Innovation | Knowledge Leadership

Fall 2015

UNLV
College of Education
Colleagues and Friends,

I am delighted to introduce you to the Fall 2015 report from the College of Education at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

Nevada, particularly southern Nevada, is an exciting place these days, and the College of Education has been deeply involved. Economic and population growth have returned. The biennial legislature approved an aggressive and progressive set of initiatives affecting all levels of education in the state. The University welcomed a new President, Dr. Len Jessup, who brings an entrepreneurial and future-focused vision to the University. After nearly a decade of budget and faculty reductions, the College has welcomed more than 20 new faculty colleagues over the past two years. The College accepted the largest single gift in the university’s history, a $12.9 million endowment from the estate of the late Kitty Rodman.

Our faculty has been actively and creatively engaged in taking advantage of the opportunities and challenges that this dynamic environment offers. They have responded to the serious demand for education professionals by creating several unique, alternative programs for individuals who wish to pursue a career in Education. More broadly, the College initiated a consortium of community, business, political, and educational agencies to form the Nevada Consortium on the Teacher Pipeline, and support from the Wynn Corporation has enabled this group to continue to meet. New for our College has been the active and substantial involvement of our faculty in activities directly focused on informing legislative and statutory policy-making. Working individually and in small teams, over a dozen College faculty members produced *Issues in Nevada Education* in the months preceding the most recent legislative session. This volume included analysis and review of eight key Education topics (e.g., autism spectrum disorders, full day Kindergarten, Common Core Standards) that were expected to come before the Nevada Legislature last spring.

Our alumni have also been extremely active in the past year. While the College of Education boasts the largest number of alumni of any college or school in the University, until recently it had no formal organization by which to communicate with and engage these former students. The tireless efforts of Dr. Katie Dockweiler, Dr. Tonia-Holmes Sutton, and their fellow Board Members resulted in official chapter recognition of the UNLV College of Education Alumni Association. In its earliest months, this group sponsored several events and continues to find new ways to reach out to our graduates around the world.

This period of change for the College has also been reflected in the constitution of our faculty. As longtime leaders retired, the College has worked to support current colleagues moving into positions of leadership and to recruit its next generation of faculty. In just the past year alone, the College welcomed established scholars from institutions such as the University of Illinois, the University of Denver, Old Dominion University, and the University of Georgia, and at the same time, early career faculty were recruited from institutions across the country. In the 2015-16 year, we will engage in an assertive effort to recruit well over a dozen new faculty colleagues. In all, both the total size and the diversity of the College’s faculty have and will continue to expand. We are excited about the work of this upcoming year as both the College and UNLV continue the climb to becoming a Top Tier University. As you read through this publication, I hope it reflects the College of Education as a leading source of significant knowledge, leadership, and innovation for our campus, our community, and our professions.
About the College of Education

As part of a culturally diverse community and within one of the largest school districts in the United States, the College of Education at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas offers its students a unique learning environment with direct preparation in PK-16 and other community settings. The College is composed of three academic departments that offer undergraduate, master’s, doctoral, and certificate programs: Educational and Clinical Studies, Educational Psychology and Higher Education, and Teaching and Learning. Collectively, these programs are in early childhood education, elementary education, secondary education, special education, English language learning, clinical mental health counseling, school counseling, school psychology, higher education, learning and technology, curriculum and instruction, and teacher education.

The College boasts seven research centers and clinics dedicated to scholarship and best practices in literacy, autism spectrum disorders, mental health, assessment and evaluation, and multicultural, STEM, and early childhood education. In addition, the College’s Education Student Services Center provides advising and career services to ensure retention, progression, and completion of undergraduate students in the College, along with those working towards initial teacher licensure in alternative routes to teacher licensure programs. With a close partnership with Clark County School District, the College’s faculty and doctoral students engage in over 50 research-service initiatives to address goals related to the teacher pipeline, English language learners and literacy, student services, professional development, and large-scale evaluation of schools and their surrounding communities.

The College is committed to creating an inclusive learning environment that values and promotes diversity. Integral to this vision is a dedication to being a premier college of education that serves our dynamic and expanding community, state, region, and the nation.

Developing a World Class Faculty

The University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) is on the path to become one of the nation’s best public research universities. It is committed to enhancing efforts to attract and retain top students and faculty, educating the region’s diversifying population and workforce, and driving economic activity through increased research and community partnerships.

The College is selecting new faculty to assist in meeting demands of the community and growth of the College in the following areas:

- Counseling
- Early Childhood Education
- Educational Psychology
- English Language Learners
- Higher Education
- Human Services
- School Psychology
- Special Education
- Teacher Education

With a student body of over 28,500 and an approximate 54% minority population, UNLV received Minority Serving Institution designation from the U.S. Department of Education, meets the requirements as an Asian-American and Native-American, Pacific Islander-Serving Institution, and is an emerging Hispanic Serving Institution.

Sources:
1http://www.unlv.edu/about/glance/facts
2http://www.unlv.edu/about/glance/highlights

Situated in the heart of southern Nevada, UNLV is home to a diverse array of leisure, entertainment, and culinary experiences.

- Art and cultural festivals
- First class entertainment
- World renowned culinary experts
- Variety of playgrounds, parks, and trails throughout the valley
- Short drive to Red Rock Canyon, Hoover Dam, and Mount Charleston

For more information on UNLV’s ascent to Top Tier, visit https://www.unlv.edu/toptier. More information on living in Las Vegas can be found on the Las Vegas Metro Chamber of Commerce website at http://www.lvchamber.com/living-las-vegas.
Taking an Alternative Route to Teacher Licensure

College of Education Advocates for Innovative Legislation and Training Programs to Grow the Teacher Pipeline

The UNLV College of Education is dedicated to preparing highly qualified teachers through a variety of innovative models to address the ever-growing need for more teachers and teacher leaders in the local community and in the Clark County School District (CCSD), the fifth largest district in the nation.

One such innovation is Rebel Academy—initiated by the Department of Teaching and Learning in summer 2015—which prepares secondary teacher candidates while most schools are closed during the summer months.

Akin to a medical residency program, Rebel Academy immerses secondary teacher candidates in extensive field experiences interwoven with theory and pedagogical coursework under the tutelage of master CCSD teachers and UNLV professors in learning theory, cognition, motivation, and subject matter pedagogy such as English, Science, and Mathematics. Working with CCSD, Rebel Academy candidates engage with urban 6-8th grade students in classrooms that connect learning about teaching to the actual problems of teaching practice. In just one summer cycle, Rebel Academy has already produced at least 30 additional secondary teachers in CCSD for fall 2015, according to Dr. Emily Lin, Professor and Chair of the Department of Teaching and Learning.

The College of Education also offers many other alternative routes to licensure (ARL) programs to recruit individuals from other professions into teaching. These programs are supported by federal and state funded grants and have received approval from the Department of Defense for a Troops to Teachers program.

As Dr. Linda Quinn, Associate Dean of Professional Programs, notes, “There are many paths to becoming a teacher. Inventive teacher education programs and training modules will help individuals from diverse backgrounds and experiences find their own unique paths to teaching.”

The ARL programs currently offered by the College of Education include special education, elementary and secondary education, and early childhood education. These post-baccalaureate programs—which were the first in the Nevada System of Higher Education to be established and approved by the Nevada Department of Education Commission on Professional Standards—are quickly delivering a robust cohort of new teachers to Nevada and to the more than 315,000 students in CCSD schools.

In just one summer cycle, Rebel Academy has already produced approximately 30 additional secondary teachers in CCSD for fall 2015.

