

UTAH EDUCATION

SPRING 2024

COMMUNITY

PROGRESS

IMPACT



THE UNIVERSITY OF UTAH
College of Education

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TO OUR STAKEHOLDERS, PEERS, STUDENTS, AND COMMUNITY — I am thrilled to introduce the second edition of Utah Education magazine. Nearly one year into my tenure as Dean of the College of Education, I find myself continually energized by the accomplishments of our faculty, the promise of our students, the national recognition we receive, and the ways our college creates movement, connections, and lasting change in our immediate community and beyond.

“ EDUCATION IS IMPACT

The narratives we will share with you here tell the story of transformation. Education is a harbinger of change — in the lives of students and teachers, and the wellbeing of our communities. When I think about the phrase “education is impact,” a cornerstone of our inaugural strategic planning process, I think of the way small changes build up to create significant impact over time. Though the effects are not always immediate, we move forward by educating and building communities — two things that our faculty do best.

EDUCATIONAL IMPACT

In a profile of Emma Eccles Jones Teach for Utah / Noyce scholar Adam Montgomery, we learn about one student’s journey from aspiring textile design student to a

passionate K-12 STEM educator. The Emma Eccles Jones Teach for Utah program fills a gap in Utah’s public schools by providing passionate science teacher-scholars to educate the state’s future STEM innovators.

On campus, Dr. Lori McDonald, College of Education alumna and Vice President of Student Affairs, thinks back to her time as a doctoral student in our Educational Leadership & Policy Program and how it shaped the foundation for her career as a University of Utah administrator and campus leader.

SCHOLARLY IMPACT

We are highlighting two additions to our faculty bookshelf this spring – Associate Dean Mary D. Burbank’s *Meeting the Learning Needs of All Children: A Model for Montessori Practitioners and Stakeholders Committed to Inclusive Education*, and Professor David Stroupe’s award-winning *Growing and Sustaining Student-Centered Science Classrooms*. Each title addresses the need for creating innovative classrooms that support all students and mirror our evolving sociocultural landscape.

SOCIETAL IMPACT

Professors William A. Smith and Laurence J. Parker won significant awards for their work to advance civil rights this year—Smith, the Albert B. Fritz Civil Rights Award from the Salt Lake branch of the NAACP; and Parker, the national Linda C. Tillman Racial and Social Justice Award.

And Professor Paula Smith received the prestigious Service to the Society for Prevention Research Award, which recognizes her advocacy of early career researchers and diversity across aspiring

prevention research scholars.

COMMUNITY IMPACT

A National Science Foundation grant is helping Professor Lynne Zummo study climate change learning at the Natural History Museum of Utah’s “A Climate of Hope” exhibit. The study of climate change learning is a burgeoning branch of educational psychology scholarship, and Zummo’s research with NHMU, where she holds a joint appointment as the Curator of Learning Sciences, is at the forefront.

Off campus, Professor Erin Castro and Andy Eisen’s work with the Utah Prison Education Project continues to inspire and deepen, and we look forward to discovering how the program will grow in the future.

Education is Progress. Education is Community. Education is You.

These three phrases round out the pillars of our inaugural strategic planning process. I believe they also echo across the pages ahead. Thank you for following along as the story of the University of Utah College of Education continues to unfold!

Warmly,



FRANKIE SANTOS LAANAN
Dean



FEATURED HAPPENING

Dean Laanan and Professor Andrea Rorrer joined Professor Laurence Parker in Minneapolis as he received the Linda C. Tillman Social and Racial Justice Award. The award was especially meaningful for Parker, who worked closely with Tillman during his early academic career in the late 1980s. Both were assistant professors, Tillman at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Parker at Temple University.



FACULTY AWARD HIGHLIGHTS

PAULA SMITH

Associate Professor of Educational Leadership & Policy

Service to Society for Prevention Research Award

Paula Smith's exceptional service and commitment to SPR have significantly contributed to the organization's mission of advancing scientific investigation into the etiology and prevention of social, physical, and mental health and academic problems. This Service to SPR Award recognizes Smith's advocacy for the inclusion of researchers early in their careers in prevention science as well as increasing the diversity of the scholars interested in prevention research careers. As a prevention researcher, Smith uses her background as a developmental psychologist to incorporate an understanding of youth development into school-based preventive interventions. Smith's research focuses on understanding the risk and protective factors to prevent youth suicide and substance misuse in K-12 schools.



