Empowering a diverse community, united by Christ, to achieve excellence in education for the flourishing of all creation.

HIGH SCHOOL. Redefined. Redesigned.
Unity Christian Academy came from community.

In 2014, clergy, business leaders, area elementary school leaders, parents and community leaders gathered to discuss the future of Christian high school options in the South Chicagoland Region. Each group and all voices pointed in the same direction: there is a need for a redefined and redesigned Christian high school in this area. Unity Christian Academy is committed to equipping students for college and career so that they can engage an increasingly diverse and rapidly changing world from a Christ-centered perspective. Excellent, innovative Christian schools are indispensable participants in shaping culture and restoring a broken world.

With this demand and a vision for something unlike other high school experiences, a Board of Directors was formed which represented a commitment to economic, social, ethnic, geographic and ecumenical diversity, a leadership version of what we hope for our student body. An opening location was secured which provides a sound educational setting and excellent accessibility to most points of the South Chicagoland Region. We intend to open our doors to a freshman class in the Fall of 2018.

“The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. Intelligence plus character—that is the goal of true education.”

—MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.
Why This is a Pressing Need

The simple fact is that all UCA students will graduate during a time of incredible change, difficulty, and opportunity. These students have more career options than ever before. The social, political, and economic realities that these students face are more complex than ever. Would-be colleges and employers are desperate for learners and employees who can communicate effectively, seek innovative solutions to complex problems, and take bold initiative in leadership.

Traditional schools, built on a factory model that emphasizes homogeneity and compliance, will not cut it. There is a growing need for a redesigned and redefined high school experience. UCA seeks to meet this need and more, but for a radically different reason: **It is our firm belief that a Christ-centered school must have a Kingdom focus.**

By meeting this pressing need for intentional—not passive—education and innovation, we intend to shape our students. By extension, we are forming servant leaders who will serve their communities, God’s Kingdom, as an engaged body of learners and teachers. This is a key component in Unity’s vision—collaboration with area churches, businesses, and non-profits. We will become known for our willingness to connect and serve in tangible and meaningful ways, starting at home.

**Our deep desire is the formation of young adults who are capable of confidently using their gifts for the good of others.**
OUR VALUES

At UCA, We Believe In...

Empowerment

Our students graduate with increased confidence and clarity about their future. The UCA learning process encourages all students to recognize and develop their unique gifts and to boldly use them for the good of others.

Diversity

We seek to admit and serve students and families from all social, economic, ecumenical and cultural backgrounds. A diverse learning community deeply committed to one another stands as a powerful testament to the Gospel and prepares students to seek restoration in a world marred by conflict and injustice.

Unity

The school we create together enthusiastically affirms the Gospel of Jesus Christ and it is by this hope alone that we seek unity in diversity. The love of Christ compels us to work together for the restoration of this world.

Excellence

As a result of our obedience to Christ, we promote relational, rigorous, and relevant scholarship that integrates faith and learning. Students and teachers must invest all the knowledge, skills, and gifts they have been given so as to glorify God. The pursuit of excellence is worship.

Flourishing

The purpose of education is ultimately wrapped up in God's mandate for human beings to create, improve, and seek the fulfillment of His creation. We do this by learning, working, building culture, and having faith that God will finish His good work.
Our Approach
Makes Us Different

Our students study through inquiry. They still learn the facts, but they also learn essential skills for life and work beyond the classroom. We bypass the formulaic and the traditional, leading kids to ask original questions and produce projects that mean something to the world.

Authentic Work
All students are capable of beautiful, complex, well-crafted work. Learning at UCA goes beyond tests and quizzes to encompass fieldwork, community projects, and other meaningful pursuits.

Self-Knowledge
We believe that in order for students to have hope and a future, their education ought to help them achieve confidence and clarity about their gifts and potential vocation. It is essential for our school to help students identify strengths and passions, and personalize the learning process.

Servant Leadership
Students must be given the opportunity to hone their gifts and use them for the good of others. They will have meaningful opportunities to do this while in high school, connecting their faith and learning. We see service as a natural result of strong education.

Community Integration
We integrate learning and doing within our community. When learning is used to build up the people and institutions in our midst, real flourishing can happen.

Collaboration
Students and teachers are co-designers of curriculum. This means that student input is not just helpful for a robust curriculum; it is absolutely necessary. Together, we can emphasize high performing teams over individual superstars.
College Prep

All students will graduate from UCA with the necessary courses for four-year college admittance. UCA’s curriculum emphasizes depth, ownership, and craftsmanship, which are critical components of college success.

Dual Credit

UCA is proud to have an official partnership with South Suburban College in South Holland. Dual credit courses will be available for students interested in extending or accelerating their learning.

Cumulative Hours in Internships: UCA vs. Traditional Programs

Guided Self-Discovery + Real-World Experience

Students begin to get real-world internship experience during freshman year, accumulating experience and self-knowledge very early in their academic career.

9th Grade: UCA freshmen will begin their internship journey by participating in a guided exploration of their Loves, Experiences, Abilities, Personality traits, and Spiritual gifts (LEAPS). This year will also involve coursework and experiences to develop professional skills and habits.

10th Grade: As sophomores, students will continue to explore their LEAPS, create a resume and portfolio, and work on communication skills. Students will begin to develop relationships with potential professional mentors.

