

Wheeler's New Faculty/Staff Professional Bios: 20-21

Liz Giancola '04 Upper School Math Teacher



Liz Giancola was one of seven founding teachers at Brooklyn Institute for Liberal Arts, a Title-I public high school in New York City. In addition to teaching algebra, algebra II, and advisory and serving as the head of the math department and the 9th-grade grade-team leader, she worked to center restorative justice within the school. After moving to Spokane, Washington, she joined the Community School, where she facilitated problem-based and inquiry-based mathematics courses. Finally, she returned to

Providence, the city where she was raised. In fact, she attended Wheeler. She earned her BA in Mathematics and MA in Math Education from New York University, and is pursuing an MA in Applied Data Science from the University of Michigan. She is interested in using data to inform education policy. If she looks tired in the morning, blame her son, Malcolm.

Rebecca Ladd Lower School Reading Specialist



When teaching English at the age of 23, Rebecca Ladd couldn't understand why her high school students didn't know who the main character was in the book. This led to a lifetime of studying reading research, learning and practicing methods, and becoming skilled at teaching reading. She has taught intensive, methodical, systematic, structured reading in quite a few schools. Searching for a job which also allows time for her to be an artist (metalwork, painting, fiber arts, natural materials, woodworking) and a classical musician (singer), she has found the community at Wheeler. She wants to apply her Structured Literacy skills to working with all ages who struggle with decoding, encoding, and comprehension. She hopes they will get her absurd sense of

humor. Otherwise, her four dogs will be mad.

Colin Martin
Middle School Teacher



Colin Martin most recently taught in The Sally Borden Program at Friends Academy in Dartmouth, MA. He began his teaching career in Los Angeles with The Princeton Review before becoming a classroom teacher at Lynwood Public Schools. He then taught in the middle school at Chatsworth Hills Academy in Los Angeles, later serving as an administrator there. After moving back to Massachusetts where he lived as a teenager, Colin taught at the Cape Cod Lighthouse

Charter School. A graduate of Carnegie-Mellon University's professional training program, Colin worked in the arts and entertainment field as an actor, director, writer, and producer previous to becoming a teacher. Other background and experience include working as a counselor and trainer at the national Trevor Line, the national Suicide Prevention Center, and the Children's AIDS Program in Boston. Colin is the lucky dad of two sons, both of whom will be attending Wheeler in the coming academic year. Feel free to share some great running routes around Providence with Colin.

Molly Mason
NuVuX Fellow



Molly Mason is a designer, researcher, and educator. Her research examines digital fabrication tools, material processes in the digital age, and the relationship between craft knowledge and computational thinking. Molly received a Masters of Science from the Design and Computation Group from MIT and a Bachelor of Architecture from Pratt Institute, where her thesis “Culture Cultures” was awarded the Lee & Norman Rosenfeld Award for Best Thesis. She has practiced architecture and digital fabrication in NYC for several years and has helped create buildings and installations in multiple cities across the U.S. as well as internationally in China and Israel. Her research has been published as a part of the International Journal of Architectural Computing, as well as in recent Fabricate and IASS conferences. She currently works as a Workshop Specialist at Autodesk's Technology Center in Boston where she acts as a fabrication consultant for innovative research in manufacturing and construction. When not making things for work, she enjoys making things for fun, hiking, cooking, gardening, and learning more about recycling.

Patricia Muumba
Second-grade Teacher



Patricia N. Muumba started her teaching career as a graduate intern at Buckingham Browne and Nichols after her undergraduate studies in architectural design. For as long as she can remember she has wanted to leave the world a little better than she found it. In her opinion, the built environment is one of the most effective ways to make a lasting impact, thus her decision to pursue architecture. She hopes to redefine the spaces in which people acquire knowledge through various futuristic educational design strategies that she continues to investigate in her professional career. This year she will be joining the Wheeler community as a Second Grade teacher where she is excited to learn from her students just as much as she hopes to impart knowledge onto them. When she is not teaching or designing, she is running her organization Engage Inspire Empower (EIE) that supports immigrants through the transition to the American education system and workforce through various workshops and mentorship.

