

Catalyst

SPRING 2019

A college degree is more important than ever.
Why aren't more students completing one?



FROM THE DEAN

LAUREN E. LINDSTROM

We have completed a strategic planning process to develop a guiding framework for the School's next five years.

This year, the School of Education has taken some very big steps in support of our vision of educational equity for all learners.

In January, the UC Davis College Opportunity Programs transferred to the School of Education from Student Affairs, instantly expanding our community impact by hundreds of miles and thousands of students across Northern California and all the way to the Oregon border. The academic preparation services these programs provide to underserved middle and high school students are a perfect match for the School's mission of educational equity and our goal to break down barriers to student success. We are so excited to add these programs to our School, and to welcome the 35 new staff members who have joined our team.

We have also just completed a strategic planning process to develop a guiding framework for the School's next five years. We reviewed our existing plan, gathered data to check progress on our existing goals, and met with key stakeholders including faculty, students, staff, school superintendents, principals and our Board of Advisors to hear their vision of the School's future. This process was an inspirational one for me, and I am grateful for everyone's thoughtful participation, which has resulted in a strategic plan that is faithful to our mission while expanding our vision of the future.

SPRING 2019

EDITOR

Eva Guralnick
 Director of Marketing & Communications
 eguralnick@ucdavis.edu
 (530) 752-4809

COPYWRITING

Eva Guralnick
 Corrie Jacobs

DESIGN

Mark Briggs Design

PRINCIPAL PHOTOGRAPHY

TJ Ushing, Eva Guralnick

ADDITIONAL PHOTOGRAPHY

Fred Greaves p. 8, Corrie Jacobs p. 2,
 Roy Manzanares pgs. 18-19, Gregory
 Urquiaga cover, pgs. 10-12

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For links to additional material and event
 information, or to download a copy, visit
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**UC DAVIS SCHOOL OF
 EDUCATION**

MISSION

The UC Davis School of Education marshals the knowledge and resources of the University of California, the world's pre-eminent public research university, to confront and eliminate inequities among people and communities through the generation of impactful knowledge and the promise of education.

ADDRESS

One Shields Avenue
 Davis, CA 95616

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When students and donors share big dreams for the future, everyone benefits

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One couple, two careers in school administration and soon—two EdD degrees

**MASTER'S STUDENTS
 PRESENT AT SYMPOSIUM**

Sarah Lack, a master's student in the School of Education's teacher education program, reviews her research poster one last time before her committee members arrive to evaluate her work.

MA students conduct research in their K-12 classrooms during their first year as teachers and present their findings at the annual MA Symposium. The inquiry skills they develop will help them continue to improve their teaching practices throughout their careers.





Dean Lauren Lindstrom with Fulbright collaborator Dr. Maximus Sefotho of the University of Johannesburg.

DEAN LAUREN LINDSTROM NAMED FULBRIGHT SPECIALIST

Dean Lauren Lindstrom has been selected to serve as a Fulbright Specialist in the area of education. She is the second faculty member at the School of Education to be named to this distinguished position. The Fulbright Specialist Program sends U.S. faculty and professionals to serve as expert consultants on curriculum, faculty development, institutional planning and related subjects at academic institutions abroad for a period of two to six weeks. Specialists are selected through a highly competitive process and work on multiple projects during a three-year appointment.

MEGAN WELSH RECEIVES AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE

Prof. Megan Welsh was one of two professors to receive the 2019

Award for Excellence in Service to Graduate Students. This award recognizes those who work diligently to advance the status



of graduate students throughout UC Davis by promoting and supporting graduate students' academic achievement and personal well-being above and beyond the scope and duties of the nominee's position. Welsh was nominated by multiple students who shared stories of her positive impact on their lives.

FACULTY PROMOTED TO ASSOCIATE AND FULL PROFESSORS

Danny C. Martinez has been promoted to Associate Professor. Martinez researches African

American and Latinx youth language and literacy practices. His



work has been recognized through several national awards, and he has also contributed to the School by playing a leadership role for the Emerging Scholars panel and faculty writing retreats, and serving on several faculty search committees.

Yuuko Uchikoshi has been promoted to full Professor. Her

NEW FACULTY

CATI DE LOS RÍOS

Cati de los Ríos became an Assistant Professor at the School of Education last summer, following her service as an Assistant Professor of Education, Culture and Society at UC Riverside. With expertise in ethnic studies, literacy, youth engagement and social change, de los Ríos joins the School of Education as a decorated early career scholar. She was conferred two 2018 American Educational Research Association Outstanding Dissertation Awards from the Critical Educators for Social Justice Special Interest Group (SIG) and the Hispanic/Latinx Research SIG; and the 2018 Promising Researcher Award and the 2018 Alan C. Purves Award, both from the National Council of Teachers of English.

In addition to her PhD and master of philosophy degree from Columbia University's Teachers College and master's degree in theological and religious studies from Harvard Divinity School, de los Ríos holds teaching credentials in Bilingual Cross-Cultural Language and Academic Development and Secondary Spanish Language and Literacy. "I was a public school teacher in Massachusetts and California," said de los Ríos, "following the lead of many women in my family who were teachers in Mexico and in California. While teaching in Southern California, I noticed my students who were classified as English language learners experienced very reductionist types of curriculum. This pushed me to gain the theoretical and methodological tools I needed to become an educational researcher and better serve these students."

de los Ríos's research explores the intersections of adolescent literacies, transnationalism, ethnic studies and teacher education, and she has done groundbreaking research around the rich cultural language and literacy practices and resources of students from immigrant backgrounds, specifically Latinx or US-Mexico transnational youth. "Some of my recent research has been looking at students' critical reading, writing and performances of Mexican corridos, a form of Mexican folk ballads," she said, "and its subgenre of narcocorridos that speak specifically to the transnational drug trade. It's often seen as a deviant activity to listen to narcocorridos, but it's a daily literacy practice that many youth use to interpret their larger socio-political world and think through complex moral and political lessons. These students have so many powerful literacy and language resources and practices that often go unrecognized by educators."

For de los Ríos, education is a setting for empowerment. "Education is such a powerful place to be," she said. "Being an education researcher allows me to critique institutions but also be a part of a solution. I want to be able to capture what a culturally empowering education can look like and reimagine more humanizing ways of educating all students."



research focuses on language and literacy development for dual language learners. She will finish her appointment as Director of Undergraduate Programs for the School of Education this summer.

Heidi Ballard has also been promoted to full Professor. Ballard focuses on environmental education that links communities, science, environmental action and learners of all ages. She is the Founder and Faculty Director of the Center for Community and Citizen Science.

CASSANDRA HART RECEIVES ASSOCIATION HONORS

Prof. Cassandra Hart, School of

Education postdoctoral researcher/alumna

Elizabeth Friedmann and PhD candidate Michael Hill have been awarded the



Thomas A. Downes Award for their article “Online Course-taking and Student Outcomes in California Community Colleges.” The Downes Award is given by the Association for Education Finance and Policy to the best article of the year published in the association’s journal. Hart was also named an Outstanding Reviewer for 2018 by the American Educational Research Association’s *Educational Researcher* journal.

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION RANKED 36TH IN NATION

According to *U.S. News & World Report’s* 2020 rankings for schools of education, the UC Davis School of Education has been ranked 36th in the nation, 21st of public universities nationwide, 5th among California education schools, and 4th among all University of California and California State University programs.

