



**BUFFALO STATE**  
The State University of New York

**SPRING/SUMMER 2016**

# EXCEPTIONAL EDUCATION

*Created by Jaclyn Phillips, Graduate Assistant*

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**Dr. Lisa A. Rafferty**  
Chair of the Exceptional Education Department



**Dr. Raquel J. Schmidt**  
Associate Chair of Graduate Programs



**Dr. Shannon Budin**  
Associate Chair of Undergraduate Programs

## WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR

This fall will mark the beginning of my second year as Chair of the Exceptional Education Department. It has been very humbling to serve such an extraordinary department; I am grateful for all of the support I received from faculty colleagues, community partners, and candidates. I am especially grateful to the Associate Chairs, Dr. Raquel Schmidt and Dr. Shannon Budin, for their leadership and collaboration. I would also like to acknowledge the support of Dr. Kevin Miller, the previous chair whose faculty profile is highlighted in this newsletter.

With the beginning of the fall semester on the horizon, it is important to look back at the year past to help us set new, exciting goals for this year. We had many wonderful events and accomplishments, some of which are highlighted in this edition of the newsletter. I hope you enjoy reading about all of the exciting work being done in the department, and I look forward to possibly seeing you at a future event!

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## CONGRATULATIONS, GRADUATES!

The Exceptional Education Department would like to congratulate all of our undergraduate and graduate students on the great accomplishment of being awarded their bachelor's and master's degrees! Please be sure to keep us updated on your future successes. Good luck to you all!



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The mission of the Exceptional Education Department is to prepare teachers, scholars, and action researchers as exemplary leaders, and to advance the profession of special education through the science and art of teaching, learning, and collaborating. Our graduates will contribute to the community by serving the needs of persons with disabilities and by broadening the general population's understanding and appreciation of individuals with disabilities.



## EXE 100 STUDENTS PLAN LITERACY NIGHT AT LOCAL SCHOOL

This spring semester, the students in the *Nature and Needs of Individuals with Special Needs (EXE 100)* partnered with Buffalo Public School #33 Bilingual Center, which is one of Buffalo State College's Professional Development Schools. A mini-grant was awarded to support the school's vision to increase parent engagement and volunteerism in literacy-related activities for Pre-K through grade 2.

Two activities were planned: videotaping parents reading books in Spanish (which the students from EXE 100 did) and a Literacy Night filled with creative stations sup-

porting literacy. These stations included: Camping Out with Stories, Making S'mores by the Fire, Story Workshops, Pair Reading (parent/child/children), an art workshop, and a book fair. There were also refreshments for attendees.

This section of EXE 100 included students who are Teacher Candidates representing many of the different education majors available at Buffalo State College. The candidates shared their talents from those areas. For example, our music majors brought their instruments to the Sing and Dance station.

The highlight of the Literacy Night was Clifford the Big Red Dog! Children and parents were filled with joy when Clifford greeted them...and yes, for that magical night, Clifford was played by one of our EXE 100 students!



## PHOTO GALLERY OF EXE 100 LITERACY NIGHT



*EXE 100 students help students from BPS #33 choose the right book!*

## 4 + 1 = Success: A New Accelerated Program

The early childhood/exceptional education 4+1 accelerated pathway offers students a combined bachelor's and master's degree pathway. This pathway allows bachelor's degree candidates to complete course requirements for certification in early childhood education (birth–grade 2) while taking select graduate-level coursework during their senior year. Following completion of the bachelor's degree, candidates take one full year of graduate coursework that fulfills the requirements for initial certification for teaching students with disabilities (birth–grade 2).

Students begin graduate coursework in their senior year and must earn a minimum grade of B in EXE coursework to continue with the graduate program. Students accepted to the pathway must follow the curriculum map as outlined by the department in order to stay on track and to have senior-year graduate-level coursework included in undergraduate tuition rates. Students are formally admitted to the Graduate School following verification of bachelor's degree requirements and acceptance of the online application. Upon formal admission, earned graduate credit is applied to the graduate course of study, and all graduate policies and privileges apply. Graduate application fees are waived for students in the 4+1 accelerated pathway.

