

Subject:

NCE Spring Term Quarterly Eblast: Advancing Excellence in Teacher Preparation, Educator Advancement & Educational Leadership

April 2024

Dear National College of Education Community,

Welcome! The spring term is off to a great start, infused with renewed energy and a shared commitment toward our academic goals.

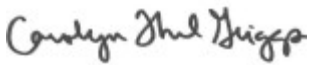
At NCE, education goes beyond the confines of the classroom; it is a transformative pathway to becoming a community change agent. We take pride in offering programs that equip our students with the skills to navigate diverse environments and effect meaningful change.

Recognizing the importance of flexibility and accessibility, we have tailored our academic programs to accommodate the demands of modern life. Our quarter schedule, designed with busy lives in mind, ensures students can pursue academic aspirations without compromising other responsibilities.

I am pleased to spotlight our bridge programs, including the accelerated LBS1 and ESL programs, designed to empower educators to expand their careers through endorsements and approvals in as little as three months. These adaptable programs not only bridge educational gaps but also enable our educators to make a lasting impact in high-needs areas.

As we navigate this spring semester, let us come together to inspire and support one another. Together, we can create meaningful change and advance the transformative power of education.

Wishing you a successful spring term! I look forward to hearing about your work and progress,



Carolyn Theard-Griggs, Ed.D.
Dean, National College of Education

WHAT'S NEW

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Director of Teacher Preparation Programs Transition This Spring

The National College of Education officially welcomed Dr. Jamillah Gilbert (left) as the Director of Teacher Preparation Programs on April 1, 2024. Dr. Gilbert served as a teacher and leader in PK-12 education for over 14 years in Bloomington/Normal and has been involved in higher education for over 19 years. She earned her Bachelor's in Special Education, her Master's in Curriculum and Instruction, and her Ph.D. in Educational Administration from Illinois State University (ISU).

NCE appreciates Dr. Sherri Bressman (right) for her years of service as School Director of Teacher Preparation. Dr. Bressman plans to remain with NCE as a professor for Teacher Preparation.

NLU to launch Institute for Early Childhood Education with \$5 million McCormick Foundation grant

National Louis University recently announced the creation of the McCormick Institute for Early Childhood Education, made possible in part by a generous grant of \$5 million from the Robert R. McCormick Foundation. Launching in Fall 2024, the Institute will combine NLU's early childhood intellectual capital of the Undergraduate College, the **National College of Education**, and the Center for Early Childhood Leadership in one collaborative space. [Learn more here.](#)

In Case You Missed It

- NLU is partnering with four high-impact literacy tutoring services to offer volunteer and paid opportunities for our candidates. Learn more about the tutoring partnerships [here](#). NLU Elementary Education graduate student/tutor **Lucy Weber** was recently highlighted in Reading Power's newsletter in "[Lucy's Story: A New Tutor's Journey of Impact and Connection.](#)"
- Meet this year's Winter Term Cassin-Graft Scholars [here](#).
- The [2023 update](#) on NLU's Scholarship & Thought Leadership has been published.

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

NCE faculty and alumni continue to serve as thought leaders through their service to the field, publications, and presentations.

Publications:

Assistant Professor **Blanca Gamez-Djokic** published "[Of Boundaries and Borders: A Micro-Interactional Examination of Consensus and Knowledge-Construction in a Research-Practice Partnership](#)" in the international journal *Learning, Culture and Social Interaction*, Volume 45.

Assistant Professor **Emily Brown Hoffman** published "[Revealing the Known: The Invisibilized Bias of Commercial Literacy Curricula](#)" in the *Peabody Journal of Education*.

Professor **Kristin Lems** published "[Paging Through the Lively CCC Newsette, a 'Substantial Record' of Evanston's Black History](#)" in the *Evanston RoundTable*.

Professor Emerita **Sara Efrat Efron**, Director of Teacher Preparation **Sherri Bressman**, and Professor **Jeffrey S. Winter** published "[Teacher Well-Being: Perspectives from Early Career Educators](#)" in the most recent volume of the journal *Critical Issues in Teacher Education*, Volume XXXI.

