

PENN GSE

The Future of Higher Education

Penn GSE Faculty, Students,
and Alumni Look Ahead

page 6

Spring 2021



Preparing Future Citizens

page 12

THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION MAGAZINE | UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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Letter from the Dean

Dear Alumni and Friends,

For more than a year, we have all been living through a time of extraordinary change and challenge, surrounded by uncertainty, loss, racial injustice, and

national tumult. Across the field of education, faculty, staff, and students have had to navigate unprecedented circumstances. Yet this has also been a time of learning and growth, and one that gives our world an opportunity for real change for the better.

As you will read on page 31 of this issue, I recently collaborated with Wharton School Dean Erika James on advice to help educational leaders cultivate the skills and mindsets to lead in a crisis. Dean James and I believe that through purposeful relationship building, decision making, and reflection, leaders can create change and innovation that outlast crises and support the long-term health of communities and institutions.

Leading through change is an area in which Penn GSE's 2021 Commencement speaker, Michael Sorrell, GRD'15, a member of our Board of Advisors, had built remarkable experience well before the pandemic. As president of Paul Quinn College in Dallas, Texas, Dr. Sorrell transformed a struggling institution, successfully pioneering an urban work college model and reimagining the important role of our nation's Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) in creating opportunity for students of color.

Heightened economic challenges due to the pandemic mean that the future of higher education will require continued bold efforts to ensure access for minoritized, low-income, and first-generation students. As you will read in the cover story of this issue on page 6, Penn GSE faculty, students, and alumni are deeply committed to ensuring that as a new era dawns, the students most in need can gain access to lifelong opportunity through higher education.

The many inspiring voices in the piece include that of Ivy Taylor, GRD'20, another HBCU president, who graduated from Penn GSE and stepped into her role at Rust College in Holly Springs, Mississippi, during the pandemic.

As you will see throughout this issue, the Penn GSE community is also having an impact on many other urgent issues of our time—supporting mental health, improving the lives of at-risk children, and fostering the ideals of democracy. I am proud that the latter topic, brought to life on page 12 by four vibrant alumni, has long been a focus our faculty, including Drs. Sigal Ben-Porath, Jonathan Zimmerman, Krystal Strong, and Ameena Ghaffar-Kucher. Their research on democratic theory and practice, civic dialogue, free speech, political and social movements, citizenship, and belonging provides a foundation that is much-needed today as our country grapples with division and issues of inclusion.

Despite a landscape that has been unfamiliar in so many ways since the pandemic began, the continued strengths of our community could not be more apparent, and I am thrilled that we have attained the #1 spot in the 2022 *U.S. News & World Report* rankings for graduate schools of education. This recognition is a result of so much leadership and dedication across the School as we have worked together to ensure a brighter future through the power of education. Our impact truly is extraordinary, and following the conclusion of the *Extraordinary Impact Campaign* on June 30, we will be celebrating the many ways that our alumni and friends have made that impact possible. As always, thank you for your commitment to education and to Penn GSE.

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

Editor's note: This issue of The Penn GSE Magazine went to print on May 17, 2021.

FACULTY BOOKSHELF

A Focus on Addition and Subtraction: Bringing Mathematics Education Research to the Classroom

By **Caroline B. Ebbly**, E. T. Hulbert, and R. M. Broadhead

Published November 2020
by Routledge



Caroline B. Ebbly

Based on research gathered in the Ongoing Assessment Project, this book helps educators modify lessons and improve student learning of additive reasoning in the primary grades. It is designed to bridge the gap between math education research and teaching, so that teachers can better understand evidence in student work and make effective instructional decisions.



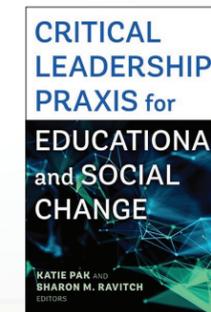
Sharon M. Ravitch

Critical Leadership Praxis for Educational and Social Change

By **Katie Pak**, GRD'19, and **Sharon M. Ravitch**

Published March 2021 by
Teachers College Press

Many educational leaders find themselves responding inadequately to issues of inequity, in part due to preparation programs that fail to address the impact of systems of oppression. This book offers leadership frameworks that integrate critical theories for social change with everyday practice. It includes insights reflecting the worldwide pandemic crises of 2020.



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

★ FACULTY AWARDS & HONORS ★

Robert F. Boruch (1) received the Jerry Lee Lifetime Achievement Award from the Division of Experimental Criminology. The award recognizes a body of research developed over a career as well as advancement of experimental science through the mentoring of other experimental scholars. **Gerald Campano (2)** was awarded the 2021 Spencer Mentor Award from the Spencer Foundation in recognition of extraordinary contributions to the training and trajectories of graduate students and junior scholars in education research. **Ameena Ghaffar-Kucher (3)** was named an associate editor of *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*. **Sharon M. Ravitch (above)** was named the senior research advisor to “Scaling EMIS-Led School Improvement: Opportunities, Challenges, Solutions,” a project of Dr. Irfan Asangani at the Society for Advancement of Education in Pakistan. **Ebony Elizabeth Thomas (4)** was awarded a World Fantasy 2020 Award in the professional category for *The Dark Fantastic: Race and the Imagination from Harry Potter to the Hunger Games*. The award is considered one of the most prestigious in fantasy and speculative fiction. **Daniel A. Wagner (5)** has been named an Honorary Fellow by the Comparative & International Education Society. The award honors senior members of the society who have advanced the field qualitatively and significantly through lifelong service and contribution.



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

News Briefs



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

For the first time, Penn's Graduate School of Education has topped the *U.S. News & World Report* rankings for graduate schools of education. The school shares the #1 spot for 2022 with Harvard's Graduate School of Education, and the ranking marks the sixth consecutive year Penn GSE has been in the top 5.

"We are honored to be ranked in the top position, especially during this difficult year. Credit goes to Penn GSE's extraordinary faculty, researchers, partners, students, alumni, and staff who work together to further our mission of expanding educational access, especially to those who are underserved or marginalized," said Penn GSE Dean Pam Grossman.

The *U.S. News & World Report* rankings also highlight Penn GSE's strength across a variety of disciplines. For fourteen years running, Penn GSE's leadership in the world of education policy has been reflected with top 10 positions—both the Education Policy division and the Higher Education division moved up to the #5 spots in their respective categories. Penn GSE's teacher education programs have also been recognized as among the nation's best, with Secondary Teacher Education named as a top specialty area.

The School's excellence in preparing students to build creativity in the classroom has been recognized for the third year in a row with a ranking in Curriculum and Instruction. For the fourth straight year, Penn GSE's Education Administration programs were highlighted, and the School also ranked highly in Educational Psychology for the second time in three years.



Howard Stevenson and Nancy Hornberger Elected to the National Academy of Education

Penn GSE's **Howard Stevenson (1)** and **Nancy Hornberger (2)** have been elected to membership in the National Academy of Education (NAEd), an organization dedicated to advancing high quality education research and its use in policy and practice.

Dr. Stevenson, the Constance Clayton Professor of Urban Education, is a nationally sought expert on how racial stress and racial trauma can affect every stage of life. He is executive director of the Racial Empowerment Collaborative, a research, program development, and training center that brings together community leaders, researchers, authority figures, families, and youth to study and promote racial literacy and health in schools and neighborhoods.

Dr. Hornberger, professor emeritus of education, is internationally known for her work in bilingualism and biliteracy, ethnography and language policy, and Indigenous language revitalization. She researches, lectures, teaches, and consults regularly on multilingual education policy and practice in the United States and the Andes (Peru, Bolivia, and Ecuador) and has also worked in Brazil, China, Mexico, Singapore, South Africa, Sweden, and other parts of the world.

The pair join Penn GSE Dean Pam Grossman, Professor Laura Perna, Professor Emeritus John Fantuzzo, Professor Vivian Gadsden, former dean and Professor Emeritus Andy Porter, Professor Emerita Diana Slaughter-Kotzin, and Penn President Amy Gutmann, a secondary faculty member of Penn GSE, in the Academy.



McGraw Prize Winners Discuss How Educators Can Adapt to Meet the Moment

The past year has challenged educators at every level, while further exposing inequities throughout American society. How can schools and universities create solutions that will bring lasting benefits to all learners? That question brought together Drs. Estela Mara Bensimon, Michelene (Micki) Chi, and Joseph S. Krajcik—winners of the 2020 McGraw Prize in Education—for a February 16 virtual discussion. The McGraw winners identified challenges and opportunities in the areas of student engagement, equity, and STEM education. Pictured (3) clockwise from top left are **Grossman, Bensimon, Chi, and Krajcik**.

For more than three decades, the McGraw Prize in Education has recognized outstanding individuals deeply committed to harnessing innovation in education to improve the lives of learners worldwide. In February of 2020, The Harold W. McGraw, Jr. Family Foundation established a \$3 million partnership with Penn GSE to enhance and expand the awards. The 2021 McGraw Prize winners will be announced in the fall, following a nomination period from February to April, with awardees in three categories: Pre-K–12 Education, Higher Education, and Learning Sciences Research. Visit www.mcgrawprize.com to learn more.

Center for Benefit-Cost Studies of Education Moves to Penn GSE

Teachers College, Columbia University and Penn GSE announced in January that the renowned Center for Benefit-Cost Studies of Education (CBCSE) has moved to Penn GSE. The Center is led by Penn GSE Assistant Professor **Brooks Bowden (4)**, with founder Dr. Henry Levin continuing as founding director and senior fellow. The mission of CBCSE is to advance educational equity by conducting economic evaluations of interventions and policies of educational barriers related to poverty and oppression that prevent students from experiencing the full value of education. Dr. Bowden plans to build on CBCSE's groundbreaking work and legacy of improving educational investments and outcomes in the U.S. and abroad.

Catalyst @ Penn GSE Hosts Bootcamp on Higher Ed in Flux

In January, representatives from HP attended an intensive two-week bootcamp designed and hosted by Catalyst @ Penn GSE to help HP better understand the rapidly changing higher education landscape. In sessions featuring Penn GSE higher education expert Professor **Robert M. Zemsky (5)**, IT experts from across Penn, and experienced leaders from community



Photo by Scott Spitzer Photography

■ Dr. **Angela Duckworth (7)**, a Penn professor of psychology with a secondary appointment at Penn GSE, topped *Education Week's* 2021 Edu-Scholar Public Influence Rankings list. Duckworth is the author of the best-selling *Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance* and the founder of Character Lab. The Edu-Scholar list, created by Rick Hess, director of education policy studies at the American Enterprise Institute, recognizes scholars whose work shapes public discussion around education. Five Penn GSE professors—Drs. **Vivian L. Gadsden (8)**, **Pam Grossman (9)**, **Richard M. Ingersoll (10)**, **Howard C. Stevenson (1)**, and **Jonathan Zimmerman (11)**—are featured on the list, as is **Laura W. Perna (12)**, Penn vice provost for faculty.

