

June 10, 2011

To All Students, Alumni, Parents, Staff and Other Members of the Lowell Whiteman School Community,

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, please join me in congratulating the LWS class of 2011, who graduated on Friday, June 3. We had a wonderful celebration with this bright and accomplished group of young adults and their families, and we are eager to track their progress as they move from the Whiteman Experience to the next phases of their lives.

This year's commencement exercises marked the end of a year of transition for LWS, a year which saw many exciting developments. A new Head of School and Director of Admissions were welcomed aboard. Students moved into the new boy's dorm, the completion of which marked the end of the first phase of our campus master plan and is a major step forward in updating the campus. Students designed, set up and moved into a new student lounge. A nurse and a consulting psychologist are now regularly on campus, and enhanced support for students with learning challenges will be in place this fall. These student-focused developments, and many others, are part of a concerted effort to continue to insure the health and safety of our students, while strengthening the special sense of community that has been a hallmark of the Whiteman Experience.

A number of other important, although perhaps less visible, programs were put in place during the year. Perhaps most critical, an alumni board, independent of the Board of Trustees, was created, and they had their inaugural meeting the weekend after graduation. LWS alumni are united in their passion for the school, and providing them with a voice and a way to stay involved in the school is a critical part of our future. We are sure that the graduates of 2011 will become a part of that voice. Additionally, an increased number of parent meetings were hosted throughout the school year. Opportunities for parents of both boarding and day students to get together and to work with the school will be increased in the coming year.

Another achievement worth noting is the continued generosity of our parents and other benefactors. This generosity, manifested primarily in giving to the annual fund, is critical to the functioning of all independent schools. This is particularly true for LWS today, as decreased enrollment that has followed the economic downturn has definitely put economic pressure on the school. However, we project the school to operate close to cash break even for the year, largely due to the continued dedication and sacrifices of our faculty and staff and the expected attainment of our annual giving goals. As the hard work that the staff is doing on the admissions front bears fruit in the coming years, enrollment should improve and the school's financial picture will follow suit. This improvement, together with the continued generosity of our entire community, will allow LWS to continue to make the investments required to ensure that we offer our students the extraordinary educational experience that has marked LWS since its founding in 1957.

In an independent school, the focus of the Board of Trustees is the strategic direction and financial viability of the institution. However, we recognize that transitions are often challenging and have been engaged with the administration and with other members of the community throughout the year. We appreciated the increased reports from the administration, as well as the feedback we received from so many of you throughout the year. Specifically, the Board's April meeting was highlighted by presentations from representatives of the student body, parents, administrators and faculty.

While we do not ignore the challenges that face us, these April sessions left us excited about the direction of the school. We remain as committed as ever to the mission and values of this special place and to continuing to advance the legacy that Lowell began over 50 years ago. The school's future depends upon the continued commitment of all members of the Whiteman Community to this common purpose. I ask that each of you join me and my fellow Trustees in that commitment.

Sincerely,

Nancy Ventrudo
Chairperson, Board of Trustees
Lowell Whiteman School