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION SETS NEW RECORD ON GIVE DAY

The third annual UC Davis Give Day, held April 12-13, raised over \$2 million from more than 4,400 gifts, bringing our community together to celebrate the Aggie spirit by sharing, following or financially supporting programs that have made an impact on the lives of people everywhere. The School of Education had a record-breaking year with over \$23,000 raised from more than 70 gifts, which will provide scholarship support to our PhD, EdD and Teaching Credential/Master’s students, program support for community outreach programs, including the Center for Community and Citizen Science, the Transformative Justice in Education Center and the Center for Shakespeare in Diverse Classrooms, and discretionary funds for the School’s most pressing needs. We are grateful for your support! Give Day may be over, but you can still be counted in this year’s total by making a donation at education.ucdavis.edu/giveday.



NEW FACULTY

ELIZABETH MONTAÑO

Elizabeth Montaña, EdD returned to the School of Education last year as an Associate Professor of Teaching in Education. She is the first in the School’s history to hold this new teaching professorship title. Montaña previously served as a Lecturer and Supervisor of Teacher Education from 2013–2015. Now she primarily teaches in the CANDEL and

undergraduate minor programs. In Fall 2019 she will become the Co-Director of CANDEL, alongside Prof. Kevin Gee. Their duties will include reviewing the sequencing of CANDEL courses and faculty advising models.

“I’m excited to be serving in this unique Associate Professor of Teaching in Education position,” said Montaña. “I’m able to really focus on teaching and understanding how to better prepare our students. I’ll be studying current teaching practices across all of the programs in our School and collaborating with my colleagues to develop innovative teaching practices. This professorship in teaching role allows me to delve deeply into pedagogical practices in the field of education.”

Montaña brings experience in teacher education and educational research to her new position. In addition to her EdD from Loyola Marymount University, she holds a California Single Subject Credential in English with CLAD Certification and earned a master’s degree in Education: Language, Literacy and Culture from UC Berkeley.

Montaña was a charter school teacher for 11 years and began doing education research while she was still a teacher. “I had a team come into my own classroom,” she said, “and we created curricula around student voice and language in formal versus informal settings. I’ve always been interested in not just the kids in my classroom but also about the larger educational world. My own experiences inform my research, and in addition to work on literacy and language in classrooms, I’ve recently been researching charter school teacher unionization and teachers who are speaking out on behalf of their working conditions.”

As Montaña serves in her new role, she will continue putting into practice the passion for social justice that she discovered as an undergraduate student. “As a first-generation student, I thought a lot about my positionality in college,” she said. “After an uninspiring quarter as a business major, I started working with middle school students in Los Angeles. Seeing firsthand the inequities students were facing sparked my interest in education. It was an eye-opening experience that made me realize how important it is to be in classrooms. I’ve always loved learning, and I’m excited to be in a position now where I can keep contributing to the future of education.”



ALEXIS PATTERSON RECEIVES OUTSTANDING DISSERTATION AWARD

Prof. Alexis Patterson has been recognized with the Elizabeth Cohen Award for Outstanding Thesis/Dissertation from the International Association for the Study of Cooperation

in Education for “Emotional Intelligence in Science: Pathway to Improving Equitable Groupwork and Enhancing Engagement in Scientific Practices.” The IASCE is the only international nonprofit organization for educators who research and practice cooperative learning in order to promote student academic improvement and democratic social processes.



CANDEL STUDENTS TO RECEIVE DISSERTATION SUPPORT THROUGH NEW SCHOLARSHIP

Last fall, the School of Education received a \$26,500 gift to establish the “CANDEL Award Honoring Dr. Paul Heckman,” which will support EdD students with assistance for expenses such as tuition, fees and research costs during the dissertation phase of their program. This gift, whose donor wishes to remain anonymous, was inspired by the CANDEL program and Founding Co-Director of CANDEL Professor Paul Heckman’s commitment to preparing education leaders who value learning, promote equity and advocate for all students.

Heckman was directly involved in deciding how the gift would be used to support CANDEL students’ dissertation research. In reflecting on the spirit and legacy of his own work, he wanted to support students who are examining a critical question in their sites of practice and using their research in a transformative way to promote educational change.

“In the CANDEL program, we really value the idea of teaching our students to be researcher practitioners,” said Co-Director Cassandra Hart. “For that reason, making sure that they have good dissertation experiences is very important to launching our students on their trajectories.”

If you’d like to support the CANDEL program and its students, please visit education.ucdavis.edu/edd-fund.



CANDEL Co-Directors Cassandra Hart and Kevin Gee announce the establishment of the new CANDEL award.

NEW FACULTY

NANCY ERBSTEIN

Nancy Erbstein, PhD, joined the faculty this spring as the School of Education’s first Associate Professor in Residence. She’ll spend one-quarter of her time at the School of Education, conducting research and also teaching in a program that links UC Davis and Nepali students.

For the other three-quarters of her time, Erbstein will serve as the Associate Vice Provost of Global Education for All in Global Affairs. Global Education for All is a Big Idea initiative selected in Spring 2017 to infuse global engagement into every UC Davis student’s experience. “I’m working with Global Affairs and units across our campuses to expand access to global learning opportunities—virtual, international, on campus, and in our backyard—that help our graduates thrive in our globalized world and collaborate to address global challenges equitably and sustainably,” she said.

It’s an ambitious goal, but Erbstein thinks big. Her research expertise includes the areas of healthy youth environments, youth well-being, and transformative pedagogies of youth civic engagement; this means she looks at the big picture when considering solutions to disparate educational outcomes.

Her work in the area of chronic absenteeism is a case in point. In one study, she found that chronically absent students experienced an average of 10 different barriers to regular school attendance. “That really flips the common narrative from ‘Why don’t these parents get their kids to school?’ to seeing these students as heroic for getting to school at all,” she said. From there, Erbstein explored interventions ranging from identifying transit system gaps to addressing health issues such as asthma to supporting youth-led research on increasing attendance.

Running through all of Erbstein’s work is her commitment to student mentoring and participation. “I was the beneficiary of incredible mentoring as a young person,” she said. “Multiple people encouraged me to think carefully about inequality in the US and globally, while cultivating cultural humility. They took my ideas very seriously and supported me to act on them, so I graduated from college feeling like my ideas mattered, even as I didn’t have all the answers. A really important part of my work with undergraduates, especially our first generation college-going students, entails making sure they know that they have expertise and insight to bring to the table.”

Erbstein’s dual roles allow her to combine many interests. “I’m thrilled to join the School of Education faculty,” she said. “The School has a strong commitment to diversity and inclusion, a real interest in experimentation, an appreciation for engaged scholarship, and a clear investment in both rigorous intellectual work and its application to promote social justice. All of that is deeply important to me.”





Globe Education Academy alumna Ayesha Faust works with her fifth-grade class on a passage from Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*.

CENTER FOR SHAKESPEARE IN DIVERSE CLASSROOMS UNITES TEACHING AND RESEARCH

Since 2005, the School of Education has partnered with Globe Education, the education arm of Shakespeare's Globe, London, to provide unique and dynamic professional development to K-12 teachers. Collectively, the 300 credential candidates and teachers served by these programs over the years have taught more than 20,000 K-12 students of varied backgrounds and grade levels, many of them emergent bilinguals/English learners.

This long-time commitment to innovative approaches to teaching has a new name: the Center for Shakespeare in Diverse Classrooms. The Center will continue to examine Shakespeare's

value in the modern world, with a focus on relevance and accessibility, while also further developing these engaging teaching practices so that a diverse range of K-12 students can learn how to access not only the work of Shakespeare, but also connect these texts with culturally and linguistically diverse work by contemporary authors.

