

The School of Education

A Legacy of Excellence.



Learning through Research

Research provides undergraduate and graduate teacher candidates with an opportunity to more deeply examine their interests in the field and to capitalize on their own knowledge and enthusiasm for teaching.

Student researchers develop problem-solving and presentation skills while gaining confidence and hands-on experience, as well as developing professional relationships in their fields of interest.

Buffalo State's teacher education faculty members actively encourage all students—not just graduate students or undergraduates in leadership positions—to participate in action research and qualitative research projects. Projects are usually a student-faculty collaboration with faculty members supporting students through each step of the process, from articulating the topic to examining expert information to developing a meaningful approach and a thoughtful analysis of their findings. This can include completing the important International Review Board application, which ensures their activities maintain the safety and privacy of their research subjects.

Undergraduate researchers are supported through awards offered by the Undergraduate Research Office. Opened in 2003, the office follows a mission to promote and provide students with a variety of research, scholarly, and creative opportunities in all academic disciplines. According to the program's director, Jill Singer, "Because undergraduate research is considered by many to be one of the most powerful ways for students to learn, the process is just as important as the outcome. Undergraduate research

is an opportunity to apply what you have learned in class to solve real-world problems, as well as to learn things that you might not typically cover in class."

Students accepted for the Undergraduate Research Small Grants Program or the Summer Research Fellowship Program receive a monetary stipend to support their research activities and are required to share their findings at the annual Student Research and Creativity Conference held each spring.

The majority of participants who travel through the International Professional Development Schools (IPDS) short-term teach-and-study-away programs engage in research before and during their time abroad. IPDS participants often carry out research projects that examine and compare methods of teaching and learning in the target country as well as the ways that community and family dynamics affect the children in our international classrooms. Participants also implement teaching activities and tools in our partner schools and share their experiences through action research.

Teacher candidates are also supported in their research through the Professional Development Schools Consortium (PDS). Each year students join faculty at the National Association for Professional Development Schools conference and present at the local PDS conference in September. On campus, graduate students showcase their



Inside This Issue:

- ▶ **Modeling the Gold Standard**
A message from Dean Wendy Paterson.
- ▶ **Unique Teaching Opportunities**
Grads excel in local schools and around the world.
- ▶ **International Update**
IPDS sends students to five continents.



SCHOOL of EDUCATION

Student researchers develop problem-solving and presentation skills while gaining confidence and hands-on experience...

LEARNING THROUGH RESEARCH continued

master's projects at the Dr. Horace Mann Graduate Research Symposium held for Exceptional Education students each May, and the Graduate Student Project Presentation Night held for Elementary Education and Reading students each December. These annual events offer students an opportunity to network with faculty and peers from across the campus and the nation, and to engage in dialogue that enhances their academic and professional endeavors.



School of Education faculty members work one-on-one with graduate students on research proposals and assist them in bringing their projects to local and national presentations. Jevon Hunter, Woods Beals Endowed Chair in Urban Education, is committed to developing research opportunities for students. "I want to pay it forward," he said. "I want students from pre-kindergarten through high school, as well as Buffalo State students, to harness the necessary tools and sharpen them to become researchers and problem solvers of their

own lived social realities. After all, shouldn't that be one of the purposes of a meaningful education? Initiatives that support undergraduate and graduate research are paramount for developing the next generation of engaged scholars who work at the nexus of learning and teaching in urban communities and translating the outcomes into concrete classroom practices."

