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Amber Winters

Senior Editor
Michelle Kearns

Graphic Design
Ellen Stay

Contributing Writers
Marcene Robinson
Melinda Miller
Doug Sittler

Research
Erik Tingue

Contributing Photographers
Kyle S. Mackie
Doug Levere
Nick Lipka

Contributing Illustrator
Jennifer Salucci

Copy Editor & Proofreader
Arthur Page

Web Design & Production
William J. Belz III

Contact us
To share your ideas and stories,
email us at gsenews@buffalo.edu

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COVID-19 AND RACISM COLLIDE

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Sailing to science in a pandemic

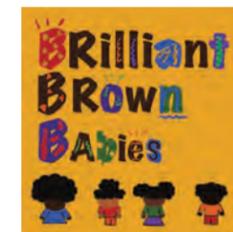
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ED ARTIFACT

The pencil, in American style: A quiet icon's evolution

BY MICHELLE KEARNS

The classic yellow No.2 pencil, made of cedar with a pink eraser cap, held in by a golden metal band, is a uniquely American back-to-school tool that took two centuries to evolve. As modern students turn to keyboards and writing habits change, people weathering COVID-19 have a new fondness for the trusty pencil. Digital-age demand has been steady and rising. Imports went from about 21 million in 2008 to nearly 29 million in 2018, according to the Writing Instrument Manufacturers Association. While there aren't yet numbers from this historic year, the association tracked anecdotal reports that pencils and art supplies did well during the pandemic.

That was true at the Manhattan shop run by Caroline Weaver, owner and author of "The Pencil Perfect: The Untold Story of a Cultural Icon." In past months, people, including her, have been making new use of the analog writing tool and reverting to "primitive" forms of entertainment. "I feel like I'm a full-on urban homesteader and seek joy in totally different ways," she said. "Letter writing has seen a huge resurgence. People have slowed down. Slow communication is so much more valuable. They're writing more. They're drawing again."



(Photo/ Caroline Weaver)

Even before New York Governor Andrew Cuomo's order led her to temporarily close her shop on the Lower East Side, she noticed an increased interest in pencils from younger, Gen Z customers. They became fans of the recently revived Blackwing brand, prized by writers like John Steinbeck, with replaceable erasers and smooth writing lead. Sometimes they want to know what's best for test taking: The soft Japanese Tombows are great at filling in answer "bubbles."

Weaver, who has a pencil tattooed on her forearm, highly recommends pencils for notetaking. "There's just such a connection cognitively to using a tool with your hands that you don't get with the computers. It's so much better for your memory." And, they don't run out of ink.

Dear GSE Alumni and Friends



We find ourselves in a moment few could have ever imagined. The continued impact of COVID-19 and our collective reckoning with systemic racism have shaken many of us. While public health officials deal with the science of COVID-19, it is in large measure left to the education community to deal with the social, emotional, intellectual and civic effects of both crises. Never before have schools of education been so critically important to our democracy and to our nation's future. We are in many ways in an existential state, one where we must ask who we are as a community, whether we will look out for one another, how will we meet this moment and how we can leave this world in better shape than it is in right now.

Last spring, long before this "new normal," GSE faculty and staff held a discussion about our commitments to equity, diversity, justice, and inclusion. From that meeting we drafted "Defining our Commitment" statement. Building on this call to action, GSE has mobilized faculty, staff and students to better understand pervasive inequality and come together to create a path forward that is motivated by change and action.

We began the academic year with a "Teach-In for Racial Equity." The purpose of this mandatory two-day event was for GSE faculty, staff and students to come together to engage in the "radical act of teaching and learning." Together we learned from distinguished scholars and activists not only about the impact of racism and its relationship to educational inequality, but we were also charged to examine our own practices—as teachers, researchers and community advocates.

GSE's commitment to breaking down barriers and becoming more inclusive began with our decision to waive the GRE requirement for all of our programs that are not prohibited from doing so legislatively. The waiver is currently in effect. We believe by doing this, we will see an increase in the diversity of our applicants. In the coming months we will continue to examine policies that serve to unnecessarily limit inclusivity and, whenever possible, dismantle them.

While GSE has stepped up its relationships with school and community partners over the past three years, the current crises have resulted in GSE taking an even larger step to positively impact individuals and communities. We have partnered with Buffalo Public Schools to offer tutoring support to any students in need, especially right now as the district is still 100% virtual.

While the impacts of COVID-19 and racial injustice are very real, I don't want to lose sight of the brighter spots for GSE. This year, we celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Gifted Math Program. We also want to celebrate and welcome six spectacular new faculty who have already begun to make an impact within GSE. We graduated our first cohort of Teacher Residents, who are now all employed in Buffalo Public Schools, and we welcomed our next cohort. Now more than ever, creating purposeful pathways that serve to diversify the teaching profession is so critically important.

This edition of our magazine is also the first under a new name and a new design. We'd love to know what you think about the new design, layout, and contents.

There will come a time when we will be able to return to campus and pre-K-12 will once again welcome students in their buildings. Make no mistake, however: the classrooms we return to, whether in higher education or in pre-K-12, will be transformed. They must be. The murders of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and so many more reveal to us in plain sight that our schools must be more equitable and must explicitly address racism and education. GSE is committed to preparing those professionals who will lead the way to educating the next generation of students in a reimagined and more just world.

Stay healthy and stay safe,

Suzanne Rosenblith

GSE in the News

Headlines from stories that featured our faculty and students

"Fortune names UB graduate student Raven Baxter to 40 Under 40" featured Raven Baxter, PhD student in science education

"A UB associate professor weighs in on online education" quoted Sam Abramovich, associate professor in the departments of Learning and Instruction and Information Science

"WNY Cybersecurity Experts Give Tips for Safe Remote Learning" featured Sam Abramovich, associate professor in the departments of Learning and Instruction and Information Science

"UB Graduate School of Education Canceled Classes to Host Teach-in for Racial Equity" featured Suzanne Rosenblith, dean and professor, and Raechele Pope, associate dean for faculty and student affairs, chief diversity officer, professor in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy

"What Colleges' Leaders Can Do to Address Racial Justice" quoted Raechele Pope

"With faculty nudge, can UB lead on social justice?" quoted Raechele Pope, who was appointed to UB's new President's Advisory Council on Race

"Study finds rising rates of obesity among children and teens who were confined during lockdowns in Verona, Italy, due to the pandemic" featured Myles Faith, professor and chair of Counseling, School and Educational Psychology

"COVID-19 Is Making Us Rethink Everything" by Raechele Pope

"Speaking to kids about coronavirus: convey calm and do not panic" featured Claire Cameron, associate professor in the Department of Learning and Instruction

"Government policies push schools to prioritize creating better test-takers over better people" featured Jaekyung Lee, professor in the departments of Counseling, School and Educational Psychology and Educational Leadership and Policy

"Scientist raps about coronavirus in viral video" featured Raven Baxter



To read and watch the news stories mentioned here, please see LEARN online, ed.buffalo.edu/magazine.

BY THE NUMBERS

RESEARCH EXPENDITURES

\$5,263,109

PHILANTHROPIC GIFTS

986 RECEIVED TOTALING

\$1,253,868 FROM

772 DONORS OF WHICH

230 OF THEM WERE FIRST-TIME DONORS



5 New Books PUBLISHED BY FACULTY



22 New Grants
worth
\$10,100,876



9 Honoric Awards



95 JOURNAL ARTICLES
PUBLISHED IN
86 JOURNALS



GSE OFFERINGS

4 UNDERGRADUATE MINORS

9 COMBINED DEGREE PROGRAMS

50 MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAMS

9 DOCTORAL DEGREE PROGRAMS

10 ADVANCED CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS

10 CERTIFICATES OF ADVANCED STUDY

1 ADMINISTRATIVE CERTIFICATION

22 FULLY ONLINE PROGRAMS

5 RESEARCH CENTERS, INSTITUTES AND LABS

BOOK STACKS

Recent books published by members of the UB GSE community



"Rethinking the Teaching Mathematics for Emergent Bilinguals: Korean Teacher Perspectives and Practices in Culture, Language, and Mathematics" co-authored by Ji-Won Son, associate professor, learning and instruction. This book, published by Springer in 2019, offers perspectives for teaching math to linguistically and culturally diverse learners, using insights from the practices of Korean teachers who teach math to multicultural students struggling with language barriers.



"Embodiment and the Eating Disordered Client: The Body as a Resource for Recovery," by Catherine Cook-Cottone, associate dean for academic affairs and professor of counseling, school and educational psychology, published by W.W. Norton this year, has tools for clinicians to restore health and incorporate self-care, thoughtful eating, yoga and other practices to support self-regulation and healing.



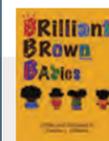
"The Information Literacy Framework: Case Studies of Successful Implementation," co-edited by Heidi Julien, professor of information science, published Rowman & Littlefield this year, demystifies the Association of College and Research Libraries guidelines, information literacy instruction and the teaching of new librarians.



"Multicultural Competence in Student Affairs: Advancing Social Justice and Inclusion" by Raechele Pope, associate dean, faculty and student affairs, chief diversity officer and associate professor educational leadership and policy, and Amy Reynolds, professor of counseling, school and educational psychology. This second edition, published in 2019 by Jossey-Bass, offers updated strategies for student affairs work and reflects current professional practice within increasingly complex multicultural campuses.



"Differentiated Literacy Instruction in Grades 4 & 5: Strategies and Resources" co-authored by John Strong, assistant professor, learning and instruction. Published this year by Guilford Press, it is a second edition, revised and updated with lesson plans and teaching tools for word recognition, vocabulary, comprehension and writing, formatted for easy photocopying and with print materials for web downloading.



"Brilliant Brown Babies," illustrated, written and published by Desiree Williams (MA/AC '15, School Psychology). This is a picture book, available on Amazon, about how special and beautiful it is to be a child of color. "With simple pictures and language, it tells the story of the rich culture that our brilliant brown babies have," she writes. One of her messages: Children of all races can celebrate diversity!



BY MARCENE ROBINSON

School closures pressure teachers to work second-shift at home

Gender roles impact pandemic-era parenting roles

As schools grappled with the decision to reopen, many women were stressed with their own pandemic issues at home—balancing motherhood and rising expectations for educators, said GSE’s educational equity expert Julie Gorlewski.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, teachers who also are mothers have been under pressure to educate students and their own kids, said Gorlewski, chair of the Department of Learning and Instruction.

Teacher-mothers also reported performing more “second-shift” activities, such as cooking, cleaning and childcare, in a study Gorlewski conducted.

U.S. mothers now spend more time with their children than moms did in the 1960s, a period when most did not work outside the home, she said.

When modern partners contribute more toward household work, mothers still do significantly more planning and managing, she said.

Gorlewski and co-author Mary Hermann, associate professor of counseling and special education at Virginia Commonwealth University, discussed the pandemic-era opportunity to rethink the norms in education and family systems in a Teachers College Record commentary in May.

“One positive outcome of this crisis is that respect for teachers has grown exponentially as parents and partners develop a greater understanding of teachers’ daily work,” said Gorlewski.

Priority shift: Tests vs. people skills

Published April 14, 2020

An increasing national focus on test scores put teaching about personal growth and job skills on the sidelines, according to new UB-led research.

The study discovered the shift in priorities after analyzing the goals of principals at thousands of public, private and charter schools for more than two decades.

The change can be traced to the test-based school accountability policies of the 1990s, which culminated with the statewide testing mandates in the 2001 No Child Left Behind Act.

“The balanced development of both academic and soft skills is crucial, not only for well-rounded child development in schools, but also for career and life success,” said lead researcher Jaekyung Lee, GSE professor of counseling, school and educational psychology.

The study, in the March issue of Educational Administration Quarterly, is one of the few to examine the influence of education policies on school principals, rather than on student achievement or teacher practices. Leaders’ goals are critical, said Lee, because they guide performance by directing and motivating staff and students.

Childhood obesity worsens with COVID-19 stay-at-home rules

Published June 9, 2020

COVID-19 stay-at-home orders hurt the diet, sleep and physical activity routines of children with obesity around the world, according to new UB research.

The study, published in April in Obesity, examined 41 overweight children through March and April in Verona, Italy.

Compared to behaviors recorded the previous year, each day they ate an extra meal, slept an extra half hour and added about five hours of screen time. They also ate more red meat and junk food, drank more sugary drinks and moved around less. Physical activity decreased by more than two hours a week.

Children and adolescents have an easier time controlling weight when schools are open, said Myles Faith, UB childhood obesity expert and study co-author.

“School environments provide structure and routine around mealtimes, physical activity and sleep—three predominant lifestyle factors implicated in obesity risk,” said Faith, GSE professor and chair of the Counseling, School and Educational Psychology Department.

He and colleagues are now in the midst of a National Institutes of Health-funded study testing a home-based treatment for childhood obesity using telemedicine technology.

From COVID-19 to Ebola: Naming diseases after locations breeds fear and hate

UB GSE expert analyzes xenophobic impact

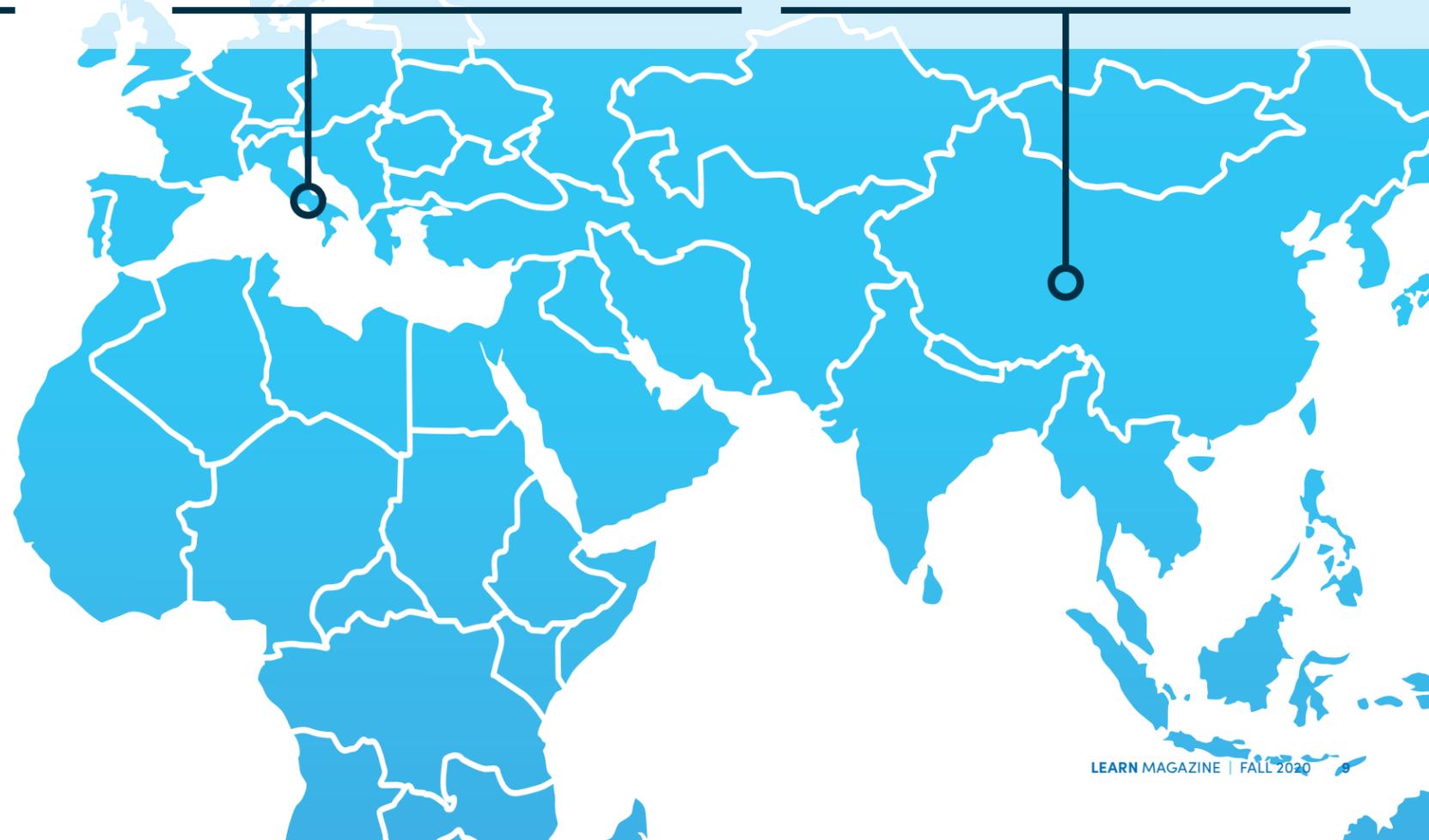
Naming infectious diseases after specific people or places perpetuates xenophobia around the globe, according to Tiffany Karalis Noel, a UB GSE expert on sociocultural inequity.

References to COVID-19 as the “Wuhan virus” or “China virus” have contributed to thousands of incidences of harassment and assault against people of Asian descent. The problem is exacerbated by sensationalist media stories, she said.

“This fear of unknown diseases is a part of human nature, especially when they are deadly and highly infectious,” said Karalis Noel, clinical assistant professor of learning and instruction.

“Stigmatization of COVID-19, led by some politicians, such as Donald Trump, might have reinforced such discrimination and social exclusion,” she said. “It is paramount to recognize the discriminatory behaviors that accompany fear, as they damage not only the sociocultural fabric in the long run, but they also compromise present efforts to contain the disease.”

