

# PENN GSE

Fall 2020

## Education in Times of Change

Penn GSE's Leadership and Partnership  
for an Unprecedented Era

page 6

## Teaching the Skills of Racial Literacy

page 12

THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION MAGAZINE | UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

Alumni Adapting in Times of Crisis / page 20 Extraordinary Impact Campaign Update / page 16



# PENN GSE

THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION  
UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

## Board of Overseers

Douglas R. Korn, W'84, *Chair*

Deborah L. Ancona, C'76, GED'77  
Brett H. Barth, W'93  
Allison Jane Blitzler, C'91  
Wallace Boston, GRD'10  
Jolley Bruce Christman, GED'71, GR'87  
Beth S. Ertel, W'88, WG'92  
Jeffrey L. Goldberg, W'83, WG'89  
Joel M. Greenblatt, W'79, WG'80  
Wendy Marcus Greenfield, W'78  
Andrew Harris Jacobson, WG'93  
Marjie G. Katz, GED'90  
Lois M. Kohn-Claar, C'88, GED'88  
Gustave K. Lipman, W'94  
Jeffrey S. McKibben, W'93  
Gregory A. Milken, C'95  
Matthew Vincent O'Malley, GED'95  
Andrea Jill Pollack, C'83, L'87, GED'17  
David N. Roberts, W'84  
Francisco Jose Rodriguez, W'93  
Molly P. Rouse-Terlevich, C'90, GED'00  
Michael J. Sorrell, GRD'15  
Navin M. Valrani, W'93, GED'18  
Steven M. Wagshal, W'94

*The Penn GSE Magazine* is produced by the University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education, 3700 Walnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104-6216. Reproduction of these articles requires written permission from Penn GSE. ©2020 by the Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania. Please contact Penn GSE at 215-898-9704 for references. Please contact [alumni@gse.upenn.edu](mailto:alumni@gse.upenn.edu) to update your address.

Pam Grossman  
*Dean*

Melissa R. Calvert, GED'00  
*Publisher*

Juliana Rosati  
*Editor*

*Editorial Board:*  
Sara Cantwell  
Jane L. Lindahl, GED'18  
Jennifer Moore  
Vanessa Rutigliano  
Kat Stein

Designed by Ten Eleven Design

## UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

The University of Pennsylvania values diversity and seeks talented students, faculty and staff from diverse backgrounds. The University of Pennsylvania does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, creed, national or ethnic origin, citizenship status, age, disability, veteran status or any other legally protected class status in the administration of its admissions, financial aid, educational or athletic programs, or other University-administered programs or in its employment practices. Questions or complaints regarding this policy should be directed to the Executive Director of the Office of Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity Programs, Franklin Building, Suite 421, 3451 Walnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104-6206; or 215-898-6993 (Voice).



## [ CONTENTS ]

**2** Letter from the Dean

[ NEWS ]

**3** Faculty Bookshelf & Faculty Awards

**4** News Briefs

[ FEATURES ]

**6** **Education in Times of Change**  
Penn GSE's Leadership and Partnership  
for an Unprecedented Era

**12** **Recasting the Moment**  
Professor Howard Stevenson on Creating  
Change through Racial Literacy

**16** **Extraordinary Impact**  
The Campaign for Penn GSE

**18** **Harnessing the Power of Education**  
Penn GSE Board Leadership Transition

**19** **Celebrating Virtually**  
Alumni Weekend and Commencement

**20** **Adapting in Times of Crisis**  
Penn GSE Alumni Shape Education's Future

**25** **Building a Community of Leaders**  
Penn GSE's Chief Learning Officer  
Program Goes Virtual

[ NOTEWORTHY ]

**27** Alumni Notes

[ RECESS ]

**31** Teaching History Online Today

Cover image by iStock.com/metamorworks. Image credits clockwise from top right: Conceptual design image courtesy of Ann Beha Architects, iStock.com/DrAfter123, iStock.com/Anastasiia\_New, Darryl W. Moran Photography, iStock.com/metamorworks.





# Letter from the Dean

Dear Alumni and Friends,

I'm sure we can agree that 2020 has been a most unusual and challenging year, for education and the world. After massive school closures impacted more than 1.5 billion

students around the globe, schools and colleges are navigating new modalities to provide virtual, in-person, and hybrid learning experiences for their students. As I write, our nation faces a presidential election under unprecedented circumstances, as we confront both a global pandemic and a historic movement for racial justice.

I'm so grateful for and proud of how our Penn GSE faculty, staff, and students have come together during this tumultuous time. Our cover story on page 6 describes our work to address a complex landscape of virtual learning, uncertainty, heightened inequities, renewed calls to combat racism, and increased social and emotional needs. For Penn GSE, this has been a time of reaching out to help educators and leaders—through an array of professional development opportunities, two new projects funded by The Harold W. McGraw, Jr. Family Foundation, and our partnership with The School District of Philadelphia.

We have deepened our relationship with the District's network of K–8 schools in West Philadelphia, led by Assistant Superintendent Rahshene Davis, GED'03, a current student in our Mid-Career Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership, who is highlighted on page 20. At her request, Penn GSE recently covered most of the cost to bring the virtual learning platform Nearpod to all thirteen network schools to improve learning, engagement, and equity. We have been delighted to support Davis's leadership and to hear that her teachers are giving rave reviews of Nearpod.

We have also leveraged our strengths to adapt to our changing circumstances. Our rapid transition to virtual learning in the spring and continued success through the virtual summer and fall have

been made possible by the expertise of faculty across the School. This fall, we welcomed the largest incoming class in Penn GSE's history, 735 students, a tremendous milestone reflecting the dedication of our faculty and staff in a new landscape.

All of our faculty have spent time learning new tools and approaches to help create the kinds of interactive classes we conduct in person—and I am no exception! After four decades of teaching, I am leading my first online class this fall. I have been so grateful for the support and resources our faculty and staff have provided. Thanks to their efforts, I know how best to apply the latest technologies as I get to know our doctoral students, delve into texts, and build a learning community.

To address the need to confront systemic racial injustice in our country, we have undertaken a School-wide process of reflection among faculty, staff, and students, establishing new goals for our continued work in race, equity, and inclusion. Once again, our faculty and staff stepped up to help lead community meetings and our schoolwide discussions of Ibram X. Kendi's book, *How to Be an Anti-Racist*. We are now engaged in a number of efforts that were identified in these community meetings, including preparing anti-racist teachers, leaders, counselors, and researchers; ensuring that our community reflects the diversity of our city, our country, and our world; and ensuring that schools become places where students of color, and Black students in particular, can flourish.

These are indeed challenging times, but they are also times of hope. The work of our community and of educators around the globe has never been more urgent, and I draw inspiration from it each day. I hope you will do the same as you read the stories in this issue and explore Penn GSE's virtual resources on page 27. Thank you for all that you are doing for education in these times of change.

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

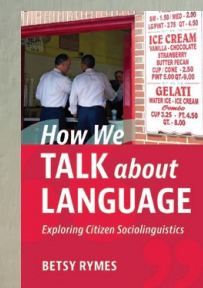
*Editor's note: This issue of The Penn GSE Magazine went to print on October 22, 2020.*

## FACULTY BOOKSHELF



Betsy Rymes

### Bookshelf Spotlight



*How We Talk about Language:  
Exploring Citizen Sociolinguistics*

By Betsy Rymes

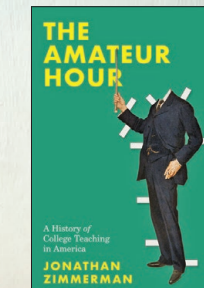
Published September 2020 by  
Cambridge University Press

This book explores everyday forms of language expertise as a way of understanding the relationship between language, culture, and society. Dr. Rymes offers tools to analyze how people talk about language and demonstrates that knowledge about language and its connection to social life is not primarily produced and spread by linguists or sociolinguists, or even language teachers. Rather, it is generated through everyday conversations, online arguments, music, art, memes, tweets, and more. Rymes is a professor in the Educational Linguistics division of Penn GSE.

*The Amateur Hour: A History  
of College Teaching in America*

By Jonathan Zimmerman

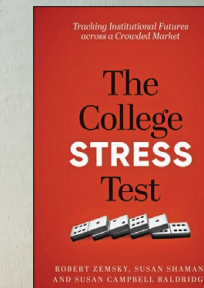
Published October 2020 by  
Johns Hopkins University Press



*The College Stress Test:  
Tracking Institutional Futures  
Across a Crowded Market*

By Robert Zemsky, Susan  
Shaman, and Susan Campbell  
Baldrige

Published February 2020  
by Johns Hopkins  
University Press



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

## ★ FACULTY AWARDS & HONORS ★

**Ed Brockenbrough (1)** received a Body of Work Award from the American Educational Research Association's Queer Studies Special Interest Group in recognition of a sustained research agenda that has shaped the field of LGBTQ studies in education and/or Queer Studies in education. **Charlotte Jacobs (2)** received a fellowship from the Trustees' Council of Penn Women and research support from the National Coalition of Girls' Schools to conduct a pilot study exploring the experiences of adolescent girls of color in all-girls schools. **Krystal Strong (3)** received a University Research Foundation Award from Penn in support of the project "Re/Member Black Philadelphia: A Multimodal Storytelling Collaboration." She has also been named a 2020-2021 Andrew W. Mellon Digital Humanities Fellow by the Penn Price Lab for the Digital Humanities. **Caroline Watts (4)** received a grant award from the Neubauer Family Foundation to support the Office of School and Community Engagement at Penn GSE through the hire of a research coordinator.



Faculty headshots on pages 3 to 5, 15, and 31 courtesy of Goldenberg Photography and Candace diCarlo



# News Briefs



**Penn GSE and McGraw Family Foundation Award Prizes and Expand Partnership**  
The Harold W. McGraw, Jr. Family Foundation and Penn GSE announced the 2020 winners of the prestigious Harold W. McGraw, Jr. Prize in Education. The winners are Estela Mara Bensimon, Rossier Dean’s Professor in Educational Equity at the University of Southern California’s Rossier School of Education (2020 McGraw Prize in Higher Education); Michelene (Micki) Chi, Dorothy Bray Endowed Professor of Science and Teaching at Arizona State University (2020 McGraw Prize in Learning Science Research); and Joseph S. Krajcik, Lappan-Phillips Professor of Science Education at Michigan State University (2020 McGraw Prize in Pre-K-12 Education). Honored in an October 21 streamed ceremony, the winners will each receive an award of \$50,000 and a prize sculpture.

Since 1988, the McGraw Prize has celebrated innovation in education by recognizing outstanding individuals who have dedicated themselves to improving education and whose accomplishments are making a significant impact. The 2020 awardees are the first to be named since the Foundation established a \$3 million partnership with Penn GSE in February to enhance and expand the awards. The new collaboration includes a programming series produced by Catalyst @ Penn GSE. Pictured (1): 2011 McGraw Prize Winner Julie Young (left) and Catalyst Executive Director **Michael Golden** (right) present a May 19 webinar. More information is available at [www.mcgrawprize.com](http://www.mcgrawprize.com).

In addition, this summer the Foundation awarded Penn GSE new grants for two groundbreaking projects released across the country in August to help schools navigate uncertain times. Professor of Practice **Michael J. Nakkula** (2) was awarded \$210,000 for “Planning for Uncertainty: An Educator’s Guide to Navigating the COVID-19 Era,” a framework to help educators and leaders address mental health and learning issues. Professor **Jonathan A. Supovitz** (3) received \$150,000 for “Leading Improvement in Challenging Times” to equip educational leaders with tools and skills to navigate 2020-2021 and beyond. *See the cover story starting on page 6 to learn more about both new projects.*

**Three Penn Deans Address Perennial Pandemic**  
In a virtual event (4) produced by Penn Alumni on June 25, Penn GSE Dean Pam Grossman appeared alongside Penn Nursing Dean Antonia M. Villarruel and Penn Social Policy & Practice (SP2) Dean Sara S. Bachman to address the ways in which the COVID-19 pandemic has disproportionately affected underserved communities. The conversation, entitled “The Perennial Pandemic: Pursuing Equity in Education, Health, and Social Policy,” was introduced by Ben Jealous, visiting scholar at the Annenberg School for Communication and SP2, president of People For the American Way and People For the American Way Foundation, and former president and CEO of the NAACP. The conversation was moderated by Shirley Franklin, G’69, HON’07, executive chairman of Purpose

Built Communities, who in 2002 was elected as the first African American woman mayor of a major southern city, Atlanta, Georgia.

