Nathwani chosen in second election

Objectives include communication and transparency

by CHLOÉ ALEXANDER
Assistant Editor

In a second all-school election on May 1, the student body elected Zoe Nathwani as the all-school president for 2023-24. Brandon Chang will be all-school vice president.

Zoe has been Class of 2024 pres- ident since ninth grade. Zoe's responses have been light- ly edited for length and clarity. Read an extended version of this Q&A with Zoe at uhhighmidway.com.

With the unauthorized change in votes that happened on the first election day, how do you suppose students will know if they were fairly elected as all-school president?

That's definitely a concern that I have, but I just hope that people can trust that we ran the entire election — again, a huge amount of work for everybody involved, and I just hope that people can trust that I was elected fairly. Even if they don't, I think I'm going to be able to prove myself through- out the course of the year that I de- serve to be elected.

Do you have any plans to cre- ate/maintain confidence with the student body?

One of my main objectives is to increase visibility and account- ability for Student Council mem- bers. One of the ways that I plan to do this is a quarterly update, be- cause right now, Student Coun- cil still plans to use its web- site, obviously, so we have to make sure that it's secure, that it's fairly impenetrable, so the students, not to anybody else, not to ourselves, not to the ad- ministration, but to the students. So, I mean, as a president, I'm go- ing to make sure that I'm available for people to talk to on an unin- ferior basis with the concerns that they have, but as a Student Coun- cil, making ourselves more avail- able and making it known, our meetings are entirely open and we want students to come in and tell us what's going on.

How do you plan to create a more inclusive environment within the student body?

I've noticed that we need a pos- sible voice in a very divided area around DEI. I think we need to be focusing on cultural enrichment and cultural understanding and mutual understanding.

I have an idea, called inter- national day, and basically what this would be is students would get to bring in food from their na- tive culture, or really any culture. Read a little card about the cultural significance, its preparation, what it means to them, and then we would all come together in the caf- eteria during lunch period, or af- ter school or something like that, and share the food and just kind of enjoy food from each other's cul- tures. Because that's such a positive and easy way to get to be more fa- miliar with somebody else's ethnic background.

What are some lessons that you've learned from your time on Student Council that you plan to make use of next year?

I think the biggest one is that we need to kind of think outside the box because when I first came in to Student Council as a freshman, I was terrified. I was literally so scared because there was all these big upperclassmen who was elected, who were well liked, who knew what they were doing, so I was really scared to kind of branch out because I didn't think there's kind of an established mold that I didn't want to be stick- ing out. But as I've gotten older, and I've spent more time on stu- dent council, I've realized that the most important thing is that we're thinking outside of the box and being a little bit more creative with the initiatives that we have.

Turbulent election resulted in re-run on safer platform

by LOUIS AUXENFANS
News Editor

Unauthorized vote changes in the election database during the Student Council election April 28 caused the results to be set aside and a new election held on May 1.

Around lunchtime on April 28, Jeffrey Huang, one of Student Council’s two directors of student technology services, noticed ir- regularities in the voting database but went no further, as he thought little of it, Jeffrey said.

Then, during 8th period, there were huge concentrated bursts of vote changes which targeted specific candidates over others, which Jeffrey said he deduced was caused by a script.

That afternoon, Student Council and Dean of Students Ana Campos also received reports from multi- ple students that their original, in- tended vote was different from what was recorded, which could be verified by the database.

Upon discovering these chang- es, Student Council leaders knew they would have to run a new elec- tion.

“At that point, we realized that the election basically lacked in- tegrity at that point, because we couldn’t call an election obvious- ly based on fraudulent voting and vote changes,” Jeffrey said.

Jeffrey acknowledged that he and Asher Grossman, the oth- er student technology director, did not set up strong security for the voting database. They never thought someone would hack the database to change votes, so they focused on developing other fea- tures of the website.

For the May 1 election, Google Forms was used instead of vot- ing on the Student Council web- site because of the higher level of security. Despite the higher secu- rity, Google Forms are more diffi- cult to configure for ranked-choice voting.

“All-School President Fermi Boonstra said that students should have confidence in the results of the new election because of the measures Student Council took. “We took all the measures we could to make sure it was the most fair and secure,” Fermi said in an interview. “The Google Form is fairly impenetrable, so the votes themselves are safe. We’re not using the website, obviously, so we don’t have the same issue.”

In addition, Fermi said that they kept the names of the script-pre- ferred candidates under wraps and did not allow candidates to campaign over the weekend in or- der to prevent election influence over the weekend.

For the next election, Student Council still plans to use its web- site for online work on identi- fying and patching its vulnerabil- ities.

“The amount of time we’ve had, which was essentially two days to create security roles, wasn’t enough for us since we’re basic- ally never done security before,” Jef- fery said. “And a lot of it is also a learning process.”
Chicago educator named principal

by CLARE MRORTBS

Martin L. Woods, who has served on the leadership team at Wolcott College Prep in Chicago since 2018, has been selected as U-High’s next principal.

Director of Schools Tori Jueds sent an email to the Lab community on April 24 following a unial search to replace Principal Paul J. Kenyon, who is departing this summer.

