

# THE GRADUATE COLUMN

THE COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY

Welcome to the Spring 2014 Issue of  
TCNJ's Graduate Column!



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In this issue, we are pleased to: introduce new faculty; highlight outstanding students; share information regarding an exciting global opportunity within the field of Special Education; and provide information regarding the upcoming registration period and a Graduate Student Appreciation event! On behalf of the Office of Graduate Studies, best wishes for an enjoyable semester.

We look forward to seeing you on campus!

*Susan Hydro*

*Director, Graduate & Intersession Programs*

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## Spotlight On: Dr. Matt Hall



Introducing Dr. Matthew Hall, Assistant Professor in the Department of Special Education, Language and Literacy! Prior to coming to TCNJ, Dr. Hall taught courses as an adjunct professor in Literacy Methods at New York University (NYU) for two years. Before that, he was a Teaching Assistant for one year and Graduate Assistant for four years in the Teaching and Learning Department at NYU's Steinhart School of Culture, Education and Human Development. Earlier in his career, Dr. Hall was a Literacy Coach at Lakewood Public Schools and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teacher in the South Brunswick School District.

One of Dr. Hall's most recent and notable achievements is the completion of his PhD in Literacy and Teaching, with a focus on Digital Media and Composition, from NYU. He has also presented and consulted throughout the U.S. and Canada on the topic of liter-

acy instruction. Some topics of concentration have been - implementing literacy coaches as part of an inclusive school staff and teaching writing and reading.

Adding to his professional credentials, Dr. Hall is a member of the American Education Research Association (AERA), and has served as the Historian of the Writing and Literacies Special Interest Group within the Association for the past two years. He is also a member of National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), Literacy Research Association (LRA), and International Reading Association (IRA).

Dr. Hall has many strong ties to TCNJ. He completed a Bachelor of Science in Education of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing as well as a Master of Education in Special Education at the College. In addition, he met his wonderful wife while attending TCNJ. Their wedding even took place on our beautiful campus!

Since working at The College, Dr. Hall finds it easy to build relationships with others. He describes the faculty as "top notch" and has really enjoyed the amount of interaction he has with students and faculty outside of class time. He believes "a good level of dedication" sets TCNJ students apart from those at other institutions. Furthermore, he feels that TCNJ

students are very classroom application based and are very open to and excited about group work and projects.

Outside of TCNJ, Dr. Hall enjoys spending time with his one year old daughter, playing piano, attending concerts, holistic health, photography, and reading. A couple of his favorite authors at the moment are Gregory McGuire and Clive Thompson.

Dr. Hall believes the biggest challenge for graduate students is time management. It can be difficult to find time to balance life, career and degree. However, he is often impressed by how well his students manage their time here at TCNJ.

His advice for graduate students is to "do your best to talk with faculty members about what their research interests are outside of class." In addition, he recommends taking advantage of the easy access to public events on campus, whether it is an art exhibit or a theater show.

Dr. Hall is always open to learning about others and their interests and encourages students to "come find [him]!" His door is always open. Welcome (back) to TCNJ, Dr. Hall!

## Spotlight On: Dr. Mindi McMann



Introducing Dr. Mindi McMann, our newest faculty member in the English Department at TCNJ! Dr. McMann is currently teaching at the undergraduate level, but will begin teaching graduate level courses in the spring 2015 semester. Her first graduate level course will be a British Literature course that focuses on modernism and post-colonial responses to modernism.

Before coming to TCNJ, Dr. McMann was a Lecturer for one year at the University of California, Davis. Prior to that, she completed her PhD in English from the same institution. One of her most notable achievements is being published in *Modern Fictions Studies*. Her

published work looked at the relationship between race and science in the novel *White Teeth* by Zadie Smith. Adding to her credentials, Dr. McMann is a member of the American Conference of Irish Studies and the American Comparative Literature Association.

Dr. McMann expressed that she was attracted to TCNJ, because she was passionate about working at a public school. "TCNJ maintains the mission of a public school while embracing the model of a liberal arts education." She was impressed with how friendly the faculty members were during the interview process. She was also interested in working at The College because she had never lived on the east coast before, which is surprising since she has lived in nine different states and two other countries! She enjoys the area because it is so centrally located to major cities, such as Philadelphia, New York City, and Washington, D.C.

