

THE UB GSE MAGAZINE FALL 2025

Learn

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Love



Where promise meets partnership

UB and Buffalo Public Schools
launch Buffalo's first university-
assisted high school



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ED ARTIFACT

Strapped in: A JOURNEY THROUGH BACKPACK HISTORY

BY KARLY RAKHIMOVA

Who would have guessed that a simple sack on your back would reveal so much about human ingenuity? From ancient mountain passes to bustling school hallways, backpacks have carried our stories and our stuff through the ages.

The earliest known backpack dates to around 3300 B.C., discovered with Ötzi the Iceman in the Alps. His gear included a wooden frame likely used to carry a hide sack or net, showcasing early human creativity in transporting essentials.

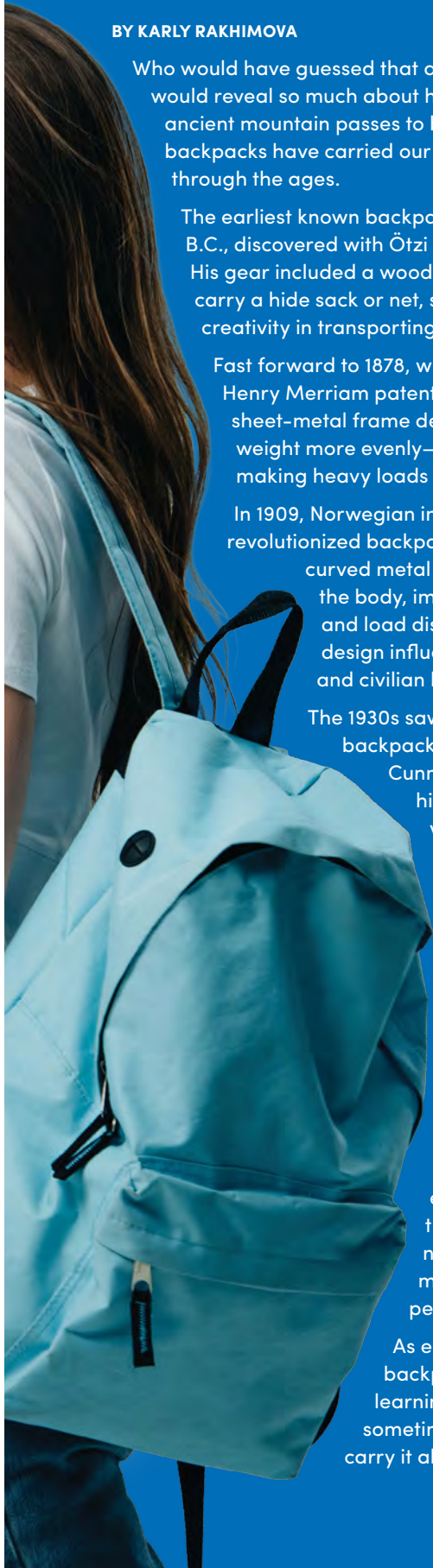
Fast forward to 1878, when U.S. Army officer Henry Merriam patented a knapsack with a sheet-metal frame designed to distribute weight more evenly—a major step forward in making heavy loads easier to carry.

In 1909, Norwegian inventor Ole F. Bergan revolutionized backpacks by adding a curved metal frame that hugged the body, improving comfort and load distribution. This design influenced both military and civilian backpack use.

The 1930s saw the first zippered backpack, invented by Gerry Cunningham, designed for hiking adventures. But it was not until the 1970s that backpacks became school essentials, replacing book straps and briefcases as students embraced practicality and comfort.

Today, backpacks have become more than just bags; they are statements of identity. Whether minimalist, ergonomic or tech-savvy, they reflect how students navigate modern life, merging function with personal expression.

As educational artifacts, backpacks remind us that learning is a journey, and sometimes, you really can carry it all on your back.



Dear GSE Friends and Alumni,

This issue of Learn is devoted to what we call “access in action.” Through its pages, we share with you how our faculty, students and alumni are working to make education, knowledge and opportunity more accessible, usable and equitable for all. Across the pages that follow, you’ll see the many different ways the Graduate School of Education is reimagining what it means to open doors.

At the heart of this issue is the transformation of Research Laboratory High School into Buffalo’s first university-assisted community school (UACS). This initiative, made possible through a partnership between GSE and Buffalo Public Schools, represents more than an institutional collaboration: It’s a shared commitment to a new kind of public education. Our UACS will integrate problem-based learning, computer science education and wraparound supports, connecting high school students to the resources of a research university while strengthening the surrounding community. It is, in many ways, a living example of our mission.

This issue amplifies the impact of GSE. You’ll meet Hannah Bogdan (EdD ’23), founder of the Buffalo Toy Library, whose work promotes equitable play and early learning for all children. You’ll read about faculty members Amanda Nickerson and Stephanie Fredrick, whose new book offers parents and educators practical tools for helping young people navigate the complex world of social media and cyberbullying. EdD student Nick Kennedy is using digital humanities to recover the stories of Black women whose contributions to U.S. history have too often been overlooked.

Together, these stories show what it means to turn knowledge into action. Whether through research, teaching or community engagement, our work is animated by the belief that knowledge should not be confined just to classrooms or academic journals. It should be something that empowers others to ask better questions, to solve real problems, to create a more just and inclusive future.

As we share these stories with you, we also celebrate the generosity that makes them possible. From the transformational Czarnecki Family Gift advancing literacy instruction and CLaRI’s mission, to the countless contributions of time, talent and care from our alumni and friends.

Thank you for being part of this community and for believing, as we do, that education can and must be a public good. We hope you find inspiration in these pages.

Warm regards,



Suzanne Rosenblith

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT STATEMENT

A pledge to peaceably 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 peaceably share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes. It is also covered by the 1794 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.



GSE in the News | Headlines from stories that featured our faculty and students

THE BUFFALO NEWS quoted **Nathan Daun-Barnett**, associate professor of educational leadership and policy and associate dean for faculty and student affairs, in an article titled “For health care students, loss of Grad PLUS program could end dreams of a medical career.”

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS quoted **Suzanne Rosenblith**, dean and professor in the Graduate School of Education, in an article titled “A century after a man was convicted of teaching evolution, the debate on religion in schools rages.” The article was shared by nearly 200 news outlets, including ABC News, U.S. News & World Report and Toronto Star.

EDUCATIONWEEK quoted **Suzanne Rosenblith**, dean and professor in the Graduate School of Education, in a story titled “Christianity is ramping up in public schools. Where is this headed?”

EDSOURCE published an op-ed titled “Artificial intelligence isn’t ruining education; it’s exposing what’s already broken,” quoting **Tiffany Karalis Noel**, clinical associate professor of learning and instruction.

THE BUFFALO NEWS featured **Africa Hands**, assistant professor of information science, in an article titled “A Ken-Ton mother wants 27 books pulled from school libraries over explicit sexual content.”

TIME MAGAZINE quoted **Africa Hands**, assistant professor of information science, in an article titled “How libraries are faring under the Trump administration amid detrimental funding cuts.”

BET quoted **LaGarrett King**, professor of learning and instruction and director of the Center for K-12 Black History and Racial Literacy Education, in an article titled “‘America in Black’: The Plan To Erase Black History Forever.”

HUFF POST quoted **Stephanie Fredrick**, associate professor of counseling, school and educational psychology and associate director of the Alberti Center for Bullying Abuse Prevention, in an article titled “Instagram launched a new anti-bullying tool for schools. But will it actually work?”

VOLT quoted **Stephen Santa-Ramirez**, associate professor of educational leadership and policy, in an article titled “Higher ed faces a crossroads over Trump’s executive orders on DEI.”

BUFFALO TORONTO PUBLIC MEDIA cited data from **Leah Bartlo**, recent graduate of the curriculum, instruction and the science of learning PhD program, and research fellow in the Community Health Equity Research Institute, in an article titled “Buffalo loses out on remaining federal lead remediation grant money.”

THE BUFFALO NEWS

AP Associated Press

The New York Times

EducationWeek

EdSource

TIME

BET★

HUFFPOST

volt

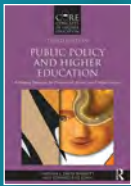
BTPM n p r

BOOK STACKS

Books and chapters published by members of the UB GSE community



“The Routledge International Handbook of Positioning Theory” was coedited by **Mary McVee**, professor of literacy education at GSE. It was published in 2024 by Routledge.



“Public Policy and Higher Education” was coauthored by **Nathan Daun-Barnett**, associate dean for faculty and student affairs and associate professor in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy. This third edition textbook was published by Routledge in 2024.



“The Worry Monster: Calming Anxiety with Mindfulness” is a children’s book written by **Catherine Cook-Cottone**, professor in the Department of Counseling, School and Educational Psychology. This book was published in 2024 by Random House Books for Young Readers.

“Cyberbullying: Helping Children Navigate Digital Technology and Social Media” was coauthored by **Stephanie Fredrick**,



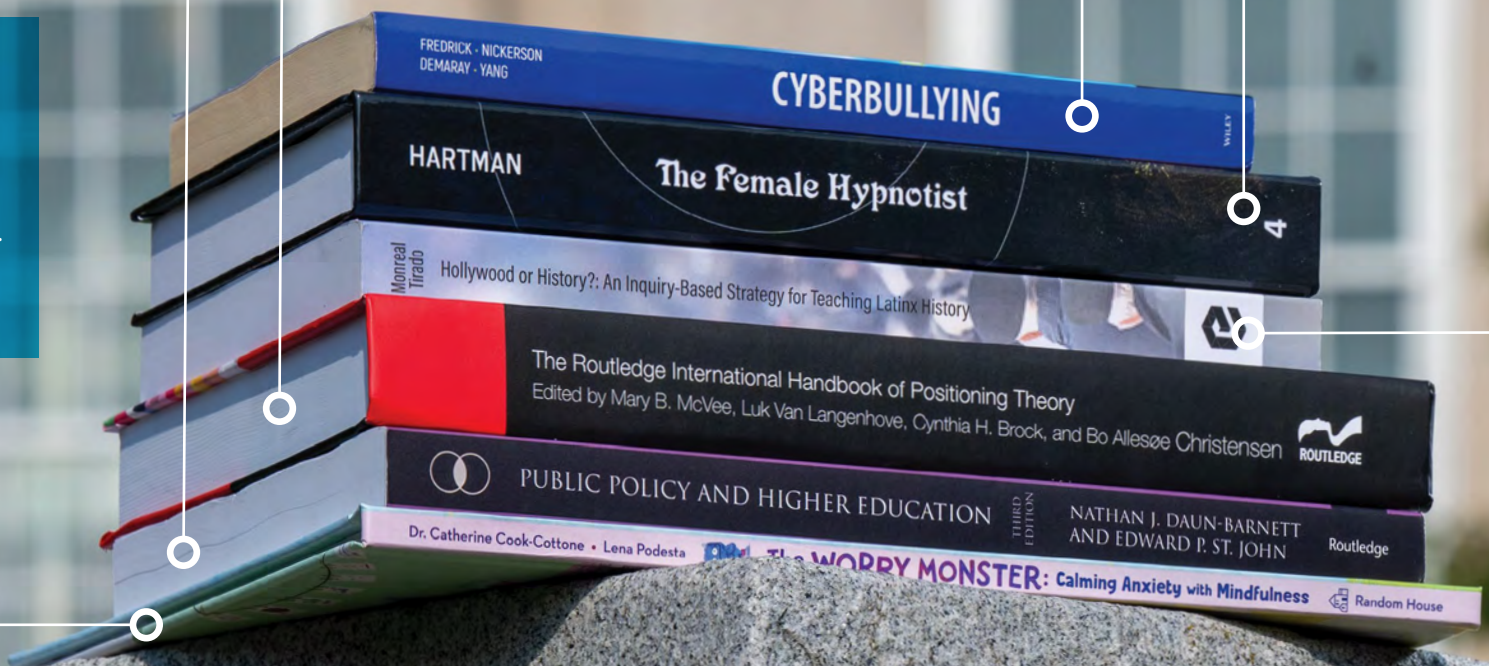
associate director of the Alberti Center for Bullying Abuse Prevention, and **Amanda Nickerson**, SUNY Distinguished Professor and director of the Alberti Center for Bullying Abuse Prevention. It was published in April 2025 by Wiley. (See story on page 22.)



“The Female Hypnotist: Stories from the Victorian and Edwardian Eras,” was authored by GSE alum **Donald Hartman**, MLS ’84. It was published in February 2025 by Themes & Settings in Fiction Press.



“Hollywood or History? An Inquiry-Based Strategy for Teaching Latinx History” was coedited by **Tim Monreal**, assistant professor in the Department of Learning and Instruction. It was published in May 2025 by Emerald Publishing Limited.





Painting from Tanzania:

"In 2014, I received a faculty international travel grant from the university to study educational leadership in Tanzania, where I scheduled meetings with leaders in all different kinds of schools, from large private schools to very rural, one-room schools with dirt floors. This is a painting that I picked up while there."

Clockwork kudos: With Michael Evans, Stone-Johnson received the Research Excellence Award from Boston College, where she wrote her dissertation on "Enduring Reform: The Impact of Mandated Change on Middle Career Teachers."

Classic text: Stone-Johnson has long kept "Howard Becker on Education," edited by Becker, H. P., on her shelf. The book was "very important" to Andy Hargreaves, her doctoral advisor at Boston College. "It became important to my understanding of Becker as a sociologist, as he looks at professionalism in education."

Kids' artwork: Ceramic mugs made by her children when they were little are among Stone-Johnson's treasured family items. "These mugs still look good after all these years." Daughter Mia is a sophomore at the University of Michigan. Her son Nate is a high school senior.

RESEARCH AREAS

- Curriculum and Instruction
- Administration/Management
- Global Issues
- Educator Preparation
- Leadership
- Leadership Training
- Organizational Change
- Urban Education
- School and District Reform

(Photo/ Dylan Buyskes, Onion Studio)

Office Hours with Corrie Stone-Johnson

Examining the dynamic interplay of leadership and educational change

BY ANN WHITCHER GENTZKE

Corrie Stone-Johnson busily packs her belongings for GSE's move to South Campus. In between dusting off prized books and culling papers to retain, she looks fondly at signposts of family life in her Baldy Hall office of 15 years. Among these are crayons left in a desk drawer by her kids, then young children.

