The theme of this issue of Michigan Education is ensuring resilient communities in times of stress and change. In the face of the dual pandemics of COVID-19 and enduring race-based discrimination, educators and systems of education play particularly critical roles in building resilience in the communities they serve. We explore the work of educators responding flexibly to emerging needs, creating new paths to opportunity, healing the damage of systemic racism, promoting restorative practice, and establishing just and equitable policies and practices. With great pride in and gratitude for the incredible research, teaching, and service of our staff, students, and faculty, I highlight below the stories you’ll read about in this issue.

This July, Dr. Shani Saunders and Dr. Carla Shalaby launched the U-M Trauma Collaboratory with a virtual event for educators. The daylong offering, Summoning Our Strength for Justice: A Virtual Offering for Educators on Trauma, Wellness, and Collective Care, featured brilliant practitioners and scholars who generously shared their work. This event created a space for healing, self-care, reflection, and empowerment. In addition to caring for educators, the presenters provided K-12 teachers and administrators resources for approaching their classes (virtually and in person) with an intentional focus on just and equitable practices and systems.

Each year, the Summer ESL Academy grows to serve more multilingual children in grades four through eight than the previous summer. The Summer ESL Academy is a program of our Mitchell Scarlett Huron Teaching and Learning Collaborative, coordinated by Dr. Cathy Reischl. For the first time, this three-week program had to be delivered virtually. Although the curriculum designers had originally planned to engage students in lessons about climate change, they quickly pivoted to support students with a curriculum focused on anti-racism. This year, the program included a particularly large group of teaching interns because of an expansion of the ESL Teaching Endorsement program. The interns received excellent mentorship from expert teachers and had positive experiences teaching online.

Private learning pods are among the many disparities in educational opportunities this year. Parents with resources and networks have organized small groups of children who learn together, often with the instruction of a private teacher. Graduate student Paula Manrique Gomez Pfeffer quickly identified the unmet need of local, low-income, immigrant families to have a safe, supportive, and educational space for their children. In partnership with a group of volunteers and a local church, she organized a thriving learning center that operates completely on donations and serves 24 children daily.

Kaelyn Walker, a student in the inaugural class of The School at Marygrove, published an opinion piece in the Detroit Free Press that we’ve reprinted for our readers around the world to enjoy. Ms. Walker chose to attend the school—which represents a partnership effort among Detroit Public Schools Community District, the Marygrove Conservancy, Starfish Family Services, and our SOE—because of the curricular focus on social justice and the school’s orientation toward community wellness. Her voice speaks powerfully to the way that the Detroit P-20 Partnership empowers youth and models the collective care we want to see in all schools.

Dr. Camille Wilson is collaborating with Detroit community organizers and youth to dismantle systems that create and reinforce the school-to-prison pipeline. With the support of a research-practice partnership grant from the Spencer Foundation, community action research teams work to develop resources that improve schools, nurture the well-being of youth, and establish equitable policies. Not only does this work combat a devastating injustice, it engages and empowers youth researchers.

Dr. Lucretia Murphy, an alumna of the Center for the Study of Higher and Postsecondary Education, shares her work as a senior director at Jobs for the Future. Dr. Murphy’s work focuses on the assets and needs of communities. Unjust policies, harmful processes, and inequitable investments lead to limited economic opportunities in many communities—particularly for the formerly incarcerated population with whom she works. Using her expertise in education and employment, she and her colleagues at Jobs for the Future confront structural racism in order to provide access to education and work opportunities.

Higher education doctoral candidate Fernando Furquim is the director of institutional effectiveness at Minneapolis Community and Technical College. He shares how he and his team analyzed and responded to their students’ changing needs this year. The college’s students already faced barriers to educational access even before the onset of the pandemic and the killing of George Floyd (just miles from the campus). Mr. Furquim and his colleagues are expertly working to support their students by expanding services, increasing flexibility, and reaching out regularly to their community.

Our two diversity, inclusion, justice, and equity (dije) co-leads, Dr. David Humphrey and Dr. Maren Oberman, discuss the work they do here in the School of Education to prioritize anti-racist education. As dije co-leads, they skillfully enact and support elements of the Year Four DEI Plan that was developed by the Education Diversity Advisory Committee. They also lead the new Antiracism Task Force, which was formed this summer.

I am ecstatic to introduce three new faculty members in this issue with a brief Q&A. Professors Charles Davis, Jamaal Matthews, and Rosemary Perez joined the SOE this fall. Our new colleagues expand our capacity to do research in critically important areas and provide our students with exciting new opportunities through their teaching and mentorship.

Dr. Davis and Dr. Perez joined the faculty of the Center for the Study of Higher and Postsecondary Education. Dr. Davis came most recently from USC where he served as Chief Strategy Officer for the Race and Equity Center. Dr. Davis studies social movement activism and political engagement in higher education. Dr. Perez’s work focuses on college student development. She explores dynamic interactions between people and their environments; tensions between structure and agenda; and how power, privilege, and oppression affect individuals and groups within higher education.
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Today is a thank-you from the School of Education to you.”

Dr. Shari Saunders, associate dean for undergraduate education and educator preparation, welcomed participants to a virtual event this past July. Designed to support educators in recognizing and skillfully responding to the trauma resulting from the dual, ongoing crises of COVID-19 and anti-Black racism, program attendees included teachers and administrators from partner schools, alumni who work as education practitioners in K-12 schools, and current students, faculty, and staff of the educator preparation program.

Dr. Saunders and Dr. Carla Shalaby, coordinator of social justice initiatives and community internships, conceived of the opportunity in early summer as the nation was reeling from anti-Black violence and the coronavirus outbreak. The intersection of the pandemic and the movement to dismantle inherently racist systems and structures has created a moment that calls upon educators to redouble efforts toward practices and policies that offer care and healing for youth. The series of sessions in this one-day conference honored the work teachers do to this end and demonstrated ways that teachers can be supported in this work. With a focus on healing, well-being, and collective care, the day was designed to support the mental and emotional health of educators, while modeling and teaching them ways to support the mental and emotional health of their students as they prepare for a new school year.

As SOE dean Elizabeth Moje remarked in her greeting, calls for trauma-informed and anti-racist practice among educators are not unfamiliar, nor is the school’s work in these areas. Together with the School of Nursing and the School of Social Work, U-M leaders had already collaborated on an interprofessional Trauma-Informed Practice Certificate designed to prepare professionals to serve populations affected by trauma while building supports that sustain the practitioners.

The Summoning our Strength for Justice offering for educators marked the launch of the SOE’s new Trauma Collaboratory, which is supported by the Office of the Provost.

With the goal of providing tools that can be used by teachers in the classroom and for their own self-care, the conference began with a reflection by Dr. Gail Parker, media personality, educator, and author who is both a psychologist and certified yoga therapist. Parker led participants through activities and meditations that they could try with their students, stressing the importance of cultivating one’s own mindful awareness. “You can’t teach what you don’t know,” she said. “If I’m not practicing what I’m teaching there is an inauthenticity.”

Parker shared a hopeful message about creating resilience through transformative communities of care. “We need to extend our definition of community. Community is no longer a place. It’s really a sense of connection and a sense of relationship with one another. We are called on now to create communities of the heart,” she said.

At two points in the program, Wasentha Young, the director of Peaceful Dragon School in Ann Arbor, led participants in mindful stretching. These focused breaks were refreshing and demonstrated a method of self-care that the educators could continue to employ in order to build self-care into their days.

Participants selected from sessions on topics such as healing-centered teaching and learning, key priorities in a trauma-informed approach to virtual instruction, restorative justice...
“Community is no longer a place. It’s really a sense of connection and a sense of relationship with one another. We are called on now to create communities of the heart.”

and community-building, and developing trauma-informed curriculum materials. These offerings allowed educators to learn from experts while sharing healing experiences with their peers.

Anita Wadhwa, classroom teacher and restorative justice coordinator at YES Prep Northbrook High School, presented with a group of high school and college students about a restorative justice model used at YES Prep. Students Kasandra Aviles (University of Houston), Beatriz Macareno (YES Prep Northbrook High School), Jose Lagunas (Washington and Jefferson College), and Leslie Lux (University of Houston) familiarized attendees with the concept of restorative justice as a way of repairing harm and transforming schools to become more inclusive spaces.

Through a youth-led approach, the presenters guided participants through the experience of forming “circles” that set community norms for respectful interaction. From that starting point, students are empowered to use the circle framework and the student-led leadership model to tackle challenging topics such as personal backgrounds and identities, school climate, and systems of power and oppression.

Nhu Do, the principal at Washtenaw International High School (WIHI) and Middle Academy (WIMA) and the program director at Washtenaw Educational Options Consortium (WEOC), presented a session titled Preparing for a Return to School: Prioritizing Healing and Collective Care. Do shared practices her school community employs in order to build a culture of collective care and inclusion.

Do discussed strategies, systems, and structures that advance collective care in her school. For example, strategies practiced in her school include maintaining consistency and routines, developing meaningful relationships, and communicating about issues that are harmful socially, emotionally, and physically. Systems that they employ include wellness surveys for students and staff and inclusive decision-making. At the time of the conference, the staff was considering how to restructure time and space to accommodate the needs of students and teachers either in person or online, with particular attention to students and staff who are vulnerable for any of a number of reasons.

Do also articulated the intersections of self care, collective care, healing, and social justice. She quoted researcher and community organizer Nakita Valerio in her presentation: “Collective care is a better stepping stone [to justice] than self-care. It addresses the fact that we’re naturally cooperative. We require validation from one another to psychologically persevere and be resilient. That’s where collective care offers something different. We’re doing it together and trying to survive in a system that’s built against us.”

Alex Shevrin Venet, a Vermont-based educator, author, and professional development facilitator led a session linking trauma-informed practice to the larger work of racial justice. “Trauma is a lens, not a label,” she began. Venet asks educators to focus on fixing systems, not kids. “Resilience is located in the community, not in the individual; services and support are what create the resilience.”

Venet provided priorities for teachers to foster through their own teaching practice: predictability, flexibility, connection, and empowerment. Trauma creates feelings of unpredictability so she recommends creating routines (which poses a new challenge in virtual learning), responding in predictable ways, and planning for dysregulation. Because trauma responses are different from moment to moment and person to person, Venet suggests checking in frequently to notice when flexibility is required. Trauma causes harm to relationships, so educators should strive to be connection-makers who develop ties among students, families, and communities. And because trauma disempowers people, Venet suggests sharing decision making, modeling consent, and dropping power struggles.

Venet adds that creating a culture based in humanity and not in systems of control has the power to disrupt causes of trauma and change how the school community functions. For example, when students and teachers demonstrate their care for each other, issues like wearing masks during the pandemic become about keeping everyone safe rather than imposing a controlling policy.

Educator and author Cornelius Minor presented a closing keynote in which he explored the question “what if instead of returning to normal, we created something better?” A return to normalcy will still leave many students and communities oppressed and traumatized by the policies, traditions, regulations, and laws that govern school spaces. Edu-culture, he remarked, is reactive, conflict-averse, and unwilling to engage in radical imagination. To confront trauma, he argues, we must confront edu-culture by actively unlearning and reinventing everything from curricula to class procedures and evaluations to interpersonal relationships. “We have to change systems so that all kids can thrive,” Minor says.
Pod with a Purpose

Master’s student Paula Manrique Gomez Pfeffer provides an educational sanctuary for undocumented youth during COVID-19

There are 14 doors at the Church of the Good Shepherd (COGS) in Ann Arbor. With so many building entrances, it is not uncommon for members of this multiracial, LGBTQ-affirming congregation to joke about being an open-door church. And this fall from 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., each one of their doors will remain ajar.

The new open-door policy is one of several safety measures adopted to reduce the potential spread of COVID-19 amongst the church’s newest visitors: 24 local students ranging from pre-school to grade nine. During the pandemic, a group of students coming together in person to complete schoolwork virtually has been dubbed a “learning pod.” The purpose of this learning pod, officially known as the Ann Arbor Community Learning Center at COGS (lahuelga.com/learning-pod), is to provide a safe and engaging space for children and youth from low-income immigrant families while they attend school remotely. Participating students are offered support understanding the curriculum, healthy food and snacks, and enrichment and outdoor activities to balance screen time.

“When the pandemic started and Ann Arbor Public Schools decided to remain online, I realized that a lot of privileged students were forming learning pods,” Paula Manrique Gomez Pfeffer, a graduate student at the School of Education, says. “Many opportunities opened up for educators like myself to work with a small group of students at home to help them navigate school. Instead of taking any of these offers, I decided to organize my community so that their children wouldn’t fall even further behind.”

Manrique Gomez Pfeffer is currently a master’s student in the SOE’s Leadership and Policy with Administrator Certification (LPAC) program, which focuses heavily on the need to increase both the excellence and equity of public schools. Originally from Colombia, she has a bachelor’s in Early Childhood Education and Administration from UMass Amherst and is Montessori-certified from birth to 12 years by the Association Montessori International. She has worked as a Montessori teacher, family coach, and recently helped trained ten Latinx women with their 0-3 Introduction Certificate. Her goal is to open a bilingual (Spanish and English) Montessori Public school in Ann Arbor (a2montessori.com) to continue this work.