Recent Research Presentations

- Border Crossing among Content Areas of Preservice Teachers at Buffalo State
— *Lilly Inglut, English Education*
- How Teachers Learn: Communities of Practice in English Teacher Professional Development
— *Zachary Cook, English Education*
- De Facto Segregation and Inequality in Buffalo Public Schools, 1910–2010
— *Mitchell Ford, History and Social Studies Education*
- Effectiveness of Teaching Strategies in Zambia
— *Tiana Wilson, History and Social Studies Education*
- Interactive Read-Alouds with Children's Literature in Santiago, Chile
— *Christine Garas, Exceptional Education; Onnika Clarey, Exceptional Education; Claire Borczuch, Exceptional Education; Jameelat Bakare, Speech-Language Pathology*
- Modifying Curriculum for Students with Severe Disabilities in General Education Classrooms
— *Marilyn Wang, Exceptional Education*
- The Role of the Physical Classroom in Student Learning
— *Carlie Mogavero, Exceptional Education*
- Special Education in the Dominican Republic: Hope for the Future
— *Kassia Balus, Exceptional Education*
- The Effects of Diverse Financial Backgrounds on Female Adolescents and Higher Education Opportunities
— *Tee-Ahna Gilmore, Elementary Education and Reading*
- The Impact of Outdoor Play on Preschool Children
— *Katie Froom, Elementary Education and Reading*
- Maternity and Paternity Rights of Developed Countries
— *Amber Amato, Elementary Education and Reading*
- Student Teaching: Germany vs. New York
— *Rachel Sparks, Elementary Education and Reading*
- Using #Black&BrownLives to Enhance Learning and Teaching in Elementary Schools
— *Roseanna Spencer, Elementary Education and Reading*



International Update

The School of Education's International Professional Development Schools Consortium (IPDS) includes partnerships on five continents in eight countries. Each IPDS has unique objectives, but the overall purpose remains constant: give teacher candidates opportunities to globalize their understanding of education through international study and travel. These short-term teach and study abroad programs are organized to meet the needs of teacher candidates. Students travel between semesters after completing a preparation course. They work in Pk-12 classrooms and collaborate with partner universities to learn about education in the target countries.

"We got an inside look at the daily routine and typical education of Chilean students," said Chelsea Davidson, Chile 2015. "At the same time we visited one of the most beautiful countries in the world—on foot and on horseback!" Amanda Steltermann, Germany 2016 and Italy 2015, added, "What better way to explore than through a college program where you are more than simply a tourist."

While abroad, many Buffalo State students work with English language learners and often become second-language learners themselves. They broaden their abilities to be creative communicators and to empathize with others. Many also spend time volunteering in places immersed in poverty, which is an eye-opening experience for them as new teachers who must quickly learn to engage children in schools with few resources or classrooms filled to capacity.

"When I started teaching, I automatically thought of the children and families who had so little but shared so much with us," said Sarah Priore, Dominican Republic 2015. "I was reminded that we never know where our students come from, what they may or may not have, or even what they ate that day. It taught me that no matter what a student's background, every child has an equal right to the best education."

Participants relate their abroad experiences to their roles as new educators as well as what is happening in many Buffalo schools.

"The ability to compare and contrast our lives with the lives of others allows us to serve as advocates," said Phylicia Brown, Zambia 2014. "When people across the globe become your companions, their struggle affects you in a new way. Teachers must understand on a deeper level and view the world through more than one lens so we can build critical thinkers in our own classrooms."



Italy

IPDS participants develop research, reflection, and observation skills and gain new teaching practices and relationships. Most depart the United States believing they will make a difference in the lives of others but soon realize that the greatest change is occurring within. They return with a stronger sense of themselves as part of a global movement,

and display increased self-sufficiency, compassion, and adaptability as well as leadership and communication skills.

"I gained new perspectives and an appreciation for new cultures, and became better prepared for teaching diverse groups of students," said Crystal Holmes-Smith, Chile 2015 and Rwanda 2016. "I faced fears, tried new things, and built the mind-set that there isn't anything I put my mind to that I cannot accomplish."

Often the students return to Buffalo State with a renewed interest in giving back and serve as ambassadors for study abroad and student engagement.

"I've woken up, learned that there is a whole other side of the earth where forgiveness, compassion, and love exist freely," said Lily Inglut, Rwanda 2016. "I've learned to be flexible and to embrace the uncomfortable in order to change the world through teaching."

In addition, students find that IPDS is a wonderful addition to a professional résumé.

"At the campus job fair all the school representatives wanted to talk about was my experience overseas," said Shannon McCooey, three-time participant of Dominican Republic 2015 and 2017 and Germany 2017. "That I sought a chance to get out of my comfort zone and into the homes and schools of strangers showed employers that I am willing to take risks and think creatively," she said.

Learn more at <http://schoolofeducation.buffalostate.edu/ipds>.



Zambia (top), Germany (bottom)

Teacher Tailgate

Sponsored by the Professional Development Schools Consortium (PDS), Teacher Tailgate is an annual fall semester open-house gathering for teacher education students, faculty, and staff to extend relationships, have fun, and share information about available local and global activities and opportunities. Campus organizations, groups, and departmental unit exhibitors are invited to display posters and share materials that highlight opportunities open to our students.



