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NEWS RELEASE

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GHS students earn top scores in world, nation on prestigious exams

Four current and recent Gainesville High School students have earned top scores on rigorous college-level exams, including one who earned the highest score in the world.

Rachel Young, a senior at GHS, earned a 'Top in the World' score on the English Language Cambridge exam, which is administered by Cambridge Assessment International. That status is awarded to students who have achieved the highest mark in the world in an individual subject. Young also earned a 'Top of the USA' score in Biology.

Current GHS junior Vicki Jung earned a Top of the USA score on the Cambridge Mathematics exam. Patrick Schanuth, who graduated from GHS in 2021, had a Top of the USA score in Physics, while fellow 2021 graduate Zoe Lammers earned a Top of the USA score on the Global Perspectives and Research exam.

All four are currently enrolled in or recently graduated from GHS' Cambridge program, an academic magnet for high-achieving students that is affiliated with Cambridge University in the United Kingdom. The Cambridge program is offered throughout the world, and students have an opportunity to earn the highly-coveted Cambridge diploma as well as college credits for high scores on Cambridge exams. More than 175,000 students worldwide take Cambridge exams each year.

Young, who plans to pursue a career in a STEM (science, technology, engineering, math), said she expected to do well in biology but not as well on the English Language exam.

"I didn't think it was going that well when I was actually taking the exam, so that was definitely a big surprise," she said.

Both Young and Jung credit the Cambridge program and its teachers for preparing them for the exams and for success in high school and beyond. Both say they've learned how to organize their time and to write effectively, which is strongly emphasized in the program.

"Taking the English classes here has helped me refine my writing abilities," said Jung. "I've learned a lot and I feel my writing has greatly improved since I first entered high school."

Cambridge coordinator Carmen Butfiloski says many of the students enter the Cambridge program focused on STEM and somewhat intimidated by the writing requirements.

"In the end, they always show appreciation for what they learned because they see how they can apply it to any field they go into," she said.

Young, Jung and Butfiloski also say the program's flexibility is a huge selling point.

"I love to see how students can tailor the program to meet their needs and their college and career plans," she said. "They can take the courses they need and find things they're passionate about during their high school careers."

Dozens of other GHS students have also earned recognition this year for earning high grades in multiple Cambridge courses. They will be recognized at a special ceremony at the school later this year.

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