

April 2023

Dear National College of Education community,

Happy spring term! With the weather transitioning to a warmer time of year, I hope you have been getting refreshed by the sun and flowers in bloom.

I'd like to address the ways NCE is engaging with alumni. Being an alum of the National College of Education here at National Louis University myself, I have a desire as dean to make sure our alumni are heard and feel that they are lifelong members of the NCE community. We spotlight alumni on our social media accounts, @NCENLU on [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#), and we are attempting to create networking opportunities that align with conferences around education.

Additionally, our [alumni office](#) has been engaging with alumni by hosting Lunch and Learns, sending out bi-monthly newsletters, and they just launched an alumni association board. I'm also happy to announce that April 25th marks our first annual Help Our Eagles Soar Day. During this day, NCE alumni may contribute to their alma mater and those proceeds will go towards a gift to the college specifically impacting future students. It's a day we can share our blue and white (and college orange!) pride. You may read more about that opportunity below, along with our faculty and student thought leadership. I'd also like to point out that our NLU Doctoral Research Symposium is May 11th. You may find out how to attend [here](#). This event also showcases NCE alumni and soon-to-be graduates of our NLU doctoral programs.

If you have suggestions or questions on our initiatives

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or in general, please email me and let me know how NCE can help you or a colleague in your educational journey. You may also view our NCE Resource Guide, a comprehensive overview of the College and its offerings. Take a look [here](#).

Best wishes for the 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

NLU Day: Help Our Eagles Soar

NLU will be hosting our first day of giving on Tuesday, April 25! NLU Day: Help our Eagles Soar is an opportunity to bring students, alumni, faculty, staff, and other University friends together to focus on learning about NLU and supporting the University financially. Our community will have the opportunity to designate gifts to NCE specifically as well. Please encourage anyone you know to donate [here](#).

In Case You Missed It

- Read about NCE's recent grant news [here](#).
- Meet this year's Cassin-Graft Scholars [here](#).
- Read about the 11th Annual Literacy conference [here](#).
- During the NLU spring break, a small but mighty group of Ed.D. Teaching & Learning program students, alumni, and faculty attended the blended, annual Community Day to engage in scholarly presentations, dialogue, and networking at the Chicago campus. Participants reported appreciation for the opportunity to come together in person to reconnect and recharge with friends, colleagues, and mentors.

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

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

Publications:

Emily Hoffman, assistant professor, is co-editor of *Casebook: Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children from Birth Through Age 8*. This book was released by the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Mark Newman, professor, published the article "American Progress: Sourcing and the Promise of Primary Sources" in *The Social Studies*.

Carlos Azcoitia, professor emeritus, co-authored the article "Mentoring Ed-Leaders for Equity in Chicago" published by [EdPost](#).

Sadia Warsi, associate professor, has an article in NAEYC's book *Spotlight on Young Children: Social and Emotional Development, Revised Edition*. The article "Welcoming Refugee Children into Early Childhood Classrooms" addressed several questions for teachers and other professionals working with refugees.

The 48th Annual Convention of Illinois Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages - Bilingual Education (ITBE) was held in Lisle, IL. NCE faculty presentations included:

- "Using *New From Here* as a Literature Circle and a Source for Teaching Equitable Asian American Community History (TEAACH) Act" - **Kristin Lems**, professor, with NLU graduate students Caroline Berg, Jenna Gatsis, and Isela Garcia Saldana.
- "Escalera: Stepping Up for Students in Bilingual Teacher Education" - **Colleen Hamilton**, assistant professor, with UGC faculty Wendy Mendez and Joao Goebel.
- At the convention, **Margaret Gigous**, former adjunct faculty, received the Marsha Santelli Award. This award is given annually to a professional who shows commitment and service to ITBE. Among other contributions, Margaret established the annual ITBE poetry and writing contest 19 years ago.

Presentations:

Tracee Farmer of the Reading Recovery® Center for Literacy presented a session at the National K-8 Literacy & Reading Recovery® Conference. The session was entitled "Creating Conditions for Independence in Writing." In this interactive session, participants investigated how teachers can create conditions for independence and how to teach for flexible problem-solving.

