



Annalies Corbin, Ph.D.  
Founder, President & CEO  
Chief Goddess

In 2000 Annalies founded the PAST Foundation, an organization she envisioned could lead the way to connecting scientific research with classrooms, schools and communities. **If You can't Be what You can't See and You can't Do what You don't Know** - then the PAST Foundation is determined to change the paradigm in education to ensure that all students have access to opportunity and high quality education.

From 2000-2006 Annalies concurrently oversaw the PAST Foundation and taught at East Carolina University's Program in Maritime Studies. Well known for her Anthropological work in the area of Shipwreck Archaeology, Corbin's research focused on the intersection of archaeological investigations and public participation, including K-12 education. Combining her passion for research with public outreach and engagement, the scope and vision of PAST evolved rapidly. In 2005, when PAST opened its headquarters in Columbus, Ohio, Annalies turned all efforts to building the PAST Foundation, assembling a team that could grow the reach and mission. From a single school partnership in 2006, Annalies has grown PAST's partnerships across the nation, building a reputation for both transforming educational delivery and understanding emerging 21st century education.

In 2012, STEMconnector in US News lists Annalies Corbin among the top, 100 Women Leaders in STEM education. Annalies was also recognized for her accomplishments in The Women's Book Magazine, 2010-2011.

In 2014, Annalies's commitment to transforming schools led to the development of PAST Innovation Lab. Connecting directly with teachers through online professional development courses, a MAEd program and on-site workshops, PAST Innovation Lab impacts more classrooms and expands learning opportunities for teachers and students everywhere.

For over 18 years, under Annalies' leadership, PAST has been a leader in designing STEM education across the nation, bringing transdisciplinary problem-based learning to educators and experiential programs to students. Most notably, PAST was recognized by the U.S. Department of Education for its Excellence in Innovation in the STEM 2026 vision report. PAST was the only educational entity in Ohio to be included in this publication.

PAST was also recognized in 2014, by CGI America and former President Bill Clinton for their outstanding work, and again in 2015 for their achievements in improving STEM education in rural America. In 2015, the PAST Innovation Lab was recognized by the White House Summit on High School Design.

Annalies received her baccalaureate and master degrees in Anthropology and Maritime Archaeology from the Universities of South Dakota and East Carolina. The University of Idaho awarded her a doctorate in Anthropology and History. In addition to her work with PAST, Annalies also serves on the Board of Directors for the Ohio Farm Bureau Foundation, the Society for Historical Archaeology and the the Co-Editor-in-Chief for the Journal of Maritime Archaeology.

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## LOI

Submitting Organization: PAST Foundation

Contact: Annalies Corbin, President & CEO, [annalies@pastfoundation.org](mailto:annalies@pastfoundation.org)

Project Title: Blurring the Lines: Pathways to Middle College

Project Duration: July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2020

### **PAST Foundation Mission & Background**

PAST invites the world to design, construct, and engage in linking learning to life. We understand education's need to transcend current boundaries using experiences and technology in new ways that create access and embrace transdisciplinary teaching and learning through culturally relevant problem-solving.

For over 18 years, PAST, a non-profit organization, has been a leader in the R&D of Design Thinking education across the nation, bringing transdisciplinary problem-based learning to educators and experiential programs to students. Working across 34 states and 156 school districts, PAST partnerships and programs have impacted over 20,000 teachers and 185,000 students. PAST's work in STEM education has not gone unnoticed. Most notably, PAST was recognized by the U.S. Department of Education for its Excellence in Innovation in the STEM 2026 vision report. CGI America and former President Bill Clinton recognized PAST in 2014 for our outstanding work, and again in 2015 for our achievements in improving STEM education in rural America. This recognition and PAST research on transformation led PAST in 2015, to open the nation's first independent R&D education prototyping facility in Columbus, Ohio – The PAST Innovation Lab. The lab partners with K12 schools, post secondary programs, community, and business and industry designing and testing educational models that promote an integrated approach to learning. The innovative work at the Lab was recognized by the White House Summit on High School Design in 2015. Since then PAST has continued to grow the Design Thinking approach to education by partnering

with a wide array of stakeholders across the US to build experiential learning programs that are relevant to workforce development regionally, nationally, and internationally.

#### **PAST Factoids**

<b>Organization Founded</b>	2000
<b>Type of Organization</b>	501(c)3 incorporated in Montana
<b>Staff Size</b>	16 Full Time /4 Part time
<b>Board Size</b>	15
<b>Constituency</b>	Educators and Community Stakeholders in Education
<b>Geographic Region Served</b>	US
<b>Type of Services Provided</b>	Design and Implementation of Transdisciplinary Problem-Based Learning for P-16 education including school design, professional development, and experiential programs for students

#### **Proposed Project : Blurring the Lines: Pathways to Middle College**

The PAST Foundation's request of the Murdock Charitable Trust is to support specifically tailored professional development for two cohorts of K-12 Alaska teachers in order to prepare high school students for Middle College program opportunities throughout the University of Alaska system.

