

## August Newsletter

Academy Coordinator: Jaime Combs

904.547.8306 | [jaime.combs@stjohns.k12.fl.us](mailto:jaime.combs@stjohns.k12.fl.us)



Academy Students and Parents,

Welcome to the 2022-23 school year! We are looking forward to a wonderful year!

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). This newsletter will 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 2022-23 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 -- 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 sixth 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! Mrs. Amato is also the sponsor of our school's DECA Chapter, which during the last 5 years of its existence has sent students to both the state and international competitions. On top of DECA, she is involved in National Technical Honor Society and the Nease Interact Club, as well.

### UPCOMING EVENTS

#### NEASE CLUB FAIR

August 24<sup>th</sup>

#### NEASE OPEN HOUSE

August 30<sup>th</sup>

#### LABOR DAY, NO SCHOOL

September 5<sup>th</sup>

#### INTERIM GRADE CHECK

September 13<sup>th</sup>

### STUDENTS, TIME TO GET INVOLVED!

Being a part of a Nease Career Academy is a great way to connect with other students who share the same career interest...but there are so many opportunities to get involved here at Nease! Extracurricular clubs allow students to explore new endeavors or compliment their current interests. Nease will host a Club Fair for students during Excel time on Wednesday, August 24<sup>th</sup>, in the courtyard behind Panther Hall. Meet club officers and learn more about options that span a huge gamut of categories. Clubs associated with Academies include National Technical Honor Society, Technical Student Association, DECA, Robotics, and more! Make sure to take time during Excel on August 24<sup>th</sup> to explore some of available options.

**Bergman Arias -- Introduction to Engineering Design, Principles of Engineering, Engineering Design & Development**

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, Autodesk, 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, Computer Integrated Manufacturing**

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 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. In his first year at Nease he helped students win regional bridge design and state architectural design competitions. He runs the Transportation Technology club that encompasses Aerospace, Automotive and Electrathon.

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. In addition to teaching Journalism and Newspaper, she also teaches Film, Theater and Cinema Production as well as IB Film.



**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

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Jaime.combs@stjohns.k12.fl.us

CAREER ACADEMY STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

In accordance with St. Johns County School district standards, Academy students must keep their Academy course semester grade at a 70% or higher. If a student's semester grade is not at least a 70%, a letter will be sent home informing the student and their parent that they are on Academy Academic Probation for the semester following the one in which they earned less than a 70%. Students must earn at least a 70% or higher for the following semester to remain in the Career Academy. If the student earns a grade lower than a 70% for two semesters in a row, that student is released from the Career Academy for the following semester and cannot re-enroll at any time.

If a student needs any academic help, they can get FREE tutoring in any subject from the National Honor Society. Tutoring sessions will take place from 4-5 pm on Tuesdays & Thursdays, and during Excel Time in the Media Center.

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

Leisha Cowart is in her fifth year at Nease as yearbook adviser and English/Journalism teacher. Under her leadership, the Nease yearbook has been recognized nationally for excellence in each of the past three years. 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 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, she co-sponsors the National Technical Honor Society, an honor society specifically for technology-based Academy students.

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

Geoff Stephens is in his 23rd 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. Mr. Stephens has his Master's Degree in Education from Mississippi State University.

## **Justin Cooler -- Digital Video Technology 1, Digital Video Technology: 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 and New Orleans 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 his first year of teaching here at Nease, he was named our school's Rookie Teacher of the Year. Last year Mr. Cooler's program was one of only eight schools that was awarded a Broadcast Excellence Award for High School News as well as the number one Vlog Team in the nation by the Student Television Network. He looks forward to what this year will bring, teaching a group of DVT 1 students and helping the Advanced Digital Video Technology students take their skills to the next level.

