



The Clarkson School Newsletter

A newsletter for alumni, students, parents and friends of The Clarkson School, a special division of Clarkson University for talented and accelerated high school students.

Spring 2020



A Letter from the Interim HEAD OF SCHOOL

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When I heard the theme of this edition of *The Bridge* was change and growth, I didn't quite realize how relevant it would be. As expected, this semester held the anticipated changes as current TCS students decided to transfer or continue their undergraduate studies at Clarkson University. There were the usual waves of growth that typically occur during this decision-making process as students step more firmly into choosing their pathway and take more responsibility for shaping their trajectory. The year students spend at TCS is one filled with changes – some exciting, such as moving in, meeting new people, developing friendships and getting involved in university life, and others

challenging, such as navigating new academic expectations and adjusting to having a roommate or interacting differently with family. These changes, which often can feel really big in the moment, shape us in ways we often do not appreciate until we're faced with a new challenge.

This semester, additional unexpected changes were thrust upon students as the COVID-19 pandemic spread and colleges and universities across the U.S. and many parts of the world moved education online so students could finish the semester remotely. These changes demanded immediate, unexpected growth and flexibility that would be needed throughout the remainder of the semester and into the future.

This year's TCS Class of 2020 is joining a strong network of alumni who are well-prepared to respond flexibly to both expected and unexpected changes by stepping forward with a unique set of skills, knowledge and innovation to address what lies ahead. As you continue to navigate these changes – and the many other changes you're bound to experience – I hope you continue to seek out opportunities for growth and personal development. I hope you keep identifying the pressing needs in your community, country and world and that you try to fill those needs in inclusive and innovative ways. I hope you continue to step into experiences that spark your curiosity and propel you to learn new things. I hope you continue to build community and bolster the people around you so you grow stronger and more capable together.

The current state of the world can be perceived from many perspectives and will influence people in myriad ways. I hope you are active in deciding how current events will shape you and intentional in how you respond to the new demands that develop.

May you always remember the resiliency and flexibility you showed during this pandemic, your ability to persevere and the ways that you connected with others during this period. Wherever your path may take you and whatever stressors you may face along the way, I hope you remember that you are not alone, but, rather, that you are part of The Clarkson School community. Let's Go Tech!

Jennifer Knack
Interim Head of The Clarkson School



The Clarkson School Class of 2020

Let's Connect.



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The Clarkson School
Clarkson University
Price Hall
Box 5650
8 Clarkson Avenue
Potsdam, NY 13699

315-268-4425
tcs@clarkson.edu
clarkson.edu/tcs

Staff News



Jennifer Knack
Interim Head of School

Professor Knack has been at Clarkson University since fall 2011. Currently serving as the interim head of school for TCS, she is an associate professor in the Psychology Department with expertise in social psychology and social/personality development.

Professor Knack has an active program of research examining how social stressors (e.g., being bullied or ostracized) impact physical health and well-being. Currently, she is examining how people detect and respond to indicators of depression in social media posts. Professor Knack has also taught in the Young Scholars Program and Project Challenge and works with TCS and Clarkson University students in her research lab and classroom. She thinks very highly of TCS and its students and is excited to be working with them!



Annie Helfgott TCS'13, '16
Associate Director for Student & Alumni Relations

Annie has returned to TCS and the Honors Program as the new associate director for student & alumni relations. She has reflected on her return to Clarkson as being "a more novel

experience than anticipated," with plenty of changes on campus and within the programs to keep her learning more every day. "I am eager to pour energy into programs that gave so much to me during some of my most crucial developmental years." As a TCS and then Clarkson student, Annie was involved in the Golden Notes (a capella group), the Theta Phi Alpha fraternity, the Writing Center and her research, among other things.

Since attending TCS, Annie graduated from Clarkson with a degree in psychology. She went on to begin building a career in student affairs, starting in residence life at Eastern Oregon University. Annie came to us from Juniata College, a small liberal arts institution in Central Pennsylvania, where she was also working in residence life.

Annie is currently attending Gonzaga University online as a full-time graduate student in organizational leadership studies. She anticipates graduating in the summer of 2021. Outside of school and work, Annie plans to take advantage of living close to the Adirondacks and work toward her goal of becoming a 46'er. She is eager to become acquainted with her new role and looks forward to working with past, current and future Schoolies!

