



the ED LEDGER

the newsletter of the
Department of Educational Leadership
at UNC Charlotte

Welcome

As the spring 2024 semester ends, I am filled with a sense of gratitude. This semester provided many opportunities to increase my appreciation for the contributions made by each student, faculty, and staff member. None of us accomplishes our goals without support. I invite everyone to pause, reflect, and express gratitude for the multiple forms of support received during this past academic year. This may have been a well-timed email, key feedback, a thoughtful word of encouragement, or simply affirmation that you are on the right track. Continue with your work while also being grateful for the opportunities before you.

Congratulations to our spring graduates! We wish you all the best as you move forward with your careers.

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

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Faculty Spotlight

Dr. Lisa Merriweather

Leading with light

What leadership strategies have been most helpful to you during your time as a faculty member?

I lead from the middle, which for me involves honoring the humanity of each person I interact with first, then wrestling with whatever issue they may be dealing with within their official university capacity.

What are your favorite parts about working in Educational Leadership:?

Assisting students with meeting their goals. In the Bible, in the book of Esther, there is a wonderful story of mentorship between Esther and Mordecai. Most people recognize Esther, but few knew her mentor, Mordecai, whose sole mission was to help Esther's star shine brightly as she became a great Queen who would save her people. Mordecai never sought to be in the limelight. ***He did not need to because his shine was seen in the bright reflection of Esther's rising star. That is how I see my ministry of the professoriate. I help the stars of others to shine.***

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

Dr. Howell is the glue that keeps us together. She is our greatest asset. ***I want to continue growing into the best version of myself*** as that is the springboard for personal and professional growth and healing.

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

Stay true to yourself. Don't sacrifice your passion on the altar of expediency or conformity, and know that ***you matter enough to make yourself a priority.***

**Responses have been edited.*



Hometown
Cincinnati, Ohio

Current
Research
NSF NC AGEP project
on STEM doctoral
mentoring. Future plans
include exploring Black
joy through the arts.

Fun Fact
*I enjoy playing the
piano, dancing, really
all things musical. My
newest hobby is
photography.*

Student Spotlights



Nicole Lawson Musicality and Service in Education

How would you define leadership?

Leadership is taking the responsibility to inspire and motivate others. Its serving others and guiding positive outcomes. I aspire to be a very transformative leader that grounds herself on the basics for school success. I believe in the power of joy in schools and believe it is the foundation of success for adults and students.

What are some things you have learned in your first year with regard to leadership?

I have learned the value of maximizing time and energy. It is so easy to want to do all, be all, and serve all. But until you let go of the idea that you can do all, you will never be an effective leader. Learning to lean while leading is so important. **Building a team is more important than leading alone.**

What are the pros & cons of being in a distance education program?

The best part of this program is that it fits into my full time schedule. I love the cohort that I am in and getting to work with these ladies weekly. If I had to reach for a con, its missing out on campus events. I am very fortunate that the cohort I am in travels together throughout the duration of the program. I know I can continue to count on them for the next three years, but **I feel certain I have made lifelong connections.**

What are your personal, professional, and educational goals for next year?

I have just recently gotten engaged and I look forward to planning our wedding over the next year. We are currently fostering a precious 3 month old baby girl in hopes of adopting. Those are my main focuses. In my career, I look foward to continuing to work towards my dissertation and I hope to become a school principal.

**Responses have been edited.*

Hometown(s)

Abington, Virginia

Previous Institutions

Western Carolina University

Winthrop University

Hobbies & Fun Facts

Music is a huge part of my career. I have played the saxophone for over 25 years and the piano for 10 years!

Student Spotlights



Jeff Richardson Educating our First-Responders

What kind of leader do you aspire to be?

The type of leader that my father was. He always put the needs of others first, listened more than he spoke, was not afraid to try something new and creative, and when things got tough...all eyes were on him looking for the next step.

Leadership is the art of helping others succeed.

What would you tell a prospective student about being a distance education doctoral student?