Meanwhile, Stone-Johnson keeps pace with her record of scholarly output. Professor of educational leadership and policy, she is finishing a book, serving as co-editor of the Journal of Educational Change and focusing on her scholarly investigations. "My research sits at the intersection of educational change and educational leadership," she explained. "I'm really interested in how school and district leaders navigate change."

The pandemic's impact on school leaders is the subject of her recent paper, "The politics of organisational sensemaking: a theory of sensesplitting," published in School Leadership & Management. Stone-Johnson and co-authors Kate Steilen, GSE PhD student; and Lea Hubbard, recently retired chair of the Department of Leadership Studies at the University of San Diego, coined the term "sensesplitting." The term expresses "the growth of two narratives emerging out of the same phenomena," as applied to leaders and parents holding competing beliefs about how schools should be organized in COVID's aftermath. The study, an outgrowth of an earlier investigation of leaders' viewpoints that began in the spring of 2020, captures the experiences of four school principals in two urban and two rural districts in New York and California.

Stone-Johnson further explores educational change in her forthcoming book, "The Transformation of Education: Parental Activism, White Christian Nationalism, and a Democracy at Risk," written with Hubbard, to be published by SUNY Press. Professionalism is another theme in the book, she said. "The next to last chapter is really about the impact of the parents' rights movement on teacher professionalism. Who gets to decide? Whose expertise? Does expertise matter in this moment?"

A native of Atlanta, Stone-Johnson was an English major at Tufts University. She then earned her master's at Teachers College, Columbia University, and her doctorate at Boston College, both in curriculum and instruction.

Among her creative and literary pursuits, Stone-Johnson owns Black Rock Books on Buffalo's West Side. She has also taken up painting and drawing, easily finding tips and techniques on the internet. "It's amazing. You have access to so many people who share their knowledge!"

[illegible]

BY DANIELLE LEGARE



Where promise meets partnership:

UB and BPS launch Buffalo's first university-assisted high school

BY DANIELLE LEGARE

The school hallways in West Philadelphia were alive with possibility. GSE faculty walked alongside Buffalo Public Schools (BPS) leaders, observing classrooms where university partnerships had redefined what learning looked like. After-school projects buzzed with energy. Students were working side by side with Penn undergraduates, tending school gardens, experimenting with physics and even launching entrepreneurship clubs.



Angela Cullen, principal of
Research Laboratory High School

“We’re fully hoping to be wildly successful and also understand that we might fail in some places and have to adjust. Buffalo was on board with this. That was a huge game changer.”

– Suzanne Rosenblith

Angela Cullen, principal of BPS’s Research Laboratory High School for Bioinformatics & Life Sciences, and Kira Mioducki, Research Laboratory’s science program coordinator, joined GSE faculty on a trip to the University of Pennsylvania’s Netter Center, where they saw firsthand how university partnerships could reshape learning in K-12 education.

For both the GSE and BPS leaders, the experience offered a glimpse of what could be realized closer to home.

“We were able to hear from districts that had tried different approaches to learning,” said Cullen. “It helped us see what had worked and what hadn’t, and to really strategize the direction we wanted to go in our school.”

GSE faculty Kristin Cipollone, Tim Monreal, Chris Proctor and Alexa Schindel felt the same way as they considered the path forward as leaders from the university embarking on a new partnership with BPS.

“We all recognized that this was uncharted territory. This has potential. This is something people are excited about. We can do this,” recalled Proctor, assistant professor of learning sciences and lead for the GSE team.

That trip to the University of Pennsylvania’s Netter Center was a turning point for GSE and BPS, who have come together to open Buffalo’s first university-assisted community school (UACS) this fall. But the groundwork had been laid years earlier.

The idea for a school focused on research traces back to UB’s Genome Day event in 2015, when nearly 400 BPS students visited UB’s Center of Excellence in Bioinformatics and Life Sciences to extract their own DNA and experience scientific research firsthand.

“Dr. David Mauricio, with Buffalo Public Schools, was inspired by the energy of the event and wanted to develop a school focused on scientific research that was co-located on the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus or UB’s South Campus,” said Sandra Small, science education coordinator at UB, who served on the planning committee. “While we were not able to find a suitable space for a school on either campus, the committee moved forward with the concept and opened Research Laboratory High School in 2016.”

That early work laid the foundation for later conversations about a UACS model.

A few years later, BPS leaders approached GSE Dean and Professor Suzanne Rosenblith with the idea of a co-located “boutique” high school with a specialized curriculum. The timing wasn’t right, but the vision stuck with her. With encouragement from UB’s Provost A. Scott Weber, she began exploring the idea of a UACS, modeled after Penn’s Netter

Center. She secured resources to bring the Netter team to Buffalo for a series of talks and focus groups, ensuring that faculty and leaders across the university could weigh in.

“The conclusion was clear,” Rosenblith said. “This is exactly in UB’s wheelhouse.”

When the district was ready to move forward, UB was too. A plan was waiting on the shelf, consensus was in place and the partners were prepared to act.

The question then became: Where should the partnership begin? With about 200 students and a home in the Tri-Main Center, Research Laboratory High School emerged as the ideal site. The school had longstanding ties with UB’s Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences through its earlier emphasis on sciences and was located near GSE’s soon-to-be new home on UB’s South Campus. Its leadership team, led by Cullen, was recognized for creative problem-solving and strong outcomes, including a 90% graduation rate.

“It just felt obvious,” Rosenblith said. “Why wouldn’t a university, with all of its resources and talents, partner with a school to do something innovative that benefits both students and the community where the university exists?”

Inspiration meets action in Buffalo

Rosenblith saw a chance not just to co-design a boutique school, as BPS had first proposed, but to reimagine what a public high school without selective admissions—a true non-criterion school—could be. “I wanted this school to be computer science-infused,” Rosenblith explained. “The state had just passed new computer science standards, but there wasn’t much conversation about how to implement them. And Chris Proctor’s research convinced me that the best way wasn’t through a stand-alone class, but by infusing computational thinking into the core curriculum.”

That decision set the tone for the partnership between BPS and GSE. They had to be bold enough to try something new, while also remaining grounded in research and responsive to state standards.

“We’re fully hoping to be wildly successful and also understand that we might fail in some places and have to adjust,” she said. “Buffalo was on board with this. That was a huge game changer.”

“I really must credit Will Keresztes, who was interim superintendent at BPS,” Rosenblith continued. “He’s been really savvy about new initiatives. He knows the hardest iteration is always the first, so you have to set yourself up for success by choosing the right school and the right leaders.”

That same principle applied at UB. Rosenblith emphasized that building the right team was crucial to making the vision a reality. “Working with Angela Cullen and Karen Murray [BPS associate

superintendent of school leadership] has made it so easy,” she said. “And when it came to the GSE team, I picked Chris Proctor, Kristin Cipollone, Tim Monreal and Alexa Schindel strategically because I knew they would be good partners.”

Designing side by side

For faculty like Proctor, whom Rosenblith tapped to lead UB’s side of the project, Research Lab offered the chance to realize something he had long imagined. “I’ve always had a secret dream of starting a school someday,” he said. “This gets pretty close.”

But it wasn’t about one person or group leading. Instead, Proctor was focused on building trust across UB and BPS.

“In the beginning, it felt like UB and Research Lab were on separate sides,” said Cipollone, clinical assistant professor of learning and instruction. “But the trip to the Netter Center and meetings after solidified the relationship. Everyone was serious, showing up for each other, invested in this together.”

Their conversations also clarified what was

“If we want a truly democratic society, we need institutions that help structure and sustain it. Schools and universities are central to that.”

–Chris Proctor

most important to both GSE and BPS. “For all of us, the priority is meeting the needs of Buffalo Public Schools and Research Lab,” said Monreal, assistant professor of learning and instruction. “That’s where the impact has to start.”

With BPS and GSE on the same page, the group settled on four key commitments to shape Research Lab’s next chapter.

First was the importance of **relationships**. The teams agreed that they wanted to ensure that every student would be supported and connected to mentors at UB and in the community through advisory groups, restorative circles and internships. Cullen envisioned expanding hands-on opportunities far beyond science labs—from journalism to photography and more—while ensuring they remained paid experiences for students. “Ultimately, the biggest goal,” she said, “is that our students choose to enroll at UB, come back to Buffalo and give back to the community.”

Just as central was the belief in **authentic inquiry and democratic decision-making**. Students wouldn’t just learn about problems in their community. They’d investigate them, collaborate on solutions and present their work at a public

What is the Netter Center?

Founded in 1992, the Barbara and Edward Netter Center for Community Partnerships at the University of Pennsylvania is considered the birthplace of the UACS model. Its core idea is straightforward yet radical: Universities bring their resources—academic, cultural and economic—into public schools, helping them serve not only students but also families and neighborhoods.

Unlike traditional partnerships, UACS emphasizes mutual benefit. It isn’t about universities “fixing” schools. Instead, the model centers on building sustained, democratic relationships where everyone is both a learner and a contributor, echoing John Dewey’s vision of schools as social centers and anchors for democracy.

At Penn, the Netter Center now operates across multiple schools in West Philadelphia, linking university courses and research with community problem-solving. Each year, roughly 90 courses connect more than 1,800 Penn students to local classrooms. The impact has been profound: improved student learning, stronger neighborhoods and a national network of universities inspired to follow the model.

“If we want a truly democratic society, we need institutions that help structure and sustain it. Schools and universities are central to that,” said UB’s Chris Proctor. “That’s the big vision: How can UB fulfill its broadest mission of serving the people of New York by partnering more deeply with a school? Like so many great research universities, UB isn’t yet as embedded in its community as it could be. This is a chance to change that.”





Christopher Proctor, Tim Monreal, Kristin Cipollone, Kate Steilen, Kira Mioducki and Angela Cullen meet to discuss plans for the university-assisted community school partnership at Research Laboratory High School.



“If I were a part of a school that was involved in this, I probably wouldn’t have left teaching.”

– Alexa Schindel

symposium.

This belief resonates deeply with Schindel, associate professor of learning and instruction. She views the school itself as a place where structures and decision-making processes must be open, and where students and teachers have a genuine say in shaping after-school programs, the questions driving classroom projects and even the problems the school addresses. “That kind of engagement is itself a form of democratic practice,” she explained.

“If I were a part of a school that was involved in this,” Schindel continued, “I probably wouldn’t have left teaching. To actually be a part of something so dynamic and enriching intellectually for the whole community is just really exceptional.”

Another cornerstone was **computer science as a connector**.

Proctor’s passion and the team’s vision for the computer science curriculum go beyond job skills. A former English teacher, he compares coding to literacy. “Reading and writing let us reflect on who we are, to look back on how we were feeling at another time, to use words as a tool for thinking,” he explained. “Computers work that way, too. They help us model action and systems, connect ideas across subjects and use technology as a medium for thought.”

His perspective has practical implications at Research Lab. Every student will take computer science in 10th grade. From there, they will continue applying those skills through research projects and

have the option to deepen their studies with AP courses or dual enrollment at UB.

Finally, the team saw the school itself as **a living lab that would link UB courses and research with high school learning**. Teachers would co-plan with UB faculty, students would apprentice in UB labs and university courses would be geared toward community needs.

Cullen hopes to take it even further by inviting UB professors to co-teach alongside BPS teachers, and by bringing undergraduate and graduate students into classrooms for short units and mini-lessons.

“The goal would be that our students develop those near-peer relationships,” she explained.

“They would see kids that look like them—students not that much older than them—coming in to co-teach with their Buffalo teacher,” Cullen said. “Our students would benefit from those relationships, while UB students would have the chance to give back to the community and possibly earn community service hours toward their degree.”

This emphasis on connections between UB and BPS is part of what makes Research Lab a model UACS, said Wil Green, GSE assistant dean of outreach and community engagement.

“One benefit of university-assisted community school partnerships is that pathways to higher education and careers are opened by connecting students directly to university faculty, resources, mentorship and programs. That access is critical, but the benefit of the partnership extends beyond

favorable outcomes for students,” he said. “This work is more than a school–university partnership; it is about Buffalo itself. By aligning resources and expertise, we are helping to create stronger schools, stronger neighborhoods and a stronger city.”

Proctor hopes the curriculum and experiences will allow Research Lab students to reflect and ask themselves: “Am I the sort of person who can go to UB? Well, obviously I am, because I’m already taking UB courses,” he said. “And then that’s an opportunity to help UB transform itself, too, and ask itself inwardly, ‘Are we ready to meet the needs of these students? And if we’re not, let’s go, because these are the people we should be serving.’”

Early impressions at Research Lab

Kira Mioducki, who has served as science program coordinator since Research Lab’s opening in 2016, was quick to embrace the new partnership. Over the years, she has helped guide the school through relocations, shifting schedules and pandemic disruptions. That breadth of experience, paired with the relationships she’s built with administrators, teachers, students and community partners, has made her a trusted voice at Research Lab.

“At Research Lab, we stand with our ideas, not pushing them forward without walking alongside them, continually reflecting on how they reach our students and community,” she said.

Now, what excites Mioducki most about the shift

“The fact that UB chose Research Lab ... just think about the opportunities. It’s not just for students, but for teachers, too.”

–Karen Murray

is the chance to deepen the school’s reach while staying true to the culture that Research Lab has built over the years. She expressed that she sees the UB partnership as a chance to expand opportunities for both students and staff, while also giving the university a richer understanding of the community it serves.

Karen Murray, associate superintendent of school leadership, calls the partnership a milestone for the district.

“The fact that UB chose Research Lab ... just think about the opportunities,” she said. “It’s not just for students, but for teachers, too. If we have a vacancy or a long-term sub, UB professors can step in with content knowledge. And when interns or professors see talented kids in action, they can connect families to new possibilities. We’re so happy about what this

will bring our students, staff and families.”

