

Innovation Grants Continue to Spark Creativity Among Faculty and Students

After extensive review during the fall 2023 application cycle, the Teaching and Learning Office awarded Innovation Grants (I-Grants) to a number of faculty and students during the Spring 2023 grant cycle. Some projects were completed last year while others are in various stages of development or may require additional resources to fully implement.

FACULTY/STAFF

From Past to Progress: A Multidisciplinary Exploration of DC's Diversity and Equity

The Middle School history department is laying the foundation for an 8th Grade Capstone Trip to Washington, D.C. Departing from traditional trips, this trip would not only cultivate connections among faculty but also foster a collaborative community. The 2024 I-Grant funded a scouting trip to DC in April 2024 to support the writing of a full proposal for this trip/curriculum. *(Christina Dominique-Pierre and Nathan Austria)*

Shifting Gears: A Community in Motion

Shifting Gears proposes a fully sustainable and weather-protected cycling storage shed at the Upper School for electric and manual bikes and scooters. This storage facility will support and encourage transportation alternatives and recreational opportunities to, from, and between campuses. *(Jay Shah and Shawnee Sloop)*

Beginners Outdoor Environment Project

The Beginners Outdoor Environment Project will offer a range of play spaces and materials to better meet the diverse physical and social/emotional needs of our students, allowing for small groups and quiet play away from the fast pace of the physical play of some students. *(Dana Bentley and Lucinda Burk)*

RECESS Equipment Storage Shed (REC.E.S.Shed)

The RECESS Equipment Storage Shed (REC.E.S.Shed) will support the care and organization of recess equipment used by Grade 2-6 students and facilitate shared play across a wide range of interests. Using a curriculum unit for grade 2 students to support the introduction of this project, students will manage the space. In doing so, they will practice stewardship as well as meaningful responsibility for the care and maintenance of materials. *(Jenny Kramer)*



Jenny Kramer and students at REC.E.S.Shed

Lower School Greenhouse Design and Development

The Lower School Greenhouse, part of the outdoor learning environment of the Lower School Renovation Project, will support sustainable, year-round growing and will result in greater continuity of the student experience. It will also act as an important resource for authentic, hands-on learning across disciplines and grade levels, which is consistent with our commitment to interdisciplinary and project-based learning. The 2024 I-Grant is funding initial design, and curriculum development for use of the greenhouse for academic programs. (*Emily Discenza and Lizzie Thome*)

Podcasting Class Development

This Upper School podcasting class, developed through a Summer Curriculum Grant, will cover the technology and techniques of online presentation through audio in a variety of circumstances, including storytelling, interviewing, and group content creation. The I-Grant supported the procurement of the equipment necessary to teach this class. (*Adam Howarth and Ross MacDonald*)

STUDENTS

HacKnight/Coding Summit

HacKnight was a two-day pilot programming event held at the Upper School in June 2024 aimed at getting more BB&N students involved in the computer science (CS) community. The aim was to make computer science feel more accessible to students whose primary interest is not STEM, helping them discover the wide applicability of CS and ways to integrate it into their own projects. (*Diego Abadie '26, Carl Chen '26, Diba Demir '25, Sofia Egan '26, Salar Sekhavat '26, Sophia Stafford '25, and Yancheng Zhao '26*)



KnightConnect

KnightConnect is an online platform that promotes professional inclusivity and serves as a one-stop-shop opportunity hub for all Upper School students. Through KnightConnect, students can find paid internships, community service, and research opportunities without needing to search the internet or rely on family connections, and exposing students to resources outside of the classroom. (*Juan Medina '24, Kevin Winschel '24, and Charlie Taft '25*)

Knights Career Talks

Knights Career Talks aim to introduce BB&N high school students to future career options by inviting professionals from the Boston area (and beyond) to speak to students, and by organizing student trips to professional contacts in the greater Boston area. (*Rohan Jayaraman '25 and Kenneth Tsay '25*)

Smart Sort

Smart Sort is an app that transforms the educational experience by enabling teachers to create groups of students in order to maximize productivity and student enjoyment. (*Max Laibson '25*)

Innovation Grant Enhances Student Access to Opportunities

Honest, Scholarship, Kindness: three words that embody the BB&N experience. Now, thanks to an Innovation Grant, the students behind the new database and website KnightConnect (knightconnect.org) want to add two new words to the dialogue when people talk about BB&N: opportunity and inclusivity.

Juan Medina '24, Kevin Winschel '24 and Charlie Taft '25 created KnightConnect to give all BB&N students direct access to paid internships, community service, and research opportunities. The students identified two main impediments to students' efforts and sought to disrupt them.

The first obstacle they noted was that many internships are only available to college undergraduates. The database curates opportunities for BB&N high school students and currently boasts 165 diverse possibilities across a range of interests including business, law, art, computer science, and writing.

The second impediment is that often only the students with connections through family or friends land internships. "To get an internship is not easy these days, especially for those who don't have connections," Juan explained. "We really wanted to equal the playing field, so that even somebody who does not have parents working at a high-end company can get some corporate experience."

More recently, KnightConnect has added other resources for students such as SAT study guides with practice problems, and guides to building a LinkedIn profile and resume. KnightConnect will keep improving and working on new ideas in the future.

"THE I-GRANT EXPERIENCE ALLOWED ME TO CO-LAUNCH A MEANINGFUL COMMUNITY INITIATIVE, WHICH I HOPE WILL CONTINUE TO IMPACT BB&N EVEN AFTER I GRADUATE. WHAT'S GREAT IS THAT NOT ONLY DO STUDENTS BENEFIT, COMPANIES AND PROGRAMS BENEFIT AS WELL FROM STUDENT WORK AND SHADOWING."

– Charlie Taft '25