

LEARNING TO DRIVE

During the pandemic, many students have gotten their drivers licenses. Through learning how to drive, teens have pushed their limits and learned to take on new responsibilities.

**CYSO RETURNS LIVE**

Students, conductors, and staff at Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestra say they emerged from the pandemic with an even greater appreciation and love for live ensemble music.

**LGBTQ+ IDENTITY**

Nearly 40% of students on 2020 health and wellness survey said they were not exclusively attracted to the binary opposite gender. The co-presidents of Spectrum speak about what this means.



University of Chicago Laboratory High School

U-HIGH MIDWAY

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In-person graduation to be on Jackman

June 10 event will feature Priyanka Rupani, Nicolas Worsley, Rohan Shah, Elena Stern

by **KRISHITA DUTTA**
CITYLIFE CO-EDITOR

For years past, seniors at U-High have graduated under the rainbow-tinted sunbeams that shine through the stained-glass windows and the grand, high ceiling of Rockefeller Chapel. This year, due to pandemic restrictions, the administration has had to adapt graduation.

The Class of 2021's graduation ceremony will take place on Jackman Field June 10 at 2:30 p.m. Seniors were notified on May 21 that each could bring up to four guests to the ceremony, who will be seated in a "family pod" six feet apart from another pod. The graduation planning committee has received permission for seniors to social distance only three feet apart rather than six.

According to committee member Eliza Doss, heading into the planning process, the committee's main priorities were having as many guests as possible, a proper location, and plans for class speakers and performers. Performers will be violinists Nicolas Worsley

and Rohan Shah, and singer Elena Stern. The graduation speaker this year is Priyanka Rupani, a 2006 alumna who has been Lab's director of diversity, equity and inclusion since 2018.

According to Dean of Students Ana Campos, one major obstacles in planning was the shift in location.

"Our usual graduation takes place in Rockefeller Chapel, but Rockefeller is still not doing large-scale events, and so it just wasn't an option for us," Ms. Campos said. "So when the university basically said, 'You have to think of something other than Rockefeller,' we immediately turned to Jackman, especially because that's what we had hoped to do last year for the Class of 2020."

Coronavirus guidelines have significantly increased the number of aspects the graduation committee has had to consider. For example, according to Ms. Campos, social distancing means the stage for the seniors will need to be much larger. The limit on guests means the event will have to be live-streamed this year for seniors' families and friends that are not present to watch.

Eliza has mixed feelings about the plans.

"I definitely wish I was graduating at Rockefeller, but I think like most things this year, I'm used to the changes we have to make due to Covid," Eliza said. "I'm honestly



MIDWAY PHOTO BY MALCOLM TAYLOR

CAPS OFF. Senior Tierney Cunningham picks up her mortar board cap, tassel, gown and sign outside school on May 21. Guests will be grouped together in "family pods," each spaced six feet apart.

just happy to have some in-person graduation at all, which is something that last year's seniors didn't get."

Administrators and the graduation committee members have strived to make graduation plans as close to normal as possible this

year — ensuring the Class of 2021 gets the special departure from U-High that they deserve. According to committee member Kara Xu, the plans lay out a ceremony as close to regular graduation as possible.

"I think people are just hap-

py that we will have an in-person graduation, and I think it'll all work out, so I'm hoping everyone likes the final plans," Kara said. "It'll mimic a regular graduation as much as possible, so I really hope people are happy with the final result."

Teachers cancel year-end exams, projects

by **LUCIA KOURI**
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Spring and finals are often two words that come together at U-High. This year, however, as classes embark on the last stretch before summer, many teachers have decided to eliminate final exams and projects in response to social and academic changes inflicted by the pandemic and distance learning.

This year, the traditional math final structure has been eliminated in many classes.