LAURENCE J. PARKER

Professor and Department Chair of Educational Leadership & Policy

Linda C. Tillman Social and Racial Justice Award

Laurence J. Parker of the Department of Educational Leadership & Policy received the 2023 University Council for Education Administration (UCEA) Linda C. Tillman Social and Racial Justice Award in Minneapolis on November 16. The award honors Professor Parker for his contributions to fostering diversity, equity, and justice in PK-20 Education, including the field of educational leadership in both K-12 and Higher Education, and his internationally transformative scholarship around Critical Race Theory (CRT) — particularly his groundbreaking piece “Race Is Race Ain’t” and Race Is....Race Isn’t, for which he served as co-editor — as well as CRT’s implications for K-12 schooling, the preparation and practice of leaders, and educational policy.

DAVID ARMOUR STROUPE

Associate Professor of Educational Psychology | Director of Research, Usable STEM Research and Practice Hub

Gloria J. Ladson-Billings Outstanding Book Award

The Gloria J. Ladson-Billings Outstanding Book Award, named in honor of the prominent American pedagogical theorist and teacher educator, recognizes an author or book that significantly contributes to the knowledge base of educator preparation, offers a fresh lens on current assumptions or practices, and reorients thinking in the field. David Stroupe’s Growing and Sustaining Student-Centered Science Classrooms, published by Harvard Education Press in 2023, was selected as this year’s winner by the AACTE Committee on Research and Dissemination. Stroupe received the award at the AACTE Annual Meeting in Denver on February 16. Dean Laanan and a handful of CoE faculty traveled to the conference in support of Stroupe’s win.



WILLIAM A. SMITH

Professor of Education, Culture & Society | Chief Executive Administrator, Huntsman Mental Health Institute

Albert B. Fritz Civil Rights Worker of the Year Award

William A. Smith received the 2023 Albert B. Fritz Civil Rights Worker of the Year Award on October 27, from the NAACP Salt Lake Chapter. This award recognizes dedicated service to the community and humanity by an individual and is named for Albert B. Fritz, a civil rights leader and former president of the NAACP Salt Lake Chapter. Smith was a student member of the NAACP during his undergraduate and graduate studies at Eastern Illinois University and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and he became more deeply involved with the Salt Lake chapter once he became a professor at the U.

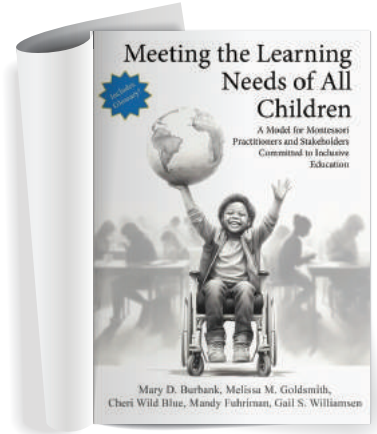


FACULTY PUBLICATION HIGHLIGHTS



David Stroupe's award-winning *Growing and Sustaining Science-Centered Classrooms* was published by Harvard Education Press in April of 2023.

"This is the most practical how-to guide I know of for motivating change toward more equitable classrooms. With inspiring classroom examples and teacher reflections, the book dispels persistent myths and provides end-of-chapter tips to spark conversation and action," said Nancy Butler Songer, professor and associate provost of STEM Education at the University of Utah.



Associate Dean Mary D. Burbank's co-authored book *Meeting the Learning Needs of All Children: A Model for Montessori Practitioners and Stakeholders Committed to Inclusive Education* was published by Montessori Services Parent Child Press in November of 2023.

The text examines the relationship between special education and Montessori principles within the context of private and public schools in Salt Lake City, offering a pathway for education communities where Montessori education serves as a platform for building inclusive classrooms and revealing the profound effect of inclusive education on the lives of students, families, educators, and their communities.

FEATURED HAPPENING

Through the Huntsman Cancer Institute, Professor Laurence Parker (center right) of Educational Leadership & Policy was invited to speak at the 3rd Utah Amyloidosis Symposium dinner on the evening of October 20, 2023. He gave a brilliantly received speech titled "The Journey through Diagnosis and Treatment: From a Patient's Perspective" in support of the symposium's goals to catalyze, advocate, and provide education that promotes change, development, and improvement for the early diagnosis and management of amyloidosis.