Dylan Ryder
Hirsch/Alperin Design-Innovate-Build Lab Director



Dylan is returning to Rhode Island after 10 years in New York City where he was teaching computer science and engineering to elementary and middle school students at The School at Columbia University. His teaching career began as a volunteer with the US Peace Corps, where he taught computing courses to high school students in the Pacific island nation of Samoa. Always pursuing innovative pedagogy, Dylan has published articles on teaching computer programming to young students, and has delivered workshops on integrating computer science and engineering into K-12 education for ISTE, ASEE, CSTA, World Maker Faire, and at schools and universities around the country. He is also a proud husband, and a father of two curious, excitable toddlers. Dylan is an enthusiastic flower gardener and sports fan, but is admittedly not a good source of expert insight on either of those two topics.

Emily Serotta
Performing Arts



Emily Serotta is a frequent musical director, vocal coach and guest conductor across New England and the NYC metropolitan area. She earned a B.M. in Music Education from Bucknell University and a M.M. in Vocal Performance from Hunter College. Emily began her teaching career at Saint Ann's School in Brooklyn, New York, where she taught K-12 general music, lower and middle school chorus, and started a high school a cappella program. After ten years, she

and her husband relocated to Rhode Island where she assumed the position of Performing Arts Department Chair at Rocky Hill Country Day School. In addition to her teaching, Emily's operatic and musical theater career has taken her all over the United States and Europe, and she has performed in venues such as Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center and The Brooklyn Academy of Music. These days, however, she's mostly performing lullabies to her baby son, Ries, who was born on New Year's Eve.

Lisa Tartaglione
First-grade Teacher



Lisa grew up in Providence Rhode Island, and comes to Wheeler after working in New York City the past 14 years. She attended Syracuse University and majored in Inclusive Elementary and Special Education. Lisa then attended New York University and received a dual Masters in Early Childhood and Special Education. She began her teaching career in Brooklyn public schools as a special education teacher in a variety of settings. The past three years she taught in the Gifted and Talented program. Lisa is thrilled to be back home with her family and is looking forward to being part of the Wheeler community. Beginning this year Lisa will be teaching First Grade. When she is not teaching in the classroom she

loves spending time with her dog Sachi and her two nephews. If her name seems familiar it may be that you remember her brother Jason '04, or know her sister-in-law Amelie Granito Tartaglione '03.

Gladys Vasquez
Upper School Spanish Teacher



Gladys Vasquez had what she likes to call a transnational upbringing, spending her childhood in Guatemala and Rhode Island. She also considers herself a lifelong learner. After completing her undergraduate degree at Brown University she continued on to the Brown Graduate School. While completing her master's degree in Hispanic Studies she began teaching Spanish at Rhode Island College. That semester of teaching along with her passion for literature made her think that she wanted to be a college professor, so off she went to UMASS Amherst to get her PhD in Latin American Literature and Culture. Throughout this time she taught Spanish at UMASS, Trinity College, URI, and Bryant University. During the final reclusive process of writing her dissertation she discovered that she did not want to be a college professor after all and that her passion was in teaching and not so much the research. Before joining the Wheeler community Gladys taught and advised for four years at Worcester Academy, led the Latinx affinity group, and was involved in Equity and Inclusion work on campus. She enjoys early morning walks with her one year old son, family dance parties in the living room, food, literature, travel, and art.

Candace Williams
Fourth-grade Teacher



(pc: Heath Antonio)

Candace Williams grew up in Seattle, WA and moved to New York City after earning her Master of Arts in Education at Stanford University. She spent a few years teaching K-4 science at Mott Haven Academy before turning her attention to tech startups. Candace built the social media presence of Fortune 500 companies at VaynerMedia, and launched new online education programs at General Assembly, before helping BlogTalkRadio get acquired. She returned to the classroom to teach sixth grade humanities, coach robotics, facilitate GSA, and dungeon master months-long Dungeons and Dragons campaigns at Little Red School House and Elizabeth Irwin High School (LREI). Candace is an award-winning poet whose full-length manuscript was a finalist in the 2018 National Poetry Series. She has read her poems and delivered lectures at UC Davis, the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, the New School, and the New Museum, among other venues. Candace is looking forward to sharing her love of literature, technology, and Liverpool Football Club with fourth graders at Wheeler.

