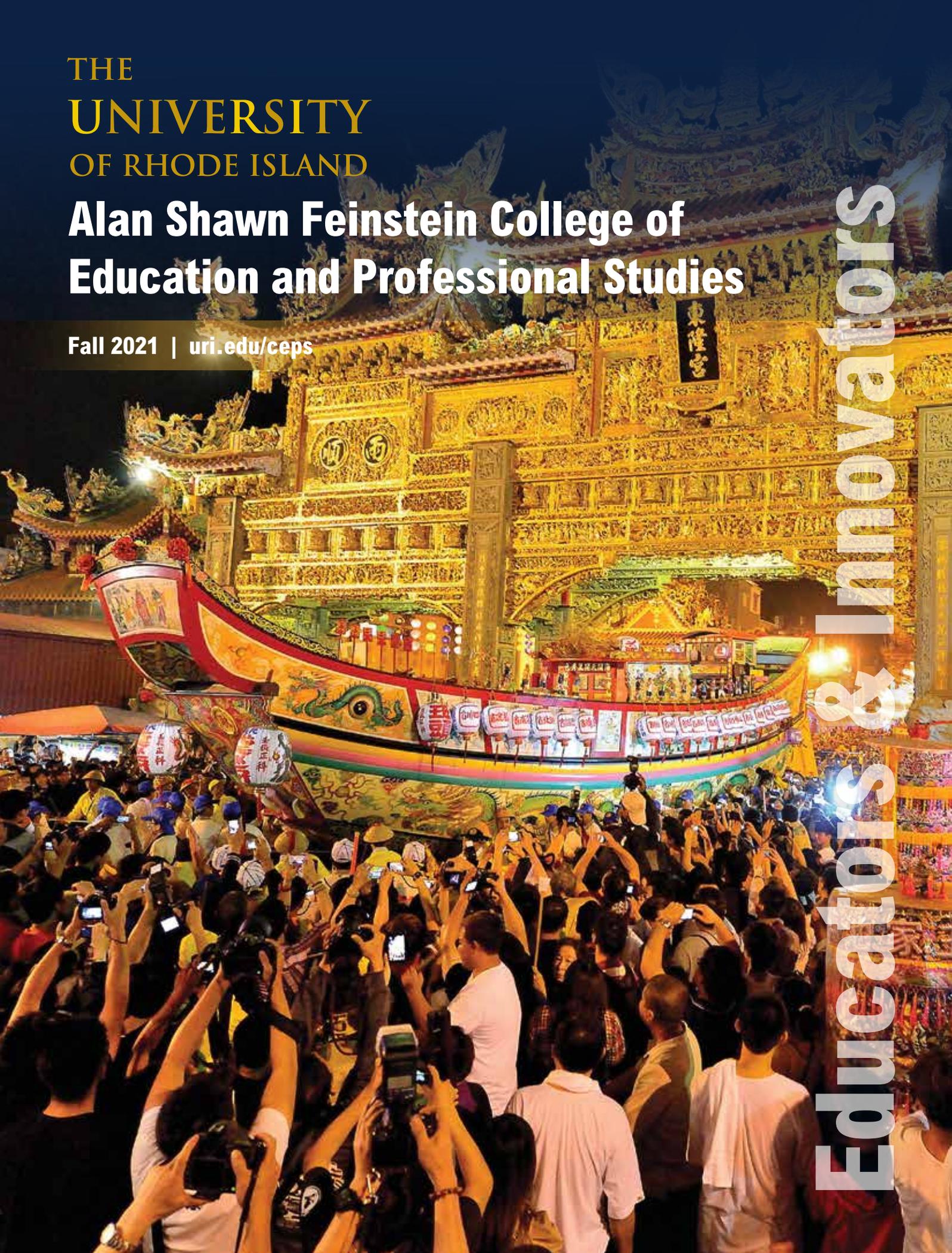


THE
UNIVERSITY
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Alan Shawn Feinstein College of
Education and Professional Studies

Fall 2021 | uri.edu/ceps

Educators & Innovators



Alan Shawn Feinstein College of Education and Professional Studies

This newsletter features the latest news and feature stories for the Alan Shawn Feinstein College of Education and Professional Studies.

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Cover: The burning of the plague god boat, seen here in Donggang, is a folk ritual practiced by fishermen in southwestern Taiwan. The Donggang boat-burning celebration runs for eight days and seven nights. The Alan Shawn Feinstein College of Education and Professional Studies continues to develop a roster of international experiential educational opportunities, including the faculty-led summer of 2022 in Taiwan. Photo courtesy of Republic of China (Taiwan) Tourism Bureau.

At URI, we are undergoing substantial change: A new president took the reins in August, our provost is retiring, and the Alan Shawn Feinstein College of Education and Professional Studies has an interim dean and interims in several other key roles across the college. After more than 18 months in a global pandemic, we are learning about new normals and what they mean for our personal and professional lives. As Heraclitus said, "the only constant in life is change."

There is another aspect of this Greek philosopher's work that is less often discussed. He talks about shifting our idea of life from one of being—where we are static and change is something to fear—to one of becoming, where change is a source of optimism and potential. As I look back on my career—and my life for that matter—I recognize that a core value of mine is to embrace change. Embracing change allows us to grow and flourish; it places us in a state of becoming.

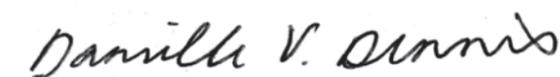
In the book *The Cathedral Within*, Bill Shore emphasizes how medieval masons set forth to build a cathedral they would never see finished. Although these cathedrals took generations to construct, the masons saw their service as contributing to the greater good of the community. They wanted future generations to benefit from their vision and labor.

As members of this college community, we are simultaneously part of its present, its future, and its history. We are at once its foundation and its vision. It is only by embracing change that we can be the masons of this institution and what it will become.

This issue of *Educators and Innovators* highlights several examples of ways that members of our college community are embracing change and strengthening our foundation as a means of building our future. Meg Jones, a Ph.D. in education student, earned a Fulbright to Finland to study how a teacher-preparation program infuses diversity into its curriculum, specifically with respect to the LGBTQ+ population. Military veteran and current student Tyrone Thomas started a podcast dedicated to retaining teachers of color, and one of his first guests was alumnus Rich Norris, also featured in this issue for his transformative work with young men of color. Students from the School of Professional Studies exercised their learning to host a leadership conference for high school students.

Also committed to community engagement, Rabia Hos from the School of Education discusses the many ways Ph.D. in education students contributed to the local area through service-learning work. Since March 2020, technology has been front and center in our lives. Amanda Zelazo discusses the transitions that were necessary to support college operations, and curriculum materials librarian Carol Byrne discusses innovations the School of Education employed to support teacher candidates with remote teaching. Deb Mathews and Lori Herz from the Office of Strategic Initiatives provide details of cross-college collaborations and advancements in evaluations. Ingenuity is at the heart of our work, and nothing showcases that more than our colleagues who earned Excellence Awards, Deb Mathews of OSI, and Kayon Murray-Johnson and Amy Correia, both of the SOE.

We are one college with two campuses, growing and becoming together. I am excited to embrace our changes alongside you over the next two years and look forward to building our college together.



Danielle Dennis
Interim Dean



'As members of this college community, we are ... part of its present, its future, and its history.'

—Danielle Dennis,
interim dean



The mark of
responsible forestry

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B.I.S. Degree Gets a Makeover

New Programs Geared to Service Members, Transfer, Adult, Returning Students

BY JANE FUSCO

Earning a college degree as an adult student is on the rise. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, about 8.1 million students older than 25 are enrolled in degree-granting, post-secondary institutions. By 2026, that number is expected to increase to 8.8 million.

The Alan Shawn Feinstein College of Education and Professional Studies' School of Professional and Studies (SPS), established in 2019, has revamped its original Bachelor of Interdisciplinary Studies (B.I.S.) degree, creating two new B.I.S. degree programs that offer more flexibility in choosing coursework and increasing academic requirements to become a stand-alone major.

"This has been an exciting endeavor to work on over the past year, as we tried to create academic pathways that allow our students to define a program that aligns with their specific desires within a framework," said Christopher Hunter, associate dean of the Alan Shawn Feinstein College of Education and Professional Studies.

Hunter added, "We have seen the changes and needs within our communities, the changes in specific economies, and the changes in how we are able to communicate and transact business and general interactions. Providing our students that option of flexibility to create their own individualized curriculum is critical as they view their identity in their perceived space moving beyond the academic realm.

"In the end, this bachelor's degree should allow our students to be competitive in their chosen space in the market," he said.

'This bachelor's degree should allow our students to be competitive in their chosen space in the market.'

—*Christopher Hunter, associate dean, Alan Shawn Feinstein College of Education and Professional Studies*

The new B.I.S. degrees include a learner-designed, three-minor major and a general studies major, launching in fall 2021.

The B.I.S. learner-designed degree is for students whose career goals call for training in more than one discipline, or who want a breadth of knowledge in several fields rather than a depth of knowledge in a single discipline. This interdisciplinary "three-minor" major provides an opportunity for students to develop and pursue a course of study centered on a self-selected unifying theme, problem, or issue. Students focus on three areas of study, apply critical thinking skills integrating theory and practice to creatively solve problems across disciplines, and communicate effectively across disciplinary boundaries.

The general studies B.I.S. degree is for students who come to URI with a substantial number of credits, or for those students who want a degree that includes learning opportunities from a diverse array of academic programs. This degree combines flexible

course options, small class sizes, and the ability for students to craft a major that meets their needs for an efficient path toward graduation. Students complete coursework in three distinct subject areas of their choosing, while concurrently honing their critical-thinking, communication, and research skills and synthesizing their learning with core courses, including a capstone experience.

The new B.I.S. degree programs offer flexibility, support, and guidance in curated programs specially tailored for STAR (service members, transfer, adult, returning) students, and are the latest additions to the SPS offerings. Last year, SPS launched Bachelor of Science degrees in nonprofit administration and professional leadership studies.

Jonathan Kroll, academic director of SPS, said all the new degree programs are in direct response to the needs of STAR students who seek degrees that capitalize on a wider breadth of academic areas of study and curricula.

"The learner-designed and general studies B.I.S. majors are structurally and curricularly designed for working professionals who want academic programs, courses, and assignments that can be directly and immediately applied to life and contexts beyond their studies," said Kroll.

The STAR student designation is part of a new promotional campaign for fall 2021.

With learning objectives anchored to a specific theme, STAR students will have more choices, allowing them to advance in their current career or train for a new career, Kroll said. ❖

Doctoral Student Receives Fulbright

Jones To Research LGBTQ+ Inclusive Practices in Finnish Teacher Preparation Programs

BY DAWN BERGANTINO



Meg Jones, a doctoral student in the School of Education, has been awarded a prestigious Fulbright grant to conduct research abroad.

'I am going to be looking at what is happening in this program to help push the boundaries of what we think of as inclusion.'

—*Meg Jones*

Meg Jones, a doctoral student in the School of Education, has been awarded a prestigious Fulbright grant to conduct research abroad, working alongside faculty at the University of Helsinki and its AGORA for the Study of Social Justice and Equality in Education group.

Jones, who was awarded the Fulbright Finland Foundation fully funded grant, will research and collect data in service of her doctoral dissertation, which will examine global approaches to LGBTQ+ inclusion in teacher preparation programs. Specifically, her research will focus on LGBTQ+ inclusive practices within the broader context of the Finnish educational system.

"Finland is very much idealized as having one of the best education systems in the world," said Jones. "Yet when surveyed, queer youths in Finland are very much facing similar percentages of discrimination, mental health issues, (and) suicide ideation as queer youths in the United States.

"However, the University of Helsinki has a master's-level teacher education program that is focused on social justice and changing education. So, I am going to be looking at what is happening in this program to help push the boundaries of what we think of as inclusion," she said.

Jones added, "It's such a unique teacher education program, a unique educational system and political system. There's a lot to be learned there."

In addition to collecting research and writing her dissertation, Jones hopes the experience will provide the opportunity for collaboration with her colleagues in Helsinki to publish internationally. Ultimately, she hopes to return to URI and replicate the study.