Addressing teacher pipeline issues not only requires creating innovative teacher education programs but also leveraging key stakeholders to assist in the effort more broadly. The Nevada Consortium on the Teacher Pipeline consists of members from various agencies across Nevada and meets on a regular basis to identify creative solutions and build efforts to strengthen teacher preparation and P-12 education statewide. During the 2015 legislative session, the Consortium provided key support of six legislative items related to the teacher pipeline and licensure in Nevada, many of which were ultimately passed.

As Dr. Lin notes, “Effecting change and improvement in teacher education and student learning in Nevada involves the concerted efforts, commitment, and collective leadership of UNLV and statewide partnerships. UNLV pledges to uphold the vision of designing creative and impactful ways to prepare teachers of high quality and quantity who also practice the moral and ethical aspects of teaching in a just and democratic society.”
$1,776,332
RESEARCH FUNDS FY15

15:1
STUDENT: INSTRUCTOR

2nd
MOST DIVERSE CAMPUS IN THE NATION

9%
FALL ENROLLMENT GROWTH

$12.9
MILLION ENDOWMENT

290,535
PRACTICUM AND INTERNSHIP HOURS

$1,776,332
RESEARCH FUNDS FY15

15:1
STUDENT: INSTRUCTOR

2nd
MOST DIVERSE CAMPUS IN THE NATION

9%
FALL ENROLLMENT GROWTH

$12.9
MILLION ENDOWMENT

290,535
PRACTICUM AND INTERNSHIP HOURS

26%
FACULTY OF COLOR

42%
TEACHER PIPELINE GRADUATES OF COLOR

381
TEACHER PIPELINE GRADUATES

373
RECEIVED MASTERS OR DOCTORAL DEGREES

1Data from September 1, 2014 to August 31, 2015
3Fall 2015 (September 25, 2015), compared to Fall 2014 (September 26, 2014).
New Faculty

Education & Clinical Studies

Danica G. Hays, Ph.D., Executive Associate Dean and Professor
Danica comes to UNLV from Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia, where she served as department chair in the Department of Counseling and Human Services. She earned a Ph.D. in Counselor Education and Supervision, with an emphasis in multicultural research, from Georgia State University. She is coeditor of several texts: Qualitative Inquiry in Clinical and Educational Settings (Guilford Press), Developing Multicultural Counseling Competency: A Systems Approach (Pearson, 2/e) and A Counselor’s Guide to Career Assessment Instruments (NCDA, 6/e); associate and content editor of the American Counseling Association Encyclopedia of Counseling (ACA); coauthor of Mastering the NCE and CPCE (Pearson, 2/e); and author of Assessment in Counseling: A Guide to Psychological Assessment Procedures (ACA, 5/e). She has extensive leadership history in the Association for Assessment and Research in Counseling and the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision. She has been recognized nationally by the American Counseling Association for her research and advocacy as a counselor educator. Danica looks forward to being a part of the synergy to move UNLV and the College of Education to Top Tier status. She chose UNLV because the faculty and staff in the College are making a difference in the community and schools, producing noteworthy scholarship, and nurturing students to become future leaders at both local and national levels.

Stephanie Devine, M.Ed.
Visiting Lecturer
With prior experience in serving as a Special Education Teacher and Department Chair in the Clark County School District, Stephanie is excited to join the ECS faculty with a particular interest in individuals with intellectual disabilities transitioning from school to postsecondary life. Stephanie’s areas of expertise involve exploring effective instructional strategies for individuals with learning disabilities, students from low-income families, and English language learners.

Odelia Duhel, M.Ed.
Visiting Lecturer
Odelia, certified as a National Certified Counselor and Bullying Prevention Specialist with the American School Counselor Association, has clinical interests in mental health in schools, counselor education, and addiction and drug counseling practices. Her research lies in self-mutilation and self-harm behaviors. She has experience in working with children in both elementary and high school settings, providing mental health counseling, and working in addiction and drug facilities. She looks to bring this experience to UNLV and to conduct future research on the longitudinal impact of posttraumatic stress disorder in childhood.

Sharolyn Pollard-Durodola, Ed.D.
Professor
Sharolyn earned her Ed.D. from the University of Houston in Curriculum and Instruction (Second Language Acquisition and Bilingual Education) and comes to UNLV from University of Denver, where she served as Associate Professor of Literacy in the Morgridge College of Education with research and experience in English language and literacy inventions and professional development practices for teachers of English language learners (ELL). Sharolyn’s goals are to further develop the ELL Program into a competitive, nationally recognized program as well as to continue the collaboration with local and national levels.

Chris Wood, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
Chris received his Ph.D. from Oregon State University and has professional experience at both research universities and regional universities renowned for teaching. His research and interest areas are school counseling, career development interventions, and college/career readiness for educationally vulnerable populations. Chris brings excitement for starting a Ph.D. program in Counselor Education and expanding the Human Services program.

Maryssa Kucskar, M.Ed.
Visiting Lecturer
Maryssa earned her M. Ed. in Early Childhood Special Education from UNLV. Her research is centered on early childhood special education, early childhood education, children with autism, social skills intervention, and inclusive school practices. She brings experience working as a doctoral intern at the Office of Special Education Programs in Washington, D.C.
Educational Psychology & Higher Education

Hugo Garcia, Ph.D.
Visiting Assistant Professor
Hugo received his Ph.D. from Claremont Graduate University in southern California. His research areas include access and equity in higher education, community colleges, international higher education and diversity in higher education. Hugo is most impressed with the caliber of the individuals here at UNLV and looks forward to the development and growth of the Higher Education program. Hugo was recently elected as member-at-large to the executive committee on the Council for International Higher Education, where he will serve as a full voting member for a two-year term.

Tiberio Garza, Ph.D.
Visiting Assistant Professor
Earning his Ph.D. from Texas A&M University in College Station, Texas, Tiberio joins the EPHE faculty with interest areas in applied statistics and English language learners. Previously, Tiberio served as the Regional Evaluator for the Prevention Resource Center in Central Texas, where he co-managed a $1.5 million grant from the Texas Department of State Health Services, and evaluated the quality of regional data across 30 counties. Tiberio looks to bring further statistical and analytical knowledge to UNLV, while conducting high-level research and commitment to further teaching of students.

Katherine Lee, Ph.D.
Visiting Assistant Professor
Katherine, having previously served as School Psychologist, joins the EPHE faculty where she is excited to educate and inspire future colleagues in the field of education, particularly School Psychology. Katherine earned her bachelor’s degree from Princeton University and later attended Teachers College, Columbia University, where she completed both her master’s and doctoral degrees.

Nathan Slife, Ph.D.
Visiting Assistant Professor
Nathan Slife completed his doctoral degree in Higher Education from UNLV in 2014. His research areas include theoretical foundations and values of higher education and hermeneutics. He was instrumental in the co-development of the College’s first and second year seminars, applying his passion and pedagogical dedication to the undergraduate learning experience. Nathan looks forward to continued collaboration with the campus community in providing high quality learning experiences.

Teaching & Learning

Steven Bickmore, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
A Las Vegas native, Steven obtained his Ph.D. from University of Georgia at Athens and taught at Louisiana State University before joining the faculty in the Teaching and Learning Department. His research areas lie in English methods and novice teacher education. He has significant interest in teaching and scholarship of young adult literature and serves as the Director of the Gayle A. Zeiter Literacy Development Center in the College of Education.

Denise Davila, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
Joining UNLV from the University of Georgia, Denise has a focus in literacy education, diverse children’s literature, community based family literacy development, and multicultural education. She is also co-editor of the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) Language Arts Journal. Denise will join the Teaching and Learning Department in Spring 2016 and continue her research on community based literacy and underserved populations.

Yan “Katrina” Liu, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
Katrina received her Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in Curriculum and Instruction with a specialty in Teacher Education. She joins the faculty in Teaching and Learning from the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, where she served as Assistant Professor in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction. Katrina’s research areas are teacher professional development, online learning communities, preparing teachers for critical reflection and transformative learning, and international and comparative education, along with recruiting and supporting teachers of color.