Thousands of literacy advocates, educators, and researchers gathered for the 54th Annual Conference of the Illinois Reading Council. NCE presentations included:

- "Reconsidering Your Literacy Curriculum through the Lens of Student Identities" - **Sophie Degener**, associate professor, with **Tina Curry** and **Camille Auguste**, adjunct faculty
- "Looking for Palestine - Resources for Teachers" - **Kristin Lems**, professor

- "Choice Projects Boost Teacher Engagement" - **Kristin Lems**, professor, with NLU students **Sarah Evans** and **Daune Demus**
- "Enhancing the Literacy Experience With Apps," "Google Slides: Tips, Tricks, Turns, and Twists," and "Google Tools for Differentiation" - **Donna Wakefield**, associate professor
- "Using Culturally and Linguistically Inclusive Picture Books for Biliterate and Bilingual Readers and Writers" and "Bilingual Literacy Practices with Biliterate Readers" - **Dora Guzman**, adjunct

Gloria McDaniel-Hall, assistant professor, presented the keynote address for District 76. The title was "Is Belonging All That Really Matters?"

Renee Gugel and **Geri Chesner** served on the steering committee for the 2023 Teacher Leadership Summit which was held in Bloomington-Normal. At the summit, they also presented the IPA Teacher Leadership Academy for the administrators in attendance.

Emily Brown Hoffman, assistant professor, was featured as a co-presenter in NAEYC's Learning Lab: Annual Conference Edition. The title of the presentation was "The Why and the How of Teaching Emergent Writing: Birth through Kindergarten."

Antonina Lukenchuk, professor, presented at the Critical Questions in Education conference. Her presentation was called "Critical Conversations on the Nature of Violence: Are There Safe Spaces in and outside School Settings?"

Pamela Radford, assistant professor, was an invited presenter at MTSS Innovations Conference 2023, a national conference scheduled two full days that focused on MTSS implementation practices in schools. Pam also co-presented with Lake Forest D67 partnering around the coaching program at DITCHED Con through the Lake County ROE. Her session was "Cultivating Coaching Capacity: Leading the Way at the District Level."

Bilge Cerezci, assistant professor, recently served as a panelist at "Supporting Illinois Teacher Preparation Programs," a webinar organized by the Illinois Workforce and Education Research Collaborative (IWERC). Previously, she served as an advisory board member for IWERC and reviewer for the Illinois Educator Preparation Profiles (IEPP) report. The webinar aimed to discuss the role, importance, and implications of this research and IEPP in general for teacher education in the state. In this webinar, the panelists discussed the research findings and different perspectives on the IEPP and teacher evaluation from state agency staff, teacher educators, and educational advocates.

IDEAcon, one of the Midwest's largest ed tech conferences, is hosted by the Illinois Digital Educators Alliance (IDEA), where thousands of educators come together to learn about sound pedagogical practices in education and how to leverage technology to engage, inspire, and reach all learners. NCE faculty and alumni presentations included:

- **Donna Wakefield**, associate professor, presented "Google Slides: Tips, Tricks, Turns, and Twists" and "Google Tools for Differentiation"

- **Marcus Belin**, alum, presented "Tell Your Story: The Power of Media" and "Creating a Culture of Learning with Relationships, Rigor, and Routines"
- **Mia Gutsell**, alum, presented "Picking a Google Tool for the Right Job"

Faculty members **Sadia Warsi**, associate professor, **Blanca Gamez-Djokic**, assistant professor, **Sandra Gonzalez**, assistant professor, **Wendy Mendez**, assistant professor, **Keisha Rembert**, assistant professor, and **Lee Tate**, assistant professor, presented a roundtable discussion called "Equity-Mindedness Using Social Justice Case Studies" at the AAC&U Conference on Diversity, Equity, and Student Success. The aim was to design and collaborate on implementing a year-long DEI initiative intended to challenge antiracism using a case study framework to center the voices of minority teacher education faculty.

