


PENN GSE

Spring 2022



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THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION MAGAZINE | UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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Letter from the Dean

Dear Alumni and Friends,

As I write, we are concluding an academic year that has taken place largely in person—a circumstance that would have been far too

obvious to note just a few years ago, but which now carries so much significance. It means that our community has enjoyed teaching, learning, working, and celebrating together again after a long period of social distancing and isolation. There has been much to celebrate this spring, from our return to campus, to our top ranking, to our groundbreaking ceremony for the building expansion that will create a state-of-the-art home for education at Penn.

At the same time, our return to campus does not mean that our world is as it was. We know the impact that COVID-19 has had on our health care workers, but I believe we are only beginning to assess fully the impact all of the events of the past two years have had on the educational landscape. We've witnessed profound disruptions to learning, resources, and social and emotional well-being of young people and educators alike.

We know that the future we face is complex. More and more, society will demand that individuals become lifelong learners who can keep up with the pace of change. I would argue that preparing educators, and especially educational leaders, for what lies ahead is one of the most important undertakings of higher education right now. Now, more than ever, we need a diverse pipeline of educational leaders who are well prepared to respond to an accelerated rate of change in our world, to cultivate individual and community well-being, to turn challenges into opportunities, and to develop innovative solutions to complex problems.

I am proud that Penn GSE is producing the leaders of the future. As you will read in our cover story on page 6, our robust set of leadership programs prepares working professionals to advance learning across preK–12, higher education, and work-

place settings. Our extraordinary faculty, students, and alumni foster an unparalleled, two-way exchange between research and practice that fuels both our programs and the field. Among the alumni and students you will meet are a Philadelphia public school art teacher who is seeking to effect change as a leader, the executive director of a New York City Department of Education leadership academy who is deeply dedicated to student achievement, the dean of a top business school who has been lauded for leadership during the pandemic, and a leader of global talent development who applies academic research in a corporate setting. They are part of an extraordinary network of Penn GSE students, alumni, and faculty propelling educational leadership across institutions and sectors.

Leadership is a recurring theme in this issue of *The Penn GSE Magazine*, from the alumni shaping the workforce in our feature on page 12, to new faculty member and former superintendent Dr. Andrea Kane on page 18, to the programs of the Penn GSE Center for Professional Learning on page 26, to the flux leadership approaches of Dr. Sharon Ravitch on page 31. I hope you will enjoy these and so many other examples of the vision and commitment of our students, alumni, and friends.

While change has become a constant in our lives in so many ways, something that has not changed is the Penn GSE community's commitment to unleashing the power of possibility through education. As always, thank you for all that you do for education and Penn GSE.

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

Editor's note: This issue of The Penn GSE Magazine went to print on May 13, 2022.

FACULTY BOOKSHELF

Higher Education: Handbook of Theory and Research, Volume 37

Edited by **Laura Perna**

Published Spring 2022
by Springer



↑ *The annual Handbook series features contributions from distinguished scholars throughout the world. Each volume provides a compendium of literature reviews on an array of topics of interest to the higher education scholarly and policy communities.*

↓ *This book presents case studies of nationally and locally mandated education reform implementation. The cases show disparate responses to shared concerns and reveal how the work of policy makers and practitioners is shaped by national and historical contexts.*

Implementing Educational Reform: Cases and Challenges

Edited by Colleen McLaughlin and **Alan Ruby**

Published November 2021
by Cambridge University Press

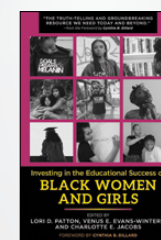


Investing in the Educational Success of Black Women and Girls

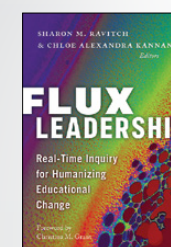
Edited by Lori D. Patton, Venus Evans-Winters, and **Charlotte E. Jacobs**

Published January 2022
by Stylus Publishing

↓ *Written by Black women educators, scholars, and advocates, this book names the challenges Black women and girls face while pursuing their education and offers recommendations for practitioners, policymakers, teachers, and administrators to consider in ensuring the success of Black women and girls.*



→ *A primer on the fundamental business-related aspects of student affairs, this book presents critical skill sets to better equip student affairs practitioner-educators to analyze circumstances, alter environments, invest in structures and programs, and lead campus progress.*



Flux Leadership: Real-Time Inquiry for Humanizing Educational Change

Edited by **Sharon Ravitch** and Chloe Kannan, GRD'21

Published December 2021
by Teachers College Press

↑ *Written by a cohort of students in Penn GSE's Mid-Career Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership, this book introduces a framework for agile, responsive, anti-racist, trauma-informed, healing-centered leadership in times of crisis and beyond. (See page 31 to learn more about flux leadership and flux pedagogy.)*



The Business of Student Affairs: Fundamental Skills for Student Affairs Professionals

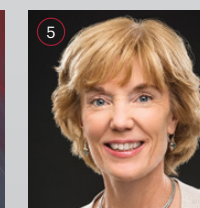
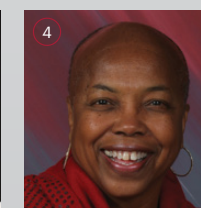
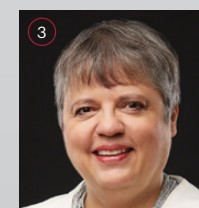
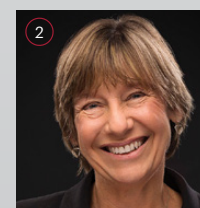
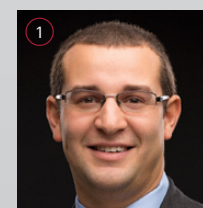
By **Larry Moneta**

Published August 2021
by NASPA

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

★ FACULTY AWARDS & HONORS ★

Nelson Flores (1) received the 2022 Early Career Award from the American Educational Research Association. The award recognizes a scholar in the early stages of their career who has conducted a distinguished program of cumulative education research. **Pam Grossman** (2) was named vice president of the National Academy of Education (NAEd), a prestigious organization dedicated to advancing high-quality education research and evidence-based policy. The NAEd consists of U.S. members and international associates elected on the basis of outstanding scholarship related to education. **Yasmin B. Kafai** (3) was awarded an honorary doctorate from the University of Southern Denmark in 2021 for her work on learning computational thinking. **Diana Slaughter Kotzin** (4), Penn GSE professor emerita, was elected in 2022 to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, an honor recognizing “accomplishments and leadership in academia, the arts, industry, public policy, and research.” As the inaugural Constance E. Clayton Professor in Urban Education, she researched culture, primary education, and home-school relations facilitating in-school academic achievement. **Laura W. Perna** (5) has been named the recipient of the 2022-2023 Faculty Award of Merit presented by Penn Alumni. The award recognizes a faculty member who has made outstanding contributions to alumni education and engagement at Penn by sharing their unique scholarship work with the alumni community. She also received a 2021 Distinguished Alumni Award from the University of Michigan School of Education.



Faculty headshots on pages 3-5 courtesy of Goldenberg Photography and Candace DiCarlo



Penn GSE Once Again Ranks #1 in U.S. News & World Report Best Graduate Education Schools

For the second year in a row, Penn’s Graduate School of Education sits atop the *U.S. News & World Report’s* rankings for graduate schools of education. After tying for the #1 spot last year, Penn GSE has now moved into sole occupancy of the top spot.

This marks Penn GSE’s seventh consecutive year in the top five. This year also marked the fifteenth in a row that Penn GSE’s leadership in education policy and higher education were reflected by top-ten positions, as the Education Policy division was once again ranked #5 and the Higher Education division entered a two-way tie for #4 in their respective categories. Penn GSE’s excellence was also highlighted through rankings in Curriculum and Instruction (fourth year in a row), Education Administration (fifth year in a row), and Elementary Teacher Education (second time in three years).

“To be ranked in the top position for the second year in a row is an honor, and I simply could not be more proud of the exemplary work being done by Penn GSE’s faculty, staff, and students—especially over the turbulence of the past two years,” said Penn GSE Dean Pam Grossman. “This ranking speaks to the passion and resilience of our community and our efforts to ensure that access to a quality education should be available to everyone.”

Penn and Lea School Formalize Partnership

Penn and GSE have entered into a new agreement with The School District of Philadelphia and the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers to expand on Penn’s more than fifty-year connection to and increasingly strong partnership

with the Henry C. Lea School, a K–8 school in West Philadelphia. Throughout the next five years, the University and GSE will contribute more than \$4 million to help support the Lea School’s key initiatives. The agreement builds on investments of more than \$300,000 annually in recent years from Penn’s Office of the President and GSE. “We are inspired by the work being done at the Lea School, which for generations has been vibrant and diverse—from the many languages spoken in its classrooms and hallways, to its skilled and dedicated faculty, to its strong commitment to its students with special needs,” says Penn GSE Dean Pam Grossman, who took part in a celebration of the agreement at Lea (1). “It was important to me that we formalize our relationship in order to create deeper and more flexible support for Principal Gerwer’s ambitious vision as he continues to improve student performance.”

Summer Program to Continue in Support of Philadelphia Schools

Following the successful design and implementation of “Bridging Gaps and Building Capacity,” an in-person summer program for over two hundred elementary students in West and Southwest Philadelphia in 2021, a collaborative team at GSE and Penn has been awarded a two-year renewal grant from the William Penn Foundation to continue the program through the summer of 2023. Contributing to this effort are GSE teams from the Philadelphia Writing Project, the Responsive Math Teaching project, the Professional Counseling program, and the Center for Professional Learning, alongside Penn’s Netter Center for Community Partnerships. The collaborative is overseen by GSE’s Office of School and Community Engagement.



Penn Interim President Wendell Pritchett (left) and School District of Philadelphia Superintendent William R. Hite Jr. (right) shake hands before Penn GSE Dean Pam Grossman (center) at an April 8 celebration at the Lea School. Photo by Eric Suclar, University Communications

Penn GSE Welcomes Rachel Baker

Dr. **Rachel B. Baker (2)** joined Penn GSE in January of 2022 as associate professor in the Higher Education division. Formerly assistant professor of education policy at the University of California, Irvine School of Education, Baker focuses her research on students at broad-access institutions of higher education, such as community colleges, aiming to increase access, persistence, and success for traditionally underserved groups. Her work has been funded by the National Science Foundation, the Institute of Education Sciences, the Spencer Foundation, and the College Futures Foundation.

Inaugural Catapult Cohort Charts a Course for the Future of EdTech

Catapult, a virtual accelerator launched by global education innovation center Catalyst @ Penn GSE, has announced its three inaugural ventures: science education organization eClose Institute, social impact software company Avela, and literacy platform Readlee, recipient of the 2021 Michael and Lori Milken Family Foundation Grand Prize at the Milken-Penn GSE Education Business Plan Competition. Catapult will provide the ventures with an array of tools and resources, including applied learning, personalized coaching, translation of knowledge to practice, and community support. The accelerator is overseen by Penn GSE Director of Innovative Programs and Entrepreneur-in-Residence **John Gamba (3)**. It represents an expansion of the support offered to education entrepreneurs by Catalyst @ Penn GSE, led by Executive Director and Senior Fellow **Michael Golden (4)**.

