



BUFFALO STATE
The State University of New York

Fall 2018

EXCEPTIONAL EDUCATION



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Created by Angela Syracuse, Graduate Assistant

WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR



Dr. Raquel J. Schmidt
Chair of the Exceptional Education Department



Dr. Kathy Doody
Associate Chair of Graduate Programs



Dr. Angela Patti
Associate Chair of Undergraduate Programs

Welcome to the Fall 2018 edition of the Exceptional Education Department's newsletter. This has been a semester of transformation and growth in our department and the School of Education at Buffalo State College. As the French writer Jean-Baptiste Alphonse Karr once said "*plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose*"—the more things change, the more they stay the same. Our department office experienced some major changes in leadership. In August I stepped into the very large (figuratively!) shoes of outgoing department chair Dr. Lisa Rafferty, who served our department as a tireless and fearless leader over the past several years.

Drs. Kathy Doody (Graduate Programs) and Angela Patti (Undergraduate Programs) became our new Associate Chairs and Dr. Shannon Budin is now the Assistant Dean of Accreditation & Assessment for the Teacher Education Unit, which encompasses all education majors/programs at Buffalo State College (whoa!). It was a busy summer of purging, painting, moving furniture, and preparing for new roles within the department.

We also welcomed two new full-time faculty members to our ranks. Drs. Andrew Hashey and Lauren Mirabella-Ormsby bring not only years of international experience and expertise in working with students with disabilities, but a vibrant and positive energy to our undergraduate and graduate programs. Please pop in to their offices and say hello to them when you get a chance.

The achievements train kept chugging along with three EXE faculty members being recognized for their significant contributions to the profession and the college by being awarded both tenure and promotion: Drs. Kathy Doody, Angela Patti, and Krista Vince Garland. Dr. Shannon Budin was also promoted to full Professor, the highest recognition/promotion a tenured faculty department member in academia can attain. Choo choo!

In this newsletter you will read about numerous other awards, honors, achievements, and contributions of the students, faculty and community members who are all part of the Exceptional Education family—if you are reading this it's because you are a part of that community in some part. This newsletter could easily be ten times longer because our EXE family members contribute so much to the education profession, much of which goes unheralded. We hope we captured a snapshot of those achievements in this document, representing a small but accurate part of a much greater whole.

I'd also like to acknowledge that our many successes are sustained day in and day out by our outstanding office team—lead by the small but mighty Andrea (Department Secretary), Gina (Office Assistant), Angela (Graduate Assistant), Kathryn (SUNY Diversity Fellow), and Fiza (Work Study). They are the boots on the ground that enable the level of teaching, research, and volunteer work that is our distinguishing hallmark. Dean Paterson & her staff also provide invaluable support to our faculty and students daily.

In this holiday season of giving there is much to be grateful for. As former EXE colleague Dr. Thom Wozniak (R.I.P.) used to greet me with every day, I say to all of you: "*thanks for showing up today and thanks for being you.*" On behalf of the entire Exceptional Education Department, I would like to wish you a Happy New Year. We hope you enjoy reading about all of the exciting happenings in the Exceptional Education Department. To receive more up-to-date information and see more interesting photos (which may or may not involve disco clothes), please follow us on both Facebook & Instagram.

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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.

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tion.buffalostate.edu

EXCEPTIONAL EDUCATION STUDENT FEATURES

Each semester, the Exceptional Education faculty chooses two students- one undergraduate and one graduate- to highlight for their outstanding accomplishments. This semester, the faculty chose to showcase undergraduate student Claire Borczuch, and graduate student Allison Gunkler. Congratulations, ladies! Keep up the “exceptional” work!