Professional educators that work in the College of Education know what it takes to provide students with an intense and meaningfully engaging learning experience in the virtual setting. If you have prior experience as a distance education student, you will find a familiar landscape here at UNC Charlotte. ***If you're new to distance education, there's no need to be concerned.***

Current Research Focus

My current position as Chief of Training for the Charlotte Fire Department is my passion. Many of the fire services' training methods are overly traditional and in conflict with several of the adult learning principles of today. I hope to bring a fresh perspective on job training that leverages technology and is generationally appropriate for those entering the fire service, such as training with serious video games and simulations.

How have you established connections with other students?

The cohort approach helps students connect early. My cohort and I check in with one another regularly.

This is very helpful in making sure we all are maintaining pace with coursework throughout the semester.

**Responses have been edited.*

Hometown

Mooresville, NC

Previous Institutions

NC State University, M.Ed.
UNC Charlotte, B.S.
CPCC, A.A.S.

Fun Fact

I enjoy swimming, gardening, and working with my two pointer dogs (Brittany Spaniels)!

Spring 2024 Doctoral Graduates

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.

Dr. Anthony Davis



Student Conduct Administrators’ Perceptions of Support Ed.D. - Higher Education

Chair: Dr. Ryan Miller
Committee: Drs. Alan Mabe, James Lorello & Amy Good

Advice: As best as you can, stay on the given path. Take advantage of your professors. I got to take classes with two college presidents and being able to ask them questions and understand different perspectives was invaluable.

Thanks: I want to thank the faculty in the Ed. Leadership program. They have been phenomenal. I also want to thank all of my classmates. I've met some really good people along the way!



Dr. Devron K. Furr



A Case Study of the Experiences of Beginning Superintendents Ed.D. - P-12 Superintendency

Chair: Dr. Walter Hart
Committee: Drs. Jamie Kudlats, Scarlett Zhang & David Pugalee



Spring 2024 Doctoral Graduates

Dr. Elenora Haag



Leadership and Context for Comprehensive Internationalization: Senior International Officer Perspectives

Ed.D. - Higher Education

Chair: Dr. Mark D'Amico
Committee: Drs. Alan Mabe, Ryan Miller & Michael Putman

Advice: Embrace openness to new ideas and flexibility throughout coursework and dissertation research. Everyone's journey through the program is different but just keep an open mind and a sense of balance and you will be OK!



Dr. Karen D. Ingram



K12 Teacher Experiences with Effective Strategies for Student-Content Engagement in the Blended Learning Environment

Ed.D. - Learning, Design & Technology

Chair: Dr. Ayesha Sadaf
Committee: Drs. Beth Oyarzun, Lisa Merriweather & Spencer Salas

Post-grad: I would like to return to teach or do something administrative in higher education

Advice: stay focused on the ultimate goal and minimize distractions in your life. This has been a learning journey where the outcome far outweighed the challenges. This journey is not for the faint of heart.





Spring 2024 Doctoral Graduates

Dr. Christopher Jonassen



A Qualitative Study of Principal Perspectives on the Implementation of Restorative Practices

Ed.D. - P-12 Superintendency

Chair: Dr. Walter Hart
Committee: Drs. Debra Morris, Jamie Kudlats & Scarlett Zhang



Dr. Shawn M. Knight



A Phenomenological Study of the Influence of Masculinity on Peer Accountability in Fraternities

Ed.D. - Higher Education

Chair: Dr. Ryan Miller
Committee: Drs. James Lorello, Mark D'Amico & Michael Putman

Post-Grad: I plan to continue working on my research in the fall to write papers/presentations on the outcomes and would like to eventually build curriculum that can work to support fraternities on the topic of accountability.

Advice: Set a timeline, especially during dissertation. Deadlines sneak up really quick and its important to give yourself enough time to get everything done.