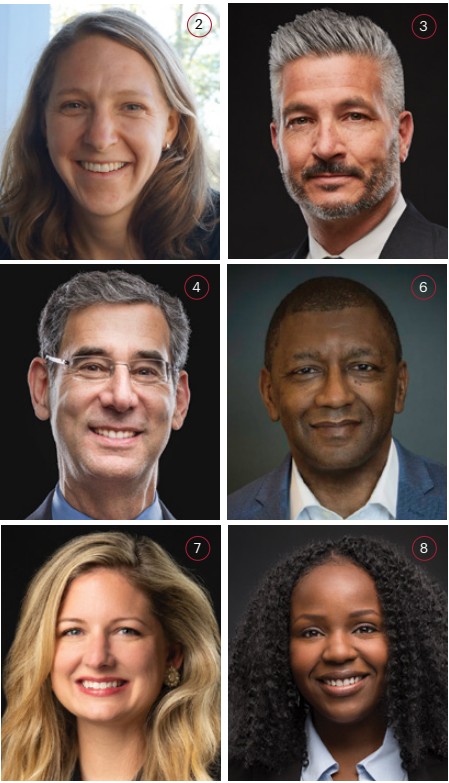


Clayton Lecture Imagines Black Futures in the Metaverse

Dr. **Courtney D. Cogburn (5)**, associate professor of social work at Columbia University School of Social Work, joined the Racial Empowerment Collaborative at Penn GSE to deliver the 23rd Annual Constance E. Clayton Lecture on October 28, 2021. Cogburn addressed pressing questions about the potential of virtual reality, artificial intelligence, and other emerging technologies to perpetuate or counteract real-world racial and social inequalities. Dr. **Howard Stevenson (6)**, the Constance Clayton Professor of Urban Education at Penn GSE, and Dr. Constance E. Clayton, GRD’81, introduced Cogburn’s talk, entitled “UNTETHERED: Black Futures in the Metaverse.” The annual lecture honors Dr. Clayton, who began her career in The School District of Philadelphia as a teacher and went on to serve as superintendent.

Penn GSE Partners in Pathway to Leadership

Penn GSE, The School District of Philadelphia, and Temple University are launching the Pathway to Leadership Principal Preparation Program to prepare employees of the District to become school principals and educational leaders. The program is geared toward not only developing and preparing the next generation of educational leaders, but also diversifying that leadership to better serve the increasingly diverse populations in Philadelphia schools. The program offers a \$25,000 scholarship to attend either Penn or Temple. Students who choose to enroll at Penn, through GSE’s School Leadership Program, will receive an additional \$15,000 of support from the University. The first cohort of students will begin in the summer of 2022.



■ Penn GSE Assistant Professor **Brooks Bowden (7)**, Penn Economics Professor Jere Behrman, and a team from the Center for Benefit-Cost Studies of Education are collaborating with Professor Hirokazu Yoshikawa and NYU’s Global TIES for Children in a major evaluation effort in partnership with the nonprofit organizations Sesame Workshop, the International Rescue Committee, and BRAC. The project is examining six early childhood development interventions serving refugee children and families from Syrian, Rohingya, and Venezuelan refugee contexts in the Middle East, South Asia, and Latin America. This work is supported by the Lego and MacArthur Foundations.

■ The MOVE Activist Archive was awarded a two-year grant of \$100,000 from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation under the auspices of the Community-Based Archives grant program. Penn GSE Assistant Professor **Krystal Strong (8)** serves as principal investigator and project advisor, while Mike Africa Jr. of the MOVE Organization serves as archive director. The MOVE Activist Archive, a joint project of the MOVE Organization and the West Philadelphia Cultural Alliance, in collaboration with partners at Penn, is a site of organizational history and collective memory, a catalyst for transformative justice, and a guide for social movements, most recently amplified by rising attention to police terrorism and state violence in Black communities. ■



Inspiring Impact Faculty Series

What can institutions do to help students make informed choices towards their higher education? How can we respond to questions surrounding the cost, value, and return on investment of a college degree? As higher education undergoes a seismic shift, Penn GSE has been rising to the challenge of preparing educators for a changing world. Four members of the Penn GSE community who are at the forefront of these changes participated in a virtual panel discussion, “The Future of Higher Education,” moderated by Dean Pam Grossman on February 10, 2022. Part of Penn’s Inspiring Faculty Series, the event attracted over four hundred households of Penn alumni, parents, and friends.

The panel consisted of distinguished Penn GSE alumnus Michael Sorrell, GRD’15, president of Paul Quinn College in Dallas, Texas; Penn GSE Associate Professor Amalia Z. Dache; Penn GSE Professor and Board of Advisors Chair of Education Matthew Hartley, associate dean for academic affairs; and GSE Centennial Presidential Professor of Education Laura W. Perna, Penn’s vice provost for faculty.

Visit www.upenn.edu/alumni and find “Inspiring Impact Faculty Series” under the “Events” tab to view the event video.

The Executive Doctorate in Higher Education Management program directed by Dr. Diane Eynon (top left) and the Mid-Career Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership directed by Michael C. Johaneck (bottom left) are two of four executive-format programs in educational leadership at Penn GSE spanning school, college, and workplace settings. Image credits clockwise from top left: David DeBalko Photography; Eric Sutar, University Communications; JPC Photography; and Lora Reehling.

FUELING Educational Leadership ACROSS THE LIFESPAN

Penn GSE Develops the Leaders of the Future for PreK-12, Higher Education, and the Workplace

by Juliana Rosati

“At a time of incredible flux, education needs leaders who are prepared to respond to the accelerated rate of change, to turn challenges into opportunities, and to develop innovative solutions to complex problems. No other Ivy League school of education offers the range of leadership programs that Penn GSE has.”

—Dean Pam Grossman, Penn GSE

As the complex period that began with the COVID-19 pandemic continues, leaders of schools, educational institutions, and organizations are navigating a host of factors. Pressures related to physical and mental health concerns, shifts to and from virtual and hybrid formats, strained resources, heightened awareness of injustice, political polarization, and the “great resignation” continue to play out while the impending effects of climate change and artificial intelligence promise further uncertainty. Given the impact of the era on education and the workplace, Penn GSE Dean Pam Grossman sees educational leadership as a vital priority.

“At a time of incredible flux, education needs leaders who are prepared to respond to the accelerated rate of change, to turn challenges into opportunities, and to develop innovative solutions to complex problems,” says Dean Grossman, who points to Penn GSE’s leadership programs as a hub for the professionals who can shape a bright future. “No other Ivy League school of education offers the range of leadership programs that Penn GSE has,” she says.

At the center of this work are four of Penn GSE’s executive-format programs for working professionals: the School Leadership program, the Mid-Career Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership, the Executive Doctorate in Higher Education Management program, and the Penn Chief Learning Officer program. The School Leadership program leads to the Master of Science in Education (M.S.Ed.) degree and/or principal certification, while the others lead to the Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) degree.

Spanning public and private sectors, and levels from preschool through graduate school and adult learning at organizations including the military and Google, the programs exercise a powerful impact on education and workplace learning. Students report a two-way exchange between their learning and their jobs, one that allows them to apply new knowledge for the benefit of learners, and to gain valuable perspective on critical issues from faculty and classmates. Through a cohort model, in which students learn among a consistent group of peers encompassing a variety of personal and professional identities and backgrounds, the programs build dynamic networks. The result is a diverse pipeline of educational leaders who are prepared to effect change locally, nationally, and globally to produce the citizenry and the workforce of the future.

CREATING BETTER SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTS The School Leadership Program

For Walter Myrick, the inequities that came to the fore in schools during the pandemic were a call to effect change. An art teacher at AMY Northwest Middle School in The School District of Philadelphia, he turned to Penn GSE’s School Leadership program “to focus on the things that I would like to change as a school leader, knowing that Penn would give me the best preparation to do that.”

Over the course of the program’s eleven months, each cohort convenes on campus for one weekend per month plus two weeks in the summer, in addition to meeting monthly in a virtual format. Along with coursework, students undertake internships,

school observations, and research projects, assembling a portfolio as they work towards the M.S.Ed. degree and/or principal certification. The program emphasizes the importance of collaboration as the basis for supporting preK-12 students.

“It’s a program that strongly supports the idea that good leadership revolves around trusting, caring, supportive relationships,” says Dr. Steve Piltch, senior fellow and director of the program, who served as head of The Shipley School in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, for twenty-seven years.

That emphasis means lots of team-based work, which initially gave Myrick hesitation. “While I thought the team aspect might not be what I would like about the program, for me it has been the best thing about the program,” he says. In the fall, students are assigned to teams that blend students from the program’s public/charter and independent school tracks. In the spring, teams are based on the tracks.



The School Leadership program and the Mid-Career Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership prepare practitioners to lead and shape the preK–12 landscape. Photo by Eric Sucar, University Communications

“One of the things that we like best about the program is that people from public, charter, and independent schools learn from one other,” says Piltch.

Myrick reports that both teams have broadened his perspective. “You see that even though we may have a different experience, we do feel the same about the way education itself should work,” he says.

Increasingly, the program emphasizes equity-centered leadership and culturally responsive approaches. Guided by the book *Culturally Responsive School Leadership* by Dr. Muhammad Khalifa, the program encourages educators to reflect on their own cultural biases and seek to understand students’ backgrounds and perspectives.

“The book has spurred a lot of great conversations within our class contexts,” says student Alia Carponter-Walker, a middle school dean at Poly Prep Country Day School in Brooklyn, New York. She reports that the conversations have helped her in her professional role. “There’s a really big push for culturally responsive practices in the work I’m doing,” says Carponter-Walker.

Another key aspect of the program is mentoring. Each student identifies a mentor within their own school and also works with a University-assigned mentor from the program’s network of school leaders. Amy Rasner Clulow, GED’19, director of people and culture at The Athenian School in Danville, California, credits the mentorships with deepening her knowledge of independent school leadership.

“It allowed me to look differently at my role and allowed me extensive access to various areas of my home organization and my Penn mentor’s organization,” she says.

Relationships with mentors and classmates alike are meant to give students an enduring network. “One of the more important outcomes is that people create connections that last far beyond graduation,” Piltch says.

Beginning this summer, the program aims to have an increased role in developing leaders in The School District of Philadelphia by offering scholarships that support District employees admitted to the program. (*See page 5 to learn more.*)

“It’s a wonderful opportunity to further our mission of impacting the local school district and preparing a more diverse and equitable group of future school leaders,” says Jessica Richard, associate director of the School Leadership program.

For Myrick, the program’s approach is already having an impact. “I can feel myself growing as a leader,” he says. “When I write papers, I get that ‘aha moment’ because every assignment builds on everything we’ve learned so far.”

AMPLIFYING K–12 LEADERS’ IMPACT

The Mid-Career Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership

As dean and executive director of the Aspiring Superintendents Academy for the New York City Department of Education, Nikole Booker works to build a pipeline of future superintendents, drawing on her experience as a student in Penn GSE’s Mid-Career Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership.

Booker is a fellow in the Penn Educational Leadership Simulations (PELS), one of the program’s “network initiatives,” through which students and alumni contribute to the wider field. Through PELS, Booker gained experience creating “sandbox,” or example, scenarios in which leaders respond to situations they are likely to face. She has brought this approach back to her aspiring superintendents. “They receive data regarding a sandbox district, and based on that information, they are asked to engage in a whole host of activities,” she says.

Such a focus on the practices of leaders is a hallmark of the Mid-Career Doctoral program, according to Dr. Michael C. Johaneck, senior fellow and director of the program. “Our premise is always that the most complex point of educational leadership is the point of practice,” says Johaneck, an expert on school leadership and educational history. Grounded in inquiry, the program asks educators to examine their practice through reflection, dialogue, and listening. “This is a caring community where committed colleagues can wrestle with the larger questions of their field,” says Johaneck.

Like the School Leadership program, the Mid-Career Doctoral program draws students from a variety of school and geographic settings. Over the course of three years, Mid-Career students—who typically have fifteen to twenty years of experience in education—convene on campus for monthly weekends and one week in the summer. They study instructional, organizational, public, and evidence-based leadership and undertake a dissertation.



“One of the things that we like best about the program is that people from public, charter, and independent schools learn from one other.”

–Dr. Steve Piltch, Senior Fellow and Program Director, School Leadership Program

Student Cyndy Jean, assistant head of school for community and inclusivity at Hackley School in Tarrytown, New York, leads diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) work for her school. “The program has helped me shape how I’m doing my work in this role, each and every day,” says Jean, whose dissertation focuses on leaders who, like her, are Black women leading DEI work in predominantly white institutions.

For Flannery O’Connor, GRD’19, principal of Cristo Rey Philadelphia High School, a dissertation about college persistence among her school’s alumni allowed her to make changes with the aim of improving her students’ college trajectories. “The program allows learning to be applicable to one’s direct experience in a particular educational setting,” she says.

