

Dear Parents, Guardians, and Young Ladies,

We are excited to welcome you back to Academy of Our Lady. I hope you have enjoyed your summer break. We are looking forward to another great year of learning and academic excellence.

Every year the students choose a theme that will be used throughout the year. This year the Student Council has chosen the theme “*AOL in Bloom: Cultivating Young Women at the Well of Salesian Holiness.*” This theme is an excellent expression of our goal to help each young lady at the Academy grow and blossom into the young adult who develops all her gifts and talents. A young lady of virtue, capable of making the right choices.

As returning students, you have an important role in making all the new students feel welcome and part of our Salesian sisterhood. We are relying on you to help spread the Salesian loving-kindness and family spirit that should typify our school. I encourage you to already begin to think of ways you and your friends can reach out to new students. Each of us has an important role in building the family. When we work together with a spirit of sisterhood, we will continue to grow in *happiness and holiness.*

This summer the campus was alive with a summer enrichment program, a vibrant day camp, and various sports’ clinics. It was great to see so many of you on campus this summer volunteering as counselors and mentors.

This year we continue to expand the educational opportunities for the students. The STEM program is expanding this year to offer a level 3 engineering class. The math department has added the option of Algebra 3. We are offering two online classes as an option for upperclassmen in Math and Foreign Language. As more and more universities are adding online or blended classes, we want to make sure our students are prepared for these changes in traditional education. Although these changes affect the upperclassmen, it is critical that you start thinking ahead about the course of studies you would like to pursue. Our students have the opportunity to earn 36 college credits. As the innovative Catholic School of New Orleans, we are committed to ensuring quality programs and courses that will help our young ladies be successful in the university and beyond. I hope that our seniors have already begun to fill out their college applications. Ms. Rye will be scheduling parent meetings for the seniors soon.

This year we will continue to focus on service learning as a way to link theoretical knowledge with practical real world application. This hands-on, project based shift will take place over the next several years. It fosters those skills critical to success in our ever-changing world. It also allows us to live our faith in a way that benefits others as we discover how academics, service and faith are linked together. In the world where almost all information can be found on the internet, critical thinking skills and application of knowledge are the key to success that we want to give to our young ladies.

A special academic focus will also be writing and speaking across the curriculum. This focus will give students the confidence to be articulate advocates for themselves and others.

Many of you signed up to sell raffle tickets this year. I thank you for that. Fundraising is critical if we want to keep tuition from increasing as we continue to grow our program offerings. The profit from last year’s first raffle was used to purchase a new van for the use of the law and health internship classes. We also purchased a large ice machine for the concession stand that will also be used by the trainers to provide ice baths. Individual teachers were invited to make requests for items that would enrich their course offerings. Among the many items purchased were sound/lighting equipment for the theater, large monitor and other equipment for the TV production class, equipment for robotics and culinary, supplemental materials for several core classes. We are looking into purchasing pews for the chapel if there is sufficient funds.

At the end of last year, we began the Academy of Our Lady Endowment Fund. Once this endowment reaches a million dollars, it is dedicated to providing financial aid for our students. This long-term investment, once it matures, will become an ongoing source of aid for families who experience an unforeseen difficulty in paying tuition due to severe illness job loss. If you know of

anyone who would like to contribute to the endowment, please let us know.

We have been busy all summer preparing for the 2018-19 school year. I cannot wait to see you on **August 8th** for Book Day. **August 9th** will be classes for the pre-freshmen and a welcome for transfer students. **August 10th** freshmen through seniors will have classes. Pre-freshmen will not have school Friday, August 10th.

Students who will be driving to school will need to register their car and get a parking pass. This process will begin **on July 31st**. Seniors can come between 8 a.m. -12 p.m. Underclassmen can come after 12 p.m. Please make sure you have filled out the vehicle information sheet before coming to the office. Parking spots are available on a first come, first serve basis. Students must come in person to register their car. They must have a valid driver's license.

This e-mail contains a great deal of information. Please read everything carefully.

1. I have included the schedule for orientation day.
2. Mrs. Amy Danos, Dean of Students, has included a schedule for book day. If you have any questions, please contact her at ext. 214.
3. Mrs. Maryanne Paley, Registrar, will be e-mailing a copy of your courses, as well as, the course fees. Information regarding the Parent Portal after the July 4th break. If you have any questions, please contact Mrs. Paley at ext. 206.
4. Mrs. Melinda St. Germain, Technology Director, requests that you read the Technology Policy. Please bring the signed form on book day. She can be reached at ext. 222.
5. In order to facilitate a smooth flow of traffic and avoid a back-up on the expressway, please follow this carefully. I expect the first week to be hectic until everyone gets into a routine.

Arrival

- Students should arrive at school no later than 7:00 a.m. For the first few weeks, it would be good to be at school by **6:55** to avoid long drop off lines.
- **Pre-Freshmen and Freshmen** will be picked up and dropped off by the guidance department near the front of the school.
- **Sophomores, Juniors and Seniors** will be picked up and dropped off back by the gym.

Dismissal

- If you arrive before the busses have left, **please park in the parking lot**. If you pull-through or back into a spot, it makes getting out easier.
- If your schedule permits, I would suggest arriving at approximately 2:40 p.m. for pick up. Most of the busses have left and traffic has usually subsided by then.
- Students should be picked-up by 3 p.m. unless they are involved in an activity.

The school office is open Monday through Thursday from 8 am to 1 pm for the month of July. Normal office hours will resume July 30th. Should the person you need not be available, please leave a message. Your call will be returned.

Praying that you have a safe and wonderful end of the summer! God bless!



Sr. Michelle J. Geiger
Principal