Mr. Woods, who is director of student life, dean of students and director of diversity and belonging at Wolcott, was picked from a large pool of candidates and was among four finalists who visited.

In his June 16th announcement email, Mr. Woods said, “I look forward to a dialogue with the members of this community as we join together to honor our past and look to the future of U-High.”

Before working at Wolcott, Mr. Woods, who was born in Chicago and comes from a family of educators, worked as a classroom teach- er of English in Noble Charter School Network. Earlier, he served as an assistant executive director and program arts director at St. Margaret of Scotland School. He has also studied music at Roosevelt University, Roosevelt College and Northwestern University and is also an opera singer. Before entering a new interview for his selection, Mr. Woods said that a goal of his is to connect with the student body and the communities within it.

“I would love to do is first connect with the groups that you have already established, I think that’s what I would want to get to know you,” he said. “So whether it be your affinity groups, your sports teams, Student Council, etc., I will love to spend some time with you all to hear your thoughts.”

Mr. Woods emerged from those interviews as his selection. Ms. Jueds, a leader of the principal search committee, said Mr. Woods seemed to connect strongly with the student body and support DEI initiatives.

LOCAL HIRE. Incoming principal Martin Woods said his goals as principal will be to connect with the student body and support DEI initiatives.

Here are some fast facts about new principal Martin Woods:

• Director of student life, dean of students and director of diversity and belonging at Wolcott College Prep in Chicago since 2018
• Implemented diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives at Wolcott for anti-bullying and identity-affirming program
• Envisioned inclusive hiring practices and the highest number of Black and LGBTQI faculty
• Worked with enrollment admissions director, enroll highest number of African American and LGBTQI students
• Music teacher at Noble Charter School Network and St. Margaret of Scotland School from 2010-2018
• Bachelor’s in Music and Marketing from Morehouse College; Master’s of Music from Roosevelt University

— compiled by Louis Laurenfuss

Hosted forums lack student participation

by AMY REN

When it comes to the forum, students at U-High over four days in early April, students had a chance to meet with members of the School Board. But just a few students did.

Forums on incidents of hate expressed during the search in- clude that only four students volunteered to attend forums, and the prin- cipal finalist search meetings this month had around 10 attendees on average.

Some say low attendance re- flects student apathy, while others say they don’t believe their view- points will truly be heard. All School Secretary James Mc- Cullen has attended such forums and meetings, and he thinks low attendance is because of a lack of trust that sharing opinions at meetings will initiate true change at Lab.

Dean of Students Ana Campon also observed a lack of student participation in community dis- cussions since the pandemic, and that after distance learning, stu- dents spent more time with small groups of like-minded friends — and stayed in an ideological bubble.

“My perception is there’s a lot more small groups of people that will talk with each other ... and so they might have complaints about something,” Ms. Campon said, “but there isn’t necessarily a de- sire to bring it to a larger conver- sation and engage in conversation with other people.”

Forums make a disconnect be- tween the student body and the student Council and believes that students are hypocritical in their lack of attendance.

“You can ask our Student Counci- l a lot for doing nothing, but it’s funny that they say that, be- cause whenever we do do some- thing or host something people don’t show up — even though we advertise it, even though we tell people to come, even though we posted on Schoolorg,” Fermi said, “so it’s just frustrating when we do those things and no one shows up and then we get criticized for it.”
Ms. Devins describes the effect of murals on the Bronzeville neighborhood as memory walls. He hopes that residents will see the interconnectedness of the murals.

“It starts to dawn on you that these murals are a part of our collective memory,” Mr. Devins said. “What makes a community is a collective memory.”

Mr. Devins believes his success as an artist comes from talking with members of the community. Before he begins any work, he spends a year touring the neighborhood and speaking with residents. After, he holds a vote on the subject of the mural.

“From a technical urban planning point of view, these murals serve the function of highlighting the identity of the area and calling attention to the historical legacy Bronzeville has,” Mr. Devins said. Mr. Devins wants to develop Bronzeville into a center for African-American culture and entertainment, similar to what a Chicago resident would see in Greek-town or Chinatown.

“African Americans contribute a lot to American culture; he said, “but everywhere you go throughout the United States, you’re mostly confronted with two things: the nice African American neighborhood, where people go to work and live downtown, or you have areas of blight, like on the South Side.”

Not every mural focuses on the historic identity of the neighborhood, but Mr. Devins saw an opportunity to revive some of the lost culture of Bronzeville through his murals, a form of public art, which he believes is crucial for a neighborhood like Bronzeville.

“Public art is the democratic side of art. Without having to be intimidated by going into a gallery, you can have a certain educational level. It’s art for everybody,” Mr. Devins said. “It’s for all to enjoy of any background, and you don’t have to be wealthy or have to have a certain educational attainment level. It’s art for everybody.”

“Mr. Jacobo said they wish for the store’s recent opening and during Record Store Day on April 22, a global celebration of independentally owned record stores, which received substantial attention across Chicago.

“I actually haven’t thought about the transition until the last couple of days,” Mr. Jacobo said. “The first week was just hectic—people coming in and out for the opening weekend.”

Mr. Jacobo said they ran into numerous obstacles while attempting to start up the store.

