Letter from the LIUS Program Director

As the 2014-2015 academic year concludes, I begin this GPD report by commending our LIUS students, alumni and faculty on their many accomplishments. Our profile as a scholar-practitioner program that conducts research with significance and application to the lived realities of urban educators and students is gaining ground, as evidenced by: our graduates, who have obtained positions as consultants for school districts and have been featured in local news outlets for their work; our current students, who are publishing their work and being accepted to present at national conferences; and our faculty, who continue to publish in high-quality scholarly venues and are awarded grant funding to support their research. These accomplishments speak to the strong foundation that has been established and maintained by LIUS faculty, students and alumni since the inception of the program nearly 20 years ago in 1996.

Even as we continue to build and strengthen the foundation upon which we stand, this year can also be thought of as a turning point in the trajectory in the Leadership in Urban Schools program. After two years of planning and development, in December of 2014, the LIUS Ph.D. degree was officially approved by the State Department of Higher Education, and already many of our current students are angling their academic studies to transition to the new degree. Along with this great accomplishment also comes the exciting process of implementation. We have begun updating the curriculum by streamlining the existing coursework, revamping our programmatic benchmarks, and offering four areas of specialization that students may pursue as they develop their expertise along their doctoral journeys. Faculty have launched new core courses, advanced methods courses, and specialization courses in the Evaluation and Applied Research and Measurement and Teaching, Learning and Leadership concentration areas. Faculty are beginning to explore the use of online pedagogies and non-traditional class formats to provide students with more flexibility in fulfilling their course requirements, and we look forward to continuing to roll out the new curriculum, providing even more options for our students’ scholarly development by launching courses in the Administration and Leadership and...
Comparative and International Education concentrations in the upcoming years.

With the changes made to the existing Ed.D. and the addition of the Ph.D., graduates of the program will be primed for additional career paths in higher education, community based organizations, policy fields, research organizations, and international venues, as well as in local K-12 school administration, where historically, most of our students have gravitated after graduation. This, combined with the development of the new concentration areas and the continued scholarly impact being made by faculty, students and alumni in these respective areas of study, marks a change in our collective identity as a program. Our work is no longer bound by the structures of school buildings; it encompasses more than the role of the school leader alone; it cuts across lines of theory, practice and policy and addresses issues of importance to students, teachers, leaders, families and communities in the U.S. and in other nations. After receiving feedback from external reviewers who evaluated the new program, and with much consideration on the part of the faculty, we are moving forward into our new trajectory with a new name to match. From hereon, LIUS will be known as Urban Education, Leadership, and Policy Studies (or Urban Ed in brief), which better represents who we are, what we do, and our commitments as scholars, researchers and leaders in the field of urban education.

In the upcoming year, we will continue to grow and change as a program. First, we will continue our search to round out our faculty expertise. Those of you who participated in the search process this year know that we had two exceptional, nationally recognized finalists for this position. Unfortunately, due to budgetary constraints, while we made offers to both, we were unable to compete with other institutions where these candidates accepted offers. We are confident, however, that the search will be fruitful in the upcoming year. Under the leadership of Dr. Krueger-Henney, we will search for an Assistant/Associate professor of Educational Administration and Leadership. In the 2016-2017 year, we will begin searching for another faculty position (expertise yet to be determined) to contribute to the new Ph.D. program. While our program is growing in some ways, we are also taking steps back as well. Sadly, we are saying goodbye to Dr. Anita Brown whom many of you know from your summer leadership courses. Dr. Brown will be returning to her home state of North Carolina, and we wish her the very best in her future. She has contributed much to our students over the past three years, and she will be dearly missed. In the upcoming year, we will see a temporary change in program leadership as I will be on parental and then sabbatical leave. Dr. Francine Menashy will be serving as Interim Graduate Program Director for 2015-2016, and I extend a sincere thank you to her for assuming this position during this critical time in our program’s history. Lastly, as we usher in the summer session and welcome the 2015 cohort into our community, I wish you all a healthy and productive upcoming year as together we continue the LIUS, now Urban Ed., legacy at UMass Boston.

Sincerely,
Tricia Kress
Associate Professor, Graduate Program Director
ALUMNI REPORT: KERRY MULCAHY, cohort 2010

Last July 22nd I successfully defended my dissertation on the campus of UMass Worcester surrounded by friends, family, and members of my community. This was an ideal location for me since I was born and raised in the city of Worcester. My dissertation was the pinnacle of my academic and professional career - mixing politics and public policy with education. I was able to weave my interests together to carve out a new path in the research world. My topic focused on why residents of an urban city chose to vote or not vote in municipal elections given the extremely low voter participation levels.

