

School History

In April 1975, after a school levy failed for the second time in a year, the Seattle School District sent out termination notices to 1,700 teachers. Tired of the distressing conditions in the public schools at that time, a small band of teachers met to discuss creating their own school. After months of meetings that took place while they were still keeping up their teaching schedules, they invited the public on February 29, 1976, to take a look at their ideas for the campus, the school philosophy, and the program. The buildings were not yet leased, there were no classrooms, and no students were yet part of the school. Still, the founders' enthusiasm and their vision sparked something in the 287 guests that day. University Prep was launched!

That's when the real work began. On Sundays and evenings throughout the spring and summer of 1976, the seven founders met prospective students and parents at informative coffee hours. Students were tested, students and parents interviewed. One full-time teacher, four part-time fine arts teachers, plus two volunteer secretaries filled out the staff. On September 6, 1976, these dedicated educators opened University Preparatory Academy, offering grades seven through twelve in space leased from Temple Beth Am. These professionals created an inspiring, disciplined environment—one that would nurture students and allow teachers to do their best. They built a curriculum that would respond to parents' desire for academic excellence and to students' need for individual attention.

In the early years, the founders not only taught but also comprised the Board of Directors. The hours were demanding, but the rewards were abundant. The founders knew they were indebted to their families, friends, and numerous professionals from the community who gave their encouragement and expertise to this fledgling undertaking. Many parents who were too skeptical to enroll their children the first year joined in for the second year. The student body grew to ninety-five, and the faculty grew to nine fulltime and six part-time teachers. That year saw the strengthening of the arts program, including a full-scale musical production. Administrative duties were redistributed as a director of admission was appointed and as the development and business offices began to take shape. The first Annual Giving drive made more than \$40,000 for campus expansion and faculty salaries.

The third year of University Prep's existence, 1978–1979, marked a new solidity. The campus grew with the addition of new science and activity buildings and with the acquisition of 2.5 acres of adjacent land. Construction of the science building was a cooperative effort of parents, students, and faculty. This facility ensured that University Prep would have a complete college preparatory program. In addition, 1979 saw the implementation of a more adequate salary scale for the 21 faculty members, while an activity program was started for the 102 students. That year also brought both University Prep's first graduating class and provisional membership in the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges.

The Parent Organization continued to be a dynamic cooperative group that ran the first Auction, which raised \$10,000 (much of it for financial aid), and an Annual Giving drive, which raised \$36,000. The faculty prepared the self-study for evaluation for membership in the Pacific Northwest Association of Independent Schools (PNAIS).

Impressive growth marked the fourth year, 1979–1980. The 22 faculty members and 108 students participated in the school’s first PNAIS evaluation, which culminated in full PNAIS membership and full accreditation through the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges. Furthermore, the founding Board of Directors merged with the Advisory Board and became a community-based Board of Trustees. Other major changes included the addition of a library building donated by Seafirst Bank.

In the fifth year, 1980–1981, the students became the “Pumas.” Individual offices were created for development, admissions, and business functions. The board authorized a facilities study to ensure that the school could function on the newly acquired property to the south of Temple Beth Am. A group of students traveled to Mexico, inaugurating the international travel program. A formal process was created for what would become the school’s first long-range plan.

In 1981–1982, the student body reached 137. The Board negotiated with the temple for long-term use of space, and Morse/Stafford Partnership prepared architectural plans for expansion.

In the seventh year, the school opened with 156 students and a larger campus, which had added portable classroom buildings, a Main Office, and connecting decks. The school was elected to permanent membership in the College Boards. Founder Roger Bass served as president of PNAIS, and 12 faculty members flew to Anaheim for the NAIS Annual Convention. Alumni had their first off-campus reunion.

In 1983–1984, the school’s sports program came into its own. Students went to the WIAA State meet for the first time, in cross country, and participated in the first sports banquet. The school received a grant to start a learning skills center for bright students with dyslexia. Campus expansion included building a learning skills center, two classrooms, and locker rooms. The trustees created a critical path for construction and capital campaigning. The E.E. Ford Foundation supported financial aid for Upper School students with an endowment of \$25,000, and the student body increased to 173. The building program begun in the previous year continued throughout the ninth year. The school had its first Washington Scholar, and the students had their first prom. A faculty retirement program was established.

