Dear Friends,

As we near the 2009-2010 academic year we anticipate that the upcoming year will be as fulfilling as the last. This past May 27 students graduated from the MSA program, six from the EdD program, and six from the PhD program. Our continuing students have also made remarkable strides in their scholarship as they work towards completing their degrees. For this issue we highlight some stories of scholarship and practice from three EdD graduates and one continuing PhD student. We also feature the Equity and Access conference that was held last February, the visit by the 2009 Teacher of the Year to UNCG, and a tribute to the late Professor David Purpel. Dr. Purpel made such a significant contribution to the ELC department since its inception, and the broader community.

We welcome submissions from ELC faculty and students for the next edition by September 30, 2010. Send your electronic submissions to Christine Nganga, cwnganga@uncg.edu. We also value your suggestions on colloquium topics for ELC sponsorship and organization of the seminars. In the Fall semester, the ELC department will host a symposium—The Dissertation and Beyond. The date for this symposium will be announced soon. This will be an informative forum where current students will meet with ELC alumni to dialogue about topics pertaining to the dissertation process and the next steps after graduation.

Sincerely,

Christine Nganga, Managing Editor with ELC Doctoral Students

Dr. Carol A. Mullen, Faculty Advisor, Newsletter Founder and ELC Chair & Professor

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Statement of Purpose

Building a mutually enhancing learning community among ELC students, faculty and surrounding community. This includes sharing our stories of hope, compassion, transformation and work for social, economic and environmental justice. For more details about the department go to http://www.uncg.edu/elc/
Congratulations to ELC’s graduating doctoral students

**Doctor of Philosophy in Curriculum & Teaching/Cultural Studies**

Marin Burton, Advisor: Dr. Glenn Hudak
Tamara (Sharee) Fowler, Advisor: Dr. Svi Shapiro
Tema Okun, Advisor: Dr. Svi Shapiro
Danita Milskiewicz Otsasiewki, Advisor: Dr. Svi Shapiro
Eric Torres, Advisor: Dr. Glenn Hudak
Brian Williams, Advisor: Dr. Leila Villaverde

**Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership**

Joyce Hubbard Davis, Advisors: Drs. Rick Reitzug and Kathleen Casey
Angela Bost Duncan, Advisor: Dr. Carl Lashley
John Andrew Eldridge, Advisors, Drs. Carl Lashley & Craig Peck
Amna Latif, Advisor: Dr. Leila Villaverde
Deborah Lynn West, Advisor: Dr. Rick Reitzug
Aaron Michael Woody, Advisor: Dr. Rick Reitzug

Aaron Woody (EdD, 2010) and Deborah West (EdD, 2010) were selected as participants for the 2010 David L. Clark National Graduate Student Research Seminar in Educational Leadership and Policy. The David L. Clark National Graduate Student Research Seminar brings together emerging educational leadership and policy scholars and noted researchers for presentations, discussions, and professional growth. The Clark Seminar was held in April 2010 in conjunction with the AERA Annual Conference in Denver.

Congratulations to Pamela Fitzpatrick, a PhD student in ELC, who received the North Carolina Middle School Association’s Region 5 Teacher of the Year. Region 5 includes the following counties and school systems: Alamance, Caswell, Chatham, Davidson, Lexington Thomasville, Forsyth, Guilford, Orange, Chapel Hill/ Carrboro, Person, Randolph Asheboro City, Rockingham and Stokes. Pamela is a district-wide literacy coach based at C.W. Stanford Middle School in Orange County Schools. She works with teachers and students to improve literacy in all subject areas. She also does a great deal of staff development work and teaches regularly in classrooms. Pamela will be completing her course work in Spring 2011.

Congratulations to Tema Okun (PhD 2010) who received the School of Education outstanding 2009-2010 Graduate Teaching Assistant Excellence Award for her outstanding work as Teaching Assistant for the course, ELC 381: Institute of Education. Tema is a passionate educator of social justice issues. She loves teaching because she views it as a creative act which fosters lifelong learning. In her teaching, Tema incorporates discussions, films, poetry, art, as learning tools, coupled with respect and compassion for her students. Tema has accepted a job as an assistant professor at National Louis University in Chicago and is in the process of getting her dissertation published as a book. The department is proud of her accomplishments.

