New kids on the block

The new school year commenced with 19 new teachers; new faces replacing old. Meet four of the newest Mustang teachers, teaching in a variety of areas.

Ryan Plachek
Q: What classes do you teach?
A: Varsity Marching Band, Music Theory, AP Music Theory, IB Music, Music Connections,
What did you do before teaching?
A: College at UNO and UNK
Fun facts/special talent?
A: Excellent backgammon player, amateur speedwalker

Mike McCauley
Q: What classes do you teach?
A: AP Lang and Comp, English II, Lit and Film
What did you do before teaching?
A: Tutored, worked at Kaneko-UNO library, and managed a falafel shop
Fun facts/special talent?
A: Love to cook vegetarian food

Wendy Brennan
Q: What classes do you teach?
A: German I, Honors German 3, Honors German 4
What did you do before teaching?
A: Worked at the mall and YMCA
Fun facts/special talent?
A: I was a debutante

Sarah Cossack
Q: What classes do you teach?
A: Algebra 1, Foundations 3, IB Math SL
What did you do before teaching?
A: Nearly died canoeing in the Boundary waters
Fun facts/special talent?
A: Fun facts

Prominence prompts reiteration of hazing policy

Hazing: a common ritual ingrained in America’s high schools. From football to choir, the age-old ritual has been performed for years behind closed doors, however in recent years, cases across the U.S. have risen, prompting MPS to reassert the former policy.

“In recent years harassment and bullying have become a popular, hot button issue that we wanted to reaffirm with the student body, because it will not be tolerated,” MPS Director of Student Services Bill Jelkin said.

The current policy defines hazing as any activity that “endangers the physical or mental health or safety of an individual for the purpose of initiation.” This broad definition focuses on a variety of acts. “Usually hazing is thought of as upperclassmen beating up incoming students, however it can be something like shaving heads. Hazing is anything that makes students uncomfortable,” Activities Director Chad Zimmerman said.

This year MPS reiterated the previous policy as well as made it prominent. MN athletes also received a hazing handout prior to the start of the season. “Hazing has always been a part of the student code, but the current policy gives an actual definition and focuses on hazing-outside of the classroom,” Zimmerman said. However for MN athletes, hazing is a relative term. For the girls soccer team the constant tradition of dressing up fellow teammates if the team advances to state is no more. Under the hazing policy this former tradition as well as others can no longer take place, causing problems with senior athletes.

“When we were freshman we faced the same thing that everyone had for years. I’m not bitter about it but now that we are seniors it’s unfortunate that we can’t do it to the freshmen,” senior soccer player Kylynn Moyer said.

The belief of many athletes is that hazing unifies their team. However it causes several problems and does little to solve the problem. “One of the unifying things for a team, having been a head coach myself, is to go through struggles together. It’s about trusting the person to your left or right. That is where those bonds are formed. On the field rather then by being hazed,” Jelkin said.

The consequence policy for hazing was reiterated by MPS as well, addressing issues with punishments varying based on the offense. “The hazing policy features no new consequences. It could be anything from an after-school to expulsion. These consequences aren’t as cut and dry as the drug and alcohol policy,” Zimmerman said.

Now with a broader and reaffirmed policy, MPS anticipates the hazing problem will be an issue of the past.

fast facts
Hazing is defined as anything that makes another student uncomfortable.

Students should contact the safe schools hotline as well as talk with teachers, par- ents or counselors if hazing occurs.
Consequences change based on the offense ranging from an after-school to expulsion.