Welcome to the Spring 2015 edition of The Bridge, the biannual newsletter of the Center for Gifted Education at William & Mary. In this issue of The Bridge, we will share our activities over the past 6 months, highlight two of our program’s alumni, and set the stage for the future. Preparing these introductory comments is always a great joy, as it reminds me of the important work of the Center employees. They are such a fine group of professionals who run the gamut from being undergraduate students, graduate students, and doctoral students to professional staff and directors. They plan effectively and improve their work from year to year. It is an honor to work with them and to share an overview of their hard work.

We are fortunate to have Drs. Kim Chandler and Jennifer Robins, at the Center as they have created a formidable team in the production of curriculum materials. For more than 2 years they have assessed, imagined, designed, coordinated, and edited a number of newly created curriculum materials. In this issue, you will learn of their most recent successes. With many of the materials developed by the Center, professional educators collaborated with us to bring their expertise to bear. We are quite appreciative of these fine people for their dedication and commitment to gifted students. I also want to thank Dr. Jennifer Jolly for introducing us to the group of professional educators she recommended to help us develop the curriculum materials focused on Common Core State Standards for Mathematics and English Language Arts.

Dr. Jennifer Cross oversees the research at the Center. In this issue of The Bridge, she shares some exciting research that reveals our wonderful relationship with the Centre for Talented Youth Ireland (CTY Ireland) and its Director, Dr. Colm O’Reilly. More specifically, she describes a nationwide study of the teachers and principals of Ireland and their perceptions about gifted education and gifted students. A national launch of the report of this study was conducted that engendered considerable national media attention on both the study and its results.

Dr. Jennifer Robins edited a book wherein the directors of the Center for Gifted Education at William & Mary and CTY Ireland at Dublin City University collaborated about gifted education in their respective countries. A book launch was held at Dublin City University with Drs. Jennifer Robins, Jennifer Cross, and Mihyeon Kim in attendance.

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There are many new curriculum materials that have recently been produced or that are in production at the Center for Gifted Education. I would like to highlight the items that were recently released or that will be available within the next few months. Because many of these items are still in production, please note that titles are subject to change.

Kendall Hunt
http://www.kendallhunt.com

The following units will be available from Kendall Hunt by the end of the summer:

A World of Wild, Wacky, Wonderful Words is a literature unit for use with students in grades 1 and 2 that is designed to engage primary students with high abilities in the verbal domain in challenging reading, writing, and interpretation skills in the language arts. It reflects the need among young gifted students for a greater exposure to higher level thinking activities sooner in their school years than other students. In addition, the unit specifically focuses on literature that utilizes extensive figurative language.

The major content of the unit is the analysis of the language system organized around the joyful study of wordplay within an exploration of the language system. Heavy emphasis is placed on comparing and contrasting various elements of the language system. A secondary content emphasis is the role of context in understanding the language devices including play-on-words in riddles, jokes, and verse as students discover differences and similarities in patterns of alliteration, rhyme, synonyms, antonyms, homonyms, palindromes, tongue twisters, and the sounds of onomatopoeia, with a corresponding focus on vocabulary study. Third, the content includes an introduction to a model for opinion writing. Students interact with words through an investigation of the parts of speech and parts of a sentence as an integral part of the written language system.

Explore, Discover, Reveal is designed for use with students in grades 3 and 4. This is a literature unit organized around the idea that our world has many exciting places and ideas to explore. Using From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler as a key novel, students learn that exploration can be done both physically and cognitively. Explore, Discover, Reveal helps students to realize that exploration and new discoveries affect people as well as the world around them.

Examining exploration as a concept involves identifying the characteristics of both external and internal exploration. Generalizations about the concept expand the students’ understanding of the importance of adopting the mindset of an explorer in order to get the most of their daily lives.

As literature, history, music, and art are studied, students understand that each of us explores in many different ways. When people begin to envision themselves as explorers, they engage in their experiences in a different way.

The American Dream is for use in grades 9 and 10. It explores how humans’ quest for peace, prosperity, and progress leads them toward a sometimes-elusive goal. The unit gives an overview of the American Dream relative to various individuals, groups, and regions. Students will delve into Arthur Miller’s commentary about the American Dream in Death of a Salesman; Erik
Curriculum, Continued

Larson’s description of a dream city in *The Devil in the White City: Murder, Magic, and Madness at the Fair That Changed America*; F. Scott Fitzgerald’s world of the 1920s in *The Great Gatsby*; and John Steinbeck’s examination of life in the Dust Bowl era in *The Grapes of Wrath*.