Candidates accepted to the 4+1 accelerated pathway need not take the GRE or MAT required by SUNY for graduate teacher edu-

cation programs if they submitted SAT or ACT scores when applying to the college. Graduate application fees are also waived for 4+1 students.

Students may enter the pathway either as incoming freshmen or at any point in their undergraduate studies. Applicants are required to submit a statement that clearly demonstrates why they are selecting the 4+1 accelerated pathway and affirms their intent to remain at Buffalo State for both undergraduate and graduate studies. Writing samples will be assessed by the faculty as an essential part of a successful application to the major. Applications for the 4+1 accelerated pathway are available in Bacon Hall 302.



For additional information, please contact Ms. Wendy McLeish of Elementary Education and Reading at (716) 878-5618 or [mcleisw@buffalostate.edu](mailto:mcleisw@buffalostate.edu) or Dr. Kathy Doody of Exceptional Education at (716) 864-8286 or [doodykr@buffalostate.edu](mailto:doodykr@buffalostate.edu)

## STUDENT COUNCIL FOR EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN

The Student Council for Exceptional Children (SCEC) is an academic-based organization that hosts professional development sessions and engages in service learning, all while having fun and making new friends! During the spring semester, the chapter hosted a professional development session that discussed different methods for teaching English Language Learners (ELLs). The discussions included topics such as characteristics of ELLs that impact their learning, successfully implementing an RtI model into ELL instruction, and researched-based teaching strategies.

The chapter also held a Teacher Interview Night. Members were able to get advice and feedback on resumes and portfolios from school administrators and teachers. Additionally, they had the opportunity to answer some interview questions and receive feedback.

SCEC's other major event of the semester was the Spread the Word to End the Word Campaign, an annual undertaking conducted in conjunction with the Best Buddies organization. The campaign focused on highlighting respect for individuals with disabilities, which is central to SCEC's mission.

For more information about this organization, feel free to contact SCEC at [buffalostatesscec@gmail.com](mailto:buffalostatesscec@gmail.com).



## SCEC AND BEST BUDDIES SPRING SEMESTER PHOTO GALLERY



***LEFT:*** A Buffalo State Student spins the prize wheel after pledging to Spread the Word to End the Word

***RIGHT:*** Best Buddies members have a fun night of bowling at Kenmore Lanes.



## BEST BUDDIES HAS BUSY SEMESTER



Best Buddies is a national organization that pairs people with and without disabilities to create friendships that last a lifetime! Buffalo State's chapter fills each semester with activities that promote learning, networking, and most importantly, fun!

This semester, members participated in many activities, including open skate with the Buffalo State Ladies Hockey Team, bowling at Kenmore Lanes, and Zumba with the Buffalo State Pom Dance Team.

Best Buddies also participated in the Friendship Walk in Albany, NY. The friendship walk is a fundraiser that Best Buddies chapters from around the country participate in to raise funds and awareness for people with intellectual disabilities. This year, Buffalo State's Chapter raised over \$3,000.



## FACULTY PROFILE: DR. KEVIN MILLER

Dr. Kevin J. Miller returned to his home town area and joined the Exceptional Education Department in Fall 2006. He served as chair of the department from 2008-2015 and currently is a professor of exceptional education. Dr. Miller was humbled by the opportunity to return to the institution from which he obtained his master's degree and thinks of his time at Buffalo State as a way of "paying it forward". Dr. Miller welcomed becoming part of a program and faculty he strongly respects.



impact on him. Until then I never saw myself as remotely being able to have any potential influence as a role model."

Dr. Miller's nearly thirty year career has not taken a straight line path. Part of the draw to special education, though it would not become evident to him until many years later, relates to having a cousin that would now be considered to have an intellectual disability. Growing up, Miller knew there was something unique about his cousin though not much was made of it as he was considered one of the bunch when they got together at family functions.

