Redefining & unleashing doctoral excellence
GSE’s new PhD scholars, curriculum and community
The overhead projector aims to help students shine brightly

BY NICOLE MEHLMAN-DAVIDOW

While the world went digital, the overhead projector somehow remained relevant in classrooms and business settings.

Widely used since the 1930s, the overhead projector was especially popular in classrooms because of its ability to enlarge images and create interactive presentations. This reliability led to its longevity. Its capabilities, meanwhile, inspired companies to adapt the overhead as a “must-have” for movie nerds in their home theaters.

According to EdTech, most classroom overhead projectors consist of a large, boxlike base with an arm, mirror and bright light. The box houses a cooling fan and the light, while the arm extends above it. At the end of the arm is a mirror that catches and redirects the light toward the screen. This type of projector can be used to enlarge images on the screen or wall for students to view.

EasyTechJunkie delves into the history of the projector. It was created in France in 1850, but it took several decades to arrive in the U.S. During World War II, overhead projectors were used as a tool to train troops. In the 1950s and 1960s, they made their way to American classrooms.

Gen Xers and millennials will remember the transparent sheets with text imprinted. Our teachers would hand us a dry-erase marker to write math problems or edit a story. While some of us may have had stage fright giving this type of presentation, others will recall the excitement of showing off our math or grammar skills for all to see.

While our definition of portable has changed over time, the overhead projector used to be praised for how easily it could be moved. It was packed away in a box/suitcase-like shape. Use of the overhead peaked in the 1990s and then gradually fell out of favor for smart boards and other digitally based products. However, teachers still sometimes prefer it for its reliability and simplicity.
Dear Alumni and Friends of GSE,

The 2023-24 academic year has gotten off to a strong start. We kicked off the year by welcoming our new students—GSE enrollment continues to grow. Currently, our enrollment stands at 1,550 students. This is a 23% growth in the last six years! As part of our continued effort to broaden our individual and collective understandings around racial equity and education, we held our second biannual Teach-In for Racial Justice. This year, we welcomed three outstanding and thought-provoking scholars: Dr. Sherri Ann Charlston, Dr. Crystal Fleming and Dr. Annemise Singh to campus for daylong lectures and conversations around race and educational equity.

Our featured story in this edition focuses on the growth, enhancement and changes made to our PhD programs. As part of a university-wide emphasis on PhD excellence, GSE faculty were asked to examine their programs to ensure that the curricula, co-curricular experiences and mentorship were student-centered and organized in such a manner as to ensure excellence. At the same time, recognizing the need to ensure that financial support was adequate to better meet our PhD students’ needs, we worked to increase the stipends associated with our assistantships. As you will see in the pages that follow, this exercise, while challenging, has paid off many times over with the recruitment of 23 outstanding PhD students.

This issue also introduces you to some of our outstanding faculty. You will have the opportunity to read about Dr. John Strong’s impactful literary research and understand why he is considered an emerging scholar in the field. In addition, Dr. Africa Hands will share her insights into navigating the job market as a BIPOC person. Dr. Sarah A. Robert’s impact as an international gender expert will be featured in this edition as well. She was recently one of 15 gender experts worldwide invited by the United Nations to review and provide feedback on “Gender Equality in a Changing Climate,” a flagship report for UN Women. You will also have an opportunity to learn a little bit about our eight new faculty. They are truly outstanding and fantastic additions to GSE.

GSE’s Teacher Residency Program continues to expand and extend its work. With two new federal grants awarded, UFRB has continued its relationship with the Buffalo Public Schools and extended its work into other districts in Western New York.

As you read through this issue, I hope you are as impressed as I am with the many ways GSE faculty and students approach meaningful problems broadly related to educational equity. As a mission-driven academic unit, we strive to make sure that our teaching and research, outreach and engagement live up to our collective vision.

Take good care,

Suzanne Rosenblith

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT STATEMENT

A pledge to peacefully share and care for North America’s five Great Lakes

We would like to acknowledge the land on which the University at Buffalo operates, which is the territory of the Seneca Nation, a member of the Haudenosaunee/Six Nations Confederacy. This territory is covered by The Dish with One Spoon Treaty of Peace and Friendship, a pledge to peacefully share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes. It is also covered by the 1783 Treaty of Canandaigua, between the United States Government and the Six Nations Confederacy, which further affirmed Haudenosaunee land rights and sovereignty in the State of New York. Today, this region is still the home to the Haudenosaunee people, and we are grateful for the opportunity to live, work and share ideas in this territory.
“Reimagining Literacies in the Digital Age: Multimodal Strategies to Teach with Technology” was written by Pauline S. Schmidt, EdM ’99, PhD ’09, along with her research partner, Matthew J. Kruger-Ross. This book was published by the National Council of Teachers of English in 2022.

“Encyclopedia of English Language Arts Education: A Critical Perspective” was edited by Julie Gorlewski, senior associate dean of academic affairs and teacher education, and David Gorlewski, a consultant at UB. Other editors include Chernice Miller, PhD ’22, and Lisa Barker, the executive director of PLACE: Professional Learning and Community Education at the University of Wisconsin–Madison School of Education. This book was published by Brill in 2023.

“The Embodied Healing Workbook: The Art and Science of Reizinging Your Body in Trauma Recovery” was written by Catherine Cook-Cottone, professor of counseling, school and educational psychology. It was published by PESI Publishing, Inc. in 2023.

“My Father’s Daughter: An Untold Story” was written by Linda B. Akanbi, EdD ’77. It was published in 2019 by ARS Educational Services, LLC.

“Exploring Science and Art: Discovering Connections” was written by Mary Kirsch Boehm, EdM ’60. It was published in 2022 by The New Idea Press, an imprint of The City of Light Publishing.

Shining the light on young readers and writers
John Z. Strong develops innovative classroom intervention to help students and teachers

BY ANN WHITCHER GENTZKE

No longer embarking on his teaching career, John Strong witnessed what it’s like for students to try to catch up with reading, when the underpinnings of literacy are missing. While teaching English in a Delaware high school, Strong was startled to find 17-year-olds in his classroom who had never passed ninth-grade English and so were stuck in the ninth grade. “That was my first job teaching high school,” said Strong, assistant professor of literacy education in GSE. “I had been hired only the day before, so I wasn’t prepared to teach children with that level of reading difficulties in high school. I thought, ‘How can I learn how to serve these students?’”

In response, Strong returned to the University of Delaware, where he earned a master’s degree in reading. “This is where I really learned about reading science, evidence-based instruction, and experimental methods for developing interventions.” Faculty there, too, emphasized the close relationship between reading and writing, the integration of reading and writing viewed separately. Much of this training overlapped with Strong’s doctoral studies, also at the University of Delaware, where he researched and devised tools and interventions that teachers and students can use in the classroom. His study of a text structure intervention for reading and writing in grades 4 and 5 won the 2020 Timothy and Cynthia Shanahan Outstanding Dissertation Award from the International Literacy Association.

Further research led to an evolution of these instructional routines. Strong is now principal investigator on a grant from the Advanced Education Research and Development Fund to study his intervention called Read STOP Write. (STOP stands for “Summarize, Text structure, Organize, Plan.”) Students use informational texts aligned with science and social studies topics they’re learning about during other parts of the school day. They first read to determine the meaning of new words and identify the main idea and key details. “We teach them strategies for breaking apart multisyllabic words and then for learning vocabulary—focusing on prefixes and suffixes and using context clues to infer the meaning of the word,” Strong explained. After reading, they summarize the main idea and key details, identify the text structure, organize information using a text structure map, and plan their writing using a graphic organizer. They then write an informative paragraph of what they’ve just read.

This past spring, Read STOP Write was implemented locally in seven fourth-grade classrooms and five fifth-grade classrooms. “Currently, we have schools within four districts implementing it in New York, and two districts in Michigan are implementing it as well,” Strong said. “I wanted to develop programs that are easy and intuitive and feasible for teachers and students to use in real classroom settings.” Strong added. “It’s different than the way that text structure, and reading and writing are typically taught in schools. I think it’s really an attractive option for teachers.”

On the occasion of receiving the 2020 Timothy and Cynthia Shanahan Outstanding Dissertation Award from the International Literacy Association, Strong said the award was a highlight of his career. “I really learned about reading science, evidence-based instruction, and experimental methods for developing interventions.” Faculty there, too, emphasized the close relationship between reading and writing, the integration of reading and writing viewed separately. Much of this training overlapped with Strong’s doctoral studies, also at the University of Delaware, where he researched and devised tools and interventions that teachers and students can use in the classroom. His study of a text structure intervention for reading and writing in grades 4 and 5 won the 2020 Timothy and Cynthia Shanahan Outstanding Dissertation Award from the International Literacy Association.

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oon after, he stumbled upon a post on Facebook by LaGarrett King, associate professor of learning and instruction and director of UB’s Center for K-12 Black History and Racial Literacy Education. King wrote in his post that he had funding available for new PhD students who had previously taught in K-12 education and would be interested in studying Black history education and racial literacy. Williams wasn’t sure his research interests were an ideal match for the opportunity, but he felt compelled to reach out anyway.

Following a series of conversations with King and other members of the GSE community, he found himself at UB’s doorsteps as an enrolled student in the curriculum, instruction and the science of learning PhD program—partly because he realized that this next step wasn’t just about advancing his education and career. It was about joining a community that valued him.

“What I got from Dr. King when we first talked was this sense of, ‘We see you as a scholar, but we also see you as a person,’” said Williams.