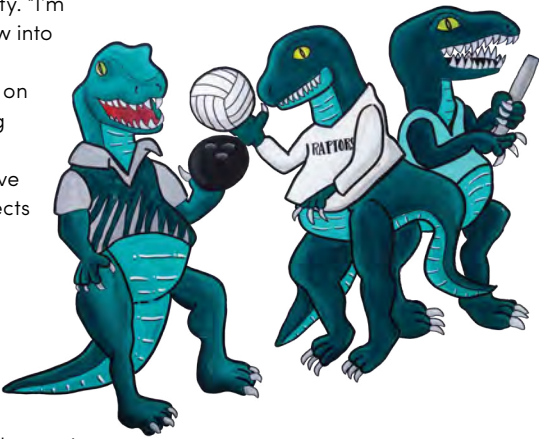
Sandra Small, science education coordinator at UB, echoed that sense of possibility. “I’m excited to have this relationship grow into a formal partnership and take steps toward the school being co-located on UB’s campus,” she said. “Broadening this relationship to include research opportunities beyond science will give students the chance to explore projects in the humanities.”

Strengths in partnership

While the driving purpose of the partnership is to expand what’s possible for BPS students, GSE stands to gain just as much. The collaboration is already creating valuable experiences for UB students.

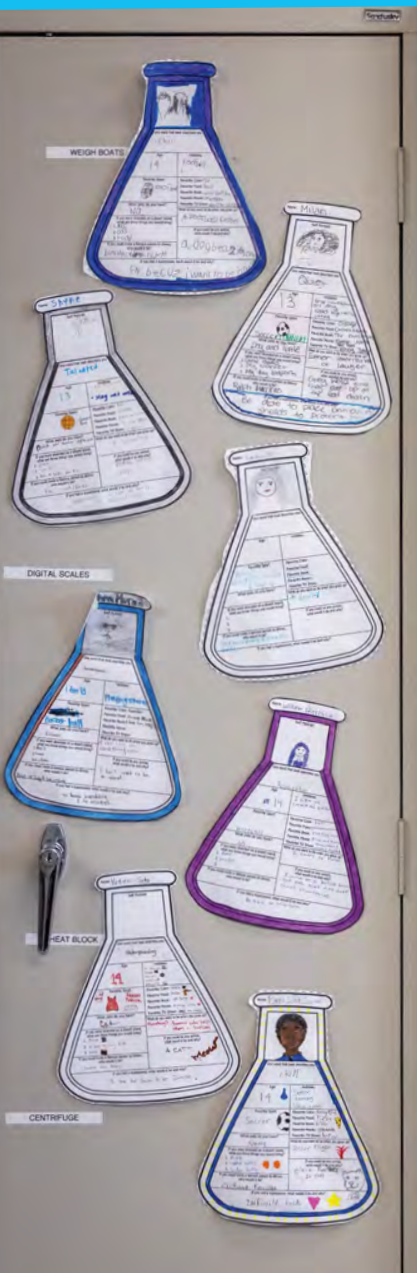
At Research Lab this fall, four GSE teacher residents are embedded alongside the school’s 26 teachers.

“We’re going to work with the teacher residents during the first half of the year, creating what we’re calling a mentor shadowing program,” Cullen explained. “Even though they’re assigned to one teacher, they’ll have the opportunity to shadow all of our teachers and learn different best practices.



Teacher resident Autumn Ragonese leads a hands-on lesson during her classroom residency experience.





“Education reflects society, and I think that we need to do a better job of repairing both.”

– Tim Monreal

You might be working with a social studies teacher, but then you’ll spend a week with a math teacher or a physical education teacher. I think that’s really powerful, because you can pick different things that work for different people and see what works for you.”

GSE doctoral student Kate Steilen offers another glimpse of the possibilities. She joined the UACS project after a conversation with Schindel. “She mentioned this project with BPS, and I was really intrigued,” she recalled. “I asked all about it, and then we discussed whether I could be useful. I essentially joined as a grad researcher and observer.”

As both a parent active in BPS and a scholar studying leadership and organizational change, Steilen found the experience uniquely rewarding. “One very striking thing about my participation is watching people who did not have prior relationships decide to work together and find that rhythm, which is complex,” she said. “These systems make decisions differently, so sometimes a meeting is simply about laying the groundwork for what might be. There’s more inquiry than answer in the process.”

“As someone new to the field, research can often feel more theoretical. Here, I’m part of a team imagining and enacting a new model of school alongside leaders who are working toward that transformation in real time,” said Steilen.

The partnership also opens up a world of scholarly questions, according to Rosenblith. “Everything about this is researchable,” she said.

Because Research Lab is a non-criterion school—one that admits students without selective requirements—the impact of the model can be measured broadly: Are students better prepared than peers in similar schools? How do computer science and AI integration shape self-efficacy and career aspirations? What happens when expanded counseling support is available?

The questions extend well beyond GSE. As other UB schools introduce academically based community service courses into Research Lab—from architecture to engineering—faculty and students will not only contribute to teaching, but also study how those collaborations reshape learning, mentoring and community engagement. “Every one of those initiatives is its own research project,” Rosenblith emphasized.

In Cipollone’s view, the work underway at Research Lab offers a rare chance to rethink teacher preparation.

“Institutions of teacher preparation do not have a great track record,” she said. “We often either reproduce the problematic systems that exist, or we send graduates into schools with ideas about change that feel impossible to enact, and they burn out. This partnership allows us to connect theory and practice differently, to prepare teachers in ways that are informed by real collaboration with

schools.”

As such, the national UACS community is watching Buffalo closely. Schindel notes that UB’s ability to navigate curricular autonomy—a level of freedom other sites have not achieved—sets this work apart. “That’s what people are curious about,” she said. “They want to see what we’ll be able to accomplish, and what gets co-created by students, teachers and professors working side by side. Relationships will be key and sustaining them will take time and resources. But if we get it right, the potential is tremendous.”

Cipollone, who is also the associate director of the UB Teacher Residency Program, agrees. “This isn’t about copying a model and pasting it somewhere else,” she said. “It’s about proving what’s possible when universities and schools come together in real partnership—when teacher autonomy, student voice and community needs are integral to the process. My hope is that we can show there’s a different way of doing this work, one that could inspire change in schools everywhere.”

Repairing education, restoring possibility

At its core, the future of the partnership is about envisioning schools and communities differently.

“Undemocratic forces really try to control and shrink the imaginations of people,” said Monreal. “Because if you can’t imagine things to be different, then you’re not going to fight for things to be different ... Education reflects society, and I think that we need to do a better job of repairing both.”

Cullen shares that conviction. She envisions the model growing beyond one school, with UB professors co-teaching alongside BPS teachers and other colleges joining in similar collaborations. “You get these wonderful professors from the University at Buffalo who are so passionate about their content, but also really passionate about the city of Buffalo,” she said. “When you put that together with educators who have devoted their lives to this district, really great things can happen. And that’s happening right now.”

For Rosenblith, the vision goes even further. “My question has been: Why can’t these students be the producers of what comes next? Why aren’t the next innovations in technology coming from them?” she asked.

“The real promise is in letting them produce the next breakthroughs, whether in medical research, education, or the arts and humanities. Why can’t these kids be the ones to say, ‘These are the things our communities need and value, and here’s how technology can provide new opportunities?’ That is the promise and the potential of this school and this partnership.”



Better Together

“Institutions of teacher preparation do not have a great track record. We often either reproduce the problematic systems that exist, or we send graduates into schools with ideas about change that feel impossible to enact, and they burn out. This partnership allows us to connect theory and practice differently, to prepare teachers in ways that are informed by real collaboration with schools.”

– Kristin Cipollone

From left: Christopher Proctor, Tim Monreal, Kristin Cipollone, Kira Mioducki, Angela Cullen, Kate Steilen, Sandra Small and Karen Murray outside Research Laboratory High School.

Q&A

UB researcher explores how picture books can help children learn Black history

BY DOUGLAS SITLER



BOOK COVER ART BY
LAUREN SEMMER

Teaching Black history in early childhood and elementary classrooms can be a challenging task for educators. The subject is regularly left out in lessons learned by young students. To break this long-standing practice, teachers are using picture books to provide valuable lessons on Black historical figures and events.

Dawnavyn James, a GSE PhD student and fellow with UB's Center for K-12 Black History and Racial Literacy Education, is the author of the book "Beyond February: Teaching Black History Any Day, Every Day, and All Year Long." One of her areas of research is studying how picture books can be integrated into the classroom to help educators teach Black history.

Q: What do picture books offer young students when teaching Black history?

A When teaching Black history, well-written and illustrated picture books offer young students insight into the lives of Black historical figures and provide rich details about Black historical events. Through the author's and illustrator's notes, timelines and glossaries that many Black history picture books contain, these books give both students and teachers more information about the Black history they read about and often spark further inquiry into the moment or person in history.

Q: How do picture books resonate with students?

A Picture books have been a tool to relay information to children for centuries. There are a few authors who have written about the history of Black women educators who intentionally created curricular materials to inform students of Black history, including the development of children's literature to acknowledge the vastness of Black history and expose children, especially Black children, to the wonders of Blackness. Other books help young children make sense of race, social justice and themselves. Think about how many times children, or even we as adults, read the same books over and over again because we've enjoyed what we read, or because we learn something new each time. Picture books, specifically Black history picture books, are purposefully written with children in mind to inform them of the Black history that is often omitted from the curriculum, yet surrounds them every day.

Q: How can picture books help educators in the classroom?

A Picture books are a staple in early childhood and elementary classrooms and in school libraries. Educators learn in their teacher preparation programs about ways to use picture books to teach concepts within literacy and social studies. What I want more educators to embrace is that whether they are knowledgeable of much Black history or not, there are picture books that can lead the way and support their Black history instruction.

Q: How can Black history picture books help make better educators?

A When I prepared to bring Black history picture books into my classroom, I was learning so much myself. Up until fifth grade, I attended predominantly Black elementary schools that did not teach Black history. My Black history education came from home and church, and as an adult, much of my Black history education now comes from picture books. I often encourage educators to educate themselves when it comes to Black history because children ask questions. It is OK not to know, but it's helpful to know where to guide students to get the answers. I always recommend that educators deeply read the Black history picture books they bring into their classrooms so that they, too, can learn before they introduce the book to their students.



Dawnavyn James, GSE PhD student and fellow with UB's Center for K-12 Black History and Racial Literacy Education

"Black history picture books, are purposefully written with children in mind to inform them of the Black history that is often omitted from the curriculum, yet surrounds them every day."

New Faculty

Fenice B. Boyd



Fenice B. Boyd is a professor in the Department of Learning and Instruction. A first-generation college graduate from Warrenton, North Carolina,

Boyd began her career as a music teacher before earning a master's degree in reading education from North Carolina A&T State University and a PhD in curriculum, teaching and educational policy from Michigan State University. Her research centers on adolescent literacy in underserved communities, with recent projects including a National Science Foundation grant focused on culturally sustaining STEM pedagogy in Gullah Geechee communities, and a National Endowment for the Arts-funded study on the role of arts and creative writing in supporting urban youth. Boyd's work is driven by a deep interest in understanding how young people learn and experience school.

Christopher Brown



Christopher P. Brown is a professor in the Department of Learning and Instruction and the associate dean for teacher education. Brown is

a former preschool, kindergarten and first-grade teacher who worked in Title I schools. Before joining UB, he spent 21 years at the University of Texas at Austin in the Departments of Educational Leadership and Policy and Curriculum and Instruction. Brown's research, supported by the Spencer Foundation multiple times, employs a range of qualitative research methods to understand the impact of policymakers' reforms on those working across the field of early childhood education. Much of his work investigates the impact of such policies on teacher education and early elementary classrooms in public schools.

Ryan Creps



Ryan Creps is an assistant professor in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy. A native of Grinnell, Iowa, Creps earned a bachelor's

degree in economics from Grinnell College, a master's degree in higher education from Providence College and a PhD in higher education from Boston College. He began his career as a college admission officer and later worked as a college counselor. These experiences continue to inform his research on postsecondary enrollment trends, college admission practices and the policies that shape access to higher education. Creps is particularly interested in promoting fairness and opportunity in the admission process.

Rubén A. González



Rubén A. González, proudly from Greenfield, California, is an assistant professor in the Department of Learning and Instruction.

González began his career as a high school English and English language development teacher in Sacramento, California. As first-generation college student, he earned a PhD in race, inequality, and language in education from Stanford University. His research examines how students and teachers of color develop and enact critical sociopolitical disposition in classroom, school and broader community settings. González's work has been supported by the Ford Foundation, the National Council of Teachers of English and the National Academy of Education/Spencer Foundation.

Phoebe Ho



Phoebe Ho is an assistant professor in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy. Originally from Los Angeles, California, Ho

earned a BA in history and Chinese from UCLA, an MA in international education policy analysis from Stanford University and a PhD in sociology from the University of Pennsylvania. With an interdisciplinary background, Ho's research examines how racial and ethnic minority and immigrant families experience and navigate the U.S. educational system, and how these experiences shape long-term outcomes for their children. She is passionate about education as a lens for understanding broader societal issues and advocating for equity across diverse communities.

Yilang Zhao



Yilang Zhao is an assistant professor of educational data science in the Department of Counseling, School and Educational Psychology.

Originally from Hangzhou, China, Zhao earned a bachelor's degree in internet of things engineering from Wuhan University of Technology, a master's degree in media and information from Michigan State University, and a PhD in curriculum and instruction from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He completed postdoctoral work at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, where he focused on community-based data science education and computational research methods. Zhao's research explores educational data science, both through developing new research methods and designing accessible programs to teach youth data literacy.

GSE faculty secure funding for groundbreaking research

BY DANIELLE LEGARE

In 2024 and 2025, GSE faculty have continued to advance innovative research by securing prestigious grant funding. These grants support projects that address critical issues in education. The breadth of funding reflects GSE's commitment to scholarly excellence and impactful research that drives the field forward.