Manrique Gomez Pfeffer has called the United States home for 16 years but did not become politically active until she joined Movimiento Cosecha Ann Arbor-Ypsilanti a week after she received...
her U.S. passport. Movimiento Cosecha (lahuelga.com) is a national immigrant-led movement fighting for permanent protection, dignity, and respect for all undocumented immigrants. The local Ann Arbor-Ypsilanti chapter began holding their meetings at COGS about a year ago when Paula first started attending their meetings and services at the church. Manrique Gomez Pfeffer learned a lot from Cosecha, including the more pressing issues and fears for the local immigrant community. “These families do not have a safety net. Children were going to be left home alone on a device,” Manrique Gomez Pfeffer says. “The Center will help these children advance not only academically, but also socially since we are focusing on social and emotional learning. If they were home alone while their parents work, they would have been on screens the entire day—and we know the effects of extended screen exposure on young children’s mental health.”

With help from Movimiento Cosecha and COGS, Manrique Gomez Pfeffer was able to open the learning pod in time for AAPS’s first day of school on September 8. The learning pod provides an alternative for children of undocumented Cosecha members who would otherwise have stayed at home alone, as well as repurposing an otherwise vacant building as church services went virtual.

“Having our building utilized in a way that actually supports our mission has given us some vitality,” Reverend Dr. Deborah Dean-Ware, the Pastor at COGS, says. As the first church in Ann Arbor to become a level-1 sanctuary church back in 2017, COGS is committed to hosting individuals and families on their premises.

Currently, the learning pod is run entirely on donations. Manrique Gomez Pfeffer serves as director for the learning pod on a volunteer basis, facilitating communication between the staff, parents, Cosecha, and the church. Other staff include a full-time, Montessori-certified teacher and two bilingual teaching assistants who, like many of the students, identify as Latinx. Several of the participating students require particular learning arrangements to accommodate for autism, language, and reading difficulties, and many have experienced trauma stemming from deportations of close family members and friends.

“These are children living with the day-to-day trauma of our unjust immigration policy,” Dean-Ware says. “This is so much more than making sure they are online engaging with their curriculum. It’s a place where maybe they don’t have to feel so scared and alone.”
Dr. David Humphrey is a reflective person. As the SOE’s first-ever Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer, he explains that his experiences “walking through the world in his Black body” make him aware of racial dynamics in ways that some others do not feel. He notes, “Like W. E. B. Du Bois, in his acclaimed work, *The Souls of Black Folk*, I navigate this world with a feeling of ‘two-ness—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder.’ “Living in this country [the U.S.],” Humphrey continues, “and working in historically White academic spaces that constantly send me messages that it was not made with me in mind—that I am not the norm—is sobering and traumatic. It is hard to hear folk talk about what I call the conflicting ideas of American democracy. In one way, being told the U.S. is a land of opportunity while at the same time being told that because I am Black...
I have to be smarter, stronger, and better to get the job. But as I thought about it more, I realized this conflict was ingrained within the spirit and memory of this country. Black folk have always held a paradoxical relationship with U.S. ideals of democracy. This country was built on Black bodies and continues to need Black labor to sustain itself. This has never changed. We have never deeply examined the White supremacist, capitalist, sexist skeletons in our country’s closet.

“For reasons like these, anti-racist work is critical for the field of education.”

The sentiment that anti-racist work is critical for the field of education is also evident in Dean Elizabeth Moje’s messages to the community and in the SOE’s Year Four DEI Plan. The SOE, in Humphrey’s words, plans to continue to work to create culturally sustaining curricular and co-curricular opportunities and disrupt the White supremacist hegemonic imagination. This includes working to diversify the SOE’s staff, faculty, and student composition and center indigenous and anti-racist research and scholarship.

In a message that Moje sent to the SOE community about the school’s critical role in combating racism, she wrote:

“We must act! We must engage in the collective struggle for human progress and freedom. Until all are free, no one will be free. Let’s come together and work to build a better society for current and future generations.”

“We cannot change the harmful realities of our society until we center culturally sustaining pedagogies and teaching practices in our learning environments,” says Humphrey. “Our students need to possess the tools to engage difference; to facilitate and engage in difficult dialogues with folx who come from different positionalities than them. If we do not create spaces where our students—many of them who have grown up and had schooling in homogenous spaces—are prepared to be comfortable with the uncomfortable, they will simply leave the SOE and re-create the same homogenous bubbles they came here with in their own classrooms. As one of my mentors once said, ‘Your level of exposure determines your level of awareness, and your level of awareness determines your level of expectation.’ I am not in the business of consciousness raising, nor should we be as the SOE. We must be in the business of increasing our students’ expectations—as well as ours—of the endless possibilities of what it means to truly be free, ‘to be more human,’ in the words of Latin American liberationist thinker Paulo Freire. The more we center the realities of our students, the more we disrupt the pervasive influence of anti-Blackness and settler colonialism, and the more we position ourselves as teacher-students, and our students as student-teachers, the more we will set our students and ourselves free. This is imperative and essential to the soul of our society, the building of a more humane and just world. This is our job as educators—the most important job on earth. And there is no way around this; there is no neutrality. Either our teaching is liberating or it is oppressive; there is no in-between.”

Humphrey extends this work as part of his role in the SOE. He believes that if we are not all free, then nobody is free, and that education is an act of liberation. He and the school’s dije (Diversity, Inclusion, Justice, and Equity) co-lead Maren Oberman do this work in collaboration with SOE students, faculty, and staff.

“In the past few weeks, we also have launched a series of meetings and workshops to advance anti-racist and decolonizing visions of education,” Humphrey says. “These will also include spaces for White colleagues to learn how to be anti-racist actors and co-conspirators in the fight for racial justice and freedom. We invite all people who may benefit from such work.”

The sessions will center healing, contemplative work, breathing, and breaks—which Humphrey says is an honor to our humanity. “Breathing is an act of resistance itself,” says Humphrey. “We work in spaces that privilege competition and production—automaton-like behaviors; doing and not being. So encouraging folx to stop and breathe is a way in which we help folx reclaim their humanity. Teachers are not robots, they are human beings.”

One such workshop was called From Complicity to Co-conspiracy: a Professional Learning Community. It is a group composed only of SOE staff, which started meeting twice a month in the winter. Two major goals for this group were: (1) to develop a deeper sense of self and empathy toward others and use that disposition to reimagine and pursue an anti-hegemonic praxis; and (2) to understand how their work (approaches, content, and context) has the potential to disrupt and/or reproduce patterns of injustice in the SOE. Humphrey explained that staff are becoming aware of the ways in which they can either reproduce or disrupt hegemony across campus. Leaders of these sessions also included staff members Alyssa Brandon, Darin Stockdill, Leea Allerding, Katherine Taylor, and Meri Tenney-Muirhead.

The SOE has recently formed an Anti-racism Task Force led by Humphrey and Oberman. Launching this task force is one important step in helping the SOE develop clear definitions and a clear and concise framework for what it looks like to be anti-racist in the SOE. The task force will recommend to the SOE leadership team a framework for building anti-racist praxis in the SOE.

In addition, the leadership team and dije co-leads are working to address specific concerns raised by the Black students at the SOE. “We look forward to engaging with the larger community about a plan for strategic action we can take together,” Humphrey says. “I know from queries and notes of support that many students are willing to work on this effort, and I am eager to engage with the SOE community in the process of strategic, systemic, and sustainable change for our school.”

This is, ultimately, Humphrey’s goal: “I aim to work with colleagues in the SOE and beyond to create an ethos where people are compelled by a vision of justice and liberation. Where we all see that our humanity is inextricably linked to the educational endeavor. And engaging with difference—both in ourselves and others—provide each of us with an opportunity to be more fully human. In the words of womanist foremother Katie Geneva Cannon, ‘this is the work our souls must have.’”

“This is our job as educators—the most important job on earth. And there is no way around this; there is no neutrality. Either our teaching is liberating or it is oppressive; there is no in-between.”
Maren Oberman is helping rethink our community

“Whiteness relies on never having to speak its name, on never having to own up to the preferences and privileges it entails.”

This quote from George Lipsitz’s *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness* is central to the foundation of Dr. Maren Oberman’s new course, Exploring Whiteness, which is being offered this fall in the School of Education to a racially diverse group of students. Oberman is a clinical assistant professor whose work focuses on anti-racist pedagogy and educational leadership in the Educational Studies Department. She is the faculty co-implementation lead for *diie* in the SOE.

The course aims to understand the social construction of Whiteness, to explore the White supremacist structures and cultures embedded in American society, and to support students of all races in deepening their own understanding of Whiteness. “I ask questions and guide students to discuss what Whiteness is and how the concept of Whiteness functions in societal systems, policies, and organizations. We also explore White identity at the personal level,” Oberman says.

Oberman leads conversations with diverse audiences about Whiteness and White identity both in and beyond the School of Education. For example, she co-led, with Dr. Debi Khasnabis, an anti-racism book club with a predominantly White group of teachers. She facilitated a well-attended community conversation in advance of a planned visit to the university by author Robin DiAngelo, whose book *White Fragility* is sparking conversations about this topic nationally. Moving forward, she will continue to design and lead professional development of K–12 teachers and school leaders.

Her sessions are productive, and their White participants are open about how little they have thought about White identity in the course of their lives. “They are interested in thinking about their identity and understanding how exploring their Whiteness is useful in understanding racism. I see them question what to do after they understand their White privilege and wonder what their White privilege means if they have other areas without privilege,” she explains. Oberman strives to help people puzzle through these questions but also believes it is important to push beyond this level of thinking.

Often, she says, when White people discuss race, they tend to disregard Whiteness. It is common for people to acknowledge in such conversations that they are new to thinking about their White identity. “This is really where we see how the personal piece meets the structural piece. Our whole society is structured so that White people don’t think about being White.” Oberman shares wisdom she has learned from scholar Beverly Daniel Tatum, who writes: “While active exploration of what it means to be Black is an almost universal experience for African American adolescents due to the encounters with racism they commonly have, the same is not true for White youth. For White people living in
largely White environments, it is possible to live one’s entire life without giving focused attention to what it means to be White."

By putting Whiteness on the table, Oberman interacts with her audience about the concept of race as a social construct, and she takes the time to unpack what that really means—the idea that race is not a biological reality, but a manmade one. "This can get to peoples’ understandings and assumptions. Some people still resist this idea, but more and more literature has proven this point and shows students why it is important."

In her new course this fall, Oberman plans to have her students wrestle with the tension of focusing on Whiteness while also striving to decenter it. She admires her students for being astute about these complexities: "They ask me about the pitfalls of focusing so much on White people or the implications of placing attention on the factor that is already given so much dominance in our society." Oberman believes that to ultimately remove Whiteness as a force of domination, it is useful first to study it up close. Her work allows students to learn the history of how Whiteness came to be a racial designation, how ideas about who counts as White have changed over time, and how Whiteness is often masked with language that is supposed to insinuate normalcy or rightness. Oberman calls for more specific language, since euphemisms can bring more power to current social structures. “This is one place where we might stumble, and we can ask ourselves what we can learn from the use of this language and what we can do about it going forward,” she says.

Oberman argues that White spaces are as racialized as spaces with a majority of People of Color, but they aren’t usually labeled as such. "In a simple way, some of my work involves the basics of naming spaces and practicing awareness," she says. "I try to normalize this. I consciously started doing it with students knowing that because we are in a predominately White space, it would be easy not to name Whiteness. However, the space is not entirely White, and even if it were, the racial makeup needs to be named and deconstructed."

Oberman's work is part of a larger ideal, which is to create learning spaces that engender trust and healthy risk-taking. She models vulnerability with her students. “There is a difference between saying that this is a safe space instead of making it a safe space. I can’t see how I can facilitate a conversation about Whiteness without seeing the ways in which my own Whiteness has been impacting a class. One strategy I use is being more specific and naming what is happening in a given scenario. For instance, if I remain silent on a racial point, I have to notice that and understand what it’s about. Otherwise, through my silence, I reinforce Whiteness. Silence does nothing to decenter Whiteness."

While much of Oberman’s work is done in predominantly White spaces, she works across race and believes that people of all races have work to do in investigating and decentering Whiteness. Ibram X. Kendi is a scholar Oberman relies on a great deal in her work. She advocated using his book, *Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America*, as a whole school reading selection this year. As Kendi writes in his prologue, “Racist ideas are ideas. Anyone can produce or consume them....Anyone—Whites, Latina/os, Blacks, Asians, Native Americans.” Oberman also uses Kendi’s definition of racist ideas—“any concept that regards one racial group as inferior or superior to another racial group in any way”—to invite a range of people into conversation. At the same time, she insists that White people take up some of this work on their own, as she says, “without further burdening People of Color with tasks of teaching Whites about race and racism, listening to stories of White ignorance and awakening, or reassuring White people that they’re ok.”

