



CULTIVATION  
OF TALENT

# ASKING FOR BETTER QUESTIONS IN THE CLASSROOM

As the need for inquiry-based instruction increases for schools across the nation, so does the need for trained faculty. We pride ourselves on academic innovation, and that begins with our teachers.

It's integral for schools to have teachers who can balance the demands of a content-rich curriculum with current, more student-centered teaching methods, especially in Advanced Placement (AP) courses. At Norfolk Collegiate, we offer more than a dozen AP courses to our upper school students. With these rigorous courses also comes AP exams at the end of the year through which students can gain college credit for their work.

Director of Curriculum and Instruction Judy Davis, Social Studies Department Chair Paige Solomon and Upper School Science Teacher Dr. Frank Thomson understand this challenge and are committed to the mission and academic initiatives of the school. That understanding, coupled with a drive to engage with other educators motivated them to speak at this year's AP Annual Conference, the premier College Board conference for AP administrators, coordinators and teachers.

The title of their presentation was, "Incorporating Inquiry-Based Pedagogy in AP," and their session modeled techniques they used in their own classes.

The concern is that as schools embrace project-based learning, AP teachers sometimes struggle to balance the demands of content-rich AP courses with the desire to implement current best practices. Davis, Solomon and Thomson spent the session explaining how Collegiate has met this challenge. They demonstrated strategies from several of Collegiate's AP classes and taught their audience how to design units that incorporate several cutting-edge teaching methods that facilitate a more hands-on approach.

"It was a really worthwhile opportunity," Thomson said. "I was able to go to a number of different sessions that dealt with AP science classes that had specific examples of project-based learning and tools for student success. It was very useful. I implemented the element of real-world experience to the course this year, and the conference held several workshops on that particular element of the AP program. It was really valuable to bounce ideas off of other people in the field and even the directors of the AP program. It affords not only my students but all AP students a leg up when their teachers have a firm grasp on these innovative techniques."



Judy Davis



Paige Solomon



Dr. Frank Thomson

# FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

## TEACHER CLAIRE FORNSEL



Teacher Claire Fornsel works with Parker Howlett '23 during a robotics LEGO team practice.

Plenty has changed since the 2005-06 school year, but for Middle School Science Teacher Claire Fornsel, much is the same as the year she began at Norfolk Collegiate. “Sure we have the Meredith Center and turf fields, but the students are still friendly and eager to learn,” she said. “They’re excited to come to school.”

Fornsel’s teaching career spans 14 years, and she says her spark for teaching continues to be fueled by her students’ passions. “I always give students surveys at the beginning of the year to gauge their interests,” Fornsel said. “I like to bring examples of what they might like into the classroom to pique their curiosity.”

Collegiate’s mission is to foster independence in every student, an ideal Fornsel incorporates into her teaching every day. “I love project-based learning because it helps bring out students’ creativity,” she said.

She also knows students’ middle-school years are a pivotal time in their education and growth as individuals. “It’s a time of change. It’s a journey. Somewhere along the way, something clicks, and they become little adults. Every parent and teacher wants to raise a responsible adult. We want them to

take on their own citizenship. We want to help them be compassionate.”

When asked why she’s chosen to stay at Collegiate as long as she has, she says it has everything to do with the people. “The faculty is out of this world,” she said. “There’s so much spirit here; it’s great to see the kids involved in so many extracurriculars. It’s been especially great to see the athletic program blossom.”

Fornsel doesn’t just talk about her love for the school; she’s Collegiate’s biggest cheerleader. One of the school’s fundraising goals is to encourage 100 percent faculty and staff giving. Every year, without fail, Claire walks classroom to classroom to talk to faculty about giving back to the school.

“I became an educator because I wanted to make better scientists,” she said. “To me, it’s not just a job; it’s about being part of a community. I believe in the school and its promise to students and parents. Not giving back would be falling short of my beliefs. Some days I think about playing the lottery and what would I do with my winnings? I would give it to the school. Unfortunately for Collegiate, I don’t play the lottery, but I’ll continue supporting the school every way I know how!”

# HACKNEY AWARD RECIPIENTS

This annual award is presented to distinguished faculty members who exemplify excellence in the classroom and influence other teachers to do the same. This year, the Jo Melchor Hackney and John H. Hackney Jr. Memorial Endowment Fund Award, which includes a stipend for professional development, was presented to Jill Archer, Nelee Connors and Dr. Frank Thomson for their outstanding work in the classroom.

Upper School Science Teacher Dr. Frank Thomson plans to attend the “Experiential Learning Teacher Conference” at the Island School in July 2019. This program is geared toward teachers interested in best practices in experiential education. Thomson said he “plans to bring these ideas back to Norfolk Collegiate and implement them in the classroom.” He can’t wait to take students’ experiential learning to the next level.