"I think it would benefit our community and our URI culture," said Jones. "We are known for our Gender and Sexuality Center and for inclusiveness. And yet there is always more work to do and more to learn."

Jones, who grew up around central Florida, was encouraged to apply for the Fulbright by her major professor, Danielle Dennis, interim dean of the Alan Shawn Feinstein College of Education and Professional Studies. A nontra-

ditional, first-generation college student, Jones initially dropped out of high school before obtaining her GED certificate. After a couple of false starts, she went on to obtain her bachelor's degree from the College of Central Florida in Ocala and her master's degree at the University of South Florida in Tampa.

"I first met Meg as a student in the University of South Florida's Master of Arts in Reading Education program. Her ideas, and the way she conveyed them through her writing, stood out to me as some of the most advanced I'd seen, so I encouraged her to consider a Ph.D. program. The path she took into higher education provides her with unique perspective on education, and I believe the Fulbright will serve to propel her work as an advocate for LGBTQ+ youths," said Dennis.

"I dropped out of high school, I dropped out of community college—not because of lack of academic ability. It was just life. It has been a bumpy road, but now I'm sitting here somehow as a doctoral student. I've received a Fulbright award," said Jones. "I'm certainly not a traditional applicant by Fulbright standards. So, I would just encourage any student who is interested to apply, regardless of whether you think you are too old or too inexperienced or don't have the right educational background."

The Fulbright U.S. Student Program is designed to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and those of other countries by providing high-achieving students with the opportunity to research, study, or teach abroad. The Fulbright Study/Research Awards program enables applicants to design their own research projects to work with institutions abroad.

Named for U.S. Sen. J. William Fulbright, the longest-serving chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, the program sponsors U.S. and foreign participants in all areas of study, including the sciences, business, academia, public service, government, and the arts.

URI students and recent graduates who are interested in applying to the Fulbright program should contact the URI Office of National Fellowships and Academic Opportunities for guidance and institutional endorsement. ❖

Focus on the Natural World

Professor Works on Scripts, Games, Curriculum in Response to Pandemic

BY DAVE LAVALLEE

Long before the PBS Kids show *Elinor Wonders Why*™ and its multiplatform teaching and learning resources were launched in September 2020, URI's Sara Sweetman helped build the foundation for the show's success.

The URI associate professor of education has already won praise for work on other PBS Kids shows, such as *The Cat in the Hat Knows a Lot About That*™ and *Sesame Street*™ and for her ability to help show the creators and producers how to boil down science concepts for little ones. In 2016, she was asked by PBS to help develop a request for proposals for new children's shows and accompanying learning media.

The co-creators of the show, Jorge Cham, who holds a Ph.D. in robotics from Stanford University, and Daniel Whiteson, who has a Ph.D. in physics from the University of California at Berkeley, emerged as the winners from the process.

"They are scientists who have also made names for themselves as comedians," Sweetman said. "Creating children's media was a new adventure for them, but they obviously had the science background, and they know how to be entertaining, so I worked with them to ensure the content was age-appropriate and educational."

Cham is a cartoonist for the online comic, *Piled Higher and Deeper* (PHD Comics), and the two have collaborated on a book, *We Have No Idea: A Guide to the Unknown Universe*.

Sweetman worked with the duo on scripts and educational games. Her team at URI—Kelly Shea, a Ph.D. student in education who worked with Sweetman on a research project for *The Cat in the Hat Knows a Lot About That*™, and Lisa Jones, a Ph.D. student who works part time with URI's Guiding Education in Math and Science Network (GEMS-Net)—developed a preschool curriculum based on the series.

Eighty *Elinor Wonders Why*™ episodes will be shown on PBS affiliates during a year-and-a-half, and three video games that accompany the shows are already in use. Four more are in development.

Like *The Cat in the Hat Knows a Lot About That*™, *Elinor Wonders Why*™ offers a

wide range of free teaching and learning resources that accompany the show.

Before designing the curriculum, the team worked with educators at URI's Child Development Centers in Kingston and Providence to get a sense of how preschoolers experience the natural world in suburban and urban settings. Sweetman, Shea, and Jones collaborated with Rhode Island PBS and Rhode Island teachers, several of whom participate in URI's GEMS-Net, and home child-care providers. They also worked with the U.S.

Their dedication to teaching and passion for young children shows in the innovative materials that were created.

"We at Rhode Island PBS have been privileged to work on this project with Professor Sweetman and her team at URI, as well as with early childhood and family child-care educators," said Jon Rubin, director of Education Services at WSBE Rhode Island PBS. "This powerful local collaboration reaches well beyond our region to provide state-of-the-art digital media resources to families



Elinor, a little rabbit and the main character in *Elinor Wonders Why*™, checks out a winter forest with her friends, Ari the bat and Olive the elephant. The PBS Kids show airs locally on Rhode Island PBS.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to develop the teaching and learning materials for a world dominated by a pandemic.

"We worked on a suite of resources to support parents and educators," Sweetman said. "We were in the planning stages when the pandemic hit, and we adjusted the curriculum to be responsive to unique teaching situations caused by the pandemic. The curriculum can be delivered virtually or in person to students."

She said teachers and home child-care providers "were an essential part of the development and testing of the lesson plans.

across the country through the PBS system, to support children's development of literacy and STEM skills," he said.

The main character in the animated show, Elinor, a little rabbit who shares the same first name with Cham's daughter, and her friends—Ari, a bat, and Olive, an elephant—celebrate 4- to 5-year-olds' ability to ask questions and make careful observations of our natural and designed worlds.

"What we are finding is that more and more children are spending increasing amounts of time in the engineered world—computers, tablets, cellphones—and less time in the natural

world. They don't understand where the engineered world comes from," Sweetman said. "Elinor helps make connections between the natural and the designed environments."

"*The Cat in the Hat Knows a Lot About That*™ focuses on physics, while *Elinor Wonders Why*™ focuses on the natural world," Sweetman said. "The cat focuses on experimental and engineering design and Elinor focuses on asking questions and making observations as she encounters the outdoors."

As part of an Explorers Club, Elinor and her friends encourage children to go outside and explore.

And it doesn't have to be some grand adventure. "Elinor wants preschoolers to see the wonder in the living community you might discover under a rock in your own neighborhood," Sweetman said.

Parents, teachers, and home child-care providers should be confident that *Elinor Wonders Why*™ and the accompanying materials are top-quality, multiplatform teaching and learning tools, according to Sweetman.

"All the people I know at PBS take children's education and programming very seriously," she said. "I also know that people trust that PBS has the best interests of children at heart. Our research has shown that quality, well-developed technology is good for children, their families, and teachers."

Elinor Wonders Why™ is part of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and PBS Ready to Learn Initiative with funding provided by the U.S. Department of Education. ❖

School of Education Ranking Climbs

The School of Education in the University of Rhode Island's Alan Shawn Feinstein College of Education and Professional Studies has been ranked No. 83 among public research universities nationally, by the 2021 *U.S. News & World Report* listing of Best Public Graduate Schools for Education, released earlier this year.

The new ranking moves the school up 11 slots from last year's ranking of No. 94 and reflects another annual increase for the college in the last three years.

"This is a proud moment for the Alan Shawn Feinstein College of Education and Professional Studies and URI more broadly," said Donald H. DeHayes, URI's outgoing provost and vice president for academic affairs. "The meteoric rise in national recognition of URI's School of Education reflects the quality, commitment, and hard work of our faculty, students, and leadership team. This wonderful and well-deserved recognition confirms our own assessments of the substance and impact of our programs and our track record in producing the next generation of passionate and deeply engaged educational leaders locally and nationally."

The School of Education has made improving the *U.S. News and World Report* rankings a top-priority strategic goal, along with improving levels of local engagement, national respect, and global involvement in its academic, administrative, and instructional activities.

The Alan Shawn Feinstein College of Education and Professional Studies, established in 2016, was unranked until 2019, when the School of Education ranked 114.

Based at the Kingston Campus, URI's School of Education prepares future professionals in the field of education across multiple specialties, offering teacher certification degree programs at the undergraduate and graduate level. Offerings include bachelor's, master's, and Ph.D. degrees, as well as graduate certificates.

"I am proud that the collective efforts of our faculty, staff, and students are being recognized by the *U.S. News & World Report*," said Danielle Dennis, interim dean of the Alan Shawn Feinstein College of Education and Professional Studies. "As a school, we have been diligent in our efforts to ensure that our graduate students have a firm

→ **2016**
URI Alan Shawn Feinstein College of Education and Professional Studies is established.

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URI Alan Shawn Feinstein College of Education and Professional Studies, School of Education ranked 114.

→ **2020**
URI Alan Shawn Feinstein College of Education and Professional Studies, School of Education ranked 94.

→ **2021**
URI Alan Shawn Feinstein College of Education and Professional Studies, School of Education ranked 83.

understanding of the research, theory, content, and pedagogical knowledge, necessary for educators at all levels, especially as we navigate best practices for distance learning and global initiatives."

First published in 1983, *U.S. News & World Report's* rankings are based on information collected from educational institutions through an annual survey, government and third-party data sources, and school websites. They also consider opinion surveys of university faculty and administrators outside the school. ❖

Becoming Tomorrow's Leaders

Leadership Studies Minor Provides Opportunities to Understand Self, Others

Being able to see yourself as a leader begins with people believing in you.

That is the advice of Molly Hovden, who received a Master of Science in college student personnel in May. She credits the strong leaders she encountered as an undergraduate that led her to this path.

Hovden and Mariel Aleman—a graduate assistant in the Center for Student Leadership Development who is also pursuing a master's degree in college student personnel—wanted to set a similar example for URI undergraduates, so the pair organized a virtual leadership and development conference for undergraduates in April.

The event, dubbed, "Becoming Leaders of Tomorrow," offered workshops on understanding and utilizing personality strengths; identifying and counteracting microaggressions; program planning; mindfulness and self-care; team-building; and such post-graduate service programs as the Peace Corps and AmeriCorps.

Aleman and Hovden staged the conference under the direction of the Center for Student Leadership Development, the Office of Student Involvement, and the Student Event Advising Office. They were advised by Annemarie Vaccaro, education professor and director of the College Student Personnel (CSP) program, as part of a graduate course on leadership and group development. Many of the workshop presenters were graduate students in the CSP master's program.

As their major course project, 10 graduate students designed, developed, and implemented the workshops, Vaccaro said. "I am really proud of the creative, informative, and engaging workshops developed by students."

Other summit presenters included participants from the Student Organization Leadership Consultants, the Center for Career and Experiential Education, and the undergraduate-led group Diversity Dialogues.

The leadership conference was part of the SOUL Summit series—Student Organizations Understanding Leadership—a signature URI initiative that encourages student involvement in organizations offering leadership opportunities. This year's event was open to all students, regardless of whether they were members of student groups or not. Since URI hosts more than 100 clubs and

organizations, incoming students can participate in the Office of Student Involvement's Match Program, which offers assistance in choosing organizations whose work aligns with their particular interests.

Underpinning Aleman and Hovden's message is their shared conviction that all students have leadership potential.

The idea that only a certain personality type—extroverted, bold, headstrong, and loud—is suited for leadership is a myth, Hovden said. Leadership, she argues, is a skill that allows for variations in style.

'Leadership can look very different depending on who you are as a person.'

—Molly Hovden '21

"Leadership can look very different depending on who you are as a person. You can leverage your unique strengths and talents," Hovden said. "Being able to see yourself as a leader is so important, and that process begins with people believing in you."

"A big part of my leadership journey was having mentors, supervisors, and leadership affairs professionals who believed in me and built my confidence to lead," said Hovden, a former graduate assistant in the Office of Student Involvement.

The Role of Mentors

After graduation, Hovden began a new position as assistant director of career development and coaching at St. Olaf College in Minnesota. Originally hired to coach business majors, she explained that her role changed early on, and she now will be coaching social impact majors, working with students who want to go into the nonprofit, social impact, government, education, and gap year/service program fields. "I have a huge passion for these areas, so it was perfect timing," Hovden said.