Year ten, 1985–1986, saw a celebration of the first decade’s triumphs, and the founders were honored at a gala tenth anniversary auction. Those still working in the school were granted a one-month sabbatical. One student was recognized as a finalist for Presidential Scholar in the Arts, while another became a double state champion in track and field. The eleventh year began with the board authorizing a marketing study, a facilities search, and a plan for a capital campaign. That year, 19 percent of the senior class were National Merit Finalists. The board approved a decision to begin a sixth grade in the fall of the coming year and to increase facilities to accommodate the anticipated growth of the student body.

The twelfth year, 1987–1988, began with University Prep once again engaging in an evaluation by PNAIS. Following the review, University Prep was recommended for continued membership without qualification. The year saw the beginning of the school’s first capital campaign to finance additional facilities to house its growing student body, which reached 195.

During the thirteenth year of the school, 1988–1989, there were two firsts: University Prep’s enrollment went above the 200 mark, and the Annual Campaign topped \$100,000. The capital campaign was officially announced in May, and by the next month, \$1.2 million had been raised, surpassing the goal.

The fourteenth year began with 232 students. The capital campaign goal was increased by \$300,000 because a gift received in the original campaign had been restricted to building a full-capacity library. More than \$200,000 was raised. This brought the total raised to more than \$1.4 million. Administrators worked with the City of Seattle and with neighbors on the master use permit and building permits. The development office was split into fundraising and marketing and communications, and a director of marketing was hired. An activity coordinator helped the students organize dances and activities.

In 1992, construction of Phase I of the permanent campus began. Students and faculty members trudged around the construction site while watching the dream come true. Fundraising continued to ensure that the planned project could be completed. The school had 264 students.

The new Commons Building and Library opened in time for the beginning of the 1991–1992 school year, the sixteenth year of the school. The gym was completed and in use by early October. All 292 students benefited from having a permanent home and being able to host functions on campus. Fundraising to finish the kitchen and the gym entrance continued, and development efforts shifted to faculty endowment, for which a \$50,000 matching grant from the E.E. Ford Foundation was received just after the close of the school year. In addition, increasing diversity became a primary goal, and the diversity committee developed a strategic plan.

During the 1992–1993 school year, a new life skills curriculum helped meet the needs of the 324 students. The school’s third long-range plan was created and adopted by the Board of Trustees. This plan incorporated the strategic plan for diversity. Funds to match the E.E. Ford Foundation grant for faculty endowment were raised through a theater party, individual donations, and a major gift from an alumni family. Funds were also raised to add acoustical tile to the gym, and work was begun to furnish the kitchen.

During the summer before the 1993–1994 school year, an “Upper School Dream Team” discussed ways to enhance and strengthen the Upper School. When the school year opened, the Upper School enrollment, by design, exceeded Middle School enrollment for the first time since the sixth grade was added. The head of school and an advisory committee adopted a strategy for implementing the long-range plan adopted the previous year. A new technology task force developed recommendations and objectives for bringing University Prep technologically up to date. An athletic task force also met to write guidelines for team cuts. Work was also begun on the school’s third self-study in preparation for evaluation by a PNAIS team in fall 1995.

During 1994–1995, the school hired a new information services manager and a new director of Upper School. Planning began on networking needs and on recording the school’s history.

University Prep celebrated its twentieth anniversary with a variety of events and with oral histories from the founders. The school year opened with 374 students and 2 new classrooms. The computer lab got new computers, and each classroom received a

computer. Work continued to upgrade computers and to network the campus. In the fall, University Prep underwent its third PNAIS evaluation and was recommended unconditionally for reaccreditation. Parent Council worked with a steering committee of trustees, administrators, and faculty to redefine the role of parents as partners at University Prep. To help the school attain its goals for multiculturalism, a Multicultural Student Alliance was formed and a diversity coordinator was hired. Although the year had many high points, the University Prep community was saddened by the first death of an alumnus, Brian Pilkington, and the first death of a founder, John Henry Makinen.

In 1996–1997, University Prep fully entered the world of technology as the Internet and email became available to all faculty and staff. Work continued to update hardware and to make the most effective use of these tools. Over the summer, students built a new senior lounge, and other summer projects included a dark room and a new office to house the Winter Opportunities, diversity, and activities coordinators. The Multicultural Student Alliance held the school's first "Bite of University Prep" and hosted a Student of Color Conference for PNAIS schools. In the spring, the sixty-four members of the Class of 1997 became the largest graduating class in the school's history.

