

# PENN GSE

Fall 2017

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# PENN GSE

THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION  
UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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**On the cover:** History teacher James Elish, GED'16, (right, back) holds a class discussion with twelfth-grade students at the Science Leadership Academy at Beeber, a high school in The School District of Philadelphia. Below, history teacher Kristen Jackson, C'12, GED'13, speaks with ninth graders at the same school. Elish and Jackson are among the many Penn GSE alumni educators and leaders in the District. Photos by Greg Benson Photography



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# Letter from the Dean

Photo by Goldenberg Photography



Dear Alumni and Friends,

This issue's cover story highlights a theme that is close to my heart: partnerships. I truly believe in the power of people working together to ensure educational opportunity for children and learners of all ages. As our nation and world confront deep divisions, the relevance of working together to increase opportunity for young people is greater than ever.

When I had the honor last year of giving the annual Constance E. Clayton Lecture at Penn GSE—an event whose namesake is a distinguished Penn GSE alumna, the first African-American and first woman to lead The School District of Philadelphia—I outlined the ingredients of successful partnerships, as indicated by research. Those ingredients include diversity, trust, time, necessity, and a common purpose.

There is a robust body of knowledge that suggests diverse groups generally make better decisions, in part because the members bring different expertise and do not share the same set of blind spots. Trust is necessary because without it, group members cannot benefit from each other's expertise. Time is essential for the development of this foundation of trust. Partners will not invest the appropriate time

and effort, however, unless their work together is necessary to fulfill each partner's core mission. Finally, a shared purpose allows a partnership to be cohesive even if the participants' primary commitments or perspectives differ.

At Penn GSE, these factors have allowed our partnership with The School District of Philadelphia to stand the test of time. For decades we have worked together in ways that meet complementary needs, including the District's need for teachers and leaders and our need to offer practical experience to our students. Our common goal of improving outcomes for children has helped to sustain this work. As you will read starting on page 6, Penn GSE is working with the District and partnering with other Penn schools to take this work to the next level.

Our new dual-degree programs with the Wharton School represent another expanded partnership at Penn GSE. We have opened our Education Entrepreneurship and Education Policy master's programs to Wharton MBA students, who can fulfill requirements of their program while also earning an M.S.Ed. degree. This partnership broadens the reach of our programs and continues our commitment to bringing together students from varied professional backgrounds to solve problems in education.

Another organization that has successfully combined the ingredients of successful partnerships is the nonprofit Say Yes to Education, founded by Penn Trustee Emeritus George A. Weiss, W'65, HON'14, in 1987. As one of the initial Say Yes sites, Penn GSE helped to prepare 112 Philadelphia sixth graders for college. Mr. Weiss promised to pay the students' college tuition if they graduated high school. Those students graduated high school—and college—at rates exceeding those of students from similar backgrounds in the District. Say Yes now partners with entire communities to make a similar commitment to every public high school student. More than 10,000 students have gone to college with the support of Say Yes.

I had the great pleasure of honoring Mr. Weiss on campus in May at Alumni Weekend before an audience of alumni and friends, as you will see on page 25. It was truly inspiring to discuss his transformative commitment to changing the lives of youth as chairman of Say Yes, on a day dedicated to celebrating the shared purpose of the Penn GSE community.

As a community of leaders, practitioners, researchers, entrepreneurs, and more, Penn GSE has a tremendous impact on education across the nation and around the world. I hope the many stories of our impact in the pages ahead provide fresh inspiration for your own commitment to education.

Pam Grossman  
Dean, Penn Graduate School of Education  
George and Diane Weiss Professor of Education

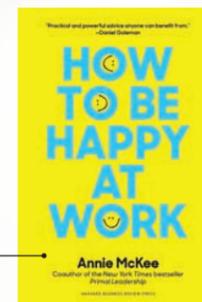
## BOOKSHELF SPOTLIGHT

*How to Be Happy at Work: The Power of Purpose, Hope, and Friendship*

Annie McKee

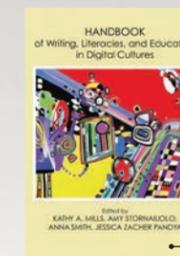
Published September 2017  
by Harvard Business  
Review Press

A bestselling business author and advisor to top global leaders, Dr. Annie McKee argues in her new book that happiness is more important than ever in today's workplace. Drawing upon extensive research and decades of experience with leaders, she reveals that purpose, hope, and friendships are the three essential elements of happiness in the workplace and offers practical advice for cultivating these pillars even under pressure. McKee is a senior fellow and director of Penn GSE's PennCLO (Chief Learning Officer) Executive Doctoral Program and the Med Ed Master's Program.



Annie McKee

## FACULTY BOOKSHELF



*Handbook of Writing, Literacies, and Education in Digital Cultures*

Edited by Kathy A. Mills, **Amy Stornaiuolo**, Anna Smith, and Jessica Zacher Pandya

Published November 2017  
by Routledge

Recipient of a 2018 Divergent Award for Excellence in 21st Century Literacies given by the Initiative for 21st Century Literacies Research



*Free Speech on Campus*

**Sigal R. Ben-Porath**

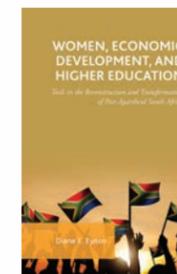
Published July 2017 by University of Pennsylvania Press



*A Focus on Multiplication and Division: Bringing Research to the Classroom*

Elizabeth T. Hulbert, Marjorie M. Petit, **Caroline B. Ebby**, Elizabeth P. Cunningham, and Robert E. Laird

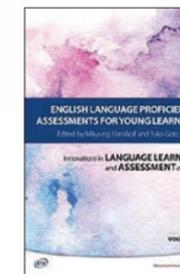
Published July 2017 by Routledge



*Women, Economic Development, and Higher Education: Tools in the Reconstruction and Transformation of Post-Apartheid South Africa*

**Diane E. Eynon**

Published July 2017 by Palgrave Macmillan



*English Language Proficiency Assessments for Young Learners*

Edited by Mikyung Kim Wolf and **Yuko Goto Butler**

Published May 2017 by Routledge

Names in **bold** are members of the Penn GSE faculty.

## FACULTY AWARDS & HONORS

**Nelson Flores** (1) and **Amy Stornaiuolo** (2) have each received a 2017 National Academy of Education/Spencer Postdoctoral Fellowship, awarded each year to thirty early-career scholars out of an applicant pool of approximately three hundred. Five Penn GSE assistant professors have received the fellowship in the past four years. **Ameena Ghaffar-Kucher** (3) has been elected to the Comparative and International Educational Society Board of Directors for a three-year term. **Sharon Wolf** (4) has been named an Early Career Fellow in Early Childhood Education and Development by the American Educational Research Association's Society for Research in Child Development.



Faculty headshots on pages 3 to 5 courtesy Goldenberg Photography and Candace diCarlo

# News Briefs

■ To improve education, health, and human services policies and practices through the use of “big data,” Actionable Intelligence for Social Policy (AISP) will launch a training and technical assistance program to help state and local governments link administrative data across multiple agencies through integrated data systems, or IDS. Led by **John W. Fantuzzo (1)**, Albert M. Greenfield Professor of Human Relations at Penn GSE, and Dennis Culhane, professor and Dana and Andrew Stone Chair in Social Policy at Penn Social Policy and Practice, AISP coordinates an existing network of sixteen states and counties with IDS capacity. With the addition of eight states and two counties through the training initiative, more than half of the U.S. population will live in a jurisdiction with an integrated data system.

■ With the aim of promoting the health of boys and young men of color, Penn GSE professor **Howard Stevenson (2)** launched the Forward Promise National Program Office from the stage of Philadelphia’s National Constitution Center in March. Backed by a \$12 million grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and based at Penn GSE, Forward Promise will work to counter the effects of chronic stress and trauma and foster healing among middle- and high-school-aged boys and young men of color. Dr. Stevenson,



who will lead the national program office, is the Constance Clayton Professor of Urban Education and director of Penn GSE’s Racial Empowerment Collaborative.

■ Penn GSE Associate Professor **Susan Yoon (3)** received a \$1 million grant from the National Science Foundation for the project “BioGraph 2.0—Online professional development for high school biology teachers for teaching and learning about complex systems.” The project’s goal is to provide professional development at low to no cost by enabling online access to high-quality activities that will include video tutorials, a discussion and collaboration forum, and mechanisms for teachers to share best practices.

■ A conference and a new fellowship are the latest developments in the Penn Futures Project, a cross-school initiative by Penn GSE, Penn Nursing, and Penn Social Policy and Practice to address issues of health and well-being for families in Philadelphia and beyond. The conference, held in June, brought together researchers, practitioners, and city officials to consider challenges related to parenting, early childhood, and the need for cross-professional solutions involving health, social services, and education. **Vivian L. Gadsden (4)**, William T. Carter Professor of Child Development and Education at Penn GSE, was an organizer of the event.



A \$2 million endowment from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) will establish the Calvin Bland Faculty Fellowships, with one fellowship in each Penn Futures school, to support research aimed at improving the lives of at-risk young men and boys of color and their families. New faculty member **Ed Brockenbrough (7)** has been named the inaugural Calvin Bland Fellow at Penn GSE. The fellowships are named for Penn alumnus Calvin Bland, former RWJF chief of staff, health-care executive, and research professor at Rutgers University, whose scholarship and career have explored how to foster health equity across communities. (To read more about Penn Futures, see this issue’s cover story beginning on page 6.)

■ Penn GSE added a day school track to the Independent School Teaching Residency (ISTR) this summer, expanding the program to include both day and boarding schools. With an innovative and comprehensive curriculum designed specifically for independent schools’ unique settings, ISTR enables aspiring and early-career teachers to receive a master’s degree in education while completing teaching fellowships at host partner schools. Day school fellows will be in residence at ten partner day schools.

■ Offering free classes to English language learners in Philadelphia, the Practical English for Daily Living (PEDAL) program at Penn GSE (5)



Photo by Ginger Fox Photography



Photo by Louisa Shepard

has grown since its founding in 2012 to include classes in four proficiency levels for Penn-affiliated people and in three levels for the general public. Last fall, the latter classes began a partnership with Philadelphia Mayor James Kenny’s Office of Adult Education, which promotes adult literacy. Taught by master’s students in Penn GSE’s Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) program, the classes give TESOL students experience teaching in the classroom while also contributing to the community at Penn and beyond.

■ **Amy Benedict, GRD’10 (6)**, joined Penn GSE in August as director of career and professional development, a role that will serve the School’s student body and alumni community. Dr. Benedict was previously director of career services at SUNY Oneonta in upstate New York, leading a comprehensive career development program for more than 6,000 students and 60,000 alumni. She spent twenty-one years at Cornell University, where she served in a variety of roles, including director of career development at the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

## Penn GSE Welcomes New Faculty

Penn GSE welcomed the following new faculty in the summer of 2017.

■ **Ed Brockenbrough (7)** is associate professor in teacher education. Previously associate professor at the University of Rochester, he studies Black male teachers and the educational experiences of LGBTQ youth of color.

■ **Manuel González Canché (8)** is associate professor in higher education. Previously assistant professor at the Institute of Higher Education, University of Georgia, he uses sophisticated quantitative methods to research college access, persistence, and success.

■ **John D’Auria (9)** is practice professor in educational leadership. After serving as superintendent of Canton Public Schools, he became president of Teachers21 in Boston. He earned his doctorate in urban educational leadership at the University of Massachusetts.

■ **Sharon Ravitch, GR’00 (10)** was appointed practice professor. Previously senior lecturer at Penn GSE, she is a founding codirector of Penn’s Inter-American Educational Leadership Network and principal investigator of research initiatives in Nicaragua and India. She is research codirector at the Center for the Study of Boys’ and Girls’ Lives.