■ Penn GSE Associate Professor **Ryan S. Baker (13)** and a team have been awarded \$330,580 from the National Science Foundation to investigate algorithmic bias in adaptive learning platforms designed for sixth through twelfth grade math.

■ Penn GSE Professor **Susan A. Yoon (14)** is co-investigator of a project awarded \$2.1 million from the National Science Foundation to investigate needs and challenges in developing an informed public able to evaluate empirical evidence generated from scientific activities.

colleges, HBCUs, and other sectors, the HP teams learned about the challenges facing different types of institutions.

"We will not be able to leapfrog into the future without partners," says Catalyst @ Penn GSE Executive Director **Michael Golden (6)**. "We won't be able to identify potentially transformative ideas unless we forge strategic alliances with partners like HP who are creating tools that would allow us to learn and work differently." This is the second year that Catalyst has developed a bootcamp for members of HP's higher education team.

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:

"Trial by trauma" | *Vox* | April 2021
Howard Stevenson comments on how the Derek Chauvin trial has retraumatized Black Americans and how the complex emotional effects can be navigated.

"Want to improve learning outcomes? Give students more time" | *Education Week* | March 2021
Pam Grossman proposes rethinking schooling to give students more time to learn in the wake of disruptions caused by the pandemic.

"The history wars" | *The Pennsylvania Gazette* | February 2021
Jonathan Zimmerman talks about the role that the U.S. education system should play in teaching people to recognize disinformation and engage across differences.

"5 ways to discuss the Capitol riot with your students" | *Tech & Learning* | January 2021
Sigal Ben-Porath discusses how educators can address the Capitol riot by focusing on facts from reliable sources and building a shared foundation of knowledge.

"Research universities must act as engines of optimism" | *University World News* | December 2020
Peter Eckel and Nazarbayev University's **Aida Sagintayeva** share insights gathered from higher education leaders from across fifteen time zones.

"What principals have learned from COVID-19's 'stress test'" | *Education Week* | November 2020
Jonathan Supovitz comments on research from the Consortium for Policy Research in Education, housed at Penn GSE, about how U.S. school leaders have dealt with the pandemic.

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

Visit www.gse.upenn.edu/news or follow @PennGSE on Twitter to stay up to date on Penn GSE in the media.

Empty campuses, virtual instruction, and financial losses have fueled speculation about the future of higher education since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Now, with the promise of vaccination making it possible to envision a “new normal,” colleges and universities across the nation and around the world continue to navigate vast complexities.

“Within and beyond higher education, the difficulties faced by under-resourced institutions and students have been heightened in dramatic ways,” says Penn GSE Dean Pam Grossman. “Yet I believe that this time can be one we will look back upon as the source of learning, growth, innovation, and real change that advance educational opportunity and racial justice.”

The Future of HIGHER EDUCATION

Penn GSE Faculty, Students, and Alumni Look Ahead

by Juliana Rosati



The disruption is daunting, but so were previous challenges faced by higher education, according to Dr. Matthew Hartley, chair of Penn GSE’s Higher Education division, associate dean for academic affairs, and professor.

“Higher education has an interesting way of keeping on and surviving,” he says. Hartley cites a projected drop in demand in the 1990s and the financial crisis in 2008 as challenges that institutions have overcome. The key, he says, may be the people within and beyond institutions who make higher education possible—taxpayers (for public institutions), students, faculty, staff, alumni, and friends.

“Every higher education institution has a community of support. I think it can be easy for people to underestimate the strength of that support,” he says. “Colleges and universities are also filled with people who care deeply about their work and about serving their students, who will stay through tough times.”

Whether researching trends, proposing solutions, or leading institutions, Penn GSE faculty, students, and alumni are studying the state of higher education and preparing to shape its next chapter.

A Challenging Landscape

A significant decrease in U.S. undergraduate enrollment in the fall has continued this spring, with March 2021 data from the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center showing a 5.9 percent drop in undergraduates. As is true of the pandemic across multiple realms, in higher education the crisis has not affected individuals or institutions equally. Penn GSE faculty describe a landscape in which attention to the needs of low-income and minoritized students is more urgent than ever.

“For some institutions, it was harder to get the resources necessary to pivot online effectively, or they couldn’t provide the supports for faculty to do it well, and these circumstances led students to exit,” says Hartley.

In the years prior to the pandemic, some experts had predicted closure for up to half of American colleges. In response, Penn GSE Professor Robert M. Zemsky and coauthors released *The College Stress Test*, predicting a less dire future in which 10 percent of institutions would face closure and 30 percent would struggle, and providing a research-based tool for colleges to assess their own market viability. Yet the overall dynamic they foresaw was a sobering one.

“Our findings said that strong institutions would get stronger, while weak institutions would be in real trouble,” says Dr. Zemsky. That, he says, proved true when the pandemic hit, just weeks after Johns Hopkins University Press published the book. As the crisis intensified the need for budget cuts, Zemsky and colleagues revised



Associate Professor Manuel S. González Canché views community colleges as an important point of access to higher education for minoritized and at-risk students. Photo by Ryan Collier

their estimate, predicting closure for 20 percent of institutions—a figure still far shy of half, but representing a substantial portion of the nation’s colleges and universities.

Both in the United States and abroad, falling international enrollment has jeopardized institutions in the wake of travel restrictions. This is particularly the case for universities in Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and the United Kingdom.

“These countries rely on large, publicly supported systems of higher education, where international student income had masked a reduction in state support for forty years,” says Penn GSE Senior Fellow Alan Ruby. “There is an impact in the United States, but it is less dramatic because of the patchwork of different types of institutions and financial models.”

Just as colleges and universities that were already financially fragile have been hardest hit, low-income students have likely faced the greatest obstacles to college due to unemployment, costs, and technological access.

“Some of the data that have emerged so far raise troubling questions about the impact of the pandemic on college enrollment for low-income students and how they’re paying,” says Penn Vice Provost for Faculty Laura Perna, GSE Centennial Presidential Professor of Education. Dr. Perna, whose research addresses how cost and other factors put college within or beyond reach for students, points to lower completion rates of the FAFSA, the form that is necessary to receive federal financial aid, among high school seniors.

The national drop in enrollment has been steepest at community colleges, a troubling sign given their reputation for serving a high percentage of students of color and representing an affordable option for low-income students. According to Penn GSE Associate Professor Manuel S. González Canché, financial challenges may have limited community colleges’ ability to pivot online as effectively as for-profit institutions with significant online programs. In addition, he says, their students may have lacked access to computers and broadband internet or may have needed to prioritize other responsibilities.

“Students who can afford to stay enrolled and be online have likely continued; those who are making an extra effort because they are parents and they have to work may have chosen to pause their studies,” says Dr. González Canché, who views community colleges as an important point of access to higher education for minoritized and at-risk students.

At four-year institutions, standardized tests are one step to admission that was widely removed during the pandemic, but this

“Students who can afford to stay enrolled and be online have likely continued; those who are making an extra effort because they are parents and they have to work may have chosen to pause their studies.”

change will not automatically improve college access. “Test-optional policies increase the application pool, but that does not mean underrepresented students will be admitted at a higher rate,” says González Canché, who has studied the impact of such policies in the past.

In addition, he and Perna share the concern that the disruption of K–12 education threatens future college students’ academic readiness. “The most-resourced K–12 schools have done the best in figuring out how to support their students during COVID. And the schools that were struggling before have continued to struggle to provide high-quality college preparation,” says Perna.

A Time to Reflect on Value and Strategy

In the midst of these challenges, questions about the value of a college degree have gained traction. “There is an existential question in higher education about the return on investment,” says Penn GSE Senior Fellow Michael Golden, GRD’07, executive director of Catalyst @ Penn GSE, the School’s hub for innovation. “What do you get out of the time, money, and effort that are required? What does a degree prepare you for—a career, further education, civic engagement, lifelong learning?”

Both Hartley and Perna point to continued economic benefits of a college degree. “Higher education is, and will continue to be, incredibly important for the lives of many students,” says Hartley. “A lot of the growth area in our economy has to do with the knowledge economy, and those jobs are going to require people with college degrees.”

Perna says, “I continue to believe what the data show—that college matters and the benefits of a degree are just so numerous. Individuals gain increased earnings, increased likelihood of employment, lower rates of unemployment, lower rates of poverty, and better outcomes for their children. We also see that communities, states, and nations with higher levels of education are better off.”

As they address questions of value, institutions will need to pay greater attention to demographic shifts. “The average undergraduate is no longer someone straight out of high school,” Dr. Golden says. “It’s someone in their late twenties, who may work full-time or have a family. We need to think about how to support and serve the growing diversity of students’ demographics, backgrounds, cultures, and goals.”

González Canché recommends that four-year colleges could better serve minoritized and first-generation students by better valuing work and family responsibilities, which such students are likely to have. These commitments may prevent students from being able to enhance their applications with the kinds of volunteer work and extracurricular activities usually listed in admission criteria, he says, yet they reflect a high level of dedication.

“Admission officers should pay more or closer attention to the type of responsibilities that low-income students have, that are typically not being rewarded by the system,” he says.



Associate Professor Amalia Dache (left) researches the relationship between geography and college opportunity. Photo by Lora Reehling

In addition, according to Penn GSE Associate Professor Amalia Z. Dache, national conversations and activism about racial justice are changing students’ and communities’ expectations of college and university demographics.

“Selective four-year institutions don’t necessarily see the people in their backyard as prospective students,” says Dr. Dache. “But if we want to think about the public good of higher education, we have to think about the local good, and whether local racial and ethnic demographics are represented.”

Dache’s research focuses on the relationship between geography and college opportunity. Her study of Rochester, New York, found that the city’s Black and Latinx communities had the highest need for educational attainment but were located farthest from higher education institutions, in what she terms a “college desert.” Proximity matters for those affected by poverty, she says, because travel may be out of their reach financially.

“The place-boundness of these communities is something that higher education has to contend with,” she says. “It has roots in how slavery was enacted and the movement of Black populations from

“If we want to think about the public good of higher education, we have to think about the local good, and whether local racial and ethnic demographics are represented.”

the south to very low-income, highly concentrated urban communities in the north.”

Strategies for global education will continue to be reevaluated. Lauren Kettler, GRD’18, a graduate of Penn GSE’s Executive Doctorate in Higher Education Management program, is senior director of operations for the Global Experience Office of Northeastern University in Boston, Massachusetts. Her office facilitates global experiences for thousands of students each year and adapted its programs to operate in a blend of remote and in-person modalities during the pandemic.

“I fully am a believer that international education is beneficial to all. It decreases xenophobia. It allows people to learn about themselves and each other,” Dr. Kettler says. Looking ahead, she sees a

new terrain of COVID-related travel restrictions and increased affordability issues for students. “Innovation will be needed from a practical, logistical, and policy perspective to increase access to international education,” she says.