Najat Sghyar, now a student in the language education and multilingualism PhD program, shares a similar story. Sghyar, who’s originally from Casablanca, Morocco, has pursued her studies and career as a writer and educator around the globe, with stops throughout France, and in the United Arab Emirates, Turkey and the U.S. Although she had achieved success as a highly sought-after French teacher, most recently at the French American School of Princeton in Princeton, New Jersey, she knew she wanted more. Sghyar wanted to change the world through education; she realized she had to advance her own education to do so. With a specific interest in multilingualism, a Google search brought her to GSE’s PhD program webpage. Her interests were piqued, but it wasn’t until she connected with Janina Brutt-Griffler, professor of learning and instruction, that she knew GSE was the right next step.

“When I read about my advisor’s background and talked to her, knowing that she’s also from Europe, I felt that she could totally understand me if I start speaking about French … She also is familiar with Arabic language policies. And so it was just perfect … a perfect fit,” she said.

Sghyar’s interactions during GSE’s PhD recruitment weekend in March 2023 only reaffirmed her feelings—with one moment, in particular, standing out in her memory: When GSE Dean and Professor Suzanne Rosenblith took the stage to address the prospective PhD recruits, she asked if any of the students already felt confident that they wanted to attend UB.

Without a second thought, Sghyar raised her hand. “I was looking at my hand, and I was like, ‘Am I really raising my hand? I just felt so natural.’ I listened to [the dean], and I saw her vision. I knew automatically that it was the right thing.”

Raising hands, committing to excellence

While working alongside GSE’s leadership team to plan the recruitment weekend, Rosenblith understood the importance of bringing students to campus to help them determine the next steps in their journeys. But her desire to attract exceptional students began long before that blustery recruitment weekend in March.

Since becoming dean in 2017, Rosenblith has led faculty and staff through the process of rearticulating the school’s mission and vision, and reviewing and refreshing GSE’s academic programs and curriculum.

A significant part of that vision and process? Ensuring that the student experience—both academic and co-curricular—is rigorous, supportive and engaging.
Sara Kieffer

Rosenblith knew she could not achieve this vision without buy-in and innovation from GSE’s faculty. “I said from the very beginning that success means something that each program needed to define for itself,” she said. She then asked the faculty: “What is an excellent outcome for your PhD program?”

“And then it was really about backward planning,” she said. “That meant looking at the curriculum, both in terms of the content and the assessments. It meant looking at what the research addresses were. It was. It also meant, perhaps, in some ways, most importantly, looking at the co-curricular experiences—what are the sorts of activities that you would expect a student to engage in, in addition to their academic coursework and dissertation?”

But this process wasn’t just about working with GSE’s already robust faculty. Rosenblith also established cluster hiring initiatives to recruit outstanding scholars interested in engaging in community-based research to provide students with the field-based activities and research opportunities they needed to excel in their fields. In 2022, 13 new faculty scholars with wide-ranging and forward-thinking research interests joined the school. In addition, eight new outstanding scholars joined GSE’s faculty this year, with more arrivals likely on the horizon.

Nathan J. Daun-Barnett, associate professor and chair of the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy (ELP), has witnessed firsthand the impact of GSE’s redefined mission, vision and goals:

“Over the past six years, we have made significant changes to nearly every program we offer. We have developed a few programs that no longer met the changing needs of educators, and we have developed new programs to appeal to the interests of undergraduate students interested in the intersection of sociology and education,” he said. “Excellence is a subjective target, but it should reflect a deep and sustaining commitment to identifying and addressing the most important challenges facing educators today.”

“Where our changes have aligned most with the mission of GSE is regarding the intentionality with which we infuse equity, diversity, justice and inclusion (EDI) throughout the curriculum,” he said. “This is also where educators at all levels face the greatest challenges,” Daun-Barnett added. “We saw what our students needed to be successful, and we found ways to make that possible for the PhD students we serve.”

Sara Kieffer is one of these students. Originally from California, Kieffer—now a PhD student—knew she wanted to pursue a doctoral degree but refused to do it at the expense of her family. “I was like, ‘OK, so if I get it, but I don’t get funding, we’re not going,’” she said. “I’m not going to do that to my husband and myself.” She noted: “This [funding] meant that I could really do this... It meant that we don’t have to worry."
Richards Williams’ journey through education has been diverse and deeply rooted in his commitment to compassionate teaching and leadership in special education classrooms throughout Virginia, the District of Columbia and Rhode Island, working tirelessly with students—who often faced severe challenges—and guiding them on a path of healing and academic growth.

School administrators in the districts where Williams worked took notice, and his path to school leadership began. He started leading interdisciplinary projects that aimed to create more inclusive and compassionate learning environments. Eventually, he moved into district leadership roles, serving as a compliance and quality officer for the District of Columbia Public Schools and then managing the entire special education program at Georgia State University. However, it was by pursuing a bachelor’s degree in philosophy at Clark Atlanta University, earning a master’s degree in special education, that he found his calling: “My goal is to come and learn and create a pedagogy of compassion that we can take into spaces and work into academics, where everything is permeated with compassion,” said Williams.

As his advisor, King emphasizes that Williams’ work extends beyond traditional educational boundaries to address broader societal issues. “His experience is unmatched. I think the world of Richard—Richard is what I call a transdisciplinary scholar, as his work is not only about teaching or about social studies. So he is thinking about not only about traditional education per se. He deals with the intersections of race, social justice and learning, and that is what he is passionate about. To me, being a transdisciplinary scholar, as Richard is, holds no boundaries, and that is an excellent way to think and work on so many things.”

“I am working with Richard because of his intellect, curiosity and insightsfulness, and because he is a great human,” King says. “Being a great human is something I think we scholars do not value enough. Our humanity is what sets us up for work that not only provides new knowledge but contributes to the world in a positive way.”

Sara Kieffer’s work is deeply personal. At the age of 30, she was diagnosed with ADHD—a discovery that shed light on her past academic and career challenges, and also a source of great comfort and understanding of herself and her diagnosis, she decided to enroll at Long Beach City College, earning her associate degree in sociology and social science. Soon after, she was accepted at UCLA, where she majored in gender studies and education. “I attended community college first and that is how I got to UCLA. I think the community college background is really important to me,” she said.

Kieffer’s research interests center on gender studies, disability studies and educational justice. In particular, she is interested in studying community colleges and the experiences of adult women learners, with a specific focus on how neurodiversity intersects with education.

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Taking the time to reflect on our PhD programs—from recruitment, to funding, to equity and diversity, to the curricular and co-curricular experiences, and to mentorship and advisement—has enabled GSE to ensure that our PhD programs are student-centered, rigorous, vibrant and aligned to our mission and core priorities of preparing the next generation of engaged scholars.

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The beginning of the fall semester has brought a renewed commitment from faculty and staff to support GSE’s new scholars. Reynolds hopes the new PhD students are challenged and enriched, personally and professionally. “I sincerely hope that their goals, hopes and dreams become a reality and that they are able to make the difference in the world to which they are so clearly committed,” she said. “My wish for them is that they are able to develop the competence they need and desire.”

Interacting with the new class of GSE’s PhD students also serves as a reminder of the greater power in continually redefining and recommitting to excellence as a school of education. “Taking the time to reflect on our PhD programs—from recruitment, to funding, to equity and diversity, to the curricular and co-curricular experiences, and to mentorship and advisement—has enabled GSE to ensure that our PhD programs are student-centered, rigorous, vibrant and aligned to our mission and core priorities of preparing the next generation of engaged scholars,” said Rosenblith.

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The scholarship will help me to focus more on my studies and focus on my research work, and the graduate assistantship. It means everything and is helping me to actually work in the field that I love.”

— Ashfique Rizwan
As institutions vie for faculty candidates, applicants can feel pressure as they attempt to display their talents, endure lengthy interviews and stress over negotiations for benefits and pay. This process can feel daunting, especially for individuals from historically marginalized backgrounds. According to Africa Hands, assistant professor in the Department of Information Science, both institutions and applicants need to do their research thoroughly if they want to succeed.

Q: You recently participated in a virtual session focused on helping Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) individuals navigate the academic job market. What recommendations do you have for job-seeking PhD students?

A: You want to be organized. You will apply to multiple institutions, and you want to keep track of where you apply, when you applied, what documents you submitted, as well as what response you received from each school. You want to research thoroughly if they have certain advantages. Another candidate may be just as talented but did not have the same privilege.

Q: How can institutions see excellence in prospective employees that go beyond what is on their résumé?

A: Search committee members need to go beyond themselves and stop trying to find someone who is their “mini-me.” Members also need to have an upfront conversation about the biases they have. You want to look for excellence but dive deeper. What privileges may have contributed to that excellence? Someone may look excellent because they had certain advantages. Another candidate may be just as talented but did not have the same privilege.

Q: How can institutions improve the job application/hiring process for BIPOC scholars?

A: Transparency. Institutions owe it to candidates to inform them of where the committee is in the search process. A quick note updating candidates on the timeline is helpful to ease candidate anxiety around the process. As I mentioned, an honest conversation about biases among search committee members is necessary. Search committee members should also be aware of the current climate for job seekers. They can gain insights from personal stories shared on social media. There’s no shortage of cautionary tales that will help institutions do a better job with their own hiring processes. From these personal stories institutions can learn how their peers landed a candidate, or cautionary tales that will help institutions do better.

Q: How can institutions prepare their students for the academic job market?

A: Institutions can offer unique ways to increase visibility for their PhD students. For example, UB has the Visiting Future Faculty Program, which brings together doctoral students from all over the country to present their research. These events and practices need funding, and students need financial help as well. PhD students, particularly students from underrepresented backgrounds, may not have the capital to pay for travel and other expenses. If you want your program to have students placed at the best institutions, then your program needs to provide opportunities and resources for students to be seen.