Service to the Field:

Kristin Lems, professor, **Xiaoning Chen**, associate professor, and **Jack Denny**, associate professor, visited the Chinese Immersion Program at Campanelli Elementary School in Schaumburg. Schaumburg's "50/50 immersion model of excellence" uses both Chinese and English for daily teaching and learning in the classroom. As NLU faculty learned of the curriculum structure and logistics in operating the immersion program, District 54 administrators gained insight into NLU's participation in the STARTALK grant, which funds higher education initiatives to produce high-quality teachers for programs in the metropolitan Chicago area and beyond.

The AACTE Advisory Council of State Representatives received the 2023 AACTE David G. Imig Award for Distinguished Achievement in Teacher Education. The ACSR was formally recognized with this prestigious award by the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) at AACTE's 75th Annual Meeting. **Todd Price**, associate professor, serves as a representative for the Illinois Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (IACTE) on this regional advocacy organization. The IACTE is the state unit of the AACTE. The David G. Imig Award recognizes distinguished achievement in the formulation, implementation, or analysis of teacher education policy, or the performance of distinguished scholarship in educator preparation. The award is named in honor of AACTE President and CEO Emeritus David G. Imig, who led the Association from 1980 to 2005.

The NLU Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence hosted a virtual workshop as a part of ongoing series of TEAACH (Teaching Equitable Asian American Community History) PD. Three NLU graduate students (Caroline Berg, Jenna Gatsis, Isela Garcia) and **Kristin Lems**, professor, shared insights into teaching the new middle elementary novel, *New from Here*, by prize-winning Chinese American author Kelly Yang, raises themes relevant to the TEAACH Act, biracial households, and ADHD.

CELEBRATIONS

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

Current Educational Leadership student, **Krish Mohip**, served as Interim State Superintendent for ISBE in February.

Sherell Wilson, assistant professor, has been selected as a recipient of the 2023 Excellence in Research Award. This national award recognizes her commitment to research and scholarship on student retention, focusing on traditionally underrepresented students. Dr. Wilson is honored to be recognized by NASPA, also known as Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education.

John R. Miller, M.Ed. in Educational Leadership, was named the Assistant Principal of the Year for Orange County Public Schools. This award recognizes outstanding assistant principals who have succeeded in providing high-quality learning opportunities for students and demonstrating exemplary contributions to their schools and communities.

Congratulations to Educational Leadership student **Rubi Ortiz**, who received an AASAHQ Educational Administration Scholarship Award.

Congratulations to **Gina Curtis**, '12 M.Ed. Curriculum and Instruction, for being named Beloit Rotary's Teacher of the Month.

Congrats to **Terita Walker**, '05 MAT Secondary Education, who was featured as a face of leadership with Colorado High School Activities Association.

Amy M. Zaher, '10 EdD in Educational Leadership, is the new superintendent for Salt Creek School District 48.

Congrats to **Sarah Thomas**, an NCE MAT graduate, who was just named a D300 Foundation Educator and Employee of the Year Nominee from Hampshire High School.

Congratulations to **Meg Schnoor**, adjunct instructor in the Special Education and Learning Science Education programs, who was just named the new Superintendent of NSSEO, the special education cooperative that serves the Northwest suburbs.

Congratulations to **Alley Michaelson**, '12 M.A.T. in Special Education, who was appointed as the new head of school at St. Matthew's Parish.

Congratulations to **Craig Curtis**, '21 Ed.D. in Educational Leadership, who was named District 23's new Assistant Superintendent, Curriculum/Instruction.

Congratulations to **Addie Wilson**, '06 grad MAT in Elementary Education, for winning a Golden Apple Award-Rockford!

NCE IN THE NEWS

NCE programs and community members featured in media outlets

Carlos Azcoitia was interviewed by Univision Chicago about an education plan for Chicago with an impending new mayor. [Watch here.](#)

Mark Newman, professor, was contacted by WBEZ, Chicago's NPR news station, regarding the revised Advanced Placement African American Studies high school course. Dr. Newman's commentary suggested that removing Black Lives Matter and other contemporary movements eliminated relevance for students who would not be studying what was happening in their lives today. [Listen here.](#)

WELCOME NEW FACULTY MEMBERS AND STAFF



Nicole Enger is excited to join NLU in her new role as Educational Preparation Field Placement Specialist. She is thrilled to build partnerships with community school districts to provide future educators the opportunity to develop meaningful field experiences that feed their long-term licensure goals. Nicole will be working with a caseload of both graduate and undergraduate students to align their needs with partnering districts and cooperating teachers. Before joining the Office of Field Experiences at National Louis, Nicole had 20+ years of experience working with grades Pre K-8th with roles ranging from teacher, instructional coach, curriculum specialist, and team leader. She graduated from Drake University with a B.S. in Elementary Education and an endorsement in Early Childhood Education. Her graduate degree is in Teaching and Learning from Coastal Carolina University in South Carolina.