“There’s nothing tangible nowadays, to hold and collect, while you’re listening to music on Spotify and YouTube,” Mr. Jacobo said, “but records are special. For people who appreciate music, they’re something cool to get into and check out.”
Administration must engage differently

A stronger bond can prompt many positive changes

The coming school year marks a substantial change in U-High's administration and functions — a new set of principal, athletics director, assistant principal, and assistant director of diversity, equity and inclusion. With these changes will undoubtedly come shifts to student life.

Student concerns and wellbeing must be at the heart of these changes. Having more accessible and widespread opportunities for students to freely and completely share our thoughts with the administration will allow our voices to not fall to the background.

While this communication does currently exist, the scale needs to increase. The administration should reconfigure these efforts to better utilize the opportunity to broaden communication, increase student involvement, feedback and expression. While there is currently a lack of regularity for low attendance, transparent platforms for communication could promote interest in attending administration-led forums as the student body could be confident their voices would be properly heard.

This problem was emphasized during the later stages of U-High's principal search, where each candidate hosted a drop-in session during lunch for students to get to know each potential principal.

While participation was limited, the forum itself did not allow for complete expression. The students present were only permitted to ask a limited set of pre-approved questions which were printed on a slip, therefore restricting their communication both to the student body and the potential administrator.

These actions dampened the efficacy of our input on an event designed to contribute to student life.

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Gray and brown buildings jut from fields of saturated spring green. The darkness starkly contrast with the light blue sky. When Lena Valenti gets home, the Green Line rumbles on its journey south. However, amidst this South Chicago spring scene is a colonial sea of crimson. One-boundred thousand red tulips erupt from the earth over several plots of land representing buildings that had once stood and have been demolished due to the corrupt practices of redlining. In each coming year, these tulips will regrow, meandering and migrating from their original plots in a state of perpetual change, perhaps representing the forms that are irreplaceable and unpredictable aspects of redlining.

The tulips at the corners of S5th Street and Prairie Avenue are part of an art project by Amanda Williams’ “Redlining: Redlining,” a project that is both beautiful and striking, utilizing space, color and space to illustrate something that reverberates throughout the South Side, the city and the United States.

Ms. Williams, a Chicago-based artist and 1992 Lab alumna, often features themes of spatial justice and "the built-environment" in her work. This project focuses on the issue of redlining, a wide-spread range of real estate practices used to exclude marginalized groups from specific areas, which continues to contribute to the last segregation that exists in Chicago and beyond. Using old insurance maps, Ms. Williams, with the help of many volunteers, planted thousands of tulips bulbs last October in the place of 21 demolished Washington Park residential buildings.

Ms. Williams said part of the project’s inspiration was the visual connection of color and space to the abstract issue of redlining.

“So redlining is just a powerful term, in many ways, because it’s so illustrative. It illustrates itself. It’s a red line,” she said. “So I think having a term that's identifiable, and then it's so easy to translate into something visual, just kind of makes it a no-brainer in terms of something that I would be attracted to, given my love of color.”

Ms. Williams has used color to translate and express experiences in her work. This project focuses on ten features themes of spatial justice and "the built-environment" before in the project “Color(ed) Theory.” In 2014 and 2015 she secretly planted multiple thousands of tulips bulbs on the South-side slat for demolition in a solid and vibrant color. She intentionally used colors linked to products marketed towards the Black community throughout the late 20th century.

Today, Ms. Williams uses art to explore spatial justice, and her art is a tool for the culmination of her experiences: specifically growing up as a Black person in two parts of Chicago’s South Side and studying architecture.

Ms. Williams said being trained as an architect and to think about how to move bodies through space has always been one of her preoccupations.

She said, “So my own spatial experience in relationship to Chicago was very influential by going to Lab School and growing between two different neighborhoods every day.”

Ms. Williams said that although she doesn’t think the project will solve the issues stemming from redlining, she believes the project can still have an expansive impact. “There’s not an impact in terms of ‘This is going to solve the problem of all of the buildings in the first place,’” she said. “But I do think that there’s an element of understanding that things on a temporal basis can bring joy. One can bring imagination. They can sometimes bring about legislative change.”

She said her project is only a small part in exhibiting the impact of redlining and making a change for the community.

“I think I’ve understood that you can’t do a single action all of a sudden and magically impact the community,” she said. “This is one note on many points that are happening that aren’t just the work that I’m doing. It’s the work of other artists, other organizers, elected officials, teachers, community groups, and so on and so forth.”

Because tulips are perennial and will regrow in coming years, Ms. Williams says an exciting part of the project is watching how it will evolve with or without her.

“I have no idea how much [the tulips] will adhere to the foot-print that we created. If they’ll start to meander. If the neighbors will continue to steward the tulips after the project and the season of the blooming has ended. Will they invite me or other artists back to do things or will they do things themselves? These are all open-ended question marks that make this type of work so exciting,” she said. “You have to make the space for the next iteration or evolution of a project is going to be.”

When Lena was 10 years old, Lena Valenti participated in her first ever professional show, a production of the musical “Oliver” at St. Bonaventure Oratory. During one of the first rehearsals with the rest of her life, an activity fueled by her passion for connecting artistic passion, creativity and joy. She said that it is a privilege to move bodies through space, can bring imagination. They can sometimes bring about legislative change.

