



the newsletter of the
Department of Educational Leadership
at UNC Charlotte

Welcome

I hope everyone enjoyed a wonderful spring break and looks forward to finishing the semester. The spring semester tends to go by quickly, and you may feel that there is insufficient time to complete tasks. I encourage everyone to take the initiative to use the numerous resources available on campus to assist with time management, research, writing, and professional development. There are a number of student led writing groups that are consistently meeting to provide accountability and a space for community. Reach out and ask questions if you are seeking a group to join or possibly to start one of your own. Don't forget to engage with professors and peers who can provide needed guidance and support.

I want to extend special thanks to Bryce Hoggard and Tynsley Gilchrist for developing this excellent edition of the Ed Ledger. I appreciate their time and efforts in producing a quality newsletter. I hope this resource is helpful in maintaining connections with the Department of Educational Leadership.

All the best for a successful and productive semester!

Cathy Howell, Ed.D.
Ed.D. Graduate Program Director
M.Ed. Higher Education Director

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Faculty Spotlight

Dr. Sandra Dika

ERME Director

What brought you to UNC Charlotte, and what keeps you here?

The opportunity to move into a tenure track position. I had been working as a research professor at University of Puerto Rico Mayaguez and the move here meant that both my husband and I would be on the tenure track. ***The people – my fellow faculty, and our talented staff and students – keep me here.*** I'd be lying if I said I didn't love my office windows!

What are your main research interests?

I focus primarily on higher education equity - success and accessibility - for marginalized and minoritized groups.

Currently, I plan to extend my projects on the NC Transfer Research Team and the case study on an inclusive STEM transfer culture for the next couple of years.

What advice would you give students pursuing a career in Educational Leadership?

Do some professional development planning early on, so you know your career focus and can select a(n) internship, GA, workshop or conference, and professional association opportunities that help you gain the experiences and connections you need. Work in the Educational, Research, Measurement, and Evaluation (ERME) field involves juggling several projects at the same time, so develop your organization and time management skills. ***Build your peer support network*** (and your social capital) through the Educational Leadership Student Organization (ELSO), ERME, and across the college, as ***your fellow doctoral students will become some of your most cherished friends.***

Responses have been edited



Hometown

Spirit River - Alberta, Canada:
A farming community of 1,000 people!

Current Research

NC Transfer Research Team with EDLD colleagues (Drs. D'Amico, Miller, & Serrata) and finishing up a case study on inclusive STEM transfer culture.

Fun Fact

I am a first-generation college student! I also love coffee, hiking, scarves, and watching my daughter's volleyball tournaments.

Student Spotlights



Georgia Reuter

Leadership & Family

What brought you to UNC Charlotte?

I loved the program and the focus on social justice. My spouse worked at UNC Charlotte for several years and **it felt a bit like home for me** as I was looking into different programs. I love the hybrid options and ability to manage work and school.

How would you define leadership?

Leadership is the opportunity to motivate, teach, and lead others to a common goal. **I strive to be a leader who elevates others and challenges my team to focus on equity.**

What are you hoping to accomplish as you finish your second year?

I am excited to be focusing on the next stages of the dissertation. **I have loved all the courses I have taken and have had fun applying the learning to my job.** I'll feel excited to have a mostly complete chapter 2 at the end of this semester!

Current Research Focus

I am focused on **mothers in mid-level leadership** roles in higher education and how they experience work-life balance.

Life Outside of School

I am a mother to two amazing kids - a 14-year-old son and an 18-year-old daughter. My son plays travel lacrosse so many free nights are spent at the lacrosse field. My daughter is a freshman at ASU and we spend most of the fall enjoying season football tickets and seeing her. **We love spending time with family and friends** and host many social gatherings at our home.

Responses have been edited

Hometown(s)

Maryland
Currently living in
Mooreville, NC

Education

Appalachian State
Auburn University

Career Aspirations

I also hope to move into a Vice President role at my current institution within the next few year

Hobbies & Fun Facts

I'm a (currently retired) swim coach at YMCA and an avid T-Shirt maker!

Student Spotlights



Kristen Wright *Music & ERME*

What is an experience that kept you motivated?

The coolest thing that happened to me this year was presenting a poster at the state music conference. The poster was about gender inequities in band ratings scores; young women came up to me and thanked me for doing this project. They were inspired to work on their own projects, and told me about their own experiences. ***I felt like a superhero***; it was pretty cool that research (and HLR) helped me shine a light on something that was important for so many people, including me.

What advice would you give to students that you wish you knew your first year?