Allison Smith, Ph.D.
Visiting Assistant Professor
Allison received her Ph.D. from UNLV in Teacher Education and has experience in working with local and international non-profits to design curriculum and create programs to support underrepresented youth. With focus areas in education policy, teacher evaluation, multicultural education, and social justice, Allison hopes to provide teacher candidates a robust experience in their courses that will prepare them to support all students.

James Kenyon, Ed.D.
Visiting Assistant Professor
James earned his Ed.D. from Florida State University in Education Policy Studies. Prior to arriving at UNLV, James served with the Nevada Department of Education in the Office of Educator Effectiveness. His areas of expertise are school improvement, alternative education, and the four-day school week. James looks to bring his desire and targeted focus to school improvement initiatives through externally funded partnerships.

Sharon Tettegah, Ph.D.
Professor
Receiving her Ph.D. from University of California at Santa Barbara in Educational Psychology, Sharon comes to UNLV from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, where she served as the Program Area Chair for Digital Environments, Learning, Teaching and Agency (DELTA) Program in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction. Sharon served as Program Director at the National Science Foundation, Education Human Resource Division from 2010 to 2012. Her research areas are emotions, emotional technology, social justice, multicultural education, equity, STEM education, education psychology, and media psychology. Sharon hopes to bring to UNLV her experience in positive teaching and learning with an empathic understanding from multiple perspectives.
Addressing the Needs of Students with Disabilities

Project SPEN:TT seeks to improve achievement and teacher training

Project SPEN:TT (Severe and Persistent Educational Needs: Teacher Training) is a grant project designed to provide training and support to teachers of K-12 students with severe and persistent learning or behavioral needs. This includes students with learning disabilities (LD) or emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD) in self-contained classrooms, as well as students in the most intensive tier of intervention who are not making progress.

Although during their training teachers learn evidence-based practices to support students with mild and moderate disabilities, data from the National Center for Education Statistics continue to document that students with disabilities are persistently underachieving. With over 20,000 students in Clark County School District (CCSD) identified as LD or EBD, supplemental training for teachers would help improve achievement and behavioral outcomes.

The 5-year, $1.08 million grant is funded by the Office of Special Education Programs in the U.S. Department of Education and began September 1, 2015. The project—under the direction of co-Project Directors Dr. Joseph Morgan, Dr. Monica Brown, and Nancy Brown—is constructed to include within the initial year an assessment of specific needs of students. Findings will be used to develop and revise curriculum for the M.Ed. in Special Education.

New and revised courses will focus on the specific characteristics of students with EBD and LD with severe and persistent learning needs, curriculum and intervention development for this population of students, the integration of technology to support learning outcomes, and teacher leadership in supporting other teachers and intervention teams.

For the remaining four years of the grant, four cohorts of 13 scholars each will be trained for a 1-year period on the revised curriculum. The 52 candidates will be selected through an application and interview process. Scholars targeted for this grant are those with a license in special education who have some experience teaching students with disabilities and the potential to make system-wide change in support of students with severe and persistent needs.

“This program is designed to deepen the understanding that licensed special education teachers have of evidence-based practices to best support the behavioral and learning needs of students with LD and EBD,” says Dr. Joseph Morgan, co-Project Director. “Course work will also provide additional instruction in multi-tiered systems of support, intensive evidence-based academic interventions, behavioral supports and structures, and the integration of technology,” he adds.

The value of Project SPEN:TT is apparent to Kristine Minnich, Assistant Superintendent of the Student Services Division at CCSD: “CCSD is committed to the academic success of all students. Programs such as Project SPEN:TT afford an opportunity to gather data, reflect upon current practices, and design curriculum that will help students to achieve at their highest potential.” In addition to tracking program completion rates and surveying scholars on their satisfaction with participating in Project SPEN:TT, the co-Directors have several mechanisms in place to assess the project’s overall effectiveness for both participants and students. For example, participants will complete a professional paper or action research project to demonstrate their level of impact on students.

Further, a 3-year follow-up plan will measure long-term impact of scholars’ learning on their students. And project co-Directors will collect data from CCSD on various achievement and behavioral outcomes, present data to a project advisory board, and determine specific areas that may need additional support for future implementation.

“As a short-term goal, our mission is to increase the ability of teachers of students with severe and persistent learning needs to provide high quality intervention,” says Dr. Monica Brown, co-Project Director. She notes, “Long-term, we hope that these professionals begin to serve as leaders on their school campuses and in the district to mentor and train other teachers to implement high quality interventions.”
Sida receives SAMHSA funding for the Southern Nevada Substance Use Disorders Training Project

With Nevada ranked as the second highest in the nation for substance abuse disorders (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration [SAMHSA], 2013), treating affected individuals and training future professionals are critical to our community and state.

Oscar Sida, a faculty member in the Department of Educational and Clinical Studies, is Co-Principal Investigator (Co-PI) of a 3-year, $941,282 federal grant to address the human and fiscal costs of substance use disorders. The grant is sponsored by SAMHSA, an office of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and is intended to address the public and mental health issues associated with substance use disorders through training and service delivery.

The award represents a collaboration of six UNLV schools and colleges, the UNLV Lincy Institute, and the College of Southern Nevada. Other project team members include Heidi Batiste, Ramona Denby-Brinson (PI), Sara Hunt (Co-PI), Natasha Mosby, and Sandra Owens (Co-PI). The three-year training program, referred to as the Southern Nevada Substance Use Disorders Training Project, is intended to strengthen and further develop the mental and behavioral health workforce by training health professions students (e.g., social workers, counselors, dentists, psychologists, and nurses) in the Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) Model.

Sida and his colleagues will work with three target populations across various health professions, who they note are at the front line of identifying, preventing, and treating substance abuse disorders. Participants in the project include approximately 450 undergraduate and graduate students, 300 practitioners who will supervise and train others on the SBIRT model, and 175 allied professionals including those who direct human resource departments and serve in residential facilities. The researchers aim to develop and provide a comprehensive and sustainable training platform to support all three groups, with a particular focus on improving students’ skills and competencies as well as implementing and evaluating the SBIRT model at various clinical sites.

With an extensive professional background as a mental health and addictions counselor, Sida knows first-hand the societal value of training generations of health professionals in SBIRT. “Providing SBIRT training to southern Nevada health professionals is a crucial element to a healthy community. Early interventions improve the long-term outcomes of mental and behavioral disorders, which lead to chronic disease, disability, and social instability.”

SBIRT is an empirically supported, community-based approach for screening and reducing a variety of behaviors associated with substance use, abuse, and dependence. The intended target population for this early intervention model are those who exceed low-level substance use and are at risk for developing more severe problems. Although SBIRT is tailored to the individual patient or client, the goal of the model is a public health one: to reduce societal problems linked to substance abuse, such as community and interpersonal violence, alcohol-related traffic and other accidents, and health care costs borne by the public.

SBIRT is a three-pronged approach of care to substance use disorders:

1. Health care professionals provide a brief risk assessment for substance abuse and dependence and, depending on the severity of symptoms, employ successively more complex screenings as they work with a patient or client;
2. They provide substance abuse information within the context of assessment scores and outline strategies and teach behaviorally-based skills for decreasing use as well as identify long-term goals for the patient or client; and
3. They refer the patient or client to a higher level of care while actively assisting them with logistics or barriers to receiving treatment.

Executive Associate Dean Danica Hays notes, “Using this approach in settings across our community, participants in the project are poised to make a difference in southern Nevada while serving as a national model for substance abuse prevention and intervention. The College is proud of Sida’s work and the collaborative nature of this project with other partners in our UNLV community and beyond.”

