CU Denver
School of Education
& Human Development

RELEVANT AND CUSTOMIZED LEARNING FOR EDUCATORS

FALL 2017
A LETTER FROM THE DEAN

Rural Partnerships to Address Teacher Shortages

Dear alumni, colleagues and friends of the School of Education & Human Development:

This issue of Edge arrives at a time when the current and growing teacher shortage has become a major focus for those of us concerned with the quality of our public education system and the opportunities for our children to achieve.

With the opening of the 2017–18 school year around the country, we see in federal data that virtually every state is dealing with shortages of teachers in key subject areas. Many districts are challenged to fill positions in subjects such as math, the traditional sciences, foreign language and special education, but also in reading and English language arts, history, art, music, elementary education, middle school education, career and technical education, health and computer science. And this is not even a complete or exhaustive list!

We began anticipating a teacher shortage many years back knowing that baby boomers would begin to retire mid-decade, but in truth, the problem has grown even more acute in recent years. Some attribute the worsening shortage to low morale over low pay for very hard work, high-pressure teacher evaluation methods, the emphasis on high-stakes testing, and lack of autonomy and creativity in highly prescribed curricula. It is a complex issue.

Our approach at CU Denver has been to create innovative ways to identify talent, prepare individuals to teach in fulfilling ways—even within current constraints—and develop their resilience for the pressures of teaching.

In Colorado, the most acute problem is found in our rural communities. We have been building networks of relationships and bringing resources to our work across the state for the past four years since we received a large federal grant ($8.5 million) that we could share with our rural neighbors.

In this issue, you will learn more about our alternative licensure program ASPIRE to Teach, which now is in 25 small rural school districts and 16 rural school districts. Since 2013, ASPIRE to Teach has prepared many individuals to teach in hard-to-fill subject areas: 114 in mathematics, 118 in science and 183 in special education.

In the Year in Review section, you will read about the bill signing with Governor John Hickenlooper at CU Denver. The new law, which resulted from House Bill 1332, expands alternative licensure pathway eligibility to include educators who work in private community-based early childhood education and care settings. You will also meet Dr. Margarita Bianco, named the University of Colorado’s Timmerhaus Teaching Ambassador, who is using her award to bring her very successful Pathways2Teaching pipeline program to rural Colorado. And, you will see that we have initiated an important partnership with Otero Junior College (OJC) to create the first four-year CU teaching degree in rural Colorado. OJC students can finish their CU Denver degree entirely in La Junta.

I’m very proud of our SEHD community’s work to teach and counsel for social change. Together, we share momentum and a great sense of purpose to improve lives.

All the best,

Rebecca Kantor
Dean
Three years ago, Lucia Cordovano landed a teaching job. Two years ago, she earned her alternative teaching license. This year, the CU Denver ASPIRE alumna received the Outstanding New Educator Award from the National Association for Alternative Certification (NAAC).

Things move quickly for students in CU Denver’s ASPIRE to Teach alternative teacher licensure program, which Cordovano completed in 2016. That’s by design. The School of Education & Human Development launched the program in 2014 to address the issue of teacher shortages in certain subject areas and in certain geographic areas throughout the state of Colorado. The program recruits career-changers, that is, people with a BA in other subject areas who decide they want to become a teacher.

“In our high-quality, affordable program, students earn a paycheck as a teacher while getting their license,” said assistant clinical professor Suzanne Arnold, director of ASPIRE, which is now the largest alternative teacher licensure program in Colorado. “ASPIRE turns out qualified teachers to serve high-need areas and marginalized populations.”

“Never want to miss a day of work”

Filling teaching positions in special education can be a challenge for schools. Thanks to Cordovano and the ASPIRE program, that’s not a problem at STRIVE Prep – Westwood, a public charter school in southwest Denver.

The award-winning educator taught special education there during her year in the ASPIRE program and continues to teach at the school, which is in a low-income neighborhood of Denver.

“Often, children with disabilities aren’t getting what they deserve in school, and these students can be left behind without the right support,” Cordovano said. “They all have different strengths and needs, so I need to learn about each individual student and figure out what works for them.”

Cordovano spends a good deal of her time and energy at work building and nurturing her relationships with students. She believes that prioritizing social and emotional learning has contributed to her success as an educator.

“Special education students need a teacher who’s flexible, forgiving and kind,” she said. “They also need structure and consistency—and that makes me never want to miss a day of work.”

“I needed all the help I could get.”

A focus on relationships is also what made CU Denver’s ASPIRE program a good fit for Cordovano. In addition to completing coursework online, CU Denver ASPIRE students receive customized one-on-one coaching and mentoring from a dedicated alternative licensure instructor (ALI) and engage in regular check-ins with classmates through professional learning community meetings.

“I loved ASPIRE,” Cordovano said. “I got lots of face time with my ALI, I got teaching ideas from other first-year teachers, and the program helped me contextualize my learning because I could try out what I was learning the very next day at school.”

She admits that she felt stressed as a first-year teacher, but she benefited from the individualized support of her ALI, Jennifer Fox, who, like Cordovano, is a special education teacher. Cordovano would often record herself in her classroom and share the video with Fox to get critiques of specific student interactions.

“My first day at STRIVE was also my first day in the ASPIRE program, so I felt like I needed all the help I could get,” she said.

More than 200 students enroll in the ASPIRE program each year, and Arnold credits the work of the nine ASPIRE ALIs for the program’s 90 percent graduation rate.