In a commentary published this year in Social Sciences & Humanities Open, Karalis Noel explored the connection between xenophobia and disease throughout history. She called on social scientists and education professionals to communicate accurate information with students and people in the community. She also stressed the importance of media monitoring to help mitigate the spread of misinformation and establish trust with people who may be affected by related discrimination.



Meet me in my (ad-hoc) office

with Sameer Honwad

BY MICHELLE KEARNS

The sudden, virus-provoked exit from campus workspaces this spring led Sameer Honwad to work from his home, repurposing rooms into office spaces. A spot in his bedroom now holds his computer. Books pile by the couch where he goes to read. The kitchen table, with a window near and a wall of art, makes for a good Zoom backdrop.

"I usually work there in the mornings," he said. "It's a nice spot."

Honwad, an assistant professor in the Department of Learning and Instruction and a native of India, specializes in learning sciences and storytelling as a learning and teaching tool.

His story-based research projects include a developing museum of climate-change stories in Bhutan and working with young people in Idaho's Coeur d'Alene tribe to create podcasts about environmental concerns.

Once the pandemic hit, a pilot version of a new project launched with Ryan Rish, a fellow assistant professor of learning and instruction, exploring the graphic novel as a teaching tool. The ease of distance meeting by Zoom helped things move more quickly. It took a few weeks, instead of a few months, for Honwad and three graduate students to use their connections to recruit 14 high school

volunteers in Buffalo, New Orleans, Chicago, Mexico and India. They divided into groups and met for three weeks by Zoom to develop comics related to the pandemic and its effect on people's lives.

The result: Compelling stories with superheroes and regular people grappling with COVID-19 dilemmas like how to keep families safe and reckon with the disparities that come with privilege. "All 14 of them are beautiful," Honwad said of stories students presented in a Zoom call at the end of July. Now they are applying for a National Science Foundation grant to do the project again and train teachers to use graphic novel assignments. "COVID is a complex problem. If we want kids to learn about complexity, we have to teach about complexity ... Storytelling allows us to think about complexity in a way in which complexity is not lost." Read the students' work at www.we-said.org.

"I like to think I surround myself with things that make me happy, things that have meaning to me," said Sameer Honwad about his approach to decor. "That sort of translates into my research too, because I study how science relates to people's everyday life ... So, everything around me ... relates to my everyday life or brings meaning to my life."



A coaster made of woven, colored cardboard was too lovely to use so Honwad framed it. Made by a woman artisan in India, it is a reminder of the beginnings of his career, 15 years ago, when he worked with two Himalayan village communities training young people to video interview parents and grandparents about the water shortage and how to address it.



A scarf from his mother, who lives in India, is one of many in his collection from close family and friends. "I kind of steal their scarves," he said. "All of my scarves are scarves which have sentimental value."

Earbuds. A casual, \$25 purchase used to listen on Zoom and help him focus as he works. "Now they've become an integral part of my life."

HONWAD'S RESEARCH AREAS

- Access and Equity
- Cultural Studies; Diversity
- Cognition
- Environmental Education
- Design and Analysis of Longitudinal Research
- Gender, Culture and Equity
- Global Issues; Design Experiments
- International Education
- Race, Inequality and Education
- Learning Communities
- Learning Design; Science Education
- Problem-Based Learning; Research Design

Laptop sticker tribute to Katherine Johnson, the Black NASA mathematician portrayed in the movie "Hidden Figures," who died this year. The drawing shows an astronaut stepping up stairs made from her chalkboard calculations. When Honwad spotted the editorial cartoon by the San Diego Union-Tribune's Steve Breen, he converted it into a sticker. He likes to have art on his computer that connects to his work and his interest in theories that capture the experience of people of color. "Last year when I picked the sticker, I was reading a lot of Black feminist pedagogies and I was thinking more about, "How do you move away from whiteness?"

JANUARY 11

China reports its first death from a new virus that researchers identified earlier as infecting dozens of people in Wuhan, a city of more than 11 million.

JANUARY 20

U.S. and other countries confirm virus cases.

FEBRUARY 21

Buffalo news channels 4 and 7 broadcast stories about Qinghua Chen, GSE PhD student and Shanghai-native, who produced a video with greetings from 140 local people to cheer and support people in China struggling with COVID-19.

FEBRUARY 23

Ahmaud Marquez Arbery, 25, an unarmed Black man, killed while jogging near Brunswick, Ga. Travis McMichael accused of the shooting after he, his father Gregory and William "Roddie" Bryan pursued Arbery.

MARCH 1

New York's first diagnosed coronavirus case.

MARCH 3

The Centers for Disease Control lifts all restrictions on testing, allowing U.S. officials to approve widespread virus testing.

MARCH 10

New York orders the nation's first virus "containment zone," closing schools and gathering places in New Rochelle.

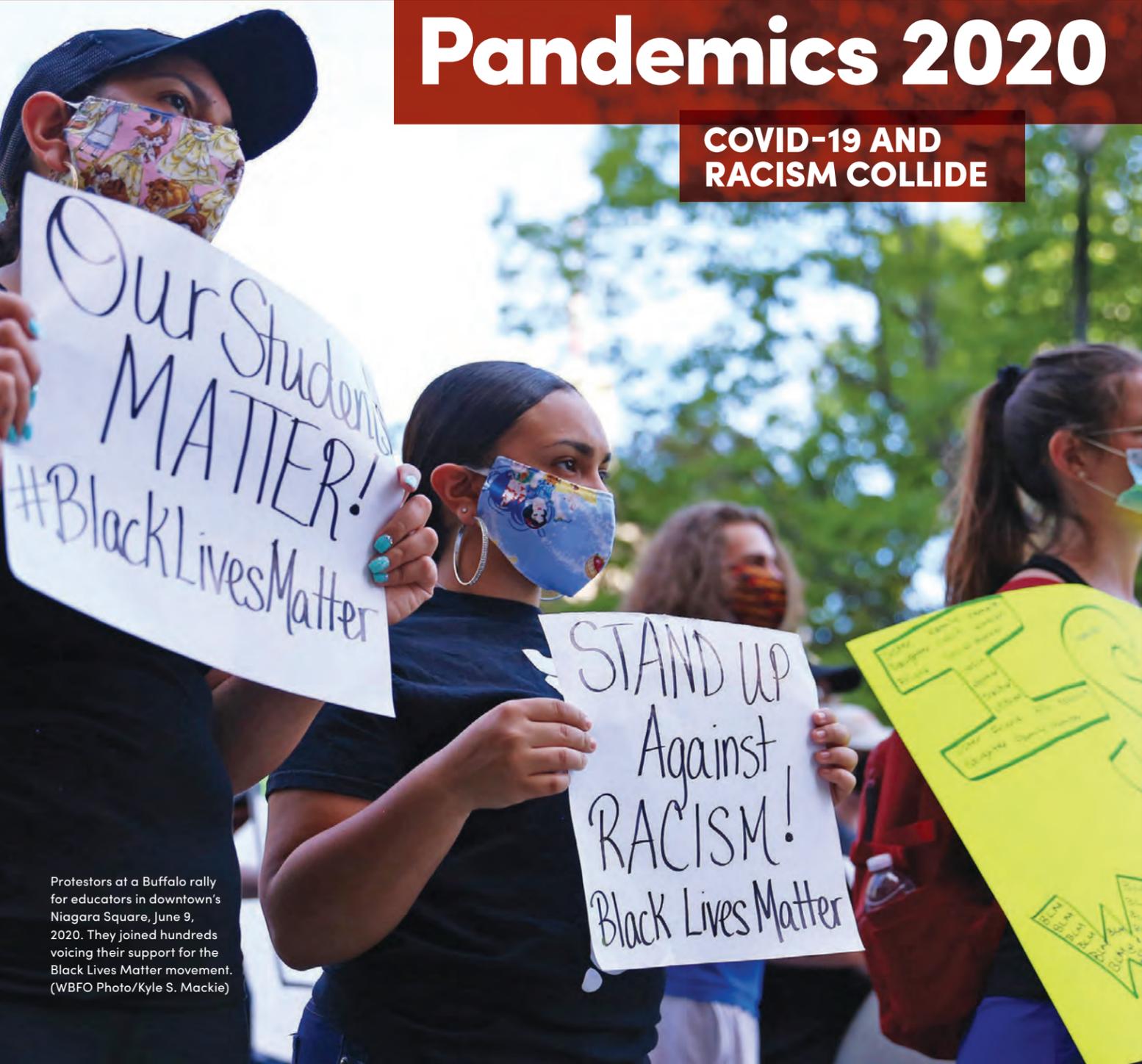
MARCH 13

President Trump declares the COVID-19 pandemic a national emergency and sends funding to states.

Breonna Taylor, 26, a Black emergency medical technician, is shot eight times by police who used a no-knock warrant in Louisville, Ky.
The last day of in-person classes at UB and other campuses, including the Buffalo Public Schools.

Pandemics 2020

COVID-19 AND RACISM COLLIDE



Protestors at a Buffalo rally for educators in downtown's Niagara Square, June 9, 2020. They joined hundreds voicing their support for the Black Lives Matter movement. (WBFO Photo/Kyle S. Mackie)

At first, 2020 seemed like a straight-forward, normal year, new and full of promise. A presidential election lay ahead. The economy looked good: low interest rates and a rising stock market. The New York governor's budget aimed for a middle-class tax cut and additional school aid. Buffalo's renaissance continued with neighborhood rehabs, transformed downtown buildings and a reimagined waterfront.

At UB, research made news, enrollment grew. The Graduate School of Education looked forward to its 2022 move to South Campus, back to Foster Hall. UB had architects working on the refurbishment of the classic McKim, Mead & White building, where the Graduate School of Education began in 1931. Meetings were underway to plot this new, still unnamed, magazine version of the .edu alumni newsletter.

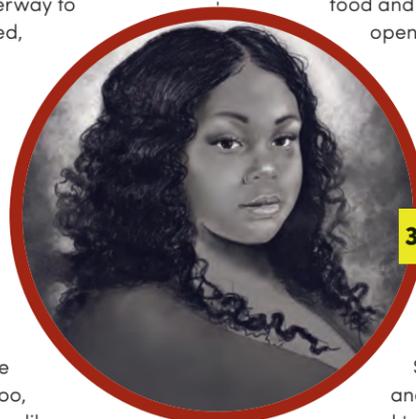
Before spring broke, whatever we had in mind for 2020 changed.

A deadly new virus quietly swept the globe, infecting millions. Black men and women continued to be killed by police, a practice that would seem as if it, too, had raged on quietly, virus-like.

By March, a new reality dawned. Two pandemics emerged and soon collided—COVID-19 and racism. Shortly after midnight on Friday, **March 13**, Breonna Taylor, 26, a Black emergency medical technician, was shot dead at home in Louisville, Ky., in a police drug raid gone wrong. Hours later, President Trump declared the virus a national emergency. It would be the last day of in-person classes at UB and other places,

including the Buffalo Public Schools.

Alarming news began its steady drumbeat. On March 14, Gov. Andrew Cuomo announced the state's first two virus deaths. The next week, New York had 3,437 cases. Then came business closings. Only those considered "essential"—hospitals, suppliers of food and drink—could keep doors open.



3.13

Everyone else, including the people of GSE, went home to work by Zoom and Google Classroom. Day by day, news broadcasts were daunting and riveting. Social distancing rules. Mask wearing disagreements. Shortages of supplies and basics, like face masks and toilet paper and flour and yeast. Dr. Anthony Fauci's sobering virus updates. Cuomo's daily briefings that reassured with their regularity.

Without the usual things to do, an overwhelmed public came to focus on what, for some, had been easy to ignore: Persistent racism, white privilege, segregation. Protests popped up. Some escalated to violence.

The presidential election inched closer. Millions reassessed the American narrative

with a different political lens.

In more than a century since the end of slavery, the pursuit of happiness, equality and justice, made famous in this nation's founding 18th century documents were still not being applied to everyone in the 21st century. Breonna Taylor's death was magnified by more Black killings. Ahmaud Marquez Arbery was shot running through his neighborhood. Dreason "Sean" Reed's shooting by police livestreamed on Facebook. Then, explosively in May, a video of Officer Derek Chauvin's deadly kneel on George Floyd's neck.

For students of color, racism shaped their experience with both pandemics. Racism and COVID-19's disproportionate impact on their communities was coupled by the burdens of new social awareness and attention.

Along with all the other turbulence, the pandemic was cataclysmic for education. Parents scrambled when they couldn't stay home to help with remote schooling. Those who were fortunate enough to work from home grappled with new school routines and virtual learning how-tos. Educators had to be nimble, rechart course plans and navigate unfamiliar technology. Teaching students in person felt like a bygone, underappreciated privilege.

In a spring semester's time, life for a generation transformed.

The timeline above chronicles highlights of the "pandemics" and the actions they spurred among the educators, psychologists, data analysts and information scientists of the GSE community.

Illustration of Breonna Taylor by Jennifer Salucci.

MARCH 14

Cuomo announces the state's first two coronavirus deaths.

MARCH 18

- Cuomo signs an executive order mandating that employees work from home for all but essential businesses as New York counts 3,437 COVID-19 cases.
- President Trump invokes the Defense Production Act to increase medical resources.
- U.S.-Canada border closes.
- GSE establishes Student Emergency Hardship Fund.

MARCH 22

- Cuomo orders all non-essential businesses to close. The state officially goes on "PAUSE" (Policies that Assure Uniform Safety for Everyone).
- The National Guard is deployed to the states hit hardest by the virus—California, New York and Washington.

MARCH 23

- New York City surpasses 12,000 COVID-19 cases, 35 percent of U.S. total.
- Raven Baxter, a science education PhD student, produces, from home, "Wipe it Down," a rap video about the virus and staying safe.
- Information science PhD student Monica Rogers begins analyzing COVID-19 case data for her employer, the Tulsa Health Department.

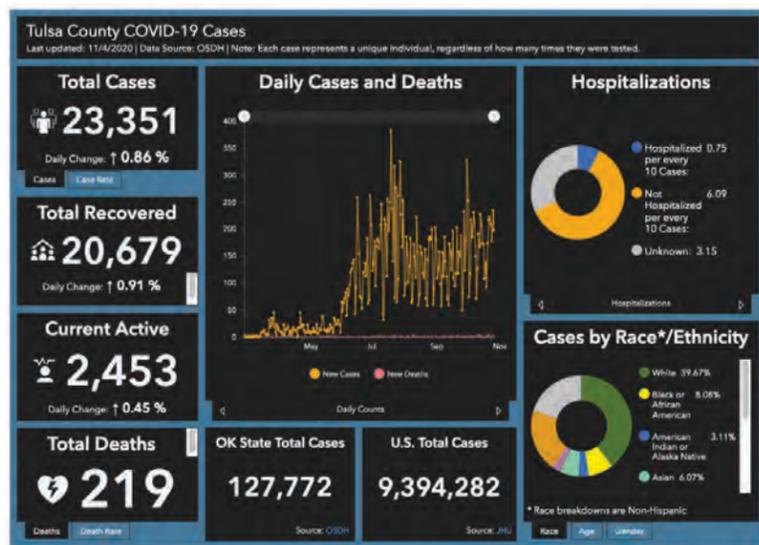


MARCH 26

Baxter's "Wipe it Down" goes viral. Newscasters from New York City to Hawaii share the story.

3.23 UB student crafts COVID-19 data models as government adapts to virus

Since the pandemic started, officials in Oklahoma have been turning to Monica Rogers, information science doctoral student, for analysis of COVID-19 throughout Tulsa County. This includes chronicling the rise and decline of the viral spread and discovering that cases dropped three to four weeks after the city of Tulsa mandated the wearing of face masks in public.



A screen shot from the Tulsa County Department of Health website, Nov. 4, 2020. The COVID-19 data were collected by information science doctoral student Monica Rogers, right. (Photo/Lori Just)

Rogers, recently promoted to division chief of data and technology for the Tulsa Health Department, has worked in information science for more than a decade. She enrolled at GSE in January of 2020 because of the PhD program's flexibility and distance learning options, which allowed her to do her

coursework from home in Oklahoma.

Doing her graduate studies while working full-time in a related field has been rewarding and illuminating. As she starts her last year of coursework, she is considering a dissertation research project about data visualization literacy to discover which formats help people

better understand different kinds of data. Professionally, she translates data for people so they can have a better understanding of its meaning. For example, she has used her knowledge of virus data to advise school districts. She once suggested a district close schools, less than a month after opening because of high case and exposure numbers.

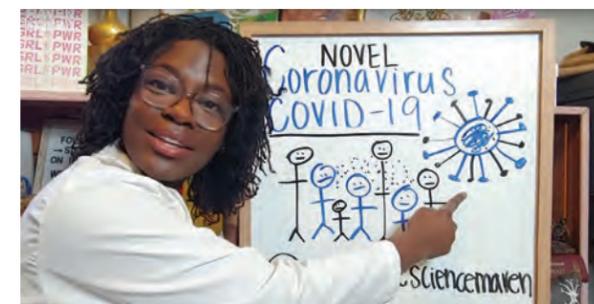
"It makes me grateful that so many people are invested and interested in the data and using the data to inform their decisions."