Aleman, who will graduate in 2022, would like to be a chief diversity officer at a college or university. She says it was the example of

mentors she encountered in her undergraduate education that set her on her intended career path. Their interest in her is a gift she wants to pay forward, she said.

"A lot of the work that my mentors allowed me to do—whether it was helping them plan retreats or be a part of a student committee—drew me into diversity, equity, and inclusion work. My goal is to make systematic change where students feel supported," Aleman said.

"I want to be the person who recognizes that each student I work with will have different needs, and I want to be the mentor who meets students where they are," she added. "I want to recognize who a student is at their core and recognize what they need at any given moment."

An added benefit of the summit was the opportunity for graduate student organizers and participants to hone their leadership skills through experiential learning.

"My fellow graduate students gain experience of how to facilitate workshops with undergrad students, because when we graduate from the program, this is going to be our life's work," Aleman said.

The mission of the Alan Shawn Feinstein College of Education and Professional Studies is to design learning opportunities for individuals to construct knowledge, skills, abilities, and aptitudes that inspire lifelong learning, innovative leadership, and community service.

Vaccaro said the college student personnel course project was, "an exciting way to enact the college mission. By planning, implementing, and evaluating SOUL Summit workshops, the Alan Shawn Feinstein College of Education and Professional Studies student personnel program was able to increase knowledge and skill development in students, engage them in community and campus service, and foster innovative leadership in both the students and the undergraduates who attended their SOUL summit workshops." ❖



'Good Faith Idea Exchange'

A Podcast for Positive Change

BY TYRONE THOMAS

It started last year, in 2020, such a crazy year for so many of us. COVID. Ahmaud Arbery. George Floyd. And that's just the tip of the iceberg. I had my own thoughts about what I was seeing on the news and social media. And for the first time in as long as I can remember, I saw people actually reaching out; even across social media I heard people having the difficult conversations and listening—really listening—to each other.

It lasted for a while, but then went away. I wanted that back. I wanted to talk about the difficult conversations again, and for people to listen to different opinions once more. That was how the "Good Faith Idea Exchange" was born.

"Good Faith Idea Exchange" is a podcast I launched to create an environment where people with differing views on politics, justice, race, or most any other timely topic could express their viewpoints and exchange ideas without the rudeness or judgment often seen on cable news or heard on the radio.

I've noticed that the past 20 years of cable news networks and 12 years of social media dominance have fostered a culture of rudeness and ignorance—a culture of people "debating" by interrupting each other, talking over one another, not communicating to arrive at a better understanding, but to "win" the debate at all costs.

The "Good Faith Idea Exchange" isn't about winning, but rather about thinking.

In episode one of the podcast, I had a talk with an old friend from the military. He and I don't see things the same politically. Yet we had a thoughtful, mature conversation where we each made our points while listening to the other without name-calling, yelling, or dismissing other perspectives.

I also interview people who are making a positive impact in our communities, such as Tory Kern—the manager of a youth street outreach team at House of Hope, an agency devoted to fighting homelessness—whom I interviewed in episode two.

In episode seven, I spoke with Rich Norris, whose family escaped civil war in Liberia. A URI graduate, he is currently an assistant principal of the 360 High School in Providence where he advocates for young people and has many initiatives to help at-risk youths succeed. We had an honest talk about the education system and community involvement in these uncertain times.

I never would have imagined this podcast would gain such popularity so quickly. It has only inspired me to keep going and do more.

Above all else, the "Good Faith Idea Exchange" delivers a message of fellowship, of communion, with an audience from all walks of life. No matter what listeners' back-

Above: Tyrone Thomas '22 during podcast "Good Faith Idea Exchange."

grounds may be, no matter the shape of their paradigm, they gain content and information that forces them to take a step back and examine the validity of their beliefs. It is important for people to understand that any issue can be discussed and perspectives shared in a comfortable, safe environment. I can't begin to tell you how many messages like these I've already received:

What began as a simple idea has taken on a life of its own.

If you have an idea that you think can make some kind of real impact in this world, I hope this will inspire you to pursue it, as I did. Don't just brush it off and move on. You never know where it may take you.

Tyrone Thomas '22 is a full-time student at URI studying writing/rhetoric and education and is a veteran student. He also is working on a post-apocalyptic thriller titled, Forged From Fire.

The "Good Faith Idea Exchange" can be accessed at: goodfaithidealexchange.com

Or search for it on Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts, Spotify, Amazon Music, etc. Type in "good faith idea exchange" and find an episode that interests you. ❖



Program for BIPOC Emerging Leaders



The Rhode Island Black Business Association (RIBBA), in partnership with URI's Office of Strategic Initiatives, has launched the Emerging Leaders Development Program, a leadership program that prepares high-performing, professional Black, people of color, and Indigenous candidates for advancement into senior leadership and executive roles.

The six-month program, to be delivered through RIBBA charitable arm and take place, in part, at the at the Feinstein Providence Campus, will provide participants with additional knowledge, leadership skills, and tools to take their careers to the next level, while raising their visibility within their organizations and communities.

"As a Black woman who has worked in corporate America for the past two decades, I know the challenges of being the only person of color in the room and the lack of career advancement support received," said Lisa Ranglin, RIBBA executive director. "We're grateful to URI for joining forces with us to take on this important program."

Ranglin said that program's pilot will offer emerging professionals a blueprint to advocate for themselves and move from supporting roles to the ranks of leadership, as well as advance through all phases of their career trajectory.

Deborah Mathews, director of the URI Office of Strategic Initiatives, said working together with RIBBA will, "enhance competencies in leadership best practices, strategic thinking, leading through change and communication, all with an eye toward diversity, equity and inclusion, self-awareness, emotional intelligence, and a strengths-based approach."

The fall 2021 pilot cohort, which begins in September and runs through February 2022, will include in-residence training, speakers, volunteer opportunities, and mentor/sponsor opportunities.

In development for two years, the program collected information from statewide surveys, interviews, leadership program assessments, and data on diversity in business. ❖

For more information, contact RIBBA. Interested participants can contact Amanda@ri-bba.org.

'As a Black woman who has worked in corporate America ... I know the challenges of being the only person of color in the room.'

—Lisa Ranglin,
RIBBA executive director

Resources for Educators of Multilingual Students

BY JANE FUSCO

Knowing firsthand what it is like to be a multilingual learner, the School of Education's Rabia Hos developed a Google-accessible website of practical tools that support multilingual students with inconsistent or interrupted formal education (SIFE).

Such circumstances as war, natural disaster, poverty, political unrest, or lack of resources in their native countries may have interfered with or halted the education process for these students, making their acclimation to American educational practices more difficult.

Hos—an associate professor in the School of Education's Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)/Bilingual Dual Language Immersion program—worked collaboratively with the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) to create the website, which went live the first week in March on the RIDE website.

It is the first of its kind in the state and provides resources, curriculum map, program considerations, assessments, and actionable steps on practice and procedures.

The link to the site is: sites.google.com/uri.edu/supportingsife/home

Hos will update the website as new resources and information become available.

"Schools in Rhode Island, particularly in the urban areas with high concentration of SIFE, need additional resources to scaffold and provide rigorous instruction," she said.

Hos was motivated to create the website to address the inequity in education of multilingual learners and to provide easily accessible resources for teachers to help their students succeed.

The website also provides educators with resources on social, emotional, linguistic, and academic needs for this population of students.

"Establishing trusting relationships between teachers and students is critical to seeing progress," she said.

Distance and virtual learning that resulted from the COVID-19 pandemic helped spur Hos to further the function of the website.



read and write because, as a girl, she was not allowed to attend school—Hos was tenacious in her quest for education.

As the only person in her family attending school, she learned English. In addition to her studies, she worked as a babysitter and house cleaner to earn extra money to help her financially strapped family.

"I had to learn many things very fast and had to grow up quickly," she said.

As an immigrant, she wanted to make advocacy

for multilingual students her mission, and she committed herself to improving educational opportunities for immigrant and refugee multilingual learners.

Hos was the first in her family to attend community college, then went on to the University of Rochester and earned a bachelor's degree in English and psychology, a master's degree in education and TESOL, and a Ph.D. in teaching, curriculum, and TESOL.

Today, she is a nationally recognized expert in TESOL/bilingual-dual-language education. She has published dozens of articles, book chapters, and book reviews. ❖

Without proper resources, teachers face problems with student attendance and participation, limited internet access in some households, and students who had to take on roles of caretakers rather than focus on their education.

"The website provides resources to address these concerns and support teachers in creating the most conducive instruction for MLL (multi-language learner) SIFE," she said. "The website is beautiful, and the native language assessments ... will be a huge help to educators in the field," said Veronica Salas, RIDE's multi-language learner specialist.

The website project was part of Hos' two-year appointment as a RIDE ambassador for multilingual learners and took her about eight months to create.

"The website provides great tools for schools and educators in supporting SIFE," said Sergio Paez, director of equity, empowerment, and excellence for English learners in the Central Falls School District.

Born and raised in Turkey, Hos and her family came to the United States with just their luggage when she was 16. She did not speak English when her family first settled in California. They later moved to upstate New York.

"I know how difficult it is being an immigrant and refugee student," she said. A high school guidance counselor told her that she "wasn't college material." Hos was determined to prove her wrong.

With the encouragement of her family—particularly her mother, who taught herself to



Rachael Garcia speaks at a 2019 Armistice Day Ceremony on the URI Quad. Garcia, assistant director of Veteran Affairs and Military Programs at URI, was recently named by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs as Rhode Island's 2021 Woman Veteran of the Year.

From Soldiers to Students

Course helps with Transition from Military to College

BY JEFF JOHNSON

'EDC 278 created the bridge I needed to connect with other students who are in a similar position that I am, being a veteran student.'

—Helder Palrao '21, private first class in the Army National Guard

At 4 o'clock on Friday afternoons, when most college students are getting ready for weekend fun, a group of students arrives at the Feinstein Providence Campus for a course that often continues into their weekend.

These students are military veterans. The course—Independent Study in Educational Studies, EDC 278—is a four-hour weekly class that helps prepare them for student success.

I instruct the class, but I learn as much from them as they learn from me. It's also an honor to work with this group, an honor I've never taken lightly.

Finding time for an additional course when you're a busy adult, student veteran, with home and life responsibilities, can be difficult to manage.

I began working with student veterans at URI in 2008. There were fewer than 200 identified student veterans on campus, but many were beginning to inquire about attending URI under the Post-9/11 GI Bill, which was new at the time.

During the initial conversations and early attendance by student veterans, many were having trouble adjusting to student life, getting information, and connecting socially to the University. Often, these students were returning to college immediately after deployments, and they were unable to attend important orientation sessions for new students. I saw a gap of understanding and a need for assistance with these student veterans. More importantly, I noticed that these students were not aware of, or did not understand, the value they added to their classes.

Student veterans have very different needs than typical college students, and many of their actions are based on their veteran benefits and other training factors.

Thanks to Christine Dolan, education specialist in the Office of Strategic Initiatives, the idea of EDC 278 was born.

"We had veterans enter or transfer in the spring, and it seemed that they were missing an opportunity to take the URI 101 one-credit class where they could really learn about URI and have someone help them navigate all our offices and more importantly better understand the University environment," said Dolan.

Military training is designed to make better soldiers and contribute to career advancement and field training, reinforced

through combat experiences, she added.

"Coming into academia for education is very different, and so understanding this new way of learning was critically important to their retention and success," said Dolan.

Given that many were combat veterans with leadership skills, the URI 101 course was just not enough. It soon became obvious that the students who were veterans preferred being in a class with other veterans and working directly with an instructor who was vested in their success, said Dolan.

"EDC 278 created the bridge I needed to connect with other students who are in a similar position that I am, being a veteran student," said Helder Palrao '21, a private first class in the Army National Guard. "The class itself puts the veteran students first and helps him or her stay on the right path."

EDC 278 is an independent study that runs two semesters for one, two, or three credits. The first semester helps students transition from soldiers to students as they learn to navigate the educational process, including the physical, psychological, and academic demands.