“They’re an incredible team of people who are genuinely interested in improving educational experiences for students in Colorado by working with these teachers,” Arnold said.

Winning the award

When asked why she thinks she received this year’s NAAC Outstanding New Educator Award, Cordovano seemed flabbergasted. She was just “someone who was trying to become a better teacher.”

“I don’t know,” said the Connecticut native who earned her bachelor’s degree from CU Boulder in speech language and hearing sciences. “I did well in the ASPIRE program because I wasn’t just doing it to do it. I was really excited by the whole program and trying to make meaning of it.”

Cordovano was selected from a national pool of nominees in their first three years of teaching who were certified through an alternative route program. The award is given based on “passion for and commitment to the success of every student.”

“It’s not often a candidate can grab the full nuance and complexity of special education in their first year of teaching, but Lucia was able to look through so many lenses at once when it came to her students,” said Fox, who, with Arnold, nominated Cordovano for the award. “Because of this, she excelled in ASPIRE and continues to be a force for the students she works with.”

“I want to continue working with students from low-income backgrounds and children with disabilities, and I’m considering pursuing a graduate degree,” she said. “I’m still deciding on my future, but I know it will involve working with children.”
Avondine Hill is passionate about becoming the kind of teacher who transforms his students' lives.

Although he is still a student in the MA + Teacher Licensure program at CU Denver’s School of Education & Human Development, he is already putting his passion for teaching social studies into action. During his first two internships at Hinkley High School in Aurora, the most remarkable moments in his teacher candidacy involved passionate, respectful and hard discussions about serious societal issues.

“Last semester involved almost daily dialogs about prejudice, racism and oppression as they relate to U.S. and world history,” Hill recalled. “These are perfect teaching moments for me to help my students think critically about their role in the world. I remember saying to myself multiple times, ‘Wow, this is why I chose to teach.’”

For Hill, who attended eight different elementary schools before he reached high school, becoming a teacher is an opportunity to rewrite his personal history, giving students some of the educational opportunities that he didn’t have as a youth.

**The importance of a multicultural curriculum**

Hill grew up in New Mexico, the son of a single mother who supported them by “working her tail off.” Sadly, when he was a child, the mainstream curriculum in the schools nationwide rarely featured or celebrated diverse cultures.

Now that he is studying to teach social studies at the secondary level, he is mindful of infusing his lessons with culturally relevant literature and activities. “I encourage my students to learn to view the world’s major ideas and events through different cultural lenses,” he said. “I know what it means to have an education that doesn’t incorporate your people’s history into the curriculum. It’s a disservice for students, their families and their communities. When students see their ethnic and cultural identities represented in the curriculum, they see that their history is valued, which serves to further students’ sense of inquiry and political efficacy.”

After graduating from high school, Hill spent four years drifting from college to various jobs and finally enlisting in military service. He spent seven years in the U.S. Navy and then enrolled in community college. As an undergraduate, he found his passion: ethnic studies, a program that uncovered untold histories, ways of being, and provided him with new theoretical tools to critically assess society, himself and the world around him.

But when he graduated, he had to ask himself an important question: What would he do with a degree in ethnic studies? To him, teaching seemed like a natural fit, and CU Denver offered the perfect program for his needs.

**His students: “They inspire me.”**

Ask Hill what drew him to MA + Teacher Licensure, and he praises the streamlined program. In just 18 months, he will have his teaching license and a master’s degree in curriculum and instruction. He also likes the extensive practical experience afforded by the close partnership with multiple Denver metro-area school districts. Hill spent one semester in classes, but by the end of his second semester he had done two internships in local schools. His third semester will bring a third internship, again with coaching from dedicated faculty and master practicing teachers.

“This process gradually eased me into full responsibility for a class,” Hill said. “I learned how to have the emotional energy that it takes to be a teacher.”

Hill praises some of his CU Denver professors for their willingness to “show up outside of class” whenever he needed help or support. In turn, he talks enthusiastically about how he supports his own students.

“They inspire me,” he said. “The kids bring plenty to the plate, and I bring something. It’s a collaboration.”

**Prepared to be “the best first-year teacher”**

With the MA + Teacher Licensure program as his foundation, Hill has clearly already had an impact at Hinkley High School. He was asked to return for another internship during this third and final semester in the CU Denver program. He continues to use his own educational experience to inform his teaching.

“I always ask the same questions,” he said. “Who are we teaching? Why are we teaching this material? How can we do it the best way possible, giving students the opportunities we promised when we ask them to come to class?”

Hill plans to continue his graduate studies with the hope that he can someday complete his PhD. He’s eager to get inside his own classroom and help students understand the world through their own filter.

“My goal is to be the best first-year teacher I can be,” he said. “The MA + Teacher Licensure program is unique. It has absolutely given me the tools to be prepared and successful when I walk into my first class.”

For more information about the MA + Teacher Licensure pathway at CU Denver, please visit education.ucdenver.edu/graduateteacher.
The School of Education & Human Development (SEHD) has started two new learning communities for undergraduate students: the Curious Teacher Learning Community, focused on changing lives through teaching in culturally and linguistically diverse settings, and the bilingual Familias y Justicia, or Families and Justice Learning Community, focused on effectively serving culturally and linguistically diverse individuals and families.

What is a learning community? Ours begin with a group of connected courses in students’ freshman year and extend across their sophomore and junior years. These communities offer SEHD students the chance to combine educational experiences, co-curricular experiences and service learning in a high-impact, theme-based program while supporting college graduation goals.