Assistant Professor **Colleen Hamilton** and Associate Professor **Xiaoning Chen** published "[Border-Crossing in Language Teacher Education](#)" in *Dimensions* 2024, Vol. 59, 37-56.

Associate Professor **Gloria McDaniel-Hall** published "[Safe, Seen, and Ready to Learn](#)" as a Feature Article in *Kappan*, Vol. 105, No. 7.



Presentations:

NCE Dean **Carolyn Theard-Griggs** was an invited panelist on "The Educator Pipeline: Opportunities and Challenges" at a recent *Center Partnership Meeting* hosted by the [Center for Success](#). Dean Theard-Griggs shared insights about the Educator Pipeline and expertise from multiple perspectives regarding mental health and wellness for all educators.

Assistant Professor **Renee Gugel** presented "What Teacher Leaders Want You to Know About Professional Development" at the [Raising Student Achievement Conference \(RSAC\)](#) hosted by the Illinois Association of Regional Superintendents of Schools.

Director of STEM Initiatives, **Vishodana Thamotharan**, Associate Professor **Xiaoning Chen**, Associate Professor **Eun Kyung Ko**, and Associate Professor **Xue Han** presented "Supporting Teacher Candidates in Leveraging Justice-Centered Visuals to Engage Multilingual Learners in STEM" at the [2024 International Conference of the Association for Science Teacher Education \(ASTE\)](#).

Assistant Professor **Renee Gugel** and Associate Professor **Geri Chesner** were panelists for the [Center for Success](#) January Teacher Leadership Panel, *Teacher Leadership: Why It's Important and How It Is Being Advanced in Illinois, Across the Country, and Internationally*.

NCE Dean **Carolyn Theard-Griggs** and NLU Provost **Eddie Phillips** provided greetings and introduced keynote speakers at the [2024 Annual Comprehensive Literacy and Reading Recovery Conference](#). Conference speakers included presenters from the Reading Recovery Center:

- **Connie Obrochta**, Reading Recovery Teacher Leader: "Supporting Attention & Flexibility Across the Reading Recovery Lesson"
- **Mary Ann Poparad**, Associate Professor Emeritus: "Phonics Instruction within Reading Recovery Lessons: A Systematic Scope and Sequence"
- **Tracee Farmer**, Assistant Professor and Reading Recovery Trainer: "Contingent Word Work" and "Creating Conditions for Independence in Writing"
- **Liz Armstrong**, Adjunct Faculty: "Planning for Success: Shifting District-wide Literacy Practices"
- **Jacquelyn Allen**, Adjunct Faculty: "Individually Designed Lessons: Using Student Data to Adjust Instruction"

Assistant Professor **Jamillah Gilbert** presented "The Crafting of Pre-Service Special Education Teachers' Perceptions of Problem Behavior: A Post-Intentional Phenomenological Study" at the 37th Annual Midwest Association of Teacher Educators Spring Conference.

Assistant Professor **Tracee Farmer**, Assistant Professor **Dana Hagerman**, and Reading Recovery Teacher Leader **Connie Obrochta** attended and presented at [LitCon 2024](#). Tracee Farmer presented "Contingent Word Work." Dana Hagerman and Connie Obrochta presented "Supporting and Flexibility Across the Lesson."

Assistant Professor **Bilge Cerezci** led a workshop titled "Science and Resilience of a Developing Brain" at the [Early Childhood Symposium](#).

Associate Professor **Donna Wakefield** presented at [IDEAcon](#), the edtech conference hosted by the Illinois Digital Educators Alliance (IDEA). Topics included: "Creating Newsletters and Class Apps Designed for the Phone with Google Slides," "Using Children's and YA Books to Learn about Digital Literacy," "Choice Boards: Advantages," "Design Tips and Differentiation, Google Slides: More Tips, Tricks, Turns, and Twists," and "UDL: Equalizing Opportunities to Succeed with Google Apps." **Mia Gutsell '18**, M.Ed. Technology in Education presented the topic, "[Modeling Your Online Brand](#)."

