Chris Gomez Schmidt
Executive Director, Galin Scholars
chris@galinscholars.org
608-501-2486 (office) or 608-215-3637 (cell)
Website: galinscholars.org

For immediate release:
Thursday, July 24, 2025

Galin Scholars increases opportunity for local students

15 students now participate in the comprehensive college prep program

Six rising 11th grade scholars were selected in May for our third scholar cohort.

Briana Carson, Middleton High School
Isis Hayes-Morales, Sauk Prairie High School
Wilma Hobenu, Madison East High School
Sennie Kidau, Middleton High School
Milani Lee, Madison Vel Phillips Memorial High School
Habib Ogunmola, Verona Area High School

Four rising 12th grade scholars prepared for the ACT this spring, continue to research college options this summer, and will apply to college this fall.

Kelvin Hobenu, Madison East High School
Alan Mecatl, Madison Vel Phillips Memorial High School
Sidney Moore, Verona Area High School
Saidu Njie, Madison East High School

Five scholars completed two years in our program and will be starting college in the fall. These five scholars together were offered over $1.1 million in merit awards at the colleges and universities where they applied.

Ornella Adanhou, Verona Area High School, attending UW-Madison
Angie Barrera Gonzalez, Madison La Follette High School, attending UW-Madison
Bill Chen, Madison Vel Phillips Memorial High School, attending Northwestern University
Jacsyn Disrud, Oregon High School, attending Lake Forest College
Adriana Villagomez, Madison La Follette High School, attending UW-Madison

The Galin Scholars program supports greater Madison area students with strong academic potential who are from a broad range of demographics underrepresented in college. Many will be the first in their families to go to college or the first to follow a traditional college path. Over two years, in 11th and 12th grade, the scholars participate in individualized ACT preparation, college advising, academic tutoring, and extracurricular opportunities in academics or arts.

"Galin Scholars broadens the college options of talented students by guiding them through a process to learn about colleges that may be excellent matches for their skills and interests. We are confident that this opportunity is leveling the playing field in college preparation in a direct and effective way." said **Chris Gomez Schmidt,** Executive Director of Galin Scholars and former Madison Metropolitan School District School Board member.

The Galin Scholars program is provided at no cost to the scholars and their families. The program is funded through a combination of individual and business donations, education grants and a strategic partnership with Galin Education. Donations over two years from Park Bank have supported transportation for scholars to reduce that barrier to participation.

This year, Galin Scholars also provided other college preparation opportunities for high school students. Funded in part by a grant from the Steve Stricker American Family Insurance Foundation, Galin Scholars partnered with Madison La Follette high school to provide a 7-week after school course for students to prepare for the March ACT exam. Also in March, Galin Scholars partnered with 12 Dane County public libraries and Galin Education to provide a free practice ACT to local tenth graders.

> *"College access and opportunity should be determined by academic talent and not limited by economic status. Galin Scholars increases access to college preparation and college options for students from a broad range of demographic groups underrepresented in college." said* **James Howard**, Galin Scholars Adviser and former MMSD School Board President.



Background: College preparation and admissions guidance can expand a student's options for college by helping students select high school classes, improve their grades, improve their test scores, research colleges, and participate in extracurricular activities that build skills and highlight interests. We know that families with resources are more likely to access these college prep opportunities.

Galin Scholars addresses this access point by offering comprehensive college preparation to students with strong academic potential and performance who are from a broad range of

demographic groups underrepresented in college. The program provides a personalized approach that focuses on each scholar's individual goals to help them maximize their opportunities for college. A partnership with Galin Education provides the expertise in college preparation. Connections to other student-focused organizations and school districts help to find students and provide opportunities for extracurricular participation and support.

> *"There are many talented high school students in the Madison area whose college search may be limited by not knowing about the opportunities available to them. Galin Scholars provides the guidance for these students to explore a wide range of college options." said* **Zach Galin**, Galin Scholars board member and President of Galin Education.

Galin Scholars is a 501(c)3 nonprofit established in 2022 with the mission to increase access to college preparation for Madison area high school students with strong academic potential who are from low-to-middle income backgrounds and from a broad range of demographic groups underrepresented in college. Many of our scholars will be the first in their families to attend college or the first to follow a traditional college path.

Find us on Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn.

Media Inquiries
Galin Scholars Executive Director Chris Gomez Schmidt
chris@galinscholars.org 608-501-2486 (office) or 608-215-3637 (cell)

Photo credit
Photo of the first two cohorts of Galin Scholars from the May 2025 end of year celebration
Photo by Galin Scholars board member Enjoyiana Nururdin