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Talented Faculty Members Join Harrisburg Academy Community for 2015-16

WORMLEYSBURG, PA – As the All-School Picnic and first day of school approach, Harrisburg Academy is excited to welcome a number of experienced and energetic faculty to the school. Each position drew a competitive pool of applicants, and we are pleased to have attracted the most qualified and knowledgeable persons to the Academy community.

There are many advantages to an Academy education, and we look forward to seeing how these new faculty members will add to the programs and positive outcomes at Harrisburg Academy. We welcome the following new faculty members (in alphabetical order):

Sean Barnes

Upper School Physics & Math

Sean Barnes will be joining the Academy faculty to teach Upper School physics and mathematics. He previously taught physics at Mechanicsburg Area Senior High School and physics and math classes, including AP physics and AP calculus, at Trinity High School. Immediately prior to joining the Academy's faculty, Sean worked as a design and analysis engineer for The Boeing Company, providing technical support for avionics and flight control software and electrical systems. Sean has also worked as a solar production engineer for I Need Solar in Mechanicsburg, designing computer models to find system lifetime costs versus the payback period for solar panel systems.

Sean earned a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering from the University of Pittsburgh and a master's degree in teaching physics from the State University of New York at Binghamton. He has earned additional post-master's credits from a number of universities, including Dickinson College, George Washington University, and the University of Puerto Rico at Mayaguez, which hosts a NASA Educator's Resource Center in coordination with the NASA Kennedy Space Center.

Robyn Cutchall

2nd Grade

Robyn Cutchall will now be teaching 2nd grade alongside Jean McIver, after teaching 1st grade at the Academy for 17 years. Robyn earned a bachelor's degree in elementary education and a master's degree in reading and literacy from Shippensburg University. Prior to joining the Academy's faculty, Robyn taught 3rd and 5th grade at Saint Patrick School in Carlisle and 2nd grade at Rowland Laboratory School at Shippensburg University.

Paul Gibson

Building Substitute; 1st Grade Classroom Aide

Paul Gibson will join the Academy's faculty as the building substitute and 1st grade classroom aide. Prior to taking this new position, Paul was a member of the Academy's after-school programming staff for one year, monitoring and helping organize Extended Day Program and Middle School After-School Study Club. He also worked as a substitute for West Shore School District, including a long-term assignment as the substitute for the high school Spanish teacher. Paul graduated from Temple University with bachelor's degrees in economics and Spanish, specializing in political economy.

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Jennifer Hricak

Director of Extended Day Program and Middle School After-School Study Club; Director of Summer Camp

Jennifer Hricak, Academy parent to Gretchen '28, will serve as the new director of Extended Day Program and Middle School After-School Study Club and the new director of summer camp. Prior to joining the Academy's faculty, Jennifer worked for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as a professional development program administrator and concurrently as a Chinese language assistant teacher at Little Star Chinese Language and Culture School. She has also previously worked at the Museum of Scientific Discovery in Harrisburg and the James Buchanan Foundation and Wheatland History Museum in Lancaster, and served as an adjunct anthropology professor at both Wilson College and Harrisburg Area Community College. Jennifer earned a bachelor's degree in linguistics with minors in anthropology and psychology from Penn State University and a master's degree in anthropology from Rutgers University.

Denise Hurst

Upper School Chemistry & 8th Grade Science

Denise Hurst will be the new Upper School chemistry and 8th grade science teacher at the Academy. Denise earned a bachelor's degree in chemistry from Dickinson College, where she performed undergraduate research in marine studies. She also has a master's degree in chemistry from the University of Florida, where she was an undergraduate researcher in inorganic chemistry. Denise served as a graduate teaching assistant, and later a lecturer during her time at the University of Florida. Denise has presented her research a number of times, including twice at the American Chemical Society (ACS) National Meeting.

Dr. Hans Koster

Upper School and International Baccalaureate History; 1st-year IB Theory of Knowledge; Director of the Center for Global & Local Citizenship; Middle School Boys' Soccer Assistant Coach

Dr. Hans Koster will return to Harrisburg Academy to teach Upper School history, in addition to International Baccalaureate history and 1st-year IB Theory of Knowledge. He will also serve as the director of the Center for Global & Local Citizenship. Hans first taught at Harrisburg Academy from 1985 to 1988, when he taught AP European and AP American history, among other classes. Since then, he has taught at a number of international and IB schools, including the Munich International School in Germany, the Greensboro Day School in North Carolina, the International School of Lausanne in Switzerland, and most recently, Verde Valley School in Arizona. He also worked at Shippensburg University as an assistant professor of world history.

