

James Newman, Ph.D., Head of School

Dear Academy Alumni,

I recently returned from attending the National Association of Independent School (NAIS) annual conference in San Francisco and the first meeting of the Harrisburg Academy Bay Area Alumni Club (HABAAC!) – both of which were wonderful!

The annual NAIS conference is a large event. Normally, more than 3,000 heads of independent schools, school administrators, and trustees from the 1,500 NAIS member schools convene during the three-day event. I'm never disappointed with the quality of the conference. It's inspiring to learn from formal presentations and informal conversations with other school leaders what independent schools have achieved.

The inaugural meeting of the HABAAC was delightful! Tom Schmidt, current president of our Board of Trustees, (who also attended the conference) and I laughed with Caitlin Patterson '86, Mike Berman '85, Neil Abrams '96, Zach Scheiner '93, and Jim King '71 and his wife, Elizabeth, as we listened to stories about their Academy experiences. I was most pleased that we could provide an opportunity for Academy alumni in the Bay area to become reacquainted or to meet for the first time.

George Gonzales, Arthur Moore, and I will travel this evening to meet with Academy alumni in the Philadelphia area and I'm sure we'll have a very good time at this event as well. All of our recent alumni gatherings have been great! In February, we gathered in the conference room of Joe Gillette's '82 telecommunications company overlooking Bryant Park in Manhattan with Courtney Kaplan '99, Rachel Gutwein '00, Alex St. John '04, Tighe Lanning '01, John Olsson '83, Max Frankston '80, and his wife Alice Hafter. Only days later, we met with nearly 30 Academy alums at the Firehouse Grill on 2nd Street in downtown Harrisburg.

What I heard at each of the Academy alumni gatherings echoed conversations at the NAIS conference. Independent school graduates attribute high value to their educational experiences. They believe their schools provided them with academic preparation, personal skills, and ethical moorings that have enabled them to succeed long after graduation.

The mission of Harrisburg Academy today differs little from its stated version in the 1980s and earlier; what continues to change is how we achieve it. As we mentioned in the preface to our *Challenge 2013* strategic plan, "our global society is changing at an unprecedented speed." Although some futurists define their predictions and even quantify them with confidence, our global society's rate of change and degree of complexity is difficult to appreciate and comprehend.

How must we equip today's kindergarten students for the world into which they'll graduate in 2022, and beyond? Thomas Friedman's no. 1 best-seller, "Hot, Flat, and Crowded," describes the globalized world that will affect our students' future — and preparing graduates to thrive in it is no small burden for any school, including the Academy.

At the same time we celebrate our *Triple Anniversary Year* and our "school of the past," we must dedicate ourselves to guaranteeing that Harrisburg Academy becomes a "school of the future." Schools throughout the world are transforming, trying to determine how best to prepare their students. It is a remarkably exciting time to be part of this period of educational change and the debate among schools is constant.

Challenging our students in an environment that nurtures and inspires.

Becoming certified to offer the highly-acclaimed International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Program in our Upper School was one step we have taken to preparing our students for the future. The IB Diploma Program has the capacity to help students think more critically and across traditional academic divisions as they wrestle with solutions to current problems. Additional steps will follow as we increasingly integrate our school-wide curriculum, differentiate our instruction within student-centered classrooms, and employ active learning techniques that make more use of project-based learning, to name a few examples.

Our school mission and central obligation to our students' preparation evoke quite a sense of responsibility. We're very fortunate that our faculty and staff are talented, committed, and experienced — and ready for the evolution underway.

Please stay in touch and help us secure our students' future. I encourage you to tell others about the Academy and our successes.

I look forward to seeing you at *The Gala* on the 17th of April!

Cheers,
Jim