

*Central Catholic High School*

THE BROTHER DAVID S.  
BAGINSKI, FSC SCHOLARS  
PROGRAM GUIDE

2017-2018

*Scholarship    Citizenship    Discipleship*



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## Mission of the Program

Each year, Central Catholic High School inducts a small number of outstanding sophomores into The Brother David S. Baginski, FSC Scholars Program. This is a highly-selective two-year program for juniors and seniors of exceptional merit and potential. It offers intellectually stimulating curricular and extracurricular activities.

### MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of The Brother David S. Baginski, FSC Scholars Program is to foster intellectual and cultural growth essential to leadership in the service of humanity.

Participation in this program provides Scholars with a strong foundation that fosters intellectual curiosity, civic engagement, diversity of perspectives, leadership, creativity, innovation, experiential learning, applied learning, scholarship, culture of integrity, effective communication, building community.

A deeper goal of the program is to motivate Scholars to reach beyond their individual niches and to understand that they can affect justice in society and, in fact, have a responsibility to do so.

## Program Description

### THE PROGRAM

A named Scholar in the program prepares for advanced studies at the university level through a liberal arts curriculum that is interdisciplinary and multi-faceted. The program is designed upon three pillars: scholarship, citizenship and discipleship. Students will explore the humanities and understand their intersection with science and technology through issue-oriented investigations. They will grapple with such critical questions as “What shapes our knowledge?”, “What makes good science?”, “How does one live a just and happy life?”, and “What does it mean to be Human?”

Students are expected to enroll in Honor or AP sections of academic courses starting in the year prior to applying to the program. Once in the program, they will practice all of the following: analytical and critical thinking skills, advanced research techniques, writing acuity, and effective verbal communication. The Junior Humanities Seminar will engage the students in critical inquiry, social justice perspectives and community-focused service projects rooted in the Lasallian tradition. In their Senior year, students will use the skills they have acquired to develop, defend and present an original research thesis.

At its core, the program is designed to encourage students to understand the intrinsic connections between their intellectual development and their responsibilities as global citizens. Many of the enrichment activities offered by the program are fueled by this intent.

### PROGRAM DIRECTORS

John J. Allen, MA

Patrizia Costa Frezza, Ph.D.

#### MATTHEW SUDNIK, MA – FORMER DIRECTOR (2007-2016)

“The scholars program strives to cultivate a brotherhood of curious and cultured young men. It's an intellectual journey. Whether traveling long distances for weekend visits to faraway universities or attending local lectures and theatrical performances in Pittsburgh, the scholars encounter bold ideas, strong personalities, compelling facts, and divergent philosophies. Together, they encourage collective enthusiasm about the pursuit of learning. It is my hope that this all-encompassing experience of education will remain with the scholars throughout their adult lives.”

#### BROTHER ERNEST MILLER, FSC, D. MIN – FOUNDER AND FIRST DIRECTOR (2002-2007)

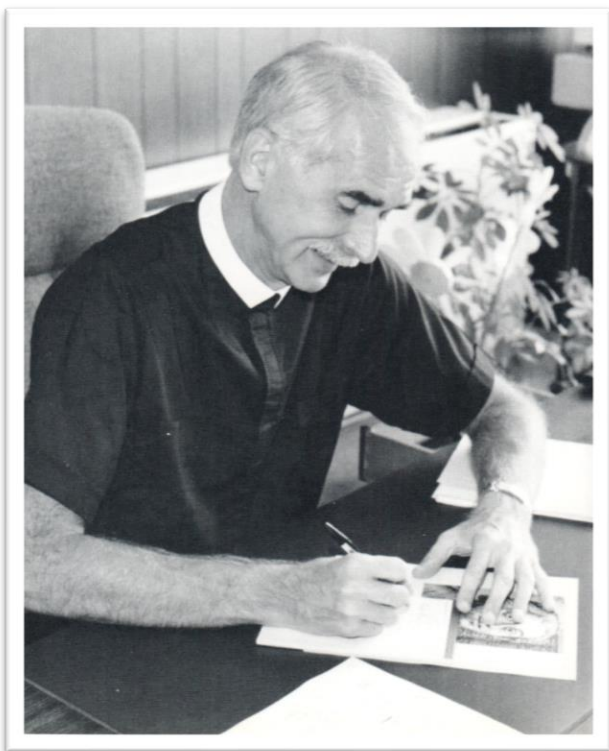
“Drawing from Plato's *The Apology*, our students should live an “examined life” whereby they are encouraged to exhibit critical thought in their faith life, speech, public responsibilities, and academic life.”