For the past ten years I have been an English teacher in the same urban high school that I had the pleasure of graduating from. In my years as an educator, I’ve seen how political decisions impact young people on a very personal level. It was my hope to shine a light on how the actual voting process impacts public policy and it was my aspiration to engage a community conversation around this topic. I am encouraged to find that my work has had meaning. The findings of my research have become the subject of multiple news stories. My dissertation discussed how to overcome some of the barriers to voting that exist and it has catalyzed a conversation within the community. This spring I have been working with the local news station in Worcester to make these recommendations a reality. At present, Worcester is a finalist for a significant grant to create awareness around voting in municipal elections.

My work has also had relevance outside of its research site. In December 2014 the ACLU filed a federal lawsuit against the Ferguson School District claiming their school board favors white candidates. My research and literature review have been used to show that historically there have been biases in municipal elections. I hope to be part of the continued national conversation around the equity of election policies.

When I began my doctorate, I had no idea of the kind of perseverance I would need to finish. These past five years have taught me lessons in resolve and tenacity. Getting diagnosed with cervical cancer and becoming a survivor has made me appreciate just how precious life is. I credit my doctoral colleagues for my ultimate success and look forward to sharing our graduation together. One of the best surprises is how proud my students are of this educational accomplishment. I am honored to set an example as a woman who graduated from the Worcester Public Schools and got her doctorate.

In my cohort I met others like me who are committed to supporting students and teachers and improving the education system for all. I am part of a large community of teachers and administrators working to prepare our young people to succeed in the future. I am proud to be part of this community and I believe that my degree will support my dreams to be a leader in my sphere. My goal is to be an advocate for the continued improvement of our education system. Even as we lead the nation in education outcomes, we still have work to do to help students in all of our communities across the state succeed. My UMass Boston degree was the next step I needed to take, and it has prepared me to be a leader far more than I ever anticipated.
LIUS STUDENT AND ALUMNI ACHIEVEMENTS

Congratulations to Stacey Jones Mulligan on receiving the LIUS Book Award upon her graduation from the LIUS program.

Student Kimberly Frazier-Booth is one of Mass Insight Education’s Partners in Excellence Teacher Award winners. Mass Insight provides the state’s largest at-scale academic STEM program in Massachusetts, designed to increase participation and performance in Advanced Placement science, math, and English courses.

Graduate Chris Avilés is the recipient of the Olmsted Award for Excellence in Secondary School Teaching, which will be presented by Williams College at their graduation ceremony this June. He was nominated by one of his former students who is a graduating senior at Williams.

Student Vittoria Pacifico-DeBenedictis recently received A Wise Woman award from the National Organization of Italian American Women at their February 24th annual awards dinner in Providence. This award is given to women of Italian heritage who have made a significant impact on the community and business area in which they work.


LIUS graduate Diane Kelly is now Superintendent of Revere Public Schools.

LIUS student Beth Balliro has disseminated her work very widely this year through conferences and publications, including:


Strategies for Equity and Inclusion in Art Colleges. The National Art Education Association National Convention, New Orleans, LA (Forthcoming, 2015)

Artists of Color in Higher Education: Preparation, Recruitment and Retention. Imagining America National Conference, Atlanta, Georgia, 2014

Imagining the “Other America”: Keeping Racial Justice at the Center of Community-University Engagement. Imagining America National Conference, Atlanta, Georgia, 2014


K-12 and Higher Education Strategies for Diversity and Inclusion in Art Colleges. The Massachusetts Art Education Association Annual Conference. Boston, MA. 2014


Congratulations to all on your notable achievements!
FIELD RESEARCH REPORT: CINDY TAYLOR, cohort 2005

Once upon a time in a county far away from UMass Boston lived an educator dedicated to researching math teachers in a Southern urban school system...

Under the tutelage of three wise professors I devised and defended a plan to collect data. This plan included a series of loosely structured interviews (Seidman, 2006 as guide), and the promise of untold treasure for me to pave my way to a very special robe.

The journey included seeking approval for the study from the school system. It arrived on parchment with official seal, and invitations were sent to all math teachers to participate via an educational Facebook called Edmodo. Full of excitement, I waited with bated breath for responses—but none came...

My time running short, I formulated a plan B—a random but focused “snowball” fight. (Random as in during my planning periods I called every high school in the system and spoke with whichever math teacher was available to get names of suggested participants.) This worked well and soon my calendar filled.

I took to interviewing with modern and medieval devices. The medieval device was tried and true but not pure of sound and generated its own noise, duly recording itself over the speakers. The modern digital device was easy to manipulate, picked up every sound clear as a bell including the sound of the medieval device, bells, loud speaker announcements, and echoes. It also deleted far too easy and at least one set of interviews had to be redone.

Between the two, I pieced together their stories.

Alas the treasures unveiled. The teachers regaled me with detailed stories, some risking their livelihoods by unveiling the details of their professional lives. They braved powerful forces to tell their stories to bring hope and enlighten others as to the plights of math teachers in public schools.