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The tulips are located on multiple plots at East 53rd Street and South Prairie Avenue. As spring flowers, they bloom only lasts several weeks.

Drama Queen: A leading actor in the spring musical, Lena Valenti finds connection through acting, choreographing and directing by KATIE SASAMOTO-KURISU

When Lena was 10 years old, Lena Valenti participated in her first-ever professional show, a production of the musical “Oliver” at the St. Bonaventure Oratory. During one of the first rehearsals with the whole ensemble, Lena felt overjoyed by the energy in the room — an irreplaceable part of her future, and how she knows acting will be an irreplaceable part of her future, surrounded by other passionate people. She said theater has saved her many times. “This is what I’m going to do with my life. I love that I’m able to do what I love for a living,” she said. “I’m going to be there for the people that I feel very at home — I have something to work for. It’s a passion about.”

When Lena performs, she wants to make the audience feel something. She said it is a privilege to be able to influence and impact an audience.

“There’s nothing that I love more than performing and being on stage,” she said. “If I’ve made the audience feel something, then I’ve succeeded. That’s what being a leader in U-High’s theater, where she took on numerous positions around production, becoming an assistant music director, head choreographer and director.

Fellow head choreographer An- na Bohlen, a senior, has worked with Lena since last year. She said that Lena’s ambition and kind personality toward others are what makes her an effective leader. “She’s very driven.” Anna said. “When you need someone to get things done, Lena’s the person you ask. She’s very moti- vated and she works so hard at ev- erything she does. She’s also a re- ally, really sweet person, and she makes everyone feel welcome in the theater.”

Theater director Luciânia Am- brosioli said Lena shares the pas- sion and intellect of students she cherographing. If I’ve made the audience feel something, then I’ve succeeded. That’s what being a leader in U-High’s theater, where she took on numerous positions around production, becoming an assistant music director, head choreographer and director.

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The theater director Luciânia Am- brosioli said Lena shares the passion and intellect of students she sees pursuing theater in the future. "This is what I’m going to do with my life. I love that I’m able to do what I love for a living," she said. "I’m going to be there for the people that I feel very at home — I have something to work for. It’s a passion about."
World-renowned museums, historic landmarks, scenic public parks and ornate architecture — these aren’t always what people think of when talking about Chicago’s South Side. Sometimes, these fundamental aspects are overshadowed by stereotypes and negative rhetoric about violence, poverty and instability. With U-High students representing the South Side and other parts of Chicago, do students see through the...

**Cultural offerings overlooked**

**by PETER COX**

The general area south of 63rd Street, which includes much of the southern branch of the Chicago Public Library, known as the South Chicago branch, is a neighborhood that has historically been maligned with a bad reputation.

It basically sounds much worse than it was. There was a cultural center and that was a big golf area; a lot of families that moved to Hyde Park have been a second home. After all, it’s the school in the South Side, and that’s where the neighborhood should be entitled to due care and due regard. Neighbors also believe that the students have to get involved to go to school in the South Side and they’ve had to be involved to get involved in the neighborhood.

According to Hyde Park resident Doris Sany, a junior living in the northern part of Chicago, Hyde Park is sort of gentrified, just because it’s a lot of Black people to live in an area of the city, which is geographically in the south. In Chicago in comparison to the North Side, Hyde Park is sort of a ‘suburb’ of the city, which is geographically in the south.

**University insulated from wealth disparities**

**by ETHAN SWINGER**

Chicago South Side is famous for its diverse culture, historic neighborhood and rich tradition. Despite this, the area is also challenged with the assumption that those who live in it are from low-income households.

While the average income on Chicago’s South Side is lower than that of the city as a whole, the area is often assumed to be a neighborhood filled with low-income residents, even though income is often overlooked.

Property taxes in our neighborhood are financed by a special branch of the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.

Hyde Park households have a median income of $53,432, nearly identical to that of Kennedys families in Evanston. In contrast, households in the Woodlawn area have a median income of $27,494, according to the same census. Despite these varying economic situations, students and residents assume that income in the South Side is equal across the board.

According to senior Erye Alston, who lives in Woodlawn, there is a strong sense of the South Side as a neighborhood filled with low-income residents, even though income is often overlooked.

The university also has some people who really don’t know that this leads to that disparity and they think that it’s definitely accurate. "I think it’s definitely an assumption of poverty if you live on the South Side," Doris Sany said. "I think there have been comments from my friends to need to expand their residents." Additionally, both neighborhoods have a significant disparity in income. This is often overlooked, as the area is stereotyped as low income. 37.5% of Hyde Park households make over $200,000, as do 4.3% of Woodlawn households.

**Hayward regarded as safer than nearby areas**

**by ERICH RAUMAN**

You can talk to a kid at any school, and they’ll proudly say they’re just a square of brown concrete, marching around every block, slapping by and checking the day and by Victorian street lights at night. With a lot of black blocks away from the university, however, and neglected times and spaces, Hyde Park itself is mostly an easy to get to the university, but it’s more unique from other neighborhoods in the South Side. It’s the opposite of what is considered the South Side is subjective. "I think it’s definitely an assumption of poverty if you live on the South Side," Doris Sany said. "I think there have been comments from my friends to need to expand their residents." Additionally, both neighborhoods have a significant disparity in income. This is often overlooked, as the area is stereotyped as low income. 37.5% of Hyde Park households make over $200,000, as do 4.3% of Woodlawn households.