Since the pandemic started, her job changed and her interest in her GSE studies of data and data visualization grew as she shifted from forecasting the prevalence of chronic conditions like heart disease and diabetes to monitoring COVID-19-related infections, hospitalizations and deaths. She now writes the talking points for news conference briefings and has presented data to a local school board weighing reopening. "It makes me grateful that so many people are invested and interested in the data and," said Rogers, "using the data to inform their decisions."



3.23 Raven the Science Maven takes off: GSE PhD candidate's science education efforts get rave reviews

BY MICHELLE KEARNS



Going viral during a virus pandemic and the aftermath

For GSE PhD student Raven Baxter, aka Raven the Science Maven, the pandemic's disruptions have made room for audiences to listen to her effervescent, and serious, message about diversifying the sciences. Lately, people have been tuning in, sometimes by the thousands, to her YouTube rap songs, tweets and, this fall, a TEDx Talk.

Her work got attention in March with the debut of her "Wipe it Down!" music video, which she made from home in a few days. It quickly went viral. "Don't pass the sickness, just stay up in your house and mind ya business," she sang while dancing in periodic table leggings.

The video, complete with a bubble bath scene, played on TV news shows from New York to Honolulu: "This scientist has got the moves," said one cheerful Hawaii News Now reporter.

In the months that followed, Baxter kept up the pace, producing more creative work. This summer when she launched an album of science rap songs she'd been working on—"The Protocol"—it sold 2,000 copies.

After she wrote on Twitter about her concept for "Nerdy Jobs," similar to Hulu's "Dirty Jobs," but with focus on STEM careers, some of her nearly 32,000 followers retweeted it. Before long, she was talking on the phone with science author and CrashCourse creator Hank Green. By the time they hung up, he'd offered to fund the pilot. After that PBS

got in touch to suggest collaborating on the show.

"That's pretty much my dream come true," Baxter said. "I really believe in speaking things into existence."

The beginnings

In September, Baxter gave a TEDx Talk for Great Mills, Md., "You Don't Look Like a Scientist," explaining how she got interested in working as a "science communicator." Focusing on how to make the sciences more welcoming and diverse came from her own experiences with discrimination and her love of science—from space camp as a kid to career work as a cancer researcher and college professor.

Now, her work toward change is embedded in her dissertation research, which is nearing completion. She surveyed 50 Black women, some in STEM careers, some not, about the impact of watching "Big Ole Geeks," a rap song video celebration of Black women scientists who wear lab coats and dance with test tubes as Baxter sings, "You mess with me your knowledge increases/I'm legit, look me up, read my thesis."

"I never was happy with pigeonholing myself into one area."

After watching, those with non-STEM jobs told her that seeing that kind of popular culture representation of Black scientists might have persuaded them to choose science and stop thinking that only white men are scientists. That was, Baxter said in her TED Talk, "one of the most exciting findings of my research."

Ahead: More work to show people, like the biology majors she once advised as a professor, that when it comes to science, there are options besides being a physician. "I never was happy with pigeonholing myself into one area."

From the president's office

Baxter's developing work in science and social justice included an appearance on UB President Satish Tripathi's new Zoom interview show Take 5. When he asked about her ambition to diversify science professions, she explained African Americans make up about 13 percent of the U.S. population, yet they are only 6 percent of the STEM workforce. "I think your goal ... is really a noble one," Tripathi told her.

One to watch: Fortune "40 Under 40" list

Baxter made Fortune magazine's 2020 edition of its "40 under 40" list of emerging leaders this fall. The story and a companion video highlighted Baxter in the healthcare category: As Fortune put it, she is dedicated to "developing a next generation of talent that looked more like her and the rest of the country."

APRIL 1

■ To keep the GSE community connected while campus is closed, **Dean Rosenblith** launches weekly Zoom coffee meetings with students.

■ GSE alumna and psychologist **Tawanna Gilford**, PhD, shepherds the "Compassion Cart" project to help de-stress staff throughout the NYC Health and Hospital System's Harlem Hospital campus, assessing emotional needs, offering solace, snacks, water and, once, flowering plants—1,275 of them.

APRIL 3

■ CDC recommends that all citizens wear face masks.

APRIL 6

■ **Stephanie Fredrick**, assistant professor in counseling, school and educational psychology, reaches out to parents to alleviate virus worries with a Zoom seminar—"Answering Tough Kid Questions ..."

APRIL 15

■ Cuomo signs an executive order requiring face masks.

APRIL 17

■ News 4 Buffalo airs story about GSE PhD student **Qinghua Chen**: She raised more than \$2,100, ordered 3,600 surgical-grade masks from China and then donated them to emergency responders and urgent care centers for children in Amherst, N.Y.



APRIL 24

■ **Dean Rosenblith** holds a roundtable discussion with fellow academic leaders about the pandemic's impact on public education.

APRIL 27

■ Confirmed U.S. COVID-19 cases surpass 1 million.

4.1 On the frontlines: Shifting the mood from tension and mask hoarding to peace and sharing

BY MICHELLE KEARNS

When COVID-19 hit New York City, GSE alumna Tawanna Gilford, PhD '12, felt more certain than ever that she'd found the right profession—a psychologist helping stressed out people find peace and calm as they work at a hospital during a pandemic.

"It affirmed that I am truly doing what God put me on this earth to do," said Gilford, as she spoke by video call from Central Park during a break. "I think I was battle tested. It pushed me to my upper limits. Being a psychologist is my calling."

As virus-sickened patients filled the hospital, the staff of about 3,000 needed relief and understanding. Gilford, a peer support trainer, was in a perfect position to guide hospital volunteers and lead the launch of a new virus-provoked effort: wheeling "Compassion Carts" filled with supplier

donations like Norwegian water and gourmet nut bars. From April through June, workers trained by Gilford made rounds to every floor at all five of the hospital's buildings, offering snacks, bottled water, toiletries. Most importantly they listened, gave perspective and helped transform the work atmosphere for employees at the hospital.

One telling example of the early struggles: When the pandemic first struck in March, people were panicking, hostile and hoarding face masks when they were in short supply.

To help with these struggles, the "Compassion Cart" project developed from a hospital initiative she began leading in 2018, a year after she was hired. She had been training staff to become peer counselors for the Helping Healers Heal program. Designed to offer emotional support for whenever staff needs,

it was set up throughout the 11 hospitals in the NYC Health + Hospitals system. "Healing doesn't necessarily come in the form of a pill," she said.

By May, Gilford's "Compassion Cart" team was making rounds and visiting each unit at

the same time each week, assessing mental health needs, asking if people needed relief from burnout or to talk about an experience, like the loss of a patient.

For one surprising and unexpectedly busy day, they lifted spirits as they gave away 1,275 yellow, white and pink flowering plants donated by a nursery.

"That was an amazing experience ... Everyone was so grateful. No one was expecting flowers. Their faces just lit up," said Gilford. "People weren't expecting tokens of appreciation. They feel seen, they feel heard. They feel acknowledged. It goes a long way."

"Healing doesn't necessarily come in the form of a pill."

Soon, the hospital's atmosphere had changed. People showed greater concern for each other. Face-mask hoarding stopped. "We observed a sense of peace across the hospital," said Gilford.

In June, the cart project stopped. The hospital felt more like its old self. Departments were fully staffed. People's pre-pandemic work patterns resumed. "It was time for them to have some semblance of normalcy," Gilford said.

Gilford has been especially grateful to land at Harlem Hospital on Lenox Avenue, where she was born.

She was aiming for a career that would take her back to her roots. Now she lives in the neighborhood where she grew up, an eight-minute walk from work.

"My mission when I went away to school was to go back and serve my community," said Gilford. "I've never felt more needed professionally. I think COVID-19 made me realize the importance of being a psychologist."



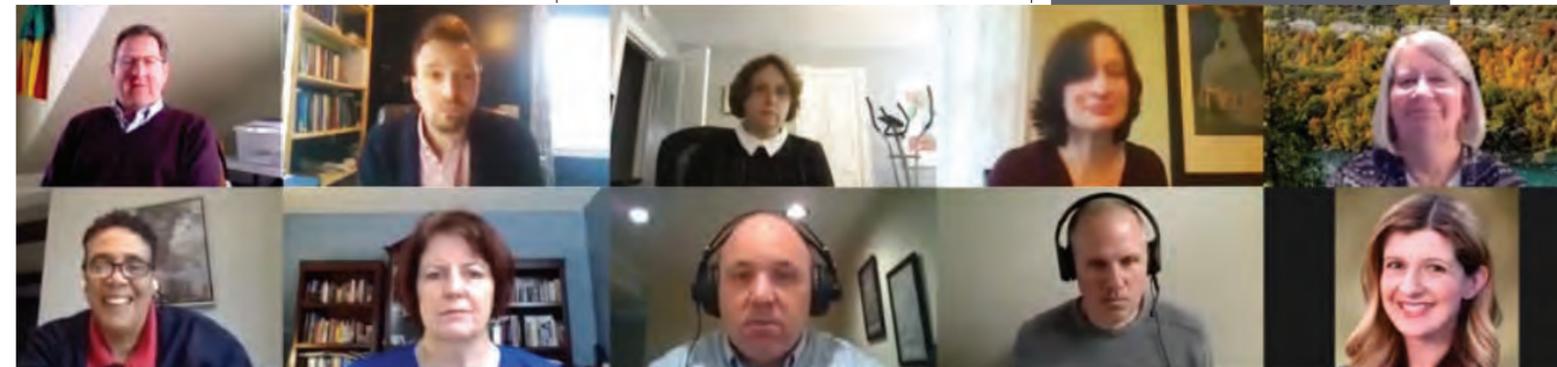
GSE alumna and psychologist Tawanna Gilford, PhD '12, leads the "Compassion Cart" project throughout the Harlem Hospital campus, assessing mental health needs and offering solace, snacks, water and, on this day, thanks to a generous donation from Milgro Nursery, flowering plants. (Photo courtesy Harlem Hospital)

4.24 A Zoom roundtable: Adapting to higher ed's new landscape

Getting classes and school operations to work well in a remote, cyber world was, and still is, intense, exhausting and inspiring. This spring, as the pandemic's changes settled in, GSE deans, UB leaders and faculty took stock and adapted to the swiftly shifting reality, starting with the 10-day window for getting all instruction online after campus closed in March. Through

nimble and it's led to some pretty innovative thinking," said Rosenblith. "I hope that stays with us permanently as part of the DNA of the university."

The panel also talked about the silver linings. During new, virtual coffee meetings Rosenblith started hosting to catch up with students, she was pleased to hear this: With all of the increased communication during



Zoom meetings, they kept up to date, gained insights and marked progress. In one forum in April, Dean Suzanne Rosenblith shared her perspective on GSE's experience with Barbara Ricotta, senior associate vice president for student life, and Jay Roorbach, EdM '19, senior emergency planning coordinator.

For Rosenblith, the challenge was managing what felt like chaos by organizing, delegating, putting the academic mission first and helping alarmed students navigate the new normal. "We've had to be really

the pandemic, one online student felt more connected than ever.

"We can learn from this," Rosenblith said. "If there's a barrier, we just have to figure it out what that solution might be."

"We've had to be really nimble and it's led to some pretty innovative thinking."

GSE COMMUNITY STEPS UP

• In May, Dean Suzanne Rosenblith hosted a conversation for faculty and staff to share perspectives about gender roles and the dramatic changes at home, especially for parents.

• Early Childhood Research Center staff read stories and even led yoga class for little ones. The preschool's Facebook page stayed updated with videos parents could share with their children.

• To help further, a new GSE webpage collected ideas, videos, links and resources being launched by professors, students and alumni: ed.buffalo.edu/about/community-outreach/resources

MAY 3

■ **Nina Pop**, 28, a Black transgender woman, found dead, with multiple stab wounds, in her apartment in Sikeston, Mo. She was at least the 10th trans person to die by violence in the U.S. this year.

MAY 6

■ **Dreasjon "Sean" Reed**, 21, a Black man, fatally shot by Indianapolis police in an altercation streamed live on Facebook.

■ **Sarah Robert**, an associate professor and a specialist in school food politics, joins *Seeding Resilience*: A consortium of people and organizations getting food to people in need, that includes UB's Food Lab policy research group.

MAY 8

■ GSE PhD student **Qinghua Chen** publishes "Born Artists," an online exhibition, with artwork by children that she collected via WeChat, and reflecting pandemic-era life in seven countries — from China and the U.S. to Switzerland and Japan.

MAY 15

■ GSE holds its first ever virtual commencement ceremony for 326 master's and 54 doctoral students.

■ The Trump administration announces *Operation Warp Speed*, a public-private partnership to accelerate COVID-19 vaccine development.

MAY 16

■ Early Childhood Research Center's preschool shifts to remote learning with staff reading stories and leading yoga exercises via Facebook video posts.

MAY 22

■ **Dean Rosenblith** brings together faculty and staff on Zoom to discuss the pandemic-influenced changes at home and how gender affects parenting responsibilities.



MAY 25

■ Minneapolis police officer **Derek Chauvin** videotaped kneeling on the neck of **George Floyd**, 46, until he dies, as three other officers watch. The video goes viral.

■ Social media reignites #BlackLivesMatter movement in response to George Floyd's death.

5.8 Pandemic solace—GSE PhD student Qinghua Chen reaches out with creativity.

BY MICHELLE KEARNS

As news of virus outbreaks swept from China to the U.S. and around the world, GSE PhD student Qinghua Chen tried to help by launching a series of creative, collaborative projects. She started by making a video of local people speaking from UB's North Campus and elsewhere to show support for people in China. Then she raised money to buy 3,600 face masks for emergency workers in Amherst, NY. Her latest effort is an online showcase of photos of art made at home by children around the world after schools closed.

Their work ranges from crayon drawings of nurses in face masks to sculpture and performance art, including a boat from recycled cans, a paper-mâché balloon egg and a yoga session with stuffed animals.

"For me, I'm playing the role of a global citizen," said Chen, who is a Presidential Fellow studying early childhood education in GSE's Curriculum, Instruction and Science of Learning PhD Program. "I just want to help a little bit."

Chen's online exhibition features 100 art pieces made by 60 children in seven countries, including her 5-year-old daughter Leonie. The project followed her volunteer work at the Amherst library branches, planning exhibitions of children's art for

hallway displays. After the pandemic forced the closing of the libraries, along with the show she organized about this year's Chinese Year of the Rat, Chen moved online.

"I didn't understand the full meaning of community until I came here."

From her blog on the Chinese WeChat app, she asked families to contribute photos of art related to themes of school closings, play and fighting the virus. Submissions came in from the U.S., the U.K., Switzerland, Japan, China, Canada and Australia. Soon she intends to add new exhibits to her developing website.

"I call this art gallery 'Born Artists,'" said Chen, a former finance reporter for a British news service and marketing and communications specialist at L'Oréal and Chanel in China. "I hope people can be inspired by these little artists and ... be cheered up by their great art pieces."

Her pandemic work at UB led to an unexpected career insight: How to work within a community.

"I didn't understand the full meaning of community until I came here," said Chen. "I felt community was something that was vague and general and big,"

Now she includes herself in a series of small



communities: At UB, among fellow Chinese students, within her daughter's school and in her current neighborhood in Amherst. She worked with them all in recent months, feeling inspired by the willingness of people to pitch in on recent projects—with fundraising help, face-mask distribution, video making and the collection of art pieces.

Lately she's been thinking of community in a new, more concrete way. It is: "Something solid that you do have a connection with ... A place that I belong to, based on different dimensions and domains," she said. "Now I know what a community means."



GSE PhD student Qinghua Chen, a Shanghai-native, with a TV news crew after donating 3,600 surgical-grade masks. (Photo/ Shuyi Zhao)

5.16 The resilience of children & ECRC's pandemic adjustments

BY MICHELLE KEARNS

For the first time in the Early Childhood Research Center's history of pre-school graduations, this summer's ceremony was held outdoors—and made complete with a hill for a stage and the traditional chicken dance finale. For the dozen students, the August evening's march through the grass, instead of a classroom, made for a more jubilant affair and, perhaps, a new custom even after on-campus classes resume.



"We feel kids are enjoying this a lot more. It's a beautiful picture: blue sky, green grass. Everybody was excited for their future," said X. Christine Wang, director of the Fisher-Price Endowed Early Childhood Research Center and professor in the Department of Learning and Instruction. "We would actually love to do this outdoors. We would like to make this a new tradition."

When the spread of COVID-19 led the UB campus to close, the ECRC team adjusted, incorporating their philosophy of learning through play

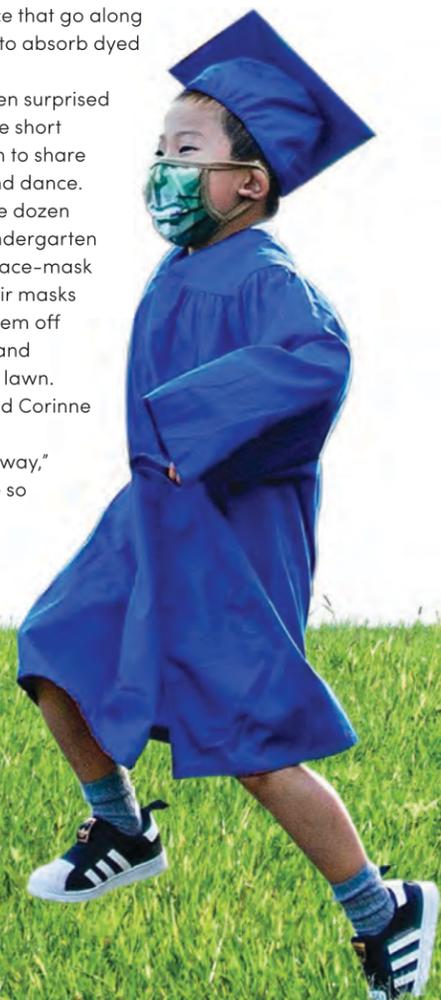
"We feel kids are enjoying this a lot more. It's a beautiful picture: blue sky, green grass. Everybody was excited for their future."

with remote learning plans for their students. There were storybook read aloud videos on Facebook and suggestions for parents, like the lessons in counting and science that go along with getting a piece of celery to absorb dyed water and change color.