Alumni Commencement Speaker



Krista Ann (Freego) Kleffner TCS'98

Krista Ann (Freego) Kleffner TCS'98, will be our alumni guest speaker for the 2020 Clarkson School Commencement, now scheduled for August due to COVID-19. As a TCS student, Krista joined the Clarkson Theatre Company, took as many business electives as she could and worked at Cheel Arena, the admissions office and the TCS office. She also participated in intramural softball, soccer and hockey.

After TCS, Krista graduated Summa Cum Laude from Niagara University with a double major in political science and pre-law and a double minor in criminal justice and theater. She attended law school at The Pennsylvania University Dickinson School of Law, concentrating in family law and alternative dispute resolution. While at Dickinson Law, she was an editor of the *Penn State Environmental Law Review* and on the National Trial Team. After law school, Krista became an attorney in North Carolina, focusing mainly in family law. In 2010, Krista became a New York state attorney and relocated back to St. Lawrence County to be closer to family. She is currently an associate at Lekki Hill Duprey PC, practicing in the areas of family, criminal and civil law. She has also served as an assistant conflict defender, solo practitioner and assistant district attorney.

With her father's family hailing from St. Lawrence County, no matter where she lived, Krista always felt St. Lawrence County was home. She recently attended an alumni dinner and loved the opportunity to share a meal with this year's class. Her advice to Schoolies is to "try new things and explore every opportunity" because you may not get a chance later on, and you don't want to spend your life wondering "what if."

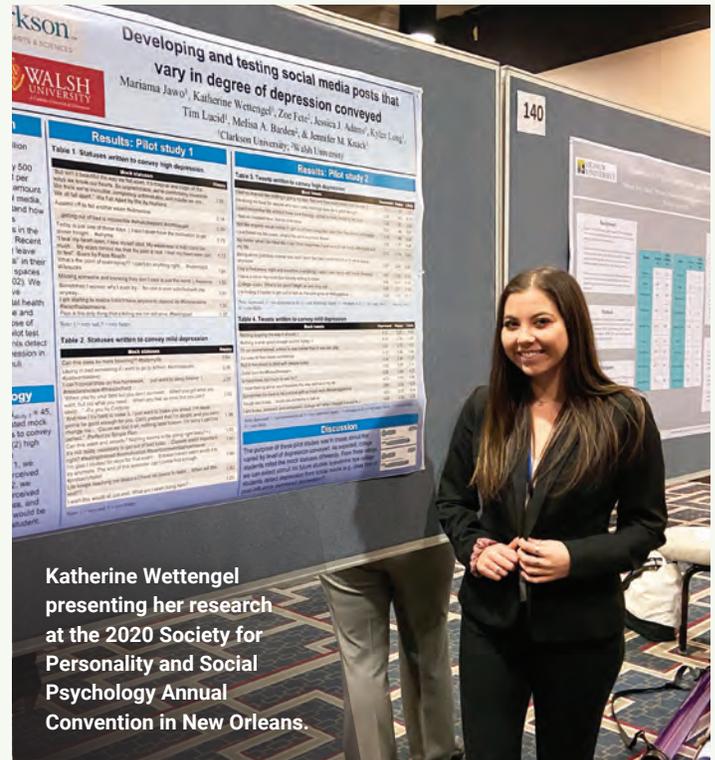
Students and Alumni on the Move

Katherine Wettengel TCS'19, '22

Katherine is a psychology major at Clarkson. Since her first semester, she has been working with Professor Jennifer Knack in her Social Development and Health Research Lab, researching how people detect indicators of mental health problems on social media. They hope to better understand how people decide whether and how to offer support to others based on information communicated through social media.

In February, Katherine attended the 2020 Society for Personality and Social Psychology Annual Convention in New Orleans, Louisiana. She co-presented a poster with one of her lab peers on two pilot studies that assessed the degree to which college students perceived depression from mock Facebook posts (Study 1) and tweets (Study 2).