■ **Sarah Kavanagh (11)** is a research assistant professor. She was previously a postdoctoral scholar at the University of Washington, where she directed a program investigating innovative approaches to teacher mentoring.

■ **Phil Sirinides (12)** is a research assistant professor. He was a senior researcher at the Center for Policy Research in Education and was instrumental in the development of Pennsylvania’s unified early childhood data system.

■ **Alec Gershberg (13)** is a senior fellow in GSE’s Literacy, Culture, and International Education Division and a senior lecturer in sociology and urban studies in the School of Arts and Sciences. He most recently served as chair and associate professor of public and urban policy at The New School in New York City.



## Congratulations to the Recipients of...

### The 2017 Penn GSE Annual Awards

*Excellence in Teaching Award*  
Dr. Howard Stevenson, Constance Clayton Professor of Urban Education

*Outstanding Service to Students Award*  
Jason Cronk, Associate Director of Admissions and Financial Aid

*The William E. Arnold Award for Outstanding Contributions by a Student*  
Abdul-Qadir Islam, master’s student

*Award for Excellence in Promoting Diversity & Inclusion*  
Ufuoma C. Abiola, GED’12, doctoral student

*The Laurie Wagman Award for Visual and Performing Arts in Education*  
James Garrett, master’s student

*The Jolley Bruce Christman and Steven S. Goldberg Annual Award for Best Dissertation in Urban Education*  
Julia A. McWilliams, GED’11, GR’17

### University of Pennsylvania 2017 Awards for Graduating Students

*President’s and Provost’s Citation for Exceptional Commitment to Graduate and Professional Student Life*  
Ufuoma C. Abiola, GED’12, GSE doctoral student

*Dr. Andy Binns Impact Award for Outstanding Service to Graduate and Professional Student Life*  
Nathan Castillo, GR’17  
Yunning Wang, GED’16

*Penn Prize for Excellence in Teaching by Graduate Students*  
Lloyd Talley, GED’15, GSE doctoral student  
Allyson Volinsky, C’13, GED’14, Penn doctoral student

See page 25 for the 2017 Education Alumni Awards.

# PENN GSE IN PHILADELPHIA

## Partnering Locally for National Impact

by Juliana Rosati

How can a great graduate school of education help to change the life trajectories of children in urban schools? A passion for answering that question drew Dean Pam Grossman to Penn GSE, a school with the expertise and desire, along with a critical location, to transform lives through education.

“Philadelphia has long had one of the highest child poverty rates among the nation’s largest cities,” says Dr. Grossman. “And the number of children in poverty has been growing nationally. By tackling this problem here, we are developing models that can be used across the country.”

Grossman is taking Penn GSE’s partnership with The School District of Philadelphia to the next level, building upon GSE’s longtime commitment to urban education and engagement with the District. Employing new approaches that amplify the reach of this work and allow GSE to join forces with other Penn schools, she views the partnership as a top priority in her vision for the School.

### Building Upon a Legacy

For decades, Penn GSE has partnered with The School District of Philadelphia to improve the academic achievement and life outcomes of Philadelphia children and youth. Today that commitment includes 566 programs that Penn GSE students, faculty, and alumni conduct in 270 schools throughout the District.

The array of programs is wide—field placements of GSE students in teaching and counseling; professional development for District teachers; workshops in subjects like science, coding, and filmmaking for District students; research by GSE faculty to improve education; alumni working as teachers and leaders; and more, all summarized in an interactive map at <https://phillymap.gse.upenn.edu>.

Complementing this broad engagement, GSE leads two intensive, University-wide partnerships with individual K–8 schools in Penn’s local community of West Philadelphia—the Sadie Tanner Mossell Alexander University of Pennsylvania Partnership School (Penn Alexander) and the Henry C. Lea School—providing a range of resources to the schools. With different histories and models of engagement, both partnerships illustrate Penn GSE’s commitment

to developing new knowledge and approaches that increase opportunity for underserved children.

“Both partnerships are important to the University,” says Dr. Caroline L. Watts, director of school and community engagement and senior lecturer at Penn GSE. The Office of School and Community Engagement, recently established by Dean Grossman, is enhancing GSE’s systems and processes of working with the city. “We are looking at what each model of partnership teaches us about university-assisted schools—what is sustainable and replicable, and which of our efforts make the most difference for students,” Watts says.

Penn Alexander opened in 2001 as the result of a historic partnership among Penn, The School District of Philadelphia, and the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers to build a model university-assisted public school for West Philadelphia children. Since its

“We are looking at what each model of partnership teaches us about university-assisted schools—what is sustainable and replicable.”



→ Students at the Penn Alexander School learn from a science and coding curriculum developed and taught by Penn GSE faculty and students.



Photos by Elisabeth Reinhardt (left) and Greg Benson Photography (right)

← Nine interns from three Penn schools trained at Philadelphia public school Kensington Health Sciences Academy (pictured left) in 2016-2017 as part of the Penn Futures Project, a cross-school collaboration between Penn GSE, Penn Nursing, and Penn Social Policy and Practice. Through Penn Futures, GSE is expanding upon its work in 270 schools throughout The School District of Philadelphia, including the Science Leadership Academy at Beeber (pictured right).

## A brand-new, District-wide math curriculum puts an increased emphasis on mathematical reasoning and allowing students to find their own paths to the correct solution of a given problem.

establishment, Penn Alexander has earned a reputation as one of the top elementary schools in the city. The school was named a 2016 National Blue Ribbon School by the U.S. Department of Education and was also dubbed a City Leader among K-8 schools on the District's 2014-15 School Progress Report. GSE and Penn's involvement in building the school from the ground up and providing a full-time onsite liaison represented an unprecedented step for a university.

The partnership with Lea, a neighborhood school established more than one hundred years ago, involves a different challenge, that of working with an existing school that operates within complex circumstances. Lea serves a student population that is predominantly low-income and includes substantial numbers of immigrant students, as well as students with special education needs. Having collaborated for decades with Lea, Penn deepened the partnership in 2013. It now includes a GSE-based liaison, doctoral student Rich Liuzzi, C'04, working onsite. GSE alumna ShaVon Savage, GED'02, G'07, L'07, became principal at the start of the 2016-2017 year. The partnership focuses on integrating GSE and Penn resources with the efforts of Lea's community to support excellence for all Lea students.

Now, in response to a District-wide initiative for mathematics improvement, Penn GSE is expanding upon the foundation of the Penn Alexander and Lea partnerships to work closely with the sixteen West Philadelphia schools of Neighborhood Network 2, a group that includes Penn Alexander and Lea.

"It's really a nice level up from our work with individual schools," says Watts of the partnership with the network, which began in the fall of 2016. "It allows us to provide support for multiple schools simultaneously."

Funded in part by the Otto Haas Foundation and the William Penn Foundation, the partnership has brought a full-time liaison, Dr. Kathleen Krier, to the network, along with one doctoral alumna and two doctoral students, all from Penn GSE. Through professional development sessions that address topics in leadership, instruction, and curriculum implementation, Krier and her team support and advise the network's principals and math "lead" teachers, newly designated by the District to lead mathematics improvement in each school.

"This project is now being seen by the District as an incubator for District-wide mathematics improvement," says Watts. By developing effective approaches in one network, Penn GSE can chart a broad course for change.

Helping the math lead teachers understand their new roles has been a priority, Krier reports. The role may include coordinating testing and resources or co-teaching with other teachers. "In addition to providing the insight and coaching of my team, we're fostering collaboration so that the math lead teachers and principals can support each other across schools," Krier says.

Another challenge facing the schools has been the need to implement a brand-new, District-wide math curriculum that puts an increased emphasis on mathematical reasoning and allowing students to find their own paths to the correct solution of a given problem.

"The meetings provided a good support system to talk about what was working for each of us as we used the curriculum," says Maria McLaughlin, who participated in Krier's sessions as the math lead teacher at Samuel Gompers Elementary School. "I was able to come back to the school with new ideas for myself and to offer the other teachers."

Having taught in the District for seventeen years, McLaughlin views the District's mathematics initiatives and network-wide partnership with Penn GSE as significant steps forward. "This is the first time I've seen such a drive for math instruction," she says. "It's important that this work continues." After implementing the new curriculum in her classroom, she was gratified to see her students' progress. "By the end of the year, they were able to articulate their reasoning and their problem-solving strategies with such eloquence," she says. "They saw that there are many ways to solve problems, which is a lesson that goes beyond math."

## Partnering Across Professions

For children facing adversity, education can offer a vital opportunity, especially when school is the most stable environment in their lives. However, many of the challenges that children in poverty encounter outside of school may affect their educational experiences. When children have been exposed to lead poisoning, suffer the trauma of homelessness, or have responsibilities for taking care of younger siblings, their attendance and performance at school will likely reflect these circumstances. Given these realities, how can education be responsive to the challenges that children face outside of the classroom?

Dean Grossman found a compelling answer when she and the deans of two other Penn schools joined the university in 2014-2105. Discovering a shared commitment to improving the health and well-being of children and families, Dean Grossman, Dean John L. Jackson of Penn Social Policy and Practice (SP2), and Dean Antonia Villaruel of Penn Nursing launched the Penn Futures Project to develop solutions at the intersection of their three professional fields.

"So many of the problems that children in poverty face begin well before they start school, and teachers will need to work with counselors, social workers, and health professionals to address the needs of their students," says Grossman. "We are creating a cross-professional approach to not only support children and families, but also prepare our students for their careers."

During 2016-2017, Penn Futures funded a range of cross-school collaborations that brought together the professions of education, social work, and nursing, with further financial assistance from the Office of the Provost. One project used the power of linking administrative data across multiple government agencies to help the City

## How can education be responsive to the challenges that children face outside of the classroom?

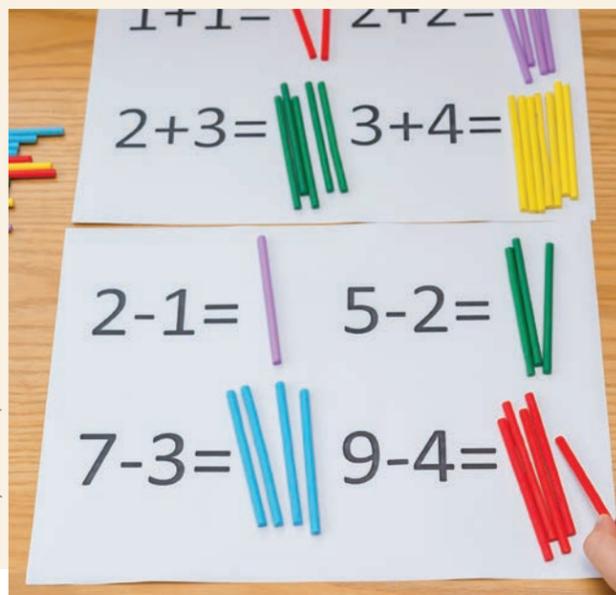


Photo by iStock.com/Freer Law

↑ Penn GSE is partnering with a network of sixteen schools in The School District of Philadelphia to support mathematics improvement.



Photo by Ginger Fox Photography

↑ Left to right: Dean Pam Grossman of Penn GSE, Dean John L. Jackson of Penn Social Policy and Practice, and Dean Antonia Villaruel of Penn Nursing launched the Penn Futures Project to develop solutions at the intersection of their three professional fields.

of Philadelphia allocate resources for early childhood education to neighborhoods with the greatest need. Led by Penn GSE professors John Fantuzzo and Vivian Gadsden, SP2 professor Dennis Culhane, Nursing professors Janet Deatrick and Terri Lipman, and Katherine Barghaus, GR'12, executive director of GSE's Penn Child Research Center, the project built upon work by Drs. Fantuzzo and Culhane to help state and local governments improve education, health, and human services through linked data.