FEATURED HAPPENING

Dean Laanan and Associate Dean Mary Burbank spoke with UITE Connect’s new teachers at the top of their Oct. 26 meeting. U of U alumni in their first three years of teaching had gathered to learn from one another and explore topics relevant to their new careers under the guidance of Professor Udit Gupta of UITE and U alum Kelly Haskerson, a Social Studies teacher at the Salt Lake Center for Science Education. UITE Connect teachers went home with College of Education swag, including bound journals, pizza cutters, and reusable storage pouches.



Right: Timothy Shriver speaks for an event titled “All the Walls You Cannot See.” Learn more on Page 16.

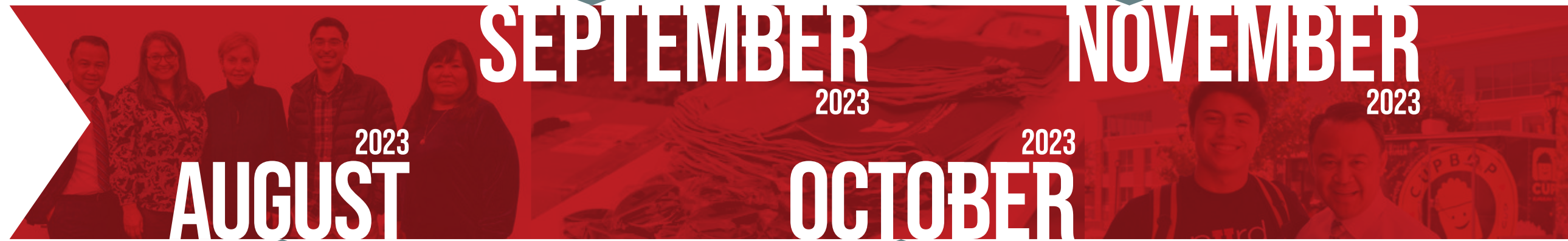


ON THE BOOKS

AT A GLANCE

AN EVENT TIMELINE

2023-2024



Welcome-back Social
on the SAEC Plaza



Jones Endowed Lecture
with Distinguished
Professor of Education
Teresa McCarty (UCLA)



Fall Faculty and Staff
Assembly



Scholarship Celebration and Donor
Dinner

“All the Walls You Cannot See” with
Timothy Shriver, Ph.D.

Above Left: Tim Shriver (center) joined by First Lady Abby Cox, Natalie Gochnour, senior advisor to President Randall and Director of the Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute, welcomed students and families from local school districts who have participated in Special Olympics.



Strategic planning process
unveiled in partnership
with Emergent Method
Consultants



Holiday Luncheon
with friends from
Tanner Dance



Faculty & Undergraduate Research Panel
Faculty travel to Denver for the AACTE
Annual Meeting



Dean Laanan travels to
South Korea to visit U
Asia Campus

EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

Below: Dean Laanan met with his grandson Devin Rice, undergraduate student [sophomore] in computer science, near the Cupbop truck.



Below: Students mingled as they waited in the winding food truck line.



Welcome-back Social

We spent September 6 and 7 on the SAEC plaza with Cupbop Korean barbecue, a favorite local food truck, as we welcomed CoE students to fall semester with lunch and yard games. It was a wonderful setting for students to reconnect with faculty and classmates! Our College of Education Student Council (CSC) was on hand with CoE swag. They took the pulse of students' priorities and goals for the coming year, hoping to get new faces involved with the council's meetings and student advocacy efforts.



Above: CoE graduate students reunited on the SAEC plaza



Above: The CSC handed out swag to returning CoE students

FEATURED HAPPENING

Special Education master's student Tarra Maddox received a \$25,000 grant from the Bimbo Bakeries College Grant Sweepstakes. Tarra was incredibly lucky to be selected as one of four random national grant winners. Dean Laanan joined Tarra, Swoop, and Bimbo Bakeries in a check-presenting ceremony on November 28.



