

OUR VISION OUR FUTURE

Dear ULS Families,

I write today as a follow up to our February 5 webinar for ULS families. First and foremost, thank you to those who were able to join us. Thank you as well for finding any opportunity to engage as we imagine where [Our Vision, Our Future](#) might lead us and as we share plans for the future of University Liggett School.

For those who could not join us, and so that all have a record of important programmatic enhancements that we shared during the webinar, I've included a summary below. We also look forward to answering questions and engaging in further conversation at any time, so please do reach out to the division head best positioned to help your family.

As we look ahead to spring, I can envision more opportunities for our division heads to share additional details regarding more programmatic enhancements and changes to school policies related to student life for the 24-25 school year. Please be on the lookout for invitations to learn more in the months ahead.

Programmatic Enhancements for the 24-25 School Year

Middle School Math

- Readiness assessment administered to all rising 6-12th grade students.
- Eligibility for **advanced pathway** determined by readiness assessment score, teacher recommendation, student interest, supplemental assessment data, and family interest.
- End of year cumulative assessment given to students meeting all the criteria.
- Final exam score of 93% or higher is required to advance to the next course in the sequence.

Upper School Math

- **Addition of honors courses in Integrated Mathematics I and II.**
- **New Integrated Math III course** reinforces Algebra II topics and introduces trigonometry, statistics, and pre-calculus concepts.
- Multilayer placement process will ensure students have best fit mathematical placement.
- Pathways to calculus have been clarified and designed with flexibility in mind.

Lower School Math

The growth in our middle and upper school math program will be further enhanced by foundational work we implemented this year in lower school math including:

- **Upgrade to new *Math In Focus*** edition with on campus training in August 2023
- Deep dive into scope and sequence of grade level skills
- Creation of student math folders to record and track assessment data
- Addition of ***LS Math Specialist*** Erin Montagne
- Monthly Math Collaboration Time
- Knights Math Club: Participation in the Math Olympiad Competition

Lower School Social Studies

Grades 1-5 will adopt the Encompass geography curriculum which is designed to bring social studies skills into the classroom with hands-on activities that engage all learners.

Middle and Upper School Social Studies

We will integrate ***place-based civics*** into our 10th grade US History class and add a ***place-based history program*** to eighth grade Social Studies. This will allow our sophomores to focus more on civic engagement and our eighth graders to practice research skills to better prepare them for the transition to Upper School.

Upper School Science

Our ninth grade science program will add ***Honors Biology*** to its course offerings, creating a parallel to Honors Chemistry and Honors Physics. This will also enhance interdisciplinary alignment with honors mathematics courses.

New Programming for the 24-25 School Year

Global Online Academy

University Liggett School has applied for membership in and accepted an invitation to join [Global Online Academy](#) (GOA), a consortium of 140 leading schools around the world providing very challenging courses designed for students seeking opportunities to study topics that may not be available in most schools. ULS is one of only two schools in the state of Michigan to have earned membership in GOA. With over 100 courses available from GOA and 3,000 students from around the world enrolling in GOA classes annually, the opportunities available for our ULS students are significant.

More details on the ways we will integrate GOA into our curriculum will follow in the near future. Until then, please feel free to learn more about GOA and the opportunities available to students who enroll in GOA classes by visiting the [GOA website](#).

Strategic Planning Updates

As [Our Vision, Our Future](#) continues, we have reached an important milestone with the collection and review of data from our ***strategic planning survey*** well underway. With 1,335

community members having responded to the survey, we have an abundance of data which can inform our journey ahead.

Another important milestone comes with the Board of Trustees' unanimous vote in January, approving our core values and core values statements, which are noted below. The core values emerged from work undertaken by students, faculty, staff, trustees, and parent leaders during Core Values Week in December. Now we begin the multi-faceted and important process of infusing the core values into our community where they can serve as a foundation for our community and our work. That work will begin this spring and continue for the foreseeable future.

Community: We believe that a community grounded in trust, belonging, and safety unites us, secure in the shared understanding that we are stronger together. We advance community by honoring our past, embracing that which we have in common, and celebrating the unique talents we each possess.

Integrity: We believe that integrity is the cornerstone of our community and lives. We aspire to develop responsible citizens who are prepared to face the challenges of the future with steadfast character and a commitment to ethical decision-making.

Respect: We believe that respect is an essential thread of the fabric of our community, creating an indispensable bond in our relationships with each other and the school. We aspire to ground our thoughts, words, and actions in a culture of respect, strengthening our appreciation for each other, for those who have come before us, for those who will follow in our footsteps, and for the diverse array of perspectives that thrive at University Liggett School.

Excellence: We believe the pursuit of excellence is the foundation of our educational community. In that spirit, our academics, programs, and experiences prepare students to be lifelong learners who impact the world for the better.

Empathy: We believe empathy is vital for our collective commitment to humanity and our unwavering pursuit of excellence. Community members consistently embody empathy through the practices of inclusion, kindness, compassion, and equity, thereby affirming the dignity of every human being.

Please be on the lookout for news about more programmatic enhancements and strategic planning updates as the school year continues. Until then, thank you for being a part of the ULS community and for entrusting your children's education to us.

Sincerely,

Tom Sheppard
Head of School