

A Letter from the Headmaster

June 2017

Dear Parents,

As you know from my earlier letters and from our celebrations on campus, this has been a year of transition on the faculty with four senior teachers departing, three after 48, 27, and 27 years of service, as well as the usual intermediate and junior teachers "moving on." We have also experienced an extraordinary admissions year, and therefore anticipate a larger enrollment.

As a result, we have appointed more new faculty than usual in order to further improve our academic and fine arts programs, and to meet the teaching needs of a growing school. I write to you therefore to give a brief description of who will be joining us next year and to explain how we have used this occasion of change and transition to expand and reorganize our departments.

First, as you know, **Marc Batson** will become the Assistant Headmaster, **Jennifer Sherman** the Dean of Faculty, and **Steve Lachut** the Dean of Students. **Robert Harry** is joining this team as our new full-time Director of College Counseling. Mr. Harry has a BA in English Literature from the University of Virginia and a MEd from Cambridge University in England. He served as the American University Placement Director at the Oundle School in England for six years, and most recently as the Associate Director of College Counseling at the Battle Ground Academy in Franklin, Tennessee, just outside of Nashville. He is a real boarding school man with tremendous experience in college placement, so we are excited to see how he will further develop and improve our program. He will be living in Claggett.

Two further administrative appointments are **Greg Wilson**, who has been serving as the Assistant Director of Development since April, and came to us from Georgetown University, where he was the Manager of Student Resources at the Career Education Center. He has a BS in Biology and a MS in Organizational Development from Shippensburg University, and he worked for Peace Corps for a year. He had a baptism by fire with the Farewell Dinner in the Field House, and has already proven himself to be a much needed and effective addition to our development team. We also welcome **Jim James** back to Saint James to serve as an Associate Director of Admissions, which we now call "Enrollment Management." Jim taught at Saint James from 2010 to 2015, and was most recently the Head of Trinity School in Frederick. He was, however, the Director of Admission at Cape Cod Academy and the Breck School in Minneapolis before he came to us, so this is a return to his original bailiwick and an unexpected bonus for Saint James.

The Department which needed the most "rebuilding" was English, which is the first time that this has been true of the English Department since I have been here. It was also in need of expansion. We have therefore made four full-time appointments: Katherine Ellis, Joel Ellis, Alexander Gould, and Catherine Miller. **Katherine Ellis**, who will be the Chair of the Department, has a BA in English from the University of the South, Sewanee and a MA from Middlebury College; she is also a graduate of NCS, so a native Washingtonian, like me. She has been teaching at the Darlington School in Rome, Georgia for the last seven years, and she taught at Sandy Spring Friends before that. She is also a very experienced Cross Country Coach, so she will bring that gift as well. Her husband, **Joel Ellis**, also has a BA in English from the University of the South, Sewanee, and is completing his MA at Middlebury. After two years as a technical writer, he has been teaching English and SAT/ACT prep at Darlington. They will be living in Ferguson House.

Alexander Gould comes to us from Davidson College, where he earned his BA in English. While at Davidson, he served as a Resident Advisor for three years, and he has also served as a camp counselor at Camp Willow Springs in North Carolina and most recently as an intern at the St. Paul's Advanced Studies Program. Because of his extensive residential life experience and his active interest in sports and music, we have made him the Dorm Head in Onderdonk, as Whitney Holmes is moving to Holloway. **Catherine Miller** went to Blair Academy and graduated from Lafayette College with a BA in English and History. She comes to us from the Culver Academies, where she has been serving as an English Intern. She will live in Coors and help with soccer and lacrosse.

The Math Department will be gaining two senior appointments: **Michael Milbury**, who will be the Department Chair, and Maria Stewart. Mr. Milbury has a BS in Mathematics and a MEd from the University of New Hampshire; he has been teaching math for twenty years, most recently at the Rabun-Gap-Nacoochee School in Georgia, where he is presently the Math Chair. He and his wife and two children will be living in one of the new duplexes, and he will be coaching in the wrestling program. **Maria Stewart** comes to us from St. John's Catholic Prep in Frederick, where she is presently serving as the Math Chair and has been teaching for the last 16 years. She is also an Adjunct Professor in the Math Department at Frederick Community College. She has a BA in Mathematics and a MEd from the University of Maryland, Baltimore County; she will be commuting from her home in Sharpsburg.

Science will also be gaining a new department chair: **Dr. Ian Brauner**, who is coming to us from the Charlotte Latin School, where he has been teaching Biology for the last 8 years. He is also a graduate of Sewanee, where he received his BA in Psychology, but then after working as a researcher in Pharmacology, he went on to receive his PhD in Cell Biology and Anatomy from the Louisiana State University, and began his teaching career at the Culver Academies. He, his wife, and their two daughters will be living in Nelson House. Complimenting Dr. Brauner's teaching experience in Biology, **Dr. Jason Weibel** will join the department to teach Physics, AP Physics, Linear Algebra, and AP Chemistry. A Saint James parent who knows us well, he has a BS in Chemistry and Engineering from North Carolina State University, a MS in Chemistry from Wake Forest University, and a PhD in Chemistry from Carnegie Mellon University. He has been teaching Chemistry at Shenandoah University, so making the move to Saint James will definitely shorten his commute to Greencastle!

The Language Department gains a new Spanish teacher: **Taylor Simpson**, who just received her BA in International Studies and Spanish from Virginia Tech. During her time at Tech, she gained a great deal of experience studying abroad, in Costa Rica, and then twice in Spain; she also served in the writing center, helping students in both Spanish and English. She will be living in Holloway. Finally, the Fine Arts Department gains a new Drama Director: **Charlotte La Nasa**, who received her BA in History from Sewanee, with a minor in Shakespeare and Theater Studies. She has extensive experience with prestigious theater internships in New York, focusing on directing and play writing. She will teach one to two sections of English and live in the Laidlaw Apartment.

As you can see from the above, we have been busy hiring, and we are very excited about what promises to be a dynamic year of growth and improvement for the school. This is especially fitting, in my view, as we will celebrate next year the 175th Anniversary of our first opening in 1842, and I cannot think of a better way of doing this than by focusing on our faculty and on the quality of our teaching. To quote Dr. Muhlenberg's prophetic line in his letter to Bishop Whittingham, sending Dr. Kerfoot and his first group of colleagues to found the College of Saint James: "They would be the soul of the thing and gradually they would generate the body around them."

This is, of course, still true, as we renew ourselves every year, from the soul of the faculty to the body of the School: new and returning together.

My very best wishes for the summer and for what promises to be a very exciting beginning of school in the fall.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Father Dunnan', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Father Dunnan