Virginia Flood



Virginia Flood has received a \$666,146 Faculty Early Career Development (CAREER) award from the National Science Foundation for her project, "Embodied Responsive Teaching in Undergraduate Physics."

John Strong and Blythe Anderson



John Strong and Blythe Anderson received a \$499,010 grant from the Advanced Education Research and Development Fund (AERDF) for their project, "Read STOP Write: Development of a Multicomponent Intervention in Grades 4-8," to expand the program's implementation into middle school.



Mary McVee



Mary McVee secured a \$415,264 grant from the National Science Foundation for her project, "Elementary Teacher Professional Learning of Equitable Engineering Pedagogies for Multilingual Students."

Megan Iantosca



Megan Iantosca, Shelley Kimelberg and Kristen Schultz Lee have been awarded a \$50,000 grant from the Russell Sage Foundation for their project, "School-to-Work Transitions for Young Adults During the Covid-19 Pandemic."

Paris Wicker



Paris Wicker has been awarded a \$59,126 grant from the National Institutes of Health for her project, "Relational Determinants of Well-Being and Institutional Support for Black and Indigenous College Students."

Ying Sun



Ying Sun has been awarded a \$40,000 SUNY Research Seed Grant for her project, "Development and Validation of a STEM Identity Inventory for Grades 4-12 Students."

Noemi Waight and Ryan Rish



Noemi Waight and Ryan Rish have been awarded a \$22,758 Spencer Foundation Bridge Funding grant for their project, "STEMcyclists: Black and Brown Youth Transforming STEM via Bikes," a university-community collaboration that engages Buffalo youth in STEM learning through biking.



Elisabeth Etopio



Elisabeth Etopio received \$19,500 from Erie 1 BOCES in a collaborative effort to support residents through the New York State Department of Labor Teacher Residency Program.

All funds supported teacher candidates in their residency program.

Suzanne Rosenblith



GSE Dean Suzanne Rosenblith has secured a \$15,000 grant from the Cullen Foundation for the "Brainy Bulls Tutoring Program."

These recently awarded grants underscore GSE's leadership in pioneering educational research and innovation.



Prepare, not scare:

UB faculty publish book on helping children navigate digital media

BY DANIELLE LEGARE

In an increasingly connected world, cyberbullying remains one of the most pressing issues facing children and teens. A new book coauthored by GSE faculty Stephanie Fredrick and Amanda Nickerson aims to provide adults with the tools they need to tackle this complex challenge and help young people foster healthy digital habits along the way.

“Cyberbullying: Helping Children Navigate Digital Technology and Social Media,” published by Wiley in April 2025, offers research-based guidance for parents, educators and mental health professionals concerned about online aggression, social media usage, and the overall well-being of young people growing up in a technology-saturated environment.

Nickerson, SUNY Distinguished Professor and director of the Alberti Center for Bullying Abuse Prevention, said the goal was to offer “a really good mix of what the research tells us, but written in a way that’s hopefully accessible and usable for adults in the lives of children.”

Fredrick, associate professor in the Department of Counseling, School and Educational Psychology and associate director of the Alberti Center, agreed.

“There’s just been a lot of negative attention given to digital media use, especially social media. We tried to balance that perspective and highlight some of the positive aspects,” she said. “We also tried to be relatable, because when parents, educators or others are constantly hearing that social media, video games and technology are all bad for kids—

that’s just not the real world. We all use digital media in our lives, and kids and teenagers have to use it.

“I think we tried to provide a balanced perspective and offer evidence-based resources to help adults help kids navigate those things,” Fredrick added.

The idea for the book grew out of a symposium the coauthors presented during the 2023 American Psychological Association (APA) convention. Their session, focused on cyberbullying prevention, was selected for the conference’s prestigious feature stage.

Their insights caught the attention of Wiley editors, who approached Fredrick and Nickerson—as well as their coauthors Michelle Demaray, professor of school

psychology at Northern Illinois University, and Chunyan Yang, associate professor of counseling, higher education and special education at the University of Maryland—about turning their work into a book.

“They wanted it to be readable and digestible for people outside of academia, and they needed it out quickly because the topic is so timely and important,” said Fredrick.

The team wrote the book in eight months.

The final product blends academic rigor with practical insights, shaped not only by the authors’ research but also by their extensive work in the field. Their work at the Alberti Center has enabled them to engage thousands of educators, mental health professionals and families through trainings, workshops and outreach programs.

“We hear the same questions over and over: How is digital media use impacting child development and mental health? At what age should my kid get a cellphone? What should I do if my child is involved in cyberbullying? We used those recurring discussions and questions and made sure we addressed them in the book,” said Fredrick.

From her perspective, one of the most important takeaways from the book is the value of early, ongoing communication.

“It’s really all about knowing your child, your student or your client, and knowing them well and recognizing when they’re acting differently or showing changes in behavior,” Fredrick said. “Are they irritable around devices? Are they withdrawing? It

comes back to having open conversations, starting them early and having them often, so you can notice when something shifts.”

The book covers a range of topics, including peer relationships, emotional development, and legal and international considerations. It also includes chapters on the family’s role, the school’s role and strategies for fostering collaboration between the two on cyberbullying prevention.

“It comes back to having open conversations, starting them early and having them often, so you can notice when something shifts.”

Fredrick said the content is meant to support prevention at all ages. “There’s a chapter on digital media use in the early years—infancy and toddlerhood—and I wrote that chapter,” said Fredrick. “Honestly, it helped me as a parent of a six-year-old and a three-year-old because I was able to look at the research and figure out what I was doing both right and wrong. I think that made it really applied and relatable.”

Looking ahead, Fredrick and Nickerson are continuing their work on digital safety and youth well-being.

“It’s about prepare, not scare,” said Nickerson. “There’s so much out there on the topics we study that it can make someone want to throw up their hands and just protect their child from everything. But that’s not particularly helpful or healthy for the parent or the child.

“We hope this book says: ‘Here it is. Here are some things we know,’” she said. “There’s still a lot we don’t know, but decades of research on child development and working with kids have shown that there are key things we can all do when these problems arise or, better yet, before they do.”



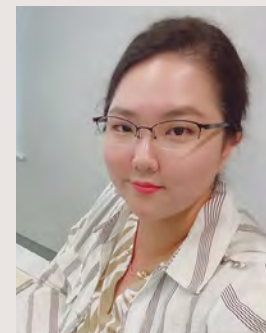
Stephanie Fredrick



Amanda Nickerson

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.



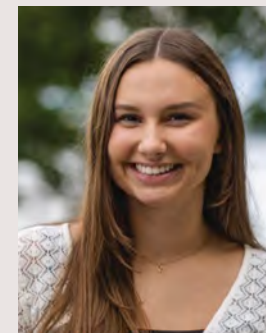
Jessica (MinkYung) Baek

Hometown:

Gangnam City, Seoul, South Korea

Program: Information Science, PhD

As I aspire to become a school psychologist, I am deeply committed to identifying and applying the most effective ways to support children and adolescents both inside and outside of school settings. My research interests broadly focus on the implementation of social-emotional learning practices in schools, crisis prevention and intervention strategies within educational settings, and issues related to peer bullying. Being a Presidential Fellow and student in the counseling psychology and school psychology PhD program will provide the foundation and opportunities I need to pursue all of these goals and make a meaningful impact in the field.



Katie Brown

Hometown:

Honeoye Falls, New York

Program: Counseling Psychology and School Psychology, PhD

My research focuses on the intersections of mental health, mentoring and career development, with particular attention to how adolescents and young adults navigate educational and vocational pathways across cultural contexts. I aim to advance assessment and intervention practices that support resilience, possibility development, and equitable career outcomes for youth. This fellowship will provide the resources and mentorship needed to strengthen my research and ensure that young people receive culturally responsive support, as they pursue their educational and career goals.



Deniz Inanici

Hometown:

Istanbul, Turkey

Program: Counseling Psychology and School Psychology, PhD

My interest lies in investigating how the intersection of factors at home, school and broader society influence students’ decisions to pursue STEM in the Southeast Asia region, and exploring effective interventions to address gender and socioeconomic inequalities in this issue. This fellowship will provide me with the resources to contribute to the advancement of research in this critical area.



Sharon Jessica

Hometown:

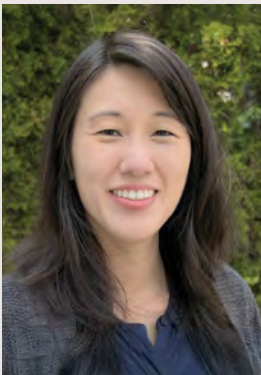
Bandung, Indonesia

Program: Educational Culture, Policy and Society, PhD

My interest lies in investigating how the intersection of factors at home, school and broader society influence students’ decisions to pursue STEM in the Southeast Asia region, and exploring effective interventions to address gender and socioeconomic inequalities in this issue. This fellowship will provide me with the resources to contribute to the advancement of research in this critical area.



Presidential Fellows, continued



Melissa Sze
Hometown: Buffalo, New York
Program: Counseling Psychology and School Psychology, PhD
I aspire to forge a path through my studies, research, direct service and advocacy that allows me to make meaningful differences in people's lives. My vision is to create and support initiatives that promote individual and societal well-being, making a sustainable impact on the communities I serve. From the words of Mahalia Jackson, "If I can help somebody, as I travel along, you know, my living shall not be in vain."



Grace Xu
Hometown: Shenzhen, China
Program: Curriculum, Instruction and the Science of Learning, PhD
My academic and professional goal is to explore how technology can expand access to meaningful learning for children who are often overlooked in traditional educational settings. With the support of this fellowship, I hope to design and research technology-enhanced learning environments that empower these students to learn about the world and about themselves.

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.



Jessica Chatonda
Hometown: Chicago, Illinois
Program: Educational Leadership and Policy, PhD
I am passionate about advancing equity in higher education through exploring student success for first-generation college students, well-being and the experiences of Black women navigating these spaces. The Schomburg Fellowship supports my commitment to my research and provides a pathway toward advocacy for these populations. At UB, I hope to continue to support first-generation college students and research how we can create more equitable and inclusive environments for both students and staff in higher education.



Melissa Elliott
Hometown: North Collins, New York
Program: Curriculum, Instruction and Science of Learning, PhD
I'm passionate about helping K-12 teachers make science equitable, locally relevant and truly interdisciplinary. My interests include creating and/or supporting place-based climate and environmental justice curriculum, investigating the barriers that limit this work, and designing supports that help both in-service and preservice teachers enact this curriculum with confidence. This fellowship will provide the time, mentorship and partnerships to weave these goals together and drive change in K-12 education.



Riley Godwin
Hometown: Buffalo, New York
Program: Counseling Psychology and School Psychology, PhD
Through my research as a school psychology PhD student, I seek to investigate the topics of peer victimization, bias-based bullying and mental health in children and adolescents, with the ultimate goal of developing evidence-based interventions that foster resilience and improve mental health outcomes. Being awarded the Arthur Schomburg Fellowship will undoubtedly allow me to pursue this work with greater focus, precision and impact—especially in support of underserved youth and school communities.



Naiyyir Hossain
Hometown: Buffalo, New York
Program: Educational Data Science, PhD
My goal is to improve instructional design through data-driven approaches to digital learning, in the hopes of creating more equitable and engaging educational experiences. This fellowship gives me the resources to explore how technology and learning analytics can transform instruction and support diverse learners, while developing the expertise needed to lead impactful, research-based innovations in education.



Christina Inyang
Hometown: Queens, New York
Program: Counseling Psychology and School Psychology, PhD
My academic and professional goals include exploring how systemic oppression and overlapping social identities shape the identity development and well-being of African diasporic women. My research interests include race-based trauma, spiritual, cultural and body-centered interventions, and liberatory practices that support healing, coping and sustained thriving. I am grateful for the opportunity this fellowship provides to further my growth and impact as a scientist-practitioner.



Vanessa O'Neil-White
Hometown: Buffalo, New York
Program: Literacy and English Education, PhD
My work in the secondary classroom, for the past ten years, has focused on equity, literacy and storytelling. With this fellowship, my research will continue to examine the intersection of gender and social class in educational experiences and uplift student voices in educational spaces.



Savannah Rourk
Hometown: Charleston, South Carolina
Program: Counseling Psychology and School Psychology, PhD
Throughout my time at UB, I hope to work with Dr. Stephanie Fredrick to observe how bias-based bullying impacts marginalized youth, specifically LGBTQIA+ youth and youth from BIPOC communities. I hope to develop school-wide bullying interventions specifically for marginalized youth that bring awareness to individualized needs of students and the importance of continuing social-emotional learning in schools.

Caught in a Landslide:

Moral injury and the collapse of teaching

BY TIFFANY KARALIS NOEL
Clinical Associate Professor of Learning
and Instruction

*Is this the real life,
or civic hypocrisy?*

*Caught in a spreadsheet,
stripped of humanity.*

*Open your eyes, look up
from your screen and see,*

*I'm just a cog now,
in a cracked democracy.*

In 1975, Queen’s “Bohemian Rhapsody” stunned listeners with its refusal to follow any conventional structure. The song lurches from soft piano ballad to operatic absurdity to anguished rock anthem, never settling into a single form or offering resolution. Its enduring power lies in that disorientation.

That same disorientation now defines the experience of many American teachers.

To teach in the post-pandemic United States is to inhabit an increasingly incoherent system that proclaims education as a cornerstone of democracy, but treats its stewards as disposable. The condition often labeled “teacher burnout” is more accurately described as a moral crisis. It’s not stress or fatigue; it’s the psychological toll of being asked, day after day, to participate in practices that contradict the very values that drew educators to the profession in the first place.

According to a 2024 report by the RAND Corporation, nearly 60 percent of K–12 teachers report frequent burnout, and nearly half say they are considering leaving the profession within the year. These numbers, while alarming, are not simply the result of long hours or stubborn students. They are the symptoms of a deeper condition that ethicists and trauma researchers call moral injury.