The second semester focuses on professional development, internships, and making connections in the workplace. The students come to the class in different phases of their lives. Some have families and are ready to buy a house. Others are just learning how to be civilians and are in their first job search phases of their lives. The course offers advice on how to highlight military careers and training in the civilian job market.

"The integration of students in different stages of their academic path not only aided in accurate flow of information, but also provided opportunities for mentorships that I may not have been able to partake previously," said Dillin Alexander '23, a corporal in the U.S. Marine Corps.

Alexander plans to take the second part of the course when he is a junior as "my way of passing on the knowledge to students who were in my position."

As the instructor of EDC 278, the course's flexibility allows me to shape my curriculum to individual student's needs.

Over time, I began to notice these students often had the same questions and concerns, so I invited them to meet as a group.

As the class size and enrollment grew, I noticed students arriving earlier to class, which takes place in conference room 242 in Providence. URI provides parking at the Rhode Island Convention Center garage, so I knew they weren't coming early to get good parking spots. They were coming early to connect with each other.

I would often begin class with "check a vet," a time when students were able to briefly explain a situation they had encountered during their week on campus. The situation may be their own or one that another student veteran had encountered on campus. It wasn't unusual to have a visiting student veteran sit in on the class to hear these discussions and resolutions.

"What I enjoyed most about EDC 278 was the encouragement in pursuing your own success," said Jennifer Vinalon '21, who enrolled for professional development experience. "Learning about individuals with diverse backgrounds produced compelling conversations. The relationships I've made with the faculty and students have created a positive difference in my work and personal life." ❖

Garcia Is Woman Veteran of the Year

BY DAWN BERGANTINO

Rachael Garcia, assistant director of Veteran Affairs and Military Programs at URI, has been named the 2021 Rhode Island Woman Veteran of the Year by the Providence Regional Office of the Veterans Benefit Administration, part of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Garcia, a tireless advocate for military veterans, active-duty and military families on URI's campuses and across the state, was honored at a virtual ceremony on April 22.

Garcia is a U.S. Air Force veteran who served in foreign and domestic operations, including Hurricane Katrina in 2005 and being deployed to Iraq as a gunner in 2006. Since she left the military in late 2007, Garcia has continued to serve as an advocate for veterans and their families and is well-known to those who work on their behalf at federal, state, and local levels.

"Rachael represents qualities that we find in the best leaders: integrity, commitment to others, and loyalty to her team. Her partner-

ship on important initiatives such as our RIServes network and R.I. VetCorps demonstrates her dedication to Rhode Island's veterans and military families. She uses the skills she developed in the military for the betterment of our state's veterans, youths, and community members," said Kasim Yarn, director of the Rhode Island Office of Veterans Services.

A graduate of URI, Garcia earned her bachelor's degree in anthropology with a minor focusing on African American literature in 2012. She obtained a Master of Social Work, focused on trauma recovery, from Portland State University in 2016. Before graduate school, Garcia worked for several years as a veterans' coordinator at URI.

"It is no surprise that Rachael is succeeding so rapidly. Her path to success began in 2009 in my EDC 278 course for transitioning student veterans," said Jeff Johnson, Garcia's academic advisor. "I was able to observe her passion for assisting other veter-

ans and students in the classroom and beyond. I hired her as my student veteran coordinator, and she was terrific."

Since returning to the University in 2018, Garcia has been focused on raising awareness of military culture and identity and helping veterans, active-duty military, and their families. She has worked to promote policy change and develop programs at the state and national level designed to support the success of veterans across the country.

Under Garcia, URI's Office of Veteran Affairs and Military Programs serves as a resource for new and prospective students in understanding U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and military benefits, GI bill certification, financial aid, and scholarships. ❖



MESA Program Comes to State

Organization Engages with Educationally Disadvantaged Students in Math, Science



‘Together, we were able to bring a nationally recognized program to the URI community.’

—R. Anthony Rolle, former dean

In June, Rhode Island became the ninth state in the United States to have the MESA (Mathematics, Engineering, Science Achievement) programs included in the curriculum.

MESA-USA is an award-winning K–16 STEM organization whose leaders, students, parents, and alumni are fierce advocates for equity and access to high-quality science, technology, engineering, and math education and training for underrepresented students.

MESA partners with higher education and K–12 to engage educationally disadvantaged students to excel in math and science. Most MESA students are low-income, attend low-performing schools with few resources, and are the first in their families to attend college.

An intent proposal was submitted in the fall of 2020, and a full proposal in the spring of 2021, written and submitted by members of the Alan Shawn Feinstein College of Education and Professional Studies, including former Dean R. Anthony Rolle, Associate Dean Chris Hunter, and Cornelis “Kees” de Groot, professor in the School of Education.

The proposal was accepted by MESA-USA in February 2021 and will be directed by de Groot through the spring of 2023.

The program, titled RIMESA, will be housed on the Feinstein Providence Campus

in the Shepard Building and partially funded through the college and URI. Additional funding will come from corporate and community partners.

Proven Track Record

MESA-USA has a proven track record with more than 50 years producing math-based graduates by providing such support as classes, hands-on competitions, counseling, transfer support, career paths exploration, and a community environment to students from middle school through four-year college. Since 1970, MESA-USA has helped students become scientists, engineers, and mathematicians, filling an urgent need for qualified technical professionals. MESA also partners with industry and major educational institutions throughout the United States.

RIMESA will focus on underrepresented students from middle and high schools in urban and urban-ring areas in Rhode Island.

“RIMESA intends to reach students of color, female students, LGBTQ students, students who live in poverty, and other underrepresented groups,” said de Groot.

Negotiations for a partnership with Providence schools have been underway since the fall of 2020.

RIMESA will develop and support programs in three main areas:

- MESA programs in the participating schools leading to participation in local, state, and national invention and design competitions.
- URI campus-based MESA activities, such as workshops, campus explorations, mentoring, and academic support.
- MESA activities with community and corporate partners, such as on-site visits, workshops, and internships.

“The underlying philosophy for RIMESA is that, beyond creating rich and viable opportunities for underrepresented middle and high school students, we must also work toward creating financial, social, and emotional resources that will enable these students to engage in these opportunities,” said de Groot.

RIMESA also will consider STEM teaching an important career path. “This will make RIMESA unique among the other MESA state organizations,” de Groot said, noting that RIMESA will partner with resources and activities at multiple campuses to build a solid foundation in the state.

RIMESA plans to engage in the following activities:

- Each fall semester, there will be at least two days of STEM workshops, STEM activities, and mentoring activities for teachers and students from the RIMESA schools at URI campuses. These activities will be led by URI STEM and STEM education faculty and students and invited STEM industry partners.
- Each spring semester, there will be at least two days of STEM workshops, STEM activities, and mentoring activities for teachers and students from the RIMESA schools at URI campuses. These activities will be led by URI STEM and STEM education faculty and students and invited STEM industry partners.
- Each summer, RIMESA and URI will organize a STEM summer camp at URI campuses, specifically targeting underrepre-

sented middle school and high school students.

- Each year (beginning in 2022–2023), RIMESA will organize a statewide MESA competition, culminating in a one-day event at a URI campus where middle school and high school winners will be selected by a panel of URI, business, and community experts. Winners will participate in the annual MESA-USA NECS competition.

RIMESA will measure its success by the following criteria:

- Growth in STEM course enrollment for underrepresented populations (among which students of color, students of low socioeconomic class, students identifying as LGBTQ, and students identifying as female), especially among those K–12 students participating in RIMESA program elements.
- Improvement in STEM course grades for underrepresented populations, especially among those students participating in RIMESA program elements.
- Growth in the number of students of underrepresented populations meeting college and career readiness criteria, especially among those students participating in RIMESA program elements.
- Growth in the number of students taking precalculus and calculus in high school and/or ready to take precalculus and calculus in college, especially among those students participating in RIMESA program elements.
- Growth on SAT assessments, especially among those students participating in RIMESA program elements.
- Growth in student RIMESA participation rates in school-based, university, and business/community program elements, as well as RIMESA competitions. (Note: MESA USA requires that at least 50 percent of the RIMESA participating students must be from underrepresented groups.)
- Growth in the number of students from underrepresented populations entering

STEM college and career paths after graduating in RIMESA participating high schools.

- Yearly focus group of RIMESA graduates during their first year for the purpose of program improvement.
- Growth in the number of high school RIMESA participants engaging in (paid) internships with corporate and community partners, starting in 2023–24 or sooner.

Rolle, a Yerba Buena High School (San Jose, California) graduate, is a MESA program graduate, and worked in the San Jose State University MESA administrative office with then-director Roberto Chavez.

“The MESA program provided (me with) guidance and focus beyond the acquisition of supplemental mathematical and science skills” as a first-generation college student, Rolle said. There was also a focus on learning the academic, administrative, cultural, and economic knowledges that are necessary to navigate the complexities of university administration, from admissions to enrollment, to financial aid to continued matriculation.

“With appropriate mentoring and diligence, I was able to become a high school and college graduate. At that time, I told myself if I ever had an opportunity to implement a MESA program at an institution where I worked, I would work toward that. I am happy to say that this program is embraced by others throughout the Alan Shawn Feinstein College of Education and Professional Studies. Together, we were able to bring a nationally recognized program to the URI community to provide access to academic and economic opportunities to our future students,” said Rolle. ❖



Left: Taiwan's Indigenous people are known for their colorful festivals. The Alan Shawn Feinstein College of Education and Professional Studies continues to develop a roster of international experiential educational opportunities, including the faculty-led summer of 2022 in Taiwan.

International Education Opportunities

Faculty-Led Experiences Offered in Dominican Republic, Taiwan

BY COLLEEN ROSSIGNOL

The year 2020 was unprecedented in so many ways as COVID forced the world to slow down, changed work habits, and kept us home. Borders closed, and travel came to a global halt. Meanwhile, education strategies and delivery methods had to be reimagined on all levels.

Despite this massive shift in human behavior, the Alan Shawn Feinstein College of Education and Professional Studies persevered in its vision to prepare people who are locally engaged, nationally respected, and globally involved in educational, organizational, and economic justice.

Keeping with one of the college's organizational objectives—to develop international experiences for students, staff, and faculty that enhance research, instructional, and community service activities—the college established new international partnerships with such collaborators as the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and re-engaged existing partners to develop a roster of international experiential educational opportunities designed specifically for the school's student base.

Once locations and partners were established, an international committee was formed to analyze each program in detail and develop the academic components for each international program set to launch in 2022.

The first two faculty-led international experiential educational opportunities are unique and offer drastically different experiences—one in the Dominican Republic and the other in Taiwan.

Winter J-Term in the Dominican Republic

Set to launch during the Winter J-term in January 2022, this impactful community service-learning course will take students to the Dominican Republic to learn about the country's education and social sector systems while sharing meaningful dialogue and participating in community development initiatives and cross-cultural experiences with various organizations from the Dominican Republic.

Students also will learn about Dominican history and culture while developing a

deeper understanding of what it is like to live in another society.

The Dominican supporting partners for this service-learning project include the UNFPA and the grassroots nonprofit, Facilitate Network Empower International (FNEI). Both organizations identified the following gaps in access to quality formal leadership and trainer/facilitation skills training in the La Romana and San Pedro de Macoris municipalities:

- Organizational leadership skills.
- Training and education facilitation skills
- Demonstrable research-based teaching curriculum and instructional methods.

Still, to sustain their programs long-term, both organizations rely on hiring local talent to manage and implement program content.

Unfortunately, to support these efforts, an all-too-real challenge exists in finding qualified local leaders and managers with appropriate education levels and professional development experience to reach program objectives successfully.

Faculty and staff proposed customized “train-the-trainer” workshops for each partner

organization's program teams, a concept that was welcomed by the group. Once an initial needs assessment is completed, organizers will collaborate further on the final framework and training topics. Workshops will be designed by faculty and students to develop leadership capacities, enhance leadership skills, and expand organizational development activities for underserved communities and individuals in La Romana and San Pedro de Macoris, giving the students the opportunity to use their classwork in a real-world context.

The first workshop will involve the UNFPA's girls club program team in San Pedro. This program aims to “strengthen the citizenship of girls and adolescents through the creation of clubs in public community spaces, where training workshops are offered on human rights, gender equality, sexual and reproductive health, prevention of early unions and violence, and general topics associated with the full development of youth potential.”