Undergraduate Student: Claire Borczuch



Claire Borczuch is a senior Exceptional Education major. Claire has proven to be a wonderful student here at Buffalo State in the Exceptional Education department, already accomplishing so much. She is proud of being an Exceptional Education Scholarship Award recipient multiple times, most

recently receiving the Horace Mann Scholarship for Exceptional Education students. She is also very proud of her involvement in the International Professional Development Schools (IPDS) programs. After participating in two IPDS programs in Chile and Zambia, Claire was selected to serve as an IPDS Student Ambassador. In this role, Claire has been an important leader in encouraging other teacher candidates to take part in the global opportunities available in the School of Education such as the Global Book Hour and IPDS. Claire has also been to several professional conferences – locally, state-wide, and nationally – to both engage in professional development and share her own work. In February 2019, she plans to attend the National Association for Professional Development Schools (NAPDS) Conference where she will present her IPDS research findings through a poster presentation.

Claire’s inspiration for wanting to join the teaching pro-

Graduate Student: Allison Gunkler

Allison Gunkler is in her second semester in the Special Education: Early Childhood Graduate Program here at Buffalo State. Allison proved to be an amazing student here at Buffalo State in the Elementary Education, Literacy, and Educational Leadership Department, so it comes as no surprise that she is a wonderful student in the Exceptional Education Department as well! Allison is proud of her involvement in the

Professional Development Schools (PDS) programs, which include serving as a Student Representative, as well as a Senior Representative. She also served as the summer 2018 PDS Graduate Assistant. Allison brings a wonderful work ethic, vision, and commitment to preparing the professional development events and mentoring undergraduate teacher candidates.

(continued on page 8).

profession comes from her own academic struggles as a student in grade school. Claire feels that the extra support in the classroom, along with her supportive and caring teachers, played an underlying role in her success. Claire is also grateful to the faculty in the Exceptional Education Department because she feels that they provided her with many different learning opportunities and experiences, including Best Buddies and the Student Council for Exceptional Children (SCEC) which helped her reach her full potential. Through her classes and her involvement in these other organizations, Claire has learned that she wants to serve as a positive role model and provide support for her future students and show them that, despite their struggles, they too can be successful and reach their full potential.

Claire was recently accepted into the Special Education: Early Childhood B-2 Graduate Program here at Buffalo State, where she is eager to continue her learning. After Claire graduates with her Master’s, she is open to just about any teaching possibility! She would love to get a job working with younger students with or without special needs, in New York State or in another state. Her involvement with IPDS has also opened her up to the possibility of getting a teaching job in another country. Claire is confident that Buffalo State has provided her with all of the tools and resources needed to become a highly effective teacher.



THE 23RD ANNUAL RECOGNITION & AWARDS CEREMONY

The 23rd Annual Recognition and Awards Ceremony for the Exceptional Education Department was held on Thursday, November 15th in the Campbell Student Union Social Hall. We honored a large group of award recipients who were recognized for outstanding accomplishments.



*Congratulations to all awardees!
We are proud of you and all of
your hard work and dedication!*

AWARD RECIPIENTS

Alyssa Klaffka
Anastasia Arzaga
Ashley Gandt
Brianna Hummell
Catherine Welch
Christina Maynard
Christine Garas
Claire Borczuch
Devontae Halter
Glorines Cantres
James Roberto
Kaeley Biondo
Kassia Balus
Kathryn Diminuco
Kathryn Jordan
Kelly Gandt
Logan Fox
Maria Rodriguez
Marisa Clark
Megan Buseck
Meghan Johnson
Meghan McEvoy
Melissa DiGuiseppe
Michelle Dachs
Nicholas Smith
Niyzer Garner
Patricia Caputy
Rachel Kedzierski
Rebecca Zagrabski
Scott Arseno
ShaMara Mackey
Holmes

BEST BUDDIES AND CEC HAVE A BUSY FALL



Best Buddies- The Fall semester was in full swing for the new and returning members of Best Buddies alike! They participated in many campus activities such as the annual Buddy Match Party, the homecoming parade, a Halloween Party, and a movie night. Additionally, members enjoyed getting out into the Buffalo Community going to the Buffalo Zoo, bowling at the Kenmore Lanes, and participating in the 12th Annual Buffalo Polar Plunge that supports the NYS Special Olympics. For more information on Best Buddies, please email bestbuddiesbsc@gmail.com.