“We are incredibly fortunate at Penn GSE to have a critical mass of faculty who put issues of equity, race, and social justice at the very center of their work,” said Dean Grossman. “We’re constantly seeking to continue to impact not only the city and the country around this work, but also ourselves, and to continue to grow in these areas.” Dr. Grossman discussed how educators can address the social-emotional and educational needs of disadvantaged children during the pandemic, as well as Penn GSE’s commitment to preparing educators to talk about race and diversifying the teaching workforce. “This is a particular moment where there is a lot of energy, a lot of passion, and a lot of desire to see change,” she said.

**Jonathan Zimmerman Named Berkowitz Chair**  
Dr. **Jonathan Zimmerman** (5), a professor of the history of education in Penn GSE’s Literacy, Culture, and International Education division, has been named the Judy & Howard Berkowitz Professor in Education. Considered one of the foremost education historians today, Zimmerman has been listed among *Education Week*’s annual Top 100 “Edu-Scholars” who influence public discussion in the USA for the past decade.

Using the proceeds from the Berkowitz Chair, Zimmerman is launching the Berkowitz Fellowship in History of Education beginning Fall 2021. It will help fund a fifth year of study for doctoral students who are admitted in tandem to GSE and Penn’s Department of History, where Zimmerman holds a secondary appointment. Berkowitz Fellows will receive a joint Ph.D. in Education and History, the only funded joint degree between a school of education and a history department in the United States.

The Judy & Howard Berkowitz Chair was endowed in 1995 with a gift from Judith Roth Berkowitz, CW’64, and Howard P. Berkowitz, W’62. The Chair was donated by the Berkowitz family in order to facilitate a study of ethnic relations, cultural pluralism, and diversity as they relate to education.

**Amalia Dache and Two Penn GSE Students Receive Prestigious National Academy of Education/Spencer Fellowships**  
Penn GSE Assistant Professor **Amalia Z. Dache** (6) was awarded a National Academy of Education/Spencer Postdoctoral Fellowship, among the most competitive awards for early career education researchers, to further her research exploring geographic and structural factors that have historically inhibited access for students on the margins of race and class. In addition, two Penn GSE doctoral students, Briana Nichols and Jessica Peng, both joint Ph.D. candidates with Penn’s Department of Anthropology, were named National Academy of Education/Spencer Dissertation Fellows, each receiving a prestigious fellowship. Nichols was recognized for her dissertation about young people in Guatemala fighting to remain in their communities. Peng was honored for her dissertation about how education is valued in Indonesia.

**Milken-Penn GSE Education Business Plan Competition Announces Winners**  
The 11th anniversary Milken-Penn GSE Education Business Plan Competition (EBPC) held its virtual finals on October 6, 2020. Eight finalists had the opportunity to pitch their ventures to a virtual judges’ panel and audience of investors, researchers, and practitioners. Third Room, a virtual platform that connects industry professionals to rural STEM schools, captured the Michael & Lori Milken Family Foundation’s Grand Prize of \$40,000. The company also received \$25,000 in Amazon Web Services Promotional credits. CloudLabs, a Colombia-based virtual platform for lab simulations in math, agriculture, physics, and chemistry, won the \$25,000 American Public University System Prize. Fulphil, a Philadelphia-based nonprofit that teaches students social entrepreneurship, collected the \$5,000 Osage Venture Partners Audience Choice Prize. All finalists received \$1,000 in cash and \$5,000 in Amazon Web Services Promotional credits.

■ Assistant Professor **Abby Reisman** (7) is part of a research team with the Strategic Education Research Partnership Institute that has been awarded the Lyle Spencer Award, a \$1,000,000 grant from the Spencer Foundation, for the study “Academically Productive Talk: Strengthening the Infrastructure for Research and Practice.”



■ Assistant Professor **Sharon Wolf** (8) received a \$299,626 grant from the World Bank Strategic Impact Evaluation Fund for the project “Nudges to Improve Learning and Gender Parity: Supporting Parent Engagement and Ghana’s Educational Response to COVID-19.”

**The 2020 Penn GSE Awards**  
**William E. Arnold Award for Outstanding Contributions by a Student**  
Nimet Eren, GED’09, GRD’20, Teaching, Learning, and Leadership  
**Recognition of Service: Student Recipients**  
Rhina Duquela, Higher Education  
Nora Gross, GR’20, Literacy, Culture, & International Education  
Xuan Guan, Educational Linguistics  
Taylor Hausburg, Teaching, Learning & Leadership  
Scott Kominkiewicz, GED’20, Human Development & Quantitative Methods  
**Recognition of Service: Staff Recipients**  
Tamika Easley, Literacy, Culture, & International Education  
Krista Featherstone, Education Policy  
Sara Goldstein, Teaching, Learning & Leadership  
Sarah Peyton Kaufman, Educational Linguistics  
Ayoun Lee, Executive Format  
Maryetta Rowan, Human Development & Quantitative Methods  
Penn GSE IT Department

**Recognition of Service: Faculty Recipients**  
Brooks Bowden, Education Policy  
Catherine Box, Educational Linguistics  
Gerald Campano, Executive Format  
Kathleen Hall, Literacy, Culture, & International Education  
Michael Nakkula, Human Development & Quantitative Methods  
Mark Pellico, Teaching, Learning & Leadership  
Laura Perna, Higher Education

**In the Media**  
As leading voices in the field, Penn GSE faculty regularly weigh in on top issues in education. Here are a few highlights of their recent contributions in the media:

“Despite COVID Concerns, Economics Still Driving Teacher Retirement Decisions” | *Laredo Morning Times* | September 14, 2020  
**Richard Ingersoll** discusses the role of economics in teachers’ decisions to leave their jobs or retire.

“Why Teaching through Crisis Requires a Radical New Mindset” | *Harvard Business Review Online* | August 12, 2020  
**Sharon Ravitch** introduces the concept of flux pedagogy for education in unprecedented times.

“Research Insights: Black Girls’ Experiences in Independent Schools” | *Independent School* | Summer 2020  
**Charlotte Jacobs** examines the experience of Black girls attending predominantly white independent schools, detailing key lessons for school leaders.

“Mid-Major Conferences Brace for Inevitable Cuts in Sports Budgets because of Pandemic” | *LA Times* | June 20, 2020  
**Karen Weaver** discusses how enrollment totals may impact sports budgets for colleges and universities.

“‘Racist’ and ‘Culturally Offensive’ Images Pulled from Hugely Popular Trading Card Game” | *The Washington Post* | June 5, 2020  
**Ebony Elizabeth Thomas** says racist imagery and tropes in popular media can reinforce negative attitudes about people of color.

“Kids Need to Talk about George Floyd, Protests, and Racism. With Coronavirus School Closures, It’s Hard to Do.” | *USA Today* | June 4, 2020  
**Howard Stevenson** says teachers can play a powerful role in helping young people to engage in conversations about race rather than avoid them.

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

Visit [www.gse.upenn.edu/news/archive](http://www.gse.upenn.edu/news/archive) or follow @PennGSE on Twitter to stay up to date on Penn GSE in the media.



# Education in Times of Change

Penn GSE Provides Leadership and Partnership for an Unprecedented Era

by Juliana Rosati



Image by iStock.com/metamorworks



Photos by Greg Benson Photography and Ryan Collier

Amid the worst pandemic in a century and perhaps the largest civil rights movement in U.S. history, the field of education is operating in a dramatic and unprecedented environment. Across K–12 and higher education, the abrupt shift to virtual education during tumultuous times has brought vast challenges and opportunities related to learning, mental health, access, and equity. In this landscape, Penn GSE has applied its expertise to move education forward within the School, across the nation, and around the world. ● “I have been incredibly proud of how Penn GSE has responded, in terms of orchestrating our own move to remote teaching, stepping up to provide resources to educators and leaders in the field at large, and addressing issues of race, equity, and access throughout our work,” says Penn GSE Dean Pam Grossman. ● In March, the School engineered a rapid and sophisticated transition to virtual education. In June, Penn GSE’s Committee on Race, Equity, and Inclusion hosted two School-wide meetings to respond to the police killings of Black people and envision next steps for the School’s longstanding work in race, equity, and inclusion. ● Since the beginning of the pandemic, Penn GSE has quickly channeled its knowledge and strengths outwards to lead and partner with educators at all levels—through its partnership with The School District of Philadelphia, its professional development offerings for educators near and far, and two groundbreaking new projects funded by the Harold W. McGraw, Jr. Family Foundation to offer mental health and leadership guidance to K–12 educators and leaders for the road ahead. ● “Many of us who have been working in education innovation for decades realized that this is the moment where the disruption is so great that it forces us to leap into the future,” says Michael Golden, GRD’07, senior fellow and executive director of Catalyst @ Penn GSE, the School’s hub for innovation. ● Throughout the process, Penn GSE has relied on the strength and power of community to meet the demands of unpredictable times.

## Embracing the Shift to Virtual Education

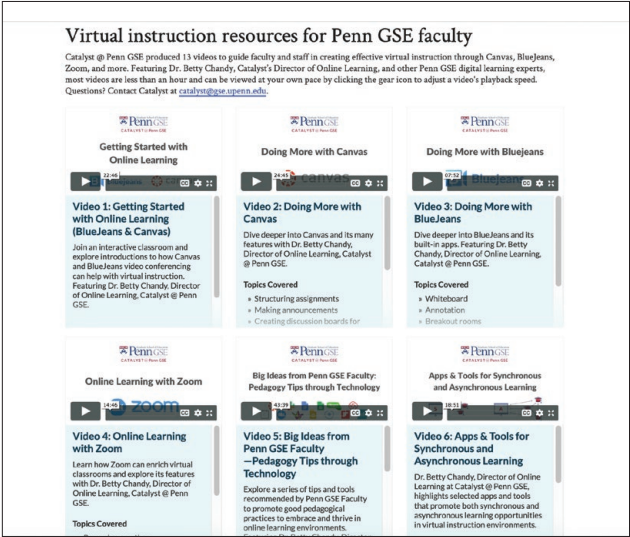


↑ Penn GSE faculty and staff met virtually for a series of workshops on teaching remotely during the transition to virtual instruction.

As schools, colleges, and universities across the country, including Penn, made an unprecedented shift to virtual education in March to curb the spread of COVID-19, Penn GSE drew upon its considerable in-house expertise to give students a high-quality experience. “Almost immediately we created an ad hoc committee to help our colleagues pivot to teaching remotely,” says Dr. Matthew Hartley, professor and associate dean for academic affairs.

The group, led by Hartley, included Dr. Golden; Betty Chandy, GED’05, GRD’13, director of online learning for Catalyst @ Penn GSE; Dr. Amy Stornaiuolo, associate professor in the Literacy, Culture, and International Education division; and Dr. Annie McKee, senior fellow and director of the PennCLO program. “We have tremendous expertise across Penn GSE in the design and cultivation of learning environments,” says Golden. Catalyst produced an initial set of seven videos led by Dr. Chandy, who applied her experience preparing K–12 and higher education instructors to teach online through Penn GSE’s VOLT (Virtual Online Learning and Teaching) certificate program, considered the first of its kind. “We wanted to help all of our faculty understand the affordances and possibilities of the platforms and tools available to them,” says Chandy. In the videos, she discussed how best to use learning management and video conferencing platforms and supplement them with apps and tools. Chandy, Stornaiuolo, and Sharon Ravitch, GR’00, professor of practice, also addressed best online pedagogical practices. When the spring semester concluded, feedback was positive. “Some students said that classes got even better because their professors were so creative in thinking about what they could do online,” reports Dean Grossman. As it became clear that the summer and fall semesters would also be virtual, the committee provided in-depth guidance on designing courses to be virtual from start to finish. A five-





↑ Visit <https://onepenn.gse.upenn.edu/teaching-remotely> to find Penn GSE’s resources for teaching remotely.

workshop series, also made available as videos, covered course design, community building, classroom practices, and more.

An overarching theme was how to balance synchronous, or live, class sessions with asynchronous activities that students can undertake on their own schedules. Lectures, for example, can tax attention spans when presented live online as part of a longer class session and may be best viewed asynchronously via video recordings. Other asynchronous activities might include discussion boards and multimedia platforms for sharing ideas and images. On the other hand, live, synchronous discussions can be essential for building community and engagement. The balance might differ depending on an instructor’s learning objectives and the type of course, such as a seminar emphasizing discussion or a project-based learning class designed around small-group work.