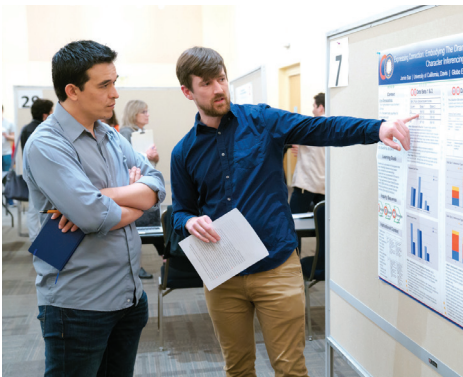
These programs are led by Globe Education artist-practitioners from London who provide innovative teaching techniques to language arts, social studies and multiple subject teachers who are at various stages of their careers, from their teaching credential year in the School of Education up to ongoing professional development workshops.

Some students also participate in the School's Globe Education Academy, led by co-coordinators Pauline Holmes and Rebecca Rosa, lecturer/supervisors in the School's teaching credential program. This intensive program includes travel to London for one week of immersive training in Globe Education practices at Shakespeare's Globe during the summer after their credential year. These newly credentialed teachers apply their new knowledge and skills to their classroom practice during their MA year, conduct research in their classrooms on the impact of the techniques, and present their findings at the annual MA symposium.

Prof. Steven Athanases, the Center's research director, is also studying how teachers are adapting these practices for use in diverse California classrooms, and the impact on student engagement and learning. He's partnering with Globe Education Academy alumni through summer institutes and quarterly meetings.

"In order to make sure that these practices can take hold within the realities and expectations of a classroom, we're engaging in a design-based research model with them," Athanases said. "We're studying how these teachers identify elements that require adaptation, and how they develop additional teaching units, design the summer institute for the next cohort—and in the process, evolve into being teaching partners."

Globe Education teaching practices align well with the School's commitment to social justice and educational equity, said Athanases. "In Shakespeare's time, writing about challenging social issues was a dangerous activity," he said. "These practices invite students to embody conflicts, voice poetic text and forge links with social issues that are still relevant in the 21st century, and they can act as a bridge to multicultural texts and diverse historical perspectives that reflect the lives of the students in California's K-12 classrooms."



Jamie Bair (Cred. '18, MA '19) presents his research to Sergio Sanchez, a Globe Education Senior Graduate Research Fellow.

PETER MUNDY NAMED PRESIDENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR AUTISM RESEARCH

Prof. Peter Mundy was appointed President of the International Society for Autism Research (INSAR)

at the organization’s annual conference in May. INSAR provides scientific collaboration, mentorship and

education to better the lives of the individuals and families living with Autism Spectrum Disorder.



CENTER FOR COMMUNITY AND CITIZEN SCIENCE HELPS BRING CITY NATURE CHALLENGE TO SACRAMENTO

Each spring, cities around the world compete in City Nature Challenge to see who can make the most observations of nature, find the most



Green-tailed Towhee found by Adam Panto.

species and engage the most people. This year, 159 cities and over 35,000 people participated, logging nearly 1 million observations of 31,000 species. Sacramento joined in for the first time, thanks to the School of Education’s Center for Community and Citizen Science and partner organizations that collaborated to make it happen. “This citizen science event gets people out into nature to learn about and appreciate biodiversity,” said Ryan Meyer, the

center’s executive director. “And all these observations become part of a global database as part of a massive effort to understand what types of wildlife live in cities. It can be useful for all kinds of questions about environmental change.” Sacramento exceeded expectations for its first year, with over 500 participants in nine counties logging nearly 10,000 observations. Learn more and consider participating in 2020 at citynaturechallenge.org.

MAISHA AND TORRY WINN RECEIVE CHANCELLOR’S ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Prof. Maisha Winn and Dr. Lawrence (Torry) Winn were honored with the Chancellor’s Achievement Award for Diversity and Community for 2018–2019 in the Special Recognition Category. This award recognizes the exemplary contributions they have made to enhancing campus inclusiveness and diversity through their leadership roles at the School’s Transformative Justice in Education Center (TJE). TJE hosts events, trainings and circles on and off campus with the goal of broadening awareness of how history matters, race matters, justice matters, language matters and future matters.



Maisha and Torry Winn.



IN MEMORIAM PROFESSOR PAUL E. HECKMAN

Dr. Paul E. Heckman was a professor in the School of Education from 2004 until his death on January 23, 2019. He was critical to the School’s growth, serving as the Associate Dean for eight years and CANDEL Founding Co-Director for five years.

Heckman’s research focused on educational change—cognition, curriculum theory, school culture, youth and community development. He was instrumental in shaping CANDEL’s focus on the nexus between theory and practice in leadership, envisioning a program that would promote transformation by questioning existing educational structures and practices to create alternatives that match what we know about learning.

Heckman will be remembered as a passionate educator who imbued his work with dignity, professionalism and sensitivity. He loved both teaching and learning, and saw himself as a learner alongside his students and colleagues. He was a dedicated mentor and advisor, supporting his students even in the final days of his life.

For those who wish more information on a gratitude gathering or to make a memorial gift in his honor, the family has established the Dr. Paul Heckman Memorial website at heckmanmemorial.com.

GRANTS

NICOLE SPARAPANI ON TWO MAJOR GRANTS

Along with colleagues at the MIND Institute, Prof. Nicole Sparapani is a co-investigator on a \$3.1 million grant from the National Institutes of Health titled “Language Development in Fragile X Syndrome.” The team will focus on how youth with fragile X syndrome successfully transition from high school to independent adult lives. She is also a Senior Leader for the Transition Protocol for UC Davis on a \$2 million Health Resources and Services Administration grant for the Autism Intervention Research Network.



sample will include applicants for financial aid grants who attended California community colleges. The work is connected to Wheelhouse: The Center for Community College Leadership and Research at the School of Education.

RYAN MEYER RECEIVES USDA GRANT

Dr. Ryan Meyer is the Principal Investigator and Prof. Heidi Ballard is the Co-Principal Investigator on a \$150,000 grant from the USDA titled “Citizen Science on the Farm: Training Teachers to Provide Locally Relevant, Authentic Food and Agriculture Science Experiences for Students.” They will work in partnership with the UC Davis Student Farm, Yolo Farm to Fork, the Yolo County Office of Education and the Woodland Joint Unified School District to prepare elementary school teachers to implement youth-focused community and citizen science in school gardens.



Meyer will also be the project supervisor on a new initiative. The California Ocean Protection Council has approved funds for an 18-month postdoctoral fellowship based jointly at the School of Education’s Center for Community and Citizen Science and the UC Davis Center for Environmental Policy and Behavior. The postdoctoral scholar will analyze data for the MPA Watch program, an innovative social science project in which volunteers gather data about how people use and interact with ocean and coastal resources throughout the California coastline.

MICHAL KURLAENDER LEADS MULTI-CAMPUS RESEARCH PROJECT

Along with colleagues from UC Irvine, UCLA and UCSF, Prof. Michal Kurlaender will be a co-investigator on “Studying Inequality and Homelessness,” a \$1.25 million multi-campus grant from the University of California Office of the President. She will serve as the Principal



Investigator for the UC Davis campus portion, and will lead her team in the California Education Lab to investigate inequality in career technical education and workforce development in both the K-12 and community college systems in California.

DARNEL DEGAND RECEIVES CALIFORNIA EDUCATION LEARNING LAB GRANT

Prof. Darnel Degand will be a Co-Principal Investigator on a \$500,000 California Education Learning Lab grant titled “Improving Retention in Engineering: E-Games for Active Training in Engineering Design.” This is a partnership between the UC Davis School of Education, Biomedical Engineering, and Computer Science that proposes to provide scalable, meaningful engineering design curricula to undergraduate students by creating online game modules that will cover the basic steps of the engineering design process.



SCHOOL OF EDUCATION TEAMS RECEIVE CTERIN GRANTS

School of Education faculty members received four of the six grants awarded for 2018–19 by the California Teacher Education Research and Improvement Network, a University of California consortium dedicated to improving the quality and efficiency of the state’s educator preparation system.