CEC- Members of the Council for Exceptional Children have been busy volunteering in the Buffalo community. Students from Buffalo state and the University at Buffalo enjoyed working together while volunteering at several Au-



some Evening events at the Explore & More Children’s Museum in East Aurora, NY. Explore & More is dedicated to giving children with Autism Spectrum Disorders an opportunity to play and learn together in a supportive and sensory-friendly environment. The CEC has also hosted events on campus, including All About Autism with Exceptional Education’s Dr. Kathy Doody, a Disabilities in Cinema night, and a DIY Teacher Tools night. The CEC has also collaborated with Best Buddies on several events, such as the decorating of the float for the homecoming parade and taking the plunge into the waters of Lake Erie at Woodlawn Beach. For more information on the Council for Exceptional Children, please email buffalostatescec@gmail.com.



Orange Crushers Raise Thousands for Special Olympics

For the twelfth straight year, the Exceptional Education Department, the Buffalo State Best Buddies, and the Student Council for Exceptional Children were “Freezin’ for a Reason” to raise money for the New York State Special Olympics. This year’s Polar Plunge was held at Woodlawn Beach in Hamburg, NY on Saturday, December 1st, 2018. Buffalo State’s team, the Orange Crushers, raised a total of \$3,434.00, exceeding their goal of \$3,000.00 once again. Thank you to the plungers and all of those who donated!



NEW CLUB FOR FUTURE TEACHERS IS CREATED

The Future Teachers Club is a brand new club run by teacher candidates/ students that brings all of the education departments together (Exceptional, Early Childhood, Elementary, Art, CTE, Music, all Secondary programs, and Speech Language Pathologist majors) to create a community of future educators who come together in a collaborative, supportive, and fun way. They have officially been recognized as a club by Student Life and are currently working towards getting USG recognition soon.



This past semester, the Future Teachers Club went to Heim Elementary School to do a STEM activity with students while their parents were at a PTA meeting. They had seven members volunteer and sixteen students in attendance. It was a huge success and the members are excited about the opportunity to do more events such as this one in the future!



The club is currently working with PDS to secure a partnership with Tapestry Charter School that would allow PDS members to work closely with the members of the Future Teachers Club in the middle and high school there in a "grow your own" initiative. There will be more information on this soon!

Some events to look forward to next semester include a "Welcome Back Night" for all clubs in the School of Education in early February, an event to showcase our "Leader in Me" course, and volunteering with Oishei Children's Hospital. The Future Teachers Club is also

looking to collaborate with Best Buddies, SCEC, and Kappa Delta Pi in the future.

If you have any questions or are interested in becoming a member, please contact them at bscfutureteachersclub@gmail.com.

VINCE GARLAND EARNS SEAT ON NT BOARD OF EDUCATION

North Tonawanda's board of education is going to look quite a bit different when board members take their oaths at the start of next year.

There were four open seats up for grabs when city residents filed into the Alumni Student Activity Center to cast their votes on Tuesday, with five candidates looking to fill them. Just after 9 p.m., the results came in – Krista Vince Garland, Erik Herbert, Cheryl McMahon and Erica Robinson had secured the vacant seats with 705, 982, 722 and 741 votes, respectively.

McMahon, the only incumbent in the race, won another full three-year term and Herbert and Robinson also won full terms, replacing Michele Golding and John Zloty, who chose not

to seek re-election with their terms expiring in June 2018.

Vince Garland, who came in fourth, will serve for one year, filling the vacancy left by current Board President Thad McMurray, who announced his resignation earlier this month. She will be sworn in at the board's next regular meeting on June 6, 2018.

Residents also voted Tuesday to approve the district's \$78 million 2018-2019 budget by a margin of 913 to 519. The budget is up nearly 6 percent over last year's budget but includes provisions to not only pay for the district's ongoing capital project but also to restore some of the program-ming the district had cut during

some fiscally challenging times in the early 2010s.

The budget comes with a 1.98 percent tax increase, which amounts to a hike of roughly \$44.18 for a home assessed at \$100,000.