Since starting work at the College, Dr. McMann has really appreciated working alongside her "supportive and welcoming" colleagues. She has also en-

joyed teaching her undergraduate level courses. "I like the curiosity of the undergrads." She explains, "They are very open to asking questions and learning new concepts." She feels TCNJ students differ from students at other institutions because of their curiosity and passion about their work. "It really shows in the way they discuss their ideas."

In her spare time, Dr. McMann can be found hiking, biking, watching movies (especially documentaries), and – of course – reading. Some of her favorite authors at the moment are Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Zadie Smith, Gary Shteyngart, and James Joyce.

Dr. McMann's advice to graduate students is twofold. She states, "Enjoy the flexibility of a graduate program, because once you finish you actually have less time." In addition, "Figure out what your voice is and what you want to contribute to conversations."

Welcome to TCNJ, Dr. McMann! We will see you next spring!



## Highlight On: New Opportunity for MSN Students

In December 2013, The College of New Jersey, School of Nursing, Health and Exercise Science signed an articulation agreement with Rutgers, The State University, College of Nursing that created an appealing professional development option for current and future MSN students at TCNJ. The articulation agreement provides a convenient pathway to receive a Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) degree through Rutgers. There are two DNP program tracks at Rutgers: Clinical Practice Focus and Leadership Practice Focus. These programs consist of 31 and 43 credits, respectively. However, the articulation agreement allows TCNJ MSN graduates to apply 6 credits earned in their MSN program towards the DNP – which would ultimately reduce the time and cost of attaining the degree

through Rutgers.

Attaining a DNP degree after achieving an MSN, while not required for advanced nursing practice, may help candidates advance in the field. The Clinical track would be beneficial to those interested in remaining in direct clinical practice while gaining more advanced skills in such areas as systems management and evidence-based practice. The Leadership track would be more suited for individuals who would like to build their leadership skills - which can be applied towards management or leadership positions in nursing or healthcare. An additional benefit of attaining a DNP degree is that some educational institutions will accept it as a qualification for teaching nursing.

Students should note that entry into the DNP program

at Rutgers is not automatic. The application procedures should be followed accordingly. However, there is no time limit on when a student needs to apply in order to transfer the 6 credits from the TCNJ MSN. Most DNP courses are conveniently offered online. Though, some on-site learning will be required (i.e. practicum hours).

For more information regarding the DNP programs offered at Rutgers, please visit <http://nursing.rutgers.edu/academics/graduate/doctor-nursing-practice-dnp>. Dr. Claire Lindberg, Graduate Coordinator for the School of Nursing, is also available to provide additional information on the articulation agreement. She can be reached at [Lindberg@tcnj.edu](mailto:Lindberg@tcnj.edu).



# Highlight On: Portugal Summer 2014

The Department of Special Education, Language, and Literacy is pleased to offer the Post-Baccalaureate program in Special Education in Portugal this summer. The courses will be held at the Carlucci American International School of Lisbon (CAISL), located in Sintra, Portugal. This program is tailored for students who already have a certification in another instructional area. However, some of the courses could be applied to other graduate programs in the School of Education.

If you are a student in the 5-year Master of Arts Teaching Program in Special Education and Elementary Education, or, a student in the Special Education M.Ed. or Post-Baccalaureate program in the SELL department, you have the option to take both required graduate courses pertinent to your program as well as some courses in your elective strand.

If you are a senior and you are expecting to graduate in May 2014 with certification in elementary or secondary education, consider applying to our Post-Baccalaureate Certification Program in Special Education. Courses offered in Portugal will count towards your certification in special education.

For graduate students in another program in the School of Education, some of these courses would be an excellent choice for further professional development in the field of Education.

If you are interested in the program, please contact Dr. Stuart Carroll at [szcarroll@tcnj.edu](mailto:szcarroll@tcnj.edu) or Dr. Shridevi Rao at [raos@tcnj.edu](mailto:raos@tcnj.edu). Interested students should pre-register as soon as possible. To pre-register, please visit: <http://offsitegrad.pages.tcnj.edu/programs/>.