URI students and faculty will collaborate with UNFPA leaders to develop leadership and best teaching practices training for their program managers. Trained leaders will be able to implement dynamic, engaging, and learning-filled training no matter the subject.

FNEI runs a rural school in the town of Villa Hermosa, in the neighborhood of Villa Caoba, predominantly serving stateless children of Haitian origin and impoverished Dominican Republic children in preschool through fifth grade. As of now, undocumented children lack educational opportunities beyond the fifth grade. For this reason, FNEI plans to expand the school to include additional educational opportunities for higher grades. While FNEI has an adult education program to reduce illiteracy and job skills training, it has identified gaps in formal leadership training and the need for continued education for its teachers. With its expertise in adult education, K–12 education, and leadership training, the college will deploy these resources to collaborate with this rural school, community, and other stakeholders to support the long-term plan for this program and to improve leadership and best teaching practices.

Summer 2022 in Taiwan

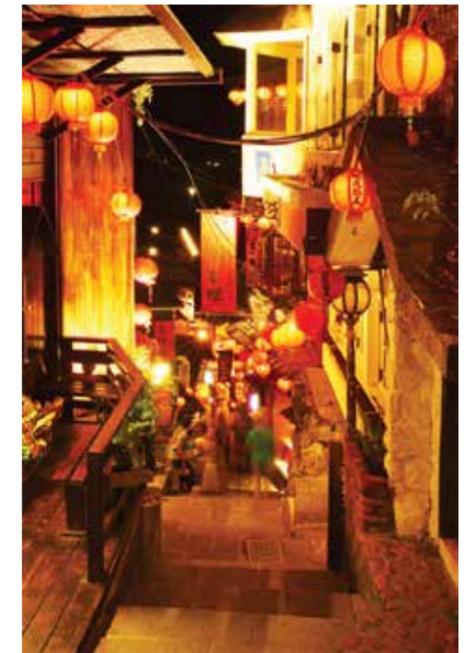
The second faculty-led program will launch in the summer of 2022, when students will travel with faculty to Taiwan for 18 days to learn about the education and social sector systems in Taiwanese society. The group will work directly with University of Taipei students and faculty, the community, and special guests from the Ministry of Education, and tour historical and culturally significant sites across the island.

Starting in Taipei, students will network with other students from the University of Taipei and receive a crash course in Taiwanese culture, history, and society from Taiwanese lecturers. Through close collaboration with student peers, they will learn what it's like to live in Taiwan directly from local youths. After the classroom course sessions, students will visit Taiwanese schools in the capital, Taipei, and in a rural community with other University of Taipei faculty and students. With thoughtfully guided discussion and reflection, students will compare and contrast the differences and similarities between Taiwan and the United States. Over two days, students will meet with local nonprofits to learn about social challenges and how they plan to overcome these challenges. Before leaving the northern part of the island, students will visit Jiufen Old Street to learn about the role gold played in this small seaside village's history.

Other bucket-list-worthy activities on this diverse itinerary include Taiwanese cultural tea plantation tours, culturally sensitive guided time with Indigenous tribes learning about their customs, how to prepare local foods, and dining in the famous Taiwanese night markets. Students and faculty will come away from this enriching experience with a deep understanding of the Taiwanese way of life, its rich history, and how it impacts modern education and societal systems.

German Teacher Experience

The German teacher exchange program will be a collaboration with the Technical University of Braunschweig and will initially run as a virtual series of webinar workshops for faculty and students separately. These workshops will deepen the professional and educational ties between the United States and



Above: Jiufen is a coastal mountain Taiwanese village known for its narrow alleyways, teahouses, and street food. The historic village, located about an hour from the capital Taipei, was once a gold-mining town.

Germany while providing digital cross-cultural experiences and networking opportunities. The goal is to build interest and the foundation for a future exchange between the two schools.

As the college grows and expands to meet the needs of Rhode Island's workforce, a global mindset, cultural tolerance, and understanding are essential. Though Rhode Island is the smallest state in the country, it serves a dynamic and international population of residents from across the world—West Africa, Central and South America, the Caribbean, and beyond. This is why the college committed to offering impactful international experiences to broaden minds and enhance the academic experiences for its community of lifelong learners.

With more than a year of staying close to home, the world is ready to get up and move once it's safe to do so. With the strides it has made in international initiatives since 2020, the Alan Shawn Feinstein College of Education and Professional Studies is bringing these community-enriching international opportunities to a post-COVID world. ❖

Colleen Rossignol is special assistant to the dean for global initiatives for the Alan Shawn Feinstein College of Education and Professional Studies. She is also the co-founder of The Village Link, a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization that provides access to early childhood education in rural Sierra Leone, West Africa.

Lasting Lessons of Virtual Instruction

Workshop May Have Enduring Benefits in Post-Pandemic

BY CAROL BYRNE

When the COVID-19 pandemic forced the shutdown of K–12 schools in March 2020, it caused a seismic shift in instruction and learning. Teachers, students, families, and districts had to adapt quickly to this new paradigm. Among the many changes were teachers creating online materials from in-person lessons, students using technology to attend class, families assisting children with technology, and districts ensuring students had access to devices and internet connectivity.

Pre-service teachers in URI's School of Education also faced this adjustment.

"When COVID-19 resulted in the closing of school buildings, teachers were required to make a quick shift to emergency remote learning. In many cases this happened without much guidance or support, and very often with old technology," said Danielle Dennis, interim dean of the Alan Shawn Feinstein College of Education and Professional Studies. "Despite this, classroom teachers and our student teachers rose to the challenge and delivered lessons virtually."

At the end of the semester, the School of Education surveyed the students who'd been pressed into virtual instruction for feedback on their remote-teaching experiences.

As the pandemic continued through the summer, and as school districts planned for reopening, URI students preparing for field experiences or student teaching faced an uncertain fall. Would their classroom experiences be in-person, virtual, or a hybrid of both? While the pandemic produced so much uncertainty, it also led to an opportunity for

these students—a workshop designed to help them learn principles of virtual instruction. Dennis came up with the idea for the workshop, based in part on the responses to the student survey.

"In thinking about ways to support (students) moving forward, I wanted to leverage the expertise of our faculty and staff to help students develop skills that would lead to more purposeful digital lessons," she said.

In August 2020, the School of Education launched "Virtual Instruction in the Real World" as a professional development workshop for its students. At that time, Rhode Island's school districts were planning a variety of instructional scenarios for the fall. Some districts offered in-person learning for younger students, with high-schoolers attending classes on a virtual or hybrid basis. Other districts, like Pawtucket and Warwick, began all classes in an entirely online format. Depending on the district into which pre-service teachers would be placed, they could have entirely different teaching experiences. While the workshop may have initially been conceived to help with remote instruction, much of its content is applicable to in-person and hybrid teaching environments, as well.

Two experienced online instructors—Amy Correia, a senior lecturer in the Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)/ Bilingual Dual Language Immersion program, and Mary Moen, assistant professor, Graduate School of Library and Information Studies—collaborated to create the content of the course. Asynchronous, self-paced modules covered such topics as principles of online instruction, online learning activities, learning management systems and tools, communication with students and families, and assessing student work.

At the outset, workshop participants were asked to reflect on and post their own experiences with remote instruction. They had, after all, been thrust into remote learning themselves as undergraduates. This exercise helped them analyze their own attitudes toward distance learning as students, perhaps helping to identify with the K–12 students they would meet in field experiences and student teaching. Workshop participants analyzed and used digital tools, developing assignments and posting them in online classrooms they created. They also evaluated strategies to facilitate communication with students and families and learned about practices that support an efficient online classroom. Once they had completed the workshop, participants earned a microcredential, with a badge to include on their resumes.

The course has been offered continuously since its inception.

"The same principles of good teaching still apply in an online setting," said Moen. "Creating an environment of respect and rapport. Clear and attainable learning objectives. Student-centered instructional activities that engage higher cognitive level thinking. Assessment of and for student learning to inform you on student progress and on ways to improve your teaching. What is different is the way you present the content in a virtual setting," she said.

There is a need to learn about digital tools and resources that might be available in a face-to-face setting, Moen added. "You have to imagine being in the student's place and design lessons that are interactive and collaborative in this more self-directed virtual setting. You have to present information in smaller chunks and take advantage of different formats (audio/visual) to present content. You have to provide even more clear instructions; have your digital resources tested, open and ready; and think of issues students might have ahead of time so you can provide supports and a 'Plan B' that might be needed to help them succeed," she said.

As they prepared to teach, students who had taken the workshop felt ready for remote teaching. Jeriann Evans '21, one of 75 students who completed the workshop, said she felt more comfortable and familiar with online resources after completing the workshop.



Elementary education major Lily Janigian '21 student-taught both in-person and virtually a fourth-grade class at Park Elementary School in Warwick this past spring.



Jeriann Evans '21 completed the workshop, "Virtual Instruction in the Real World," to help prepare for student teaching.

Since completing her student teaching in a first-grade classroom at Harris Elementary School in Woonsocket, Evans reflected on a year of virtual teaching, seeing how other platforms could be used in the classroom to keep students interested.

"I think the workshop was really helpful for incoming teachers to become familiar with technology-based learning and teaching," she said. Evans used Padlet, a useful online resource for brainstorming, assessments, exit tickets, parent/student communication, gauging prior knowledge, and other applications in the workshop.

Lily Janigian '21—an elementary education major with a TESOL certification extension who student-taught in a fourth-grade class at Park Elementary School in Warwick this past spring—taught both in-person and virtually. When she introduced herself in the workshop, she said, "I wish that it were easier for students to collaborate in partners or small groups with online learning."

In response, one distance-learning strategy she took away from the workshop was facilitating online breakout sessions with her students using Google Slides, allowing them to answer questions on the slides during the sessions. Before the workshop, she had been concerned how to effectively work with English learners during distance learning. After the workshop, however, she felt more prepared for teaching distance learning with English learners. "I found that many of the

needs of English learners ... are all addressed in similar ways to in-person learning," she said.

During the 2021 spring semester, students in EDC 458 Social Studies Methods were among those who had been planning to be in the classroom in person but were not able to go into schools and had to teach remotely. Their instructor, Sandy Jean Hicks, associate professor of elementary education, required students to complete the workshop for class credit. Hicks credits the workshop with her students' ease in presenting lessons remotely.

"They taught three lessons via Zoom in teams, with children interacting, and were confident to do so. It seemed to go well for them. I think the workshop helped with this," she said.

Giving pre-service teachers exposure to remote-teaching tools and strategies will have benefits that endure beyond the pandemic.

Students "can't get enough on this topic," said Hicks. "They need these skills, whether we are in a pandemic or not. We don't know the context of education in the future, so I'd like them to have some specific skills so they can jump in with confidence to any teaching and learning situation."

While educators tend to agree that most students are more successful during in-person learning, there are some students who perform better in a virtual setting. The pandemic-induced prevalence of virtual instruc-

tion has revealed as much to families, who may be advocating for the option of remote learning. Perhaps as a result, other districts are still planning to offer virtual instruction in some form. The School District of Philadelphia, for example, is keeping the remote learning option available to families. Districts in California and Houston, Texas, will offer some remote learning next year, as well. Jefferson County Public Schools, the second-largest school system in Colorado, plans to offer the Jeffco Remote Learning Program alternative education environment, in which students can enroll for the 2021–2022 school year. Even before the pandemic, online K–12 schools were available in at least 30 states. According to the RAND Corp.'s Remote Learning is Here to Stay report, 20 percent of U.S. school districts plan to offer some form of remote learning even after the COVID-19 pandemic.

In Rhode Island, most students in K–12 districts returned to at least some in-person learning by the spring of 2021. But even with full in-person learning, remote teaching may still be utilized to provide instruction during staff professional development days, inclement weather days, or in instances when schools must close unexpectedly during power outages or due to other infrastructure issues.

Even before the pandemic, in-person classrooms teachers were using increasing amounts of technology every day. The pandemic compelled them to integrate these tools more fully into their daily teaching. Now that they have, it is unlikely it will go away, whether they are physically in a classroom or not.