Dr. Krista Vince Garland

Retrieved from https://www.niagara-gazette.com/news/local_news/changes-fo-nt-school-board/article_4c7221eb-586b-563d-8221-51d51c89243d.html

DR. HORACE MANN RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM DEEMED A SUCCESS

The Buffalo State Exceptional Education Department hosted the Winter 2018 Dr. Horace Mann Graduate Research Symposium on December 2nd in the Classroom building on campus. Dr. Shannon Budin's EXE 690 students proudly shared their Master's projects with their colleagues, fellow teachers, and other members of the community.



At this semester's Symposium, Dr. Warren Gleckel, Exceptional Education Department Professor Emeritus, delivered the keynote presentation. Dr. Gleckel began his career with SUNY Buffalo State in September of 1975, and has since made several significant contributions to the college, community, and the profession. One of Dr. Gleckel's greatest contributions to the education profession is reflected in the graduate research projects of hundreds of EXE majors with whom he has worked through their culminating Research Seminars and Master's Projects. As the keynote speaker, Dr. Gleckel was able to share his wisdom

and reflect on his personal experiences in the field of special education, including what it was like over 40 years ago, what it is like now, including all of the progress that continues to be made, and his thoughts on what the future of Special Education looks like.

After the students presented their Master's research, Dr. Budin presented each student with a certificate as recognition of their hard work and successful completion of their Master's research projects.

We invite you to join us for the Dr. Horace Mann Research Symposium in the Spring on Saturday, May 4th, 2019. Keynote speaker Dr. Janet Twyman currently serves as the director of Innovation and Technology for the U.S. Department of Education's National Center on Innovations in Learning.

A career educator, she has been a preschool and elementary school teacher, a principal and administrator, university professor, and was vice president of instructional development at Headsprout, an award-winning learning sciences technology company. She has published and presented extensively on evidence-based innovations in education and the systems that support them to produce meaningful difference in learners' lives.

Congratulations to all of the graduate students on your outstanding achievements. We wish you the best of luck in the future!



Presenters

Rachel Browning
Andrew Crecco
Meghan Cuddihy
Kathryn Diminuco
Rebecca Durant
Rebecca Herbert
Erin Lang
Kristen Lillis
Kara Messina
Amanda Mooney
Jessica O'Donoghue
Brigid Philipps
Kelsey Sacco
Jessica Smith
Clarice Rowland
Katie Vitale
Melissa Wilkanowski
Jennifer Wojcik

PARTNERSHIP IS A LIFETIME FOR TEACHERS FROM PUERTO RICO

Though he's an accomplished educator with eight years of experience in Puerto Rico, Emil Rivera was a little nervous when he came to Buffalo to be a high school bilingual special education teacher.

"I had my doubts," said Rivera. "I was prepared to be all on my own." Instead, just five days after arriving from Puerto Rico in late August, Rivera was pleasantly surprised — and immensely grateful — for the immediate support from Gliset Colón from the Buffalo State College bilingual education program and Judith Harris, a faculty member and director of the Tonawanda-Grand Island Teacher Center. It was exactly the kind of welcome wagon he needed.

"I feel like a little boy starting school," said Rivera, as he picked up an Acer tablet and teacher education textbook provided through a regional teacher center grant. He also listened intently as teachers from last year's program described how the emotional, instructional and technical supports they received were nothing short of "lifelines" for their success.



Mrs. Judy Harris

Rivera is one of 20 teachers from Puerto Rico who were recruited by Buffalo City Schools to fill much needed bilingual educator positions. While Buffalo has historically had a large Spanish-speaking population, the numbers have grown dramatically since last year's Hurricane Maria. In 2017-18, more than 500 students from Puerto Rico enrolled in Buffalo schools,

with many more arriving over the summer. Statewide, as of the end of last school year, more than 2,500 students from Puerto Rico relocated to New York schools. As a result, districts around the state are struggling with a severe shortage of bilingual educators.

While the New York Board of Re-

settling into a new home and teaching full time. Educators with more experience are exempted from those requirements but need to complete a bilingual extension certificate and, in many cases, earn a master's degree.