It's all about asking good questions. You ***will*** get better at asking good questions, you ***will*** become a better researcher, and people ***will*** be interested in what you say. I've also realized that I have perfectionist tendencies, but I don't have the time to pick over my work like I usually would. I will do my best, but it will look different than what I (and my professors) are used to.

Current Research Focus

My main focus is ***music education*** but there are lots of branches: gender equity in certain areas of music education, equity in access to music education, use of ratings systems, teacher retention/teacher stress; for a while I was really into neuroscience of music and how language acquisition and music might work together.

What has growth looked like for you?

It has been strange to straddle the practitioners' world and the research world. ***Growth for me has actually been distancing myself from the public school system and saying, "Ok, now what can I do to help this?"***

Hometown

West Palm Beach, FL
& Sylva, NC

Previous Institutions

West Carolina University
UNC Greensboro

Interests Outside of Research

Music, Traveling, Sci-Fi & Fantasy, Gaming, and Volunteering!

Fun Fact

I am a bassoonist! I was first chair in NC All-State my senior year of highschool.

Responses have been edited

Dissertation Defenses



Devron Furr
Ed.D. P-12 Superintendency



Ellie Haag
Ed.D. Higher Education



Christopher Johannsen
Ed.D. P-12 Superintendency



Shawn Knight
Ed.D. Higher Education



Lindsay Merritt
Ed.D. P-12 Superintendency



Stephen (Chad) Parker
Ed.D. P-12 Superintendency



Melissa Smith
Ed.D. P-12 Superintendency

The dissertation defense is the final milestone toward degree completion. A doctoral candidate disseminates the results of their study during the final defense to the research committee and academic community. ***Congratulations to these doctoral candidates who successfully defended their dissertations!***

Dissertation Proposal Defenses



Claudia Allen
Ed.D. P-12 Superintendency



Nicolette Grant
Ed.D. P-12 Superintendency



Colleen Grosse
Ed.D. P-12 Superintendency



Christopher Lacy
Ed.D. P-12 Superintendency



Shayla Savage
Ed.D. P-12 Superintendency



Darlene Schaefer
Ed.D. Learning, Design, and Technology



Corey Stirewalt
Ed.D. P-12 Superintendency

The **dissertation proposal defense is the second major milestone** toward degree completion. Proposals are generally comprised of chapters 1-3 of the dissertation: introduction, literature review, and methodology. Successful completion of all coursework, the qualifying portfolio, and the proposal defense acknowledges students as doctoral candidates prepared to complete their dissertation research. **Congratulations!**

Kudos Corner



A space to celebrate exciting news beyond the doctoral program! Kudos to the following...

Congratulations

Learning, Design and Technology

Darlene Schaefer co-authored with Dr. Florence Martin and NC State PhD candidate, Min Zhuang was published. They also presented their findings at the Association for Educational Communications and Technology in October.

Miffy Tsai was recently promoted to Senior Lecturer in Chinese Studies at Davidson College. Miffy wants to extend kudos to all of the faculty who provided care, guidance, and support even before she officially began her doctorate study.

Ph.D. in Educational Research, Measurement, and Evaluation

Congratulations to the CEME team on a successful presentation at the EERA conference in February.

Qiao Liu, first-year Ph.D. student and graduate assistant, completed her first conference presentation!
Congratulations!

Superintendency

Tyler Mavity and his partner welcome a baby boy to the world! We are so excited for your new baby boy. Keep up the good work with balancing dissertation and family life.

Sarah Williams Wright secured a grant through the NC Go Outdoors program that will support a trip to the Outer Banks for her students.

Amber Lawson recently announced her engagement and became a foster parent.

Higher Education

Dr. Paul Holliday-Millard was elected to serve as Chair of ACPA's Commission for Assessment and Evaluation beginning in 2025.

Dr. Jules Keith-Le accepted a new full-time position with the UNC Charlotte Office of OneIT as an Academic Technology Support Analyst. She will also teach for the LDT program as Associate Graduate Faculty in our department!

Ellie Haag had her poster proposal accepted for the NAFSA Conference in New Orleans.

Research Symposium *March 22nd, 2024*

The Annual Graduate Research Symposium 2024 is here again! This year's event will be held at the Popp Martin Student Union this Friday, 22th March 2024 starting at 10:00 am. Come listen to and see the awesome research done by graduate students across several disciplines.

The Graduate Research Symposium is sponsored by the Graduate & Professional Student Government of UNC Charlotte and the Division of Research. Over the years, GRS has been supported by the Dean and staff of The Graduate School and The Thomas L. Reynolds Center For Graduate Life and Learning. We are grateful for past sponsorship and support and continue to welcome additional support annually.

ORGANISED BY
GPSG
Graduate & Professional Student Government

**2024
GRADUATE
RESEARCH
SYMPOSIUM**

*"Evolving Research in
Evolving Charlotte"*

LEARN MORE!!