Looking forward, Oberman will be working with her students, the community, and the SOE to offer programming as part of the school’s commitment to diversity, inclusion, justice, and equity (dijie). “When Dr. Humphrey, Dean Moje, and I talk about dije programming for the year, one of our main aims is to decenter Whiteness. Another purpose is to offer healing spaces, and another is to strive toward liberation and policy change. When I plan these sessions, I can’t predict the dynamics of the group. But what excites me about this work is my purpose: to bring new awareness to participants about their own identities and the ways they interact with others around issues of racism.”

One program that Oberman is especially excited about is an intensive workshop she will offer this winter using the book *Me & White Supremacy* by Layla Saad. Students, faculty, and staff will be invited to opt in to role-alike groups that will meet four times each between December and March. Facilitated by Oberman, participants will discuss the book and share personal reflections that they keep in a journal. “I know that one way to decenter Whiteness is to get White people to understand what it means to be White, the fact that it is centered, and how we can stop doing that. If we don’t do this work, then we are perpetuating some White supremacist norms.”

Oberman does not believe that all anti-racist work can or should be done on the individual and personal level, but she is committed to helping people who want to begin their journeys by looking inward. “Practicing anti-racism is more of a marathon than a sprint, and there is a lot of work we can do by starting with ourselves.”

**Recommended Reading & Listening**

- James Baldwin, *The Fire Next Time*
- John Biewen, *Seeing White* podcast
- Gene Demby and Sheereen Meraji, *Code Switch* podcast
- Nikole Hannah-Jones, *1619* podcast
- Ibram X. Kendi, *How to be an Antiracist*
- Ibram X. Kendi, "The Difference between being ‘Not Racist’ and ‘Antiracist’" TED Talk
- George Lipsitz, *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: How White People Profit from Identity Politics*
- Bettina Love, "There is Nothing Fragile about Racism," Education Week article
- Ijeoma Oluo, *So You Want to Talk about Race*
- Beverly Daniel Tatum, "Why are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?" And other Conversations about Race
Detroit is on the upswing. For evidence, you need look no further than the hundreds of articles proclaiming the city’s revitalization and resurgence. A few articles will mention that this revitalization has, so far, generally been limited to Detroit’s downtown business corridor. Fewer still will detail the lack of opportunity and entrenched poverty that continue to plague many of the city’s neighborhoods. Almost none will explain that one of the defining characteristics of these neighborhoods is the devastating effect that the school-to-prison pipeline has on children and families.

According to the Justice Policy Institute, even as juvenile crime rates are trending downward, school discipline policies continue to move in a different direction. Through policies that disproportionately discipline Black students, advocate for “zero tolerance,” and place law enforcement officers inside schools, a system has been created where trouble at school can directly lead students to their first contact with the criminal justice system.

Dismantling a system that endangers Detroit’s children requires change at multiple levels, including improvements in early learning programs and K-12 schools, as well as policy changes for children and families confronting trauma, substance abuse, and poverty. Exploring these changes and the roots of the school-to-prison pipeline is the focus of a new project being spearheaded at the SOE. Dr. Camille Wilson, professor of education and recently appointed University Diversity and Social Transformation Professor, has helped develop a unique project that will utilize community action research teams to tackle the school-to-prison pipeline head on. Through a research-practice partnership grant from the Chicago-based Spencer Foundation, Wilson has developed Dismantling the School-to-Prison Pipeline Intruding on Detroit in conjunction with the Urban Learning and Leadership Collaborative (ULLC) and the Detroit nonprofit Focus: HOPE.

“Working with Focus: HOPE and the ULLC on Dismantling the School-to-Prison Pipeline Intruding on Detroit is a great opportunity for university, community, and youth partners to collaborate on conducting research that improves education and advances social justice,” she says. “It is gratifying to co-lead this joint effort.”

Founded in 2012, the ULLC is a partnership comprising residents of HOPE Village—a neighborhood in a roughly 100-block area that intersects north-central Detroit and Highland Park—community-based organizations, and three research university partners (University of Michigan, Michigan State University, and Wayne State University). The vision of the ULLC is for the community to leverage and coordinate university resources in support of neighborhood initiatives that address pervasive problems and create innovative solutions to community challenges.

Anchored by Focus: HOPE—as well as by a number of other high-performing social services agencies, community-based organizations, public institutions, and faith-based organizations—this innovative model of community-campus collaboration will build on the assets of all members in order to enhance learning and knowledge and become a catalyst for accelerating community change that specifically and holistically addresses one of the most pernicious educational inequities of our time. Wilson explains that “working with residents of north-central Detroit has revealed that they regard dismantling the school-to-prison pipeline as a central education objective.”

The project will support community-based research initiatives that seek to advance equitable educational access, fair discipline, and restorative justice in Detroit’s schools, and nurture the socioemotional well-being, learning, and retention of youth most susceptible to expulsion and incarceration.

“Through this project,” Wilson says, “we hope to reimagine research and explore what it means to do research in...
Dismantling the School-to-Prison Pipeline Intruding on Detroit

Camille Wilson co-leads a joint effort with the support of a research-practice partnership grant from the Spencer Foundation

more impactful and democratic ways. How can research help communities in the ways they want to be helped?”

In addition to Wilson, project leaders will include Dr. Richard Smith, a faculty member from Wayne State University School of Social Work, and Jasahn Larsosa, a practitioner-leader from Focus: HOPE. With their guidance, the project will establish and support a cohort of Detroit-based inquiry teams, with a particular focus on the schools and neighborhoods surrounding Focus: HOPE’s campus in north-central Detroit.

Each team will consist of (at minimum) one university-based researcher, one community-based practitioner-researcher, and one youth researcher (age 14–19). Meaningfully engaging youth as full research team members is an important component of the project, which seeks to honor youth perspectives. Youth researchers will offer their team valuable expertise about schooling, justice, and learning and living in Detroit and/or its suburbs. Adult team members will facilitate youth research engagement in equitable and age-appropriate ways across the stages of the project.

Through an RFP (Request For Proposal) process, research proposals were solicited from Detroit area colleges, universities, and community-based organizations. The proposals will be reviewed and selected by ULLC members who include university researchers and staff, Detroit community residents, and Detroit community-based organization professionals. The ULLC will work with applicants to find good partners for collaborative inquiry.

Each inquiry team will receive an action research mini-grant that will provide teams with funding for research expenses; stipends for community practitioner-researchers as well as youth researchers; and research development, evaluation, and team-building support. Because of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, it is anticipated that—at least in the near term—many of these activities will take place online. ULLC will work to provide online support and facilitate the processes necessary for working and researching remotely.

Teams will participate in research development and team-building events as well as present findings at a ULLC symposium in the Hope Village Community. Toward the end of the two-year study period, each action research team will develop a practical and research-informed resource that will assist at a school community (or a community organization that has close relationships with local schools). Such resources will relate to school improvement, youth and family advocacy, equitable policymaking, and/or strengthening school-family-community partnerships. In addition, Wilson will work to evaluate and study the processes and impact of this research-based collaborative.

“Despite looming challenges, Detroit communities remain positive, resourceful, and proactive,” Wilson says. “Young people and their families continue to innovate new ways to enact their agency. This project strives to honor the unique and equally important contributions and expertise that academics, practitioners, and community member partners bring.

“It reflects the central aim of community-based, action-oriented research to disrupt traditional research hierarchy that privileges university researchers and academic expertise,” she continued. “Instead, this project is designed to function by democratic norms that center community members’ experiential and culturally relevant knowledge, while affirming the value of all partners.”
New SOE Faculty
Meet Professor Charles Davis

Dr. Charles H.F. Davis III joined the SOE as an assistant professor in the Center for the Study of Higher and Postsecondary Education (CSHPE).

His current research and teaching broadly focus on issues race and racism, systems of oppression, and structures of domination in U.S. higher education and its social contexts. In particular, his ethnographic work examines contemporary student activism at the intersections of campus and community, specifically focusing on the mobilization of resources and tactical repertoires used to achieve movement goals. He has received funding support from the Lumina Foundation, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and the National Center for Institutional Diversity.

In addition to publishing in top peer-reviewed academic journals, Davis recently co-edited Student Activism, Politics, and Campus Climate in Higher Education and hosted and produced a long-form documentary about the structural barriers facing Black youth in education and innovative solutions to support their success. Davis’ work has been featured by leading national news outlets, cited in amici curiae briefs in the Fisher v. University of Texas and the SFFA v. Harvard Supreme Court cases, and was recently recognized by Diverse Issues in Higher Education, where he was named a 2020 Emerging Scholar.

Prior to joining the faculty, Davis was an assistant professor of clinical education in the Rossier School of Education at the University of Southern California and the chief strategy officer and director of research of the USC Race and Equity Center. While at USC, Davis was recognized as Faculty Member of the Year by the USC Rossier Postsecondary Administration and Student Affairs Network and Outstanding Faculty Member by the USC Rossier Student Organization.

Davis earned his doctorate in higher education from the University of Arizona, and holds master’s degrees from the University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education and Florida State University.

Q: What are the two biggest research questions on your mind right now?

CHFD: Given the broader concerns of racial justice movements, particularly around issues of policing and mass incarceration, two interrelated questions are guiding my work. The first attempts to uncover how colleges and universities facilitate the expansion of policing, state surveillance, and the carceral continuum. The second—because such exercises of power are always met with resistance—seeks to understand the ways campus and community stakeholders are currently organizing to divest from the institution of policing while investing in alternative systems of safety and security. These two lines of inquiry remain largely unaddressed by current higher education scholarship, but demand serious attention. As I argue in two recent essays, the use of university police and deputized actors to (re)enforce boundaries between campus and community through the subjective determination of insiders and outsiders has serious implications for campus racial climate and meaningful ‘town and gown’ relationships.

Q: In your scholarly research, you have examined the use of digital media in student organizing and social movements. Can you share a finding from that work that you think is broadly applicable to social movements (on campuses or elsewhere)?

CHFD: An important finding from my earlier research is that contemporary student organizers use digital media not in isolation from more traditional, on-the-ground methods of resistance, but as a part of a dynamic interactive process of strategies and tactics. In fact, their use of alternative and activist new media projects facilitates the mobilization of critical resources to achieve their goals, a hallmark concept discussed across decades of social movement scholarship. Although the assumption is that online activism is less effective or legitimate than other forms of direct action, my research refutes that assumption by highlighting how, for example, the media practice of “culture jamming” helps student organizers develop narrative frames for the public to better understand current social and political issues, who is ultimately responsible for creating those issues, and offering actionable solutions.

Q: Outside the academy, what kind of service work are you engaged in?

CHFD: As an engaged scholar, my work is deeply connected to community organizations and people committed to improving the lives of everyday Black people. For that reason, my commitment to supporting the political education and civic participation of Black communities is at the center of what I do outside of academe. In particular, I spend most of my time supporting organizations as part of the Movement for Black Lives, including Black Lives Matter chapters locally and nationally, as well as adjacent organizations like the Scholars for Black Lives (S4BL) collective and BLDPWR in Los Angeles. As director of S4BL, I facilitate relationships between campus and community scholars in the organization of national advocacy campaigns, production of timely research, engagement in public teaching, and creation of contemporary movement archives. As a board member with BLDPWR, founded by actor and advocate Kendrick Sampson, I help advance partnerships between artists, storytellers, grassroots groups, and community activists dedicated to challenging injustice by empowering frontline communities to address issues that affect their lives.

Q: Outside the academy, what kind of service work are you engaged in?
New SOE Faculty
Meet Professor Jamaal Sharif Matthews

Dr. Jamaal Sharif Matthews joined the SOE as an associate professor in Educational Studies and the Combined Program in Education and Psychology.

Born and raised in Harlem, NYC, Matthews’ research interests are grounded in his experiences as a middle school mathematics teacher in the Bronx. His research focuses on achievement motivation during adolescence and motivation in mathematics specifically. His work addresses how race, teacher pedagogy, and the sociopolitical context shape students’ beliefs about their abilities in and value of mathematics. He also applies a critical race perspective on the psychological processes that undergird adaptive and healthy school functioning for Black American and Latinx adolescents in urban schools.

His research has powerful implications for public scholarship, counseling, and out-of-school youth interventions, as evidenced through his youth mentorship program, THREADS (Truth, Honor, Respect, Education and Development of Self; threadsmentorship.com). Matthews’ teaching integrates critical and cultural lenses onto traditional paradigms in educational psychology and he has taught a number of courses related to equity and inclusion in urban education, motivation in marginalized youth, and adolescent development.