Spring 2024 Doctoral Graduates

Dr. Marcus Leake



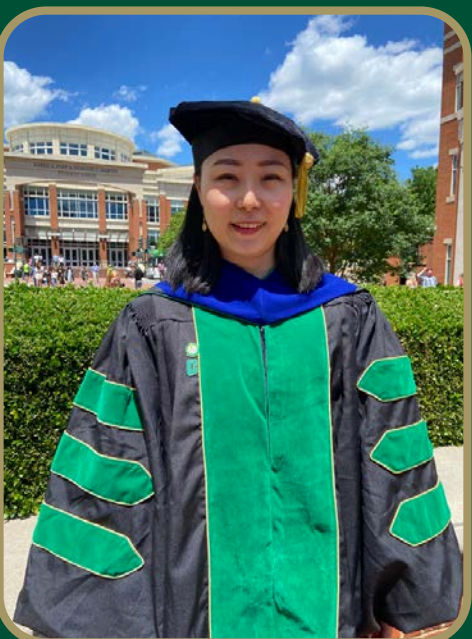
An Exploration of Teacher and Student Perceptions about Standard Uniform Policies in American Public Middle Schools

Ed.D. - P-12 Superintendency

Chair: Dr. Walter Hart

Committee: Drs. Jamie Kudlats, Scarlett Zhang & Spencer Salas

Dr. Zhi Li



Informing Evaluation Practice through Research on Evaluation

Ph.D - Educational Research, Measurement, & Evaluation

Chair: Dr. Carl Westine

Committee: Drs. Chuang Wang, Xiaoxia Newton & Kelly Anderson

Post-Grad: I've been offered a position at the National Center for Rural Health Professions Department at the University of Illinois Chicago. As a Research Specialist in Program Evaluation, I'll apply the knowledge and skills I've gained from our program.

Advice: The university provides many resources for students' daily lives. If you check your emails closely, you will find many events worth attending. Maintaining a work-life balance is also important.



Spring 2024 Doctoral Graduates

Dr. Lindsay M. Merritt



An Exploratory Study of the Lived Experiences of First-Year, International Spanish-Speaking Dual Language Teachers in North Carolina

Ed.D. - P-12 Superintendency

Co-Chairs: Dr. Walter Hart & Joan Lachance

Committee: Drs. Jimmy Watson & Adriana Medina

Thoughts: I am a first generation college graduate. I felt such pride when getting my undergraduate degree from UNC-Charlotte in the presence of my parents and grandparents back in 2007. Fast forward to 3 degrees later (two more from UNC-Charlotte), I still feel an overwhelming sense of accomplishment.



Dr. Stephen Parker



A Single Case Study of an Inner-City School During an Era of School Choice

Ed.D. - P-12 Superintendency

Chair: Dr. Walter Hart

Committee: Drs. Jimmy Watson, Rebecca Shore & Erik Byker



Spring 2024 Doctoral Graduates

Dr. Melissa D. Smith



A Qualitative Study of Black Women Superintendents: Inhibiting Factors, Enabling Factors, and Perceptions
Ed.D. - P-12 Superintendency

Chair: Dr. Walter Hart
Committee: Drs. Jimmy Watson, Scarlett Zhang & Chance Lewis



Dr. Kimberly D. Turner



The Experiences of Black Women Administrators in Mid-Level Leadership Navigating the Superwoman Schema
Ed.D. - Higher Education

Co-Chairs: Dr. Ryan A. Miller & Cathy D. Howell
Committee: Drs. Mark D'Amico & Tehia Glass

Advice: This is a great program with wonderful faculty. They provide resources and mentors for you to be successful. Take advantage of everything the program has to offer.

Completing your dissertation is a process you have never experienced before. It's going to be hard. You will question yourself and the process. It will all work out. Give yourself grace!