Originally coined in military and medical contexts, moral injury describes the experience of being compelled to act in ways

that betray one’s ethical commitments. For teachers, it might mean enforcing policies that silence students, ignoring their own professional judgment or standing by as inequities worsen—all while knowing better. Over time, what begins as a pang of discomfort becomes a sustained erosion of self.

Most teachers do not enter the profession to become enforcers of policy. They come to build relationships, nurture civic responsibility and foster critical thinking. But the system they enter often rewards something else entirely: compliance over curiosity, surveillance over trust, technical efficiency over moral engagement. Teachers must navigate overcrowded classrooms, punitive accountability structures, and legislation that constricts both curriculum and conscience.

The COVID-19 pandemic briefly disrupted that rhythm. At the height of school closures, educators were hailed as heroes. They scrambled to create virtual classrooms and emergency lesson plans, often while tending to their own families and fears. For a moment, the dissonance faded. The public saw the improvisational labor that teaching had always required.

But the recognition was short-lived. When schools reopened, many teachers returned not to relief, but to intensified strain: larger rosters, deeper student trauma, reduced planning time and an increasingly volatile political climate. They were praised for their care, yet punished when that care conflicted with policy. They were asked to foster democratic values while being told which truths were off-limits. In many states, new laws now dictate how teachers may speak—if at all—about race, gender, inequality and history, precisely the subjects most relevant to students’ lives. The contradiction is stark: Cultivate critical thinking, but censor critical content. Model empathy, but ignore injustice. Care, but only within the boundaries of obedience.

Over time, these contradictions wear down not only a teacher’s spirit but their sense of self. As “Bohemian Rhapsody” demands in its

operatic crescendo—“So you think you can stone me and spit in my eye”—many teachers reach a breaking point. What begins as disillusionment becomes rupture, and what starts as exhaustion corrodes into ethical collapse.

And so they leave. Not out of indifference, but as an act of self-preservation and moral survival. They are not walking away from students but from a system that demands silence when they are called to speak, obedience when they are trained to question, and endurance in the face of sustained injustice.

And what remains after they go? Visit the empty classroom. The whiteboard still bears yesterday’s date. A stack of ungraded papers curls at the corners. The fluorescent lights buzz overhead. The room is vacant, but the purpose that once animated it has faded beyond recognition.

We cannot talk about teacher retention without talking about moral injury. We cannot address what is often described as a teacher shortage without confronting the policy decisions and institutional habits that are driving good educators out. Teachers aren’t leaving because they lack resilience—they’re leaving because they’re being asked to participate in a version of education that violates the very commitments that brought them to the work.

If we frame this crisis as a matter of compensation or workload alone, we obscure the more unsettling truth that teaching, once understood as a calling, has been reduced to a role governed by constraint and control. Addressing this crisis requires more than recruitment strategies or surface-level incentives. It calls for structural repair through the restoration of autonomy, the renewal of trust, and the creation of conditions in which care is not seen as a private act of sacrifice, but as the public foundation of democratic life.

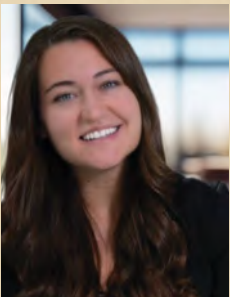
The question is not simply whether we can recruit more teachers. It’s whether we can rebuild a profession worth staying in, and whether our education system still believes in the civic mission it claims to uphold.

And that is the real emergency—not a shortage of teachers, not a lack of will, but a collapse of purpose. A crisis not of endurance, but of trust. And without trust, there is no democracy. Only performance.

At the end of “Bohemian Rhapsody,” the music softens. The lyrics fade into resignation: “Nothing really matters to me.” It would be easy to hear apathy in that final note. But listen again. What you hear is grief—the voice of someone who once cared deeply, who gave everything they had, who believed too much, for too long, in a system that forgot how to believe in itself.

“They are not walking away from students but from a system that demands silence when they are called to speak, obedience when they are trained to question, and endurance in the face of sustained injustice.”

– Tiffany Karalis Noel



Tiffany Karalis Noel, director of doctoral programs and clinical associate professor of learning and instruction, investigates how systems, structures and mentoring relationships influence educational equity, teacher development and institutional transformation.



This image is AI generated.

GSE student unearths the hidden histories of founding Black mothers

BY DANIELLE LEGARE



Nick Kennedy was well into his career as a high school English teacher when he realized just how much was missing from his own K-12 education. Black women—integral figures in shaping American history—were conspicuously absent from the curriculum. Now, as both an educator and a doctoral student at GSE, Kennedy is working to change that narrative.

His involvement in “The Search for Founding Black Mothers”—a National Endowment for the Humanities-funded initiative dedicated to reclaiming the erased histories of Black women—has transformed his approach to teaching and research. “Recognizing and really wrestling with that huge gap in my own education has been pretty paramount for my pedagogy,” he said.

Reclaiming the stories of Black women

“The Search for Founding Black Mothers” began as a research article by Gretchen Rudham and Candice Logan-Washington of Morgan State University before evolving into a month-long digital humanities institute for educators. Kennedy was selected as one of 30 teachers to participate in the summer 2022 program, where he engaged in an interdisciplinary exploration of the contributions of Black women throughout American history.

“He seeks knowledge to not only better his students’ classroom experiences, but to improve himself as a human so he can attend to the needs of those who rely on him.” —LaGarrett King

The project addressed historical erasure by analyzing archival silences, connecting with scholars and descendants, and developing curricular resources to bring these narratives into classrooms. Following the institute, Kennedy continued his work with “The Search,” coauthoring an article in Interdisciplinary Digital Engagement in Arts & Humanities alongside fellow educators and scholars. His contribution, “Between Binaries in The Search,” examines the tensions between the digital and the physical, the local and the global, and the generative and recursive nature of historical reclamation. He explores how digital humanities provide both a means to recover lost narratives and a tool to critically reexamine the way history is told.

Bringing ‘The Search’ into the classroom

For Kennedy, “The Search” is more than an academic project. It is a call to action. His high school students now engage with these recovered histories and challenge the omissions of traditional curricula. “Bringing elements of ‘The Search’ into the classroom has facilitated powerful encounters in my high school English classes,” he said. Moreover, Kennedy’s doctoral studies in GSE’s learning and teaching in social contexts EdD program have deepened his research focus. He is particularly interested in the accessibility and impact of Black studies curricula in predominantly white institutions. According to LaGarrett King, professor of learning and instruction, Kennedy’s contributions to the GSE community have been impressive.

“He is unique in that he balances his identities as a secondary teacher and a scholar. He sees them as one and allows those identities to merge and are equally valuable in who he is. He seeks knowledge to not only better his students’ classroom experiences, but to improve himself as a human so he can attend to the needs of those who rely on him,” King said.

Expanding the conversation

While “The Search” remains a central pillar of his scholarship, Kennedy is also sharing his insights with broader audiences. Recently, he contributed an article to Ed Week titled “Can’t Teach AP African American Studies? Start a Club,” offering strategies for educators facing curricular restrictions. Additionally, Kennedy serves on the Advisory Group for the Gilder Lehrman Institute’s AP African American Studies Guide, a resource designed to support classroom instruction and student learning of the College Board’s AP African American Studies curriculum. He is also a trustee on the school board of Solvang School District and teaches in Arroyo Grande—both in California—as well as works as a curriculum partner with the Colored Conventions Project. He recently served as chair of the Ambassadorship Committee for the National Humanities Center’s Teacher Advisory Council. “The work I do in the classroom informs my scholarship, and my scholarship informs my classroom,” he said. “That symbiotic relationship is what I aspired to achieve through a doctoral program, and I couldn’t be happier with the decision I made, and I feel very fortunate to be a part of this community.”



Nick is with Cortnie Belser of CUNY. She is a coauthor of “The Search for Founding Black Mothers” piece.



CARRYING A DREAM ACROSS BORDERS:

A journey of motherhood, scholarship and advocacy

BY VANDANA SHARMA

Born and raised in India, I am a proud first-generation student whose journey has been shaped by determination, love and a deep sense of purpose. When I moved to Buffalo from Canada during an unexpected snowstorm, I wasn't just crossing borders. I was stepping into my father's greatest wish for me: to earn a PhD and use it to make a meaningful impact in education. As the first woman in both my family and my husband's family to pursue a doctorate, this journey is more than academic for me.

I chose the University at Buffalo because I wanted more than a degree. I wanted an academic community committed to equity, social justice and courageous leadership. In GSE, I found rigor, mentorship and a mission that aligns with my own.

As an international educator and special education teacher with seven years of classroom experience, I've seen how students with disabilities are often left behind due to systemic gaps in policy and practice. My commitment to helping these students began in India, where the lack of inclusive education and policy frameworks first sparked my commitment to equity. Now, as a third-year doctoral student, my research focuses on adolescent girls with learning disabilities who are at risk of gender-based violence; young women marginalized at the intersections of (dis)ability, gender and race. Too often, they're denied and/or lack access to support due to the compounded effects of ableism, racism and gender inequality. My work is about amplifying voices that have been silenced for far too long.

I began my program in the fall of 2023. I knew it would not be easy, given the many responsibilities on my shoulders. This journey became even more complex when I learned I was pregnant during the early stages of my PhD. Despite the emotional and physical toll of pregnancy, postpartum anxiety and financial hardship, I chose not to give up. I kept pushing forward without any breaks from my academic and work responsibilities.

Balancing motherhood with doctoral research has been the greatest challenge of my life, but it has also been the most defining. Through tears behind closed doors, I struggled with anxiety and homesickness. Yet, I kept going, buoyed by the steadfast love and support of my husband and family, as well as the unwavering support of my advisor, Dr. Melinda Lemke. It is impossible to share my journey without mentioning her role. Dr. Lemke has been a lifeline. Her mentorship, compassion, fierce advocacy and unwavering belief in me gave me the strength I needed

during my most challenging times. She is not only guiding my academic work but also holding space for me as a whole person. It was through her mentorship that my interest in gender-based violence took shape; what began as a question grew into a powerful academic commitment. I am forever grateful!

At UB and within GSE, I have found a community that values both my intellect and my humanity. My research not only contributes to academic scholarship but also informs policy reforms that protect and empower girls at the margins, especially those whose voices have been too long ignored.

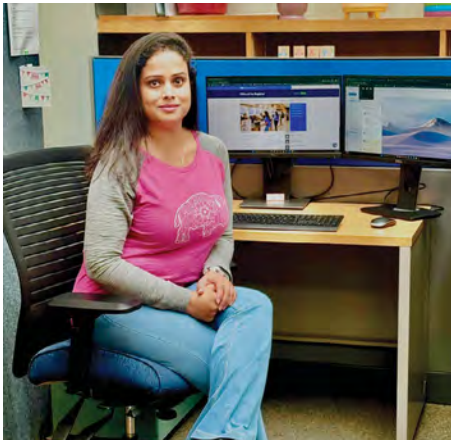
“Dr. Lemke has been a lifeline. Her mentorship, compassion, fierce advocacy and unwavering belief in me gave me the strength I needed during my most challenging times.”

To fellow international students and student parents: You are not alone. Balancing school, parenting and life in a new country takes courage and strength. Your journey matters. Keep going, even when it's hard. Even in silence, your resilience is rewriting your story!

Vandana Sharma is a third-year PhD student in GSE's educational administration PhD program.



Every milestone in my career is rooted in the love, joy and strength my children and husband bring into my life.



Every dream flourishes with a circle of support. Mine found its home in the Office of the Registrar, where, as a graduate assistant, I've been mentored and trained for administrative roles in higher education.



Everything I am and strive to be stands on the foundation my mom and dad built for me, with my little brother's encouragement guiding every step of my journey.

‘Accountabilibuddies’: How a chance meeting turned into a lifelong friendship at UB and beyond

BY NICOLE MEHLMAN-DAVIDOW



How does a 15-year-long friendship start at an information tent?

For Ryan Taughrin, EdM '12, GSE's assistant dean of enrollment management and director of admissions, and Danielle Lewis, PhD '23, postdoctoral associate in UB's Department of Engineering Education, it was a chance meeting while working at a resource tent. UB's opportunity to volunteer during the first week of classes brought them together, but it was a shared commitment to making the field of higher education more accessible that forged a lifelong friendship.

"I was a grad assistant working with new students and their families, and Danielle was working with what was formerly called undergraduate academies here at UB. We just so happened to be working at the same information tent, and we found we were both passionate about living learning communities and their benefits," said Taughrin, currently enrolled in the higher education PhD program. "We take it to a bit of an extreme, but when you find someone who aligns professionally and academically, it's important to cultivate that relationship."

Fifteen years later, that chance meeting led to both Taughrin and Lewis collaborating to achieve their respective career goals, pursuing doctoral degrees and, most recently, becoming running partners.

Fitness has also been a major component of Taughrin and Lewis' relationship. Together, along with GSE PhD student Chrissy Daniel, they have been meeting multiple times a week with Pace Buffalo's running club and took part in the Buffalo half-marathon last spring.

"Chrissy and Ryan call me 'the people's peer mentor,' because I'm always trying to get them to publish or do trainings, but the roles get reversed with running," said Lewis with a laugh. "It's nice that in different areas of our friendship, we can support each other and one person is taking the lead and encouraging the other one."

‘Accountabilibuddies’

Whether it's running, research or work, Lewis and Taughrin have held each other accountable, pursuing the goals they had established for themselves. During the COVID-19 pandemic, they made sure to touch base virtually as much as possible.

"We were waking up at 5 a.m. and meeting on Zoom to hold each other accountable and make sure we were doing academic work at a time when our families didn't need us," said Lewis. "If one of us didn't show up, the other one would call until that person was woken up."

Lewis and Taughrin highlighted that having an "accountabilibuddy" who was in the thick of a similar journey to their own was key to getting through the hard times.

"Having someone who knows your history and can talk through the pros and cons, and things you haven't even considered, is quite the strength to have," said Taughrin.

Lewis echoed similar sentiments: "He has carried me through some challenging times, especially in terms of job searches. Ryan is my own personal hype man!"

