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Parents' Committee on Health and Wellness is calling for the school to make systemic changes to workload, citing high levels of anxiety, stress in the student body.



PAGE 4 • FEATURES
New to U-High, learning coordinator Laura Doto works with her counterpart Lesley Scott to help students develop strategies for coping with U-High's academic rigor.



PAGE 6 • SPORTS
The girls basketball team struggled to recruit members this year. While this led to disadvantages on the court, the small team size brings with it a tight-knit community.



University Of Chicago Laboratory High School

U-HIGH MIDWAY

1362 East 59th Street, Chicago, Illinois 60637

JANUARY 25, 2019

Volume 95, Number 5

Community in protest

Students, parents, faculty express support for Bobo-Jones; direct their shock, outrage at administration

by **MIRA COSTELLO**
and **JACOB POSNER**

Winter quarter began shakily when a long-standing teacher's employment was terminated, prompting confusion and outrage from students, faculty and parents — and action from the Faculty Association.

On the morning of Jan. 8, Daniel Bobo-Jones left his position as a U-High biology teacher, according to an email sent to the families of students in his classes. The abrupt nature of his departure sparked questions and concern among students, faculty and staff, who had little information available about the reasons for Mr. Bobo-Jones' absence.

The Midway obtained a statement the faculty released Jan. 22 to U-High employees regarding Mr. Bobo-Jones' recent termination. The statement claims that the administration "mischaracterized" Mr. Bobo-Jones' actions as violating federal privacy laws and falsifying a grade report. It said, "few teachers have not adjusted a grade, or suggested to a student that she or he remind a friend to hand in an assignment. If Principal Weber's criteria were applied widely, few of us would be safe."

David Derbes, a physics teacher, added in an interview, "This is the first step, and it will not be the last step."

Before his termination, Mr. Bobo-Jones taught just one day of his winter quarter classes, which were then substituted by administra-

See the full story online
uhighmidway.com

tors for approximately three days. During this time, students learned little new material, and spent the week catching up, especially in Mr. Bobo-Jones's introductory biology class.

Science department chair Daniel Calleri said on Jan. 11 that the science department hired a substitute Dr. Marites Baris, who has a Ph.D. from the University of Chicago in geophysics and is experienced in biology and paleontology. Dr. Calleri said he hopes that Dr. Baris will substitute all of Mr. Jones' biology classes and electives for the rest of the year.

Tension between parents and U-High administration ran high during a Principal's Chat for parents Jan. 22 in the Gordon Parks Assembly Hall. More than 100 parents showed up — triple the typical number, according to a parent who did not give her name.

About two-thirds of the attendees raised their hands when Director Charlie Abelmann, who co-facilitated the meeting with Principal Stephanie Weber, asked who came to discuss the events surrounding science teacher Daniel Bobo-Jones.

Most of the meeting, which was held from 8-9 a.m., was devoted to the termination of Mr. Bobo-Jones. Parents voiced issues about the timing of Mr. Bobo-Jones' termination, how the community was



MIDWAY PHOTO BY EMERSON WRIGHT

SUPPORTING FORMER FACULTY. Senior Sohil Manek hangs a poster to support science teacher Daniel Bobo-Jones, who was terminated Jan. 8. Alex Stevanovich, a senior who helped organize the show of support, said, "I wanted to say, 'Hey Mr. Jones, we appreciate you.'"

informed and how the administration handled the three-day transition of Mr. Bobo-Jones' classes to a long-term substitute.

Risa Cohen, a student in Mr. Bobo-Jones's biomedical ethics elective that began Jan. 7, said she and her peers are adjusting to the substitute and class structure.

"She's been really nice," Risa said. "We get readings and discuss them in class, though we still don't have a textbook. It's gone from a really fun class to just another average period, for me at least."

Malcolm Taylor, a freshman in Mr. Bobo-Jones's class and also a member of Spectrum, was particularly hurt when he left. Malcolm only knew the teacher for a few

months, but he already trusted and saw him as an adult he could go to for help.

"Mr. Jones was my favorite science teacher. He made learning fun and had me engage in a way that has been unique all of fall quarter," Malcolm said. "When he left, I cried. Biology went from being the best class of the day to the worst overnight. I didn't go to Spectrum for fear of not being able to control my emotions."

After posting signs of solidarity on their lockers the day after Mr. Bobo-Jones left U-High, students have vocalized more protests against his termination. Some have hung posters with slogans like "#BringBackBoboJones," and

"Settle the Grievance," as well as circulating memes on social media to draw attention to their concern.

Charlie Kistenbroker, a junior, also printed posters with more general criticism about Lab's administration in a time of loss. Her signs, which Charlie said were directed toward Dr. Abelmann and Ms. Weber, displayed messages mocking the format and language of the Laboratory Schools mission statement.

Charlie said she believes that the administrations should spend more time listening to student voices.

Additional reporting for this story contributed by Amanda Cassel and Olivia Griffin

DAY OF SERVICE



MIDWAY PHOTO BY LILY VAG-URMINSKY

SATURDAY SERVICE. Carla Young, principal of grades N-2, tapes a box filled with meals in C116. Students, parents and faculty from the University of Chicago, Lab and Woodlawn volunteered with Rise Against Hunger Jan. 19.

Bobo-Jones claims discrimination

by **ELLA BEISER**
ASSISTANT EDITOR

Daniel Bobo-Jones filed two separate charges with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, a branch of the Department of Justice, against the Laboratory Schools administration — one before and another after his employment was terminated Jan. 8 — claiming both discrimination and retaliation.

The Faculty Association, the union representing members of the faculty, filed a separate grievance with the administration claiming the termination of Mr. Bobo-Jones violated the collective bargaining agreement.

"The FA believes the administration's response is an overreaction and that his firing is without just cause," James Catlett, FA president, wrote in an email to the faculty that was obtained by the Midway.

The FA filed charges with the Na-

tional Labor Relations Board Jan. 14 for the termination of Mr. Bobo-Jones. The documents, which the Midway obtained through a public records request, state that the "retaliation came suspiciously timed after a written criticism and a written rebuttal of the director's activities."

After a series of meetings in October and December, Mr. Bobo-Jones filed his first set of charges with the EEOC and DOJ in December because he believed he was being discriminated against for being openly gay. He said he believes that his straight colleagues would not have been treated similarly.

"I got the distinct feeling that I had been treated differently because of my open status," he said.

Two weeks after Mr. Bobo-Jones informed the administration of the charges, he was fired.

Principal Stephanie Weber declined to comment on the claims

Mr. Jones filed against the administration.

Mr. Bobo-Jones told the Midway that he believes he was fired partially due to the charges he filed in December. He thinks that this is an unfair reason to fire him so he chose to file more charges with the EEOC and DOJ for "suspicious timing" and a retaliatory dismissal.

Mr. Catlett, Mr. Bobo-Jones and Lab Schools Director Charlie Abelmann met Jan. 18, where Mr. Catlett and Mr. Bobo-Jones presented their contract grievance to Dr. Abelmann. Dr. Abelmann has until Jan. 28 to decide whether he agrees with the FA's grievance.

If Dr. Abelmann does not reinstate Mr. Bobo-Jones, the union has until Feb. 4 to send a final letter to the school asking them to hire a private judge, known as an arbitration officer, who will listen to both sides of the case and make a ruling.

‘Are we living the dream today?’