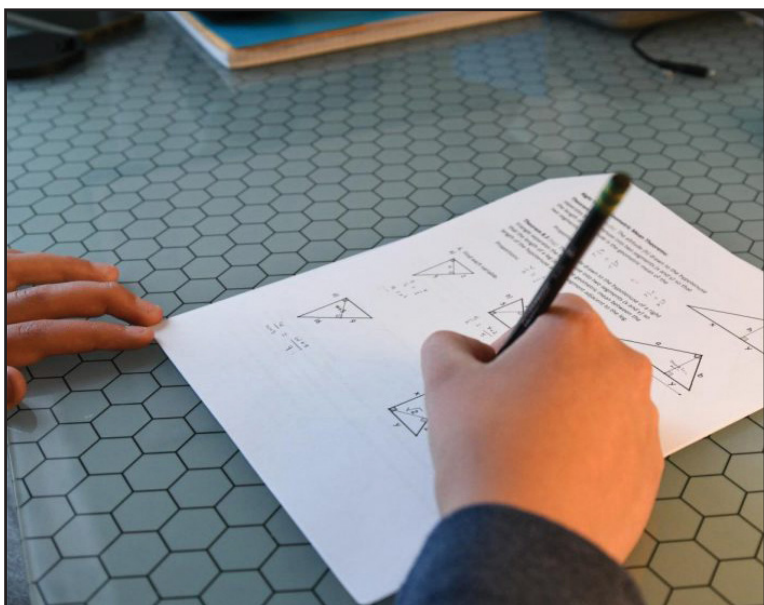
Zana Tran and Farukh Khan decided to eliminate the final exam in their Precalculus/Intro to Calculus classes. Part of this choice had to do with complications of testing in hybrid learning — especially given that the class has had asynchronous testing all year.

"We are worried that it's hard to have a fair final exam within this hybrid setting," Ms. Tran said. "If we have a real-time exam, the students present in class will have a very different experience than those at home."

Ms. Tran also noted that teaching during distance learning required PCIC teachers to change their teaching plans in terms of how much material was covered.

"We have been going slightly slower than other years. If we do not do a final exam, the time which would have been spent on reviewing for and administering it could be used to cover some more topics needed for calculus," Ms. Tran said.

PCIC student James Sowerby



MIDWAY PHOTO BY MIRIAM BLOOM

TESTING TIME. While math is typically a subject heavily dependent on testing and finals, the traditional math final structure has been eliminated in many math classes this year.

appreciates the decision to eliminate a final exam.

"It takes the pressure off of memorization and grades and gives you a chance to focus more on the concepts and theory behind what you're doing," James said, "without worrying about consequences."

Other non-math classes have made similar decisions to eliminate final projects, not because of time restraints but based on student input. History teachers Christy Gerst and Christopher Janus, for example, have decided to

eliminate the AT Modern European History EU Mock Council, a debate on current events where students represent different countries in the European Union.

"Mr. Janus and I have listened and responded to what the student body has shared all year about the lived experience of attending high school during a pandemic," Ms. Gerst said. "We know the additional work hours of the EU Mock Council was not in students' best interests."

Kriti Sarav, a sophomore who

"It takes the pressure off of memorization and grades and gives you a chance to focus more on the concepts and theory behind what you're doing, without worrying about consequences."

— JAMES SOWERBY

has not had any final exams cancelled, said she wishes more of her teachers considered doing so.

"I think they should for it to be more equitable, plus this year is already extremely stressful," Kriti said.

Junior Zach Gin, however, said taking finals can be a valuable experience because many were eliminated last year, too.

"Finals can be useful because it's just a boost to your grade if you do well," Zach said. "I think that not having finals two years in a row is going to detriment us in the long run."

With this in mind, most teachers are trying to find a balance between testing students' knowledge and being mindful of what is in their best interest — something junior Peter Stern thinks is important.

"Finals can be hard on students' mental health which has already been negatively impacted for most students due to the pandemic," Peter said, "and so I think that even small changes are good."

Prom will take place June 5

by **TÉA TAMBURRO**
DEPUTY MANAGING EDITOR

Previously held in museum galleries and at Navy Pier, prom is something most seniors look forward to, and it marks the end of their high school experience.

This year's prom will take place on Kenwood Mall on June 5 from 8-10:30 p.m. and tickets are free.

Prom committee member Meghan Hammond said the theme is "Under the Stars," but will feature a casino component and raffle.

Due to coronavirus safety precautions, the evening will not include a catered meal but boxed meals will be served to reduce time spent unmasked. Ana Campos, dean of students says there will be no dancing limitations and up to two students can be unmasked for photos at a time in the designated photo-taking areas.

Despite limitations, Meghan emphasized the importance of having an in-person prom and the chance to come together before graduation.

"I think prom is just a really nice experience, and I think it's something that every high schooler should get to experience," she said. "It's actually nice that we're not at, like, a fancy venue this year and that it's gonna be at Lab, because it's like the first time this year that a lot more of us are going to be back together and kind of get to see each other before graduation."