19-20 Mid-year Additions

Michael Geller

Senior Associate Director of College Counseling



Mike Geller started at The Wheeler School in January of 2020. Prior to joining the Wheeler College Counseling Office, he was the Director of College Counseling at Worcester Academy for the past two years. Prior to his college counseling work, Mike spent 20 plus years in college admissions; Mike spent 16 years as the Associate Director of Admissions at Wheaton College (his alma mater) and 6 years as the New England Regional Director of Admissions at The George Washington University. Mike has a long history with Wheeler as he was the admissions representative for Wheeler at both Wheaton and GW. (Fun fact: Mike admitted Sean Kelly, Wheeler's Director of Athletics to Wheaton!) While Mike grew up in Maine (and will always

be a Mainer at heart) he has lived in the greater Providence area since his senior year in college and loves his adopted state of Rhode Island. Mike is able to give directions based on former Benny's locations and is often seen with a Dunkin coffee in hand. Mike enjoys travel, cooking, golf, skiing, and good conversations. He is looking forward to continuing to get to know members of the Wheeler community.

Nicole Peters Sisson

Director of Annual Giving



Nicole Peters Sisson started at The Wheeler School in October of 2019 as the Director of Annual Giving. Prior to joining the Wheeler Advancement Team, she was the Executive Director of Annual Giving and Parent Engagement at the University of Rhode Island Foundation, where she also received her bachelor of science and master of arts degrees. Nicole's fundraising background began at Brown University, where she held various roles in the Advancement Office for more than 18 years - first with the Brown Sports Foundation raising money for student-athletes, and later moving into parent fundraising.

Nicole believes strongly in the importance of education and the role it plays in a student's life, which is why she has dedicated her career to asking people to support the mission of each organization for which she has worked. Nicole looks forward to getting to know the Wheeler community and hearing everyone's Wheeler story.

**Deana Tineo,
Coordinator of Family Engagement**



Deana Tineo grew up in Serbia and lived in Cyprus, Spain, and the UK before moving to the USA to study. She pursued her passion for teaching Marketing and Business at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, Rhode Island College and Wheaton College. After her children started elementary school, she became an involved volunteer at their brand-new charter school. In addition to serving on the school's Board of Directors, she also helped establish and chair the Parent Association. During this time her interests in supporting school families, organizing events, and facilitating school community connections, grew into a career-changing idea. She is very excited about the opportunity to work with the Wheeler community in her new role as the Coordinator of Family Engagement. After many years of living in different countries, Deana was happy to settle in Providence with her husband Hansel and their 3 daughters. The oldest, Isabela, will be joining 6th grade at Wheeler. Deana's family is full of pet-lovers and the current lineup includes a cat, a leopard gecko, a hermit crab, a beta fish and his buddy the snail, a praying mantis, and two wrens who made a nest in their yard. The family is currently dreaming of adding a dog to the household.

**Sara Porreca,
Advancement Associate in the Office of Advancement**



Originally from Northeastern Pennsylvania, Sara found her way to Rhode Island through the vessel of education. She attended Johnson & Wales University where she majored in International Hotel and Tourism Management. Upon graduation she accepted a position at Collette, a large tour operator located in Pawtucket, Rhode Island. During her time here she was not only introduced to different cultures around the world but also to her husband, Jon. In 2017 their daughter Ella was born and a new adventure began. After a decade of working in the Travel Industry she decided to dive into the nonprofit sector and discovered the field of Education. Prior to coming to Wheeler, she worked at Brown University. It was here where she was introduced to the world of Advancement in a University setting. She spent just over a year gathering as much knowledge as she could before landing at her new home for many years to come, The Wheeler School's Office of Advancement. Both Jon and Sara are most excited for their daughter, Ella, to attend Wheeler's first Nursery class at the Farm in September.

Teachers Moving to New Grades or New Jobs:
Val Gallagher - 5th grade
Kim Gustafson - 2nd grade
David Michel - History teacher/Cityside Faculty