Hans, a native of Rotterdam, the Netherlands, holds a Kandidaats in history and pedagogy, similar to a bachelor's and master's degree in the United States, and a Doctorandus, similar to a Doctor of Education in the United States, from Leiden University in the Netherlands. He also earned a master's degree in education and history from Shippensburg University and completed his doctoral coursework at Carnegie Mellon University.

Maria Lee

1st Grade

Marie Lee will now be teaching 1st grade at the Academy. She served as the building substitute for one year before taking on her role as 1st grade teacher alongside Mary Mahaffey, and she was a member of the summer camp staff for the 2014 Summer Expeditions Day Camp program. Maria taught early childhood and elementary classes at an independent school district in Texas for seven years prior to moving to the Harrisburg area in 2012. She has a bachelor's degree in interdisciplinary studies from the University of Houston.

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Michelle Long

Academic Support and Enrichment

Michelle Long will be the academic support and enrichment teacher, working alongside Sheri Biller. Michelle earned a bachelor's degree in psychology from the University of Pittsburgh and a master's degree and Pennsylvania Instructional Certification in special education from Shippensburg University. Prior to joining the Academy's faculty, she worked as a learning support teacher at Clemens Crossing Elementary School in Columbia, Maryland and W.G. Rice Elementary School in Boiling Springs, and as a preschool teacher at Silver Spring Presbyterian Church School in Mechanicsburg.

In her role, Michelle will provide support for students seeking improvement in certain curricular areas, including reading, language acquisition, and problem solving. Focusing on learning support and enrichment allows the Academy to address the needs of our students while maintaining an academically challenging, liberal arts education.

Kelly Rinehart

Junior Kindergarten Assistant Teacher

Kelly Rinehart will be joining the Academy faculty as the Junior Kindergarten assistant teacher to Jackie Stabach. Prior to joining the Academy community, Kelly worked as a pre-kindergarten assistant teacher at Trinity Preschool for six years. She also served as a classroom volunteer at Hillside Elementary School and was an in-home childcare provider. Kelly has an associate's degree in interior design from the Art Institute of York.

Lakshmi Shrikantia

Middle School Science; Director of the Center for Experimental Science

Lakshmi Shrikantia will return to Harrisburg Academy after a two-year sabbatical in Dubai, during which she traveled extensively, including Spain, Portugal, Turkey, Jordan, and England, and spent time with her family in India. She also worked as a substitute teacher at the American Academy in Dubai and took a course on the topography of the sand dunes in the United Arab Emirates.

Lakshmi first started teaching science at Harrisburg Academy in 2009, prior to which she taught one year of social studies at the Academy. She has also taught at schools in Florida and Toronto, Canada. Lakshmi earned a bachelor's degree in math and physics and a master's degree in linguistics. She also received a post-graduate diploma in early childhood education.

Jenny Walker

Upper School and 8th Grade French

Jenny Walker will be the new French teacher at Harrisburg Academy. She comes to the Academy with over seven years of experience teaching French, most recently at Northwest High School in Omaha, Nebraska. Jenny earned her bachelor's degree in international studies with a minor in French at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. She also earned master's degrees in public and international affairs and economic and social development, and French, and a certificate of advanced study in teaching and foreign language education from the University of Pittsburgh.

Jenny also utilized her French language education while serving with the Peace Corps for two years in Mali and with Catholic Relief Services for four years in Senegal, Ghana, and Benin. While in the Peace Corps, Jenny acted as a business advisor to local entrepreneurs and hosted radio segments in French, educating the local community on the importance of financial management. During her time with Catholic Relief Services, she led workshops and teams to secure funding and design new policy for the program.

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About Harrisburg Academy

Established in 1784, Harrisburg Academy is the 17th oldest non-public school in the nation and Harrisburg's only independent school. Our coed, diverse school community inspires students from age three through 12th grade by providing an academically challenging and globally minded liberal arts education focused on dynamic classroom experiences, strong student outcomes, and a commitment to character development. The Academy proudly stands as the first school in the greater Harrisburg area to offer the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program and merit scholarship.

For more information about Harrisburg Academy please visit our website or contact Mary S. Campbell at 717-763-7811 or via email at campbell.m@harrisburgacademy.org.

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