Community Spotlight

Chris Janus: Bringing experience, passion to history class at U-High

by CALEDONIA ABBEY
REPORTER

Hundreds of years of hand-painted history adorn the walls of C125. From important dates of the Seven Years' War to the impressionist movement coming out of France, many U-High students — decades' worth — have spent class time unknowingly gazing upon a physical manifestation of Christopher Janus' legacy at the school.

Although he is retiring this year after 33 years at U-High, students will long remember Mr. Janus's legacy of deepening the study of the social sciences in and outside the classroom using his rich background in economics, investment, and international relations.

After first teaching AT Modern European History, Mr. Janus started what would become today's AT Economics course.

"I ran a small business class for basic things like renting, buying groceries and things like that," he said. "I thought to myself, 'We have one of the best economics departments in the world at the University of Chicago and it's just not right that the Lab School doesn't have an economics class.'"

Since then, the class has only grown in popularity.

"It's been very successful, not necessarily because of me, but because I think a lot of students and their parents recognize the importance of some economics," he said.

Mr. Janus brought his interest in economics to Lab over from his previous career.

Prior to teaching, Mr. Janus worked as an options trader in Chicago, where in between the highs and lows of the trading floor, he'd find time to go ice skating.

His background as a trader has made the AT Economics course at U-High unique compared to other courses of the same nature.

Charles Disantis has taught the course alongside Mr. Janus for the past seven years.

"In terms of economics I think he's been really forward thinking in a lot of ways. The way we teach it, there's a lot of emphasis on behavioral economics," Mr. Disantis said. "Even now a lot of high school classes don't really touch that, and a lot of college classes barely cover it. It's a big thing in the field and he saw that a long time ago and started

Three lower, middle school teachers to retire after long careers

by COLIN LESLIE
& CAROLINE HOHNER

Three members of the middle and lower school faculty are retiring from Lab at the end of this school year.

Debra Kogelman, 24 years, middle school science

Ms. Kogelman began teaching middle school science at Lab in 1997, and has since dedicated to sharing a love of science to her students.

"Being able to laugh and share the good times and the stressful



Debra Kogelman

times and then the really fun times," Ms. Kogelman said, "those are the things that I will carry with me and hopefully people will look back and smile."

Ms. Kogelman has served in various community roles, such as middle school adviser, 6th Grade Camp director, faculty chair and grade-level chair. She has worked on the admissions, steering and technology committees.

After retiring from Lab, she plans to move to Ann Arbor, Michigan, to spend time with her 1-year-old grandson.

Lisa Hilarides, 15 years, middle school math

Since 2006, Ms. Hilarides has taught middle school math at Lab, eventually settling in her long-time role as a beloved sixth-grade teacher. Ms. Hilarides also directed the sixth grade camp.

According to Ms. Hilarides, one of her favorite parts of working at Lab all these years has been watching students grow into themselves

throughout their time at Lab.

"So that's another thing that I really love is to watch these kids come in, and sometimes their feet don't even really touch the floor, and then they grow," she said.

After 15 years of service, Ms. Hilarides plans to spend her retirement taking care of family.



Lisa Hilarides

Nisha Ruparel-Sen, 34 years, primary school teacher

Ms. Ruparel-Sen got her own classroom just two years after arriving at Lab as an assistant teacher and leader of after-school programs. Since then, she has taught nursery and kindergarten students, and said she hopes to have installed empathy and kindness into each of them.

Ms. Ruparel-Sen said she has always appreciated and enjoyed the creativity of her students.

"What I will miss most is the kids," Ms. Ruparel-Sen said. "I love walking down the hallways and see-

ing the creativity in the hallways — things teachers have created, things students have created. I will miss that a lot."

Ms. Ruparel-Sen plans to travel the world after she retires, including visiting her family in India. She is also eager to spend more time on her hobbies like sewing and embroidery, and to pick up her study of French.



Nisha Ruparel-Sen

Before school lets out for the summer, the Midway is highlighting the work and contributions of individuals in the community, from students to faculty and staff. Some of these community members will leave after this year, while others plan to continue for years to come.

Susan Shapiro: Devoted to study of history, students for 42 years

by ADRIANNA NEHME
NEWS EDITOR

In 1978, Susan Shapiro was weighed down with the disappointment of not being chosen to work at the Laboratory Schools as a history teacher. Three days later, after the chosen candidate at Lab quit the job a week into the school year, Ms. Shapiro soon got a call asking to replace the teacher. This altered her future and allowed her to infuse her passion for history and world events into the Lab community for 39 of the past 42 years, taking time away to have children.