Chandy is optimistic about the capabilities of virtual education to support and even enhance opportunities for students to drive and shape learning. “So many faculty members are seeing value in digital tools in terms of helping students see each other’s ideas,” she says. “I think we’re going to have even more student-centered learning environments as a result of this experience.”

The growing library of videos has been posted online. (*For the URL to this and other resources, see “Go Virtual with Penn GSE” on page 27.*) Training documents, along with individual consultations with the Penn GSE Information Technology Department, were also made available to faculty. Open Q&A sessions allowed faculty across the School to share their own best practices. Discussion addressed a range of issues impacting students, including time zone differences, limitations to technological access, sensitivities about appearing on video, and the need to compensate for social opportunities that would happen organically in person.

“Everybody wants to make this work, and we are so committed to bringing the best possible experience to our students,” says Dr. Susan A. Yoon, professor in the Teaching, Learning, and Leadership division, whose research in the learning sciences has long developed digital learning environments. “It’s heartening to see

that we’re all sort of banding together. What a way to create community—it’s amazing.”

Faculty have also considered together how class discussions can respond to current events. “One of the things that has united us is the importance of always attending to our classes as communities of learners who want to produce positive change in the world,” says Hartley. “At a moment in time when we’re trying to figure out what kind of country and world we want to have, it’s important to provide an environment where people can have those kinds of conversations.”

## Leading the Field Locally, Nationally, and Globally

Throughout the seismic shifts in the nation and world since the spring, Penn GSE has kept its attention outwards, providing partnership and resources for educators through existing programs while also expanding the School’s reach.

“We got a very clear message from the dean that Penn GSE needs to be responsive and be of service at this time. We knew we had a role to play,” says Dr. Zachary Herrmann, executive director of the Center for Professional Learning and director of the Project-Based Learning Certificate Program.

Faculty have offered their expertise through *The Educator’s Playbook*, a newsletter for K–12 educators and parents, and national media outlets. In particular, Dr. Howard Stevenson, Constance Clayton Professor of Urban Education and professor of Africana studies, has been widely interviewed on his work in racial literacy.

“An initial step towards social change is sitting with racial discomfort. Unfortunately, without stress management tools, no one really does that very well,” says Stevenson, who offered advice for educators to address the national racial climate based on his years of bringing trainings to schools and organizations. (*See page 12 to learn more about Stevenson’s work.*)

Penn GSE’s longstanding work with The School District of Philadelphia, across more than 230 schools, represents a national model of partnership between a university and an urban district and has provided an infrastructure for Penn GSE to support schools. The Responsive Math Teaching project, which helps improve math instruction in the thirteen elementary schools in West Philadelphia, immediately moved all of its professional development and coaching for District teachers online—and changed its content for the new reality.

“We’re helping teachers figure out how to teach math in a virtual environment, which has been an urgent need,” says Dr. Caroline Watts, director of the Office of School and Community Engagement and senior lecturer, who oversees Penn GSE’s partnership with the District.

Similarly, the Philadelphia Writing Project (PhilWP), based at Penn GSE, quickly moved its programs for teachers and students online and undertook new efforts—including a teachers’ study group about virtual writing instruction, summer lessons for children, and 1,500 writing kits delivered to students and families at partner schools.



“I think we’re going to have even more student-centered learning environments as a result of this experience.”

— Dr. Betty Chandy

↑ Penn GSE’s longstanding work with The School District of Philadelphia, across more than 230 schools, has provided an infrastructure for Penn GSE to support schools during the pandemic. Photo by Greg Benson Photography



“Kids are stuck in the house, so we want to give them as many exciting learning experiences as possible,” says Professor of Practice Diane Waff, C’76, GRD’07, director of PhilWP, which represents Philadelphia’s most prominent teacher network, with a community of more than eight hundred teacher consultants in the region who enhance the teaching of writing.

In these and other collaborations with the District, Penn GSE has worked to help school leaders navigate the impact on children from lower-income families, who may have lacked the technology to participate when schools went virtual, and who may also have lost critical access to food, social services, and counseling when school buildings closed.

“Everything that we’re dealing with right now is further highlighted by and further highlights inequities,” says Watts. “We work by listening to the schools and communities, learning alongside them, and connecting them with resources at Penn GSE.”

Educational, social, and health support provided by students from Penn GSE, Penn Nursing, and Penn Social Policy & Practice at Kensington Health Sciences Academy, part of a three-school collaboration called the Penn Futures Project, is being adapted to current conditions. The new principals of the Henry C. Lea Elementary School and the Penn Alexander School, both schools where Penn GSE leads University-wide partnerships, have set goals for racial justice and equity in the year ahead, and Watts is linking the schools with relevant Penn GSE resources.

Within Catalyst, the Center for Professional Learning and VOLT have adapted and expanded their nondegree professional development for working educators. As the transition to virtual learning began, the Center for Professional Learning not only redesigned its planned Summer Institutes, but also created a slate of free webinars and workshops about issues related to the pandemic, altogether reaching over 1,600 participants.

“The workshops made the resources of our community broadly accessible to educators, leaders, and caregivers around the globe,” says Herrmann. A topic that he has taught regularly in the past, “Collaboration and Conflict,” gained added resonance this year when Herrmann presented it through both the Center and his Penn GSE courses.

“I’m a Black woman, the mother of a son, and have lost people to the coronavirus,” says Penn GSE doctoral student Yulanda Essoka, associate director of diversity and inclusion at Penn Engineering, who enrolled in a summer course on the topic. “I hit the street protesting after George Floyd’s murder and started class angry, hurt, and disengaged. However, Dr. Herrmann opened

**“I felt confident to take ownership of my virtual classroom, provide purposeful and meaningful learning activities, and expand the ways in which my students can demonstrate their learning.”**

— Tara Greene, third-grade Spanish immersion teacher at Appoquinimink School District

class acknowledging what was going on in the world, and his small, genuine act of recognition caused me to lean in, listen, and learn. Ironically, and thankfully, the course content provided an ideal lens to scrutinize current events and conflicts that stemmed, in part, from lack of collaboration.”

While Chandy was helping Penn GSE faculty move their classrooms online overnight, she was doing the same for educators enrolled in the VOLT program and U.S. school districts with which VOLT previously worked. For partner Aditya Birla Education Academy in India, VOLT launched a new series of trainings, the first of which reached over eight hundred educators.

“I consider myself incredibly lucky to be a part of the VOLT program as the COVID-19 crisis continues,” says participant Tara Greene, a third-grade Spanish immersion teacher at Appoquinimink School District in Middletown, Delaware. “I felt confident to take ownership of my virtual classroom, provide purposeful and meaningful learning activities, and expand the ways in which my students can demonstrate their learning.”

Supporting Practitioners on the Road Ahead

Decision making for education leaders has never been more complex as they determine when and how to reopen school buildings and campuses—and prepare to change plans on short notice. At the same time, with daily life disrupted on an unprecedented scale on multiple fronts, the need for social and emotional support for students and educators has never been more urgent.

“We’re all experiencing what’s going on in the world,” says Dr. Marsha Richardson, senior lecturer in the Human Development and Quantitative Methods division and a clinical psychologist by training. “All parts of the system are impacted by trauma.” Looking to the future, Penn GSE has prepared to reimagine and support the field in multiple ways.

As an outcome of the School-wide conversations in June, Penn GSE has established new faculty-led initiatives that build on the School’s work in race, equity, and inclusion to promote antiracism and diversity within Penn GSE and in the field of education at large. “As a school, we are committed to doing the work to address racism and other forms of oppression,” says Dean Grossman. “I am grateful that so many of us came together to share ideas about how we individually and collectively can take actions that move this work forward.”

To equip K–12 educators and leaders across the country for the complexity of the 2020-2021 academic year, Penn GSE has released two groundbreaking new resources in mental health and leadership for schools, funded by a total of \$360,000 in grants from The Harold W. McGraw, Jr. Family Foundation.

“If students are struggling emotionally, that makes it hard for them to focus in school. And that is underscored in this era of virtual learning, because students are taken out of physical proximity to each other, where social development occurs,” says Dr. Michael J. Nakkula, professor of practice in the Human Development and Quantitative Methods division. Nakkula and his team from the Project for Mental Health and Optimal Development have led the creation of “Planning for Uncertainty: An Educator’s



↑ The shift from in-person to virtual settings has created an increased need for social and emotional support for students. Photo by Ryan Collard

Guide to Navigating the COVID-19 Era,” one of the two McGraw-funded projects.

Intended as a user-friendly document to help educators navigate the social and emotional aspects of the new academic year, the guide examines scenarios adapted from real-life situations in schools. For example, a student who was performing well in school begins to disconnect from virtual classes, an educator struggles to cope with being at risk for COVID-19, and the national and global environment of high anxiety disrupts students’ learning.

“It’s meant to help you realize the things you can control and the things you can’t, and see possibilities to innovate and support optimal development in sub-optimal conditions,” says Andy Danilchick, GED’98, director of the guide project and of the Project for Mental Health and Optimal Development, an initiative through which he and Nakkula work with schools and educators locally and globally.

The guide aims to help educators foster an “uncertainty mindset” to address changing circumstances with adaptable solutions and respond to needs as they emerge. The scenarios have been developed by a team of educators, many in Philadelphia and New York, with input from Penn GSE’s Caroline Watts and Julie Berger, GED’13, GED’19, senior research coordinator of the Office of School and Community Engagement.

“Our focus is on moving educators from inaction to action through a process of dialogue and reflection, with a focus on equitable practice,” says Miranda Wenhold, GED’20, manager of the guide project.

For school leaders, decision-making processes are undergoing a severe test—and practice collaborating makes a difference. “There are inequities in the decision-making capacities of school systems,” says Dr. Jonathan A. Supovitz, professor in the Education Policy division. “If you didn’t have established structures and practices for collaborative decision-making, and you got thrust into this situation where a lot of people had to communicate quickly to come up with a coherent response to the crisis, your ability to respond was much weaker.”

**“If students are struggling emotionally, that makes it hard for them to focus in school. And that is underscored in this era of virtual learning, because students are taken out of physical proximity to each other, where social development occurs.”**

— Dr. Michael J. Nakkula

As leader of “Leading Improvement in Challenging Times,” the other McGraw-funded project, Supovitz has produced a guide and animated video to give educational leaders the practice they need in collaborating to create, test, and adapt solutions to problems. The video simulates the interactions of a leadership team and provides commentary from several graduates of Penn GSE’s Mid-Career Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership.

These materials and the “Planning for Uncertainty” guide were released to U.S. schools for the 2020 back-to-school season, with a combined potential reach estimated at 14 million students. During the academic year, each project will release professional development resources and provide coaching to approximately 100,000 educators. The hope is that in addition to guidance for a time of crisis, the projects will impart skills and processes that remain useful in calmer times. “We’ve built this to be durable,” says Supovitz.

Catalyst oversees the projects and continues to create conversation about the future of education through multiple channels. These include the Milken-Penn GSE Education Business Plan Competition and The Harold W. McGraw, Jr. Prize in Education, which offer year-round programming as well as annual events that went virtual this fall. (*See page 4 to learn more.*) EDTECH WEEK 2020, a four-day virtual event produced by Catalyst and StartEd® in June, drew four thousand educators, entrepreneurs, funders, investors, and researchers. A key outcome from one session was a white paper about innovation for higher education leaders, “Is Academic Innovation Mission Critical or Crisis-Driven? Nine Questions that Matter,” generated by a think tank of college and university leaders and cowritten by Dr. Peter Eckel, senior fellow in Penn GSE’s Higher Education division.

“We’re hoping that we can leverage what the disruption has surfaced, which is this underlying dichotomy of advantage and disadvantage, and the heightened awareness of systemic racism,” says Golden. “We can envision a future where people are proactively working to make change happen, and no longer willing to perpetuate a system that hasn’t served all students and all learners.”