Prof. Steven Athanases is the Principal Investigator on “Collective Inquiry as a Scaffold for Learning to Teach in a High Leverage Practice: A Case Example of Class Discussion.” This study explored ways that novice teachers can learn disciplined and structured improvisational processes to facilitate leading of classroom discussion to enhance student learning in diverse classrooms.

Prof. Margarita Jimenez-Silva, Principal Investigator, and Dr. Nadeen Ruiz, Co-Principal Investigator, received a grant titled “Recruiting and Preparing the Next Generation of California’s Bilingual Teachers” to collect and analyze data to help California’s teacher education programs better recruit and prepare bilingual teacher candidates. Jimenez-Silva is also a co-Principal Investigator on “Recruiting, Retaining, and Supporting Teacher Educators of Color in the University of California,” which explored what distinguishes the professional expertise and growth of teacher educators, particularly persons of color.

Dr. Lisa Sullivan, the School’s Associate Director of Teacher Education, is Principal Investigator on “Teacher Education Network Team on Meaningful Evaluation of Student Teaching,” and led a team of researchers across the UC system examining how best to support student teachers while responding to state level standards requiring that data be collected on student teaching.

PACO MARTORELL AND MICHAL KURLAENDER RECEIVE IES GRANT

Prof. Paco Martorell, Principal Investigator, and Prof. Michal Kurlaender, Co-Principal Investigator, received a \$3.2 million Institute of Education Sciences grant funded under the Postsecondary and Adult Education topic. “Evaluating Incentives for Full-time Enrollment



at California Community Colleges” will evaluate the causal impact of financial incentives on students’ short-term and longer-term education outcomes. The

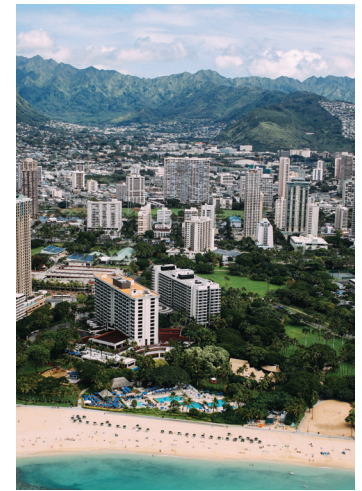
AUTHOR ERIN ENTRADA KELLY FEATURED AT 2019 WORDS TAKE WING

This spring, the School of Education hosted Newbery-winning author Erin Entrada Kelly at our annual *Words Take Wing: Honoring Diversity in Children’s Literature* celebration.

Kelly spoke to an audience of 1,300 regional schoolchildren at the UC Davis Mondavi Center about her writing process, her characters and her personal experiences as a Filipina-American. The author of *Hello, Universe, You Go First* and *Blackbird Fly*, Kelly is a professor of children’s literature in the graduate fiction and publishing programs at Rosemont College in Pennsylvania. *Words Take Wing* has presented children’s book authors each year since 2005 to more than 14,000 Sacramento-area students.



Author Erin Entrada Kelly presents at Words Take Wing.



Waikiki, Hawaii.

Photo by Colton Jones on Unsplash

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION JOINS CARNEGIE PROJECT ON THE EDUCATION DOCTORATE

The School of Education is one of nine higher education institutions accepted for membership in The Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate (CPED) in 2019. CPED is a network of over 100 colleges and schools of education working together to undertake a critical

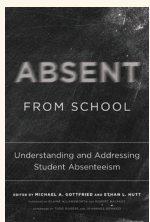
examination of the doctorate in education through dialogue, experimentation, critical feedback and evaluation.

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION DEBUTS NEW STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS

The School of Education introduced two new internship programs for this upcoming summer through

UC Davis Study Abroad. Led by Prof. Yuuko Uchikoshi, undergraduate students will spend five weeks as education interns in Honolulu, Hawaii or Chiang Mai, Thailand, participating in teaching, mentoring, homework assistance, lesson prep and after-school activities. Students earn six course units to interact through online discussions and explore the significance of interning in a broader social and cultural context.

FEATURED PUBLICATIONS



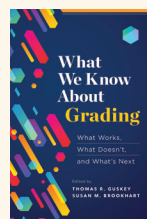
Prof. Kevin Gee published a book chapter on “Variation in Chronic Absenteeism: The Role of Children, Classrooms and Schools” in *Absent in School*. In addition, he co-authored “Will I Be Victimized at School Today? How Schools Influence the Victimization Experiences of Asian American Teenagers” in the *Asian American Journal of Psychology*.

Prof. Marcela Cuellar’s research on “Creating Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs) and Emerging HSIs: Latina/o College Choice at Four-Year Institutions” has been published in the *American Journal of Education*. She also co-authored “Beyond the Baccalaureate: Factors Shaping Latina/o Graduate Degree Aspirations” in the *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education*.

Prof. Lee Martin co-wrote an article about his research on “Iterative Design Toward Equity: Youth Repertoires of Practice in a High School Maker Space” in the journal *Equity and Excellence in Education*.



Prof. Michal Kurlaender, California Education Lab Executive Director Dr. Sherrie Reed and PhD students in the Graduate Group in Education contributed to *Getting Down to Facts II*, a national collaborative research project. The peer-reviewed project’s 55 publications provide education leaders and policymakers with an overview of how California’s PreK-12 education system is performing in the areas of student success, governance, spending and personnel. Kurlaender also co-authored “Predicting College Success: How Do Different High School Assessments Measure Up?,” a report published by Policy Analysis for California Education.



Prof. Megan Welsh has published her research on “Standards-Based Grading” as a book chapter in *What We Know About Grading*. She also co-authored “Methods Matter: A Multi-trait Multi-method Analysis of Student Behavior” in the *Journal of School Psychology*.

Exploring Latinx Success

While in the CANDEL program, Cynthia Sommer (EdD '18) rotated into various roles at California community college campuses, where the equity gap for Latinx students was troubling her. "Being a Latina and first-generation college student myself, I wasn't comfortable with the easy story that these students were not ready for college or that their culture doesn't appreciate having a higher education degree," she said. "Given my own background and my experiences working with some of these students, I felt there was more to it."

Through her classwork and dissertation research, Sommer wanted to identify the strategies that were working for Latinx students. She turned her attention to student success courses with a cultural perspective. They seemed to improve persistence, but the meager data available didn't indicate why.

Sommer interviewed Latinx students about their experiences in these course offerings. She found that the practical skills they acquired were valuable, but the importance of taking a course that recognized and validated their culture meant even more. "Having a teacher and classmates from their same background made college become what it's supposed to be for them," Sommer said, "and they developed a confidence that then carried over to their other classes."

Sommer is now a director in Workforce Development at American River College. "CANDEL paved the way for my transition to educational leadership," she said. "I love what I'm doing now and I hope to continue finding ways to promote student success. I'm optimistic that I can make a positive change in higher education." ■

“

CANDEL paved the way for my transition to educational leadership. I love what I'm doing now.”

CYNTHIA SOMMER, AMERICAN RIVER COLLEGE



COVER STORY

Reaching the Finish Line

MORE CALIFORNIA STUDENTS ARE GRADUATING FROM HIGH SCHOOL AND GOING TO COLLEGE—BUT TOO FEW ARE FINISHING THEIR COLLEGE DEGREES

The numbers start strong: a record 81 percent of the state’s students are finishing high school. However, only 63 percent go on to enroll in college—and only 38 percent earn a degree. Among those who don’t complete college, achievement gaps persist for historically underrepresented groups. School of Education researchers are collaborating to identify the barriers to student success and the systemic changes needed to ensure that more students leave college with degrees.