## Brother David S. Baginski, FSC

Brother David was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania on June 1, 1947. He attended Pittsburgh grammar schools and graduated from South Hills Catholic High School in 1964. He entered the Brothers' Novitiate in Ammendale, Maryland on June 15 of that year. In 1969, he received a B.A. degree from LaSalle College. His major was English. He continued his studies also at Southern California University and Duquesne.

He took his perpetual vows in Pittsburgh on May 14, 1972 and dedicated 25 years of his life as a De La Salle Christian Brother. In addition to serving as vice principal and teacher at Central Catholic from 1983 to 1991, he also served at South Hills Catholic (69-75), West Catholic in Philadelphia (75-76, 79-83), St. John's College High in Washington (91-92), Seaton-La Salle (92-94) and Hudson Catholic Regional in Jersey City (94-96). In the late 70's, he worked as the District Vocations Director.

The tall, lanky teacher with a charismatic demeanor made his classes come alive with his gregarious teaching style and an eclectic taste in literature. He was a mentor to some, a father to others, and an inspiration to the lives he touched daily. Many recall him as a "people's principal" who tended to the needs of the students, faculty and staff. He had a great capacity to touch the hearts of young people, his Brothers and colleagues. Wherever he went, he was a source of community, great excitement and energy



as well as much playfulness and laughter. The District of Baltimore described him as one of the "worker bee" giants in its history. He loved learning and infusing the same passion in his students. As an administrator, he always taught the largerst class whether it was English, Religion or other subjects.

One of his favorite quotes was this one by the 19<sup>th</sup>-century Quaker Missionary Etienne de Grellet: "I shall pass through this world but once. If, therefore, there be any kindness I can show, or any good thing I can do, let me do it now ... for I shall not pass this way again."

Brother David died on April 23, 1996 at Hudson Catholic High School in Jersey City, NJ. Two beautiful trees were planted on campus in his honor and to symbolize the growth he fostered in his students.

## Benefits of the Program

### STUDENTS IN THE PROGRAM:

- Become part of an engaged and culturally-connected community of peers
- Are exposed to meaningful learning experiences rooted in a Catholic intellectual tradition and a Lasallian spiritual heritage
- Receive guidance and direction from faculty advisors to reach their full potential as thoughtful, creative, socially-responsible, empathetic, and productive men of faith, scholarship and service.
- Develop an individualized academic research path
- Participate in enrichment programs and cultural experiences
- Engage in university-level seminars and writing
- Develop a service-oriented consciousness, leading to a commitment to public service and active participation in a democratic society.

### DESIGNATION OF THE PROGRAM ON THE SCHOOL TRANSCRIPT

Students in good standing may list their affiliation to the program on their transcript and use this special recognition in applying to post-secondary institutions.

### A COMMUNITY OF SCHOLARS

The program values the examination of ideas both individually and within a community of scholars. Students in the program develop a shared intellectual curiosity by taking a seminar together in Junior year and by sharing their research efforts in Senior year. Through events and outings, students also have opportunities to learn together outside of the classroom.

### INTERDISCIPLINARY WORK

Students who have a significant interest in a STEM track explore interdisciplinary work in the humanities by taking advantage of a comparative approach whereby an idea is examined from at least two analytical vantage points.

### OPPORTUNITIES TO FORGE CONNECTIONS

Scholars forge connections with alumni, friends of the program, distinguished academics and field experts.

