

University Home

About SLU

Academics

Admission

Majors & Programs

Colleges & Schools

Campus Life

International Programs

Athletics

Jesuit Tradition & Mission

Madrid, Spain Campus

Visit SLU

Apply Now

July 12, 2016

Jeanette Grider

314.977.2538

jgrider1@slu.edu

Second Billiken Teacher Corps Class, New Director Announced

The second year of the Billiken Teacher Corps (BTC) has been filled with energy and anticipation as this year's cohort started -- and last year's inaugural cohort continued -- their graduate studies and preparation for fall teaching assignments. Adding to the excitement was the announcement of Ronny O'Dwyer, S.J., as the first director of the BTC.

O'Dwyer, a Saint Louis University alumnus, earned graduate degrees in philosophy ('09) and Catholic educational leadership ('10). He also holds a Master of Divinity and a Licentiate in Sacred Theology from Boston College. O'Dwyer served as a theology instructor and director of student activities at De Smet Jesuit High School in St. Louis, where he received an excellence in teaching award.

In addition, he has also served on the boards of Boys Hope Girls Hope St. Louis and Loyola Academy St. Louis, and most recently was assistant pastor of St. Peter Claver Parish, Punta Gorda, Belize, which oversees operations for more than 30 village churches and rural Catholic elementary schools.

Ann Rule, interim dean of SLU's School of Education, said the University is very blessed to have Father O'Dwyer in this new role.



"He will serve as a spiritual leader for our Billiken Teacher Corps, and will assist them in acclimating to their roles as teachers as they educate children and serve as beacons for a brighter future," Rule said.

O'Dwyer says their goal is to guide young Catholic educators to translate their idealism into action.

"Their success will be grounded in the ability to use the research-based approaches they learn at SLU to achieve real-world results," O'Dwyer said. "This will require our BTC members to integrate spiritual passion and intellectual depth with their service as leaders in Catholic education."

On Memorial Day, more 60 family, friends, last year's BTC students and School of Education faculty and staff welcomed the students to their newly renovated residence in the former convent at St. John the Baptist Catholic Church in south St. Louis. A welcome Mass and dinner was held for everyone after the students moved in.

Listed below are the names of the BTC-Cohort 2 students, along with their hometowns, undergraduate schools and degrees, and the schools where they will be teaching this fall.

- **Owen Dabek:** Lorain, Ohio (Cleveland State University, English Literature): teaching at Sr. Thea Bowman School (East St. Louis)
- **Darrin DeChane:** Salem, New Hampshire (Saint Louis University-Madrid, Spanish): teaching at Cardinal Ritter College Prep (St. Louis)
- **Julie Gates:** Danville, Kentucky (Centre College, Psychology): teaching at St. Louis Catholic Academy (St. Louis)
- **Catherine Gilmore:** St. Louis, Missouri (University of Dallas, Interdisciplinary Studies): teaching at Our Lady of Guadalupe (Ferguson)
- **Molly Keeven:** Weldon Spring, Missouri (Saint Louis University, Theological Studies): teaching at St. Pius X High School (Festus)
- **Kristi Walsh:** St. Louis, Missouri (Creighton University, English and Technical Theatre): teaching at Cardinal Ritter College Prep (St. Louis)
- **Jessica Young-Eleazar:** Lombard, Illinois, (Saint Louis University, Middle School Education): teaching at Most Holy Trinity (St. Louis)

John James, Ed.D., associate professor in the Department of Educational Leadership and director of the Institute for Catholic Education, said the students who applied for this year's Billiken Teacher Corps were outstanding.

"The applicant pool this year was even larger than last year -- from Portland to Boston, from Omaha to Dallas, and even SLU Madrid," James said. "This enabled us to, once again, select only the very best. We are pleased to add another exceptional group to the Billiken Teacher Corps."

Now in their second year, the inaugural cohort of students are listed below, along with their hometown, undergraduate school and degree, and schools where they will be teaching this fall.

- **Jennifer Bruns:** Cincinnati, Ohio (Xavier University, Middle School Education): teaching at Christ the Light of Nations
- **Elise Earley:** Ballwin, Missouri (University of Missouri-Columbia, Biology and Religious Studies): teaching at St. Cecilia School
- **Michelle Ehrhard:** St. Charles, Missouri (Truman State University, Psychology): teaching at Holy Trinity School
- **Kelsey Kerr:** Lisle, Illinois (Saint Louis University, Elementary Education): teaching at St. Frances Cabrini
- **Mitch McCurren:** Zionsville, Indiana (Saint Louis University, Biology and Theological Studies): teaching at St. Mary's High School
- **Sarah Staten:** St. Louis, Missouri (University of Notre Dame, Theology and Applied Mathematics): teaching at St. Louis the King Cathedral School



About the Billiken Teacher Corps



The [Billiken Teacher Corps](#) (BTC) at Saint Louis University combines service and teaching to offer faith-driven college graduates the opportunity to have a transformative impact on Catholic schools in the St. Louis metro area. As teachers in underserved Catholic schools for two years, these individuals earn a graduate degree in education from Saint Louis University with full tuition remission. The BTC members live together in an intentional faith community, focused on spiritual and personal formation in the Catholic, Jesuit tradition.

The program is a partnership between Saint Louis University, the Archdiocese of St. Louis, and the Diocese of Belleville. The Billiken Teacher Corps is also a member of the University Consortium for Catholic Education (UCCE), which supports collaboration between institutes of higher education and Catholic primary and secondary schools by providing graduate level teaching service programs in Catholic schools.

- APPLY
- CONTACT
- MYSLU
- GIVE
- JOBS
- VISIT
- SOCIAL



ABOUT SLU

- At a Glance
- Jesuit Tradition & Mission
- Rankings & Honors
- Diversity at SLU
- SLU Administration
- Health Care
- Maps & Directions
- St. Louis City

ADMISSION

- Undergraduate
- Graduate
- Professional Studies
- Summer Programs
- International
- Scholarship & Financial Aid
- Schedule a Campus Visit

ACADEMICS

- Majors & Programs
- Colleges & Schools
- Graduate Education
- Study Abroad
- Academic Calendar
- Libraries
- Research

CAMPUS LIFE

- Housing & Residence Life
- Safety & Security
- Campus Ministry
- Museums & Arts
- Athletics
- Chaifetz Arena

Higher purpose. Greater good.

© 1818 - 2016 SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY | [Disclaimer](#) | [Mobile Site](#)
St. Louis | Madrid