In partnership with Philadelphia's Data Management Office, the team created maps showing the areas where children faced multiple risk factors, like lead exposure and homelessness, and areas lacking access to prekindergarten programs that could counteract the toxic stressors in children's lives. These maps highlighted the neighborhoods in greatest need of high-quality early childhood education. The City's Commission on Universal Prekindergarten used this research in their recommendations to expand quality programming for young children. The research also added to the momentum of efforts to use city resources, such as a new soda tax, strategically to support early childhood services.

"It's a great example of work that informs policymakers so they can make wise decisions about using scarce resources," says Grossman.

Another project brought students from all three Penn Futures schools beyond West Philadelphia to train collaboratively at Kensington Health Sciences Academy (KHSa), a high school offering career and technical programs. Located in the northern part of the city, the school's neighborhood of Kensington is part of Pennsylvania's First Congressional District, shown in recent years to have one of the highest levels of hunger in the nation.

The location represents another way Penn GSE is broadening its work in Philadelphia, according to

→ Through the Penn Futures work at Kensington Health Sciences Academy, the school's student-counselor ratio lowered to 75:1, a figure unheard of in most urban schools.

## "If we're going to serve all the needs of the whole child—health, mental health, and academics—then we need to draw from all three fields to do that."

Watts. "We want to move farther out into different parts of the city, to places where we can meet a need by integrating resources from GSE and Penn," she says.

Led by Penn GSE Teacher Education Program Director Kate Kinney Grossman, the project brought nine Penn interns to KHSa in 2016-2017. This included two students in GSE's Teacher Education program, three in GSE's Professional Counseling program, two in SP2's Master of Social Work program, and two Penn Nursing undergraduates.

While field placements are an established part of the Penn programs, the work at KHSa was unusual for bringing students from different Penn programs together to train at one site, with a new, shared curriculum.

"If we're going to serve all the needs of the whole child—health, mental health, and academics—then we need to draw from all three fields to do that," says Kinney Grossman. "For me it was an opportunity to rethink how we're preparing teachers for high-needs contexts."

One of the most significant outcomes of the year for KHSa was the dramatic increase in the number of counselors and social workers available to the high school students. Without the Penn interns, GSE alumna and full-time KHSa school counselor Diana Finesmith, GED'16, would have served the student body of 450

Photo by Elisabeth Reinkordt



→ Penn GSE's commitment to The School District of Philadelphia includes 566 programs conducted by GSE students, faculty, and alumni. This work is creating a national model of partnership between a graduate school of education and an urban school district, and represents a top priority in Dean Grossman's vision.

alone. With the addition of the three students from GSE's Professional Counseling program and two from SP2's Master of Social Work program, the student-counselor ratio lowered to 75:1, a figure unheard of in most urban schools.

"The challenges we're working with at Kensington are very intense," says Finesmith. "Our student population faces a variety of issues, from trauma and abuse, to grief and loss, to mental and behavioral health concerns." With the five interns in place, her department was able to meet with three hundred students during the year. This included ongoing work with over ninety students.

"We've really been able to create a culture and environment where students feel safe and comfortable enough to come and talk with us," says Finesmith. "Counseling and mental health still often hold a stigma, and we've been able to begin to break down that barrier and give students a level of consistent emotional support that they might not otherwise have in their lives."

Penn faculty from the three schools took turns leading group discussions for all of the Penn interns, considering KHSa students' challenges through the perspective of all three fields.

"Allowing future nurses to learn in this way, alongside other professions, will give us richer professionals, those who can think critically and solve problems," says Monica Harmon, senior lecturer, MSN, MPH, BSN, who oversaw the project for Penn Nursing during the 2016-2017 school year.

"For the first time, social work students could have professors from GSE and Nursing impact their fieldwork learning on a regular basis," adds Anne Weiss, MSW, LSW, director of field education, who managed the project for SP2.

Another facet of the project involves professional development for KHSa teachers offered by students in GSE's Ed.D. in Educational Leadership program and Penn Nursing. That effort, and all of the Penn Futures work at KHSa, embraces a "trauma-informed" approach meant to increase awareness across the school of the challenges students face outside of the building. Before deciding to discipline a student who acts out or breaks a rule, for example, adults in the school are encouraged to try starting a dialogue with the student to learn what is behind the problematic behavior, or consider sending the student to a counselor.

"The idea is that everybody in the school should approach students with the understanding that they may have experienced something that is causing them anger or sadness or frustration in their life," says Nimet Eren, GED'09, principal of KHSa beginning in 2017-2018. A GSE alumna and current doctoral student, Eren has been a part of the GSE community throughout her eleven years as a Philadelphia educator, participating in the Philadelphia Writing Project and working with master's students after receiving her degree.

The project will continue in 2017-2018, and KHSa has begun the year with a total of six GSE and Penn alumni on staff—Eren and



Photo by Greg Benson Photography

Finesmith; teachers Jodi Miller, C'14, GED'15, and Eric Clark, C'15; and two of last year's GSE interns who were hired as full-time employees.

Both former interns report enriching experiences that prepared them for their careers. "Working at KHSa for my student teaching was a great opportunity to learn what it's like to teach in a neighborhood school, and to do so in a very supportive environment," says Maddie Luebbert, GED'17, who was hired as a ninth-grade English teacher following her field placement. "KHSa has a very tight-knit staff, and the presence of Penn interns and faculty gave me additional levels of support."

Nicholas Allen, GED'16, GED'17, hired as a school counselor after his field placement as a student in GSE's Professional Counseling program, says, "I really enjoyed being part of the strong community of caring at KHSa—staff give so much individual attention to students. It's something you don't see in many schools, and it's not what you expect to see in a school that's so under-resourced."

## Looking Ahead

As Penn GSE deepens the partnership with Neighborhood Network 2 and Penn Futures supports a variety of projects—including one led by Watts to develop a cross-school certificate program at Penn in child welfare—the horizons of GSE's work in Philadelphia continue to broaden.

A Penn Futures conference on parenting and early childhood brought together researchers, practitioners, and city officials in June. A new grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation has established a Calvin Bland Faculty Fellowship in each Penn Futures school to support research on improving the lives of at-risk young men and boys of color and their families. (See page 4 to learn more about the conference and fellowships.)

Most importantly, Penn GSE is committed to work of broad practical importance. "In a knowledge economy, our country cannot afford to leave children behind," says Grossman. "Penn GSE is having an enormous impact not only through the work of our students and faculty, but also through the graduates we produce each year who go on to influence the nation and world as educators and leaders." ■

# SHAPING THE NATIONAL LANDSCAPE

*Penn GSE Produces College Presidents*

by Lini S. Kadaba

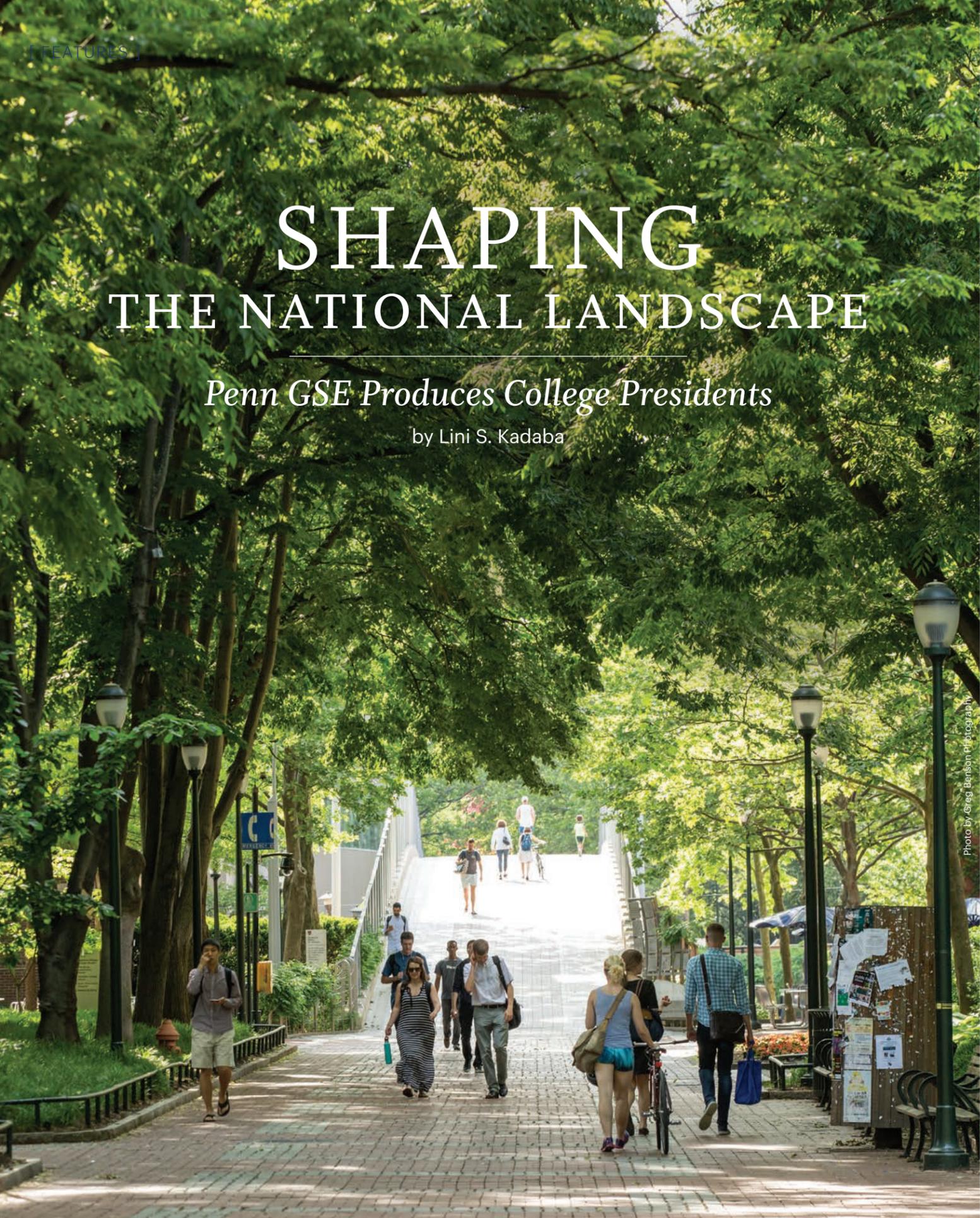


Photo by Greg Benson Photography



HAVING PRODUCED FORTY-FIVE COLLEGE PRESIDENTS *as well as other top higher education leaders, Penn GSE's nationally ranked Higher Education Division and its Executive Doctorate in Higher Education Management program play a significant role in the nation and beyond. Here, FIVE ALUMNI who have gone on to the top position at a college or university share their professional paths, accomplishments, and perspectives. Representing PUBLIC, PRIVATE, VIRTUAL, INTERNATIONAL, and MINORITY-SERVING INSTITUTIONS, these alumni reveal varied career routes and a shared commitment to excellence and opportunity in higher education.*

## INCREASING COLLEGE ACCESS

Drawing inspiration from his hero, Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall, Gregory J. Vincent, GRD '04, began his career as a civil rights attorney and an assistant attorney general of Ohio. Now, as the new president of Hobart and William Smith Colleges, a private liberal arts college in Geneva, New York, he continues a lifelong focus on diversity and opportunity. It was in 1995 that he turned his passion for civil rights toward education.



**Gregory J. Vincent**  
GRD'04

"I realized that I had benefited from access to college, as had my parents," says Vincent, the 2016 recipient of the Penn GSE Alumni Association's Educator of the Year Award. As assistant vice chancellor of academic affairs at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, he worked to improve the institution's ability to enroll qualified students from a range of socioeconomic and racial backgrounds. He continued in this vein as vice provost of academic affairs and campus diversity and a professor of law at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge.