Iván Rosales Montes, GRD’19, a principal in Alum Rock Union Elementary School District in San Jose, California, also implemented changes based on his dissertation, which considered the experiences of students categorized as both English language learners and disabled. “We were able to make some significant policy changes to enhance how we approach the redesignation of students,” he says.

As a student, Dr. Montes was a fellow in another of the program’s network initiatives, the Inter-American Educational Leadership Network, a collaboration with colleagues across Latin America. Montes now leads GSE fellows for the growing network of nine institutions, which hosts webinars as well as a conference that recently drew 3,300 attendees.

Such a reach is an important goal of the program, according to Johaneck, who points to the program’s structure of opportunities for graduates. “We are committed to generative means by which our alumni can amplify their impact on the wider educational landscape,” he says.

Through the new Empowerment Through Education Scholarship at Penn GSE, the program is also seeking to strengthen the pipeline of future educational leaders who are members of underrepresented groups or who demonstrate a longstanding commitment to serving marginalized populations. (*See page 16 to learn more.*)

For Booker, the program is grounding her in a sense of purpose as she envisions the next chapter of a career that has included the roles of teacher, principal, and leadership coach. “Ultimately, this work is all about ensuring that systems,

practices, structures, and resources are what they need to be so that young people are able to achieve whatever it is that they may want to achieve,” she says.

SHAPING THE FUTURE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

The Executive Doctorate in Higher Education Management Program

A desire to learn and improve drew Scott Beardsley, GRD’15, to Penn GSE’s Executive Doctorate in Higher Education Management program while he oversaw the worldwide learning and leadership development programs of global management consulting firm McKinsey & Company. He knew a doctorate could open doors to leadership in higher education, but wondered how to earn one while continuing his career. Penn GSE’s program offered a solution. “Between the quality of the program and the condensed format, it was almost too good to be true,” he recalls. The only problem was having to fly across the Atlantic from Belgium, where he lived at the time, to attend class—a challenge he accepted.

The Executive Doctorate in Higher Education Management program draws leaders from across the country and globe, and has produced more than 45 college presidents. Photo by Eric Sucar, University Communications



Today, having spent seven years as dean of the University of Virginia Darden School of Business and Charles C. Abbott Professor of Business Administration, he expresses great appreciation for Penn GSE’s impact on his knowledge and path. Reporting to M. Elizabeth Magill, Penn’s incoming president, in her role as UVA’s executive vice president and provost, he has sought to advance a mission of producing responsible leaders through transformational learning. He stepped into his role in 2015, shortly after graduating from Penn GSE. In December 2020, he was named Dean of the Year by *Poets & Quants* magazine, in part due to his leadership during the pandemic.

“Had I not done the program, it’s very unlikely that I would have ended up in the role I have,” he says. “What I learned from my classmates and my professors made me better equipped to lead in the field.”

Learning from a close-knit community is at the heart of the program, according to Diane Eynon, GRD’10, senior fellow and director of the program. “Students learn as much from one another as they do from the faculty, and they build the trust to be able to bring the challenges they’re facing professionally into the classroom,” says Dr. Eynon, a graduate of the program with more than twenty-five years of experience in international education and business.

Considered the premier doctoral program of its kind, and offered within Penn GSE’s top-ranked Higher Education division, the Executive Doctorate program draws leaders nationally and globally. Its community of nearly four hundred alumni includes more than 45 college presidents. While most come from within higher education, an increasing number, like Dr. Beardsley, come from other fields.

The shortest of Penn GSE’s executive-style doctorate programs, the Executive Doctorate takes place over an intense two years. Students convene for monthly sessions on campus, participate in a two-week international experience, and write a dissertation, all while maintaining their full-time jobs.

For student Darren Conine, vice president for enrollment and dean of admission at Merrimack College in North Andover, Massachusetts, support from his cohort is essential. “You always have those twenty individuals who are facing the same challenges as you, and that’s extremely important when you’re

doing this much work,” he says. Through his dissertation, Conine has explored how higher education institutions can improve student reten-

tion in the face of approaching demographic shifts. Sharistan Melkonian, GRD’19, dean of general education at American University of Armenia, credits the support of the program with preparing her to move from director of accreditation into her current role. “I became much more confident, and developed an exceptionally resourceful and supportive network, and that came from engaging with both the cohort and the faculty,” says Dr. Melkonian, whose institution opened when Armenia declared independence from the Soviet Union in 1991 and aims to double in size over the next five years.

As the program enters its twenty-second year, Eynon points to its alumni community—reinforced by an alumni advisory board and an annual conference—as a powerful force. Beardsley, who received the program’s Distinguished Alumni Award at the 2022 conference, agrees. “So many amazing leaders come through the program, who go on to produce the next generation of leaders that we need in all domains in order to make our world function,” he says. “I think the program does a great service to the country and society.”

PRODUCING SCHOLAR-PRACTITIONERS FOR THE WORKPLACE

The Penn Chief Learning Officer Program

As chief learning officer for MasterCard, Ann Schulte, GRD’10, enjoyed overseeing staff training and development but sought a deeper grounding in her profession. Penn GSE’s Chief Learning Officer (PennCLO) program, then relatively new, captured her attention.

“The program was designed for the ‘scholar-practitioner,’” recalls Dr. Schulte. “This was a totally new term for me and one that resonated with my personal identity.”

The term is key to the program’s mission, according to longtime PennCLO director Dr. Annie McKee, a bestselling author and a global leadership consultant named one of *Business Week*’s top 100 leaders. “We are attempting to break what has been a nearly impermeable wall between the workplace and academia,” she says. “We want organizational leaders to gain academic research skills so they can practice evidence-based decision making,” she says.

Schulte reports that the program equipped her to do just that as senior vice president of global talent development at Procter &

“We are attempting to break what has been a nearly impermeable wall between the workplace and academia. We want organizational leaders to gain academic research skills so they can practice evidence-based decision making.”

—Dr. Annie McKee, Penn Chief Learning Officer Program

“I see it as my calling to take advantage of the goodwill and the capital this program has and elevate it to the next level.”



—Raghu Krishnamoorthy, Penn Chief Learning Officer Program

Gamble, a role in which she now supports the learning and development of more than 100,000 employees in approximately 70 countries. “The academic theories of adult learning give credibility to my choices as I link talent strategies to business outcomes,” she says.

Dedicated to learning in the workplace, the PennCLO program is considered the first of its kind. It draws mid- to senior-level leaders responsible for employee training, talent recruitment, and culture in a variety of sectors and a range of organizations including Dell, JP Morgan, and Verizon. Over three years, students work towards the Ed.D. degree, meeting for one on-campus and one virtual week each semester and undertaking a dissertation. GSE and Penn faculty and an array of industry leaders teach about leadership, learning, business, evidence, and technology. Recently, graduate Lilian Ajayi-Ore, GRD’20, was a finalist for the 2022 OnCon Icon Top 100 Learning & Development Professional Award.

“Most people who come to this program are very successful, but they have a desire to understand things in a deeper way. They learn to question assumptions about adult learning at work, and they emerge transformed,” says McKee, who cites a dramatic increase in U.S. minority enrollment in the program as one of her proudest accomplishments.

Student Chris Bittinger, president of leadership consulting company Open Pivot in Carmel, Indiana, seeks a deeper understanding of how executives manage stress and mitigate burnout through his dissertation. The topic is of urgent interest to his clients, leaders in multiple industries. “Every leader is saying, I’ve got all this disruption, but I’m drained and exhausted—how do I lead my team?” reports Bittinger.

Student KimArie Yowell, chief learning officer at financial technology company Rocket Central in Detroit, Michigan, is researching the experiences and perceptions of Black women in Fortune 500 companies for her dissertation. She was impressed by the PennCLO curriculum’s theoretical and practical relevance during the pandemic.



The Penn Chief Learning Officer Program, considered the first program of its kind, is creating a powerful impact by bridging research and practice for leaders of workplace learning. Photo by Ginger Fox Photography

“As a leader in my company who was responsible for helping lead us through the challenges of 2020, I found value from our class discussions and could immediately apply the lessons back to my work. The leaders of the program ensured the content was dynamic and addressed the major events of the world,” she says.

This spring, the program faces another shift as McKee steps down from her position and current student Raghu Krishnamoorthy prepares to step in, soon to become the first PennCLO alumnus to serve as director. McKee welcomes Krishnamoorthy, who has spent decades in organizational learning, human resources, and management at GE, most recently as senior vice president of human resources. “There is no other person that I would rather see in this role than Raghu,” she says.

Krishnamoorthy echoes her appreciation. “Annie has been the anchor of the program and leads an extremely strong brand. To follow her is a real honor and a privilege. I see it as my calling to take advantage of the goodwill and the capital this program has and elevate it to the next level.”

For Schulte, who regularly teaches in the program, perhaps its greatest legacy is its community. “The program created a new network—a new orbit entirely—of colleagues with a like-minded commitment to growing our profession and ourselves,” she says.

For Dean Grossman, the four leadership programs represent both a legacy of the School and a foundation for the future. Going forward, she envisions increased exchange and collaboration among the programs to further capitalize on their strengths in light of the ever-changing landscape ahead. “Collectively, our programs are poised to address the future of learning across the lifespan,” she says. ■

Opening Doors and Reimagining Learning

PENN GSE ALUMNI SHAPE THE WORKFORCE

by Lini S. Kadaba

As the country emerges from a pandemic that has upended the economy, transformed how people work, and changed in-demand jobs, the role of education is proving ever crucial. At the forefront of workforce development are Penn GSE alumni. They are creating new approaches to readying students and workers for today's and tomorrow's workplaces. Here, four alumni representing varied sectors of education—a corporate learning program, a national nonprofit, a community college, and a liberal arts college—share innovative ways they are helping prepare the workers of the future.

TRANSFORMING CORPORATE LEARNING

Candace Thille | GRD'13



Photo by Kim Larson

As director of learning science and engineering for Amazon, Candace Thille, GRD'13, puts her research into practice for a company of 1.6 million employees, offering a powerful glimpse of how the future of workforce development could look.

"The knowledge and capabilities people need to develop are changing rapidly," says the learning science pioneer, who lives in Seattle, Washington. "The old mechanisms are not up to the task." Leading a team of eighty that includes engineers, product managers, data scientists, learning scientists, and user experience designers, Dr. Thille collaborates with in-house business units such as Amazon Web Services to transform how workers learn.

How does it work? The approach relies on adaptive learning software that customizes the learning experience. Throughout the workday, employees' devices collect data that are analyzed with algorithms based on Thille's research. The system makes inferences about the employees' current knowledge and capabilities relative to their desired knowledge and capabilities and provides guidance and experiences to address each individual's needs. "The system is constantly monitoring to help the employee decide 'where I am' relative to 'where I'm trying to be,'" says Thille, who has spent two decades working to make education more effective through the learning sciences and technology.

As founder of the Open Learning Initiative (OLI) at Carnegie Mellon University, Thille established courseware to supplement classroom instruction across a variety of subjects and provide ongoing feedback to students, instructors, and course designers. The approach has been shown to help students achieve equal or better learning outcomes in half the time of traditional courses. At Penn GSE, Thille's thesis for the Executive Doctorate in Higher Education Management program explored aspects of OLI, an effort she continued to lead as a faculty member at Stanford University prior to taking a leave of absence to work for Amazon in 2018.

At Amazon, Thille notes, the learning system she built has replaced many traditional classes in both technical and non-technical fields such as a boot camp for software engineers and courses on interviewing, management, and coaching. In addition, she says, it helps employees who want to shift jobs within the company develop the necessary skills.

Some might find it all a bit "Big Brother," but Thille emphasizes that the system operates under clear responsible-use policies.

"We're collecting learners' actions not to judge them, but to better support them," she says, adding that worker agency is at the center of her work.

"How do you frame learning technology so that people see it as supporting them and not replacing them?" asks Thille. "The way I work is not about, 'If I build this, they will come.' It's about collaborating with the business units to co-build so they feel ownership and it's actually solving their problem."

"I'm seeing that when you invest in communities that are often overlooked, give them the proper resources and skills to succeed, they do succeed."