Through classroom activities and the study of rich, challenging literature, students will learn that pursuit of the American Dream can cause joy and despair as well as other emotional and physical reactions in humans. Exploring that journey through both current and historic documents, literature, art, photography, and music will provide students with an avenue to compare and contrast their own ideas about the American Dream with those of peers, communities, and society.

**Prufrock Press**

[http://www.prufrock.com](http://www.prufrock.com)

The following units have recently been released from Prufrock:

*Challenging Common Core Math Lessons: Activities and Extensions for Gifted and Advanced Learners in Grade 3* was released this spring. The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for Mathematics are curriculum standards that describe the mathematics skills and concepts students need to develop for success in higher education and the 21st-century workplace.

This book provides gifted and advanced learners challenging enrichment activities related to the CCSS for Mathematics. The 21 lessons cover mathematics content for grade 3, including operations and algebraic thinking, numbers and operations in Base Ten, fractions, measurement and data, and geometry. Each lesson includes a teacher page that outlines the CCSS and mathematical practices covered, estimated time, key terms, materials, and objectives; a challenging activity to allow students to explore the concepts in depth; practice problems; and an assessment similar to CCSS-based grade-level standardized assessments.

*Challenging Common Core Math Lessons: Activities and Extensions for Gifted and Advanced Learners in Grade 4* was also released this spring. This book, similar in structure to the grade 3 unit, includes 24 lessons that cover math content for grade 4, including operations and algebraic thinking, numbers and operations in Base Ten, fractions, measurement and data, and geometry.

**Focus on the Common Core State Standards**

The Center for Gifted Education is currently developing activity books correlated to the Common Core State Standards. Four mathematics books, one each for grades 3–6, will include enrichment and extension activities correlated to the standards; the two that have been released are described above. Books for grades 5 and 6 will be released in Fall 2015. Six English language arts books, one each for grades 3–8, will be released in 2016. Prufrock Press will publish all 10 books.

**Opportunities to Participate in Curriculum Efficacy Research**

The Center continues to publish curriculum materials in various content areas. We are preparing to conduct several research studies related to the efficacy of some of the new materials (humanities units for middle school and CCSS mathematics and English language arts activity books). If you are a gifted education program coordinator or district administrator and would like to investigate the possibility of having your school district participate in a research study, please contact me directly (klchan@wm.edu).

**Professional Development for Curriculum Materials**

Center staff members are available to provide tailored professional development for implementation of the William & Mary curriculum materials. We will design sessions focusing on specific unit implementation, trainer of trainers models, or other workshops related to the curriculum materials. Please contact Dr. Jennifer Robins (jrobins@wm.edu) for additional information or requests.
The Center for Gifted Education has been working closely with the Centre for Talented Youth Ireland (CTY Ireland; https://www.dcu.ie/ctyi/index.shtml) over the past several years on a variety of projects. In one research project, we surveyed more than 800 Irish teachers and principals to get an understanding of their beliefs about giftedness and gifted education and to learn about what is being done in schools for gifted students (J. R. Cross, T. L. Cross, O’Reilly, & Mammadov, 2014). We gained a great deal of valuable information about gifted education in Ireland through the study, and some of it may be helpful to educators on this side of the Atlantic.

One important lesson learned from the study concerned the importance to gifted students of teachers’ confidence in their teaching abilities. Greater confidence in teachers’ general teaching abilities was associated with a number of positive trends. We used the Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2014) to measure teachers’ confidence. The study revealed that teachers who were more confident in their teaching abilities were more likely to use a variety of instructional strategies and to create a positive classroom climate. These findings highlight the importance of teacher confidence in the success of gifted students’ education.
In 2001, which assesses three factors: Efficacy in Student Engagement (e.g., “How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in school work?”), Efficacy in Instructional Strategies (e.g., “To what extent can you use a variety of assessment strategies?”), and Efficacy in Classroom Management (e.g., “How much can you do to control disruptive behavior in the classroom?”). In combination with a number of other self-reported beliefs and practices, the TSES offered a useful perspective on the 369 teachers who completed the scale.

