



May 30, 2024

Dear Lakers,

Our Strategic Plan is clear about what we must accomplish by 2025: *re-center our identity as an educational innovator and re-affirm our status as a destination for learning*. Please consider two pursuant vignettes from our spring on Hawk Hill.

1. Reading and Writing

The Scholastic Writing Awards (seeking originality, skill, and personal voice) are the nation's longest-running and most prestigious; high schools with hundreds of students are lucky to get one or two. This year ULS Upper Schoolers brought home a whopping 27 awards- one in three students. How?

When fads come and go elsewhere, ULS doubles down on great teaching: personal, social, creative, and rooted in *what works*. In early years, this famous Laker approach coupled with a focus on mechanics pays off with nuanced comprehension- and accountability without the testing treadmill. As veteran Upper School math teacher Mark Bronner says, "*ULS: No Scantrons Ever.*" (Also offering the tagline "*ULS: Perfectly Undefeated in Football*").

Today the science of reading confirms what we've always known and is poised to help ULS *build the strongest possible reading and writing program for each student K through 8*. For two years our teachers have studied each step in how a human learns to read and write, and have identified resources *to maximize higher-level learning and promote deep engagement with books for life*.

Please consider helping us pay for materials, professional development, and library expansion to combine the magic of ULS with the discoveries of brain science. *We are budgeting 70K for this initiative and ask you to consider supporting this important work for ULS.*

## 2. College Counseling

The Wall Street Journal dubbed this year's college admissions cycle "the most chaotic in history" with its financial aid delays, Supreme Court hearings, standardized test confusion, and tiny acceptance rates. At ULS we doubled down on our student-centered approach and responded with a banner admissions year.

Spring 2024 epitomizes the results of ambitious, mission-aligned guidance. Our seniors were offered \$3 million in merit scholarships (a quarter of a million per student) across 48 schools in 21 states. In just one season of preparation, our average ACT score jumped 2 points to 28.3 (9 points higher than the state and nation) and is poised to hit 30 within the two upcoming test dates. The Wisconsin Association for College Admissions Counseling (WACAC) has recognized these achievements by giving its **one** annual *Rising Star Award* to our very own Director of College Counseling, Allie Reeder.

Allie is leading ULS to track and analyze student and alumni data, strengthen ties with admissions, widen our scope to target those colleges best equipped to challenge our students, and provide community education to demystify the application process.

Please consider helping fund database services, accrediting memberships, professional conferences, college travel, and targeted expertise such as ACT prep for *all* students. *We are budgeting 70K for this expanded function.*

Your spring gift to the Annual Fund this year earmarked "Reading" or "College" will help us affirm our identity as a destination for learning. Thank you for investing in an education that matters *and in the world our students will shape and lead*. We are honored to share their journey and invite you to share it with us.

Sincerely yours,



John Dewis  
Head of School



Abby Schlater  
Advancement



*Scan QR to give!*