“There are many factors explaining why students aren’t completing college,” said Sherrie Reed, executive director of the School of Education’s California Education Lab. “There’s still a lot of research to be done, but we do know there are four major factors that keep students from finishing their degrees: academic preparedness, lack of financial aid, socio-emotional factors like student belonging and information barriers

that make navigating college difficult.”

These issues affect students in different ways, but they can also work together to make college extremely challenging. If students don’t receive adequate academic preparation in high school, they may start in remedial classes, resulting in a larger academic load that adds more time to their degree. A longer time to degree may make students feel discouraged, leading

to a lower sense of engagement within their academic community. If a student changes from full-time to part-time status in order to deal with other responsibilities while going to school, that affects the cost of college and financial aid. “Trying to navigate this very complex system and find the resources you need is not a skill students are necessarily being taught in high school or college,” said Reed.



As researchers, we want to move beyond thinking of this problem through an individual's causes of success or failure in college. We want to focus on what institutions can do."

MICHAL KURLAENDER

Starting College on Uneven Ground

Some students are already behind before they set foot in their first college classroom. According to recent assessment scores, less than one-third of California's high school juniors are ready for college-level work in both mathematics and English Language Arts.

"Our students in the UC, CSU and California Community College systems are coming from some of the best high schools in the country and also some of the worst," said Prof. Michal Kurlaender, faculty director of the California Education Lab. "Students have had different levels of access to quality instruction, AP classes or dual enrollment opportunities that prepare them for a rigorous college curriculum and the intellectual spaces they're going to inhabit. Higher education did not create these inequalities at the K-12 level, but it has a responsibility to address them."

To lessen the challenges students are facing, Kurlaender explains that it's important to separate the individual from the institution. "As researchers, we want to move beyond thinking of this problem through an individual's causes of success or failure in college," she said. "Instead we want to focus on what institutions can do and how they can better prepare their systems for students rather than students being asked to navigate on their own."

School of Education researchers have been working closely with the California Department of Education (CDE) and the UC, CSU and California Community

College (CCC) systems to research what effective academic preparedness looks like for two- and four-year degrees. "At the California Education Lab, we're looking at data about student performance and outcomes from the CDE, UC, CSU and CCC systems to answer big questions about how to align K-12 and higher education," said Kurlaender. "As an example, right now the UC and CSU systems are contemplating changing math and science requirements to better ensure students are prepared for college-level coursework. We've been providing them the information they need to answer this and other critical policy questions around what predicts college success."

Finding Financial Help

Just as students are entering college with disparate levels of academic knowledge, they also have disparate levels of understanding about how to access financial aid. Knowing what assistance is available can mean the difference between dropping out or successfully earning a degree.

"There are a lot of ways in which financial pressures can make it hard for students to succeed even once they overcome the hurdle of paying for tuition," explained Prof. Paco Martorell, faculty co-director at the California Education Lab, "and a growing body of research shows that financial aid leads to better student outcomes."

The burden of having to finance tuition in addition to other expenses, and trying

to meet all of these demands at once, can make earning a degree difficult. Students may not want to go into debt or may not have access to loans. Students who support themselves by working may have less time to study or get enough sleep, and may have more class scheduling conflicts. Unstable housing situations, food insecurity, unreliable transportation and other pressures can make a college degree seem impossible to achieve.

"Today's students face a variety of barriers to accessing financial aid," said Martorell. Martorell and Dr. Elizabeth Friedmann (PhD '16), a research fellow at the California Education Lab and Wheelhouse: The Center for Community College Leadership, are currently researching Pell Grants for CCC students and have been publishing their findings through a series of Wheelhouse research briefs.

"Community college students who are Pell-eligible have their tuition covered and are also able to receive a grant that covers housing, books or other expenses," said Martorell. "We discovered that about one in five students who appear eligible based on their financial need aren't receiving the funding they're entitled to. A complex paperwork process to verify eligibility can be a significant barrier keeping these students from important funding, which affects their ability to do well in their classes."

Martorell and Friedmann are also in the process of studying a new statewide program that awards additional financial aid to students enrolled in 15 or more units per semester, encouraging students to finish an associate's degree in just two years. "It's exciting to get to collaborate on these projects to produce research that has an impact on policy and helps California's students do better," he said. Financial aid research coming out of the California Education Lab and Wheelhouse is being used by education leaders, practitioners and policymakers throughout the state.

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Particularly at large institutions, it's easy for students to get lost or discouraged when navigating layers of bureaucracy.”

MARCELA CUELLAR

Figuring Out How to Belong

Even for students who come to college academically prepared and with ample financial resources, finishing a degree is not guaranteed. “When we talk about academic preparedness, we often focus on the cognitive aspects without necessarily unpacking all of the different elements that also come with going to college,” explained Prof. Marcela Cuellar, whose current research examines student experiences and outcomes at Hispanic Serving Institutions such as UC Davis. “Particularly at large institutions, it's easy for students to get lost or discouraged when navigating layers of bureaucracy. That's why it's important for institutions to ensure students are comfortable seeking help and are aware of the various resources on campus to support their success.”

Kurlaender and Scott Carrell, a professor in the Department of Economics and faculty co-director at the California Education Lab, recently found that some forms of professor engagement can make a big difference. Their research suggests that just a few emails from a professor can improve student performance and perception of support. These emails increased study time and exam scores among UC Davis economics students. When the same study was run at a CSU campus, lower-division students saw some improved course performance after getting the emails, and improved perceptions about the class and instructor support for their learning.

Graduate students within the School of Education are also examining how colleges

and universities can create a welcoming space for students and provide them with the tools they need to finish their degrees. PhD student Alicia Garcia's research focuses on students who have been put on academic probation or dismissed from their institutions. Claudia Escobar, a PhD candidate, looks at how belonging and motivation relate to degree completion for first-generation college students. Vanessa Segundo, a PhD candidate, documents the role of Latinx/Chicanx centers in redefining and reimagining student success.

At UC Davis, students who are historically underrepresented, low-income and educationally disadvantaged can find support through community centers like the Student Recruitment and Retention Center or ethnic-specific retention centers such as the Center for African Diaspora Student Success and the Center for

Chicanx and Latinx Academic Student Success. These culturally relevant spaces, led by School of Education PhD and EdD students and alumni, cater to the unique needs of students who may be struggling in their coursework and provide a close-knit community to make the university feel less overwhelming. At the K-12 level, the School of Education's College Opportunity Programs are preparing students for college academically and emotionally by providing enrichment opportunities, guidance and resources at schools throughout Northern California.

A variety of factors can discourage students from finishing college, but earning a postsecondary degree is becoming increasingly necessary. “As the skills required for today's economy demand a college degree, college is the greatest safety net you have for yourself and for your family, especially for low-income and first-generation students,” said Kurlaender. “Today's college student is much more complex than the college student of 60 years ago, and some of the models we have for what students need in college need to be more responsive to the changing demographics of who attends college. It's really important for institutions to figure out how to help students across the finish line. We have to get it right.”





Diana Santoyo presents the results of the research she conducted in Yuuko Uchikoshi's Language and Literacy Development Lab at the 2019 UC Davis Undergraduate Research Conference.

FEATURE

Generating Knowledge

Undergraduate research opportunities offer big benefits to students—and advance the field of education

Over 300 undergraduate students earn a minor in education at UC Davis each year, making it one of the largest minors on campus. But the School's work with undergraduate students doesn't stop there. Students from a range of minor and major programs conduct research under the direction of School of Education faculty, making real contributions to the field of education while gaining hands-on social science research experience and exploring career and graduate school options.

Like the School's graduate programs, the undergraduate research program is multi-disciplinary, with students from linguistics, psychology, history, statistics and human development working alongside and learning from each other and their mentors.

