this in the future.



WOŚP, 28 January 2024

We raised over 61,000 PLN for WOŚP! Akademeia's incredible community, including our alumni who supported the live auction with donations, came together to make a difference during the 32nd Grand Finale. This year, the fundraiser benefitted post-pandemic lung treatment. Huge thanks to our dedicated student volunteers for organising a week-long program culminating in a fantastic live music concert and art auction.



Alumni Reunion, 20 December 2023

Dr Watras expressed gratitude for the alumni involvement in various school events and initiatives, ranging from participating in Insiders Stories to delivering presentations during assemblies and generously donating artwork for our fundraisers. She also shared plans for the upcoming year, focusing on further developing our alumni network, which has now surpassed 200 members globally. The Headmaster recounted how one alumna, upon arriving at the school reception, expressed the sentiment of being 'back home.' We aspire for Akademeia to remain a cherished home for our alumni, a place they're always eager to revisit.

**Insiders Stories, 24 October 2023**

At Insiders Stories, one of our most cherished annual events, our Year 11-13 students have the opportunity to meet with accomplished Akademeia alumni from various institutions. At this year's edition, we were privileged to welcome 16 Akademeia alumni, some of whom joined us virtually from different corners of the globe, while others visited in person. They represented a variety of majors and programmes, including Medicine at the University College London, Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering at Princeton University, Biomedicine at Oxford University, Illustration at Parsons School of Design, Aerospace Engineering at Delft University of Technology, Media & Culture at the University of Amsterdam, as well as universities like Brown and Wesleyan.





Alumnus Visit: Mateusz, 22 September 2023

We had the pleasure of hosting Mateusz, our student scholar and a proud member of the Class of 2022. He has just completed his first year at Trinity College, Cambridge, where he successfully delved into the world of Natural Sciences. Mateusz didn't rest during his busy summer; he completed internships and enriching learning experiences. Before heading back to the UK, he took some time to visit his high school. Mateusz reconnected with his mentor and teachers, explored the latest changes to the campus, and, most importantly, shared his invaluable experiences with some of our current 6th Form students who are eager to follow in his footsteps. Mateusz shared his journey, from the Cambridge application process and interviews, to what it's been like to embrace academic and college life. Thank you, Mateusz! Our students couldn't have asked for a better guide.



ALUMNI INVOLVEMENT

Tomek, Class of 2019



Could you share with us what you have been doing at Akademeia recently?

During the winter term at Akademeia High School, I had the pleasure of teaching the maths prep course to Year 8-9 students. These students were preparing for the school's entrance exams. Over the course of eight weeks, I worked closely with them, guiding them through various mathematical concepts and problem-solving techniques essential for that exam.

Teaching this course in Term 2 was an incredible opportunity. I genuinely enjoyed helping the students enhance their mathematical abilities and watching their confidence grow. The experience was immensely rewarding, and I am grateful for the chance to positively impact their learning journey.

Can you share one specific memory that has stayed with you from your time in AHS?

I particularly remember the Cambridge offers days at school. Everyone was sitting so impatiently during their classes awaiting the results. Luckily, as the day progressed, everyone received what they were hoping for – an offer from their dream university.

Do you think Akademeia helped you prepare well for university, work, or life in general? If yes, in what way? Could you give an example?

Akademeia helped me with preparation for university as it helped me build a solid academic vocabulary that aided me with the school-to-university transition. In addition, the classes at AHS were run in a more academic style, which allowed me to switch quickly to a university-style of learning. I was also very grateful for the lab facilities at AHS, as they provided me with a solid set of practical skills that proved indispensable in the lab.

Based on your time at Akademeia, what advice would you give to current or prospective students?

Try to find a good balance between studying, sleeping, and socialising with your peers. All those things are key to success and sustainable progress!

How do you reflect on your choice of university? What aspects did you consider when choosing where to go?

I was super indecisive on what I wanted to do in the future – I wasn't sure what I wanted to study, so I chose a subject that gave me a choice to specialise in a number of paths. Overall, I am very happy with my uni choice – I am glad I was able to explore various paths during my time there.

Tomek recently graduated with an MPhil in Materials Science from the University of Cambridge. He is now helping to educate the next generation of Akademeians.

Liubou, Class of 2022

Could you briefly share with us what you have been doing since graduating from AHS?

Since graduation and receiving my IAL results, I have been studying MSci Biochemistry (Molecular and Cellular) at the University of Oxford. Alongside my degree, I managed to attend an internship at Ben-Gurion University of Negev, where I worked in the Hematopoietic Stem Cell lab. Additionally, I have been involved in working as a facilitator for workshops and alumni panels with the online research program Pioneer Academics. Furthermore, some of my classmates and I have started a student-led university research journal.

What are the top 3 things you miss from your time in Akademeia?

First and foremost, I miss the teachers. They were the highlight of my classes and school life in general. I still keep in touch with most of them, but I really miss the times when I could talk to them at any point throughout the day, learn from them, or ask for their advice.

I also really miss various spaces in the school, especially the cafeteria. When I was a student there, the library had not been built yet. I remember times when my friends and I used to stay in the cafeteria until late at night, preparing for our exams. A lot of memories, laughter, and tears are associated with that place.