Participants in the "Virtual Instruction in the Real World" workshop benefit from being prepared for the possibility of some remote learning. At the same time, what they have learned is not limited to an online scenario, but can be used to reinforce and supplement in-person or hybrid instruction. Through the workshop and subsequent application of what they learned in field experiences and student teaching, education students have gained new knowledge into instructional strategies that will serve them regardless of the instructional environment in which they work. ❖



Leadership Summit

Partnership Forged between Feinstein College, Local High School

BY JANE FUSCO

This was not a typical final exam, or a typical classroom experience.

On March 6, the Alan Shawn Feinstein College of Education and Professional Studies hosted a virtual Leadership Training Summit for about 40 participants from the Juanita Sanchez Educational Complex and Providence Country Day (PCD) high schools, where the URI students were assessed on how well they applied the principles from the class and facilitated breakout sessions that explored topics of listening, mindfulness, and teamwork.

The course—SPC 420: Facilitating Leadership Development, designed and taught by Jonathan Kroll—met every Saturday for six weeks, from January to March, preparing students to deliver engaging and applicable leadership trainings, while challenging them to use experiential learning and reflective dialogue.

Kroll said the summit's breakout sessions were purposefully designed to be "live training for the students to apply their leadership training and facilitation skills."

Originally scheduled as an in-person event, it was switched to a virtual format in a matter of 24 hours because of an outbreak of COVID-19 at one of the high schools.

Sharon Blackmar '23, one of the URI student leaders, said that some of the principles and methodologies from the course helped to formulate a plan B that was needed quickly due to the unforeseen circumstances.

"Anticipating the unexpected is very important. Understanding your own confidence and knowing the significance of your own confidence level contributed to the success of the workshop," she said.

The summit and change of plans provided the students with a tangible opportunity to put their leadership training skills into practice, Kroll added.

Austin Ashe, associate director of undergraduate education at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Martin Trust Center for Entrepreneurship, launched the summit as keynote speaker. Ashe, completing his dissertation from UMASS Boston, researches and examines how hip-hop music informs teaching practices for students of color and others underrepresented by dominant cultural practices.

"Looking into these Zoom boxes, I see the future, and I feel the presence of excellence," he said.

Ashe explained his humble beginnings growing up poor in Connecticut and said his own mentor taught him, "to be the kind of leader I wanted to be." By culturally connecting hip-hop to his leadership style and skills, he followed his passion.

Following Ashe's address, the high school participants were divided in four breakout sessions led by the URI students—Aaron Fitzsenry '24 facilitated "Listening in Leadership"; Ineida Anderson '22 presented "Mindfulness in Leadership"; Keri D'Abrosca '21 hosted "The Leader's Attitude"; and Blackmar led "Leadership Strengths."

"A good leader is one who demonstrates empathy, listens well, and includes the voices of others in decision-making," said Fitzsenry, a chef with 30 years' experience, adding he has had supervisors who were ineffective because they lacked some or all of these qualities.

"I've also seen the growth and success of others as a result of practicing these core values with honesty and authenticity," Fitzsenry said.

Blackmar said the professional studies coursework prepared her to understand her audience for the assignment—her first time facilitating a workshop. "It is so important to know your audience, to know the subject/material, and to consider the best way to deliver it," she said.

Mark McLaughlin, associate head of the Providence Country Day School, said he hopes the school's students will strive to be positive leaders in whatever fields they choose to pursue. "The earlier we can begin helping them think about this, the greater their chances will be to succeed."

The PCD students came away from the event with three big takeaways, McLaughlin said. First, they were engaged, thanks to "a powerful keynote speaker who was able to connect his own experiences to the themes of the day." They also learned that mindfulness and the proper attitude contribute to success, both as a leader and in life, in general. Lastly, they were able to connect with "earnest, genuine adult students who shared not only their curricular knowledge but also their life experiences."

'Anticipating the unexpected is very important. Understanding your own confidence and knowing the significance of your own confidence level contributed to the success of the workshop.'

—Sharon Blackmar '23,
URI student leader

Shannon Gormley, lead teacher for career technology education and social work at the Juanita Sanchez Educational Complex, said the high school students were able to practice their public speaking skills, communicating, and collaborating with others.

"So many of our students are leaders in different capacities," Gormley said. The students enjoyed learning from others at the summit. "They appreciated the overall feeling of having a safe space that was created by the URI leadership team," Gormley said.

Kroll plans to make a summit a regular part of his course curriculum and is looking forward to returning to face-to-face meetings. He hopes to expand participation with other groups of URI students, departments within the University, and other high schools.

So how did the URI students fare on their exam?

"Exceptional," said Kroll. ❖

Targeting Barriers, Building Trust

Alum's Youth Group Helping Young Men Reach their Potential

BY RICH NORRIS

I wanted to tell this story in so many ways and begin in so many places, but instead I will get right to the point. If I die fighting for the success of marginalized students, particularly Black boys, then so be it. This is not to ignore the plight of young women of color, as their future deserves equal attention as well. I emphasize Black boys because much of the research so far has pointed to just how cheated they have been in society. Armed with this knowledge and what I see each day as a school administrator, I have focused my life's work on building a space where these young men can thrive.

The Gilbert Stuart Gentlemen Association (GSGA) is a leadership academy that targets the ills that so often keep these young men from becoming the productive citizens they are meant to be. These young men live in a country that has built up walls that seem impossible for them to climb. My job so far with the group is to recruit a small army of good people to tear these walls down so these young men can reach their full potential. I will go to my grave doing this work.

The Gilbert Stuart Gentlemen Association is a boys' leadership group that I started when I was a recent college graduate and still looking to find my place to make an impact. I worked for the College Crusade of Rhode Island as an advisor at Gilbert Stuart Middle School. I had also attended the school as a new refugee from the war-torn nation of Liberia who had spent three years living in a refugee camp in Ghana.

I have always been one to take initiative, so I wasn't going to wait until someone told me to plug a gap at the school. We had beautiful young men whose energies needed to be redirected, so I stepped in and led the charge. As we built more trust, we began to talk about everything. I began to notice more and more gaps. Many of these young men were below grade levels in school, so we added tutoring.

After lots of convincing with snacks and agreeing to play one-on-one basketball, the gents started to attend. We instituted physical fitness and meditation as ways to care for their minds and bodies, and they bought in. We agreed to community service after I made a convincing case that we were responsible for caring for our community and no one was coming to do it for us; that if we didn't do it, others would come and buy us out.

We put in place a professional dress day to practice for the leaders we would become. I demanded that they study their histories, because the United States has glossed over it or taught them a whitewashed version or hadn't taught them at all. For me, it was about having pride in where they came from and where they could go.

Our district was preaching college and career readiness, but students weren't exposed to any of those opportunities, so we added that to our programming. We would take the city bus, or some of the parents would bring their cars, to support our college trips. We walked to some of the local colleges. I invited various guest speakers to meet the young men, and I reached out to whoever was willing to provide an opportunity. We went to public hearings at the school board to testify on issues that concerned them. We even made it to Washington, D.C., to speak with our congressional delegates about inequities students felt existed within the system. We celebrated with each other in every way. We worked on being OK to express love for another Black male and to be supportive of each other. We created a safe space for us. I was willing to do whatever it took to make sure these young men had the exposure to opportunities that would change their world view and spark a new vision of themselves.

The GSGA is my heart because it allowed me to give back in a way that I had been given and taught to give. I always believe I am doing God's work in the field. While it can be very taxing work, I am grateful for the opportunity to support these young people in their growth. I am grateful for the team that has signed on to guide and do this work. I only ask that the young men pay it forward.

I moved to the United States at 12 years old. When the war happened in Liberia, I was 3 years old, and while my memory is not all there about all the things that happened, I know what chaos is. I know what destruction of life and dreams looks and feels like. In all, I know what selflessness looks like as I watched my mother do everything in her power to provide for others, even when we had very little for ourselves. I watched her sacrifice her own life and time with my brother and me, so she could care for others who couldn't do it for themselves. So, when I

was in position to serve others, it was an easy calling. Even if I hadn't made it to the United States, I probably would be dedicating my life to this kind of service.

I never know where I am heading next, but as I do more research, I see an opportunity to expand my work—hence, the beginning of a new chapter with the very slow start of the Black Girl Magic Group at my current high school in Providence. I don't know how it will turn out, but my heart is in it, and I know that's an important ingredient if one is to do this work. I am not here to save anyone; I am merely a support. My mother taught me this.

Part of leadership, as I am learning, is to build capacity in others and let them continue and improve upon the work. It is the hardest thing for me, but I am slowly letting go. The gentlemen's association is now led by advisors I have developed over the years. We have established a board and have become a nonprofit organization. I have full confidence in my team, so I can step away, but not too far, and let my people do their work. So far, things are trending in the right direction. I am grateful for this. In all, the work has remained focused on the development of the young men. This was the intent all along. If I can leave you with anything, it would be this from one of our gents:

"The GSGA helped me to open my eyes to problems in society from the still ongoing struggle of kids like me to the transition from childhood to the real world," said Micah Matthews. "When I first joined, I knew what I wanted to be when I finished school, but the GSGA taught me more about how to get there. GSGA also taught me some morals like being different instead of trying to blend into the crowd. It also taught us how to be leaders instead of followers. To this day, I will never forget the things I learned from my teacher that started the program, and I have confidence that this program will help other young African American men to grow and set goals for the future." ❖

Richelieu Norris '09 is the assistant principal of 360 School in Providence, R.I.

Celebrating 25 Years Together

'Marriage' of Feinstein College and Arts Program a Vibrant Union

BY STEVEN PENNELL

As the URI Alan Shawn Feinstein College of Education and Professional Studies celebrates 25 years since moving to the Shepard Building in downtown Providence, we reflect on the collaboration between the college and the Arts and Culture Program.

It all began with a sort of blind date. "Meet me at the Shepard Clock" was a popular slogan when the building was home to Shepard's Department Store. As URI prepared to move the college into the renovated Shepard Building, I met with then-Dean Walter Crocker about engaging in a senior theater/oral history theater program. For our "first date," I proposed, "Meet Me at the Shepard Clock—A Living History Lesson," recreating living holiday window displays representing different departments of the Shepard store, designed to look like different points in history from the 1880s to the 1970s. Each window was filled with students from Mount Pleasant High School, URI students and staff, and residents from Smith Hill and the downtown senior centers. The display also included oral histories, artifacts (hats and boxes, dishes, silver, furniture, and wedding gowns), and performers from high schools and senior centers singing carols on street corners as audiences peered into the activated windows.

After the success of this performance exhibit, Dean Crocker asked if I wanted to do another, as the Artist in Residence (AIR).

Each semester, the AIR program hired poets, creative writers, choral directors, and theater directors to create projects for the URI community. I also began creating oral history performances combining URI students and staff, young people from the community, and senior citizens. After a bit of "dating," I also realized that the lobby provided an ideal space for exhibits (though I had to manufacture display walls). It was visible to



"Containment" oil painting by Michael Stricklin '77

the public from the outside of the building, drawing people in from the street, and to people walking into the building for classes, conferences, meetings, and appointments at the departments of education and of higher education, also located in the building.

This had the makings of a long-term relationship. Monthly exhibits and events focused on such topics as family relationships, cultural celebrations, aging and gerontology, hunger and homelessness in Rhode Island, and Holocaust awareness. We joined with Gallery Night Providence and featured exhibits with receptions, bringing artists from the University, the community, and around the world, attracting a wide range of people to the building and its programming.

Then we became "engaged" with the creation of the Arts and Culture Program to which I applied as coordinator. Thus began expanding the network of collaboration with the URI Honors Colloquium; a variety of URI departments; tapping artists from URI, Rhode Island College (RIC), and the Community College of Rhode Island (CCRI) faculty, students, and alumni; working with Brown University; students in theater at URI and RIC; public and charter schools; and community organizations.

I saw the possibilities for the visual and performing arts to focus on a range of important topics and issues, including genetic testing, cancer, climate change, veterans' issues, domestic violence, hate crimes and the construction of racism, peace, life after 9/11, LGBTQ issues, gender identities, and healing.