Dissertations and dance recitals

If they say it takes a village to raise a child, then Lewis and Taughrin have created their own version by blending their families. As they grew in their respective careers, their collaboration went beyond research and work. It began to include strategies for tackling parenting challenges while pursuing a doctoral degree and working full time.

"Our families are friends at this point. Danielle's daughter is considered my middle child and vice versa," said Taughrin. "Our kids dance with the same team—they're close—so we've been able to navigate parenting together, which is not easy while working and getting a PhD."

"Having someone who complements your work and challenges you to keep going was critical, and for me, if it wasn't for her, I would have quit the program." - Ryan Taughrin

This experience of balancing their jobs, family and scholarly learning will be brought to life in a forthcoming book chapter.

"I think we're going to write about what success looks like for us," said Lewis. "It's not just graduating, publishing and making sure our work for our jobs is done. It's about how we manage all those things and spend a whole weekend at a dance competition, and make sure that we have time to go on dates with our spouses and run six days a week."

Their chapter was accepted by editors, Oksana Moroz, PhD, Silvia Vaccino-Salvadore, PhD, and Gloria Park, PhD, for their forthcoming book "Navigating Parenting

during the Doctoral Journey: Affordances and Constraints in Managing Academic and Family Responsibilities." In writing this duoethnography, Lewis and Taughrin hope that their shared experiences, along with those of others, will serve as a toolkit for doctoral students' educational journeys.

‘Until we're both old’

Both Lewis and Taughrin stated that their working partnership, as well as their friendship, is for life, and their "accountabilibuddy" partnership continues as Taughrin finishes his doctoral program.

"Danielle is unafraid to ask people hard questions," said Taughrin. "Having someone who complements your work and challenges you to keep going was critical, and for me, if it wasn't for her, I would have quit the program."

"He is a person who will be in my life until we're old," said Lewis. "His friendship and support have been one of the greatest surprise blessings of my adult life."



Lewis cheers on Taughrin at the Buffalo half-marathon, where the running partners swapped their usual academic motivation for race-day encouragement.



Meet the Residents

All of GSE's teacher preparation programs feature a year-long residency experience. Resident teachers serve in a co-teaching capacity alongside an expert mentor teacher for a full school year, while simultaneously engaging in rigorous university coursework. Theory and practice merge, and residents hone their skills with the support of mentor teachers and university faculty. Upon completion, residents are well-equipped to lead their classrooms and positively impact their students' educational experiences.

From left: Kelsey Soto-Garza, Sarah Nocero, Jannatun Uddin, Xavier Morgan, Katherine Schibler, Joshua Brice, Kinja Bagalwa, Abigail Mansfield, Cagla Zirek, Autumn Ragonese, and Sumaya Ahmed.

Not pictured: Margaret Adams, Samuel Anglim, Michael Jakubaszek, Lily Nasso, Daniel Ray, Lucy SanGeorge, Bridget Sharp, James Sutherlin, Johanna Woellert

Removing barriers to entering the profession and meeting local, state and national needs for excellent teachers are aims of GSE's Office of Educator Preparation. Through partnerships and collaborations with local districts, we offer several funded teacher residency pathways, each with varied funding support, as well as different programmatic foci, selection criteria, commitment requirements and partner districts.

Noyce Residency Cohort

Funded by a National Science Foundation Robert Noyce Teacher Scholarship Program grant, Noyce scholars are undergraduate STEM majors or career-changers who have made the decision to pursue teaching. Noyce Residency Scholars participate in a range of programs and experiences designed to engage them in STEM-oriented community outreach and community-driven science initiatives. In exchange for scholarship and stipend support, Noyce Scholars commit to teaching in high-need school districts for two years per year of funding, after completing the program and earning their initial science or math teacher certification.

- Margaret Adams
- Abigail Mansfield
- Sarah Nocero
- Autumn Ragonese
- Cagla Zirek

My Brother's Keeper (MBK) Teacher Opportunity Corps (TOC) Cohort

Funded by a grant from the New York State Education Department, MBK TOC Scholars are committed to cultivating inclusive, affirming and equitable classroom climates where K12 students' social-emotional and academic needs are met. Rooted in the New York State Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Framework, the MBK TOC community of practice engages scholars in experiences designed to extend their capacity for enacting responsive-sustaining practices in their classrooms, schools and local communities. Cohort members receive scholarships and certification-related support during their residency year.

- Sumaya Ahmed
- Kinja Bagalwa
- Joshua Brice
- Xavier Morgan
- Lily Nasso
- Kelsey Soto-Garza
- James Sutherlin
- Jannatun Uddin

BOCES-District Partnership Cohort

Funded by a New York State Department of Labor Teacher Residency Program grant, in collaboration with Erie 1 BOCES and local school districts, graduate-level PK12 teacher candidates receive stipends that provide them with monetary support as they focus on their studies and participate in their residency placements. Residency scholars are selected based on the needs of our WNY School District partners.

- Samuel Anglim
- Kinja Bagalwa
- Abigail Mansfield
- Sarah Nocero
- Katherine Schibler
- Bridget Sharp

Buffalo Public Schools Residency Cohort

Funded by a New York State Department of Labor Teacher Residency Program grant, in collaboration with Buffalo Public Schools, graduate-level teacher candidates in teaching World Languages or English for Speakers of Other Languages receive stipends that provide them monetary assistance, affording an opportunity to focus on their studies and continue to participate in our registered residency program.

- Michael Jakubaszek
- Daniel Ray
- Lucy SanGeorge
- Kelsey Soto-Garza
- Johanna Woellert



Teacher resident Autumn Ragonese engages students in interactive learning.

Event Recap

Gail Paradise Memorial Endowed Lecture
“Education, Gender and Muslim Womanhood: Ethnographies of a Punjabi Muslim Community from Pakistan and a Maya Muslim Community from Mexico,” featuring Ayesha Khurshid, PhD, associate professor of educational leadership and policy studies at Florida State University | May 2, 2025





New Student Orientation
Aug. 23, 2025



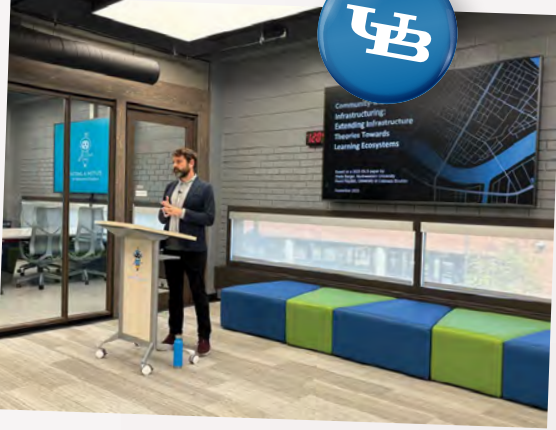
Ice Cream Social
Aug. 26, 2025

Black Boy Joy
Black Girl Magic
THE HISTORY OF BLACK CHILDHOODS
8th Annual Teaching Black History Conference
“Black Boy Joy, Black Girl Magic: The History of Black Childhoods”
| July 25-27, 2025



GSE State of the School
Sept. 26, 2025







Black History Nerds Saturday School Professional Development Series
Learn more: ed.buffalo.edu/bh-nerds



“Sovereign Learning: Black Home Education From Historical Necessity to Contemporary Choice,”
featuring Cheryl Fields-Smith, PhD | Sept. 13, 2025



“The Black History 101 Mobile Museum and the Million Man March,”
featuring Khalid el-Hakim, PhD | Oct. 11, 2025



“If We Don’t Get: A People’s History of Ferguson” and “Reflections on 10 Years of Black Lives Matter,”
featuring Stefan Bradley, PhD | Nov. 8, 2025



“Voices Still Crying out From the Wilderness: Lessons From Black Educators 20 Years Post Katrina,”
featuring Daniella Cook Sumpter, PhD | Dec. 13, 2025

Institute for Learning Sciences Speaker Series
“Planning Learning-Centered Communities: Where Urban Design Meets Learning Science,” featuring Wade Berger, PhD, Northwestern University | Sept. 11, 2025
“Rethinking K-12 in the Intelligence Era: Smart Classrooms and Learning Communities,” featuring Jim Slotta, PhD, University of Toronto | Sept. 29, 2025

On the Move

HONORS, AWARDS AND PROMOTIONS



FACULTY AWARDS



Sam Abramovich, associate dean of academic affairs and associate professor in the Departments of Information Science and Learning and Instruction, is part of the inaugural class of SUNY's AI for the Public Good Fellows.



Tasha Austin, assistant professor in the Department of Learning and Instruction, received a UB Exceptional Scholar-Young Investigator Award for 2025 and an Early Career Award from the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages Research Special Interest Group.



Yunjeong Chang in the Department of Learning and Instruction has been promoted to associate professor.



Myles Faith, professor in the Department of Counseling, School and Educational Psychology, received a UB Exceptional Scholar-Sustained Achievement Award for 2025.



Virginia Flood, assistant professor in the Department of Learning and Instruction, received an award from the National Science Foundation's Faculty Early Career Development Program.



Wendy Guyker in the Department of Counseling, School and Educational Psychology has been promoted to clinical full professor.



Megan Iantosca, along with coauthors Shelley Kimelberg, Ryan Taughrin and Danielle Lewis, received the honorable mention for the Sociological Forum Inaugural Author Award, highlighting groundbreaking contributions to educational sociology.



Jaekyung Lee, professor in the Department of Counseling, School and Educational Psychology, was named a University at Buffalo Distinguished Professor.



Xi Lu, assistant professor in the Department of Information Science, earned a Best Paper Award at the Association for Computing Machinery CHI 2025, a premier global conference on human-computer interaction.



Tim Monreal, assistant professor in the Department of Learning and Instruction, received the Ina J. Ferguson Chatmon Parent Advocate Award at the Buffalo Public Schools Family and Community Engagement Summit.



Sarah A. Robert, professor in the Department of Learning and Instruction, received the 2025 Association for the Study of Food and Society Book Award, Edited Volume Category, as well as the 2025 Best School Meals Book in the World, awarded at the 30th Annual Gourmand Food Book Awards. She has also been promoted to full professor.



Stephen Santa-Ramirez in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy has been promoted to associate professor.



Michele Shanahan in the Department of Counseling, School and Educational Psychology has been promoted to clinical full professor.



John Strong in the Department of Learning and Instruction has been promoted to associate professor.



Rebecca Vujnovic in the Department of Counseling, School and Educational Psychology has been promoted to clinical full professor.



X. Christine Wang, professor of learning and instruction and senior associate dean for interdisciplinary research, received the University at Buffalo's President's Medal during the 2025 commencement ceremony. Wang also received a UB Exceptional Scholar-Sustained Achievement Award for 2025.

STUDENT AWARDS



Tiffany L. Bromfield, a doctoral candidate in the higher education PhD program, received the Best Presentation Award at the Northeast Association of College and University Housing Officers (NEACUHO) Annual Conference in October 2024.



Sarah Hale, a doctoral student in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy, was named the 2025-26 Graduate At-Large Representative for the American Educational Research Association (AERA) Division J.



Jayda Holmes, Kingsley Arthur, Phoenix McClinton and Sunettee Sharpe, master's students in the higher education and student affairs program, received the Esther Lloyd-Jones Case Study Competition Award at the College Student Personnel Association of New York State (CSPANYS) Conference in Fall 2024.



Rahnuma E Jannat, a student in the school psychology PhD program, received the APA Division 16 School Psychology Blue Ribbon Award for Top Student Poster at the 2025 American Psychological Association Conference in Denver. Her poster was titled "Cyberbullying: Association with Adolescents' Global Self-Worth and Peer Support."



Kendall Klosko, a student in the higher education and student affairs master's program, received the "Of The Month" Award from the National Residence Hall Honorary of the National Association of College & University Residence Halls, Inc. in April 2025 for her conflict mediation and thoughtful programming. In May 2025, she was named Advisor of the Year at the University at Buffalo Residence Hall Association Awards.



Iman Lathan, PhD student in education, culture, policy and society, was selected as a 2025 NAEd/Spencer Dissertation Fellow, one of the most prestigious awards available to doctoral students in education research.



Erin MacDiarmid, a PhD student in the higher education program, received the Robert E. Valenti Memorial Scholarship Award in March 2025 from the University at Buffalo Graduate School of Education. In April 2025, she also received the Outstanding Leadership Award from UB's School of Engineering and Applied Sciences.



On the Move

HONORS, AWARDS
AND PROMOTIONS

Taylor Smith, a student in GSE's English for speakers of other languages education program, was named a Fulbright recipient, carrying GSE's commitment to global education into communities around the world.



Shay Valley, a student in the higher education PhD program, received the Class of 2000 Anna Furgiuele ELP Award from the University at Buffalo Graduate School of Education in November 2024. The award supports professional development expenses for higher education students.

ALUMNI AWARDS



Russel Bassarath, a recent graduate of the UB Teach program, was recognized as a Fulbright Alumni Ambassador, sharing his experiences and inspiring others to follow a similar path.



Laureen Cantwell, a recent doctoral graduate in the Department of Information Science, received the 2025 ALISE Eugene Garfield Doctoral Dissertation Award. This prestigious national honor recognizes outstanding dissertation research in library and information science.



Yanelly M. Reyes, a recent graduate of the early childhood/childhood education program, received the SUNY Association of College Council and College Trustees (ACT) Nancy L. Zimpher Scholarship for Teacher Education. The award recognizes her outstanding academic performance and extraordinary commitment to her campus and community.



STAFF AWARDS
AND PROMOTIONS



Nicole Mehlman-Davidow, assistant director of communications and web, was the overall female winner at the sprint distance in the A Tri in the Buff at Evangola State Park. Following that performance, she placed in the top ten among women at the Barreلمان Olympic distance triathlon and took first place in the women's 30-34 age group.



Carly Ogletree in the Office of Research has been promoted to post-award finance manager.



Eduvijez Sanchez, assistant director of recruitment in GSE's Office of Admission, was accepted into the 2025 NAGAP Leadership Academy. She was also recognized through UB Human Resources' Pillars of Pride program for August 2025. This peer-to-peer recognition highlights the importance of empathy, integrity and effort.