Although differences were small in most cases, teachers who had greater confidence in their own teaching abilities were more likely than those with less confidence to be supportive of special services for gifted children. They also tended to have beliefs that are more supportive of gifted education. For example, among teachers who were less likely to think gifted students “will do fine in a regular classroom” and that they do “require modifications to the regular curriculum to ensure they are challenged and learn new material,” confidence in teaching abilities was higher. Teachers were asked how many (All, Many, Some, Few, or None) gifted students have the 31 characteristics we presented to them—from having an extensive vocabulary to being socially isolated. Those who generally considered Many gifted students to have the listed characteristics tended to have a higher sense of efficacy than teachers who believed Few gifted students have these characteristics.

This suggests that teachers with greater confidence will be more likely to recognize the gifted students in their classes. Teachers who felt more confident in their abilities to manage the classroom, engage their students, and use effective instructional strategies were more likely to modify the curriculum and offer challenge and choice for both average and gifted students. This did not mean, however, that greater differentiation would be occurring in their classrooms. Gifted and average students in these classrooms would receive about the same amount of curricular modification and challenge. There would be more frequent use of these teaching practices, however, in the classrooms of teachers with greater confidence, particularly in their use of instructional strategies.

In Ireland, we have seen a relationship between teachers’ confidence in their general teaching abilities and beliefs and practices that can be beneficial to gifted students. Others have reported that teachers’ sense of efficacy is critical to differentiation of instruction for gifted students (e.g., Dixon, Yssel, McConnell, & Hardin, 2014; VanTassel-Baska & Stambaugh, 2005), but the picture painted by this study of Irish educators suggests that it may have an even broader impact, from support of special services to recognition of gifted students.

Boosting teachers’ confidence in their ability to manage their classrooms, motivate students, and effectively use a variety of instructional strategies may help gifted students be recognized and advocated for. Although we would like all teachers to receive professional development in gifted education, perhaps your support for the development of basic teaching practices can have the desired effect of improving the learning environment for gifted students.


Saturday/Summer Enrichment Programs

The Center for Gifted Education offers the Saturday/Summer Enrichment Programs (SEP) for K–9 gifted students. The Saturday Enrichment Program is an academically challenging program with an emphasis on inquiry-based learning that allows students to explore specialized areas of science, mathematics, humanities, and arts. Students enjoy attending SEP as they face academic challenges, socialize with peers, and explore interest-based topics. SEP provides gifted students opportunities to apply process skills in inquiry fields and problem solving in new and exciting ways.

The Spring 2015 SEP program was held on the William & Mary campus during February and March, and the program was very successful in meeting the needs of gifted students. The evaluations from both parents and students demonstrated that the program produced a high level of student and parent satisfaction across all disciplinary areas served.

The Summer SEP will be held during weeks of July 6–10 and July 13–17, 2015, with many exciting and academically challenging courses. In addition, the Fall 2015 SEP program will be held in Richmond area, and many exciting courses are currently in the works. The Fall SEP serves gifted students in grades 1–5. For more information on SEP, please visit http://education.wm.edu/centers/cfge/precollegiate/index.php.

Summer Enrichment Program Dates
July 6–10, 2015 (Session I)
July 13–17, 2015 (Session II)

Saturday Enrichment Program Dates
Richmond: November 7–December 12, 2015 (5 Saturdays)

Focusing on the Future

The Center hosted its annual Focusing on the Future (FOF) event on February 7, 2015. This program is geared toward students in grades 6–12 who are interested in a wide range of careers relating to science, technology, engineering, mathematics, arts, and humanities. For these students, the Center recruited several guest speakers from various career paths. The speakers were from William & Mary, the Williamsburg community, and other neighboring communities. William & Mary faculty and professionals from off campus offered the 50 student sessions, 15 parent sessions, and 8 counselor sessions.

Also, undergraduate students shared information about college life, and representatives from different high school programs shared their program information during lunch sessions. Tours of the campus were offered at the end of the day. A total of 402 people participated in the program this year, and those who
completed the evaluation forms held the program in high esteem with many positive comments.

International Precollegiate Programs

The Center for Gifted Education provides international educational outreach through curriculum training, professional development, and academic enrichment programming. The international program is a collaborative program with the Chungcheongnamdo Office of Education in Korea.

Nobel Project Group From Korea

The Korean Nobel Project’s goal is to “to stimulate the minds and develop the skills of Korea’s future global leaders.” Educators and students travel to Williamsburg, VA, to exchange ideas about teaching and learning through a variety of science and math curricular conceptual learning activities.