## Student Experience in Portugal

Justine Brancato is in the 5-year Special Education program and will graduate this May.

Last summer, she completed Advanced Study in Learning Disabilities in Portugal. Although she loves traveling and was extremely interested in student teaching abroad for a semester, it was just not practical for her. "Taking a class in Portugal allowed me to experience an American school in an entirely new environment without having to commit to being abroad for an

extended time."

Justine believes that students other than those in the Special Education program could benefit from the courses offered in Portugal. "Given the rising trend of special education, I really think it is just good practice for general educators to have a solid foundation of knowledge related to teaching students with disabilities."

Taking one course in Portugal provided Justine with the oppor-

tunity to explore a new country, make new friends, and network.

"The most memorable experience for me was being able to explore all the hidden gems of Portugal." While she was there, Justine was able to visit the cities of Sintra, Lisbon, Evora, and the beautiful beaches on the Portuguese coast.

Good luck with your last semester, Justine!



## Student Experience in Portugal continued...



*Justine at the Castelo dos Mouros in Sintra, Portugal*



### What you need to know...

- Courses taken in Portugal could apply to your program as an elective or a required course.
- Studying in Portugal provides an exciting opportunity to experience a different culture.
- You would be meeting with students in other global programs who are working in schools around the world. Sharing and connecting with these international students would be an invaluable introduction to the profession.
- There are many opportunities to explore the breathtaking natural beauty of Portugal.
- The seven special education courses offered this summer are: Students with Disabilities in Our Schools, Advanced Study in Learning Disabilities, Teaching Students with Severe Disabilities, Remedial Instruction, Reading: Content Area Literacy, Creating and Sustaining Classroom Communities, and Collaboration, Consultation and Partnerships.



## Meet the Students



Introducing John Bransfield! John is currently a full-time student in his last semester of the Post-Baccalaureate Certificate: Students with Disabilities program at TCNJ. In August 2013, John completed the MAT in Secondary Education – Social Studies program here at the College. Prior to attending TCNJ, John completed his Bachelor of Arts in Political Science at American University in Washington, D.C.

John knew he wanted to go back to school to receive this additional certificate after his student teaching experience in the MAT

program. Although the MAT program lead to a certificate in Secondary Education: Social Studies, the experience helped John discover his true passion for working with students with disabilities. The key factor in choosing TCNJ to pursue his MAT and certificate was “the reputation for excellence in teacher preparation.” Additionally, John was a student in the New Jersey public school system for grades K-12 and had the opportunity to be taught by graduates of the College (then Trenton State College). He was impressed by their abilities as teachers.

John’s two favorite courses have been Assistive Technology and Teaching Students with Disabilities in Our Schools. In his Assistive Technology class, his fears of integrating technology in the classroom were allayed. Teaching Students with Disabilities in Our Schools was a “very practical” class. The professor held applicable experience and was able to bring both academic and practitioner perspectives to the classroom.

John is currently completing his practicum in Special Education at Hillsborough High School in Hillsborough, NJ. His ideal job after graduating would be to work in the classroom with stu-

dents who have disabilities. He stated, “I am ready to put my education to use.”

When he is not in class, John enjoys taking walks, biking, traveling internationally (he’s been to over 30 countries!), spending time with his special needs golden retriever – Darwin, and reading mysteries or biographies. Currently, his favorite author is Mary Higgins Clark.

During his studies at TCNJ, John’s biggest challenge was finding a balance between his academic requirements and all the other demands on his time. He said, “I do not let the academics consume everything about me.”

John’s best advice to graduate students in the education field is, “Recognize that in teacher preparation programs, you are not going to earn a credential for your own personal benefit. Your credential is being earned to be put at the service of other people.” He elaborates, “What you put into it will determine what you’re able to give back to those people.”

Best of luck in your last semester, John!

## Meet the Students...continued



Introducing Meredith Jeffries! Meredith is a graduate student in the Education of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing 5-year master's program. In addition, Meredith graduated Magna Cum Laude with a Bachelor of Science in English from TCNJ, as part of the dual-major program.

Meredith became interested in TCNJ during a visit to the campus during her senior year of high school. She states, "I heard about the Deaf Education program and knew that was exactly what I wanted to do." She was also impressed with the five-year program to attain a master's degree.