Ryan Taughrin, assistant dean for enrollment management and a PhD student in GSE's higher education program, received a SUNY Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Professional Service.

WELCOME TO GSE

Hemy Choi joined GSE as a senior counselor for students.

Lisa Kragbé joined GSE's office of community outreach and engagement as the program and event administrator.

Julia Schildwachter joined the Gifted Math Program as a staff assistant.

Kristen Smigielski joined the Department of Learning and Instruction as a research project manager.



A milestone moment:

COMMENCEMENT 2025



President's Medal awarded to X. Christine Wang



Excellence in Research Award presented to Cara Monaco



Excellence in Community Outreach and Engagement Award presented to Yun Liang



Excellence in Inclusion and Belonging Award presented to Dabralis Garmon

On Friday, May 16, 2025, GSE celebrated its 94th commencement ceremony in UB's Alumni Arena. Faculty, staff, family and friends cheered as graduates crossed the stage. Blue and white balloons rained down in celebration. The Class of 2025 officially joined the GSE alumni community.

The celebration began the night before, with a special reception honoring graduating PhD students and distinguished members of the GSE community. Several prestigious awards were presented during the two-day celebration:

President's Medal
X. Christine Wang, Professor of Learning and Instruction; Senior Associate Dean for Interdisciplinary Research

Dean's Service Award
Angela Cullen, Principal, Research Laboratory High School

Distinguished Alumni Award
Heather Jenkins, President and CEO, The Literacy Lab

Dr. Edwin D. Duryea, Jr. Higher Education Memorial Award
Kavitha Muralidhar, Higher Education, PhD '25

Excellence in Community Outreach and Engagement Award
Yun Liang, Educational Culture, Policy and Society, PhD '25

Excellence in Inclusion and Belonging Award
Dabralis Garmon, Spanish Education: Adolescence, EdM '25

Excellence in Research Award
Cara Monaco, Curriculum, Instruction and the Science of Learning, PhD '25

PhD Excellence Award
Julianna Casella, Counseling Psychology and School Psychology, PhD '25

PhD Mentorship Award
Seong Won Han, Associate Professor of Educational Leadership and Policy

In her address to the graduates, Dean Suzanne Rosenblith reflected on the challenges and opportunities facing today's educators, counselors and researchers: "The Graduate School of Education has prepared you not just to be professionals, but to be catalysts for change—resilient,

empathetic and unwavering in your commitment to justice and equity. The knowledge and skills you have honed at UB will guide you as you navigate complex realities and seek meaningful solutions." This year's faculty-selected student speaker, Courtney Copeland (Counseling Psychology and School Psychology, PhD '25), shared a heartfelt message about purpose and responsibility in the field of education: "As we move forward into our careers, whether in clinical practice, research, teaching or service, we carry with us a deep responsibility: to uphold the highest standards of ethics, integrity and cultural humility. We must continue to examine our own biases and privileges and recognize the impact our identities and experiences have on our work. We must approach those we serve not as problems to fix, but as individuals with unique stories, strengths and boundless potential." Congratulations to the Class of 2025! Your journey with UB may have reached a milestone, but your impact on the world is only beginning.

REWRITING THE FUTURE: UB, AI and the next chapter in literacy



Suzanne Rosenblith, GSE dean and professor, and UB alumna Elizabeth A. Czarnecki visit a tutoring program at Heritage Heights School, part of the Sweet Home district, in August 2024.

The literacy crisis is urgent, but solvable. With public-private partnerships, science-based practices and a new generation of teachers trained at UB, change is possible.

BY FLORENCE GONSALVES

A national crisis

Nearly one in five U.S. adults struggles with the comprehension skills needed to participate fully in society: completing job applications, following medical instructions or filling out ballots, for example. Children aren't faring much better. According to the 2024 National Assessment of Educational Progress, just 30% of fourth graders read at a proficient level. Scores for both fourth and eighth graders have dropped since 2019 and have shown no meaningful progress since the early 1990s.

The burden falls hardest on communities of color, immigrants and low-income families, with ripple effects for economic growth, public health and social justice. Low literacy in the U.S. costs an estimated \$2.24 trillion annually in lost productivity and increased social services.

UB's longstanding role in literacy

GSE has been tackling these challenges for decades through its Center for Literacy and Reading Instruction (CLaRI). Founded in 1963, the clinic partners with schools across Erie County, offering tutoring, assessment and evidence-based interventions for children and parents, with special emphasis on under-resourced schools.

CLaRI also serves as a training ground for graduate students and a hub for pioneering literacy research. "As educators, it is our job to provide systematic, evidence-based instruction to students," GSE Dean Suzanne Rosenblith said. "Strengthening CLaRI through new resources, technology and faculty will help us expand research, reach more families and make a greater local-to-global impact."

That expansion is now possible thanks to a generous endowment from UB alumna Elizabeth (Liz) A. Czarnecki, EdM '94, BA '76. Her gift, inspired by her passion for reaching underserved populations with reading and writing instruction, as well as the death of her husband, establishes the Mark J. and Elizabeth A. Czarnecki Professorship and

the Czarnecki Resource Fund in Literacy, supporting CLaRI's tutoring, programming and faculty recruitment.

Meeting community needs

Over the years, CLaRI has adapted to meet local families where they are. "When parents asked for more programming, especially in the summer, we expanded from two semesters of tutoring to year-round services," said Ashlee Campbell, CLaRI's associate director.

Today, students can join Saturday morning tutoring sessions with certified specialists or half-day summer literacy "camps," where small groups work on phonics, fluency, writing and comprehension in a relaxed environment. "There's a real need in the community that we fill," Campbell said.

From research to results

The pandemic amplified that need. In 2021, John Strong, associate professor of literacy education and CLaRI associate director of research, partnered with colleague Blythe Anderson, assistant professor of literacy education, to launch a summer program addressing learning loss. With donor support, they hired UB student tutors to provide small-group, evidence-based instruction.

The results were immediate. Within a month, reading gains were significant enough to publish in *Reading & Writing Quarterly*. Since then, hundreds of students in WNY have benefited, and the program has been replicated across multiple summers and school districts.

Preparing the next generation of teachers

CLaRI also prepares UB graduate students for the realities of today's classrooms. Beyond theory, they practice evidence-based methods under faculty supervision, equipping them to meet students' widely varied reading levels.

GSE student Madison Stercula recalls her first years teaching second grade. "I had no idea there'd be such a discrepancy in reading levels in one class. CLaRI gave me the tools and support to meet those challenges. It

reminded me why I wanted to teach in the first place," she said.

Her experience reflects a broader goal: to send graduates into schools not only as teachers, but as literacy leaders who can influence curricula, support peers and eventually shape educational policy.

A gift with lasting impact

For Czarnecki and her sons, Christopher and Gregory, the gift is personal. It's an homage to her longtime career as an educator working with English language learners and special education students, as well as a tribute to her late husband's legacy of service to the university as a member of the UB Foundation Board of Trustees and vice chair of the UB Council.

The endowment will equip the center to reach even more individuals, families and educators—to buy more books, hire more tutors and prepare more teachers in training across Western New York—while helping to recruit and retain talented faculty like Strong and Anderson, whose pioneering research is transforming literacy instruction, research and intervention nationwide.

"A gift of this magnitude has significant reach and potential impact for so many," said Rosenblith. "Its impact will ripple for generations."

The Czarnecki Professorship also ensures UB has the resources to keep pace with technology—exploring how AI can reduce teacher burnout, personalize learning and extend literacy instruction beyond the classroom, while grounding every innovation in evidence and equity.

Building a culture of reading

At CLaRI, success isn't just about test scores—it's about how kids feel about reading. Children choose their own books, explore graphic novels and celebrate small milestones. "Even if a book is beyond a child's level, we don't say no," Campbell explained. "We find ways to engage them in the story. It's about nurturing confidence and curiosity."

That philosophy—backed by evidence, fueled by community partnerships and now strengthened by the Czarnecki endowment—is why UB is at the forefront of addressing the literacy crisis.

"We're not just teaching kids to read," Stercula said. "We're helping them understand the world, think critically and grow into thoughtful citizens."



Toys with purpose:

How a GSE alum turned a classroom moment into a personal mission

BY DANIELLE LEGARE

When Hannah Bogdan, EdD '23, opened a preschooler's backpack at UB's Early Childhood Research Center (ECRC), she didn't expect to find inspiration for her future nonprofit. But nestled between a book and winter gear were a few classroom toys and one student's honest explanation: "I was just borrowing them like a library."

Instead of treating it as a disciplinary issue, Bogdan—then a teacher at the ECRC—turned the moment into an opportunity. She began allowing students to check out one toy every Friday to take home and return on Monday, transforming the experience into a semester-long action research project for her doctoral coursework.

The children loved it. So did their families. And before long, a much bigger idea began to take shape.

Today, Bogdan is the founder and executive director of the Buffalo Toy Library, a nonprofit community play space that aims to make high-quality toys and materials accessible to all children in Western New York regardless of income, background or zip code.

From dissertation to nonprofit

Bogdan's classroom experiment became the foundation of her dissertation and her mission. While researching international models of toy libraries, she discovered thriving networks in countries like Australia and New Zealand, where borrowing toys is as routine as checking out books.

"Just like a library—where you can walk in and read any book on the shelf—here, the idea is that you can walk in and play with any toy on the shelf," she said. "There's no financial barrier between the kids and the toys in this space."

Through GSE's learning and teaching in social contexts EdD program, Bogdan's dissertation became what one grant reviewer later called "the ultimate business plan." Her research explored models for sustainable and accessible play and equipped her with the tools to launch her nonprofit.

In 2024, the Buffalo Toy Library officially launched, offering a rotating collection of donated toys for children ages 4 months to 12 years. The nonprofit now operates out of its first physical home at 2929 Main Street, where families can drop in to play, explore and borrow toys with a membership.

"Just like a library—where you can walk in and read any book on the shelf—here, the idea is that you can walk in and play with any toy on the shelf." -Hannah Bogdan, EdD

Bogdan has been encouraged by how eager local organizations, small businesses and families were to support the idea. Their enthusiasm has helped the Buffalo Toy Library grow quickly. And, thanks to a grant from the M&T Charitable Foundation supporting scholarship memberships—as well as additional funding from the Children's Foundation of Erie County and donations from individual supporters—no child is turned away.

Deep GSE roots

Bogdan credits much of her success to her time at GSE, where she earned both her EdM and EdD and worked at the ECRC for over five years.

Faculty from the Department of Learning and Instruction, like X. Christine Wang, Tiffany Karalis Noel and Elisabeth Etopio, played key roles in supporting her research and professional growth.

In addition, her relationship with Keeley Benson, associate director of the ECRC, who

first helped run the toy checkout project in her classroom, remains especially meaningful.

"At the ECRC, I supported the project by acting as the librarian, as children checked out toys from our storage room. It quickly became clear to both Hannah and me that this concept had real merit and was something the Western New York community was missing," Benson said. "Today, Hannah continues this vision through the Buffalo Toy Library. I'm proud to support this work as a board member, and my own children love spending time there and borrowing toys themselves."

Building while parenting

While launching the Buffalo Toy Library, Bogdan became a first-time mother to her son, Flynn.

"I have always wanted to be a mom, and I've always believed in the power of play ... Now, as a mom, I feel like I can relate to families on a different level."

Bogdan is excited to continue building a city where free, joyful play is the norm and not the exception.

"All kids in Buffalo deserve play," she said. "All kids everywhere deserve play."



Class Notes

1950s

Loretta Kaminsky, BE '58, former CEO of Lou-Retta's Custom Chocolates, recently won first place in a statewide tap-dancing competition at age 89. She also teaches senior dance at the Amherst Senior Center and continues to prove that age is just a number.

1960s

Victoria Stearns, MLS '65, published her third book "Classical Music: A Listener's Guide."

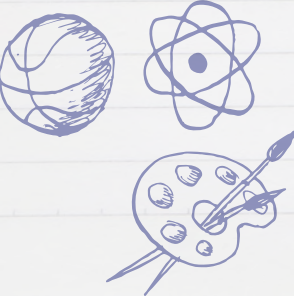


1970s

Marilyn Ciancio, BA '70, MA '70, is a past president of the University at Buffalo Women's Club and chair of the World University Games. She was honored with two National Telly Awards for "Artscope" and recognized with the U.S. Senate Woman of Distinction Award. She was also awarded UB's Wels Award, underscoring her lasting contributions to the UB community and beyond.

Jack Yanno, EdM '70, was honored with multiple Hall of Fame inductions for his decades-long contributions as a teacher and coach, including the Maryvale Sports Wall of Fame, Clarence High School Sports Wall of Fame and the Town of Clarence Baseball Wall of Fame. The Town of Clarence also proclaimed July 25, 2003, as Jack Yanno Day. He is the author of "A Walk Across the Diamonds" and is completing "Golden Stitches," a book chronicling the lives of student-athletes he coached.

William Mehls, EdM '74, BFA '74, was inducted into the Canandaigua City School District Visual and Performing Arts Hall of Fame on Sept. 25, 2025. He taught K-5 general music in the district for 30 years, and was recognized for his contributions to school and community music programs.



1980s

Kerry Langan, MLS '82, recently published her fourth book, "Worthy: Stories and Novellas," with Wising Up Press.

Victor B. Stolberg, EdM '84, authored "Bipolar Disorder: Your Questions Answered," to be released by Bloomsbury Publishing in January 2026. His previous works include "ADHD Medications: History, Science, and Issues," "What You Need to Know about ADHD" and "Painkillers: History, Science, and Issues."

1990s

Roxana G. Reichman, PhD '96, was appointed dean of the Graduate School of Education at Gordon College in Haifa, Israel. She previously served as head of the college's master's program in educational leadership and organization. After organizing a three-day international conference on gifted education, she is now planning a national conference on educational leadership in times of crisis, scheduled for Oct. 21, 2025.

John Sibusiso Chalufu, EdM '99, was appointed to the Council on Higher Education Reference Group on Transformation in the South African higher education system.