Africa S. Hands is an assistant professor in the Department of Information Science and principal investigator for Project CLA, an IMLS-funded project examining public libraries as an information resource to college-bound patrons.
Simone Fried is an assistant professor of education administration and comes to the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy after earning her PhD at the Harvard School of Education. Her research is focused on U.S. public schools in crisis, and how a complex constellation of stakeholders navigates relational dynamics and external pressures to heal wounds inflicted on communities. Her work in K-12 education spans over a decade. She’s looking forward to using her skills to ensure a diverse pool to heal wounds inflicted on communities. Her work in K-12 education spans over a decade. She’s looking forward to using her skills to ensure a diverse pool of excellent and equity-driven education leaders positively impact Western New York and beyond.

Brittany Jones joins the Department of Learning and Instruction as an assistant professor of social studies education. A marathon runner from Richmond, Virginia, Jones will also serve as the assistant director of the Center for K-12 Black History and Racial Literacy Education. Her research, which is informed by her experiences teaching secondary social studies, explores the teaching and learning of critical Black histories, with a specific focus on Black emotions and affect. Jones’s work also interrogates the intersections of race, power, emotions and, discourse within social studies curricular materials and state standards.

Ian Mette joins the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy as an associate professor of education administration. An outdoorsman, Mette is originally from Maine. Mette’s research focuses on culturally responsive instructional supervision and developing equity-oriented educational leaders in predominantly white rural spaces. Part of his work looks at examining internal physiological stimulation when providing difficult feedback about instructional practices, specifically by measuring biometric data using high-quality wearable technology.

Carla Pattin is a clinical assistant professor in the Department of Counseling, School and Educational Psychology. Pattin earned her PhD from the University of Toledo in educational leadership and social foundations of education. Her research centers on Black women’s voices, challenging racial and gender stereotypes through a social justice lens, and ways to implement Black feminist pedagogies in classrooms. Pattin is a gardening educator also known as the “Harvest Doctor” and wrote a gardening book titled “Grow Through It.” Her Instagram @theharvestdoctor features gardening recommendations, especially for those living in urban communities.

Tangela Roberts is an assistant professor in the Department of Counseling, School and Educational Psychology. Roberts received her PhD in counseling psychology from the University of Massachusetts Boston, and her research focuses on experiences of stigma and marginalization encountered by lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) individuals, as well as the negative health outcomes (LGBTQ) individuals, as well as the negative health outcomes of prejudice. Originally from Birmingham, Alabama, Roberts feels she brings a critical mass of research related to Black, LGBTQ+ mental health to GSE.

Sagina Shankar is an assistant professor in the Department of Information Science. Originally from Vancouver, Canada, Shankar was drawn to GSE because of its scholarly communities. Her research focuses on information practice, specifically how groups negotiate their activities with information and technologies, as part of a theoretical approach that emphasizes the as part of a theoretical approach that emphasizes the agentic, cultural and social aspects of these activities.

Paris Wicker joins the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy as an assistant professor of higher education. A classically trained vocalist and chorus singer, Wicker is originally from Chicago and is a proud product of Chicago Public Schools. Prior to her doctoral journey, she worked for ten years as a higher education practitioner within college admissions and student affairs. Her field of research applies sociological and equity-based perspectives on the study of health, well-being and success in higher education.
Six GSE faculty recently awarded prestigious NSF grants

In a significant stride toward advancing education and research, six of GSE’s esteemed faculty members have been awarded prestigious grants from the National Science Foundation (NSF), and are currently serving as principal investigators on projects poised to make substantial contributions to their respective fields. These groundbreaking projects span a diverse range of educational and scientific domains, showcasing GSE’s commitment to innovation and excellence.

These projects, bridging foundational and applied research, bolster STEM education for youth and educators. With a steadfast focus on equity, they promote robust community engagement and address pressing real-world challenges,” said X. Christine Wang, professor, director of the Fisher-Price Endowed Early Childhood Research Center and associate dean for interdisciplinary research. “These endeavors underscore GSE’s commitment to pioneering solutions that advance educational equity.”

Robert tapped by UN Women to review report on gender equality, climate justice

Sarah A. Robert, GSE associate professor, is an international education policy expert who researches how policy and politics shape and are shaped by the intersectional qualities of gender in global, South American and U.S. urban contexts.

“The report lays out a gender-focused approach to climate justice, making the case that public action should be based on a framework of feminist climate justice,” Robert explained.

Robert’s research brings together aspects of social policies, education policies, and health and pension policies for teachers and school employees. Her unique blend of expertise and her award-winning book, “School Food Politics” co-edited with Marcus B. Weaver-Hightower (Peter Lang, 2010), caught the attention of UN Women, the U.N. organization delivering programs, policies and standards that uphold women’s human rights.

“I had no idea that my scholarship, and the school food politics book in particular, actually had such an impact on different people, including government decision makers and grassroots activists and students,” Robert said.

She has completed an update to that book with contributors from around the world, which is how she ended up on UN Women’s radar.

The new book, co-edited with Jennifer E. Gaddis (University of Wisconsin-Madison), is called “Transforming School Food Politics Around the World” (MIT Press, 2024) and caught the attention of UN Women. As part of the discussion leading up to the two-day review of the UN Women report, Robert learned that what’s been laid out for her new book is similar to the conceptual framework being proposed to U.N. member states to confront climate justice and, “to do so from the perspectives of women and those who are most vulnerable to climate change, and who also have a deep fountain of knowledge about schools and food systems.”

“Climate change is having a significant impact on food systems. And climate justice is an important concept that is gaining momentum around the world,” Robert’s forthcoming book looks at the food systems in schools from urban Philadelphia to rural Brazil and beyond.

“There are people who care for communities in ways that governments need to start paying attention to and finding ways to support both in terms of just honoring and recognizing the work that they’re doing in their communities,” she said.

Robert has been entrenched in feminist policy and educational food system studies for three decades. And while she’s been involved with crafting policy and language all over the world, this is her first time working with UN Women.

“This was really incredible because of the diversity of experts who were asked to participate,” she said. “People from different sectors of the world who have knowledge and engage in work that’s concerned about women and about climate justice and about food systems. It was refreshing because I was being asked to be an expert and to share my knowledge, but I also was engaging in learning. I think that’s the beauty of that type of meeting.”

Robert says it speaks volumes that UN Women brought together experts who have knowledge that addresses women’s experiences around the world. And of the report, Robert says she thought it was brilliant, moving and important.

“I was so humbled by the fact that our research matters on a global level. And that there are people at this global policy-making level who are actually paying attention,” she said. “They want to know what it is that someone at the University at Buffalo is doing. And it’s really transformative as a public scholar to work with governments to make that change happen in different places. So that was really moving and really reassuring.”
The generous gift moved Dan Albertson, professor and chair of GSE’s Department of Information Science. “UB meant so much to this family. Our profession meant so much,” Albertson said. “Those factors went into deciding to connect with us and to give us a gift in honor of Nell. It is a very special thing to be part of someone’s major life discussion and decision.”

“People recognize our profession as being one of service and helping people, and so it’s special when people give back,” he continued. “It’s just indicative of our wider profession.”

“Her graduate degree meant the world to her. She knew it would open the doors for her to have a career where she could do the things she wanted to do, because she was smart, thoughtful and always wanted to be challenged.”

The fellowship seeks to recruit and retain information science students, focusing on those who express financial need, and have the potential for academic and professional success. Albertson reports that a “very worthy” candidate was awarded the fellowship for the first time in 2023.

“Scholarships have a tremendous impact on what we do and, on our students,” Albertson said. “It’s a lifelong gift.”

Now that the fellowship has taken effect, Albertson finds comfort in knowing that his wife’s legacy lives on. “When she died, I lost my best friend. ... She was a really important person to me, and she always wanted to help. That’s what this fellowship is about,” he said.

“I know she’s smiling about this right now.”

The Larways moved to Denver, Colorado, where Tim began a new position at the Department of the Interior. Nell enrolled in the University of Denver’s master’s program in librarianship. She had found her niche and—after completing the program—carried her passion for librarianship as their careers took them to Pennsylvania, Georgia and Ohio. “I kind of dragged her all over the country, but she always adapted,” Tim recalled with a smile.

Their time in Columbus, Ohio, marked a turning point. They became parents to their daughter, Erin, in 1984. Around the same time, Nell joined the Squire, Sanders & Dempsey Law Firm as the head of the law library. “She was a law librarian for the rest of her career—the next almost 25 years. She loved that job,” said Tim.

Nell’s enthusiasm for law librarianship continued at the Murphy, Young & Smith Law Firm, where she worked as the law librarian until her retirement in 2015. Her dedication and desire to help others join the information science field led Tim to set up a fellowship in her wife’s honor after she passed away in October 2021.

“Her graduate degree meant the world to her. She knew it would open the doors for her to have a career where she could do the things she wanted to do, because she was smart, thoughtful and always wanted to be challenged,” he said.

“That’s why I decided to approach UB about a fellowship in her name. She loved UB when she was there.”

Continued on next page
Censorship hinders critical thinking and infringes on readers’ rights

By Julie Gorlewski

Banned Books Week, held during the first week of October, seemed an ideal time to investigate the meanings of key terms and the implications of their execution. In today’s political landscape, the words “censorship” and “book banning” are whispered and declared in a range of settings, without always ensuring that shared understandings underpin discussion. Let’s start there.