Scholarship Celebration and Donor Dinner

The evening of October 3 brought our annual Scholarship Celebration and Donor Dinner, for the first time held at the University of Utah Cleone Peterson Eccles Alumni House. Attendees were greeted by a U of U string quartet and entered the banquet hall to find a mix of CoE students, faculty, staff, and donors. Donors sat alongside the very students who had received their scholarships, a gesture which personalized donors' gifts and allowed students to learn more about our donors' commitment to supporting the transformative power of education. Dean Laanan welcomed the crowd by reminding donors that they had given students an invaluable gift: time to focus and deepen their academic pursuits, a gift which in turn enriches our wider community.

In total, we awarded 166 donor-funded scholarships worth \$656,550 to 133 students.

Right: Danielle Susi-Dittmore, Educational Leadership & Policy Ph.D. candidate and Assistant Dean of College Access Initiatives, stood to be recognized alongside other CoE scholarship recipients.



Above: Student speaker and scholarship recipient Yaleve Cardona showed her U pride before taking the podium.



Below: CoE staff set the tables for dinner guests, complete with CoE notebooks and Love, U chocolates.

Right, Below: Tim Shriver presented to a full house in the Art Works for Kids Auditorium.



Left: Dean Laanan caught up with the UNITE team after the presentation and before Tim Shriver met with local K-12 students and their parents.

Right: First Lady Abby Cox, former special education teacher and champion for inclusion, sat front row with Tim Shriver's UNITE team.



“All the Walls You Cannot See” with Timothy Shriver

On October 19, the College of Education hosted U Impact Scholar and Special Olympics Chairman Timothy Shriver, Ph.D., for an event titled “All the Walls You Cannot See.” Shriver presented the Dignity Index, an eight-point scale for measuring how people interact during disagreements and conceptualized through interdisciplinary research by his team at UNITE. Shriver challenged our campus community to consider how expressions of contempt reinforce and widen divisions across groups. “We do not have a disagreement problem in this country. We have a contempt problem,” he said. “They are not the same...It is human to disagree...It is not necessary to disagree with hatred.” The index’s implications for pedagogy and classroom implementation left the CoE community inspired to heal divisions with dignity, and ready to inspire our students to do the same.

“A Viable Path for Education” with Teresa McCarty, Ph.D.

Through the annual Jones Endowed Lectureship Series, the College of Education welcomed Teresa McCarty of the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) for her lecture “A Viable Path for Education: Centering Relationality and Relational Accountability in Indigenous Education and Education Research.” This was an especially resonant topic for the College as we continue to develop our Native Education Graduate Certificate and deepen our efforts to serve Utah’s Native communities through the CoE Native Education Collaborative. Teresa McCarty was introduced by CoE alum Daniel Piper of the Education, Culture, & Society Ph.D. program and received a commemorative Jones Endowed Lecture award from Dean Laanan.



Above: Teresa McCarty, center, poses with Dean Laanan, ECS Chair Verónica E. Valdez, ECS Professor José Francisco Gutiérrez, and ECS Professor Cynthia Benally (Diné).



Right: McCarty receives a commemorative Jones Endowed Lecture award from Dean Laanan.

FEATURED HAPPENING

On December 4, Dean Laanan visited the graduation and presentations ceremony for Professor Leticia Alvarez Gutiérrez’s ECS 5709/6709 Family-School Partnerships class. These projects involved collaborative work on issues important to marginalized immigrant and refugee families outside a classroom setting, driving home the importance of engaging families at schools through diversity, justice, and equity. The course is funded by a grant from University Neighborhood Partners (UNP).



From traditional classrooms to innovative learning spaces around the world, our students and alumni are transforming what it means to educate.



Training the STEM Educators of Tomorrow

Before he was a Noyce scholar, Adam Montgomery was an aspiring sustainable textile designer and earned a bachelor’s degree in gender studies. It wasn’t until an early wave of COVID-19 that he first considered shifting gears. When he brought some concerns about a materials science instructor to his Chemistry advisor, she told him about the National Science Foundation Robert Noyce Teacher Scholarship program and Emma Eccles Jones Teach for Utah initiative.



His first class in the College of Education was Education 101 with Professor Mary D. Burbank. “It was amazing,” Adam said. This was the first time he began to see how his degree in gender studies could support his future career as a STEM teacher.

Each program offers generous funding to talented undergraduates aspiring to be 6-12 STEM educators, and U students leave these programs with accelerated master’s degrees and state teaching licensure.