Thanks to good planning, sage advice and determination I hope to obtain my exalted robe shortly.

The End
Paulo Freire Symposium and Re-Dedication of the Paulo Freire Archives Ceremony
By Teresa Schwarz, Cohort 2013

Late one evening last spring, while sitting on a couch in front of the Library in the McCormack building, I smiled as I watched Dr. Tricia Kress walk down the long hall toward me. Dr. Kress, Program Director of LIUS, informed me that she had just returned from a conference and was planning on speaking to me about an upcoming project. This project, she told me, involved Paulo Freire’s work and could count toward a program-required internship. Would I be interested? As a “fan” of Freire’s theories and work regarding critical pedagogy, I readily agreed to participate. Little did I know that this experience would become much more than “another” project.

This opportunity involved the translation and presentation of some of critical pedagogue Paulo Freire’s primary documents from Portuguese to English. Initiated by Dr. Kress, this project also included collaboration with Dr. Suzanne SooHoo, Hassinger Chair of Culture, Community and Collaboration and other scholars, students and staff at Chapman University. The culminating moment of this internship was the presentation of these documents during the Paulo Freire Symposium and Re-Dedication of the Paulo Freire Archives Ceremony on October 25th, 2014 at Chapman University in California. This incredible opportunity, which began initially as a “translation task” transformed into an experience that would, to me, exemplify the very essence of the kind of collaboration and pedagogical practice that Freire spent his life promoting.

In preparation for the translation of documents for this project, I researched many sources that directly related to the authors and contexts for Freire’s primary documents. In his classic work Pedagogy of the Oppressed, Freire (2000) claims that in order to provide social equality for the underprivileged, education must become a democratic arena for radical social change. It was through this philosophy that Freire developed his theories on critical pedagogy, which aim to teach students to critically interrogate dominant ideologies and knowledge. However, in the process of searching the literature for this project, I also gained insight on the current state of affairs of education from the perspective of Freirean scholars. I learned from reading – and then subsequently speaking to - some of the most widely-published scholars in fields relating to Freirean theory, pedagogy, and teaching, including; Dr. Nila Freire, widow to the late Paulo Freire and an accomplished author in her own right, Dr. Donaldo Macedo, Distinguished Professor of Liberal Arts and Education at the University of Massachusetts Boston, Dr. Peter McLaren, Dr. Ana Flor Ada, Dr. Antonia Darder, and Dr. Lília Bartolomé, among others. During the Symposium, these scholars helped me to “know” and understand Freire, the theorist; the educator; the student; the radical; the leader; the collaborator; the scholar; the husband; the friend; the dreamer; the believer.

The experience of this internship has marked me greatly. I have learned firsthand that Freire’s dream of collaboration toward social justice education is not only possible, it is happening on a daily basis through the kind of collaboration between institutions such as University of Massachusetts Boston and Chapman University. According to Freire, any kind of work must be done through a collaborative relationship throughout the organization’s members: its leaders, teachers, students, and other service providers. Through this internship, I experienced the realization of this kind of collaborative work and bore witness to true social justice education. Freire’s theory became, in a small but significant way, my lived experience. I am living proof; a part of Freire’s theory in action – in the present and in the future.
NEW LIUS FACULTY MEMBER PUBLICATIONS


**LIUS EVENT: A DAY OF SCHOLARSHIP**

On Saturday March 28th, several LIUS students and faculty members gathered at New Mission High School in Hyde Park for a “Day of Scholarship.” This event included presentations and sessions featuring LIUS graduate Jinhui Xu (cohort 2009) and Dr. Zeena Zakharia who each presented work on partnerships and collaboration in research. As well, a panel of presenters, including Dr. Alan Stoskopf, Dr. Terrie Epstein, Dr. Meenakshi Chhabra and Dr. Zakharia, discussed their research examining international perspectives on narratives of history and identity in schools today.
Congratulations

TO OUR RECENT GRADUATES:

Nick Fitzgerald
Chris Flieger
Samantha Meier
Mary Mitchell
Margo Moore
Kerry Mulcahy
Stacey Jones Mulligan
Kim Talbot
Jinui Xu

GOOD NEWS!

Congratulations to Dr. Zeena Zakharia on the birth of her daughter, Naya Barada, on June 21, 2014

And congratulations to Dr. Patricia Krueger-Henney on the birth of her son, Joaquin Valentino, on September 5, 2014!

For more information on our programs, visit: http://www.umb.edu/academics/cehd/leadership
Or Contact:
lius@umb.edu, Department of Leadership in Education
College of Education and Human Development
University of Massachusetts Boston
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If you have items to be included in the next issue of LIUS NEWS, please contact the editor: francine.menashy@umb.edu