For additional information about SBIRT, visit http://www.integration.samhsa.gov/clinical-practice/SBIRT.
Improving Clinical Access and Outcomes

The PRACTICE makes its mark in Las Vegas with mental health treatment for over 1,000 underserved clients

The PRACTICE, an acronym for Partnership for Research, Assessment, Counseling, Therapy, and Innovative Clinical Education, provides clinical services to children and adults in Las Vegas as well as training opportunities for UNLV students in mental health counseling, human services, school psychology, social work, and clinical psychology.

As PRACTICE Director Dr. Michelle Paul notes, “The number of Nevadans with mental health, substance abuse, and co-occurring disorders, combined with an underdeveloped workforce, represents a major challenge for the state’s service delivery systems. The PRACTICE’s three-pronged service, training, and research mission is perfectly suited to provide solutions for this community challenge.”

Clinical services include psychological assessment and testing as well as individual, group, and family therapy. Since opening in fall 2012, the center has especially catered to populations that are cited in research as experiencing significant barriers to mental health service access, such as racial and ethnic minorities and individuals from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. To date, the agency has clocked over 12,000 hours of direct, on-site clinical services to over 1,000 clients ages 1 to 82, many of those individuals with average family household incomes below $20,000.

In addition, the clinic tracks whether clients are benefitting from services by asking them to complete brief questionnaires at each session regarding their mental health symptoms, sense of well-being, and functioning in school, work, and relationships. Analysis of the overall scores reveal that clients experience significant improvement over the course of treatment. Moreover, data reveal that noticeable improvements occur early in treatment even after only attending five sessions.

Part of the center’s success relates to its partnership with other UNLV centers and clinics, such as the Center for Autism Spectrum Disorders, Child School Refusal and Anxiety Disorders Clinic, and Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Clinic. These collaborations cultivate a diverse clientele along with fundraising and interdisciplinary training possibilities.

The PRACTICE has hosted in three years over 75 undergraduate, graduate, and postdoctoral trainees during their practicum and internship experiences. These trainees have been afforded a rich array of supervision, consultation, and psychoeducational experiences. In addition, about 50 students taking undergraduate and graduate courses this past year have had access to the center to try out clinical and assessment skills using state of the art technology. And with over 800 psychological assessments available on-site, trainees have tremendous learning opportunities not available at many on-campus mental health centers.

For the 2015-16 academic year, Dr. Paul cites several goals. These include continued fundraising and promotion of the center, growth in its postdoctoral training program, development of a group psychotherapy training program as well as a pediatric high-risk clinic, advancement of research activity within the center for students and faculty, and new partnerships with the UNLV School of Medicine.

In addition to these goals, the PRACTICE continues its work to fulfill the Top Tier mission of the College of Education. Dr. Paul highlights several ways the center is meeting that mission: “We are promoting student achievement toward clinical licensure to build the state’s workforce; providing high quality and impactful clinical service; engaging with and meeting an absolute need of this community; and providing the necessary supports so students working toward graduate degrees can meet both practical training and research requirements.

“In short, we aim to become a model for evidence-based mental and behavioral health care and training across disciplines, and to produce highly qualified providers who are committed to settling in and serving our community for the long term.”

Executive Associate Dean Danica Hays adds, “Under Dr. Paul’s direction, the PRACTICE is providing an enriched experience for clients and trainees and demonstrating how multiple partners in mental and physical health can come together to make real changes.”

For additional information about the PRACTICE, please visit https://www.unlv.edu/thepractice.
Implementing the Next Generation Science Standards

Deniz is awarded National Science Foundation Funding to Define Science and Engineering Curricula for Grades 1-5

Hasan Deniz, Ph.D.

Dr. Hasan Deniz, Associate Professor of Teaching and Learning, is leading the way in translating recently developed science and engineering education standards into well-defined and evaluated curricula. Deniz received a two-year $299,986 grant from the National Science Foundation to develop, test, and teach others about modules that address key content standards in science education and how those standards align with Common Core State Standards for English language arts. The project, “Developing Integrated Elementary Science, Engineering, and Language Arts Curricula Aligned with Next Generation Science Standards [NGSS],” involves Deniz and his team of master elementary science teachers, university professors including science, engineering, and science teacher education faculty, and a science education postdoctoral or graduate student.

The NGSS – a collaborative of the National Research Council, the American Association for Advancement of Science, the National Science Teachers Association, and Achieve – was an important milestone for science educators, as previous standards are about 15 years old and do not capture advances in science and engineering fields.

The NGSS focuses on content areas in science and engineering in which all K-12 students should be competent. They involve three dimensions: (1) Practices, or behaviors needed to engage in scientific inquiry; (2) Crosscutting Concepts, which refers to application of learning across various science disciplines; and (3) Disciplinary Core Ideas, or essential learning components in physical sciences, earth and space sciences, life sciences, or engineering, technology, and applications of sciences that are teachable and applicable and meaningful to the student and society as a whole.

The two-year project involves three phases of module development, evaluation, and training. Specifically, Deniz and his team will develop and field-test a module for particular grade levels and then provide professional development to elementary teachers in Clark County School District. Embedded within these phases is the intentional positioning with English language arts content standards to create a cohesive educational experience for K-12 students.

Ultimately, Deniz sees the modules as a tool for altering both learning of and attitudes towards science and engineering: “The goals of this project are to improve elementary teachers’ and their students’ conceptions of the nature of science and engineering, as well as explore how implementation of these modules changes students’ attitudes towards STEM [science, technology, engineering, and mathematics] education in general.”

Dean Kim Metcalf envisions this project as having expansive outcomes: “Dr. Deniz’s work of operationalizing the NGSS into comprehensive and piloted modules will be a national exemplar for other states needing to implement the standards in their school systems. The College has a distinct opportunity to shape pedagogy and instructional outcomes at a national level.”

Ascending to Top Tier Through STEM Education

Center for Mathematics, Science, and Engineering Education has a Record Year of Grant Submissions

As a collaboration between the Colleges of Education, Sciences, and Engineering, the Center for Mathematics, Science, and Engineering Education (CMSEE) serves as a research hub for those interested in external funding efforts in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) disciplines. Further, CMSEE is dedicated to advancing STEM teaching and learning outcomes. With its primary mission on obtaining federal grants to support STEM research, CMSEE actively collaborates with the Clark County School District’s (CCSD) STEM efforts. CMSEE is composed of a grant writer, Dr. Kim Kendricks, and co-Directors representing three colleges: Dr. Jeffrey Shih (Education), Dr. John Farley (Sciences), and Dr. Brendan O’Toole (Engineering). A diverse board advises CMSEE, including the Deans from the three Colleges, the Vice President of Research and Economic Development, and a representative from CCSD.

The goal of CMSEE staff during its first two years was to submit at a minimum 10 federal-level proposals with at least two of the three partner Colleges. During fiscal year 2014, CMSEE met this goal and was awarded $974,671 from $4.6 million requested. In fiscal year 2015, the CMSEE staff have doubled the amount requested ($9.2 million) and increased the number of overall proposals to 14. Grant awards from funders such as the National Science Foundation and the U.S. Department of Education have helped CMSEE move toward its long-term goals. As co-Director Shih notes, “The ultimate goal of CMSEE is to become a self-sustaining entity that serves as the center of STEM-related grants, a place where the Colleges of Sciences, Education, and Engineering collaborate to pursue external funding.”

For more information about CMSEE, please visit http://cmsee.unlv.edu/.
In addition to daily challenges, young adults with intellectual disabilities likely do not have an opportunity to integrate socially and academically in a college community. As Dr. Joshua Baker notes, “Sadly, individuals with intellectual disabilities are used to being segregated since Kindergarten and have been told all their lives they cannot do this and that. They will never go to college. This is something we want to change in Las Vegas and across the state.”

The F.O.C.U.S. program (Forming Occupational and Community Understanding for Success) is geared toward providing academic and social opportunities these individuals can use to maximize success in future employment and independent living.