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Tumbling Twins. High up on the rings, senior Akshay Puri engages in a difficult routine at gymnastics practice. He and his twin brother, Kavan Puri, are accomplished student athletes who find strength in family. One of the most physically demanding sports, high school and college, rowing is the oldest intercollegiate sport in the United States. Though U-High doesn’t have its own team, several students participate in new height categories can come from the turn of a foot or the straightening of an arm. Akshay and Kavan have learned to rely on the other for advice and critique, each bringing an attention to detail which competitively pushes the other to improve. “We can watch videos of each other doing gymnastics, and we can correct things. We can make comments on things, we can de- scribe the feeling of the skill and be better to each other,” Kavan said. “I think that’s been a huge contributor to our improvement in the sport is the fact that, whenever we want, we can always get better with the other’s help.” Being exceptional high school gymnasts doesn’t always feel like soaring through the air on the high bar. As student athletes, both have faced the often-grueling and mun- dane responsibilities of balancing a challenging high school curricu- lum with long practices. Sometimes the twins don’t start home- work until after 10 p.m. and don’t sleep until much later. When this happens, Kavan and Akshay will turn to their gym commu- nity and the teammates who haveencouraged a kind of teamwork that push the limits of physical endurance, but there are also some issues with the administration’s commitment in their life and an activi- ty to form close relationships. “When you’re younger, your prac- tices were in the city from 4-6:30 every day, and then Saturday’s, I’d practice in the morning. Sun- day was my day off,” Akshay said. “Now, practice is at 6 p.m. for us now, because I’m an older guy, so we go until 9 p.m. every day of the week, and then Saturday again in the morning until 12:30 p.m. We’re looking around three to four hours every day.” At its core, gymnastics is about discipline and repetition, and the smallest slippage in the ability to move can spell the difference between winning a meet and finishing last. Though U-High doesn’t have its own team, several students participate in its grueling training regimen of at least once a day, practicing and building its essential teamwork. Races happen in either singles, doubles, or fours and eights being the most common. Though there are other people in the racing shell, athletes are generally focused on themselves as they strain to keep the shell moving as fast as possible. This is especially true for the two brothers who are facing the way the boat is mov- ing. They’re in a conversation on a conversation, one of the people in the boat who isn’t rowing, to direct them. “We’re doing a lot of work and you don’t know where you’re go- ing because you’re going back- wards,” said U-High senior Smith Bumpers, who rows at The Chica- go Rowing Foundation. Because of this, even though team spirit is very high, rowing encourages a kind of teamwork that also emphasizes the individu- al. Crews are picked by coaches to fill shells with athletes of a similar skill and strength. “The interesting thing is that it’s a team sport in the sense that there are four or eight of you rac- ing down a course. But it’s indi- vidualized in the fact that every- body earns their own seat,” said U-High junior Frances Lewis, an- other member of the Chicago Rowing Foundation. “Even though we’re all rowing down the course together, we all had to individually get in the boat.” Participating in a sport that isn’t affiliated with the school at all has both upsides and downsides. It allows athletes to interact with peers outside of the U-High envi- ronment, but there are also some issues with the administration’s constraints on nonschool activi- ties. “In some ways it’s nice branch- ing out, meeting new people. It definitely helped prepare me a little bit more for college,” Smith said. “Also, I think sometimes not being a school sport definitely has its cons, like with attendance, be- cause your absences aren’t count- ed the same way.” Rowing is different than any other sport that high schoolers do. It’s a combination of individ- ual racing team coordination and a brutal full-body workout. It’s a massive time commitment that has an impact on other parts of their lives. “The discipline and compet- itiveness and failure, in a sense, translated to working harder and trying again,” Frances said. “And especially in school, it’s translated to OK, it doesn’t matter if you do bad on one test, that doesn’t mean you can’t learn the material. You just have to figure out a different way to learn it.”...
CLOSING ON AN OUTSTANDING CAREER

ATHLETICS DIRECTOR DAVE RIBBENS HAS BUILT UP PROGRAMS OVER PAST 20 YEARS

By AMON GRAY

Sports and Lacrosse Editor

When Kovler Gymnasium was opened in 2000, it promised room to grow for Lab's athletics program. Twenty-three years later, this dream has come true. The hall is now home to the offices of the man who cultivated this growth: Director of Athletics Dave Ribbens.

Mr. Ribbens will retire at the end of this year, following a celebrated 20 years at Lab in which he built the athletics program into a robust and competitive collection of teams that reflect Lab's values.

Mr. Ribbens has focused on three categories of athletics expansion in his time at Lab: increasing the number of sports offered, expanding the rosters of teams and hiring of new, qualified coaches.

“Fencing, squash, sailing, diving, dance troupe — dance team now — and we’ve got water polo in its infancy that seems to have grown some momentum for students, so that growth came internally from the students, and I think that’s a real indicator that it wasn’t coming from a strategic plan, a five-year plan, or a 10-year plan; it’s organic growth from Lab students,” Mr. Ribbens said.