In addition, the program celebrated different cultures that make up our Rhode Island community—Indigenous American, Mexican, Puerto Rican, Columbian, Bolivian, Guatemalan, India, Myanmaran, Chinese, African, Irish, and Italian—honored through exhibits and original oral history plays that I created and produced. We also hired theater and spoken-word artists, dance, music, and film artists who presented programs in the lobby gallery and the auditorium and also toured throughout the community. We engaged with student writers and directors, local and national arts organizations. Through the years, these programs have helped to educate, raise issues, and provide platforms for discussions about the arts.

Looking at 2021, our 25th anniversary, this has been a year marked by continued COVID restrictions. Like any long-term relationship, challenges provide opportunities to



"Fox Point" by David De Melim '09

strengthen and mature. We offered monthly exhibits, bringing in artworks and allowing the public—in safe numbers—to again experience face-to-face access to the arts. It began with masked guided tours, until the doors opened for self-guided masked visits, and finally unmasked access once more. We presented a variety of virtual opportunities, as well, to reach far beyond the state and across the globe.

As a deepening commitment to the relationship, this year began with an exhibit on "Art as a Tool for Social Justice and a Call for Action" to help recognize bias and to celebrate difference. Topics included Black Lives Matter and gun violence among other issues presented through visual art and performance.

As things opened up more fully, we recommitted our vows with face-to-face access. We featured a solo exhibition of Madolin Maxey's "Visions of Flora" to celebrate Women's History Month in March. The exhibit explored the relationship of the 25 years of Maxey's work with parallels to noted impressionist and post-impressionist artists.

"Ocean View" in April was a celebration of the URI Graduate School of Oceanography's 60th anniversary, created collaboratively with 210 youth artists in competition and 25 area professional artists exhibiting alongside the young artists. The exhibit explored a variety of topics related to the value and the future of our oceans and included a range of face-to-face, radio, and Facebook Live events featuring discussions between scientists, artists, and students reaching far and wide. The project also forged collaborative partnerships between schools and community organizations.

Our recommitment continued with the annual "PS 2021 (Public School Art) and Gift of Art to Rhode Island" exhibit, featuring art from more than 100 K-12 students from 13



"Narragansett Lifeguard Boat" acrylic painting on canvas by Mike Bryce '94

school systems, engaging schools and families and celebrating the way the arts integrate into the interdisciplinary school curriculum at all grade levels. This was followed by the annual "State of the Arts" URI, RIC, CCRI exhibit, including 160 works of art by 75 faculty, student, and alumni artists, showcasing the schools' quality of teaching and the successes of students, faculty, retired faculty, and alumni in the world of art and education.

"Human Creativity" celebrated 40 years of visual and performing arts in Central Falls, highlighting a long-standing, deep relationship between URI and Central Falls public schools—encouraging their students to "Think Big," to express and envision themselves beyond the boundaries of their 1-square-mile impoverished community.

September's "Remembering the Life and Work Jorge Cardena" was a celebration of the local Latinx community through the visual and performing arts, celebrating these significant cultures in Rhode Island while celebrating the passing of an important champion and philanthropist in the community. A documentary of this project is in the works through Rhode Island PBS.

Exploring personal growth in October involved healing and spirituality with "Spirits, Spirituality, Supernatural, and Steampunk!" celebrating a wide range of healing arts and contemporary artists who use their media to explore spirituality.

The year will end with "Environmental Justice and Indigenous Rights" in November and December, a collaboration with Brown University's John Nicholas Brown Center for Public Humanities and Cultural Heritage and the Tomaquag Museum. The project will include an interactive traveling exhibit, works by area Indigenous artists and craftspeople, with panel discussions and presentation exploring social justice, individual rights, and environmental issues.

This marriage remains vibrant and has deepened through the ensuing years with the College of Continuing Education transforming into the Alan Shawn Feinstein College of Education and Professional Studies. It continues to grow, exploring important educational issues and topics, networking with departments across the University and community organizations, while engaging individuals and organizations from the University, the community, and beyond.

Here's to the next 25 years! ❖

OSI and 'Big Picture' Connection

BY DEBORAH MATHEWS AND LORI HERZ

When the R.I. Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner initiated Rhode Island's take on a nationally recognized best practice in adult education—Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST), dubbing it RIBEST @Work—the goal was to use the expertise of the state's higher education, workforce development, and adult education systems to solve employer-identified needs for mandatory skill development and frontline workers' access to education.

That is where URI's Office of Strategic Initiatives' (OSI) evaluation team came in.

"The evaluation team was actively engaged throughout the development and implementation of the RIBEST @Work project, attending steering committee meetings as observers offering consultation during all phases of the project," said Gayla Gazerro, OSI team leader.

The OSI evaluator developed "consistent and strong relationships" with the project director, agency providers, participants, and industry partners, she added. Mid-point and cumulative surveys provided feedback, with the data used for continuous improvement throughout the project.

"The evaluator was sensitive to the needs of the participants and therefore eliminated any barriers to completing the survey by providing translation in two languages, English and Spanish. One of the most valued and effective data sources came in the form of participant success stories that demonstrated the career, education, and personal impact related to program participation," Gazerro said.

Program evaluation is a tool to demonstrate accountability to an array of stakeholders, including funding sources, policymakers, state and local agencies, and community leaders. Most federal funders require that an evaluation be conducted by an independent party. An objective analysis of programs and projects is always beneficial, even when not required by funders, to track progress toward goals and report on impact.

For more than 25 years, the OSI has provided reliable evaluation services for numerous state and federal government entities, schools, hospitals, nonprofit organizations, and business clients.

Relationships with grant leadership teams are viewed as a partnership—collaborative

efforts to bring a project or program successfully full cycle. Toward that end, OSI is engaged during the proposal-writing process and then participates in team meetings and grant events as needed throughout the grant period. OSI consults with teams on goal clarity, the evaluation and assessment plan, data sources and collection methods, strategies to boost participation, data analysis and reporting, even event planning.

The office partners with faculty from such URI colleges and departments as the School of Education, Graduate School of Oceanography, College of the Environment and Life Sciences, College of Engineering, and the Computer Science program. In addition, it works with state agencies, public and private nonprofits, and business organizations that are interested in learning the impact of workforce development programs.

As part of its process, OSI helps clients design an evaluation plan that will assess progress toward goals and report on outcomes and impact. Data collection methods typically include focus groups, interviews, and surveys.

Sara Sweetman, assistant professor of education, said OSI helped her to make "big-picture" connections from the work they were doing in education to the community at large. The project was an exploratory study of computational thinking at the elementary school level.

"The evaluation taught us that we made a lot of progress over the last three years in many areas—cross-walking standards, creating meaningful shared definitions, providing examples of integration in various subjects, spreading awareness—but also made us aware there is still a lot of room for future work," Sweetman said.

TYPES OF EVALUATIONS

Developmental Evaluations

Developmental evaluations, also called adaptive, real-time, or emergent evaluations, are designed to inform and support innovative and adaptive development in complex dynamic environments. Asking evaluative questions, applying evaluation logic, and gathering and reporting evaluative data to support the project, program, and/or organizational development with timely feedback

URI Office of Strategic Initiatives consults with teams on goal clarity, the evaluation and assessment plan, data sources and collection methods, strategies to boost participation, data analysis and reporting, even event planning.

are all part of a developmental evaluation. Using a mixed-methods approach to get real-time feedback creates a level playing field between participants and the evaluator and reduces participant vulnerability.

Process Evaluations

Process evaluations, also called implementation evaluations, are the most frequently used type of evaluation. They review how a program is implemented and focus on how a program operates. Process evaluations can be beneficial throughout the life of a program; however, they are often used when a program is implemented to ensure compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements, program design requirements, professional standards, and customer expectations. Early program evaluations can identify processes that can be made more efficient and mitigate compliance issues later. A process evaluation may also be appropriate during the latter stages of a program life cycle when there is a need to assess program efficiency or effectiveness in achieving output goals.

Formative Evaluations

A formative evaluation (sometimes referred to as internal) is a method for judging the worth of a program while the program activities are forming (in progress). This part of the evaluation focuses on the process. Formative evaluations are basically done in real time. They permit the designers, learners,

instructors, and managers to monitor how well the instructional goals and objectives are being met. Its main purpose is to catch deficiencies early so appropriate learning interventions can take place allowing the learners to master the required skills and knowledge.

Summative Evaluations

A summative evaluation (sometimes referred to as external) is a method of judging the worth of a program at the end of the program activities (summation). The focus is on the outcome. Various instruments used to collect the data include questionnaires, surveys, interviews, observations, and testing. The model or methodology used to gather the data should be a specified step-by-step procedure. It should be carefully designed and executed to ensure the data is accurate and valid.

Outcome Evaluations

Outcome evaluations, as the name implies, assess program outcomes. Outcomes can be immediate effects of a program or less obvious. In general, the closer an outcome is to program outputs, the clearer the link between the two. That is, outcomes measured immediately after outputs are generated are less likely to be affected by outside factors that can cloud the relationship between outputs and outcomes. In addition to intended outcomes, outcome evaluations should address unintended outcomes.

Why program evaluation? Because evaluation activities seek to document accomplishments, organize data, prepare reports, and define any variance between the planned program and the actual program, Gazerro said.

Funders and stakeholders need to know what works well, what doesn't, how to replicate or change a procedure, and feel confident that future programming will be successful. ❖

For more information or to engage the services of OSI for your program, contact Gayla Gazerro, 401.277.5236, gayla@uri.edu.

Alumni Spotlight

Marie and Guy DiBiasio—Educators who Lead by Example

BY RENEE BUISSON

Marie and Guy DiBiasio are dedicated teachers who believe in supporting the school that set them on their career path.

Guy DiBiasio saw Marie Campopiano at a high school graduation party in Providence, and it was love at first sight. She was supposed to attend another college, but he convinced her to apply to the school he was planning to attend—the University of Rhode

Island. It was the beginning of their mutual commitment to education.

Today, Guy DiBiasio '60, M.A.'66, and Marie (Campopiano) DiBiasio '61, M.A.'68, are still enthusiastic about each other, their alma mater, and the field of education.

"URI was the best thing that ever happened to us," said Marie DiBiasio. "We had great careers and raised our children. We love URI and have stayed connected over the years."

Guy DiBiasio entered URI majoring in engineering, then switched to the liberal arts, with a minor in English.

"My parents worked in factories, and I didn't know what I wanted when I started URI. URI inspired me and opened up new vistas," he said. "After graduation I became an English teacher and realized I would need an advanced degree to stay in education. I went on to get my master's degree in education at URI and a doctorate at Boston University."

Marie DiBiasio started in the College of Business and then switched to early childhood education. She followed a similar path, earning her master's in elementary education at URI and then going to Boston University for her doctorate. Both have taught in URI's School of Education during their careers.

The DiBiasios have two children—Stephen and Susan—and managed to juggle family while they each continued their education.

"We need good teachers, and the education URI provides is essential," said Marie DiBiasio. "That's why Guy and I set up the DiBiasio Family Endowment to provide scholarships for students in the School of



Marie (Campopiano) DiBiasio '61, M.A.'68, and Guy DiBiasio '60, M.A.'66

Education. When I was teaching at URI, I saw single mothers working hard to improve their situation, and we thought it would be important to help them. The endowment is flexible depending on student needs, and we contribute every year to build it up."

"We also are members of the Oliver Watson Society, which means that we have left money to the Alan Shawn Feinstein College of Educa-

tion and Professional Studies when we pass," said Guy DiBiasio. "We are very pleased with how much the University has grown and evolved over time."