From modeling best practices in the shift to virtual education to supporting and shaping the field of education locally, nationally, and globally, Penn GSE has demonstrated the strengths and adaptability that will be needed for the unfamiliar road ahead. “If this period has taught me anything, it is that the Penn GSE community is a resilient and generous one,” says Dean Grossman. ■





“With teachers and others in positions of authority, we focus on developing racial mindfulness so that they are aware of how they behave in the presence of people different from themselves and are prepared to make decisions that foster equity.”  
—Dr. Howard Stevenson

↑ Penn GSE’s Dr. Howard Stevenson (left) and his team lead a racial literacy workshop at the Jubilee School in Philadelphia. Photo by Darryl W. Moran Photography

# Recasting the Moment

PROFESSOR HOWARD STEVENSON ON CREATING CHANGE THROUGH RACIAL LITERACY interview by Juliana Rosati

*In the wake of the series of police killings of Black people that sparked historic protests and heightened national conversation about race, and amid persistent structures of systemic racism, how can people of color promote their own emotional well-being and healing? How can leaders and organizations create lasting change to advance anti-racism and social justice? To Penn GSE’s Dr. Howard Stevenson, Constance Clayton Professor of Urban Education and professor of Africana studies, the importance of skills and practice to navigate difficult interpersonal moments cannot be overestimated. A nationally sought expert on racial stress and racial trauma, Dr. Stevenson trains students and educators in racial literacy—the ability to identify and resolve racially stressful social interactions. Since 2016, he has brought his approach to students, educators, parents, community leaders, and others through the Racial Empowerment Collaborative at Penn GSE, of which he is executive director. More than one hundred public and independent schools and community health organizations across the country have sought the expertise of Stevenson and his team. We sat down with him to discuss the national landscape and how racial literacy can help create a better future.*

**In light of the deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and other Black Americans killed by police, and the historic protests that followed, how would you describe the current landscape of our country?**  
As in other times of injustice followed by protests, there has been a sense that people feel very hopeful. And I think part of that comes from watching more people, or different people, joining in protest than we generally see. But if you look back across history, you will see a dynamic in which protest is accompanied by violent backlash. Some of this is documented in the work of my brother, Bryan Stevenson, at the Equal Justice Initiative, which recently chronicled over two thousand lynchings in the United States between 1865 and 1876, during Reconstruction. It’s outrageous—at the time of hope, at the time of the country deciding to make a change, you have this other narrative and experience of extreme violence. Right now, I think the real issue is how to organize change. People can get excited in what civil rights leader Kwame Ture called “spontaneity moments,” but do we know how to create change? I believe we don’t yet have skill sets or literacies that are as far-reaching as these protests.



How can the approaches of racial literacy help?

Racial literacy offers an interpersonal approach to making change. We need institutional, systemic approaches as well as interpersonal approaches. And when it comes to the interpersonal, change is not easy if you don't have a stress management approach. In the moment, what do I do when I'm not just upset by watching George Floyd's murder on video, but when I'm facing somebody different from me and I have to use my own wits and battle my own stereotypes and fears? There's no research to suggest that even if I believe in social justice, or I believe racism is wrong, that I will act without a sense of threat in a racial encounter. We think of racial literacy as the ability to read a racially stressful moment accurately, to recast it from really high stress to moderate or low stress, and then to work to resolve it by making a healthy decision that isn't an underreaction or an overreaction.

How do you define a racial encounter?

It's really in the eye of the person involved. The conflict could be internal—you could be struggling with thoughts of what might happen in the presence of a person different from yourself. Or you could feel that you have been slighted or insulted because of your difference.

What are the racial literacy skills that the Racial Empowerment Collaborative teaches for dealing with these moments?

One particular recasting skill is CLCBE: Calculate, Locate, Communicate, Breathe, and Exhale. On a scale of one to ten, can you calculate your stress level? If it's an 8, 9, or 10, you're in a threat-like position, and you're compromised. Usually your brain goes on lockdown and you lose peripheral vision and hearing. This is how we would describe many of those police officers who simply made no decision before shooting someone who was unarmed. I believe we can teach people to notice their level of stress. If you notice it, then you have options that you wouldn't otherwise. Locate means, where do you feel the stress in your body? Communicate means, identify what you are saying to yourself during the moment. The process takes practice, but we have taught children as young as fifth graders. One time I was at a school in Chicago with about seventy fifth graders early in the morning. Before I could get to "communicate," one of the girls stood up and said, "I'm angry at a 9 that I'm the only Native American girl in this school. I can feel it, I can locate it in my stomach. It's like a bunch of butterflies fighting with each other so much they fly up into my throat and choke me." She was so descriptive.

What happens at the end of this process to resolve the moment?

Breathing in for four counts and exhaling for six counts is meant to bring a certain mindfulness, so that you can pause and decide how to respond. We work with students of color to practice what we call "healthy racial comeback lines" that they might choose to say at this point. Experiences of discrimina-



↑ Stevenson is a nationally sought expert on racial stress and racial trauma. Photo by Greg Benson Photography

tion are associated with chronic stress, which comes partly from not knowing what to say in the moment. The comeback could be as simple as saying "Excuse me?" with attitude in response to an insult. The purpose is to empower young people with a way to stand up for themselves. Whether they say it to the other or not, it's most important they say to themselves, "I reject your rejection of me." With teachers and others in positions of authority, we focus on developing racial mindfulness so that they are aware of how they behave in the presence of people different from themselves and are prepared to make decisions that foster equity.

How have you adapted this process for different contexts?

We've brought it to schools to help educators and students navigate conflicts between students, or between students and teachers. We've worked with parents and children to help families have conversations about race. Parents learn to use the skills to process their own childhood traumas before speaking with their children, and the children learn the skills as well. Another project, PLAAY (Preventing Long-term Anger and Aggression in Youth), helps young people to manage stress, including but not limited to racial stress. We use physical activity, primarily basketball, as a stress management technique, along with group therapy and racial literacy. For that project I've been traveling to New Mexico for the past eight years and training communities from around the country, thanks to support from the National Network to Eliminate Disparities in Behavioral Health. Stakeholders from departments of recreation, police departments, mayors' offices, and education get trained to take the approach back to their cities.

How has your work translated to a virtual environment?

There have been some pleasant surprises. In our work, we usually push people to tell stories about racial encounters they have experienced. With online interactions, we've discovered

Putting People at the Forefront of Research



Dr. Nkemka Anyiwo



Dr. Whitney Polk  
GED'11, GED'12

Stevenson's team at the Racial Empowerment Collaborative (REC) includes two post-doctoral fellows in Penn GSE's Human Development and Quantitative Methods division.

In keeping with the Collaborative's mission, their research seeks to advance the well-being of students and educators by addressing issues of race.

Dr. Nkemka Anyiwo, a vice provost and National Science Foundation postdoctoral fellow, studies how Black youth heal from and are empowered to contest racism by advocating for change in their communities. "How do we support young people in developing the skills, the confidence, not only to survive and manage the system, but also to contest and challenge it?" asks Anyiwo, who earned her M.S.W. and Ph.D. at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, and has led several cultural and social justice organizations and worked as a community and campus organizer.

Penn GSE alumna Dr. Whitney Polk, GED'11, GED'12, a National Science Foundation postdoctoral fellow, is taking a closer look at how racial literacy can be applied to school discipline. "That moment when a teacher decides

that a young person has violated the code of conduct can become a racially stressful interaction, one that feeds into the larger racial climate of the school," says Polk, who worked for agencies contracted with The School District of Philadelphia as a licensed professional counselor before earning her Ph.D. at Harvard. "I'm trying to understand the stress experienced by both the educator and the young person, and give them the skills to reclaim their humanity in those moments."

Anyiwo and Polk both appreciate the emphasis that Stevenson and REC place on people and community. Polk, who worked with Stevenson while earning her master's, returned to Penn GSE to work with him again. "He puts forth racial literacy as something that can be learned and practiced in community with others," she says. Anyiwo adds, "Our team is supportive of each other and very intentional about how this work translates to people—keeping them at the forefront of the work. Dr. Stevenson embodies this in his leadership, and his care and dedication are powerful."

Past postdoctoral fellow and Penn GSE alumna Kelsey Jones, GR'15, now assistant professor of human development at California State University, San Marcos, agrees. "His ability to connect with people in a very authentic way is something that spreads through the work of the Collaborative," Dr. Jones says. "He is a man about healing. And all of the work of REC is focused on healing." ■

that people can manage stress during our process in ways that may not be as available face-to-face. You could go to a room that's calming for you, hold a pet, or find privacy by stepping away from the screen. It's an interesting difference that we're still learning about. I've found that in the virtual environment, you can push people to emote in a way that I wouldn't have thought possible without being face-to-face. And yet I also want to be there when we push you, because there's a level of trust that's harder to develop virtually.

In June, you led two School-wide meetings of Penn GSE faculty, staff, and students to respond as a community to the racial climate of the country and envision next steps in the School's goals for race, equity, and inclusion. What do you feel that those meetings accomplished?

We had over a hundred participants, and I felt that people invested themselves in the conversations. It was nice to

have faculty, staff, and students leading together—we had a variety of folks who shared their voices. I think there was a common sense of energy to want to do something. The faculty members who are now leading various committees to expand Penn GSE's initiatives in race, equity, and inclusion are continuing that energy.

What gives you hope about the future?

When we teach racial literacy to young people, it's exciting to see how they take it in directions we didn't always plan. In one school, students started pushing their teachers and peers in a way that led to them being part of a rally that took place recently at Philadelphia's City Hall. Young people can move the rest of us. If they get the skills to speak up, they use their voices like a superpower, and what they do with it extends beyond our imagination. ■



# EXTRAORDINARY IMPACT

THE CAMPAIGN FOR  PENN GSE

## The Campaign for Penn GSE Creating Opportunity at Penn GSE and Beyond

by Karen Doss Bowman

The *Extraordinary Impact Campaign*, a \$75 million initiative within the University-wide *Power of Penn Campaign*, represents the largest fundraising effort in Penn GSE’s history. Through the generosity of donors, *Extraordinary Impact* is fueling the work of Penn GSE faculty, staff, and students as they create opportunity through education. This support, spanning the areas below, allows the School to improve learning outcomes locally, nationally, and globally to shape the next century of education.

**Facilities and Technology /** Generous new gifts have contributed to a total of **\$11.5 million** raised for Penn GSE’s state-of-the-art building expansion, adding momentum to the School’s first building project in more than half a century. The transformational project is designed to provide a much-needed hub for Penn GSE, which boasts the second-largest student body among Penn’s graduate and professional schools. Many new gifts and commitments are propelling the project forward so that the majority of the School’s more than 1,600 students can convene at a central location with flexible, technologically advanced learning spaces.

“The enhanced facility will create an interdisciplinary hub for educators,” says Penn GSE Dean Pam Grossman. “Future early childhood and K–12 educators, researchers, policymakers, entrepreneurs, chief learning officers, and others will learn side by side.” The expansion will merge the 3700 Walnut Street building with nearby Stiteler Hall and include the addition of a large new entrance lobby; plentiful student spaces, lounges, and study areas; and a two-story adjoining building with classrooms and an innovation lab. Through the generosity of an anonymous donor, a \$5 million match is available to double the impact of a new \$5 million gift to the project and will provide a prominent naming opportunity at the intersection of 37th and Walnut Streets at a key entry point of Penn’s campus.

**Scholarship and Fellowship /** Gifts totaling **\$6.6 million** for financial aid are bolstering Penn GSE’s ability to attract exceptionally talented and dedicated students across programs. By lessening the burden of tuition payments, scholarships and fellowships allow students to focus on their academic and professional pursuits. Rebecca Baelen (1), an Education Policy Ph.D. student, received the Lee and George Doty Endowed Fellowship. For her dissertation, Baelen has conducted a study of the School’s three teacher education programs, developing an intervention to promote teachers’ well-being.

“I am beyond grateful for the opportunity to study at Penn GSE,” says Baelen. “I have transformed as a scholar, teacher, and colleague.” Heather Hairston (2), an Ed.D. student in Teaching, Learning, and Leadership, received the Glosserman Family Urban Education Scholarship. A former Mary Jane Patterson Fellow in the District of Columbia Public Schools, Hairston is focused on advocating for educational reform. She was drawn to Penn GSE’s research focus, rigorous programs, and overall reputation.

“The cost of education can take a toll on students’ families and work-life balance,” Hairston says. “I am so grateful and thankful that the generosity of donors has provided me and other students with an invaluable opportunity—a chance to further our education.”