During the convention, she met many brilliant people who enhanced her curiosity about psychology. Each poster presentation and talk she attended made her think more deeply about her own research questions and realize ways their lab could delve further into their study. One of the most valuable things she gained from the experience was being part of the conference's peer mentor program. She was paired with a psychology doctoral student from Columbia University who gave her advice that she will remember throughout her whole career. Katherine is so grateful that she could take advantage of this wonderful opportunity and is excited to continue her research with the knowledge she gained from the conference.



Katherine Wettengel
presenting her research
at the 2020 Society for
Personality and Social
Psychology Annual
Convention in New Orleans.



Taylor Ormasen TCS'20

Taylor, from Gouverneur, New York, is dually enrolled in both TCS and the Honors Program. She came to TCS to avoid a stagnant senior year at her local high school and gain a competitive edge for college applications.

Taylor spent this year as a physics major, but will continue on as a political science major with a concentration in pre-law at Columbia University starting this fall. She completed the Honors Program "pre-frosh" summer research with faculty supervisor Professor Joshua Thomas. Taylor designed and 3D-printed an all-sky camera enclosure for the Reynolds Observatory.

During her time at Clarkson, she was the Class of 2023 Steering Board representative and chief yearbook editor, sang in the Understaffed A Capella group and spent a semester as secretary of The Clarkson School Council. In her fall semester, she made The Clarkson School Scholars list, as well as the Clarkson University President's list.



Leon Lufkin TCS'20

After spending nine years in Singapore, Leon lived in Potsdam for seven years. He completed most of the challenging courses at his high school, so TCS was an opportunity for him to pursue more difficult and interesting classes in every subject, especially mathematics, which he had been teaching himself since middle school.

As an applied mathematics and statistics major, he had the opportunity in TCS to get more involved in research with Clarkson professors, which he actually began as a 10th grade student in high school. He started doing research with Professors Sumona Mondal and Shantanu Sur, primarily working on using national survey data to develop statistical models for bettering our understanding and prediction of rheumatoid arthritis. The Honors Summer Research Program in 2019 was a great opportunity to further his work on this project and present it at the Research and Project Showcase, where he received a Best Oral Presentation Award.

Leon swims competitively on his club team, Northern TRIBS Swimming, and his high school's varsity team. Even though he took all of his classes at Clarkson, he found time to occasionally play in his high school's band during the week. Research was his primary activity at Clarkson. While Leon was accepted to several schools, he will be attending Yale University in the fall.

2020 Goldwater Scholars



Ashwin Ajit TCS'20, '22

Ashwin, a Potsdam native, is dually enrolled in TCS and the Honors Program, double majoring in computer science and mathematics. He was recently named a Goldwater Scholar, and his academic achievements are outstanding.

In 2018, at the age of 16, he completed an apprenticeship at the U.S. Naval Research Laboratory. Since fall 2018, Ashwin has been a researcher in the Terascale All-Sensing Research Studio (TARS) at Clarkson, a lab that has produced two other Goldwater Scholars in the past three years. Through his research at TARS, his first-author paper was accepted for the IEEE's Artificial Intelligence & Virtual Reality 2019 conference and received the Best Student Paper Award. He also produced a second-author publication, achieving the remarkable feat of publishing two peer-reviewed publications while still in TCS.

Ashwin has been accepted to Cornell University, where he plans to attend school in the fall. His application was supported by Professors Sean and Natasha Banerjee, as well as Athanasios Iliopoulos (Naval Research Laboratory).



Rebecca Meacham TCS'18, '21

Rebecca, of Moira, New York, is a junior chemical engineering and Honors student at Clarkson. Last summer, she notably earned an REU (Research Experiences for Undergraduates)

appointment in Cornell University's Center for Materials Research and, as a result, submitted a first-author paper on her work with Alan Zehnder on dual-cross linked hydrogels.

In addition to her many accomplishments, Rebecca was slated to present her current research, conducted with Professor Devon Shipp, at a symposium organized by the Polymer Division of the American Chemical Society (ACS) at the ACS Spring 2020 National Meeting & Expo in March. Her Goldwater application was supported by Professor Devon Shipp, Teaching Assistant Kelly Tillman and Alan Zehnder (Cornell).