Participants explore international opportunities for educators, organizations and clubs, certification exams and updates, graduate programs, volunteer and service-learning activities, and the employment outlook for teachers while enjoying free food and prizes. Teacher education students of all grade levels and disciplines, as well as those interested in exploring the teaching field, are encouraged to attend.

PDS Student Reps

Serving as a Professional Development Schools representative is a competitive, rewarding, and collaborative educational experience through which students serve as peer leaders, build their résumés and professional portfolios, develop their teacher candidate voices, and take advantage of opportunities for professional development and networking. PDS reps help the PDS Consortium organize monthly meetings, prepare for special events and the annual PDS conference, participate in student orientation, and conduct and present educational research of their choice at the National Association for Professional Development Schools spring conference.



Juliana Mowatt

Juliana Mowatt wants to be part of the solution: paving a path to success for students from marginalized communities who lack opportunities or support.

Mowatt, a senior seeking a bachelor's degree in childhood education with a concentration in English, was selected as a 2017 Summer Teaching Fellow for Uncommon Schools, a nonprofit network of urban-area public charter schools working to close the achievement gap and prepare low-income students to graduate from college. As a Teaching Fellow in Rochester, Mowatt collaborates with high-performing mentor teachers in Uncommon schools.

"It has always been my passion to help interrupt the achievement gap in urban- and low-income areas," said Mowatt. "For many children, learning and discipline starts in the classroom. Teachers are able to guide students to their desired destinations by being effective and passionate and implementing excellent classroom strategies."

Summer Teaching fellows receive teacher training and professional development by observing and teaching in classrooms while receiving continual feedback and coaching from mentor teachers and the academy director. Fellows may also develop a lesson plan and build curriculum for a summer class as they develop and enhance their instructional skills.

"In Uncommon schools, I saw that every teacher had the same mission—the culture of the schools is very driven and harmonious," she said.

Mowatt, who was born in Washington, D.C., and lived in Jamaica for 10 years, attended high school in the Bronx. She began to wonder about the lives of immigrant students arriving to her school from the Dominican Republic, Nigeria, Liberia, and beyond. She was surprised to learn that so many were older than the typical age and already had children of their own and she sought to learn more about their lives.

Mowatt realized that life for many of the immigrant students was not equitable or desirable—they were unfamiliar with U.S. school systems and expectations and faced unique obstacles. She felt that their environment pulled them away from fully engrossing in academics and was distressed by how many of her peers disappeared from school after just a semester or year. Mowatt decided that she would graduate from college and return to her high school to motivate students and help them realize the opportunities and personal abilities that can help them to achieve their aspirations.

So she enrolled in teacher education at Buffalo State.



"I want to be a part of the solution. My heart is toward low-income students who commonly lack motivation for education due to their environment and fewer opportunities. I want to make a difference in the lives of children in urban areas. I want them to know that they are important, that they can obtain that degree; whether to become an architect, doctor, teacher... it is possible. I want them to know they can make a difference in the world starting with their community. And I want them to view education as a priority. This is why I want to become a teacher."

For more information, visit

<http://www.uncommonschools.org/careers/stf/program>.

LETTER FROM THE DEAN Dr. Wendy A. Paterson, '75, '76 Dean, School of Education



Keeping It Real: Modeling the Gold Standard in Teacher Education

Approaching each newsletter cycle, I find myself distracted by the controversies and contradictions that beset the teaching profession: declining teacher

program enrollments, teacher shortages, an explosion of standardized testing.

It's easy to focus on the negative...until we look at our amazing teacher candidates.

When I meet graduates whose generosity helps us fund programs at home and abroad—scholarships that keep our teacher workforce healthy and contribute to projects that help us achieve our mission—I am reminded that we stand on the shoulders of our ancestors. The programs and reputation they built evolved in times every bit as challenging as our current one, and our collective efforts support our boldness in claiming Buffalo State as a model—what many call "the gold standard"—in teacher education.

Buffalo State celebrates 20 years of serious growth in partnerships reaching new heights in collaborative

impact with action-based research projects, professional development, co-teaching, engagement, and multicultural education. In this newsletter and on our web pages, you will read about candidates and graduates expanding their visions to teach in their own neighborhoods, across the country and around the world.

