

SAINT MARY'S HEAD LINES

A newsletter for
Saint Mary's School Parents

FEATURES

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Educating Girls Seminars and Schedules for Girls

By Brendan J. O'Shea, Head of School

One of the highlights of this academic year at Saint Mary's has been designing a seminar program and revised daily schedule specifically for girls, to enhance their educational experience. This program is unique and will distinguish Saint Mary's from other educational institutions. Taking the best of the Compass Explorations programs and forming a comprehensive, engaging, and relevant program is no small task. Yet, the end result will further strengthen our ability to prepare girls for college and life.

The seminar program is designed to help girls build the 10 key competencies we know they will need to be successful today and in their future. Organized around four main areas: communication, health and wellness, innovation, and social impact, girls will cycle through quarterly seminars as they take a deep dive into these areas. Seminar content advances each year based on the age and development of the students involved. For instance, ninth grade girls may focus on introductory public speaking and presentation skills while 11th graders may work on advanced skills in conjunction with the delivery of their junior speeches. The seminar program also engages girls in the creation of a Portfolio for Life – a digital tool they will use to track their progress, record their work, and chronicle their development.

Our improved daily schedule works for girls as well. Featuring A and B days consisting of four 75-minute academic periods

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Featuring A and B days consisting of four 75-minute academic periods, the schedule allows students to take year-long courses at a reasonable pace and have ample time for daily preparation. Furthermore, girls need time to “catch their breath” and feel a part of the community. Our schedule builds in advisory and community time throughout the week and allows for 10-minute breaks between periods. Community time consists of chapel (twice per week), assemblies, advisory times, and class meetings. Our daily schedule features eight periods, with each period meeting once over the two-day cycle. Girls will have a dedicated study period among the eight-period schedule, allowing them time during the academic day to focus on their projects, reading, or homework. Our daily schedule also features a late start on Wednesday, with classes starting at 9 a.m. rather than 8 a.m. Many of these schedule enhancements are in direct response to input from our current students and recent graduates. In addition, extensive educational research and consultants were used to design a plan that works best for Saint Mary's and our girls.

It is truly an exciting time for our entire school community, and both teachers and students are eagerly anticipating the implementation of the new programming and schedule in the fall. August can't get here soon enough! ■



How We Teach Girls

Real-World Learning

Laura Novia, Director of Marketing and Communications

Internships, independent study, Compass Explorations. What do these have in common? They are all opportunities Saint Mary's provides to girls to help them shape their educational experience, apply their learning in real-world contexts, build valuable competencies, and grow in confidence and independence. How Saint Mary's students utilize these opportunities reflects their creativity and the breadth and depth of their interests.

Annabel Bloom '18 can be found teaching dance to young refugees from Burma and the Congo who are legally seeking asylum in the United States. Building on her experience as a dancer and combining with her interest in psychology, Annabel heads to the Cedar Point Community Outreach once a week to be part of the non-profit's after-school offerings designed to help refugee families develop the skills and resources they need to integrate successfully into their new communities. "The most valuable thing about my experience is the relationships I have formed with the girls I teach. They make my week exciting—they are always eager to share, to dance, to have a great time. I am teaching them dance, but they are teaching me much more about integrating into a new world, making friends, and frankly, how you survive situations we can hardly imagine."

Josie DeRonja '19 was looking over Saint Mary's curriculum guide when she realized she could create an independent study through the school's Pathways program and explore a personal passion of hers – sewing. "I chose to do an independent study for flexibility and to dive deep into [sewing]. I can explore sewing and entrepreneurship, two passions of mine," says Josie. Using her current skills and building new ones, she has been exploring the viability of a sewing business. In that process she has researched how to design, produce and deliver products. She has practiced budgeting, sourcing materials, time management and garment creation. "My independent study gives me the opportunity to learn what I want and discover it on my own... This experience has taught me how difficult it is to start a business. I have realized that this is a task with numerous obstacles and hurdles. My challenges have not deterred me from my interest in entrepreneurship, instead they have motivated me to try again with new ideas."

Grace Dohner '18 is a digital/content marketing intern/fellow at Paradigm, an N.C. State University start-up specializing in product design and branding. She chose to work with Paradigm "because their mission is to create innovative products and apps, which I find to be very interesting. The Raleigh-Durham area is becoming a hub for innovation and technology, and I wanted to be a part of that."

She is involved in a variety of tasks, both collaboratively and independently, and Grace says she spends much of her time focused on "growing the company's social media platforms, learning how to use certain software, and experiencing a start-up culture." What has been most significant for her is "the experience of being valued in a work environment, creating authentic connections with people who I may be able to call upon when starting my career, and gaining knowledge



Paradigm co-founders Sunny Su and Ben Markoch with Grace Dohner '18 and other interns.



Josie DeRonja '19 researches how to design, produce and deliver products.



Erika Reiger '18 pursuing her interests in public health (Broadreach Ecuador Medical Spanish trip)

10 Key Competencies

To prepare girls for college and life, we must equip them with competencies that will ready them for whatever the future may bring. After studying educational and industry research, engaging with forward-thinking industry leaders, and reviewing cutting-edge research on learning and teaching, Saint Mary's has developed 10 key competencies we know girls need. These competencies are central to our new seminar programming; our new daily schedule provides flexibility for girls to build competencies in different contexts; and all aspects of our program – from classroom learning to internships, from arts to athletics, are designed to help girls develop key competencies.

on how to get proficient in certain software that future employers may require. As a young woman, being valued in a work environment and given important tasks is empowering... I feel like an equal, and that my opinion and work is valuable.”