Matthews is a recipient of multiple national awards, including outstanding dissertation awards from the American Psychological Association (APA) and ProQuest. Further, he was awarded the APA Early Career Educational Psychology Research Award, the National Academy of Education/Spencer Postdoctoral Fellowship; and the Best Article Award from Educational Psychologist in 2018 for his article “Black and Belonging at School.” Matthews has secured extramural funding through a National Science Foundation CAREER Award in Research and Evaluation on Education in Science and Engineering, and the Mindset Scholars Network in cooperation with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

Prior to joining the School of Education, Matthews was an associate professor of educational foundations at Montclair State University in New Jersey.

Q: What are some examples of instructional choices and practices that teachers can employ to foster a sense of belonging in school for Students of Color?

JSM: Over the past 14 months, my team and I have observed hundreds of secondary mathematics classrooms to answer this exact question. Although we still have another eight months of observation and analysis ahead of us, several key themes are beginning to crystallize. A few of those themes we’ve coined include “safety to be wrong,” “social and emotional bridging,” and “decentering teacher authority.”

As an example, “decentering teacher authority” reflects how the teacher conveys that students’ mathematical methods/ideas have real value and worth. Teachers who do this well position students as knowledge authorities in mathematics. Thus, students have a sense that their intellectual contributions matter in the life of this classroom. In traditional mathematics classrooms, students must often defer to the teacher and the textbook as absolute knowledge authorities in mathematics. Consequently, the mathematical knowledge or expertise that students—particularly Students of Color—bring with them into the classroom is often minimized or entirely ignored, especially if it fails to align with teacher or textbook perspectives. When teachers decenter their authority and engage students’ expertise, they foreground students’ mathematical insights by building on or providing space for students to express them. Similarly, when teachers can honor students’ ways of knowing and showing mathematical competence, they center students’ unique mathematical methods and ideas in their own instruction. When teachers engage in these behaviors that position students as knowledge authorities, they provide opportunities for student agency and student ownership over their own learning, thereby humanizing mathematics. This can also promote belongingness, produce positive affect and engagement, and prevent the silencing of student voices.

Q: The motto of the group mentorship program that you founded, THREADS, is “It’s all We!” What does that mean to the participants in the program?

JSM: “It’s all We!” is an adaption of a South African Ubuntu proverb that says “I am because we are.”

And this is meant to express the interconnectedness of our lives and our development as human. In today’s western society where we tend to have a focus on talent and rugged individualism, this Ubuntu proverb, “I am because we are,” reminds us that no one becomes who they were meant to be without the nurture and support of the people around them.

In THREADS, we often talk about greatness and becoming a great man, but we are always mindful to reinforce the notion that no one becomes great without the support of the people around them. So, in our work with the young men, we partner with them as allies in helping them to discover their gifts and who they were meant to be, but also supporting them in becoming the greatest version of themselves.

Q: What’s on your reading list this fall (either academic or not)?

JSM: Well, I just took a new associate editor position at the Journal of Educational Psychology, so for the foreseeable future, I’ll be reading a lot of other scholars’ work for review and preparation for publication. But when I find some breaks in that new role, I’m looking forward to reading Afrocentric Praxis of Teaching for Freedom by Joyce King and Ellen Swartz and Redemption: The Untold Story of Martin Luther King Jr.’s Last 31 Hours by Joseph Rosenbloom. I also read a few chapters from the Bible daily for inspiration, meditation, and a closer connection with the Creator. As a social scientist, people often think it oxymoronic to believe in both science and faith, but I find that to be a false dichotomy. In my experience, I’ve drawn insight and wisdom from both in ways that mutually inform and inspire one another.
New SOE Faculty
Meet Professor Rosie Perez

**Dr. Rosemary (Rosie) Perez** joined the SOE as an associate professor in the Center for the Study of Higher and Postsecondary Education.

Her scholarship leverages the strengths of student development and organizational theories to explore individual and organizational learning and development in collegiate contexts. Across her program of research and her teaching, she explores the tensions between structure and agency, and how power, privilege, and oppression affect individuals and groups within higher education.

She is committed to empowering individuals and communities as we work toward creating a more equitable and just society, as evidenced by her role on the leadership team for the Education for Social Justice Certificate at Iowa State University. This university-wide certificate provides students the opportunity to engage in thoughtful, rigorous, and sustained inquiry into social inequalities and social justice praxis in P-20 classrooms, schools, and educational systems.

In recognition of her engagement with Students of Color and efforts to improve their experiences on campus, she received the 2016 Faculty/Staff Change Agent Award from the Iowa State University Multicultural Student Affairs office. In addition, she was named an Emerging Scholar in 2017 and Diamond Honoree in 2020 by ACPA-College Student Educators International, a professional association for student affairs educators.

Prior to joining the University of Michigan, Perez was an assistant professor of higher education and student affairs at Iowa State University School of Education. She brings six years of professional work experience in university student affairs divisions to the School of Education.

**Q: As co-PI on a project that aims to improve pathways to the professoriate for underrepresented minority STEM doctoral candidates by working to improve departmental and campus racial climates, what have you found to be effective ways to do the hard work of changing institutional climates?**

**RP:** Changing racial climates is difficult work, and in some ways, I’ve learned more about why people struggle than succeed. For example, in many STEM departments, work related to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) is seen as distant if not in opposition to science. Accordingly, DEI work often relies on the labor of a faculty champion, a small committee, or on graduate students. Furthermore, many efforts to address racial climate in STEM graduate programs are piecemeal—a few workshops here, a mentoring program there, yearly efforts to recruit racially minoritized students without clear plans on how to support and retain them.

Departments must do the hard work of evaluating their culture and how it may center Whiteness and devalue racially minoritized doctoral students. Concurrently, individuals need to examine their thoughts, beliefs, and practices and be honest with themselves about how they contribute to and detract from racially minoritized students’ abilities to thrive. Changing climate requires reimagining STEM graduation with DEI as core to becoming a good scientist and creating policies and practices that reflect that commitment. Rather than relying on champions or graduate students, meaningful change requires sustained commitment and contributions from all members of a departmental community.

**Q: How does your past experience working in a student affairs office influence the research questions you ask or how you perform your research?**

**RP:** My work as a student affairs educator influences what I study and how I engage in inquiry. For instance, working as residence hall director and attending the Social Justice Training Institute shaped my interest in understanding how people engage across differences in socially constructed identities and how they can disrupt and dismantle systems of oppression. These experiences have informed my research on the development of intercultural maturity and more recently, critical consciousness.

My work in residence life also informed my interest in studying graduate education. I supervised master’s students and new professionals and observed the challenges people encountered as they tried to make sense of what they were learning in their programs and as they navigated their subsequent transition to practice. This led me to start a line of inquiry focused on the professional socialization of graduate students.

Finally, my work in student affairs allowed me to build and to sustain relationships with students. As a longitudinal qualitative researcher, my abilities to create connections, to listen, and to be fully present with students have served me and my participants well. I’m invested in my participants’ lives, and in turn, I’ve found that many are invested in me and my work.

**Q: What class or topic are you most excited to teach at U-M and why?**

**RP:** I’m most excited to teach Learning and Development in Higher Education since it draws upon my research and practice as a student affairs educator. In this course, we examine, critique, apply, and reconstruct theories of college student learning and development. I enjoy learning alongside those in the course as we grapple with the benefits and limitations of theory, and the dynamic relationship between research and practice. I learn something new each semester that adds complexity to how I’m thinking about, studying, and supporting students’ development.

In this course, I also love seeing people’s relationship of theory change. Rather than seeing it as something that is distant or created by others, we engage with the material in ways that help students connect theory to their work and that encourage them to see themselves as theory builders. The idea that we can (re)create theories to better understand and support college students’ learning and development is powerful.
Kaelin Walker is a 10th grade student at The School at Marygrove. She is active in theater, jazz band, and poetry club. She is passionate about journalism, marine biology, and playing piano, and would like to pursue journalism as a career after high school. Her article, below, first appeared as an opinion piece in The Detroit Free Press.

I chose to attend The School at Marygrove because of its unique social justice pathway, small class sizes and the community it offers. As an incoming freshman and a member of the inaugural class at Detroit Public Schools Community District’s Marygrove campus, I wasn’t sure what to expect during my first year.

You feel in awe and so studious when stepping foot on the former Marygrove College campus, nestled in northwest Detroit. The campus, with its stately buildings and generational trees, manifests academic success.

After spending my first year taking core classes while also learning about community activism, politics, and our justice system, our class discussions became more real after the death of George Floyd, while in police custody by officers from the Minneapolis police department.

Upon hearing of the tragic consequences that precipitated his death, my teachers and classmates rallied to be part of the District’s Peace Protest in June.

As a person of color, this made me feel important. I’ve never had any teacher sit down and talk to me about things happening outside our school, let alone march next to me.

That showed me that I am truly loved and valued by my teachers. They showed me that they cared about more than just my grades.

The teachers at The School at Marygrove go above and beyond for us students and genuinely care, such as my teacher Ms. Jordan. I call her “my mom away from my mom,” because she keeps me on top of my work while encouraging me and keeping my spirits high. The staff also takes time to listen to students’ needs, concerns, and interests. You can really tell that the faculty has a genuine interest in the students at heart.

For example, this past school year, we were surprised with a public piano for the school. This was exciting because I don’t have access to one at home and I was able to play daily at school. Not only do they provide us with resources that cater to everyone’s individual interests, but they push us to experience wonderful opportunities that are unique to our school. One of my favorite moments last school year was when we went on a retreat to the University of Michigan. I met all my amazing friends on that one trip. That’s an experience I’ll truly never take for granted.

What really brought my experience at The School at Marygrove full circle, despite the hardships we faced due to the COVID-19 pandemic at the close of the year, was when one of the teachers nominated me for Student of the Year, for embodying compassion. I was honored to be selected. For a recognition like this, you must really know your students. I’m not alone in saying that every teacher at The School at Marygrove made an effort to know me this year, to understand my strengths and weaknesses, and to encourage me to harness my talents.

The upcoming school year will undoubtedly bring about change during these unprecedented times. However, if there’s one thing I can count on, it’s the familiarity and community that my school wraps us students in, whether we step foot in our building or we’re working online. I am proud to be a student at The School at Marygrove and I am looking forward to leaving my mark on my community and the world.
For 11 years, the Mitchell Scarlett Huron Teaching and Learning Collaborative—a robust partnership between the SOE and three Ann Arbor public schools (Mitchell Elementary, Scarlett Middle, and Huron High schools)—has provided a rich teaching and learning environment for K-12 students, interns, experienced educators, and SOE faculty. An important aspect of this partnership since 2010 has been supporting English Language Learners in the Ann Arbor Public Schools. The Summer ESL Academy (SESLA)—a three-week program for rising fourth through eighth graders—is academically challenging, culturally responsive, and literacy-based. The program has grown to serve 360 students this year.

For the first time ever, all instruction was provided virtually this summer. And that wasn’t the only quick adaptation that the organizers and teachers made. After months of planning a curriculum on climate change in collaboration with the U-M Museum of Natural History, SESLA leadership decided to instead offer an anti-racism curriculum in the wake of George Floyd’s death and the international protests for social justice.

SESLA principal Evelyn Daugherty (AM ’15) and SESLA teacher leader Tori Jovanovski (AM ’15) took the lead on developing the curriculum, with Dr. Cathy Reischl, clinical professor and coordinator of the Mitchell Scarlett Huron Teaching and Learning Collaborative, supporting their work. The team also drew on the expertise of other Scarlett Middle School teachers and the school social worker who offered critical feedback and content.

The fourth and fifth grade curriculum focused on kids making their voices heard in response to issues of social justice. The sixth, seventh, and eighth grade curriculum began by reading the biography of a woman who was 15 years old when she participated in the March on Selma. Students and teachers then worked together to compare civil rights issues in the 1960s to key issues raised in the Black Lives Matter movement. Throughout the unit, students built complex reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills as they worked to voice their own opinions in oral and written forms.

Teachers and interns supported students as they watched videos, read and wrote together, and discussed their questions and experiences with each other. Students entered the program in late June, curious and concerned...
After months of planning a curriculum on climate change in collaboration with the U-M Museum of Natural History, SESLA leadership decided to instead offer an anti-racism curriculum in the wake of George Floyd’s death and the international protests for social justice.

Over the course of the three-week unit, they built an understanding of historical and current issues about civil rights and began to articulate their own stances on racism.

Teaching intern Connor Callum, who taught middle schoolers, commented, “The students responded fantastically to the BLM and activism-centered curriculum. I could tell that they were enthusiastic about learning about current events and the relationship to activism during the civil rights movement. The engagement was high and students were excited to apply what they learned and make their voices heard.”

In addition to building literacy and language skills, the curriculum included the development of mathematics skills as teachers and interns guided students to use data and graphs that provided information about voting rights, police brutality, and other related issues.

The team also worked with the school psychologist at Scarlett Middle School, Jemela Smith, to develop lessons about self-care. Because the teachers and students were discussing emotionally charged topics, these lessons prepared everyone for what to do when they feel frustrated or confused.