Our high-priority goal of "crossing borders" has led to signature programs in IPDS and to connecting student teachers with jobs in New York City (SUTEC) and Texas (SUNYTEX). These are distinctive in SUNY yet

they are just the newest of the many ways that School of Education faculty and

leaders work creatively to keep programs vibrant, authentic, and meaningful—a heritage from which we can claim 146 years of practice!

We recently instituted the Developing Future Teachers (DeFT) Fellowship program, where outstanding graduate teacher candidates serve as regular substitutes and co-teachers while earning their professional certification. We recruited the first Urban Teacher Academy cohort of Buffalo Public Schools students who aspire to be teachers, the first of its kind to "grow our own" in Buffalo. We welcomed back a bilingual special education graduate, Gliset Colón, whose proposal on providing skilled teaching for

multilingual learners earned her one of SUNY's coveted Faculty Diversity Fellowships. And we were awarded a \$10,000 SUNY Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion award recognizing the value of the IPDS experience and supporting efforts to engage our candidates after they return from transformative travel projects.

We add these new initiatives to the efforts students, faculty and staff have engaged in for years and the

events and curricular innovations that keep our programs fresh and relevant.

Each development, each improvement, each new way to serve local and global communities through our teaching practice is grounded in our predecessors. We take that responsibility soberly. It is a promise to the parents of current students. It is a commitment to promote social justice and sow the seeds of peace through education in a world increasingly terrorized by ignorance. It is a dedication to develop educational programming that is fully present in the real world of kids, families, and schools. It is a vow to build on our heritage of excellence.

We are Buffalo State Teachers.

“We are Buffalo State Teachers.”



UNIQUE TEACHING OPPORTUNITIES: INTERNATIONAL

Crystal Holmes-Smith, '15, '16

The summer after she completed her literacy specialist master's degree, Crystal Holmes-Smith, '15, '16, accepted an offer to teach fourth and fifth grades at Moriah School in La Esperanza, Honduras. As she taught English, science, and mathematics, she also studied the Spanish language and developed her classroom methods.

Holmes-Smith believes teaching abroad was the perfect way to spend her first year as an educator. "There were some challenges, of course," she said. "English is a second language for my students, so I had to work hard to help them understand the content. But I enjoyed the challenge. I had the freedom to be creative and do whatever I think is best. I had fun."

Teaching provides Holmes-Smith with the satisfaction of helping students reach their goals, and her focus on literacy enables her to help them develop strong reading and writing skills—skills she considers essential. "I've watched students struggle because they lacked literacy skills," she said. "I chose this field because I think that literacy is the basis for all education. I am motivated in my desire to make a difference in the world. It is important to me that I make an impact and have a positive influence on others."

"I had the freedom to be creative and do whatever I think is best. I had fun."

Holmes-Smith said that Buffalo State contributed greatly to her personal development by helping her build confidence and leadership skills. As an undergraduate, Holmes-Smith collaborated with student government, took on an organizing role with Step Expression (a student group that volunteers

at events to increase school spirit using the art of stepping as a form of communication), and worked closely with Buffalo State's Professional Development Schools Consortium. She also engaged heavily in undergraduate

research—earning a summer research fellowship and presenting on campus and at national conferences.

Two study-abroad opportunities also influenced Holmes-Smith. In 2015, she traveled with the International Professional Development Schools to Chile, where she observed, taught, and studied Spanish. In 2016, she traveled with the Anne Frank Project to Rwanda to take part in a drama-based education program. Both trips allowed her to build friendships, stretch herself as a teacher, and examine the joys and struggles experienced across the globe. Holmes-Smith believes that campus-led travel-abroad is something all students, especially teacher-education candidates, should make part of their academic plan.

"All of these experiences, both abroad and on campus, made me challenge myself and try new things," she said. "I developed an appreciation for different cultures, which helped me become a more culturally responsive teacher." Her next stop began in August 2017, when she started as a Peace Corps volunteer co-teaching English as a foreign language in Nicaragua.

Holmes-Smith said that at Buffalo State she learned what it takes to succeed in both a career and at life: a love for what you do, hard work, dedication, and a willingness to continue learning.

