New year brings changes

Policy updates support students regarding health, identity, workload

by CLARE O'CONNOR
Editor-in-Chief

Students and faculty returned to a school year schedule on Sept. 6, adjusting to this year’s minor changes and updates. Many of the changes focus on promoting well-being through clarification and extra support for students and teachers.

One addition to this year’s student handbook acknowledges students’ difficulty balancing homework load and reminds students to consider the expected time commitment for their chosen courses. Last spring’s program of studies introduced an expected time commitment for classes.

Dean of Students Ana Campos said many of the changes focus on student wellness. This addition, under the “Workload at U-High” section of the handbook, addresses wellness by giving students agency to limit certain stressors.

“We have a population of kids that really are in some ways over-extended — they just can’t do so much going on,” Ms. Campos said. “This was an attempt to try and help kind of normalize that it’s okay not to do it all, it’s okay to have some balance. There are some personal choices that students make, and the school is trying to help students make those choices.”

The handbook also addresses U-High’s mental health day policy. Students have been allowed mental health absences in the past, but now mental health days are listed as a type of absence in the handbook. According to the handbook, mental health days will count toward absence thresholds.

While the handbook focuses on how students should address the issue of homework balance, the administration is also asking teachers to help students navigate their work.

Every teacher was provided an assignment planner listing days where assignments are not allowed, like Thanksgiving, winter and spring breaks and the two days following each break. The planner also includes reli- gious holidays and U-High’s extracurricular events. Teachers are not required to alter their assignment schedule around these listed dates but are encouraged to consider these holidays and events as they plan their assignments.

The handbook also clarifies the assignment regulations put in place during the previous school year. The handbook outlines that all assignments due the next day must be posted before 4 p.m. on a weekday, and that homework cannot be due on weekends outside of extensions.

Other changes this year focus on affirming students’ gender identities. These changes are detailed in the new “Gender Identity Support” section of the student handbook.

Students can add their correct pronouns and names in PowerSchool and Schoolology, helping teachers and other school adults avoid incorrectly referring to a student. Students who want to change how they are referred to in the schools’ systems can use a form to request the changes they want.

The form allows students to request that their teachers be informed of a different name and set of pronouns.

The form additionally asks that their name be changed in the schools’ electronic systems, to be a new 1D card with corrected information or for P.E. accommodations.

NEW ON THE FIELD. Ninth graders Rayan Omar and Simon Iyi-Ojo participate in a passing exercise during practice on Jackman Field on Sept. 7. Both are members of the team of ninth graders and sophomores. U-High’s athletic teams returned to practice Aug. 8, marking a new school year that started to resemble pre-pandemic times.

To Mr. LaRowe, the class sizes are steady and increasing, especially in grades that commonly see new admittances: sixth grade and ninth grade.

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Mr. LaRowe, the class sizes across the school community are encouraging, especially given the impact of COVID-19 the past few years.

“This is a very boring-looking set of numbers. But that’s good. Things are going as we expect, and I’m really pleased that our community is as resilient as it is,” he said. “We went through a pretty tough couple of years, and things are looking very similar to where they were before [COVID-19] started.”

High school tuition this year is $40,408, a 4% increase from $38,376 in the 2021-22 school year.

Midway style evolves with revised goals

by CLARE O’CONNOR, TÉA TAMBURO, WILLIAM TAN
Editors-in-Chief

For nearly a century, the U-High Midway has stood for the core values of informing, educating and serving the U-High community with accurate and timely reporting. This year, we will uphold and build upon these standards by reporting accurate, reliable and timely stories, highlighting a diverse array of perspectives and presenting content that corresponds to the interests of the student body.

We have expanded our social media presence over the past year, but there’s room for improvement. By maximizing content on platforms like Facebook and Instagram, while keeping our website as the dominant information hub, we aspire to make content as easily accessible as possible.

Improving our presence on these platforms will allow us to interact with you, the reader, in a way that is more personal and meaningful. Better polls, quizzes and updates on news-worthy events will hopefully engage the wider community online and create a more inclusive environment for all our readers.