Institutions will also need to reflect on their expectations of leaders and faculty. Penn GSE Senior Fellow Peter Eckel predicts an increase in presidential and other senior leadership vacancies as leaders weary from the pandemic step down.

“I think those who postponed retirement to see their institutions through the pandemic will leave, and others on the cusp of retirement may leave early,” he says. At the same time, Dr. Eckel says, potential candidates may be wary of leading struggling institutions. He recommends that colleges and universities invest additional time and effort in the search process and consider carefully the qualities their leader will need.

Like leaders, faculty have faced unexpected challenges. Perna, who has broad oversight of faculty affairs across Penn in her role in the Provost’s Office, is considering the long-term effects on career trajectories. “I think this is a moment where we can perhaps step back and have big conversations about what we value—how we think about productivity, scholarship, and performance in the areas of research, teaching, mentoring, advising, and service,” she says.



Professor Matthew Hartley, Higher Education division chair and associate dean for academic affairs, sees hope in the resilience of higher education institutions and their communities of support. Photo by Stuart Goldenberg

An Opportunity for Change and Innovation

While the page is still turning to the next chapter of higher education, Hartley sees great promise. “I have a lot of hope,” he says. “Higher education institutions are resilient. Many of them have very dedicated, smart, nimble leaders, as well as faculty and staff who care deeply about the institutional mission. I think they will take what we’ve learned during this period and do something important with it. There are all sorts of possibilities.”

A critical step toward a bright future in higher education is to address the loss of academic readiness among K–12 students. Dean Grossman has argued in *Education Week* for innovations that would give students more time to master the past year’s content. With federal funding, she proposes, states could create extended school days and summer academies, hire unemployed people to become trained tutors, and establish cross-grade classrooms to accommodate different levels of learning.

With a new administration in Washington, Perna sees an opportunity for policy to be advanced to address college affordability. “I’m excited about the potential for a federal–state partnership, which could mean some kind of free community college program,” she says. Such a step would build on the precedent of state and local College Promise programs that help students afford postsecondary education, often at a community college, a trend Perna has documented with the help of Elaine Leigh, GED’10, a student in Penn GSE’s Higher Education Ph.D. program.

“I hope our work on College Promise programs can help institutions and communities think through how they want to support students as they look for ways to rebuild and recover in the years to come,” says Leigh.

At the state level, governmental action is essential to drive economic recovery and educational opportunity, according to a policy brief released by recently retired Penn GSE Professor of Practice Joni Finney and colleagues. With governor-appointed statewide task forces, they argue, states can develop sustainable funding strategies and invest in the institutions best positioned to prepare the workforce, including public community colleges and regional four-year universities.

“Leadership in this time of crisis requires bold action that acknowledges historical barriers and prioritizes supports for the recently unemployed, students of color, low-income individuals, adults, and those populations impacted by COVID-19,” write Dr. Finney and coauthors in the brief.

González Canché sees a role for community colleges in preparing workers for a green energy future. “There will be a need for retraining and continuous education, and community colleges can be a fundamental player,” he says.

Community colleges are also poised to prepare students for other industries key to recovery, including transportation, logistics, distribution, information technology, engineering, finance, health care, and hospitality, according to Michael A. Cioce, GRD’18. A graduate of Penn GSE’s Executive Doctorate in Higher Education Management program, Dr. Cioce is president of Rowan College at



Penn Vice Provost for Faculty Laura Perna, GSE Centennial Presidential Professor of Education, conducts research to address how cost and other factors put college within or beyond reach for students. Here Dr. Perna participates in a 2018 *Power of Penn Campaign* panel in Washington, DC, led by Penn President Amy Gutmann. Photo by Kevin Birch

Burlington County, one of two New Jersey community colleges partnered with the public Rowan University to create accessible pathways to a bachelor’s degree.

“The students who trusted in us during the pandemic have not been let down on the quality side,” Cioce says. “We pride ourselves on providing a high-quality academic experience at a low cost, and I think we’ve found some big fans over the past year.”

In addition to a prominent role for community colleges, Penn GSE faculty, students, and alumni foresee new approaches to teaching, technology, global engagement, and diversifying the workforce.

A national dialogue about teaching, prompted by the shift to virtual education, has been a positive effect of the pandemic—one that promises to propel innovation even when in-person instruction resumes, according to many Penn GSE faculty. “We’ve seen a conversation about how to deepen and broaden learning on an unprecedented scale,” says Eckel.

To examine technology’s potential in higher education, Perna is working with Penn GSE Higher Education graduate Roman Ruiz, GR’20, a researcher at American Institutes for Research in Arlington, Virginia. “My hope is that technology can be used to equalize educational opportunity and not as another mechanism to limit access or divert students from postsecondary pathways that would benefit them the most,” Dr. Ruiz says.

Technological access for students may be addressed through new partnerships between universities and private companies. “There’s an increased willingness of universities to partner with outside organizations to create solutions,” Catalyst’s Michael Golden says.

Technology could reduce obstacles to global engagement, according to Sijie (Bess) Li, a Penn GSE master’s student in the International Educational Development Program. Li has undertaken the internship for her program virtually, working for UNESCO Paris Higher Education Sector. “The core of international education is the exchange of different opinions and view-

points across national and cultural borders,” she says. “Virtual mobility could complement physical mobility and expand access.”

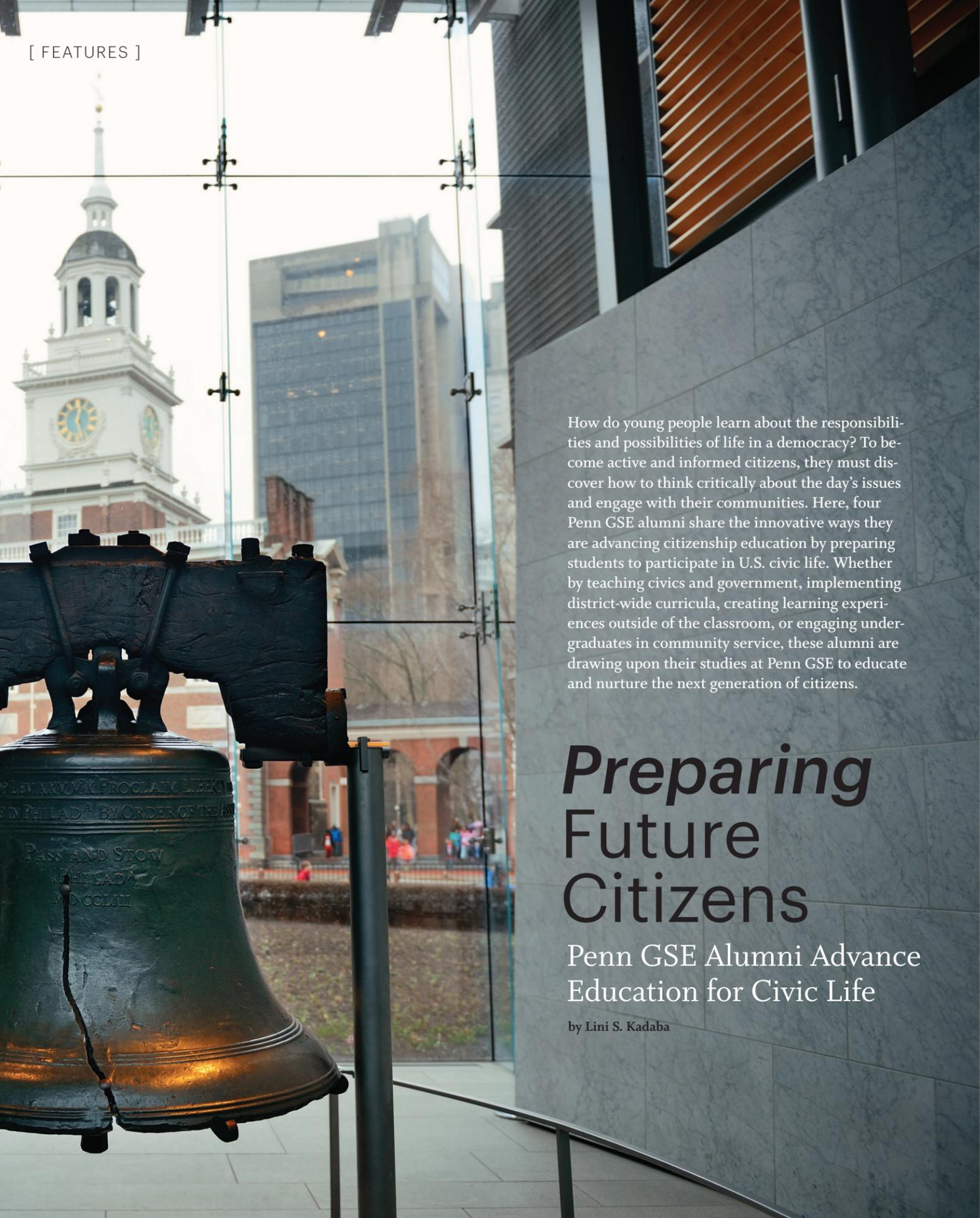
Nationally, dialogues about systemic racism have increased attention to the role of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) in creating opportunity for Black students. Ivy Taylor, GRD’20, a graduate of Penn GSE’s Executive Doctorate in Higher Education Management program, aims to capitalize on this strength to change the racial demographics of key fields as president of Rust College, an HBCU in Holly Springs, Mississippi.

“I realized that HBCUs were a way that I could really live out my mantra of connecting people to opportunity, because these are institutions that have been doing that for many decades,” says Dr. Taylor. Formerly mayor of San Antonio, Texas, she came to Penn GSE with the goal of leading an HBCU and interviewed for the presidency of Rust during the pandemic while still enrolled at Penn GSE. Now, Taylor is placing a focus on the college’s communications and education departments as she draws inspiration from journalist and activist Ida B. Wells-Barnett, who attended Rust in the late nineteenth century to prepare for her early teaching career.

“I get so excited about creating the pipeline of the next generation of Black journalists and storytellers who can help shape public policy dialogue,” she says. “We also need to bring more Black and Brown people into the classroom as teachers. Statistics show that students have better outcomes when they see teachers who look like them for at least some portion of their educational experience.”

For Penn GSE, perhaps the greatest source of hope for the future of higher education is the School’s community of alumni and students determined to make a difference.