This year’s SESLA was staffed by 17 Ann Arbor teachers, 75 percent of whom are SOE alumni. Current SOE students who were pursuing their ELS teaching endorsement served as teaching interns. This summer, 28 interns co-taught with the mentor teachers.

The interns enjoyed the experience of teaching online with their mentor teachers, especially given that they expected to be teaching online as they began their own careers in the fall. Interns were able to draw on skills and practices for teaching online from Dr. Liz Kolb’s courses about educational technologies as they collaborated with experienced teachers.

Teaching intern Katherine Hamilton says, “Explicit teaching and instruction is key to creating a learning space online. Any vague instruction can lead to confusion and inaction. Making sure that I give really clear directions and have a clear sense of what direction the class is taking is important to being able to facilitate everything else. Also, relationship building is key, especially online!”

Reischl credits the success of the program to the strong leadership of SESLA principal Evelyn Daugherty and teacher leader Tori Jovanovski and the opportunities for interaction they created between SESLA educators. “Everyone was highly collaborative as we worked to make changes in the curriculum and take risks to teach and learn together about controversial topics. Thanks to their leadership, teachers and interns felt confident engaging with learners and with each other,” says Reischl.

Above Mama made art with a collage and paint.

Above Shunto made a protest sign.

Above Luis made a protest sign.

Above Koren made a protest sign.
Annemarie Sullivan Palincsar appointed Ann L. Brown Distinguished University Professor

Dr. Annemarie Sullivan Palincsar, Arthur F. Thurnau Professor and Jean and Charles R. Walgreen, Jr. Professor of Reading and Literacy, was appointed Ann L. Brown Distinguished University Professor of Education in recognition of her exceptional scholarly achievements, teaching contributions, reputation for academic excellence, and superior record of mentoring and service.

“I was thrilled to receive this recognition! There are many fine education scholars in the School of Education and I hope that my appointment opens the door for others to be recognized as University Professors of Education,” says Palincsar.

Established in 1947, Distinguished University Professorships are the university’s most prestigious professorships. In collaboration with Dean Moje, Palincsar named the professorship in honor of her mentor, Ann L. Brown (1943–1999). “It was such a joy to be able to name this professorship for Ann. She died a little more than 22 years ago and I still miss her. I want young scholars to be aware of her—and just maybe, having this professorship named for her will make them curious to learn about her.”

Brown was an educational psychologist responsible for developing methods for teaching children to be better learners. Her realization that children’s learning difficulties often stem from an inability to use metacognitive strategies such as summarizing led to advances in educational psychology theory and teaching practices. Palincsar says of her mentor, “I came to my doctoral studies with lots of ideas, based upon my experience as a teacher, regarding how school could be more interesting, joyful, compelling, and effective, but it was Ann who helped me to understand how to use theory (theories of metacognition, self-regulation, and socioculturalism) to explain and test my thinking. Furthermore, my penchant for thinking and reading across disciplines was influenced by Ann.”

Palincsar also credits Brown with shaping her practices as a mentor: “Ann created remarkable opportunities for me. She was such a star that she received many more invitations than she could accept and she would ask me to present in her stead. Once I got accustomed to the expressions of disappointment when the audience realized they were going to have a ‘stand-in,’ I came to treasure these opportunities and I try to provide these opportunities for my own advisees.”

Palincsar’s scholarship has transformed the field of cognition, learning, and instruction by developing a preeminent program of research based on the belief that the purpose of education is to facilitate children’s ability to think, reason, problem solve, and transfer learning to novel situations.

In the 1980s, Palincsar launched one of the most successful literacy instructional interventions to date. Called Reciprocal Teaching (RT), the intervention engages students and their teachers in co-constructing the meanings of shared texts through dialogue. Her seminal work documenting the effectiveness of RT has since inspired many researchers to replicate the results across a variety of instructional contexts and has gained a wide practitioner audience of reading educators. Cutting across disciplinary boundaries, she has conducted research at the intersection of the language literacies and science by collaborating with disciplinary experts across domains. Her work on interdisciplinary instruction has identified implications for designing communities of practice among teachers, designing and using science text to promote scientific reasoning and knowledge.
students as a chair, co-chair, or committee member. She also serves as a mentor for teaching apprentices in which she works with them to develop lesson plans, convey efficacious teaching practices, and provide continuous feedback on their teaching.

Palincsar’s former advisee Dr. Miranda Fitzgerald, who currently serves as an assistant professor of reading and elementary education at the University of North Carolina Charlotte, says, “In addition to her scholarly achievements, Dr. Palincsar has an impeccable record of service to the profession, university, and community, and is an outstanding mentor who prepares her students to conduct rigorous educational research and serve in research, teaching, and service-oriented leadership roles.”

Palincsar has achieved top distinctions in both the education and literacy fields. She is an executive board member for the National Academy of Education and a member of the professional development committee. She has served on four of the National Academy of Science’s Research Councils: the Prevention of Reading Difficulty in Young Children; the Panel on Teacher Preparation; the Committee on the Science and Practice of Learning; and the study group for How People Learn: Vol. 2. Palincsar is an American Educational Research Association (AERA) Fellow. In AERA, she has served as a member of the executive council and as program chair and has chaired several divisions of the organization. She also served on the International Reading Association’s Literacy Research Panel, on the National Advisory Board to Children’s Television Workshop, the International Reading Association’s Literacy Research Panel, and as chair of the Contributions to Research Award committee for the National Association for Research on Science Teaching. She was elected to the Reading Hall of Fame in 2017, and she received the P. David Pearson Scholarly Influence Award in 2019 for her contributions to advancing literacy research and instruction.

When asked what she hopes her professional legacy will be, she says, “Nothing is more satisfying than receiving a message from an educator telling me that my research and writing have had a significant influence on how they teach, whether it is reading comprehension instruction or science instruction, and that their teaching is more lively and their classrooms more productive because they are using curricula or instruction that my research group has designed and studied. Similarly, I get a real kick out of getting requests from young scholars (using Research Gate, for example) telling me that they are appreciative of the program of research we have conducted and that it has fueled their own scholarship.”

The professorship also recognizes her record of service to the profession, university, and community. Within just the past 10 years, Palincsar, who currently serves as the chair of the Educational Studies program and has previously served as associate dean of graduate affairs and associate dean of academic affairs, has mentored more than 40 doctoral
Fernando Furquim helps Minneapolis Community and Technical College navigate familiar and unfamiliar challenges toward greater health

Facts Guide Acts
Combining data and student experiences, CSHPE student Fernando Furquim helps Minneapolis Community and Technical College navigate familiar and unfamiliar challenges toward greater health

Fernando Furquim works just four miles from the intersection where George Floyd was killed by police on May 25, 2020. As the director of institutional effectiveness at Minneapolis Community and Technical College (MCTC), Furquim’s role and that of the college took on new significance in the face of dual pandemics: COVID-19 and racial violence.

Furquim is a doctoral candidate in the Center for the Study of Higher and Postsecondary Education. He applies his training to the work he does at the college, which includes research, strategic planning, and maintaining college compliance with state, federal, and accrediting bodies.

As an urban community college, his institution serves populations that face and challenge inequity. The MCTC community includes many Students of Color, first-generation students, and Pell grant-eligible students.

“We have already been working with students who face barriers with access to high-quality education, and we also have data that show a high rate of housing and food insecurity among our students, just like at many other community colleges,” says Furquim. His college’s wraparound services and supports became particularly relevant due to the effects of the pandemic, beginning in early spring. “The inequity is hard to fight normally, but then the pandemic came. Some students lost their work, or their safety nets, or were feeling unsafe due to preexisting conditions, so COVID-19 brought about quick changes to their earnings as well as their academic lives.”

Furquim and his team worked quickly to connect with students, collect data to inform the college’s plans, and support changes that would support students. “We knew it was important to collect information to get a sense of how students are navigating this change to remote learning. We found that 10–15 percent of students only had access to their smartphones to do their coursework, so that is one area we are looking to assist students with,” he says. “We also found that many students lacked access to reliable internet and a quiet place to study. The infrastructure and resources on campus are critical to them.” MCTC staff and advisors decided to quickly roll out laptop loaner programs, make software easily available to students remotely, and connect students to community resources.

His team also supported offering emergency course withdrawal options and expanding options for Pass/No Credit grading to help ameliorate possible academic issues caused by the sudden onset of new challenges facing students. “These policies for withdrawal, grading, and other challenges were definitely a deviation from our normal practices meant to support the huge efforts faculty and students were already making,” he notes. Furquim and his team realized that these adjustments were necessary because not all students could seamlessly transition to online learning. Keeping a positive attitude toward learning in the pandemic was important to his team so that they could best support their learners.

The college also amplified existing programming to meet the needs of the community, including anti-bias training, intercultural supports for students and staff, professional development for faculty, and a systemwide plan to eliminate equity gaps by 2030, called the Minnesota State Equity by Design initiative. “The college continues to think through what the pandemic and George Floyd’s death have meant for the college and locally,” he says, adding that “it’s always been our responsibility to our community to support its health. The college has taken this time to reinvest in our equity and social justice commitments.” One important aspect of this work is continuing to engage and listen to students despite not being on campus this fall.

The college has offered additional programming around their aspirational goals of improving equity across campus and Minneapolis as a whole. This includes launching an ambitious program to identify, educate, and cultivate future leaders who identify as African American, Black, or American Indian through the Breakthrough 2020–Bridging the Equity Gap Initiative. The new initiative was established in response to the social justice movement of 2020 surrounding the tragic death of George Floyd.
of George Floyd. The program will be an affirming cohort experience where students are equipped with the tools to see greatness in themselves as well as in the experience of others. Students will be provided supportive faculty, staff, and student-centered resources that equip them with the information, motivation, and agency needed to attain their education, achieve their career goals, and become leaders in their fields.

MCTC has also reached out to the Minneapolis public school district, which is going through several large-scale reforms to better serve Students of Color. Since many graduates of the local schools will attend MCTC, the college is eager to invest in their success and is hopeful that the redesign supports students to be college-ready.

Furquim credits the SOE for his ability to make quick adjustments as a college leader during the current crises. “They clearly prepared me, between my thinking, research, and analytical tools that developed at CSHPE,” he says. “I feel a sense of domain knowledge and a finger on the pulse of national practices across community colleges—what seems to be working and not. I feel well-informed and well-trained to do the kind of research that can move a college like mine forward,” he says, adding that

“being in the SOE environment made me more aware of how institutional climate and experiences burden students of color. It prepared me to face my current conversations in this new role in a conscientious way.”

In attending the University of Michigan, he focused on developing skills as a quantitative researcher, which now complement his closer contact with students. “In this role, I have more contact with students and it’s easier to see and internalize the impact of decisions about how we do all sorts of things. These include the ways in which we will disperse federal CARES Act funds, what it means to ask students to take online courses when they didn’t want to, how we will hear from students when they are not present on campus, and how to best support students. I hope to help guide college leadership work through these challenges with data,” he says.

Furquim’s role has made him more student-focused. “Now, the first thing I think of is the students themselves. When my team works on research, one priority is to figure out how to communicate what we learn to students. This type of work is much more about individuals than I expected, but then with the pandemic—not to mention George Floyd’s killing happening a few miles from campus—it’s all about the student experience. Data and numbers alone would not reflect the fact that Minneapolis is facing so many overdue reckonings, so they could be overlooked by viewing events through a quantitative angle alone. Now, I get a more well-rounded view on students focusing on the needs of people who attend and work at MCTC.”

A father himself, Furquim understands the challenges teachers, staff, and others in the education community face. “I think immediately of my day-to-day life,” he says, “where my daughter is attending first grade online, and I will continue to balance my work with making sure that my daughter is engaging healthily with the world. The real need is for balancing and prioritizing. Only a few things can get done, even fewer can get done well, and everything else has to take a back seat. We need higher education leaders to understand and embrace that.”

Data and numbers alone would not reflect the fact that Minneapolis is facing so many overdue reckonings, so they could be overlooked by viewing events through a quantitative angle alone.
Disrupting Inequity by Investing in Education

CSHPE alumna Cre Murphy works in and with communities to promote economic opportunities for all

Dr. Lucretia “Cre” Murphy (PhD ’04) has always felt a calling to serve her community, and this is exactly the work she has continued to pursue as a graduate of the Center for the Study of Higher and Postsecondary Education (CSHPE). A senior director at Jobs for the Future (JFF), Murphy works to strengthen the workforce and increase success for individuals and employers. JFF’s driving motivations are equity and meeting employer needs, and preparing for the future workplace. The organization shapes policy that strengthens the labor market at the federal, state, and local levels and drives the conversation for education, workforce, and industry leadership nationwide.