Rita Haire, an EdD student, was selected as a winner of the 2010 Golden Key Research Grant, a US $1,000 award. The 1,000 dollar grant is from the Golden Key International Honour Society to help cover her data collection expenses for her dissertation: No School Choice Vouchers in North Carolina: An Exploratory Study of the Policy and Politics that Advanced the Voucher Movement in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and the Contrasting Absence of a Voucher Movement in North Carolina. Rita currently the principal of Highpoint Christian Academy.
**The ELC department** has a new brochure. You can pick a copy at the department’s office at 239 Curry building.

**Dr. Rick Reitzug** is the new chair for the School of Education’s Access and Equity committee. ELC thanks the outgoing chair Dr. Camille Wilson Cooper for her leadership of this committee and furthering the social justice mission at the School of Education. Dr. Reitzug was named member of the Editorial Review Board of *Educational Administration Quarterly*, the top-rated journal in educational leadership. He was also Senior Scholar for the Office of Leadership and Service Learning.

**Dr. Camille Wilson Cooper** was named a member of American Educational Research Association’s (AERA) Relating Research to Practice Award Committee.

**Dr. Ann Davis** has joined the ELC faculty as an assistant clinical professor. Dr. Davis is not new to the department as she is an ELC graduate and was an adjunct professor. She received a Bachelor of Science degree from Wingate College, a Master of School Administration from UNC-Charlotte as a North Carolina Principal Fellow (Class 2) and an Educational Specialist degree and Doctorate in Educational Leadership from UNC-Greensboro. ELC is pleased to have her join the faculty on a full-time basis.

**IN MEMORY OF DR. DAVID PURPEL**

*by Dr. Svi Shapiro*

I arrived in the city of Greensboro, North Carolina, in 1979. David Purpel was head of the search committee that brought me to this city, and to The University at North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG). David was a professor in the Department of Curriculum and Educational Foundations at UNCG. His life’s work focused on the moral and spiritual critique of public education. I knew him for more than 30 years. In that time he was my colleague, collaborator in writing, institutional co-conspirator, and, most of all, beloved friend. He advised me, counseled me, and supported me through times good and difficult. Later when I moved to Raleigh, he and his wife Elaine provided me with my weekly lodging space. Both of them endlessly generous. Always David’s wisdom—both in matters professional and personal shone through. He saw things through a lens that was always about the need to affirm human worth and the preciousness of life. No matter what he said, taught, or wrote, the touchstone was always the need to recognize the sacred importance of all our humanity.

The spirit of the universe has blessed me with the good fortune to have walked so much of my life’s path with him. We talked often about the importance of making a difference in the world, and living a life of purpose. David did. He changed the lives of so many students, giving new direction to them. And he lived a life of deep meaning adding a full measure to *tikkun olam*, the process of healing and repairing our world. David knew, quoting Rabbi Tarfon’s words often, that the work of making a more just and loving world would not be completed in his lifetime, but that one is still obligated to participate in the work. He was compelled to give his life’s energies, intelligence, and passion to the task. He did, and we are all the richer for the gift of David’s presence in our lives.

*There are only two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other is as though everything is a miracle* (Albert Einstein)
ELC’s departmental commitments acknowledge that “honoring differences in race, class, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and ability” is “critical to human understanding” and part of treating humans with respect and dignity. Indeed, such action is essential to pursuing social justice and providing quality education to all students. Just as ELC has a strong commitment to social justice, the UNCG School of Education has heightened its pursuit of educational equity over the past several years, in part, by supporting the work of the School’s Access and Equity Committee (AEC). In 2007, I had the pleasure of collaborating with Dr. Micheline Chalhoub-Deville in the School’s Department of Educational Research Methodology, and Dr. Jewell Cooper in the Department of Teacher Education and Higher Education, to establish the AEC. The AEC, which is composed of nine faculty, staff, and student members, is dedicated to educating the School of Education community about critical issues pertaining to access, equity and diversity, and encouraging the use of inclusive practices. Hosting an annual conference is one key way the Committee educates and engages the community. It featured internationally known scholars and state-wide experts who addressed issues related to educational policy, advocacy, effective educational strategies, self-empowerment, and community resources for individuals with disabilities and their families. Keynote speakers included Mr. Michael Murray, director of Disability Action Network, a Raleigh-based organization that provides legal advocacy for people with disabilities, and Dr. Festus E. Obiakor of the Department of Exceptional Education at The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

The conference also hosted an information fair involving several community organizations and schools that serve people with disabilities, along with musical performances and a wide array of interactive presentations by educators, families, youth, and activists. ELC’s own Dr. Carl Lashley presented a special session on special education and the law.