Throughout it all, the children surprised everyone. They adapted to the short Zoom classes with time built in to share silly faces with their friends and dance. At August graduation time, the dozen graduates now heading to kindergarten seemed unfazed by the new face-mask reality. They knew to keep their masks on as they marched, taking them off once they got their diplomas and re-joined their families on the lawn.

"It was really adorable," said Corinne Eggleston, associate director.

"They really showed us the way," said Wang, "because they are so resilient."



MAY 26

- A video of **Alexandra Schindel's** conversation with a Tapestry Charter School teacher answering third graders' questions about her Galapagos journey and the science of ocean plastics pollution goes up on YouTube. The interview, the pandemic alternative to a classroom visit, connected to the students' semester of water study. SEE PAGE 30
- Protests begin in the Minneapolis–St. Paul area following George Floyd's killing.



MAY 27

- Minneapolis protests turn violent as activists call for murder charges against the police officers involved in George Floyd's death.
- **Tony McDade**, 38, a Black transgender man, was fatally shot by a police officer in Tallahassee, Fla.
- U.S. COVID-19 deaths surpass 100,000.

MAY 28

- A state of emergency declared in the Twin Cities, with hundreds of National Guard soldiers deployed, as social justice protests spread nationwide.
- **Dean Rosenblith** holds another Zoom session with staff and faculty to talk about George Floyd's death and emerging racism and social justice concerns.

MAY 29

- Minneapolis officer **Derek Chauvin** charged with third-degree murder and manslaughter in the death of **George Floyd**. High-profile protests began in Portland, Ore., in response to Floyd's killing.
- Portland Mayor **Ted Wheeler** declares state of emergency and imposes curfew as protests become violent.
- Learning and Instruction Professor and Chair **Julie Gorlewski's** "Endless Work, Endless Love: Teaching and Mothering During a Pandemic" publishes in Teachers College Record.

MAY 30

- As riots and protests continue nationwide, curfews are set in Los Angeles, Philadelphia and Atlanta.
- UB's President **Satish Tripathi** releases a statement in response the police killings in Minneapolis, Atlanta and Louisville—"We mourn peacefully but not passively."
- Protests begin outside Buffalo's City Hall in response George Floyd's death.

5.28 Diversity forum: Understanding anti-Blackness and this time of change

As summer unfolded and news reports about the coronavirus overlapped with stories about race and the injustice, segregation and violence against people of color, GSE started a critical conversation with its community of students, staff and faculty. What was their experience with race and privilege in this time of civil unrest?

In a Zoom gathering in June, almost 60 people, mostly white, met to talk in what was the first step in planning forums for creating, and learning about change.

"I do believe, as a school of education, we have a particular role to play in this," said

Dean Suzanne Rosenblith. She then read the names of Black people killed by police this year and stopped for a silent tribute to Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, Sean Reed, Tony McDade and George Floyd.

"Expect some discomfort," said Raechele

Pope, associate professor, associate dean for faculty and student affairs and chief diversity officer and moderator. "You really can't grow without some challenge."

Challenges ranged from the global to the personal. The dean had been thinking about the pain her students of color must feel at being dehumanized—for a lifetime—for the color of their skin.

Another professor said he was proud of the protestors' bravery and willingness to go to the streets during the pandemic. Someone else spoke up, despairing that the killings continued in spite of it all. "What will it take to cause the change that we need?" she said.

Parents talked about their children. Pope worried about her Black son's tendency to pause when someone asks him a question. If police stopped him, would they shoot rather than wait?

White parents were concerned about similar things, but noted they are not in the same situation because their children are not Black. A mother wondered at her own unwitting contribution to white supremacy. What about the safety of unarmed protestors and her sons, who worked in law enforcement and carried guns? "They're out there in the protests and I, honestly, can't watch them."

As a Black mom said this year was an awakening for her and her son. As young teen, he didn't understand why, a couple of years ago, she was so upset to see him run from the corner store where he bought something. Police, or someone else, might misunderstand his running and assume he was fleeing from a crime.

"Fast forward, in 2020, he's now having a better understanding of why he's unable to run," she said. The bottom line: All kids should feel free to run. "I'm hurt," she added, "and quite frankly disgusted with the way that things are being handled and where we are in 2020."

"You really can't grow without some challenge. Too much challenge and you stop growing. Too little challenge and we don't."

For the white people participating in the conversation, the issues included abandoning their "culture of niceness" and its practice of avoiding difficult topics, like race. "To be white and to be cautious around race ... means it's hard for me to contribute to change," said Amy Reynolds, a psychologist and professor in the counseling, school and educational psychology department "For me, it's been a lifelong challenge to unlearn what I was taught."

Pandemic illuminates the power of student-teacher classroom collaboration

When the pandemic shut down school buildings in March, GSE's 50 teacher candidates suddenly went virtual, along with their teacher mentors. They came together and figured out how to co-teach from home computers—troubleshooting tech glitches, capturing students' attention with encouragement, and holding office hours and parent conferences.

"There was this sense of two equal teachers operating in the classroom," said Elisabeth Etopio, assistant dean for teacher education and director of educator preparation. "That power of two is something special when both individuals can kind of embrace that and learn from each other."

The teacher certification program enrolls 150 students a year with about 50 candidates working every semester as co-teachers in about 15 schools. As they pivoted this spring, so did the state. Certification exams, which include mandatory videos of teachers in the classroom, were modified. New teachers, caught short by the pandemic, could start work this year with an "Emergency COVID-19 Certificate," good for a year to allow time for finishing video portfolios.

Mentors in the liaison schools were particularly grateful for the extra help. One teacher, who asked if the teacher candidate could stay an extra semester, put it this way: "We're learning together." She was grateful for assistance with lessons while she troubleshooted tech issues and parent concerns.

"A teacher on their own in a classroom would have had to stop all instruction to navigate all of that," said Etopio.

Another candidate was commended for attending every department meeting and developing lessons that other teachers used. More end-of-semester praise came in for the student teachers' steady communication, website management, home lessons, online assignments and instructional videos.

Etopio was proud of them all. "It's that natural teacher that comes out in our students when they're put into a situation where they need to be resilient," she said. "Our students are special. They rose to the occasion."



Protestors at a Buffalo rally for educators in downtown's Niagara Square, June 9, 2020. They joined hundreds voicing their support for the Black Lives Matter movement. (WBFO Photo/Kyle S. Mackie)

JUNE 1

■ Dean **Suzanne Rosenblith** and Associate Dean **Raechele Pope** condemn racism with an email policy announcement: As an institution of public education, the GSE has a responsibility to speak out.

■ President Trump threatens to deploy the military to quell riots. The National Guard and police clear peaceful protestors for a photo op of him with a Bible at St. John's Church.

JUNE 2

■ People post single black squares on social media for Blackout Tuesday, a music industry-provoked protest against racism and police brutality.

JUNE 4

■ Buffalo police officers make national news when they keep moving forward after one of them shoves peaceful Niagara Square protester **Martin Gugino**, 75, to the ground, causing serious injury.

JUNE 9

■ A protest rally on the steps of City Hall, one of a series in Buffalo, features educators and GSE alumna **Tiffany Nyachae**, PhD, an assistant professor of education at Penn State, who speaks about the importance of increasing faculty diversity.

JUNE 10

■ The U.S. counts more than 2 million COVID-19 cases.
■ GSE Professor **Nathan Daun-Barnett** publishes insights about potential positive outcomes from the COVID-19 pandemic.

JUNE 12

■ Protests in Atlanta follow the police killing of **Rayshard Brooks**, 27, in a Wendy's parking lot.
■ GSE Professor **Myles Faith's** research appears around the world with revelations that children with obesity were hurt by the pandemic's stay-at-home rules with negative effects on diet, sleep and physical activity

JUNE 13

■ Protesters burn down the Wendy's where **Rayshard Brooks** died. Atlanta Police Chief **Erika Shields** resigns.

JUNE 17

■ UB President **Tripathi** announces a new President's Advisory Council on Race, inviting Associate Dean **Raechele Pope** and PhD student **Raven Baxter** to serve.

6.10

Improved graduation rates, less chronic absenteeism: Some good may come from COVID-19

BY DOUGLAS SITLER

There may be an educational upside to COVID-19. It's true that school building shutdowns wrought havoc on lives in 2020 and interrupted school. The entire education system was disrupted by the pandemic—with students, teachers and families navigating uncharted territory.

Yet, within this somber landscape, Nathan Daun-Barnett, an associate professor of higher education administration, found promising possibilities of good things that may come. There are at least four, by his count.

1 Graduation rates could rise

"We may see more students complete high school, particularly in high-need districts," said Daun-Barnett. "One of the barriers for students to finish high school is the successful passage of Regents exams in core academic subjects. This year, New York State cancelled the exams and will waive the requirement under certain conditions, including that the student successfully pass the course. This is the reason we may see additional graduates this year."

2 Lack of jobs could also provoke an increase in college enrollment

"Related to the first, we may see that more students consider college as a possibility because they have completed the high school credential. It is generally reported that more students are second-guessing their decisions. It is possible that we see overall declines, but it is also possible that students will find that their alternatives to college are limited. The job market is sluggish and going to college may seem a better alternative. This is often what we find during economic downturns but the psychology of a pandemic that has an uncertain time horizon is different."

3 Online schooling could ease chronic absenteeism and help students with health issues

"We may find new ways to make education accessible to those that have chronic health conditions. We know that there are tremendous health disparities along lines of race and class. And we also know that chronic absenteeism is an important predictor of poor performance in school," said Daun-Barnett. "We make assumptions about why students are not in school, but at least for some, health conditions play an important role. Now that we are figuring out how to deliver education virtually, we may find that it can be a vehicle for those who cannot be in school as regularly. We still have more work to do to refine these practices, but we are closer now because so many more educators have been exposed to these strategies."

4 More effective online teaching

"We may also find that we become better at delivering distance education now that all students and teachers have operated in that environment. We have heard from online students that they feel more engaged by faculty now that all classes are online because we have had to be more intentional about how we provide a high-quality education when students and faculty cannot be in the classroom ...These are lessons we can and should apply to all of our distance programs," said Daun-Barnett. "To be clear, at this point, the in-person experience is better than what we provide in a virtual environment, but we may find improvements in these practices because so many instructors have had to shift their teaching to a virtual environment."

6.17

UB president creates advisory council to focus on race

Two from GSE join new president's committee to foster change

UB President Satish Tripathi responded to calls for change in this unprecedented time by charging a new committee, which includes a GSE associate dean, with guiding university

"More than ever before, UB should serve as a bastion of hope and a community of action compelled by the greater good."

efforts to adapt and change, evaluating curriculum, finding ways to recruit more Black faculty and encouraging community conversations about race and racism.



The new 16-member President's Advisory Council on Race formed in July, with temporary summer input from Raven Baxter, a science education PhD student specializing in STEM communication, and continuing work on faculty recruitment with Raechele L. Pope, an associate professor of educational leadership and policy, chief diversity officer and associate dean of faculty and student affairs.

"Let's look at our organizations—our campus in this case—from top to bottom and

figure out what we need to do, what we need to do differently, and what are some of the best practices that already exist," said Pope speaking about the need to deeply examine university practices in a June story by WBFO, NPR's local station.

In announcing the new university-wide committee, Tripathi said he was responding to three historic moments affecting Black and Hispanic communities: the global pandemic that has taken more than 200,000 American lives and counting, an economic crisis that left more than 20 million people out of work and frustration, anxiety and despair following centuries of intolerance and oppression of the Black community.

"Across the country, protests have brought hundreds of thousands of people into the streets ... Their outrage has amplified the call to collectively address injustice, racism and violence. Doing so requires nothing less than meaningful structural change," Tripathi wrote in his email announcement. "More than ever before, UB should serve as a bastion of hope and a community of action compelled by the greater good."

During her work with the curriculum committee, Baxter was excited by the possibility of a course about anti-racism for students beginning their academic careers. "If you have that knowledge and that awareness before you go out into the world," she said, "that will help to curb some of these oppressive cultures that we're seeing today."

JUNE 19

■ The annual Juneteenth commemoration of the emancipation of enslaved people becomes a state holiday, as declared by Gov. Cuomo.

JULY 2, 3 AND 4

■ Raging protests in Portland, Ore. become increasingly violent.



JULY 7

■ A research commentary by GSE Clinical Assistant Professor **Tiffany Karalis Noel** publishes in *Social Sciences & Humanities Open* with an analysis of the stigmatizing impact of disease names with geographic references.

JULY 20

■ *Forbes* magazine includes an interview with GSE's **Raechele Pope**, associate professor and chief diversity officer, in its story, "What Colleges' Leaders Can Do To Address Racial Justice."

JULY 24

■ Federal forces deploy to quell protests in Portland, Ore., where their unmarked cars and officers in camouflage, without clear identification badges, generate a national outcry.

JULY 29

■ Oregon Governor Kate Brown and Vice President Mike Pence agree to a phased withdrawal of federal officers from Portland.

AUGUST 10

■ GSE announces the establishment of the Equity, Diversity, Justice and Inclusion fund for school initiatives promoting diversity and inclusion.

Math as a coping skill

BY MICHELLE KEARNS

Gifted Math Program navigates pandemic and finishes with new digital tools

Once campus closed and courses went virtual, Anne Izydorczak, administrator of UB's Gifted Math Program, wasn't sure how, or if, the program would carry on. With little notice, she, program co-director Harry O'Malley, 10 teachers and 11 UB student assistants had to figure out how to continue classes for 280 seventh through 12th graders used to traveling from schools all over Western New York for advanced math lessons in Baldy Hall. Once students were disconnected from their face-to-face meetings, would they keep coming virtually?

Izydorczak and the rest of her team scrambled. They did a quick training for the online video interface. They ordered Microsoft Surface Go tablets so teachers could write out math problems without a chalkboard. They found a good, free app for scanning and submitting homework. They had a practice day for students.

"Our attendance was better than ever actually," Izydorczak said.

There were surprises along the way, like Pi Day math challenges, which helped keep students interested in showing up online and doing their homework. Families appreciated the "synchronous" class meetings at the same times every week.

Everyone was grateful for the routine. Math, it turns out, is a coping skill. "Think of how nice it is to occupy your mind with a puzzle," said Izydorczak.

This fall Gifted Math began its 41st year, fortified by the lessons of the spring's crash course in online learning and the summer break to evaluate and adapt. "It was like an experiment," Izydorczak said.

The mission of the program is to offer advanced math challenges for students bored by traditional math. It will carry on virtually with new discoveries and adjustments: Weekly sessions for students who need extra help and parent meetings were much easier to arrange online. Adding in more quizzes and projects kept everyone on track.



Interactive project work with the Desmos, free math software tools, to encourage virtual collaboration and adds variety to teacher lessons.

"It's not just about a problem for the kids to solve. It's about them being able to talk with each other," Izydorczak said. This interface gives a break to teachers. They were exhausted by the initial setup of online teaching, which had them talking more than usual. "We don't want our teachers to be burned out."

"Think of how nice it is to occupy your mind with a puzzle."

After the unexpected spring success, the 2020-2021 enrollment was stronger than expected: 270 students, only 10 students less than last year.

"We're in great shape," Izydorczak said. "They depend on us more than we knew."



On Instagram, Gifted Math student Joseph Gavacs posts a picture of his math puzzle, a Pi Day assignment involving folding paper and a COVID-19 message—"Keep Calm and Remember: Apart We Stand Together." April 17, 2020. (Photo courtesy Joseph Gavacs)

8.10 EDJI fund launches

Bringing in perspective, training and insight from people seeped in the work of transforming racism, anti-Blackness and institutional injustice was the reason for creating the new GSE reserve fund for Equity, Diversity and Justice Initiatives. The monies will help pay for guest speakers, workshops, consultants, professional development and other initiatives that promote diversity and inclusion.

"Like many schools and colleges of education, GSE is thinking carefully, robustly, and comprehensively about our sustained response to social unrest," Dean Suzanne Rosenblith wrote to explain the philosophy behind the fund. "Our approach will be to attend to racism, inequality, educational injustice on multiple fronts – curricular, programmatic, policy, and community engagement."

New committee takes on social justice

The new Equity, Diversity, Justice, and Inclusion Committee will help to implement GSE's new 2025 Comprehensive Plan and develop new programs and policies focused on diversity and inclusion. The team, which includes faculty from all departments and is led by Raechele Pope, associate dean of faculty and student affairs, chief diversity officer, and associate professor of educational leadership and policy, began its assignment this summer, planning and executing September's Teach-In. They now have shifted to reviewing curriculum and considering how to increase underrepresented groups of faculty, staff and students.

The work includes developing a proposal, to be put to GSE for a vote, defining the purpose and function of the new standing committee.