At JFF, Murphy helps develop strategies that increase economic opportunity for individuals and economic prosperity for communities. This work emphasizes integrated approaches that confront structural racism and other forms of bias in policies, practices, and processes. Murphy serves as an expert in education and employment strategies for people who are incarcerated and preparing to reenter their communities. She is a passionate speaker on the economic advancement of young people, adult learners seeking their first credentials, and individuals who have been, or currently are, incarcerated. She also speaks on the importance of confronting race in society, systems, and institutions, so that all people can fully realize prosperity and equal opportunity.

“It is through direct engagement with people ‘on the ground’ and with community stakeholders that I offer an opportunity to talk about structural racism. The way that it comes up in my work is the ways that it is connected to access to education and the job market. Often, people of color in a community have lacked some of both, so my work helps to ensure that they can have access to both,” she says.

More broadly, she asks community members and leaders questions about structures that create or may block opportunity in their community. “For example, when community partners talk about the lack of participation in workforce training programs among Black residents, I ask about the community’s transportation system. Are people physically able to gain access to job training facilities and work sites? This starts to peel back the layers on transportation in neighborhoods that employers are trying to reach. Then, we talk about how their questions of access unveil that it’s not that people aren’t interested in training, but rather it becomes a question of structural inequity and how it operates when it comes to actual infrastructure. If you aren’t starting with a conversation about this, then you could be missing out on challenges and also the ability to have solutions,” she adds.

Murphy cites an example of a community in which an employer said that he had many jobs to fill, but that he felt like nobody was willing to work an entry-level job. In conversation with the workforce system leaders, the employer realized the problem was not about individual willingness.

There was no bus route from many of the community members’ homes to his job site. Two of the work shifts at the site did not align with the bus schedule for those who did have bus service. She uses this example to explain how conversations can unveil the ways in which people can work effectively, and in this case, the employer began to offer a shuttle service. “Focusing on defeat doesn’t solve the problem in the end, but understanding the structures of your community does solve the problem.”

Murphy also consults with community members and leaders about barriers for people with an incarceration history and the ways in which structures need to change to make reentry easier. “I have learned a lot of lessons in this work,” she says. “The first one that is reinforced over and over is that people are not ‘the worst thing they have ever done,’ but a criminal status places restrictions on people for life, even if they are 35 and did something at the age of 17. Just as that one moment never defined who that person is, it should not define who they
can become. When people have an opportunity to transform their lives, they take it.”

Murphy also learned that, when working with reentry populations, there is great value in investing in transformational experiences and work opportunities for that group. “The payoff is giving better opportunities to these people instead of giving them poor training and poor schooling. The investment pays off in the degree of the transformation for the individual and their families. Since so many of these people become change agents themselves, the investment pays off at the community level.”

Societal inequity is built into the carceral system. “The system targets people by race, and the treatment of women in jail is worse than that toward men. As Bryan Stevenson says, ‘You are more likely to be acquitted if you are rich and guilty than if you are poor and innocent’. This system perfects every inequality we have in the rest of society,” she says. “It’s really disruptive to inequality when people can get a good education because it liberates people from being stuck in this horrible system. This also helps families and communities rewrite their futures. This is really important.”

Many lawyers, policymakers, and community leaders have joined her in the effort to overcome stereotypes that labels people who have been in prison as dangerous, but there is still a lot of work to be done. Murphy says, “When we debate about how much we want to invest in corrections education, that is not the right question. The question we should ask is how much we want to invest in society, to invest more upfront, to invest in public education and communities. And as for those currently in prison, we need to do more to ensure they can transform their lives and be able to be change agents in their community. I have seen people who have been in prison come out and start businesses where they hire other people who have been in prison. They make things better for people. That’s the truth of investing in people in preparation for when they get out. They can transform their own lives and change their community. They pay it forward when they are invested in.”

In all her engagements with community leaders, Murphy approaches them with humility to see what their assets and goals are, and she seeks a broad perspective on a community, to make sure enough community members have a seat at the table. “We attend their meetings, work with strategic planning, and so on. We also arrange to talk to people independently to have conversations with them based on who they are and where they sit. I found that most community leaders are well versed in how this works and how it impacts their community for better or worse. What they will not be as knowledgeable about is who pulls the levers to make something work. For example, a community may be very engaged in an education issue, but not see the structural racism within it. I work to bring together all of the people with the right knowledge, the ones with the power, and the ones with the ability to execute change.”

In her work prior to JFF, Murphy ran an organization that worked to educate hundreds of kids who, before attending the Maya Angelou Schools, believed that they were stupid or “bad kids.” At the schools they blossomed as scholars. The organization also expanded their programs to open a school for young adults transitioning from corrections back to the community, and they continue to run a school in the juvenile jail for children who had never had a positive school experience. “Amazing work has continued at these schools,” she says.

The SOE prepared her for this work, says Murphy. “The SOE provided an interdisciplinary structure for research and analysis, and my work today also benefits from being comfortable working across disciplines, systems, and structures. Of course, the research skills I gained are also useful, like understanding and being a critical reviewer of research—and developing qualitative analyses. I have been working with colleagues at JFF who are amazing researchers to create a research agenda for the reentry work we are developing at JFF. I am able to contribute to this work because I studied with faculty and peers at SOE who were brilliant researchers.”

As a student in CSHPE, Murphy was able to work on issues related to the education of Black students. The work she did with other SOE researchers and faculty in public policy, anthropology, psychology, and African American studies informed her dissertation. “It’s given me a framework for analyzing the structures of racism that impact education and work across many domains, but also for understanding the framework for working toward new opportunity structures. Professionally, all of these people would be called part of my ‘network,’ but I am fortunate to continue to call them friends,” she says.

Murphy reflects on society’s growing awareness of social challenges and racism that affect minority groups: “I think we are just at the beginning of making real change internally to be a fully anti-racist organization, so JFF is just the tip of the iceberg of our impact in the field. My hope and plan going forward is to build a platform for changing education and employment opportunities for Black people, and customizing this framework with the particular context for liberation for Latinx, Native American, and other communities. We sometimes talk about education and employment as transactional, but they can also be transformational when we make equity the bottom line. I hope that the work I do will liberate people and communities.”
New Gifts, Endowments, and Bequests

Ruhana Family gift to the Detroit P-20 Partnership Angel Fund

George (BBA ’93) and Kim (BBA ’93) Ruhana made a gift to the Detroit P-20 Partnership Angel Fund. The Ruhanas were first introduced to the P-20 Partnership when they heard Dean Elizabeth Moje at a U-M Parents Leadership Council meeting. Moje spoke about the collaborative efforts of Detroit-area organizations to build a cradle-to-career educational campus on the former grounds of Marygrove College. There are several aspects of the partnership that inspired the Ruhanas’ gift. Although they now live in Chicago, George is from Detroit and Kim grew up in southeast Michigan. They want to see Detroit continue to succeed and believe that quality educational opportunities are necessary for broad-based revitalization of neighborhoods across the city. “It is extremely important to us that all kids have access to a quality education,” Kim said. They’re pleased to see the SOE partnering with the Detroit Public Schools Community District in order to support systemic improvements that reach the youth in the city who have the most need. “This work has the potential to serve as a roadmap to improve schools across the city,” added George. They also hope to see the Teaching School model for preparing and supporting educators become the norm for teacher education.

The Ruhanas look forward to seeing the P-20 partnership flourish on their trips back to Michigan to visit their daughter, Audrey, who is currently studying mathematics and statistics in LSA. They hope their donation motivates other donors who, like them, have no previous connection to the SOE but care deeply about U-M, the city of Detroit, and equitable access to education. “We frankly think the university has a responsibility to the biggest city in the state,” said George. “We want to help U-M share their talent and resources.”

Dr. Bruce Cohen gift to the Wilbur J. Cohen Endowment Fund

University High School alumnus Dr. Bruce Cohen made a new gift to the Wilbur J. Cohen Endowment Fund to supplement the endowment Bruce and his brothers (Chris (AB ’64, JD ’67) and Stuart (BSENav ’77, MSE ’81, MSE ’82, PhD ’86)) established in 2000 to honor their father and former SOE dean Wilbur Cohen. Awards from the fund encourage SOE students and faculty members to undertake innovative projects in local, state, and national policies in health, education, and welfare.

Initially, Wilbur Cohen came to U-M following a distinguished career in Washington, DC, where he helped to establish and strengthen the Social Security Administration, from 1934 until his arrival in Ann Arbor in 1956. From 1956 until the election of President John F. Kennedy, Cohen served as professor of public welfare administration in the U-M School of Social Work, teaching and writing extensively on problems of economic security and social insurance. In 1961, Cohen returned to Washington, DC to serve as President Kennedy’s Assistant Secretary for Legislation and subsequently as President Johnson’s Secretary of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. Under his leadership, Cohen helped secure passage of the landmark Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, Medicare, and a variety of legislation in the fields of public health, mental health, vocational education, and civil rights.

Upon his return to the University in 1969, Cohen assumed the deanship of the SOE. His leadership of the school reflected his continuing concerns with issues such as affirmative action and early childhood education. Major projects such as the Urban Program in Education, the Program for Educational Opportunity, and the ERIC Clearinghouse in Guidance and Counseling were housed in the school during Cohen’s tenure.

Kessler Presidential Scholars Program Expansion

The Fred and Judy Wilpon Family Foundation has made a gift to support the expansion of the Kessler Presidential Scholars Program to other institutions. The program, established through a 2006 gift, provides four years of support to U-M students who are among the first in their families to attend college. The Wilpons’ new gift established several funds to support the Kessler Expansion Project, including an Evaluation and Research Fund. The fund will be used to design and implement a phased plan for evaluation and research related to the Kessler Expansion Project. This work will be led by the Center for Education Design, Evaluation, and Research (CEDER) and the Center for the Study of Higher and Postsecondary Education (CSHPE), both in the SOE.
The SOE will lead an evaluation project intended to allow institutions participating in the Kessler Expansion Project to assess progress, refine interventions, and assess the experiences of low-income, first-generation students at a series of distinct, postsecondary settings. Initial evaluation design will focus on establishing common metrics and data sharing and tracking. That initial work will lead to a broader investigation of student and program outcomes. A dashboard system, with regular updates, will provide participants with data about performance and program status.

Resilient Community Fund

Elizabeth and John Moje established the Resilient Community Fund in recognition of the resilient community of faculty, staff, and students at the SOE who remain committed to the school’s mission in this time of challenge and uncertainty. Additional lead gifts to the fund were given by Professor Annemarie Palincsar and another faculty member who has asked to be anonymous.

Across the world, the advent of COVID-19 forced a rapid change in the delivery of education. At the SOE, as elsewhere on campus, this has meant converting all courses into online formats for students who cannot or choose not to return to campus. It has meant that students need access to remote learning technologies as well as internet access. Virtual tools have to be adapted to assist students in practicing their interactions with K-12 students when in-person communication is not possible. Additionally, the pandemic has placed unexpected financial burdens on some SOE students. This fund is designed to meet many of these needs so that students, faculty, and staff may continue to excel in their studies and work.

Mackey Family gift to the SOE Dean’s Discretionary Fund

Michael (BBA ’93) and Betsy Mackey made a generous pledge to the SOE Dean’s Discretionary Fund to meet emerging critical needs as they arise due to our challenging environment. Michael serves on the SOE Dean’s Advisory Council and the donors have two children who are first-year students in U-M’s College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.

The following gifts support the goals of the Teach Blue initiative to recruit students to and retain students in the profession of teaching.

The Ann ReVelle Scholarship Fund

Ann ReVelle (ABEd ’68, TeachCert ’68, AM ’72) established an endowed fund at the SOE via a planned gift leveraging her IRA. The Ann ReVelle Scholarship Fund will be used to provide need-based scholarship support to undergraduate students.

ReVelle’s gift is made with gratitude for the support she received as a student. She recalls: “In December 1967, I married my U-M sweetheart and began preparing for my senior year at Michigan with a lot of uncertainties ahead. I was afraid I would need to drop out and get a job. I was worried about my husband being drafted into the Vietnam War when he graduated. The year 1968 was going to be a very trying year, but the pivotal moment came when I received news that I had a SOE scholarship to pay my tuition. That was a big worry off my shoulders. We all face pivotal moments in our academic lives when we are unsure of the way forward. That scholarship helped me find my way. I am establishing a modest scholarship for future educators who find themselves in need of a tuition boost. This is my way of paying my moment of need forward for the benefit of future students.”

ReVelle’s “U-M sweetheart,” husband Douglas ReVelle, was a scientist at the Los Alamos National Laboratory who was known for his pioneering theoretical work in meteor physics. He passed away in 2010. ReVelle currently resides in Tucson, Arizona with her partner Cynthia Williams.

Viola I. Brown Scholarship Fund

Dr. Doug Brown (BS ’49, MS ’51, PhD ’57) established the Viola I. Brown Scholarship Fund in honor of his late wife, Viola I. (“Vi”) Brown (AB ’49, AM ’62). The fund will provide scholarship support to undergraduate and graduate students in the SOE.