Finally, I miss the sense of community we had in the school, the constant encouragement for academic growth and development. I remember how motivated I felt while encountering challenges throughout my education at AHS and how happy I was when I overcame them. This is where I am especially grateful to the teaching staff for supporting each of my steps and decisions.



Can you share one specific memory that has stayed with you from your time here?

I vividly remember coming to school for the first time in August 2022, when COVID was still around. I arrived at school for the COVID test that day. Sitting in isolation, waiting for the results, surrounded by books, I was in the space where the spirit of academic development and encouragement for learning were floating in the air... I don't think I will ever forget the mix of excitement and anticipation that I experienced in that room. That was the exact moment when I silently promised to myself that I would try making the most of my time there.

Can you tell us a bit more about your plans for the summer?

I have just finished my second year at Oxford and moved to Cambridge to pursue an internship at Clemence Blouet's lab. This lab is concentrated on neuroscience, and the control of energy and glucose homeostasis by the brain. I'm hoping to do research on the control of appetite in post-menopausal mice, but it depends on if they will be able to allow this project in such a short period of time and the resources that the laboratory has at the moment. Originally, I was applying for the Amgen scholars programme. However, after being put on the waitlist, I have been told that I will still be able to pursue this internship. Luckily, I also managed to obtain financial support from the British Neuroendocrinology Society.

Afterwards, I will be doing an internship in Sweden at the Karolinska Institute. Briefly, I will investigate signalling pathways in cancer cells using microscopy techniques. I'm excited to learn and work in a lab and meet new people in Cambridge and Sweden. Most of the labs in the second year of Biochemistry in Oxford are computer-based, so I am looking forward to getting back to wet lab experiments.

Tell us about teaching at AHS.

I was at AHS to help prepare students for their ESAT exams. I prepared a presentation with different questions and tried to answer them with the students guiding them towards a written answer and helping to develop an exam technique. I found it hard to find the balance between giving them additional knowledge to spark their interest and on the other hand having to cover the material required for the ESAT. Overall, however, I really enjoyed teaching. It was encouraging and motivating to see the students who are in the same position as I was a couple of years ago. It is also really nice to be back at school and see familiar faces. Feels like I never even left.

Ania Wojas, Class of 2020

Could you briefly share with us what you have been doing since graduating from AHS?

Since graduating from AHS, I completed a bachelor's degree in Economic History at LSE and am currently in the process of completing an MA in Holocaust and Genocide Studies at UvA and the NIOD Institute for War, Holocaust, and Genocide Studies. From August onwards, I will be joining the AHS team, teaching Political Ideologies and Economics while applying for a PhD.

What are the top 3 things you miss from your time at Akademeia?

The community: being surrounded by people who are always there to help you. The routine: sometimes 9:00 – 5:00 (though in the case of high school, 8:30 – 6:00) can help you structure your life and bring peace of mind. Passionate teachers: those who can push you in the best direction and instill a love for learning about the world.

Can you share one specific memory that has stayed with you from your time here?

A trip to Białowieski Park Narodowy. I remember after one day of intensive hiking, we drove to a field a couple of kilometres away from where we were staying to look for European bison (we had heard they had been spotted there for a few days in a row). We patiently waited, despite the unbearable mosquitoes, until we finally saw a pair. Seeing these animals, combined with the discomfort of mosquito bites, made that afternoon somehow truly special.

Do you think Akademeia helped you prepare well for university, work, or life in general? If yes, in what way? Could you give an example?

Absolutely. The two most important skills AHS taught me, that have been extremely useful to my studies and work so far, are critical thinking (especially when dealing with academic texts) and diligent note-taking. These skills have helped me navigate the academic world tremendously. Whenever I am presented with new information, these skills generate hundreds of questions in my head, which helps me understand and evaluate the material better.

Based on your time in Akademeia, what advice would you give to current or prospective students?

Firstly, take your time and don't panic. The world is your oyster, but to navigate it skillfully, you need to have your head in the right place. So, take a deep breath and calm down, even meditate or do yoga. As long as there is mess and tension in your head, there will not be order in your life. Secondly, if your plan A, B, or even C doesn't work out, it is not the end of the world. There are many things more important than getting into your dream university: health is one of them (including mental health).



Would you like to be the next Alumni Coordinator?

Position Description:

As an Alumni Coordinator, you will bridge the gap between our institution and its alumni network.

Your primary responsibilities will include:

Maintaining an updated alumni database.

Maintaining relationships with alumni.

Organising alumni events, reunions, and other engagement initiatives
(alumni picnic in June)

Collaborating with teachers and faculty to facilitate alumni involvement
in educational programs and initiatives.

Maintaining an updated alumni database.

Creating and distributing regular alumni newsletters to keep them
informed and engaged (once a year)

Collaborating with the development team to involve alumni in
fundraising efforts.

If interested, please email hr@akademeia.edu.pl



Editors:

Krystian Schneyder, Editor-in-chief

Julia Seeholzer, Senior Editor

Special thanks to Agata, Zofia, Tomek, Luba, and Ania for contributing to this first-ever issue of the Alumni Review

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