Adam applied. His first class in the College of Education was Education 101 with Professor Mary D. Burbank. “It was amazing,” Adam said. This was the first time he began to see how his degree in gender studies could support his future career as a STEM teacher. “I saw how I can use the principles of gender studies to understand and approach complex social issues in education settings and in teaching science. It all came together, and I thought, ‘I really like this, I feel good when I do this.’”

Like others in his cohort, Adam worked as a teaching assistant in a few chemistry courses and had already learned a great deal about teaching – including the fact that he simply enjoys it. He soon found others who felt the same.

Adam has been attending EEJ TFU meetings for

FEATURED HAPPENING

Dean Laanan and CoE faculty (pictured, L-R: Kerry Herman, Udit Gupta, Shamby Polychronis and Sandy Smith) traveled to Denver for the annual AACTE meeting in support of David Stroupe’s AACTE book award for Growing and Sustaining Student-Centered Science Classrooms. Dean Laanan ran into local college of education deans Kendra Maria Hall-Kenyon of Brigham Young University, Brenda Sabey of Utah Tech University, and Vessela Ilieva of Utah Valley University.



two-and-a-half years now and has “met a lot of really good friends ... we have a group chat with the whole Noyce and EEJ TFU cohort. People ask questions — about homework, about teaching — and we all help each other.”

“I’m just so excited that I finally get to be in the classroom and teach. I love Noyce, TFU and the Education program at the U.”

“I really look forward to meetings; I get to ask current and master teachers about teaching and we can bond over what works and what doesn’t. I’ve even encountered EEJ TFU and Noyce people in classes unrelated to my major, like astronomy. It’s been a great community builder. I never had too many friends in the Chemistry department, and, through EEJ TFU, this has changed a lot. Because of

the program, people I wouldn’t have normally become friends with have become important to me.”

As of spring, 2024, Adam is completing his final student-teaching year at Cottonwood High, where he works in both regular chemistry and honors chemistry classes. In the latter half of his student-teaching year, he will fully take over the classroom.

“I’m just so excited that I finally get to be in the classroom and teach. I love Noyce, TFU and the Education program at the U.

“I wouldn’t be doing this if it weren’t for EEJ TFU and Noyce — a big part of it is the scholarship and money, it started with the idea that it would make student teaching a lot easier, but I wouldn’t have continued had it not been for the community —the professors, support from my peers. Without the experiences I’ve had with EEJ TFU and Noyce I don’t think I would have been where I’m at and enjoying what I’m doing as much as I do.”

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Lori McDonald, Ph.D.

*Vice President of Student Affairs
University of Utah*



From Student to Leader

Lori McDonald, Vice President of Student Affairs at the University of Utah and proud graduate of the College of Education, has ascended to remarkable heights in the academic realm. Her journey from student to administrator underscores the transformative power of education and the college's commitment to nurturing leaders who shape the future of academia. Lori McDonald has served as the University of Utah Vice President of Student Affairs since July of 2019. She has been working for the university in various positions for almost 27 years.

“

McDonald said that she received incredible support and mentoring while working on her Ph.D. in the College of Education.

As Vice President of Student Affairs, McDonald brings a wealth of experience and dedication to her

role, embodying the values and spirit of the University of Utah. Her commitment to student success and visionary approach to higher education make her an exemplary leader within the university community.

McDonald herself has pursued education across the country, largely due to her family's moves during her adolescence. She enrolled as a biology student at the University of Utah and earned her BS, but slowly realized that the sciences were not her destined path. Her passion for education took her to Ohio State University, where she received a master's degree in higher education. But she missed the beautiful views and Rocky Mountains of the west. McDonald was drawn back to Utah and accepted to the College of Education's doctoral program in Educational Leadership & Policy.

McDonald said that she received incredible support and mentoring while working on her Ph.D. in the College of Education. She mused about professors like Andrea Rorrer, chair of her dissertation committee, who instilled in McDonald the confidence she needed to see her research through. Under the guidance and support of these positive role models, McDonald successfully defended her dissertation. Her love of the state and the school led McDonald to begin an internal job search. As she says, "one thing led to another."

McDonald was serving as Dean of Students when the position of Vice President of Student Affairs opened. Her predecessor had ended a 30+ year career, so McDonald knew she had some big shoes to fill. But with her love for the students and the school, she stepped into the role wholeheartedly. Nevertheless, there were huge challenges that she thought she would never have to face in her position: COVID-19, for one.

