Springing Into Summer

The confluence of two forces on our campus in Livingston is making for an especially active year at Newark Academy. First, we are in the midst of a comprehensive renovation of our physical plant that began with the opening of the Upper School Academic Center last fall, continues with the addition of a second turf field this summer, and will resume with the construction of a Middle School building in early 2014. The second major driver is the new Strategic Plan that lays out a series of initiatives designed to build on Newark Academy’s distinctive strengths and to set ambitious goals for the next five years. (See page 30.)

As you approach the campus from our main driveway, you see the new girls’ softball field on your left, an improved baseball field to your right, and the state-of-the-art Kaceur Field beyond the tennis courts, equipped with field turf and lights for night play. Starting in May, we will begin construction on Courson Field (also with field turf), a new track, and a much needed outdoor concession/restroom building. This final step in the improvement of our athletic spaces will elevate the quality of our outdoor facility equaling that of the much-admired Simon Field House. As we complete this important phase of our Campus Master Plan, we are also in the early stages of designing a new Middle School building to be located next to the McGraw Arts Center. More details on that project will be shared in Fall 2013.

This spring we are looking forward to the second year of our nine-day June Term. Students in grades 9-11 will take a single course for six hours per day, delving into a range of topics with an experiential orientation. Nature Writing, 3-D Printing, Food and the American Identity, Constructing an Outdoor Environmental Sculpture and Political Cartooning are some of the courses that will be offered again this year. Students’ positive response to this initiative last year exceeded faculty expectations, and the innovative spirit of June Term is spreading. One exciting example is a student-teaching internship program that pairs seniors with Middle School teachers. This program grew out of a June Term course and has been praised by Middle School students, teachers and the pioneering 12th grade interns. (See page 32.)

In just a few weeks, the Class of 2013 will join the ranks of Newark Academy alumni at Commencement (June 9). As always, this time of year is bittersweet. The Class of 2013 has blazed a trail for future NA students – embracing the Immersion Experience requirement and inaugurating the June Term. Perhaps most important, this group of students has demonstrated a remarkable spirit – in the classroom, on the stage and athletic field, and in their interactions with one another and the world beyond NA. Having come to us before we were building new buildings or planning for the next five years, this group of seniors reminds me that the ultimate measure of Newark Academy’s success is not gauged by the number of buildings or the size of our budgets but rather by the extent to which we send our graduates out into the world as “engaged individuals instilled with a passion for learning, a standard of excellence and a generosity of spirit.”