Roche, Coats receive new MLK Spirit award

by KATERINA LOPEZ
ASSISTANT EDITOR

In honor of Martin Luther King Jr.’s 90th birthday, students, faculty and staff gathered in the Gordon Parks Assembly Hall Jan. 17 to answer the question, “Are we living the dream today?” This was the theme of the assembly organized by the Black Students’ Association. The faculty advisers of BSA also presented a new award to one faculty member and one student who work daily to make Dr. King’s dream a reality.

Sophomore Kennedy Coats and Service Learning Coordinator Hannah Roche received awards.

The assembly was more visual than previous ones, with an opening film created by photography and film teacher Benjamin Jaffe with help from his film class, and an animated version of Martin Luther King’s “I Have a Dream” speech shown between performances.

A speech from Barbara Ransby focused on answering the theme of the assembly. Dr. Ransby, a historian and professor at the University of Illinois at Chicago, examined the definition of “we” in the assembly’s theme, arguing that “we” should include everyone around the world.

“King’s notion of success was to change the world, to change history, to stand up in difficult times and to speak truth to power. Dr. King was a reformer and a radical thinker, a peaceful trouble maker. He argued not for preserving traditional values, but changing many of those values, values that justify and cover up the fundamental inequalities and injustices of our society,” she said. “So in remembering Dr. King this week in what would have been his 90th birthday, I hope we all remember him as a dreamer and a do-



See more photos online
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MIDWAY PHOTO BY ODY NIKAS

er. His dream was a collective dream, and that we define ‘we’ as a inclusive of all of us, not just some of us.”

Among the student performances, Billie Holiday’s “Strange Fruit” sung by Isha Singh and Sofia Kouri seemed to be one of the

most popular performances and received the most applause.

“We sang that song because we sung it at a concert last year when talking about racial injustice and there’s something so powerful about the dissonance in the song that makes the message even stronger,” Isha said.

Senior Jordyn Mahome read an excerpt from “The Anarchy of Colored Girls Assem-



MIDWAY PHOTO BY ODY NIKAS

DREAM ON. Guest speaker Barbara Ransby discusses the importance of dreaming. Dr. Ransby asked students to consider how they can realize Dr. King’s dream through activism.

SIGNS OF SOLIDARITY. Sophomore Yanni Simmons holds a sign representing Angela Davis, a Black activist and author from the 1960s. Members of BSA held a presentation about the lives of various Black historical figures.

bled in a Riotous Manner,” by Saidiya Hartman, which she said is a reminder that we do not have to be great activists to be proactive. Other student groups that performed included Bel Canto, Jewish Students’ Association, Latinos Unidos, Spectrum, BSA Board and the U-High Jazz Ensemble.

Principal Stephanie Weber closed the assembly with a speech on showing love in a community.

New courses to be offered during registration Feb. 4-17

by GRACZE ZHANG
ARTS EDITOR

Eight new courses will be offered for the 2019-20 school year, and some will be semester-long classes if the the semester schedule is approved after meetings next week.

The course registration window is Feb. 4-17. Students sign up for classes by logging into PowerSchool. During the registration period, students can edit their sub-

missions as many time as needed, and only the final submission will count.

One new history course is AT Comparative Politics and Global Relations, which emphasizes understanding international politics and solving real world problems with open-mindedness and creativity.

The science department will offer Organic Chemistry and Introduction to Chemical Research, se-

mester-long courses which could be combined into a yearlong course. Due to the enrollment growth in chemistry classes such as AT Chemistry, these new courses will help students who are interested in taking more chemistry. Two new computer science classes are also being offered: Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning.

The music department will offer Recording Studio Musicianship and Introduction to Acoustic Gui-

tar, both elective courses. In addition, Digital Music Production I will now meet the music graduation requirement instead of counting as an elective. Other changes include allowing students to take U-High Chamber Collective without an Orchestra pre-requisite and Jazz Band in the same year Band.

The journalism department is expanding to offer two new classes: Media Literacy and Analysis and Multimedia Journalism. Me-

dia Literacy and Analysis has no prerequisites and aims to help students analyze online and other digital media. The course explores methods and awareness of the effects of media on consumers and citizens. Multimedia Journalism will require completion of Beginning Journalism and builds on those skills to tell stories through different media such as photo, video and audio, as well as on online platforms.

NEWS IN BRIEF

JSA to hold first-ever Shabbat potluck event

The first-ever all-school Shabbat dinner potluck will be hosted by the Lab Jewish Affinity Group and the U-High Jewish Students’ Association on Jan. 25 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. in Café Lab.

The potluck will uphold the traditions of the weekly Jewish holiday with lit candles, grape juice, blessings and traditional Jewish foods such as challah bread.

“The idea for an all-school Shabbat dinner started when two Jewish moms in ESH realized that there wasn’t a strong Jewish group at Lab,” Nathan Appelbaum, JSA president, said. “The event is partially to showcase our community.”

All students regardless of their age or faith are invited and encouraged to come to the event.

“My hope is that the event will be full of people, joyous, and fun,” JSA adviser Susan Shapiro, a U-High history teacher, said.

—BERK OTO

Gmail will replace existing Webmail

Gmail will replace Webmail as the email platform students and faculty use starting the next school year if policy and technical issues with the University of Chicago can

be resolved.

This change from the current platform aims to facilitate collaboration and communication using email, chat and video conference for all faculty and grades, according to Brian Hewlett, director of innovation and technology.

“So much of our work now is happening in groups and teams,” Mr. Hewlett said, “so we need to have a platform that supports that kind of collaborative work.”

Anyone with another Gmail account will be able set up accounts access them in the same place.

“It is one less password to remember,” Mr. Hewlett said.

—PETER PU

Current Drivers Ed program discontinued

In December 2018, Principal Stephanie Weber announced that U-High would no longer “promote the services of and have ceased to facilitate the Illinois Driving School’s Program on campus.”

The administration has not yet developed another program for Drivers Ed.

Lab’s driver’s education program was run through an external vendor, the Illinois Driving School, and has been affiliated with the school for several years.

According to the Associate Director of Schools, Christopher

Jones, there were a series of conversations with the Illinois Driving School in which the administration determined that due to reports, it was not “in the best interests of the students to continue to work with the Illinois Driving School on campus.”

Andrew “Andy” Danek, the owner and teacher of Illinois Driving School, said that when he “walked into the meeting, they already seemed to have their mind made up.”

Danek intends to challenge the administration’s decision. Participants of the fall quarter drivers ed class have said that the instructor made inappropriate comments toward students.

—CALEDONIA ABBEY

CU reallocates Winter Formal music budget

Just two weeks away, one of two annual school dances will be held at the Theological Center this year. The Winter Formal will be Feb. 9 from 7:30-10:30 p.m. Tickets will be sold for \$10 in advance and \$15 at the dance.

The dance will have a Spc, according to Aly Lathrow, Cultural Union president.

Aly said some students complained that the DJ in previous dances switched the songs too fast. She said rather than hiring a

DJ, the CU decided to make a playlist to let songs play all the way through with a quick transition at the end of songs.

Without CU spending money on the DJ, students can also count on the usual cookies and extra food.

—NELSON MARKS

SJW solicits student workshop proposals

Social Justice Week will occur April 15-19 and will feature the theme “Break the Cycle.”

Students will have many opportunities to schedule their own events throughout the week. They may host a workshop during their free periods, during a class period with teacher approval or during the extended Thursday assembly period that will feature two 50-minute sessions.