The program provides students a well-rounded training while affording them the opportunity to engage in a college community. “Students enrolled through F.O.C.U.S. are UNLV students. They pay the same tuition, have access to the same campus events, and take the same classes as their peers. We just provide supports as needed. Their experience of college life is the same as I had,” states Baker.

Baker, who serves as the project director, piloted the project in spring 2015, modeling it after similar programs found in over 230 institutions nationally. His primary goal was to create a student-centered experience that realized provisions of the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008, which aims to improve access to postsecondary education for students with intellectual disabilities. The F.O.C.U.S. team currently provides outreach to the community (teacher classrooms, vocational settings, parent advocacy organizations) to build awareness of the program.

F.O.C.U.S. students are college students ages 18 to 22 who attend classes in an inclusive environment, participate in job internships, and gain valuable independent living and career development skills throughout their 2- to 4-year program. Academic requirements include 21 credit hours of general core requirements, 15 credit hours of job-related skills training, and at least 6 hours of a supervised job internship.

The typical day for these students includes attendance in inclusive college courses, access to student facilities at UNLV, involvement in student events and organizations on campus, and participation in the community near or around UNLV. The end result for successful students is an Occupational Career Life Certificate from UNLV with real-life tools for becoming employed and living a more independent life within the community.

UNLV’s College of Education has a commitment to similar post-secondary programs like F.O.C.U.S. that help to develop the workforce skills of individuals with intellectual disabilities. In addition, through a partnership with CCSD, the College provides various types of support for a program specifically geared towards employment training, Project SEARCH.

Dean Kim Metcalf adds, “The College is keenly focused on ensuring that our programs and our research truly make a meaningful difference. F.O.C.U.S. is undoubtedly one of our exemplars in this regard. Dr. Baker’s work, through this project and others, integrates rigorous scholarship and research with engagement of future educational professionals in practical experiences in ways that provide remarkable opportunities for the students and adults who participate.”

For additional information about F.O.C.U.S. and similar programs that provide college options for individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities, please visit http://unlvcoe.org/focus/ and http://www.thinkcollege.net.
Learning to Learn

Bernacki receives a National Science Foundation Grant to Foster STEM Course Success

Many students arrive on college campuses with the intention of pursuing science, technology, engineering or mathematics (STEM) majors and careers, but about half of them never complete a STEM degree (48% in a 2013 US Department of Education report). Of those who leave their STEM major, half eventually graduate with a non-STEM degree, but the rest leave college without earning any degree at all. Preparing undergraduates to join the STEM workforce is a high priority for universities, and this rate of attrition has captured the attention of university administrators and educational researchers.

Research on STEM dropouts indicates that students tend to leave their majors when they perform poorly in a course, perceive they lack the critical skills needed to perform tasks in STEM courses and professions, and lack the motivation to continue onward with their training. Dr. Matthew Bernacki and his project team are working to prevent course attrition and improve achievement in STEM courses, thus increasing the number of graduates who are hired into STEM professions.

Bernacki is Principal Investigator and recipient of a $499,973 award from the National Science Foundation to explore how students use learning management systems – such as UNLV’s WebCampus – and whether features designed to help students build their learning skills and maintain their motivation can increase student achievement in STEM courses. The three-year, collaborative project with faculty from Biology (Jenifer Utz), Math (Carryn Warren-Bellomo, Monika Neda), and Engineering (Donald Hayes, Jeffrey Markle) and support from the Office of Information Technology began last fall and will continue through the summer of 2017.

Bernacki and his project team designed a set of three web-delivered modules – known as the Learning to Learn series – to teach students key learning skills known to improve learning and achievement. The three modules review the common challenges students face when learning while at college, then introduce them to learning principles. Each module explains a set of learning principles, describes a case where use of the principles improved student achievement, and provides students with interactive opportunities to practice and receive feedback as they incorporate these principles into their own approach to learning. In total, the Learning to Learn series requires about two hours of training that can be completed on students’ own time via WebCampus.

Initial findings show that the Learning to Learn intervention holds promise for improving students’ academic performance in their Biology coursework – especially for students who struggled in the early weeks of the course. Results of a randomized control study indicate that students who completed the Learning to Learn intervention after their initial exam outperformed a control group on the next two exams, and that the benefits of the intervention were greatest for the students who scored most poorly on the initial exam. In essence, training students to adopt evidence-based learning strategies improved achievement, and effects were larger and more persistent for those students mostly likely to need support.

While the Learning to Learn series can build students’ learning skills, other tools are needed to help warn students about impending poor performances that can lead to STEM dropout. Bernacki and his team are also designing a tool to decrease the time it takes for students to be notified that they are in danger of failing a course.

Because typical “early warning systems” rely on students’ performance data (like midterm exam scores) to generate alerts, notifications to students who are struggling often arrive too late for them to recover. Bernacki and his team aim to move up this “early warning window” so that alerts arrive before major tests and assignments so that students can adapt before a poor grade is earned. To accomplish this, the team is building a warning system that relies on WebCampus usage data to detect potentially problematic behavior and alert students after just a few weeks of learning.

Preliminary findings show that their warning system accurately identifies approximately 75% of students in Biology courses who would eventually fail to obtain the grade needed to move on in their major (e.g., a B or better for nursing and pre-med majors). This behavior-driven system is able to warn students about the strong possibility of obtaining a poor grade approximately six weeks before a midterm-generated “early warning” alert would typically arrive. This early warning provides greater opportunity to change learning strategies and seek out help, increasing alerted students’ likelihood of success in the course. With this early warning system for Biology nearing completion, the team has turned its attention to building similar detectors for Calculus and Engineering courses and aim to implement them in fall 2016.

Bernacki sees promise for the Learning to Learn series and other tools designed to support student STEM achievement and retention: “It is exciting to find that an investment of just a few hours spent learning to learn more effectively enhances students’ achievement. With some work to improve the effectiveness of modules and the precision of the warning system here at UNLV, we can continue to improve student outcomes locally and eventually share these innovations to help STEM majors at other universities, too.”

Dr. LeAnn Putney, Chair of the Department of Educational Psychology and Higher Education, sees his research as an important step for student retention, progression, and completion: “Dr. Bernacki’s research has offered a great contribution to the department. His collaborative research affords students in the STEM fields a crucial and systematic model of learning skills to ensure student success. The Learning to Learn model is especially timely for the highly diverse student population at UNLV and furthers the UNLV mission of student retention and completion.”
The staff at the Center for Autism Spectrum Disorders (CASD), under the directorship of Dr. Shannon Crozier, provides comprehensive assessment, parent training, and behavioral consultation services to individuals ages 1 to 23 years old. The CASD is developing innovative educational programs for families and professionals, and staff also conducts research on the identification, treatment, and prevention of autism and other neurodevelopmental disabilities.

CASD is the first university multidisciplinary assessment clinic in southern Nevada and has served more than 300 families since January 2013. Clinical activity alone has increased significantly: in a typical year, CASD evaluates 150 clients and provides 80 intensive behavioral trainings for families, consults for over 200 hours with families post-trainings, offers 15 professional trainings on topics such as autism and positive behavior support, and provides more than 250 hours of consultation to Nevada Early Invention Services.

Although average wait times for private assessment clinics are 6 to 12 months, CASD is able to see clients promptly. Timely access to assessment is a critical factor to any intervention, as insurance and state programs require a clinical diagnosis to determine eligibility. CASD is able to help Nevada reduce wait times but also connect families with helpful information to obtain necessary support services in Nevada. Thus, CASD is facilitating access to assessment and intervention, which improves outcomes for children and families.