Learning communities help students integrate into university life, tap into their passion for a discipline or theme, and support long-lasting friendships with fellow students and faculty. Eight learning communities are organized through CU Denver’s Office of Undergraduate Experiences led by Jeff Franklin, associate vice chancellor for undergraduate experiences.

“This notion of how to really construct high-quality curriculum that is engaging and interconnected for students, and that pulls them into communities, is something very familiar to us in education,” said Barbara Seidl, associate dean for teacher education and undergraduate experiences at SEHD. “We are really striving for participants to feel a true sense of belonging to the university community, a sense of connection to their profession and an overarching joy and passion for improving the world.”

Each learning community is based on a common big idea and driving question. The central question to the Curious Teacher Learning Community is “How can I learn about children’s learning?” And the central question to Familias y Justicia/Families and Justice is “How can I support diverse families and communities?”

Most learning community participants start freshman year by taking three common courses together. Transfer students may enter the community at any point. As undergraduates progress in their studies, they encounter additional courses, community-based field experiences and numerous learning events and programs. All of these touchpoints are designed to keep the essential learning community themes and questions top of mind. Welcome barbecues, book studies, faculty lectures, research presentations and on- and off-campus service learning experiences are all part of the mix of scholarly activities.

Bobbie Rucker is a dedicated member of the Curious Teacher Learning Community. “I am proud and thankful to be a part of this astonishing teacher education program!” said Rucker. “I’m so happy with it in terms of preparation, community support and enjoyment. I know that any challenge can be overcome with the support and love that resides within our community. The faculty is very open and empathetic; they gladly provide students with whatever they may need to be successful. There is not a better group of people that I could wish to have by my side in the pursuit of my dreams to become an elementary school teacher.”

Brie Ann Mondragon, student, BS in Human Development and Family Relations, is a member of the Familias y Justicia/Families and Justice Learning Community because “I know that together, we can make a positive impact.”

“I am confident these two learning communities will thrive,” said Seidl. “I know how hard the faculty leadership and student teams have been working to imagine and shape vibrant and collaborative experiences for our students. Our students are truly engaged in their learning and passionate about improving the world.”

To learn more about CU Denver’s undergraduate majors and minors in teaching and the Human Development and Family Relations program, please visit www.ucdenver.edu/education.
Research for the community
A faculty member in CU Denver’s Research and Evaluation Methods program, Davis has contributed much of his community service through his research for DPS. Since 2011, he has served as researcher-in-residence with the CU Denver-DPS Research Collaborative, coordinated a professional development grant to help English language learner (ELL) students in Denver, and led local initiatives to improve attendance, increase organizational coherence and reduce dropout rates.

His research returns often to issues of culture and diversity, such as ELL success factors, urban learning environments and the immigrant experience. He’s fascinated with the concept of an adolescent student’s developing sense of identity and how it affects academic success and career aspirations. Through a National Science Foundation grant project led by SEHD Mathematics Education professor Ron Tuz, Davis is now studying a new approach to teaching mathematics to multilingual learners in low-income urban schools.

“Part of the pleasure of my work is constantly learning new things,” Davis said. “It keeps you mentally young. Now that I’m 70 years old, that’s one of the things that I think about.”

Connecting across cultures
As an undergraduate in Southern California in the late 1960s, Davis planned to become an economist. But that changed when a serendipitous hitchhiking encounter led him to a job teaching eighth- and ninth-grade math and language arts in San Luis, Colo.

“It was a life-changing experience,” he said. “I was bilingual, and so were all but four of my students. The culture of the San Luis Valley was new and wonderful to me.”

He went on to get his master’s degree in teaching from Harvard University. As he gained diverse teaching experiences—in the Philippines, at Native American high schools and with urban and rural school districts across the country—Davis learned more and more about the role of culture in education, and in achievement gaps.

“Nothing exists outside of culture,” he said. “So, it’s important that teachers learn something about the culture and neighborhood that their students come from and find a way to connect with that.”

Davis has brought this mindset to his decades of teaching SEHD undergraduate, master’s and doctoral students. He believes the school’s emphasis on culture is one of its biggest strengths.

“At CU Denver, we try to recruit students from diverse populations, and our faculty is pretty diverse as well in terms of race, national origin and sexual orientation,” he said. “We see our mission as preparing teachers to work in urban and rural schools with diverse populations.”

“A legacy through teaching
Davis has been teaching for nearly half a century, and he doesn’t intend to stop anytime soon. In fact, he’s still starting new projects, like his new undergraduate research methods course for SEHD’s Human Development and Family Relations program.

“I haven’t retired simply because I am in very good health, still learning, still interested in research and still loving the opportunity to teach in and out of the classroom,” he said.

“I insist on teaching,” he said. “Anyone in teaching has a legacy in the sense of what your students go on to do. You have some small share in that, and that’s very satisfying.”

So satisfying, apparently, that this “Colorado boy” may continue teaching long after he stops downhill skiing.

“I don’t want to damage my knees. Those things have to last,” he said. “But my job is extremely rewarding to me. I love every aspect of it.”

Alan Davis, PhD, calls himself a “Colorado boy.” The CU Denver education professor grew up near Golden, started skiing when he was 12 and graduated from Wheat Ridge High School. Davis might also be called a Denver scholar for the years of service he has given, and continues to give, to schools in the Mile High City. From serving on Denver Public Schools (DPS) boards and task forces to helping develop the CU Denver-DPS Research Collaborative, he has been a partner in local education for decades.