This year was the fifth year the Center has hosted this group, and we were excited to have 27 students, three teachers, and three administrators participating. In January of 2015, these students and teachers arrived in Williamsburg for the intensive weeklong program. The students attended classes a total of 6 hours per day for 6 days to gain in-depth knowledge about their selected topic.

Instructors engaged students in hands-on exercises to help illustrate the major issues affecting the ecology of the Chesapeake Bay. After intense days of study and research, students boarded buses to visit the Virginia Aquarium, where they were graced with snowflakes in Virginia Beach and got to bravely stick their hands in a pool of circling stingrays; Jamestown, where students sat in one of the oldest churches in the country and experienced the thrilling, albeit deafening, sound of a colonial firearm; and the oldest dairy farm in the country, and one of the only farms left in the area, where students learned the complicated process of dairy farm milk production in America.

The teachers were interested in learning more about the Integrated Curriculum Model (ICM) developed by Joyce VanTassel-Baska and observed classes to see how educators can facilitate problem-based learning with the ICM.

Camp Launch

Camp Launch, a summer camp for gifted middle-school students from low-income backgrounds that is operated by the Center for Gifted Education, has been awarded a $250,000 grant per year from the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation. The Jack Kent Cooke Foundation is a private, independent foundation dedicated to advancing the education of promising students who have financial need. This summer is the fourth year of the program facilitated by the funding from the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation.

Seventh- and eighth-grade students from 13 school districts in Eastern and Central Virginia are eligible to participate in Camp Launch. Students are selected to participate through their local school districts. We invited back 37 rising eighth graders, who participated in the camp as seventh-grade students last year, and 49 rising seventh graders were selected by their school districts. A new program for ninth graders who attended the previous two years of Camp Launch allow them to apply to be Junior Teaching Assistants (Jr.
TAs)—four males and four females—attended the second week of camp, supporting teachers in the academic and enrichment classes and carrying out an artistic project.

The components of the Camp Launch program, including its STEM academic courses, personal development courses, and weekend activities, are heavily focused on the career development of students in STEM areas. As the program takes place on a college campus, its students get a chance to envision themselves in college.

The Personal Development course emphasizes the need for planning, which campers take to heart. All campers have described the need to begin planning early and recognized the need to make short- and long-term goals. Planning for the future is “important because you need to know what you want to do and how you can achieve it,” as one camper put it.

The Center for Gifted Education experienced considerable success at the 2014 National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) conference held in Baltimore, MD, November 13–16, 2014. Dr. Tracy L. Cross, Executive Director of the Center and Jody and Layton Smith Professor of Psychology and Gifted Education, led the conference as President of NAGC. Dr. Kimberley L. Chandler, Director of Curriculum and Clinical Assistant Professor at the Center, serves on the NAGC Board of Directors and was the recipient of the 2014 NAGC Early Leader Award.

Dr. Joyce VanTassel-Baska, Professor Emerita and former Executive Director of the Center, was selected as the Legacy Series honoree. The Conceptual Foundations Network recognized and interviewed her during a special session entitled Curriculum, Being and Becoming With Joyce VanTassel-Baska.

Dr. Lori Anderson, an alumna of the Educational Policy Planning and Leadership (EPPL) program with an emphasis in gifted education, received the second-place award in the doctoral dissertation competition. Paige Hendricks, a current doctoral student in EPPL program, received the 2014 Professional Development Network award. Reginald Johns, a current doctoral student in EPPL program, was awarded second place for Completed Research at the Doctoral Level at the 2014 Graduate Student Research Gala by the NAGC Research and Evaluation Network. His topic was Sources of Positive Self-Efficacy for African American Women in STEM.

The Center’s mathematics unit Moving Through Dimensions was the recipient of a 2014 NAGC Curriculum Studies Award. The unit, which was written by Dana Johnson, was one of several curriculum units that were selected to be shared with educators as models of exemplary curriculum for use with gifted students.

In addition, numerous Center faculty members and graduate students made presentations during the conference representing William & Mary’s School of Education and Center for Gifted Education very well.
The 20th annual National Curriculum Network Conference (NCNC) was held March 12–13, 2015. It was a wonderful time for presenters and participants to network with each other and spend time together discussing how to better gifted education for our brightest learners. We had 39 presentations from more than 55 professionals.