Assistant Professor **Hannah Graham** presented "[You don't have to think that much](#)" vs. "[I could see where I stand](#)": *Student Perceptions of Humanities Classrooms Dedicated to Social Justice*" for the Reading Leadership Institute at the Wheeling Campus.

Professor **Kristin Lems** and Associate Professor **Xiaoning Chen** presented "Best Practices in Visual Literacy for Multilingual Learners" at the [49th Annual Convention of Illinois Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages - Bilingual Education \(ITBE\)](#).

Associate Professor **Geri Chesner** and Assistant Professor **Renee Gugel** presented "Leveraging Teachers as Leaders" at the [Illinois Teacher Leadership Summit](#).

Associate Professor **Todd Price** presented a "Federal Update" at the [Spring 2024 Licensure Meeting of the Illinois Association of Colleges for Teacher Education \(IACTE\)](#). Topics included AACTE Advocacy, Distance Education, and Apprenticeships. Dr. Price is a member of the [IACTE Executive Committee](#) with service in Government Relations.

Almost 600 attendees attended the three-day [McCormick Center Leadership Connections](#) conference, representing 27 U.S. states, Canada, the U.K., Nigeria and Rwanda.

Assistant Professor **Pamela Radford** presented "MTSS Manifesto" at the [28th Annual Innovations in Education National Conference](#).

Over a thousand literacy advocates, educators, and researchers gathered for the [55th Annual Conference of the Illinois Reading Council \(IRC\)](#). NCE faculty presentations included:

- **Kristin Lems**, Professor: "New Uses for Music in the Language Arts and Literacy Classroom" and "The Magic of Trees"
- **Sophie Degener**, Associate Professor, and **Hannah Graham**, Assistant Professor: "What's Culturally Relevant About The Illinois Literacy Plan?",
- **Dana Hagerman**, Assistant Professor: "Leveraging Language and Culture to Best Serve All Students"
- **Tracee Farmer**, Assistant Professor: "Coaching to Facilitate Continuous Growth"

Assistant Professor **Shannon Hammond**, Assistant Professor **Kathleen Kotel**, Associate Professor **Eun Kyung Ko**, and Associate Professor **Xiuwen Wu** presented "Impact of Learning Science Teacher Practices on Pre-Service Teachers' Instruction" at the [Council for Exceptional Children \(CEC\) 2024 Convention & Expo](#).



Service to the Field:

Associate Professor **Ruth E. Quiroa** served as a member of the [2024 Pura Belpré Youth Literature Awards Selection Committee](#). Award winner and honor selection books were announced at the [American Library Association LibLearnX Conference](#).

Associate Professor **Gloria McDaniel-Hall** met with the Parent Advisory Council at Marcus Garvey Elementary School in Chicago. The visit was arranged by alum **Tiffany Brown '20**, Ed.D. in Educational Leadership. Dr. McDaniel-Hall shared her children's books with parents ([Payton Finds a Friend](#) and [Gloria Finds Her Voice](#)) and discussed the importance of establishing time for family reading and how that practice will impact students' love for and achievement in reading. **Kimlona Robinson '10**, M.A.T. in Elementary Education and current Ed.S. in Educational Leadership student, the Network 13 Instructional Support Leader, was also in attendance.

Marcus Campbell '16, Ed.D. in Educational Leadership, the superintendent of Evanston Township High School District 202, spoke at the Sherman United Methodist Church on his vision for the future of Black education this Sunday as part of the church's [Black History Month celebration series](#), "My Black Is Beautiful."

Associate Professor **Vito Dipinto** attended the recent [Baker Benefit](#). This annual fundraising event supports the Baker Demonstration School, originally built as a part of National Louis University and served as a lab school for the National College of Education. At the event, the 8th Grade Class of 1992 had a mini-reunion. As a former Science Teacher at Baker, Dr. Dipinto taught most of these Baker alumni for five years.