With the U-High community at the forefront of our mission, the Midway has been redesigned to better represent the continuous growth of the Midway’s style and content along with the ever-changing student body we represent. Stylis- tic design choices for fonts, color schemes and layout choices reflect our wish to present a newspaper that is progressive and contemporary in addition to the professionalism and readability that the previous newspaper design carried.

We hope our choices honor our intended evolution as a newspaper while maintaining the foundation of the Midway’s previous aesthetic and values.

Finally, we will strive to continue to shed light on the multitude of voices in the community, across all our platforms, and we acknowledge our community’s diverse activities, interests and opinions. As we begin the new school year, we encourage students to stay informed by seeking credible, main- stream news sources, and we encourage our readers to actively contribute to the Midway’s content.

Laboratory Schools enrollment stabilizes, tuition increases

by WILLIAM TAN
Editor-in-Chief

For the 2023-25 school year, 31 new students have joined or returned to U-High: 21 ninth grad- ers, 4 sophomores, 4 juniors and 2 seniors.

In U-High, there are now 152 ninth graders, 158 sophomores, 150 juniors and 162 seniors, bring- ing the total number of students to 623. Enrollment across all of the Laboratory Schools is 2,203 stu- dents.

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(Brent LaRowe, director of registrar services and information management)

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Fresh Faces:
High school welcomes 9 new faculty

What should students know about your style of teaching?

Aaron Arrejune
Math and Academic Games

“I can be very supportive and I can be extremely capable of finding ways to solve an issue that maybe I don't know of. I'm a very resourceful type of person that even if I don't know the answer to something I work together with every- body to make sure we like find a solution to a problem. And that's what people see in me: that I'll get excited about whatever you have interest in and then through that excitement we together just build something fun, new or repeat something that was already fun.”

Shannon Barker
English

“I like it to be student centered. We are a community of learners who are constructing our knowledge together, and I try to make that — that kind of sit in a circle that I am part of, engaging in conversation that I don't want to go through me where I have to call on people. I like conversations that happen among students that I can just listen to, so I like a lot of collaborative work, and in classes I like to give students choices.”

Issue Bucceruta
History

“I'm all about making mistakes. I'm all about taking risks. I am all about putting our errors and the process of learning through mistakes. I'm always trying to make things transparent and giving me real life experiences that we had as substitute teachers. Like, I don't want to take over for Ms. Himmelfarb, and I think it's important. Especially for someone in my position because I've been doing that for a couple of months.”

Cody Boukather
Music

“I appreciate student input, and I value student input and I value fun, and I think all that is key to the learning experience. It's just a pretty laid back. If people come in with interesting ideas, I'm very happy to listen.”

Deb Donely
College counseling

“I'm a little blunt, and I am a partner with you in your post-secondary planning. So I might make suggestions, but it's always up to you, the student, to tell me what you want and to steer me in your direction. It's your path, and I'm merely waving to you from the sidelines.”

Matthew Insalaco
Mathematics

“I think teaching is collaborative. I think especially math, the way that you work with math, but also through getting your hands messy, right — like getting into there trying things out, failing, getting it wrong, going back, double checking your work, finding errors, asking questions, figuring out what misconception you're having about whatever topics in front of you — but I think that idea of that collaboration and that conversation I think is really important.”

Quinn Menchetti
P.E.

“I try to keep my students relaxed 'cause I think that's when they do their best work. I'm also very, very commit- ted to making sure my students feel seen and heard for who they are in my classroom and I then think one of my philosophies as a teacher is to get students thinking about big issues and big problems as early as possible. I think you all are capable and ready to think about and to try to tackle some of the world's biggest problems, and I want to give students a chance to think through those things.”

Fiona Murphy
English substitute

“I think that the relationships and the rapport are really important. Especially for someone in my position because I'll be taking over for Ms. Himelfarb, and I think it's really natural and understandable in that position that stu- dents want to feel reassured that their substitute teacher for those months, me, is really qualified and really invested and I'm a person that is just kind of signing in and out of for a couple of months.”