Middle and Upper School English Teacher Jill Archer plans to attend two conferences. The first, “Strategies! Strengthen Your Writing Instruction to Significantly Increase Students’ Writing Skills,” and the second, “What’s New in Young Adult Literature and How to Use



Jill Archer



Nelee Connors



Dr. Frank Thomson

“It In Your Program” (both oriented students in Grades six through 12).

Lower School Learning Resource Coordinator Nelee Connors is part of a taskforce researching different phonics programs to use with lower school students. Connors said, “Research has shown that students learn best when instruction uses multi-sensory strategies and materials, so we’re looking into phonics-based programs that incorporate these techniques.” Once a program is selected, Connors will attend workshops and training sessions to help implement the new program into lower school classrooms.

## 2018 Mathas Professional Development Grant Recipients

The Mathas Professional Development Grants were created in 2014 when Ted and Keryn Mathas expanded their annual donation to promote faculty growth in the areas outlined in the school’s Characteristics of Professional Excellence. The Mathas Awards and Grants recognize exceptional performance and provide funding for professional activities that increase our faculty’s expertise in current best practices in their disciplines, project-based learning, technology integration and other identified areas of focus for the school. The grants also support faculty summer projects that will transform a program or area of curriculum in a significant manner to be replicated across the wider school community.

**Math Department Chair Rebecca Zborowski** investigated “Vertical Alignment in Math Curricula” in response to our recent adoption of the Singapore Math-based *Math in Focus* program in our lower school. Recognizing that our math program in Grades 6-12 will have to incorporate new teaching approaches and skills

our students will bring with them from the lower school, she traveled to the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics Conference to research current best practices for middle and upper school math instruction related to the Singapore approach.

**Social Students Department Chair Paige Solomon** and **Upper School Science Teacher Dr. Frank Thomson** used their grant funding to travel to the AP Annual Conference to present “Incorporating Inquiry-Based Pedagogy in AP” with Director of Curriculum and Instruction Judy Davis and to develop related professional development activities for other AP teachers.

Mathas Awards for Professional Excellence during the 2017-18 academic year were presented to the following faculty and staff:

|                   |                   |              |
|-------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| Laura Booker      | Paula Cook        | Cathy Wright |
| Evan Benedict '04 | Anne Curtis       |              |
| Ron Chupik        | Emily Lindale '02 |              |

# TEACHERS ON THE CUTTING EDGE OF LEARNING

From the conception of our school by two educators, to the first day it opened as Carolton Oaks, Norfolk Collegiate has put its students first. Though the idea has taken on several iterations over the school's 70 years, teachers have remained focused on teaching traditional subjects in innovative ways. Continuing the legacy of pushing students to succeed, Collegiate's teachers engage in ongoing learning and inventing to keep themselves on the cutting edge of their profession.

Collegiate's Academic Innovation Task Force is committed to student-focused teaching and strives to help faculty incorporate inquiry- and project-based learning across the curriculum with a goal of training 100 percent of faculty in the Buck Institute "Gold Standard PBL" by the end of 2019.

In July of 2017, teachers flocked to the upper school campus for the first Mathas Summer Project-Based Learning Institute featuring the Buck Institute for Education. In June of 2018, a cohort of teachers participated.

These three-day workshops led faculty through the process of how to create project-based curricula for students and how to implement these projects in the classroom.

Teachers designed challenging problems and questions

tied to skills students need to master in various units.

Every teacher's goal is to help students take ownership of their learning, keep them engaged and, in the end, allow them to produce an authentic product. Teachers have started implementing these skills in the classroom, encouraging students to exercise voice and choice in how they shape their projects as they critique, revise and reflect on their learning.

"This was my second year in PBL training, and it really solidified the concept of project-based learning for me," said middle school science teacher Michael Johnson. "It's such a cool idea. I was excited to bring it back to my classroom."

For the 2018-19 school year, he is looking to integrating PBL into student assignments in conjunction with short-term projects.

"I've asked my students to apply their knowledge to a long-term concept: colonizing Mars," he continued. "For example, once we finish Chapter Seven which has four lessons in it, they will do a wrap-up assignment where they will take everything they learned in these units and think about how that new knowledge is going to help us live on Mars. Ultimately, it will allow them to synthesize the information they've just learned and apply it toward a joint goal!"

**OUR VISION:** Every teacher's goal is to help students take ownership of their learning, keep them engaged and, in the end, allow them to produce an authentic product.

# BUCK INSTITUTE TRAINED FACULTY & ADMINISTRATORS

The following individuals attended PBL 101 training with the Buck Institute between July 1, 2017, and June 30, 2018.



