



## **Williams College Fund for Mount Greylock Annual Report 2012-13**

**Office of the Superintendent – Dr. Rose Ellis**

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The Williams College Fund for Mount Greylock has supported teacher and administrative initiatives to catalyze innovative change and to sustain improvement at the school. The projects and programs funded by the generous donations of the Jeffrey Family and members of the local community have both addressed objectives of Mount Greylock's new two-year Strategic Plan and pushed beyond them to provide ever-richer experiences for all Mount Greylock students.

In its second year, the Fund has supported a variety of programs that enhance academic rigor, align courses to Massachusetts Common Core State Standards and Next Generation Science Standards, and make curriculum, instruction and assessment more relevant to the students' lives.

### **Professional Development**

- Christine Size of Looney Math Consulting (North Easton, MA) advised the math department in the redesign of all of courses to align with Massachusetts Common Core Standards. Size supported teachers' implementation of the curriculum by coaching for effective, relevant instruction, including the use of digital technology across all grades.
- Erika Tate, a consultant with the *International Center for Leadership Education* (Rexford, NY), conducted a multiple-day needs assessment of the Science Department. Tate focused on curriculum scope and sequence, instructional practices, the incorporation of technology, assessments and laboratory practices. After her analysis, she continued to work with science teachers to revise and align curriculum, collaborate with the Building Sub-Committee to redesign laboratories to enhance inquiry-based learning, and coach teachers to develop project-based instruction. This was the third year of Mt. Greylock's partnership with the *International Center for Leadership in Education*.
- Massachusetts Common Core State Standards emphasize literacy across the curriculum and press for teachers of science and social studies to understand how to help students access difficult texts. To achieve those goals, Mount Greylock teachers and administrators worked with *Keys to Literacy* (Rowley, MA) on reading, writing and

vocabulary-acquisition strategies. Further, teachers enrolled in courses on tiered instruction and *Response to Intervention* through The Reading Institute (Williamstown, MA).

- Throughout the academic year, more than a dozen teachers enrolled in courses that enhanced their content knowledge or developed their ability to design and implement lessons that are individualized and project-based. Ten teachers across all disciplines participated in College Board Advanced Placement workshops or summer seminars to improve content knowledge and instructional skills and learn about the AP exams' new design.
- Last summer English teachers were supported as they devised new semester-long courses to engage and academically challenge 11th and 12th graders. This year, time was provided to allow them to analyze the success of the curriculum shift and look for ways to address persistent challenges. Adjustments were made.
- The grant funded small group and individual teacher initiatives for a second summer. This work included book studies, preparation for inquiry-based learning, interdisciplinary work, and individual course registration for MGRSD teachers seeking to enhance the quality of their curriculum and instruction.
- Strategies for effective classroom management that give students more responsibility for managing their behavior were offered in the summer as part of the *Connected School* (Chapel Hill, NC) training. This effort was supported with the establishment of a Professional Learning Community and breakout sessions held over the course of two years.

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*As a grizzled science teacher, the biggest impact I've felt from the Fund is the freedom to experiment a bit more, just as we hope our students will do. The opportunity to follow through on initiatives, such as working with Erika Tate of ICLE to improve student discovery while maintaining the rigor of labs and lessons is invigorating. Too often public schools seem condemned to live from one budget cycle to another and the frustration of dropping initiatives over time can be discouraging. One of the highlights of the year in biology, the wetland study of Pontoosuc Lake, saw 35 kayaks of students and staff working with Williams ecologist Drew Jones collecting data on eutrophication. The excitement generated in the students has led to the continuation of the project, likely for years to come, with a collaboration with the Friends of Pontoosuc forging closer ties to the community at large.*

*Larry Bell, Biology Teacher*

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### **Experiential Learning and Co-Curricular Activities**

- A qualified community member was contracted to research and design an Independent and experiential learning program for Mount Greylock, as well as review and restructure the existing co-curricular program.
- Financial support was provided for a hands-on STEM enrichment course focused on tool design and mechanical engineering for 8th grade students in preparation for the Massachusetts standards testing in science.
- The Pathways Job Shadowing program was refined to provide full-day career exploration for students in the business careers concentration.

### **The Arts**

- A new student-designed mural stretches along two library walls. This impressive artwork, painted over the summer, celebrates knowledge and written expression across cultures and centuries. A Williams College Studio Art major participated in its installation.
- Performing arts and visual arts teachers for grades K through 12 met for the first time in memory to evaluate and align their curricula and develop possible collaborations among schools.
- Teachers of visual art, environmental studies, and music collaborated on the *John Denver Project*, a multi-media concert focusing on environmental preservation. Ted Vigil, a John Denver tribute artist, provided master classes for the musicians and rehearsed and performed with the students.
- An electronic keyboard was purchased for the performing arts programs.

### **Technology**

- More than 35 LCD projectors were purchased to support instruction and assessment. Almost every classroom at Mount Greylock now has a LCD projector. Further, the digital photography and editing lab was upgraded with the installation of new processors and the purchase of Adobe Creative software.
- Cohorts of teachers and administrators participated in two national conferences and one regional conference that focused on enhancing the use of technology and digital media in schools across disciplines.
- *Renaissance Learning's* STAR formative assessment software was purchased to monitor progress in 8th grade mathematics classes.

## **Williams College Fund for Mount Greylock**

### **Expenditures in 2012-2013**

#### **Professional Development – \$41,255**

Teachers participated in professional development programs aligned with Mount Greylock's Long Range Plan goals. Understanding and teaching to the Massachusetts Common Core State Standards remain the focus of professional development; particular attention was paid to mathematics and literacy. Funds were also used to send staff to conferences and training sessions to expand the use of digital technology across all disciplines.

#### **Science – \$31,030**

A full needs assessment of the Science Department, grades 7 through 12, was conducted by the International Center for Leadership Education. The needs assessment involved teachers, administrators, students, parents and members of the Williams College Science Department. Following the recommendations from the study, we hired the ICLE consultant to guide curriculum development and alignment and to coach instruction.

#### **Visual and Performing Arts – \$10,654**

Arts teachers from Mount Greylock and its partner elementary schools met to share and vertically align visual and performing arts curricula. In Spring 2013, an interdisciplinary program was held that included middle and high school faculty and students in photography, environmental science, chorus and orchestra.

#### **Curriculum Expansion – \$23,606**

A consultant explored and refined independent and experiential learning opportunities for students. Separately, teachers initiated programs around offering students more exposure to career options.

#### **Technology – \$43,455**

In addition to purchasing equipment to outfit a digital photography and video lab, software was acquired to conduct and track formative assessments for middle school math.