In fall 1997, the school held its first community service day. Students, parents, friends, employees, and trustees came together to fill emergency relief boxes for the American Red Cross and in the process set a new record for the number of relief boxes filled in a day. After a national search, a new director of Upper School was hired to begin in 1998–1999. Negotiations for a land swap with Temple Beth Am continued, as did work on designs for new buildings.

The quiet phase of a capital campaign continued with great success throughout the 1998–1999 year and included the school's first \$1 million gift. Temple Beth Am signed the land exchange agreement, and progress was made toward obtaining the master use permit. Both Annual Giving and receipts from the auction reached record highs. For this twenty-third year of the school, enrollment was 400 students and included the first child of a University Prep graduate to attend the school. The school year ended with anticipation of the construction expected to begin during the summer.

In fall 1999 a number of administrative offices moved to temporary quarters in preparation for construction of the new administration and classroom buildings. The portables were removed to make room for new facilities, and construction continued throughout the year. The capital campaign continued to raise money for the final design stage, the addition of a fine arts facility. By the end of the school year, pledges to support the building projects amounted to nearly \$8 million, and bond financing had been obtained for part of the expansion project. The school began using school buses to transport students for school activities. The year ended as it began, with the administrative offices moving once again, this time to summer facilities while new buildings were completed. Everyone eagerly awaited the opening of the new facilities in the fall.

The official opening of the new classrooms and administrative spaces provided an exciting beginning to the 2000–2001 school year. Planning and fundraising for the fine arts facility culminated with a groundbreaking ceremony during closing exercises. Development of the school's next long-range plan included surveys and focus groups of each of the school's constituencies and resulted in board approval at year's end. The school community

was saddened by the retirement of founder Christine Petersen McGarry and news that Founder and Head of School Roger J. Bass would retire in June 2002. By that time, construction of the Hooper Fine Arts Center was completed and used for many of the school's end-of-the-year events. The broader school community, including its 430 students, ended the year with celebrations of the tenure of Roger J. Bass as head of school.

As 2002–2003 began, the school welcomed Erica L. Hamlin as its third head of school. Erica's fresh perspective on the school provided opportunities for every member of the community to consider new possibilities. Needs for a writer/editor, a learning resource coordinator and a director of intercultural affairs were identified, and the positions were funded in the budget for 2003–2004. Students and faculty enjoyed a new schedule with the school's first midwinter break.

The PNAIS visiting team spent three days on campus in fall 2003. Following the visit, the team made an unqualified recommendation that University Prep be reaccredited. The first WOW program, the result of restructuring the Winter Opportunities program to a one-week program, was held immediately before spring break. To serve the needs of the school better, the Instructional Council was restructured into two groups: the Academic Council and the Instructional Leadership Team. Plans were submitted to renovate one of University Prep's first buildings, the Commons. Erica Hamlin submitted, and the Board of Trustees adopted, a new mission statement: University Prep is committed to developing each student's potential to become an intellectually courageous, socially responsible citizen of the world.

Beginning with the 2004–2005 school year, the position of college and career advisor was changed to director of college and career services and the position of director of administrative services was eliminated. Work continued to update and clarify the responsibilities of a full-time faculty member.

The Board of Trustees, guided by the school's mission, approved a preliminary case statement for building an endowment to ensure the school's success in providing an outstanding educational program, led by exceptional faculty, for a diverse and dynamic student body. Planning began for renovation of the Commons to provide additional eating space and better lighting. The year ended with the school community bidding farewell to two longtime employees: Director of Middle School Ron Waldman and Director of College and Career Services Arlene Prince.

Endowment planning, preliminary work for developing a new long-range plan, and launching a revised Week Without Walls (WOW) program were among the major projects during the 2005–2006 school year. For the first time, participation in the Global Link program that offers students meaningful, hands-on cultural experiences was included in WOW. Plans for remodeling the Commons were finalized with the construction work to be completed over the summer of 2006. The project also included the addition of a computer lab classroom in the library. The school's response to the PNAIS Visiting Team's report was submitted, and the school subsequently received notice that it had once again met all standards for accreditation. The position of academic dean was added for the 2006–2007 school year. At the end of the year, Founder Christine Petersen McGarry announced her retirement from the school's Board of Trustees, and Founder Terry Nelson Froggatt retired from the faculty.