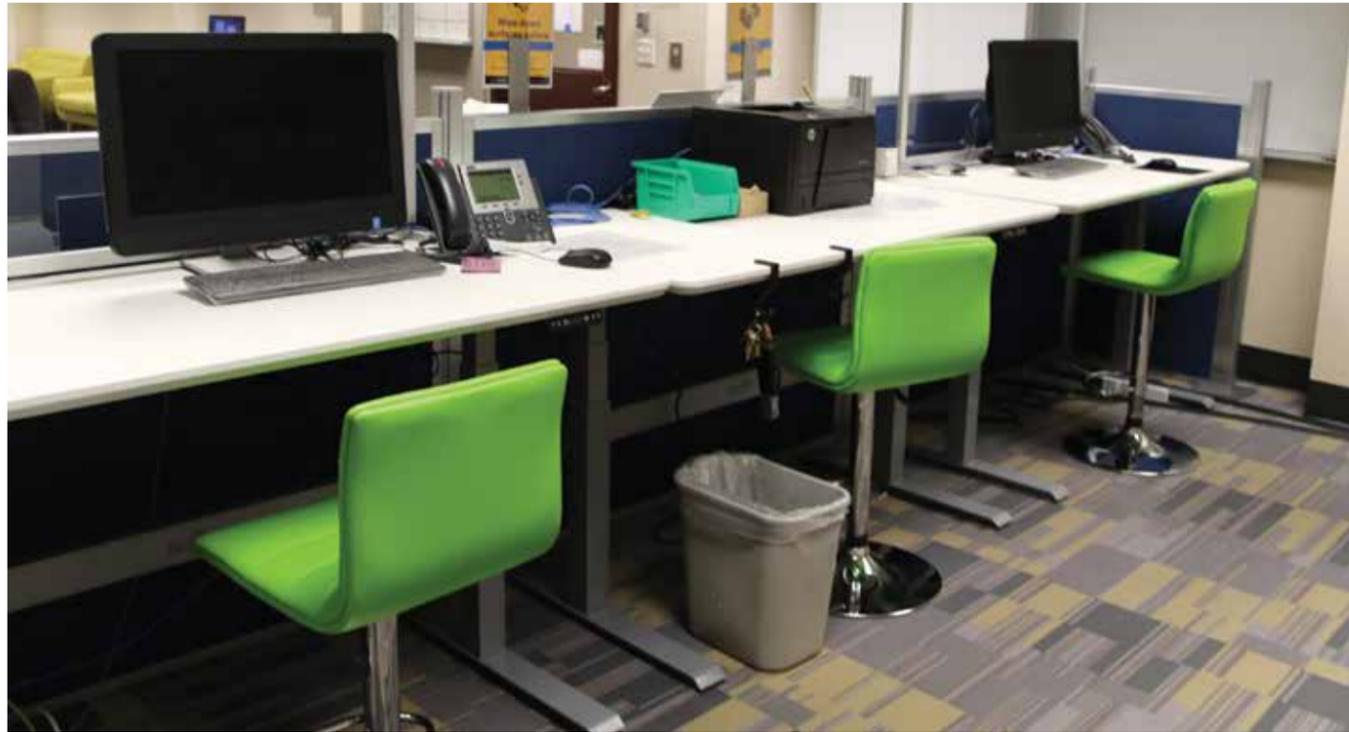
Marie DiBiasio is currently chair of the Advisory Council for the Alan Shawn Feinstein College of Education and Professional Studies, working closely with the dean to plan for the future. Her professional experience teaching at URI, working in the Rhode Island Department of Education, as dean of the School of Education at Roger Williams University, and as an educational consultant developed her broad view and unique perspectives.

"I like being active, and I love staying involved with URI," she said. "Guy and I have always attended and helped organize our reunions and the Golden Grad activities."

Guy DiBiasio retired as superintendent of the Bristol Warren Regional School District and served as superintendent in Chicopee, Mass., as well as Eastford and Franklin, Conn., school districts. During his career he taught in the Coventry school system, at the Community College of Rhode Island, and at URI.

"People who work in education don't generally have the resources that alumni from other URI colleges do," said Marie. "It doesn't matter how much you give as long as you participate to encourage future teachers. ❖

Support the Alan Shawn Feinstein College of Education and Professional Studies through RhoDyNow: Feinstein College at uri.edu/give, or contact Linnell Bickford at ljbickford@uri.edu for more information about giving options.



Newly renovated Alan Shawn Feinstein College of Education and Professional Studies' Information and Instructional Technology Services department.

Transitions in Technology

BY AMANDA ZELAZO

In the spring 2020, URI made the tough decision to halt all in-person classes with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. For many departments across the University, this came with challenges, including transitioning faculty to online teaching, finding new ways to deliver student services remotely, along with the sudden onset of everyone needing to work from home to stay safe and healthy.

After the initial rush of device loans to staff so they could work from home and countless virtual meeting trainings of faculty and staff so they could meet and teach online, the Alan Shawn Feinstein College of Education and Professional Studies' Information and Instructional Technology Services (IITS) department took full advantage of no longer having foot traffic and patrons to serve in the computer labs and began plans for a renovation of the student computer labs and IITS offices.

For more than 10 years, the two computer labs were assigned to classes needing computer access, and the single daily use computer lab was available for students who needed quick access to a computer.

With the increase of personal computing devices students are bringing to class, and in

conjunction with most class enrollment numbers exceeding our computer lab capacity of 23, it was time to do something different with the space we had available. The renovation of the computer lab space included removing a wall that divided student employee space from a quiet computer lab, creating a new student computing lounge with daily use computers, setting up a socially distant computer lab space for classes and open use, and creating a separate office space to fit the three full-time technology support staff members who make up the IITS department.

The new lounge space for URI students has a few daily use computers, including one ADA- (Americans with Disabilities Act) accessible workstation, comfortable furniture for working individually or in groups, and two study pods equipped with 55-inch monitors for screen-sharing and collaboration.

The computer lab is currently set up for social distancing, with a mixture of 16 Windows and Mac desktops. To accommodate classes with more students than the lab can hold, a mobile lab for up to 30 students can be reserved and will be brought to the class's general assignment classroom for use.

The future of the new computer lab and

lounge space includes in-space device rentals, allowing students to test out new technology without having to purchase it on their own.

The IITS department hopes to have a bank of Microsoft Surfaces, Apple iPads, Windows and Mac laptops, VR Headsets, and specialized film equipment available for students to use within the lounge space.

The hope is for students to use and experiment with the available technology to determine if it is something they can use in their studies to improve workflow and productivity.

The computer lab and computing lounge area will be open only to URI students who show a valid URI ID. Basic tech support will be provided by student employees and full-time employees working on-site. ❖

AWARDS



AMY CORREIA

Robert J. Stevenson Scholarship

Association of Teacher Educators

Amy Correia, instructor in the School of Education's Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)/ Bilingual Dual Language Immersion program, has received the 2021 Robert J. Stevenson Scholarship from the Association of Teacher Educators. The award is given to a candidate who shows potential for leadership in the field of teacher education, research and scholarship, and outstanding programs in teacher preparation.



DEBORAH MATHEWS

Administrative Excellence Award

URI Foundation & Alumni Engagement Award

Deborah L. Mathews, director of the Office of Strategic Initiatives, has received the URI Foundation & Alumni Engagement Award. She is an established leader with more than 20 years of experience in using creativity, enthusiasm, and strategic thinking to drive organizational change and build innovative and flexible professional development strategies to grow the skills of Rhode Island's workforce. Mathews leads efforts to provide inventive, comprehensive, and customized solutions to a diverse clientele of public, private, and educational organizations. A skilled leadership coach, organizational development consultant, and facilitator, she prides herself on activating the full potential of every person within organizations.



KAYON MURRAY-JOHNSON

Excellence in Teaching

URI Foundation & Alumni Engagement Award

Kayon Murray-Johnson, assistant professor of adult education, was named the 2021 recipient of the Excellence in Teaching award given by the URI Foundation & Alumni Engagement. She has more than 17 years of training and experiences in facilitating adult learning experiences and instructional design. Her most recent scholarship examines effective approaches to navigating difficult dialogues on race, ethnicity, and racism—an area of study for which she received the 2019 Christine A. Stanley Award for Diversity and Inclusion Research in Educational Development from North America's Professional and Organizational Development Network in Higher Education



ANNEMARIE VACCARO

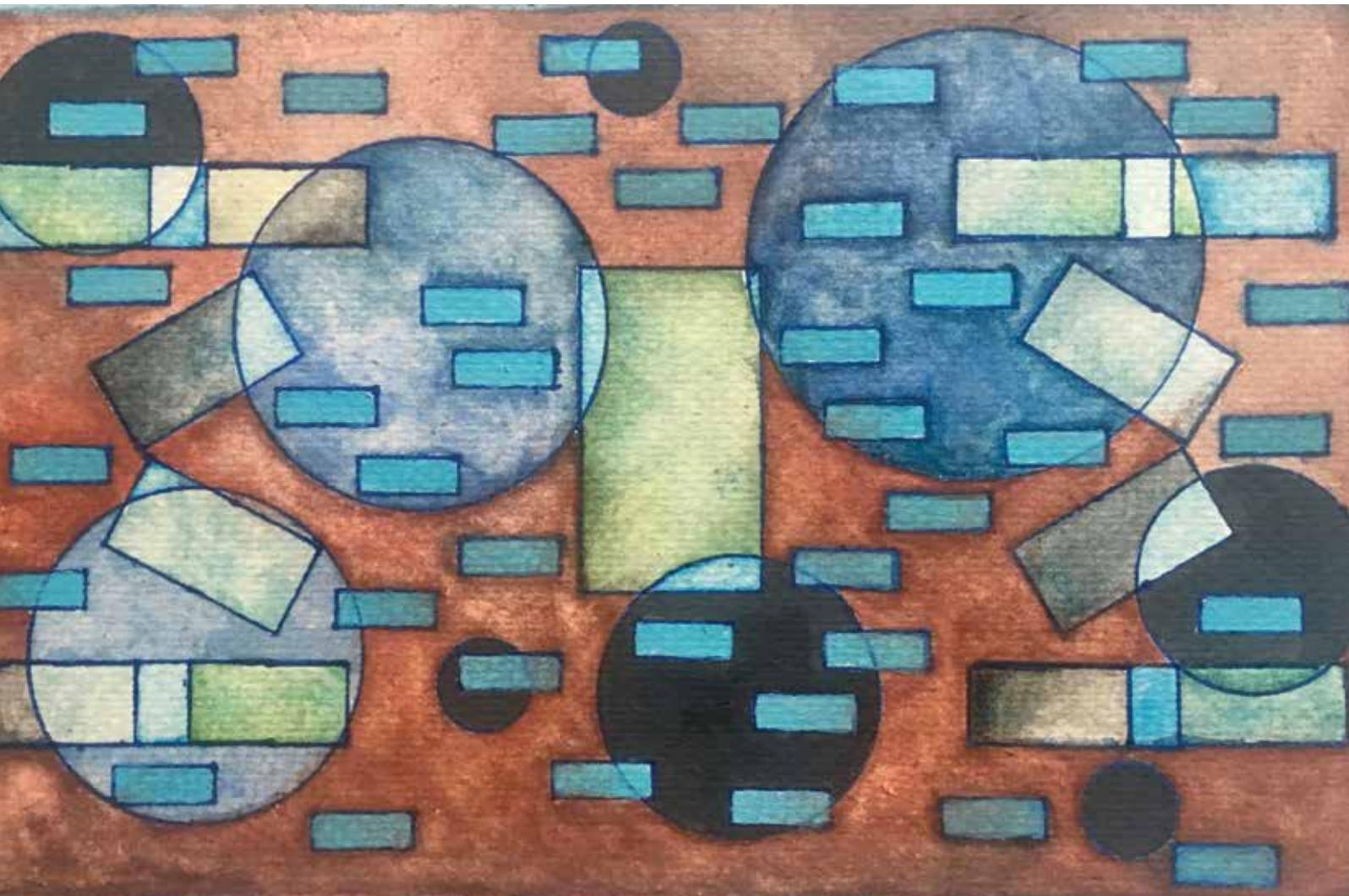
2021 Alumni Scholar Award

College of Education and Communications at Indiana University of Pennsylvania

Annemarie Vaccaro, professor of education and director of the College Student Personnel program, has received the Alumni Scholar Award from the College of Education and Communications at Indiana University of Pennsylvania for outstanding scholarly achievements and noteworthy accomplishments in her post-graduation career.

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"Coordinates" by Richard Mathews '76

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