Students may also host a speaker during lunch or open time. Workshop proposals are due by Feb. 8, and leaders Stephanie Miller and Franzi Wild are available to answer questions via email.

—TEDDY NEER

Robotics club shows steady improvement

In the U-High Robotics Club’s first months, its two teams, We Byte and Fresh Steel, have shown a steady improvement in competition results.

Sophomore Nicholas Pietraszek and middle school science teacher Darren Fuller formed the club at the beginning of the school year. Meetings include building and engineering specific parts, wiring components and programming their robots.

Leading up to their first meets on Nov. 17, the teams mainly worked from their instruction manual. Many members had very little experience in robotics and struggled to build the robots.

“By the first meet, we were convinced that we were the rookiest of rookies... I wasn’t so sure how we were going to do,” Nicholas, the club’s president, said.

The teams performed better than they expected, with We Byte finishing 4th, and Fresh Steel finishing 12th. This led to continued improvement as We Byte finished fifth and Fresh Steel third at the second meet on Dec. 15.

Despite having little time to prepare due to winter break, We Byte finished second and Fresh Steel finished third at a Jan. 12 meet.

Nicholas credits his teams’ hard work as the key to their improvement.

The Robotics Club welcomes new members and meets Thursdays during lunch and after school in room S221. The teams will compete at the regional level Feb. 2.

—TEDDY NEER

Sky-high homework

Over 350 parents call for changes to workload

by **PRIYANKA SHRIJAY**
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Last year's health and wellness survey highlighted that 94 percent of students find school work to be their leading source of stress. In response, more than 350 parents have signed on to a call for the middle school and high school to make systemic changes to workload.

In an email to U-High department heads and administration, the Parents' Committee on Health and Wellness noted that workload changes would address issues like stress, sleep loss, anxiety, depression, and drug use.

According to committee member Christian Leuz, a parent of a ninth grader and a seventh grader, the committee formed when middle school Principal Sandra Bixby asked a group of concerned parents to participate in meetings around stress and workload. Parents read about and discussed homework and stress as well as the experiences of peer schools. The committee realized that there was a strong case to revisit student workload at Lab.

The quality of homework and instruction is more important than quantity, according to Lauren Raphael, parent to students in 10th and eighth grades. She added that inundating students with homework would only detract from their health.

"They are stressed, they have anxiety and depression, they are getting 'burned out' with school. The health and wellness survey done last year shows that 81 percent of students are suffering from some form of anxiety," Ms. Raphael said. "That is an astounding number."

Additionally, Dr. Leuz noted that when his children started middle school, he saw major changes in their workloads.

"We felt that they had very little time to do other things and to enjoy their hobbies. With each

grade, it became harder for them to get the necessary amount of sleep. They had to make some difficult choices in terms of their hobbies, and our weekends are often ruled by the kids' homework schedules," he said.

According to Dr. Leuz, one fewer hour of homework wouldn't have a negative impact on academic success.

"It is very hard to believe that an hour more or less homework would make a major difference to the academic success of Lab students," he said. "But an additional hour could make a big difference when it comes to a hobby, a sport or a past time."

Dr. Leuz noted the parents committee is not against homework.

"We, too, want academic excellence," he said. "In fact, our call emphasizes that, to us and based on the evidence we have seen, academic achievement and well-

ness are not in opposition, they go hand in hand."

According to Dr. Leuz, the reaction from parents has been chiefly positive.

"We were surprised how quickly over 350 parents supported our call. This number is remarkable considering that we have not yet reached everybody and that many parents still have not heard about the signature campaign," he said. "We were also very pleased to see that there are a number of parents who are also Lab teachers supporting our call."

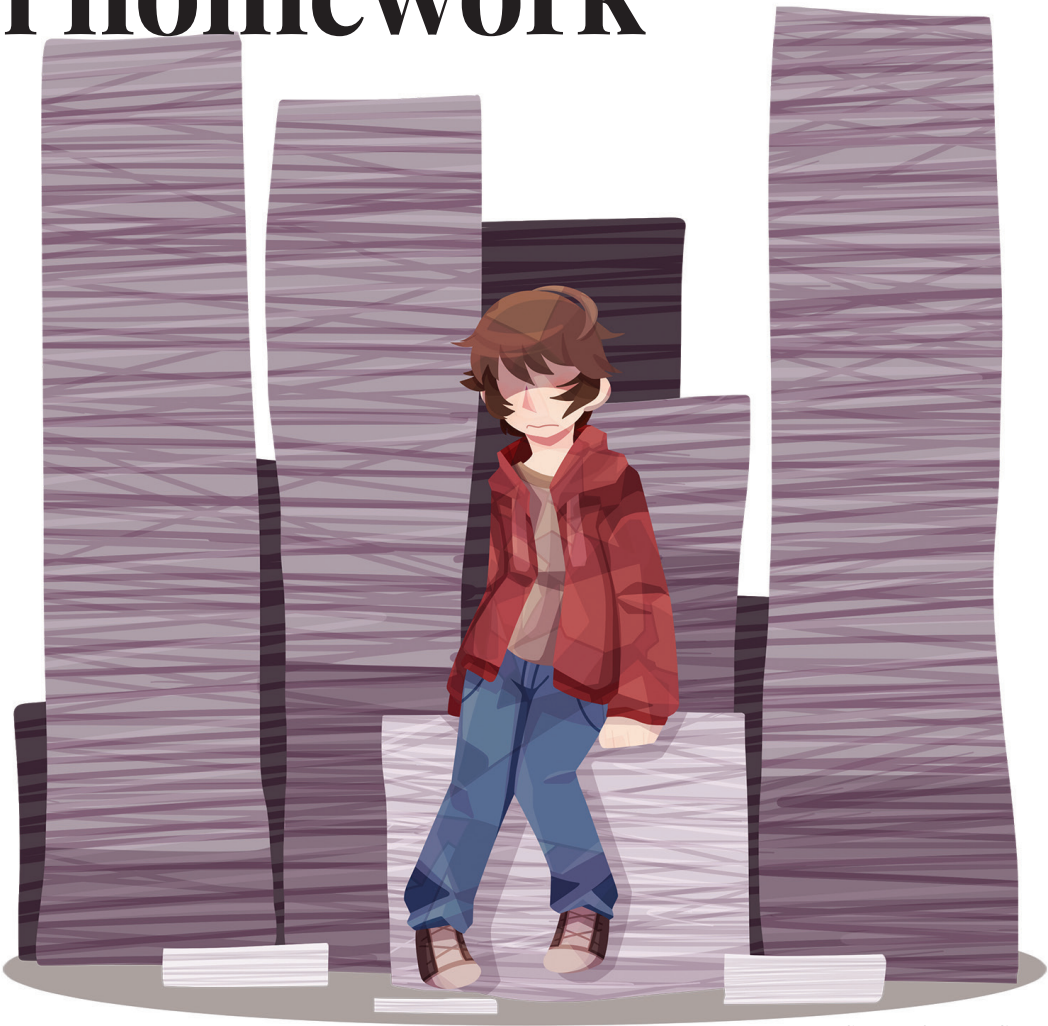
Ms. Raphael noted that teacher-parent communication often results in teachers being resistant to hearing feedback about the amount of time students spend at home on schoolwork.

"They tend to assume that students are distracted by phones and screens and music, whether they are or not. We cannot fix the

problem unless teachers are willing and able to understand how much homework they are giving," she said. "I would suggest some form of anonymous feedback loop where students can report on excessive homework without the risk of offending the teacher. Or students can set up a way in which they can evaluate their experiences in classes — much like students do in college."