Meredith has held many practi-

cum and internship positions while pursuing her master's degree. This past fall she was a student teacher for second grade students at the Lake Drive Program for the Deaf in Mountain Lakes, NJ. Most recently, she student taught in a mainstream classroom in Marymount International School in Rome, Italy. Meredith has just begun her last student teaching placement in a mainstream second grade class in Bedminster Township, NJ.

Meredith's favorite class so far has been Assistive Listening Devices and Auditory Management. "It was such a useful class that provided practical information that I could add to my teaching the very next day in the classroom."

During her first four years at TCNJ, Meredith was a member of the TCNJ Varsity Field Hockey Team and was part of the team that won the National Championship in 2011. Additionally, Meredith was the recipient of the 2011 NCAA Elite 89 Award. This award is given to the individual having the highest GPA of a player at the Division III field hockey Final Four. She was also a member of Kappa Delta Pi and Sigma Tau Delta.

In her spare time, Meredith enjoys hot yoga, cuddling with her

yellow Labrador Retriever, and reading Harry Potter. In addition, "my favorite hobby outside of school is to talk to my teacher friends about school. Teachers love talking about teaching."

Meredith's advice for graduate students is, "Take a moment to really consider what it is you want your career to be. Graduate school is not something you do when you cannot find your ideal job right off the bat. Instead, get some experience and perspective before making such a big decision."

Meredith's biggest challenge has been to maintain endurance during this last year while she is student teaching and attending night classes. "It is very trying having to commute over an hour to each placement, not be paid, and be 'on top of my game' every day for the hopes of a potential job opportunity." However, she is thankful for every moment because of all the experience she has gained.

Once she graduates, Meredith hopes to teach children with hearing loss in an auditory-oral environment to prepare them for mainstream settings.

Good luck in your last semester, Meredith!

## Meet the Students...continued



Introducing Marissa Marton! Marissa is in the dual certification Master of Art in Teaching Special Education and Elementary Education program and expects to graduate in the Spring of 2015. She obtained her BA in Art Education at TCNJ in 2008. She decided to return to campus to complete her Master's degree because of all of the constant changes in the field of teaching. She stated, "As a teacher you should be a lifelong learner to help better prepare students." Marissa was interested in completing her second degree at TCNJ because it is considered a top teaching school in the state. She explained that many school

districts consider TCNJ graduates when hiring because of the "highly qualified" applicants that come out of its education programs.

Marissa has had a lot of work experience since graduating in 2008. Initially, she was a long-term substitute at Burlington Township Middle School teaching 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade Art and Ceramics classes. In 2009, she became a full-time 6<sup>th</sup> grade Art Teacher at Auten Road Intermediate School in Hillsborough, NJ. She still teaches there full-time while she completes her master's degree on a part-time basis. Marissa explained that she currently has her "dream job," but she wants to get better at it every day. "I feel fortunate to work in the Hillsborough Township School District because it is such a distinguished district and we follow best practices that are taught in the TCNJ graduate program."

From her TCNJ coursework, Marissa has been able to learn strategies on how to work with all learners. Her favorite class so far has been Internship I. She was able to work with a Special Education class of eleven boys during the extended school year program in her district.

Outside of work and school,

Marissa enjoys spending time with her friends and family and going to the beach or her parents' lake house. She is also very active at her school; she is involved in the Certified Emergency Response Team (CERT), Mural Club, iRun (a girl's running club), Tools for Schools, and Character Education Committee.

Marissa's message to other graduate students in her program is, "It is a lot of work, but you will have so much to bring back to the classroom, like new and innovative classroom exercises." She also mentioned, "It seems like it will take forever, but you will get through it. It will pay off." Her biggest challenge has been balancing time between work, family, friends, and school.

Marissa's education at TCNJ has helped her feel like she is continuously growing as a teacher. It definitely seems that this is the case, as Marissa was just honored with the Teacher of the Year Award at her school in January 2014.

Congratulations and good luck with your semester, Marissa!