McDonald commented, "If you ever told me we would have virtual meetings in Student Affairs, I think would've said 'No, you're crazy.'" The pandemic was a shock to all industries, and McDonald spearheaded the search for solutions to support U students. Through the resilience of amazing faculty, McDonald and her team were able to keep the university balanced.

Despite challenges like navigating the impacts of COVID-19, her dedication to student success stays steadfast. McDonald's educational journey underscores the importance of mentorship and community support in shaping leaders. Reflecting on her remarkable career, we anticipate her ongoing contributions to the university's mission and the continued empowerment of students under her leadership.

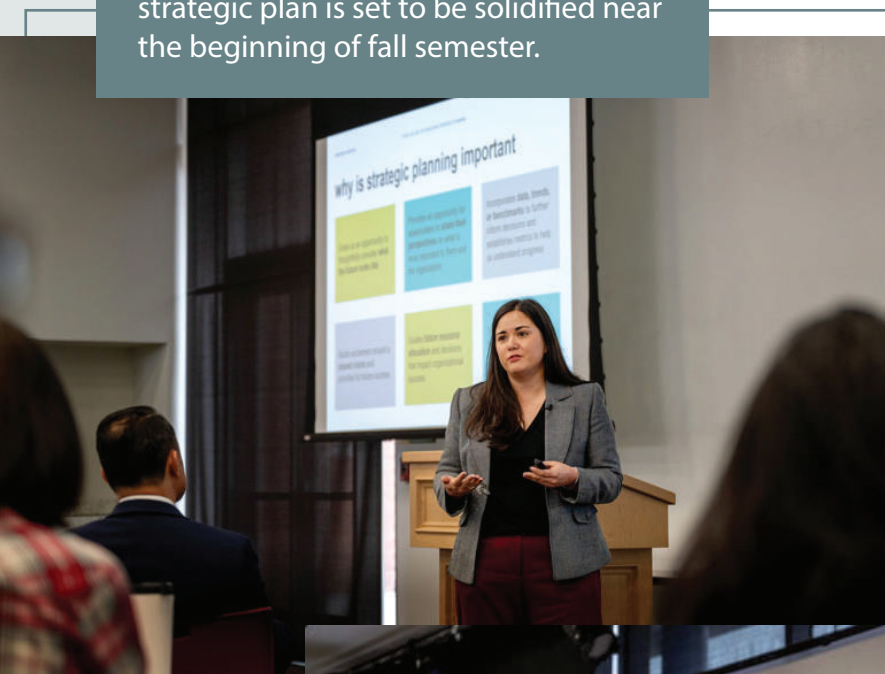
FEATURED HAPPENING

Last winter, Professor Kerry Herman, Dean Laanan, and Associate Dean Burbank visited with administration and reading coaches at Lincoln Elementary and Woodrow Wilson Elementary.



FEATURED HAPPENING

Robyn Stiles, Ph.D., of Emergent Method kicked off the College of Education strategic planning process at a college-wide meeting on Feb. 20. This is the first strategic plan for the College in over twenty years. The plan will be rooted in CoE faculty's priorities and aspirations, and focused on innovation and expansion. With a timeline that ends in September of 2024, the strategic plan is set to be solidified near the beginning of fall semester.



Beyond the classroom, faculty and alumni implement innovative research and service to positively impact our communities.

IN THE FIELD



Left: An immersive grove of aspen trees welcomes museum visitors into the exhibit. The interactive display invites participants to share their emotions around climate change and responds accordingly.

NSF Grant Positions Lynne Zummo at the Forefront of a New Educational Research Area: Climate Change Learning

The National Science Foundation (NSF) awarded Lynne Zummo, Assistant Professor of Educational Psychology, an Advancing Informal STEM Learning Program (AISL) grant to study learning around climate change at the landmark Natural History Museum of Utah exhibit “A Climate of Hope,” along with Co-PI and NHMU Exhibit Developer Lisa Thompson. Zummo holds a joint appointment at NHMU as the Curator of Learning Sciences.