Science department chair Daniel Calleri, himself the parent of students in ninth and sixth grades, agreed teachers should consider the quantity of work assigned from the students' perspective.

He added that homework is still necessary to maintain a relationship with class material. Dr. Calleri noted that singling out this one component of a student's reality as the sole source of that student's problems is not going to lead to successful outcomes.



MIDWAY ILLUSTRATION BY ACE ZHANG

Stress Stats

On average, students spend

3.4

hours on weeknight homework, and sleep

30

minutes fewer per night than recommended

83%

of students &

85%

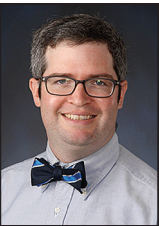
of parents

think sleep, homework and habits are a priority

— STATS FROM LAB HEALTH AND WELLNESS SURVEY

QUICK Q

What's your philosophy for assigning homework to students?



Colin Rennert-May, English teacher: "There are some things that are useful for students to do at home. Any homework I assign should be a part of learning. There could be times where it's useful for students to read in the classroom, but that's something that's better accomplished by students on their own time."



Rosa McCullagh, math teacher: "'We all just wanna do more. We have to ask ourselves are we preparing kids? Would it be fair to do less? What I have a hard time with is trying to get tough and cover material, with giving students enough time to process and learn it.'"



Daniel Ristin, Latin teacher: "The purpose of homework in my class is to help the students start to move what they've learned in class from short term memory to long term memory. It's just simply to practice what they've learned in class."

— COMPILED BY MAX GARFINKEL

Admin has limited influence on homework

by **GRACE ZHANG**
ARTS EDITOR

Although the administration doesn't regulate or coordinate the homework teachers assign, the administration is working on creating focus groups for students to talk about health and wellness at Lab, including homework.

Individual teachers, sometimes with their department, determine homework. There's no rule requiring teachers to give homework, but according to Principal Stephanie Weber, there is also no regulation on how much, how often or coordination with other classes.

According to Faculty Association President James Catlett, a chemistry teacher, it is difficult to put a limit on or identify an amount of time students should spend on homework. Instead of talking with administration, teachers talk within their department to determine the homework given in classes.

"We rely on the professional judgment of teachers and trust their judgment in what's appropriate," Mr. Catlett said.

In addition, according to Ms. Weber, it's difficult for the administration to oversee homework. She said it is up to expertise of the department to determine what homework will best help students understand and practice new material. She also said a time regulation on homework isn't inclusive of every student's abilities.

"The question I always encourage teachers to ask is, given the educational objectives and learning outcomes for your class, what work do you have students doing in

"The question I always encourage teachers to ask is, given the educational objectives and learning outcomes for your class, what work do you have students doing in class?"

—STEPHANIE WEBER, PRINCIPAL

class?" Ms. Weber said. "And then what work are you asking them to do on their own outside of class and why?"

History teacher Christopher Janus said he tries to be sensitive to his students' needs and their experiences with the homework.

"My objective is also to listen to the class," he said. "There's a difference between complaining and 'it's too much,' and if I hear from the class that it's too much, I reduce it. I tend to deal with it more on a class-to-class basis."

After seeing the results of last spring's health and wellness survey, the administration is discussing homework in the curriculum committee, which consists of department chairs and high school administration. Ms. Weber said that they are considering changes such as incorporating student course evaluations earlier in the term, rather than at the culmination of a course.

She is also planning to create a working group of students, faculty and parents, as well as student-only groups to be led by Wellness and Deputy Title IX Coordinator Betsy Noel to further discuss health and wellness concerns, including student expe-

riences with homework load.

When concerns about homework are brought to the administration, Ms. Weber encourages students to share the concerns directly with the teacher.

"I will also share those concerns with the teacher so that they have the information and from that can respond to the needs of student," Ms. Weber said.

Ms. Weber also suggests teachers should regularly check in with students and ask for feedback about the course and workload. This would allow a teacher to learn what parts of the homework were helpful and to make sure the homework matched the intentions and objectives of the assignment.

Director Charlie Abelman cited other resources students could use if they have concerns about the workload. They could talk with a counselor, an adviser, the dean of students or assistant principal. He also said they could have parents speak on their behalf.

"I think kids need to be able to be advocates for themselves and where they are doing an amount of homework that seems excessive that's interfering with a healthy lifestyle," Dr. Abelman said.

"If that is the situation students need to speak up, and by speaking up, that also creates greater urgency for being able to think about change and have change be necessary."



Charlie Abelman

Learning to deal with distractions

Learning coordinators create individualized plans for students

by JACOB POSNER
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

“When I was in first grade, there was a student in my class who acted out all the time and who was always in trouble. It was very obvious to me, all of six years old, that he was having trouble learning,” Laura Doto, a learning coordinator, said. “It wasn’t that he was bad, he just couldn’t sit still and he couldn’t do the work and he wasn’t doing the homework and his name got put up on the board basically every day. And I just never thought that was very fair.”



Lesley Scott



Laura Doto

Although Ms. Doto said that she has always been good at learning, she never expected that she would become a professional educator.

Now, as a learning coordinator, she works to figure out what accommodations would be most useful for students who have learning disorders.

Ms. Doto, who is new to U-High this year, and Lesley Scott, U-High’s other learning coordinator, help students develop good practices, such as becoming more organized or developing effective testing strategies. According to Ms. Scott, accommodations for students might include extended time or use of the testing room, where a student who has difficulty with reading comprehension might read questions aloud.

But the learning coordinators don’t just help students with learning disorders.

“For a student with a mood disorder, the more concrete the plan, the less likely they are to get worried about it because they’ve got some consistent opportunity,” Ms. Doto said. “There’s some certainty.”

Oftentimes, the act of planning, for students with a mood disorder — it’s not that they don’t know how to do it, it’s creating the



MIDWAY PHOTO BY ISABELLA KELLERMEIER

BUILDING COMMUNITY. Junior Elizabeth Gately sits down with learning coordinator Lesley Scott to pick out courses for senior year. Learning coordinators often help students develop plans for their education. From test taking strategies to arranging extra time for students during tests, learning coordinators aim to provide students with the resources they need to succeed in their classes.

space and time to do it so they can actually act and not get worried.”

Anyone can ask for help from the learning coordinators, Ms. Scott said. They often act as mediators between students, parents and teachers — Ms. Doto calls this “educational diplomacy” — and will help any student who stops by.

Ms. Doto said she never expected to find herself working education.

“My mom had been a teacher, I was like, ‘Nope, don’t want to be a teacher, I want to do economic development in Latin America,’” Ms. Doto said.

But one way or another, education has always found its way into her life. Ms. Doto went to the University of Chicago for a master’s degree in Latin American studies, and

ended up getting her degree in the effects of a bilingual education in the Chicago Public School System. Despite majoring in Spanish and History, and ended up doing quite well on the National Teacher’s Exam.

She is now dedicated to education counseling.

When a new student comes by, the learning coordinators will establish rapport, understand the student’s process, then try to find the root causes, according to Ms. Scott. If, for example, a student needed help writing an English paper, the learning coordinator might help the student write the skeleton of an outline.

“So when they start that work then later in the day, whether it be during the school day or at home, they’ll have that jumping off

“If you can cross my threshold, and have an honest conversation about where you are, I will get you somewhere. You just have to show up and I’ll take it from there”

— LAURA DOTO,
LEARNING COORDINATOR

point,” Ms. Scott said.