The new upper and lower Commons were inaugurated with great fanfare at the beginning of the 2006–2007 school year. In a notable development, University Prep embarked on its first Endowment Campaign with the goal of raising ten million dollars. On a sad note, Pat Pananen, who worked for University Prep for twenty-eight years, passed away in January. And the end of the academic year brought with it the retirement of two long-time faculty members, Sara Thiel and Bill Moore.

In the 2007-2008 school year, the Campaign for Endowment came close to reaching the \$5 million mark, and significant progress was made in the development of the Very Long Range Plan. The Mandarin Chinese program was launched, the music program was expanded, and the global education program continued to blossom. The close of the school year brought with it the retirement of veteran French teacher Karen Manarolla, who continued to substitute teach, and the departure of long-time math teacher Laurie Conley.

In 2008-2009, University Prep welcomed Marianne Picha as Director of the Middle School and the first ever brand-new Puma bus joined our transportation fleet. The Very Long Range Plan (VLRP) was approved by the Board of Trustees, which then began the work of formulating a Very Long Range Financial Plan to support it. The Campaign for Endowment topped the \$5 million mark, and even in a difficult year for the economy, the U Prep community raised well over \$400,000 at the annual Auction -- and set a record for Fund-A-Need donations, including \$137,000 for financial aid to help retain current families affected by the downturn and \$52,000 for another Puma bus. Week Without Walls was replaced with a series of Change of Pace days throughout the year and the Middle School began switching over to a formative evaluation system.

In 2009-2010, University Prep launched a Capital Campaign to begin raising funds for the remodel of the Pumadome and the science labs. With almost \$3 million raised by May 2010, the remodel of the Pumadome got the go ahead for summer 2010. The annual auction raised \$433,000 in funds for the school, including \$120,000 for operating funds, \$113,000 for this year's Fund-a-Need, faculty and staff professional development, and \$200,000 for the capital campaign. Other important developments included curriculum mapping across the board, the introduction of parent conferences for grades six and seven, and the initiation of two new Global Link programs to India and China.

The year 2010-2011 got off to a great start with a grand celebration for the beautifully renovated Pumadome, which became a real community hub within short order. By Spring 2011, the Capital Campaign had raised enough money (a total of \$4.4 million) for the Board of Trustees to approve the science facility remodel for Summer 2011. U Prep embarked on a technology overhaul and continued its planning for a future library remodel. The end of the school year saw the retirement of Founder and veteran teacher Pat Landy and long-time librarian Debbie Wheeler who both, after many years at U Prep, looked forward to a change of pace.

In 2011-2012, University Prep received a glowing evaluation from PNAIS and was reaccredited through February 2020! The school finalized plans to remodel the library in the summer of 2012 and transform it into a Learning Commons for the 21st Century. The Annual Fund exceeded its goal by raising \$545,000 and an additional \$80,000 for the Grandparents Library Fund. The annual auction raised a total of \$325,000 with \$125,000 in Fund-a-Need donations to go toward the library renovation. The major technological

overhaul continued to be implemented. Long-time Spanish and language training teacher Katie Pananen departed after 15 years, leaving U Prep for the first time since 1979 without a Pananen on staff.

In the fall of 2012-2013, University Prep inaugurated its beautiful new Library Commons, which quickly became a central social hub for the entire school community. Head of School Erica Hamlin announced that she would step down at the end of the 2013-2014 academic year after twelve years of leading the enhancement of the school's academic program and facilities. As the year-long search process for the new head began, the school continued to prepare for the new iPad and laptop programs to begin in the fall of 2013. The annual auction raised a total of \$256,000, with approximately \$90,000 slated for improvements to the common areas of the school. The end of the year saw the retirement of history teacher Scott Herrick after thirty-two years at University Prep. A record 530 students enrolled for the coming year, and alumni involvement also reached a new high.

In 2013-2014, University Prep established the Erica and Nason Hamlin Endowed Scholarship Fund to honor departing Head of School Erica Hamlin. By the end of the school year, the fund has raised \$850,000 in pledges and donations to benefit students in need of financial assistance, with first priority given to Rainier Scholars. The main focus of academic change was the new Middle and Upper School device programs, which got off to a successful start. Global Programs continued to grow, inaugurating a Middle School domestic exchange programs with Santa Fe Prep and a Global Link program with the Maru-a-Pula School in Gaborone, Botswana. Long-time English teacher Sue Patella and Shake Hands with Shakespeare director retired after thirty-seven years.