Our two keynote speakers were Dr. Julie Dingle Swanson, Professor at the College of Charleston, and Dr. Karen B. Rogers, Professor at the University of St. Thomas. Dr. Swanson spoke on “Uncovering Talent: Key Influences in Identifying and Developing Potential,” and Dr. Rogers shared her thoughts on “Just What Do We Mean When We Say Our Practices Are Research-Based? A Guide to Navigating the Rocky Shoals of Claims That ‘The Research Says.’” We were honored to have these gifted education experts speak at NCNC. Be on the lookout for a call for proposals for next year’s NCNC this fall.

Professional Summer Institute

The Professional Summer Institute will be held June 29–30, 2015 (please note that this is a Monday and Tuesday). The Institute provides teachers and administrators with the knowledge and skills to design and use high-quality curriculum within effective programs for advanced learners. Participants select one strand of study for the 2-day institute and receive intensive training in a particular area. This year, we are excited to offer the following sessions:

- Center for Gifted Education Language Arts Curriculum (Mary Ann Yedinak)
- Center for Gifted Education Social Studies Curriculum (Molly Sandling)
- Center for Gifted Education Research-Based Teaching Models (Dr. Ann Colorado)
- Navigating the Information Highway: Strategies for Incorporating Informational Text in the Classroom (Magdalena Fitzsimmons)
- Designing Challenging Math Activities for the CCSS Elementary Classroom (Jess McKowen Patti and Molly Bryan Talbot)
- Supporting the Psychological Well-Being of Gifted Children and Adolescents (Dr. Tracy L. Cross and Dr. Jennifer Riedl Cross)
- Creativity and Learning (Dr. Mihyeon Kim)
- Designing Curriculum for Underserved Gifted Populations: Bridging Research and Practice (Dr. Kimberley L. Chandler and Dr. Jennifer H. Robins)

Registration is now open. Please note: Sessions are subject to cancellation should minimum numbers not be met. Those registered in sessions that do not make will be notified no later than June 1, 2015 and will be given the opportunity to select another session. In the event that another session is not desired, participants will receive a full refund. Please register early to avoid class cancellations! More information can be found on the Center’s website (cfge.wm.edu) under Professional Development.

Advanced Placement Summer Institute

We are also pleased to offer our Advanced Placement Summer Institute (APSI). Due to the
Where Are They Now? 
Alumni Features

Since the inception of the graduate program in gifted education at William & Mary, many individuals have had the opportunity to work at the Center for Gifted Education in assistantships as they pursued master’s and doctoral degrees. Other students have served the Center as conference presenters, teachers in the Saturday and Summer Enrichment Program (SEP), or as curriculum writers. In each issue of The Bridge, we include an article about a master’s degree graduate and one about a doctoral degree graduate. The alumni featured in this issue are Megan Balduf and Dr. Steve Coxon.

An Interview With Megan Balduf, Master’s Degree Program Graduate

When did you graduate? 
What was your degree?

I graduated in 2006 with a Master of Arts in Education with a concentration in gifted education.

Describe your career path since completing your master’s degree.

Since graduating, I’ve been working in a middle school gifted center in Fairfax County, VA. I’ve been happily ensconced in my eighth-grade classroom, preparing my students for what lies ahead. In 2011, I earned my National Board certification in Early Adolescence English Language Arts. I’ve taken on a variety of leadership roles at my school, ranging from leading the mentoring program for first-year teachers to being the chair of the English department.

Did you have an assistantship at the CFGE? If so, describe your assignments there and how you have used the skills acquired in your subsequent positions.

During my time at the Center for Gifted Education, I worked on Project Clarion, which required an understanding of both gifted children’s needs and curriculum planning. Although I’d always planned lessons for my students before
Alumni Features, Continued

my degree, the deeply engaged work that I created for Project Clarion carried over to what I do with my students now. I’d never attempted such an all-encompassing unit plan before, but now it’s an everyday facet of my life.

What was most memorable to you about your experiences in the master’s program?

One of the most memorable experiences wasn’t a single experience but rather the feeling I had while in the program. There was a sense of coming home. This wasn’t a teacher prep program; we were all already educators looking to expand our reach with our students. Being with other teachers who wanted to challenge their students, who wanted new ways to reach children, was exhilarating. The coursework helped me become a better teacher and better understand my own educational needs.