**Faculty /** With **\$5.8 million** raised, including four new endowed professorships, support for faculty ensures that Penn GSE can attract and retain scholars of the highest caliber. Dr. Yasmin Kafai (3), a world-renowned learning scientist, is the inaugural Lori and Michael Milken President’s Distinguished Professor in Education. A pioneer of online tools and communities to promote coding, crafting, and creativity, as well as diversity in the field of technology, Kafai empowers students in grades K–16 through her groundbreaking work. Teachers across the country have a powerful new tool for engaging students in coding thanks to the unit in electronic textiles that Kafai created for the Exploring Computer Science curriculum. Through the unit, students create stuffed animals, wristbands, hats, laptop sleeves, and other accessories, embedding them with LED lights that glow through circuitry and computer programming.

“Creating is a very powerful way of learning because it helps you to externalize your thinking,” says Kafai, who co-developed the popular programming tool Scratch, through which millions of children create and share digital games. “You create something that is shareable and visible. Your teacher and peers can interact with it, and this gives rise to great conversations.”

**Programs and Research /** Gifts and grants totaling **\$9 million** for programs and **\$55 million** for research are advancing Penn GSE’s role as a pioneer in innovation and a force for change in education. Support for the School’s teacher education programs is driving innovative coursework and fieldwork for the School’s Urban Teacher Apprenticeship program and enabling Penn GSE to incorporate best practices, such as student-centered and project-based learning, into teacher preparation. Gifts to the Office of School and Community Engagement are bolstering Penn GSE’s work with The School District of Philadelphia, a national model of partnership between a university and an urban district, across more than four hundred programs in over 230 schools.

Support for the School’s hub for innovation, Catalyst @ Penn GSE, is fueling initiatives to spark change in education—from problem-solving partnerships with schools, to certificate programs and webinars that advance practitioners’ skills, to programs that bring together leaders in education, business, entrepreneurship, and technology to envision education’s future. Catalyst’s efforts include new projects in mental health and leadership, funded by The Harold W. McGraw, Jr. Family Foundation, to help K–12 educators and leaders across the country navigate the complexity of the 2020-2021 academic year. (See page 4 to learn more.)

**The Penn GSE Annual Fund /** Gifts to the Penn GSE Annual Fund, which total **\$2.3 million**, are crucial for supporting faculty, staff, and students, as well as funding new opportunities and initiatives. Patricia Grant, GED’01, GRD’04 (4), senior associate dean for the undergraduate program at Georgetown University’s McDonough School of Business, gives to the Penn GSE Annual Fund out of gratitude for the financial support she received to earn her master’s and doctoral degrees.

Before enrolling at Penn GSE, Dr. Grant worked for several years in admissions and student services at Cornell University, her alma mater, and Binghamton University. She paused the career she loved to advance her skills and explore directions for the future.

“Because Penn GSE had the resources to support my studies, I’ll be forever grateful,” Grant says. “And when you’re given a gift, it’s important to pay it forward to support others.” She credits her Penn GSE courses, interactions with faculty and peers, and work with the School’s executive programs, with preparing her for higher education leadership. In addition to giving regularly to the Annual Fund, Grant has donated to the Dean’s Discretionary Fund in support of diversity initiatives.

“It’s important to me to invest in diversity—whether through supporting candidates to attend a school like Penn GSE or helping facilitate dialogues,” Grant says. “Our world needs a variety of talents and backgrounds to bring forward innovation and collaboration, and education is a core underpinning of that process.” ■

↓ 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.



To learn more about the *Extraordinary Impact Campaign*, or to contribute, visit [www.gse.upenn.edu/support/extraordinary-impact](http://www.gse.upenn.edu/support/extraordinary-impact) or contact us at 215.573.6623 or [alumni@gse.upenn.edu](mailto:alumni@gse.upenn.edu).

Ann Beha Architects



Photo by Greg Benson Photography

Ann Beha Architects

Photo by Greg Benson Photography



# Harnessing the Power of Education

## Penn GSE Board Leadership Transition

by Karen Doss Bowman

Doug Korn, W'84, is passionate about education and about Penn GSE's role as a national leader in the field.

"Penn GSE is an innovator in many areas—urban education, project-based learning, virtual education, the STEM fields, and so much more," says Korn, who became chair of the Penn GSE Board of Overseers in June. "At a time where education is increasingly important to future workers—who will have to adapt to a changing economy and a changing world of technology—Penn GSE faculty, students, and alumni are preparing American students, and students around the world, to become productive members of the economy and a civil society."

A member of the Board since 2013 and chair of Penn GSE's *Extraordinary Impact Campaign*, Korn has supported priorities across Penn GSE with his wife, Betsy. Along with scholarship aid, annual giving, and the capital expansion project at Penn GSE, the two have given to other areas of the University and recently contributed surgical masks to Penn Medicine to help out during the pandemic.

"Doug is one of the School's greatest advocates and I am ever grateful for his enthusiasm, his decisive leadership, and his commitment to the values of our school and our community," says Penn GSE Dean Pam Grossman.

Korn is taking over from previous Board chair David Roberts, W'84, who has been a great advocate of the School's commitment to serving at-risk students and under-resourced school systems.

"Penn GSE is giving aspiring teachers the tools to meet the needs of underserved populations. It is also developing new approaches through policy to help improve high school graduation rates and college access," says Roberts, who has been a Board member since 2012 and served as chair for the past five years.

"David has been a wonderful partner to me, serving as a trusted advisor, helping to support my vision for the School, offering advice whenever I needed it, and always only a call away," says Dean Grossman. Roberts, who continues to serve as a Board member, has played a key role on Penn GSE's Executive Committee and Campaign Committee. He and his wife, Debbie, have supported the School in the areas of scholarship, faculty professorships, annual giving, and work with the Henry C. Lea School in Philadelphia.

As Korn embarks on his new role, he is excited and energized about supporting Dr. Grossman and seeing the transformation of the School's physical plant into a modern, state-of-the-art hub.



Photo by Ginger Fox Photography

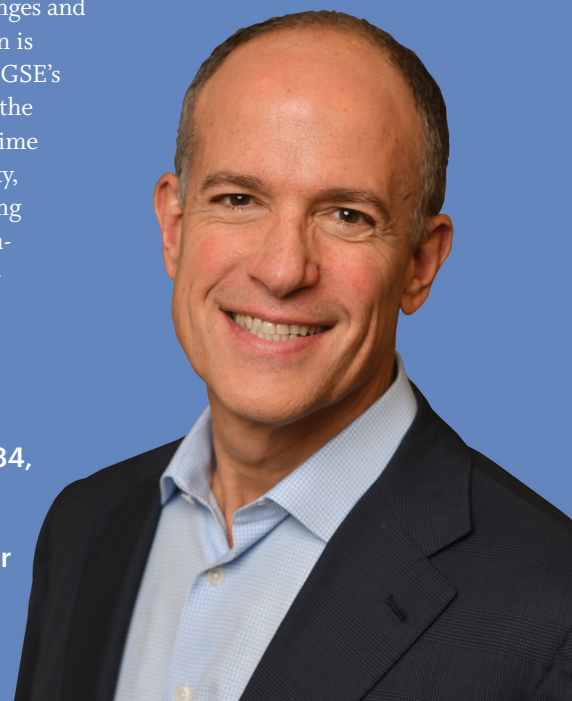
David Roberts, W'84, Penn GSE Board of Overseers chair, 2015-2020

"More than a century of hard work and excellence has built Penn GSE into one of the top education schools in the country," says Korn, founder and managing partner at Victor Capital Partners. "But over the years, the physical plant and the technology available to the School have not kept up with its success and the importance of its mission."

To advance the project that will bring the majority of Penn GSE's degree programs into a central location with flexible, technologically advanced learning spaces, Doug and Betsy have committed to name a classroom in the expanded facility and additionally have established a giving challenge to memorialize late Board member Edward M. Yorke, W'81, at the School.

In an era in which an unprecedented shift to virtual education has created vast challenges and opportunities, Korn is confident in Penn GSE's ability to navigate the road ahead. "At a time of great uncertainty, Penn GSE is making powerful contributions to the educational landscape," he says.

Doug Korn, W'84, current Penn GSE Board of Overseers chair



## Celebrating VIRTUALLY

With the spring semester concluding virtually and the COVID-19 pandemic underway, Penn Alumni Weekend and Penn GSE Commencement went virtual for 2020, keeping the University and School communities connected from afar.



### Virtual Penn Alumni Weekend

The University-wide programming on Saturday, May 16, featured two members of the Penn GSE community. Dr. Angela Duckworth, the Rosa Lee and Egbert Chang Professor at Penn and a secondary faculty member at Penn GSE, spoke on "Grit and the COVID-19 Pandemic." Duckworth (pictured above, center) is author of *New York Times* bestseller *Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance* and founder and CEO of the nonprofit Character Lab. Penn GSE alumna Rita Axelroth Hodges, C'05, GED'15 (above, right), discussed "The Netter Center, Civic Engagement, and Higher Education's Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic and Beyond" with Dr. Ira Harkavy, C'70, GR'79, associate vice president and founding director of the Netter Center for Community Partnerships at Penn. Hodges is associate director of the Netter Center.

Visit [www.alumni.upenn.edu](http://www.alumni.upenn.edu) and select "Virtual Alumni Weekend" under the "Events" tab to watch videos of these and other Virtual Alumni Weekend programs.



### Virtual Penn GSE Commencement

In lieu of its 106th in-person Commencement ceremony, Penn GSE shared a video on Monday, May 18, at 9:00 a.m. EDT to celebrate the School's 2020 graduates with heartfelt messages from faculty and staff. The video drew 1,900 views on Facebook, 1,266 on Instagram TV, 1,155 on YouTube, and 1,247 on LinkedIn. New graduates tagged their at-home celebrations and shared their memories using the hashtags #PennGSEGrad and #PennGrad, and alumni, faculty, and staff shared "Congrats, Grad" stories on Instagram. Penn GSE conferred 678 degrees during 2019-2020.

### Save the Date

Alumni Weekend: May 14-16, 2021

Visit [www.gse.upenn.edu/alumni/events](http://www.gse.upenn.edu/alumni/events) to find upcoming alumni programming.





Photo by iStock.com/Warchi

# ADAPTING IN TIMES OF CRISIS

Penn GSE Alumni Shape Education’s Future

by Lini S. Kadaba

The novel coronavirus pandemic and renewed calls for social justice in the wake of police brutality have permeated every facet of life—and the role of educators and leaders in the lives of learners worldwide is more important than

ever. Here, four Penn GSE alumni share the challenges they have faced in their work and the many ways their Penn GSE experience has helped them chart a promising path forward.

## Developing Change Agents in Schools

When The School District of Philadelphia moved to virtual learning this spring, Rahshene Davis, GED’03, assisted principals as they marshaled

staff volunteers to ensure each student in the District’s Learning Network 2 got a Chromebook. While some students already had school-issued devices, many did not.

Davis oversees the thirteen K–8 schools in West Philadelphia as assistant superintendent of Network 2, where most schools serve a low-income population and students of color make up the vast majority of the student body. While the successful distribution of technology this spring made her schools better prepared for a fully virtual start of the new academic year, for Davis, the circumstances of COVID-19 and civil unrest around race have coalesced, with the pivot to distance learning spotlighting disparities.

“Now that inequities are front and center, what are we going to do about it?” asks Davis, who earned her master’s in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages at Penn GSE.

Her answer is to continue her focus on developing the most

influential “change agents” that schools have: principals. Having begun her career as a teacher at the Henry C. Lea Elementary School, part of Network 2, Davis went on to work as a national literacy consultant and to study school reform. Her wide-ranging experiences taught her the importance of school principals, and she took on the role at University Heights Charter School in Newark, New Jersey, earning recognition for breakthrough student achievement gains.

Now, as assistant superintendent, Davis mentors Network 2’s principals, drawing inspiration from her work as a current student in Penn GSE’s Mid-Career Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership. “The role of principals is ever more crucial in these times of COVID and of students speaking out about racism and bias and having conversations with leaders to seek change,” she says.

Drawing upon her timely thesis, which considers the anti-racist leadership practices of Black district-level leaders who seek to dismantle systemic racism in schools, she is making anti-racist education a priority. She has shared a self-care checklist by Dr. Howard Stevenson, Constance Clayton Professor of Urban Education at Penn GSE, for navigating racial stress. She sees the Responsive Math Teaching project, led by a team from Penn GSE in Network 2’s schools, as an important partnership that fosters equity by promoting high-quality math instruction for students of color. “The program is aligned with the instructional vision that I have for my network, which is to improve teaching and learning,” she says. To help principals navigate the many changes they have faced, she shared Penn GSE Professor of Practice Sharon Ravitch’s “flux pedagogy” for leading through uncertainty, and Dr. Ravitch joined an April Q&A with principals via Zoom. In addition, Davis is helping principals to harness the benefits of Zoom to engage parents in new ways.

