

Leading in Singapore

Doctoral student shares Marian Mission through leadership at the Singapore American School



Our educational journey does not end after high school, or even at the collegiate level; rather, it is a lifelong process that takes different forms and goes beyond our foundational years. For Dr. Darin Fahrney, '04/'13, his educational journey inspired him to utilize his Marian experience and transform the lives of students at the Singapore American School.

Educating with passion

With a passion for helping others, the teaching profession has always been Fahrney's calling. After graduating with a bachelor's degree in biology education from a public university, Fahrney took to teaching within the Wisconsin public school system as a high school biology teacher.

"I first encountered Marian University when I was looking to learn more and develop my skills through a master's degree," said Fahrney, a 2004 graduate of the master's degree program in educational leadership. "The Marian community really struck a chord with me, with its small class sizes and focus on applied learning."

Eager to make a difference through his role as a new principal, Fahrney's desire to share his love for the learning process certainly inspired his students, as he continued to incorporate creative life lessons and

impact the lives of his young learners through making the school setting a fun, engaging experience.

Curiosity for learning

Fahrney's own yearning for knowledge and his love of learning led him to continue his educational goals even further, through pursuing his leadership skills in Marian University's Ph.D. program.

At Marian, the Mission is the foundation of the community, and speaks to the purpose of being an effective educator, both in the classroom and beyond.

"The doctoral program at Marian had the same impact on me as when I attended for my masters — I felt at home," said Fahrney. "The professors and my fellow cohort members were open to sharing their experiences and knowledge, and really

allowed me to learn from multiple perspectives. It was beneficial to be challenged on both my way of teaching and the values that I hold — Marian truly made me reflect on who I am and why I'm here."

Fahrney's passion for teaching was renewed, especially through the Mission and Core Values of the University.

"It's not every day that a college classroom of principals focuses on the 'who am I?' question," said Fahrney. "At Marian, the Mission is the foundation of the community, and speaks to the purpose of being an effective educator, both in the classroom and beyond. Since my first class, I've taken the Mission





with me with each experience and take the Core Values into consideration in my leadership style.”

Fahrney’s education and life journey expanded with a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity: to serve as a deputy principal at the Singapore American School located in Singapore, a Southeast Asian island city-state.

After hearing of an overseas principal opportunity through networking with a fellow Marian alumnus, Fahrney and his family took on this new exciting adventure at the Singapore American School. A K–12 international school, the Singapore American School serves more than 4,000 students and offers a quality educational experience for children of missionaries, business families, U.S. military personnel and members of the U.S. government and U.S. embassy.

“The school is really a melting pot of students, with more than 50 nationalities represented,” said Fahrney. “The school has been around since the 1950s, and continues the legacy of success for its students, especially for students with special learning needs.”

Through his experience in the Singapore American School, Fahrney completed his doctoral dissertation on the “Voice of Struggling Adolescent Readers in a Secondary School Response to Intervention (Rtl) Based Reading Program.” Fahrney’s research and educational experience at Marian University supported his passion for development and leadership in the Singapore American School.

Developing a Global Perspective

The Singapore American School offers additional resources and support for students with an Individual Education Plan (IEP) in order to help all students receive a quality educational experience and reach their fullest potential.

“My Marian education helped me support students and teachers in the school in how to make accommodations and incorporate differentiated learning strategies in the classroom,” said Fahrney. “This is definitely a unique quality of the school, and I’m even part of the startup group, Next Frontiers Inclusion, where we are working to support the inclusion of all students in the learning environment.”

“Educators certainly have a rewarding role, but being able to change students’ lives in a foreign country and help bring these resources to them, it’s really meaningful work,” added Fahrney. “It really speaks of Marian’s mission of educating the whole person and transforming one’s professional and global perspectives.”

In addition to quality academic resources and support, Fahrney has assisted in furthering the school with its 21st century learning initiatives, both through incorporating technology and hands-on learning experiences.

“We are working on making our school cutting edge, and driving it toward the future of the educational system,” said Fahrney. “Culture certainly takes on a new meaning here, as our quality educators are

incorporating travel and service-oriented trips in order to reinvent our school. Through combining our traditional methods of success with travel and hands on experiences, the Singapore American School has transformed. Our mission is to offer a quality American education with an emphasis on global perspective — and we are doing it.”

Knowing the importance of a hands-on learning experience, Fahrney has led and continues to organize immersion trips to several countries during school breaks, including trips to the Himalayas, India, Burma and even a special meeting with the Dalai Lama in Tibet.

Living the Mission

As an educator, Fahrney strives to make the most of each day, using his talents and skills to better the lives of students at the Singapore American School.

“It is my hard work, motivation and inspirational Marian experience that has brought me such success here in Singapore,” said Fahrney. “This opportunity is certainly a reflection of my call to live out my personal values and the Mission of Marian and to do all that I can to be the quality educator and person that I have grown to be.” ■

For more information about the adult and graduate programs at Marian, visit www.marianuniversity.edu/admission today, or contact the Office of Adult and Graduate Admission at admission@marianuniversity.edu or (920) 923-7650.