After years of wearing various academic hats including academic adviser, club adviser and history teacher, and being seen as a nurturing, thoughtful and inquisitive scholar, Ms. Shapiro will retire at the end of the 2020-21 school year.

Ms. Shapiro has been a strong advocate of the advisory program and served as a lead adviser.

Meghan Hammond, Ms. Shapiro's advisee, said, "She was always there to help, and if I wasn't doing well in a class, or I was having trouble keeping track of my homework, she was always there to come up with some sort of strategy for how I'm going to fix this."

Whether with her advisees or colleagues, Ms. Shapiro is always willing to share a piece of her wisdom and provide assistance, something that history teacher Holly Johnston has noticed throughout the past four years working closely with her.

"She wants to give and share and ensure that everyone is ready to tackle whatever they have to tackle here at Lab," Ms. Johnston said. "She showed me that you can absolutely have the highest expectations of your students, but if you're going to do that, you have to help get them there."

Such a devotion towards her students and colleagues is something Ms. Shapiro hopes to be remembered for. The students at Lab who made Ms. Shapiro's experience valuable is a memory she will carry, despite the many changes Lab endured over the years.

"Whatever the social issues that arose, the school had the most wonderful children, the most extraordinary scholars and kids who made getting up in the morning worthwhile," Ms. Shapiro said.

In addition to her many contributions to students and faculty at Lab,



MIDWAY PHOTO BY ANDREW BURKE-STEVENSON

DECADES OF DEVOTION. While she's spent the last year teaching remotely, students will long remember the sight of Susan Shapiro sitting at her desk, decorated with mementos of her career. "She wants to give and share and ensure that everyone is ready to tackle whatever they have to tackle here at Lab," Ms. Johnston said.

Ms. Shapiro is known for extensive work with the Jewish community, and she has served as adviser for the Jewish Students' Association since its founding in 1995.

While Ava Eggen, current JSA president, was initially intimidated upon meeting Ms. Shapiro, Ava's mindset quickly shifted after experiencing her affable and candid nature.

"When I first met her in the context of JSA, I noticed her appreciation and fondness of her religion and others who share it," Ava said. "She creates a very fun and accepting environment."

Additionally, Ms. Shapiro ran her first Holocaust class in the fall of 1995, which included a trip to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C., as a part of the curriculum. The trip served as an opportunity for students to research their final paper topics.

World language teacher Marianne Zemil, who teaches about the Holocaust in her AP German class, looks up to Ms. Shapiro as a valuable resource on this topic.

"Everything that she does around Holocaust education made me think on a different level about how I was teaching the Holocaust to my

Anthony Hunter: Custodian brings hard work, friendly face to Lab spaces since 2004

by BERKOTO
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Every morning since 2004, Anthony Hunter gets up to listen. He listens to hip-hop on his 30-minute bus ride to the Laboratory Schools. At work, he listens to everyday acts of kindness he sees around him, picking up the smallest details of the lives of the people he talks to. Always staying near his little black radio, he listens for opportunities to help the community he loves.

Despite being a custodial contractor for ABM, Mr. Hunter — just Anthony to everyone around him — is seen as family by many in the community through his reputation for hard work, generosity and a positive, outgoing attitude.

"He helps me a lot with small things, even things my son would usually do," said U-High principal's secretary Carol Arrington, a friend of Anthony's. "One example is that he helped me find the music I like and load it on my phone, but there's just so many like this. Sometimes, I feel like he's my work-son."

Anthony said his eagerness to help comes more from his passion for the Lab community, rather than a passion for custodial work.

"My job is definitely more routine-oriented," Anthony said. "The daily excitement I get is from talking to people in the community, and helping them out with whatever they need. Also, what keeps me going is that I get a lot of compliments on how good of a job I'm doing. That's fulfilling for me."

Anthony said that as a custodian, he has the opportunity to observe everyday acts of kindness from people in the Lab community, often without being seen himself.

"I've worked here through many, many changes to the school," Anthony said. "One thing that's always stayed the same is everyone has treated me with respect and kindness. That's my favorite part of working here at Lab: I get to see how everyone treats each other."

— ANTHONY HUNTER



MIDWAY PHOTO BY MALCOLM TAYLOR

EVERYDAY HERO. Custodian Anthony Hunter carries out his usual tasks, moving school garbage bags into a larger container. For years, Anthony has been a friendly face throughout Lab's hallways and is known for his kind attitude. He is considered family by many who appreciate his eagerness to help out.