"While many of these teachers are highly qualified educators, they are



Dr. Gliset Colón works with some of her teachers from Puerto Rico.

gents approved one-year emergency certification for teachers from Puerto Rico and the state had allowed in-state tuition for SUNY and CUNY students from Puerto Rico, these newcomers face a number of challenges to becoming permanently certified teachers.

"It's a very complicated process, with varying individual circumstances," said Colón, who coordinates the college's bilingual graduate certification program. Educators with less than three years of teaching in Puerto Rico public schools (or those from higher education or private schools) must pass all of New York's certification exams, including the edTPA portfolio assessment — all while

English language learners themselves and the challenges are great," said Harris, who worked with Colón to provide a crash course on edTPA requirements for the newcomers. "They have to work even harder." Stefany Arce, who is starting her second year as a bilingual kindergarten teacher, said the tablet the program provides is like a lifeline. She uses it to translate her college textbook readings, discussions at faculty meetings and for classroom learning center activities (*continued on page 8*).

EXCEPTIONAL EDUCATION STUDENT FEATURES *(CONT. FROM PAGE 2)*

She has also been to the National Association for Professional Development Schools (NAPDS) Conference where she presented her research findings through a poster presentation. Allison is excited to attend again in February 2019 where she will present research that she has conducted with Dr. Kathy Doody of the Exceptional Education Department. In addition to graduate school, she keeps herself quite busy working 3 jobs as a substitute teacher in West Seneca Schools, a District Care Specialist at People, Inc., and a pharmacy technician at Rite Aid.

Allison's inspiration for wanting to work with and educate children with disabilities comes from her experience working as a Direct Care Specialist at People, Inc. where she, ironically, works with adults! Once she began working at People, Inc., she really fell in love with working with people with disabilities and thinks that, had she discovered this passion sooner, she would have done the dual certification program in Exceptional and Childhood Education Grades 1-6; though the Exceptional Education is thrilled to have her now as a graduate student! After finishing up her second semester in the program, Allison feels that the professors, along with all of the information she is learning in her classes and her personal experiences at People, Inc. have helped shape her into the teacher she wishes to be. Upon graduation, Allison would like to get a job as a teacher in early childhood education. After Allison gains experience as a classroom teacher for a few years, she would love to work as an Early Intervention Specialist, providing individualized services to infants and toddlers exhibiting any sort of developmental delays.

PARTNERSHIP IS A LIFETIME *(CONT. FROM PAGE 7)*

Then there are the emotional supports. "The trauma-informed care we provide to our students is to some extent what we need to provide for these teachers," Harris said. "Just like the students, these teachers are displaced, too." Colón, whose own family emigrated from Puerto Rico, said many of these teachers faced difficult decisions to leave their homeland and they are separated from their family. That's why she tries to create a family-like support system and connect the newcomers with essential community-based groups.

Colón and Harris, who are both members of United University Professions at Buffalo State, said the retention rate for the program has so far been promising, with all eight of last year's cohort returning to teach in Buffalo and taking courses at the college this fall. Under School of Education Dean Wendy Paterson, Buffalo State works closely with area teacher centers, building bridges between higher ed and P-12 educators.

"The support system is working, but continued funding is uncertain," Colón said, noting tuition assistance and state Teachers for Tomorrow grants are in question. While the \$2,200 teacher center grant provided books and tablets for this group, the state cut teacher center funding for this school year.

"These teachers need our help," Harris said. "If we don't support these teachers, we will never be able to meet the needs of these children who are growing in numbers daily."

Retrieved from https://www.nysut.org/~media/files/nysut/nysut-united/2018/nysutunited_september2018.pdf

CONGRATULATIONS, DR. PATTI!



Exceptional Education's Dr. Angela Patti is expecting her first child in February 2019! She will be on maternity leave for part of the Spring 2019 semester. The Exceptional Education Department hosted a baby shower for Dr. Patti on November 30th which included plenty of food, decorations, dessert, and gifts! On behalf of the Exceptional Education faculty and staff, we would like to congratulate Dr. Patti, and we wish her the best of luck with her bundle of joy!

