

10 early graduates most in recent memory

By Gavin Broussard

Nine seniors graduated early, the most in recent memory, while one junior is also finishing up high school in May.

Seniors Mia Berry, Cole DeWulf, Mayson Eddy, Baileigh Edwards, Addison Honts, Kady Kraklio, Draven Lopez, Alyssa Ostofi, and Collin Wagner all graduated after the first semester while junior Alivia Barnard will be graduating a year early.

High school counselor Mrs. Kristy Badtram said the number of early graduates shows that students are more strategic when they schedule their classes now.

“They are more prepared when I come in to schedule,” she said.

Eddy was caught off guard by the number of students graduating early.

“This number kinda surprised me, especially since I’ve always heard people say enjoy your years of high school for as long as possible,” said Eddy, who decided

to graduate early after watching two of her sisters regret the decision not to do so in the past.

“I knew if I graduated early that I would be able to have more time to do the things I want to do but also pick up more hours at work,” said Eddy.

Eddy said that “part of me wanted to stay till the end of the year, but another part of me was like take this as a reward for all the hard work you’ve done, especially since you have more than enough credits right now.”

Eddy cited several possible reasons for the larger number of early graduates.

“I think this is happening because students might just be burnt out with being in school,” said Eddy. “I believe that students are starting to become more strategic when planning their schedules, so they have the opportunity to graduate early.

“Also, students may want to start

college or whatever career they want to do sooner. Those would be my best guesses, but each person has a different thought process as to why they want to graduate early.”

Barnard is graduating a year earlier because she was worried about the length of her college education

She said she plans to become an equine vet, which requires a six-year doctorate program as well as a two-year residency.

“I was annoyed that I was going to be almost 30 by the time I got my career going,” said Barnard.

The new period system that Durant High School adopted this year also played a part in her early graduation.

“Graduating a year early was a goal I started planning for last year when it was announced we would be switching from blocks to periods,” said Barnard. “I didn’t, and still don’t, like that, so I wanted out as quickly as I could.”

Barnard took no study halls in high school and also points to a jump start she got back in elementary school.

“The reason I am able to graduate early is because in second grade my score on the state tests allowed me to be placed in advanced classes, which eventually led to me being placed in several high school classes when I was in middle school,” said Barnard.

Though the number of students graduating early may be surprising to some, Barnard believes that the number of students graduating early should be higher.

“I’m kinda surprised the number isn’t bigger,” said Barnard.

“The required credits to graduate is kinda low, and most of them are electives, so people could just work hard freshman and sophomore year then take a bunch of easy classes senior year and mostly easy classes junior year and graduate at semester, but they don’t, and I don’t understand it.”

Durant’s foods classes to start offering ServSafe certificates

By Ellie Kirchner

Durant’s foods classes will be offering a certificate starting next year that will help students who are interested in culinary careers.

The certificate is titled ServSafe, and it shows that students are properly trained in food safety preparation. The certificate would normally cost students \$15 if they were to complete the course on their own.

Mrs. Hailey Houk, Family Consumer Science teacher, is offering the certificate in two of her classes, Foods and Advanced Foods.

The ServSafe certificate shows that students are knowledgeable about such topics as food safety, personal hygiene, and cleaning.

Mrs. Houk is presenting the certificate in her class syllabus on the first day of the new school year.

To get the certificate, students will take a 40-question multiple choice test with no time limit. Students will need to score at least 75 percent on the test.

The course will be a graded portion of the Foods and Advanced Foods classes.

“Students will be taught the curriculum just like any other topic area and take the ServSafe exam and that will be entered as a grade,” said Mrs. Houk.

However, students are not required to pass the ServSafe exam in order to pass either foods class.

The certificate will open more opportunities for those students interested in a culinary career when they leave high school.

“This certificate is required by many employers, so having this already completed may make employers lean towards hiring one of my students versus someone who hasn’t gotten this certificate,” said Mrs. Houk. “It shows that someone is conscious about what is required in the industry world.”

ing on where students want to work after high school. Mr. Rouse offers the course to about 15-20 students every year.

“It is my goal to have every student someday taking this course as part of my classroom safety culture,” said Mr. Rouse.

The Iowa Department of Education has a list of industry-recognized credentials that school districts in Iowa can offer. These credentials are available in a variety of fields including agriculture, technology and business.



Photo by Tim Rouse
Junior Tate McKinley holds up his 10-Hour Construction Safety and Health card from OSHA.

Latta Harris’ soccer player of the month

Senior Jordon Kirchner has been playing soccer for two years. He has been chosen to be captain of the team this year. Kirchner’s favorite part is getting to travel to the away games with the team. His goal this year is to score 10 goals. He will miss playing with his friends.



Kirchner



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Photo by Paige Happ
Senior Mariah Alpen gets set in the blocks for the 100-meter hurdles in a track meet this spring.

Newsmaker of the Year award to senior athlete Mariah Alpen

By Kila Wink

Senior Mariah Alpen was chosen as *The Wildcat Chronicles* 2024-2025 Newsmaker of the Year with five appearances in the newspaper.

Seniors Bryce Daufeldt, Lauren Callison, and Conner Schwarz and junior Colby Gast finished in second with four appearances each. Four other students placed third with three appearances each.

Alpen, who was featured in two spotlight ads for basketball and track as well as previews for those sports, is excited to be Newsmaker of the Year.

“I enjoy reading the newspaper, and I think it’s really intriguing how the *Chronicles* staff writes about different topics, students, and athletes,” she said. “I think it’s exciting to have the opportunity to highlight standout students and athletes.”

As Alpen was interviewed more and more by the newspaper, she became comfortable in that role.

“I would say it definitely got easier for me as I got interviewed more,” she said. “I was more confident, and my answers were better detailed.”

Students involved in activities also have a higher chance of being featured in the newspaper.

“I would definitely encourage the

underclassman to try and get involved in as many things as you can because of all the memories you make,” she said.

One of the runners-up, Bryce Daufeldt, also encourages underclassmen to get involved.

“I try to be in as many extra activities as I can, and the advice I can give to the underclassman is to get involved as soon as possible cause the time really does fly,” he said.

He said the newspaper can “acknowledge students’ hard work, not only in sports but also in the classroom.”

Another second-place finisher, Lauren Callison, is the sports editor for the *Chronicles* but has also been highlighted in sports stories as a leading golfer for the girls’ team.

“It feels very rewarding because I get to interview athletes and share their story, but also I’m getting to build my own,” she said.

Being featured in the newspaper and working behind the scenes, Callison thinks the *Chronicles* is important to the local community.

“I think it’s so amazing that we have the *Chronicles*,” she said. “It keeps people updated on what’s going on at school and is very rewarding to those who are interviewed.”