The learning coordinators said they help any student who comes by as best they can.

“If you can cross my threshold and have an honest conversation about where you are,” Ms. Doto said, “I will get you somewhere. You just have to show up and I’ll take it from there.”

For some, service extends beyond sophomore year

by NIKHIL PATEL
WEB EDITOR

As the students pour in from their regularly scheduled after school program, they begin to sit at the tables that they are familiar with. The kids, who are anywhere from kindergarten to eighth grade, begin to either play or work on their homework and with tutor John Freeman, a volunteer and a U-High junior, who has spent far more than the required 40 hours at the After School Fun program at William H. Ray Elementary School.

Although many students do not continue at their service site past the required 40 hours, some go above and beyond the requirements by continuing to volunteer long past the requirements.

A bond that grows between the volunteer and the community often serves as a powerful reason for this excellence.

“I didn’t think I was going to keep helping out at Ray when I started, but by the time the end of the year came I had made such strong bonds with the students there that I just didn’t want to stop going,” John said.

Grant Fishman, a senior, tutors students at the University of Chicago Charter School North Kenwood/Oakland and has been volunteering there with Ready, Set, Grow! since the organization’s founding. He chose to fulfill his sophomore year requirement there as well.

“My sister founded the organization during her sophomore year, and when I joined, I intended on eventually taking responsibility for its continual growth,” Grant said. “I grew attached to the kids over the years, and watching them mature has been very rewarding.”

John had a close connection to the site before sophomore year.

“I knew I wanted to tutor because I have been tutoring middle schoolers here since freshman year and have really enjoyed it,” he said. “Ray School is a place that is close by that needed the help, so I decided it would

“I grew attached to the kids over the years, and watching them mature has been very rewarding.”

— GRANT FISHMAN,
SENIOR

be the right place.”

At their service sites, John and Grant help both curricularly and extra-curricularly. Aside from his role as a tutor who helps with his homework, John also serves as a peer to talk with.

One of John’s favorite parts of his volunteer site is the conversations he has with the students.

“I have had so many great conversations about anything you could imagine,” he said. “Talking with the kids there has really given me a different perspective of my life.”



MIDWAY PHOTO BY MACY BEAL

EXTENDED SERVICE. John Freeman stretches along with several other children from William H. Ray Elementary School, where he has continued to volunteer during his junior year.

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Nearly New

Social media promotes mainstream fashion brands, advertising clothing sold for high prices. However, many teens opt for a cheaper alternative, thrifting.



ADRIA WILSON

Jumpsuit
Bought at: Buffalo Exchange
Price: \$10
"I got it fairly recently but I wear it a good amount, it's not my favorite but I wear it a good amount."

Inner Coat
Bought at: Vintage Banana (in Louisville, Kentucky)
Price: \$30
"I really like this jacket. I like that it's got nice hardware."



MICHAEL HARPER

Sweater
Bought at: Village Discount
Price: \$8
"It's definitely one of my favorite items. I got it about a year ago and I've worn it a lot, I wore it a lot especially last year."

Outer Jacket
Bought at: Buffalo Discount
Price: \$20



GIGI REECE

Where to thrift:
Buffalo Exchange
Location: 1478 N. Milwaukee Ave.
Hours: 11 a.m. - 8 p.m. daily

Pilsen Vintage:
Location: 1430 W 18th St.
Hours: 11 a.m. - 7 p.m. Mon. - Thurs.; 11 a.m. - 8 p.m. Fri. - Sat; 11 a.m. - 6 p.m. Sun.

Village Discount:
Location: 2032 N. Milwaukee Ave.
Hours: 9 a.m. - 9 p.m. every day except Sunday

MIDWAY PHOTOS BY EMERSON WRIGHT

by **AMANDA CASSEL**
ASSISTANT EDITOR

Walking into a Wicker Park thrift store, sophomore Gigi Reece is filled with excitement and hope. She looks from shirt to shirt and doesn't worry that she could fall in love with something that could destroy her wallet.

She finds a shirt that appears brand new and could easily cost more than quadruple the price at one of her favorite stores, Urban Outfitters. She looks at the price tag and is thrilled to see it is only \$3. Although this seems like a ra-



Gigi Reece

re deal and an unlikely find to a novice thrifter, Gigi isn't surprised. This is normal thrift store procedure. Search, find clothing that expands your style, check the price tag, smile. She buys the shirt and finds herself satisfied and excited about her purchase.

"It's that excitement you get when you buy any new clothing," Gigi said, "but this time, you clawed through those racks and put in the work to find that shirt you love. You earned it."

Gigi explained how walking into a former warehouse with racks on



Adria Wilson

racks of clothing can be incredibly overwhelming, but part of what makes thrifting incredible is the sheer mass of possibility without the intimidating price tag.

"There's this satisfaction when you find something you love," Gigi said, "You did that. You found something unique for almost no money. And that is really special."

Gigi's experience and relationship with thrifting is not unique. Junior Adria Wilson also loves thrifting. She was introduced to it by her older sister, a lab alumna, and when her sister learned to drive, they started thrifting all the time.

"She really liked thrifting and I followed her lead," Adria said, "and then it became something I look forward to, and love myself."

Adria loves the variation she sees

"It's that excitement you get when you buy any new clothing," Gigi said, "but this time, you clawed through those racks and put in the work to find that shirt you love. You earned it."

— GIGI REECE, SOPHOMORE

thrifting, finding something that is uncommon and unique. She disliked how other stores would cycle through clothing every few weeks and everything generally followed one era or trend.

"When you thrift, you find stuff from all different periods, in all different varieties," Adria said. "And you could find something you

love, that you never expected, and it has this unique story behind it."

Adria and Gigi's excitement about thrifting is not reserved to girls. Senior, Michael Harper would argue that style is one of the best ways he can express himself.

"When a stranger sees you on the street," Michael said, "in that split second all they have to judge you is your clothing."

But clothing wasn't always something so relevant to Michael. He started caring about his style towards the end of middle school. At first, much like Gigi, his go-to store was Urban Outfitters. That changed after his friends took him thrifting.

"It was really different, you know," Michael said, "it was like a totally different kind of shopping."

New taco restaurant might not meet all expectations

by **NICKY EDWARDS-LEVIN**
MIDWAY REPORTER

At the busy corner of 57th and Kimbark, 1321 E. 57th Street has come to be known as a "cursed location." From Edwardo's Natural Pizza to Packed Dumplings to Cemitas Puebla, no restaurant that arrives here seems to last very long. As of December 2018, the space has been occupied by Seoul Taco, a Korean-Mexican fusion restaurant with five other locations across the Midwest.

Casey Master, Seoul Taco's regional manager for Illinois, thinks Seoul Taco is here for the long haul. In fact, Master said that the Chicago River North location had also been "cursed."

"At first, when we were in River North, everybody told us, 'You aren't gonna make it,' every time something went wrong, and here we are, three years later, still there and thriving," Master said, "so I'm excited to see what happens here in Hyde Park."

Though Master said the campus clientele is very different from that of River North, he is confident that

everything will run smoothly.

"I'd say we are confident in our success, given the quality we put out — it's unique, it's something you don't see around, Korean and Mexican fusion," Master said.

But the food I tasted didn't quite live up to Master's description.

For starters, it's never good when the best part about a restaurant is the soundtrack. Seoul Taco does features a charming space with a fun, lively atmosphere (and a wonderful, '90s hip-hop playlist), but the food, greasy and over-salted, doesn't measure up.