Prof. Yuuko Uchikoshi's Language and Literacy Development Lab team uses interviews and assessment tools to collect data from parents and children, many of whom speak Spanish or Chinese. Her

30 undergraduate researchers, many of them bilingual, make this labor-intensive research possible.

"Undergraduates have a lot of energy and great ideas," she said. "I love working with them. We train them to test the language ability and social-emotional development of 3- and 4-year-olds. They recruit families, conduct assessments, interview parents, transcribe videos, code data and assist with statistical analyses."



From left, Nicole Sparapani and Kerry Enright meet with their undergraduate researchers.

Prof. Kerry Enright will be succeeding Uchikoshi as the director of the School's undergraduate programs, and will continue to expand undergraduate research opportunities. She currently has two undergraduate students working in her Integrating Literacies Project.

"They've been critical to the success of the project," Enright said. "They share many of the talents and histories of the students we're studying: bilingual, first generation, Latinx youth with strong familial and cultural resources, but few financial resources. And they're helping us generate knowledge that can promote more equitable and just practices in Latinx youths' classrooms and workplaces. It's a win-win for them and the project."

Prof. Nicole Sparapani's team of 16 undergraduates analyzes and codes video footage of teacher-child interactions to help identify universal learning practices and see how those practices work for students with autism. "They're highly motivated students who are early in their academic careers and excited for the future," she said. "They're getting to see research from beginning to end and how it can directly impact a person's life." One of her students has entered the School's PhD program as a result of her lab experience.

Sparapani's team includes several students who are neurodiverse and came forward when she asked for researchers on an autism project. "They're thriving here," she said. "They didn't think they'd have a chance to work in a research setting, and now they know they can contribute." ■





Educational Talent Search participants tour the campus of CSU Sacramento on the first stop of a college tour that includes multiple campuses in Southern California.

FEATURE

Expanded Opportunity

UPWARD BOUND, GEAR UP AND EDUCATIONAL TALENT SEARCH PROGRAMS FIND A HOME AND A SHARED VISION AT THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

On January 2, 2019, the School of Education began managing the College Opportunity Programs, three venerated programs that have collectively changed the educational trajectories of tens of thousands of Northern California middle and high school students across generations and geography.

The programs transferred from UC Davis Student Affairs to the School of Education, where they are now managed by Senior Director Renee Newton of the Resourcing Excellence in Education center. The transition nearly doubled the School's staff overnight, and expanded our locations beyond Davis to eight counties, at school sites as far away as Redding in Shasta County and Etna in Siskiyou County.

The School of Education was a natural home for Upward Bound, GEAR UP and Educational Talent Search, the three federally funded programs combined under one banner as College Opportunity Programs, said Newton. "These programs represent the historical federal education equity programs, some of which have been at the UC Davis campus since 1968," she said. "This move really advances the School's mission to engage with public

schools and community partners with a goal of eliminating educational inequities. It's an opportunity to explore and expand the School of Education's research-practice partnerships."

The students served by College Opportunity Programs are facing systemic inequities. They often live in regions struggling with poverty, unemployment, and low rates of high school completion and postsecondary education. They are frequently from low-income families and are potential first-generation college students. They are unsure how to prepare, apply or pay for college, and may instead be expected to work and help support their families as soon as they leave high school.

Each program is funded through multiple-year federal grants on a project basis, and each has a different approach to helping students thrive in high school and transition successfully to college.

Educational Talent Search

Educational Talent Search (ETS) serves 500 students in rural Shasta County and 1,700 students in Solano and Sacramento counties. Two-thirds of participating students must be from low-income families in which neither parent holds a bachelor's degree. Services are provided on-site at the students' schools.

"We're opening doors to college for students who otherwise wouldn't have the option," said Angela Radford, director of the Shasta ETS program. "These students have the drive and potential but not a lot of role models or resources." ETS staff provide career exploration, assistance with college searches, applications, tours, financial aid and majors, and academic advising that includes tutoring, SAT/ACT prep, course planning and study skills.

Shasta County families face higher-than-average rates of poverty and unemployment, and lower rates of high school persistence, postsecondary enrollment and college completion. "We're painting a new vision for our students," said Radford. "Without this program I think many of them would be swept up by the status quo. I have a very strong calling to help this generation and generations to come meet their full potential. Some of our students have no one in their corner. They don't always know they matter. We want them to know that we believe in them and that they can go on to be successful."

Upward Bound

Like ETS, Upward Bound serves students in Shasta, Solano and Sacramento counties, but it has programs in Siskiyou County as well. Upward Bound works with high school students from low-income families and families in which neither parent holds a bachelor's degree, providing them with the support they need to successfully complete high school and go on to earn a college degree. That includes topics such as college applications, financial aid, career exploration and financial literacy.

In Yolo, Solano and Sacramento counties, Woodland-based staff members make weekly visits to students at their schools to provide services. Students attend a monthly Saturday academy, and spend six weeks on the UC Davis campus in a summer residential program. "About 90 percent of our participants go on to college because of the services they've received," said Sam Blanco III, who directs both the Upward Bound and ETS programs

located at the Woodland office. "Sometimes parents cry when their child is accepted into Upward Bound, because they know it means their child is going to college."

A different model is needed in more remote communities with fewer resources. In rural Shasta and Siskiyou counties, Upward Bound advisors teach a daily elective class at the local schools.

Tim Warkentin directs the Shasta County Upward Bound program, located in the small towns of Anderson and Cottonwood. "We serve one high school in each town, for a total of 120 students," said Warkentin. "This is a very rural area—most people work in ranching and farming. A lot of our students are from low-income families and don't get out of the county very often. Some have never seen the ocean. This program is about helping them see beyond what they know, and seeing a future where they can break the cycle of poverty and provide for themselves and their families."

Upward Bound staff in Siskiyou County serve students in the towns of Yreka and Etna, which are even smaller and more remote. Yreka has a population of nearly 8,000 people, while Etna, population 800, is in a rural area classified by the U.S. Department of Agriculture as "frontier" due to its low population and remote location. One-third of the 180 students at Etna High School participate in Upward Bound.

As both director of the program and a long-time Siskiyou resident, Maryann Kaae-Munson has seen the difference Upward Bound makes. "Some of our students leave the region to get their education and then come back, and that's our best bet to maintain a healthy, vital community," she said. "Then there are others who graduated from our high schools and went on to high-profile careers elsewhere, and they're proof to our students that coming

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We're painting a new vision for our students. Without this program I think many of them would be swept up by the status quo.”

ANGELA RADFORD



Clockwise from top left: COP program directors Stacey Garrett, Sam Blanco III, Maryann Kaae-Munson, Angela Radford, Cody Lane and Tim Warkentin.



Victoria Brutlag, right, with husband Matt Kim and daughter Estelle Kim.

FEATURE

Many Paths Converge

WHEN STUDENT AND DONOR ASPIRATIONS CONNECT,
EVERYONE'S DREAMS ARE REALIZED

Victoria Brutlag (Cred. '19) is a teacher because dozens of people whom she hadn't even met believed in her. Thanks to the scholarships they funded, Brutlag was able to say yes when the School of Education accepted her into our credential/MA program.

"Getting those scholarships was a big weight off my mind," she said. "I couldn't have done the program otherwise."

Brutlag had a lot to balance during her credential year. Her baby girl was only four months old on the day the program began. Attending a full-time credential program meant Brutlag couldn't work, and

her husband cut back to part-time hours to be home with the baby. Their finances were tight. The scholarships covered all of Brutlag's tuition, but there were still exam fees, textbooks, rent and bills to pay. Infant child care was \$1,600/month, more than the cost of their one-bedroom apartment, putting full-time child care out of reach even with subsidies.