The CU Denver faculty member of 27 years received the 2017 Lynn K. Rhodes Endowed Faculty Award from CU Denver’s School of Education & Human Development (SEHD). Named for the former CU Denver education dean, the awardee is chosen by former Dean Rhodes and current Dean Kantor to honor SEHD faculty who make a significant contribution to the school and the communities we serve.

“I have high regard for the purpose of the prize and was very honored by the award,” Davis said.
Sien’s brother has autism, and with her special education major, she wants to help students like him. “We need to set kids like my brother up for adulthood,” said Sien, who plans to graduate in December.

Sharing a love
As Sien and her brother grew older, she learned how to be more patient when talking to him and how to connect with him through things they both love, like music. A Maryland native, she first fell in love with Colorado during a show at Red Rocks Amphitheatre, and her brother can “play the drums like he’s in AC/DC.”

When she was in high school, Sien struggled with selecting a career path because of her own learning disability. “I can’t do simple addition in my head,” she said, “and all the careers I was interested in required me to be good at math.”

Then, she realized she was good at working with her brother. She began participating in a teacher academy program and got internships with students with special needs.

“Teaching came very naturally to me, and I realized this is exactly what I’m supposed to be doing,” she said.

Teaching with perspective
Sien just completed a practicum at Carmody Middle School in Jefferson County, and this fall, she has an internship at Arvada High School.

“It’s been a really rich experience,” she said of being a student in SEHD’s Special Education program. “I like the fact that there’s a diverse population, both in the student body and the population that I teach. And the professors are so supportive and contribute so much to the educator that you become.”

Much of her work has focused on helping students plan for life and a career after graduation—the type of transition support that her brother never received.

“My brother has regressed in some ways and is nearer to the nonverbal end of the spectrum now,” she said. “Watching him go through that put things in perspective of what I can do for other kids.”

Setting big goals
Sien has dreams of starting a summer camp for kids with autism. She envisions the camp offering horse therapy, water therapy, hyperbaric oxygen and, most importantly, scholarships for 20 percent of campers. She has already thought through how she’ll make the camp a reality through nonprofit grant funding, and she has built a professional foundation for herself through CU Denver’s Student Council for Exceptional Children.

“It’s a big goal,” said Sien, who worked last summer as a counselor at a kids adventure and wildlife camp in Highlands Ranch. “But without big goals, how are you going to get anywhere?”

And that’s not even her biggest goal. “My end-all, be-all goal is to change the perception of kids with special needs,” she said. “People feel like they can’t do things, but if you give them a chance to conquer their world, I guarantee you they can do it.”

“Teaching came very naturally to me.”
THE BILINGUAL ADVANTAGE

You can count on your fingers the number of school psychology doctoral programs in the United States that offer a bilingual concentration. In Colorado, you just need one finger—and it would point to the CU Denver School of Education & Human Development (SEHD).

“There should be more programs like ours, because we have a huge need in our field,” said Associate Professor of School Psychology Bryn Harris, who teaches in SEHD’s School Psychology (PsyD) doctoral program and oversees the students in the bilingual concentration. “In our country, bilingual populations are often underserved and not understood. Research shows how poor their services are compared to other populations and the inequities that occur in public schools.”

The bilingual concentration at SEHD has been available since 2010, and the PsyD program was established in 2015. Each year several students take advantage of this rare opportunity. Ana Novelli is one of them.

The fight for fluency
Ana Novelli is not a native Spanish-speaker. She grew up speaking English in Boulder and threw tantrums when her mother, who is Peruvian, tried to speak Spanish to her.

Later, she double-majored in Spanish and psychology at CU Boulder, studied abroad and lived in Peru to immerse herself in the language. Today, she is bilingual in English and Spanish, and she’s not letting it go.

“I’ve always wanted to work with Spanish-speaking populations, and the bilingual concentration is why I chose this PsyD program,” she said.

The program is open to bilingual speakers of any language in addition to English, though many of its students are Spanish-speaking.

“Parents are so grateful when they realize you can speak their language and help them navigate our systems,” Novelli said. “It’s been so wonderful to be able to help these parents feel comfortable coming into their kids’ school.”

This fall, she has an internship at North Star Elementary in Thornton, where her Spanish-speaking supervisors will include SEHD alumna Tamina Quinto-Penkova, who serves on the school district’s bilingual assessment team. Quinto-Penkova was born in Mexico to a father from Mexico and a mother from the Czech Republic. Her family moved to the United States when she was 14, making her an ELL student in the U.S. school system.

“As an immigrant, I experienced a lot of things growing up that non-immigrants don’t experience,” she said. “It’s difficult to be an effective school psychologist if you don’t share a common language or understanding of a culture. I wish there were more school psychology programs like CU Denver’s.”

The quality of education here has been really amazing,” said Novelli, who has completed the certification and plans to earn her PsyD in May 2018. “I absolutely love the small cohorts. We go through all of our classes together and meet to talk about our practicums and internships, and the faculty really get to know us.”

A huge need in public schools
As she enters her fourth and final year of the PsyD program, Novelli has already served Spanish-speaking populations through two practicum experiences at elementary schools and an externship at a counseling center.

“CU Denver has a good reputation in the school psychology community in Denver,” Novelli said. “The school sites are really happy to have us.”