Spring 2024 Doctoral Graduates

Dr. Kristin M. Villanueva



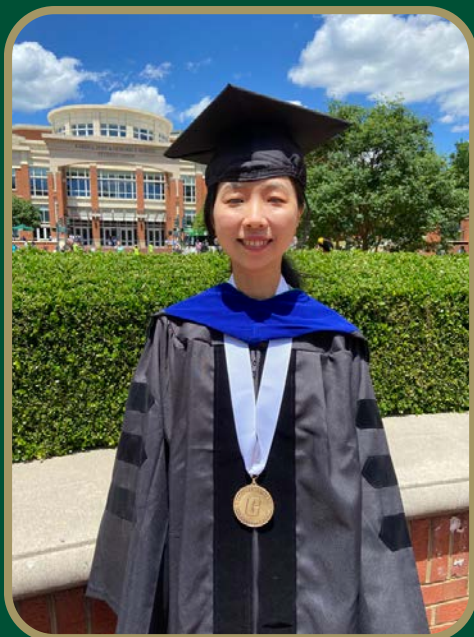
Examining the Research-Practice Collaborative Model as a Framework for Bolstering Implementation Fidelity of Educational Policy Initiatives: A Case Study of the North Carolina Early Learning Inventory
Ph.D - Educational Research, Measurement, & Evaluation

Chair: Dr. Richard G. Lambert
Committee: Drs. Jae Hoon Lim, Carl Westin, Drew Polly, and Heather Taylor

Advice: Immerse yourself as much as possible in your program. Spend time with your cohort outside of class, join the writing groups and social events, and take advantage of all the resources our campus has to offer. Push self-limiting thoughts aside and network with leaders in your area of interest early in your program.



Dr. Yi Wang



Advancing Community College Student Engagement and Success: Validation Study of Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE)
Ph.D - Educational Research, Measurement, & Evaluation

Chair: Dr. Sandra Dika
Committee: Drs. Kyle Cox, Mark D'Amico, E. Michael Bohlig, Elizabeth Stearns



Spring 2024 Doctoral Graduates

Dr. Johnine N. Williamson



The Untold Story: African American Men with Learning Disabilities at the Postsecondary Level a Multi-Case Study from Two Perspectives Parent and Student

Ed.D. - Higher Education

Chair: Dr. Lisa Merriweather
Committee: Drs. Jae Hoon Lim, Mark D'Amico & Gloria Campbell-Whately

Post-Grad: I intend to pursue an adjunct professorship while concurrently focusing on transforming my research into articles for different academic journals and compiling it into a book to aid parents of students with learning disabilities in supporting their postsecondary students.



Doctoral Degree Process

The doctoral process includes four phases, including coursework, qualifying examination (portfolio), proposal, and final defense. During years of study, students immerse themselves in scholarly study to develop a research topic with supervisory oversight and support from their academic advisor, subsequent dissertation chair, and committee. The genesis of a research topic may be derived from courses, an existing research project, a problem of practice, or personal interest.

The dissertation is an original study that involves a systematic methodological process for collecting and analyzing new or existing data. The dissertation demonstrates advanced, if not mastery, of a selected subject area. The goal for applied and research dissertations is multilayer, including making a novel contribution to a body of knowledge, serving as the capstone for doctoral study, allowing for the cultivation of intellectual growth, and having the potential to impact real-world problems through policy and practices.

Doctoral study requires a commitment to a sustained process normalized with iterative revisions to their writing and research. Students commit themselves to a process that requires careful analysis of systems and persistence to advance their cognitive skills in addressing complex questions.

Successful completion of a doctoral degree is recognized as having the highest academic credentials and may allow for career and labor market mobility. We celebrate and applaud our doctoral students for their resilience and commitment to doctoral education!

Dissertation Defense

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.



Zackary Hubbard

Higher Education

Exploring the role of student organizations in the persistence of women in STEM associate degree programs

Chair: Dr. Ayesha Sadaf

Committee: Drs. Jae Hoon Lim, Ryan Miller, and David Pugalee

Dissertation Proposal Defenses



*Jordan Baker
P-12 Superintendent*



*Ashley Bayer
P-12 Superintendent*



*Jasmine Bishop
Learning, Design & Tech.*



*Kathleen Bradley-Volz
Higher Education*



*Taniqua Canzater
Higher Education*



*Ashley Carter
Higher Education*

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

Dissertation Proposal Defenses



*Pariss Coleman
Learning, Design & Technology*



*John Everett
Higher Education*



*Jacob Frankovich
Higher Education*



*Joy Stogner Hathcock
P-12 Superintendency*



*Leonardo Herrera Mosquera
Ph.D. in Educational
Research, Measurement,
and Evaluation*