Laura Gill, assistant director of athletics, has been working with Mr. Ribbens for the past four years. “When I was at Porten, a lot of my colleagues in the ISL would always talk about how Dave was such an important figure, not only in the ISL, but in the entire HSA,” Ms. Gill said. “So when I applied for this job, and knew I had the opportunity to work under him, that really excited me because he’s such an accomplished director.”

Ms. Gill has admired Mr. Ribbens’ initiative and decisive leadership in the face of adversity. Ms. Gill said that she has been committed to ensuring that the fall and winter seasons would take place during the COVID-19 pandemic to improve students’ physical and mental health.

“He just really understands the moment, and I think that’s the most impressive thing about him, and I’ve really learned from him about understanding the moment and knowing when to react and how to react,” Ms. Gill said.

Ms. Gill said that she has enjoyed sharing the athletics office with Mr. Ribbens, and she will miss his sense of humor and collection of sports memorabilia.

“Mr. Ribbens loves to print. Ms. Gill said, ‘I would say the sound of the printer is the sound that, when Mr. Ribbens is gone, I will miss the most because that man prints everything.’”

Joyce Grotthus, a P.E. teacher and coach for middle school girls’ basketball and volleyball teams, was on the committee that hired Mr. Ribbens, and she has been able to see the results of all the work he has done in his time at Lab.

“I think he was also able to do a lot with creating the Hall of Fame, creating the pictures. We never had the team photos on the walls. Those are all things that kind of made the students proud and wanted to be part of the athletic program,” Ms. Grotthus said. “When people walk through that hallway, they like looking at their old picture from like eighth grade. They walk through the hall and they’ll look for their little face and their friends, and they smile.”

Mr. Ribbens remained supportive of the no-cut policy for sports and continued to support the expansion of the program to whoever wants to compete.

“For some people, it means that we’re really not that competitive and that we’re not that serious about athletics. And I think that we’re both,” Mr. Ribbens said. “I think there’s students who are competitive, that are serious about it, and it’s good for our students who need that encouragement to be a part of the team that they belong to, and that’s a good thing for all students.”

Mr. Ribbens’ success as an athletics director can be seen in the numbers. From 1983 to 2000, when Mr. Ribbens was hired, Lab won 21 IHSA championships in regional, sectional, super sectional and state competitions across four sports. From 2003 to 2023, Lab has won 102 IHSA championships across 10 sports.

“My favorite part is watching the students and seeing them mature and develop. By far, it’s enormously rewarding to see students do well, compete well and to see them in some ways from sixth grade,” Mr. Ribbens said. “It’s very unusual that we’ve got middle school and high school together, as far as one athletics department — most schools don’t have that. So I literally can see kids from sixth grade who are, you know, very small and inexperienced to kids who graduate years later.”

IN THE HALL OF FAME. Dave Ribbens delivers a speech at the Athletics Hall of Fame ceremony on Oct. 15, 2022. The Hall of Fame was one of many additions Mr. Ribbens made to the athletics program in his time at Lab.

Field team stands out from track with designated coach

By ETHAN SWINGER

Assistant Editor

Observing closely, the coach studies how the athlete spins before ripping the discus away from his body. It cuts the wind as it soars before slamming into the grass. It is several meters short of the 20-meter goal.

“Despite the good throw, he knows how to make it even better. After careful coaching and eagerly demonstrating to the athlete how better to center his body mass, he watches the discus fly once again. This time it lands just inches shy of that elusive 20-meter mark.”

Brandon Davis is the new field events coach for U-High and began working with the track teams in January. He is the first designated coach for field athletes.

According to Mr. Davis, U-High’s field team competes in the long jump, high jump, triple jump, shot put and discus. Occasionally he assists with the sprinting events as well.

He wanted to become a field coach after not having the same opportunities in his own high school track team.

“To come here and be that new field events coach and help give people guidance and the events that I wish I had a little bit more guidance is just a really, really good feeling,” he said.

According to Mr. Davis, U-High’s field team has undergone a recent expansion and has focused on getting more people to participate in field events.

“We’re kind of in that building foundation phase, so just building up interest of having people experience different events,” he said. Mr. Davis says there are eight or nine athletes who do field events this season.

Junior Jace Chen is the head discus thrower and has been on the team for two years. He believes that Mr. Davis initiates a vibrant and motivating environment for current and potential team members.

“He has very positive vibes. He’s energetic, and gets people to participate,” Jace said. “He’s pretty warm around incoming freshmen or sophomores that want to join track, and encourages everyone to do their best.”

Track and field coach Austin Warner notices Mr. Davis’s enthusiasm and the improvements students have made this season.

“He is somebody who puts in a lot of energy,” he said. “He’s very passionate about the sport and is helping other student athletes achieve results.”

Mr. Warner acknowledges that Mr. Davis’s coaching has been essential for the growing success of U-High’s field team.

“A lot of students are hitting personal bests as the weeks go on,” he said, “which is great.”
Pre-workout: Popular yet precarious

BY AUDREY MATEI

Midway photo by Ishani Hariprasad

Pre-workout is a drink or powder that has been said to increase energy and endurance during exercise. But is it a must-have for everyone? Not necessarily. While some athletes swear by pre-workout, others find it unnecessary or even detrimental.