2000s

Suzanne Colligan, MLS '00, earned an MS in student affairs and higher education from Buffalo State University in May 2025. She received the American Labor Movement Scholarship in 2023 and currently works as a case manager for Erie County government.

Susan Lombardo, PhD '00, professor emerita at D'Youville University, was named president of the Graduate School of Education Alumni Association.

Andrew Wiss, PhD '00, is assistant dean for academic innovation at the George Washington University Milken Institute School of Public Health. He was recently inducted as a Distinguished Fellow of the National Academies of Practice.

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY
WASHINGTON, DC

Kelly Coleman, MA '02, clinical assistant professor in the PsyD program in clinical psychology at D'Youville University and director of clinical training, was elected president of the Psychological Association of Western New York for 2025-2026. She also maintains a private practice specializing in treatment for youth through young adults with sexual and gender identity concerns.



Jason Otto, BA '04, is beginning his 20th year in education and currently serves as a specialist in the Department of Teacher Leadership with Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools in North Carolina.

Nikki Wells (Lynn), EdM '07, earned her EdD in student affairs administration and leadership from the University of Wisconsin in May 2025. Her dissertation, "Gateways", explored how prehealth advisors develop advising philosophies when working with first-generation and BIPOC students. She is associate director of health professions advising at Cornell University.



Casey Jakubowski, Adv. Cert. '08, will publish a chapter in the forthcoming SUNY Press book, "Governing New York Through Crisis," examining education governance and finance in the state.

Kumba Sankoh, EdM '09, was appointed director of curriculum and student supports with the Penfield School District, where she oversees the Seal of Biliteracy as well as the ENL, world languages, music and art departments.



2010s

Holly Staley, MS '10, is the principal of Phillippi Shores IB World School in Sarasota, Florida, where she recently completed her fourth year of leadership. The school has maintained its A-rating throughout her tenure. Outside of work, she supports her daughter's pursuit of competitive golf; her daughter recently placed first at the U.S. Kids World Golf Championship in Pinehurst, North Carolina.

Justin Alger, PhD '11, is a client services manager with a managed network provider that partners with higher education institutions on campus security, wireless networking, cellular connectivity and large-scale event venues. He applies his academic background to create practical IT solutions that help his clients.

Jennifer McDonel, PhD '13, was promoted to professor of music at Radford University in Virginia. She also released her second children's album, "Little Beats: Grand Old Time—Science and Engineering Songs," on July 29, 2025, connecting early music and STEM learning.

Danielle Hawkins, BS '06, EdM '14, is entering her second year as director of curriculum and instruction at Akron Central Schools, following 10 years of experience in building-based leadership.

Amanda Lowe, MLS '14, was recently promoted to associate librarian with tenure at the University at Albany, SUNY, where they serve as outreach and marketing librarian. They have since been recognized with the President's Excellence Award in Librarianship, the Unsung Hero Award for championing LGBTQ+ students and initiatives, and the SUNY Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Librarianship.



UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY
STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Laura Amo, PhD '15, received tenure in September 2025 from the University at Buffalo School of Management in the Department of Management Science and Systems.



Class Notes

Chelsea Walter, BA '10, PhD '15, was appointed director of Colorado College's Colket Center for Academic Excellence for a two-year term. She also serves as director of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Education and as a lecturer in the Education Department at Colorado College.

Robin Hall, EdM '16, purchased her first home in the Buffalo area with her husband, Adam, in June 2024.

Lorenda Chisolm, EdD '17, was appointed superintendent of schools for the Greenburgh Central School District in Hartsdale, New York, effective July 1, 2025.

Monica Miles, PhD '17, assistant professor in the Department of Engineering Education at the University at Buffalo, received the Medgar Evers Civil Rights Award from the Buffalo Branch of the NAACP for her leadership in environmental justice and equity in STEM. She is the first UB faculty member to receive this honor.

Julianne Westrich, MLS '18, was selected as a recipient of the Fulbright Teachers for Global Classrooms 2025-2026 program. Her work will include collaborative learning with teachers worldwide and conclude with an international field placement in spring 2026.

Ashley Kibler (Fries), BA '17, EdM '19, married Jeff Kibler in October 2024. She was recently promoted to assistant director of undergraduate education advising at the UB Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences—the same office where she held a graduate assistant position during her time in graduate school.

2020s

Lisa Gagnon, BA '17, EdM '21, joined UB's Office of Fellowships and Scholarships as an advisor.

Jessie Moore, MLS '22, completed state requirements for school library certification and began working as a school library media specialist in 2023. She later returned to her alma mater district, where she was recently named high school librarian.

Yu Wu, EdM '18, PhD '23, is a research assistant professor at the Center for Research in Educational Policy in the College of Education at the University of Memphis. She co-leads external evaluation projects supported by the U.S. Department of Education, the Institute of Education Sciences and the National Science Foundation.

Katie Dineen, EdD '24, was selected to participate in the 2025-2026 Fulbright Teachers for Global Classrooms program.



Mitch Kase, EdD '24, was appointed executive director for the Center for Learning, Teaching, and Assessment at Hofstra University. He transitioned from his previous role as executive director of Education and Research Technology in July 2025.

Tracy Langley, MC '25, earned the Teaching Black History microcredential from UB, which deepened her curriculum, expanded her pedagogical practice and strengthened her commitment to equity. The program continues to inform her teaching of ethnic studies at the junior college level in Lake County, California. She is also pursuing an additional master's degree in ethnic studies.

Carol Lynn Lockhart, MLS '25, was hired as assistant director of the Southeast Steuben County Library in Corning, New York.



SCENE ON SOCIAL

LinkedIn: Where professional meets personal

This fall, you'll find more than résumés on LinkedIn. GSE students and community members are sharing reflections, celebrating milestones and building a sense of belonging.

PhD student **Jahare Hudson** ¹ kicked off his second year with enthusiasm, writing about his commitment to public policy development and civic engagement in Buffalo as a Western New York Prosperity Fellow. "Here's to intentionality, crafting, energy and love toward a career I am building today!" he wrote, signaling a year of purpose and connection.

Higher education and student affairs master's students are also reflecting on their journeys. **Jayda Holmes** ² marked her "last first week of classes" with gratitude, sharing that she looks forward to deepening relationships and "nerding out" in program evaluation and assessment.

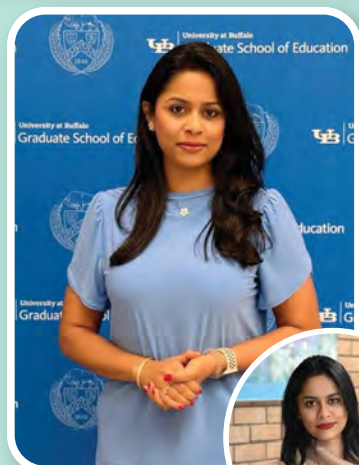
Sunettee Sharpe ³ shared that the only way to define the eighth month of the year is the "August Rush." She described the rush of training resident assistants, welcoming students during move-in weekend and serving as a GSE ambassador at orientation.

And **Zamira "Z" Caldwell** ⁴ captured the spirit of "syllsy week"—otherwise known as syllabus week—by sharing a wish for all GSE students: "I hope that your icebreakers aren't too awkward, that you have time to prepare for your first assignment/test, and that you get to wear all the fits you planned!"

Incoming students are adding their voices, too.

Tukhbita A Nawmi ⁵ announced her transition to doctoral studies as she begins her PhD in educational data science, sharing that "persistence carried me through every doubt and change."

Through posts like these, GSE's LinkedIn community shows how professional goals and personal feelings intertwine, inspiring others to celebrate milestones, share gratitude and support one another.



IN MEMORIAM

Remembering recently
deceased members
of our cherished
GSE community

Patrick J. Finn

Oct. 17, 1935–Feb. 17, 2025

GSE mourns the passing of Patrick J. Finn, associate professor emeritus in the Department of Learning and Instruction, who died on Feb. 17, 2025, at the age of 89. A passionate educator, author and advocate for educational equity, Finn spent his life working to transform literacy into a force for social justice.



Finn joined GSE in 1973 and served on the faculty until his retirement in 1999. He became widely known for his groundbreaking 1999 book “Literacy with an Attitude: Educating Working-Class Children in Their Own Self-Interest.” A second edition, published in 2009, won the American Educational Studies Association’s Critics’ Choice Award the following year.

Finn argued that schools must honor the lived experiences and language of working-class students to help them access the full power of literacy. His work, rooted in both research and activism, reshaped how many educators approach reading instruction, especially in underserved communities.

Finn also wrote “Helping Children Learn to Read” (1990), “Teacher Education with an Attitude” (2007, co-edited with his wife Mary Finn), and “The Taste of an Olive: A Southside of Chicago Memoir” (2024).

In Buffalo, Finn led parent and teacher workshops on empowering education through a grant from the Mayor’s Education Fund.

His influence extended well beyond the classroom, inspiring generations of teachers, organizers and scholars.

“While Pat had retired before I came to UB, ‘Literacy with an Attitude’ had a significant impact on the grad students who were teachers over the years. I used it as a core text in my Language

Literacy and Culture master’s class,” said Mary McVee, professor in the Department of Learning and Instruction.

“Former students have told me that the book changed their lives because it dramatically shifted their perspective from blaming kids—and maybe also teachers—to thinking about where kids were coming from and how working-class perspectives influenced views of teaching and learning.”

“‘Literacy with an Attitude’ had a significant impact on the grad students who were teachers over the years.”

– Mary McVee

1940s

Betty-Jane A. Fenwick,
EdM ’48 | 03/28/2025

Sister M. Aubert Froning,
Adv. Cert. ’46 | 07/04/2025

1950s

Janet Kibrick,
BS ’52 | 7/11/25

Ellen Kimmelman,
BS ’59 | 7/13/25

Carol W. Snell,
BE ’58 | 03/31/2025

1960s

Richard F. Boris,
EdM ’67, BA ’65 | 04/28/2025

Paul Gagliardi,
EdM ’68, BS ’63 | 8/25/25

Marsha R. Grass,
BE ’65 | 04/07/2025

Dr. J. Norman Hostetter,
EdD ’67, EdM ’63 | 03/28/2025

Ruth H. Jones,
MS ’63, BA ’60 | 06/30/2025

Sandra G. Kurtzman,
BE ’60 | 04/03/2025

Minnette Mazur,
EdM ’66 | 8/2/25

Thomas Nuhfer,
EdM ’71 | 7/15/25

Dennis E. Przykuta,
BE ’66 | 04/13/2025

John Rex,
EdM ’68 | 05/14/2025

Arthur L. Serotte,
EdM ’66, BE ’62 | 04/14/2025

Mary Ann Stegmeier,
EdM ’66 | 04/08/2025

Jane M. Wilks,
EdM ’69, BA ’66 | 04/08/2025

1970s

Brigita Alks,
EdM ’73 | 8/8/25

James A. Allegretto,
EdM ’71, BE ’63 | 05/30/2025

James V. Allen,
EdM ’74 | 05/26/2025

D. Richard Bleyle,
EdM ’75, BA ’71 | 04/26/2025

Theresa M. Costello,
EdM ’79 | 05/07/2025

Darryl J. Crowe,
EdM ’75, BA ’72 | 06/04/2025

Jacqueline B. Faigenbaum,
EdM ’70, BE ’67 | 06/08/2025

Gloria G. Foster,
EdM ’73 | 06/23/2025

Howard Gordon,
EdM ’72 | 7/26/25

Ernestine R. Green,
EdM ’71 | 05/02/2025

Elaine Mahaney,
MS ’73 | 7/14/25

Jane Maier,
MLS ’70 | 8/11/25

Adrienne K. Sakavicius,
EdM ’71, BE ’67 | 06/25/2025

Gretchen Seibert,
MLS ’76 | 8/23/25

Allan C. Stevens,
EdM ’70 | 04/05/2025

Janet M. Taylor,
MLS ’75 | 03/14/2025

1980s

Susan M. Bassett,
EdM ’86 | 06/20/2025

Susanna P. Lunsford,
EdM ’81 | 03/31/2025

Barbara A. Moore,
MLS ’81 | 06/24/2025

John Mrozek,
EdM ’84 | 7/12/25

Rena A. Sheffer,
MLS ’84, BA ’71 | 05/03/2025

1990s

Mark Davison,
EdM ’96 | 7/24/25

Joyce P. Klaasesz,
MLS ’90 | 05/12/2025

Margaret McGrath,
EdM ’97 | 7/13/25

Dr. Patricia Pulver,
EdD ’97 | 7/8/25

Paula A. Valley,
MLS ’98 | 06/13/2025

Iris Zackheim,
EdM ’90 | 05/14/2025

RETIREMENTS

Bonnie Reed

Department Assistant in the Office of Educator Preparation



After 30 years of service to UB and the Graduate School of Education, I am excited to announce my retirement and the start of a new chapter.

My journey at UB began in Undergraduate Admissions, followed by a promotion to Campus Living. From there, I advanced to GSE Admissions, then to

the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy, and finally to the Office of Educator Preparation. Along the way, I’ve had the privilege of working with so many wonderful colleagues and building lasting friendships that I will always treasure.

As I step into retirement, my husband and I have relocated to Nevada, where we look forward to enjoying golf year-round, along with plenty of hiking and biking. Each summer, we plan to return to Western New York for a month to visit family and friends, traveling across the United States as we make our way back and visiting as many National Parks as possible.

While much will change, one thing never will—we will always be loyal Bills fans. Go Bills!



While much will change, one thing never will—we will always be loyal Bills fans. Go Bills!



GET SOCIAL



Search for and follow @UBGSE to catch up on the latest university and school news and information.

Mural Mania! Buffalo high school students from City Honors, Performing Arts and South Park have been busy working on a mural for newly renovated Foster Hall—GSE's new home. Students toured the South Campus building with GSE faculty and staff, learning about the renovation process and the building's history. After gaining a deeper understanding of what UB and GSE mean to those who work and study here, the students worked with Mural Mania staff to identify themes that inspired their creativity.