“There are many ways in which higher education has the opportunity to do and be better, but I strongly believe in the public value of postsecondary education,” says Elizabeth Dunens, a student in Penn GSE’s Higher Education Ph.D. program. “I am excited and grateful to get to be a part of realizing its future in the decades to come, and in the meantime to consider critically and creatively the possibilities for this future as a Penn GSE student.” ■

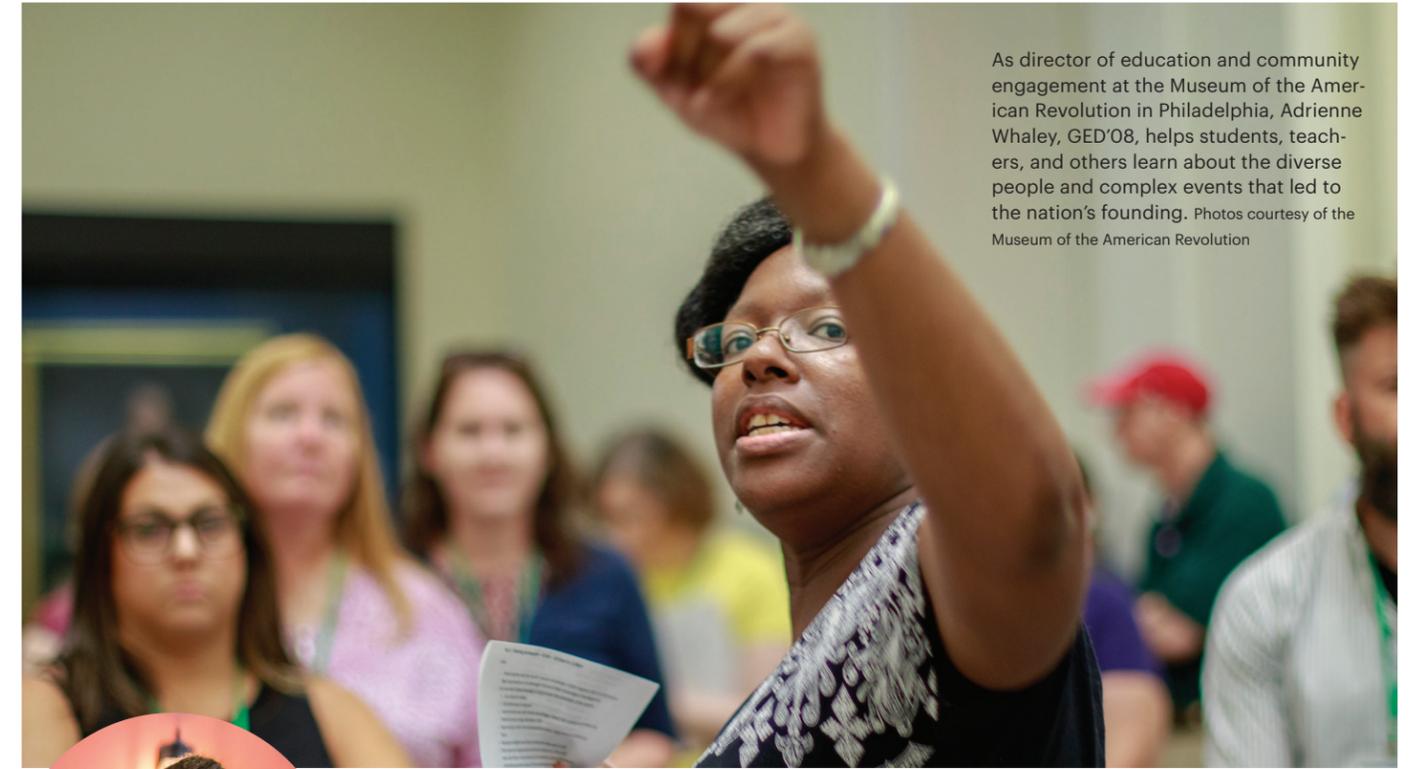


How do young people learn about the responsibilities and possibilities of life in a democracy? To become active and informed citizens, they must discover how to think critically about the day's issues and engage with their communities. Here, four Penn GSE alumni share the innovative ways they are advancing citizenship education by preparing students to participate in U.S. civic life. Whether by teaching civics and government, implementing district-wide curricula, creating learning experiences outside of the classroom, or engaging undergraduates in community service, these alumni are drawing upon their studies at Penn GSE to educate and nurture the next generation of citizens.

Preparing Future Citizens

Penn GSE Alumni Advance Education for Civic Life

by Lini S. Kadaba



As director of education and community engagement at the Museum of the American Revolution in Philadelphia, Adrienne Whaley, GED'08, helps students, teachers, and others learn about the diverse people and complex events that led to the nation's founding. Photos courtesy of the Museum of the American Revolution



BRINGING HISTORY TO LIFE

Often, civics gets defined as the nuts and bolts of government, the contributions of familiar figures such as Thomas Jefferson and John Adams, and the importance of voting and jury duty.

“That can come across as, ‘Eat your broccoli,’” says **Adrienne G. Whaley, GED’08**, director of education and community engagement at the Museum of the American Revolution (MoAR) in Philadelphia. At MoAR, the governmental and historical basics are acknowledged, but the emphasis is on bringing to life the diverse people and complex events that led to a new country and its democratic form of governance. The aim is to ensure that the nation’s “ongoing experiment in liberty, equality, and self-government” endures, according to the museum’s mission statement.

“The museum wanted to recognize a story not about heroes and villains, but about many complicated people,” says Whaley, whose Penn GSE master’s thesis in the Teaching, Learning, and Leadership program focused on teaching and learning Black history outside the public school classroom. “People were making decisions on complex issues without knowing what the outcome would be, and struggling with the distance between ideals and realities for themselves and for others.” At MoAR, she oversees educational programs for students, teachers, families, and general audiences and leads engagement efforts for Black communities.

Exhibits highlight a diversity of individuals who lived through and contributed to the Revolution, including women, free and enslaved people of African descent, Native Americans, Europeans of many stripes, and members of varied social classes and religions. “Through Their Eyes,” a field trip program Whaley designed, encourages students to imagine how people thought and felt at the time, and why they may have behaved as they did. Each student receives a card depicting a real person from the era (for example, one features a five-year-old boy who was enslaved by Thomas Jefferson), and museum educators weave these stories into discussions of artifacts and images.

An important aim is to show that the Revolutionary era launched debates about freedom and equality that continue today. “If we can help visitors understand the complexity of that moment, then that makes them better prepared to understand the complexity of every other moment in American life that has come afterwards,” says Whaley. She reports that the tour engaged approximately seventy thousand school children each year prior to the pandemic and has since broadened its geographic reach through a virtual format.

In addition to offering a variety of tours, workshops, and programs, MoAR also creates resources for teachers to help students develop skills practiced by historians. Those skills include critical thinking, active listening, and empathy—the “essence of good citizenship,” Whaley argues. When making decisions through voting, jury duty, or other forms of civic participation, she says, “people have to be willing to grapple with the fact that people have different experiences from themselves, with the fact that everybody’s perspective is different. If we can practice empathy, we can consider both our rights as individuals as well as our responsibilities as members of larger communities.”

Photo by iStock.com/rabbit75_list



INSPIRING ACTIVE PARTICIPATION

For Civics and AP Government teacher **Sarah Cannon-Straight, GED'14**, a passion for teaching civics began at Penn GSE in the Education, Culture, and Society program. Initially interested

in U.S. history, she shifted her focus while researching her master's thesis about the decreased role of social studies in school curricula, particularly in districts in low-income areas. She learned that an emphasis on preparing students for standardized testing often squeezes out civics, which is not assessed. For her it was an eye-opener.

"If you lose the civics component of social studies, when students become adults, they don't know how to vote and they don't know how to engage," says Cannon-Straight. "We were creating this generation of students who were not educated on how the government works and how they can participate."

As cultural studies department head at the New Orleans Charter Science and Mathematics High School (SciHigh), an open-admission public charter school in Louisiana, Cannon-Straight has developed creative curricula for her Civics and AP Government classes. Her focus is on hands-on exercises and connecting course content to students' lives, with the ultimate goal of encouraging them to

participate and seek change. "Civics is a 'doing' subject," she says. "You learn a skill. Then you go vote. You go protest. You write your senators."

On alternate days, and in a virtual classroom during the pandemic, Cannon-Straight begins class with the day's news. Recently, clips about the power grid crisis in Texas provided an opportunity to discuss how state and national authority are divided in the United States. "None of that was on the lesson plan for that day," she says. "But it's worth spending fifteen minutes on current events. You've got to make class time relevant."

With that aim of relevance, Cannon-Straight brings in guest speakers (a city court clerk, a local candidate running for office) and prepares simulations in which students act out court or foreign policy procedures. She also has students pick a city woe, such as potholed roads, and investigate solutions, from the source of infrastructure money, to how resources are allocated, to the role of voting and local representatives. She encourages her students, many of whom turn eighteen while she's teaching them, to register to vote.

"It's about giving them skills, teaching them how to engage," says Cannon-Straight, who was named the school's 2020-2021 Teacher of the Year. "How are we ever going to enact change if we don't have people who understand how the system works?" she asks. The payoff comes in the moments when graduates message her that they voted, show curiosity about what a jungle primary means, or work to get out the vote with a nonprofit. "Those are the connections that bring me a lot of joy," she says. "I just need one of them to run for office."



LIFTING UP STUDENT VOICES

In a year that brought a global pandemic, heightened awareness of racism and oppression, and significant mental health challenges, the District of Columbia Public Schools found that a new curriculum was in order.

The result is the "Living through History" unit that launched under the leadership of **Melissa M. Kim, GRD'09**, deputy chancellor of social, emotional, and academic development. The unit opened the school year for the district's approximately fifty thousand pre-K-12 students and provided context for the dual pandemics of COVID-19 and racism to help students make sense of their experiences during tumultuous times.

"Educators need to be both content experts and also human development experts," says Dr. Kim, a graduate of Penn GSE's Mid-Career Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership. "I think kids should be just as fluent in how they feel, how they respond to stress,

as we expect them to be in math and reading."

As the district's 117 schools operated online due to the pandemic, the "Living through History" unit encouraged students to share their perspectives and apply academic knowledge to discuss the current era and create a variety of projects. A number of the resulting videos, songs, works of art, public service announcements, and time capsules have been featured on the Smithsonian Learning Lab website.

"We're trying to redefine civic education," says Kim. From the start, the new curriculum addressed the virus's unequal impact along racial and socioeconomic lines and presented public health as a civic responsibility. In the wake of the siege on the U.S. Capitol, the district quickly provided teachers with resources to discuss the threat to democracy and the difference between insurrection and protest.

A main goal, Kim says, is to develop citizens who notice patterns of inclusion and exclusion in society and take action to address concerns, for example, by writing letters to Congress. "What I think civic education should address at its heart is how we can work to include people," says Kim. "How do we get students to be reflective enough to participate in the creation of a better world?"

Inclusion has long interested her. Growing up as a Korean American immigrant and non-native English speaker often made her "feel outside of the dominant American culture," says Kim. She wrote her Penn GSE doctoral dissertation on segregation and the experiences of students transitioning from racially homogeneous elementary schools to racially diverse middle schools.