Despite snow and slush, approximately 230 students, faculty members, school educators, social service professionals, and members of the community-at-large attended the AEC conference. ELC attendees included numerous students, Department Chair Dr. Carol Mullen, and Professor Rick Reitzug who served as the conference photographer. UNCG Chancellor Lindy Brady and Provost David Perrin were also present.

As the 2009-2010 chair of the Access and Equity Committee and as someone whose life has been gifted with loved ones who have disabilities – the conference on Access, Equity, & Inclusion was professionally and personally meaningful. AEC conference attendees also reported that they enjoyed an enriching day dedicated to promoting educational improvement and inclusion. Indeed, being part of a campus-wide, community-based event that brought together people with and without disabilities to learn from each other, break through stereotypes and fears, share examples of good practice, and simply enjoy each others’ company was tremendously gratifying. Altogether, the conference complemented ELC’s commitment to “honoring differences.” Even more importantly, it highlighted how essential it is to embrace, serve, and collaborate with people with disabilities as community members who are not only very capable, but who are – in the words of keynote speaker Michael Murray – “natural and beautiful!” Additional information about the School of Education Access & Equity Committee, including information and photos of past conferences, can be found on AEC’s website http://www.uncg.edu/soe/access_and_equity/index.
One year ago in April, President Barack Obama presented to the American people the 2009 National Teacher of the Year, Anthony J. Mullen, a special education teacher at the ARCH School, an alternative education branch of Greenwich High School in Greenwich, Connecticut. Mr. Mullen’s path to teaching was truly a dream deferred. Due to family circumstances when he was young growing up in New York City, college attendance along with a desire to become a teacher were put on hold for full-time work, first in a factory assembly line then for 20 years as a New York City police officer, all the while saving money out of his salary to eventually go to college. At the time Mr. Mullen was ready for higher education he chose Long Island University because its program accommodated the fluctuating schedule of police officers and fire fighters. He received a bachelor’s degree in Criminal Justice from the University in 1990. Continuing through the 1990s with the NYPD, Mullen had many opportunities to work with troubled teenagers—young people he describes as destined for prison unless they received the benefits of a quality education and positive adult role models. He wanted to be that role model so consequently he earned a master’s degree in Elementary Education and Special Education from Mercy College in New York in 2001. Retiring from the police department because he wanted to teach and mentor teenagers who needed a second chance. As Mr. Mullen says:

I actively sought teaching positions that included in the job description ‘working with students with severe behavioral or emotional problems. I knew that my biography and work experience would provide me the empathy and skills necessary to help such young people.

During his first year of teaching in 2001-2002, Mullen taught special education in grades seven and eight at Northern Westchester Board of Cooperative Educational Services in Yorktown Heights, New York. He then went to the ARCH School where he has taught for the past seven years. In his years as a teacher, Mr. Mullen has found a highly effective mix of passion, professionalism and perseverance—the three words that drive his teaching philosophy. He was chosen National Teacher of the Year from among the State Teachers of the Year. Selected by the oldest and most prestigious awards program to focus public attention on excellence in teaching, Mr. Mullen has spent this year as a full-time educational spokesperson.

Every year, the office of Recruitment, Retention and Professional Development at the School of Education holds a teaching career day whose focus is having high school students who are interested in teaching spend a day on the UNCG campus. This event involves having a key note address by a renowned educator who tells his teacher story to the high school students. This year the School of Education was honored to have Anthony Mullen the 2009 teacher of the year visit the UNCG campus. Among other words of wisdom that he spoke to the high school and UNCG teacher education students, he told them that “the real work begins after class time—self reflection.” As a word of advice he told them that a major aspect that contributes to offering students a worthwhile experience in school is having an authentic relationship with students.
Dr. Aaron Woody