In addition to its clinical focus, the center serves as an important portal for professional development and direct clinical training of individuals in disciplines such as school psychology, clinical psychology, medicine, social work, physical therapy, kinesiology, and pediatric dentistry. These interdisciplinary partnerships have been successful for obtaining several grants to support doctoral students, postdoctoral fellowships, and scholarly activity.

“As the CASD expands, our focus is on interprofessional research opportunities that translate theoretical concepts into clinical practice. A major goal of the CASD is to facilitate the translation of knowledge across disciplines in ways that enhances the education and services provided to children and families. We work closely with the School Psychology program in the College. Some of our new research and grants collaborators include UNLV School of Medicine, Department of Psychology, Department of Physical Therapy, Nevada Institute of Personalized Medicine, and Department of Kinesiology and Nutrition Sciences,” said Crozier.

During the 2015-16 academic year, the College of Education is actively expanding CASD. Through the support of private, state, and national funders, CASD will integrate medical, psychological, behavioral, and other therapeutic services for children under the same roof.

Dean Kim Metcalf sees great value in this expansion: “This growth will undoubtedly enable the center to serve a greater number and wider range of children and families.”

For additional information about CASD, please visit http://unlvcoe.org/casd/.
A Model of Early Childhood Education Excellence

The UNLV/CSUN Preschool Continues to Surpass Standards

An inclusive, nationally accredited educational and research center, the UNLV/Consolidated Students University of Nevada (CSUN) Preschool has remained a program of excellence since 1994 as set forth by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

In 2014-2015, the preschool staff served approximately 200 children ages six weeks to five years; it employs 16 head staff members, four support teaching staff, and 70 UNLV student employees. Approximately 130 students participated in training programs, completing field work, practicum studies, course work, or research experiences. Children attending the preschool are from families of UNLV faculty, UNLV students, and the Las Vegas community. Housed in the Lynn Bennett Early Childhood Education Center (LBECEC), the preschool has an interagency agreement with the Clark County School District Early Childhood Special Education Department and a Memorandum of Understanding with Nevada Early Intervention Services.

In addition to the learning opportunities provided within the classrooms, a lending library is available to preschool children, families, and UNLV faculty and students.

Director Claire Tredwell notes, “The preschool staff supports the mission of research, service, and training in an inclusive learning environment. Undergraduate and graduate students have opportunities for teaching field experiences and involvement in on-site research studies. The LBECEC Research Advisory Council coordinates, reviews, and supports research studies at the center.”

The UNLV/CSUN Preschool has continued to make early childhood education accessible to a diverse population. To better accommodate its families, in January 2015 the preschool expanded its early childhood program services to year-round. In addition, UNLV students also have the option of enrolling their children full- or part-time.

The mission statement of the preschool speaks to the value it places on diversity and delivery of high quality education and research: “The UNLV/CSUN Preschool celebrates the diversity of family culture, language, and tradition. We value the partnerships that support curriculum adaptations and developmentally appropriate, inclusive practice for each child. We recognize the importance of providing children with a rich and varied preschool experience that honors each family system and builds a strong foundation for the future.”

The UNLV/CSUN Preschool continues to exceed NAEYC’s Quality Standards. Here are some examples of current preschool initiatives:

- Increased involvement of families in school events, workshops, surveys and NAEYC practices, and UNLV or community committees related to child and family services;
- Assessment of weekly curriculum data to individualize classrooms based upon skill level while meeting individual children’s needs;
- Curricular analysis to further support Individualized Education Plan objectives for children with disabilities;
- Utilizing a transdisciplinary approach to teaming, expanded communication and collaboration among teachers and families is essential, as is on-going lesson planning and instruction;
- Encouragement of on-site research activity for UNLV faculty, staff, students, and related partners;
- Evaluation and support for a quality transition program for children advancing to Kindergarten;
- Development of nutrition resources for families; and
- Increased professional development for preschool staff on- and off-campus.

For additional information regarding NAEYC and its Quality Standards, please visit http://www.naeyc.org/.
Measuring Instructor Success

Center for Research, Evaluation, and Assessment Provides a National Model for Evaluating Teaching

The Center for Research, Evaluation, and Assessment (CREA) provides several consultation services to UNLV and the external community, including research design and grant writing assistance, development and implementation of surveys, rubrics, and other instruments, and analysis and evaluation of data. One of the key functions of the center has been developing, administering, and analyzing university-wide student evaluations of teaching. In spring 2015 alone, CREA administered over 48,000 course evaluations to students, yielding approximately a 50% response rate. With expanded technology options, including greater use of mobile devices, CREA expects to see even greater response in the future.

CREA prides itself on providing an evaluation service that is reliable, efficient, and customized to departmental needs. According to Fred Kuch, CREA staff, “The evaluation process is well known and well respected by peer institutions, providing practical information instructors can use to improve their teaching practice.”

Write to College

Relles Helps to Break the Cycle of Post-Secondary Attrition for Students from Low-Performing High Schools

Dr. Stefani Relles, Assistant Professor of Higher Education, wants to ensure high school students transitioning to college are “college ready” in terms of writing skills. Writing ability, which is closely linked to other components of literacy such as reading ability and critical thinking, is a significant predictor of postsecondary success. Further, most studies show that individuals from low socioeconomic statuses, non-English speaking backgrounds, and/or racial and ethnic minorities are significantly underprepared for college in terms of literacy, leading to college attrition and limited career readiness.

The Write to College program focuses on the academic underpreparation of students for college writing. The project targets high-achieving students from low-performing public high schools in the Clark County School District (CCSD), who often meet the aforementioned demographic risk factors for deficiency in literacy and above average rates of postsecondary attrition. Relles adds the following about the program:

“Unlike traditional programs that offer at-risk students extra instruction, Write to College gives students more intense writing practice. Most program students have never written a school paper longer than 4 pages, so we ask them to write a 15-page college paper in a few weeks. Writing, after all, is something students must learn to do in college. The failures students experience during the process provoke experiential learning via reflective discussion in a supportive peer workshop environment.”

Write to College is a summer bridge program, offering student support during the summer prior to beginning college; support will include educational interventions related to writing as well as other forms of academic assistance and financial aid advising. The program derives from 10 years of research at the Pullias Center for Higher Education at the University of Southern California.

Relles is currently accepting applications for the summer 2016 program. Students selected for the program receive a modest scholarship. For additional information about the Write to College program, please contact Relles at stefani.relles@unlv.edu.
Improving Literacy in Nevada

The Gayle A. Zeiter Literacy Development Center Expands its Focus with Recent Legislation

Improving childhood literacy for those from low socioeconomic, rural, and/or English as a second language backgrounds is receiving increased attention and funding in Nevada. Two specific bills signed into law in June 2015 — Read by 3 (SB391) and expansion of the Zoom Schools project (SB405) — provides students extra literacy support through direct instruction, teacher professional development, and educational software (Read by 3), with supplemental resources to schools with a high proportion of English language learners (Zoom Schools).

Under the direction of former Interim Director Dr. Marilyn McKinney, the Gayle A. Zeiter Literacy Development Center has been supporting literacy efforts among children, teachers, and those training to become teachers in Clark County School District (CCSD). With the recently passed legislation, the Zeiter Center has been building a research and service capacity to take advantage of the state’s increased education funding.

A significant part of the Zeiter Center’s mission is to offer literacy tutoring services to elementary and middle school students, provided by teacher education majors. Tutoring occurs over 10 weeks and provides direct improvements in reading for young children in CCSD. Further, College of Education students providing the services directly witness the benefits to children and learn strategies for promoting literacy in the future within their respective classrooms.

In addition to tutoring, the Zeiter Center sponsors several professional development opportunities, including a Literacy Lecture Series and children’s literature conference. Part of the Zeiter Center’s success in addressing literacy issues among children and professionals is its strong partnerships with several entities including the Southern Nevada Writing Project, Southern Nevada Council of Teachers of English, Society of Children’s Book Writers and Illustrators, and UNLV Curriculum Materials Library.

