The Faculty Excellence Grant was created in 2014 to enhance the quality of the liberal arts program at Maclay School in a meaningful and substantial way. Stipends are offered to faculty or staff members who have the potential and desire to make a meaningful impact and sustain the excellence of the Maclay academic program. Any employee of the school may apply, but preference is given to applications in the areas of differentiation, technology integration, or innovation. Grants were awarded for those proposals leading to significant curricular innovation beyond the normal annual revision or growth. A committee reviewed the submitted proposals and the following grants were awarded for the 2016-17 school year:

**Schoolyard Habitats**  
**Stephanie Cornais**

Stephanie Cornais received a grant for her Lower School Science Lab classes and the creation of several Schoolyard Habitat areas that will support local wildlife, serve as a living laboratory and outdoor classroom where children can engage in hands-on science inquiries, design investigations into the natural world and foster a student’s sense of stewardship for the local environment. The project includes the creation and maintenance of several habitats, butterfly gardens, vegetable gardens, and a Red Hills Region Habitat. The Schoolyard Habitat areas will serve as a resource for the entire school and will be accessible to other teachers for cross-curricular, multi-disciplinary lessons that provide children with a strong foundation in STEAM concepts.

**Mock Archaeologic Site**  
**Kristen Youngblood & Emma Perry**

The Mock Archaeological site will be used by all Latin classes in Middle and Upper School as well as being accessible to history, anthropology, and forensics classes to demonstrate practical hands-on lessons. The project will allow students to learn mapping and graphing skills while making grids, using math and science skills, and applying real-life archaeological techniques. It will include excavating, sending results to an imaginary lab, and receiving test results giving students an opportunity to research and present findings. Both Mrs. Youngblood and Mrs. Perry have worked on actual excavations and will look to partner with area universities to provide even more in-depth study in how archaeology plays a role in the world today.
Digital Textbook for Latin 6th Grade  Emma Perry

Mrs. Emma Perry’s grant was awarded to develop an interactive digital textbook for the Introduction to Latin class. The creation of the digital textbook involves collecting resources, explanatory text and videos of the grammatical material, and incorporating cultural lessons and interactive features that will easily be accessed with the new Bring Your Own Device program to be implemented next year in Middle School.

Genius Hour Passion Project  Bentley Harris

Genius Hour gives students time to explore their own interests, wonders and passions. It gives them autonomy over their learning and time to be creative. This idea is credited to Google, who asks its employees to spend 20% of their time working on a pet project, a project that their job description doesn’t cover, which has produced amazing results (Gmail!). Every Friday afternoon, the entire Lower School will be participating in our own Genius Hour at Maclay. Bentley Harris’ grant includes professional development training for teachers, including workshops and books, as well as materials for student projects. Beginning in fall 2016, students will be given the time, freedom, and resources to deeply explore topics that may eventually become a job they love; time to learn a topic, hobby, skill that defines who they are and who they might become; a time to learn and share with fellow students and others in the world who share their passions. In short, it builds knowledge, connections and possibilities.

Force & Motion  Darlene Miller & Dean Gargiulo

The Force and Motion project will be used in collaboration with the classroom teacher, science lab teacher, and the technology support staff to integrate a problem-solving strategy in all areas of the curriculum. The robot building kits and Lego sets will help build a foundation for engineering and an eagerness to create machines that can be programmed and coded. Darlene Miller and Dean Gargiulo will work with teachers on implementing Force and Motion lessons and Genius Hour so that students can work and collaborate together not just in their own classroom but across different grade levels.

The Maclay Faculty Excellence Grant is completely funded by the generous donors at the 2016 Maclay Auction and is an invaluable tool for our teachers to access opportunities for growth. Additionally, the grants are an extension of the commitment for on-going continuing education that is consistent with mission and philosophy of the school.