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Galin Scholars: Matching Talent with Opportunity

22 Madison area students from 8 local high schools

Announcing seven Class of 2028 scholars (rising 11th graders) selected in June 2026 for the two-year Galin Scholars comprehensive college prep program.

Melanie Cortes Alvarez, Madison West High School
Yuliia Dembitska, Middleton High School
Nysen Hill, Madison La Follette High School
Esther Hong, Oregon High School
Alric Koffison, Madison Vel Phillips Memorial High School
Fatima Jallow, Madison East High School
Jason Pan, Middleton High School

The **Galin Scholars program** supports greater Madison area students with strong academic potential from demographic groups underrepresented in college. Many will be the first in their families to go to college or the first to follow a traditional college path. During the two year program, scholars participate in individualized college advising, ACT preparation, academic tutoring, and college prep workshops including financial aid guidance.

Now in its fourth year, the Galin Scholars program also includes 15 students from earlier scholar cohorts bringing the total number of Galin Scholars to 22.

The six Class of 2027 scholars (rising 12th graders) averaged a 4.8 point gain on their ACT this spring and will apply to colleges across the country this fall.

The four Class of 2026 scholars graduated from high school in June. These scholars collectively were offered over $1.5 million in merit aid awards at the colleges and universities where they were accepted. All four will attend UW-Madison this fall.

The five Class of 2025 scholars just completed their first year of college at Lake Forest College, Northwestern University, and UW-Madison.

> *"College access and opportunity should be determined by academic talent and not limited by economic status. Galin Scholars addresses this by increasing access to college preparation for students underrepresented in college."* **James Howard**, Galin Scholars Adviser and former MMSD School Board President.

If you'd like to learn more about our program and its impact, please contact Executive Director Chris Gomez Schmidt or find out more at galinscholars.org or on LinkedIn, Facebook, and Instagram.

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, work experiences and internships that build skills and explore 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 academically talented students 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 maximize their opportunities for college. A partnership with Galin Education provides the expertise in college preparation. Connections to other community-based organizations and school districts help to find students and provide opportunities for extracurricular participation and support.

The Galin Scholars program is provided at no cost to the scholars and their families and is funded through a combination of individual and business donations, foundation grants, and a strategic partnership with 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.

> *"There are many talented students in the greater Madison area who could benefit from this in-depth guidance to maximize their college options. As we grow to include more scholars each year, we continue to level the playing field in college prep.*
> **Chris Gomez Schmidt,** Executive Director of Galin Scholars.

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Photo from May 2026 Galin Scholars celebration includes Class of 2026 and Class of 2027 scholars