Pope is keen to evaluate and find approaches, including how advising, mentoring and pedagogy can address racial disparity. "We've got an opportunity," she said. "There are students who are saying that 'My experience as a Black student here is very different than the white student ...' How do we fix that?"

Hard work is ahead, she said, but the current momentum is the beginning of fundamental change.

Like many schools and colleges of education, GSE is thinking carefully, robustly, and comprehensively about our sustained response to social unrest.

Uniting GSE with books:

Group reading about racism and social change

As professors leading classes know, reading books together brings people together in conversation and collaboration. This fall, Dean Suzanne Rosenblith took that approach with staff, faculty and students by launching a GSE-wide social justice reading project with departments choosing books that related to their work.

"I tend to be interested in fostering community and shared experiences – with COVID, and people feeling more estranged from one another, it became even more important," said Rosenblith. "We are a learning community and when confronted with significant social issues, one way to address them is join together in a common learning activity."

GSE's fall reading list and department choices:

"How to Be an Antiracist" by Ibram X. Kendi, chosen by Counseling, School and Educational Psychology Department, the Dean's and Admissions offices and the Communications and Marketing team.

"Multiplication is for White People: Raising Expectations for Other People's Children" by Lisa Delpit

"The Racial Healing Handbook: Practical Activities to Help You Challenge Privilege, Confront Systemic Racism, and Engage in Collective Healing" by Anneliese Singh. Both additional titles were also chosen by the Department of Counseling, School and Educational Psychology.

"The Privileged Poor: How Elite Colleges Are Failing Disadvantaged Students" by Anthony Abraham Jack, chosen by the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy.

"We Want to Do More Than Survive: Abolitionist Teaching and the Pursuit of Educational Freedom," by Bettina Love, chosen by the Department of Learning and Instruction.

"White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism" by Robin DiAngelo, chosen by the Department of Information Science.



AUGUST 23

■ Violent protests break out in Kenosha, Wisc., following the police shooting of **Jacob Blake**, 29.

■ The FDA grants emergency authorization for antibody-rich blood plasma treatments for COVID-19 hospital patients.

AUGUST 25

■ Two protesting the shooting of Jacob Blake were fatally shot in Kenosha, Wisc. Kyle Rittenhouse, 17, of Antioch, Ill., accused of allegedly using an AR-15-style rifle in the shooting.



By Parker Miller

AUGUST 29

■ Thousands of people gather at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. for the Commitment March, organized by the Rev. Al Sharpton and with Martin Luther King III, in support of Black civil rights.

■ GSE holds its first virtual new student orientation and 433 register to attend.

SEPTEMBER 2

■ Protests breakout in Rochester, N.Y., following the release of disturbing police body-camera footage of the fatal March arrest of **Daniel Prude**, 41, an unarmed Black man having a psychotic drug episode.

■ Fortune Magazine includes GSE PhD student **Raven Baxter**, 27, in the health care group of a special expanded version of its annual 40 Under 40 list of young innovators.



SEPTEMBER 3 & 4

■ GSE cancels classes and hosts the "Make Good Trouble Now Teach-In" about race and equity for faculty, students and staff. The two-day event features five national experts and 82 breakout discussion sessions. Faculty, staff, alumni and community members highlight topics ranging from book club reading to Black career navigation and teaching about race in majority white schools.

9.3&4

A call to action

BY MARCENE ROBINSON

GSE started the academic year by canceling classes and activities for students, faculty and staff to make time for a teach-in style forum rooted in the anti-war movement of the 1960s: "Make Good Trouble Now: Teach-In for Racial Equity." For two days, five keynote speakers and leaders in 82 breakout sessions explored issues gripping the nation: the murder of Black people by police, institutional racism, internalized oppression and privilege, educational equality and routes toward change.

"This just isn't done. Some may think we are lucky that we can afford to shut down normal operations. The fact of the matter is, we can't afford not to. It's simply that critical," said event chair Raechele Pope, associate dean of faculty and student affairs, and chief diversity officer. "In the midst of two global pandemics — COVID-19 and racism — along with a global fiscal crisis, we are witnessing community activism and calls for systemic and structural change that are not going to go away."

The virtual event, held Sept. 3-4, deployed the "teach-in" format, modeled on 1960s-era educational activism. Faculty, staff, and students



listened and asked questions via Zoom and learned about the impact of racial injustice, particularly in education. Keynote speeches included "We Gon' Be Alright, But That Ain't Alright: Abolitionist Teaching and the Pursuit of Educational Freedom" by award-winning author Bettina Love.

More than 80 breakout sessions were led by faculty, scholars, alumni and community partners who discussed a range of themes— from anti-racist reading groups to the barriers challenges and successes of professional Black women and how students from a white rural community used digital storytelling

"Learn how to incorporate diverse student voices, don't single them out."

— Dr. Gloria D. Campbell-Whitley
PROFESSOR | UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA
AT CHARLOTTE

tools to explore the meaning of Martin Luther King Day. The two days ended with a town hall conversation about how to incorporate insights at GSE.

"Change is both an individual and collective responsibility," said Dean Suzanne Rosenblith. "As an institution of higher education, we continue this work through the radical act of teaching and learning."

The discussions were part of a larger national dialogue about racism sparked by the killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis in May, and reignited by news of more deaths, like the September shooting of Jacob Blake in Kenosha, Wis.

"GSE recognizes that it cannot make good on its mission and vision, or on its commitment to equity, diversity, justice and inclusion, without ensuring that all faculty, staff and students have a more fundamental understanding of the systematic violence against Black people and the role that education has played and continues to play in perpetuating systems of oppression," said Rosenblith.

Keynote Speakers



Bettina Love



Carlton Green



Ali Michael



Gloria Campbell-Whitley



Jamie Washington

Plans for change

BY MICHELLE KEARNS

As the two-day Teach-In came to a close, people started talking about what it meant. That happened first at the final town hall session led by Dean Suzanne Rosenblith and Raechele Pope, associate dean of faculty and student affairs, and chief diversity officer. In the days that followed, there was more conversation in smaller groups.

People said they were grateful that a tough topic was addressed. Speaking freely about the "elephant" of racism in the room was cathartic. It was also awkward and uncomfortable to figure out what to say— about racism, micro-aggressions and injustice of the racist U.S. systems that Black people are subjected to and that white people are protected from.

And, in part, feeling uncomfortable was exactly the point.

"Discomfort and conflict are part of being anti-racist," said Rosenblith as she spoke during the town-hall meeting at the end of the conference's second day. "Creating a

community and culture where discomfort and conflict are the norm is necessary to making anti-racism part of our learning norms and it amplifies the idea that anti-racism is a daily practice."

"Injustice anywhere is injustice everywhere."

— Rev. Dr. Jamie Washington
PRESIDENT & FOUNDER
THE WASHINGTON CONSULTING GROUP

She then highlighted a comment from keynote speaker, psychologist and diversity consultant Carlton Green: "If you're not making mistakes while doing anti-racist work, you're not doing anti-racist work."

Ahead, Rosenblith said GSE will be looking for ways to support students who may have returned to campus changed or reeling — from a social and political awakening, economic distress, COVID or stress about and fear of the next instance of racial violence.

For PhD student Chazz Robinson, the two days of lectures and conversations about inclusion, awareness and justice were gratifying. It was heartening to see GSE take this lead on combating the racism that shaped some of his own academic career.

"Through all the madness of the pandemic ... the Teach-In was wonderful," he said, adding that Bettina Love's direct and sometimes funny talk about advocating for awareness and change was his favorite. He has used this time to consider his own research interest in finding ways for academia to support Black students like himself from poor working-class backgrounds. "We have systems and policies in place that don't see people as people ... I just hope that I get to be a part of this change... I feel optimistic that change can happen."

SEPTEMBER 11

■ GSE's Equity, Diversity, Justice and Inclusion webpage launches and features a strategic plan with diversity goals.



SEPTEMBER 18

Supreme Court Justice **Ruth Bader Ginsburg** dies.

SEPTEMBER 22

■ The U.S. COVID-19 death toll passes 200,000.

OCTOBER 1

■ President Donald Trump and first lady Melania Trump test positive for COVID-19.

OCTOBER 7

■ Derek Chauvin, former police officer charged with the murder of George Floyd, posts bail.

OCTOBER 16

■ The U.S. surpasses eight million cases of COVID-19.

OCTOBER 24

■ Cases of COVID-19 rise in 43 states with single-day records set in 7 of those states.



Coping on the front line: Everyone is on it

Self-care demystified with **Catherine Cook-Cottone**

BY MICHELLE KEARNS



As Catherine Cook-Cottone, professor in the Department of Counseling, School and Educational Psychology and a yoga instructor, sees it, in this time of quarantine and social action, the front line

includes us all. Now more than ever, Cook-Cottone says, everyone is responding to urgent needs. This means “self-care”—taking care of one’s own physical and mental health—is paramount.

Cook-Cottone, whose research includes yoga, mindfulness and self-care, says the things that relieve stress and fortify are unique to the individual. To help consider healthy possibilities, she and Wendy Guyker, a clinical associate professor, designed a Mindful Self-Care Assessment with six categories and suggestions—from physical activity and supportive relationships to relaxation. Since launching ed.buffalo.edu/mindful-assessment last spring, between 10 and 100 people from all over the country take it every day.

“It’s to get you thinking ... Looking at where you’re at and seeing where you are, can inspire you to get creative about it,” she said of the self-assessment. “We’re taking back self-care from the media and from the marketing.”

The practice can also be a political act, said Cook-Cottone. To make the point, she offered this quote from the late activist and poet Audre Lorde: “Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare.”

Q Why do you think that we should all consider ourselves as front-line workers who need to make self-care a priority?

A We’re all negotiating a pandemic. We’re all trying to keep our families safe. We’re on the front lines right now. Stop thinking of it as someone else on the front line ... Systemic racism isn’t going to shift until we all start thinking of ourselves as on the front line.

Q You say that tending to the self helps others because it leaves a person with more energy and attention. Can you elaborate?

A It’s thought of as indulgent, but it’s a very generous act, actually, to take care of yourself. Like a mom who is in great self-care—what a gift to her children because then she’s available for them.

Q How do you explain self-care?

A Self-care can be a way to get to know yourself. I think of it as self-love. Self-love is actionable. When somebody really loves you, they just don’t show you in one way.

What you want in self-care is diversity. You don’t want all of your investments in one area. It should be a mix of fun and supportive friends. Walk, kayak. Take time to nap on the weekends. Write in your journal.

You’re like a bird with two wings. One wing is your mission and direction in life and the other is self-care. When we have both a sense of mission and self-care, we can fly strongly. I call it great effort and great rest. You’re constantly asking of yourself and you’re constantly caring for yourself.

It’s not obligatory. It includes curiosity. It’s not a checklist. Your self-care becomes part of your life practice. It’s not something other people do for you. It’s part of taking care of yourself as a human being.

About: Catherine Cook-Cottone, is a licensed psychologist, a registered yoga teacher, and a professor in the Department of Counseling, School and Educational Psychology. Her new book “Embodiment and the Treatment of Eating Disorders: The Body as a Resource in Recovery,” published by Norton Professional Books in September, reflects her private-practice work in anxiety-based disorders and self-regulation skills.

9.11 GSE launches new EDJI website

It is now more important than ever to be transparent and to clearly define our commitment to equity, diversity, justice and inclusion. GSE recently launched a new diversity and inclusion web page offering our commitment to diversity and inclusion, our collective responsibilities, the 2025 comprehensive plan, activities, resources, and action strategies, as well as related research. Our stakeholders are also able to provide feedback on how we are doing working toward our goals in creating a safe and just educational environment. The site also offers the opportunity to support activities by making a donation to the EDJI Fund.

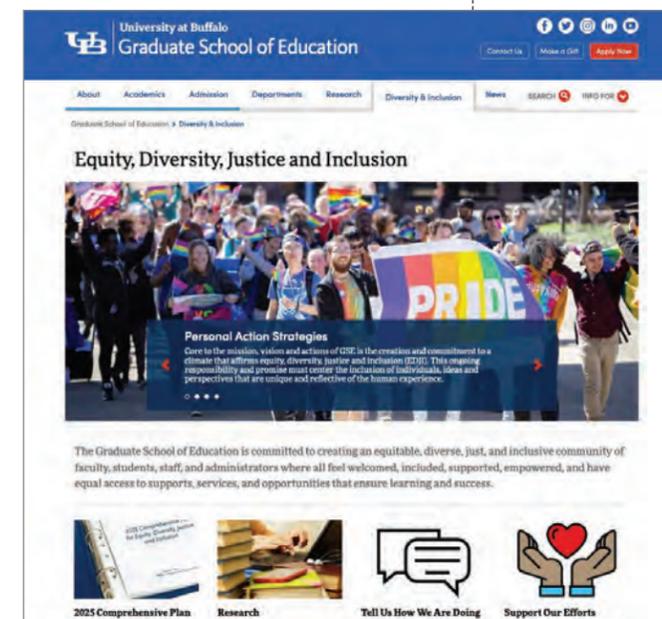
Defining our commitment

As educators, scholars and advocates, we view education as essential to improving and transforming social and

economic opportunities for individuals and communities. This influences our actions: how we teach, conduct our research, serve our communities and work toward a more equitable and just future.

We are driven to engage with local, national and global communities. We aim to help develop self-aware, inclusive and culturally competent students and alumni, employ inclusive teaching, service and professional development, and conduct research in collaboration with and to strengthen communities. We strive to build effective partnerships that remove institutional, informational and educational barriers.

Our full commitment statement can be found on our website at ed.buffalo.edu/edji/commitment



2020 carries on ... This timeline captured some of the year’s major events, the overlap and collision of the virus spread, racism, police killings, social justice outcry, educators’ response and the changed world we now find ourselves in. We couldn’t include everything. When this magazine went to press, Joe Biden emerged as the president-elect, President Trump did not concede, some Republicans encouraged his move to battle the results in court, COVID-19 cases rose more sharply than in the spring. The world confronted a second wave as news broke of a promising new vaccine. This nation and this university now confront a complicated aftermath. Questions about race, equity and the tumult of 2020 remain. The answers lie ahead.



Galapagos-to- Buffalo and pandemic work-arounds: Plastics research expedition sheds light on teaching—about science and amidst a shutdown

Taking ocean plastics research to Buffalo classrooms with some bonus virus-inspired insight

BY MICHELLE KEARNS

Alexandra Schindel, left, an associate professor specializing in science education in the Department of Learning and Instruction, takes the helm of the eXXpedition research sailboat during the 10-day Panama-to-Galapagos leg of the crew's journey to circumnavigate the globe and raise awareness as they measure plastics water pollution, Feb. 2, 2020. (Photo/Jessica Patterson). Above, from top, Schindel's elementary school methods graduate class analyzes plastic waste along Buffalo's Scajaquada Creek. That afternoon's haul includes a handful of cigar tips, Sept. 21, 2020. Plastic finds during the Galapagos sail include this micro piece held between two fingers and, in a photo by Schindel's eXXpedition crew mate Candy Medusa, a Croc sandal floating by. Feb. 1, 2020. (Photos courtesy Alexandra Schindel)



The charming, direct questions that third graders had about her sabbatical plastics research sailboat trip to the Galapagos Islands gratified and inspired Alexandra Schindel, an associate professor specializing in science education in the Department of Learning and Instruction.

She knew the importance of connecting science to students' lives. Their wonder was heartening. She hadn't been sure how to make ocean research relevant to Buffalo students more familiar with Lake Erie than the Pacific Ocean. She could see promise in their curiosity.

"Why can't the turtles and fish just stay away from the plastic?" and "What are micro-plastics and are they more harmful than any other plastics?" were on a list of queries emailed to Schindel from Tapestry Charter School's Friendly Frogs and Fantastic Fishes classes.

The exchange followed her return from the Galapagos Islands and was one of the many virtual learning adaptations of last spring. Virus-provoked changes swept the world following Schindel's February adventure across the equator with the all-women crew, collecting information to help solve the world's plastics-pollution problem by gathering information and raising awareness. Schindel joined volunteers for one 10-day leg of the eXXpedition trek to circumnavigate the globe, measuring and logging plastics water pollution to build a data set with global reach.

When she returned to Buffalo, Schindel read through student queries and responded in a video chat instead of visiting the class in person as she once had planned. In spite of the pandemic, the most stunning lesson of Schindel's journey made its way to teacher Melissa Leopard's virtual Tapestry school classroom: Plastics pollution is omnipresent.

It permeates the sand of the remotest uninhabited Pacific island, fills in birds' nests, gets eaten by animals like food and haunts the deepest ocean depths plummeted by the expedition's special scoping tool. Her conversation with Leopard helped students see the connection to pollution in and around the freshwater near their neighborhoods.

"She took it out of the Great Lakes," said Leopard of the classes' semester of water study. "That was huge for the kids... What's the local problem? And how can we fix it? Kids were shocked in many ways about the incredible amount of plastic across the globe ... They were quite amazed and horrified at how quickly pollution travels ... It was extremely meaningful to see a real scientist in the actual field."

Even though Schindel knew science captivates when students can see its connections to the place where they live, it was good to see her far-flung Galapagos experience pay off at home.

"Kids need to have connections in the outside world," Schindel said. "When we make things more specific and not just a textbook read, that helps them to see things differently."

This fall, Schindel continued to adapt the Galapagos project—to her own teaching work.

