

## September Newsletter

Academy Coordinator: Jaime Combs

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Academy Students and Parents,

Welcome to the 2020-21 school year! It will, no doubt, be a unique experience. More than **1,000** students are currently registered in one of Nease's three Career Academies, which is fantastic!

Each month a newsletter will be released via the Academy Section of the Panther Press, as well as uploaded to the Academies website at [neaseacademies.com](http://neaseacademies.com), to keep Academy students and parents updated with the latest information on what's happening in our one-of-a-kind programs. In the first edition for the 2020-21 school year, we are introducing you to our incredible Academy instructors.

If you ever have Academy questions, please feel free to ask:

[Jaime.combs@stjohns.k12.fl.us](mailto:Jaime.combs@stjohns.k12.fl.us)

-Jaime Combs, Academy Coordinator

### MEET OUR ACADEMY INSTRUCTORS

#### ST. JOHNS COUNTY ACADEMY OF HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM

**Tara Amato -- Digital Information Technology, Introduction to Hospitality and Tourism, Technology for Hospitality & Tourism, Hospitality & Tourism Marketing Management, Hospitality & Tourism Entrepreneurship**

Tara Amato is a graduate of Western New England University with a B.S.B.A. in Sport Management and a Juris Doctorate from the School of Law. She is now in her fifth year as the Hospitality and Tourism Academy teacher here at Nease and has watched the program grow from less than 50 students to over 170! She is also involved in National Technical Honor Society, the Nease Interact Club and DECA, and the Girls Lacrosse Team.

### UPCOMING EVENTS

LABOR DAY, NO SCHOOL

September 7th

ACADEMY CONTRACTS DUE

September 25<sup>th</sup>

INTERIM GRADE CHECK

September 30<sup>th</sup>

### ACADEMY CONTRACTS

Academy students have a number of exciting opportunities presented over the course of their high school experience, but they are also held to a higher standard when enrolled in our programs. All students are required to turn in a signed Academy Contract each school year. Contracts will be distributed via the Academy classes, and must be returned with both the student and parent signatures by September 25<sup>th</sup>. Academy contracts stipulate the behavioral and academic standards by which all students must abide. The first instance of breaking the contract results in Academy Probation, which lasts for a semester. If a student violates the contract again while on probation, he/she may be removed from the program immediately, or at the end of the semester, depending on the violation. If you have any questions regarding the contract, feel free to ask Mrs. Combs.

## STELLAR ACADEMY OF ENGINEERING

### **Bergman Arias -- Introduction to Engineering Design, Principles of Engineering, Engineering Design & Development, STEM Elective Course**

Bergman Arias joined the Stellar Academy of Engineering instructional team after teaching Engineering students in Miami-Dade county for 10 years. He graduated from Florida International University with a degree in electrical engineering. He's certified to teach both Engineering Technology and Math, and holds industry certifications in Adobe Creative Cloud, Microsoft Office, Rhino CAM, Autodesk, DraftSight, SolidWorks, and 3D printing. Mr. Arias has also been involved with the Technology Student Association for many years. He has taken teams to the TSA state competition on multiple occasions, and has spearheaded the start of a TSA chapter here at Nease, so that our Academy students can compete in the TSA state competitions, as well.

### **John Beale -- Introduction to Engineering Design, Civil Engineering & Architecture**

Before becoming a teacher John Beale graduated from the University of West Florida with a degree in Maritime Studies. He worked for a decade in the museum industry learning and demonstrating blacksmithing, woodworking, and boat building. He has designed and built a number of traditionally inspired small craft. Prior to joining the team at Nease, he taught at Indian Trails Middle School for three years with classes that included STEM Environmental Science and Engineering/Robotics. He also started and ran a STEM Club with a focus on CAD and 3D Printing.

