

Dear Academy Community:

First off, I want to thank all of you, faculty, staff, parents, students, and alumni. The past two weeks have been challenging for all of us, but based on your feedback, I continue to be optimistic about our future. Not because everyone agrees on every issue, but because so many of you care. It's this common ground that will prove most critical for us in the long run.

On Tuesday, some members of the board and I met with more than one hundred Academy faculty and staff who attended the optional meeting. Over roughly two hours, we had a productive, open conversation about a range of issues—from the endowment, to compensation, to our collective path forward. That meeting, coupled with last week's meeting with the board of the parents' association and another meeting with a group of curious students, has me inspired and energized. Questions remain, but I think these were important first steps toward a healthier and more transparent Academy.

In fact, I was touched by some of the unsolicited feedback that I've received from a number of participants in those meeting. They conveyed a sense that we collectively achieved real connections and that there was genuine information sharing, humility, openness, and listening on all sides. But there was another important takeaway that's worthy for all of us consider: our need as a community to be receptive to change and open to building new bridges that move us forward.

Of course, we all recognize that we need to do more. Nonetheless, we must also remember that we must balance these conversations with our primary charge of providing the very best education for every one of our students. Their health, focus, and vitality are why we are here in the first place and we must never lose sight of it. In fact, they should serve as our inspiration for how we choose to act today, tomorrow, and long into the future.

Most important, I believe, is how we treat each other and how we work toward meaningful solutions. The Academy may not have a formal honor code, but we all have a shared obligation to act honorably and to model the best behavior and the best approaches to constructive problem solving.

With this in mind, and thanks to feedback from many of you, we are looking to host a town-hall-style meeting in early April. This, of course, will be open to all Academy community members—past and present—and will provide a broad forum to talk meaningfully and help define a framework for future engagement. Some of the priority topics at this point include:

- Establishing periodic meetings between the board and all of the faculty and staff
- Holding annual discussions about matters of importance and interest to our community
- Forging a relationship between the board and student senate
- Building a more strategic future in all areas of school operations and school life
- Creating more connections and more opportunities for genuine and constructive engagement between parents and the board

Moving forward, our goal is to ensure that dialogue, transparency, and human connections define the next chapter of the Academy, while maintaining appropriate and thoughtful governance boundaries between the different functioning units of the school.

Disagreements and frustrations are part of the human condition. But so are art, mathematics, history, literature, languages, science, and a myriad of other experiences that are important facets of life at Albuquerque Academy. These experiences tell a more complete story of who we are, what we should aspire toward, and what we can achieve when we come together.

We've come a long way since the financial crisis hit us around a decade ago, preserving our programs and the people who offer them, increasing our fundraising, growing as a school, and moving towards a budget that will ensure our strength in the future. With financial assistance growing, applications and enrollment up, the smallest operational and overall draw on our endowment in the past twenty years, the initial success of our Charged By Promise campaign, and student outcomes that rival those at any school in the country, we know that the future is bright. Brighter still as we all pull together for the future of our school.

When I graduated from the Academy in 1991, I had little idea that I would one day serve on the board or help our school through a challenging time. But these past two weeks have changed me. In fact, I think in years to come they will be seen as keystones to our growth—difficult at times, but ultimately part of a more productive future.

I am traveling over the next week, but when I return my door will remain open and I look forward to speaking with each and every one of you. Of course, if more immediate attention is needed, please feel free to reach out to Board of Trustees Vice Chair Tom Smidt who is equally engaged, knowledgeable, and passionate.

Thank you for your time and dedication, and for ensuring the very best future for Albuquerque Academy.

Yours sincerely,

Adam Honegger '91  
Chair, Albuquerque Academy Board of Trustees (505-341-7001)