He began his undergraduate studies at St. Edward's University in Austin, TX majoring in computer programming and soon realized he was more interested in studying human behavior and learning. He changed his major to psychology, and during his junior year, an unplanned occurrence provided some fodder for his ultimate career path. A young boy in a class Miller was volunteering as part of a service learning service experience was having attendance problems. The teacher confided to Miller that the boy was showing up regularly on the days he was volunteering. "It made an impression on me; for some reason, I was having an

After completing UG studies, Miller worked as a child care worker/counselor at Nashua Children's Association in NH. "In those days, we actually did 36 hour shifts and slept, or at least attempted to sleep, overnight on campus." The purpose was to ensure continuity for the children so that when they woke up, at least one person who was present from the evening before was present in the morning. "While there, I developed and implemented several successful behavior intervention programs. I learned a lot from that experience."

A few years later he moved to Austin, TX and worked as supervisor/program coordinator at Brown-Karhan Health Care, a treatment facility for individuals with head injuries and neurological impairments. One of the high school students in the program was from out of state, and Miller attended an IEP meeting as the guardian representative for the family. Miller recalled, "It was there that I had my 'aha moment' and decided to become a special education teacher."

He eventually moved back to WNY and began his master's program in special education at Buffalo State and became a special education teacher. Drs. Carmen Iannaccone and Horace Mann encouraged him to pursue a doctoral degree, which he did at West Virginia University under the mentorship of Dr. Bill Wienke, an alum of Buffalo State. Miller subsequently held faculty positions at West Virginia University, St. Bonaventure University, and University of Central Florida.

Dr. Miller's scholarship accomplishments include over 80 publications, 105 presentations, and 30 workshops at local, state, national, and international levels. Miller also serves on multiple journal editorial review boards and on the board of directors for national and state level professional organizations.

Dr. Miller sees teaching as an art and science. The art part involves developing creative, interesting, and engaging lessons. The science relates to the relevance and effectiveness of instruction, and whether or not students learned the intended information. "It does not matter how great a lesson is planned or even delivered if the students did not learn." This is something he works to communicate with teacher candidates. He also purposefully plans lectures, assignments, and in-class activities to make them relevant to what teacher candidates will actually be doing as teachers. "What I especially like about being at Buffalo State is that this line of thinking is prevalent in all faculty in our department, which contributes to us having strong and respected programs."

## DR. HORACE MANN RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM

The Spring 2016 Dr. Horace Mann Graduate Research Symposium was held on Saturday, May 7, 2016 in Rockwell Hall. There were 29 Exceptional Education Graduate Students who showcased their master's projects to their peers, as well as the Exceptional Education Department faculty and staff. Projects involved the design, implementation, and reporting of research studies responsive to the needs of individuals with disabilities.

Research topics ranged from the effects of social stories on the behaviors of adolescents with autism to promoting parent involvement using literacy based workshops.

The keynote speaker was Dr. Russell Gersten, director of the Instructional Research Group and professor emeritus in the College of Education at the University of Oregon. He spoke about different strategies educators can use in the classroom to help students with disabilities suc-

ceed in mathematics.

The symposium allows graduate students to present the research that is a required part of the Exceptional Education program. "We want to give them an opportunity to use data to inform instructional practices and add to the collective knowledge on evidence-based practices for students with and at-risk for disabilities," said Dr. Lisa Rafferty, Chair of the Exceptional Education Department.



Dr. Horace Mann Graduate Research Symposium • Spring 2016

### Presenters

Ellie Allen	Melissa Kacalski
Jessica Andriatch	Kathryn Kelly
Jillian Borton	Michael Kelm
Samantha Bowes	Kelsey Kilminster
Daniel Buck	Laryssa Kimble
Allison Cislarski	Tabitha Loebel
Aaron Deutschman	Jonathan Miller
Vicky Devoe	Shawntell Milton
Nicole Dixon	Stephanie Newman
Amanda Feirabend	Amy Perkins
Katherine Ferrentino	Jaclyn Phillips
Molly Gowin	Ashley Prince
Devin Grau	Stephanie Schwartz
Chelsea Haven	Alaina Sheisley
Stephanie Hollis	



**Top:** Dr. Russell Gersten presents strategies for successful math instruction.  
**Center:** Students present research surrounding parent involvement.  
**Bottom:** Students present research about using graphic organizers and self questioning for reading comprehension.