The Zeiter Center has several initiatives underway since the beginning of the 2015-16 academic year: (1) expand its tutoring program, exploring ways to work with parents on family literacy concerns; (2) partner with the CCSD Zoom Schools to enhance literacy instruction within those schools; (3) continue the children’s literature conference, expanding the scope to include young adult literature as well as increasing professional development opportunities to local teachers. Within these service initiatives are also efforts to expand the center’s research function in improving literacy and literacy education.

Dr. Steven Bickmore, Director, summarizes the anticipated growth of the Zeiter Center: “We will see more frequent interaction of local, regional, and national authors with university educators, local teachers, librarians, students, and parents. We want individuals throughout the community to see the Zeiter Center as place where literacy issues of every kind can be supported.”

This expansion would not have been possible without the previous work of Dr. McKinney. Executive Associate Dean, Dr. Danica Hays, notes: “Interim Director McKinney’s efforts served to develop foundational elements for the current vision of the center. The infrastructure she established has had direct impact on CCSD students and teachers, as well as those trainees who are aspiring to change the trajectory of K-12 students’ lives through reading and writing.”
Serving the K-12 Community and Educators

The Curriculum Materials Library Serves as a Centralized Center for Resources, Outreach, and Professional Development

The Curriculum Materials Library (CML) is a unique resource for College faculty, staff, students, and K-12 educators in the Clark County School District (CCSD). As a branch of the University Libraries that is housed in and works in partnership with the College of Education, the CML contains about 40,000 volumes of K-12 materials and resources curated specifically for pre-service teachers and K-12 educators. It also has innovative learning spaces such as a SMARTboard lab, media room, and newly renovated instruction room, as well as two full-time librarians.

The staff provides individual and group instruction in information literacy, consults with students and faculty on research projects, assists with course assignment design and assessment methods that directly correlate to UNLV student learning outcomes, and customizes digital research guides by courses or subject areas that faculty embed in their courses. Dean Kim Metcalf speaks to this collaboration: “The CML is a truly unique resource for our UNLV Education faculty and students. But it’s also something of an undiscovered ‘gem’ that is open to our colleagues throughout the region.”

The CML also engages in a variety of outreach and professional development initiatives with CCSD personnel and students, community groups, and the Gayle A. Zeiter Literacy Development Center, a research center in the College. Sample activities have recently included: (1) provision of resources for writing project workshops and camps; (2) participation in the Zeiter Center’s Children’s and Young Adult Literature Conference; (3) services to community groups such as the local chapter of the Society of Children’s Book Writers and Illustrators; (4) school visits with CCSD students; and (5) presentations and consultation with K-12 educators and public libraries on topics such as intellectual freedom, graphic novels in education, best practices for school libraries, college readiness, and children’s/young adult literature.

In addition to these examples, the University Libraries, in partnership with the CML, hosted on August 11-13, 2015, its annual Teacher/Librarian Institute for the Integration of Research into the K-12 Curriculum. The institute is a federally funded, 3-day workshop designed to assist CCSD librarians with creating authentic research assignments, assessments, and rubrics to use with K-12 students. CCSD librarians, in partnership with a department head from their respective schools, constituted 20 teams for the 2015 institute and completed advance reading assignments. During the institute, the CML hosted various guest speakers and participants focused on their selected subject area and grade level to generate resources that could be used to compile instructional units with evaluative tools. Participants left with complete instructional units they could implement immediately within the upcoming year.

Participant surveys collectively noted the powerful benefit of collaboration, reflection, and feedback within and across schools and levels, as well as the increase in knowledge of how to integrate literacy learning outcomes into curriculum standards. As one participant noted, “I have practically an entire unit completed and a teacher to collaborate with throughout the year because of this experience. I also feel as if I have made a connection with UNLV for when I need support on student research in the future.”

The CML is an undiscovered gem that is open to colleagues throughout the region.

Further, participants found the pace of sessions and the individualized attention to their respective units unique from other professional development opportunities. Another attendee noted, “The most valuable thing I got out of the institute was breaking our unit into workable chunks, identifying assessments that align with our outcomes, creating a rubric, making a schedule, and dividing responsibilities...the institute provided introduction to the tools and then time for us to work with the tools and meet with other groups.”

Another participant noted, “I loved the amount of time allowed to collaborate with each other and create research projects from start to finish. This is the ONLY training that I’ve attended in 16 years of training that has ever allowed the TIME needed to get things done.”

Amanda Melilli, Head Librarian for the CML, echoes the value of the institute: “This is a much needed opportunity for Las Vegas educators at all levels to collaborate on authentic student learning as well as a chance for them to build new teams within their schools. By having teachers and librarians, ranging from elementary school to higher education, conversing in the same room, we are better able to understand the needs of our current and future students. The CML sees itself as an important partner to K-12 educators and their students.”

For additional information about the CML and its initiatives, visit https://www.library.unlv.edu/cml/.
Empowering Youth Through Curriculum and Sports

College of Education Hosts 300 Participants of the National Youth Sports Program

The National Youth Sports Program (NYSP), an annual program that has become a summer staple on the UNLV campus for over 35 years, again welcomed 300 youth for a five-week, action packed camp designed to fulfill its mission of “Providing Children with the Right Start.” Structured from a national model, NYSP is a Positive Action, evidence-based prevention program designed to serve racially and ethnically diverse boys and girls between the ages of 10 and 16 from low-income neighborhoods of Las Vegas.

Each day of their five-week camp, students participate in a comprehensive curriculum including: Positive Action (an evidence-based drug prevention program with enrichment components); Success Maker (a technology-based literacy program with a focus on Math and Reading); and STEM (a focus on science, technology, engineering and mathematics fields and career education).

In addition to a structured curriculum, a major component of NYSP is time for individual and team sports including basketball, volleyball, soccer, flag football and dance. Throughout the summer community leaders share their time to lead workshops focused on Health and Nutrition, Higher Education, Mentoring, Anti-Bullying, Conflict Resolution, Diversity, Family Risk and Prevention Factors, and Dropout Prevention.

Entry into the camp is free and includes transportation to and from campus each day along with a full medical screening and medical insurance coverage for youth while at camp. In addition, participants receive a USDA-approved lunch and snack each day of the camp.

Professor Emeritus Dr. Porter Troutman has served as Director of NYSP on campus for 35 years, helping to secure nearly $150,000 in grants each year to continue the program. The PACT (Prevention, Advocacy, Choices, and Teamwork) Coalition and Department of Education also provide support. Troutman adds, “The community, parents, students and staff are highly appreciative of the continuous support from Dean Metcalf and the College of Education for providing access and opportunities for underserved populations to fulfill their dreams and aspirations in a higher education environment with university faculty and students. This is a vital connection between the University and community to support the success of these students through our Office of Diversity Initiatives and our status as a Minority Serving Institution.”

More information on this program can be found at unlvcoe.org/nysp/home.
College of Education receives $12.9 million for Special Education Scholarships

Rodman Scholars Commit to Make a Difference in the Community

In Fall 2014, the College of Education became the recipient of the largest single endowment to the university in the amount of $12.9 million by the late Kitty Rodman, a longtime supporter of the university and the community. Per Ms. Rodman’s request, the funds are to support scholarships and graduate fellowships for UNLV students pursuing careers in special education.

Six Rodman Scholars began this Fall semester following a competitive search process. The first cohort of scholars is comprised of undergraduate students completing their student teaching in special education classrooms at the Resource Room level.

In addition to meeting the application requirements, a key factor in the final selection of the scholars was that they each embody passion and commitment to the special education career field and serving students with disabilities in the Las Vegas community. Dean Kim Metcalf speaks to the importance of scholarships to continue the work of the College of Education: “Special education is one of UNLV’s longest running programs. It is a great honor to our institution that Kitty Rodman would recognize the College of Education’s commitment to producing teachers who are dedicated to helping children with disabilities.”