For many athletes, pre-workout is a staple of their routine. It’s a way to kick-start their workout and give them a boost of energy. But not all athletes are convinced of its benefits. Some believe that pre-workout can cause adverse effects or simply don’t see a difference.

“I absolutely love using pre-workout because I can drink another coffee drink, even energy drinks like Red Bull, Alas, and others. I don’t need them, but sometimes I drink a whole 16-ounce can just to get 200 milligrams of caffeine, but with pre-workout powder, I just mix or dry it, and it’s one or two sips and I’m good to go,” said one athlete.

However, not all athletes see the same benefits from pre-workout. Some find that it doesn’t work as advertised.

“I used pre-workout pretty much every day, but I always go basically right to bed after I use my pre-workout, so I don’t care that much about it,” said another athlete.

The use of pre-workout is not without controversy. Some athletes believe that it is a necessary part of their routine, while others see it as a unnecessary supplement.

“Pre-workout is a great way to increase your energy before exercising. It just helps me to get through my workout,” said one athlete.

But is pre-workout really necessary? It all depends on your needs and goals.

“Pre-workout is not necessary for everyone. It’s just a way to boost your energy before a workout,” said another athlete.

When it comes to pre-workout, it’s important to remember that it is not a replacement for a healthy diet and lifestyle.

“Pre-workout is just a supplement, not a replacement for proper nutrition and exercise,” said one athlete.

Pre-workout is available in a variety of forms, including powders, capsules, and gels. The most popular form is a powder that is mixed with water or a sports drink.

“Pre-workout powder is the most popular because it’s easy to use and can be mixed with water,” said one athlete.

Pre-workout is often used to increase energy and endurance during exercise. But is it worth the hype? It all depends on your needs and goals.

BEAUTY BOOST. Often in the form of pills, beauty supplements are sold to improve skin, hair, and nail health. Sophomore Leila Rezaali started taking them to help with dry hair. She said she saw a significant improvement and decided to continue using them.

“I started taking hair supplements because my hair was dry and brittle. I wanted to make it healthier, so I started taking supplements,” said Leila.

When it comes to beauty supplements, it’s important to choose ones that are right for you. Not all supplements work for everyone.

“Not all beauty supplements work for everyone,” said Leila. “You need to find the right ones for your specific needs.”

In summary, pre-workout and beauty supplements can be beneficial for some athletes and teenagers. But it’s important to remember that they are not a replacement for a healthy diet and lifestyle.

“Pre-workout and beauty supplements can be helpful for some, but it’s important to use them in moderation,” said one athlete.

The use of pre-workout and beauty supplements is not without controversy. Some athletes believe that they are necessary, while others see them as unnecessary or even detrimental.

“Pre-workout and beauty supplements are not a substitute for proper nutrition and exercise,” said one athlete.

But the bottom line is, it all depends on your needs and goals. If you’re looking to increase your energy and endurance during exercise, or if you want to improve your skin, hair, and nails, pre-workout and beauty supplements may be a good option for you. Just make sure to choose ones that are right for you and use them in moderation.
Inspired to soar

Student pilots pursue unconventional hobby with long-term career in mind

by LOUIS AUJXENFANS

It’s really cool to be able to just capture that moment in the air where you can just like see everything. You’re up like thousands of feet in the sky going super fast and you are the ones in control of it.

Nathan Lio, sophomore

I fly this pattern again!”

To obtain a student license, the Federal Aviation Administration requires a professional's endorsement and ground work knowledge of regulation, weather, aerodynamics and ability to perform certain maneuvers. At WAIr, this process is divided into four stages with a flight and ground check at each step to prepare students for the license exam.

Nathan already has this student license, which allows him to fly alone, and is working towards 40 hours of flying to receive his private pilot license when he turns 17. Since he has flying proficiency, he flies every other week to keep up his skills, biding his time for when he is old enough to get more licenses.

While Nathan and Jackson’s experience has been fairly smooth, it hasn’t been without some turbulence. Jackson’s first flight school, Windy City Aviation, closed unexpectedly last November, so he didn’t fly for over two months. And for both, learning the ground rules of flying can be dense and technical to comprehend. However, their diligence has paid off.

Benjamin Council, Jackson’s flight instructor at WAIr, said Jackson’s attentiveness has made him a pleasure to teach.

“He definitely absorbs the instruction well, so he can absorb what I say and then do it,” Mr. Council said. “Versus some people you really have to spend a lot of time trying to figure out a way to communicate what I’m trying to explain or demonstrate.”

Additionally, Mr. Council was pleasantly surprised that on the first day of instruction, Jackson could fly using physical aviation charts, rather than iPads.

“It was impressive to see at that stage — stage one early in his flying career — he can already fly via charts,” Mr. Council said. “I like that fundamental because we have technology, but should that fail, it’s nice to know that you can do that and fly around without being lost in the air.”

For both Jackson and Nathan, flying has felt surprisingly natural.