According to Oxford Languages, censorship means “the suppression or prohibition of any parts of books, films, news, etc. that are considered obscene, politically unacceptable, or a threat to security.” While the definition is useful starting point, it omits the actor. This is critical because it is a person who determines whether texts are obscene, politically unacceptable or dangerous; and people’s interpretation of texts in relation to these criteria differ. Some people find nudity and sex to be obscene, others find depictions of violence and war offensive. Some people object to references to demons, angels and deities, and others prefer texts that include them. In a diverse, pluralistic society, considerations about what content should be prohibited are clear. More often they are not. Having spent many years as an English teacher and department chair in a public school, I have direct experience negotiating these ideas in consequential contexts.

For example, each year, my colleagues and I collaborated on the development of curriculum, which included summer reading lists for each grade level. Our intention was to create lists with a range of topics and reading levels, since the books would be read independently without instruction. Summer reading assignments were designed to heighten student interest and increase reading fluency and thus build in student reading fluency and thus build in student interest and increase reading fluency and thus build in student interest and increase reading fluency and thus build in student interest and increase reading fluency.

One June when I was department chair, the district assistant superintendent received a call from a parent who expressed concern about the list. When I returned the call, the parent said that none of the books on the 10th grade reading list were acceptable. Her objections to the books included references to religion and the occult (angels, wizards or witches), excerpts related to physical desire or of a sexual nature, and descriptions of violence (settings with a backdrop of war or other kinds of fighting). She acknowledged that she had not read the books, and listened as I explained our rationale for text selection and presented the merits of the books listed. It is important to note that our conversation was collegial, as we both sought to understand the other’s position and to reach a solution. The parent initially requested that, based on her objections, we replace the list with a new set of books. I explained that no set of books would be immune from complaints, as objections and the assumptions that underlie them represent enduring tensions that require ongoing negotiation in a democratic society. I expressed agreement with her assertion that she has the right to determine what her child reads, but disagreed with her request to determine what all incoming 10th graders could read. This gave her pause, as she considered how her rights intersected with the rights of other parents who might have different values and different criteria regarding the appropriateness of texts for their children. This parent could and did decide to provide an alternative summer reading book, but she did not have the right to decide what texts the rest of the 10th graders could be exposed to.

Decisions about censorship uphold the rights and values of some and deny the rights and values of others. As public educators, we are charged to respond to the communities we serve. Schools and teachers should respect the values of families, and should also engage them in curricular activities that are challenging, reflect diverse perspectives and promote critical thought. All of these endeavors require dialogue—speaking and listening with the goal of expanding understanding. We expect this of our learners, and should expect no less from the adults around them. Censorship is contextual; therefore it should not be standardized. Extensive, standardized censorship leads to book banning. To make a film analogy, instead of blurring objectionable content (which would be akin to censorship), the whole film is prohibited. Such an approach is inherently undemocratic. It obstructs dialogue and inhibits informed discussion. Learners who never encounter challenging content are unprepared for authentic participation in our society; having never considered alternative perspectives, they may not be prepared to explicate their own beliefs. Ironically, these conditions run counter to the aims of many proponents of censorship and book banning. Ultimately, censorship and book banning reveal relations of power. Who decides whether a text should be available to read, and for whom are such decisions made? A thriving democracy requires an educated populace—people who are exposed to diverse ideas and can debate effectively. Censorship and banned books undermine the foundations of our society. Schools and libraries exist to promote dialogue and critical thought for learners of all ages. Censorship is the powerful silencing of the less powerful. What is it that those in power fear will be learned? And how can we ensure we will be able to read it? Educators must advocate to liberate readers.

Julie Gorlewski is the senior associate dean for academic affairs and teacher education, and a professor of learning and instruction. Her research focuses on curriculum and instruction; access and equity; English education; educator preparation; school and community partnerships; and qualitative research methods.
friendships—or at least professional more aware of the profession,” he said.

so, Twitter [now X] has been one of those like meeting people and learning things. And impacts his approach to social media. “I really the Conference on English Leadership.

He serves as the president of the Language Arts and of the Literacy Association participation in professional organizations. He serves as the president of the Pennsylvania Council of Teachers of English Language Arts and of the Literacy Association of Greater Erie, and as the associate chair of the Conference on English Leadership.

Emmanuele’s devotion to education also impacts his approach to social media. “I really like meeting people and learning things. And, so, Twitter (now X) has been one of those amazing spaces where I’ve connected with people from all over — I think it has made me more aware of the profession,” he said.

“Talking with people, it’s building connections and understanding of our field so I can do a better job in my day-to-day work with students.”

The drive to continue learning and growing influenced his decision to pursue GSE’s curriculum, instruction and the essence of learning PhD program in 2018. “I had done a couple of graduate certificates and a master’s degree,” he explained. “And so, after a two-year wait, I was looking at the UB program, and I just knew I wanted to keep going. I like taking classes. I like learning. I like figuring things out.”

An online, part-time student, Emmanuele is now focused on his dissertation. Inspired by his professional and academic background in special education, he centers his research on how students with learning disabilities in reading accept, reject or navigate that label—a label placed on them by adults, a label—a label that is ascribed to them in the context of reading instruction. In his district and national leadership roles, he seeks to understand how instructional shifts can be made to support teaching and learning.

Nick wants to understand in order to guide effective and lasting change.”

Looking to the future, Emmanuele hopes to finish his dissertation in 2024 and continue his research independently after graduation. But, more than anything else, he still wants to help and work with students.

“I like working with students who are figuring out how to communicate differently, or better, and are developing as communicators, readers and writers,” he said. “I want people to feel comfortable and welcomed in school, where they feel like they can be successful and find ways that increase their sense of success.”

“Luiza is warm, empathic, thoughtful and sensitive, but she is also passionate, hard-working and committed. Together, these qualities make her such a strong and well-deserving recipient of this important scholarship, and I couldn’t be more proud or excited for her.”

Guyker shares equally positive feelings about Perez Ortiz. “Luiza is warm, empathic, thoughtful and sensitive, but she is also passionate, hard-working and committed. Together, these qualities make her such a strong and well-deserving recipient of this important scholarship, and I couldn’t be more proud or excited for her,” said Guyker.

The impact of the scholarship will last long beyond Perez Ortiz’s time at UB. She plans to pursue a PhD program in counseling, allowing her to meet her goal of serving refugee and immigrant communities, while also specializing in eating disorders.

She hopes to employ mindfulness-based interventions to treat eating disorders and intergenerational trauma in the Latino community.

She also plans to take a creative approach to her future practice. “I appreciate the healing properties of nature and enjoy spending time outdoors, usually hiking, camping and paddle boarding. I want to incorporate nature, art and physical activity such as hiking and yoga—a holistic approach—into my counseling,” she said.
### UB Graduate School Fellows

The UB Graduate School Fellowship helps fund outstanding graduate students at UB.

#### 2023-24 Fellowships and Scholarships

- **Weiyi Ding**  
  **HOMETOWN:** Wuxi, China  
  **PROGRAM:** Educational Psychology and Quantitative Methods PhD  
  "I would like to enhance school engagement for international students by identifying and addressing current problems of parental support among parents from different countries. This scholarship helps me to better prepare for my doctoral degree and allows me to step further in the research field."

- **Blessed Mhungu**  
  **HOMETOWN:** Harare, Zimbabwe  
  **PROGRAM:** Curriculum, Instruction and the Science of Learning PhD  
  "My ambition is to be a college professor, a beacon of inspiration for others, regardless of their background. With the GSE fellowship, I aspire to make quality education accessible to students from marginalized communities, just as I came from, and I pledge to introduce the concept of UBUNTU to the USA. UBUNTU is a term steeped in South African culture, emphasizing the interconnectedness of humanity in all our endeavors."

- **Najat Sghyar**  
  **HOMETOWN:** Casablanca, Morocco  
  **PROGRAM:** Language Education and Multilingualism PhD  
  "I want to show the world how amazing Moroccan students are at learning multiple languages. The fellowship allows me to do impactful research on Moroccan public education. As we say back home: set your intentions. Dir niya!"

### Presidential Fellows

The Presidential Fellowship Program, inaugurated in the fall of 1984, is awarded to new PhD applicants who have a record of excellence. Students must be appointed as a full teaching, graduate or research assistant.

- **Sara Kieffer**  
  **HOMETOWN:** Long Beach, California  
  **PROGRAM:** Higher Education PhD  
  "My goal is to have a career that benefits students from ‘non-traditional’ backgrounds, either through research, policy-building or in a student-facing role. I believe I will be able to do this with the support of my fellowship, which has and will continue to provide the opportunity and resources for me to develop as an academic and a professional."

- **Ziqi (Kathleen) Li**  
  **HOMETOWN:** Kunming, Yunnan, China  
  **PROGRAM:** Language Education and Multilingualism PhD  
  "My academic interests mainly center on community, identity and language learning. With the presidential fellowship, I intend to work closely with schools and institutions to increase educational opportunities for international students and promote equity in language education."

- **Reza Nahid Sahlan**  
  **HOMETOWN:** Tabriz, Iran  
  **PROGRAM:** Counseling Psychology and School Psychology PhD  
  "Overall, I am potentially interested in studying eating disorders among adolescents, college students and pregnant women. I am eager to continue my research work. Furthermore, I am interested in being involved in therapy using evidence-based treatments for those who report eating disorders. I have a plan to apply to United States universities to become an assistant professor and start supervising students. Being a fellow provides me with additional support for my professional growth, allowing me to maximize the benefits of my graduate school experience."