SESSIONS

ORAL & POSTER PRESENTATIONS
CELEBRATING CHARLOTTE'S
BRIGHTEST STUDENT
RESEARCHERS

KEYNOTE ADDRESS
DELIVERED BY
DR. VICTORIA
WATLINGTON

SCHEDULE

BE OUR GUEST!
March 22, 2024
Popp Martin
Student Union
340

PRESENTATIONS
10:00 AM
RECEPTION & AWARDS
3:00PM

SPONSORED BY

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA
CHARLOTTE

DIVISION OF RESEARCH

THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

THOMAS L. REYNOLDS
CENTER FOR
GRADUATE
LIFE & LEARNING

URBANCORE

Please contact the GRS Chair and GPSG Vice President Adams Familusi at gpsgvicepresident@uncc.edu. for more information and to offer sponsorship and support.

Celebrating Diversity in Education

HBCUs

Historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) are institutions that were established prior to 1964 with the principal mission of educating Black Americans. These institutions were founded and developed in an environment of legal segregation and, by providing access to higher education, they contributed substantially to the progress Black Americans made in improving their status. Explore these Fast Facts to learn more.

<https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=667>



Recent Celebrations

Black History Month - Month of February

Lunar New Year - February 10th

World Day of Social Justice - February 20th



Check It Out!

Drs. Tehia Glass and Tisha Greene are leading an affinity group for Cato College of Education students of color.

Ed. Leadership in the News

Remain updated with current news in Educational Leadership .
Check out these articles that showcase relevant topics in education.



‘Something Has to Be Shaken Up’: How One State Hopes to Reinvigorate Its Community Colleges *by Lee Gardner*

https://www.chronicle.com/article/something-has-to-be-shaken-up-how-one-state-hopes-to-reinvigorate-its-community-colleges?utm_source=Iterable&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=campaign_9084120_nl_Academe-Today_date_20240221&cid=at



Building Diverse College Campuses Starts in Kindergarten *by Michael J. Petrilli*

<https://www.educationnext.org/building-diverse-college-campuses-starts-in-kindergarten/>



Why It’s So Hard to Get People Back in College Once They’ve Quit *by Karin Fischer*

https://www.chronicle.com/article/that-ship-has-sailed?utm_source=Iterable&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=campaign_9047960_nl_Academe-Today_date_20240216&cid=at&source=&sourceid=

Important FAFSA Updates

The new and improved 2024-25 FAFSA is available for students. It is available periodically due to maintenance and technical updates. **UNC Charlotte’s FAFSA priority deadline is March 1st, 2024.** Submissions after this date will receive award offers on a rolling basis.

As the Department of Education works to finalize the FAFSA Simplification Act, Charlotte is committed to communicating changes to the awarding process and anticipated impacts to our students and families as soon as details are confirmed.

Visit studentaid.gov to learn more about the 2024-25 FAFSA update.

UPDATES

Dec. 13, 2023

As previously shared, The [U.S. Department of Education](#) released that the improved FAFSA form will be **available for students and parents by Dec. 31, 2023.**

As you and your family prepare to complete the [FAFSA for the 2024-2025 aid year](#), here are a few things to consider.

- 1. Create an FSA ID:** We encourage you and your family to take the first step in getting ready to file your FAFSA by [creating your FSA IDs](#). Everyone, regardless of whether they have a Social Security Number, will be required to have an FSA ID in order to access and submit the FAFSA.
- 2. Apply Early:** To maximize your financial aid eligibility, it is important to submit your application as early as possible.
- 3. Help is Available:** If you have any questions or need assistance with completing your FAFSA, [Niner Central Specialists](#) are available to help. As a reminder, the University is closed Dec. 22, 2023 - Jan. 1, 2024. Don't hesitate to [connect with us](#) for guidance and support with your application in the new year.

Completing your FAFSA is a critical step in ensuring that you have access to financial resources you need to pursue your education. Remember, we are here to support you in your academic journey, including securing financial aid.

<https://ninercentral.charlotte.edu/financial-aid-loans/2024-2025-fafsa-updates/>



Funding Graduate Education



Please scan the QR Code on the left to visit the Graduate School's funding webpage.