Professor **Ayn Keneman** designed a literacy workshop focusing on Repeated Interactive Read Aloud for NLU undergraduate interns of the Jumpstart program. The NLU interns work with the teachers at the El Valor Reyes Early Childcare Center, helping to support their literacy development prior to kindergarten. Dr. Keneman is a [board member of El Valor](#).

CELEBRATIONS

Awards, honors, and career promotions NCE students, alumni, and faculty receive

	Victoria Dobies, '22 M.Ed. in Reading and current Ed.S. Educational Leadership candidate, was appointed associate principal at Oak Terrace Elementary School for the 2024-25 school year.	Beth Carmody, '95 MED in Educational Leadership, was named Fremont Elementary School's principal for the 2024-25 school year.
Michelle Robinson, who recently defended her dissertation on Co-Teaching in Inclusive Schools, was appointed student services director at Palatine District 15 for the 2024-2025 school year.	John Finan, '14 Ed.D. in Educational Leadership, was announced as the new principal of Fenwick High School, beginning in the 2024-2025 school year.	Scott Carlson, '18 Ed.D. in Educational Leadership, was appointed as the director of human resources for Northbrook/Glenview School District 30, beginning in the 2024-25 school year.
The School District 230 Board of Education unanimously approved Anita Huffman, '13 Ed.S. in Educational Leadership, as assistant superintendent for instructional services at Carl Sandburg High School for the 2024-25 school year.	Scott Grens, '12 M.Ed. and '19 Ed.D. in Educational Leadership, was approved as the next superintendent for Skokie School District 68. Scott is also a current adjunct instructor in the Educational Leadership program at NLU.	Katie DeLaRosa, '18 Ed.S. in Educational Leadership, was named Wheaton/Warrenville District 200's Emerson Elementary School principal for the 2024-25 school year.
The Wisconsin School District of Brown Deer Board of Education selected Katrice Cotton ('94 M.Ed. Curriculum & Instruction, '16 Ed.D. Educational Leadership) as the district's new superintendent for the 2024-25 school year.	Dominic Manola, '19 Ed.D. in Educational Leadership, was appointed assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction at Leyden High School Dist. 212. Dr. Manola is also an NLU adjunct faculty member and serves on dissertation committees.	Mark Larson, former NCE faculty member and Director of Partnerships, recently published a book, <i>Working in the 21st Century: An Oral History of American Work in the Time of Social and Economic Transformation</i>.

NCE IN THE NEWS

NCE programs and community members featured in media outlets

Professor Emeritus **Carlos M. Azcoitia** was interviewed on Noticias Univision Chicago regarding the renewal of charter schools at Chicago Public Schools. [Watch the video here.](#)

Elementary Education student **Brett Montalbano** was interviewed on CBS News Chicago regarding a proposed Illinois bill to create a student-teacher stipend program. Under the program, student teachers would get paid up to \$10,000 a semester for up to two semesters. Lawmakers are hoping this program will help combat the teacher shortage in Illinois. [View the interview here.](#)

WELCOME NEW FACULTY MEMBERS AND STAFF



Stephanie Block has joined NLU as an Undergraduate Field Experience Specialist. She will be managing a caseload of undergraduate education students and working with them to fulfill their field experience requirements with school partners within the communities.

Before becoming part of the Office of Field Experiences at National Louis, Stephanie worked for the YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago within enrollment and financial assistance programs for families. She has a lot of experience with non-profit

organizations and school-age programs, but she knew she wanted her next position to be in higher education and felt that this role would be the perfect fit!

Stephanie graduated from Eastern Illinois University with a Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education and a middle school endorsement. Stephanie grew up in the northwest suburbs of Chicago and recently moved into a new home in Prospect Heights. She has two little girls at home and is looking forward to a fun summer of exploring all the parks and pools in the area! She is hopeful that with this new position, our future educators will have the best support possible when provided with their field experiences, allowing them to feel successful when becoming great teachers.

UPCOMING EVENTS



Save the Date! NLU Doctoral Research Symposium

Learn more information about this event [here](#).

May 16, 2024

Questions, comments or suggestions? Contact us: NCEDean@nl.edu

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