

(ms)²

Director's Update

As we enter autumn, Phillips Academy is bustling with activity. The campus energy reminds me of when the 107 scholars excitedly returned to Andover in June for the 45th summer of (MS)². You can read about some of the 2022 highlights below, as a preview of our new (MS)² Impact webpage, which we plan to release next month – stay tuned for updates from us!

Warmly,
Carolyn M. Zimmer
(MS)² Interim Director



Scholars Return

With COVID-19 shifting from a pandemic to an endemic, (MS)² resumed in-person learning and returned to its traditional residential life model. (MS)² scholars once again joined over 500 Summer Session students from around the world for All School Meetings, clubs, meals, afternoon activities, and weekend fun. Limited covid cases and positive campus health data enabled us to move quickly to an open campus with mask

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The return to shared community - after two years of living through a pandemic – did, however, pose challenges. Students had to re-learn how to reside in close proximity with others, navigate differences, and have difficult conversations, particularly around incidents of microaggressions and racism when these occurred on campus. Despite these challenges, the return to a shared community experience after the dislocation of the pandemic highlighted the importance of intentional community-building and forging connections across programs, something that a group of (MS)² and Summer Session student representatives began working on together at the end of the summer, with efforts continuing virtually throughout this year. Students have already recommended that – rather than simply returning to the old version of “normal” for all of our programs, the post-pandemic reality necessitates a new type of intentional connection, which may result in shifts to program schedules, orientation, course offerings, and more.



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Rediscovering Andover as Faculty

Thirteen alumni returned to (MS)² this summer to give back to the program as faculty members – a record high! Alumni filled essential programmatic roles, including: an (MS)² Intern, Program Coordinator, seven Teaching Assistants, one Identity teacher, two College Counselors, and the Assistant Director of Curriculum & Instruction. These alumni rediscovered favorite hangouts (GW basement), traditions (Cultural Sharing), and friendships, and it was rewarding to see scholars from across the decades connecting in meaningful ways. They also played an integral role in supporting and mentoring our current scholars, and we will be kicking off our search for the next cohort of summer faculty and staff in early December. We encourage you, as alumni and supporters of (MS)², to consider applying to work with the program directly (by emailing ms2@andover.edu) or to spread the word to others, so that we can build a strong team for the summer of 2023.



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Reimagining Curriculum & Assessment

Victor Leos, (MS)² '11, returned to the program this summer as the Assistant Director for Curriculum & Instruction. Currently a STEM Education Doctoral candidate, Victor met with faculty and observed classes to learn what, how, and why faculty are teaching, as a precursor for a future (MS)² curriculum review. Victor also helped facilitate the program's continued transition to Mastery Based Assessment (MBA), which focuses on assessing students on their skill development and progress toward a defined set of learning outcomes instead of measuring student progress using a single numerical rating. Both Summer Session and eSummer classes have been piloting this approach for several years, as have select courses in Phillips Academy's regular session, where emphasis is placed on ongoing formative assessment, reflection, and revision throughout a course.



A New Leader

It is with great excitement that (MS)² will welcome its next director, Eliot B. Sykes, PhD, LCSW, MSW, and a Phillips Academy alumnus in January 2023!

With direct experience in curriculum development, school-community partnerships, mentorship, supporting students of color, and program evaluation and research, Eliot brings an impressive range of skills and talents to Andover and is uniquely equipped to lead this program.

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the Andover Bread Loaf (ABL) Lawrence Student Writers Workshop since 2016. Having witnessed the 40-year Andover tenures of his parents, Rebecca and Elwin, Eliot is deeply familiar with (MS)² and the importance of the Outreach programs to Phillips Academy's broader mission and to the Andover community at large. From within the PA community, Eliot counts as his mentors former (MS)² directors Walter Sherrill and Temba Maqubela and ABL directors Lou Bernieri, Jineyda Tapia, and Amaryllis Lopez.

A 2001 graduate of Johnson & Wales University with a BS degree in marketing, Eliot left the food service industry to work in wilderness therapy and later at an in-home family intervention program. After earning a master's degree in social work from the University of Utah in 2011, he pursued a career as a therapist, working for the Ute Indian Tribe of the Uintah and Ouray Reservation, and then as a research analyst at the Utah Criminal Justice Center at the University of Utah. In 2019, Eliot founded 635 Community Health Collective, which supports BIPOC and LGBTQ+ clients utilizing a trauma-sensitive approach, as well as conducting program evaluations and leading community-based research teams. In 2021, Eliot completed a PhD in the Department of Education, Culture and Society at the University of Utah's College of Education. His doctoral work focused on Black males along the K-16 pathway; he also served as an instructor in the university's Ethnic Studies program.

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