Morgan McGrath in the Clarkson biology lab in the summer of 2018.



Morgan McGrath TCS'19

Morgan McGrath TCS'19, a biology major and current student at Fordham University, has been named a 2020 Goldwater Scholar.

Throughout her time at Clarkson, Morgan was actively involved in research. She was a member of Professor Susan Bailey's Evolutionary Biology and Bioinformatics Lab in the Biology Department, starting in summer 2018 as part of the Honors Program and continuing until her TCS graduation in spring 2019.

In collaboration with other student researchers in the lab, Morgan conducted experiments quantifying how bacteria adapt to different types of complex environments; the results are currently being prepared for publication in a peer-reviewed journal. This research adds to the general understanding of how evolution works and will ultimately contribute to models aimed at predicting how bacteria and other organisms will evolve in the future.

Class Notes

Tim Wiltshire TCS'79, '82 is working in the semiconductor industry, still at GLOBALFOUNDRIES, in Fishkill, New York. He has been at this location for 38 years. His wife, Lupe, is retired, his son, Alex, is in the United States Marine Corps, stationed in California, and his daughter, Rebecca, is planning a March 2021 wedding in Virginia.

Tim reflects, "The Lord has been good, we travel some and have two long-haired Chihuahuas, 'Bleu' and 'Belle.'"



Michelle (Wiltsey) Hartnett TCS'85, '88

is married with three grown children. She is living in Central New York and works for Equitable IT, supporting their fraud and financial crime office.

Ion Freeman TCS'86 continues to live in the Fort Stirling area of Brooklyn Heights with his wife, Gigi (m. 2009) and sons Brooks (b. 2010) and Gordon (b. 2012). He still works as a data engineer at Bank of America. He is currently in the doctor of professional studies program at the Pace University Seidenberg School, doing research in text generation, and has completed all but his dissertation. He's the easiest person in the world to find on social media — he's the only Ion Freeman — so connect with him on MeWe, Mastodon, Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn or whatever's your pleasure.

Lisa Wyatt Rooksby TCS'89 traveled to Morocco in November 2019 and got engaged! She is loving her work as a psychiatric nurse. In fact, she just started taking classes to get her next degree, which will be a bachelor's in nursing.

Talicia Raggs TCS'90 is a TV writer and producer. In 2019, she teamed up with Stacey Abrams to bring her novel, *Never Tell*, to the small screen. CBS purchased the drama to be produced with PatMa Productions.

Chad Thiemann TCS'90 completed his Executive Master in Cybersecurity degree at Brown University in May 2019. He recently started teaching cybersecurity as an adjunct professor (part-time) at Dallas Baptist University's Graduate School of Business. His full-time role continues to be as the privacy and cybersecurity director for CVS Health. He resides in Plano, Texas, with his wife and daughter.

Andrew White TCS'90 has moved to a software development role in Amazon AWS Cryptography, where he helps customers use encryption safely, at scale.

Chantalle Forgues TCS'93 is on sabbatical from her position as an associate professor of law at Plymouth State University in New Hampshire and is reminiscing about her Clarkson days as she researches the application of data science to her field of law.

Ali Boolani TCS'99 received tenure at Clarkson in 2019. His research focuses on understanding the biological differences between self-reported feelings of energy and fatigue and how these moods manifest themselves physically. His lab has made some great strides in this field, and they continue to find really interesting results. Finally, his daughter is currently a Clarkson School student and is loving her time here!

Sean Curtin TCS'01, '03 and his wife, Jessie, live in Avon, Connecticut, with their daughters Lillian, Lucille and Isabella. Their oldest daughter is finishing her first year of high school. Sean just started his third year as vice president of finance for the Central Region at Hartford HealthCare. He also recently earned his MBA from Yale University. Jessie spends her time volunteering for Gifts of Love, a local charitable organization.

Frank Ganz TCS'03 lives in Ormond Beach, Florida. As of January 1, 2020, he is the shareholder/partner at Smith, Bigman & Brock, P.A. in Daytona Beach, Florida.