“That’s one of the things I was kind of surprised about when I started flying, like it was very natural to me,” Jackson said. “It wasn’t like, ‘Whoa, this is so new, this is such a crazy feeling,’ and just this just felt normal to me.”

Nathan said flying provides him with a new perspective of the world.

“It’s really cool to be able to just capture that moment in the air where you can just like see everything,” Nathan said. “You’re up like thousands of feet in the sky going super fast and you are the ones in control of it.”

For their next stages in the world of aviation, Nathan wants to join the Air Force, while Jackson wants to major in engineering in college, but both want to eventually pilot commercial airliners. While they currently fly two-seater Cessna aircraft at a small airport north of O’Hare, Nathan and Jackson’s aviation aspirations are just beginning to take off.

Summer jobs provide students glimpse at real world

by KATIE SASAMOTO-KURISU

As summer approaches, students face the decision of what to do during their free summer months. A common choice is finding a job, which gives them an introduction to the workforce and a source of income. Many jobs are available to high schoolers that are easily accessible within Chicago.

Jobs offered to high school students range in activity and difficulty. They can be held through big corporations like Morningstar and Citadel, nonprofit organizations like ACT Now Illinois and Inner City Impact, government institutions like the Chicago Park District and local establishments including grocery stores, restaurants and shops. The minimum wage in the City of Chicago for employees under 16 is $12. The minimum wage increases every July 1.

Many programs are designed to provide teenagers job opportunities. They cater directly to individuals in the Chicago area.

Summer jobs are offered to ages 14-24 in a range of fields and community businesses. Recent community employers include Bank of America, Chicago Defender Newspaper, GoldStar Law Office, Poldy Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation, and Loretto Hospital.

Average pay: $15 an hour

Application deadline: June 2

• Chicago Park District Summer Job Portal:
The Chicago Park District offers jobs to individuals 16 years and older through community-focused experiences. Positions are open for lifeguards, camp counselors, recreation leaders, special education teachers, and landscape laborers. Average pay is $15 an hour.

• After School Matters:
After School Matters is a nonprofit organization that provides Chicago youth ages 14 and older various professional opportunities in the arts, communications, leadership, sports and STEM. Programs are categorized into apprenticeships for those 14 and older, assistantships for those 16 and older and internships for those 18 and older.

Average pay: $15 an hour

Application deadline: June 2

The bottom line:
Beyond the work itself, getting a job is a worthwhile experience that invites the participant to build strong habits, both socially and professionally, while getting a glimpse at future financial responsibilities.

Once an individual is hired, they also have to complete a few forms. Certain institutions have varying requirements.

1-9: Used to verify the identity and legal authorization of individuals hired for work in the United States. Every employee hired is required to fill out the form. Minors may have a parent or legal guardian fill out their form.

Working Permit: Designed to comply with local child labor laws and regulate the employment of workers under 16 years of age.

W-4: Indicates to the employer the amount that will be withheld for federal and state income tax purposes.

W-2: Contains information about earned income and amount of taxes withheld from a paycheck. This form is used to file federal and state taxes. This form is used to file federal and state taxes.
In eighth grade, Arainde Merchant was scrolling through social media when she came across a cosplay of the character an artist created. The picture sparked an interest, and ever since then, she said that she wants to dress up and embody some of her own favorite characters. 

Cambridge is a type of performance art where participants represent comic characters or concepts from different media like comic books, video games or anime.

"Kosupure" or "cosplay" was invented in Japan in 1984 and rose in popularity in the West during the late 2000s.

For students, cosplay allows for self-expression and serves as a fun hobby to pursue more intricate interests like sewing.

Junior Alex Fogel's father introduced her to the concept as an infant. He hand-sewed Halloween costumes for Alex.

"As soon as I had enough consciousness to understand what the costumes actually mean, I immediately wanted to start working on them, too," Alex said.

Alex enjoys putting a lot of effort into their cosplays and seeing their cosplays come to fruition.

"I love when people ask for photos because it lets me know all the effort I put into a cosplay off," they said. "It’s just to make things and be proud of them and look cool."

Their interest in designing Halloween costumes for Alex.

"It is really cool to see how much time and effort people put into these creations," Alex said. "You can bond over that, and there are similar senior Martin Oliver also enjoys attending C2E2 and has sporadically attended the Chicago Comic and Entertainment Expo convention.

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Senior Martin Oliver also enjoys attending C2E2 and has sporadically attended the Chicago Comic and Entertainment Expo convention.

"It is really cool to see how much time and effort people put into these creations," Alex said. "You can bond over that, and there are similar interests like sewing.

Similarly, senior Martin Oliver also enjoys attending C2E2 and has sporadically attended the Chicago Comic and Entertainment Expo convention.

"It is really cool to see how much time and effort people put into these creations," Alex said. "You can bond over that, and there are similar interests like sewing.

For Ariadne, cosplay serves as a way to incorporate her love for theater and passion for art into one art form — one where she can meet like-minded people and her favorite artists, customize and personalize her own iterations of characters, and further express her adoration for a piece of work and art.

"Cosplay is not just the costume. It really is a cosplay for the character you’re doing," she said. "You want to do them justice. You want to do right by the character and get into the character. You take the time to put in the effort in the outfit, the makeup and everything else. The whole process really is just so much fun."