"I've worked here through many, many changes to the school. One thing that's always stayed the same is everyone has treated me with respect and kindness. That's my favorite part of working here at Lab: I get to see how everyone treats each other."

hallways to make sure I was OK and offered to help if I needed anything like time or conversations. That kindness helped me a lot, and it's something I still think about."

Anthony pays that kindness forward to community members by working hard to help students and faculty, no matter what they need. He cares deeply about the Lab community and, according to Ms. Ar-

rington, he remembers every special event or life detail a student or adult tells him. For example, on the morning of every birthday and wedding anniversary he shows up to Ms. Arrington's office, armed with a big smile and ready to strike conversation.

"He's very much a family-oriented person, and cares deeply about family and overall, he's just a caring and thoughtful person," Ms. Arrington said. "He actually has an incredible memory. He's the kind of guy to remember everyone's birthdays, anniversaries and other special occasions."

Being a custodian at Lab was actually Anthony's second job. He has worked at various Target stores since 2000 and applied for the custodial position at Lab to provide additional income for his family. When he's not working one of these jobs, Anthony says he enjoys listening to music and helping his 10-year-old daughter with her homework.

Since he was young, Anthony has been passionate about R&B and hip-hop music, despite never having the time to play music himself. Anthony began collecting CDs in the early 1990s, but in January 2020 he also began collecting vinyl records. Even with his sizable music collection, Anthony streams most of his music often at work or during his daily commute.

"Music has just always been a part of my life. I've been buying music since I was 10 years old," Anthony said. "Now, I'm old school. I only buy songs if they're really special and make me feel a certain way. Otherwise, I stream music on my earbuds, especially when I'm on the way to work or doing something where I'm alone."

Whether listening to music on his earbuds, or listening to members of the Lab community, Anthony's hard working and uplifting attitude makes him a part of many people's work-family.

Website showcases senior art

by PETER COX
REPORTER

A collection of art from six members of the Class of 2021 is currently being displayed on the Laboratory Schools' website on the Corvus Gallery page. The art show would have usually taken place in the gallery but, due to the space currently being used for other purposes during distance learning, the art show is being displayed exclusively online.

The featured seniors are Sawyer Anderson, Naomi Corlette, Isabella de la Cerna, Margot Fahrenwald, Ashley Husain, William McCullen.

Despite this being a difficult year to produce visual art, Sawyer has tried to take a constructive approach to the challenges of the year.

"You get out of it what you put into it," Sawyer said, "that's kind of just how life is, but I think that's really flourished for me in Covid."



MIDWAY PHOTO BY MALCOLM TAYLOR

VICTORY LAP. After a 4-0 win against Francis W. Parker School on May 21, soccer players jog across Jackman Field. The win solidified the team's first place position in the ISL and capped their senior night. Senior Sophie Raphael (No. 15) said, "It always feels great to beat Parker, but it's even better when we all collectively play such a great game and put the work in for each other."

Make vaccines mandatory for eligible students

As the Midway sees it ...

The return to in-person learning and gradual relaxation of social-distancing standards has been a boon to everyone wishing life could return to normal. The current coronavirus vaccines, which are highly effective at preventing symptoms of COVID-19 and halting transmission, have allowed people in Chicago and other cities to become inoculated and begin removing restrictions.

If U-High is serious about making Chicago safer and ending restrictions, then mandatory vaccinations for everyone eligible in the high school is the only way to make the prospect of returning to normal a reality.

The Food and Drug Administration has already approved the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine for everyone over age 12, and many students have already begun receiving vaccinations as they have become widely available. While some parts of the world still have low vaccination rates, more than 20% of Illinois children age 12-17 have received at least one dose and mass-vaccination in Chicago continues to be feasible. Supply issues are not a problem for Lab.

It is true that healthy young people are at low risk of becoming seriously ill from coronavirus, but we still need vaccinations to prevent spreading COVID-19 to old-

“While the coronavirus might not be so dangerous for most U-High students, it could be a lethal threat for other people, and so all eligible U-High students have a responsibility to get vaccinated.”

er adults or the significant number of immunocompromised people, many of whom are in our immediate community. And even though many infected individuals recover, the phenomenon of “COVID long-haulers” — those with persistent neuropsychiatric or respiratory symptoms — reinforces the seriousness of the virus beyond the short-term.