This project is in direct response to the 2016 Alaska Department of Education & Early Development's (DEED) 2016 *Alaska's Education Challenge* addressing both amplifying student learning and modernization of the education system while inspiring tribal and community ownership in education (DEED 2017). In addition, this project enhances the Alaskan Legislatures existing multi-year investment in Middle College programs. The University of Alaska Anchorage with the support of the Alaska Legislature initiated a series of strategies and programs to build robust Middle College pathways. Currently, there are three Middle College programs at Matsu Borough School District (established), Anchorage School District (emerging), and Kodiak Borough School District (in planning). The success of these Middle College programs relies on students who are ready both for post secondary and workforce, having already explored careers and problem-based learning strategies in secondary education that are aligned to relevant workforce development pathways. By creating pathways to Middle College,

high schools are able to blur the lines between secondary and post secondary, thus influencing both student success and access to post-secondary. Building up the feeder systems and pathways in high schools across Alaska is critically important to Middle College success. Traditional educational strategies have rigid demarcations based arbitrarily on age rather than accomplishment. By modernizing Alaska's educational system with seamless pathways that rely on accomplishment and readiness, DEED and the Middle College program can drive student learning and community ownership.

To accomplish these aspirations, University of Alaska's Middle College initiative and school districts across the state need help in establishing well-aligned programs and well-articulated learning strategies. The teacher professional development proposed in this project is specifically designed to help middle and high school educators master the practices, tools and strategies to fill this gap, better preparing students to take advantage of the pathways and opportunities Middle College programs provide.

Over the last 20 years changing societal dynamics have dramatically changed the workplace, technologies, and access to information. Education is under pressure to shift instructional and delivery strategies to remain relevant in the 21st century. These changes include blurring previously static lines between primary, secondary and post secondary education, drawing community and industry into education as integrated partners, and pivoting learning on real world issues to overcome rote memorization. Middle College and Early College programs are expanding across the US, blending to varying degrees, collegiate and high school courses, industry experience and internships, as well as stackable certifications and research. The instructional strategies of these programs are problem-based using hands-on projects to deliver concepts, directed at solving culturally relevant issues. The results are young adults with solid skills in critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and a willingness to keep learning. To survive in this rapidly changing world, these are imperative skills that every child needs to master before they reach post-secondary education. Design Thinking learning environments that rely on authentic problems and project-based delivery seated in culturally relevant issues, provide all learners with multiple avenues to drive deeper learning and demonstrate proficiency and competency. When concepts are tied to experiential actions rather than lecture students gain understanding that is tied to critical thinking and problem solving instead of memorization. This is deeper learning that stays with students, long term.

However, taking theory to practice and knowledge to understanding requires a sea change in how education is perceived and delivered. Both students and teachers have to breakdown established habits, change how they perceive learning takes place and embrace learning holistically. Changing how teachers perceive learning and deliver culturally relevant content requires professional development that establishes processes that take theory to practice with continued support that helps teachers build confidence in their new practices taking knowledge to understanding.

Helping Alaskan teachers create a seamless pathway to Middle College programs is directly aligned to the mission of PAST in transforming the educational landscape and to Murdock's mission of enriching education in the Northwest.

This proposal request is for professional development for middle and high school teachers. In particular Murdock support will make possible professional development both online and onsite for two cohorts of teachers from across Alaska. Each cohort of 40 teachers and accompanying school administrators (20) will be provided professional development around the design and implementation of STEM/STEAM problem-based learning strategies that are aligned to Middle College programs at the University of Alaska campuses, as well as the benchmarks for monitoring implementation by building confidence and success.

#### **Reasons for Approaching the M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust**

PAST has not approached the Murdock Charitable Trust before this proposal. We are currently approaching the Murdock Charitable Trust because of the Trust's commitment to enriching communities across the Northwest through strong education that is creative and sustainable. PAST is committed to and has a history of transforming the educational landscape through creative and sustainable support that resonates with communities. PAST is also committed to and has a history of building partnerships that engage whole community in the transformation. To this end, the proposal supports a strong vision of transformation and holistic approach to change. The partnership of the University of Alaska with the Alaskan legislature that is launching the Middle College program in unison with committed K12 School Districts, teachers, and communities is a recipe for success and a good partnership for the Murdock Charitable Trust.