About one in five students in the Denver metro area is an English language learner (ELL), and there are not enough bilingual school psychologists to serve all of them. Bilingual school psychologists not only help ELL students get accurate assessments and proper academic placements, they also help students’ parents.

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100 percent job placement
The field of psychology is growing quickly, according to the U.S. Department of Labor, and there is a shortage of school psychologists, both in Colorado and the nation. Add to that the increasing ethnic diversity in U.S. cities, and CU Denver’s PsyD bilingual concentration program has a 100 percent job placement rate, Harris said.

“There is no shortage of school psychologist positions, and if you’re bilingual, you are in high demand,” Harris said. Each year, she receives inquiries from school district hiring managers offering hiring bonuses and other incentives for qualified bilingual school psychologists.

For Novelli, the program is working. In her current work at a local urban treatment center for youth who have experienced trauma, she said she can see a difference in how she interacts with kids from when she started working there in her second year of the program to now.

“It’s a hard degree, but it’s worth it,” Novelli said. “You’re going to get a job, and you’re going to help people.”

School psychology doctoral candidate helps bilingual students and her own career
Ana Novelli, PsyD student, with Tamina Quinto-Penkova, alumna
**YEAR IN REVIEW**

**FIRST FOUR-YEAR CU TEACHING DEGREE IN RURAL COLORADO**

CU Denver is proud to work alongside Otero Junior College (OJC) to address teacher shortages in Colorado, particularly in rural school districts. What makes this program unique is not just that it’s rural-focused; OJC students can finish their CU Denver degree entirely in La Junta. We’re excited to see the results of this partnership, which combines the strengths of a top public urban research university with the talent and vision of a prestigious rural junior college.

**ENCYCLOPEDIA ENTRY PUBLISHED JULY 2017**

Farah Ibrahim, PhD, LP (CO), professor of counseling, and her daughter Jianna Heuer, MSW, LCSW, published an invited entry in “The Encyclopedia of Psychology and Gender” in July 2017. Their entry is titled “Existential theories of gender development.” This encyclopedia considers issues of gender, identity and psychological processes and informs some of today’s key contemporary issues and debates on gender. Ibrahim is well-known in the counseling field for her expertise in applying cultural sensitivity and cultural responsiveness principles to clinical decision-making.

**FIRST DENVER CAMPUS Awardee**

Margarita Bianco, associate professor in special education, has been named the University of Colorado’s Timmerhaus Teaching Ambassador. During the appointment, she will lead lectures and workshops in Colorado and beyond. Her presentations will address important issues about access, equity and building opportunities for college readiness and success for first-generation and other underserved student populations.

**13 PHOTOGRAPHS**

Silhouette: Stories of Immigration, a project by local photographer and personal historian Dona Laurita, brings forward imagery and stories of local immigrants and refugees. It is on display at the SEHD Student Commons, on the seventh floor of the Lawrence Street Center, Monday–Friday from 9 a.m.–5 p.m. The exhibit allows observers to connect with immigrants’ reality, thereby offering visual and emotional perspectives on immigration. It features individuals who have immigrated from Africa, Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Chile, Democratic Republic of Congo, Germany, Ghana, Guatemala, Mexico and Tibet/Nepal.

**19 FACULTY ADVANCE DIGITAL PEDAGOGY**

ThingStudio launched with a generous grant from Chancellor Dorothy Horrell to SEHD faculty. ThingStudio is an interdisciplinary faculty project that promotes and explores creative and critical approaches to teaching and learning. Collaborating with the nationally renowned Digital Pedagogy Lab, the project engages CU Denver faculty with an international community of practice focused on teaching, learning and social justice in the digital era. In summer 2017, ThingStudio sent 19 faculty to the Digital Pedagogy Institute to initiate the project, with a series of professional development activities scheduled throughout the 2017-2018 academic year. ThingStudio is partnering with the Center for Faculty Development as well as CU Online to continue advancements in effective digital pedagogy at CU Denver.

**495 DIVERSE PARTICIPANTS**

SEHD’s Office of Diversity and Inclusion hosted 170 academic and guest speakers in the annual SEHD’s Student Awards Spring Banquet. This celebratory occasion highlights student achievement in academics, leadership and community service. In addition, 275 youth and 50 adults from the Denver metro area participated in the 2017 Black Education Impact Conference, where they participated in career workshops and presentations.

**68 STUDENTS IN THE NEW EDD COHORT**

The Doctor of Education in Leadership for Educational Equity (EdD) program doubled in size in 2016-2017. It is now the largest doctoral cohort in the school’s history. Areas of study include a cohort studying the opportunities and challenges in Latino/a student communities, executive leadership in schools, early childhood education and school leadership.

**HOUSE BILL 1332**

On May 31, Governor John Hickenlooper signed House Bill 1332 into law at CU Denver. The bill’s concept originated through a strong collaboration between our SEHD dean, the deans at CU Boulder and University of Colorado Colorado Springs, and the Colorado Children’s Campaign. The new law expands alternative teacher licensure pathway eligibility to include educators who work in private community-based early childhood education and care settings. The bill’s sponsors were Representatives Jeff Bridges and Jim Wilson and Senators Jim Smallwood and Stephen Fenberg. Dr. Shannon Hagerman from CU Denver and Dr. Stacy Howard from Qualistar testified on the bill.

