

once students, now teachers

Six teachers share their thoughts on how West High has changed since they attended

Can you even imagine one of your teachers as a student at West? Neither could we. But several teachers did, in fact, attend school here—some not too long ago.

“One day this girl came up to me and said, ‘Hey, I was looking at my mom’s yearbook and you were in it.’ ” art teacher Christian Aanestad said. “And I was a little freaked out, like ‘You knew who I was?’ ”

Having students recognize you from a parent’s yearbook isn’t the only difference for these teachers.

“When I was here, I want to say there were only maybe 1100 students,” Aanestad said. “The nice thing, though, is the mentality of the school has stayed the same.”

But more than the enrollment has changed, according to science teacher Maureen Head.

“I think it’s more diverse than it used to be,” she said. “But it’s definitely grown in size since I went here.”

And Head also found she had to get used to chatting with her former teachers.

“At first it was weird,” she said. “My former teachers tried to get me to call them by their first names. At the start, I was like ‘Uh, no, you’re Mr. Neuzil, not Gary.’ Now, it’s good. It’s fun and awesome teaching here.”

Teaching Trojans started out differently for chemistry and physics teacher Jeff Conner.

“I have a lot of positive memories from when I was a student here,” he said. “Coming back as a teacher was really exciting, and working with some of the teachers I had when I was in high school made it more positive.”

Conner’s happy memories don’t stop there.

“Mrs. Barnhouse and I will touch base every once in a while. I worked with her starting the Colors Club when I was here, and it’s good to see that it’s still going.”

For mathematics teacher Jean Morsch, some of her teachers no longer work at West.

“When I first started, there were some—maybe three or four—still working here,” Morsch said. “It was cool because they still remembered me.”

So the staff has changed and enrollment has grown. Plus, the building has expanded.

“Obviously, it’s grown a lot with new additions since I came here,” Morsch said. “The technology part has grown so much, too. I’m pleased with the school.”

That growth didn’t stop with technology.

“My graduating class was in the two hundreds if I remember correctly,” Lynn said. “It’s a lot bigger today.”

And student achievement has continued to spike since Lynn attended West.

“It’s a fulfilling experience working here,” Lynn said. “Some of the core values here remains the same, like academics and excellence.”

And a few teachers continue to pursue their high school passions. Science teacher Kody Pudil, for example, joined the wrestling staff as an assistant coach.

“I was excited to come back. During college, I actually hoped I could get a job here,” said Pudil, who wrestled at 103 pounds as a freshman and at 135 as a senior.

No matter when they graduated, each of these teachers echoed the theme of growth.

“There wasn’t the ninth grade center when I was here, or nearly as many computer labs,” Pudil said. “The halls are definitely more crowded.”

—By Megan Haman & Emily Shie



barb Lynn

PHOTO BY ELLEN BURNS

PHOTO BY ELLEN BURNS



christian aanestad

C
A
U
T
I
O
N
!

Page will be trimmed one pica in from this outside bleed line.