Aaron Woody is the principal of Joseph Lawrence Elementary School in Randolph County. Last year, he was named the 2009-10 Wachovia Principal of the Year for Randolph County Schools. The program is sponsored by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, the Center for School Leadership Development and the Wachovia Corp. His dissertation is titled *Educational Leaders as Catalyst for Connecting School and Community: Uncovering Leadership Strategies for Forging School, Family, and Community Partnerships*. His study focused on the collective community partnerships that schools are involved in. He was able to uncover specific strategies that schools can utilize to connect outside agencies to the work of the school. On asking him how his study impacted his professional practice, Aaron remarked:

> I was excited about the theoretical and practical approaches I could use to create meaningful partnerships in the school I lead. In addition, an interesting finding included the importance of working on perception gaps between parents and staff. By working within the context of relationships, schools and families can eliminate the barriers that often keep kids from being successful.

During this year’s AERA, Aaron was chosen as a Clark’s seminar participant. Being a participant in this seminar gave him a chance to reflect on research within education with leading researchers in the country:

> Having the opportunity to hear from other students and professors from around the nation also affirmed the experiences I have had as a student at UNCG. I left the seminar believing that my graduate work was as valuable and just as solid as the work done at any other leading university.

On asking him what he felt was the “catalyst” for educational leaders connecting schools to community, he remarked:

> I realized that there are conflicting forces that pull at the philosophical frame in Educational decision making. School leaders, in a desperate effort to enact positive change, face two distinct dangers. First is the pressure of having to retreat from emphasis on community building, democracy, and cultural relevancy in order to offer true supremacy of student achievement. The second danger is that school leaders can become so overburdened with social and political agendas that student achievement is underemphasized and lost to broader skirmishes.

Aaron is certain that educational leaders should have the opportunity to blend community participation with academic achievement. In fact, he stresses that a school cannot be considered successful unless it is committed to parental and community involvement. Great schools call for parents to give as much time as they can to their children’s education, and, when school staff model this philosophy, parents respond. A critical attribute of this type of school is the positive climate experienced by all participants. Aaron is not just a proponent of connecting the school to the community but he enacts this value as a principal.
Dr. Debbie West

Debbie West has made a great contribution to the ELC department throughout her time here as a doctoral student. In fact, as Dr. Lashley remarked in her dissertation defense, she served as a model to Ed.D students through her collaboration with professors in writing for publications and conference presentations. During this year’s AERA, Debbie was also chosen as a Clark’s seminar participant. In this seminar she received feedback on future publications based on her dissertation study. She also had the opportunity to critique the research of other Clark scholars. Debbie’s dissertation was titled *The Daily Lives of Principals: Twenty-one Principals in the 21st Century.*

Her background is in counseling and psychology. During her initial research involvement, the counselor in her discovered that principals are overworked and stressed:

*After almost 40 interviews across the country, I have found that many interviews feel like counseling sessions—that is, as principals described their work, many times they expressed work frustrations. Emotions emerged once trust was established. I believe my counseling experience has equipped me with skills that promote a trusting atmosphere to those I interview.*

This dissertation study tells the stories of the daily work lives of 21 school principals from 10 states across the nation. Since the inception of No Child Left Behind (NCLB), the principalship has increased responsibilities and restricted control in an environment of persistent accountability. Her study not only revealed the stress that principals undergo, but also the rewording aspects of their practice.

Aaron (left) and Debbie (right) with UCEA’S Executive Director Dr. Michelle Young (middle)

Upon asking Debbie to comment on her success in completing her dissertation she said:

*The most important factor in my success as a student was to have a mentor who has remained positive, supportive and encouraging, and who believed in my ability as a researcher. Many times as we worked together, Rick Reitzug demonstrated his enthusiasm toward our research discoveries, and his enthusiasm was contagious!* 

Debbie has already secured a tenured faculty position at Eastern Kentucky University. Starting this fall, she will be teaching in the Educational Leadership and Policy Studies doctoral program. During last year’s UCEA conference, Debbie had a preliminary interview with the department chair and a member of the search committee for the position. She then had a phone interview early this year and a daylong interview on the university campus. Upon asking her what was the best tool in order to succeed in the interview process, she remarked:

*My best tool for the interview was to have a research focus that I love and know well, along with a mentor who prepared me by answering my unending questions and assured me that I would do well—which all gave me confidence. One other important thing I did which helped me tremendously—I wrote down every thing I was asked by the search committee, took time to think it through then answered. I also made sure I was myself.*