While there, Vincent enrolled in the Executive Doctorate program

at Penn GSE, conducting research on community-university partnerships that resulted in a law review article. "It made a strong on-the-job experience even stronger," he says of the program, "because it connected the theoretical and the practical, and being around smart classmates and faculty helped you to think through issues."

After a stint at the University of Oregon, Vincent moved in 2005 to the University of Texas at Austin, where he rose to vice president and was named the W.K. Kellogg Professor of Community College Leadership and Professor of Law. It was, he says, his destination school. Vincent earned a reputation for raising funds—\$23 million over eight years—and aligning the budget with the university's priorities. But when his undergraduate alma mater, Hobart and William Smith (HWS), came calling, Vincent couldn't resist.

In July of this year, Vincent became the first HWS alumnus to serve as president. Working for the first time at a private college rather than a state university, he says his number one issue remains access.

"Can students, can families afford a Hobart and William Smith education?" he asks. "Our country needs to invest more in higher education. Higher education, in turn, needs to be more effective and efficient. As a proud alumnus, I know firsthand the transformative power of an HWS education, and I want to make that a reality for future generations," he says.

Headshots courtesy of Hobart and William Smith Colleges, University of Alaska, Huston-Tillotson University, American Public Education Inc., and Universidad Latinoamericana de Ciencia y Tecnología

## NAVIGATING STATEWIDE CHALLENGES

When James R. Johnsen, GRD '06, left a labor relations post with the State of Alaska for one at the University of Minnesota, he didn't expect to be a college president one day. But when he rose to chief of staff at the University of Alaska in 1998, he says, the then-president suggested he was top-dog material.

"Oh, come on, labor relations people never become presidents," Johnsen recalls saying. Still, a seed was planted. When Johnsen became a vice president, he decided it was time to pursue a doctorate at Penn GSE. Today, as president of the University of Alaska, he oversees fifteen campuses thousands of miles apart with an enrollment of 35,000 full- and part-time students. Johnsen finds himself making tough choices while aiming to create economic opportunity.

"We're in a major fiscal crisis in Alaska," he says. The state and its university system are in desperate financial straits as revenue from the state's bread-and-butter oil industry declines. For the 2017-2018 fiscal year, the state legislature cut \$8 million from the university system's budget.



**James R. Johnsen**  
GRD'06

In addition, Alaska suffers a large educational attainment gap. Johnsen says a quarter of the jobs in the state require a bachelor's degree, and 40 percent an associate's or certificate. "The state is producing about fifteen percent of those," he says. "We import our talent. For example, the majority of the state's K-12 teachers come from outside of Alaska."

Johnsen seeks to close the gap through his Strategic Pathways initiative, which grew out of his research at Penn GSE. "I developed a set of habits and ways of analyzing the issues leaders encounter," Johnsen says of his experience in the Executive Doctorate program. "I really wanted to enable myself to be effective if one day I was going to be president."

Through Strategic Pathways, Johnsen has brought together faculty, staff, and community members to identify ways to improve all aspects of UA—with less money. He is now implementing some of the hundreds of suggestions generated, working to consolidate procurement offices across campuses and schools, cut or suspend fifty degree programs, and reduce employees. Future phases will focus on online learning and partnerships with community colleges.

"It was bumpy at first," he says of the implementation. "I learned more about leadership. I go back to some of the readings I did at Penn GSE to ground myself and even find solace as I deal with these challenges."

## ADVANCING HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Colette Pierce Burnette, GRD '15, left a lucrative career in engineering to find her purpose in higher education. As president of Huston-Tillotson University in Austin, Texas, she is committed to the purpose of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) in American education.

"The mission of HBCUs is more important than ever," says Pierce Burnette, the first female president and CEO of Huston-Tillotson since the previously separate Samuel

Huston and Tillotson colleges merged in 1952, and the second female president in the institutions' 140-year history. "HBCUs give people of color an opportunity to be in a space where their peers see them simply as students, not students who are different," she says.

As an engineer, Pierce Burnette worked at a variety of companies, including Procter & Gamble and her own computer networks business.

"But I was never quite fulfilled," she says. She turned to education, teaching computer science at a community college and eventually joining an HBCU, Central State University (CSU), in Wilberforce, Ohio, as director of information technology. There



**Colette Pierce Burnette**  
GRD'15

she rose through the ranks to vice president of administration and CFO, earning a track record by tripling enrollment, boosting morale, and introducing best practices to save hundreds of thousands in the budget.

Eager to take on a presidency, she knew she lacked one qualification. "I had street credibility, but I didn't have the doctorate," she says. In the Executive Doctorate program at Penn GSE, Pierce Burnette says, she worked harder than ever before. "You may think you're going to school once a month," she says, referring to the sessions on campus, "but really, you're going to school every day."

Her doctoral thesis on Wilberforce University, the first college to be owned and operated by African Americans, reinforced her staunch support of HBCUs. Networking with her fellow students brought her to her current role.

As president, Pierce Burnette has worked to build community on campus and partnerships with the surrounding city of Austin. She has also grown Huston-Tillotson's adult degree program, which includes tracks in business administration, education, liberal arts, psychology, and criminal justice. "It is designed for working adults whose access to higher education may be otherwise limited due to personal, financial, and professional responsibilities," she says.

That kind of opportunity is at the heart of HBCUs, she notes. "College gives people choices," she says. "HBCUs are an investment in the future."

## PROVING THE VALUE OF ONLINE EDUCATION

Having served in CFO and CEO roles at health care companies for over sixteen years, Wallace "Wally" E. Boston, GRD '10, became intrigued by American Public University System (APUS), a for-profit, online school based in Charles Town, West Virginia.

"I was fascinated by the challenges of online programs," says Boston, a member of the Penn GSE Board of Overseers and the 2015 recipient of the Penn GSE Alumni Association's Helen C. Bailey Award. "No one outside the online education community understood that you could provide a great education online."

In 2002, he joined APUS as CFO. By 2004 he was president of APUS and CEO of its parent company, American Public Education Inc. (APEI). The majority of APUS's 85,000 students are active-duty military, law enforcement, and emergency management professionals. To meet their needs, APUS offers flexible class schedules and monthly semester start dates. The university also makes affordability a priority, charging about \$250 to \$280 per credit hour.

Under Boston's tenure, APUS has received regional accreditation



**Wally E. Boston**  
GRD'10

and approval for Title IV federal student aid and added doctoral programs in strategic intelligence and global security. "I've worked to keep us at the forefront and build a reputation of quality," he says. APUS won the Online Learning Consortium's Ralph E. Gomory Award for Quality Online Education in 2009 and has earned other accolades since.

While president and CEO, Boston enrolled in the Executive Doctorate program at Penn GSE. He wrote a dissertation about student retention in online education at a time when little had been published on the topic. Based upon APUS student data, his research spawned a multi-institution study funded by the Gates Foundation.

Boston notes that among undergraduate students who complete five courses at APUS, the university's graduation rate jumps from 48 to 78 percent. "If we can engage students enough or just get them comfortable being educated online, we have a really good graduation rate," he says.

Boston envisions a future where college costs will make the first two years of a four-year degree a commodity and online programs will have the price advantage. "I think the current business model for higher education is broken," he argues. Only highly selective schools, he says, can continue to charge top prices.

Now president emeritus of APUS, Boston remains CEO of APEI. He reports that in a world of MOOCs and cyberschools, distance learning has gained respect. "I haven't had to argue the value of online degrees in years," he says.

## PREPARING LEADERS TO SERVE THE WORLD

When Silvia Castro, GRD '10, graduated from Georgetown University and returned to her native Costa Rica, her career took off. After just six months as international office director at Universidad Latinoamericana de Ciencia y Tecnología (ULACIT), a private, bilingual university in San José focused on science and technology, she became the university's student affairs director, supervising job placement, financial aid, and counseling programs.

She continued to rise quickly to academic vice president, and earned a master's in school leadership from Universidad Francisco de Vitoria in Madrid. In 2000, Castro became president of ULACIT. She was twenty-eight years old and just five years out of college.

"I would basically train people and move on," says Castro, who grew up in a family of educators. "I organize. I fix it, and it works on its own."

Seeking to step back and gain perspective on her field, Castro came to the Executive Doctorate program at Penn GSE after earning a master's in education from Harvard.

"I had done management, but I didn't understand it theoretically," she says. Her thesis at Penn GSE, Castro says, was the first data-



**Silvia Castro**  
GRD'10

driven look at Costa Rica's higher education system. Unlike in the United States, Costa Rica's public institutions are generally more selective than private ones. Her study concluded that public universities primarily served the wealthy, while private institutions served the poorest, often without the financial capacity to fulfill appropriate standards of educational quality.

"It caused a sensation when it was published," she says. "It's a highly politicized issue." What she learned helped her to position ULACIT as a selective private college with a focus on preparing leaders to serve the world. Approximately 30 percent of its students are low-income and supported by merit scholarships. For the past six years, QS Latin American University Rankings has placed it at number one for private universities in Central America.

The college uses only project-based learning, which emphasizes student-centered projects. It has a scholarship program, student services, and eighteen student clubs.

"Those are things that hadn't happened before Penn GSE," says Castro, whose current role as rector encompasses the functions of president and provost. "I was able to adopt a lot of concepts and ideas from faculty, from discussions."

Castro says the format of the Executive Doctorate program—designed to fit the schedules of working professionals—served her and her classmates well. "Penn GSE didn't sacrifice quality for format," she says. "I have a lot of faith in the nontraditional." ■

# Faces of Philanthropy

by Karen Doss Bowman

Through their generosity, donors to Penn GSE make a difference by investing in the School's extraordinary people, programs, and partnerships. Penn GSE students and faculty strive every day to improve the world through education, and donors share that vision of education as a vital ingredient for a stronger society. Here are three stories about people supporting the mission of Penn GSE:



## Boosting Support for Penn GSE Faculty

Penn GSE faculty are preeminent scholars in the field of education, contributing groundbreaking research and practice that direct the national conversation about education. Thanks to the generosity of multiple friends of the School, these distinguished scholars will be supported by four new professorships established since 2016 through a total of \$7.5 million in faculty aid.

"Faculty support is among our highest priorities at Penn GSE," says Dean Pam Grossman. "Our faculty provide cutting-edge policy guidance through their research, play an outsized role in the leadership of national professional organizations, and partner with teachers and schools to improve education. Perhaps most importantly, they produce Penn GSE alumni—the next generation of transformative educators and leaders."

Three of the new GSE professorships received matching funds from the University as part of a bold plan to create new endowed

## "Faculty support is among our highest priorities at Penn GSE."

professorships under President Gutmann's Penn Compact 2020 vision. Former Penn GSE Board of Overseers member Lori A. Milken, GED'72, and Michael Milken, WG'70, created the Lori and Michael Milken President's Distinguished Professorship. Penn GSE Board of Overseers member and former chair Joel M. Greenblatt, W'79, WG'80, and the MRM Foundation established the MRMJJ Presidential Professorship. Multiple donors contributed to a Graduate School of Education Presidential Professorship: current Board of Overseers chair David N. Roberts, W'84, and Deborah Roberts; Overseer Jeffrey S. McKibben, W'93, and Allison Bieber McKibben, C'93; and Overseer Gustave K. Lipman, W'94, and Karen M. Lipman, W'94, WG'98.

An even larger coalition of donors produced a Centennial Presidential Professorship: Overseer Joel M. Greenblatt, W'79, WG'80, and the MRM Foundation; Overseer Edward M. Yorke, W'81; Overseer Andrea J. Pollack, C'83, L'87, and Adam Usdan; the late Richard Charles Trimble; former Overseer John Katzman; Laura Bilodeau Overdeck, WG'95; and Overseer Gregory A. Milken, C'95, and EJ Milken.