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Key SEHD faculty members involved include Brad Mirenow (PI), Kees Kalk (Co-PI), Scott McLeod (Fellow) and Julia Kantor (Fellow).
GRANTS

Selected Funded Projects

FOUR-STATE STUDY ON EARLY CHILDHOOD HOME-VISITING WORK

CU Denver and University of Denver’s Butler Institute for Families have been awarded a $300,000 grant from the State of Washington’s Department of Early Learning titled "Regional Early Childhood Home Visiting Workforce Study." Dr. Diana Schaack of the SEHD and Dr. Meg Franko of DU will serve as principal investigators for the study. The study seeks to describe the demographic, educational, psychological and workplace characteristics of the home-visiting workforce in Washington, Idaho, Alaska and Oregon. The study will also examine factors that predict turnover, retention and the well-being of home-visitors to better understand how this workforce can be elevated in ways that enable it to best provide services for young children and their families.

ONE FEDERAL GRANT, 7 COLORADO UNIVERSITY CONSORTIUM PARTNERS

The Colorado Consortium of Residency Educators (CO-CORE), a unique group of partners across higher education and nonprofit organizations in Colorado, received a $400,000 grant from the Institute of Education Services to study what makes teacher residencies effective as a teacher preparation strategy and how to sustainably fund them. CO-CORE will provide scholarships to early career scholars working in critical areas of education research nationwide to enhance their most important elements.

ONE OF 30 NATIONWIDE

Luis Poza, assistant professor of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Education, is one of 30 early career scholars to be selected for a prestigious National Academy of Education fellowship. The Spencer Postdoctoral Fellowship will support Poza’s research into understanding bilingualism and improving learning outcomes for English language learners. Over the course of the next two years, Poza will study the challenges and opportunities of bilingual programs in gentrifying neighborhoods to identify if community change can be leveraged to foster meaningful integration of students and families across ethnic, linguistic and class backgrounds. Only 30 early career scholars working in critical areas of education research nationwide have been selected out of roughly 300 applicants for the competitive program. The fellows receive $70,000 for one year to support research proposals that make significant scholarly contributions to the field of education.

$4.7 MILLION IN AUTISM-RELATED AND PRESCHOOL INCLUSION GRANTS

Phil Strain, professor of Early Childhood Special Education, developed the LEAP model of inclusive services for young children with autism in 1981. This model continues to gain national momentum and utilization. This year, Strain has secured four new autism-related grants. The sub-awards to CU Denver total more than $4,726,500. Funding comes from three divisions in the U.S. Department of Education: Institute of Education Sciences, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services; and, the Office of Innovation and Improvement. The projects involve major partnerships with the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Temple Hoyne Buell Foundation, and Stanford Research Institute.

$300,000 NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION GRANT

CU Denver faculty members Heather Johnson (Mathematics Education), Remi Kalir (Information and Learning Technologies) and Gary Olson (Mathematical and Statistical Sciences) will study how “techtivities” (free, web-based learning experiences that link to video animations with interactive graphs) impact the academic performance of students in college algebra courses. This year, Strain has secured four new autism-related grants.

177 ETHNICALLY AND RACIALLY DIVERSE FUTURE TEACHERS

Funded by a $8.5 million five-year grant, the SEHD’s NxtGEN Teacher Preparation program extended CU Denver’s reach by partnering with 31 high-need school districts across urban and rural Colorado to enroll and train 177 ethnically and racially diverse future teachers since 2014. In the urban teacher pipeline, 89 percent of the students speak more than one language and 49 percent are ethnically diverse. During the same timeframe, 865 current teachers in rural partner districts received professional development and induction support through the grant.

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ONE OF 30 NATIONWIDE

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FOUR-STATE STUDY ON EARLY CHILDHOOD HOME-VISITING WORK

CU Denver and University of Denver’s Butler Institute for Families have been awarded a $300,000 grant from the State of Washington’s Department of Early Learning titled "Regional Early Childhood Home Visiting Workforce Study." Dr. Diana Schaack of the SEHD and Dr. Meg Franko of DU will serve as principal investigators for the study. The study seeks to describe the demographic, educational, psychological and workplace characteristics of the home-visiting workforce in Washington, Idaho, Alaska and Oregon. The study will also examine factors that predict turnover, retention and the well-being of home-visitors to better understand how this workforce can be elevated in ways that enable it to best provide services for young children and their families.

ONE FEDERAL GRANT, 7 COLORADO UNIVERSITY CONSORTIUM PARTNERS

The Colorado Consortium of Residency Educators (CO-CORE), a unique group of partners across higher education and nonprofit organizations in Colorado, received a $400,000 grant from the Institute of Education Services to study what makes teacher residencies effective as a teacher preparation strategy and how to sustainably fund them. CO-CORE will provide scholarships to early career scholars working in critical areas of education research nationwide to enhance their most important elements.
NEW FACULTY

Scott Bauer, professor and associate dean of advanced education and doctoral programs, comes to CU Denver with a robust career as a researcher, professor, leadership expert, school improvement professional and organizational design authority. He earned all of his higher education degrees, including his PhD, from Cornell University. Most recently, he served as a professor and division director of education leadership at George Mason University. In addition, Bauer has served on the research and teaching faculty at the University of New Orleans in the post-Katrina era and as an adjunct at Cornell University. Bauer has contributed scholarly work in topflight journals such as Educational Administration Quarterly, Teachers College Record, the Journal of School Leadership and the Journal of Educational Administration, and he serves on the editorial boards of several scholarly journals. He is an officer on the board of the School Leadership Center of Greater New Orleans and serves on the advisory board of the Apple Federal Credit Union and Apple Education Foundation.