- **Silvia Zumaglini**  
  **HOMETOWN:** Biella, Italy  
  **PROGRAM:** Counseling Psychology and School Psychology PhD  
  "My professional aspirations are becoming a school psychologist and staying involved in meaningful research projects. I am passionate about learning how to best support young people and helping them succeed in and out of school. Being a fellow and student in the combined school and counseling psychology program allows me to pursue all of these goals."
Arthur Schomburg Fellows

UB’s Arthur A. Schomburg Fellowship Program provides financial support for master’s and doctoral students who contribute to the diversity of the student body and have overcome a disadvantage or other barrier to success in higher education.

Daphanie Bibbs
HOMETOWN: Chicago, Illinois
PROGRAM: Curriculum, Instruction and the Science of Learning PhD

“My academic and professional goals include launching a research study that lends perspective on how Black history is taught by non-Black teachers, constructing a platform for school administrators and teachers to embed Black history education throughout the academic year, and pursuing professorship to instruct, motivate and advise pre-service teachers. Being an Arthur A. Schomburg fellow will greatly impact the lives of my daughter Amiyah, and Black girls and Black women whom I intend to advocate for throughout this journey.”

Kiana Jean-Baptiste
HOMETOWN: Fairburn, Georgia
PROGRAM: Counseling Psychology and School Psychology PhD

“I aspire to pursue a tenured faculty position and conduct research related to queer people of color (QPOC). Further, I intend to engage in social action aimed at deconstructing oppressive systems and promoting equity for the population. This fellowship provides me with the means to pursue academic endeavors that will prepare me to enter spaces where I can enact such change.”

Robyn Lelito
HOMETOWN: Buffalo, New York
PROGRAM: Counseling Psychology and School Psychology PhD

“My research goals center on Indigenous and LGBTQ2S+ competent psychological treatment, intersectionality, trauma, resilience, protective factors and access to care. I hope to use this research to provide quality care to these populations. Being a fellow means having the privilege to access resources that support my research and training to provide quality services to marginalized and underrepresented populations.”

Lina Loja
HOMETOWN: Sleepy Hollow, New York
PROGRAM: Educational Psychology and Quantitative Methods PhD

“There are several challenges that minority children face throughout their lives that I feel get overlooked. Although being a Schomburg fellow helps me tremendously in various ways, I believe it has a strong impact on the future of minority families and their children’s education. I say this because that’s my goal at the end of this: to help as many minority children as I can in my life.”

Aminah Raysor
HOMETOWN: Gaithersburg, Maryland
PROGRAM: Language Education and Multilingualism PhD

“My scholastic goal is to collaboratively discover and create a pedagogy of compassion while practicing healing and community. I am an individual who lives their divergent abilities out loud and in audacious invitation for those around me to practice community and healing together. The fellowship has an immediate impact on my work by affirming the practice and process, while simultaneously enabling me to connect and practice compassion, curiosity and learning with the UB and broader Buffalo community.”

To infinity and beyond!

The ECRC learns about space through hands-on activities

BY SARA DEMBSKI

At the end of July, the UB Early Childhood Research Center’s Instagram account showcased their trip to outer space. From looking at satellite images to getting lost in the stars, there was always something to do. The children learned various facts about our moon, such as what its rocks look like and the fact that the moon has one-sixth of the earth’s surface gravity. This would explain why astronauts walk so funny when exploring the moon; nothing is holding them down!

All age groups got in on the fun, even the toddlers. They wore space masks to breathe in the galaxy’s thin air and write in “blue moon dust” to communicate with other life forms. With all the excitement, they almost forgot to keep the classroom’s space station running correctly.

UB’s Early Childhood Research Center did a fantastic job this summer combining learning and play to teach the children about space! The GSE community enjoys seeing what the children are up to, and Instagram is the perfect way to tag along on their adventures.

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Welcoming this year’s residents

Myra Ahmed
Worked as a substitute teacher in the Buffalo Public Schools. She holds a bachelor’s degree in individualized studies with the programmatic theme of community revitalization. Ahmed was born and raised in Buffalo, and loves to work with arts and crafts. “One specific teacher inspired and motivated me to pursue UBTR. This program would allow me to be able to continue modeling and expressing the respect, peace of mind and quality education that every student deserves.”

Grace Bashizi
Is originally from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and came to the U.S. in 2008. Bashizi graduated from Buffalo State University with a bachelor’s degree in political science. She is fluent in Swahili, Mashi, Luganda, French and English. “I was motivated to become a teacher in Buffalo because I worked as an academic coach in the Buffalo Public Schools. I saw a need for multilingual teachers in the Buffalo Public Schools.”

Mary Kay Caulfield
Attended Buffalo State University and earned her bachelor’s degree in humanities. As a longtime champion Irish dance, Caulfield became a certified Irish dance teacher and instructed children ages 3 and up. After subbing in the Buffalo Public Schools, Caulfield decided to apply to the UBTR program. “I think that every child deserves a chance and just needs to be given an opportunity to shine! I will be a powerful advocate for my students.”

Kara Cottrell
Obtained a bachelor’s degree in business administration, and a master’s in international business from Daemen University. After a long career in human resources, Cottrell decided it was time for a change. “I have always been interested in teaching, so I was thrilled to be accepted into the UBTR program. I want to become a teacher to inspire young children, and I am motivated to teach in Buffalo to have an impact on my community.”

Tanya Blakeley-Clark
Earned a bachelor’s and master’s degree in history from Eastern Washington University. During her time there, her thesis, “The Martyrdom of Anne Askew: A Case Study in the Suppression of Feminine Spirituality in Early Modern England,” was awarded the 2016 Raymond G. Shultz prize for best departmental thesis. In addition to pursuing her advanced certificate, her dissertation is underway with the UB history department. “As someone who comes from a low-income, first-generation family, I have personally seen the ways that a good education can change lives. I believe that teaching in an urban school is a great way to pay it forward and put my education and skills to use.”

Esther Blakely
Received an associate degree in general studies from Erie County Community College and a bachelor’s degree in business management and economics from Empire State University. Blakely has worked for more than 10 years as a program coordinator for Playworks, which is supported by the Buffalo Board of Education. “I was interested in the UBTR program because it seemed like the timing was finally right to pursue a career as an educator. I want to become a teacher because I want to be an active participant in the change that I want to see within the communities of the global majority.”

Alexa Dean
Earned her bachelor’s degree in geology from UB. As an undergraduate, Dean worked as a barista at Starbucks—and she now plans to transfer the skills she obtained in creating lesson plans and individual learning plans while training new bartenders to educating youth in the classroom. “I was interested in the UBTR Program because of the opportunity to work in the Buffalo Public Schools. I am drawn to Buffalo Public Schools because of the diversity in their schools and the ability to immerse myself in many different cultures. I want to become a teacher because I want to make a difference in students’ lives and be a positive role model.”

Jada Fisher
Studied at the UB where she obtained a degree in psychology in 2020. While obtaining that degree, she started working at the Jewish Community Center of Greater Buffalo’s Early Childhood Center, where she discovered her passion for working with children. “Going into the Buffalo Public School district, where diversity enrollment is so high, I am able to educate, love and foster a safe environment for students of all cultural backgrounds.”

Abby Griffith
Is an Alfred University graduate with a bachelor’s degree in English. She also attended the University of Tennessee, where she received a master’s degree in English. Her most recent positions include serving as the executive director of Cornell Cooperative Extension, Wyoming County, and as lead executive director for the CCE Western Shared Business Network. “I can think of no better program to hone my skills as an educator than one that provides participants with such rigorous, hands-on learning opportunities. I could not be more excited to join the community of passionate individuals who make up the residency program.”

Jaime Herbeck
Received an undergraduate degree in organizational communication, learning and design with a minor in art history and still photography from Ithaca College. Herbeck has had the pleasure of teaching English as a new language to a group of incredible adults through the Ken-Ton Adult and Community Education program since moving to Buffalo. “What I hope for in education is meaningful, community-embedded project-based learning that gives students the spark, curiosity and courage to think for themselves, ignite tangible, positive change in the places they call home and continually question the world around them.”

Cierra Hernandez
Attended UB and majored in health and human services. Hernandez has been working as a social-emotional coordinator with BestSelf to support the Buffalo Public Schools. “Being a community partner in Buffalo for the past four years allowed me to see how I can support students and coach teachers to be trauma-informed, teach with a social-emotional lens and include more restorative justice practices in their school day. Being able to support the diversity and diverse learners that Buffalo Public Schools has to offer is something that I want to do.”

Ashlyn Gregoire
Is a UB graduate after beginning his educational journey at Niagara County Community College. He earned his bachelor’s degree in business with a minor in education. “I was interested in UBTR because I loved my time in undergrad at UB and wanted to stay here for grad school. I decided on teaching after seeing the impact my great-grandma was able to have on her students just as an aide, and always wanted to be able to have that same impact.”

Meg Devine Maxwell
Is a graduate of College of the Holy Cross and earned a bachelor’s degree in English. Maxwell then went on to work in publishing, arts marketing and higher education communications for 20-plus years. “I am equally excited by UBTR’s commitment to increasing educational opportunities for all students and the opportunity to learn experientially in a classroom from/with an experienced mentor teacher.”
had on me, led to this program.”

Victor Enrique Morales
Earned a bachelor’s degree from SUNY Fredonia with a dual major in English and political science. Morales has previously worked as a domestic violence advocate and was a supported housing specialist before deciding to enter education. “I believe building community is vital and look forward to being a part of a school community. When I contemplated if I wanted to teach, I always knew I would be teaching in Buffalo if I did.”