### SENIOR BANQUET

Graduating seniors are invited to a celebratory dinner in May with the Directors, the Principal and members of the Advisory Council.

## Admission to the Program

Each Spring, a number of highly-qualified students are selected from a pool of applicants. This is a competitive process, and no one is guaranteed entrance. All eligible students are encouraged to apply.

Transfer students may apply no later than the beginning of the Fall term at the discretion of the Directors.

### ELIBIGILITY

To be eligible, students should:

- Be in their Sophomore year
- Have taken a minimum of three Advanced Placement or Honors courses. One of these must be a writing-intensive course such as *AP Human Geography*, *Exploring Literature and Writing I or II*, or *AP European History*.
- Demonstrate an ability to work at a minimum GPA level of 3.5
- Demonstrate academic competence and excellence (i.e. perform at the top of the applicant pool)
- Have an interdisciplinary curiosity
- Show promising interest in social causes and the passion to make positive difference in the world
- Be willing to participate in discussions with confidence, resourcefulness of ideas, maturity and respect for others
- Demonstrate a commitment to abide by the high standards of academic integrity at Central Catholic
- Be enrolled or plan to enroll in three years of foreign language study or take an AP language course.

### IN PREPARATION FOR THE ADMISSION INTERVIEW

All eligible applicants who wish to schedule an admission interview will be asked to:

- Complete an application
- Provide two teacher recommendations
- Write an essay on an assigned theme, answer a set of questions and provide a writing sample
- Provide a copy of their grades or transcript.

### AT THE ADMISSION INTERVIEW

Students interviewing with the Directors of the program will be asked a series of questions about their application and motivation for applying. The interviews are used to assess the suitability of the finalists in terms of the announced criteria (see page 7).

Students should demonstrate an ability to articulate their own ideas and express a willingness to belong within a community of scholars who travel together, study together, and reflect on their experiences as a collective group. The professional conduct of interviewees will be considered, as well as their verbal and analytical skills.

## Coursework

### JUNIOR HUMANITIES SEMINAR

In their Junior year, students enroll in a humanities seminar to engage in critical inquiry often from a social justice perspective. They explore philosophical and social questions proposed by ancient and modern texts. Students reflect on the nature of truth, beauty and goodness from varied perspectives, including great works of literature and avenues of philosophical discourse.

### SCHOLARS FORUM

Students in the program enroll in a half-credit course featuring discussions on contemporary issues, performances, visiting-guest lectures by renowned experts, films, musical and theatrical performances and field trips. The course allows students to engage in active inquiry and cultural explorations beyond the traditional classroom setting.

### SERVICE LEARNING

The Brother David S. Baginski, FSC Scholars Program offers service learning opportunities that bridge volunteer service with academic learning. Juniors travel as a class, usually over a three-day period, to a direct service site and work together as a team providing aid to poor or marginalized communities. The site locations are non-profit, 501c3 organizations or other faith-based initiatives, whose mission and work address community needs. Students will explore and experience what it means to live out the social teachings of the Catholic faith, particularly embodied through the principles of empathy, solidarity, the dignity of workers, stewardship for the environment, and the preferential option for the poor. Students bond with each other, while building connections with communities not typically encountered. Students spend a minimum of 30-40 hours on this project.

### SENIOR THESIS

In their Senior year, students engage in a sustained examination of a significant problem, question or issue under the guidance of an advisor, second reader and field professional/expert. They will articulate a developed, ethical argument in response to the motivating question or issue. This project is the culmination of their experience in the program. The thesis is more substantial than a typical research paper in terms of effort and length. Students go beyond what others have written, think critically, and reflect on the topic in an original way. They also venture outside of the classroom and assume the responsibilities associated with a commitment to independent scholarship. The end goal should be to make an independent contribution. Excellent research, analysis and contextualization of a body of primary and secondary sources are expected. All theses are defended in early Spring and presented at the Senior Thesis Symposium in April/May.