*Tyler Mavity
P-12 Superintendency*

Dissertation Proposal Defenses



Chikako Mori
Learning, Design & Technology



Marcus Porter
P-12 Superintendency



Karen Shaffer
Higher Education



Courtney Stallmann
P-12 Superintendency



Sarah Williams Wright
P-12 Superintendency



April Williamson
P-12 Superintendency



Harry Efird
P-12 Superintendency



Alejandra Garcia
P-12 Superintendency



Dwayne Simmons
Learning, Design & Technology

Kudos Corner

A space to celebrate exciting news beyond the educational leadership programs.
Kudos to the following...

Congratulations

Learning, Design and Technology

Karen Ingram won first place in the Graduate School Symposium and a \$500 award. She was elected to serve on the Association for Educational Communications and Technology Board as a representative for Technology Integrated Learning.

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

Leo Herrera was the recipient of the Graduate School Summer Fellowship for 2024 and will soon be published in the Literacy Research and Instruction Journal!

Superintendency

Dr. Yolanda Blakeney presented her dissertation research at the Center for Racial Equity in Education (CREED) annual conference.



Higher Education

Jessica Dunlow's presentation proposal was accepted to the 2024 UNC System Advancement Symposium. Her proposal was “Empowering Alumni: Applying Nancy Schlossberg’s Theory of Marginality and Mattering to Alumni Engagement”

Congratulations to M.Ed. alumna, **Shelby Jo Lewis** on her marriage this month!

Celebrating Diversity in Education

Women's Leadership Development Program



In January 2014, a cohort-based women's leadership conversation series was created for students who currently act as leaders (whether in positional roles or not) to interact with and learn from women leaders in our community. Women in the community or from our alumni share their stories, answer questions and engage in conversations with UNC Charlotte students about their personal experiences as women and leaders in their fields, their families or their communities.

We recognize **Lauren Smith**, M.Ed. Educational Leadership student, for overseeing the 2024 WLDP.



Recent Celebrations



Latinx Graduation - April 27th



Lavender Graduation - April 22nd



Donning of the Kente - May 9th



Ed. Leadership in the News

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



Busting Myths About Deadline Extensions *by Colleen Flaherty*

<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/student-success/2024/05/07/study-explores-extension-without-penalty-deadline-policy>



Bringing College into High Schools *by Wayne D’Orio*

<https://www.educationnext.org/bringing-college-into-high-schools-bard-early-colleges-associates-degree/>



DEI Isn’t Scary; Political Purges Are *by Ryan A. Miller*

<https://www.insidehighered.com/opinion/views/2024/04/05/dei-isnt-scary-political-purges-are-opinion>

Important FAFSA Updates

Financial aid offers for the 2024-25 year are being processed. We are aware of students receiving emails from Niner Central: The Department of Education (DOE) has identified a population of students who will need to be reprocessed due to FAFSA Processing System errors. Please view <https://ninercentral.charlotte.edu/financial-aid-loans/2024-2025-fafsa-updates/> to keep up to date with the latest FAFSA updates at Charlotte, and visit studentaid.gov to learn more about the 2024-25 FAFSA update.

Importantly, please be aware of the requirements for full-time classification:

- 9 credit hours in the Fall & Spring
- 6 credit hours in the Summer

<https://provost.charlotte.edu/policies-procedures/academic-policies-and-procedures/academic-load-and-time-status-all-graduate/>

Earlier this week, the Department of Education (DOE), provided updates related to previous issues students and families were experiencing related to their FAFSA completion. Those updates include:

Reprocessing of IRS Data Known Issues

Over the previous weekend, the DOE completed reprocessing FAFSA forms impacted by known issues (IRS FA-DDX, blank SAI) and as of May 1, began delivering the subsequent ISIR transactions to states and schools. At this time, the DOE believes that virtually all of the ISIRs that have been delivered are complete and accurate. [You can learn more about the actions taken to reprocess impacted data here.](#) At Charlotte, we are working diligently to package financial aid offers for the reprocessed data we have received. We encourage both new and continuing students to monitor their University emails for notifications from our Financial Aid team regarding their offer.