"We are deeply grateful for this robust and inspiring support," says Dr. Grossman. "It ensures that Penn GSE can continue to attract and retain an esteemed and internationally renowned faculty who are transforming education through their research and practice."

## Advancing the Teaching Profession



Marjie Gittis Katz, GED'90

As an educator, Marjie Gittis Katz, GED'90, knows firsthand the influence teachers have on children as learners.

"Teachers play a vital role in launching the academic lives of the children in their classes," says Katz, a new member of the Penn GSE Board of Overseers. "They can have a positive impact on the way that a child's whole educational career unfolds."

Katz, who taught in elementary school for seven years, recalls

her experience at Penn GSE as both practical and cutting edge. Her time spent engaged in scholarship was balanced with hands-on learning opportunities in a real classroom setting with young students.

"As a Penn GSE student, it was incredibly rewarding to work with a classroom for the whole year and to get the feeling of carrying a group of kids through and seeing their improvement," Katz says. "The teacher education program at Penn GSE took a groundbreaking approach."

Even though she's no longer employed as a teacher, Katz has volunteered in numerous capacities at the independent school her three children have attended. A member of GSE's Benchmark Society and a Fellow in the University's Benjamin Franklin Society—both for her support of the GSE Annual Fund—Katz recently established the Marjie Gittis Katz Scholarship Fund at Penn GSE to support future educators.

"Teachers are in demand right now, but it's a hard job that doesn't offer big financial rewards," Katz says. "It's a job where you have to really, really want to do something good in this world. So you have to show why this can be a fulfilling career and what kind of social impact educators can provide. Scholarship support will keep Penn GSE at the forefront, attracting the best and brightest to teach the next generation."

## "Teachers play a vital role in launching the academic lives of the children in their classes."

## Bringing a Passion for Penn to GSE



Natalie Barth and Brett Barth, W'93

Brett Barth, W'93, and his wife, Natalie, have a strong interest in expanding access to higher education to outstanding students with financial need.

A former Penn Fund Executive Board member, Barth says serving the University in that capacity broadened his view of what it takes to educate Penn students.

"Natalie and I felt that getting a high-quality education and having the opportunity to go to a first-class university was the great equalizer for our own lives," says

Barth, a new member of the Penn GSE Board of Overseers. "We feel that the most important factor to driving anyone's success is gaining access to a high-quality education at every level. And Penn is the place that is near and dear to our hearts."

That insight prompted the Barths to support Penn in multiple ways, most recently through GSE. One of Penn's top priorities is to boost undergraduate financial aid, and Barth has been a leader in that effort as cofounder and chair of the Undergraduate Financial Aid Leadership Council, which strives to strengthen and expand resources for financial aid.

"After supporting undergraduate scholarships for many years, we thought that there was more that we could do," Barth says. "We looked at a number of different opportunities, but what we found at GSE was by far the best in terms of the breadth and excellence of its research and educational programs."

Impressed with Penn GSE's strengths in training teachers for the classroom, as well as the School's broad engagement in innovative research and educational policy, the Barths have established the Brett H. and Natalie W. Barth Scholarship Fund at GSE for master's students enrolled in the Teacher Education Program. They are proud of the difference that the School is making throughout the United States and beyond by producing educators and leaders.

"To obtain a teaching degree and then receive a teaching salary is not an attractive monetary investment on the face of it," says Barth, cofounder of wealth management firm BBR Partners LLC. "If you can attract people who really have a heart for an education career and are incredibly talented at it, then making their training affordable seems like a no-brainer." ■

# Data and Learning

## Penn GSE's Dr. Ryan Baker Leads the Penn Center for Learning Analytics

interview by Juliana Rosati

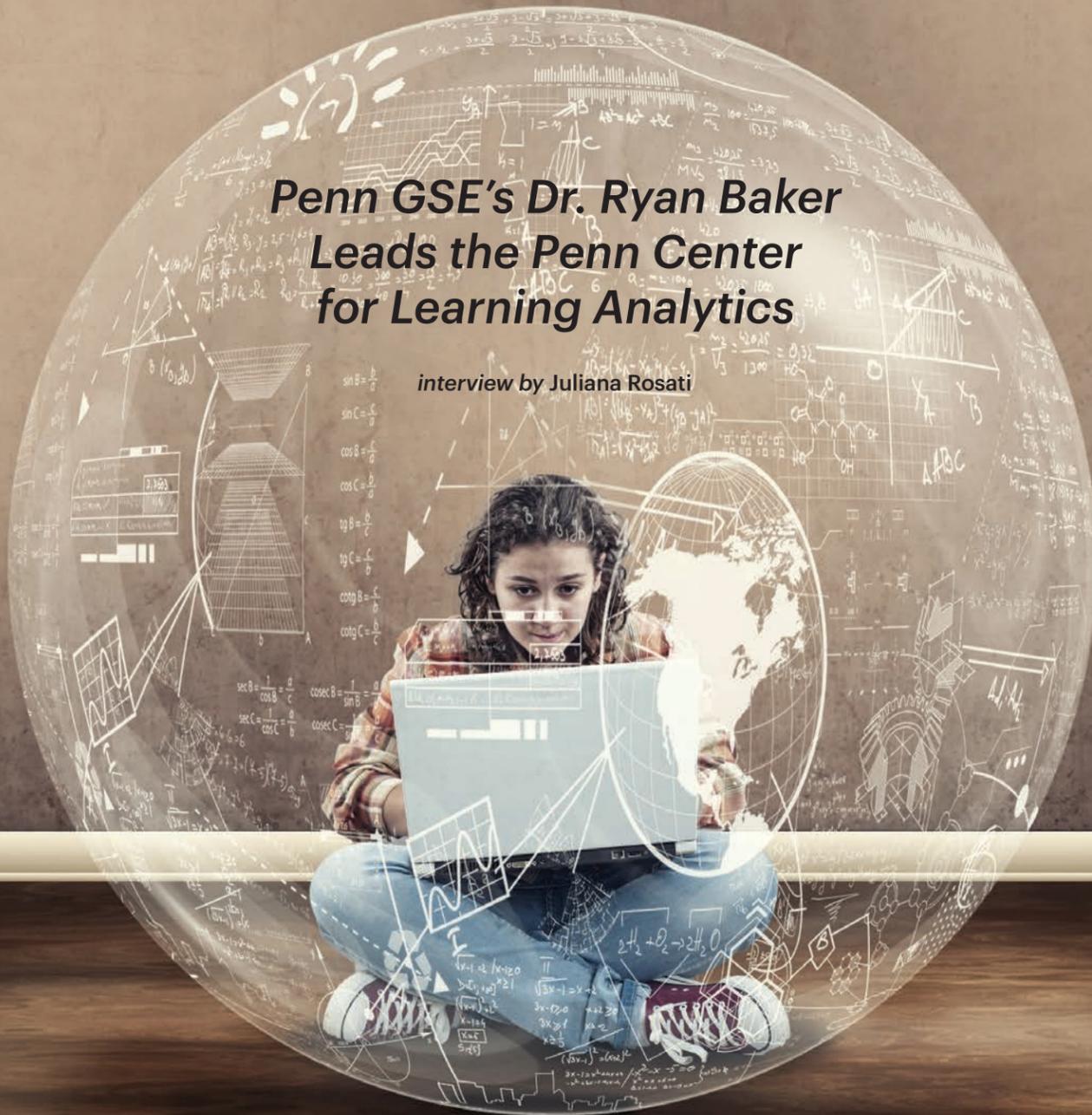


Photo by iStock.com/ALLVISION

When middle school students struggle with math homework, will this affect their college prospects years later? How can massive open online courses (MOOCs) improve their completion rates? Penn GSE Associate Professor Ryan Baker aims to answer questions like these as director of the Penn Center for Learning Analytics (PCLA), working with a team to find factors in online and classroom learning that predict and promote success. Having joined Penn GSE in 2016 as a transplant from Teachers College, Columbia University, Dr. Baker established PCLA with generous support from the Office of the Provost at Penn, as well as federal funding. We sat down with him to learn more about how PCLA is working to improve learning and how he believes data can transform the education landscape.



Photo by Ginger Fox Photography

Dr. Ryan Baker

### How would you describe PCLA's mission?

We use data to study how learning unfolds. We are trying to identify aspects of a student's experience that predict long-term outcomes, so that these can be addressed early. For example, one of our projects has shown that if students exhibit boredom, confusion, careless behaviors, or other forms of disengagement during middle school mathematics, this affects not only their performance on standardized examinations at the end of the year, but also their college prospects several years later—whether they will go to college, whether it will be a selective college, and

what they will major in when they get there. Findings like these can be used to develop more effective curricula and teaching approaches.

### What kinds of learning environments do you study, and how?

We look at a variety of formats, including state-of-the-art online learning like MOOCs, traditional classroom instruction, and blended learning, where students use software in a classroom. It happens to be easier to collect data about online and blended contexts, but we are interested in learning across the board. We use a range of methods, from large-scale approaches like data mining to small-scale observational techniques.

### Data mining means developing computer algorithms to find hidden patterns in large quantities of data. What does this make possible?

With traditional research methods, typically you can only ask one question at a time. With data mining, if you have enough data, you can ask ten thousand questions at a time. We have a large portfolio of data-mining projects. For one of them, Ph.D. student Juan Miguel Andres is analyzing over a hundred data sets about the MOOCs Penn offers for free to learners around the world through the Coursera and edX platforms. He is using the data to test fifteen previously published findings about MOOCs. Too often, studies about MOOCs

take a narrow approach, drawing conclusions from the data on just one course. We want to see if the existing findings about things like the completion rates and benefits of MOOCs can really be generalized across multiple courses in different subjects for different populations, and data mining allows us to do that.

"If students exhibit boredom, confusion, careless behaviors, or other forms of disengagement during middle school mathematics, this affects not only their performance on standardized examinations at the end of the year, but also their college prospects several years later."

**What are some other highlights of your data-mining projects?**

Dr. Jaclyn Ocumpaugh, PCLA's associate director, is working to identify in real time which students in a classroom are engaging in behaviors that impact their learning. This could save field researchers time and money by giving them a better sense of where to focus when they observe a classroom. Ph.D. student Stefan Slater is working on a project that analyzes 160,000 math problems to determine which ones are most effective for students and why. For another key project, the Center has received a grant from the Office of Naval Research to determine which aspects of U.S. Navy training lead to better outcomes, such as a lower risk of accidents.

**In addition to the U.S. Navy project, have you done other research on workplace learning?**

Yes, when I was at Columbia we did a project studying the emotional reactions of military cadets training to be combat medics. The training content that the cadets go through is, frankly, very intense. Our findings identified ways to make the training more supportive, such as messages highlighting the trainees' ability to succeed.

**How can PCLA's findings be translated into better learning experiences for students?**

Largely, findings like ours can be taken up by various educational vendors—such as developers of online or print curricula. So, for example, a vendor that provides an algebra curriculum to a thousand schools could make use of our findings to improve their content so that students will learn more effectively. Or these companies can provide the information in a digestible fashion for faculty and administrators.

**Last summer, you taught your MOOC “Big Data and Education” for the first time at Penn, having brought it from Columbia. What are some of the highlights of the course?**

It's designed for people in graduate school and the workforce who want to learn the key methods of educational data mining

and learning analytics. As far as I know, fewer than ten universities in the world teach these subjects, and many of them use my MOOC as their textbook. I'm excited about the ways we have continued to push the envelope for MOOC instruction and content. For this version of the course, we moved toward incorporating adaptive learning, using software that provides the content in a way that is tailored to each student's individual needs.