Jason Pells
Fine Arts

“Very discursive, right? So it's student-centered, stu- dent-led. I'm less interested in form and function of art than I am in sort of its real-world use value, if that makes sense. I think of like how might approach problems and use our creative capacities to propose solutions, and I tend to have a baseline overview of some of the things we could accomplish, but try and have students co-create that as much as possible.”

What do you hope your students will say about you and your class at the end of the year?

Aaron Arrejune
Math and Academic Games

“I just hope that they continue to do the things we practiced in class at home, with friends, after they all go to college or wherever they go. Just kind of keep going back problem solving and remembering how to solve things on your own.”

To me, there's something really beautiful about being able to foster empathy and relationships among members of a community in the English class. You know, it's the first year of high school for all the students I'm teaching and so I guess by the end of the year, I want them to feel that the class contributed to their feeling of community here.”

With the new school year comes the regular tude of new students, schedules and lockers, but also new teachers. This year, U-High welcomes nine new faculty in part or full-time roles, from college counseling to the makerspace.

Issue Buccanea
History

“I hope students will say firstly that they had fun. But I also hope that every one of my students is able to accom- plish something that they didn’t think they could. A lot of that is goal setting, so I want work hard with kids in the math class- room. It's gonna be work, right, like it's gonna be work. Again, like that idea of ‘You’ve got to get your hands dirty’ so it's gonna require students to do quite a bit of work at home and in class as well, but I think at the end of the day, I want that to be a joyous place and a place of discov- ery.”

Cody Boukather
Music

“I would hope that at the end of the year they found me to be a kind person and human being, and I would hope that they found the content challenging. So somehow a balance of ‘what a nice guy, but what a hard teacher.’ Something to that effect would be my dream.”

Deb Donely
College counseling

“I hope students will remember the instruction that they got in my class. That’s my favorite quote is, ‘People might not remember what you said, they remember how you made them feel.’ And so hopefully students will remember the instruction that they got in my class and make a lot of connections with that support my students in the colleges they want, it’s also about thinking of finding ways to solve an issue that maybe I don’t know I care about, or I can engage and convince others of what I can do for them.”

Matthew Insalaco
Mathematics

“I would hope that they would say that they had the aca- demic and the freedom to explore ideas, but also the support and love to accomplish those goals in a realistic way. Yeah, I think that would be the mark of success.”

Frankie Bishop is looking forward to meeting new people as leader of the school’s athletic teams and members of the Umbrella student organization. Frankie has been using a planner, and “I’m looking forward to meeting new people and I’m looking forward to meeting new people because teachers would never trust you with that.” To get ready for the start of the year, Cecilia prepared standard and supplies for classes.

Zuri Casey Gay is looking forward to helping new students acclimate to high school and specifically “the sports games and the social life.” Starting the school year, Zuri is trying not to cram too much stuff together to complete assignments.

For rising ninth graders at U-High, the first year of high school can be full of ups and downs and with many different rewards. Eight ninth graders shared what they want to get out of high school, as well as how they’ve prepared for it.

In CACE, Licherman’s first week of high school, CACE was most excited for taking classes and having more freedom within the school day. To prepare for ninth grade, CACE spent the summer doing research and reading.

Daniel Wu is most looking forward to everything in high school and, a few days into his ninth grade year, are enjoying it so far.

Leon Dhill is most excited to meet new people and anticipate the “tremendous amount of experiential” of ninth grade at high school. Leon improved organizational skills, mainly through gaining homework experience.

In the first week of September, Cecilia Singel is looking forward to meeting new people. “I'm looking forward to making new friends, having new experiences in high school. To prepare for the year, Cecilia talked to a lot of people over the summer.

Like Cecilia, Evelyn Halldey enjoys having more freedom in high school. “My teachers are a lot different as a high school than as middle school so I have a lot of freedom to choose what I do,” Evelyn feels that through gaining homework experience.

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Dennis Asher is anticipating more challenges than what was available in middle school. “It made me read some of the high school material,” Dennis said, “I read the yearbook and the science work book, and that prepared me for what we’re doing right now.”

Compiled by Chloe Alexander, Mia Lipson, Grace LaBelle, and Zuri Casey Gay.

By LOUIS AUXENFANS
and TÉA TAMBOUR

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