Given that the St. Louis-based chain is called Seoul Taco, it seems fair to expect a great taco. Each comes with a choice of protein — bulgogi steak, chicken, spicy pork or tofu — plus a sesame vinaigrette salad mix, green onion, crushed sesame seeds, "Seoul sauce" and lime wedge.

This might sound plentiful, but the "sesame vinaigrette salad mix" was just a few measly leaves of lettuce, and the green onion and sesame seeds were practically non-existent.

The best part of the taco was the Seoul sauce. Sweet at first, it leaves a spicy aftertaste. But all three meat options were thoroughly underwhelming.

The bulgogi steak was too salty and, in a word, floppy. The spicy pork was barely seasoned yet saucy to the point of syrup; the flavor was hardly memorable. The chicken was very fatty and fairly rubbery.

In each case, it was difficult to identify a clear flavor with the salty meat, spicy sauce and bland lettuce all vying for attention. Each taco — and, for that matter, menu item — relies on the Seoul sauce, but the sauce can't make up for the underwhelming meat.

Though the tacos are nothing special, Seoul Taco's service is fairly efficient, the food is fairly tasty and the prices aren't outlandish: \$2.50 per taco and \$8 for a burrito.

If you crave a taste other than Medici or the cafeteria during your lunch break, Seoul Taco can provide a quick taco or burrito fix. But unless you are going for the music, don't expect anything special.



MIDWAY PHOTO BY EMMA TRONE

TASTY TACOS. Seoul Taco is opened this year at 1321 E. 57th St. and its hours are 11 a.m.-10 p.m. Monday-Sunday. Soeul Taco is an Korean and Mexican fusion restaurant. Seoul Taco has multiple locations around the Midwest, they are most well known for their Seoul sauce.

Smaller team, Stronger bonds

With fewer U-High girls choosing to play basketball, team finds more supportive, bonded atmosphere

by ELLA BEISER
ASSISTANT EDITOR

Passing on basketball, U-High girls run towards other year-round sports such as club soccer and volleyball.

Last year the girls basketball program had 11 players, only enough to form a varsity team, and this year's roster has just 10 players. In stark contrast, the boys team has enough players to field a full varsity and junior varsity team.

In years past there have been much higher interest and enrollment in basketball. At one point, there have were multiple girls basketball teams.

Athletics Director David Ribbens said he encourages high school basketball coaches to be more involved in middle school basketball, where 46 players participated this year.

He hopes that by building relationships between players and coaches, they will retain more of the players into high school.

The past two years, the athletics department have incorporated the sixth grade into the basketball program in order to minimize the loss that comes from sports specialization.

Mr. Ribbens said that during his 15 years at Lab, there have been a few years with two girls teams.

A varsity girls basketball player suggested high school girls choose other options rather than school basketball.

"I think girls basketball in general is not that popular of a sport and people tend to when they are younger, especially in the city, play soccer because there are more clubs to play on," basketball captain Stephanie Miller said. "If you want to play AAU you have to go to the suburbs, and a lot of people don't have the resources to do that."

While club basketball opportunities for girls are minimal, club volleyball is rapidly expanding, contributing to the decline in girl basketball players, according to Mr. Ribbens.

However, there are upsides of having fewer players.

"I think our team has been close for a cou-



MIDWAY PHOTO BY TOSYA KHODARKOVSKY

PASS IT ON. Girls basketball players huddle up and motivate each other before the fourth quarter of home game, Jan. 15. Down by 20 points, the team was not discouraged as their coach passed along positive energy and support. U-High finished the game at 41-48.

ple of years now," Stephanie said. Everyone's friends with everyone like I feel like everyone feels like they can go to talk to anyone."

Team size also allows players to focus on more technical drills, and Stephanie said that they always have enough players to field a team in a game.

Mr. Ribbens expects that one of the reasons for the low numbers is the length of the season, which stretches over both Thanksgiving and winter breaks.

One of the major downsides of having low numbers is that girls who would normally be placed on the JV team are thrown onto the varsity court with little experience. According to Mr. Ribbens, these players would benefit from a JV season to develop their skills and grow their confidence.

As sports specialization gains populari-

"I think our team has been close for a couple of years now. Everyone's friends with everyone, like I feel like everyone feels like they can go talk to anyone."

—STEPHANIE MILLER

ty, sports that are poorly catered to younger ages suffer as parents choose to enroll their daughters on soccer and volleyball teams.

Opposing specializing in a sport, Mr. Ribbens suggests that students play as many different sports as they can in high school.

He said, "The club volleyball players are playing volleyball and club soccer players are playing soccer and the winter sport of basketball just isn't getting as much club exposure during the timeframe."

TEAM RESULTS

Scores are listed as: U-High-Opponent

Boys Basketball, Varsity

Notable: Senior Jamie Miller attended every practice and game, despite having an injury preventing participation. The team will remain confident for the remainder of the season despite their record so far.

Shaumburg Christian	Jan. 21	48-40
Plainfield South	Jan. 21	70-52
Wheaton Warrenville	Jan. 19	30-51
North Shore	Jan. 19	34-58
F. W. Parker	Jan. 12	42-55
Payton Prep.	Jan. 11	62-52
Leo	Dec. 18	52-66
Elgin Academy	Dec. 15	57-22

Boys Basketball, Junior Varsity

The team has lost their past two but still believes that their game is rising and players are improving their technique.

FW. Parker	Jan. 15	40-51
Latin	Jan. 11	32-45

Girls Basketball

Notable: Even though the girls have lost most of their games, they are still optimistic and try to be tougher than the other team. The girls basketball team will honor their seniors at their home game against Morgan Park Academy Jan. 29.

FW. Parker	Jan. 16	30-34
Willows Academy	Jan. 15	41-48
Steinmetz	Jan. 11	46-39
Walter Payton	Dec. 19	22-54
Elgin Academy	Dec. 18	31-39
Latin	Dec. 11	28-54

Fencing

Notable: At GLHSFC Dual Meet South Division on Jan. 12, the fencers won two out of seven games.

Mens Saber did well, and Men's Foil. Jonathan Liu did particularly well, according to Michelle Tchenko-Weaver.

Squash

Notable: At the Latin game, Peter Grisom and Gaurav Shekhawat did particularly well. The two are also co- team captains. The team was worried about going up against Lake Forest Academy, but they only lost by one match.

Lake Forest	Jan. 12	4-5
GEMS Academy	Dec. 14	3-0
Latin	Dec. 14	1-3

Boys Swimming/Diving

Notable: The team had their first dual meet at Latin on Dec. 11. At the MT. Carmel meet, most swimmers swam in positions they do not usually swim. This is because many of the swimmers fell ill the weekend before. The team still won the meet.

MT. Carmel	Jan. 15	1st
Riverside Brookfield	Jan. 11-12	6th
Highland Park	Dec. 27	8th
Juarez High	Dec. 14	1st
Latin	Dec. 11	1st

— COMPILED BY JULIAN INGERSOLL
ILLUSTRATIONS BY NEENA DHANOA



MIDWAY PHOTO BY WILL KOENEN

NEW YEAR, NEW TRAINER. New trainer, Barrett Jones wraps athlete's ankle outside Sunny Gym. Mr. Jones was the head athletic trainer for U.S. women's national soccer team before he came to Lab. Mr. Jones replaced Ashley Alonso, who left U-High to join the police academy.