“I’m helping leaders see there are things you can continue to do even when we go back to face-to-face,” Davis says. “We should stay connected.”

## Keeping a Community Inspired



Navin Valrani, W’93, GED’18

In the United Arab Emirates, Navin Valrani, W’93, GED’18, CEO of Arcadia Education, has tackled virtual learning and reopening plans for Arcadia School, the first in a planned series of private schools meant to improve the K–12 educational landscape for children in Dubai.

“With the city of Dubai being one of the early movers in the shutdown of schools, we came up with an innovative device loan program within hours to ensure that every child at Arcadia could engage in the school’s distance learning program,” he says.

Perhaps the school’s focus on innovation and mindfulness made it well suited to adapt. Opened in 2016 by Arcadia Education, a venture between Mohan Valrani and the Al Shirawi Group, Arcadia School combines a British curriculum with an emphasis on student happiness through yoga, nutrition, and mindfulness. Throughout the transition to virtual, he says, the guiding question for both students and staff was, “What did we learn from this experience that made us better human beings?”

At the pandemic’s height, teachers collaborated through regular virtual forums and senior leadership made themselves available to parents. In a weekly Zoom call with students, Valrani fielded questions about the virus and on race relations in America. The school also cut its fees by 20 percent and worked with parents who lost jobs and couldn’t afford tuition.

Lessons were pre-recorded for younger students, but the school soon incorporated synchronous instruction as many missed the connection with peers and teachers, Valrani says. For older students, up to half the classes were live. “This put tremendous pressure on the teachers,” he says. “They have been the true heroes.”

Valrani, who grew up in Dubai, attended Wharton as an undergraduate. Once home, he was tapped to oversee the Al Shirawi Group’s construction and development. Later, his additional role as CEO of Arcadia Education brought him back to Penn to continue his own education. Pursuing his master’s in education entrepreneurship at Penn GSE, he says, helped him shape Arcadia School’s mission of producing students who “go on to become selfless, tolerant, and unifying citizens in society.”

With a new academic year underway, Valrani has returned to Penn GSE—remotely—as a student in the Penn Chief Learning Officer doctoral program. Arcadia is implementing in-person instruction with protections that include UV technology in the HVAC system, thermal imaging cameras at entrances, and classroom cameras for those more comfortable learning from home.

In times like these, Valrani says, educators can take solace



Photo by iStock.com/FG Trade

“The role of principals is ever more crucial in these times of COVID and of students speaking out about racism and bias and having conversations with leaders to seek change.”

—Rahshene Davis, GED’03



iStock.com/Rocco-Herrmann

**“The shift to distance learning was far from perfect. Almost every day I logged off Microsoft Teams wishing so badly I could just see my students in real life. But with strong collaboration and a growth mindset, schools can create a robust and positive learning experience. I saw it happen.”**

—Megan Tribble, GED’11



Megan Tribble, GED’11

in the power of their profession to make the world a better place. “When the chips are down, as they have seemed to be in the past several months, it’s time to lift ourselves up and know there’s an entire community out there that looks at us every single day for inspiration,” he says.

**Collaborating to Meet Students’ Needs**

When public schools in Washington, DC, moved online, English language learner teacher Megan Tribble, GED’11, was skeptical about connecting virtually with her students at Lafayette Elementary School.

“I didn’t know how I would teach young children through a computer,” says Tribble, a member of the school’s Academic Leadership Team and Racial Equity Committee. “But pretty much

everything exceeded my expectations.”

To navigate the impact of COVID-19 on learning and equity both then and now, Tribble has relied on strong collaboration and critical thinking—skills she credits to her time earning her master’s in teacher education at Penn GSE. Her teaching placement at the Penn Alexander School, she says, gave her practical experience and professional mentoring, while her coursework provided “the space to discuss large-scale issues of educational equity and policy solutions for these challenges.”

At Lafayette, where an insensitive lesson on slavery caused concern last year, she reports that she and others had already been working to place a year-round focus on issues of racial inequity. The coronavirus posed additional challenges, ones Tribble likens to building a plane and flying it at the same time. When the DC schools closed on March 13, spring break was moved up—but teachers continued to work, “hammering out plans for how to create virtual learning that mimics in-person school as closely as possible,” Tribble says. A framework of daily meetings via Microsoft Teams encouraged collaboration.

“We learned through trial and error,” Tribble reports. Take the morning meetings that began each student’s day. Tribble and colleagues quickly realized the necessity of the mute and unmute buttons to keep control of the class. Small-group reading was dropped at first, but soon reinstated through virtual breakout rooms known as channels. With the school library inaccessible, Tribble helped organize the purchase of books with the help of the Home and School Association, and she and others delivered them to children.

Meanwhile, student clubs helped maintain social ties, and the school formed a Social-Emotional Learning Committee. Tribble spent time brainstorming solutions with academic leadership, seeking to balance the expectations of families and teachers. A spread-

sheet tracked each student’s needs, including social-emotional learning, family needs, and academics.

Tribble was pleasantly surprised to find that some of her students fared better online than in the classroom, no longer distracted by classmates. “I saw so many of my English learner students make tremendous academic progress,” she says. Overall, she notes, feedback from parents has been positive.

“The shift to distance learning was far from perfect,” she says. “Almost every day I logged off Microsoft Teams wishing so badly I could just see my students in real life. But with strong collaboration and a growth mindset, schools can create a robust and positive learning experience. I saw it happen.”

**Propelling Innovation in Higher Education**



Mahesh Daas, GRD’13  
Photo courtesy of The Boston Architectural College

Despite the challenges of current times, Mahesh Daas, GRD’13, president of Boston Architectural College (BAC), sees opportunity for higher education innovation in both the need for social justice and the impact of the coronavirus.

Appointed to his current role in 2019, Dr. Daas has presided over a mission that has only increased in relevance—in his words, to “provide diverse communities access to professions

that are acutely in need of better inclusion and diversification.” Consider, he says, that only 2 percent of licensed architects are African American, and a fraction of a percentage point are African American women. “That is how anemic the professions are in terms of diversity, equity, and inclusion.”

The 675-student BAC largely meets its goal, Daas says, through an education model in which students work a practicum from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. at one of eighty-one partner firms and then attend classes, sometimes until 10 p.m., getting assessed on both fieldwork and academics. Students (Daas reports an average age of 28.5 years and 45.8 percent people of color) earn while they learn, which can make college more affordable, and an open admissions policy helps reduce barriers of access.

“We were talking about social justice well before all these issues became national and international discourses,” he says. “That is why our mission is what it is.”

**“When the protests began to happen, or even when the pandemic broke out, in a way our vision and strategy aligned with what we saw emerging. We just had to accelerate, invest more.”**

—Mahesh Daas, GRD’13

When COVID-19 struck, the college already had 43 percent of its programs online, which made for an easier transition, he says, noting that BAC also has the first primarily online master’s program to earn accreditation. Most students continued their practicum placements remotely, but those laid off were assigned to community-based projects, such as developing site proposals.

Soon after his arrival, Daas began a strategic plan, often seeking advice from his cohort in Penn GSE’s Executive Doctorate in Higher Education Management program. The plan includes social justice, which encompasses diversity, equity, and inclusion, as one of six tenets of BAC’s “Vision Hexagon.” He envisions social justice initiatives cutting across all aspects of the college—the curriculum, extracurricular activities, research, and institutional structures—supported by the resources to make a difference.

“When the protests began to happen, or even when the pandemic broke out, in a way our vision and strategy aligned with what we saw emerging,” he says. “We just had to accelerate, invest more.”

Daas also has emphasized nonviolent communication developed by psychologist Marshall Rosenberg as a way to improve organizational culture, implementing faculty and staff workshops on the approach that puts empathy at its center.

“The world has shifted,” he says. “Our way through these times is through innovation, and not by managing the crisis to go back to models and paradigms from before the pandemic.” ■



# Building a Community of Leaders

Penn GSE’s Chief Learning Officer Program Goes Virtual

by Debbie Goldberg



Image by iStock.com/DrAfter123

**When the COVID-19 pandemic started to shut the country down in mid-March, students in Penn GSE’s Chief Learning Officer (PennCLO) program were almost due back for the second on-campus session of the spring semester. It quickly became clear that was not about to happen.**

Considered a first-of-its-kind, the program prepares students to lead learning in the workplace. In corporations and nonprofits, workplace education is often managed at the highest levels by chief learning officers (CLOs), and many other leaders also view it as a top responsibility. At a host of major organizations, including General Electric, LinkedIn, IBM, Lincoln Financial Group, the U.S. Navy, the Hoover Institution, and more, PennCLO students and alumni tackle a range of challenges in employee training, talent recruitment, and organizational culture.

Part of Penn GSE’s collection of executive-format degree programs for working professionals, the PennCLO program allows students to continue working as leaders and executives while pursuing an Ed.D. degree. Under normal circumstances, students attend two immersive and intensive six-day seminars on campus each semester. In between, they undertake coursework while continuing their busy lives during the three-year program.

Without the benefit of the extended spring break that tra-

ditional programs had to prepare for the transition to virtual, and much to be accomplished within the session, Dr. Annie McKee, Penn GSE senior fellow and director of the program, worked around the clock with Penn GSE colleagues and tech gurus to redesign the week.

“We quickly had to figure out the technology, the pedagogy,” McKee says. “In all of the organizations and crises I have experienced, I have never seen a team pull together as our team did.” The result was scheduling, technology, and content that brought together a dozen or so faculty members and presenters from Penn and other institutions around the world, as well as some thirty students, also from a variety of locations and time zones.

One of the students, Keaston Simmons of Winchester, Tennessee, currently resides in Roseville, California. His multifaceted career includes ten years of active-duty service with the United States Air Force and half a decade of private-sector consulting for U.S. federal government agencies, including the National Park Service and National Institutes of Health. He teaches contract performance law at the University of California, Irvine, and serves in the California Air National Guard. He enrolled in the PennCLO program last fall, drawn to the opportunity to learn more about educational pedagogy and elevate his teaching skills, and reports he has gained much more.

“This program has been transformative for me,” says Simmons, noting that it has helped him develop research interests in how curiosity and creativity fuel cultural transformation, as well as how venture capital and philanthropy facilitate civic and social innovation.

For Simmons, the transition to virtual has provided an unexpected upside thanks to the chat box functionality that is now a part of the learning experience. “The virtual environment has given me a bigger voice than I had in person,” he says. “I speak out more. In class I’m usually really quiet.”

Student Lauren Weinstein, C’06, agrees. “We use the chat to engage with the speaker and content a lot more. The leadership does a great job playing moderator; they can stop the speaker to say, ‘Here is what I’m hearing in the chat.’ That’s been pretty transformational, being able to react in the moment.”

The chat feature is part of a larger strategy on McKee’s part to apply research on relationships in virtual environments. Studies of remote work, including that of Jennifer Neumaier, GRD’20, a graduate of the PennCLO program, show that people experience lower levels of trust online than in person. “Our challenge now, according to her study, is to get better at replicating the in-person environment online,” says McKee. To compensate for interactions that might have happened naturally in person, McKee and the PennCLO team completely redesigned the schedule. The highly structured days included regular small-group work as well as trust-building activities with themes such as gratitude, values, and personal experiences of being “at my best.” In keeping with the program’s longtime practice, faculty and staff evolved their approaches for subsequent sessions in response to student feedback, demonstrating an improvement process that students can apply when leading workplace learning.

Weinstein, until recently a consultant at Raffa—Marcum’s NonProfit & Social Sector Group, enrolled in the PennCLO program last fall to take her career to the next level, particularly in the areas of talent, leadership, and coaching. After being furloughed, she started a new position this summer at Degreed, an upskilling and learning platform, based on a connection she made through a fellow PennCLO student. She now leads internal learning and development for Degreed’s five hundred employees, building a comprehensive learning strategy with a focus on leadership development and coaching.

“The PennCLO program has already helped me tremendously,” says Weinstein, who lives in Washington, DC, and is writing a book on the mindset needed to navigate a job search. “It’s putting me on a path to a senior leadership role in a company focused on people, learning, and talent.”