Athena (Simpson) Choyce TCS'04, '07, a federal employee for the last three years, is currently with the Defense Counterintelligence and Security Agency. **Mark Choyce TCS'04, '07** has accepted a new position at Green Hills Software after several years of employment with Raytheon. Athena and Mark recently purchased a home in the Tampa Bay area. Their son, Gregory, is about to finish first grade and is in his fourth cancer-free year. They reflect that "life is good."

Stephanie (Light) Eames TCS'04 has started working with the Bennington County Regional Commission as the internship coordinator. She is still active in the field of maternal mental health and lives in southern Vermont with her husband and two children.

Neil Mandalaywala TCS'05 finished his residency training in physical medicine and rehabilitation at New York University and fellowship training in pain medicine at the University of Washington. This year, he began working at Kaiser Permanente as a pain management physician.

Jennifer Slack TCS'06 owns a small preschool in Charlottesville, Virginia, where she lives with her husband and one-year-old daughter. This summer, they will be expanding the school from 48 to 124 students, continuing in their dedication to support children and families in the transition to parenthood. Their website is <http://ourneighborhood.community>.

John Lindsay TCS'13 is currently the executive for corporate partnerships at the University of Oxford's Said Business School. In addition to building corporate relationships for the School, John continues to consult for the U.S. State Department and the United States Trade Representative, supporting trade negotiations in both Latin America and Southeast Asia. In his free time, he has enjoyed exploring his new home in the U.K. and even running into other TCS alums in London!

Kennedy Norris TCS'14 attended Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences and graduated with a bachelor's in pharmacology in 2017. She spent about two years working at an inpatient adult psychiatric unit in Ogdensburg, New York, and then moved to Baldwinsville, New York, about nine months ago. She is a little over halfway through an accelerated dual degree nursing program with St. Joseph's College of Nursing and Le Moyne College. She anticipates graduating in December 2020 with an associate's and a bachelor's degree in nursing.

CJ Raymond TCS'14, '18 recently moved to Albany, New York, and is working as a counselor with St. Peter's Addiction Recovery Center.

Krissy Govertsen TCS'15, '18 was recently accepted into the inaugural leadership training cohort hosted by the Center of Leadership Development in Built Environment Sustainability and funded by the National Science Foundation. The six-month program is supposed to take place in Hong Kong for four weeks, though that has yet to be confirmed.



Jocelyn (Martin) Russell TCS'15, '18 (pictured above) is an environmental engineer at CDM Smith in Massena, New York. She focuses in hazardous waste remediation site post-closure assessments (operations and maintenance, statistical modeling of sampling data, and EPA and NYSDEC reporting and correspondence). She also performs computation fluid dynamics modeling of wastewater treatment plant headworks and multimedia filters using SpaceClaim and ANSYS. Jocelyn was married in 2019 and is enjoying life and her job!

Christopher Potter TCS'16 will be staying at Purdue for a master's in computer science. He went to Epic Systems Corporation for a summer internship in 2019.

Rose Bloodnick TCS'16 received her Bachelor of Science in Ecological Restoration from Paul Smith's College in December 2018. She recently made the jump to the West Coast to work for the Great Basin Institute, in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service, as a timber stand improvement crew lead in Eldorado National Forest. Her off days are spent chasing powder and hunting down ice and rock routes around the Sierra Nevadas.



Clarkson University
Box 5650
8 Clarkson Avenue
Potsdam, NY 13699

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The Clarkson School



Growing Our Alumni Connection Scholarship Awards

Some students who apply to The Clarkson School lack the financial means to attend. Your contribution as an alum to these scholarships is crucial. By sustaining these scholarships, you're giving deserving students the opportunity to learn and do more — and to start now, when they're ready. Your opportunities to assist in this venture include the following:

Alumni Family Award

Students with a sibling, aunt, uncle or cousin who attended TCS or Clarkson University can qualify for a \$500 award.

Alumni Legacy Award

Students with a parent or grandparent who attended TCS or Clarkson University can qualify for a \$1,000 scholarship. Only one award will be granted, regardless of the number of legacy connections.

The Clarkson School Alumni Referral Award

This award is given to a student who has been referred to TCS by an alum. The recipient will receive \$1,000 per year over four years at TCS and Clarkson University. A student can only receive one award, regardless of the number of referrals.