### STUDY ABROAD

Each summer, usually in June, the program offers a 10-day study abroad. Before the trip, a Central faculty member coordinates readings and a series of workshops that provide immersive study of location-specific topics in the humanities and the arts.



## Responsibilities of Scholars

The Brother David S. Baginski, FSC Scholars Program prides itself on being a program of opportunity, rather than one of requirements. However, there are some guidelines and requirements that students must follow. Scholars must:

1. Make a commitment to be an active and willing participant in The Brother David S. Baginski, FSC Scholars Program offerings, including attending scholar events and assisting with the program
2. Maintain Honor Roll status (3.5 GPA average) every quarter. If a student's GPA falls below Honor Roll status he will be placed on probation and has one quarter to improve. If a student's GPA falls below Honor Roll status on a second occasion, a conference of the Directors will take place to determine whether the student should continue in the program
3. Commit to three years of the same foreign language OR satisfactory completion of an Advanced Placement (AP) language class
4. Visit a service site with their Junior class and present their newly obtained knowledge and reflective experience to the freshman religion classes
5. Participate in the cultural trips to major US cities offered by the program
6. Produce a 15-page, article-length work of scholarship in their Junior Seminar
7. Work on an approved research topic, pass an internal defense, and present their work at the Senior Symposium in the spring
8. Accumulate a minimum of 15 credits in Honors or Advanced Placement (AP) level courses
9. Actively abide by the Standards of Academic Integrity set forth by Central Catholic HS. Violation of Academic Integrity will not be tolerated. All violations will be referred to the Honor Board who will recommend a course of action to the Directors. Serious violations will be cause for dismissal from the program.

A student wishing to withdraw from the program must present a declaration of intent to withdraw in the form of a letter to the Directors stating his reason for withdrawal. By withdrawing, a student formally relinquishes all the rights, privileges and responsibilities of a Brother David S. Baginski, FSC Scholar at Central Catholic High School.

## Outcomes of the Program

### BY COMMENCEMENT, STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO

- Understand the interdisciplinary nature of learning
- Exhibit superior oral and written communication skills
- Demonstrate mastery of advanced research skills in many media
- Possess a greater awareness and appreciation of the fine arts
- Be familiar with the foundational corpus of great books, ideas, and philosophies that have shaped Western and non-Western civilizations
- Examine contemporary issues and current events through a critical lens and engage in meaningful, socially-responsible discussions about these issues
- Demonstrate a commitment to academic excellence
- Build connections with a scholarly community inside and outside of the school
- Function intellectually at higher levels of thought
- Apply ethical models to research questions
- Apply leadership skills in solving community problems
- Be accustomed to reaching beyond their individual niches, knowing that they too can effect change in society, and have, in fact, a responsibility to do so.

### SCHOLARS MEDAL

At Commencement, each Scholar receives a beautifully-crafted bronze medal in recognition of his superlative achievements in scholarship and service.

### BEST THESIS AWARD

At the Senior Symposia, the Faculty Advisory Council for the Brother David S. Baginski, FSC Scholars Program presents a “Best Senior Thesis” award to one student based on the following criteria: originality, work ethic, writing, knowledge of the field, and societal impact. Several awards for “outstanding work on the Senior Thesis” and one award for “Best Presentation” are awarded as well.

## Scholars Forum

One of the highlights of the program is the Scholars Forum. This is a half-credit course that students enroll in for both semesters of their Junior and Senior years. It features lectures, local field trips, discussions, films, gallery exhibitions, poetry readings, opera and symphony performances.

### SCHOLARS OPEN FORUM

The Open Forum provides an opportunity for students to design their own discussion sessions. Here students can debate critical issues and examine a range of questions drawn from the arts, sciences and politics.

### GRADING CRITERIA

To receive a grade of “pass,” students must attend six approved events on the Forum’s calendar by the end of each semester. Incomplete grades will not be given in this course. Students may have absences during the semester, either excused or unexcused, and they may still receive a grade of “pass” if they attend 6 Forum events. Students must attend all events with the Scholar’s group, not independently. Nor can they get credit for attending the same event through another class at Central. Failure to meet the attendance requirement will result in probation from the program. If a student’s attendance does not improve, the Directors will determine whether the student should continue in the program.