Here, you will learn about:

- Tuition Support
- Graduate Assistantships and Part-Time Employment
- External Funding Opportunities
- Financial Aid
- Graduate School Fellowships

- **Tuition and Health Insurance Support** - Funding administered by the Graduate School that covers the cost of tuition and health insurance.
- **Assistantships and Employment** - Graduate assistantships that require working up to 20 hours per week for a stipend. Teaching assistantships involve the activities of teaching a course while research assistantships involve research projects.
- **Philanthropic Awards** - Admitted and continuing UNC Charlotte graduate students may apply for awards through the University Scholarship Office.
- **External Funding** - Sources of funding that are not affiliated with UNC Charlotte, such as local, state, federal, private, and institutional sources.
- **Financial Aid** - Federal student loans, based on financial need and the estimated cost of attendance, are available from the Federal government.
- **Graduate School Fellowships, Awards and Competitions** - Fellowships are service-free awards that may include a stipend for living expenses and tuition and fees.

Conferences

Are you looking to get involved with a professional organization? Below are just a few conference opportunities coming up in Spring 2024.

American College Personnel Association (ACPA) 100th Anniversary

March 18-21, 2024 Chicago, Illinois

<https://www.csc.pitt.edu/annual-conferences/>

The American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting 2024

April 11-14, 2024 Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

<https://www.aera.net/Events-Meetings/Annual-Meeting/2024-Annual-Meeting>

The 65th Annual Council for the Study of Community Colleges Conference

April 18-20, 2024 Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

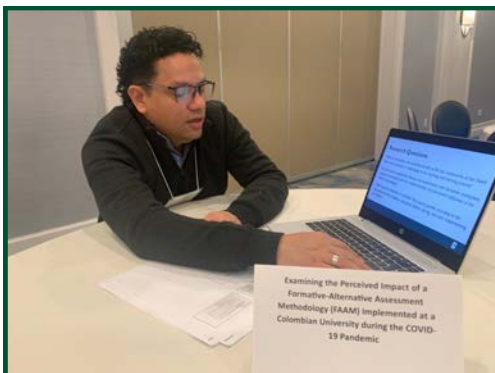
<https://www.csc.pitt.edu/annual-conferences/>

The Association for Graduate Enrollment Management (NAGAP) 2024 Annual Conference

April 24-27, 2024 Louisville, Kentucky

www.nagap.org/2024-summit-graduate-enrollment-management-summit

Eastern Educational Research Association (EERA) 2024 Conference - Clearwater, FL



ERME student, Leo Herrera presenting at a roundtable session



*CEME group photo at the EERA 2024 Conference
Pictured from Left to Right: Qiao Liu, Kristin Villanueva, Marah Lambert, Leo Herrera, Dr. Lambert*



ERME student, Qiao Liu presenting at a paper session

Memories Galore at NCARE 2024

UNC Charlotte and The Department of Educational Leadership was represented well at the 2024 NCARE annual meeting.



Dr. Sandra Dika recognized at the NCARE Past Presidents Award Ceremony (2016 President)



First year Ph.D. student, Onima Vadakke Thodiyil, presenting



Dr. Dawson Hancock recognized at the NCARE Past Presidents Award Ceremony (2001 President)



Faculty and students took a photo opportunity after the last session of the conference



Celebrating 50 years of NCARE by honoring past presidents



Third year Ed.D. student, Jacob Frankovich, presenting



Dr. Dilara Yaya-Bryson presenting her research



UNC Charlotte faculty, students, and alumni. Go Niners!



Dr. Carmen Serrata presenting her research



Educational Leadership Student Organization

f UNC CHARLOTTE

The mission of ELSO is to encourage professional development and improve the experience of the COED students through initiatives that enrich the intellectual, social, and cultural aspects of their lives. Consider signing up to become an ELSO member at <https://forms.gle/unsfrNjMpT8L8aWJ8he> COED.

Interested in ELSO? Please contact Jacob Frankovich, ELSO President, also-org@uncc.edu

ELSO Upcoming Events

Be on the lookout for opportunities to engage with ELSO this semester!

- Pre-Class Snack Breaks
- Coffee & Convos
- Trivia Nights
- Academic Workshops
- End of the Semester Celebration



ELSO won 2nd place at Que Onda Tacos Trivia!

Join ELSO for:
Educational Support
Leadership Opportunities
Socialization

Get Involved With ELSO!



NINER ENGAGE





2024

Dates to Know

March 4

Fall 2024 Class Schedule available

March 4-9

Student Break - No Classes

March 18

Last Day to Withdraw

March 29-30

Refresh Weekend - No Classes

April 1

Registration for Summer and Fall

April 10

Doctoral Dissertation Defense
Deadline

April 22

Last day to submit Doctoral
Dissertations for May 2024
graduation

April 29

Last Day of Classes

April 30

Reading Day

May 1-8

Final Examinations

May 10-11

Commencement!



Questions?
Ideas for a future newsletter?
Something to celebrate?
Let us know!

edld-edd@uncc.edu



CHARLOTTE

CATO COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

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