## COMMUNICATIONS ACADEMY

### **Holly Bourquin -- Journalism (Newspaper)**

Holly Bourquin joined the Nease faculty during the 2013-2014 school year as an English and Journalism teacher. Ms. Bourquin has previously taught at Fruit Cove Middle School, Saint Johns River Community College, and East Carolina University. In addition to her teaching experience, she brings more than 16 years of writing, editing, and publishing experience. Previous roles have included overseeing the publication of an international magazine, serving on the Florida Magazine Association board of directors, and managing multiple forms of communications including social media, digital media, print media, and web publishing. She holds a master's in English with a concentration in technical and professional communication.



**CAREER ACADEMIES**

of St Johns

Experience. The Difference.

## HOW CAN PARENTS GET INVOLVED?

If you work in the field of Communications (TV Production or Digital Design), Engineering, or Hospitality and Tourism, let us know! We would love for you to join our Advisory Board, be a guest speaker, or become a potential field trip site host.

Contact: Jaime Combs

904.547.8306

Jaime.combs@stjohns.k12.fl.us

## ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

### PRINCIPAL

Mrs. Lisa Kunze

### ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS

Mr. Nathaniel Wuellner

Mrs. Abbey Mander

Mrs. Daryl Cullipher

Mr. Jeff Stoddard

### DEANS

Ms. Kelly Abbatinozzi

Mr. Josh Bailen

Ms. Becky Burney

Mr. Kevin Reevy

### ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT

Mr. Matt McCool

Athletic Director

Mrs. Heather Matthews

Athletic Secretary

### **Leisha Cowart -- Journalism/Yearbook**

Leisha Cowart is in her third year at Nease as yearbook adviser and English teacher. During her time in education, she has taught in Jacksonville at Frank H. Peterson Academies (a wall-to-wall CTE Academy school) and University Christian School, along with Lakeview Academy in Georgia. She holds a degree in journalism from Auburn University, and began her career as a sportswriter. She then worked in minor league baseball public relations for the Durham Bulls and Fayetteville Generals, and spent a number of years in advertising, marketing and graphic design before finding her true calling in teaching.

### **Jacquelyn Soto -- Digital Information Technology, Digital Design 1-4**

Jacquelyn Soto became part of the Nease faculty in the 2016-2017 school year, joining the Communications Academy to teach Digital Design. She began her teaching career at her alma mater, Woodbridge High School in Woodbridge, NJ, where she taught everything from Keyboarding to Web Design. After 10 years, she made the move down to Florida, where she taught Digital Design in Brevard County for 2 years. Jacquelyn holds a Bachelor's degree in Business Education from East Carolina University and a Master's degree in Educational Leadership from University of Phoenix. In addition to teaching Digital Design and DIT courses, she co-sponsors the National Technical Honor Society, an honor society specifically for technology-based Academy students.

### **Geoff Stephens -- Digital Video Technology 1, Sports Media**

Geoff Stephens is in his 21<sup>st</sup> year of teaching Television Production at Nease. He created and implemented the Sports Media program here, which is the only one of its kind in the country. In fact, The Collegiate Sports Video Association has named Mr. Stephens the High School Video Coordinator of the Year four times...most recently for the 2018-19. Mr. Stephens has his Master's Degree in Education from Mississippi State University.

### **Justin Cooler -- Advanced TV Production: Wired**

Justin Cooler uses his upbringing in deaf culture and his real world experience with production companies like VH1, America's Most Wanted, and Ghost Robot to craft various forms of media with a distinct visual style. Working in New York City, New Orleans, and LA, he gained experience on everything from Music Videos to Feature Films. During his time in the business, Mr. Cooler garnered many skills in the technical and physical aspects of filmmaking. He worked for the St. Johns County School District for 3 ½ years, teaching media skills to students, creating original educational videos, and serving the schools as an Instructional Television Specialist. In 2016-17, Mr. Cooler's first year teaching television production at Nease, the Student Television Network awarded his students with both regional and national prizes in coveted competitions. In 2017-18 he was named Nease's Rookie Teacher of the Year. He looks forward to what this year will bring, as the Advanced Television Production students take their skills to the next level.