**Adaptive learning is often pointed to as a way to improve education. How well do you think it is currently applied, and how do you view its potential?**

No currently existing system really reaches the full vision of adaptive learning—education that is sensitive to the full range of differences that students bring to bear, in which students receive individualized learning experiences that will most help them to grow. Some of the technology that is currently used to customize students' learning in K–12 is pretty good, though it hasn't cracked the problem entirely. K–12 education is ahead of some other areas in implementing adaptive learning, but higher education is moving a lot faster and tends to be better equipped to evaluate evidence

and adopt good products. Right now, some sustainable efforts for higher education are coming out of large publishers and learning technology companies.

**Through support from the Office of the Provost, PCLA has a central location in the Van Pelt-Dietrich Library to foster its collaborative role at Penn. How does the Center collaborate?**

We have an important collaboration with the University's Online Learning Initiative, which is located next to us in the library, to study the data from Penn's MOOCs. Since joining Penn GSE, I've been talking with many others on campus about potential collaborations in areas such as computer science and writing, and I feel very positive about the collaborative possibilities at Penn. The Center also has research collaborations with the University of Michigan, the University of Illinois, Georgia State University, and Beijing Normal University in China, among many other places. Beyond my role at GSE and Penn, I see my job as one of building things that can do outreach from the University, so that people around the world can utilize Penn's great research instruments. ■



From left: Doctoral student Stefan Slater, Associate Professor Ryan Baker, doctoral student Juan Miguel Andres, and PCLA Associate Director Dr. Jaclyn Ocumpaugh use data to study how learning unfolds. Photo by Ginger Fox Photography

# New EAA President Seeks to Build Connections Among Alumni

by Susan Scerbo, GED'14, EAA Communications Committee Chair

**Marsha Comegno, GED'98, GRD'04**, wants to create new opportunities for Penn GSE alumni to stay connected with their alma mater. As the new president of the Education Alumni Association (EAA), she envisions rising engagement among graduates. Her goal for achieving that engagement is to develop meaningful pathways and programming for alumni.

"I want to get to know alumni and students," says Comegno. "I want to learn about their journeys through graduate school and in the job market, and I want to be able to tap into their individual talents and experiences to help build connections."

As she works to promote the interests of Penn GSE alumni, Comegno can draw upon years of experience matching people with opportunities, having worked in the admissions offices of Penn Law, her alma mater Gettysburg College, and Salem College, where she was associate dean of admissions. Today, she continues to help students and families navigate the college selection process as a college consultant through her own business, Journey Education Consulting.

All Penn GSE alumni become members of the EAA upon graduation. Comegno will begin her term as president by leading the EAA Board, the Association's governing body, in a strategic planning process to identify the needs of Penn GSE alumni. The process will involve benchmarking with similar schools of education and direct outreach to alumni. "We need to take the pulse of our alumni and students," she explains.

The EAA's mission is to provide opportunities for continued advancement, professional growth, networking, and sharing of expertise among alumni. Comegno envisions the Board focusing this year on partnerships for professional development, working in collaboration with Penn GSE's new director of career and professional development and the School's Office of Development and Alumni Relations. Another priority for Comegno will be to ensure that the alumni community's voice is expressed by the EAA Board.

Comegno brings the perspective of an experienced alumni leader and higher education professional. She was instrumental in developing a strategic plan for Gettysburg College as president of its alumni association and continues to serve her undergraduate alma mater as a member of its board of trustees. Through her consultancy business, she is a regular visitor to many college and university campuses, and in 2016 she co-chaired the annual conference of the Higher Education Consultants Association, a professional organization that supports consultants across the nation.

Comegno believes that ensuring a vibrant future for an alumni community begins with fostering

professional networking. "By increasing these connections among alumni, we're going to give them a valuable lifelong relationship to the School," says Comegno. "This is a model I have seen work very well on other campuses, and I know we can make it work here at Penn GSE." ■

*Marsha Comegno holds Ed.D. and M.S. degrees in higher education administration from Penn GSE and a B.A. summa cum laude, Phi Beta Kappa from Gettysburg College. She lives with her husband, John, and their three children in New Jersey.*

*Susan Scerbo holds an M.S.Ed. degree in higher education administration from Penn GSE and a B.A. in literature and writing from The Pennsylvania State University. She lives with her husband and son in Narberth, Pennsylvania.*

Visit [www.gse.upenn.edu/alumni](http://www.gse.upenn.edu/alumni) to learn more about Penn GSE alumni programming and the Education Alumni Association.



Photo by Lisa Godfrey

# TRANSFORMING SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

## PENN GSE PROGRAM SHAPES EDUCATION ACROSS SECTORS

by Stephanie Berrong

One Wednesday night a month, from her home in the mountains of northeastern Georgia, DaRel Christiansen joins her Penn GSE classmates online for a conversation about best practices in educational leadership. Representing public, charter, and independent schools, the working professionals in Penn GSE's School Leadership Program (SLP) are transforming their understandings of schools and developing their own capacities to effect change as they aspire to become principals, heads of school, and other leaders. The virtual sessions keep the cohort's momentum strong in between monthly weekend sessions that bring the students to campus from as far away as California and as nearby as Philadelphia.

Christiansen is director of admissions at Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School, a private boarding and day school where 78 percent of the student body receives financial aid. She has found it energizing to work side by side with her classmates at Penn GSE who have different roles and come from other types of schools.

"I really like the immersion in an academic community of peers," says Christiansen, who intends to use her experience to redefine her current admissions position, expanding her scope by shifting her role into that of an enrollment manager.

She came to Penn GSE with the goal of enriching her perspective. "I wanted a deeper understanding of the broad topics around running an independent school," she explains. That would mean venturing into areas beyond admissions, but Christiansen decided she wanted to push herself. "While I was, to be quite honest, a little scared about the deep dive into pedagogy and instructional practices, I was excited to delve into something that was going to be a challenge," she says.

Christiansen was drawn to the eleven-month program's design. SLP launched a decade ago with a cohort model that places student diversity at the core of learning. Students range from those with three to four years of experience to more seasoned mid-career professionals and hail from such divergent career paths as admissions, development, teaching, and consulting in the private sector. They are also geographically diverse; what started primarily as a local program has evolved into one with a national reach, as the combination of virtual and on-campus sessions has helped SLP attract students from across the country.

One of the most significant forms of diversity, however, is the way that SLP integrates students from private, public, and charter schools. Matriculants enroll in one of the program's three tracks—Independent School, Public/Charter School, or Certification-Only. Students in the first two tracks expect to earn an M.S.Ed. in School Leadership as well as public-school principal certification, while those in the latter track pursue certification alone. Students in all three tracks learn together.

"It's the only program I know of that has that mix," says Earl Ball, SLP's director and one of its architects. "We really believe that if we're going to make progress in education, there has to be this discussion across sectors," he adds. "The siloed approach where the

private school people don't talk to the public school people and the charter school people are in the middle somewhere just doesn't make sense. There's a lot for people to learn from one another, and that's something that we're excited about. Good schooling is good schooling, regardless of the sector."

Aaron Lucas, an English as a New Language teacher and coordinator at P.S. 33 Timothy Dwight School, a public school in the Bronx, is an SLP student in Christiansen's cohort. His long-term career goal is to continue in public education as the



↑ DaRel Christiansen.  
Photo by Ginger Fox Photography

**"I wanted a deeper understanding of the broad topics around running an independent school."**

principal of a dual-language elementary school. Attracted to the program's geographically diverse mix of students, he says connecting with peers at public schools in other states has broadened his knowledge. "Public schools aren't monolithic," he notes. "Pennsylvania's schools differ from New Jersey's, for example." He has also learned from his peers at private schools, gaining insight on approaches that have been adopted more widely in their institutions, such as project-based learning, a teaching method that emphasizes student-centered projects.

Administratively, SLP reflects the cross-sector philosophy as well. Ball, who served as the head of the private William Penn Charter School in Philadelphia for more than three decades, partners with co-director Priscilla Dawson, an expert on leadership in urban schools who spent thirty years as a leader in public schools pursuing school reform. "The mixture of students from the three sectors enhances the dialogue about quality education," Dawson says of the cohort model. "Conversations recognize differences, but the focus is on how the school leader provides the vision and leadership to create caring learning environments that promote success for all students regardless of context."

Over the course of the program, students develop that vision and leadership by participating in the rigorous weekend sessions, listening to expert speakers, collaborating on group projects, and observing practitioners in school settings. To further expose

Photos by Ginger Fox Photography and iStock.com/ozgurdonmaz



↑ Aaron Lucas. Photo by Ginger Fox Photography

“I look forward to continuing to grow and learn by reading the literature of education research and forming relationships with exceptional school leaders.”

students to practical perspectives and foster their ability to effect change, SLP requires ongoing communication with a mentor in the field and a capstone research project.

For his research project, Lucas is investigating faculty perspectives about Advance, the teacher development and evaluation system for New York City public schools. “Prior to 2013, there was no teacher practice rubric,” he says. “You were only rated satisfactory or unsatisfactory. Your teaching was not attached to any type of student achievement data, so Advance represented a big shift to being accountable for test scores and the progress that students made.” He is documenting his colleagues’ challenges and successes and will share the results with his school community in the hopes that changes can be made where they are warranted.

Leaders with research skills are better equipped to advocate for meaningful change, according to Ball. “Research is a powerful tool for documenting challenges and finding solutions,” he says. “We believe very strongly in the idea of teachers and administrators as researchers who know how to do practical research that’s focused on the setting.”

The program-assigned mentors, experienced educational leaders, further prepare students for the realities of leadership roles. Students and mentors communicate weekly, and each mentor makes a visit to the mentee’s workplace to gain a firsthand understanding of the student’s institutional setting.

Christiansen sees long-term and short-term advantages to her mentor relationship with Penn alumnus John “Hench” Murray, an educational consultant who served for nearly twenty years as head of the Woodlynde

School, an independent school in suburban Philadelphia. “He has helped guide my thinking; he has helped me when I wrestled with ideas or thoughts; he has been supportive at times when I’ve been uncertain about what I should do next,” she says. “I imagine that he will continue to be someone I can reach out to even after I graduate.”

Dawson notes, “We believe the mentors have an enormous impact on our students’ growth as leaders. Relationships commonly extend beyond the program and into the professional realm.”

As Christiansen and Lucas look ahead to their paths beyond the program, when they will join SLP’s community of alumni serving in leadership positions at hundreds of schools, they feel empowered to make their mark on the future of education.

“I’m passionate about admissions work, and I know that this program will help me contribute more deeply and more widely in my school and achieve my long-term goals of consulting and writing about best practices in admissions,” says Christiansen.

Lucas adds, “I’ve learned that changes in schools are possible with intentional support and accountability, if a school leader has an altruistic appreciation of high standards for all children. I look forward to continuing to grow and learn by reading the literature of education research and forming relationships with exceptional school leaders.” ■

↓ Earl Ball. Photo by Ginger Fox Photography



# CELEBRATING EDUCATORS



Left to right: Penn Trustee Emeritus George A. Weiss, W’65, HON’14, and Dean Pam Grossman welcomed Penn GSE alumni to campus with a conversation about educational opportunity. Photo by Lisa Godfrey

Penn GSE honored and recognized the extraordinary impact of our community with two special events during Penn’s Alumni Weekend.

At Voices in Education, Dean Pam Grossman held a conversation about educational opportunity with Penn Trustee Emeritus George A. Weiss, W’65, HON’14, founder and chairman of the nonprofit Say Yes to Education.