Margaret Fountain '18 is interning at Raleigh's Trilogy School for children with learning differences. With an interest in becoming a teacher, Margaret is getting firsthand experience in the classroom each week as she assists in middle school-level history and science classes and tutors a student in mathematics. “It has helped show me a piece of what it is really like to be a teacher and has made me appreciate even more of what all of my many teachers have done for me.” She is expanding her classroom experience by reaching out to area experts, like N.C. State University professor Dr. Jessica Hunt, to learn more about learning differences so she may apply that to her work at the Trilogy School.

Erika Reiger '18 found an internship that aligned with her interests in public health and Spanish language. One day a week, she would spend five hours working at the Alliance Medical Ministry in Raleigh, first working in the garden, then advancing to enter patient information, and then working on a healthy recipe cookbook which she is writing in English and will then translate into Spanish. “From stapling packets to helping with the cookbook, I am able to see how much the little things do to keep this great organization running. The experience solidified my belief that I want to go into the field of public health, which ultimately led me to apply to The George Washington University's Milken Institute School of Public Health – where I was accepted and will attend in the fall.”

Sarah Scott Woolard '19 comes from a family of real estate professionals, so it is no surprise she is interested in getting her real estate license. With the help and flexibility of Saint Mary's faculty, she has been able to participate in a year-long internship that gives her valuable hands-on experience to move her toward achieving her personal goals. First semester she interned with a primary and mixed-use real estate agency in North Hills; second semester has been spent with the Glenwood Agency which specializes in downtown Raleigh rentals and sales. “I usually get to participate in a different task every day, as the agents are all up to something different. So far it has been really awesome to work alongside these agents and companies in Raleigh. It's been informational to compare the companies, their market sizes, and the tactics used in Raleigh.” Says Sarah Scott, “my internship experience has opened my eyes to so much more than I was expecting.” ■



1. Collaboration

The ability to productively engage in a group setting, both face-to-face and virtually. An awareness of self and of others to move a team forward along common values and goals.



2. Communication

The balance of speaking and active listening, writing and reading. A strong grasp on the verbal and non-verbal aspects of expression.



3. Critical thinking

The utilization of novel and adaptive thinking, coupled with analytical skills, to form creative solutions that positively impact society.



4. Cross cultural intelligence

The ability to navigate and operate in, and adapt to, a globally connected world. The recognition that a diverse team drives innovation and productivity.



5. Growth mindset

The resiliency, dedication, hard work, and belief in self to accomplish any task. A commitment to being a lifelong learner.



6. New media literacy and computational thinking

The ability to critically assess, navigate, and create across diverse digital platforms. A strong grasp of this competency enhances effective communication and collaboration.



7. Self-expression

The ability to articulately share original thoughts and ideas in creative ways, while staying true to an authentic sense of self.



8. Self-directed learning

The demonstration of personal interests and the motivation to set goals and objectives to move those interests forward.



9. Servant Leadership

A commitment to putting the good of a community and others before self-interests.



10. Social-emotional intelligence

The ability to accurately assess social cues, as well as the spoken and unspoken language around you. Social-emotional intelligence is the foundation for effective collaboration and meaning-making.

Sources: *Institute for the Future: Future Work Skills 2020* and *Partnership for 21st Century Learning*

STEAM Compass Exploration Day

By Laura Novia, Director of Marketing and Communications

This year's STEAM Compass Exploration Day engaged students in a wide range of hand-on, competency-building experiences in and around Raleigh. Here are just a few of the explorations offered:

- A visit to **Blue Sky Farms** to discuss organics and sustainable farming and practice some sustainable farming methods firsthand.
- A student-designed, student-led **Economics 101** program offered a crash course in economics. Students learned key concepts and economic fundamentals, viewed *Inside Job*, a documentary illustrating the causes and effects of the 2008 economic crash, played an economic simulation game demonstrating how international trade works.
- **Lego Engineering**, an advanced engineering session lead by Bricks 4 Kids, had girls working on challenging builds and the creation of their own engineering masterpieces.
- **Principles of Biomedical Science**, an introductory course of the PLTW Biomedical Science program, engaged students in designing their own experiments to determine the cause



of death of a fictional person as they examined autopsy reports, investigated medical history, and explored medical treatments.

- A **hexagon project** involved girls in a discussion of community and world attitudes and beliefs followed by the creation of hexagon-shaped artwork representing interconnectedness.
- A trip to **Repurpose-It.org**, a non-profit organization providing technology and training to indigenous teachers, introduced students to the organization's mission and challenged them to pitch social media strategies to enhance Repurpose-it social media.

EVENTS



MARCH 25-APRIL 2

Spring Break
Dorms reopen Apr. 2
at 2 p.m.

APRIL 3-6

Compass Week

APRIL 10

Easter Eucharist Chapel

APRIL 11

PA Executive Committee
Meeting

APRIL 12

Celebration of the Arts
Assembly

APRIL 13 AND 14

Orchesis Dance Theatre
Concert

APRIL 20

Grandparents &
Grandfriends Day

APRIL 21-22

Campus Weekend

APRIL 21

Prom and Spring Swing

APRIL 23-27

Senior Week

APRIL 25

Spring Student Recital

APRIL 26

Chorale Spring Concert
New Student Leader
Inductions

APRIL 27-28

Reunion Weekend

APRIL 28

Alumnae Bazaar

MAY 7-18

AP Exams

MAY 9

Parents Association
Thank You Luncheon

MAY 11 & 14

Senior Exams

MAY 18

Honors Convocation

MAY 19

Senior Dinner and Program

MAY 20

Baccalaureate Chapel
Commencement

MAY 22-25

Grades 9-11 Exams

MAY 25

Last day of school

MAY 26

Dorms close at 10 a.m.

See online calendar for details | www.sms.edu



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COURAGE
SCHOOL