Kim reports that under her leadership, the school district has worked to create a culture of inclusion by putting student voices at center. For example, the redesign of two underperforming schools included extensive input from students. In addition, at the district level, long-term suspensions were reduced through alternative approaches that help students learn to share space and express needs and wants effectively.

While Kim emphasizes that the curriculum and initiatives are works in progress, she sees a positive impact. "We've invested a lot of time in engaging students," she says. "What I do know is that they're in a much healthier place as a result."

Photo by Daniel Grossman



FINDING COMMON GROUND

To **David Grossman, GR'04**, founding director of Penn's Civic House and Civic Scholars Program, one goal of civic education is to find shared values amidst difference and division.

"It's important, as we're an increasingly diverse and increasingly stratified world, that we work at understanding what it is we share in common," says Dr. Grossman, also

a Penn GSE adjunct assistant professor in the Higher Education division. He sees Civic House, located at 3914 Locust Walk, as an important way in which Penn helps students learn to work toward a more equitable society.

Penn established Civic House in 1998 as a hub to build upon existing community service programs, with Grossman as director and a mission to "promote service as a means of preparing students for their roles as citizens and leaders," according to Civic House's charter. Today, Civic House is home to a range of initiatives that engage students in service and advocacy. Its work aims to promote mutually beneficial collaborations between Penn and the communities of West Philadelphia, other Philadelphia neighborhoods, and the larger world.

That mission is about much more than mere volunteer hours, according to Grossman. "It's about providing opportunities, both formal and informal, for students to learn about, to explore, and to practice what it means to be part of a broader society, and in

"It's about providing opportunities, both formal and informal, for students to learn about, to explore, and to practice what it means to be part of a broader society."

that process, ask challenging questions of themselves," he says.

Programs attract hundreds of students each academic year. Highlights include the West Philadelphia Tutoring Project, through which Penn students provide free tutoring to local K-12 students, and the Community Engagement Internship, which provides funding for Penn students to undertake internships at community organizations, among them Bread & Roses Community Fund and VietLead. In addition, the signature Civic Scholars Program recognizes up to fifteen Penn undergraduates in each class with a special four-year experience integrating civic engagement and scholarship. These and other Civic House programs adapted to operate virtually during the pandemic.

Community partnerships are key to the work of Civic House and were the topic of Grossman's doctoral research in Penn GSE's Education Policy program. Through studying the efforts of nonprofits to address longstanding issues in West Philadelphia, such as racial and economic inequity, he concluded that the best chance to improve outcomes arises from a shared understanding between community partners.

"It's important that we not position ourselves as experts, but rather value the local community as having assets, such as vital experiences and knowledge of their own, that should drive partnerships," he says. His hope is that such a model of civic engagement will strengthen our democracy through greater connection and collaboration.

"We have to be walking through the world in a way that we understand ourselves as part of the whole," Grossman says. "Then we're going to be better members of our communities. That is the point of this work." ■

Celebrating *Extraordinary Impact* The Campaign for Penn GSE

This spring, Penn GSE is preparing to conclude the *Extraordinary Impact Campaign*, a \$75 million initiative within the University-wide *Power of Penn Campaign* that ends on June 30, 2021. The largest fundraising effort in the School's history, *Extraordinary Impact* has dramatically increased support for priorities across Penn GSE so that the School's faculty, students, and alumni can continue to reach learners locally, nationally, and globally and provide them with the foundation for lifelong opportunity. These pages highlight successes of the campaign, stories that Penn GSE will continue to celebrate in the months ahead.

Image credits clockwise from top right: Jay Gorodetzer Photography, Lisa Godfrey Photography, Penn GSE, Ann Beha Architects, Greg Benson Photography, center: Greg Benson Photography

EXTRAORDINARY IMPACT

THE CAMPAIGN FOR  PENN GSE

Programs and Research

Penn GSE has grown its innovative work partnering with urban schools, sparking change in the field, deepening practitioners' knowledge, reinventing teacher education, advancing racial literacy, and pioneering solutions in hybrid, digital, and active learning.

"We are looking at what each model of partnership teaches us about university-assisted schools—what is sustainable and replicable, and which of our efforts make the most difference for students."

—Caroline L. Watts, director of school and community engagement and senior lecturer



Faculty

Penn GSE has increased support for faculty in order to continue attracting and retaining the finest scholars, who shape the field of education through their research, practice, and teaching.

"Teachers are yearning to teach with progressive pedagogies and tools, but without an advocate like us and high-quality professional development, education is hard-pressed to improve."

—Susan Yoon, professor in Teaching, Learning, and Leadership division



Facilities and Technology

Penn GSE is undertaking a dramatic building expansion—the School's first new construction in more than fifty years—to create a hub of twenty-first-century teaching and learning.

"The expansion will revitalize and modernize Penn GSE's footprint and teaching spaces as the School pursues its ambitious goals for its second century."

—Douglas R. Korn, W'84, chair, Penn GSE Board of Advisors and chair, *Extraordinary Impact Campaign*

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.

Scholarship and Fellowship

The School has made a Penn GSE education more affordable by initiating need-based aid for the first time and significantly increasing financial aid offerings to master's students.

"The cost of education can take a toll on students' families and work-life balance. 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."

—Heather Hairston, Ed.D. student in Teaching, Learning, and Leadership; recipient, Glosserman Family Urban Education Scholarship



The Penn GSE Annual Fund

Through the Penn GSE Annual Fund, the School has supported every student, faculty member, and program, responding to new and exciting opportunities while preparing students for lives of leadership and service.

"It's important to me to invest in diversity—whether through supporting candidates to attend a school like Penn GSE or helping facilitate dialogues."

—Patricia Grant, GED'01, GRD'04, senior associate dean for the undergraduate program, Georgetown University, McDonough School of Business



To learn more about funding priorities at Penn GSE, or to contribute, visit www.gse.upenn.edu/support or contact us at 215.573.6623 or alumni@gse.upenn.edu.



COLLABORATING with

Communities

PROFESSOR VIVIAN GADSDEN WORKS TO HELP CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

interview by Juliana Rosati

Gadsden's national impact has resulted in her regular presence on the annual Education Week Edu-Scholar Public Influence Rankings list, her membership in the National Academy of Education, and her roles as president of the American Educational Research Association for 2016-2017 and chair of the National Academies of Sciences Committee on Parenting Young Children. At Penn GSE, Gadsden teaches in the Literacy, Culture, and International Education division and is director of the National Center on Fathers and Families. She is also faculty co-director of the Penn Futures Project and a faculty associate of the Penn Child Research Center, and served as associate director of the National Center on Adult Literacy.

We sat down with Gadsden to learn how she is collaborating with students, parents, educators, and the City of Philadelphia to imagine and build a brighter future through education.

Photo by iStock.com/urbazon

You have spent your career studying how inequities affect the learning and lives of children. How would you describe the current moment in our nation as families of color struggle disproportionately with the impact of the pandemic, and as a historic civil rights movement continues?

The problems that are faced by the focal families of my work weren't created by them. Their barriers and challenges are rooted in a four-hundred-year history that begins with the enslavement of African people in the American colonies. Over time we have chipped away at the ways in which people have been denied rights, but in our nation today we are still fighting in the most fundamental of ways to protect the human experience and quality of life.

Reform is needed in every aspect of our systems of education, social services, health care, and government. We're brilliant enough in our democracy to find the pieces of the systems that have worked and use those as a way of going forward. But reform has to be based on *knowledge* of the hardships that poor families face; it can't just be based on assumptions about their lives. We need to hear their narratives and view these communities as powerful sources of data on how we can do things differently. And we have to bring people together with a shared goal of effecting change.

How is your work addressing the need for reform and change?

In my research, I work with communities and organizations to act on a shared belief that we can make a difference. For example, one of my current projects is lifting up the voices of families and educators to help the City of Philadelphia develop a new definition of child well-being, along with better data to support it. It's a companion to the work that Dr. John W. Fantuzzo of Penn GSE and Dr. Dennis P. Culhane of Penn Social Policy & Practice have done to help the city develop the CARES integrated data system. CARES is an example of big data—it combines information across areas such as education, housing, juvenile justice, and mental health so it can be used to improve services. My colleagues recently helped the city use CARES to identify the places with the greatest need for high-quality prekindergarten so that investments could be made there.

Big data is powerful, but there are other kinds of data that are often overlooked. My project aims to help the city combine big data with what I call "little" and "medium" data. Little data are what an individual teacher can observe or learn about and from a child. Medium data are what a school can learn by reaching out to parents and communities. My research team has looked at how the city collects data about childhood risks, and now we're interviewing parents and educators to identify additional variables that Philadelphia and other municipalities might use to gain insight into the needs of families. We want the city's data to include first-hand observations from the families who are facing risks and the practitioners who work with them. This work is part of the Penn Futures Project, a cross-disciplinary initiative to address pressing social issues affecting Philadelphia youth and families.



Photo by Ryan Collier

"Reform is needed in every aspect of our systems of education, social services, health care, and government. We're brilliant enough in our democracy to find the pieces of the systems that have worked and use those as a way of going forward. But reform has to be based on *knowledge* of the hardships that poor families face; it can't just be based on assumptions about their lives."

In what other ways are you collaborating with the city and with communities?

For the past year and a half, we've been partnering with Philadelphia's Department of Human Services (DHS) to help them study and revise parts of their system. Philadelphia places children in foster care or adoption at the highest rate in the United States, and this rate is disproportionately high for youth of color. DHS approached us to help them learn why this is happening and how to change it. We are conducting a survey, and now a team of Penn GSE students is interviewing hundreds of DHS employees, along with parents, foster parents, and family caregivers, to understand how and why decisions are being made about children's care.

Another project, within Penn Futures, invites residents of four Philadelphia neighborhoods to identify problems in their communities, primarily related to early childhood, and write proposals for funding to develop solutions. Although most of my work focuses on early childhood, I've also been studying civic engagement among high school students in Philadelphia and elsewhere in the United States and Africa. We're collaborating with youth both to learn what civic engagement means to them, and to provide opportunities for them to effect change.

The pandemic has caused an unprecedented disruption in education for many students. What advice do you have to help parents and schools address students' needs during the process of reopening schools?

Teachers are overextended as it is, but something they might do is set aside time to check in informally with students and parents to learn about ongoing issues and needs. From these conversations, teachers could develop a list to share with administrators during the transition. Ideally principals and teachers will come together

to discuss not only the logistics of reopening, but also what knowledge they want students to have, how students can bring their whole identities into the classroom, and how the school can make sure students see it as an equitable and caring space. Throughout the process, I would like families and educators to be clear that they don't need to hide issues of race and racism when they feel that those are relevant or when they feel they have been treated unfairly. I also want to convey this commitment to my graduate students and support them to embrace it in their research and work in the world.