An alumni reception recognized the 2017 Education Alumni Awardees and others, including alumni who have spent five or more years as teachers and school leaders. Dean Grossman said, “Alumni are the greatest testament to Penn GSE’s mission of producing transformative teachers and leaders. Your collective impact is changing the face of education locally, nationally, and globally.” ■

## 2017 Education Alumni Awardees

**Penn GSE Educator of the Year Award**  
Noah Tennant, GRD’06

**Helen C. Bailey Award**  
Keith F. Look, GED’97, GRD’02

**William B. Castetter Alumni Award of Merit**  
Diane R. Waff, C’76, GRD’07

**Ethel and Allen “Buddy” Carruth Sustained Leadership in Education Award**  
Natasha Murray, GRD’05

**The Penn GSE Alumni Recent Alumni/Early Career Award of Merit**  
Steve D. Mobley Jr., GED’06  
Anthony Zarate, C’12, GED’13



Dean Pam Grossman congratulates the 2017 Education Alumni Awardees. Left to right: Anthony Zarate, C’12, GED’13; Natasha Murray, GRD’05; Dean Grossman; Steve D. Mobley Jr., GED’06; Diane R. Waff, C’76, GRD’07; Noah Tennant, GRD’06; Keith F. Look, GED’97, GRD’02. Photo by Lisa Godfrey

# Alumni Notes

## 1940s

**Jane Burke Lego, ED'49**, is retired and still appreciative of her Penn education. She has moved to her son's home and looks forward to making new friends.

## 1960s

**Bill Kautz, GED'61**, is working on his autobiography. Before his retirement, he was an assistant professor at Pennsylvania State University and worked as bureau director of higher education for the State Department of Education.

## 1970s

**Myrna Agris, CW'63, GED'73, GRD'79**, a financial advisor at Morgan Stanley in Houston, TX, gave a lecture on finance at the Mensa Regional Gathering in June.

**Lois Kimmelman, GED'75**, has founded the website Historecycle.com, which showcases historic building renovations that successfully integrate "green" elements.

**Alice Korngold, CW'74, GED'77**, wrote her second book, *A Better World, Inc.: How Companies Profit by Solving Global Problems... Where Governments Cannot* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

**Daniel P. Kraft, C'71, GED'71**, was a pediatrician in Palm Beach County, FL, specializing in learning disabilities and behavioral pediatrics. Now retired, he volunteers at a bilingual elementary school and elsewhere.

**Joan Poliner Shapiro, GED'71, GRD'78**, became an emeritus professor at Temple University's College of Education in June. She was the keynote lecturer on ethical decision-making at a conference sponsored by Penn's Excellence and Equity Center in July.

## 1980s

**Maria Antonia Cowles, GED'87**, having retired from Penn, has been conducting OPI language assessment in English and Portuguese for academe and the military, training language testers, and creating language evaluation materials for K-12 students.

**Monica Bieniosek Davis, C'81, GED'81**, completed coursework in administrative leadership at St. Martin's University. She is in her second year as principal of Holy Family School in Lacey, WA.

**Elizabeth Flemming, C'83, GED'83**, is in her thirty-fifth year teaching math at William Penn Charter School in Philadelphia, PA, where her daughter is now a student.

**Peggy Haykal, C'87, GED'82**, a lifelong swimmer, is a swim instructor at the Princeton Fitness and Wellness Center in Princeton, NJ.

**Nadia Hionides, GED'80**, founded The Foundation Academy in Jacksonville, FL, in 1988. A K-12 school with a current student body of 315, it offers a project-based curriculum.

**James W. McGuire, C'82, GED'83**, has retired as a high school social studies teacher after thirty-two wonderful years. He is now a full-time field representative for the New Jersey Education Association.

**Wendy Cassel Mulhern, C'80, GED'81**, published her ninth book of poetry, *Vessels: A Conversation in Porcelain and Poetry* (Schiffer Books, 2017), in June.

**Alicia Pousada, G'78, GR'84**, edited *Being Bilingual in Borinquen: Student Voices from the University of Puerto Rico* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2017). She is a professor at University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras.

**Linda Sperry, GED'85**, is professor of educational and school psychology at Indiana State University, where she is in her seventh year as chairperson of the Department of Communication Disorders and Counseling, School, and Educational Psychology.

**Cynthia Weill, GED'87**, republished her bilingual series, *First Concepts in Mexican Folk Art*, as board books under Cinco Puntos Press of El Paso, TX, gaining a positive review in *The New York Times*.

**Mona Sue Weissmark, GR'86**, finished writing a textbook, *The Science of Diversity*, based upon a course she teaches as a professor at Harvard University.

**Shelley B. Wepner, GED'73, GRD'80**, coedited *Challenges Facing Suburban Schools: Promising Responses to Changing Student Populations* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2017) and gave two presentations at the 2017 American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education Annual Meeting.

**Eriko Yatabe-Waldock, GED'86**, works with international students at the University of Colorado Boulder, managing an ESL program for au pairs and coordinating with Japanese universities.

## 1990s

**Katherine (Kathy) Kaby Anselmi, GNU'81, GR'94**, has returned to full-time teaching as associate clinical professor at Drexel University after eight years as assistant dean of nursing.

**Dave Davies, GED'96**, enjoys living in Silicon Valley and helping St. Andrew's Episcopal School through a transitional year as interim head of school.

**Lisa Keasbey Herring, GED'93**, an ESL teacher in the Pittsburgh public schools, received National Board Certification for English as a New Language, Early and Middle Childhood.

**Jennifer S. Park, GED'98**, assistant professor at Colorado Christian University, earned her Ph.D. in counselor education and supervision at Regent University in 2015.

**Kristy Perry, GED'95**, received tenure at Springfield Technical Community College in Springfield, MA, last year and became English department chair on July 1.

**Sheri Pickover, GED'91**, cowrote *Therapeutic Interventions for Families and Children in the Child Welfare System* (Springer, 2016).

**Rachel Skerritt, C'99, GED'99**, is returning to her alma mater, Boston Latin School, as the first headmaster of color in the school's history.

**Lisa Citron Taglang, GED'96**, works at Penn as university connection programs manager and lives in Havertown, PA, with her husband and two children.

**Michael K. Townsley, GR'94**, is working on a book entitled *Why Colleges Struggle to Change*, which deals with internal and external constraints on change.

## 2000s

**Richard Adzei, C'00, GED'01**, manages education activities in Ghana for the U.S. Agency for International Development, aiming to improve reading performance in public primary schools.

**Michael Class, GED'04**, a Jesuit priest, became executive director of Bellarmine Jesuit Retreat House in Barrington, IL, on July 1, after seventeen years on the faculty of Marquette University.

**Angela Cleveland, GED'01**, is a school counselor at Auten Road Intermediate School in Hillsborough, NJ. She was named the 2017 New Jersey School Counselor of the Year by the New Jersey School Counselors Association.

**Sydney Hunt Coffin, GED'00**, a teacher at Edison High School in Philadelphia, PA, was a guest on Radio Times with Marty Moss-Coane on July 19, in an episode featuring one of his students.

**Mary Robinson Cohen, L'81, GED'07**, is superintendent and principal at Roosevelt Public School in Monmouth County, NJ, which welcomed Perrin Ireland, great-granddaughter of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, as its 2017 commencement speaker.

**Kelly Johnson Comly, GED'07**, graduated from Neumann University in May with an Ed.D. in educational leadership. She married William F. Comly Jr. on January 21.



Photo by Greg Benson Photography

**Delvin Dinkins, GRD'05**, has joined the Pingry School in Basking Ridge, NJ, as assistant headmaster.

**Chris Fariello, GR'04**, is owner of the Philadelphia Institute for Individual, Relational, and Sex Therapy, which now has offices in Philadelphia and Media, PA.

**Alexine Fleck, GED'95, GR'07**, teaches at the Community College of Philadelphia. In her spare time, she works with horses and fosters dogs, cats, and rabbits.

**Laura Fried, GRD'05**, became the eighteenth president of the Maine College of Art on July 1. The 135-year-old private college offers B.A., M.A.T., and M.F.A. degrees.

**Jennifer Michelle Johnson, GED'08**, joined Temple University in July 2017 as an assistant professor in the higher education program. She earned her Ph.D. from the University of Maryland, College Park.

**Tracy Ellen Kamens, GED'00, GRD'04**, accepted a position as operations manager for PennPAC, an organization that helps solve nonprofit business challenges through the time and talent of Penn alumni volunteers.

**Marco Kratochiv II, GED'07**, director of institutional research and effectiveness at Governors State University, was elected a vice president as well as president-elect of Kappa Kappa Psi National Honorary Band Fraternity.

**Paul Marthers, GRD'08**, became vice provost for enrollment management at Emory University in July.

**Yvette Denise Mayhan, OT'80, GR'00**, is project lead for Talk with Me Baby, a program aimed at breaking the cycle of illiteracy and improving the long-term health of babies born at Grady Hospital in Atlanta, GA.

**Dale McCree, GED'86, GR'03**, recently joined the Discovery Center in Murfreesboro, TN, as vice president of audience and community engagement after twenty-eight years at the Franklin Institute.

**Erin Servillo, GRD'08**, completed her first year as assistant superintendent of personnel in East Windsor School District in New Jersey.

**Devon Skerritt, GED'05**, is associate director for design and innovation programs at Southern Methodist University, where he focuses on design thinking. He is also finishing his Ed.D.

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**Leigh M. (Gardner) Tolley, C'00, GED'02**, is a tenure-track assistant professor of secondary education at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette and chair of the PreK-12 Educational Evaluation Topical Interest Group of the American Evaluation Association.

**Dena Haritos Tsamitis, GRD'09**, is director of the Information Networking Institute at Carnegie Mellon University. In April, she was named the inaugural Barbara Lazarus Professor in Information Networking in recognition of her work fostering diversity.

**Michael Steven Williams, GRD'08**, has been appointed to a tenure-track position as assistant professor at the University of Missouri College of Education, effective this fall.

**Regina Zurbano, GED'03, CGS'04**, was appointed principal of John F. Kennedy High School in La Palma, CA, the first school to be named after President Kennedy.

## 2010s

**Scott C. Beardsley, GRD'15**, dean of the University of Virginia's Darden School of Business, wrote *Higher Calling: The Rise of Nontraditional Leaders in Academia* (University of Virginia Press, 2017).

**Hannah Brenneman, GED'15**, was selected by the U.S. Department of State for a ten-month fellowship project teaching English at the Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán in Mérida, Mexico.

**Tom Bullock, GRD'10**, founder and CEO of LEADERS Inc., has been appointed to the Savannah Technical College Foundation Board of Trustees.

**Katrina Burns, G'11, GED'13**, is writing a dissertation at the University of Michigan regarding academic research laboratory safety.

**Nesime Can, GED'14**, is pursuing her doctoral degree in counselor education at Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi. Her research addresses compassion fatigue in master's counseling students.

**Brittany Clarke, GED'16**, was named Teacher of the Year at Pan American Academy Charter School in Philadelphia, PA.

**Karen Warren Coleman, GRD'15**, became the Eugene McDermott head of school at the Hockaday School in Dallas, TX, on July 1.

**Stephanie Consoli, GED'12**, accepted a position as director of college guidance at Magen David Yeshivah in Brooklyn, NY, effective this fall.

**Rachel Crew, GED'16**, is a management consultant with Eagle Hill Consulting, regularly applying knowledge gained in the Education Entrepreneurship program at Penn GSE.

**Brian Cuzzolina, LPS'08, GED'10**, was promoted to interim director of the Office of Academic Resources and assistant dean of the college at Haverford College. He will pursue his Ed.D. at Temple University in fall 2018.

**Kurt Davies, GED'12**, was appointed the inaugural director of prestigious scholarships at the James Madison University Honors College, where he will oversee students applying to nationally competitive scholarships.

**Michael J. Driscoll, GRD'14**, a professor at Adelphi University, was a Fulbright Specialist at the National University of Ireland during the summer of 2017.

**Diane E. Eynon, GRD'10**, senior fellow and director of the Executive Doctorate in Higher Education Management program at Penn GSE, wrote *Women*,

*Economic Development, and Higher Education: Tools in the Reconstruction and Transformation of Post-Apartheid South Africa* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

**Rebecca (Steinberg) Fox, GED'17**, teaches AP Psychology to adolescents. She is deeply grateful to the Penn GSE community and Drs. Fegley, Baker, and Gomez for the experiences and education she received.