Are there any of thoughts you’d like to share?

This program opened more doors than I could have ever imagined when I applied. While job hunting, administrators admitted contacting me in part because I had a degree appropriate for gifted students. One of the doctoral candidates I met while working toward the master’s degree introduced me to the National Board Certification process, which in turn opened more doors for me.

Even if you don’t teach gifted kids or see yourself as a teacher of gifted kids, the tools and strategies you’ll get from the gifted education program are invaluable. It’s hard to learn what you learn and not have it impact any kid you teach. You’ll see different ways to engage and challenge all learners, not just gifted ones. This degree is absolutely worth it.

An Interview With Dr. Steve Coxon, Ph.D. Doctoral Degree Program Graduate

Describe your career path since completing your doctorate.

I accepted a professorship at Maryville University in St. Louis before finishing my dissertation. I recently received early tenure and promotion to associate professor. I also serve as the director of programs in gifted education at Maryville. This includes the graduate gifted education program, two grant-funded programs, and the Maryville Summer Science and Robotics Program for High Ability Students, which arose from my dissertation study. The latter program has grown to offer 76 courses in all areas of science, technology, engineering, art, and math (STEAM) with a focus on robotics. It now employees about 50 faculty and staff and serves about 500 children and teens, including 50 students from poverty on full-ride scholarships. It serves as my primary research vehicle looking at ways to develop creativity and spatial ability in children.

I have directed the Maryville Young Scholars Program for 5 years, generating more than $530,000 in grants and gifts. The program now serves 120 high-ability children from groups traditionally underrepresented in gifted education from elementary schools from Fergusson and St. Louis. It serves as a scaffolded pipeline from kindergarten to prepare students over their elementary years to enter middle school gifted programs. The program has resulted in a state pilot
alternative-identification policy and is radically improving the educational trajectory of participating students.

My newest grant-funded program is just ramping up: The Children using Robotics for Engineering, Science, Technology, and Math (CREST-M) program. CREST-M will result in math curricula that engage diverse children in real-world science and engineering problems through robotics. It involves a controlled study of the first unit with 80 children and 18 teachers this summer.

I participate in several areas of service both in Missouri and nationally. I was recently appointed to the Advisory Council on the Education of Gifted and Talented Children, which provides the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and State Board with policy recommendations. I also write the column “Scientifically Speaking” for Teaching for High Potential and am the book review editor for Roeper Review.

Did you have an assistantship at the CFGE? If so, describe your assignments there and how you have used the skills acquired in your subsequent positions.

I did have an assistantship. I had the honor of serving as Joyce VanTassel-Baska’s last research assistant before her retirement, as well as Tracy Cross’s first research assistant when he took the helm at the Center.

With Joyce, I served as reference editor for two books along with numerous other projects; I learned APA style fairly well. I came in just as Project Clarion was wrapping up and participated in the final revisions of several units. I also conducted professional development workshops about Project Clarion all over Virginia. From observing Joyce, I also learned the value of time on task. Joyce wakes up early while I stay up late, but her message was the same: To finish papers and grant proposals, one must apply bottom to chair and fingers to keyboard with no distractions. Most importantly, I have taken up her call to serve gifted children from poverty as evidenced in the aforementioned projects, especially the Maryville Young Scholars Program. I continue to depend on Joyce as a mentor.

With Tracy, I served as assistant editor for Journal for the Education of the Gifted (JEG). I learned to control my own perfectionism in this position. As the author and reviewer point of contact for JEG, I saw that even the best published professors made mistakes and had room to grow. Papers will never be perfect; ultimately, one must submit. I see so many bright people crippled by perfectionism. I tell my graduate students that there is no such thing as perfect. Write it, revise it, submit it. Whether for a class, a potential grant funder, or a journal, a manuscript shouldn’t stay in limbo. Failure happens. Pick yourself up. Revise and resubmit.

Tracy is also a great mentor. He quietly empowers those around him and seeks the thoughts of all stakeholders, including graduate students. He provided advice on grant writing, finding the right position, and so much more.

What was most memorable to you about your experiences in the doctoral program?

Joyce’s festschrift reception, where so many well-known gifted education scholars came together to honor her life’s work. Interviewing Tracy with other graduate students over lunch when he was applying to direct the Center. Having Joyce tell me she’d like to see me write a publishable paper with only a few
days before the deadline. Almost winning a quiz night at the Green Leafe with a group of doctoral students from an advanced statistics course only to be destroyed by undergraduates when the topics turned to popular culture. Too many memories to choose one!