11th Grade: Juniors will begin the formal process of internships by applying for several potential partnerships and will ultimately be placed according to their LEAPS and the needs of UCA partners. Students will also learn about change agency, stewardship, and innovation.

12th Grade: UCA’s 12-week senior internship is the culmination of the students’ four-year journey. Students will report to their internship sites every day and do meaningful work in the context of dedicated mentor relationships.

College + Vocational Prep

Keeping students engaged from 9th grade until graduation—so they’re ready for what comes next.

Students are already asking deep questions about their identity and future. During the UCA internship process, students will engage this curiosity with caring teachers and mentors in their field of interest, developing abilities, habits, and interests in a low-risk environment. Our desire is that UCA graduates will move on to the next stage with confidence and clarity, having made meaningful connections between curriculum and vocation.

“The workplace is clearly the place to ‘try on’ or test out a career choice. It’s also by far the best venue in which to learn the ‘21st-century skills’ so critical to success in today’s economy.”

—HARVARD GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
Community Access
Christ-centered education should be accessible for every family.

Making Education Affordable
We believe an excellent, Christ-centered education should be affordable for all families. We also believe that economic diversity within a school increases its educational value. This is a holistic reflection of God’s Kingdom on Earth and equips students for a life of service in a diverse world.

We are committed to working with your family to ensure that your child’s education at UCA is valuable and affordable.

If you would like to receive more information about our unique, means-based tuition and how to apply, please contact us.

Open enrollment
UCA is a distinctly Christ-centered school open to families of all faith backgrounds. As a Christian school, we welcome all who are interested, regardless of church membership or faith affiliation.

South Holland: Community Resources

A South Suburban College
College level science labs & dual credit courses

B South Holland Public Library
Books, databases and research tools

C South Holland Community Center
Access to fitness classes and community events

D Veterans Memorial Park
Outdoor school event space for everything from a picnic to a kickball tournament, and everything in between.
Community-Based Curriculum

At UCA, Chicagoland is our community, and our community is the extended classroom.

Chicago is a world-class city, rich with educational resources. Graduates will leave UCA as experienced city explorers, having traveled with teachers and classmates to various destinations in the area for Learning Expeditions.

Not your ordinary field trips, our Learning Expeditions are a natural expression of our rigorous on-campus curriculum. It’s not about being a student tourist—it’s about learning from the place itself and gathering information in a fresh way.

South Chicagoland boasts a wealth of forest preserves, a perfect classroom extension for our environmental studies, art, and wellness curriculum.

How can our young historians learn about Chicago’s vibrant railroad history without visiting the Pullman neighborhood?

As part of our religious studies, we may visit the Al Sadiq Mosque in Bronzeville (above), one of America’s oldest Mosques, or the KAM synagogue, Chicago’s longest-standing Jewish congregation.

Our history and literature courses will be enhanced by many of Chicago’s museums or cultural institutions, such as the Chicago History Museum, above.

“The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it.” —PSALM 24:1
Classroom Design

“The [classroom] environment is like the second curriculum.”
—DESIGNING SCHOOLS FOR 21ST CENTURY LEARNERS

Classrooms at Unity Christian Academy are designed around values like flexibility, collaboration, and independence. Space design at UCA is meant to provide optimal learning environments and opportunities to practice leadership and self-regulation.

- Student devices connected to moveable smart TVs will provide a powerful combination for learning and group collaboration.
- Direct instruction, group collaboration, or individual work space.
- Flexible spaces for reteaching, exploration, and adaptive learning.

Circles

Every morning at UCA starts in Circles—not rows of desks.

Led by students and teachers together, Circles provide opportunities for students to be known and discipled, and to lead, navigate conflict, and engage in crucial conversations about faith and culture. Circles will stay together over the course of a student’s four years in high school.

Having met with students for four years, UCA teachers will know where your son or daughter has been and where they are going.

A Culture of Collaboration

At UCA, teachers and students work together every day.

This could mean teaming up to focus curriculum plans, execute a learning expedition, or plan community service. Students will regularly work in high-performing teams across the curriculum. Starting freshman year, UCA students will begin learning how to set goals, hold peers accountable, give feedback, and communicate effectively.

Leadership is central to life at UCA. Students will work alongside teachers when coordinating with school leaders, parents, and community stakeholders.
Emphasis on Spiritual Formation

“The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it.”
—1 THESSALONIANS 5:24

We are being formed every day—by the people we interact with, by the media we consume, by the neighborhoods in which we live, and the list goes on. Living Christianly means being formed by Christ so that we can act justly and love mercy. We pursue God and seek to be renewed by His Spirit.

At UCA, we seek to be formed by knowledge of the Bible and relationships with God and our neighbor. To this end, we:

- Emphasize formation over information as we study the Bible
- Rethink disciplinary procedures so they’re restorative rather than only punitive
- Build authentic community
- We worship together in all our activities
- Strive to develop a Biblical lens for living in this world
- The entire trajectory of spiritual formation is fully loving God and our neighbor.

“We are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ...”
—EPHESIANS 4:15

Arrows represent the work of the Holy Spirit. Adapted from a graphic by Scottie May.
If you are interested in a UCA education, we would love to hear from you.

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