DEVON MINER, GED'13

OPENING DOORS TO CAREER ADVANCEMENT

Devon Miner | GED'13



Increasing access to opportunity for low-income people and people of color is a priority of Jobs for the Future (JFF), and one that resonates on multiple levels with Devon Miner, GED'13. As an associate director for

JFF, he works with local and regional players to launch and amplify innovative efforts that connect historically marginalized groups with paths to career success.

"I'm looking at how we can reskill individuals impacted by the pandemic," says Miner, who joined the Boston-based nonprofit in the spring of 2021 and works remotely from Los Angeles. "We want to connect them with in-demand training and education opportunities, and then get them matched to in-demand jobs."

Since COVID-19 hit, Miner says, skilled trades, healthcare, and business development have experienced more industry growth in comparison to hospitality and restaurant industries, while the move to at-home work for many has underscored the importance of closing the digital divide that impacts rural areas and socioeconomically disadvantaged communities.

One groundbreaking project that Miner has helped spearhead is the Bay Area Opportunity Onramps, a collaboration among JFF and other workforce development organizations to place five thousand Bay-area workers with skills—but without four-year degrees—in full-time,

middle-wage jobs by 2024. The initiative aims to improve paths to employment for many of the region’s Black, Latinx, and veteran workers. “We’re looking at how we can funnel job seekers into high-demand industries,” Miner says.

Miner has a particular affinity for opening doors to opportunity because of his own trajectory growing up in Inglewood, California, a city that has been historically underinvested. He credits strong role models like his father, a retired probation officer, with his ability to find a path to UCLA and then Penn GSE.

That journey spurred him to make the educational success of students of color his focus during his time in Penn GSE’s Higher Education master’s program. Working with Dr. Shaun Harper, now founder and executive director of the USC Race and Equity Center at the University of Southern California, Miner wrote a thesis about programs and policies that support the success of Black men in college. In addition, he contributed to Harper’s New York City Black and Latino Male High School Achievement Study, which put a spotlight on the factors that students reported as contributing to their success in school.

Those Penn GSE experiences continue to inspire his current work, Miner says. “I’m seeing that when you invest in communities that are often overlooked, give them the proper resources and skills to succeed, they do succeed,” he says.

BUILDING A BRIDGE TO A THRIVING ECONOMY

Tuesday Stanley | GRD’05



Photo courtesy Westmoreland County Community College

Workforce development is all about institutional nimbleness, argues Tuesday Stanley, GRD’05, president of Westmoreland County Community College, based in Youngwood, Pennsylvania.

“Community colleges are well poised to get information from employers and train employees and have a continual cycle of feedback throughout,” says Dr. Stanley. Working with about five hundred companies, Westmoreland often creates new course content to meet the demands of these local and regional employers. For example, one company wanted its design engineers to understand the skills of the assembly line technicians. The college came up with a class in a matter of weeks, Stanley says. In another case, Westmoreland supported a company’s training needs due to a shift from traditional to

additive manufacturing, or 3D printing.

“We don’t even know what the jobs of tomorrow are going to be. We’re changing our curriculum all the time because the needs are changing all the time,” says Stanley, who gained a strong grounding in leadership in Penn GSE’s Executive Doctorate in Higher Education Management program while serving as vice chancellor of San Jacinto College in Houston, Texas. (See page 6 to learn more about Penn GSE’s leadership programs.) Since 2014, she has helmed Westmoreland, which enrolls 4,500 students plus 28,000 learners in non-credit classes.

The college has programs for traditional industries like trades and healthcare that still anchor its region, as well as emerging fields such as additive manufacturing and robotics. Its 73,500-square-foot Advanced Technology Center, opened in 2014, serves as an industry accelerator and offers an array of industry-aligned courses within technology-equipped classrooms and specialized labs. Three start-ups lease space at the center and provide students with internships and jobs.

Thanks to the technology center and the college’s success in placing graduates in industry positions, Westmoreland was selected in 2019 to deliver a high-level robotics technician training program as part of a \$1.8 million federal grant to Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The college also has programs with employers who sponsor students to learn industry-specific skills. In return, graduates, who are often adult learners, are expected to commit to work at the companies for a few years.

While workforce development may be a buzzword right now, community colleges have long played an important role in preparing the workforce, Stanley notes. “Community colleges have been in this space for decades,” she says. “It’s really about helping the businesses and the residents of our community be able to fit together so that the economy thrives.”

FUSING CAREER SUPPORT AND THE LIBERAL ARTS

Sonia L. Elliott | C’88, GED’01



Photo by Deb Grove

Franklin & Marshall College in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, doesn’t have a career services office. Instead, the private liberal arts college boasts the Office of Student and Post-Graduate Development, where Director of Employer and Community Partnerships Sonia L. Elliott, C’88, GED’01, and colleagues work with students from freshman through senior year.

“What attracted me to this institution was that it had the most holistic model I’ve ever seen for this kind of work,” says Elliott. The 2,400-student F&M has ventured beyond traditional career services that tend to focus on limited, senior-year support. Instead, F&M’s take on workforce development starts before freshman year at an event for admitted students. It continues with programming

“We’re going to find your child as a freshman—it doesn’t matter if they aren’t sure about what they want to do. We’re helping them to start having the conversation and try things out.”

SONIA L. ELLIOTT, C’88, GED’01

offered through college houses, Greek organizations, athletics, and multiple student groups. All are nontraditional venues for career services, Elliott notes.

“We are everywhere,” she adds. “We’re going to find your child as a freshman—it doesn’t matter if they aren’t sure about what they want to do. We’re helping them to start having the conversation and try things out.”

Over the course of a student’s four-year experience, the Office of Student and Post-Graduate Development offers hundreds of touch points, Elliott says. Her focus on employers includes not only job fairs, but also job seeker boot camps with alumni, winter break mini-internships, and immersion trips exploring various industries. “I try to give students different perspectives on what a particular industry is,” Elliott says.

As she works to strengthen F&M’s relationships across industries and sectors, Elliott draws on a background of leading higher education initiatives and developing community and corporate partnerships. She began her higher education career at Penn and joined F&M in 2015 after serving in posts at Temple University, the Philadelphia Mayor’s Office, and a charter school management organization. Elliott also draws on her time in the Education, Culture, and Society master’s program at Penn GSE as she seeks to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion. (See page 22 to learn more about the program.) “DEI is not just about students of color,” she says. “It’s about all students. Employers want to know that you understand the importance of inclusion.”

Within six months of graduation, Elliott says, 96.3 percent of F&M’s Class of 2021 was employed or pursuing further education. For Elliott and her colleagues, the work does not stop there. True to its name, the Office of Student and Post-Graduate Development offers lifelong career development to alumni.

“I love what I do,” Elliott says. “Our focus on a strong and diverse liberal arts education encourages our students and alumni to think critically, and ultimately transform theory into practice, in an ever-changing and challenging world.” ■

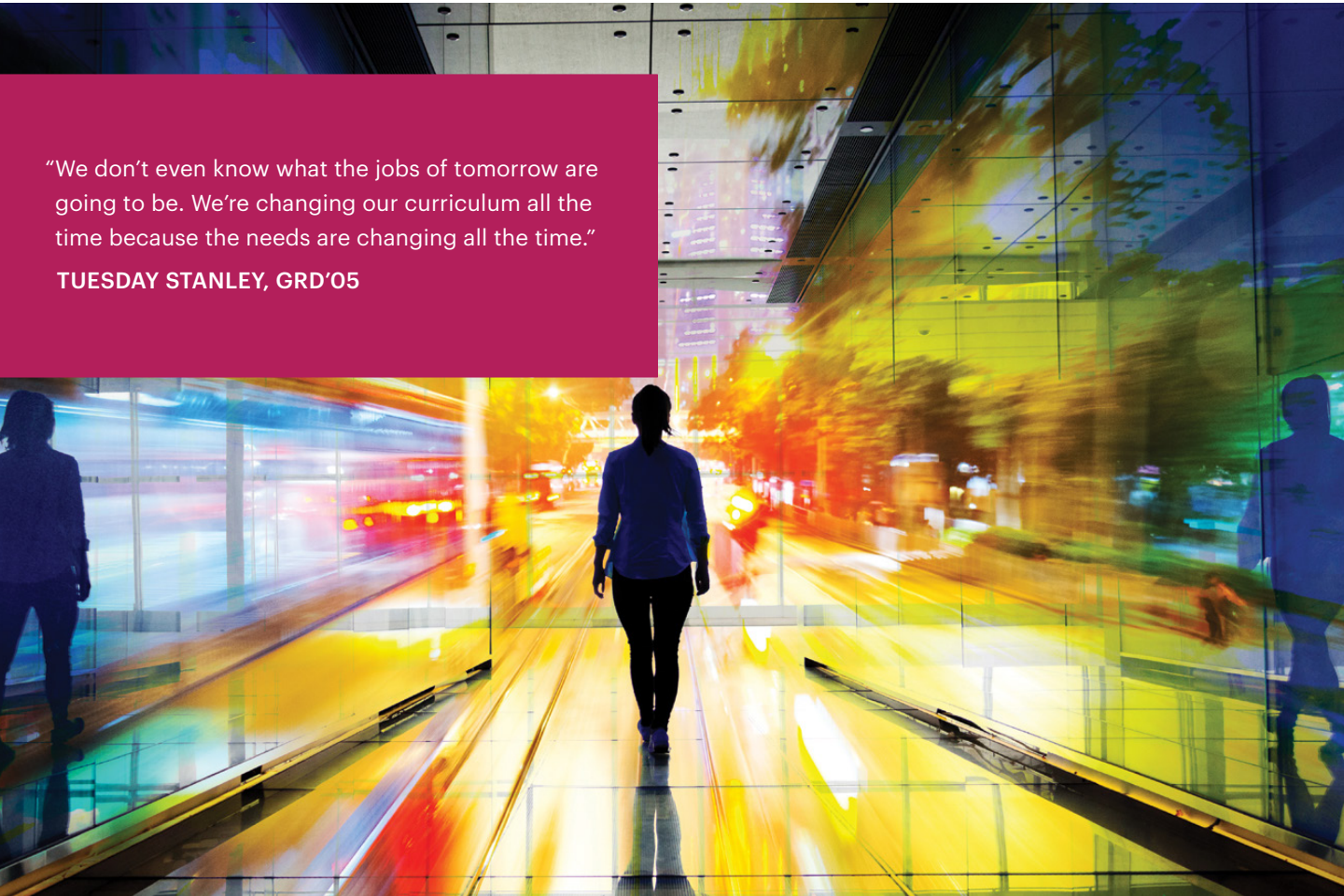


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Photo by Ginger Fox Photography

FACES of Philanthropy

by Karen Doss Bowman

Penn GSE is bringing hope and opportunity to a new era. In keeping with Dean Grossman’s vision of access and inclusion, practical knowledge, powerful partnerships, and innovation for impact, Penn GSE is unleashing the power of possibility through education—building a diverse pipeline of the educators and leaders the world needs. The School is grateful to the generous donors who are investing in this work. Here are three stories of support for Penn GSE’s mission.

Opening Doors to Future Teachers and Leaders

A transformational new scholarship at Penn GSE will provide significant funding to diversify the nation’s pipeline of teachers and educational leaders and propel work that benefits marginalized populations. Through the Penn GSE Empowerment Through Education Scholarship Program, Penn GSE will provide significant funding for several students in the Mid-Career Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership and the Urban Teaching Apprenticeship Program, awarding the scholarship annually starting in 2022 to individuals who would not otherwise be able to consider enrolling in those programs.

Intended to open doors and create opportunity, the scholarship will be awarded to future teachers and educational leaders who are members of underrepresented groups or who demonstrate a longstanding commitment to serving marginalized populations. The program aims to build a diverse, robust, and highly talented community of educators and leaders who will be positioned to reframe education in the twenty-first century, especially in underserved communities.

“We are thrilled that this program has been made possible through the generous support of our donors,” says Penn GSE Dean Pam Grossman. “The scholarship will have an incredible impact on Penn GSE, advancing our deep commitment to access and inclusion and strengthening our efforts to create a national model that prepares teachers and educational leaders to develop and implement innovative and replicable practices. The Penn GSE Empowerment Through Education Scholarship Program will build the next generation of educators who are equipped to be change agents and address systemic challenges facing our nation’s schools.”