The safety and efficacy of the vaccines in teenagers has also been well established through large-scale, double-blind studies the FDA conducted. Some people have expressed worry that mRNA vaccines from Moderna and Pfizer might somehow alter recipients’ genetic material because they are receiving a small piece of viral genetic material. But that worry relies on a misunderstanding of how the mRNA vaccines work. Upon entering new cells, the mRNA codes for the spike proteins that surround coronavirus cells before being degraded by cellular machinery. The purpose of generating



MIDWAY ILLUSTRATION BY ALINA SUSANI

these spike proteins is to give the immune system a piece of foreign material to recognize and build adequate defenses in the form of antibodies. But at no point is the viral RNA genome — what allows entire coronaviruses to replicate and infect the body — present in the cells of those that receive the vaccine. Thus, worries that mRNA somehow alters our genetic material are ill-founded, and clinical trials have demonstrated consistent-

ly high rates of protection from serious symptoms of COVID-19 in those that are vaccinated.

While those with prior medical reasons preventing them from being vaccinated should be exempt, religious or ethical objections based on the applications of cell lines from aborted fetuses have little force, as these cell lines were used only in related research but not testing or development for the Pfizer vaccine. Virtually every-

one in the high school can be reasonably expected to become vaccinated.

While the coronavirus might not be so dangerous for most U-High students, it could be a lethal threat for other people, and so all eligible U-High students have a responsibility to get vaccinated. Making vaccinations mandatory is the only way to ensure that school can return to normal and free itself from the shadow of pathogenic danger.

Succesful DEI work requires participation from everyone

Again and again, student DEI groups spend hours working, discussing and preparing for workshops and events, hoping that other students will engage with them.

More times than not, few students actually show up. The students who do decide to come are also often the same ones who have shown up before and can be expected to show up again.

While DEI work has been disproportionately burdened on marginalized students, this work should be taken on by the entire community, especially those within it who benefit most from the status quo.

Every day, marginalized students have to face the exact microaggressions and lack of understanding in the community that they’re trying to combat. Not only that, they are burdened with educating their peers since so few



An Ngo

“Despite meager attendance at DEI-related workshops and events, the majority of the student body wants to see a change in the school.”

people who aren’t directly affected by these issues are willing to do so. This is why it’s especially frustrating that so many students don’t show up, leaving a small fraction of the student body to labor in making the school a more equitable place for all students.

This issue isn’t found in just DEI peer facilitator-led or social justice workshops. The lack of participation in our cultural and affinity groups is equally disheartening. It can feel daunting to enter a club or group with which one does not identify when those groups encourage other students to show up and support them, yet we must all do so to make their work sustainable and impactful. Knowing how to navigate these spaces when you

feel like an outsider isn’t always easy, but our community norms, such as “take risks, be raggedy, it’s OK to make mistakes — then let it go,” are a great starting point.

The lack of participation isn’t only frustrating for student organizers, but it makes their efforts nearly futile. The workshops and events are for the most part designed for students who aren’t familiar with DEI issues. When these messages reach only a fraction of the student body, discourse is limited, and without the entire community’s engagement, we can’t accomplish broad change to make U-High an equitable environment.

Despite meager attendance at DEI-related workshops and events, the majority of the student body wants to see a change in the school.

Discussion is only a start to making sure everyone can feel safe and supported at U-High, so all of us who are able must show up and do the work, whether that’s organizing, leading or even just being vulnerable and honest in our discourse.

QUICK Q

What impact do DEI assemblies have on U-High students?

WILLIAM KRAEMER: “There’s a lot of good information in assemblies but I feel like they’re not always presented in a way that encourages students to pay attention. They would be helpful if it felt like more of a conversation than a lecture.”



KAAVYA SHRIRAM: “They teach people, so I think they’re good. But I also feel like not a lot of people engage with them. Like, lots of people just mute the assemblies because we’re on Zoom. ... It’s also more engaging when students lead them.”



NATALIE HULTQUIST: “They don’t solve everything, but I do think they have a positive impact. We should give more time for the assemblies or bring up the conversation continuously, so it’s not just one day to keep the kids engaged. I want more topics of conversation to be included. They just cover the basics of human existence.”



JUAN CHIADES: “I just feel like they don’t work. No one really listens to them, at least not the people who most need the information. The school is divided up; there are students that are interested and want to work on DEI, but they can’t make progress because the other half of the school doesn’t care.”



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In a time when the press is criticized, the U-High Midway seeks to inform, educate and serve the community of University High School. The Midway is developed and managed by students, for students.

In every story we write, the Midway should give a voice to the experiences of people at U-High. We will report on the people, activities and thoughts that make our school unique, striving to include the voices we haven’t heard yet.