What advice would you give to someone who is considering pursuing a doctorate related to gifted education?

Quit your day job. It wasn’t easy to leave my fourth-grade classroom and to live on just my wife’s income and small graduate stipend. We had to make a lot of sacrifices during those years in graduate school. However, I completed my Ph.D. fairly quickly and learned so much during my assistantship at the Center. In retrospect, I was being hothoused for the work I do now. I was able to participate in research, policy recommendations, grant projects, professional development, summer programs, publications, and curriculum revision at the Center as well as to focus on my studies and publish while still a graduate student. My time at the Center made a tremendous positive impact on my life and career.

Recent Research

Dr. Jennifer Riedl Cross, Dr. Colm O’Reilly, Dr. Mi hyeon Kim, Sakhavat Mammadov, and Dr. Tracy L. Cross were recently published in High Ability Studies. In a first-of-its-kind cross-cultural study of American and Irish gifted students, the researchers looked at how social behaviors and beliefs were associated with self-concepts. In brief, when students in both countries denied they were gifted, despite being identified as such, or when they believed their giftedness does not impact their friendships, they had less positive beliefs about themselves. Being active in extracurricular activities in the U.S. sample and helping one’s peers in the Irish sample were associated with positive self-concept. A few free copies of the article are available to be downloaded here: http://www.tandfonline.com/eprint/htejpIFBwR8sFUdpmdvx/full.

Executive Director, Continued

Since the Center’s beginning 27 years ago, our precollegiate programs have served tens of thousands of students. Dr. Mihyeon Kim shares her perspective of the programs conducted in the last several months. As you will notice, Dr. Kim’s work provides meaningful opportunities for gifted students from primary through high school. These include the Saturday and Summer Enrichment Programs, Focusing on the Future, and Camp Launch. She also coordinates a program that brings the highest achieving middle school students in math and science in Korea to our Center for a week. Teachers and administrators also participate in this program, which is in its fifth year.

Complementing these programs are our two Virginia Governor’s School Programs. Dr. Margie Greenfield administers these programs that provide month-long mentorships for students at either the Virginia Institute of Marine Science or the National Institute of Aerospace.

The Center has offered professional development since day one of its existence. This summer we host our Summer Institute by offering numerous 2-day intensive training sessions. The complete list is provided in this issue. We also hold training for teachers who teach Advanced Placement (AP) courses. Our program has expanded to approximately 500 teachers across three separate weeks of courses. There is still time to register should you wish to participate in either of these offerings.

One of our most popular sections of The Bridge is where we highlight our alumni. In this issue we catch up with Megan Balduf and Dr. Steve Coxon. It is great to hear how each of them has become such highly productive educators working on behalf of students with gifts and talents.

In a final comment about the Center and its work, this past November I served my final term as the President of NAGC at its annual convention. It was held in Baltimore, MD. The professionals making up the Center for Gifted Education helped sponsor the event, staffed informational tables in the exhibit hall, presented numerous times, made important talks, served on the board, and conceptualized and co-sponsored an 11-university reception. Dozens of our alumni were in attendance and important work was done. Old friends reunited, and new friends were made. Several of our Center’s associated personnel, including Dr. Joyce VanTassel-Baska, Dr. Kim Chandler, Dr. Lori Andersen, Paige Hendricks, and Reggie Johns, were honored. Dana Johnson also garnered an NAGC award for curriculum. In sum, the hard work of professionals associated with Center for Gifted Education was widely recognized during the 61st Annual NAGC convention.

I am personally excited to note that I will have the opportunity to further our relationship with CTY Ireland by accepting a Fulbright Scholarship to conduct research with Dr. Colm O’Reilly at Dublin City University in Dublin, Ireland. I will be there between the months of September 2015 and February 2016. This opportunity comes as an extension of the past 4 years of work among the professionals of the two Centers. I am honored to have this opportunity and to be sponsored by the Fulbright Foundation, CTY Ireland, and William & Mary.

I have only scratched the surface in providing this overview of Center activities and the people who make everything happen. Should you like to learn more about any aspects of our work, please contact us. We would love to hear from you.

Dr. Tracy L. Cross
Executive Director