

# OLIVERIAN

— A school as unique as its students. —

## Oliverian Newsletter October 2018

### **The Sea Cow of Hope**

*By Will Laughlin, Head of School*

Hanging in the entryway of our condominium in Biddeford Pool, Maine, is a painting of a cow. It is a giant, colorful, audacious painting. The cow is wearing spectacles and appears simultaneously amused and annoyed, perhaps at all the attention he receives (mostly from me). He shares his canvas with a collision of letters and flags - the entire nautical alphabet - and seafaring symbols and secret messages to my son, Colton. Besides a painting by Chagall that made me cry the first time I saw it in a small gallery in California (Jacob's Grief), this is my favorite painting in the world. Unlike the Chagall, this painting does not make me cry; it makes me smile and helps me breathe.



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### **What's new at Oli? We're glad you asked...**

- Our campus is getting a new look! Oliverian trustee George Hawthorn (who also happens to be Dartmouth's lead architect) has helped us pick a new color palette: "Burnt Sesame." You'll also see new upgrades across campus - from new floors in a dorm to more flowers blooming on the grounds.

New paint colors and other upgrades are just a prelude - over the next ten years, we'll be building a new campus on our current site.

- Oli's counseling department is growing: over the last four years we've grown from two counselors to three, and this year we'll have four full-time counselors, including our clinical director.
- We're excited to have a new allied dorm: a non-gender-based dorm to create a safe community within the community.
- Help us welcome our new chef Billy Brigtsen. Billy is a New Orleans

trained master chef, and owner of [Bright Sun Kitchen](#) in Bradford, Vermont.

- We have reached full enrollment and currently have a waiting list - stay tuned for new spots opening up in January!

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## Faculty Spotlight: Director of Student Life Connor Fahey

Director of Student Life Connor Fahey, who is going into his fifth year at Oliverian, believes that mistakes are also valuable learning opportunities. That's why he's passionate about Oli's approach to discipline, which offers students a valuable opportunity to grow as individuals within a larger community and prioritizes reflection over restrictions.



We sat down with Connor to talk about Oli's unique perspective, and why our students and faculty are especially equipped to help each other overcome mistakes.

### **Q: What is Oliverian's approach to discipline and supporting students through mistakes?**

**A:** Our approach is really progressive. Not many schools are doing what we do, and our student-to-staff ratio is so small that we can really give individualized attention and help students grow when they make mistakes. We teach students that consequences come with any decision you make, and sometimes those consequences are positive, but sometimes they're negative. After students make a choice that has negative consequences, we're able to have conversations with them, and that's really a big part of who we are. We're about relationships: talking with the kids and finding out why they're making some of the choices that they're making.

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## Oli Welcomes Brendan Bigos to the Admissions Team

As most of you know, Barclay Mackinnon has been the welcoming face for every student and family who has come to Oliverian over the past 15 years. We're excited to add a new member to our admissions team to make the admissions process even better for families and consultants while helping Barclay do more of what he does best.

Brendan Bigos is coming aboard as Oli's Director of Marketing & Development. In his new role, Brendan will work to protect and refine Oliverian's profile, select right-fit students, and create a positive experience for families, educational consultants, and other referents.

Barclay will continue to shepherd families through the admissions process while nurturing referring professionals and the massive network of highly engaged Oliverian alumni he's helped develop over the past 15 years.



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### What We're Reading

*The Self-Driven Child* acknowledges the increased rates of anxiety and depression among school-aged children. It looks at the roles of modern parenting and highly structured school programs and activities as contributing factors for increased anxiety and lack of motivation among teens. It then offers solutions to these struggles by exploring how to let your child(ren) make more choices, individuate, and gain greater autonomy in small and large ways.  
-Julie Tracy-Prieboy, Director of Counseling