The Mid-Career Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership prepares working educational leaders to meet the demands of district and organizational leadership and deepens their understanding of educational organizations, instruction, and learning. *(Read more about the program on page 6.)*

The Urban Teaching Apprenticeship Program is a practice-focused master’s program in teacher education that prepares new teachers to enact student-centered learning and to use innova-

tive teaching tools in urban schools. Teachers leave the program inspired to use the power of teaching to deepen student learning, transform schools, and increase educational equity.

The Penn GSE Empowerment Through Education Scholarship Program is made possible through the generosity of Allison Blitzer, C’91, David Blitzer, W’91, and the Blitzer Family Foundation.

Giving back to a Lifelong Inspiration



Photo by Jane Lindahl

For Susan Cotton, GED’69, Penn GSE’s values of leadership, innovation, inclusion and diversity, and equality in education were a formative influence. As an expression of gratitude for her experiences at the School, she and her husband, Doug Cotton, WG’69, established the Susan M. Cotton Scholarship Fund. Believing the School’s world-class reputation is well deserved, the couple want

to expand access to a Penn GSE education. The Cottons believe education not only improves each individual’s quality of life, but also makes the world a better place. In Doug’s view, one of the biggest challenges facing American education is the need to upgrade teacher salaries. Additionally, he hopes more talented young people become aware of the broad range of career opportunities within the field of education.

“Education is the basis for our future,” Doug says. “Without the ability to provide every child a quality education, our society is going to regress. Susan and I are both proud of Penn GSE’s tremendous commitment to improving education at all levels.”

Doug and Susan also have a particular fondness for Penn as the place that brought them together. The pair met in a library elevator and married shortly after graduating in 1969. They raised their children, Mark and Amy, in California, where Doug worked for Corning Inc. and Susan paused her career in education to be a stay-at-home mom. After their children were grown, the couple returned to upstate New York, where Susan resumed her career as an elementary school teacher and counselor and Doug became president of Cotton-Hanlon Inc., a timberland management company. They are now retired and live in Horseheads, New York.

“I’m thrilled to honor my wife in this way,” Doug says. “It’s a way we can give back to a place that had such a positive impact on her life as a wife, a mom, a grandmother, and an educator. This scholarship fund is based on Susan’s investment in Penn GSE, as well as the School’s investment in Susan. The values that Penn GSE instilled in her have never left her.”

Supporting an Indelible Impact



Photo courtesy of Karen Tracy

As a member of the inaugural cohort of the Penn GSE Mid-Career Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership, Delvin Dinkins, GRD’05, appreciated the opportunity to exchange knowledge and experiences with fellow school leaders in an innovative format for working professionals.

“We had a chance to be pioneers and to actually co-construct a program that

was designed to leverage the knowledge, skills, and expertise of its students,” says Dr. Dinkins, who was appointed head of school of Springside Chestnut Hill Academy in Philadelphia, effective in July. “Penn GSE brought together thoughtful scholar-practitioners to imagine together how to improve our schools and better serve our students.” *(Read more about the program on page 6.)*

Having received scholarship support for his own education, Dinkins believes in giving back to Penn GSE. He is a member of the Penn GSE Annual Fund Benchmark Society, which honors donors who have made contributions every year for the past three or more years.

“I support Penn GSE because I am a fan of its impact—indelible and outsized in every way possible,” says Dinkins, currently assistant head of school at The Pingry School in New Jersey.

A native of the Philadelphia suburbs, Dinkins grew up in a family that valued the transformative nature of education. As an educator, he believes it is important to “meet people where they are” throughout a school’s community. “People come to the table with appreciably different levels of experience and expertise, and you have to build on that,” Dinkins says. “As the world gets even more complex, that means we must come to the table with competencies that transcend any one area not only to guide school improvement, but also to affect lives.”

That perspective is rooted in his time in the Mid-Career Doctoral program. “Penn GSE met me where I was and provided me with a rigorous, deep, and thoughtful experience that allowed me to think more broadly and complexly about everyday problems in practice,” he says. “Giving to Penn GSE has meant providing oxygen and a knowing nod to the great work faculty and students are doing, or will do, to effect positive change in the world within and beyond the schoolyard.” ■

To learn more about Penn GSE’s giving priorities, visit <https://www.gse.upenn.edu/support/power-of-possibility> or contact us at 215.573.6623 or alumni@gse.upenn.edu.



“The Theme Is that We Give to Students”

PENN GSE’S DR. ANDREA KANE ON SCHOOL LEADERSHIP AND SUPPORTING STUDENTS’ POTENTIAL

interview by Juliana Rosati

In her role as professor of practice at Penn GSE, Dr. Andrea Kane brings the perspective of twenty-five years’ experience in K-12 public schools to her work with aspiring and current teachers and leaders.
Photo by Ginger Fox Photography

As schools across the nation grapple with issues of race, social justice, curriculum, health, and staffing, Dr. Andrea M. Kane brings the perspective of twenty-five years in Maryland and Virginia K-12 public schools to her work with aspiring and current teachers and leaders at Penn GSE. A professor of practice who joined the School in 2021, Kane works with students in the Mid-Career Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership and the Teaching, Learning, and Leadership master’s program, preparing them to address complex issues and provide valuable learning opportunities to all students.

In roles from teacher to administrator—most recently, superintendent—Kane gained recognition including the Governor’s Citation for instructional leadership, the first National Blue Ribbon School in Queen Anne’s County Public Schools’ history, the State of Maryland’s highest graduation rate for four consecutive years, and a ranking of six out of twenty-four school districts in Maryland. As the first African American superintendent of Queen Anne’s County, Kane set professional and personal goals focused on implementing equitable practices across all areas of the organization. We sat down with Kane to discuss her teaching, her practice, and her transition to Penn GSE.

At Penn GSE, you teach courses about educational leadership. What are you aiming to impart to your students?

I always want to differentiate my instruction to make it meaningful to students with a variety of professional backgrounds and goals. Some of the areas we cover in my courses are instruction, policy, school improvement, professional development, and self-care. Throughout, we apply theory to practice using an equity lens. We’re building educators and leaders who can employ equitable practices across a classroom, a school building, or an entire district.

I want our Teaching, Learning, and Leadership master’s students to know that I can relate to their challenges as prospective or current teachers. Sometimes they’re intimidated—they say, you were a superintendent and I haven’t even taught yet, should I even be in this class? And I say, absolutely you should.

Most of our students in the Mid-Career Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership are working in schools every day, facing a variety of challenges. Having worked in urban, suburban, and rural districts helps me to be able to brainstorm approaches with them. We want to provide a forum that supports them in their everyday leadership as well as in their visionary leadership—their aspirations for the future.

Instructional leadership, equity, and the connection between the two have been themes of your work. How have you approached these areas?

Overall, I’ve looked at who is learning and who is not, and what instructional practices we can employ to ensure that children who are at the margins are brought to the center and made a focus of instruction, while we continue to challenge all of the students. The focus isn’t just one group of students—it’s got to be everybody.

Equity looks different in different places, but the theme is that we give to students—we ensure they have what they need to meet their full potential. In Anne Arundel County, Maryland, I was part

of a team that started a district-wide initiative to narrow or eliminate achievement gaps. We used the Data Wise Improvement Process from Harvard, looking at students’ results to identify areas where teachers needed to make adjustments in their instruction. We would consider the classroom environment, the instructional materials, and the delivery of instruction to understand how to improve in areas where students were struggling. I brought the same approach to Richmond, Virginia, and Queen Anne’s County, Maryland.

What is an example of an area in which you sought improvement?

When I looked at the data in Queen Anne’s, I saw that the majority of the students were white, and also that there were hardly any students of color in Advanced Placement classes. Research tells us that students who enroll in rigorous coursework in high school fare better in college, and we wanted to open the doors to college preparation. We worked with an outside agency and implemented strategies that increased the enrollment of nontraditional students—Black, Brown, and poor—in Advanced Placement classes. We matched students with potential to caring teachers who mentored them. We reconsidered the prerequisites for enrollment and the instructional strategies. In addition, we diversified our materials of instruction to send a more inclusive message to students.

Beyond instruction and access, what are some other areas you have addressed to make schools more supportive of all students?

As a district-level leader, I’ve made sure to find out what students think about the school environment. If schools take a thoughtful approach to asking students their opinions, they’re going to hear the truth of the matter. I’ve worked to diversify teaching staff, often going out myself to recruit teachers of color from historically Black colleges and universities so that our students could see themselves reflected in the adults at their school. I’ve also required professional development in culturally relevant instruction, cultural proficiency, and bias and antibias-related behaviors for every employee, from bus drivers to administrators, so that we could understand and begin to value cultural differences and how we might make various groups of students feel welcome. In addition, I’ve addressed the ways in which inclusion can be about ability, rather than culture—engaging students who receive special education services and addressing them appropriately makes a difference.

You are a member of the advisory board for the Achieving Academic Equity and Excellence for Black Boys Task Force with the Maryland State Department of Education. What does that work involve?

We kept seeing data that shows Black boys are behind everybody else in school, and we wanted to do something about it. I was on a team convened by Dr. Vermelle Greene, a member of the Maryland State Board of Education. We conducted research and presented a proposal with recommendations for social and emotional behavioral supports, recruiting and training teachers and administrators, and curricula and instruction that the Maryland State Department of Education approved. Now we have pilot schools implementing a variety of strategies and programs to address areas such as academic



A former school superintendent, Dr. Kane differentiates her instruction to make it meaningful to students with a variety of professional backgrounds and goals. Photo by Ginger Fox Photography

performance, behavior, and sense of belonging. The approach is to recognize and build on Black male students’ assets in order to improve their outcomes.

Teaching about race in schools has become a controversial issue as some communities have sought to restrict curriculum content, including in Queen Anne’s County. How would you describe the approach that you would want schools to take? We need to teach children the truth about our history. Let’s talk about why slavery happened, and let children reflect on the conditions that allowed it to happen, and how important it is for those not to find their way into the current reality. Children understand that it was wrong. This is not about making white children feel ashamed because white people were slave owners, any more than it’s about making Black children feel ashamed because their ancestors were enslaved. This is about helping children grapple with hard issues, so that they grow up to be adults who can do the same.

Your commitment to environmental education led to Green School certification in 100 percent of Queen Anne’s County schools and a \$1 million grant for a summer program. Have you continued to pursue work in this vein?

Yes, environmental education is my second love! Equity is first, and I’ve been able to fuse the two. I sit on the board of directors of the Maryland Association of Environmental Outdoor Education (MAEOE), and recently we’ve focused on diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice. We want to help students not only become good stewards of the environment, but also understand why environmental conditions are different in different parts of the state. Because climate change and some environmental issues disproportionately impact impoverished communities (and more often than not, those who are Black, Indigenous, and people of color), MAEOE acknowledges the importance of dismantling systems of oppression and injustice that prevent equitable access to nature. Overall, we want to show that this work is about making the environment better for everybody.

What has it been like to move into your role at Penn GSE? My transition has been fabulous. I can truly say that every person I have met has been welcoming. I appreciate the freedom and openness that allow me to teach what I want to teach and to have conversations with my students to ensure the content is meeting their needs. At Penn GSE, there’s a wonderful willingness to keep improving our practices to best support our students. ■



Penn GSE’s building expansion is expected to be completed in August 2023 for fall occupancy. Conceptual design image courtesy of Ann Beha Architects



Putting shovels in the ground are (from left) Penn GSE Board of Advisors Chair Douglas R. Korn, W’84; Penn Interim President Wendell Pritchett; Penn GSE Dean Pam Grossman; and Philip Chen, principal and president of Ann Beha Architects. Photo by Krista Patton Photography

BREAKING GROUND FOR PENN GSE’S SECOND CENTURY

Penn GSE Launches Historic Building Expansion

Following an extremely successful fundraising effort and a comprehensive design process, Penn GSE held a groundbreaking ceremony for the School’s dramatic building expansion project on April 19, 2022. Approximately one hundred members of the School’s community attended the event, held in person in the Penn GSE courtyard. Speakers included Penn GSE Dean Pam Grossman; Interim Penn President Wendell E. Pritchett; Penn GSE Board of Advisors Chair Douglas R. Korn, W’84; and Philip B. Chen, principal and president of Ann Beha Architects.