U. S. women's soccer team trainer joins U-High athletics

by IVÁN BECK
FEATURES EDITOR

Before practice, students flood into the trainer's office, chattering with teammates, and are greeted with a new face.

Barrett Jones began as the new athletic trainer for the Lab Schools Jan. 7. Mr. Jones took over after Lab's former trainer, Ashley Alonso, who left the position earlier this year to join the police academy.

Mr. Jones is not new to the world of physical training, as he boasts a rather prestigious past.

"I worked with the Soccer Federation national team for the last three years. I oversaw the national team coverage — so everything under the teams you see on TV." Mr. Jones explained, "I worked in division one, division three athletics, and in the MLS as well."

As the athletic trainer, Mr. Jones works with student athletes for prevention, recognition, and care on injuries, as well as first aid coverage at games when needed.

So far, he has worked to get become ac-

quainted with the various teams and staff members at this school, as well as the facilities he has for his use.

"I'm looking forward to kind of getting used to the environment and set up new protocols and rehab programs for different sports throughout the year," Mr. Jones said.

Despite being able to boast a distinguished past in physical training, his specialty is helping soccer athletes.

Therefore, he has been forced to learn a great deal more about a range of different sports.

"It's been an adjustment working multiple sports and re-learning the intricacies for each, outside of soccer, but it's been a good transition," Mr. Jones said.

With the widespread increase in sport participation in the last few years, the amount of injuries and corresponding need for a trainer has only increased.

The trainer's office is open to students every day after school until approximately 8 p.m.

Administrators: You must walk the talk

School climate after teacher termination highlights need for communication, trust

As the Midway sees it ...

After the unexpected termination of science teacher Daniel Bobo-Jones Jan. 8, some students are coping with disorganized classes and the loss of a teacher, while others grieve a trusted, guiding figure.

But their concerns reflect a deeper distrust in the relationship between U-High's administration and its students. Even though some information must be kept private, professionalism and sensitivity are not mutually exclusive.

The way Mr. Bobo-Jones was fired demonstrated a disregard toward true community by the administrators involved in this decision. That fact that these administrators would leave his classes teacherless and confused for days seems like a regrettable invalidation of his 14 years of hard work at U-High. His abrupt firing also created avoidable, harmful speculation.

It is essential that the administration consider the implications of the way they handle charged situations, especially when the resulting dialogue is damaging to respected contributors to our community. Students who saw Mr. Bobo-Jones as a supportive mentor felt abandoned. This should disturb the same leaders who created the student wellness survey, which revealed how

few students at Lab feel they have a reliable, trusted adult.

Students and faculty need to be able to trust the administration — especially when they have been misinformed and may feel lost and kept in the dark. For years, some Lab community members have felt a strained, adverse relationship with the leaders of our school. With little transparency or understanding of what administrators do, we often see minimal follow-through and an unwillingness to connect meaningfully with students.

With a high turnover rate for director and principal positions, faculty and students alike may struggle to find common ground with their leaders. We are not voiceless, though. No matter how disconnected we may feel from our administration, our wellness and success is fundamentally connected to theirs.

Students must engage as we begin the search for a new principal. As individuals with shared interests, we must consider how to fortify what we have built. We need a principal that is caring and approachable, yet effective and attentive during times of change. We need an administration that can actively work together to foster close relationships with students and faculty. Above all, we need an administration for whom “community” is a clear plan, not a vague dream.



MIDWAY ILLUSTRATION BY RISA COHEN

Other students’ success doesn’t make you a failure

by ABBY SLIMMON
SPORTS EDITOR

As I walked into the assembly hall Dec. 13 for the fall quarter student recognition assembly, I rolled my eyes, dreading sitting through names being awarded for their performances in math contests and MUN tournaments. I slumped into my seat while the girl sitting next to me rattled off names of students she knew would be recognized.

“I hate this assembly so much,” she said.

I decided to chime in, and said, “I’m so sick of applauding the same students’ awards over and over again. We get it. You’re good at m—” I stopped and quickly shut my mouth. In this moment I realized one of the problems we have at our school, and how I was guilty of it, too.

At Lab, we constantly tear each other down. Our rigorous and intense academic culture has created a community that struggles to be supportive of one another’s achievements.

Countless times, I’ve found myself and my peers comparing ourselves to other people. In most cases, comparing yourself can only hurt your self-confidence and originality. It’s



Abby Slimmon

OK to look at someone and think, “What can I learn from them,” but thinking “How can I be like them” or “How can I be better than them” will only hurt you in the long run.

Sometimes it feels like students at Lab see everything as a “win-lose” or a “me vs. you” situation, but it doesn’t have to be like this.

We need to remember that just because someone else is successful, doesn’t mean that we can’t be successful, too. Tearing someone down is not going to boost you up any higher.

In order to build a more supportive environment, there need to be more opportunities to recognize students that are excelling and are doing great things in areas separate from academics or

“In order to build a more supportive environment, there need to be more opportunities to recognize students that are excelling and are doing great things in areas separate from academics or sports.”

sports.

This change could start in the very assembly that always seems to foster negative reactions. Similarly to how students get awards for community service and leadership at the end of the year, there should be time at the end of each recognition assembly where any-

one can stand up, take the microphone, and tell the student body about someone they think deserves recognition. Not someone who got first place in a math contest or won the debate tournament, but someone that is making a difference in people’s lives, the school or their community. This will ease the competitive environment that Lab has created by helping students understand that there are many different ways to define success. It will also encourage students who usually aren’t recognized for academic achievements to support those who are.

It is important that we are more supportive of one another, and that starts by recognizing a wider scope of achievements.

Focus on your passions — aim for joy, not perfection

by AUDREY MAZTKE
ASSISTANT EDITOR

Sleepless nights, nervous breakdowns, and lunch periods spent drilling Chemistry notes. For quite a while, the fleeting highs of excellent report cards were enough to keep me going.

Until they weren’t. When my grades began to slip during Fall Quarter, I wasn’t prepared for the misery that would follow. Many of my peers have been similarly disillusioned, and our lack of perfection has left us feeling lost.

The solution is easier said than done: Stop trying to be perfect at everything. Instead, focus on what interests you.

I’ve always loved writing, but until very recently, I made very little time to pursue my interests.

Now, the hours I used to spend obsessing over math are free for me to write short stories or do thoughtful, high-quality work in English class. Instead of quickly moving on to the next subject, I now allow my mind to linger on my English readings, appreciating their brilliance more and more in the process.

While I don’t condone slacking off or not turning in assignments, school’s excessive focus on being “well-rounded” stifles depth and creativity. Students should do diligent work



Audrey Matzke

in all of their classes, but should not allow perfectionism to get in the way of their interests. In fact, Lab’s educational impact would be incomplete if we did not allow it to support our individual dreams and passions.

For many students, getting good grades isn’t about serving their own needs, but rather, that of their parents. Good parents want their children to live happy, productive lives, so it’s easy to understand where their emphasis on academic performance comes from.

However, a study of over 700 American millionaires showed that their average high school GPA was only 2.9. According to Money magazine, American high schools reward a more generalized scope of proficiency, whereas the adult

“U-High has a determined and conscientious student body, yet 81 percent of us reported symptoms of anxiety. Of course, we are going to face challenges no matter what we do, even in our most beloved activities. However, if you truly care about them, your passion will sustain you through times of difficulty.”

world rewards individuals with passion and expertise, even if it only manifests in one place.

Doing a lot of what you love

makes you happier, and in the context of the recent wellness survey, more happiness is what our community needs.