Areej Mullick
Studied biological science for her undergraduate degree at UB. Mullick is a cat lover and would like to become a foster cat mom in the future. “A family friend motivated me to teach in a diverse school community and being their representative improves the Buffalo Public Schools. My degree in liberal arts and science at Toccare College. She also completed her bachelor’s degree in educational studies at Empire State University. Vega has more than 20 years of experience working in education. “Since I was in high school, I knew I wanted to be a teacher. When I received an email regarding the UBTR, I immediately began the steps required to apply.”

Loran Peterson
Is a graduate of SUNY Fredonia, where he earned a BA and MA in English. Peterson is a world traveler and lived in the Middle East for 14 years, where he worked as an editor for Open-Source Enterprises and New Lebanon. “UBTR offered a golden opportunity for me to channel my experiences abroad into Buffalo Public Schools classrooms. I’m a big fan of self-advocacy among the underserved and came back to Western New York to see if I could find a way to engage that in powerful, meaningful ways.”

Tierra Purdue
Received a bachelor’s degree in applied mathematics, with a concentration in statistical modeling, from Buffalo State University. Purdue was born and raised in Buffalo and is a proud product of the Buffalo Public Schools and a Spay Neut Scholar alumna. “I think it is so important to see teachers who look like you, especially in a STEM subject, and teachers who have had a similar experience. By knowing I can make a change for the better, it motivates me.”

Melissa Ray-Schafer
Is a UB alum with a BA in communication and an MS in applied public affairs. Ray-Schafer was the director of the community center for a youth and family counseling agency in Illinois for ten years before taking a break to raise four children. She has been working as a teacher’s aide in Buffalo and found her calling as a teacher. “A family friend highly recommended the UBTR program. His son is a graduate and happily teaching in the Buffalo Public Schools.”

GSE secures over $4.75 million in grant funding for teacher residency program
GSE faculty recently secured two substantial grants aimed at revolutionizing teacher education and diversifying the teaching professions. These grants, totaling more than $4.75 million, will support initiatives aimed at addressing teacher shortages, improving teacher quality and promoting diversity in the education sector.

The first project, entitled “UB Teacher Residency MBK TOC II,” has been funded with $1,044,221 by the New York State Education Department’s My Brother’s Keeper Teacher Opportunity Corps II initiative. Under the leadership of Principal Investigator Amanda Winkelsas, GSE clinical assistant professor and director of the UB Teacher Residency Program along with Tasha Vega, a UBTR resident teacher corps member, the project seeks to positively impact student learning by developing teacher residents who are culturally responsive and economically disadvantaged students. The two grants are in addition to two existing grants supporting the UBTR program: a U.S. Department of Education Supporting Effective Educator Development (SEED) grant awarded in 2022 ($3.5 million), and a National Science Foundation Noyce Program grant ($1.1 million) awarded in 2022.
On the Move | HONORS, AWARDS AND PROMOTIONS

FACULTY AWARDS AND HONORS

Jasmine Alvarado, assistant professor in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy, was awarded the AERA Latina/o/x Outstanding Dissertation Award.

Janina Brutt-Griffler, professor in the Department of Learning and Instruction, was awarded the 2023 Award for Outstanding Contributions to International Education at the University at Buffalo.

Robert A. Stevens, MLS ’74, BA ’70, was recognized with the UB Alumni Association’s Samuel P. Capen Award.

Russel Basarath, a UB Teach student studying history and social studies education, has received a Fulbright Scholar Award and will spend the academic year in Cyprus.

ALUMNI AWARDS

Francisco M. Vasquez, PhD ’03, was recognized with the UB Alumni Association’s Distinguished Alumni Award for GSE.

Stephenie Freckel, in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy, has been promoted to full professor.

STAFF AWARDS

Louise Lalli was recognized as Advisor of the Year by the University Advising Council.

Margaret Sallee was promoted to full professor.

GSE’s Marketing and Communications team, Amber Winters, Danielle LeGare and William J. Belz III, were awarded "Best of Category" in the SUNY CUAD Awards of Excellence for the fall 2022 issue of Learn magazine.

WELCOME TO GSE

Patric Bruenschweiler joined the Office of Educator Preparation as a clinical coach.

Alice Cody joined the Early Childhood Research Center as an early childhood lead.

Jason Lyons joined the Office of Educator Preparation as a clinical coach.

Halley Maze joined the Teacher Residency Program as a postdoctoral student.

Arethetta Ming joined the Office of Educator Preparation as a clinical coach.

Tikona Truth joined the Department of Counseling, School and Educational Psychology as a clinical coordinator.

Bath Weiss joined the Office of Educator Preparation as a clinical coach.

Cassandra Wright joined the Office of Educator Preparation as a clinical coach.

A lifelong Buffalonian, Conrad F. Toepfer, Jr. earned his BA, EdM and EdD degrees from UB. Prior to joining the GSE faculty in 1965, he served as a teacher and curriculum coordinator in area schools. During his tenure at UB, he supervised nearly 100 doctoral and master’s students. Several of his mentees came together to establish the Dr. Conrad F. Toepfer, Jr. Mentorship Award, which will honor exceptional mentorship in the GSE community. The inaugural award will be presented this spring, with a nomination process in the new year.

STAFF ROLE CHANGES

William J. Belz III has been promoted to assistant director of web and accessibility for Marketing and Communications.

Jennifer Dashheimer has been promoted to mental health counseling program and clinical director in the Department of Counseling, School and Educational Psychology.

Dawn Haak has been promoted to administrative operations coordinator.

Kristine Mariglia has been promoted to director of personnel and finance within the Office of the Dean.
Continued Accreditation

The American Library Association (ALA) has recently granted continued accreditation status to the Master of Science in Information and Library Science program in GSE’s Department of Information Science. This accreditation status is a significant milestone for the program, reaffirming its commitment to excellence in education and preparing information professionals for the challenges of the digital age.

The accreditation decision, made by ALA’s Committee on Accreditation, ensures that the program meets the rigorous standards set by ALA. Accreditation is vital, as it signifies that the program has met or exceeded the established benchmarks for quality education and professional development.

Visiting Faculty

Anne Perrault is a visiting lecturer in the Department of Information Science. Perrault brings a wealth of practitioner and district level leadership experience from the educational field. Perrault earned her MLIS from the University at Buffalo and her PhD in teaching and curriculum from the University of Rochester. She previously was a faculty member in the Information Science department and continued to serve as an adjunct after returning to the PK-12 public school system. Her research is in information behaviors of educators to improve pedagogical practices, and the health information behaviors of young people with varying abilities. She has published in refereed and practitioner journals. Publications include “Reaching All Learners: Understanding and Leveraging Points of Intersection for School Librarians and Special Education Teachers” and “Schools as Information Ecologies: A Proposed Framework of Study.”

Kathleen Reeb is a visiting instructor in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy. Reeb earned both her EdM in learning and instruction, and her PhD in educational culture, policy and society from the University at Buffalo’s Graduate School of Education. Reeb will be instructing both undergraduate and doctoral level courses and will also be designing and offering a special course on the schooling realities of special education and the systems of dis/ability that underpin the K-12 landscape. When not teaching, Reeb is a member of the Buffalo Public School’s Special Education Parent Advisory Committee Executive Board, where she helps support families navigate the special education system and advocate for systemic change on their behalf. Reeb was selected as a 2020 NAEd/Spencer Dissertation Fellow for her work on the structural and systemic mechanisms that undergird inequities for students with dis/abilities or those needing special education.

Events

TEACHING BLACK HISTORY CONFERENCE
Sounds of Blackness, Hip Hop Turns 50
July 21-23

Hundreds of educators, parents, librarians and others who share a love of Black history convene every year to learn the best curricular and instructional practices in Black history education at the Center for K-12 Black History and Racial Literacy Education’s annual Teaching Black History Conference.

This year’s conference theme was “The Sounds of Blackness: Hip Hop Turns 50,” and offered interactive sessions led by educators and a range of thought-provoking keynote speakers, as well as a Black History 101 Traveling Museum, karaoke, laughter and fun.
Events

THE ROOTS OF RAP
Featuring author Carole Boston Weatherford
July 24

NEW STUDENT ORIENTATION
Aug. 26

WEBINAR
Beyond the Hashtag: Ten Things to Know about the Science of Reading
Sept. 7

UB ALUMNI WEBINAR
Addressing Teaching Shortages and Diversifying Teachers in the Classroom
Aug. 30

WELCOME BACK ICE CREAM SOCIAL
Aug. 30

COYOTE’S GENIUS: VALUES THAT ARE TRANSCENDING TIME—INDIGENOUS PATHWAYS TO NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION
Featuring Caj Matheson
Sept. 13

VICTIMIZATION EXPERIENCES AMONG TRANSGENDER AND GENDER EXPANSIVE ADOLESCENTS: AN EXAMINATION OF PREVALENCE, IMPACT AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS
Part of the Alberti Center Colloquium Series featuring Rachel C. Garthe, PhD
Sept. 14

ECPS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERIES
Tips and Tricks for Writing a Qualitative Spencer Fellowship Proposal featuring Ranita Ray, PhD
Sept. 20

ECPS LECTURE
The Making of a Teenage Service Class: Going from Unruly Fieldnotes to Coherent Theory featuring Ranita Ray, PhD
Sept. 20

INFORMATION SCIENCE RESEARCH SEMINAR
User Studies in the Context of Bibliographic Information featuring Tanja Merčun, PhD
Sept. 21