By mid-summer, with COVID-19 cases soaring across much of the country, Penn GSE announced that the fall semester would be online, including the PennCLO program’s two scheduled on-campus sessions. The road ahead is one in which community building will remain top of mind for McKee, who quickly brought her insights on the topic to Penn GSE colleagues as a member of the committee that aided faculty in the transition to virtual education. (*Learn more about Penn GSE’s shift to virtual in the cover story on page 6.*) “It is the environment, the climate, the culture in our classes that really does support students to learn,” she says. ■



Keaston Simmons

**“The virtual environment has given me a bigger voice than I had in person. I speak out more. In class I’m usually really quiet.”**

—Keaston Simmons



Lauren Weinstein, C’06



# 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.

## 1960s

**Carol Serotta, CW’67, GED’68**, reports that she has survived the coronavirus, has antibodies, and hopes to donate her plasma.

## 1970s

**Beverly Ahrens Dorf, GED’74**, is volunteering in Naples, FL, on the board of Empty Bowls Naples, which raises money through an annual fundraiser for community food pantries. She previously taught in southwest Philadelphia for thirty-eight years.

**Barbara Bry, CW’71, GED’71**, has focused as a candidate for mayor of San Diego, CA, on the expansion of the city’s innovation economy and increased linkages between employers and schools.

**Sandy Snitow Gorman, CW’72, GED’73**, and her husband, Dr. Ed Gorman, after living in Stamford, CT, moved to central New Jersey, where they have been living for the last several years. Sandy writes, “For sure, no more moves! Hope everyone is staying safe and well.”

**Carol Parlett, GED’78**, keeps active in her community, recently as a commissioner on the planning commission of St. Michaels, MD, which rewrote the zoning code for the town, and previously as president of the St. Michaels Business Association.

**Richard Piccard, GED’71**, has completed a half-century of teaching and has been married for forty-four years. He began his career teaching physics, transitioned to information technology while teaching part-time, and continues teaching in retirement.

**Joseph Sessoms, GED’76**, retired in 2005 and is enjoying time with his wife and family. He taught mathematics for thirty-three years at Penncrest High School in Media, PA, where he also coached varsity football.

## 1980s

**Peter Bobbe, GED’88**, recently presented at the National Council of Teachers of English and was elected vice president of the Professional Educators of North Carolina. He has visited schools internationally as a teacher and instructional coach.

**James Day, GR’87**, has joined the think tank The Taos Institute and was elected professor emeritus at Université Catholique de Louvain in Belgium. He is a widely cited contributor in moral psychology and other areas.

**Sandra Epstein, CW’75, GED’76, GRD’83**, has spent more than forty years consulting, running schools, and more in the Jewish educational world and beyond. Her current work addresses LGBTQ inclusion, multi-faith dialogue, and other areas.

**Barbara Mitchell, GED’83, GR’87**, visited Cuba last year, having wanted to do so since 1959. She spent ten days hearing the stories of three generations of Cubans under the Castros, staying in privately owned homes, and driving all over the country.

**Margaret Mulqueen, GED’78, GR’84**, is devoting more time to writing and media while continuing her private psychotherapy practice. She has published numerous articles on *NBC News Think* about COVID-19 and its impact on mental health.

**Vicki Oswald, GED’89**, is proud to report that, despite her disability, she handwrote one hundred postcards to Pennsylvania swing voters reminding them to vote on November 3.

**Christine Parini, C’87, GED’88**, is in the process of founding Genesis-Justice Reframed, a nonprofit to interrupt the school-to-prison pipeline, create work with a living wage for the formerly incarcerated, and provide treatment for trauma.

**Nathan Scott, C’89, GED’89**, is entering his thirtieth year as a public school educator at Council Rock High School North in Newtown, PA. He is collaborating to reinvent schools and create the best opportunities for students during the pandemic.

**Mark Steinberg, C’83, GED’83**, has retired from the Bellmore-Merrick Central High School District in Long Island, NY, after thirty-five years of teaching science. His fulfilling career culminated in serving as union president for six years.

**Mona Weissmark, GR’86**, wrote *The Science of Diversity* (Oxford University Press, 2020), which was featured on OUPblog in August as one of nine titles on the frontiers of psychology research.

**Wendy Wollner, GED’85**, is founder and CEO of Balancing Life’s Issues, which now offers fully digital trainings. She reports that the company will educate over one million people this year in areas such as racism, finance, health, and wellness.

## 1990s

**Barbara Caruso, GR’93**, a registered nurse with forty-five years in practice, is working as a COVID-19 case manager to support individuals struggling with the illness. She urges compliance with public health guidelines to prevent the spread of the virus.

**I-Chu Chang, GED’98**, has been teaching Chinese at Monta Vista High School in Cupertino, CA, for seventeen years. She is grateful and touched that the Class of 2020 dedicated the school yearbook to her.

**Karin Donahue, C’87, GED’88, GRD’96**, coauthored *Right from the Start: A Practical Guide for Helping Young Children with Autism* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2019), which discusses helpful strategies to address the struggles of children with autism.

**Michelle Emery, GED’92**, teaches French at a high school in Manchester, VT. She has led numerous international trips and was recently elected president of the Vermont and western Massachusetts chapter of the American Association of Teachers of French.

**Kimberly Erwin, GED’99**, is owner, speaker, and educator at OneUniversal Media.

**Patricia Freeland, GED’91**, has spent fourteen years with Educational Testing Service, writing tests and focusing on accessibility for candidates with disabilities. Previously she trained English teachers in a program developed by the late Penn GSE professor Teri Pica.

**Edmund ‘Ted’ Hamann, GR’99**, received career recognition as a 2020 AERA Fellow from the American Educational Research Association. He credits Fred Erickson, Kathy Hall, John Puckett, Nancy Hornberger, and others at Penn GSE with mentorship that supported his success.

**Donna Walker James, C’86, GED’90**, has completed her first year as executive director of Computer CORE, a basic computer skills workforce development program for low-income adults in northern Virginia.

**Kimberly James, GED’91**, a career consultant with more than twenty years of experience, works through the James Consultancy Group to help professionals address burnout, stress, upward mobility, and other career challenges to achieve success.

**Gloria J. McNeal, GNU’75, GR’98**, received a grant to use virtual and augmented reality to prepare nursing students for practice in underserved communities. As director of the National University Nurse Managed Clinic, she will guide a virtual interprofessional team to deliver care.

**Laura Zaharakis, GED’92**, is president of the Lehigh Carbon School Counselor Association. Her school counseling program at Luis A. Ramos Elementary School in Allentown, PA, has been named a Recognized ASCA Model Program by the American School Counselor Association.

## 2000s

**Deborah Bieler, GR’04**, received the 2020 American Educational Research Association Division K Exemplary Research in Teaching and Teacher Education Award for *The Power of Teacher Talk: Promoting Equity and Retention through Student Interactions* (Teachers College Press, 2018).

**Francesca de la Torre-Shu, C’04, GED’07**, has joined Westtown School in West Chester, PA, as an upper school learning specialist. She is slated to present on transition planning at the conference of the Pennsylvania Council for Exceptional Children.

## Go Virtual with Penn GSE

Find the resources and professional development mentioned in this issue’s cover story:

**Teaching Remotely**  
<https://onepenn.gse.upenn.edu/teaching-remotely>

**Catalyst @ Penn GSE**  
[www.gse.upenn.edu/about-penn-gse/catalyst](http://www.gse.upenn.edu/about-penn-gse/catalyst)

**Professional Learning**  
[www.gse.upenn.edu/professional-learning](http://www.gse.upenn.edu/professional-learning)

**The Educator’s Playbook**  
[www.gse.upenn.edu/news/educators-playbook](http://www.gse.upenn.edu/news/educators-playbook)

**Planning for Uncertainty: An Educator’s Guide to Navigating the COVID-19 Era**  
[www.gse.upenn.edu/academics/research/project-mental-health-and-optimal-development](http://www.gse.upenn.edu/academics/research/project-mental-health-and-optimal-development)

**The Leading for Improvement Framework**  
[www.gse.upenn.edu/news/educators-playbook/leading-improvement-challenging-times-COVID](http://www.gse.upenn.edu/news/educators-playbook/leading-improvement-challenging-times-COVID)

**Greg Dubrow, GED’98, GR’03**, returned in April to the University of California, Berkeley, taking on a new role in development and alumni relations as director of information strategy and analytics for the Haas School of Business.