Born Viola Ilona Elo in 1927 to Finnish immigrant parents in Rock, a small community in the Upper Peninsula, Vi was fluent in Finnish. At U-M, she earned a bachelor’s degree in social work and a master’s degree in guidance and counseling. In a true Ann Arbor love story, Vi and Doug met each other at the Log Cabin restaurant on Packard while they were both attending U-M as undergraduates. They married in 1950. Vi enjoyed a rewarding career as an elementary school teacher while the couple raised two daughters. Both their daughters are U-M alumni, as well as some of their beloved grandchildren. The family lost Vi to breast cancer in 2010.

Doug says of Vi: “She excelled as a teacher, counselor, mother, homemaker, spouse, and caregiver.” This scholarship honors Vi’s legacy and gives others the opportunity to be successful in their lives.

Teaching Resident Professional Development Fund

Anonymous donors established a fund to support professional development opportunities for SOE teacher education graduates who are serving as Teaching Residents at the School at Marygrove. This summer, two Teaching Residents were able to complete a reading remediation course at no cost due to the donors’ generosity.
Champions for Education

Carrying on the Family Tradition

Jonathan and Kelly Opdyke honor family and support Detroit through two new gifts at their alma mater

Story by Madeline Swanson for Leaders & Best Magazine

Jonathan (BSEIO ’99, MSE ’00) and Kelly (AB ’98) Opdyke were born and raised with Michigan in their blood and a love for the Motor City. Recently, they invested in the revitalization of Detroit through gifts to U-M’s School of Dentistry and School of Education.

With generations of U-M alumni and Detroiter’s on each side of their family, Jonathan and Kelly both have deep family ties to the Detroit area and the university. Kelly’s parents grew up in the city of Detroit, and her father Dr. John H. Morrison Jr. (AB ’65) and three siblings all attended U-M. Jonathan, a third-generation Wolverine, was raised just outside of Detroit with his parents, William Opdyke (BS ’73, DDS ‘77) and Karen Opdyke Feldman (BSDHyg ’74). Jonathan’s grandfather, Robert Opdyke (BSEMe ‘43), grew up in Detroit and his great-great-grandparents owned a farm in Bloomfield Hills on what is now Opdyke Road.

Carrying on their families’ tradition, Jonathan and Kelly eventually joined the Michigan alumni community. Not long after graduation, professional opportunities led them out of state, and they have since become successful entrepreneurs and philanthropists who are passionate about building thriving communities. Kelly maintains they are still “Michigan kids at heart” who frequently return home for visits with family, the occasional Detroit Tigers game and, of course, fall Saturdays at the Big House.

Starting about a decade ago, with each trip home, they witnessed the growing energy and excitement around Detroit’s modern renaissance. For the Opdyes, this renewed sense of optimism in a city that has meant so much to their families inspired them to help fuel its resurgence. They began investing in Detroit real estate in 2018 and last year Jonathan (along with multiple fellow Wolverines) helped found Greatwater Opportunity Capital, a rapidly-growing real estate private equity firm focused on rehabilitation and new construction of multi-family housing in Detroit neighborhoods. Their investments in Detroit led them to various neighborhoods where they got to know local residents, community advocates, and business leaders, as well as the unique challenges facing each individual community.

“We knew that flourishing neighborhoods would be critical to Detroit’s rebirth, and that it would start with improving education and strengthening the city’s institutions,” Jonathan Opdyke said.

Universities are the lifeblood of many thriving modern cities. Since its founding in Detroit in 1817, U-M has helped educate the workforce, generate knowledge and understanding, and fuel economic vitality. But in the city of Detroit, where the poverty rate is nearly three times the national average, residents experience many layers of challenges that stem from a lack of resources, including attracting and retaining educators equipped to teach in underserved environments.

But at U-M’s School of Education, a potential plan was brewing that would bring to light exciting opportunities for Jonathan and Kelly to be part of the solution.

On a trip home to attend Camp Michigania, U-M’s family alumni camp in Boyne City that Kelly frequented as a child, the Opdyes met Elizabeth Moje, dean of the School of Education and the George Herbert Mead Collegiate Professor of Education and an Arthur E. Thurnau Professor.

She spoke about the school’s new P-20 partnership in Detroit, a collective impact model built through a collaboration among the U-M School of Education, Detroit Public Schools Community District, Starfish Family Services, the Marygrove Conservancy, and the Kresge Foundation. When the Opdyes recognized that U-M shared their passion for helping to revitalize Detroit neighborhoods through education, they were eager to get involved.
In 2018, the P-20 partnership launched a cradle-to-career educational campus in Northwest Detroit. The P-20 partnership includes a PreK-12 school named the School at Marygrove, a cutting edge teacher training program, and community-in-schools approach to education. Unlike any other institution in Detroit, the partnership is committed to a project- and place-based, holistic educational experience, where learning opportunities will promote social justice, foster student agency, connect students' academic work with broader community needs, and much more. “We were really impressed that the Detroit Public Schools Community District and the university were able to form this partnership. It’s truly inspiring to see U-M apply its world-class resources to address inequities in its own backyard,” Kelly said.

The Marygrove campus adopts a “community-in-schools” approach—a model that recognizes that addressing the physiological, sociocultural, and socioemotional needs of students are critical for learning. By providing an ecosystem of wrap-around support, this approach aspires to give every student the chance to succeed at the highest level. It was this comprehensive vision for the School at Marygrove that inspired the Opdykes to explore more about the partnership.

Jonathan and Kelly soon learned of a collaboration between the School of Education and the School of Dentistry to build a dental clinic on the Marygrove campus, and they saw the perfect opportunity to honor the memory of Jonathan’s father, whose life was cut short by a heart attack at age 43. It also resonated with Kelly’s background and career in public health.

With a generous gift to the School of Dentistry, the Opdykes, along with several family members established the William R. Opdyke, DDS Memorial Dental Clinic at Marygrove. Among other health care services planned for the campus, the clinic will offer oral health care to the students enrolled at the School at Marygrove. Although dental care isn’t always top of mind for students and their families, research shows that having good oral health is critical for students to stay engaged.

“We’ve seen that when dental issues persist, school can be low on the priority list,” Jonathan said. “By providing access to preventative and curative care at school, we hope we can help kids focus more on learning, and not on their health care needs. Through this gift, we want to help make learning a top priority for young kids.”

The Opdyke’s initial gift to the clinic spurred additional conversations with Moje about Marygrove’s future and U-M’s growing presence in Detroit. Inspired by the School of Education’s efforts to enhance education in Detroit, they established the Jonathan and Kelly Opdyke Urban Educator’s Fund to provide financial assistance for School of Education students and teaching residents working at Marygrove.

The P-20 partnership encourages School of Education students to gain experience teaching in underserved school districts, with the hope that they will continue working in these communities after graduation. Evidence from a similar program at the School of Dentistry shows that 11 percent of the most recent graduating class returned to practice professionally in underserved communities after graduation, as compared to the national average of only two percent of all U.S. dental school graduates.

Jonathan said he hopes this scholarship will encourage a similar pattern with education students in the P-20 program. “In an era where education is underfunded, inspiring future teachers to continue working in communities like Detroit is a key component to enhancing the entire public education landscape.”

Moje shares Jonathan and Kelly’s aspirations for recipients of the scholarship. “The teaching interns who train at Marygrove are uniquely prepared to create empowering learning opportunities for children and youth because they practice side by side with experts using research-based curricula and teaching strategies,” said Moje. “These new teachers are not only seeing, but also practicing, the most cutting-edge teaching, designed to engage and inspire children and youth to be leaders of positive social change. This generous gift from the Opdykes will help us attract teaching interns committed to serving in urban areas and provide the financial and professional support they need to continue this work after they graduate. The Opdykes are helping us build a new kind of teaching profession.”

The School at Marygrove aspires to be a model for the future of elementary and secondary education in the U.S., and support from donors like the Opdykes is carrying this critical work forward. “This is a really exciting and pivotal time for our hometown and we had been looking for the right opportunity to give back,” Kelly said. “We hope that partnering with our alma mater to bolster educational opportunities in Detroit will inspire others to get involved.”

In addition to the gifts to the School of Education and School of Dentistry, the Opdykes have supported the College of Engineering, the Alumni Association of the University of Michigan, and the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts. Jonathan and Kelly both serve on the Dean’s Advisory Council at the School of Education.
Teach Blue Initiative

Providing opportunities for all who seek to enter the greatest profession

The SOE is introducing a new approach to support teachers as a response to declining enrollment in teacher education programs across the country, critical teacher shortages due to high attrition, and gaps in teacher training as districts anxiously attempt to staff their schools. The Teach Blue Initiative addresses the challenges of recruiting, preparing, retaining, and recognizing teachers by providing a comprehensive pipeline of opportunities and resources.

Dean Elizabeth Moje, who developed the initiative with the input of colleagues and advisors, says, “For the past several years, we have analyzed the factors that are negatively affecting the teaching workforce. As leaders in teacher education with robust school and community partnerships, we are uniquely poised to meet the prevailing challenges to the profession through a fresh approach to recruitment and retention. With the Teach Blue Initiative, our vision is to introduce opportunities and resources that work together to support educators at all stages. This initiative is central to our efforts to ‘re-professionalize’ teaching.”

Recruit

Recruiting young people to the profession through Grow-Your-Own programs

Beginning with efforts to recruit diverse students into the SOE’s Educator Preparation Program, Teach Blue will help young people discover teaching and consider a career trajectory that begins as an educator. Grow-Your-Own programs engage youth in learning activities that help them prepare for college admission. Focusing particularly on districts with teaching shortages, typically in urban areas, students who participate in Grow-Your-Own programs, are admitted to the University of Michigan, and are committed to teaching will be offered scholarships to offset the cost of their four years of tuition. Grow-Your-Own programs help young people prepare for and finish college, recruit wonderful candidates to teaching, and provide future staff for hard-to-staff schools and districts.

Invest

Investing in future teaching professionals through tuition-free teaching degrees

Salaries for beginning teachers can be in the range of $35,000 with a low ceiling for salary growth over time, which makes the choice to take on student loan debt a difficult one, even for those who are passionate about the profession. Currently, SOE undergraduates who accumulate debt have an average debt of $23,466 at graduation. The fear of overwhelming student debt should not deter outstanding future teachers from entering the profession and doing so at U-M. The Teach Blue initiative offsets the cost of a degree for students seeking certification through the SOE’s professional teacher preparation program. With the goal of being able to offer tuition-free teaching degrees, the SOE seeks to enable students—particularly those recruited through Grow-Your-Own programs—to achieve their degrees at U-M and to pursue their dreams of teaching.

Support

Supporting and retaining early career professionals with Teaching Residencies

After graduation, novice teachers continue to be supported as “Teach Blue Residents.” This urban teaching resident stipend encourages teacher education graduates to commit to working in an urban school after graduation as residents, while simultaneously continuing their studies as teaching residents of the SOE. Teaching residents are fully certified teachers eligible for independent teaching status, but offered continued support from the SOE as part of the Teaching School structure. The first residents will be located at Detroit P-20 Partnership schools, but this program may expand to include other partner schools over time. Teaching residents serve a three-year residency, in which they are supported with a reduced teaching load and mentoring from SOE faculty and attending teachers in the first year, with removal of those scaffolds over time to allow them to move toward completely independent teaching. After the third year, the teaching residents will be offered positions in other Detroit public schools, opening the residency positions to other newly graduated novices. In addition, SOE will offer professional development opportunities that will assist the residents in moving from initial state certification to achieving their professional state teaching certificates.

Elevate

Elevating expert professionals through the Teaching Fellows program

Teach Blue continues to advance the work of experienced teachers, too. “Teach Blue Fellows” will be provided opportunities to work on teaching challenges together and to access professional mentorship provided by SOE faculty. The fellowship program will also shine a spotlight on excellent teaching and give acclaim and thanks to the often-unsung heroes of education. The fellowship concept was suggested by Rod Franchi (Teach Cert ’95, AM ’09), an SOE alumnus and classroom teacher, and has created excitement among other experienced teachers. It will provide a unique form of professional development that gives advanced teachers opportunities to contribute to the professional development of novice teachers. One goal of the fellowship is to motivate expert teachers to stay in the classroom by providing individualized learning opportunities as well as a stipend during their participation in the fellowship. Fellows will participate for two years and, in that time, define a problem space and an approach to it. At the end of the two-year program, fellows will present their findings and experiences at a symposium held at the SOE. Funding will support stipends for fellows, support for project costs, conferences, publishing the results of fellows’ work, faculty incentives to partner in developing the study design, travel, and a symposium.
Lead gift from The Harry A. and Margaret D. Towsley Foundation launches the initiative

Supporting students through scholarships has been a commitment of the SOE for decades. Teach Blue brings existing and new scholarships into the comprehensive framework offered by this initiative. The Teach Blue Initiative is only possible through the investment of donors. All scholarship funds directed by donors to teacher education students are part of the effort.