Zummo’s project is titled “A Climate of Hope: Investigating learning at an innovative exhibit towards new knowledge, theory, and practice of climate change learning.” Zummo saw an opportunity to apply for project funding last year, as the displays in “A Climate of Hope” moved from research and conceptualization to prototyping and testing ahead of the exhibit’s launch in November, 2023. A few earlier NSF grants funded the preparation of the exhibit. Now this grant, for which Zummo is the Principal Investigator, will allow her to continue to gather data in a relatively new but nonetheless burgeoning research area:

the study of how people learn about climate change.

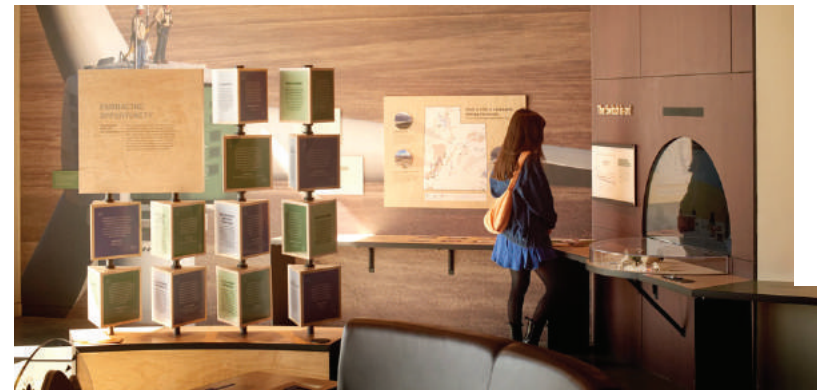
“Over the past 20 years or so, as climate change has become more prominent, many strategies of education have tried to scare people, which often hasn’t worked,” Zummo said. “People can become so scared they don’t know what to do, and might begin to feel like there is nothing they can do to change the course we’re on. This fear-based approach can also be antagonizing and hasn’t done anything to mend divisiveness around climate change,” she continued.

But “A Climate of Hope” is different. It speaks to a diverse range of museum-goers by engaging them through emotions and identity, and through the unique life experiences they bring to their



Above: Spinning wooden blocks tell uplifting stories about Utah’s climate change activists and innovators.

Right: Interactive displays light up the minds of museum visitors of all ages.



Left: Visitors enjoy the fifth-floor “Climate of Hope” exhibit on an early spring day, with a clear view of the valley’s current air quality.

interpretations of the displays and interactives. Rather than tell stories about the distant future or distant geographies, this landmark exhibit tells stories close to home; it is grounded in Utah, the place we know and love, and things happening here and now—all of which lends itself particularly well to Zummo’s research.

To prepare the exhibit, “we talked to a lot of museum visitors and tested and prototyped every element of the exhibit with Lynne’s help, because she could bring to it that lens of ‘what is really working in this and what is not,’ and help us refine the interactives and themes

throughout the exhibit,” said Thompson in an interview on KCPW’s “This Green Earth,” a weekly talk show about our relationship and impacts upon the environment.

The exhibit is full of such “interactives”—including at least 6 digital displays, one of which is a striking golden aspen grove, as well as dioramas, play tables for kids, sections about the impacts of climate change in Utah, and a scrolling story about how climate change affects our health — all of which were discussed by Zummo and Thompson during the KCPW interview.

In short, the exhibit seeks to cultivate what Zummo and Thompson call “rational hope,” a

term which comes from climate scientist Dr. Katherine Hayhoe’s body of work and popular TED Talk.

It is Zummo’s hope that people plan to visit the exhibit and, if nothing else, ask questions, become curious about climate change, and begin to have conversations with people in their lives. “Most people in the US don’t talk about climate change for a variety of reasons. Having conversations is one of the most effective actions we can take,” she said. “We’re hopeful that the exhibit fosters productive conversation around not just climate, but also the future we want to have, and the future we want to create.”

FEATURED HAPPENING

The January Faculty and Undergraduate Research Panel was a success! Students and faculty gathered to share research projects ranging from soccer in youth literature to teachers’ responses during COVID-19. The College of Education is committed to growing undergraduate research opportunities and telling stories of CoE student researchers’ success. Professor José F. Gutiérrez is pictured with undergraduate researcher Mary Smith. They worked together on the project “Mathematical Reservations.”





Far Left: 2023 annular eclipse party with 750 incarcerated individuals.