ECPS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERIES
How What I Learned in my PhD Program at UB Leveraged My Not-For-Profit Work at The Literacy Lab and Other Ventures featuring Heather Jenkins, PhD
Oct. 17

BLACK HISTORY NERDS SATURDAY SCHOOL
TeachBlackHistory Any Day, Every Day and All Year Long featuring Dawnavyn James
Nov. 11

BLACK WOMEN LEAD
Black Radical Educational Leadership & The Black Panther Party’s Oakland Community School
Oct. 2

ALBERTI CENTER ANNUAL CONFERENCE
Strengthening Support for the Whole School Community featuring Byron McClure, EdD; Stacy A. S. Williams, PhD, LP; and Rebecca Vujnovic, PhD, NCSP
Oct. 5

INFORMATION SCIENCE RESEARCH SEMINAR
Information Under the Skin: Information Experience of Tattooed People featuring Jennifer Campbell-Meier, PhD
Oct. 11

GSE SERIES: BEYOND CHATGPT AI + Education
Oct. 20

BLACK HISTORY NERDS SATURDAY SCHOOL
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Oct. 11

Dean’s Lecture Series: A Just Society: Equity, Belonging and Community
Examining the Margins of the Margins: An Imperative for a Just Society featuring TJ Stewart, PhD
Oct. 20

Nurturing Knowledge: Ending Epistemicide, Transforming Education, Strengthening Communities featuring Beth Patin, PhD, MIS, MLIS
Nov. 17

Speaker to be announced
March 18

At a time marked by growing public concern about the number of school-aged children who have difficulties learning to read, GSE hosted the event, “Beyond the Hashtag: Ten Things to Know about the Science of Reading,” to explore and answer these questions. With over 200 K-12 educators, parents, administrators, and UB students and alums registered, the virtual event shed light on the different perspectives and implications related to the “science of reading”—or, in other words, how children learn to read.
GSE cancels classes to host teach-in for racial equity

BY DANIELLE LEGARE

GSE canceled all coursework and office work for students, faculty and staff on Sept. 22 to host a “Teach-In”—an event that builds on GSE’s efforts to discuss and learn about the relationship between racial injustice and education. In 2020, GSE hosted the school’s inaugural Teach-In, “Make Good Trouble Now: Teach-In for Racial Equity.”

The event, “Making Changes That Matter: Teach-In for Racial Equity,” explored systemic racism in education, society and digital infrastructures, offering an opportunity for the GSE community to learn and outline actions for working toward desired change within GSE and the greater community.

Held in person on UB’s North Campus and virtually for online students, GSE’s Teach-In was inspired by the teach-ins during the anti-war movement of the 1960s and 1970s, which were held to educate and elevate understanding as powerful tools to fight the forces of structural racism,” said Suzanne Rosenblith, GSE dean and professor. “This Teach-In, like our first, is an opportunity for us to take stock, individually and collectively, of our commitments and vision for a more equitable future for ourselves and the communities in which we live and serve. As an institution of higher education, we came to this moment to learn, teach and stretch our beliefs and understandings.”

The Teach-In featured three keynote speakers:

Sherron Ann Charleston, JD, PhD, chief diversity and inclusion officer at Harvard University, presented “Past as Prologue: The Future of Equity, Diversity, Justice, and Inclusion.”

Crystal Fleming, PhD, professor of sociology and Africana studies and associate faculty in the Department of Women’s, Gender and Sexuality Studies at SUNY Stony Brook, presented “The Light of Truth: Inspiring Change with Critical Race Theory.”

Aneelaxi Singh, PhD, LPC, professor and chief diversity officer/associate provost for diversity and faculty development at Tulane University, presented “Racial Healing: Practical Activities to Help You Explore Racial Privilege, Confront Systemic Racism, and Engage in Collective Healing.”

Rosenblith and Rachael Pope, professor, chief diversity officer and associate dean of faculty and student affairs, also hosted a town hall session, discussing themes and questions that arose throughout the event. As they reflected on the day, they also looked back on the three years since the last GSE Teach-In.

“We did a Teach-In in 2020... One of the things that the dean and I promised was that we weren’t just doing a Teach-In. The Teach-In was not the intervention to try and create something different. The Teach-In was a tool,” said Pope during the town hall. “For us, the goal of this was to increase racial dialogue, a deeper understanding are powerful tools to fight the forces of structural racism.”

GSE alumna establishes digital archive documenting violence in Jim Crow South

BY DANIELLE LEGARE

The Burnham-Nobles Digital Archive, a record collection and database documenting racially motivated violence targeting African Americans in the Jim Crow South, was recently established, thanks in part to GSE alumna Gina NortonSmith’s expertise, guidance and leadership.

The Northeastern University School of Law’s Civil Rights and Restorative Justice (CRRJ) Project—where NortonSmith, MS ’19, is the project archivist—launched the database on Sept. 27, 2022. Named after Professor Margaret Burnham of Northeastern’s School of Law and MIT Chancellor Melissa Nobles, the archive contains thousands of records of people, incidents and documents, allowing users to find more information and better understand the anti-Black killings in the mid-20th-century South.

Alongside the project team of students, staff, scholars and attorneys, NortonSmith created a digital archival collection out of the investigative records, allowing the archive’s metadata and design teams to develop a web application with open-source architecture to make it available to the public. The project builds on knowledge about this time period by addressing the relationship between racial violence and official silence or misinformation. In addition, it serves as a resource for researchers, journalists, teachers, students and family members of the victims whose stories are told in the archive.

“The GSE community came together in the Center for the Arts Mainstage Theatre for learning and dialogue.”

“GSE cancels classes to host teach-in for racial equity”

Friday, September 22, 2023

“Making Changes That Matter: Teach-In for Racial Equity”

“I’m really delighted to see the success that Gina is achieving. It’s not at all surprising, considering the level of her engagement and hard work in the master’s program,” said Julian. “She served as a student representative on our Advisory Board and sought out every opportunity to learn and to network. Gina’s GSE alumnus is an excellent model of what we hope to expect of our students to achieve following graduation.”

“GSE alumna establishes digital archive documenting violence in Jim Crow South”

To learn more about the Burnham-Nobles Digital Archive, visit https://crrjarchive.org/
Congratulations, GSE Class of 2023!

On May 19, GSE’s 92nd commencement ceremony brought together faculty, staff, students and guests to celebrate in UB’s Center for the Arts. Dean Suzanne Rosenblith and UB President Satish K. Tripathi conferred degrees on the graduates during this special occasion. This year’s commencement celebration was unlike any other. The night before the ceremony, GSE hosted a special reception for graduating PhD students. The reception honored doctoral candidates with awards recognizing their outstanding contributions to our school and communities, including:

Delbert Mullens
“Thinking Outside the Box” Award
Melodie Baker
Educational Psychology and Quantitative Methods, PhD ’23

Dr. Edwin D. Duuryea, Jr. Higher Education Memorial Award
Danielle Vegas Lewis
Higher Education, PhD ’23

PhD Excellence Award
Margaret Manges
Counseling Psychology/School Psychology, PhD ’23

Members of GSE’s distinguished alumni, faculty and community were also recognized for their exceptional accomplishments and service:

Distinguished Alumni Award
Robert Davies, PhD
President, Central Michigan University

PhD Mentorship Award
Tiffany Karalis Noel, PhD
GSE Clinical Assistant Professor of Learning and Instruction

Dean’s Service Award
Samuel L. Radford III
Program Director, Community Action Organization of Western New York

The next day, the ceremony welcomed GSE faculty speaker, Stephen Santa-Ramirez, PhD, assistant professor of educational leadership and policy, and GSE student speaker Shakuntala (Devi) Gopal, PhD ’23, to the stage to share their wisdom and advice with the graduating class. The ceremony recognized exceptional members of our community with awards, including:

Excellence in Community Outreach and Engagement Award
Michele Agosto
Educational Administration, EdD ’23

Excellence in Equity, Diversity, Justice and Inclusion Award
Ebony Bullock
Educational Administration, EdD ’23

Excellence in Research Award
Melodie Baker
Educational Psychology and Quantitative Methods, PhD ’23

“Thank you all for your advocacy for others, dedication to your craft and the positive impact you have had at GSE and in your personal and professional communities,” Dean Rosenblith said during her remarks. Keep in touch, GSE alumni! Share your accomplishments. Let us always celebrate you.

1. Student Speaker Shakuntala (Devi) Gopal, PhD ’23
2. Faculty Speaker Stephen Santa-Ramirez
3. “Excellence in Research Award” and “Delbert Mullens ‘Thinking Outside the Box’ Award” Recipient Melodie Baker, PhD ’23
4. “Excellence in Equity, Diversity, Justice and Inclusion Award” Recipient Ebony Bullock, EdD ’23
5. “Excellence in Community Outreach and Engagement Award” Recipient Michele Agosto, EdD ’23
Class Notes

1960s
Norbert Baschnagel, BS ’65, EDM ’68, wrote his seventh book titled “How to Build a Sport or Life Dynasty” in 2021. He was also inducted into the Clarion University Sports Hall of Fame on April 24, 2022.

1970s
Dorothy Woodson, MS ’76, recently retired as an African studies curator at Yale Library. She was a fellow at University Western Cape. Woodson had held the position of social science bibliographer at UB’s Lockwood Library from 1977 to 1999. During that time, she was a Fulbright Senior Scholar Research Award recipient and received the United States information Agency fellowship to Swaziland.

1980s
Victor Stolberg, MA ’81, MA ’83, EDM ’84, is the author of seven articles, including “Globalization” and “Tobacco,” in the recently published “Wellness Around the World: An of seven articles, including “Globalization” and “Tobacco,” in the recently published “Wellness Around the World: An...”