Jill Archer  
Middle & Upper  
School English



Shannon Bartel  
Foreign & Classical  
Language  
Department Chair



Evan Benedict '04  
Upper School  
English



Garrett Booker  
Middle School  
History



Kat Calzini  
Lower School  
Teacher



Dana Carr  
Middle School  
History



Chrysy Cooper  
Middle School  
English



Anne Curtis  
Middle School  
Math



Judy Davis  
Director of  
Curriculum &  
Instruction



Claire Fornsel  
Middle School  
Science



Aaron Gregory  
Upper School  
History



Sara Hahne  
Lower School  
Spanish



Brendan Hoyle  
Theater Director  
& Coordinator of  
Maker Education



Ashley James '94  
Lower School  
Teacher



Michael Johnson  
Middle School  
Science



Ashley King  
Technology  
Integration  
Specialist



Lolita Kraft  
Lower School  
Teacher



Lauren Langley  
Lower School  
Teacher



Ashleigh  
Lassiter  
Upper School  
English



Emily Lindale '02  
Lower School  
Teacher



Susannah Lipchak  
Middle & Upper  
School French



Charlene Loope  
Director  
Instructional  
Technology &  
Library Services



Robyn Maus  
Lower School  
Teacher



Mark McElhane  
Communication  
Arts Teacher



Michelle  
McNaughton  
Lower School  
Teacher



Suzanne  
Montgomery  
Upper School Math



Laura Morse  
Middle & Upper  
School English



Nicole Mottinger  
Lower School  
Teacher



Brenda Pigeon  
Lower School  
Teacher



Amy Robb  
English  
Department Chair



Melissa Silverman  
Lower School  
Science



Paige Solomon  
History  
Department Chair



Dr. Catherine  
Thomson '94  
Lower School  
Teacher



Richard White  
Middle & Upper  
School Latin



Susan White  
Middle & Upper  
School Spanish



# Richard White

Teacher, Coach, Friend and Colleague

For 16 years, Latin Teacher Richard White filled the halls with “How dos” and an infectious love of learning. It was July 2018 when we learned he had passed away, and we knew we’d lost a legend.

Mr. White was born in East Grand Rapids, Michigan, in 1960 and grew up in storied Fort

Dodge, Iowa. Richard married his grad school sweetheart Mary Anna in 1992 and soon after had their son Francis “Frankie” White ’17.

Headmaster Scott Kennedy worked with Mr. White during the 16 years he was at Collegiate and admired him greatly.

“Richard was an academican and a student-centered colleague, and it was a wonderful combination,” said Kennedy. “He was passionate about Latin and ancient history. His strong academic background allowed him to make connections across subjects, which brought his class to life for his students.”

Mr. White also was a constant source of energy and humor. When he wasn't teaching, he was coaching the cross-country runners, leading quiz bowl and tearing it up with his legendary defense in every faculty-student basketball game.

“He was always willing to engage with the life of the school and his students in ways that enriched our community every day,” Kennedy added. “He was the first to volunteer for field trips, club activities and basketball games. He elevated our academic discourse and made sure everyone had fun doing it.”

Mr. White was full of wonderful anecdotes, limitless knowledge and greetings. His passion for Latin was legendary, and his impact on our community was profound.

“I have many happy memories from Latin class with him at Norfolk Collegiate. He was a brilliant and kind man who always had a twinkle in his eye.”

CIANA (BAKER) BESTER '03

“Mr. White was such a bright soul and an integral part of my experience at Norfolk Collegiate. He will be greatly missed but never forgotten.”

TORI PHILLIPS '09

“Mr. White was one of my favorite teachers. He truly cared about his students, and each one knew it. I'm grateful that I had the privilege of learning from him, both inside and outside the classroom.”

DAVID GOLDBERG '07

“Mr. White was such a special man filled with a wealth of knowledge. He never missed an opportunity to teach his students something but maintained an incredible sense of humility. I remember the day we learned the suffix “arium,” which either refers to a room or a place where something took place. So I followed up and asked if we were technically in the Latinarium (his classroom). He started cracking up and said, “Yes, I suppose we are!” After that, I made a “Latinarium” sign for his classroom, and we continued to joke about it for the rest of the year. Instead of dismissing my having fun with words, he chose to indulge me by joking around. I obviously still remember the term because of it.”

JULIA LAIBSTAIN '13

“I started teaching at [Collegiate] with Richard. Even then, I knew Richard was one-of-a-kind. I never knew a smarter or more interesting person. He regaled me with stories of his colorful childhood and family. When I began teaching sixth-grade Latin, Richard was always ready with advice as well as ready and willing to lead class for a day. I am eternally grateful that our paths crossed, and I will miss him greatly.”

DAVID SMITH, FORMER SIXTH-GRADE ENGLISH AND LATIN TEACHER

“We are relative newcomers to the school and one of the first teachers to welcome us was Mr. White, and Katie didn't even have him as a teacher. His enthusiasm for the school and the students was significant. We will miss seeing Mr. White every morning as he walked to school. We will miss his enthusiasm for his school and his students and we will miss his generous smile.”

CORIE SULLIVAN, PARENT

“Mr. White had a positive impact not only on our three children and family but all who had the privilege of knowing him.”

VICKIE BEALE, PAST PARENT