



DUCHESNE HIGH SCHOOL

shaping leaders in mind, body, and spirit

Hi all,

Have you heard of the “Wait Calculation” or the “Barnard’s Star Scenario”? I hadn’t until this weekend when I came across them in Ethan Mollick’s newsletter on artificial intelligence. He frames the scenario like this: “Say you wanted to get to our stellar neighbor, Barnard’s Star as fast as possible. When should you leave? You might be tempted to answer ‘as soon as you can,’ but you should reconsider. Using today’s rocket technology, this six light year journey would take 12,000 years. The catch here is ‘today’s rocket technology.’ A theoretically possible fusion-powered spaceship could make the trip in less than fifty. Given enough time (and avoiding apocalypse or collapse), humanity will likely develop that new fusion drive. That changes the equation. You don’t want to be the person who set out on a 12,000 year voyage (or more likely their great-great-and-so-on grandchild, born aboard the ship), only to be passed by a flurry of rockets launched 11,950 years after your departure, piloted by people whose ancestors lived comfortably on Earth the entire time. Better to be lazy and wait for technology to improve before every setting out into the stars.”

Mollick goes on to discuss the “Wait Calculation” in terms of AI and large language models. If one plans to use AI to help in the completion of a task, is it better to wait for the AI to advance. He also recognizes the hazards of waiting. If we put off projects until AI can complete them at our desired levels, we lose the learning and joy that comes from working the problem. These hazards address the biggest problems with using AI in the classroom. I don’t assign analytical essays to my literature class because I expect perfect analysis; I assign them because I believe my students can find significant learning and joy in working through the various problems of the assignment.

The “Wait Calculation” idea, however, interested me in a different way. Teachers are constantly making these types of calculations as they pertain to our students. We all have goals for our students. The ones we write into our curricula are tailored specifically to the courses we teach, but the goals that matter the most tie directly into our mission and vision, educating students in both virtue and knowledge. On both fronts, we have a strong desire to charge ahead: the best course of action is the most direct and action focused. Discernment, however, sometimes asks us to wait. Is today the best day for a particular lesson to resonate, or might tomorrow bring about better conditions? Answering that question can be frustrating, but it can also be a wonderful source of learning and joy.

Pax,

Dominic D’Urso



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Announcements

January 26

Coronation Basketball Game: Our pep rally will be held at 2:00 and will include an introduction of the Coronation court. The game begins at 7:00. The Coronation court will also be introduced between the JV and varsity game. As usual, all of our families are welcome to attend.

Wrestling Meet: The Pioneer wrestlers are competing at St. Charles West.

January 27

Coronation Dance: The doors will open at 6:30 with the ceremony starting at 7:00. The dance will follow the ceremony and end at 9:30. Students attending the dance are required to stay until 9:00.

January 29

Registration Opens: Freshmen, sophomores, and juniors will begin to sign-up for classes for the 2024-25 academic year. Registration closes on February 6th. Students were given information by their Communio teachers about their graduation progress (classes they have taken, and those they still need to take), and a worksheet. These documents, their Communio teachers, and their guidance councilors should help them plan the necessary schedule. Registering by the February 3rd deadline is essential to establishing the schedule for next year.

January 31

Power Hour

February 2

Home Boys Basketball: During halftime of the varsity game, numerous generations of alumni dancers will perform with our diamondline. It should be a great night.

February 6

Home Girls Basketball



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February 7

National Signing Day: We are inviting all seniors who plan on signing a national letter of intent (and their families) to a reception on Wednesday morning at 8:30. Please see the letter from Paul Boschert for more details. Also, if you plan to attend, please RSVP to Paul by 2:00 on February 2nd.

Home Boys Basketball

February 8

Home Girls Basketball

February 12

Freshmen Registration Night: We welcome the class of 2028. For the first time, they will come together as a class to meet one another and register for next school year.

February 14

Ash Wednesday/All School Mass/No Late Start: Our next all school mass will be on Ash Wednesday. To accommodate the mass, we will have a normal 7:45 start time. As usual, all of our families are welcome to attend.