**Emily Gasoi, GRD'12**, cofounded Artful Education, a consulting practice focused on helping arts organizations and schools strengthen creative teaching and learning. She coauthored *These Schools Belong to You and Me* (Beacon Press, 2017).

**Justin Adam Gelzhiser, GED'12**, is completing Ph.D. studies in social science and comparative education at UCLA's Graduate School of Education and Information Studies. He received the George F. Kneller Award in 2016 for his research.

**Aman Goyal, GED'13**, accepted a position as associate director for student life at the Wharton School. He previously held roles in the Office of Student Affairs and the Office of Alcohol & Other Drug Program Initiatives at Penn.

**Jiawen Guo, GED'16**, works in the e-learning industry in Shanghai, China, as a product researcher and designer and hopes to meet Penn alumni with an interest in her field.

**Lisanne Hauck, GED'16**, is putting her Penn GSE master's in medical education to good use as a faculty member at The City University of New York School of Medicine.

**Amy Hecht, GED'03, GRD'12**, was appointed vice president for student affairs at Florida State University.

**Kalyn Higgins, GED'14**, has accepted a position as an academic language therapist at Rawson Saunders in Austin, TX, where she will specialize in basic language skills for elementary-aged dyslexic students.

**Nicola Tollett Jefferson, GED'16**, has accepted a position as lead English teacher and assistant principal at a newly formed international school in Shenzhen, China.

**Dan Kent, GED'16**, has been an admissions counselor for nearly a year at Yale–NUS College in Singapore. His work has brought him to many places, such as Armenia, Kazakhstan, Brazil, Panama, and Bulgaria.

**Abby Kirchner, GED'10**, is a founder of The Stone Independent School, a progressive, interdisciplinary high school in downtown Lancaster, PA.

**Abraham Kou, GED'15, GED'16**, is an outpatient methadone counselor at Thomas Jefferson University's Narcotic Addiction Rehabilitation Program, where he serves those grappling with opioid dependency.

**Robert Jean LeBlanc, GR'16**, assistant professor at the University of Lethbridge in Alberta, Canada, received the 2017 AERA Catholic Education SIG Award for Outstanding Dissertation for his Penn GSE dissertation.

**Vincent Leone, GED'16**, accepted a position as program manager of learning experience and design at the non-profit Camden Coalition of Healthcare Providers, prompted by his experience teaching students who lacked access to quality health care.

**Danielle Levine, GED'16**, is an assistant editor at a startup high-tech company in Tel Aviv, Israel. She is happy to be in a multicultural environment using the skills she learned in Penn GSE's TESOL program.

**Holly Link, GR'16**, is director of educational programming and research at the Centro de Cultura, Arte, Trabajo, y Educación in Norristown, PA. Her research on Latino students and schooling has been published in *Harvard Educational Review*, *American Educational Research Journal*, and *Journal of Latinos and Education*.

**Rachel Skrlac Lo, GR'16**, was appointed assistant professor of reading, literacy, writing, and assessment at Villanova University, effective in August.

**Diane Luckman, GED'11**, was selected for the third consecutive year to present at the Progressive Education Conference. She is a teacher at The School in Rose Valley, located in Pennsylvania.

**Anita Mastroieini, GGS'99, GRD'10**, was recently promoted to executive director of graduate education and initiatives in the Office of the Provost at Penn. She was previously the founding director of Penn's Graduate Student Center and Family Resource Center.

**Mark Miller, GED'17**, is a school counselor at William H. Ziegler Elementary School in The School District of Philadelphia and was promoted to mental health professional at the Philadelphia-based Center for Autism.

**Angel Mills, GED'16**, is communications coordinator at Georgia Organics, where she works to convey the importance of local, organic food and eradicating inequality in food production.

**Carolanne Mitchell, GED'11**, has been a myPLACE learning coach for two years, helping adult learners in Philadelphia access classes to improve their reading and math skills and prepare for high school equivalency tests.

**Dalyn Montgomery, GED'12**, was recently promoted to director of enrollment for the University of Redlands School of Education.

**Cathy May Moyer, GED'17**, works as an autism parent peer coach in a pilot research project. She begins a Ph.D. program in special education at Temple University this fall.

**Juliana Musselman, GED'15**, is in her third year of teaching special education at Nashville Academy of Computer Science, a RePublic Schools charter school. She particularly enjoys helping students learn to love reading.

**Payal J. Patel, GED'14**, a teacher in Sherburne-Earlville Central School District in Sherburne, NY, accepted invitations to appear as a lead speaker

at the National Counsel of Teachers of Mathematics October 2017 conference and to attend the Educator Summit 2017 last summer.

**Jasmine Phillips, GED'17**, accepted a position as an administrator at the Arkansas School for Math, Science, and the Arts. She is also a consultant for Great China International.

**Callista Regis, GED'17**, has accepted a teaching position with Uncommon Schools, her first in the United States. Previously a teacher overseas, she looks forward to preparing low-income students for college.

**Anthony L. Rini, GRD'11**, was promoted to senior vice provost for budget, planning, and administration at Northeastern University after serving as vice provost for six years.

**Christina Riso, GED'14**, was appointed deputy chief of staff in the Office of the President at The College of New Jersey in May.

**Elizabeth (Liz) Anne Schopfer, C'13, GED'14, GED'15**, received her New Jersey state license as an associate counselor in marriage and family therapy in March. She is a bilingual mobile response outreach and case manager at Robins' Nest Inc. in Glassboro, NJ.

**Melissa K. Trotta, GRD'13**, joined AGB Search as associate managing principal in July. The company is an executive search firm focusing on higher education leadership.

**Jill Vizza, GED'10**, completed her Ed.D. in educational administration at Temple University in August. Her research addressed single-subject acceleration in an elementary school setting.

**Nicole (Ruixin) Wang, GED'11**, a Ph.D. candidate at Pennsylvania State University, will pilot an online course this fall as part of her research on improving online learning.

**Jayson Weingarten, C'12, GED'16**, interned as a product manager at Workday this summer after completing his first year in the Wharton M.B.A. program.

**Marcus T. Wright, GED'14**, wrote *Paradox of the Learning Game: The Promise and Plight of Video Games and Learning* (Design Meets Mind, LLC, 2017). He returned to Penn GSE this fall to pursue his Ed.D. in higher education.

**Jiusi Yao, GED'16**, is the founder of Buds, China's first design and lifestyle media brand. She appears on the 2017 *Forbes* China 30 Under 30 list and is a global shaper at World Economic Forum.

**Cong Zhang, GED'11, GED'12**, obtained her Ph.D. in counseling psychology at Boston University and plans to begin work as a postdoctoral fellow in

psychiatry at the Learning and Emotional Assessments Program at Massachusetts General Hospital.

**Qinqin Zhao, GED'17**, began working as a research analyst at Curriculum Associates, an edtech company headquartered in the greater Boston area, in July.

**Zihui Zheng, GED'17**, is an operations analyst at First Future, an online English education company. ■

## Share Your News

Fill out our Alumni Notes form at [www.gse.upenn.edu/alumni/alumni-notes](http://www.gse.upenn.edu/alumni/alumni-notes) to tell us your latest professional updates.

*Submissions have been edited due to space constraints and magazine style guidelines.*

# TIPS FROM MATH INSPIRED BY STUDENTS' LIVES

*The Educator's Playbook:*



Janine Remillard



Caroline Ebby

It's a question math teachers know students will ask: "When am I going to use *this* in real life?" The Community Based Mathematics Project (CBMP) of Philadelphia offers lesson ideas designed to make math more accessible and meaningful to students, connecting it to their lives and local environments. Penn GSE faculty Janine Remillard and Caroline Ebby developed the initiative in partnership with GSE graduate students and middle school math teachers in The School District of Philadelphia. Start with the tips below and visit <http://cbmp.gse.upenn.edu/> for free, Common Core-aligned lesson plans you can use or adapt.



## Focus on Real-World Problems

Show students how mathematics can help them understand the world around them and make choices benefiting their lives and communities. Many lessons on the CBMP website share this goal. For example, an important decision that Philadelphia middle school students face is choosing a District high school. Lessons analyzing high school performance data give students tools to navigate the application process. Other empowering topics include using math to compare cell phone plans and understanding who really makes money on the lottery. To come up with your own topics, interview your students or hold group conversations to learn what excites or concerns them.

*(continued on next page)* →

## Alumni Directory PROJECT

# CALLING ALL ALUMNI

**We want to share news, initiatives, and opportunities that are relevant to you.**

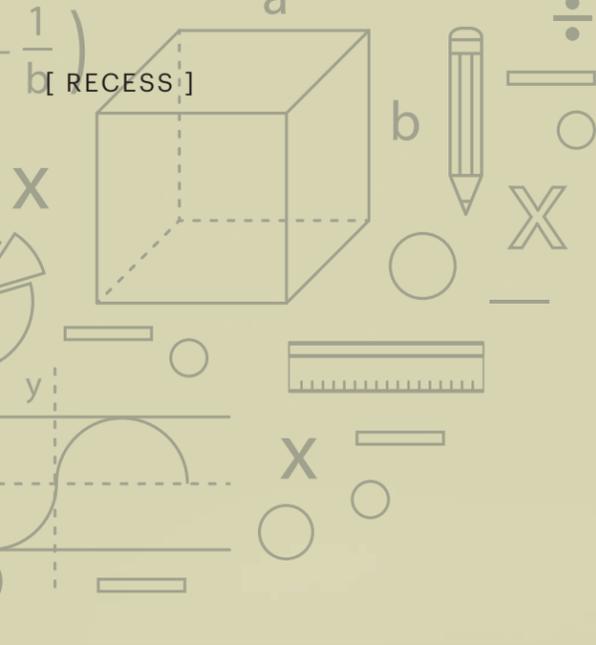
To better connect our alumni community and learn about the impact of our graduates, Penn GSE is working with our trusted partners at Publishing Concepts (PCI) to create a comprehensive alumni directory.

**Please call the dedicated, toll-free Penn GSE Alumni Directory verification line today to update your contact information.**

**866.647.8629**

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You can learn more by visiting our website at [www.gse.upenn.edu/alumni](http://www.gse.upenn.edu/alumni)



## Keep it Local

Drawing from news and current events, find issues that have local relevance to your students and then use publicly available data to create related math lessons. Many CBMP math lessons tap into students' daily experiences living in Philadelphia. In one lesson, students find the difference between the amount of sugar listed per serving on a label and the total amount of sugar in the bottle, learning to make healthier choices and gaining insight relevant to the city's new tax on sugary drinks. Other local lessons address how to calculate travel times and distances for trolley routes and navigate the grid system of the Center City map.

## Connect with Colleagues

Find colleagues who share your interest in creating relevant math lessons that benefit your local community. Brainstorm the topics and the mathematics together, swap ideas for modifying lessons, and share your classroom experiences. The CBMP website is more than a place for educators to download lesson plans and resources; it is also a free and open professional learning community. Every lesson includes a discussion forum where educators can connect to discuss their work. Collaboration is key to the creative process and can help you accomplish your goals. ■

### Want more advice for educators?

These tips are adapted from *The Educator's Playbook*, a monthly Penn GSE newsletter that distills faculty research into useful advice for K-12 educators. Visit [www.gse.upenn.edu/news/subscribe](http://www.gse.upenn.edu/news/subscribe) to sign up.



Photo by Darryl W. Moran Photography



# Commencement 2017

Penn GSE held its 103rd Commencement Ceremony on May 13 at the Palestra. Dr. Robert Parris Moses, a legendary civil rights activist and founder of the Algebra Project, gave the Commencement address. The ceremony also featured graduating student speaker Fatima Zaidi, GED'17. Penn GSE conferred 721 degrees during 2016-2017.



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