Access to the FAFSA Form for Individuals Without a Social Security Number

As of April 30, the DOE is temporarily allowing individuals without an SSN to enter and complete the 2024-25 FAFSA. Students and contributors without an SSN must continue to manually enter their tax information. Students without an SSN must verify their eligible noncitizen status through their school before they receive any federal funds. New users who request a StudentAid.gov account and cannot validate their identity using the knowledge-based questions (as generated by TransUnion) must still complete the manual process to validate their identity. However, they will not have to wait to have their identity validation completed before they can use their account username and password to access and complete the online 2024-25 FAFSA form. The DOE also encourages all users without an SSN to complete the identity validation process without delay, even after the student’s FAFSA form is submitted. [You can learn more about next steps here.](#)

Please note, the DOE continues to address known issues impacting student experiences as outlined in the [Issue Alerts page](#) and the [Technical FAQ Known Issues Guide](#) to continuously improve the 2024-25 FAFSA experience. As an institution, we are continuing to monitor updates provided by the DOE and will continue to summarize those here for members of Niner Nation.



Funding Graduate Education



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

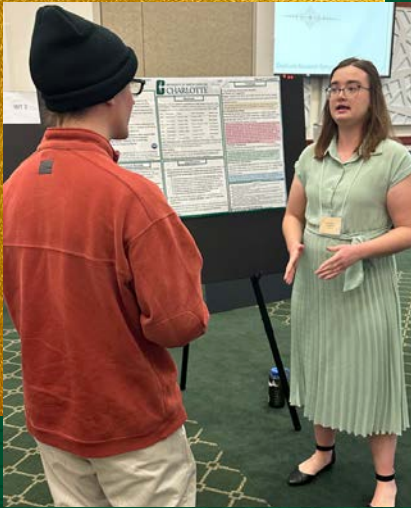
Here, you will learn about:

- 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.



Graduate Research Symposium *March 22nd, 2024*



M. Lambert presenting at the Diversity Scholars Forum

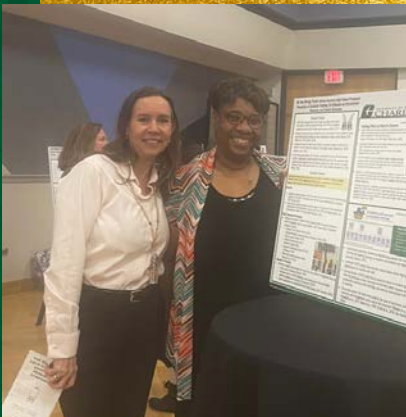


T. Canzater presenting her dissertation research



K. Ingram presenting at GRS - First Place winner in Oral Presentations!

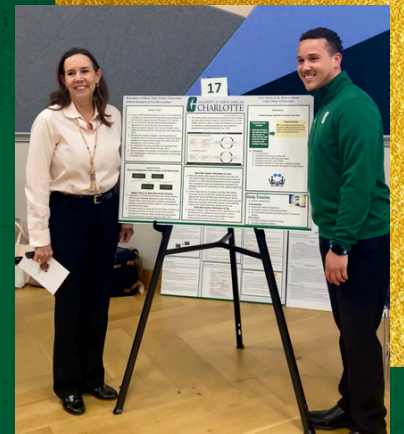
COED Research Symposium *April 8th, 2024*