Sofía Chapaorro, assistant professor in the Culturally and linguistically diverse Education program, earned her PhD from the University of Pennsylvania, where she received the Ford Foundation Dissertation Fellowship and the National Academy of Education/Spencer Dissertation Fellowship. Her research focuses on the social contexts of teaching and learning for bilingual students and, in particular, on the emergence of two-way immersion programs. She designed and taught a graduate course, Content-Based Language Instruction to Teaching English as a Second Language (TESOL), to master’s students at the University of Pennsylvania. In addition, she served as a linguistic and language instructor at Drexel University and adjunct instructor for Arcadia University.

Anayeli Lopez, instructor in our Human Development and Family Relations program, is in the dissertation phase of a dual PhD degree from Boston College and TESOL-Universidad Autónoma de Guadalajara. Prior to this position, she served as director of the Latino Studies Service-Learning program and researcher at the Center for Intercultural Teaching and Learning at Goshen College. Her higher education teaching experience includes instructor positions at Boston College, Grace College and Universidad Tecnológica de Aguascalientes in Mexico.

Kobi Nelson, instructor for the NxtGEN teacher education program, is currently in the dissertation phase of her PhD coursework at CU Denver. Her higher education teaching experience includes adjunct faculty positions at University of Colorado Denver and Red Rocks Community College. She has experience teaching third- through eighth-grade English language acquisition at Mountain Vista Community School in Colorado Springs and sixth-grade language arts at The Pinnacle Charter School in Thornton. Nelson received her first MA in English from Abilene Christian University and her second MA in Curriculum and Instruction from CU Denver.

Mary (Ellen) Schreivogel, instructor in undergraduate teacher education, is preparing future elementary teachers locally in La Junta through CU Denver and Otero Junior College’s new partnership, which provides a four-year pathway to teaching. The partnership prepares students with an education that is rooted in proven best practices and a strong commitment to working in rural communities. Schreivogel’s previous experience includes an adjunct instructor position with Adams State University and seminar/field school work with the Boettcher Teacher Residency. In addition, she has served as an education consultant, an elementary school principal and an elementary teacher. She earned her MA from Regis University and her principal licensure through Adams State University.

Lisa Silverstein, instructor for the NxtGEN teacher education program, is currently in the dissertation phase of her PhD coursework at CU Denver. She also serves as the undergraduate coordinator for CU Denver’s Teacher Preparation for Rural Education Partnership (TPREP) program at Otero Junior College and is an instructor for CU Denver’s Educational Foundations program. In addition, she has experience in grants project management and program coordination at the Community College of Denver and teaching courses at Community College of Denver, Colorado Community Colleges Online and Adams City Middle School. She received her MA from CU Denver.

NEW CU DENVER SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Honoring a couple’s leadership in education and activism

In their lives as a married couple, Phil Loney (CU Boulder: PhD ’73) and Pat Wiser (CU Boulder: MA ’67, EdS ’76, CU Denver: MA ’84) spent hours soaking up works by authors such as Mark Twain and James Baldwin. English and American literature engaged them and helped them explore many issues at the very heart of humanity. “We talked about literature all the time,” said Wiser. “It was our passion.”

Phil and Pat made it their mission to teach English and promote books, with a special love for reaching diverse and underserved student populations.

“Phil has been gone for six years now,” said Pat Wiser. “And I’ve been searching for the best opportunity to honor his memory in a way that would really, really please him.”

Through an excellent experience working with the University of Colorado Foundation to honor a family friend through a memorial scholarship, she found the perfect plan. The Phil Loney and Pat Wiser Philanthropic Scholarship Fund, administered by the CU Foundation, will award its first $2,000 annual scholarship in spring 2018 to a University of Colorado Denver student in the School of Education & Human Development pursuing a teaching career in K-12 English education (writing, literature, reading, language arts and related fields). Preference will be given to students who are passionate about teaching under-served student populations in rural or urban communities.

“Phil would have wanted to do this,” Pat said. “And through my estate plans, I will add to the scholarship fund over time.”

After receiving his PhD in English literature from CU Boulder, Phil taught for three universities, including College of the Ozarks, Kansas State and as an adjunct for CU Boulder. “He was very interested in satire and 17th-century literature. He had a wonderful sense of humor,” she said. In his later years, Phil was heavily engaged in public policy work in Colorado and Tennessee, including an appointment with Governor Roy Romer and state leadership roles for the Democratic Party.

In recognition, the couple moved to Sewanee, Tennessee. He kept active chairing the water utility board and the Cumberland Center for Justice and Peace. He also gardened to his heart’s content.

Pat knew in first grade that she wanted to teach and be a role model for children. Each afternoon for an hour, she played school with her younger brother at their desk and chalkboard. She taught him so well that he was asked to skip a grade. After high school, Wiser received her undergraduate degree from Peabody College, now the school of education for Vanderbilt University. Her curriculum for learning brought her to CU Boulder, where she worked as a research associate on a racial attitude change project and received a master’s degree in English and an education specialist degree in reading instruction. Wiser taught and led in highly diverse high schools in Minnesota, Tennessee and Colorado for 25 years. For the final years in her career, she wished to work with younger children. And that’s when she decided to attend CU Denver in the evenings to become an elementary-school librarian.