Brutlag had already faced more than her share of hardship. She spent time in the foster care system before being adopted by her grandparents, and experienced a lot of racism in the small Alabama town where she grew up. She didn't have many role

models—no one in her family had gone to college, and it wasn't until high school that she had her one and only African-American teacher in her K-12 education.

Brutlag excelled anyway, completing both high school and college in only six years. While earning her bachelor's degree at Troy University, she also mastered conversational French and studied abroad in France, logged hundreds of hours of community service as a tutor in an ESL program and served as president of two student organizations. After considering majoring in education, she chose a hospitality degree in order to make her part-time pastry chef job a full-time career. The day after graduation, she loaded up her car and drove across the country to Sacramento to start a new life.

From Pastry Chef to Teacher

Two years later, Brutlag began thinking again about a career in education. The grueling shifts as a pastry chef were taking their toll. She wanted a career that would provide both a stable income and a family-friendly work schedule and environment.

She also wanted to be back in a setting where she was making a difference.

"They say 'Be the change you want to see in the world,' and being a teacher is the best way to do that," she said. "You have new students every year—that is so many opportunities to give back, so many opportunities to change lives."

Brutlag's first year in the credential program was transformative. "At first I'd get really anxious about teaching," she said. "Now I have so much more confidence to get in front of a class, implement my strategies, and get the kids really engaged. This program has definitely given me so many opportunities to grow as a teacher and as a person." Even before completing her credential year, Brutlag had accepted a job offer from the Fairfield school where she did much of her student teaching. She begins teaching her own eighth-grade class in fall 2019 while she works on the master's year of the program.



They say ‘Be the change you want to see in the world,’ and being a teacher is the best way to do that. You have new students every year—that is so many opportunities to give back, so many opportunities to change lives.”

VICTORIA BRUTLAG

“I don’t think I’d have gotten through all this if I didn’t have scholarship support,” Brutlag said. “Getting that support was life changing.”

Each Donor Has a Unique Path

Just as each student’s path to college and graduate school is unique, so are the paths to becoming a scholarship donor.

“Our donors have many reasons why they choose to give back through scholarships,” said Barbara Celli, executive director of development and external relations. “They may be inspired by a special teacher, or their passion for a particular subject. They may remember how meaningful their education was for them and want to give others the opportunity they had.” Other donors, including faculty and staff members, have asked for donations to a scholarship in honor of life milestones such as marriage or retirement, or in memory or honor of a colleague or family member.

“We work with each of our donors to customize a scholarship that meets their goals and the needs of the students,” said Celli. Some want to experience meeting the students they support, so they establish a gift that will be used during their lifetimes. Others include the School in their estate plans, allowing them to leave larger gifts than would have been possible otherwise. Some do both.

“One of our greatest joys is introducing our donors to their amazing scholarship students,” said Celli. “The students are so dedicated and eager to change the world, and they can’t believe that someone who

doesn’t even know them has invested in their dream of becoming an educator. Likewise, many of our donors have shared that their scholarships are the best investment they ever could make—a gift that will touch thousands of lives over the years.”

The Unmet Need Is Still Great

The School currently has 32 scholarships that provide partial support to students, distributing awards totaling approximately \$170,000 each year. But students’ needs still greatly outpace the available funds. Tuition is approximately \$16,000 per year, and living expenses bring the total to over \$30,000. Not every student who needs support receives it, and even students who receive several awards may fall short.

In Brutlag’s case, the School combined scholarship and stipend funds from a number of donors who each have a special interest in supporting former foster youth who want to become teachers. One source was the Heather Marie Award for Guardian Teaching Scholars, which was made in memory of a donor’s loved one. Additional philanthropic funds came from many other individuals, the Dean’s Board of Advisors, the Stuart Foundation, and the UC Davis Guardian Professions Fellowship program.

“Our Dean’s vision is that no student who wants to become a teacher or an educator at UC Davis is turned away for lack of funds,” said Celli. “We invite everyone to join us in making that vision a reality.” ■

Contact Barbara Celli at bpcelli@ucdavis.edu to explore how you can establish a scholarship that is right for you.

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIPS

PhD Program

Anthony Barcellos Education Award
Mark Cary Reflective Learner Award
Mohini Jain Family Foundation Award
School of Education PhD Annual Fund Award

Edd Program

CANDEL Award Honoring Dr. Paul Heckman

Teacher Education

Agricultural Education

Agricultural Student Enhancement Award
Brad Davis Alpha Gamma Rho Award
Orville & Erna Thompson Family Award

Bilingual Education

Fortes Bilingual Award
TC/MA Bilingual Authorization Scholarship

Former Foster Youth

Guardian Teacher Scholarship Fund
Heather Marie Award for Guardian Teaching Scholars

STEM Education

Lydia and Ronald Baskin Family Scholarship Award
Next Generation STEM Teaching Award
Sandi Redenbach and Ken Gelatt Teaching Credential STEM Scholarship in Honor of Dean Harold Levine

General Teacher Education Support

Boyd Family Teaching Scholarship
The Davis Family Scholarship
Education Faculty Scholarship Award
Farrer-Patten Award
Frank E. Isola Award
John Curtis Brown Scholarship
KLC Adler Award
Laura E. Settle Scholarship
Mabel Outler Scholarship
Marilyn G. Reisen Early Education Scholarship Award
Rogers Scholarship Program
Sandi Redenbach Students at Promise Award
School of Education Teaching Credential/Master’s Student Annual Fund Award
Sullivan-Scheuring Scholarship
Susan Schnitzer Fellowship in Teacher Education
Teaching Credential/Master’s Student Scholarship
Thea and Art Mills Scholarship

Partners in Leadership

What happens when two people who are passionate about making educational change join forces personally and professionally?

We spoke with current CANDEL student Stephanie Morgado (MA '15) and alumnus Byron Laird (EdD '18) about the challenges of being educational leaders, how they're bringing social justice to their students and what it's like to be married collaborators.

Tell us about your leadership roles and the community you serve.

STEPH: We are both in Vallejo, which is an urban school district with a high percentage of free and reduced-price lunch students.

Byron and I are within the same charter management organization, and I spent this past year opening up a new middle school that I direct, Griffin Academy.

BYRON: We're all one organization called

Griffin Technology Academy, and I'm the high school principal of MIT Academy. The last four years we've been recognized by *U.S. News & World Report* as one of the best high schools in America.

You both started your careers as teachers. What drew you to education?

BYRON: I chose to go into teaching because I was working in the corporate

world and I didn't feel like I was really doing what I wanted to do. I know it sounds cliché to want to make the world a better place, but I felt a calling towards education. I taught social science, psychology, geography and world history before I went into administration.

STEPH: I was an astrophysics major at UC Berkeley at the same time that CalTeach was being piloted. I took education classes every semester alongside my major courses and did student teaching for almost four years as an undergrad.

Doing astronomy research really opened my eyes to the lack of diversity in the scientific community. Being pretty much the only Latina around was just hard. At the same time, I was also working with kids and seeing that even at a young age they didn't believe that they could become scientists or engineers. In the end, that's where my passion grew, and that's why I ended up taking the education route instead of doing research. I was most recently a high school physics, chemistry and astronomy teacher at our charter management organization before transitioning to my director role.

How did you come to be in your current roles as administrative leaders?

BYRON: If you're a teacher with any interest in taking on additional work, there's lots of it there for you. My director



From left, Byron Laird and Stephanie Morgado at Griffin Academy in Vallejo, CA.

told me he thought I'd be a good person for administration. I took his advice and got my administrative credential as well as my master's in education. I thought I could affect change on a much deeper level by getting into administration.