On a September afternoon, she and master's students in her elementary school methods class donned masks, and collected trash along Buffalo's Scajaquada Creek. They spent a few hours collecting 400 pieces: cigar tips, bags, fast food wrappers and cans. As the group entered findings as data into the same citizen science phone app the eXXpedition crew used—the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Marine Debris Tracker— they were surprised by how much was plastic: About 60 percent.

Kids were shocked in many ways about the incredible amount of plastic across the globe ... It was extremely meaningful to see a real scientist in the actual field.

Afterward one student offered the kind of insight Schindel was aiming for: She was more concerned about how garbage makes its way into the water. "When teachers see the science around them it helps them teach differently," Schindel said.

She now knows with even greater assurance that science lessons with experiences built in, like the field work and even a video interview, help people connect with their community in new ways.

"It just drives home for me the constancy that I already knew," said Schindel, "—the impact of experiences."

There is power in embedding science-learning in the places we live, she said. And, perhaps, potential to change the world.

School desegregation: An emeritus faculty member and lessons from the 1970s and 80s

BY MICHELLE KEARNS



Herb Foster, left, and George Singfield, right, together on Martha's Vineyard, Edgartown, Mass., in an undated photo. They were, as Singfield liked to put it, the "Salt and Pepper Team." (Photo courtesy Herb Foster)

“With all that has been done, the racist and the ethnocentric feelings that people have about Black males are still there.”

Decades before Black Lives Matter came to be, Herbert Foster, now a GSE professor emeritus, was a white educator focused on teaching teachers about Black culture. His work bridged the divide between teachers and students after 1954's Supreme Court *Brown v. Board of Education* desegregation ruling.

Misunderstandings about what Foster calls Black "street corner" culture led to disastrous outcomes for Black students, particularly males, who were labeled as discipline problems and assigned to special education programs.

In the 1970s and 1980s, Foster traveled nationwide explaining Black urban culture to teachers with his friend George Singfield, a Black special education administrator.

"Today, you're talking about white privilege," said Singfield, now a consultant. "Back then they were talking mostly about communities not being open and understanding. The rules were not really set up for the minority urban kids, but for nice, neat well-accorded school districts."

Not much has changed, said Foster, who retired in 1998. Their culture-bridging seminars during social unrest in places like South Boston are still needed. "With all that has been done," said Foster, "the racist and the ethnocentric feelings that people have about Black males are still there."

His career was defined by cultural adaptations. A Brooklyn native, he was a Morse code radio operator in occupied Japan in World War II before earning an EdD from Columbia University's Teachers College. His expertise in urban education led UB to hire him to direct the now-closed Woodlawn Teacher Education Center. He taught industrial and graphic arts in New York City for 17 years, mostly at the infamous, now defunct "600" public schools, where teachers once earned an extra \$600 to teach students labeled delinquent and emotionally disturbed.

His interest in transforming difficult student-teacher dynamics followed a humiliating early-career episode as a substitute mechanical drawing teacher. After a student threw a paper wad, Foster said something like, "Is that all you got?" Chaos ensued. A T-square flew. Students ran on tabletops. Foster, terrified, hid under the desk. That weekend, he said he thought about giving up.

Instead, on Monday he took control with the sort of nuanced move he would later teach to educators. On the blackboard, he wrote the family name he had used—Finklestein—before it was changed to protect against anti-Semitism. As he expected, a male student sneered at its connection to the word "fink." Foster responded. With knees shaking, he took charge and told the student: "Read that." The young man did and from then on, Foster said, the class was easy to handle.

"The teacher has to recognize that a lot of their classroom behavior is a performance," said Foster in a 1974 Phi Delta Kappan interview about his book *'Ribbin', Jivin', and Playin' the Dozens.*" By focusing on just one student, the teacher may "lose the rest of the class."

Reflecting on his work, Foster recalled a letter a white teacher wrote saying how much his approach had helped her. She had been regularly suspending three boys. "She read my book, understood what was going on and," said Foster, "never had another Black male suspended."

As he reads and watches the news about protests and social injustice, Foster can imagine his old workshops could be a help. If he could start over, he would go back to their original mission of teaching how to understand students and respond with empathy. "If the teacher is a professional," he said, "he has to interpret and change first."

ROAMING THE HALLS STUDENT PROFILE

Chazz Robinson: A journey to graduate school and an ambition to create more supportive environments for working-class students

BY MICHELLE KEARNS



During this past very unusual summer, GSE PhD student Chazz Robinson (EdM '19) watched protests from a hotel window in his hometown of Milwaukee. He felt curious about how the unrest and police killings of Black people were going to affect students and educators.

As a researcher, a scholar and an activist, his ambition to be a dean of a graduate school of education has deepened. As he finishes his coursework, he knows his dissertation research will involve collecting stories of people like him from working-class backgrounds who found ways to navigate white education systems. His goals: Create change. Ease the journeys of others.

To get this far, he persevered through unlucky, and lucky, twists of fate. As he watched protestors in the Milwaukee streets in July, he wondered how many of them could use the same kind of life-changing help he's found along his way.

He was 13 when his mother, once a landlord with 10 houses, slipped into poverty after the

2008 economic crash. "We lost everything," said Robinson, 27.

He went to three high schools. He was expelled. Things were particularly bad after his mom sent him to live with uncles. When he slept, rats and roaches were near. Gunshots rang out. He ate Doritos for dinner. He lashed out at school. Fights were common. Studying was hard.

"I was just angry all of the time from being hungry, tired and constantly in survival mode," said Robinson.

Year by year, things changed. He studied. Mentors stepped in. He landed at HOPE Christian High School, where the college acceptance graduation requirement motivated him.

At his first college, a disagreement about a project led classmates to say he was threatening. A dean, Kate Herrick of George Williams College of Aurora University, said the accusation was racist, suggested he transfer and drove him to Minnesota's Saint Mary's University to visit.

He enrolled and Esther Peralez, a dean of the student success center at the time, grew concerned about police shootings, the danger Black men faced, and made a habit of checking in with him.

He knows he wouldn't be in graduate school if not for help from teachers and deans. The list now includes his current advisor Raechele Pope, associate dean for faculty and student affairs and associate professor of higher education.

While he was earning his EdM in higher education last year, she encouraged him to go for his doctorate in higher education.

"My story is one story of so many. There's a community of people who never even got the chance to get access to education, to get their story told," he said. "The more we can get these stories, the more we can start advocating. I think that through storytelling we begin to understand the different things that are affecting people ... When people start sharing stories with each other something powerful can happen."

Shaping leaders outside academia with unique, hands-on, in-school residency experience and pandemic-era lessons

BY MELINDA MILLER

The 10 principals-in-training in the inaugural class of GSE’s new Buffalo Aspiring Leadership Academy, or BALA, worked in local public schools, got the unique immersive experience they signed up for and an unexpected pandemic lesson in leadership: As they assisted their principal mentors, helped teachers with online lessons and found ways to get school meals to students stuck home, they got a first-hand experience in crisis management.

“Leaders face ambiguous, complex, nebulous situations every single day. They got thrust into leadership,” said Teresa Lawrence (EdM ’93, PhD ’09), the BALA liaison for UB, the Buffalo Public Schools and the residents. “They were actively a part of transitioning online ... You couldn’t teach that by a case study. It was nothing shy of an authentic learning experience and it really called upon them to lead.”

BALA, a new collaboration with GSE and BPS, was created for educators employed in the school system. The 15-month program includes coursework and a yearlong placement at a school with a principal mentor.

To give schools a chance to adjust new challenges this fall, Lawrence has been shepherding the program’s second year

through a hiatus. The upcoming class of 2021 will wait until January to start, she said.

For the first BALA students, finishing the program’s inaugural year during the spring pandemic confirmed their school leadership ambitions. When COVID-19 closed schools, they collaborated from home with their mentors and teachers via teleconferencing, messaging, phone calls and personal check-ins with at-risk students.

The pandemic’s school closures led Natasha Mehta to realize that she thrived on the pressure of the leadership work she did at her assigned residency at D’Youville Porter Campus School. “It hasn’t turned me off on the job,” said Mehta, a former school social worker. “In fact, I miss it!”

How it works

BALA was designed to find out if extended residency was better preparation than traditional classroom-based certification. The Wallace Foundation, a philanthropic educational organization, helped develop the idea in New York City after school superintendents reported poor preparation as a key problem with new principals.

“BALA is the full experience. It is not only being in the schools, it is being responsible for planning and organizing and participating – even on Saturday mornings sometimes – so they have a clear understanding of the work,” Lawrence said. “They are fully exposed to the job’s requirements, its demands, all the good and the bad.”

The program was funded by a \$1.3 million state education grant with supporting staff help from UB and the Buffalo schools. Classes emphasize cultural responsiveness to a diverse student body and include curriculum leadership, English as a new language and urban school demographics.

“Equity is at the center of it all—making sure that every student has the same chance at a good education. Even high-performing districts have issues of equity that need to be

addressed,” said Corrie Stone-Johnson, faculty liaison and associate professor for educational leadership and policy. Nearly every district has issues of equity that need to be addressed, she said.

She was pleased that the program setup attracted a more diverse group than traditional GSE applicants for the School Building Leadership certification training. Members of the first BALA class had school experience ranging from less than 10 years to two decades.

“Equity is at the center of it all—making sure that every student has the same chance at a good education.”

“These are 10 people who have worked and clawed their way to succeed in their profession,” Lawrence said. “Many are Buffalo schools’ graduates, and they have a passion for urban school education. They are incredible people who believe they can change the world.”

Ambition in action

The COVID-19 disruption led Mehta to an observation about student differences that she is now curious to address in her career ahead. While there were students at D’Youville Porter Campus School who needed more help to stay on track, the ones who thrived surprised her: Some who weren’t really engaged in the classroom did really well with distance learning.

“They are submitting more assignments, asking questions, and participating more,” said Mehta. “We’re all concerned about children who are in less than ideal settings, not only for learning now but for their long-term prospects. This lack of interaction can widen the digital and the social divides.”

Another point clarified during the pandemic: Principals must consider home life, parents and families as they lead teachers and students.

Insights about the importance of reaching out to families were part of Erich Wheeler’s early leadership insights during his residency at Riverside Academy. They came out of an assignment that didn’t seem at all related to a principal’s job duties: Moving furniture.

“I actually had a dolly in my office,” said Wheeler, a former high school computer science teacher. “It was kind of a joke.”

The principal gave him the task, he later realized, as a kind of test. “He was waiting for me to start taking the initiative,” Wheeler said. On his own, he decided to set up a dedicated space—using some of that furniture—for parent meetings.

That’s when he learned how outreach to families can really help students. Working with parents to foster one-on-one teacher communication, offer technology assistance and taking time to understand personal difficulties encourages parents to engage more with their children’s school.

“I have progressed from being a glorified janitor,” said Wheeler, “to leading student support and handling suspensions.”

Working as a principal made Holly Hudson realize how interconnected a school community is. Making it work means strengthening all the bonds and building an education “family.”

“At the building that I am in, the principal leads with ‘family first.’ These kids need to feel loved before they can learn,” said Hudson, a former music teacher placed at Frank A. Sedita Academy.

“You can’t understand why kids are acting out if you don’t understand that they are hungry, that they are tired. You need to know who you are teaching,” she said. “It has been the best blessing – to be doing this, in this year, as crazy as it is.”



An evening BALA class in leadership policy unfolds on Zoom with two leaders from Buffalo Public Schools as guests, Friday, April 24, 2020. (Photo/Teresa Lawrence)

The inaugural 2020 BALA class and their post-residency job placements

- Ashley Elliott**, a new assistant principal at Dr. Lydia T Wright School. Residency: Highgate Heights Elementary School.
- Holly Hudson**, a new job as music teacher at West Hertel Academy. Residency: Frank A. Sedita Academy School.
- Natasha Mehta**, a new assistant principal at Dr. Charles R. Drew Science Magnet School. Residency: D’Youville Porter Campus School.
- Mary Pope**, a new coordinating supervisor of grants in the Multilingual Department at Buffalo Public Schools. Residency: Herman Badillo Bilingual Academy.
- Jillian Santoro**, an elementary school teacher at the Roosevelt Early Childhood Center. Residency: Lafayette International High School.
- Christopher Spence**, a new assistant principal for the middle school at Math Science Technology Preparatory School. Residency: the New BUILD Community School.
- Chanelle Wallace**, a third grade teacher at Community School. Residency: Hamlin Park Academy.
- Maureen Williams**, a new assistant principal at Marva J. Daniel Futures Preparatory School, where she did her residency.
- LaFraya Wilson**, is a new assistant principal at West Hertel Academy, where she did her residency.
- Erich Wheeler**, a new assistant principal at International Preparatory School. Residency: Riverside Academy.



Founding a school at 28: How GSE helped change a would-be accountant into a charter school leader



Alumna builds a school from the ground up

BY MICHELLE KEARNS

Joelle Formato (EdM '15), planned on an accounting career until curiosity inspired her to sign up for two years teaching math in a school outside Washington, D.C. She was interested in service to others. It seemed like a fit. "Five days into teaching I knew I had found my life's work," said Formato, a Williamsville native.

While working with Teach for America, a nonprofit placing teachers in high-need, under-performing schools, she realized how unequal education was. Her safe suburban hometown school had a culture of excellence. That environment was missing for the kids in her math classes. They deserved better. To help make change happen, she opened Persistence Prep, a majority-Black charter school on Buffalo's East Side in 2018.

She was 28. Now, after two years, 232 students are enrolled from kindergarten through third grade and there is a waitlist. This year, after managing the challenges of COVID-19, she secured a \$6.5 million loan

to buy and renovate former Buffalo Public School 62 on Urban Street. She plans to expand and open there in the fall of 2021.

To get this far, Formato followed a path she started to see after that first teaching job. Back then she noticed the barriers that kept students from capitalizing on their potential. Some were reading at the first-grade level. Some dropped out to join gangs. School didn't seem like a place for them.

"You fall in love with school at K through 2," Formato said. "If you don't get it right there, then the cycle perpetuates itself and then you have students in seventh and eighth grade who don't see themselves as successful students."

Her GSE school counseling master's degree studies led to more insights. She credits Luis "Tony" Tosado, a clinical associate professor, for explaining how a "deficit" mindset leads adults to focus on what's wrong instead of what's going well.

Joelle Formato greets a student at the Persistence Preparatory Academy she founded on Buffalo's East Side, August 2019. (Photo courtesy Joelle Formato)

Signs of success after the first year included the confidence and reading ability gained by two students whose parents decided to hold them back a year so they could focus on improving their skills. "To see those moments when things work out like that tells me we are on the right track," Formato said. "Persistence embodies, for me, the number one value that a person needs in life."

Adapting to the pandemic's sudden changes deepened her understanding of the role of schools in a community. "The school is more than just a physical building," she said. Persistence Prep's pandemic efforts included asking teachers to lead online video classes at three different times, with evening sessions at 7:30 p.m. so working parents could help their children. Teachers also stepped in for extra one-on-one communication with families to help with needs like food and Wi-Fi.

As this new school year started, more 2020 adaptations were in place. The curriculum now addresses social justice. Students all have school-issued Google Chromebooks. Parents could choose whether to have children go to school for a few days each week or work completely online.

Formato is proud of how well they managed. "You don't join our team unless

you at your core, fundamentally believe that access to a high-quality education is a civil right," said Formato. "I am continuously fired up to work alongside a team that gets that."



Bagpiper leads the way

After the pandemic canceled the St. Patrick's Day Parade, Dan Ryan (PhD '97), UB director of veteran's services, plays his bagpipes and walks the sidewalks—to the delight of his neighbors and social media commentators.

- Dan Ryan you are awesome! Thank you for brightening our day! #buffalove 3
- Love that. Come to south Buffalo
- Hope all is well with you Dan! That was awesome!!
- Just woke up my lazy cat with those bagpipes! Love 'em 🐾
- Thats great Dan! How sweet!
- Great Job, Dan! 🍀🍀 1
- Q: What's the difference between a 5 lb bag of onions and some bagpipes?
A: No one cries when you cut up the bagpipes. 1
- Thanks for the great reception! 1
- Proud to be buffalo 2
- love it. Thank you 2
- We have the greatest city
- Freakin love that sound!!! 3
- Love the pipes!!! 2
- Awesome! 1
- Love that! 2
- So cool! 🍀🍀 1
- Awesome !!! 1
- Jennifer, did you see what you're missing in TX? 🍀🍀 1
- Thanks for bringing smiles to so many faces, Dan! 1
- Dr. Ryan is as good a human being as it gets! What a great way to raise people's spirits!

Thanks **Dan Ryan**.

Comments from Facebook posts appearing in the spring of 2020. (UB Photo/Douglas Levere)

The anatomy of a scholarship

BY MELINDA MILLER

To understand the regard students had for Clinical Professor William Barba during his 44-year career at UB, consider this: When alumnus Gabe Cagwin (BA '02, EdM '04, PhD '06) wanted to honor his mentor-turned-friend with a scholarship, he asked other former students for help. Within a few nights in the summer of 2015 he had all of the \$50,000 needed to endow a scholarship that launched last year, including a gift from the late former UB president and his wife, Bill and Carol Greiner.

"It wasn't hard," said Cagwin. "Just knowing the people and the lives he's touched. It's amazing."

Barba, former clinical professor of higher education and chair of the Educational Leadership and Policy Department, retired in 2018. He was known for encouraging excellence and potential.

"He's just so genuine and insightful and smart," Cagwin said. "I would not be where I am today without Dr. Barba. He opened doors I never thought possible. He showed me a life I never imagined."