Callie Harris is thrilled to join NLU's Undergraduate Educator Preparation team in her new role as Field Placement Specialist. Callie brings eight years' experience as a teacher in 2nd and 4th grades in Los Angeles, California. She looks forward to working collaboratively with the OFE Team during this exciting time as UGC merges with the National College of Education. Callie graduated from Illinois Wesleyan University with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Elementary Education and a minor in Spanish. She continued to earn her Master of Arts in Educational Administration from California State University-Los Angeles.



Estee Hernández is a new assistant professor for Higher Education Leadership. She earned her PhD in Higher Education from Florida State University, an MSEd in Higher Education & Student Affairs from Baylor University, and a BA in French from Baylor University. She grew up along either side of the United States-Mexico border, which has fundamentally shaped how she sees the world and how she approaches her scholarship, pedagogy, and practice. Prior to this role, Dra. Hernández was part of the inaugural CLAVE postdoctoral fellows cohort, part of the Centro de Excelencia at NLU. She has fifteen years of experience in higher education administration and in areas like teaching and learning, scholarship and recognition programs, leadership development, service learning, residence life, diversity and inclusion, and TRIO programs.



Gabriela Tafur is NCE's new Educational Field Placement Specialist. Gabriela is the oldest of her siblings and the first member of her family to obtain a higher education. She is NLU alumna, receiving her Bachelor's (Early Childhood Education) and Master's (Arts in Teaching) degree in 2015 and 2022 respectfully. Being an academic trailblazer in her family is what has led Gabriela back to NLU. Gabriela possesses 10 years of field experience in Early Childhood services, where she served as an educator, coach, and social service advocate for families in underserved communities.



Melissa Faron is also a new Field Placement Specialist. She has worked as a high school educator for over twenty years. . Melissa's passion for education can be traced back to her experiences as an English Language Learner in her formative years. She has a B.A. in Social Sciences Secondary Education from Illinois State University, an M.A. in Curriculum and Instruction with a minor in Staff Development from Concordia along with being certified as a Special Education Learning and Behavior Specialist LBS1 educator. Melissa has also obtained her certification from Northwestern University in Historic Preservation as well as in Museum Studies.

UPCOMING EVENTS AND WEBINARS

Save the Date! McCormick Center's Leadership Connections

April 26-28, 2023

At the McCormick Center for Early Childhood Leadership, we strive to catalyze change as we implement initiatives that strengthen the leadership capacity of early childhood educators. Our Leadership Connections National Conference helps us do just that! The mission of the McCormick Center to empower leaders and advance the field to promote excellence in early childhood education is the touchstone of Leadership Connections. The conference offers opportunities to attend workshop sessions relevant to your complex role, network with

professionals who relate to your trials and triumphs, and gain inspiration from dynamic specialists in our field. We would be delighted for you to join us!

Not only does our virtual conference provide cutting-edge content during the live three-day event, but recordings of all keynote and break-out sessions will be available to registered attendees for three months following the conference. During the event, engage with others, enjoy live sessions, and connect with sponsors. Later, you may view any missed sessions, so you'll fully benefit from our valuable material! [More info here](#).

Doctoral Research Symposium 2023

May 11, 2023
4:30 PM CST

The National Louis University Doctoral Research Symposium is an annual virtual event showcasing the outstanding scholarship and research of NLU's doctoral candidates from multiple disciplines. The 2023 symposium will be held on May 11, 2023, from 4:30-7:00 pm CST (5:30-8:00 EST). [Register here to attend](#).

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

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