In summer 2020, the SOE received a leadership gift from the Harry A. and Margaret D. Towsley Foundation in honor of Lynn Towsley White for her years as an educator and her service to the SOE as a friend, supporter, advocate, and member of the Dean’s Advisory Council.

Established in 1959, the Harry A. and Margaret D. Towsley Foundation was created by Margaret Dow Towsley with stock from the Dow Chemical Company. Margaret’s father, Herbert H. Dow, founded Dow Chemical. Harry A. Towsley was a physician and professor of pediatrics and communicable diseases at U-M. Together, Harry and Margaret raised five daughters. Lynn Towsley White, the youngest of the couple’s daughters, has served on the foundation’s board of trustees since 1967.

White is a retired middle school teacher who has served on the SOE’s Dean’s Advisory Council since its inception in 2007. In addition to serving in this capacity during the administration of two deans, Deborah Loewenberg Ball and Elizabeth Birr Moje, White has a special connection to the SOE as a graduate of University High School, which was housed in the current SOE building.

The foundation has supported many initiatives coming out of U-M—including at the SOE—that accomplish the organization’s goal to offer creative and sustainable approaches to improving the lives of people and communities. “It is crucial that we support our nation’s teachers with innovative approaches to recruitment, training, and retention,” White says. “The Teach Blue initiative builds on the work the School of Education has been doing for over a decade. I am proud that the Harry A. and Margaret D. Towsley Foundation has honored me with this gift and I am excited to see the initiative gain momentum.”

The foundation’s investment powers each aspect of the initiative as it grows. Lynn Towsley White Scholarships will be awarded to students who are pursuing teaching in urban settings, particularly those who seek to be involved at the School at Marygrove.

The Lynn Towsley White Residency Awards will support teaching residents, providing support in numerous ways, including tuition assistance for graduate coursework, loan repayment, help with living expenses, stipends for classroom teaching supplies, and professional development.

The gift from the Harry A. and Margaret D. Towsley Foundation kicked off the SOE’s effort to raise $50 million in endowed funding for the Teach Blue Initiative. Donors may establish funds and scholarships that broadly support any portion of the initiative, or they may choose to restrict the purpose of their gifts to support one aspect of the initiative or teacher education students who meet certain criteria.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Endowment Level</th>
<th>Initial Annual Scholarship</th>
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<td>$100,000</td>
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Donors may establish funds and scholarships that broadly support any portion of the initiative, or they may choose to restrict the purpose of their gifts to support one aspect of the initiative or teacher education students who meet certain criteria.
Students tell the real story of the impact of Teach Blue scholarships

Students are already benefiting from scholarships under the Teach Blue Initiative. Existing scholarships that donors designated for teacher education students are being leveraged to attract and retain prospective teachers.

Amy Avery, a former paraprofessional at Milan High School who decided to pursue her teaching certification, says she could not have done it without scholarships. Avery received the Nelda Taylor Endowed Scholarship, and in 2021, she will graduate exactly 90 years after Taylor graduated from the SOE. Avery explains that she was often overlooked for financial aid in the past. “My needs to make ends meet as a blended family of six far exceed my family’s take-home pay, and scholarship funds allow me the opportunity to attend school and complete my degree while helping provide opportunities to have basic necessities within my home. The SOE was the only program that considered my cost of living, and by closing this gap for students like me, we are more able to focus our energy on our education.” She adds that this scholarship was especially essential to her family as they weathered the COVID-19 pandemic onset, saying that she was able to contribute finances to her household when her husband’s working hours were reduced.

Nicole Afton received several scholarships, including the Ada Cogswell and Ira Schluter Scholarship and the Thomas A. and H. Ellen Mullett Scholarship. She was studying psychology and volunteering in a preschool when she realized that she wanted to change her major to education. She was concerned that adding time to her degree would be financially impossible, but Teach Blue resources made it possible. “My past two years of school, I didn’t have to pay tuition or take out any loans, and it looks like I won’t have to do that again this year,” she says. “It’s taken so many of my worries away knowing that I have these scholarships. Before them, I had to work two jobs. This opportunity is amazing, it really is.”

Alex Worth came from a large family with seven children, and she was planning to attend another university to keep costs down. “I wanted to get the best education possible, but I also needed to take my finances into account, so it was a balance for me,” she says. “The scholarship support I received at the SOE made a huge difference that allowed me to attend U-M. The SOE was the only school of education that worked really hard to support me as a student financially, and that made a big difference.”

Worth’s parents and grandparents are Wolverines as well. “They were thrilled when I was able to attend U-M,” she says. Worth is planning to teach both secondary education and psychology. She says the staff in the SOE Office of Student Affairs were encouraging and accommodating so that she could finish both certifications and graduate on time. “They pushed me to continue working to gain the psychology certification, which opened up a lot of learning for me that has been helpful in education,” she says. In spite of rapid changes taking place across the field of education, she feels prepared for whatever happens next, adding, “I’m just so excited.”

“The scholarship support I received at the SOE made a huge difference that allowed me to attend U-M.”
Jim Barber (PhD ’09) was named Senior Associate Dean for Academic Programs at the William & Mary School of Education. Barber also recently published a book, *Facilitating the Integration of Learning: Five Research-Based Practices to Help College Students Connect Learning Across Disciplines and Lived Experience*. The book is addressed to a wide range of educators engaged with college student learning, from faculty to student affairs administrators, athletic coaches, internship supervisors, or anyone concerned with student development.

Rachel Bryan (AM ’18) became a College Bound Scholars Teacher with Jalen Rose Leadership Academy, after returning from her time teaching in Thailand.

Sarah Erwin (AM ’13) completed her PhD at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in the Department of Child, Youth and Family Studies, and started in her new role as Social Science Research Analyst with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services in the Department of Health and Human Services.

Ann Luke (AM ’18), Chief of Staff at the A. Alfred Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning, was recognized with the U-M Staff Impact Award, which celebrates staff who go above and beyond, find ways to collaborate across units, find solutions to make the workplace better for us all, and encourage innovation and flexibility in the workplace. Since being elevated to the role of chief of staff in August 2018, Luke has stepped forward to champion and implement thoughtful, inclusive efforts that streamline and modernize practices toward increasing equity and flexibility at Taubman College.

Leah van Belle (PhD ’10) has been named the Executive Director of 313Reads, the collective impact coalition to support literacy equity and grade level reading in Detroit, and elected as the Vice President of the Michigan Reading Association. Van Belle also serves as the Vice-Chair of the Board of the Black Male Educators Alliance of Michigan and on the Advisory Board of the Black Educators Initiative of Urban Teachers.

Carly Wegner (AM ’13) was named Chief Philanthropy Officer for the Nebraska Children’s Home Society.

Tiffany (Pryor) Nelson (AM ’03) is now Director of Admission and Enrollment Management at The Hockaday School in Dallas, Texas.

Stefan Turcic (AM ’14) began the Executive MBA program at Columbia University in the fall.

To submit class notes, update your contact information, communicate with the editor, or connect with the School of Education, please visit [soe.umich.edu/magazine](http://soe.umich.edu/magazine)
Professor Emeritus David Cohen passed away on September 23 at the age of 86. Cohen retired last year after having served as John Dewey Collegiate Professor of Education and professor of public policy since 1993.

A prolific scholar of teaching, learning, and social policy, Cohen was a renowned writer and beloved teacher and mentor. At the heart of his work was a focus on instruction and on the transactions that interact to produce students’ learning opportunities and learning outcomes. Through his research, he has shown that resources—school funding, teachers’ capacity, class size, curriculum, teacher compensation—impact the outcomes of schooling but only as a function of how they are deployed, interpreted, and used, and how those uses ultimately affect what happens inside the classroom.

He received the American Educational Research Association’s Palmer O. Johnson Award in 2004 and the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Educational Policy and Politics Division in 2015. He was an elected member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the National Academy of Education.

From 2015 until 2020, Cohen was a visiting faculty member at Harvard Graduate School of Education, where he had been a tenured faculty member from 1971 to 1984. He became the John Hannah Chair at Michigan State University’s College of Education in 1984. Prior to his career in academia, Cohen was a consultant to the general counsel of the NAACP on schools and race (1964–66) and then director of the Race and Education Project for the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights (1966–67).

Professor Stuart Karabenick passed away on August 1 at the age of 80. Karabenick retired from Eastern Michigan University as Emeritus Professor of Psychology before joining the University of Michigan faculty in 2005 as a research scientist. He was promoted to Research Professor in 2011, and was appointed Adjunct Professor of Psychology in 2015. Although he officially retired as Research Professor Emeritus of Education in 2019, he remained an active scholar in the SOE as he continued research on an NSF-funded project. Karabenick’s scholarship has significantly influenced the field of educational psychology, particularly in the areas of achievement motivation, help-seeking, and self-regulated learning. He received a lifetime achievement award in 2016 from the European Association for Learning and Instruction for his contributions to the field and for his coordination of the Motivation and Emotion Special Interest Group.

About his professional legacy, in an interview conducted by Héfer Bembrutty (2015), Karabenick stated, “I would like to be remembered as someone who contributed to advances in theory and research that has relevance for teaching and learning.... An essential and rewarding part of that role involves mentoring and, in many cases, being enlightened by students, younger scholars, and researchers with their own areas of expertise and interests.... In many respects, I think there is no more important legacy.”

Professor Emerita Valerie Lee passed away on September 21. She joined the University of Michigan faculty in 1986. In 1992, she was also appointed faculty associate in the Survey Research Center at the Institute for Social Research. She retired from the University of Michigan in 2011.

Lee taught courses in the sociology of education, program evaluation, quantitative research methods, and mixed methods research. Her research focused largely on public policy with respect to educational equity, and on identifying characteristics of schools that make them simultaneously excellent and equitable. Although much of her research focused on secondary schools, she had more recently been studying similar issues in the early grades, and at the time of her retirement had broadened her focus to study schools' effects in Brazil and sub-Saharan Africa. In 2008, the University of Michigan recognized her scholarly contributions with the Rackham Distinguished Faculty Achievement Award. In 2010, Lee was elected to the National Academy of Education.

Alumna Kapila Vatsyayan (AM ’49, DFA ’01) passed away on September 16. No one held as commanding a position in the arts in India over the last half century as Kapila Vatsyayan, who combined unparalleled arts scholarship and institution-building experience.

She studied western ways of analyzing movement by mastering the Laban notation system and was prized as a scholar both in the east and the west. In 1998, Congress on Research in Dance honored her for her Outstanding Contribution to Dance. Often called the grand matriarch of cultural research, she authored many path-breaking books such as The Square and the Circle of the Indian Arts, Plural Cultures and Monolithic Structures, and The Natyashastra. Most recently, she was leading the Asia project of the India International Centre, of which she was a lifetime trustee.

Vatsyayan advised three prime ministers—Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi, and Rajiv Gandhi—on matters both educational and cultural, in the foundational period of nation building, and represented India on UNESCO’s board. She was the founder of Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts and was active in the establishment of the Central University of Tibetan Studies and the Sarnath Centre for Cultural Resources and Training.
Over the summer, Susan Santone taught a course on education reform to 44 students in the Master of Arts with Teacher Certification program. With the permission of her class, Santone shared their reflections on education as it intersects with democracy, well-being, justice, action, access, and opportunity. Each quote is an excerpt from a different student’s work. For more, visit susansantone.com.

“I have always believed that it is our civic duty to improve our community. However, I hadn’t thought about the fact that our society seems to expect adults to solve community problems when they are rarely given an education on how to do so. It is very important to me as an educator that I am able to integrate solving global and community problems into my curriculum.”

“If you want students to learn democracy, let them practice democracy. Give them meaningful choices, teach them to collaborate, and spur them to civic action. Schools should be organized to provide a just and democratic education to all Americans so that they can participate in society.”

“If educational policy is not addressing things like access to food and clean water then it is inherently incomplete. If we are asking how to raise students’ test scores, while those same students are taking tests on empty stomachs then perhaps we need to take a look at our priorities. Policies which are not concerned about the student as a whole often rely on deficit thinking.”

“As educators, we need to make space for students to process their emotions and, if needed, to grieve. That is, we need to put student wellbeing before curricular goals in the coming school year. This is particularly true for black and brown students whose communities have been disproportionately impacted by the dual pandemics of coronavirus and police violence.”

“In times of uncertainty and unknowing, we can create a space where our students’ voice and insights can illuminate the path we are carving out for them—and us.”

“Not only are we aware of the importance of equity and democracy in a classroom, but we know how to identify it based off of various categories, including, but not limited to accountability, involvement, policy, role of students, teachers, parents, government, etc. By building an actual set of criteria to evaluate schooling, ‘democracy’ no longer belongs to the government or the bureaucrats; it is in the hands of teachers.”
Champions for Education

In honor of our upcoming Centennial Anniversary Celebration, we invite you to submit your stories & photos!

Share your SOE memories or images

online: myumi.ch/soe-centennial
or by mail: SOE Centennial Stories 610 East University Ave. Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1259