STEPH: In my student teaching experience, I understood my role more as a teacher leader and was always thinking about other ways I could be involved in policy. I always took on more and more teacher leadership roles and dabbled in various administrative things, whether it was ensuring that our seniors were ready to graduate or starting a program with Byron for our students to make up credits.

While I was a teacher, I earned my standalone master's degree at the School of Education, and it really made me think about what I was doing in the classroom. I knew I could be a mentor for other teachers, but there are greater systemic issues that we need to challenge at a policy level, and that's what drove me to do this.

What are your approaches to being administrators?

STEPH: Everything that I've done is for all students, not just the highest-achieving students. When I think about all of the programs our students are offered, I'm really thinking, "Why can't all kids be a part of this?" That's what drove me to open up a third school this year. I'm thinking about what policies I can implement from the beginning to ensure that all students have access to rigorous curriculum and a college-going culture.

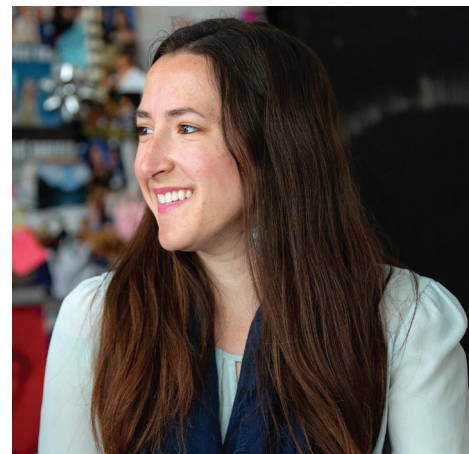


I'm thinking about what policies I can implement from the beginning to ensure that all students have access to rigorous curriculum and a college-going culture."

STEPHANIE MORGADO



Byron Laird and Stephanie Morgado.



BYRON: There's a great deal of work that needs to be done. We're both trying to bring more equitable outcomes to our students and challenge teacher perceptions and biases around student performance and learning outcomes. My EdD work at UC Davis has definitely helped me realign my vision about an administration's role to advocate for all students.

How do you put equity into practice?

BYRON: First, we view our students as coming to school with assets, not deficits. We need to collectively check our privilege and biases so we can recognize those assets, whether that be their learning capacity, cultural experiences or something else. Then we take that one step further and think about how to empower students so they can have control of their own educational experience.

STEPH: I think of equity as the first stepping stone to dismantling some of

the structures that aren't benefiting our students. We want more than equity. We want to move toward social justice. A lot of ideas we've talked about felt like short-term solutions. For example, instead of getting a donation of backpacks for students, let's think about the supports and services that they really need in the long term. We need to dig deeper and think about how to dismantle those things that are putting our students in boxes.

As leaders we need to drive the conversation forward, and that starts with awareness. So this year we started the Equity Committee at our schools. I want staff, students and families to be aware of equity because they can feel injustices occurring. I want them to see that they have some allies here that want to do the work. I want to get the word out that this is really our vision.

BYRON: This is generalizing, but I think teachers all have a unique view of equity that varies based on personal beliefs and whether they're keeping up with ongoing research. So how do you challenge the viewpoints that don't benefit students? We're trying to create a committee where we can have conversations that really confront these systemic issues that have plagued education for decades. One thing I'm worried about is getting people to buy in and not treat the committee as

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Working in administration is difficult, but having Steph as a partner has helped me stay focused through all these years and has really driven me.”

BYRON LAIRD

just another meeting. What I hope we can communicate is a sense of urgency for people to join in and that there's this opportunity for people to make impactful change, whether that's in their classroom, in their community or both.

What is it like to be working together while married?

BYRON: It's funny because I just don't think about it that often since I'm really immersed in it right now. And when I wasn't working with Steph, we would still come home and bounce ideas off each other. We met at the school and our personal relationship definitely had a component of work. We are both driven, passionate people, and we connected pretty quickly in that sense. I love working with Steph because it's awesome to see her in action, making a meaningful impact. How many people

can say that about their spouse? Working in administration is difficult, but having Steph as a partner has helped me stay focused through all these years and has really driven me. It's been an amazing experience, and I definitely wouldn't trade it for anything.

STEPH: It's been awesome to have Byron there through some of those really hard times, and I couldn't imagine doing a lot of the things that we're doing this year without our collaboration. A lot of the boundaries between work and home bleed over because we're working towards this common mission together. It hasn't all been just policy. It's also been organizing opportunities that are good for our students and just fun for us to do, like student camping trips. It's been really great to experience this wide range of things with him, and I have a feeling we're just going to keep going. ■

from a small school without a lot of AP and honors classes doesn't have to limit your potential.”

GEAR UP

The GEAR UP program serves Colusa, Glenn and Tehama counties in the north Sacramento Valley area. “This is a high-poverty, rural agricultural area and has some of the lowest college attainment rates in the state,” said Stacey Garrett, director of GEAR UP.

GEAR UP uses a cohort model, starting with a group of students who are in sixth and seventh grades and providing services to them until the end of their first postsecondary year. The goals are to increase academic performance, college preparation, high school graduation rates, and student and family knowledge of college options and financing.

“We have a full-time staff member housed at each of the seven middle schools to provide services and support for not only this group of students, but also to their parents, the school and the school staff,” said Garrett. “For students, that might mean college and career field trips, tutoring and curriculum. It could be professional development for the teachers working with these students, parent education meetings, or electronic equipment purchased for the school.”

Advisors stay with students as they move through their grades and into high school, where students coming from other middle schools join the cohort. For this reason, the program initially serves approximately 1,800 students but serves nearly double as many by the time it concludes.

“We instill in families the idea that a plan for going to college is possible,” said Garrett. “We're helping to end generational poverty. I am very passionate about these students and their education. This has been my community for 25 years. I want there to be equal access to education for all, no matter whether you're rich or poor.” ■

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LAST WORD

KORY CHOE (CRED. '19)

Becoming the Teacher I Needed

I moved around the East Coast and the Midwest a lot when I was growing up, and I had a difficult home life. In every school I attended it felt like I was the only Asian-American student, and I pretty much had every racist insult possible hurled at me.

During those years, I really needed a teacher who would invest in me as a person. I felt like I was just left to my own devices, struggling and not understanding.

Now I'm working on my multiple subject teaching credential and I'm student teaching in a first-grade classroom with an amazing resident teacher who is a great role model. I see that as a teacher I can have a huge influence on my students, positive or negative, and I want it to be positive. I want to help them understand that they're capable of achieving anything given the right set of tools. I want them to know that they have infinite value.

To be a good teacher, I need to understand my students' lives, both inside and outside the classroom. I need to know what their demeanor means, what their struggles are and who needs extra attention.

One of the gifts that I bring is encouragement. Today I was working with a student who was stuck and frustrated. I told him, "You're almost at the finish line. We're going to make it." 📌



School of Education
University of California
One Shields Avenue
Davis, California 95616-8609

(MAIL)

Make an Impact on Education through Planned Giving

Christine Ibrahim (Cred. '19) was inspired to become a teacher after witnessing educational inequity while tutoring in schools serving low-income students. "I want to become an advocate for classroom equity," she said, "and make sure my students know their contributions to the world are meaningful and needed."

Christine will be able to make a difference thanks to support from the School of Education's Teaching Credential/Master's Student Scholarship Fund, a fund that recently received a generous planned gift. Planned giving is a simple way to have a lasting impact. Your estate gift can establish a permanent endowment or make funds available for current use at the time of your passing, all with potential tax advantages for you. **Please visit education.ucdavis.edu/ways-give to learn more about how you can leave your legacy on the future of our School and the future of education.**

Christine Ibrahim, Cred. '19