## Meet the Students...continued



Introducing Julie Muller! Julie is a graduate student in the Family Nurse Practitioner Program. Currently, she is in her second semester and hopes to graduate in August 2015. Julie previously completed a BS in Health and Exercise Science at TCNJ and a BS in Nursing at Johns Hopkins University. She decided to pursue her master's degree to become a nurse practitioner. She explains, "I wanted to do family practice so I could treat through the lifespan of the individual and really create that relationship with my clients".

Julie chose to attend TCNJ again because of the relationships student build with their professors. Other contributing factors were affordability and the small size of the program.

Julie's favorite course so far focused on pathophysiology. "I find the human body fascinating and all the intricacies of how disease develops and subsequently subsides are at the core of my practice."

Currently, Julie works at a school with disabled and psychiatric children. She enjoys it because "it highlights a different aspect of nursing apart from the bedside." Previously, she worked as a physical therapy aide in Hopewell, NJ.

Julie is a HRSA Nurse Corps Scholarship recipient and member of Sigma Theta Tau International Nursing Honor Society. Outside of school, Julie enjoys reading, going to the beach, and spending time with family, friends, and her dog.

Julie's advice for graduate students is to "go for it!" She explains, "When you put your mind to something, don't give up, and you can accomplish your dreams." Upon graduating, Julie's dream job would be to work in a federally-qualified health care center, where there is either a health professional shortage or low income clients to serve.

Good luck this semester, Julie!



## Mark Your Calendar!

### Fall and Winter Registration

**Begins\*:**

Tuesday, April 1

**Last Day of Spring Classes:**

Friday, May 9

**Spring Commencement:**

Thursday, May 15 - Friday, May 16

***\*It's not too late to register for  
summer, too!***

### Maymester Session:

Monday, May 12 - Friday, May 30

**Memorial Day:**

Monday, May 26 (No Classes)

**Summer Session A:**

Monday, June 2 - Thursday, July 3

**Summer Session B:**

Monday, July 7 - Thursday, August 7

### Graduation Notice

*If you are planning to graduate in May or August, but have not yet applied, please do so immediately via PAWS. If you have questions, please contact Records & Registration at 609-771-2141. A \$35 late fee will apply.*

*Students who, at the end of the spring 2014 semester, will have 7 or fewer credits remaining to complete their program over the summer may participate in the Spring Commencement Ceremony and will graduate in August. Students with more than 7 credits remaining to complete following the end of the spring semester may participate in the May 2015 ceremony.*

*\*Please note: Commencement ceremonies are only held in the month of May.*

**April 7-11 is National Graduate and Professional Student Appreciation Week!**

The Office of Graduate Studies invites you to join us in celebrating the contributions of our graduate students to the intellectual vitality of The College of New Jersey.

Our 3rd annual "Cupcakes and Conversation" event with faculty, plus raffle prizes for students (including Kindles!), is scheduled as follows:

We look forward to seeing you!



**GRADUATE & PROFESSIONAL STUDENT  
APPRECIATION WEEK  
APRIL 7-11**

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 9**

Cupcakes and Conversation with  
Faculty, plus raffle prizes!  
4-5 P.M.  
Education Building, Room 110



For more information or to RSVP, see [www.tcnj.edu/tcnjgrad](http://www.tcnj.edu/tcnjgrad)



## THE COLUMN WORD SEARCH

FNTSDSRTGHNMRCC  
 OANENEHLNCFERRN  
 TEEOOAGAIRFTOIA  
 ENGLISHRLLLOAEEC  
 RETLTTOIEIHUGPH  
 EKALASANSEKDYTL  
 ANGICTTCNRCAPTA  
 DENOITALUCIRTAM  
 I I ENFNHTODEGLVN  
 NURSINGICTERIII  
 GHSATAIWANA EAPR  
 DCPORTUGALT TBLU  
 RSRREWORB NMULOC  
 IOAACIRFAHTUOSI  
 GGLKCGTMLAIUFLA

ROSCOE	BROWER	COLUMN
GRADUATE	EICKHOFF	PORTUGAL
THAILAND	NURSING	ENGLISH
COUNSELING	EDUCATION	READING
VIETNAM	TAIWAN	SPAIN
EGYPT	SOUTH AFRICA	DEGREE
CERTIFICATION	MATRICULATION	LIONS

Good luck!