“The expansion is going to create cutting-edge learning spaces for our students—and fulfills our vision of a ‘One Penn GSE’ by bringing our community together in a single building here in the heart of the University of Pennsylvania campus, where our students, faculty, and staff can collaborate in new ways,” said Dean Grossman, noting that the school’s student population has doubled to 1,400 in the past twenty years.

Interim President Pritchett pointed to the significance of the building as a landmark of learning and innovation. “Education should not merely reflect our own beliefs and the current state of society back at us. Education must bring light to the dark corners of our world. It should illuminate our minds and help us envision new ways to create better societies for all,” said Dr. Pritchett, who is on GSE’s faculty as the James S. Riepe Presidential Professor of Law and Education.

Chen discussed how the project’s architecture will reflect the School’s passion for fostering engagement within and

outside campus, and throughout the world. “It brings everybody together here in one facility, into a new home, that’s accessible, sustainable, flexible, connective, and collaborative,” he said.

Korn hailed a “pivotal moment” for Penn GSE that would impact generations to come. “The building expansion will provide a beautiful home for Penn GSE in its second century and position the School to continue to play an important role in changing the lives of millions of people for the better,” he said.

The expansion represents Penn GSE’s first new construction in more than fifty years and will address the School’s needs as the fifth-largest school at the University and one of the largest in terms of the number of graduate and professional students.

The value that Penn and GSE place on sustainability, accessibility, inclusion, and community engagement have been reflected in the project and its planning process, according to University Architect Mark Kocent. “The inclusive planning process, led by the architect team, incorporated a high degree of stakeholder input from students, faculty, and neighbor town hall meetings,” he says.

Targeting LEED Silver certification, the project will connect 3700 Walnut Street to nearby Stiteler Hall and make the latter fully accessible. A new main entrance on 37th Street will make GSE a visible gateway to the Penn campus, and a two-story addition will contain an innovation hub. Flexible spaces including active learning classrooms, student lounges, and study areas will provide an enhanced experience of academic and professional community. Construction by P. Agnes Inc. began this spring and is expected to be completed in August 2023 for fall occupancy. ■



The images shown here are of a conceptual nature, illustrating the intended massing of potential additions and proposed scope of interior work. The final design of the addition and interior renovations will continue to develop and advance in future months in accordance with the program requirements and budget targets.

Asking Questions and Building Bridges

Penn GSE Education, Culture, and Society Master's
Students Expand Opportunities for Learners

by Stephanie Berrong

Alamia Biro came to Penn GSE on a Fulbright Master's Outreach fellowship to pursue her interest in educational advocacy and leadership through the Education, Culture, and Society program. Photo by Ginger Fox Photography



Growing up Palestinian in the Jaffa area of Tel-Aviv in Israel, Alamia Biro felt she was a girl between two worlds.

"I felt like I was always in between, but I also felt like this is a strength, because I can see two perspectives, and I can try to build a bridge between these two worlds," says Biro, who is currently a student in the Education, Culture, and Society master's program at Penn GSE.

At home with her family, she cherished Arab culture and the familiar rhythms of Islam. In the classrooms of the schools she attended, she encountered Western-based curricula taught in French, English, and later Hebrew, with classmates who hailed from countries around the world.

By the time she was in high school across the city, Biro had started to notice the socioeconomic and geographic disparities between herself and some of her classmates. "The school was almost an hour away from my home, and I used to commute to there and back to Jaffa," she says. "Going to a very rich neighborhood in the center of Tel Aviv, I saw the very opposite of where I lived."

She went on to earn her bachelor's degree at Tel Aviv University and managed the Arab sector of Educating for Excellence, a nonprofit with centers across Israel dedicated to educating children on the socioeconomic and geographic periphery of the nation. Through this work she recognized even more obstacles for Arab-Palestinian students, including language barriers, poor teacher training, and a lack of formal educational support structures.

While their interests may vary, ECS students share a strong commitment to questions of access and equity and the ways in which politics and culture affect the kind of opportunities that learners have.



Photo by iStock.com/fatCamera

"I felt fortunate that my parents were aware of the importance of higher education," says Biro, who saw through her work "how urgent it was for me to work in education and have an impact back home." That realization led her to Penn GSE on a Fulbright Master's Outreach fellowship. One of several awards granted by Fulbright Israel for study in the United States by Israeli citizens, the Outreach fellowship supports master's studies for students of Arab or Ethiopian origin. Recipients are selected on the basis of academic excellence, leadership qualities, and ambassadorial skills to promote mutual understanding between the United States and Israel.

Penn GSE's Education, Culture, and Society (ECS) master's program is a one-year course of study that encourages students like Biro to examine the social, cultural, and historical aspects of education and prepare for careers in research, community advocacy, and educational or nonprofit administration. It allows students the flexibility to follow their own research interests—through a variety of interdisciplinary electives and the selection of a master's thesis topic—while providing a strong foundation in scholarly methods. This openness and flexibility, Biro says, is one of the strengths of the program. "You are able to bring yourself to class and to your research."

This flexibility is by design, explains Dr. Sigal Ben-Porath, professor and chair of the Literacy, Culture, and International Education division, which is home to the ECS program. "We want to provide a cohesive program with a lot of advising and flexibility

that allows for people to shape their studies," Ben-Porath says. For example, some students may be interested in immigrant communities or English language learners and how those characteristics affect educational paths. Some may be interested in systems of education in other world regions or in thinking about race or gender issues. While their interests may vary, says Ben-Porath, ECS students share a strong commitment to questions of access and equity and the ways in which politics and culture affect the kind of opportunities that learners have.

Another similarity among the students is that most have worked for a few years in related fields after earning their undergraduate degrees. "We all benefit from the vast amount of experience and knowledge that our students bring with them," says Ben-Porath. "The students who join us are marvelous practitioners, professionals, and academics."

Like Biro, ECS student Shahara Ahmed came to the program with a professional background. A native of New York City, Ahmed earned her bachelor's degree at Wellesley College, where time spent observing classrooms for courses in education sparked her interest in the field.

"Those experiences really allowed me to appreciate the art and science of teaching," she says. Although she earned teaching certification in Massachusetts, after graduation Ahmed was driven by a curiosity to learn about other facets of education. "When I'm interested in something, I want to know everything about it," she says. She went on to explore the field through roles



“I reached a point where I had more questions than I had answers, and it was at that point that I thought, ‘maybe grad school will help me answer some of these questions.’”

at the New York City Department of Education, where she recruited and enrolled young children in Head Start programs, and the independent Grace Church School, where she guided prospective high school students through the admissions process.

“I was developing so many curiosities and questions about how we can make the broad field of education more equitable,” she says. “I reached a point where I had more questions than I had answers, and it was at that point that I thought, ‘maybe grad school will help me answer some of these questions.’”

The ability to pursue her varied interests made ECS a dream program for Ahmed. “I loved the idea that I would have the flexibility to take courses in anything that I’m interested in, while also learning so much from my peers who are coming from such different backgrounds, and I’ve absolutely found that to be the case,” she says.

While she undertakes her studies, Ahmed is continuing to explore the field professionally, working part-time for the Advanced Education Research and Development Fund (AERDF). Putting her knowledge of teaching to use, she serves as an educator engagement fellow for AERDF’s EF+Math program, which aims to double the number of Black and Latinx students who are proficient in math in grades three through eight. “I support the educators who work with the research and development teams, ensuring that educators’ voices are elevated and incorporated into the research and development processes,” says Ahmed.

The ECS program’s approximately fifty students take their required courses together as a cohort, and many assignments rely on different forms of collaboration, including group projects and group presentations. The program’s faculty have expertise not only in education but also in a traditional discipline like anthropology, sociology, or philosophy. Both Biro and Ahmed say the depth and range of faculty expertise has been invaluable, particularly as they plan for their master’s theses, the capstone project of the ECS program.

Biro’s thesis investigates how higher education attainment can empower Arab-Palestinian women in Israel, an aim she hopes to pursue after graduation through advocacy and leadership. Ahmed’s thesis considers how to address racial inequity at independent schools. She has sought to find some answers by studying enrollment data, and she says she has learned through her experience in the ECS program that there is value in just asking the question.

“I think having these questions and being able to further quantify what we know is so important for achieving equity,” says Ahmed, who is exploring roles in education technology and higher education. “Even if you can’t find the answer, just challenging what we see as the norm and considering different perspectives is still important.” ■

The ability to pursue her varied interests and a strong commitment to questions of access and equity in education made Penn GSE’s Education, Culture, and Society a dream program for Shahara Ahmed.



Professional Growth through Collaboration

The Penn GSE Center for Professional Learning Builds Networks

by Juliana Rosati

As a professor at Valley Forge Military Academy and College, Sean Chambers helps young people preparing for military life to develop their voices through courses in creative writing and English. When he saw how the challenges of our era—a public health crisis, transitions between learning formats, racial reckoning conversations, and more—were straining his students’ ability to express themselves, he knew he needed new tools for connecting with them.

“In the classroom, students seemed at a loss for words specifically around stating how they felt,” says Chambers. That observation brought him to the Virtual Institute in Social-Emotional Teaching and Learning (SEL) offered by the Penn GSE Center for Professional Learning. Through SEL, students can develop healthy ways of managing their emotions and connecting with others. The five-day Virtual Institute, taught by experts based at GSE and Penn, emphasizes the need for educators to engage with students’ identities and perspectives so that systems of oppression are disrupted rather than reinforced.

For Chambers, the program provided a welcome opportunity to learn through collaboration with peers in other disciplines. “I heard how scholars, medical professionals, and secondary level educators and trainers put the SEL ideas into practice,” he says. The program also equipped him to demonstrate leadership at his institution. “I became better at explaining to my peers at my college that we aren’t alone in needing SEL tools or applying them,” he says.

Such professional growth through collaboration is a key aim of the Center’s programming. “We’re conveners,” says Dr. Zachary

Herrmann, executive director of the Center. “We bring people together who are working on tough problems, who are innovating in their contexts, so that they learn, collaborate, and grow together.” The Center’s year-round programs range from days to months in length and address a variety of topics. While most of the programs are virtual, the Center builds community among participants through group work and interaction.

Dr. Chris Haug, vice president for student affairs at Neumann University, came to the Collegiate Athletics for Senior Leaders certificate program to gain insight on the role of athletics in higher education. He appreciated the opportunity to learn not only from faculty and special guests, but also from classmates. “The cohort that made up this program came from all institution types and sizes—and from across the country,” he says. “The diversity of our class added to the richness of our conversation, particularly when we were able to break out into small groups and tackle case studies.”

Collaboration was also key to Dr. Mary Libby, principal of The Chester A. Arthur School in The School District of Philadelphia. Libby attended the Project-Based Learning (PBL) certificate program alongside three of Chester A. Arthur’s instructional leaders as they prepared to enrich student-centered learning at their school. “The program helped me develop as a leader by providing a regular time and space to collaborate with others who are leading PBL in their learning communities,” Libby says.

The Center continues to develop new programs in response to emerging needs. A new Leadership for Employee Engagement certificate program will address how managers can respond to the “great resignation” by fostering an inclusive and innovative team culture.

“Having experienced the twin pandemics of COVID-19 and racial injustice, today’s workforce has high expectations,” says Raquel Arredondo, Penn GSE’s assistant dean for diversity, equity, and inclusion, who is a member of the program’s faculty. “Individuals are demanding a work environment in which they are trusted, respected, and feel safe to bring their authentic selves to work.”

Overall, the Center aims to cultivate learning and connections that endure. “We’re building a community,” says Herrmann. “We’re creating networks of educators and leaders who will continue to learn from and support one another.”

Visit www.gse.upenn.edu/professional-learning to learn more about the Center’s certificate programs, institutes, and workshops. ■

Photo credits from left to right: Greg Benson Photography, Ginger Fox Photography, University Communications, University Communications

Alumni Notes

Penn Affiliations

At Penn, all alumni have an affiliation, or series of letters and numbers, following their name to indicate their degree, school, and year of graduation. A master’s degree from GSE is represented as GED and an education doctorate as GRD. A philosophy doctorate from any school at Penn is represented as GR. An undergraduate degree offered by the School of Education until 1961 is represented as ED. The two numbers following the letters represent the year in which that degree was completed.