The ELC department conveys their best wishes to Debbie as she begins her new career as a faculty member at Eastern Kentucky University.
Dr Jake Henry

On December 2009, Jake Henry the principal at Doris Henderson Newcomers School, graduated with a Doctor of Education degree in Educational Leadership. He delivered the student address during the December 2009 UNCG commencement. This was especially an honor for him because he has never participated in his own graduation ceremonies in the past—*I never felt the need to participate in commencement exercises or understood why they are important.*

My perspective has changed. However, he grew to learn that *our ultimate value does not lie in just what we do… but we find our value and sense of worth in something greater than ourselves.* With this lesson he was able to celebrate the accomplishment of a great step in his career.

Jake became principal of the Newcomers School when the school was opened in 2007. The school serves newly arrived immigrant and refugee students in grades 3-12. His drive and passion for immigrant and refugee students led him to his dissertation topic—*Refugee Transition into American Public Schools: An Emergent Study of Major Influences.* Refugee students come to the U.S., many having experienced trauma and loss. They face unique challenges as they transition from their countries of origin to learning in U.S. public schools. Some of them join the school having missed several years of schooling due to prevailing circumstances.

In his study, Jake discovered that most of the literature on refugees and immigrants generalizes the needs of English language learners; hence, there was little in the literature that focused on the day-to-day learning process of refugee students. He realized that as a principal in a school that largely caters to refugee students, he needed to learn more about creating an environment that enables them to adequately learn and grow socially. Jake noted that *school officials need to see refugees from the perspective of the additive model rather than the deficit model. Refugees are not empty vessels to be filled. They have a wealth of experience, culture, and heritage that will enrich the school they attend.* His research was significant in that the study revealed the interconnectedness of the refugee experiences such as trauma, learning, second language acquisition and cultural adaptation.

Upon asking Jake how the study has impacted is daily life as a principal, he responded:

*The study informed me about real needs our students have. As a result, we are working to implement the recommendations participants made in the study. Most of all, it has reminded me of the personal connection educators need to have with the students they serve. By fostering relationships and getting to know the people we serve and their needs we can provide a better level of service.*

His next steps will entail continuing to learn from his students so that the Newcomers School can foster the best possible learning environment for the students.
Earlier this year, Ty-Ron Douglas was officially inducted as a Holmes Scholar during the Holmes Partnership Conference which was held in Charleston, South Carolina. Ty also presented a paper at the Holmes Partnership Conference with Dr. C. P. Gause titled Closing the Achievement Gap through Pedagogical Partnerships with the Black Barbershop. As a Holmes Scholar Ty was able to attend various workshops that are geared towards offering mentoring and support to doctoral students. These workshops included information on the dissertation process, writing for publication, and grant writing. One aspect of the conference that Ty found particularly valuable was the level of specific interest to one’s work and research on the part of the professors. He valued the fact that the conference was conducive for dialogue between doctoral students and professors. At the 2010 Congress of Qualitative Inquiry Conference at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Ty shared some of his findings and experiences navigating the power dynamics of his research project on Black Bermudian males.

Ty is currently writing his comprehensive examinations. For his dissertation, he is focusing on border-crossing among Black males in the U.S. and Bermuda in order to gain insights into how Black males form identities, define and acquire success, and the roles that alternative pedagogical spaces (i.e. barbershops, churches, sports clubs/ basketball courts) may or may not play in their experiences.

FACULTY AND STUDENT CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS


Shapiro, S. (2010, June). Education policies and the Obama administration. Facilitated workshop at The Network of Spiritual Progressives Conference (NSP), DC.

FACULTY AND STUDENT PUBLICATIONS


UPCOMING CONFERENCES

University Council for Educational Administration’s (UCEA) conference will be held in New Orleans, Louisiana, October 28-31, 2010. The theme of the conference is Building Bridges: Politics, Partnerships and the Purpose of Schooling. For conference details visit the website, http://www.ucea.org.

American Educational Studies Association’s (AESA) conference will be held in Denver, Colorado, October 28-31, 2010. The theme of the conference is Listening across/within Difference. For conference details visit the website, http://www.educationalstudies.org.

American Research Educational Research Association’s (AERA) conference will be held in New Orleans, Louisiana, April 8-12, 2011. For conference details visit the website, http://www.aera.net.