<p><b>Pamela Felder, GRD’05</b>, was recently appointed associate editor for the <i>International Journal of Doctoral Studies</i>.</p> <p><b>Tanya Glenn-Butler, GED’07</b>, is a recent graduate of Northeastern University and is a critical race theorist and expert in culturally relevant pedagogical practices.</p> <p><b>David Hanson, GRD’09</b>, recently joined The Branson School in Marin County, CA, as chief financial and operating officer.</p> <p><b>Teppei Hayashi, GED’07</b>, is study abroad coordinator at Temple University Japan Campus in Tokyo and will teach a hybrid-format high school English class. He sees exciting intercultural opportunities as he works with virtual exchange students.</p> <p><b>Stefani Hite, GED’95, GRD’05</b>, coauthored <i>Leading Collective Efficacy: Powerful Stories of Achievement and Equity</i> (Corwin, 2020). The book has been endorsed by Michael Fullan, professor emeritus of the University of Toronto.</p> <p><b>Ji Kim, GED’00</b>, gained certification from the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants in 2011 and is currently working as chief financial officer of Il Woo Corporation in Seoul, Korea.</p> <p><b>Angela McIver, GR’05</b>, was featured on Good Morning America for her line of Dinner Table Math games and activities for families of elementary-age children.</p> <p><b>Joe Petrosino, GRD’07</b>, is chief academic officer at Educational Assurance Solutions, a company specializing in interim administrative positions, special education issues, and expert witness opinions for educational lawyers.</p> <p><b>Philip Sirinides, GED’06, GR’09</b>, is associate professor of education at Penn State, Harrisburg. His team at the Consortium for Policy Research in Education at Penn GSE has launched ECDataWorks Community to advance early childhood policy and programs through integrated data.</p>	<p><b>Manami Suzuki, GED’01</b>, finished a sabbatical at the Japan Center of Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität in Munich, Germany. She contributed to a chapter in <i>Studies and Essays on Learning, Teaching and Assessing L2 Writing in Honour of Alister Cumming</i> (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2020).</p> <p><b>Kelly M. Thompson, GRD’08</b>, was awarded emerita status at Culver-Stockton College after six successful years as the twenty-sixth president and the first woman in the role. Her tenure included enrollment and net tuition revenue increases and a successful fundraising campaign.</p> <p><b>Adrienne G. Whaley, GED’08</b>, has been promoted to director of K-12 education and community engagement at the Museum of the American Revolution in Philadelphia, PA. She will continue exploring how history can empower and support learners from diverse communities.</p> <p><b>Regina Zurbano, GED’03, CGS’04</b>, is the proud principal of Bell Mountain Middle School in Menifee, CA, and entering her twentieth year of public education. She wishes fellow Quakers well during this time of challenge and struggle.</p> <p><b>2010s</b></p> <p><b>Robert J. Alexander, GRD’12</b>, has been named dean of admissions, financial aid, and enrollment management at the University of Rochester.</p> <p><b>Nida Arafat, GED’11</b>, has returned to her work as educational supervisor of math in the directorate of education, Nablus, West Bank, since graduating from Penn GSE. She also worked as educational supervisor at the Palestinian school in Qatar in 2019-2020.</p> <p><b>Jennifer Beatty, GED’15, LPS’18</b>, is a doctoral student in the Diversity Science Lab of the Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences at Washington University in St. Louis, MO. She develops and tests long-term interventions for bias reduction.</p>	<p><b>Matthew Antonio Bosch, GRD’19</b>, published the chapter “We’re Here, We’re Queer, We Persevere in This Career: Experiences of LGBTQ+ Housing Professionals” (<i>Journal of College and University Student Housing</i>, 2020, volume 46, number 3).</p> <p><b>Katrina Burns, G’11, GED’13</b>, has earned her Ph.D. in public health, focusing on occupational health in academic research laboratories.</p> <p><b>Lisa Cauda, GRD’14</b>, has transitioned to board management after twenty-five years in development and alumni relations. As vice president and secretary of the institute at Rochester Institute of Technology, she works jointly for the president and board chair.</p> <p><b>Carlo Cinaglia, GED’16</b>, is beginning a Ph.D. program in second language studies at Michigan State University, having spent the past four years teaching linguistics, Spanish, and English as a second language at St. Joseph’s University.</p> <p><b>Lourdes DelRosso, GED’16</b>, a sleep expert at the University of Washington School of Medicine, is the leading researcher in the identification of restless sleep disorder, a new pediatric condition. She believes this accomplishment will help children receive treatment for the disorder.</p> <p><b>Nyree Dawn Dixon, GRD’19</b>, is executive director of EduStat, a research-based approach to school improvement within the New York City Department of Education. She also co-leads My Sister’s Keeper, a project to change outcomes for girls and young women of color.</p> <p><b>Samuel C. Evans, GED’18</b>, was appointed assistant principal of Penncrest High School in Media, PA. He recognizes that this opportunity comes with the sacrifice of leaving Philadelphia schools, but looks forward to serving Penncrest’s community.</p> <p><b>Stephanie Fazio, GED’11</b>, recently published a new fantasy romance series, <i>Opal Contagion Books 1-3</i> (Syafant Press, 2020). This is her third series published this year.</p>	<p><b>Ashley Glover, GED’11</b>, is a curriculum and instruction specialist serving the Camden, NJ, region of Democracy Prep Public Schools. She previously taught in the charter network since helping to found its Freedom Prep High School in 2014.</p> <p><b>Bridget Goodman, GED’01, GR’13</b>, was promoted to associate professor of multilingual education at Nazarbayev University Graduate School of Education in Kazakhstan. Her articles have been accepted to <i>TESOL Quarterly</i>, the <i>Journal of English for Academic Purposes</i>, and the <i>Asian EFL Journal</i>.</p> <p><b>Margaret (Maggie) Hadinger, GRD’14</b>, was named a 2020 Forty Under 40 winner by <i>Lehigh Valley Business</i>. The award recognizes leaders in the Greater Lehigh Valley, PA, who are committed to business growth, professional excellence, and the community.</p> <p><b>Terri Harpster, GRD’16</b>, retired as an elementary school principal in the Bellwood-Antis School District in Bellwood, PA. She is president and codirector of The Hope Center, a nonprofit to bring support, encouragement, and friendship to the Bellwood-Antis community.</p> <p><b>Maggie Hart, GED’19</b>, began working for Philadelphia City Councilmember Kendra Brooks in March. As communications director, she amplifies the office’s legislative work in affordable housing, funding public education, workers’ rights, and climate justice.</p> <p><b>Chimère G. Holmes, GED’15</b>, joined Main Line Health’s Women’s Emotional Wellness Center as a psychotherapist and began doctoral study at Eastern University. Her research will address how the Black church, pastoral psychotherapy, and systemic therapy can offer healing to the African American family system.</p> <p><b>Vanessa Irvin, GRD’12</b>, was granted tenure and promotion from assistant professor to associate professor in the Library and Information Science Program at the University of Hawaii at Manoa, effective August 1.</p>	<p><b>Savannah Johnson, GED’19</b>, is an incoming venture capital intern for Harlem Capital. She is also consulting as a strategy manager for Manatee, a digital pediatric mental health startup, and completing a venture residency with Gener8tor.</p> <p><b>Susan Klusmeier, GRD’17</b>, was named vice provost for academic success at the University of Kansas, a role providing leadership of the university core curriculum and multiple student-facing units. She was also named a courtesy assistant professor in the School of Education.</p> <p><b>Paul Langteau, GRD’17</b>, was named president of Presentation College, a small, private, Catholic college in Aberdeen, SD.</p> <p><b>Robert LeBlanc, GR’16</b>, has been appointed Board of Governors’ Research Chair (II) at the University of Lethbridge in Alberta, Canada, effective 2021.</p> <p><b>Rosa Leff, GED’12</b>, decided in February to leave the classroom after eight years of teaching kindergarten to focus on her arts career, having worked hard to juggle both pursuits. She is now a full-time hand cut paper artist.</p> <p><b>Fredrik Leuhusen, GRD’17</b>, was promoted to assistant dean of strategic initiatives at UCLA Anderson School of Management, a position responsible for strategic planning, revenue diversification, a transition to a data-driven decision-making, rankings, and accreditation.</p> <p><b>William Liu, GED’11</b>, has spent the past eight years teaching secondary education science and is currently a science teacher at IDEA Judson College Prep in San Antonio, TX. He and his wife have a two-year-old son, Solomon.</p> <p><b>Linda Luciano, GRD’13</b>, was elected chair of the board of trustees of Caldwell University, effective July 1.</p> <p><b>Carlos Martinez-Cano, GR’19</b>, has accepted a tenure-track position as assistant professor of learning sciences and human development at the University of Washington College of Education.</p>	<div>Find <i>The Penn GSE Magazine</i> Online</div> <div>Visit <a href="http://www.gse.upenn.edu/alumni/resources/gse-magazine">www.gse.upenn.edu/alumni/resources/gse-magazine</a> to find our issue archive.</div> <div><p><b>Dana Nickson, GED’15</b>, received her Ph.D. in educational studies with a concentration in foundations of education and policy in August. She is now a tenure-track assistant professor of education equity and justice at the University of Washington, Seattle.</p><p><b>Angeles Ortega-Luque, GED’19</b>, is working as a customer care manager this year while applying to Ph.D. programs.</p><p><b>Pamela Pruitt, GRD’16</b>, has been promoted from director to executive director of the Center for Diversity and Inclusion at Rider University. The university has provided additional staff to support her work and a new space for the center.</p><p><b>Nadia Schafer, GED’17</b>, was promoted to associate director of data supports and evaluation at Philadelphia Academies, Inc. She oversees and supports a network of high schools in The School District of Philadelphia to increase ninth grade on-track rates.</p><p><b>Carolyn Sloan, GED’17</b>, spent six months developing TeachMe TV, an online education company for children and their families. Her interactive music book for kids, <i>Welcome to Jazz</i> (Workman, 2019), has won two awards.</p><p><b>Nicole Wang, GED’11</b>, has successfully passed her defense for her Ph.D. in learning, design, and technology with a dual title in comparative international education from Penn State University. She is scheduled to graduate in December.</p></div>
--	--	---	--	---	--



**Diego Zelaya, GED’18**, is a full-time tenure-track professor at the Universidad del Mar in Huatulco, Oaxaca, Mexico. He teaches English as a second language to a diverse group of Mexican students and is pursuing his Ed.D. at the University of Glasgow.

**Qianqian Zhang-Wu, GED’14**, accepted a tenure-track position as assistant professor of English and director of multilingual writing at Northeastern University. She received a 2020-2022 Cultivating New Voices among Scholars of Color fellowship from the National Council of Teachers of English.

**2020s**  
**Tara Bryant-Gray, GED’20**, is proud of her training and cohort in Penn GSE’s School and Mental Health Counseling program. She is grateful for the experience of learning from outstanding professors who inspired and challenged her during the past two years.

**Klarissa Spencer, GED’20**, passed the School Leadership Series Praxis exam and is working as coordinator of special needs for The School District of Philadelphia.

## Share Your News

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

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

## TIPS FROM THE EDUCATOR’S PLAYBOOK



Image by iStock.com/Anastasiia\_New

## Supporting the Next Generation OF EDUCATION LEADERS

*“I am greatly encouraged by and appreciative of the financial support the Gloria Twine Chisum Scholarship provides me. It enables me to focus fully on my concerns for undervalued children and communities through my research. I aspire toward a vibrant and dynamic scholarly career wherein I can promote healthy child development through the possibilities of education.”*

—Laronnda Thompson, Ph.D. student in Interdisciplinary Studies in Human Development, recipient of the Gloria Twine Chisum Scholarship

Through named master’s scholarships and Ph.D. fellowships, Penn GSE is able to attract the most talented and committed students and help make their education affordable. In return, our graduates go on to impact millions of students globally each year as educators, leaders, entrepreneurs, and more.

Extraordinary impact starts with you.



[www.gse.upenn.edu/support](http://www.gse.upenn.edu/support)

## Teaching History Online Today



**Abby Reisman**  
Assistant Professor

Penn GSE Assistant Professor Abby Reisman is helping to lead a conversation about how history is taught during these challenging times, and how lessons from the past can help students understand their world. Her approach develops students’ critical thinking skills by asking them to engage with texts from the periods they are studying, identify elements like the authors’ perspectives and biases, and discuss the texts in a meaningful way. Because of the shift to virtual education during the pandemic, many teachers are reimagining how they will teach their classes. Virtual teaching presents challenges, but Dr. Reisman, who co-created the award-winning Reading Like a Historian curriculum, believes there are new ways for social studies teachers to get their students excited about history.

(continued on next page) →





Photo by iStock.com/GoodLifeStudio

“Even if every school were meeting in person, social studies teachers would feel a real urgency to address contemporary events,” Reisman says. “Historical inquiry offers students a way to think deeply about the past and consider how it connects to and shapes the present.”

## Use your expanded toolbox.

This is a good time to experiment with new methods for helping students construct knowledge. You might not have as much time to lecture, but on-line tools give students more ways to explore a topic and show their work, while working at their own pace. Students can build interactive timelines. They can create videos. Instead of writing an essay by themselves, students can record themselves debating a text or a critical event with their peers. These are often the sorts of projects teachers find difficult to assign as traditional classwork, but they work well in online formats.

## Host a different kind of discussion.

Online environments offer teachers more ways to bring students into a discussion. Students who don’t like talking in class can have their voices heard in a chat, which the teacher or a student moderator can amplify by sharing submitted comments and questions with the class. Online discussions about historical texts can also allow students to zero in on key passages in a way they might not have been able to in a classroom discussion because it’s so easy to share text on the screen, and for the class to annotate together.

## Don’t change topics. Change questions.

Any moment in history has relevance to us today if we ask the right questions about it. The questions you pose for your students to answer about an event will drive instruction, help your students see how that event shaped our world, and build a connection to the present and your students’ lived experiences.

With a pandemic, an election year, and renewed calls for social justice for Black Americans, many teachers rightly want their social studies lessons to have a sense of immediacy. Start by thinking about the questions you are asking. For example, Reisman says that if she were teaching the Black Death last year, she likely would have used a lesson she wrote for the Stanford History Education Group focusing on how people believed that plague was transmitted. This year, she might ask students whether people living through the plague in the fourteenth century felt as we do today, using a new lesson structure she designed for comparing past and present. She might have students read excerpts from *The Decameron*, a collection of linked stories about young people sheltering outside Florence during the Black Death. ■



“We’re creating more ways for educators to stay current with best practices and cutting-edge research, to continue to interact with the Penn community, and to gain the education they need to advance in their careers.”

—Dr. Zachary Herrmann, executive director, Center for Professional Learning



## Deepen your knowledge. Build your network. Grow your career.

You can benefit from learning experiences with Penn faculty and the Penn community without enrolling in a degree program. The Center for Professional Learning at Penn GSE provides professional development and continuing education opportunities for educators, entrepreneurs, leaders, and professionals across disciplines.

Find programming that fits your schedule on topics such as teaching and learning, leadership, and education entrepreneurship:

- *Educational Leadership certificate program, launching spring 2021*
- *Project-Based Learning certificate program for teachers and leaders*
- *Monthly Virtual Institutes to accelerate your learning*

CENTER FOR PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Visit  
[www.gse.upenn.edu/professional-learning](http://www.gse.upenn.edu/professional-learning)  
to learn more and enroll.



University of  
Pennsylvania  
Graduate School  
of Education





3700 Walnut Street  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19104-6216

Nonprofit Org.  
U.S. Postage

PAID  
Permit No. 2563  
Philadelphia, PA



## Penn GSE Connects: A Platform for Networking and More



“Penn GSE was really good to me. I had great teachers and colleagues in the Mid-Career Doctoral Program, and I feel super fortunate to have been a part of it. Today I have my dream job. I see mentoring others on Penn GSE Connects as my way of giving back.”

—Nathaniel W. Coffman, GRD'12  
*Head of School and President, The Prairie School*

Professional networking is more important than ever to navigate today's job market. With Penn GSE Connects, Penn GSE students and alumni have an exclusive new platform to build professional relationships.

Alumni can talk to alumni, students can talk to students, and students and alumni can talk to one another. Register today and start forming meaningful connections that align with your professional interests and geographic area.

Sign up at <https://penngseconnects.gse.upenn.edu>

Contact the Penn GSE Connects Team: [penngseconnects@gse.upenn.edu](mailto:penngseconnects@gse.upenn.edu)  
A PennKey username and password are required to access Penn GSE Connects.  
Learn more: <https://pennkeysupport.upenn.edu/faqs>