Photo by Krista Patton Photography

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to find our issue archive.

1960s

Heidelise Als, GED’68, GR’75, recently retired from her academic position as professor of psychology at Harvard Medical School. She continues to direct the Neurobehavioral Infant and Child Studies Program and the National New-born Individualized Developmental Care and Assessment Program at Boston Children’s Hospital.

1970s

Myrna Skobel Agris, CW’63, GED’73, GRD’79, has been promoted to vice president at Morgan Stanley in Houston, TX.

Amy Pollack, GED’74, wrote *The Adventures of Jelly Bean* (Austin Macauley, 2022). The book follows the ups and downs of life at home and at school for fourth-grader Jelly Bean and her beloved dog, Roger-Over.

Joan Shapiro, GED’71, GRD’78, released the fifth edition of her coauthored ethics book, *Ethical Leadership and Decision Making in Education* (Routledge, 2021), which she wrote with Jacqueline Stefkovich.

1980s

Margaret Mulqueen, GED’78, GR’84, has been writing for outlets including NBC News *THINK*, *Psychotherapy Networker*, and *Psychotherapy.com* in addition to running her private practice.

Shelley B. Wepner, GED’73, GRD’80, released the sixth edition of her coedited book, *The Administration and Supervision of Literacy Programs* (Teachers College Press, 2021). She also coauthored “School-Based Leadership Perspectives on University Partnerships” (*Excelsior: Leadership in Teaching and Learning*, 2021, Volume 13, Number 3).

Joyce Hatfield Wise, GED’88, has accepted an assistant solicitor position with Somerset County Children and Youth in Somerset, PA. She was previously the solicitor for Washington County Children and Youth for eighteen years before retiring in 2016.

1990s

Deirdre Morris Abrahamsson, C’93, GED’94, a communications consultant, has worked with Wallingford-Swarthmore School District in Wallingford, PA, since 2013. She founded the Strath Haven High School Ultimate Frisbee team, one of the top programs in Pennsylvania.

Waldo Alvarado Baires, GED’90, was appointed principal of Reading High School in Reading, PA. He has been interim principal since November 2021 and director of equity and inclusion for Reading School District since 2014, having joined the district in 2001 as a school counselor.

Barbara Caruso, GR’93, is director of educational programs at BAC Health and Wellness Associates. She offers experiential workshops about aging and spirituality.

G. Loessner, GR’94, emeritus professor and former administrator, recently received the University of Delaware’s Medal of Distinction, presented by its board of trustees. He retired after thirty-seven years at the university and twenty-six at the Unidel Foundation Inc.

Gloria McNeal, GNU’75, GR’98, associate vice president, community affairs in health at National University, was an invited speaker on “Episode 2: Health Equity” for the National Academy of Medicine’s *The Future of Nursing* podcast, which explores the underlying causes of health disparities and the social determinants of health.

Michael Townsley, GR’94, published two books with Gatekeeper Press in 2021, *Colleges in Crisis: How Private Colleges and Universities Can Survive* and *Cash Defines Survival: Cash is King*. He and his wife are working on a new book about transformational turnarounds in higher education.

2000s

Katie Carella, GED’05, executive editor at Scholastic Inc., applies what she learned at Penn GSE to create quality books for new and newly independent readers. She conceptualized and launched the Branches early chapter book line, which has more than twenty-two million books in print.

Natasha Charles, CGS’06, GED’09, WEV’09, WEV’10, is CEO of Intuitive Coaching with Natasha Charles. She is a member of the Forbes Coaches Council and is writing a chapter for the anthology *Sacred Promise* by Tererai Trent.

Sandra Dean, W’59, GRD’06, expressed concern about loss of academic freedom in a letter to the editor, “Let’s not stifle teachers or students,” published by *The Washington Post* on February 14, 2022.

Pamela Felder, GRD’05, was nominated secretary/treasurer of the American Educational Research Association’s International Studies Special Interest Group.

Tracie Gilbert, GED’09, released her first book, *Black & Sexy: A Framework of Racialized Sexuality* (Routledge, 2021). It looks at the structures and schemas of racialized sexuality among descendants of the transatlantic slave trade in the United States and discusses her theoretical model, Black Sexual Epistemology.

Stephanie Raible, GED’07, assistant professor of social entrepreneurship at the University of Delaware, coauthored her first book, *Social Entrepreneurship: A Practice-Based Approach to Social Innovation* (Edward Elgar Publishing, 2022). She was invited to keynote the Be Like Ben event honoring the Penn Club of Delaware’s 2021-2022 scholarship recipients.

Joel Seligman, GRD’09, has accepted a position as chief communications and marketing officer at the University of Vermont, his sixth research university in over thirty-one years and his fourth land-grant institution.

Sarah Steinberg, GRD’05, was appointed provost and senior vice president of the University of Arizona Global Campus in January 2022.

Steven Szilagyi, GED’04, is associate head of school for institutional advancement at The Kiski School, an independent boarding high school for boys in Saltsburg, PA.

Herbert Turner, GR’02, is president and principal scientist at Analytica Insights, Inc. which has partnered with Texas A&M University and WestEd on a \$17 million grant to evaluate and scale up the Knowledge and Transformation intervention to improve reading comprehension among elementary-aged children from underserved communities.

Martha Wright, C’80, GR’02, teaches in Penn’s English Language Program (ELP) and serves as curriculum and assessment coordinator of a major curriculum review for Rowan University’s ELP. She continues to consult for READ for Life and other literacy organizations in Uganda.

2010s

Seher Ahmad, GRW’14, GR’16, leads the research and analytics team at the Delaware Department of Education. She was slated to present “STEM’s Mommy Problem: Gender, Aspirations, and the Reproduction of Inequality among First-Year STEM Majors” at the 2022 American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting.

Melanie Betchen, GED’15, is a third-year internal medicine resident at Cooper University Hospital. She has been matched into a critical care medicine fellowship at Montefiore/Einstein Medical Center in New York City.

Beverly Brooks, GED’16, began a new role as director of college counseling at St. Mary’s Episcopal School, a Memphis girls’ school that is the oldest independent school in Tennessee. Previously she was director of academics and college counseling at YSC Academy in Pennsylvania.

Craig Carter, GED’19, has accepted the position of senior director of diversity, equity, and inclusion and employee engagement for Elwyn, a provider of education and support services to children and adults with autism, intellectual and developmental disabilities, and related behavioral health challenges.

Nina Cross, GED’19, a researcher at Princeton University’s Center for Research on Child Wellbeing, works on a team that manages the landmark Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing study.



Photo by Krista Patton Photography

Lourdes Delrosso, GED’16, associate professor at the University of Washington, leads the World Sleep Academy, an initiative from the World Sleep Society to provide education about sleep medicine to underserved areas of the world. She was awarded a Ph.D. from the University of Portsmouth in Hampshire, England, in 2022.

Janet Duliga, GRD’18, was promoted to executive vice president, chief administrative officer of JOANN, Inc., one of the largest fabric and craft retailers in the United States. In her spare time, she is writing a book on hiring and selection and considering her first public board seat.

William Dunworth, GRD’13, recently evacuated from Kyiv, Ukraine, and is working virtually to lead the five-year USAID/ Ukraine Monitoring and Learning Support Contract as chief of party on behalf of EnCompass LLC.

Sarah Fears, GED’18, has accepted the position of development manager for Recidiviz, a nonprofit organization that partners with state criminal justice agencies to advance their use of data and reduce incarceration.

Christine Galib, GED’13, released a collection, *Parables from the Pandemic: Holding onto Hope in a Hurting World* (Road Less Traveled Enterprises, 2021), geared for reflection and faith-based book groups. Her debut novel, a Grailquest adventure and mystery, is forthcoming this summer.

Stacy R. Gill-Phillips, GRD’10, is a chair member of the African American Charter School CEOs and the National Advisory Council for Foundations, Inc. As a panel speaker at the Foundations, Inc. Beyond School Hours 2022 conference, she shared results of the 2021 Summer Reach Partnership, which were statistically significant in showing growth in all grades.

Tyrah Hodge, GED’13, is an education officer in the Examinations Unit in the British Virgin Islands. She collaborates with stakeholders to create education policies and implement school programs throughout the overseas territory. Previously, she was math team coordinator at Al Jood School with the Ministry of Education in Abu Dhabi.

Ashley R. Johnson, GED’17, joined America on Tech (AOT) as program director for the New York region. AOT is an award-winning talent accelerator that provides tuition-free technology courses and learning programs to promote the advancement of underrepresented students in technology.

Candace Kenyatta, GED’11, was a finalist for the 2022 Greater Philadelphia Social Innovations Awards in the Racial Justice category for her focus on addressing barriers in research and evaluation. The company she cofounded, Grovider, was recently profiled by *Inc.* magazine for its human-oriented hiring practices.

Runlin Mao, GED’19, is putting her learning from Penn GSE into practice as an Advanced Placement Psychology teacher in Beijing. She hopes to build connections and exchange experiences with teachers and educators.

Leya Mathew, GR’16, assistant professor at Ahmedabad University in Gujarat, India, wrote *English Linguistic Imperialism from below: Moral Aspiration and Social Mobility* (Multilingual Matters, 2022), to be published this spring.

Ebbie Parsons, GRD’11, is managing partner at Yardstick Management, which was named the number one consulting firm in Georgia by the *Georgia Business Journal* and also named to *Inc.* magazine’s 2021 Best in Business.

Jessica Pavelka, GED’14, provides individual counseling, meditation, yoga, and movement therapy through her private practice to adults who would like to enhance their emotional well-being. She recently started offering group supervision to pre-licensed professionals.

Christina Riso, GED’14, was appointed assistant vice president of university advancement at Gwynedd Mercy University. She oversees strategies for development and alumni engagement to maximize philanthropic support in preparation for GMercyU’s upcoming comprehensive campaign.

Hui Shi, GED’18, events manager for Penn Wharton China Center (PWCC), provides virtual and on-the-ground support for events and collaborations between Penn’s twelve schools and many Chinese alumni, academic, government, and business partners. She would like to assist more schools in establishing alumni clubs and creating value for PWCC and Penn.

Wei Shi, GED’12, is a lecturer of communication research and insights at Columbia University’s strategic communication master’s program. In 2021, she received a research fellowship from the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science to study Japanese family firms at Waseda University in Tokyo, Japan.

Jamilah Thompkins-Bigelow, GED’12, released her third children’s book, *Abdul’s Story* (Simon & Schuster, 2022), which is about a little boy who has great stories to tell about his Philadelphia

neighborhood but is too ashamed to write them, until a visitor changes his perspective.

Rebecca Thompson, GED’15, a science teacher at Montclair Kimberley Academy in Montclair, NJ, recently earned a master’s degree in chemistry from Montclair State University.

Kimberly Truong, GR’10, chief equity officer at MGH Institute of Health Professions, was named to *Color* magazine’s Inaugural Power 50 Chief Diversity Officers list for her accomplishments as a diversity, equity, and inclusion leader.

Justice Walker, GEN’12, GR’19, assistant professor at The University of Texas at El Paso, has received a three-year appointment to the Equity and Ethics Standing Committee of the National Association for Research in Science Teaching.

Courtney Worth, GED’12, of Wallingford-Swarthmore School District in Wallingford, PA, is approaching the end of her tenth year teaching reading and special education. She thanks Penn GSE for helping to prepare her to work with so many amazing students, families, and teachers.

Qianqian Zhang-Wu, GED’14, published *Languaging Myths and Realities: Journeys of Chinese International Students* (Multilingual Matters, 2021). She is assistant professor of English and director of multilingual writing in the Department of English, Northeastern University.

2020s

Curtis Callands, GRD’20, director/principal of Elwyn’s Davidson School, created a training manual, *A Principal’s Mission in Designing Trauma-Informed Care* (independently published, 2021). His doctoral research focused on helping schools and organizations understand and mitigate trauma’s impact on children.