In 2014-2015, Matt Levinson took the reins as University Prep's fourth Head of School. The Board of Trustees took on the complex task of developing a new strategic plan for the school, forming many subcommittees and focus groups to obtain input from the school community. The summer saw the inauguration of the first Jump Start program, two weeks of classes in August designed to help entering ninth grade students be better prepared for high school. UPrep enrolled eight new Rainier Scholars, the largest number in one year to date. Global Link added Lithuania to its roster of programs and celebrated the tenth year of its relationship with Samoa. The new Computer Science program blossomed, with three new Middle and Upper School classes. The 2015 Auction raised \$332,000, including \$207,000 for the year's two Fund-A-Needs, a new Puma bus and Financial Aid.

In 2015-2016, University Prep celebrated its fortieth anniversary by inaugurating a new five-year strategic plan focused on promoting teacher excellence, evolving next generation learning, and planning a future expansion of school facilities. Partnerships with Global Online Academy and Liddane Tutoring and Learning Services were notable additions to our program. A Raise-the-Paddle Gala at the Seattle Art Museum attended by founders, alumni, two former heads of school and hundreds of community members brought in over \$600,000 for our 40th Anniversary funds, the Faculty Fund for Innovation and the Endowed Financial Aid Fund. A day of on-campus festivities open to all members of our community capped off the celebrations of this memorable year.

In 2016-2017, University Prep advanced its Next Generation Learning initiatives, expanding innovative programming, interdisciplinary work, and student-driven learning opportunities. LaunchPad made its debut in the spring, with every senior spending two

weeks of their own design off campus exploring a passion. The school continued to redefine the role of teacher in the 21st century, with professional development focused on social emotional learning, culturally responsive classroom practices, and more personalized teaching and learning. With the goal of supporting deeper learning while slowing the pace of school, a new daily schedule was adopted for Fall 2017. UPrep also continued planning for an expansion of its campus footprint, acquiring the North Seattle Friends Church lot across 25th Avenue. Preliminary designs were developed by long-time architectural firm Mithun with input from the full UPrep community, and a Master Use Permit was filed with the City of Seattle in June 2017 to explore building on the site. The Puma Fund (formerly known as the Annual Fund) beat all previous records, bringing in a grand total of \$709,000 with 82% parent participation. Our spring community celebration and fundraiser, #WeAreUPrep, raised \$506,000 for our financial aid fund. And finally, the year ended with the retirement of long-time teachers Alan Hargus and Judy Ghavamian.

In 2017-2018, University Prep launched its new schedule to great acclaim from both teachers and students and finalized plans for its new Intensive term schedule to debut in 2018-2019, adding 35 courses to the curriculum. UPrep also implemented the transfer to a new school information system that rolled out in August 2018, bringing all of our databases under a single umbrella. UPrep completed the planning process for the renovation of the Commons. The Puma Fund once again beat all previous records, bringing in a grand total of \$833,000 with 84% parent participation. Our spring community celebration and fundraiser, #WeAreUPrep, raised \$498,000 for our Endowed Financial Aid Fund. And finally, the year ended with the retirement of long-time teachers Mark Cullen and Jerry Gallaher, who between the two of them were pillars of the UPrep community for had a grand total of 71 years.

The 2018-2019 academic year was one of transition and transformation for the UPrep Community. At the end of November 2018, Head of School Matt Levinson announced he would leave UPrep at the end of the school year to become the head at The Pingry School. The Board of Trustees formed a search committee, hired search consultants, and led a multifaceted engagement process with all of our constituencies. In late March 2019, Ronnie Codrington-Cazeau was named by the Board as the fifth head of school at UPrep, starting in the fall of 2020. An interim Head of School, Lila Lohr, was named for the 2019-2020 school year. During the spring, we launched the transformation of UPrep's campus with the much anticipated two-phase construction project designed to connect our history to our Next Generation Learning (NGL) initiative. The first phase of the campus transformation included a renewal of the Commons, as well as the enhancement of two classrooms. During 2018-19, we successfully launched 35 intensive courses and witnessed the transformation that can happen when students engage in experiential learning out in the community and wrestle with real world problems. Thanks to the generous support of our UPrep community, we surpassed our Puma Fund goal by raising over \$790,000 with an unprecedented 89 percent of families donating! At our annual spring fundraiser, UPrep Together, we raised more than \$500,000 to support the Endowed Financial Aid Fund. The Class of 2019 will attend 44 different institutions in 16 states and two foreign countries.