"Education is always changing, and there will always be new strategies and techniques," she said. "There are many challenges in education, and if you don't truly love your job, those challenges will frustrate you. It is up to you, as a professional, to remain engaged in research and professional development so that you are always equipped with the best tools for student success."



UNIQUE TEACHING OPPORTUNITIES: NATIONAL

Brianna Ware, '16



When Brianna Ware, a 2016 graduate majoring in early childhood education, headed to Houston to complete her student teaching last October, she bought a one-way ticket.

"In Houston, they actually have billboards that say, 'Do you want to teach? When can you start?'" Ware said.

The Houston Independent School District (HISD) had 400 vacancies, and that's just one of several school districts serving the city and its population of more than 2 million people. To meet the demand, HISD and other districts, including the Aldine Independent School District, are encouraging education majors from around the country to visit Houston and its schools. Those visits are personal. Student interns are invited to participate in a one-week placement in an urban school setting and are hosted by district administrators during a brief visit that introduces the student to the possibility of becoming a teacher in Houston. During the placement, each intern gets hands-on training from a master teacher and, by the end of one week, shifts to being the lead teacher in the classroom. Students who successfully complete their student teaching in Houston are hired.

Ware's first visit took place in May 2016. "I went in to teach in a second-grade class on Monday," Ware said, "and my mentor was amazing at giving suggestions. It wasn't all simple lesson plans; the class had arts and activities, and the teacher used a lot of technology."

Ware learned about the Houston program from School of Education Dean Wendy Paterson, who worked with HISD to establish the opportunity for Buffalo State students interested in pursuing teaching careers outside the local area. "Many of our students want to stay local," Paterson said, "but we encourage them to take advantage of the opportunities Buffalo State offers to travel and learn."

"Buff State is really good for giving you classroom experience so you can make the right decision about a major," said Ware, who chose early childhood education. "When I worked with kindergartners, I really enjoyed it. They are little people with big personalities who have a lot to say. And I believe that if children have a good start, they can make better choices."

Ware hopes to teach in a school with a higher poverty level. "I want to have the opportunity to make a difference," she said. "I want my students to come to school and learn because it will be the best part of their day."



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Produced by the College Relations Office.

This publication is available in large print or other accessible formats upon request.

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STUDENT RECOGNITION



UPStander Awards

At the April “Take Back the Night” event, Buffalo State’s Counseling Center honored Claire Borczuch and Kassia Balus, undergraduates in the Exceptional Education Department, with the 2017 UPStander Awards. “UPStander,” a play on the word

“bystander,” is a term the center uses to describe those who are involved in and contribute meaningfully to the community. UPStander Awards are given annually to members of the Buffalo State community who have gone beyond their assigned roles or duties on campus and have made a difference in someone’s life by an act of kindness, unselfish action, proactive behavior, or caring attitude. Borczuch was recognized for her quick thinking and compassion when a Best Buddies participant with intellectual disabilities suffered a medical emergency on campus. She physically supported the person and stayed with him long after help arrived, then visited him at home after the incident. Balus is a deeply involved student who works to raise awareness on the importance of listening to and advocating on behalf of others who are in need or who cannot adequately express themselves. Recently when an individual with intellectual disabilities on campus was looking for assistance but was being ignored by passersby, Balus got involved and made sure he got to a safe place. This event later compelled her to share her message, imploring readers of the student paper, the Record, to look past themselves and out to those in need. Borczuch and Balus, inspiring role models for their peers, are valued members of the Exceptional Education’s “Civil and Caring Academic Community.”

Adult Education Award for Diversity and Social Justice



Jason Mazeski, graduate student in adult education, received the 2017 Adult Education Award for Diversity and Social Justice. Mazeski earned his bachelor of science degree in forensic psychology from John Jay College of Criminal Justice.

He is a police officer for the New York City Police Department, assigned to the counterterrorism training section, and is a full-time instructor and a member of the curriculum design and development team. Mazeski has written three training programs for the department and revised more than 14 existing courses. He works to expel bias and culturally motivated profiling techniques from the counterterrorism training curriculum. Reaching more than 7,500 officers each year, the redesigned curriculum seeks to replace methods and practices that perpetuate social injustice with those that promote community interaction and fair application of the law to all citizens of New York City. Mazeski hopes to work with other training units within the department to foster a gradual movement toward social justice, responding to the diverse population of New York City.