## RTI TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CENTER LOCATED ON CAMPUS

The New York State Response to Intervention Technical Assistance Center (NYS RtI TAC) is part of the NYS Education Department's (NYSED) strategy to promote and build school district capacity to implement a systemic, response to intervention process. Located on the campus of Buffalo State College in Ketchum Hall and financially supported by the NYSED, Office of Special Education, the TAC provides resource infor-

mation and professional development on topics related to RtI to interested consumers at no cost. NYS RtI TAC staff include: Dr. Theresa M. Janczak, Project Director; Mrs. Molly Marren, RtI Webinar Coordinator; and Dr. Dane DiCesare, Program Coordinator/Data Manager. NYS RtI

Consortium members include university faculty and school personnel from across the state.

Information and professional development regarding RtI can be assessed via the NYS RtI TAC website at [nysrti.org](http://nysrti.org).



## FORMER DOCTORAL STUDENT ATTENDS PRESTIGIOUS WORKSHOP

Dr. Sarah K. Howorth, a recent graduate from the Joint Doctoral Program in Special Education, was selected to attend the 2016 Beginning Career Researchers Workshop hosted by the Division for Research, Council for Exceptional Children in St. Louis, MO.

Dr. Howorth was required to apply and was chosen to be one of 20 participants. The workshop, which is held once every three years, is designed to give new professors strategies for becoming tenured, writing grants, publishing papers, and bal-

ancing career and personal responsibilities.



## Co-Teaching Pilot Program

In the 2015-2016 academic year, Dr. Patti (Exceptional Education Department, EXE) and Dr. del Prado Hill (Elementary Education and Reading Department, EER) co-taught coursework through the Co-teaching Pilot Program. The program was a two-semester sequence of combined EXE and EDU coursework that teacher candidate majors from the EXE and EER departments took together. The program included a two-semester field experience in a Professional Development School (PDS) site, Herman Badillo Bilingual Academy (HBBA).

In addition to the traditional course outcomes, the program focused on developing the teacher candidates' knowledge, skills, and dispositions to be successful in their future roles as collaborators and co-teachers in schools. The program faculty modeled co-teaching in the college coursework, and teacher candidates were able to observe and participate in co-teaching at HBBA. A teacher candidate from each department was paired together in each field experience classroom to further promote their collaboration and co-teaching skills.

Pictured below are: Jordan Keenen, Childhood Education Major (left); her co-teaching partner, Devon Holler, Exceptional Education Major (right); and Ms. Lindsey Ragusa, HBBA Mentor Teacher (center).



### PROFESSOR RECEIVES AWARD



Dr. Kathy Ralabate Doody, Assistant Professor in the Exceptional Education Department, won the Service Learning Award for Outstanding Faculty Commitment to Service Learning. This is presented to a faculty member who demonstrates outstanding achievement in service learning and/or provides unique and meaningful opportunities for service learning course participants. She was also the co-recipient of the Service Provider Award. Congratulations Dr. Doody!



### PROFESSOR RECEIVES PROMOTION

Beginning September 2016, Dr. Awilda Ramos Zagarrigo has been promoted to Associate Professor!



Congratulations Dr. Ramos Zagarrigo!

### CONGRATULATIONS!



Exceptional Education undergraduate students, Katie Vitale and Amelia Dick, were presented with Service Learning Awards for Community Engagement. Vitale was awarded the recognition of Neighborhood Advocate for completing over 400 hours of service. Dick was presented with the award for Outstanding Student Community Service in a Service-Learning Course in 2015. Congratulations Katie and Amelia!

### DOCTORAL CANDIDATES GRADUATE

Doctoral Candidates, Timothy Zgliczynski and Gliset Colón, have earned their doctoral Degrees! Buffalo State and the University at Buffalo have a Joint Doctoral Program for Exceptional Education, which is directed by Dr. Sharon Raimondi.

**Congratulations  
Dr. Zgliczynski and  
Dr. Colón!**