Hollyann Freso-Moore, GRD’21, is chief academic officer at Carlos Rosario Charter School in Washington, DC. She is grateful to Penn GSE and particularly John D’Auria, Sharon Ravitch, and Gerald Campano for preparing her to support the next generation of principals.

Nora Gross, GR’20, coedited *Care-Based Methodologies: Reimagining Qualitative Research with Youth in U.S. Schools* (Bloomsbury Academic Press, 2022), which argues for care as essential to research in schools, particularly when participants are from nondominant communities. Two of the book’s coeditors are **Veena Vasudevan, GR’17**, and **Katherine Clonan-Roy, GR’16**.



Photo by Krista Patton Photography

Amanda Jones-Layman, GED’17, GRD’21, was appointed assistant professor in the School of Education and Human Services at Neumann University. She teaches qualitative research and serves as methodologist in the Ed.D. program in educational leadership.

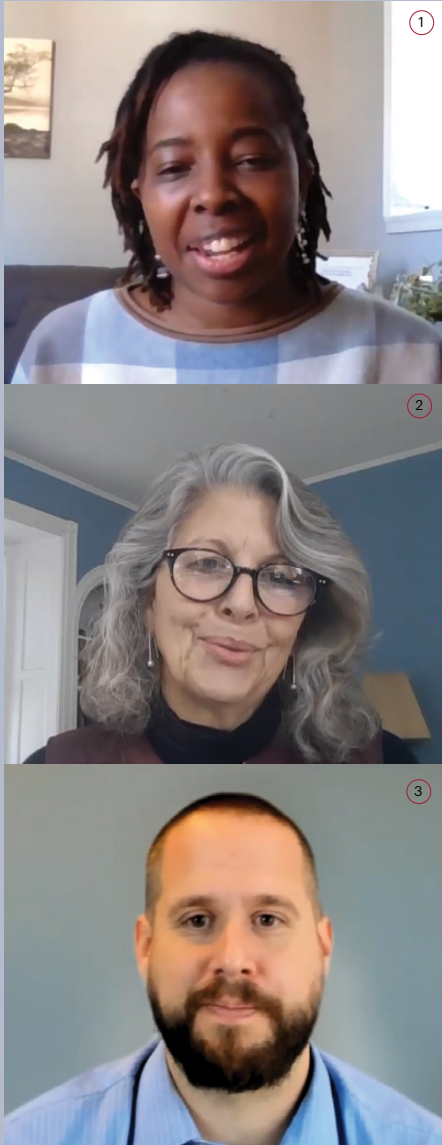
Jinsong Li, GED’20, started a company in China, Ivy Praxis, to provide social-emotional learning and positive psychology courses for K-9 students. Focusing on the mental health of children and adolescents, he blends courses with holistic modalities such as bilingual and cross-cultural learning, learning in nature, meditation, and sound therapy.

Huimin Tang, GED’21, has found it challenging yet rewarding to work for three public schools as a teacher of English as a new language. She is excited to begin her next chapter in life, pursuing a Ph.D.

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

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Homecoming Panel Addresses Student Mental Health

Dean Pam Grossman moderated a timely discussion featuring three mental health professionals for Penn GSE’s 2021 Homecoming event, held virtually on Saturday, November 6. The panelists included Dr. Batsirai Bvunzawabaya (1), director of integrated care initiatives at the University’s Student Counseling Center; Dr. Caroline Watts (2), senior lecturer in the Human Development and Quantitative Methods division and director of school and community engagement at Penn GSE; and Dr. Kyle Schultz (3), lecturer in educational practice and director of the Counseling and Mental Health Services program at Penn GSE.

The event highlighted some of the challenges and opportunities surrounding student mental health. “The past year facilitated a closer relationship with students,” Schultz said, explaining that he witnessed how challenging the pandemic was for students who were starting their professional journeys by practicing and learning online. Watts observed, “Flexibility is adaptability. We’ve seen that we can manage a whole host of things that we didn’t think we could, particularly if we work together.”

The panelists were encouraged by the ways in which virtual services make it easier for students to seek and receive help. They also saw hope in the healthy growth and resilience that can come from facing challenges. “I think one of the things that has been helpful [for] students is understanding that even if you are struggling in this moment, it doesn’t mean that that will always be the case,” said Bvunzawabaya. “It’s okay to ask for help in the moment, get the help you need, and continue like you did in the past,” she said.

flux pedagogy (Ravitch, 2020)
transformative teaching
in ever-changing contexts

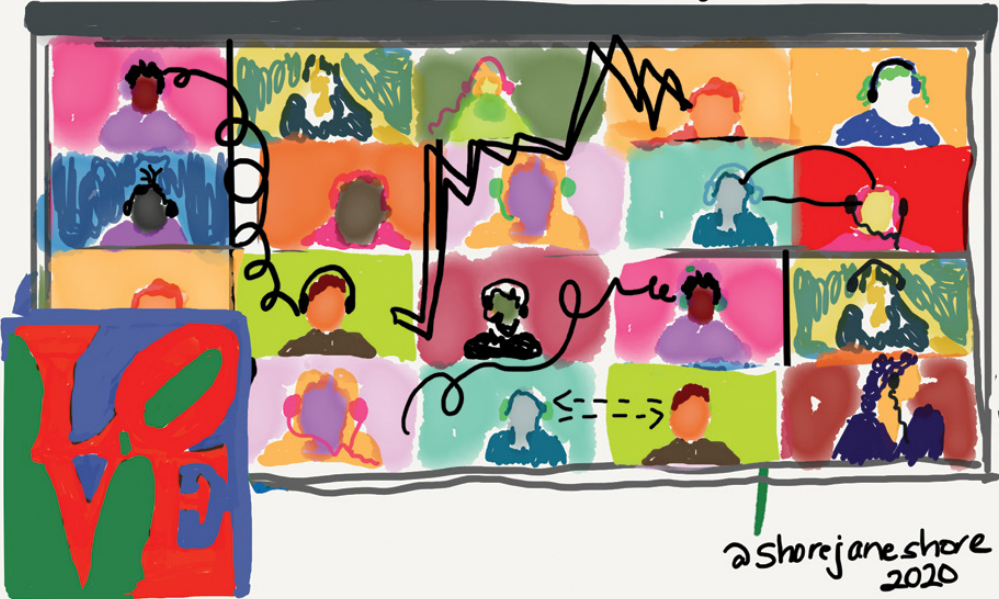


Illustration by Jane Shore

TIPS FROM THE EDUCATOR’S PLAYBOOK

Flux Pedagogy and Flux Leadership



Dr. Sharon Ravitch

How can educators support students’ whole selves during times of radical change? As the COVID-19 pandemic set into motion a complex and challenging era for K-16 educators, Penn GSE Professor of Practice Sharon Ravitch, GR’00, began integrating interdisciplinary frameworks into a transformative pedagogical approach called flux pedagogy. After introducing this work in *Perspectives on Urban Education* and *Harvard Business Publishing*, and extending it to the concept of flux leadership, Ravitch and Chloe Kannan, GRD’21, collaborated with a cohort of students in Penn GSE’s Mid-Career Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership. The resulting book, *Flux Leadership: Real-Time Inquiry for Humanizing Educational Change*, was published in December 2021 (see page 3 for details).

“It’s a humanizing pedagogy that can help educators to examine the goals and processes of schooling in times of uncertainty with a goal of fomenting mutual, collective, durable individual and societal growth, learning, and transformation,” says Ravitch. Below are highlights of the approach. For in-depth analysis and additional practices, find related links at www.gse.upenn.edu/academics/faculty-directory/ravitch.



Illustration by Jane Shore

Radical Growth Mindset

According to Carol Dweck’s seminal concept of growth mindset, growth happens in and through challenges and struggles, personal qualities are changeable rather than fixed, and learning includes missteps and vulnerability. Radical growth mindset applies Dweck’s framework to learning about one’s own identity and positionality in an era in which educators are held more accountable than ever for providing student experiences that reflect justice and peace. Radical growth mindset, an important foundation to flux pedagogy, means demonstrating the courage to identify and address your implicit biases, cognitive distortions, and conditioning into specific logics through compassionate and critical accountability to self.

Inquiry Stance

It is increasingly important for educators to situate themselves as learners, taking an inquiry stance as established by Penn GSE Professor Emerita Susan Lytle, GR’82. This means engaging in active self-reflection and examination of the norms of your professional context. Examine yourself and your practice with curious humility. Cultivate possibilities for constructive dialogue, feedback, and learning that support student well-being. Listen carefully to students to understand the macro and micro sociopolitical forces present in their lives and educational experiences.

Trauma-Informed, Healing-Centered Engagement

It is vital to understand that students are collectively traumatized right now, and that trauma lands differently in people’s lives, having a more severe impact on already-vulnerable populations. Read Shawn Ginwright’s “The Future of Healing: Shifting from Trauma-Informed Care to Healing-Centered Engagement” for a look at both trauma-informed and healing-centered approaches. Work to play a role in helping students process their trauma in community and offer them culturally responsive and assets-based support to cultivate radical compassion and radical self-care. Begin by noticing students’ emotional and mental health states and levels of engagement. Offer present and compassionate support, helping students learn to engage in their own wellness and self-care inquiries and practices.

Responsive and Humanizing Pedagogy

Learning happens best when it is active, responsive, contextualized, and humanizing at its core. In times of global, institutional, and personal flux, stress, and precarity, it is particularly urgent to provide responsive and humanizing pedagogy. Work to create a seamless, calm, engaging, and flexible learning environment with students. Reimagine assignments and assessments to achieve learning outcomes while responding to the challenges students are facing in all learning formats.

Racial Literacy

Racial literacy, developed by Penn GSE’s Dr. Howard Stevenson, Constance Clayton Professor of Urban Education, is the ability to read, recast, and resolve racially stressful encounters, as described at www.recastingrace.com/racial-literacy. It is crucial for educators to understand and model this work in order to stand up for justice and address issues of racialized stress and trauma, as well as identity-related stress more broadly. For example, work to counteract the norm that students of color often do emotional labor for their white peers in classes. Address identity-based assumptions as they arise during course sessions.

Brave Space Pedagogy

When facing equity issues that some may find uncomfortable or challenging, a typical response is to create “safe spaces” for dialogue. However, what feels safe to one person might not feel safe to another. In contrast to safe spaces, brave spaces require more authentic dialogue and the co-construction of equitable and critically inclusive communication norms. Introduce brave space pedagogy with “From Safe Spaces to Brave Spaces: A New Way to Frame Dialogue around Diversity and Social Justice” (Arao & Clemens, 2013) and work with students to co-create inclusive group norms for communication.

Critical Pedagogy

By positioning students as knowledgeable citizens who can act as agents of social change, you can help students cultivate a sense of agency rather than feelings of helplessness. Help students make meaningful connections between course topics and current events by introducing narratives from public sources that reflect a wide array of perspectives. Create opportunities for students and educators to engage in shared inquiry and brave space storytelling, a concept from the *Flux Leadership* book, as a way to learn, build community, and express what is happening in their lives and what they want to do about it. ■

Want more advice ?

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 and parents. Visit www.gse.upenn.edu/news/educators-playbook to sign up.



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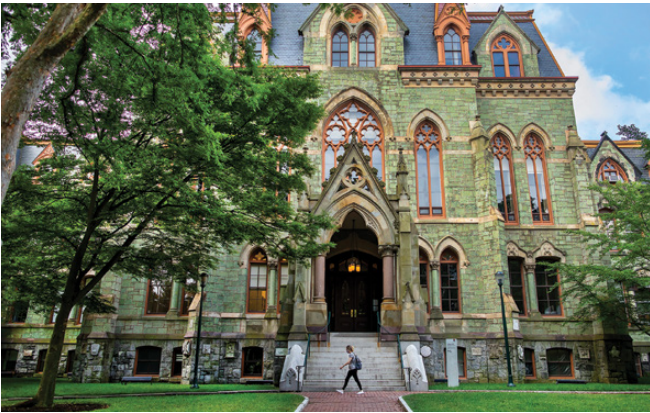


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