“When I was obtaining my master’s in library media at CU Denver in the 1980s, I was quite struck by the diversity of the student body and the university’s commitment to scheduling night courses for working adults,” said Wiser. “I really enjoyed meeting the nontraditional students in my classes. And that’s why I think that CU Denver is a good choice for this scholarship legacy. For nontraditional students, who many times need to complete one course at a time, it can take a while to complete a degree. It’s my hope that these scholarship funds will give students a boost to speed up that process.”

Her 10-year library position at the multicultural Whitter International School in Boulder was extremely fulfilling. “We had 27 languages represented. And I enjoyed so much the families and the projects that we were able to do. Plus, I just loved being a librarian. So I retired from that job. We took early retirement.”

“We are so thankful to Pat Wiser and her late husband, Phil, for sharing their love of literature with our CU Denver students,” said Rebecca Kantor, Dean of the School of Education & Human Development. “Your support for our current students and the students to come will in turn allow them to share their love for literature with their K-12 students. Thank you for your commitment to sustaining CU Denver’s scholarship program for educators.”
RESEARCHING AND ADVOCATING FOR LEARNING, DIGNITY AND EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS

Manuel Espinoza, associate professor of Educational Foundations, and a group of 10 first-generation college students and alumni are on a mission to change the way we view educational rights. Collectively, they are preparing to write and publish an argument for a major law review. The argument could find practical application in amicus curiae briefs — briefs offering information and advice to the court on a matter of law — to courts hearing cases that deal with education.

CU Denver’s Right to Learn Undergraduate Research Collective (R2L), now in its 10th year, is a service and community-learning project that provides opportunities for undergraduates to work on salient social issues and develop research for real-world application. The primary object of R2L is to study dignity in education, or the ways that the supreme value of the human person is affirmed or disregarded in social life and educational contexts.

The research group meets regularly to contemplate and discuss how education cultivates minds, humanity and creative potential. Key interests in educational dignity, civil rights and diversity bind group members in their commitment to the work, as do three new research grants: a $74,756 matching grant from the School of Education & Human Development.

“The concept of dignity occupies an important place in moral philosophy, legal studies and religious thinking, but it has not been adequately explored in education,” said Espinoza, a Chicano ethnographer and philosopher of education. “I do think it is destiny that this project was founded by a child of desegregation (myself) who had an undocumented mother and a migrant student who was undocumented (Tania). There are so many beautiful facets of who we are as a group — interracial, migrant, young women (for the most part) and first-generation college students.”

Through the research, members of the team are realizing that educational dignity means more than respect. It is the experience of having one’s intelligence and sense of self affirmed in a way that fosters continued growth. “This experience is generated and guided by particular things teachers and students say and do in interaction, and those linguistic and interactional moves can be charted and analyzed,” said Espinoza. “The sense of full ‘humaneness’ that results from such encounters aligns with discussions of dignity in human rights literature and could establish the grounds for legal arguments regarding education as a fundamental right.”

As an important step in the process of preparing the argument, the group is currently creating a handbook of the usage and meaning of the concept of dignity — a guide for social scientists writing for a legal audience. They blend technology into their learning experiences by using apps such as the open-source Hypothesis to read and annotate digital documents of four landmark court cases and transcripts of citizenship education programs.

“Our group is most thankful to my colleague Remi Kalir, assistant professor in SEHD’s Information and Learning Technologies program, who suggested the Hypothesis app for collaboration and trained us to utilize the technology. The app allows us to read and mark up digital documents together without being in the same place at the same time. It allows us to respond to one another’s thoughts so that we can build common understanding over time.

“This handbook will provide a comprehensive review of the content and criteria of dignity in the four cases,” said Espinoza. “It is an intermediate step towards achieving our long-term goal of writing an argument for education as a fundamental right because it will allow us to understand the ways dignity functions as a legal concept from the trial court all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Creating the handbook will help us better understand the prohibitions and positive obligations that dignity places upon governments and individuals, and allow us to use those principles in our argument for education as a fundamental right.”

The preliminary iteration of this group’s argument will be presented at the Association for the Study of Law, Culture and the Humanities conference in April 2018.

The written argument will be submitted by August 2018 to the Public Interest Law Journal at Boston University, the leading civil rights journal in the country according to the Express Law review submission guide.

Current members of the collaborative include:

- Manuel Espinoza, associate professor
- Tania Soto Valenzuela, lead research associate
- Mandy Wong, senior research associate
- Tamara Luhgay, senior research associate
- Maria Velasco, senior research associate
- Valencia Siedel, senior research associate
- Ariana Howard, research associate
- Monica Luna, research associate
- Frida Silva, research associate
- Diego Ulibarri, research associate
- Raquel Isaac, research associate

Arliss Howard, senior research associate

The Right to Learn Undergraduate Research Collective adds three to four student researchers per year who demonstrate a strong passion and interest for the work. Current members of the collective include:

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Innovative Education, Diversity and the “TBD” Generation

Reception: 4:30 – 5:45 p.m., SpringHill Suites Denver Downtown - Marriott
Lecture and Q&A: 6:00 – 7:45 p.m. CU Denver Student Commons, Room 2600
Cost: Free

Dr. Ball, the 2015 recipient of the prestigious St. Clair Drake Teaching Award, is the Charles E. Ducommun Endowed Professor in the Graduate School of Education at Stanford University. Come join us as Dr. Ball discusses her innovative approaches in mediating teaching and learning in culturally and linguistically diverse settings. She will also share lessons learned from her most recent work focusing on the development of blended online professional development for teachers working with diverse student populations.

RSVP http://www.cvent.com/d/7tq9c3