What experiences and aims inspire your work?

I spent much of my early childhood in Charleston, South Carolina, with parents and families committed to civil rights—a minister father and a citizenship school-organizer mother. Through the work with and for the congregation, they brought together people from vastly different socioeconomic backgrounds, and they imparted to me an appreciation for the differences of people in the world. When I first came to Philadelphia, immediately after graduate school, the condition of the houses, streets, and sidewalks in North Philadelphia was distressing to me, because it seemed as though the folks there were forgotten—that they did not matter. But I quickly realized that I didn't have time to be distressed. I needed to be doing something, in whatever small way, to make a difference.

I view it as important to bring my research to the attention of policy makers and others who are in a position to change our systems. But my work is also about collaborating with communities who join me in the study of themselves, to learn from them and to imagine, together, something better for our world. ■



Dr. Gadsden, the William T. Carter Professor of Child Development and Education, is lifting up the voices of families and educators to help the City of Philadelphia develop a new definition of child well-being. Photo by Ryan Collard

ENGAGING GRADUATES

Penn GSE Launches Alumni Leadership Board

by Jane L. Lindahl, GED'18, associate director, development and alumni relations

Penn GSE is benefiting from a new source of alumni perspectives and feedback thanks to thirteen graduates who have served as the inaugural members of the School's Alumni Leadership Board (ALB) during the past year. Launched in January of 2020, the ALB works closely with Penn GSE's Office of Development and Alumni Relations to help inform, shape, and promote engagement opportunities that speak to the interests and ever-changing needs of alumni.

"The goal of our work has always been to find pathways for alumni to stay involved with GSE and Penn in ways that are both meaningful and relevant to their lives and professional growth," says Vice Dean for Development and Alumni Relations Melissa Calvert, GED'00. "By creating the ALB, we are fostering a space for an open, two-way dialogue that better ensures our ability to meet that goal quickly and in a way that resonates."

Representing a range of regions, academic programs, backgrounds, career levels, and graduation years, members draw upon their professional expertise to serve as advocates for and ambassadors to Penn GSE's robust alumni community. They are invited to attend two substantive annual retreats, as well as periodic update calls and learning opportunities, all designed to keep them well versed on the scope and reach of the School.

Virtual retreats in October and May brought members together to learn from faculty and students and develop the board's priorities and strategy.

"The educational landscape has always asked practitioners to grow and adapt continually to meet the needs of learners," says Marsha Comegno, GED'98, GRD'04, inaugural chair of the ALB. "Similarly, we are working with the School to meet the needs of alumni, through professional development, network building, access to resources, and more."

Initiatives of the ALB have included plans to increase alumni participation on Penn GSE Connects, the exclusive new professional platform for Penn GSE students and alumni, and to collaborate with the School's new Center for Professional Learning.

Dr. Comegno, who was instrumental in developing the ALB and shaping its vision, brings significant experience as a volunteer leader at Penn GSE and other organizations.

"Serving on the ALB has already been an incredibly rewarding experience," she says. "I am excited to see what our second year brings and how the board grows and develops alongside the needs of Penn GSE alumni."



Penn GSE Alumni Leadership Board Members

- Jeanne Arnold, SW'80, GRD'06
- Marsha H. Comegno, GED'98, GRD'04
- Theo L. Cramer, GRD'16
- Ted Domers, GED'07, GRD'15
- Barbara L. Hewitt, GRD'02
- Abdul-Qadir Dade Islam, GED'17
- Marjie G. Katz, GED'90
- Gail R. Foster Lewis, GED'92, GED'95
- Amanda Luo, GED'11
- Wendy R. McCulley, WG'91, GED'16
- Shawn Milheim, GRD'14
- Matthew Vincent O'Malley, GED'95, WAM'19
- Michelle Leone Riley, C'95, GED'96

Join Penn GSE Connects

Register at <https://penngseconnects.gse.upenn.edu> today and start forming meaningful professional connections with Penn GSE alumni and students.

Stay Connected

Visit www.gse.upenn.edu/alumni to find alumni events, resources, and more.



Professional Counseling Master's Program Trains Future Therapists amid a Pandemic

by Stephanie Berrong

“Do you have any homework you need help with?”

It is one of the first questions AC Conwell, GED'20, asks her clients when she meets with them, working online from her apartment in Philadelphia. As a middle school counseling intern for the General George G. Meade School in North Philadelphia, she has learned that such practical considerations must be dealt with first. “Obviously this is a space for them to talk about their emotions, but it's really hard to do that when you're thinking about the homework assignment that's late,” she explains.

For students from the public school for prekindergarten to eighth grade, who have been distance learning since last March, the question is also an invitation to make a very concrete connection with their counselor. By spending early moments of a session on homework, Conwell hopes to help students relax and feel comfortable discussing other concerns with her, whether they are sad or anxious or struggling to understand and process the many national crises of the past year.

As a student herself in Penn GSE's Professional Counseling master's program, Conwell is by now well accustomed to virtual

learning. Her internship at the Meade School, as well as her coursework, have highlighted the urgency of this moment for mental health professionals while preparing Conwell to meet it.

Conwell is a graduate of Penn GSE's one-year Counseling and Mental Health Services M.S.Ed. program. She and over thirty of her classmates opted to continue their studies for a second year of advanced counseling training in the Professional Counseling M.Phil.Ed. program.

According to Penn GSE Lecturer in Educational Practice Ariane Thomas, the program's associate director for professional training, the two-year program serves as a gateway to careers in psychology, mental health counseling, school counseling, and research. The first year provides foundational skills and a degree that can be applied towards a variety of professional paths. Some first-year graduates, for example, attend medical school or matriculate into a doctoral program for psychology.

Students who undertake the second year receive a more targeted and intensive experience to prepare them to qualify for licensure and school certification. They must complete twenty

← Clockwise from top right are Penn GSE Professional Counseling program faculty Drs. Howard Stevenson, Caroline Watts, Ariane Thomas, Marsha Richardson, and Michael Nakkula.

Photos by Chris Kendig, Lora Reehling, Goldenberg Photography, Ryan Collerd, and Darryl W. Moran Photography.

hours per week in a field internship like Conwell's with the Meade School, an increase from eight to ten hours per week of practicum work in their first year. Penn GSE courses inform students' internship experiences through a comprehensive psychology-based counseling curriculum, bolstered by practical advice from faculty, many of whom maintain small private practices themselves.

“We want students to leave the program knowing that they will be sensitive and compassionate professionals who are responsible for the delivery of mental health services to vulnerable populations,” Dr. Thomas says.

Students' field internships are aligned as much as possible with their long-term professional goals. The program has established relationships with a range of organizations, including public and independent schools, community mental health centers, inpatient psychiatric hospitals, and private practices.

Zhengtian (Leo) Hao, GED'20, is a second-year master's student from China. He discovered the power of counseling during an internship at a psychiatric hospital in Beijing. Hao, who hopes to stay in the United States after graduating, aspires to work with immigrants or the elderly, whom he thinks could be particularly in need of counseling therapy after the pandemic. “They are a population that was highly affected by the virus, and a lot of elderly experienced losses during the pandemic,” he says.

In his field placement at The Consortium, Inc., a nonprofit community mental health center based in West Philadelphia, Hao treats clients with a variety of psychiatric diagnoses. Like Conwell, Hao meets one-on-one with his clients on his computer from his apartment. He helps them address issues of addiction, trauma, anxiety, and, of course, the impact of the pandemic.

The latter has offered Professional Counseling students unique opportunities for personal and professional growth. This year's cohort, many of whom are living far from family and friends, have faced some of the same challenges of an unprecedented worldwide health crisis as their clients: stress caused by social isolation, economic distress, and increased anxiety about one's personal health and safety or those of loved ones.

Hao says he had rarely heard the term “self-care” before this year and had not been practicing it, but faculty in the master's program as well as colleagues at The Consortium emphasized its importance. He now meditates every day, exercises three times a week, and has set boundaries between his professional and personal lives.

Both he and Conwell concede that completing an internship remotely presents its own challenges in terms of building relationships. “I'm the kind of person who tries to pick up on



AC Conwell, GED'20

By spending early moments of a session on homework, Conwell hopes to help students relax and feel comfortable discussing other concerns with her, whether they are sad or anxious or struggling to understand and process the many national crises of the past year.



Illustration by iStock.com/Marta Shershen



Zhengtian (Leo) Hao, GED'20

Hao aspires to work with immigrants or the elderly, whom he thinks could be particularly in need of counseling therapy after the pandemic. “They are a population that was highly affected by the virus, and a lot of elderly experienced losses during the pandemic,” he says.



Illustration by iStock.com/Olga Streinikova

body language, and half of my communication is implicit,” Conwell says. “It’s been a longer process to build connections with students, especially when they don’t like to turn on their cameras.”

Conwell and Hao find support in their coursework and the online community of other students and program faculty. “Despite being online, my cohort has been doing everything we can to make it easier for each other,” Conwell says. “If it wasn’t for them, this would’ve been much more difficult.”

Thomas notes that the current era has brought students and faculty together in heightened ways despite the physical distance between them. “While taking care of other people, we’ve also had to do a very good job of trying to take care of one another. During class, we’re talking about self-care, what the stressors are, and how we’re dealing with them,” she says. “I’m a Black woman, so I’ve had my own struggles dealing with the radical way in which America has been forced to face its racial history, as have many of our students, and those issues have come across as we share insights and support each other as a community.”

Even with all of the challenges, both students report that their experiences in the program have been invaluable. Hao says one of the most rewarding aspects has been the opportunity to develop his clinical style as a therapist. “I can see my confidence and clinical intuition improved after interacting with clients,” he says, adding that the validation he has received from clients, colleagues, and peers has assured him that he is on the right path.

Conwell likewise feels affirmed in her professional route. “All of my interactions, challenging and easy, truly helped me solidify that I do love working in education and that helping these children is what I really want to do with my life,” she says. ■



Homecoming @ Home

Highlights Bedtime Math and Education Alumni Awardees

Penn GSE celebrated accomplishments in multiple facets of education as part of Penn’s Homecoming @ Home on Saturday, November 14, 2020. In addition to honoring five outstanding graduates as Education Alumni Awardees, the program featured keynote speaker Laura Bilodeau Overdeck, WG’95, founder and president of Bedtime Math, a nonprofit that works to help kids love math.



Laura Bilodeau Overdeck, WG’95, founder and president of Bedtime Math

Overdeck’s keynote address, “Jumpstarting Math: Getting beyond Screens and Worksheets,” shared her eight-year journey creating fun and memorable ways for children to learn math. Through activities such as illustrating geometry with glowsticks and bringing fractions to life with art, Bedtime Math aims to help children develop real fluency with mathematical concepts. Bedtime Math’s free app to help parents guide children through math activities, available in English and Spanish, has been downloaded half a million times.