2000s
Nellie Nossi Feza, PhD ’09, is the deputy vice chancellor of research and innovation at the University of Venda in South Africa. She is currently working on a book titled “Centering Whole-Child Development in Global Education Reform: International Perspectives.” In March 2023, she was honored with an Alumni Achiever Award by Nelson Mandela University.

Pauline Schmidt, EDM ’95, PhD ’98, is a professor at West Chester University in Pennsylvania and was awarded the Lindback Distinguished Teaching Award in 2020. She also received Buffalo State University’s English Education Alumni Award in 2022. She was promoted to full professor at the start of the 2022-2023 academic year and published her first book, “Reimagining Literacies in the Digital Age: Multimodal Strategies to Teach with Technology,” co-authored with Matthew J. Kruger-Ross.

2010s
Meredith Feigel, BA ’10, MA ’11, Adv. Cert. ’12, was named Teacher of the Year for 2023 at an intermediate school in the New York City public school system. In 2022, Feigel was a New York City finalist for the PFLAG award and was awarded $10,000.

Sara Lewis, EDM ’12, Adv. Cert. ’13, finished her fourth year of employment at Horace Greeley High School in Westchester County, New York, as a school counselor. Prior to being hired, she worked for six years as a school counselor and counseling department chairperson at Fredonia High School in Fredonia, New York.

Louis Altman, MS ’13, released an album of original songs called “Songs of Citizen Lou: Hide in Plain Sight” (vol. II).

Hyunsuk Cho, PhD ’16, was promoted to associate professor at the University of North Dakota and received tenure in 2022. She has published research papers in TESOL Quarterly, Journal of Language, Identity & Education, Literacy Research and Instruction, Journal of Early Childhood Research, International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism, and more. She received the AERA Education Research Service Projects grant in 2019, the UNCD-CEHC Daniel Faculty Fellow Award in 2022, and the Best Paper Award from the American Educational Research Association.

Zach Basler, MS ’18, was promoted to the position of adult and teen services manager/librarian II at the Ben May Main Library in Mobile, Alabama.

2020s
Ashley Cannon-Zelasko, BA ’16, EDM ’21, serves as the digital marketing specialist in University Advancement at the University at Buffalo. In August 2023, she began a new role as associate director of advancement in the Office of Student Life at UB.

Lindsey Moses, MS ’21, is working for a leading artificial intelligence company based in Silicon Valley, California.


Devon Cozad, MS ’22, celebrated one year at Daemen University as a research and instruction librarian. She joined the Western New York Library Resources Council’s Library Education, Advancement and Partnerships (LEAP) Committee and was inducted into Beta Phi Mu–The International Library and Information Studies Honor Society.

RETIREMENTS

Deborah Dias
I retired on July 20 after working in GSE’s Department of Educational Leadership and Policy (ELP) for almost seven years as an office assistant. My career at UB started in the Financial Aid Office, then continued in the Department of Biochemistry and the Western New York Educational Service Center and ended in ELP with a total of 6 ½ years of New York State service.

I loved decorating my office for all seasons, caring for my botanical garden setting, and welcoming everyone with a big smile. I especially enjoyed helping with events and always looked forward to greeting our students and guests.

In my retirement, I look forward to spending time with my husband Dave, my cat terrier Jake, my Mom (who is in assisted living), our nine grandchildren and other dear family and friends. This fall, I plan to resume my tap-dancing hobby, learn how to crochet, stay in shape with the help of the Muscle Pump class here at UB, pursue my love of gardening and do all the other things I never had time to do. There are so many adventures just waiting for me!

I will cherish all the friendships I made with faculty, staff and students and plan to keep in touch.

Thank you, UB, for all the memories that I will hold close to my heart! I feel so lucky I was, and will always be, a part of this special community.

Judith Roberson
My favorite quote to share with prospective teachers, included in my email signature, states: “Ask yourself one simple question every morning on your way to work. Would you want to be a student in your class?”

I have worked in education all my adult life. For the past 50-plus years, I have been a classroom teacher, school program coordinator and coordinator for parent involvement for the Buffalo Public Schools—where I worked from 1971-2004. Then, I continued my second educational career journey in GSE under the leadership of Dean Mary Graham immediately after retiring from the BFS.

As a team player, it has been a privilege to work with some of the most incredible associate deans and directors of educator preparation programs here at UB, such as the late Dr. Julius Adams, Dr. S.G. Grady, Dr. Fenice Boyd, Dr. David Cantaffa and, most recently, Dr. Beth Stopko. I witnessed firsthand how these insightful, positive and progressive leaders have increased effectiveness, nurtured growth, and maintained and enhanced the high standards needed to generate highly effective, quality educators. From the Buffalo Research Institute on Education for Teaching (BRIET) to the Teacher Education Institute (TEI) and now the Office of Educator Preparation, the evolution of teacher preparation at UB has been outstanding.

During my nearly two decades as program coordinator of clinical experiences at GSE, I have interacted with thousands of students, securing student teaching placements, and counseling, coaching and supervising teacher candidates. For three consecutive years, I represented GSE/TEI as a member of the Western New York Teacher Center Board. I also fostered, maintained and enhanced many successful relationships with mentor teachers, administrators and school districts in the Western New York area to create lasting, meaningful partnerships with the UB teacher education programs.

All these experiences have helped me to manifest my purpose in life—helping others. Make a difference, be a difference. The old saying “teach one, teach one” rings true to me. I plan to continue to follow my purpose by helping others use their talents and abilities to want to teach all children.

“I feel so lucky I was, and will always be, a part of this special community.”

“Make a difference, be a difference.”
Faculty
A. Neil Yerkey

A. Neil Yerkey, professor emeritus, died on July 30, 2023. He was 85. Yerkey was a distinguished educator and scholar who dedicated his life to the betterment of education. Born in Akron, Ohio, he earned his bachelor's degree from the University of Akron in 1959 and a master's degree in library science from the former Western Reserve University in Cleveland in 1962. He came to UB as an assistant professor in 1977 after earning a doctorate from the School of Communication at Kent State University. Yerkey was a member of the School of Information and Library Studies faculty (previously called the School of Informatics) from 1977 until 2006. He was the recipient of the SUNY Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching and became a professor emeritus in 2006.

Known as a pioneer for his work bringing libraries and information science into the digital age, Yerkey helped to develop and implement "the Cleveland idea," an online network that could build banks of information and offer free access to the internet in rural communities. This network, Buffalo Freenet, was one of the first free online networks in the nation. This network evolved into a free website host for more than 600 nonprofit agencies that lasted until 2006.

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Yerkey was a member of the American Library Association, the Special Libraries Association, the American Society for Information Science and the Western New York Library Resources Council. In addition to his professional memberships, he was a deacon at his church, a member of the Western New York Fiddle Club and played Dobro guitar. When he was not teaching, Yerkey could be found with his band, Gospel Express, playing frequent gigs at the famous Earl’s Drive-In on Route 16 in Chaffee.

Student
Rachel S. Goodwin

Rachel S. Goodwin, a master’s student in the Department of Information Science, passed away on May 17, 2023. She was 50 years old.

Goodwin earned her bachelor's in childhood education from Buffalo State University. After graduation, she relocated to Boston, Massachusetts, where she welcomed a son in 2008. She eventually returned to Buffalo to work as a lead teacher at the University at Buffalo Child Care Center, where she shared her love and kindness with the students she taught.

Goodwin was passionate about education. Her goal was to work with children for the rest of her life. She was prolific in engaging with young people; they were drawn to her energy and her ability to make boring tasks fun.

"Rachel saw the field of library and information science as a path that would provide new challenges," said Dan Albertson, chair of the Department of Information Science. "Her professional interests upon entering the program included children and youth services and lifelong learning. Rachel’s passion for books, literature and reading were at the center of her motivation, and she saw the library as a space to advance the mission of childhood literacy. The department will deeply miss Rachel and the dedication and energy she brought to our classes."

Donor
Myra S. Razik

Lifelong learner and philanthropist Myra S. Razik passed away in July 2023. Myra was an active member of the international committee of UB’s Women’s Club, which sponsors monthly brunches for international students to interact and exchange ideas with each other and people in the community.

In partnership with her husband Taher, Myra was a committed supporter of GSE and the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy (ELP). The Raziks established the Taher and Myra Razik Fellowship, which provides funding for underrepresented minority students pursuing a GSE doctoral degree in educational administration. The Raziks also funded Taher Razik Lounge, located in 461 Bailey Hall on UB’s North Campus. This lounge is exclusively for students in ELP and offers a space to study, relax and socialize.

"The Raziks truly made an impact and are fondly remembered by many alumni. From hosting students in their homes for the holidays to having casual weeknight dinners, the years at UB were wonderful times for her and her family. Many of those students were still in touch with her until her passing and called her ‘Mom Myra.’ Their commitment to ELP and to international students will not be forgotten, and their generosity will continue to make a doctoral degree more accessible for students,” said Kathryn Ross-Winnie, GSE director of advancement.

Many ... students were still in touch with her until her passing and called her ‘Mom Myra.’
The STEMcyclists Summer Camp—developed by Noemi Waight, GSE associate professor of learning and instruction, in collaboration with GoBike Buffalo and UB’s Science and Technology Entry Program (STEP)—sparked a transformation in STEM learning this summer by providing 9th and 10th-grade students of color living in Buffalo with the opportunity to explore the intersections of science, technology, engineering and mathematics through bicycles and bicycle riding. The group was photographed on South Campus in July 2023.