Cagwin was a student playing basketball for the UB Bulls in 2000 when Barba was assigned as his mentor, part of a then-new program for athletes.

"On top of being a good athlete, Gabe was really smart, and he didn't realize how smart he was," said Barba. "Anything mathematical, analytical, statistical, he was always on top of the game."

Cagwin, who earned his bachelor's in communication and his master's and PhD in higher education, is now vice president for institutional advancement at Tarleton State University in Texas. In his career, he has raised millions for stadiums and sports programs at Arizona State University, UCLA and Penn State University.

"I love what I do," Cagwin said. "I'm doing what I was meant to do."

The William C. Barba Scholarship is for students like Cagwin: athletes working toward education careers. Last year's recipient, its first, was Ian James, a former UB wrestler and athletics department intern. After he earned his master's in higher education this year, he started work as Daemen College's coordinator of residence life and career development.

James (BA '18, EdM '20) was glad he got to know Barba before his retirement. They lunched as James was honing in on his academic focus. "I started as a pharmacy major, but I decided pretty fast 'This is not for me!'" said James. "I couldn't figure out what I wanted to do when a lot of things began pointing me in the direction of higher education."

Barba was delighted and honored to have a scholarship named for him, a personal and professional gift. To have it initiated by a student who became a dear friend was even better.

Cagwin remembers well the thrill of telling Barba about the scholarship. "I was crying, my wife was crying, he was crying," he said. "It was really cool."

"I would not be where I am today without Dr. Barba. He opened doors I never thought possible. He showed me a life I never imagined."



For information about creating and funding new scholarships, please contact Kerri Lehmbek (EdM '00), GSE associate director of advancement, at lehmbek@buffalo.edu.

A TEACHER WHO

A fifth grade teacher who redefined what was possible for Kerri Lehmbek

BY MICHELLE KEARNS

The life-changing year was 1986. Kerri Lehmbek was in fifth grade at Amherst's Smallwood Elementary School. She had Mrs. Smith, a teacher she remains grateful to for the life lessons she instilled. She remembers Smith for her warm smile, love of cows and extra help.

"I would have never had a shot if I didn't really get steered on the right path when I was little," said Lehmbek (EdM '00), the new associate director of advancement for GSE.

Smith (EdM '88), taught her that it was OK to approach things differently from other students.

"I can picture her little face. Her beautiful smile. Curly hair. She was the most delightful, happy little girl," said Smith. "I thought she was being underestimated and she was."

That year, 1986, was a new beginning. Smith was 24, a newlywed and working on her GSE master's degree in elementary education. "At UB, I became a thinker," said Smith. "How do children learn? What kind of environment do children need to thrive?"

She learned the approach she used with Lehmbek and throughout her subsequent 22 years of elementary school teaching, work as a principal and now as director of instruction for Orleans County's Lyndonville Central School District:

Teach with elements for each learning style—auditory, kinesthetic and visual. "Every lesson must incorporate all those components if you're going to reach all learners," Smith said.

At 10, Lehmbek struggled to read and recognizing her auditory style, Smith moved her to a more advanced reading group. "I felt that by being challenged, she would achieve at a higher and quicker rate," said Smith.

She urged Lehmbek's parents to read aloud. Her father's early pick: Jack London's "The Call of the Wild." "I can remember sitting on the couch and my dad reading me the book every night," Lehmbek said.

She credits Smith for setting her up to become an A student. Hamilton College recruited her, in part, for her skill at soccer, basketball and softball. Lehmbek feels sure her strong grades and Smith's early lessons were another key.

Decades later, they reconnected after some database sleuthing. Lehmbek discovered they both earned GSE master's degrees.

Smith, 58, still lives on a Middleport cattle farm with her husband. Lehmbek, 44, settled in Clarence with her husband, son and daughter. While her eldest, Griffin, navigated school with ease, Lehmbek sees herself in her daughter. Teachers stepped in when Peyton, now in fourth grade, had a harder time reading.

Now it is a joy for Lehmbek to watch her daughter with a book. She's grateful to see teachers still stepping in to transform lives.

"I was a student that my parents never thought would make it to being a straight A student, going to a great college, having my master's degree," said Lehmbek. "Mrs. Smith was the catalyst of it all."

Sharon Smith (EdM '88), as a fifth grade teacher at Amherst's Smallwood Elementary School when Kerri Lehmbek (EdM '00,) was her student, circa 1987. (Photo courtesy Sharon Smith)



New Faculty



We are pleased to welcome seven new faculty members to the GSE academic community. From learning sciences, school psychology, higher education, educational leadership and educational equity, they bring an impressive range of specialties and experience to our school.



Blythe Anderson, an assistant professor, comes to the Department of Learning and Instruction after earning her PhD this spring in curriculum, instruction, and teacher education from Michigan State University. She specializes in language and literacy education. A former first-grade teacher and district literacy coordinator, her research focuses on instructional practices, professional development and curriculum to promote spoken language and vocabulary development. She's interested in approaches that promote independent learning and curiosity about words. She's looking forward to the year ahead at UB for herself and her 3-year-old daughter, Myra, who is newly enrolled in the Early Childhood Research Center's preschool.



Chris Proctor, an assistant professor in the Department of Learning and Instruction, earned his PhD in learning sciences this spring from Stanford University, where he also finished an MS in computer science with a concentration in artificial intelligence and human-computer interaction. Proctor's research explores identity in digital worlds and the ways young people can use computer science to understand and respond to oppression. Proctor is the lead developer and researcher of Unfold Studio, a web application for interactive storytelling. He is proud to join GSE and have the opportunity to work at a public university that is a national leader in research and student social mobility outcomes. A former English and computer science teacher, he is helping design UB's new computer science teacher preparation program. He is a former whitewater rafting guide who has led trips down the Grand Canyon and through Glacier Bay National Park in Alaska.



Virginia J. Flood, an assistant professor, comes to the Department of Learning and Instruction after earning her PhD in learning sciences at the University of California, Berkeley, this spring. In her research, Flood investigates multimodal communication, like hand gestures, and the role the body plays in teaching and learning mathematics and other STEM disciplines. She is especially interested in peer and student-teacher interactions with new educational technologies. Originally from Acton, Maine, Flood worked as a farmer before graduate school, and attended both the University of Maine and the University of Southern Maine. She chose GSE because of its strong commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion, its growing learning sciences program and its strong ties to the community. She is also thrilled to be back in the Northeast!



Stephen Santa-Ramirez, an assistant professor of higher education, comes to the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy after working as a research and teaching associate and earning his PhD in educational policy and evaluation from Arizona State University in 2020. His research and scholarship interests include race and racism on college campuses, first-generation students' sense of belonging, and the various ways race, ethnicity, and im/migration inform the educational experiences of Latinx undocu/DACAmented students. Santa-Ramirez chose GSE because of its focus on social and racial justice. He has lived in six states in the past 10 years and enjoys salsa dancing in his spare time.



Gwendolyn Baxley, an assistant professor in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy, comes from the University of Wisconsin, Madison, where she graduated with a PhD in educational leadership in the department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis in 2019. She chose UB because of GSE's increasing focus on justice and community engagement. Her research interests include educational leadership, community-school-family partnerships, Black youth and families, multi-method research, and race and anti-Blackness. Baxley also is a poet. Last spring/summer, she created and hosted a free online poetry series for students, educators, researchers and other poetry fanatics to share their poetry in a virtual place with a focus on expression, healing, consciousness-raising and freedom dreaming amid COVID, anti-Blackness and police brutality. Baxley's "Get Free: Poetry For the People, By the People" was done in partnership with the Jersey City Public Library.



Ashley Grant comes to the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy from Johns Hopkins University, where she earned her PhD in education in 2020. She is a postdoctoral research fellow with the Research Center on the First Generation College Student Experience and was drawn to UB to work on advancing equity in education through research, programs and practices. She will examine interventions designed to help first-generation college students succeed in postsecondary education. Her prior research focuses on restorative practices—community-building approaches to school discipline and culture—and how it can reduce teacher turnover in hard-to-staff schools. A first-gen student herself, she was also a teacher for three years in Philadelphia and is a devotee of yoga, painting and Maggie, her Russian Blue cat. She also is a #coronabride—i.e., she got married this fall.



Kamontá Heidelberg is an assistant professor in the Department of Counseling, School and Educational Psychology. He is a three-time graduate of the University of Cincinnati, where he earned his BA in psychology, MEd in applied behavior analysis, and, most recently, a PhD in school psychology this spring. His research examines interventions that support the positive behavioral and academic development of African American students, particularly African American males. He chose GSE because he wanted to contribute to a research-intensive public institution committed to equity, diversity and inclusion. One day he would like his work to inform state and national educational policies. Fun fact: Heidelberg has recently become a "dog dad" and has a new puppy, a terrier mix named Jelani.

New Staff



Leisha Gordon, the assistant to the LAI chair, comes to GSE after a banking career, working as a First Niagara Bank vice president and a director at TIAA-CREF Trust in St. Louis. A College of New Rochelle alumna, she came home to Buffalo to be close to family, including her eldest son, a graduate of Buffalo State College's students with disabilities program. Her youngest son, a lawyer in Omaha, Neb., once lived in Panama and Argentina, igniting his mother's interest in world travel.



Michelle Kearns, senior editor, earned a journalism master's from Boston University and joined the communications and marketing team after a career as an award-winning journalist and editor at Maine newspapers, the Associated Press, the Boston Globe and The Buffalo News. She recently taught storytelling and led Villa Maria College's new bachelor's degree digital media and communication program that she designed. As the daughter of UB retired philosophy chair John Kearns, she says it has been rewarding to write about GSE's people and the UB community that shaped her family's life.

On the Move

HONORS, AWARDS AND PROMOTIONS



Stephen Jacobson
UB distinguished professor in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy, is a 2020 recipient of the Master Teacher Award for the University Council for Educational Administration.



Heidi Julien professor in the Department of Information Science, has been awarded the 2020 SIG-USE Outstanding Contributions to Information Behavior Research Award.



Jaekyung Lee professor in the Department of Counseling, School and Educational Psychology, has been selected as a Fulbright Global Scholar for the 2020-2021 academic year.



Melinda Lemke assistant professor in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy has been named the co-lead of the Refugee Health and Wellbeing Team participating in the 2020-2021 Big Ideas Teams Leadership by the Community for Global Health Equity.



Amanda Nickerson professor in the Department of Counseling, School and Educational Psychology, has won the American Psychological Association's Tom Oakland Mid-Career Scholarship Award.



Raechele Pope associate professor in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy, received the Sawubona Award for Research & Scholarship from the American College Personnel Association's Pan-African Network. Pope also is a Senior Scholar Diplomate with ACPA.



Amy Reynolds professor in the Department of Counseling, School and Educational Psychology, has been named president-elect of the American Psychological Association's Division 17, Society for Counseling Psychology. She also has been named full professor.



John Strong assistant professor in the Department of Learning and Instruction, has been awarded the International Literacy Association's Timothy & Cynthia Shanahan Outstanding Dissertation Award. He also has been awarded the Reading Hall of Fame Emerging Scholars Fellowship.



Jinting Wu assistant professor in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy, has been named an Early Career Fellow in the Henry Luce Foundation/American Council of Learned Societies' Program in China Studies.



Maureen Boyd in the Department of Learning and Instruction, has been promoted to full professor.



Tony Tosado in the Department of Counseling, School and Educational Psychology, has been promoted to clinical associate professor.



X. Christine Wang in the Department of Learning and Instruction, has been promoted to full professor.



Lois Weis SUNY distinguished professor in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy, has been elected to the Board of Directors of the National Academy of Education for a four-year term.

STAFF UPDATES



Timothy Cauler has been named director of the English Language Institute.



Lisa Monpere-Cruz has been named a staff assistant for the English Language Institute.



Benjamin Poremski has been named the director of assessment and data analytics.



Arryonna Singleton has been named assistant to the chair in the Department of Information Science.



Ryan Taughrin has been named the assistant dean of enrollment management and the director of graduate admissions.

Visiting Scholar



Terri N. Watson is an associate professor in the Department of Leadership and Human Development at the City College of New York. This year she joins GSE as a Distinguished Visiting Scholar with the Center for Diversity Innovation. Her work is informed by critical race theory and Black feminism, and her research focuses on school leadership for social justice. She aims to help transform schools into more just, caring, loving and equitable spaces as she collaborates with educators to improve the educational outcomes and life chances of historically excluded and underserved students and families. "If we're going to tackle racism, I think schools are the best place to start," she said. "What are we doing now to dismantle the walls that segregation has created? It's literally killing us ... We can't normalize Black death."

"If we're going to tackle racism, I think schools are the best place to start"

Before earning her doctorate, she worked as a middle school teacher in Harlem. She has a 22-year old daughter who graduated from Tufts University this spring. As a native of New York City, she was eager for the opportunity to come to Buffalo and explore schools and practices in this part of the state. "I'd like to spend the year working with students, parents and school leaders," Watson said. "I think schools have to be the hub of the community. When I was younger, our lives revolved around school. We have to bring that back."

Dean's Lecture Series

The theme for the 2020-2021 Dean's Lecture Series is "**Equity and Education.**" GSE is committed to creating an equitable, diverse, inclusive and just community where all feel welcomed, included, supported and empowered. It is crucial our communities have equal access to supports, services and opportunities that ensure learning and success.

Invited speakers this year are VALERIE KINLOCH, Renee and Richard Goldman Dean at the University of Pittsburgh School of Education; JENNIFER MORTON, associate professor of philosophy at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, and JOHN BIEWEN, host of the "Scene on Radio" documentary podcast of the Center for Documentary Studies at Duke University. They were selected by a committee of junior faculty who also picked the theme. Their topics reflect a range of perspectives on the theme, representing the various departments within GSE.



VALERIE KINLOCH

"The ones we've been waiting for": Race, Justice and Activism in Literacy Education"



JENNIFER MORTON

"Moving Up Without Losing Your Way"



JOHN BIEWEN

"Seeing White"

Commencement 2020

Rite of passage goes virtual

Pomp and circumstance are hard things to put into a Zoom graduation day. The virtual world doesn't make easy room for classic traditions and rituals people look forward to on that momentous occasion when, finally, they have that diploma in hand: Friends and family in the audience. Speeches from the stage. A procession with classmates down the aisle. Caps tossed in the air. The velvet sash "hooding" of the new doctors.

Instead, people behind the scenes came up with new twists for commencement 2020. They wanted to make this graduation memorable and unique—with a movie credit-style scroll of names and degrees and GSE hooded sweatshirts sent to graduating doctoral students in time for UB's first virtual graduation on May 15.

"The biggest challenge about staging a virtual commencement is making sure there are personal touches," said Amber Winters, assistant dean for communications and marketing. "Nothing could ever replace an in-person commencement. We really did try to make the best of it and be creative."



UB turned social.

The GSE community posted photos and videos in real-time on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter—complete with regalia, caps and robes—as commencement unfolded.



A special "hooding" of GSE doctoral students.

Instead of the traditional velvet sashes bestowed on stage, the new doctors got "hooded" with sweatshirts that came by overnight delivery. That way, they could conduct a private hooding ceremony at home.



Setting the stage.

UB had the DIY décor all set. Zoom backgrounds and signs ready for download to help students celebrate and have some social-media fun.



"Follow your passion, it will lead to your purpose. Always stay true to yourself & believe that anything is possible. Congratulations to the Class of 2020 and to my sister, Jacqueline Morgan.... YOU DID IT!!"

Jessica Mergen, Mental Health Counseling, Class of 2018

Alumni welcomed new grads with kudos and inspiration.

The community of GSE graduates rallied behind the first-ever virtual graduation by sending personal videos and words of encouragement.



Make your mark.

Graduates virtually "signed" the new "2020 Sign-A-Bull" and left messages for posterity. The Class of 2020 will be the first in a future, cyber "Hall of Bulls."

"My regalia arrived the day before, leaving me just enough time to decorate my cap. I chose to dedicate my mortar board to my future career as a physics and Earth science teacher. I dressed up and enjoyed my GSE graduation ceremony in my living room surrounded by loved ones. My father, a fellow educator, even put my hood over my head for the first time, signifying the completion of my master's degree."

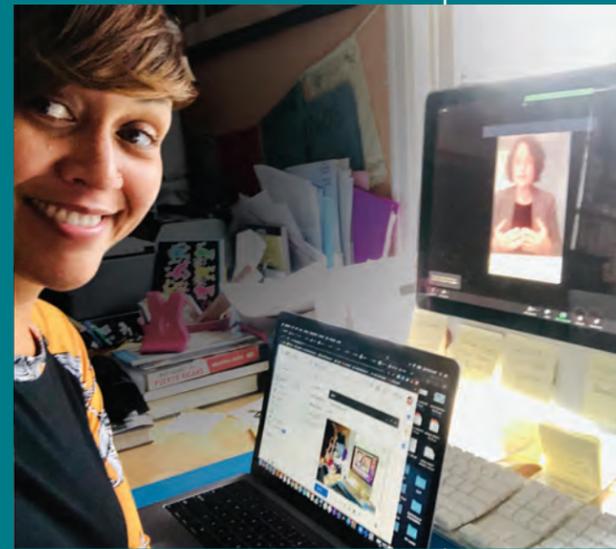
Alexandra Jean Montesano



Alexandra Jean Montesano
Master of Education
Physics Education - Adolescence

New student orientation, reoriented

This year's all-virtual student orientation, an unavoidable departure from the norm, was an unexpected exercise in community building. Instead of a GSE-wide gathering, afternoon meetings and lunch, this version, on a Saturday in August, featured videos, Zoom and DIY snacks.