Penn GSE Dean Pam Grossman announced the following 2020 Education Alumni Award recipients



Penn GSE Educator of the Year Award
James B. Johnston, WG’66, GRD’76



Helen C. Bailey Award
Caroline Brayer Ebby, GR’97



William B. Castetter Alumni Award of Merit
Marsha H. Comegno, GED’98, GRD’04



Ethel and Allen ‘Buddy’ Carruth Sustained Leadership in Education Award
Saqi Mehta, GED’01



The Penn GSE Recent Alumni/Early Career Award of Merit
Tian Song, GED’09

The list of 2021 Education Alumni Awardees, announced in May during Alumni Weekend, is available at www.gse.upenn.edu/news and will appear in our fall issue. Visit www.gse.upenn.edu/alumni/get-involved/awards-nominations to learn more about the Education Alumni Awards.

Alumni Notes

Penn Affiliations

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



Photo by Greg Benson Photography

1960s

Maxine Weisman Greenberg, ED'61, is a realtor associate for Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Fox & Roach in Margate, NJ. She received a 2020 Circle of Excellence Award from New Jersey Realtors.

1970s

Myrna Agris, CW'63, GED'73, GRD'79, was promoted to associate vice president of wealth management at Morgan Stanley in Houston, TX.

Barbara Bry, CW'71, GED'71, is back in the entrepreneurial world as chief operating officer of Blackbird Ventures. She is also writing a book with her husband about the biggest Ponzi scheme masterminded by a woman and celebrating twin grandchildren from her daughter, **Rachel Aberasturi, GED'16**.

Linda Hirsch, GED'71, is an entrepreneurial photographer, photojournalist, and mindfulness meditation teacher-guide.

Alice Korngold, CW'74, GED'77, president and CEO of Korngold Consulting LLC, speaks at global conferences on sustainability and board governance, the topics of her books and research. Her firm trains and matches executives to NGO boards.

Gwendolyn Samuels, C'77, GED'79, has begun a third career as an artist and writer, exhibiting and winning awards for her fiber art and publishing two books. She previously worked as a K-12 teacher and administrator, an adjunct professor, and a certified freelance interpreter and translator.

Joan Shapiro, GED'71, GRD'78, is co-writing the fifth edition of *Ethical Leadership and Decision Making in Education* (Routledge, 2016). Another book she coauthored, *Ethical Educational Leadership in Turbulent Times* (Routledge, 2013), has been bought by a publishing house in China.

1980s

David Basile, GED'85, of Pine Ridge Middle School in West Columbia, SC, was named 2021 South Carolina Middle Level Principal of the Year by the South Carolina Association of School Administrators. He was also named Principal of the Year by the South Carolina Council for Exceptional Children.

Ellen Brooks, GRD'81, an instructor at Purchase College, completed the facilitator training program for Narrative 4, a global organization that brings people together to share personal stories and build empathy. She facilitated her first story exchange in July.

Maria Antonia Cowles, GED'87, a consultant for Language Testing International, is certified in Portuguese as a second language tester, both online and face-to-face.

Sandra Epstein, CW'75, GED'76, GRD'83, works regionally and internationally in interfaith relations and has written on related topics for academic publications. She also directs the Welcoming Shuls Project for Eshel to foster inclusion of LGBTQ+ Jews in religiously observant Jewish communities.

Anne Pierpont, GED'83, is director of auxiliary programs at Stuart Country Day School of the Sacred Heart in Pennington, NJ. She contributes to the school's participation in the National SEED (Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity) Project to develop leaders who drive change towards social justice.

Nathan Scott, C'89, GED'89, is in his thirtieth year in public education. As assistant principal at Council Rock High School-North in Newtown, PA, he oversees social studies, special education, special services, and the Class of 2024.

Mona Weissmark, GR'86, is author of *The Science of Diversity* (Oxford University Press, 2020), which was chosen for the publisher's essential reading list of nine titles that offer cutting-edge perspectives on racism and hate, leadership, and human nature.

1990s

H. Penny Bryan, GR'92, is professor emerita and former head of graduate leadership programs at Chapman University. She works with administrators, educators, families, and communities to apply restorative practices towards building a culture of equity and deepening community.

Lynell Engelmyer, GED'96, works with the nonprofit Alexander Hamilton Scholars to mentor and serve high-achieving, low-income students. She uses her college admissions and financial aid experience to help the students break barriers and succeed in college and beyond.

Kimberly Y. Erwin, GED'99, is an intercultural communicator, author, and host of Race Talks® on WGXC-90.7 FM, a station serving the greater New York state regions. The show provides expertise on race and ethnicity to promote a better informed, appreciative, and active local citizenry.

Tania Israel, C'88, GED'92, wrote *Beyond Your Bubble: How to Connect Across the Political Divide* (APA LifeTools, 2020). A professor at UC Santa Barbara's Gevirtz Graduate School of Education, she was named a 2019 Congressional Woman of the Year for her scholarship and community engagement.

Jennifer Park, GED'98, assistant professor at Colorado Christian University, presented at the American Counseling Association's 2021 conference. She coauthored an article forthcoming in *The Professional Counselor* as well as "Comparing Behavioral Health Graduate Students in Spiritual and Religious Competence" (*Spiritual Psychology and Counseling*, 2018, Volume 3, Number 2).

Margaret Roth, CW'68, GED'91, has worked in marriage and family therapy at Council for Relationships since 1991. She is part of a research project, Transcending Trauma, which will help inform therapy for current and future populations affected by trauma.

Michael Townsley, GR'94, published *Colleges in Crisis: How Private Colleges and Universities Can Survive* (Gatekeeper Press, 2021) and is editing a paper about cash and financial analysis.

2000s

Jeanne Arnold, SW'80, GRD'06, was elected to the board position of first vice president of the National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education (NADOHE) and appointed chairperson of the 2021 NADOHE Annual Conference. She formerly served on the board as secretary.

Pamela Felder, GRD'05, was appointed associate editor of the *International Journal of Doctoral Studies*.

Stefani Hite, GED'95, GRD'05, is founder of Tigris Solutions.

Alexander Joujan, GED'06, published the second edition of his fifteen-book algebra series, *Summit Math* (independently published, 2020). He also recorded screencasts to supplement the books for students learning at home.

Elizabeth Lehmann, GED'03, is principal of West Hollywood Elementary School in Los Angeles, CA. She recently completed her Ph.D. in intercultural education at Biola University, where she previously earned her M.Div.

Julian McNeil, GED'09, WEV'11, is serving as the first anti-racism program manager at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA.

James Miller, GED'05, is principal of Chambers Hill Elementary School in Harrisburg, PA. He was previously assistant principal of Central Dauphin Middle School in the same district. He earned his Ed.D. in educational leadership from Widener University in 2017.

Steve D. Mobley Jr., GED'06, assistant professor of higher education administration at The University of Alabama, was named one of five 2021-2023 Emerging Scholar-Designees by the American College Personnel Association (ACPA). He will undertake research and leadership commitments towards the ACPA Emerging Scholars Award.

Khalid Mumin, GRD'08, superintendent of the Reading School District, was named 2021 Pennsylvania Superintendent of the Year by the Pennsylvania Association of School Administrators for leadership that has put the district back on a positive track since he joined it in 2014. The award recognizes leadership for learning, communication skills, professionalism, and community involvement.

Natasha Murray, GRD'05, was elected to the board of directors of the National Network of State Teachers of the Year. The board strives to provide every student with exceptional learning opportunities through improved policy, practice, and advocacy.

Joseph Petrosino, GRD'07, is available to speak nationwide on special education issues and building trust and humor in the workplace. He is chief academic officer of Educational Assurance Solutions.

Michelle Robinson, GED'06, has been principal of Glenside Elementary School in Cheltenham Township, PA, since August 2017. She has successfully implemented initiatives in school climate and culture, STEM education, and literacy and is enrolled in Penn GSE's Mid-Career Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership.

Tian Song, GED'09, joined Amerigo Education as director of campus operations in the Twin Cities. She also serves in volunteer leadership positions on the Diversity and Inclusion Subcommittee of NAFSA: Association of International Educators and on the Partnerships Team of the Global Leadership League.

Kimberly Stock, GED'05, was named Delaware's 2021 State Teacher of the Year and the state's nominee for National Teacher of the Year. As a representative of all Delaware teachers, she plans to promote equitable access and opportunities for students. She works closely with English learners as a teacher at McKean High School.

Nyeema C. Watson, GED'01, is vice chancellor for diversity, inclusion, and civic engagement at Rutgers University-Camden. She is responsible for leading campus diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts along with civic engagement.

Valerie Weaver-Zercher, GED'00, is an acquisitions editor at Broadleaf Books, a general trade publisher that produces adult nonfiction for a more open, just, and compassionate world.

2010s

Valerie Adams-Bass, GR'11, coauthored a chapter of *Strong Black Girls: Reclaiming Schools in Their Own Image* (Teachers College Press, 2020) with **Keisha L. Bentley-Edwards, GR'09**. She has published and spoken about the experiences of Black students during the pandemic in *Successful Black Parenting* magazine and elsewhere.

Ryan Elizabeth Arey, GED'12, married Eric Byington on October 17 in Bay Harbor, MI, in a small ceremony with close family and friends. She and Eric live and work in Washington, DC.

Jessica Bacal, GRD'18, wrote *The Rejection That Changed My Life: 25+ Powerful Women on Being Let Down, Turning It Around, and Burning It Up at Work* (Plume, 2021). She is director of reflective and integrative practices and of the Narratives Project at Smith College.

Carlo Cinaglia, GED'16, is a Ph.D. student in second language studies at Michigan State University. His research focuses on language learner and teacher identity, translanguaging in higher education, and instructed second-language acquisition.

Dexter D. Evans, GED'18, accepted a position as executive director of the FRIENDS of Barack Obama Male Leadership Academy, which supports the boys' public school in Dallas, TX. Previously he was associate dean of students at his alma mater, Paul Quinn College, under the mentorship of President **Michael J. Sorrell, GRD'15**.

Esther Glasgow, GED'18, has continued working at READ 718, providing one-on-one reading tutoring for students from low-income families and serving in the new READ Up program for students who are or may be dyslexic.

Anna Q. Han, GED'15, L'15, joined the Career Development Office of the UC Berkeley School of Law as director of judicial clerkships. She previously worked in private legal practice in San Francisco, CA, and Washington, DC.

Angelica Jackson, GED'19, is opening the first public charter and arts-as-curriculum school in her hometown of Charles County, MD. She has also launched a wellness tech startup, Me Time, which automated the planning and scheduling of sustainable self-care practice for overwhelmed parents and caregivers.

Hieu Le, GED'18, is founder and CEO of G.A.P. Institute, a social enterprise that provides training for disadvantaged youth in Vietnam. The organization hit a record number of twenty-five thousand students in 2020 and was recognized by Forbes Vietnam for helping workers find jobs during the COVID-19 crisis.