The Educational and Clinical Studies (ECS) Department is in the process of selecting the Rodman Scholars for spring 2016. Dr. Kyle Higgins, Professor in ECS, and Ms. Nancy Brown, ECS Field Coordinator, agree that Ms. Rodman was a visionary, and both indicate that the Rodman Scholarships will showcase this vision by contributing to the department’s ability to attract the best and the brightest students to the field of special education.

“I chose Special Education because I believe that each student is a unique individual and should have an equal opportunity to share his or her abilities and talents in and out of the classroom. I want to be a positive role model in my students’ lives and encourage them to challenge themselves to be the best that they can be in everything they do. I am eager to help students meet their full potential and accomplish their goals by providing them the tools and services needed to succeed academically and in society.” —Amber Peck

“The Rodman scholarship has tremendously blessed me financially this semester. This award further helps me reach my educational goal of making a difference in the lives of kids. My deepest desire is to see the youth grow into young men and women who make a difference in their community. I will use my education at UNLV to make a difference by teaching and leading others to strive for success beyond graduation. The Rodman Scholarship has given me an opportunity to graduate from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas and to make a difference in the field of education and I am very grateful for this opportunity.” —Manuel Lucas

“As an educator I plan to make an impact in the community by being a positive influence and inspiring generations of change. I want to help students with the tools they need to be successful and reach their potential. I plan to prepare students to be good citizens by creating meaningful learning experiences that incorporate important life skills, morals, and compassion. My goal is improve the quality of education for all students. I plan to motivate other teachers by leading by example. I plan to initiate collaboration with colleagues in order to contribute to the advancement of the education profession.” —Bridgette Baquero
As the first established academic college at UNLV, the College of Education has the largest number of alumni of any College in the University, over 19,000 locally, nationally, and internationally. In early 2015, the College of Education Alumni Association (COEAA) received full chapter status from the UNLV Alumni Association and is increasingly finding ways to engage alumni with current students and community leaders for professional development opportunities. The COEAA holds regular social mixers and this year is seeking to engage alumni at events including tailgate parties and award ceremonies. Stay in touch, get involved, or let COEAA know about some of the great things you are doing in our community.

Email us at: unlvcoeaa@gmail.com
Follow us on Facebook at: http://www.facebook.com/unlvcoee
Hashtag us in your social media posts: #unlvcoeaa

Alumni Spotlight

Tonia Holmes-Sutton, Ed.D. ‘12, a dual graduate from UNLV’s College of Education, having earned her Master’s Degree in Special Education in 2004 and her doctorate in Educational Leadership in 2012, is leading the way in education advocacy in southern Nevada. Tonia is a National Board Certified Teacher (NBCT) in her 16th year of teaching, serving students and families in low-socioeconomic status communities within the Las Vegas Valley. Locally, Tonia works to provide support and service to new teachers in the Clark County School District (CCSD) as a Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) Consulting Teacher, along with her role as a Certified Mentor for the CCSD Employee Onboarding and Development Department. More globally, Tonia serves as a Governor-appointed member on the Nevada State Board of Education, on the WestEd Board of Directors, and for the Southwest Regional Educational Laboratory. Within these roles, Tonia strives to commit to excellence in service to education.

Dr. Holmes-Sutton has been included in the Cambridge Who’s Who Among Executive and Professional Women in Teaching and Education and Who’s Who Among American Teachers and Educators. In addition, she is the Vice President of the UNLV Alumni Association College of Education Chapter, continuing to actively engage fellow College alums to stay connected to the University.

She cites her training at UNLV as instrumental to her career path: “My education at UNLV, the College of Education faculty, and my mentors thoroughly prepared me for my career as a professional educator. The educational opportunities afforded to me at UNLV provided me with the quality skills, strategies, confidence, and disposition needed to engage in leadership capacities within the field of education at the local, state, and national levels. Committed to excellence in service and education, UNLV and the College of Education encouraged and challenged me to be an exceptional professional.”

Invest in Education

The UNLV College of Education is committed to creating an intellectual environment that promotes quality instruction and significant research and leadership in both the art and science of educational practice.

What truly makes the College unique is its vision for each student to be engaged in the creation of new pedagogy, examination and dissemination of contemporary research and scholarship on pressing issues, or ideas in the fields they serve. Your donation, no matter the size, will help us reach the margin of excellence that cannot be reached by state funding alone. Contributions from friends and alumni are a critical piece in helping to move forward key priority initiatives. Gifts to the College of Education assist in the recruitment of outstanding students and faculty, provide cutting-edge research opportunities, and offer scholarships to students who will become the leaders of tomorrow.

Every donation counts. Invest in education by contributing to the growth of the College of Education today.

http://education.unlv.edu/giving.html
College of Education faculty produced eight policy papers on key legislative issues during the 2015 Nevada Legislature. These papers were presented to legislators in advance of the session and provided non-partisan research and key conclusions. The papers covered issues such as: autism spectrum disorders, child and adolescent mental health, educational funding, English language learners, improving the teacher pipeline, needs of students in poverty through comprehensive school reform, and Nevada academic content standards.

Dr. Cori More, Assistant Professor in Educational & Clinical Studies, speaks to the importance of conveying the research she compiled for the Full Day Kindergarten paper to Nevada legislators: “Increasing Full Day Kindergarten programs improves the likelihood that all children have equal access to a high quality Kindergarten education and increases chances for academic success. Investment in quality early childhood programs will provide at least a $3.00 to $1.00 return on investment (National Education Association, 2006).”

For his policy paper on implementation of the Nevada Academic Content Standards, Professor Michael Nussbaum of the Department of Education Psychology and Higher Education notes, “Both a survey by the Nevada Department of Education and other research indicate that a lack of both high-quality professional development and instructional materials hamper effective implementation of the new content standards. The faculty of the College of Education are dedicated to helping policy makers achieve meaningful improvements for the benefit of teachers and students.”

The research and lending of expertise by our faculty is a shining example of the College of Education’s commitment to informing and affecting policy for the advancement of education throughout Nevada.

POLICY PAPER TITLES AND AUTHORS:

*Addressing the Needs of Students Living in Poverty through Comprehensive School Reform*, by Joseph John Morgan, Ph.D., & Tara Raines, Ph.D., N.C.S.P.

*Autism Spectrum Disorders in Nevada*, by Shannon Crozier, Ph.D., Rachel Davis, Ph.D., Allison Werlinger, M.S., Amy Bourji-Nassar, M.S., CCC-SLP, Jessica Love, Ph.D., & Cori More, Ph.D.

*Educational Funding Practices in Nevada and the U.S.*, by Micah Stohlmann, Ph.D.

*English Language Learners: Historical Contexts, Current Status, and Considerations for Future Directions*, by Christine Baxter, M.Ed.

*Full Day Kindergarten: An Overview for Nevada*, by Cori More, Ph.D., Catherine Lyons, Ph.D., & Jeffrey Gelfer, Ph.D.

*Implementation of the Nevada Academic Content Standards in English Language Arts and Mathematics*, by Michael Nussbaum, Ph.D.

*Improving Child and Adolescent Mental Health in Nevada: School-Based Initiatives and Wraparound Services*, by Randall Astramovich, Ph.D.

*The Teacher Pipeline: Recruitment and Retention*, by Jane McCarthy, Ed.D., & Linda Quinn, Ph.D.

Full papers can be viewed on the College of Education website at education.unlv.edu. For a printed copy, please contact Sheila Bray at sheila.bray@unlv.edu or (702) 895-3375.
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Featuring
Governor Brian Sandoval

Monday, December 7, 2015
9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
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