Left: UPEP faculty conduct an art class.

Now in Seventh Year, the Utah Prison Education Project (UPEP) Looks To Deepen Impact

In 2017, the Utah Prison Education Project (UPEP) embarked on a journey to bring higher education and intellectual vitality to the Utah State Correctional Facility. UPEP was co-founded by College of Education Associate Professor Erin Castro, Associate Dean of Access and Community Engagement, and a dedicated group of students supported by the Honors College at the University of Utah. Now directed by Andy Eisen, UPEP has become a wellspring of opportunity for incarcerated individuals. What began as an Honors Praxis Lab has blossomed into a transformative educational program, offering individuals impacted by the justice system the chance to pursue both for-credit and non-credit classes in a variety of disciplines, including art, science, law, music, history, and philosophy.

“

UPEP's mission is simple yet profound: to advance educational equity through on-site higher education, empirical research, and advocacy.

Over the past few years, UPEP has not only provided academic instruction but has also encouraged and empowered individuals to pursue higher education despite their circumstances. Many incarcerated learners have embraced the opportunity for personal growth and self-improvement, recognizing the transformative power of education to reshape lives and mindsets. By offering a comprehensive educational experience, UPEP is not only preparing individuals for successful reentry into society but is also laying the foundation for a brighter future beyond the prison walls.

UPEP's mission is simple yet profound: to advance educational equity through on-site higher education, empirical research, and advocacy. Through partnerships with Brigham Young University, Southern Utah University, and Utah Valley University, UPEP has expanded its reach, providing access to education for those who might otherwise never have the chance. And research conducted by Professor Castro and her team has shed light on systemic barriers faced by individuals with felony convictions, advocating for greater access to education and opportunity.

What's more, studies have shown that participation in prison education programs significantly reduces the likelihood of recidivism, underscoring the importance of initiatives like UPEP in promoting rehabilitation and reducing harm. As UPEP looks to the future, the question arises: what comes next for the program?

In talking to Castro and Eisen, it is clear to see that the future holds boundless possibilities for incarcerated learners. This summer, the first cohort of incarcerated learners will enroll in a degree program within the women's designated unit at the Utah State Correctional Facility, representing a significant milestone for social impact in our state. Additionally, the development of a Bachelor's in University Studies (BUS) degree option offers incarcerated individuals a tangible pathway to higher education and future success.

The College of Education is inspired by Castro and Eisen's work and looks forward to supporting UPEP well into the future. Castro and Eisen's leadership has brought to light the dedication, resilience, and important contributions of incarcerated learners. Through education, students participating in UPEP can expand their intellectual horizons and empower themselves as engaged learners with agency and dignity.

BACK MATTER

BEFORE YOU GO

A look at Alumna Cecelia Foxley, Ph.D.

Cecelia “Cece” Foxley earned her Ph.D. in Educational Psychology with emphases in Administration, Teaching, Research, and Counseling from the University of Utah. Since then, her decorated and extensive career has included such titles as Commissioner of the Utah System of Higher Education and Chief Executive Officer of the State Board of Regents, as well as Regents Professor of Educational Psychology right here in the College of Education.

Though her career has taken her around the country and up through the ranks of higher education administration across the state, Foxley has remained a steadfast supporter of students pursuing counseling psychology career paths in the very place she started her own.

In 2008, Foxley's dedication to supporting



future leaders in higher education led her to create the Dr. Cecelia H. Foxley Endowed Teaching Assistantship in Educational Psychology. The assistantship provides graduate students in the Counseling Psychology program with vital funding, supporting those who aspire to become counselors or administrators in student affairs at the college or university level. This scholarship, offering between \$16,000 to \$18,000 in funding annually, reflects Foxley's commitment to fostering the next generation of educational leaders.

Foxley is pictured at the College of Education Donor and Scholarship Celebration on the evening of October 3, 2023, with the recipient of this year's Dr. Cecelia H. Foxley Endowed Teaching Assistantship, graduate student Erin Butters.

FEATURED HAPPENING

In advance of the public opening of the new permanent exhibit “A Climate of Hope,” Dean Laanan visited Professor Lynne Zummo at the Natural History Museum of Utah, where she holds a joint appointment as the Curator of Learning Sciences. He also met with Jason R. Cryan, Sarah B. George Executive Director for the museum.



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