### FORUM ETIQUETTE

All students are expected to adhere to relevant rules of etiquette while in the Forum. All books, cell phones and iPads must be put away, unless students are taking notes. Students should sit up and focus on the presentation. Questions to Forum guests must be posed in a respectful manner. Please note that tardiness is unacceptable. Students arriving late will not receive attendance credit.

## Sophomore Reading Group

Sophomores who are admitted into the program will spend part of their Spring semester reading scholarly articles assigned by the Directors. This material will enrich students' appreciation of theology, philosophy, the arts, social justice and literature. Discussions of these articles with fellow Scholars will provide opportunities for the students to bond and begin to form quality relationships within the program.

### DISCUSSION MEETINGS

Discussion meetings will take place on four Wednesday mornings before homeroom and last about an hour. The meetings will be driven not by lecture, but by conversation. Like all conversations, they will take on a life of their own. There is no single format for participating in them. But since the conversations are the sole means by which the Directors can assess the depth of a Scholar's engagement with the texts, these guidelines may be of help:

At the minimum, students should be able to address the following questions:

1. What is the essay or article about? What questions does it seem to be asking? How are these questions answered?
2. What arguments are proposed in the various parts of the text, and how? Do these arguments make sense? Are they ethical?
3. Is the text true, in whole or in part? Is it a convincing representation of human experience? Does it distort or falsify a condition?
4. Why does the text matter? How should we live life differently, according to the author?
5. Can you think of opposing arguments that are more important than those offered by the texts?

The Directors recommend that Scholars compile a list of their ongoing reflections in a notebook. The notebook should contain a page-length outline of every text the Scholar reads, so he can recall its form and content at a moment's glance. Compiling a list of important points or questions to ask about the texts is also a good idea.

## The Scholars Library

A Scholars Library was founded in 2017 with donations from alumni, foundations and friends of the program and is still in development. Its holdings include books and media material in five areas: theology, philosophy, the arts, social justice and great works of literature.

It is the goal of the Scholars Library to:

- Provide a central location for resources related to Junior Seminar, Scholars Forum and Senior Thesis courses
- Provide a place where students can talk about and interact with books
- Provide students with opportunities to learn at a personal level of inquiry, outside the assigned curriculum
- Provide a repository for all Senior Theses
- Stimulate intellectual growth
- Provide stewardship in the “great books”
- Enrich the scholarly environment for students in the program.

## Cultural Explorations

### SCHOLARS TRIPS

All students in The Brother David S. Baginski, FSC Scholars Program take part in one trip per year to a major arts and culture city in the USA. In recent years, we have visited Boston, New York, Washington DC, Cleveland, and Chicago.

The trips are scheduled with sightseeing, museum visits, performances, and lectures by special guests. The trip aims to expose students to the nature of travel and introduces them to a new culture and city. The goal is to teach students how to see a city in its myriad aspects, be it cultural or on the ground level of human population, and to instill the joy of exploration and the importance of place. Interaction with alumni and various experts in the field teach students to value the lifelong commitment to education. Central to these cultural experiences is the bond of community formed among the Scholars and the mentors who accompany them.

### STUDY ABROAD

Students in the program have the opportunity to enroll in an optional, half-credit ten-day Summer Study Abroad course.

Studying abroad at the high school level is a unique opportunity not only to anticipate the possibilities available at the university level, but to expose students at a young age to the diversity of culture and the excitement of international travel. The academic portion of the trip teaches students to view travel as more than a touristic venture, and to understand such excursions as educational and transformational to the human spirit.

In June, 2017, students traveled to Italy for a course on the Art and Religions of Rome. A trip to London and Edinburgh is planned for summer 2018.

## Administrators and Faculty Advisory Council

The Brother David S. Baginski, FSC Scholars Program Directors have advisors from Central Catholic's administration and faculty.

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