U-High has a determined and conscientious student body, yet 81 percent of us reported symptoms of anxiety. Of course, we are going to face challenges no matter what we do, even in our most beloved activities. However, if you truly care about them, your passion will sustain you through times of difficulty.

Tonight, I encourage my fellow students to take time for the things they love: Practice violin, read about neuroscience, write a poem, write Python script.

Nobody’s perfect at everything, but with enough dedication, we can all be great at something.



MIDWAY PHOTO BY ABIGAËL THINAKARAN

MAGICAL MUSES. Junior Risa Cohen works on her self-portrait in her Advanced Drawing and Painting class. Risa added personal touches by using blue and pink lighting and including her personal characters, a cat and a dragon. Risa hopes to tell stories through her artwork, and has created strong friendships with other artists.

‘Vice’ lacks conflict, comedic character

Film’s strong cast gives memorable performance

by **EMMA TRONE**
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

The advent of Trump-era politics has even some tried-and-true liberals missing the Presidency of George W. Bush. But “Vice,” a biopic centered on Bush’s vice president, Dick Cheney, unflinchingly dredges up the horrors of that era and how they still haunt us today. Written and directed by Adam McKay, whose last project was “The Big Short,” “Vice” shares a similar style to its predecessor. Both are sharp in their sarcasm and use a frenetic combination of past, present, real and surreal images that are purposely overwhelming. “Vice” can’t hold on to the same comedic character that drove “The Big Short.” The circumstances simply don’t allow it. By and large, we’ve recovered from the 2008 financial crisis; we’ve never recovered from the lives of those lost in the Iraq War and the birth of ISIS, the proliferation of politicized news or the expansion of presidential power that is nearly dictatorial. Because of the heaviness of Cheney’s actions, the film never seems to understand its own tone. It’s satirical and furious, but the global and personal impacts of his decisions also require a certain

drama that never strikes the right chord. And combined with a few weak, extended metaphors that largely fall flat, the middle section of the movie, in particular, feels like McKay is simply checking off historical events that Cheney was even tangentially involved in, failing to infuse them with the emotions that should be readily available. Lack of conflict also prevents this movie from being a satisfying watch. Besides an opening scene where Cheney pivotally chooses to never be a disappointment to his wife again, neither Cheney nor the movie ever seems to reach a similar point where the stakes feel particularly high, which should be easy in a movie with this subject. Instead, Cheney breezes through administration to administration, easily manipulating the media and fellow politicians, and underhandedly making decisions that change, and end, the lives of millions. While that may well have been the way Cheney’s career went, the lack of even inner conflict means that the movie similarly breezes by, without reaching any dramatic highs or lows. That all being said, the cast pulls off memorable appearances. Christian Bale embodies Cheney’s physicality and quietly devious demeanor so well, it’s hard not to marvel at his transformation each time he’s on screen. As Lynne, his wife, Amy Adams becomes a 20th century Lady Macbeth, complete the resentment that comes with



SOURCE: IMDB

BE MY VICE. Christian Bale and Amy Adams play former Vice President Dick Cheney and Lynne Cheney in “Vice,” released Dec. 25, 2018. The film was nominated for six Golden Globe awards. Christian Bale won Best Actor in Motion Picture Musical or Comedy for the film. “Vice” is also nominated for eight Academy Awards, including Best Picture and Best Director. personal ambitions that will never be realized. Steve Carell and Sam Rockwell as Donald Rumsfeld and George W. Bush respectively play their loose-talking, almost goofy roles perfectly against Cheney’s quiet, measured presence. When the threads of both the earlier plot points of the movie and Cheney’s life combine with the pains of the present, the pure hatred that the on-screen Cheney finally elicits is truly staggering. Even the shock of the ending and other genuinely surprising, heart-wrenching moments can’t pull the movie out of the tonal mess it makes beforehand.

FANTASTICAL

Artist Risa Cohen creates a world of vibrant creatures

by **SAMIRA GLAESER-KHAN**
MANAGING EDITOR

After spending hours immersed in her drawing of a cat, Risa Cohen holds her drawing at arm’s length. She is especially pleased with the vibrantly colored fur. From a distance, it looks like she has actually altered the texture of the paper. For Risa, drawing fantastical creatures is a form of escapism and helps her build connections in the online art world, which allows her keep academic success in perspective. Risa, a junior, said her goal is to create a world and tell a story with her drawings. “My style is a mixture of cartoonish and vibrantly colored,” she said. “The world of my imagination and art have always been more fun than the real world. Whenever I read a book or play video games, I’m obsessed with the stories and pictures it puts in my mind.” Senior Jasmine Wang, Risa’s friend and classmate in art class, said she is always impressed with Risa’s creativity. “She’s just creating her own world and her own characters unprompted,” Jasmine said. “It’s really impressive because she comes up with creatures that you couldn’t imagine until she puts it on the paper. Risa said a big part of her identity is seeing the world through a fantastical and imaginative lens. Her inclination for the whimsical manifests itself in her drawings of animals. “I enjoy all the different ways that animals can look and appear,” she said. “There are only so many different shapes, sizes and colors that humans can come in. But drawing a peacock is so different than drawing a tiger. Each animal challenges you in a new way, and it can be fun to explore

“I enjoy all the different ways that animals can look and appear. Each animal challenges you in a new way, and it can be fun to explore different texture and shapes with different animals.”

— RISA COHEN

different textures and shapes with different animals.” Risa explained that art has helped her withstand the narrow definition of success at Lab. “At Lab, there’s a big emphasis on STEM and finding a lucrative career path, so it can be hard to face that when you’re more artistically oriented,” Risa said. “Whenever I do poorly on a math test, I can always turn to art. I can say: This is my thing and I don’t have to be good at every single thing if I can just create something beautiful.” The online art community has been another source of support for Risa. Besides posting her art on social media, Risa also posts art in fanbases dedicated to books, movies and TV shows. “Posting your art spawns messaging and connections that last,” Risa said. “I’ve been in touch with the same people for years. The shared love of art and a creative mindset makes for a pleasant sense of family.” In addition to leading to strong friendships, Risa said the online art community has helped remind her that creative pursuits are worthwhile and possible. She says she is inspired by other creators who use their art to make others happy and help them escape to a different world. Risa says her love of fantastical creatures was sparked by watching movies and playing video games. In the future, Risa says she would like to pursue a career in multimedia design or as an animator. Her dream is to work on movies with Disney or Pixar. She said, “I want to create something with action, something that’s vibrant and something that affects people.”

SET, spring productions announced

by **OTTO BROWN**
MIDWAY REPORTER

The lineup of theater productions for the rest of the year has been announced. Student Experimental Theater performances will be Feb. 28 to March 2 and the spring musical will be “Mamma Mia.” Eleven short productions comprise this year’s SET show. SET performances are curated, directed and designed by students, and seven pieces were written by students. The shows were chosen to showcase the talents of the actors and the directors. “We try to create a good variety of productions,” Nicholas Merchant, SET board member, said. “It’s important to the board that the short plays have a diverse variety of emotions to engage the audience.” The actors and crew won’t have much of a break because work on the spring production of “Mamma Mia” will begin immediately after. According to theater teacher Liucija Ambrosini, she chooses productions that allow students across the production to learn from the show, whether acting, directing or designing costumes. Auditions will take place March 5-8 and the production will take place May 16-18. Theater auditions are open to all students, regardless of past theater experience.