C. Allen and Dr. Shore pose for a photo



Students and faculty having fun at the COED Research Symposium



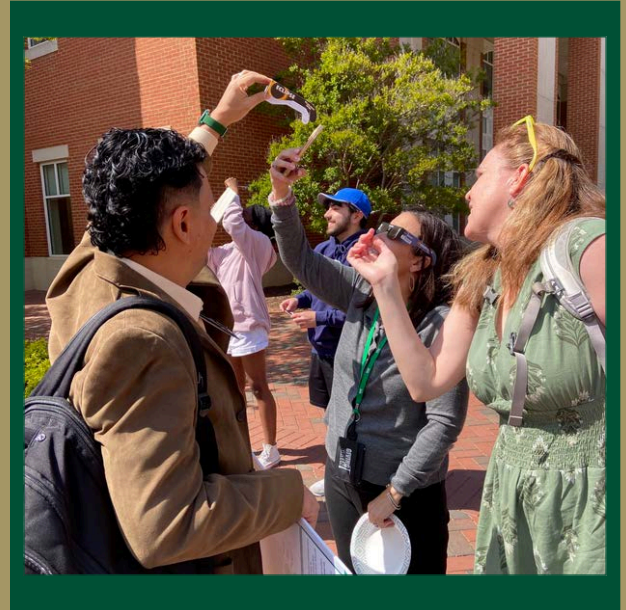
T. Mavity presenting his work with support from Dr. Shore

Leaders Out and About



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The Council for the Study of Community Colleges (CSCC) is an affiliate of the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) and a project of the Center for the Study of Community Colleges. Council members include university-based researchers and community college practitioners who further scholarship for community colleges.

Conference Feature



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The American Educational Research Association (AERA), founded in 1916, is concerned with improving the educational process by encouraging scholarly inquiry related to education and evaluation and by promoting the dissemination and practical application of research results.



This year, AERA was attended by: Drs. Ji Yae Bong, Kyle Cox, Sandra Dika, Dawson Hancock, Stella Kim, Rich Lambert, Jae Hoon Lim, Lisa Merriweather, Ryan Miller, Xiaoxia Newton, Ayesha Sadaf, Carmen Serrata, Chuang Wang, and Carl Westine.

Additionally, several current ERME Ph.D. students attended: Jada Deiderich, Leo Herrera, Marah Lambert, Zhi Li, Qiao Liu, Kristin Villanueva, and Kristen Wright.



Educational Leadership Student Organization

UNC CHARLOTTE

Coffee & Convo



Get Connected!



NINER ENGAGE

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. ***Thanks to all members and friends of ELSO for a great year!***

Interested in ELSO? Please contact Tynsley Gilchrist, incoming ELSO President, at also-org@uncc.edu



Snack & Chat Event



End-of-Year Celebration at Divine Barrel Brewing



Sun, Surf, and Semester Photos

The Department of Educational Leadership is ready to celebrate and enjoy the summer. Take a look at some 2023-2024 memories.



T. Gilchrist, M. Lambert, & O. Thodiyl receive the Jane K. Testerman scholarship!



Graduate students celebrating accomplishments at the ELSO End of Year Celebration at Divine Barrel



Jacob Frankovich won the College of Education Research Symposium giveaway



Doctoral students and graduates at the End of Semester Celebration



Jasmine Bishop & Pariss Coleman won the raffle giveaway at the End of Semester Celebration!



Raina, Aly, Natalie, and Erin meet with Dean Butler to celebrate graduation!



Congratulations to Dr. Chuang Wang for receiving the Distinguished Faculty Award!



Congratulations to Dr. Mark D'Amico for receiving the Distinguished Faculty Award!



Students, faculty and staff gather in the courtyard to view the eclipse



Upcoming Dates

May 20	Summer Session 1 (S1) Classes Begin
May 21	Last Day to Add/Drop a Class for S1
May 22	Payment Due Date
May 24	Niner Course Pack Opt-Out Deadline
May 27	Memorial Day (NO CLASSES)
June 10	Last Day to Withdraw
June 21	Last Day of Classes (S1)
June 25-26	S1 Final Examinations
July 1	Summer Session 2 (S2) Classes Begin
July 2	Last Day to Add/Drop a Class for S2
July 4	July 4th (UNIVERSITY CLOSED)
July 8	Payment Due Date
July 23	Last Day to Withdraw
August 2	Last Day of Classes (S2)
August 6-7	S2 Final Examinations



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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