Rosa Leff, GED'12, a former kindergarten teacher, is a full-time hand cut paper artist. She bought her first X-Acto knife and fell in love with the medium when asked to make children's books for a class at Penn GSE.

Anne Marie Liebel, GRD'12, contributed to the special issue "Against Autonomous Literacies: Extending the Work of Brian V. Street" (*Literacy in Composition Studies*, 2021, Volume 8, Number 2). The late Brian Street taught in Penn GSE's Reading, Writing, and Literacy programs. Liebel has brought Street's work into the health sector.

Holly Link, GR'16, is director of educational programming and research at the Centro de Cultura, Arte, Trabajo, y Educación, a community center in Norristown, PA, that aims to empower the Latinx and immigrant community. She is working on participatory research through which young people and adults can promote social transformation and inform public policy.

William Liu, GED'11, moved to the Idea Judson College Preparatory campus in San Antonio, TX. There he serves sophomore students and faculty as grade team lead and teaches Pre-AP Chemistry and AP Biology. In nine years of teaching, he has learned that the truest knowledge is shared knowledge.

Noni Thomas López, GRD'16, has been elected to the board of trustees of the National Association of Independent Schools.

Robert Luisi, GED'11, was granted tenure as of August 2020 in his role as assistant professor of mathematics at Bucks County Community College in Doylestown, PA.

Rina Madhani, GED'19, launched a literacy nonprofit, Start Lighthouse, in response to the widespread school and library closures during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. Since March 2020, she has distributed 1,453 books, impacted 385 families, and hosted a decolonizing education hackathon for 120 individuals nationally.

Ivan Montes, GRD'19, was elected in November 2020 to represent his community on the Morgan Hill Unified School District Board of Trustees. The district serves 8,500 students from transitional kindergarten to adult across fourteen schools in California's Silicon Valley.

Thai-Huy Ngyuen, GED'06, GR'15, was promoted to associate professor with tenure at Seattle University, but decided to leave for a new opportunity as a policy researcher at the RAND Corporation.

Kasey Price, GED'18, was recognized by the TD Bank "Thank You" campaign for her diversity and inclusion work in the Philadelphia area and at Cristo Rey Philadelphia High School.

Amber Ravenscroft, GED'19, manager of innovation for The EdVenture Group, Inc., is co-chair of NatlEshipWeek, a congressionally chartered annual movement to support America's entrepreneurship ecosystem. The 2021 program brought an unprecedented number of federal agencies to the conversation for Federal Entrepreneurship Day.

Lisabeth Shean, GED'11, has taught art for the past eight years at various elementary schools in The School District of Philadelphia. Her students have won more than \$14,000 in awards and grants.

Lisa Smoots, GED'10, has been appointed director of the Cranbrook Schools Horizons-Upward Bound Program. One of the oldest and largest of its kind in the nation, the program prepares students from the Detroit Metropolitan area to succeed in post-secondary education.

Jamilah Thompkins-Bigelow, GED'12, wrote a picture book, *Your Name is a Song* (The Innovation Press, 2020), which *Time* magazine named to its list of the ten best young adult, middle grade, and children's books of 2020.

Justice Walker, GEN'12, GR'19, was appointed to a tenure-track position as assistant professor at the College of Education at The University of Texas at El Paso. He thanks his faculty advisor, Yasmin Kafai, as well as Sigal Ben-Porath, Vivian Gadsden, and many others at Penn GSE for their strong mentorship.

Guan Wang, GED'15, plans to receive her doctoral degree in human development and begin a new career as a management consultant in a top consulting firm this year. She thanks Penn for a wonderful educational and life experience.

Nicole Wang-Trexler, GED'11, has joined Wharton Customer Analytics and AI for Business as associate director of data science and research. She is thrilled to come back to Penn.

Taryn Williams, C'14, GED'15, teaches and works as a classroom coach in the Alaskan bush and has enrolled in Penn GSE's Strategic Leadership in Education Certificate Program.

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.

Michael Ernst, C'13, LPS'16, GED'20, began designing and teaching courses in art history at Temple University as part of his Ph.D. program. His course *The Art of Video Games: Art, Affect, and the Responsive Image* is inspired by his studies with Yasmin Kafai at Penn GSE.

Jessica Gladstone, GR'20, GRW'20, joined CTI Clinical Trial & Consulting Services as a biostatistician. She is grateful to apply skills and experiences gained at Penn GSE towards improving the quality of life of patients, especially those with rare, debilitating, or critical illnesses.

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.

Find The Penn GSE Magazine Online

Visit www.gse.upenn.edu/alumni/resources/gse-magazine to find our issue archive.



Photo by Greg Benson Photography

Matthew Wolf, GED'20, a teacher and coach at Middle Township High School in Avalon, NJ, will be responsible for the safety of the bathing public during the summer as chief of the Avalon Beach Patrol. The patrol consists of over one hundred lifeguards and fifty beach taggers.

Jessica Yoos, GED'20, has been appointed director of Penn's human research protections program after having served in the acting director role since July 2020.

Share Your News

Fill out our Alumni Notes form at 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.



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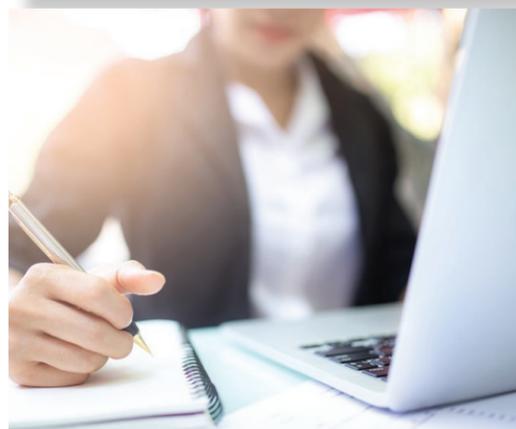
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TIPS FROM THE EDUCATOR'S PLAYBOOK

Leading in a Crisis

Since early 2020, leaders across the educational spectrum have had to make consequential decisions impacting their entire communities, within a context of great uncertainty, significant political polarization, and few resources to support their work. This is not the first time of crisis educators have faced, and it certainly won't be the last. Dr. Pam Grossman, dean of Penn GSE, is an expert in preparing educators for real-world challenges. Dr. Erika James, dean of the Wharton School, is a leading researcher and scholar in the area of crisis leadership. Here, the two offer a framework, based upon their experience and Dean James's research, for crisis leadership.



Dr. Pam Grossman, dean of Penn GSE



Dr. Erika James, dean of the Wharton School



Before the Crisis

Build relationships.

Investing in strong, high-quality relationships with people across your institution will provide the best long-term dividends. If you wait for a moment of crisis to build these relationships and then ask your team to jump through the fire with you, you may find yourself jumping alone.

Recognize where talent lies.

Crises frequently demand new talents and skills, and when leaders know their people well, they are better positioned to mobilize the right people quickly. Leaders who knew where online learning expertise existed within their organizations, beyond the IT department, were quickly able to call upon those individuals when the pandemic hit.

During the Crisis

Prioritize your efforts.

In a crisis, leaders are bombarded by multiple and conflicting demands. They must consider who is being most affected and prioritize accordingly. For example, many college students argued vociferously about their desire to be on campus; however, for some first generation, low-income students, college housing may have provided the only housing opportunity with reliable internet access. The latter students' needs would take priority.

Make the case.

Some stakeholders will feel that their leaders are not prioritizing the things that they may value the most. Leaders must engage in "issue selling" to make a compelling case for where the organization should be focusing its efforts. For example, K-12 leaders have made the case regarding their decision to reopen schools or remain remote, appealing to data, public health guidance, and the academic and social-emotional needs of children.

(continued on next page) →

Headshots courtesy of Goldenberg Photography (left) and The Wharton School (right). Illustrations by Ten Eleven Design.



After the Crisis

Take stock of stakeholders.

By choosing one course of action, leaders face alienating stakeholders who preferred a different decision. Leaders might want to consider who falls into each of three subcategories: Adversaries, Ambivalent, and Advocates. While there may be a temptation to try to focus on adversaries and convert them to your perspective, in fact, converting ambivalent stakeholders into advocates can help you build the legitimacy you need.

Know when to look forward.

Even within a crisis, our communities expect us to have a bigger vision and strategy for the future. Once leaders have built a solid and stable structure to manage the crisis and have clarified roles and procedures in ways that are sustainable, they can begin to shift some of their focus to larger questions, such as: How will we support students and faculty with the transition back to school? How can we take advantage of what we've learned about virtual learning to create more effective hybrid options?

Learn from the experience.

A crisis can provide a powerful organizational audit of what is working well and what needs to be improved. Creating time for a "post-mortem" can help the organization learn and be better prepared for the next crisis. Collecting data from various stakeholders will reveal the processes and systems that may have been vulnerable to begin with.

Identify innovations.

Given all that the crisis has revealed and the innovation that it has forced, leaders must consider which innovations should be sustained. For example, some schools have provided more personalized mentoring for students, while others have placed a renewed focus on staff well-being. These initiatives may be worth sustaining and scaling.

Conclusion

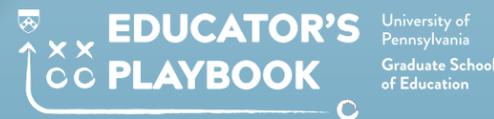
Despite the challenges, crises provide growth opportunities. Adopting a crisis leadership mindset can help keep you focused on the growth of both individuals and organizations in the midst of turbulence. ■

Want to develop your capacity to lead with purpose, confidence, and skill?

Learn how with Penn GSE's Strategic Leadership in Education certificate. Visit www.gse.upenn.edu/academics/professional-learning for details.

Want more advice for educators?

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



Photos by Ginger Fox Photography (background) and iStock.com/Elsa Barron

2021 Graduates, It's Time to Celebrate and STAY ENGAGED

Congratulations to Penn GSE's Class of 2021! You have truly had a Penn GSE experience like no other, completing a fully virtual academic year amidst a global pandemic and tumultuous times. Thank you for your exemplary resilience and dedication.

Please know that while you may not have set foot on campus, you are just as much a part of our community as those who have. We urge you to share your stories and stay engaged in our community by taking advantage of Penn GSE Connects, an exclusive new platform to build professional relationships with Penn GSE students and alumni.

As you enter a quickly changing world and job market, professional networking is more important than ever. Register today to 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
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Make a Difference with Us

“As the president of one of the most diverse colleges in the United States, and a first-generation college attendee myself, I know firsthand how access to higher education transforms lives. I like to say that education has the opportunity to transform the lives not only of individual students, but also of their entire families and communities. I give to Penn GSE because my alma mater is making a difference in the lives of the students who will change the world.”

—Linda S. Oubre, GRD'17
*President and Professor of Business Administration
Whittier College*

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