Michele Agosto, the director of arts for Buffalo Public Schools, is a first year doctoral student in the Educational Administration EdD Program. (Photo courtesy Michele Agosto)

It went surprisingly well, participants said. A new webpage featured resources. Department chairs hosted introductions and meetings by computer camera. The event, they said, felt more personal than usual.

"In some cases, it was better than others—with students really feeling tied to and connected to their programs and it was a real plus," said Raechele Pope, associate dean of faculty and student affairs, chief diversity officer and associate professor of higher education.

Doctoral student and Presidential Fellow Julianna Casella liked the video welcome messages. "I thought it was cool because I could hop around," said Casella, "which let me see what GSE is doing more broadly, which made me more connected."

As a younger student, Casella designed a bulletproof backpack shield to protect students from school shootings. Now she wants to work as a counselor and lead research about preparing students to be resilient.

She particularly enjoyed learning that one professor—Myles Faith, chair of the Counseling, School and Educational Psychology Department—went to school in Long Island, where she grew up. "I really appreciated having a way to connect to people," she said.

Insights from department chairs

Dan Albertson, chair of the Department of Information Science organized smaller meetings and an informal social time. It was the largest orientation turnout he's ever seen with 100 percent participation of about 115 staff, faculty and students.

"Having different online programs, some students may never come 'face to face' with any of their faculty or

peers, so a new student orientation shows that a community does indeed exist," said Albertson. "We made time for students to discuss academic or career interests.... From an observational standpoint, it was great to see the energy."

For Nathan Daun-Barnett, chair of the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy the virtual gathering of students was critical. "It is the first opportunity for us to welcome them into a community, share our expectations and establish relationships," he said.

Julie Gorlewski, chair of the Department of Learning and Instruction, was encouraged by how people enjoyed the experience. "We made extraordinary efforts to humanize faculty, sharing personal information and engaging with one another." Professors met students individually and, in another session, senior students shared tips, strategies and conversation.

Incoming students said they appreciated how approachable everyone was. "Our success," Gorlewski said, "despite being in a virtual format, was a wonderful surprise."

The second class of 15 in the GSE Teacher Residency Program, a partnership with Buffalo Public Schools, began in the summer of 2020 with a virtual institute. Each student is working with a mentor teacher at their assigned school. They will co-teach this year while taking courses that connect research and theory to teaching. Once they finish in August, 2021, residents are certified and eligible to work as full-time teachers in Buffalo schools. Here, members of this year's class explain how they expect the residency to shape their careers.

"I loved the mission of the program. I knew I wouldn't have gotten this anywhere else."

Residents



Lindsey Hanes earned her bachelor's degree in anthropology. She has worked as a classroom aide, behavior technician and teaching assistant in local schools. She is eager to lead a classroom of her own. "It's time to embrace my passion ... This program felt like it was tailored to my dreams."



Sara Gullo has a bachelor's degree in psychology. She worked as a substitute teacher in Buffalo schools and sought out the residency to teach full-time in the diverse classrooms of the city she loves. "I aspire to be a transformational elementary school teacher and create a classroom environment that is a safe place."



Devan Rodriguez has a bachelor's degree in English. Before enrolling, he was working on an MFA in fiction, writing a book and leading writing workshops. "The residency program has a unique method of co-teaching ... I want to teach high school and college while continuing to work on my novels."



Jahil Jocelyn Joseph earned a bachelor's degree in French. He chose the residency to focus on his studies and teaching. "I've always wanted to be a teacher, help students and create a positive and equal environment for all."



David Panepinto earned a bachelor's degree in English and a law degree. He's worked as an assistant district attorney in Erie County and for a nonprofit helping Alaska Natives develop their courts. He chose the program to inform his teaching with research and theory. "I want to use my experience to help urban students reach their full potential."



Cassidy McGee earned a bachelor's degree in environmental studies with a Spanish minor. She chose the residency for its supportive approach and community focus. "I want to do something that matters. I want to help people and I want to involve myself in my job at a level that provides the most impact."



Berkeley Kozuch earned bachelor's degrees in biological studies and Spanish. She ran an elementary school after-school program and enrolled in the residency to learn how to help students create change. "I want to have a positive impact on our future and the community while ... showing my students the importance of education and the power of science."



Gary Crump earned a bachelor's degree in history. He also earned a law degree from Case Western Reserve University. He supervised a high school equivalency diploma program and is particularly interested in training in city settings. "The one-year residency affords us a practical deep dive into the everyday life of a teacher."



Brianna Perry earned a bachelor's degree in social work and an associate degree in nursing. She has worked as a school nurse and liked the residency for including a stipend with coursework and job search assistance. "It has been my dream to be a teacher."



Griffin Coyne earned a bachelor's degree in English, and has been working as a gallery assistant and bartender at a local art and event space. He was attracted by the residency's immersive approach. "We receive real-time, relevant coursework that won't be lost over the span of a few semesters."



Micah Harris a Marine veteran, earned his bachelor's degree in history with a coaching minor. He has been substitute teaching and coaching football and basketball. "I want to be a teacher and, eventually, a school principal."



Dayna Boone earned a bachelor's degree in biological sciences and worked as an intern in the Health Promotion office and was a Campus Living resident advisor. She liked the residency's mentorship approach. "I loved the mission of the program. I knew I wouldn't have gotten this anywhere else."



Ivey Pittman earned a bachelor's degree in history. Her passion for teaching followed an experience mentoring troubled students. She wants to develop a theater-related after-school program. "I can relate to a lot of students in urban areas. I feel as though it is my duty to help prepare them for life after school."



Monet Simpson earned a bachelor's degree in English literature. Since graduation in May, she's worked as a food service supervisor and a babysitter for a child with autism. She looks forward to working with a mentor teacher. "I expect that I will gain an immense amount of insight on a multitude of programs, protocols, and teaching styles."



Courtney Smith earned a bachelor's degree in individualized studies. Her interest in teaching followed her work as a teacher's aide. "I wanted to become a teacher but didn't think I could do it because my undergraduate degree was not in education. The residency program was a way I could fulfill my goal of teaching."



Fellowships

Presidential Fellow

The Presidential Fellowship Program, inaugurated in Fall 1984, is designed to support students of proven excellence in UB's various graduate departments. Eligible students must be new applicants to a PhD program and must be appointed as a full teaching, graduate or research assistant.

Julianna Casella, a native of Merrick, Long Island, is enrolled in the counseling and school psychology doctoral program. She earned a bachelor's degree in biology and psychology with a minor in writing from SUNY at Stony Brook. She aims for a career that combines work as a school psychologist with academic research focused on crisis prevention and intervention in schools.

"I really wanted a program that had a strong research emphasis."



2020-21 Arthur Schomburg Fellows

The Arthur A. Schomburg Fellowship Program at UB provides financial support for master's and doctoral students who demonstrate that they can contribute to the diversity of the student body, and that they have overcome a disadvantage or other barrier to success in higher education.



Gabriella Martinez, a Tyler, Texas native, is enrolled in the counseling and school psychology doctoral program. She earned a bachelor's degree in psychology with a minor in counseling from the University of North Texas. She chose GSE for its emphasis on diversity and social justice.



Swapna Balkundi, a native of Hyderabad, India, is studying for her doctorate in counseling and school psychology. During her studies in India, she earned a bachelor's degree in microbiology at Shadan Degree College and a master's degree in English literature at Osmania University. At UB she earned bachelor's and master's degrees in psychology.



Carly Pershyn grew up in Buffalo and is enrolled in the counseling and school psychology doctoral program. She earned a bachelor's degree in psychology and arts and letters from SUNY Buffalo State College, with a concentration in sex and gender. She chose GSE because of its focus on social justice and women's advocacy and her interest in research, teaching and private-practice training.



Iman Lathan, a San Diego native, is studying for her doctorate in educational culture, policy, and society in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy. She earned a bachelor's degree in communications and print journalism and a master's degree in education from Hope International University.



Chelsea Rodriguez, an educational culture, policy and society doctoral student, intends to develop the discourse about Latinx and bicultural young people as a professor one day. She earned her bachelor's degree in English from San Antonio's Trinity University. Her experience growing up in the Rio Grande Valley border community led to her interest in bicultural identity.

Retirements



"When I walk into a room of music educators, I see a flood of faces from my courses over the years."

A musical legacy

Maria Runfola, an advocate of music education and professor for 50 years, retired from UB last year after a career that included contributing to award-winning toys for Fisher-Price, patents for a color-coded system for music notation, state policy work and groundbreaking research about the connection between reading and music.

She was the first to establish a link between music learning and emergent literacy. She also developed a preschool measurement test. Her publications include a recently expanded guide for teachers, "The Child Voice," commissioned by the National Association for Music Educators.

Before joining the faculty in 1969, she taught music in public schools. As a professor, she was acting dean of the UB graduate school. She chaired the Department of Music before moving, in 1999, to GSE, becoming chair of the Department of Learning and Instruction and associate dean for academic affairs.

"When I walk into a room of music educators, I see a flood of faces from my courses over the years," she said.

She developed the music education program as she worked with the Fisher Price

Endowed Early Childhood Research Center documenting infants' and toddlers' responses to music.

Her contributions to Fisher-Price toy design included a keyboard controller for a music video game and the "I Can Play" piano and guitar, with features like strum bars for strings, to segue to real instruments.

In retirement, Runfola will continue to study the impact of music and creative movement as predictors of school readiness, advocate for school music and teach graduate courses. She is working with the state education department to create tests for music students and teacher licensing.

She is gratified to see the modern recognition for music's power to help children learn.

"Music educators did not realize the importance of music in pre-school," she said. "It better prepares them for kindergarten readiness. It enhances their music achievement later on in life ... It's their first opportunity to learn a second language. They can express themselves without words. They can express their emotions, their feelings, their ideas."



Kathy Curtis has retired after 52 years serving UB and GSE. Curtis started her UB career in the Foreign Student Office in the summer of 1968. In 1971, she joined the Intensive English Language Institute as the assistant director and later was promoted to associate director under the now retired former director, Stephen Dunnett. While working for the institute, she completed her bachelor's degree in anthropology in 1973 and went on to complete her master's in TESOL in 1979 from GSE. In 1981, the English Language Institute was transferred to the Graduate School of Education under then dean Hugh Petrie. "My proudest moments have simply been welcoming newly admitted international

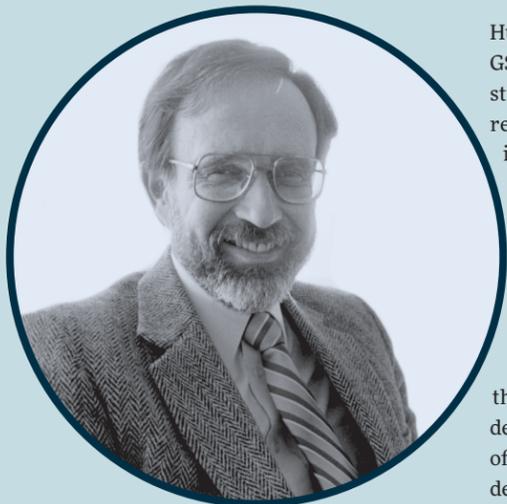
students to campus year after year," said Curtis. She also enjoyed visits from ELI alumni

"My proudest moments have simply been welcoming newly admitted international students to campus year after year."

returning to campus to share their stories of professional and personal success. The GSE community thanks Curtis for her peerless performance over the years and congratulates her on her retirement.

IN MEMORIAM

A leader remembered for his innovative reimagining of GSE



Hugh Petrie, former dean who reorganized GSE, was 82 when he died in August after a struggle with a rare muscle disease. He is remembered by colleagues for his thoughtful intelligence and skill at leading reform.

“He was marvelous. He was somebody who did his job so well you didn’t know what going on behind the scenes,” said Stephen Jacobson, a distinguished professor in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy.

Petrie, a native of Colorado, retired to the state in 1999. He came to UB in 1981 as dean of what was then known as the Faculty of Educational Studies. He consolidated departments. A new name, Graduate School of Education, was chosen to reflect the professional nature of the school.

Petrie was a founding member of the reform-minded Holmes Partnership, 1987-1997, a consortium of 96 research institutions with professional education programs formed in response to troubling trends, including the elimination of schools of education. To combat this, the group set out to change teacher

education and strengthen connections—with teachers, administrators and the community.

“The idea was to raise the quality of future teachers,” said Jacobson who worked with others to create the Leadership Initiative for Tomorrow’s Schools, a program for principals and administrators. “He made it easier to do the work we were brought on to do.”

Petrie’s training reflected the varied interests he used to lead. He earned bachelor’s degrees in business and engineering from the University of Colorado, and a PhD in philosophy from Stanford University. He studied math and philosophy at the University of Manchester, England on a Fulbright scholarship.

The Petries organized a February “Banish-the-blues-and-blahs Brunch,” which became an annual winter tradition at the Center for Tomorrow. He wanted people from different departments to gather, get to know each other and have a shared knowledge of where GSE was headed. “That was something people looked forward to every year,” said Hodges.

“He was somebody who did his job so well you didn’t know what going on behind the scenes.”

LeAdelle Phelps, an advocate for children’s psychological health

LeAdelle Phelps, a widely published GSE professor of psychology, earned her PhD from the University of Utah at 25, an uncommonly young age. For the next four decades, Phelps was a leader in school psychology, publishing three books and creating a popular test for kindergarten readiness.

She was 67 when she died in September of 2019 after battling multiple sclerosis and melanoma.

Early in her career, she was a school psychologist in Davis, Utah. She came to UB in 1989 and was director of the Counseling Psychology/School Psychology Program, associate dean for academic affairs and chair of the Department of Counseling, School and Educational Psychology.

“She had the goal of revamping the school

psychology program, getting it approved by the National Association of School Psychologists, and establishing a doctoral program, and she made it happen despite a climate at the time that was more of an old boys’ club,” said Amanda Nickerson, professor and director of the Alberti Center for Bullying Abuse Prevention. “LeAdelle had gutsy determination.”

Phelps wrote and contributed to more than 60 journal articles and was editor of Psychology in the Schools from 1999-2006. This year, she received a posthumous presidential citation from the American Psychological Association in recognition of her contribution to the field.

She taught until her retirement in 2014 and was an influential mentor. “She inspired me to

pursue what I love: Conducting research that can benefit the greater good,” said Laura M. Anderson (PhD ’06), a licensed psychologist, now in private practice.



Lillie P.W. Stephens, a life of firsts

The career firsts in Lillie P.W. Stephens’ life started in 1957 when she became the first Black woman to earn a UB physical education degree. She was also the first Black woman to land a job teaching gym in the Niagara Falls School District. She went on to become its first Black female administrator.

Stephens, who died on May 22 at 84 after a short illness, earned her master’s degree in educational administration from GSE in 1975. She focused her work on the importance of equal opportunity—for minority students and working women.

Stephens was an assistant principal at Trott Vocational High School and LaSalle High School, retiring in 1995 as principal of Niagara Falls’ 60th Street Elementary School.

Stephens was also active in the NAACP and the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority. She was president of UB’s Alumni Association and of the National Committee for School Desegregation. During the Clinton Administration, she was appointed to a team evaluating school desegregation.

Her daughter remembers how her mother filed a lawsuit, and won, when she applied for a school job that went to a less qualified candidate.

“She was fiercely principled,” said Pamela Stephens-Jackson (EdM ’91), assistant director of student engagement for fraternity and sorority life at UB. “She had a very strict standard of ethics. She was unaccepting of anything less.”



“She was fiercely principled. She had a very strict standard of ethics. She was unaccepting of anything less.”

Without the influence of Conrad Toepfer, American middle schools as we know them might not exist.

Toepfer, one of the “founding fathers” of the middle school movement and an evangelist for the education of young adolescents, died April 20 at 86 from cancer. His work helped form the intellectual bedrock of the movement to create distinct, separate middle schools.

“They needed more than either advanced elementary school programs or junior editions of the senior high school,” Toepfer said in an interview for “The Legacy of Middle School Leaders: In Their Own Words.”

Known as “Connie” to friends, family, colleagues and thousands of students, Conrad Toepfer III was born in Frankfurt, Germany in 1927. In 1933, he emigrated to Buffalo, where his father, Conrad Toepfer II, was the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra concertmaster.

Like his father, Toepfer was a musician. An accomplished bassist, he joined the union at the Buffalo’s Colored Musicians Club. When other white people would ask him why, he’d say, ‘Because I don’t believe in separation,’ according to a 1994 interview.



“I don’t think that the association and the movement would have survived without him.”

His passion for addressing injustice infused the education career that followed. He joined the GSE faculty in 1965 after earning his EdD in curriculum planning from UB in 1962. He was one of seven contributors to the 1982 “This We Believe” position paper about middle school creation. From 1987-88, he was president of the Association for Middle Level Education, which he helped found, launching committees on racial, ethnic and cultural diversity and urban education.

“I don’t think that the association and the movement would have survived without him,” said fellow education researcher Sherrel Bergmann, a former professor at Chicago’s National Louis University. “He was so passionate ... that he would do almost anything to get the word out.”

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A student stands by a new social distancing floor marker, one of the new pandemic-era practices on campus, July 2020.
(UB Photo/Douglas Levere)