Apr 13 2023

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Ardmore resident and OSSM senior seeks career in growing field of data-driven investment

Oklahoma School of Science and Mathematics

Alexander Zhao, a senior at the Oklahoma School of Science and Mathematics (OSSM), and his family are part of a small community of professional researchers and computer scientists in Ardmore, Okla. His parents immigrated from China two decades ago to work at a nationally renowned research institution. Watching his parents and wanting to pursue a similar profession, he knew he needed an advanced, college-level education.

Alexander was familiar with OSSM, a residential high school in Oklahoma City that focuses on math and science, after several friends graduated from it. In addition to the advanced academics, he knew the school would provide him with the opportunity to grow as both a student and a person. He applied for admission

Alexander Zhao

during the throes of the COVID pandemic and is now preparing to graduate from one of the nation's top public high schools.

One of the most impactful elements of his OSSM education he cited is a mentorship with a local venture capitalist firm. That experience gave him valuable hands-on experience in data science, programming, and finance. All that led to his

dream of a career with an organization that combines data analysis and venture capitalism.

"I had an interest in these subjects but never had an opportunity to act on them until I attended OSSM," he said.

All students at OSSM are given an opportunity to participate in its mentorship program. The school partners with more than 60 academic institutions, businesses, nonprofit organizations and government agencies to give students the opportunity to work with professionals in many fields. These include research, medicine, engineering, among others.

Alexander hopes to earn a bachelor's in financial economics at Columbia University with a minor in data science. After going on to earn a master's and a doctorate in finance, he will focus his career on the intersection of data analysis and venture capitalism.