March 16, 2016

Dear Members of the Poly Community:

On behalf of Poly Prep’s Board of Trustees, we are delighted to announce the appointment of Audrius Barzdukas as the tenth Head of our School in its 162-year history.

Audrius is currently Associate Head of School and Head of Upper School at Harvard-Westlake School, the leading independent co-ed school in Los Angeles. As Associate Head, he is actively involved with development, admissions and college counseling, and serves on the Board’s finance, education, advancement, and building and grounds committees. As Head of Upper School, Audrius is responsible for the academic and extracurricular program for more than 860 students in grades 10-12, and oversees more than 190 deans, staff and faculty, including 134 teachers. Prior to these roles, for eight years he was the school’s Head of Athletics where he was responsible for more than 1,000 students participating in 28 programs and 165 coaches and support staff on two campuses.

We selected Audrius following an extensive search with the assistance of our search firm consultant that attracted strong candidates from a range of experiences and geographies, as well as gender and ethnic backgrounds. Over many months, we narrowed our focus from 40 candidates to eight semi-finalists and then two finalists. We are very pleased that Audrius has agreed to lead our School. His credentials and background, energy and enthusiasm impressed us. He is a thoughtful and dedicated leader. At Harvard-Westlake, among other things, he co-chaired the Accreditation committee, restructured its Honor Board adjudication process, aligned the athletic program with the school’s mission, was responsible for the largest budget, and managed complex capital construction projects. Committed to open and transparent communication, collaboration and classroom innovation, Audrius has a strong record of empowering teachers and students to develop resilience and be willing to challenge themselves.

Audrius grew up in Northern Virginia, attended Falls Church High School, where he was a National Merit semifinalist, and earned his Bachelor’s degree in Philosophy and Master’s degree in Education from the University of Virginia. Before heading to Harvard-Westlake in 2003, he worked for 12 years at the U.S. Olympic Training Center and for the U.S. Olympic Committee.

Now he is eager to return to the East Coast to advance Poly’s bright future. He and his wife, Rose, first met in New York City. Rose was born in Queens and grew up on Long Island. She is a substitute teacher at the Center for Early Education in L.A. They have three children, Mila (18), Rasa (17), and Rimas (14), who is excited to become a Poly student in Grade 9. We look forward to welcoming the family into our community.

Audrius is passionate about learning, has great respect for teachers, and views one of the important roles of the Head to be that of supporting faculty with the resources necessary for them to be successful teachers and mentors. He has supported faculty-led offerings in character development, poetry, and much more. Likewise, he shares with faculty and staff our goal of inspiring and empowering students to pursue academic excellence while developing well-rounded citizens who seek to make the world better, have fun and grow into the best versions of themselves in a diverse community. He is particularly excited to serve an institution with a lower school where children first fall in love with learning.

We would like to thank the search committee and Poly community for its participation and candor in this process. Audrius will begin at Poly on July 1. There will be many opportunities for our community to get to know him, and vice versa, and we are organizing spring visits for him to meet with families, faculty, and administrators. We have a Q&A with Audrius enclosed and his bio is on our website if you’d like to learn more about him today. In the meantime, we want to thank David Harman for his support through this
school year as the Board has completed this process. In the months ahead, we look forward to joining you in celebrating David and all that he has accomplished for Poly Prep over the past 16 years.

We will communicate with you more regarding the transition process and look forward to a smooth and thoughtful transition as we move into the next chapter of our exciting and bright future as a school and community.

Sincerely yours,

Co-Chairs, Board of Trustees