Welcome

I hope that everyone feels a sense of accomplishment as the semester comes to an official end. Reflect on the hard work, late nights, and time spent searching for research sources needed for the countless papers. All of these things are part of graduate education that can be grueling. Did you find yourself questioning or doubting yourself this semester? Why am I doing this? Is this educational process worth it? Those questions are normal as graduate school is challenging. Reevaluating priorities and determining what is best for you can sometimes make all the difference in degree progression. Take time during the break to rest, relax, and consider any necessary adjustments to make the upcoming spring semester even better than the fall.

Amidst the challenges, our graduates can be an inspiration. Please join me along with the Department of Educational Leadership, faculty and staff, in congratulating our fall graduates! We wish them all the best as they move forward with their careers and the new opportunities that will come their way.

Enjoy the winter break and holiday season!

Cathy Howell, Ed.D.
Ed.D. Graduate Program Director
Faculty Spotlight

Dr. Ayesha Sadaf

What brought you to UNC Charlotte?

First, I was impressed by the experiences of faculty in the LDT program and collegiality of faculty in the Educational Leadership department. Second, I wanted to work at an institution with diverse students and faculty. Finally, I was drawn to the beautiful urban city of Charlotte with great weather and friendly people.

I am originally from Pakistan and worked there as a K-12 teacher for five years. I came to the U.S. to pursue a degree in Computer Graphics Technology from Purdue University. I enjoyed the development of technology-based instruction and being hands-on with technological tools. My teaching background and interest in technology was the reason I decided to pursue a doctorate in LDT and become a faculty in higher education.

What are your favorite parts about working in Educational Leadership?

I like the ability to pursue my own academic goals including the topics that I enjoy teaching, areas of scholarship that I am interested in, and service roles that I value as my social responsibility to the students and profession. Also, I enjoy collaborations on different research projects with my colleagues and graduate students in the department and with other institutions.

What research projects are you working on?

My research is focused on improving technology integration and instructional practices in varied learning environments. I have worked on several grants to prepare teachers to integrate emerging technologies in their classrooms and to better understand students’ learning and engagement online. Currently, I am partnering with faculty from Purdue, exploring facilitation strategies that can promote cognitive presence and shared metacognition in online collaborative inquiry environments.
Student Spotlight
Shawn Knight

What made you interested in educational leadership?

The work we are able to do helps shape what’s going on in society. Education really can be a place to address a lot of inequity and social problems. For me, that’s just been something I’ve really appreciated about the work. In a program like this, we get to think about the different issues and how we can influence those changes and create better experiences for students.

I am a first generation college student, and I had no idea what I didn’t know. I got really involved in college and saw how much that changed my life. I also had several mentors in the field. I wanted to understand more about how my work in conduct can be educational. It should be a learning experience.

What brought you to UNC Charlotte?

I got a job as the Assistant Director of Student Conduct & Academic Integrity. I wanted some time to get my bearings, but I missed the educational environment. I always thought a doctoral program would be in my future. Now in Educational Leadership, there are great people, colleagues, and professors. They’re all very supportive. It’s helpful to have on-going feedback and to understand one another’s experiences.

What is your research focus?

My research centers around accountability and masculinity. How masculinity impacts accountability in fraternities. Those were areas I was interested in coming into the program. I have also done more research in the diversity, equity, and inclusion area, and was able to present at ASHE as part of a collaborative departmental project. That was a great experience, seeing that academic side as someone who has been in the student affairs world.
Dissertation Defenses & Graduates
The dissertation defense is the final milestone toward degree completion!

**Dr. Paul Holliday-Millard**
Ed.D. - Higher Education

Dr. Mark D’Amico, Chair  
Dr. Ryan Miller, Member  
Dr. Leslie Zenk, Member  
Dr. Kelly Anderson, Graduate Faculty Representative  

*Understanding the complexities of advising transfer students in an institution-driven system*

**Dr. Michele Mason**
Ed.D. - P-12 Superintendency

Dr. Rebecca Shore, Chair  
Dr. Claudia Flowers, Member  
Dr. Jimmy Watson, Member  
Dr. Loril Gossett, Graduate Faculty Representative  

*Leading for equity: Perceptions of how school districts build the capacity of equity-driven, learning-centered district leaders*
Dissertation Defenses & Graduates

The dissertation defense is the final milestone toward degree completion!

Dr. Tuba Gezer
Ph.D. - Educational Research, Measurement, & Evaluation

Dr. Claudia Flowers, Chair
Dr. Stella Kim, Member
Dr. Rich Lambert, Member
Dr. Val Mazzotti, Graduate Faculty Representative

Providing equal access to English language learners in educational settings

Spring 2021 Graduates

Dr. Aimee Miller
Dr. Meghan Frazier
Dissertation Proposals

The dissertation proposal defense is the second major milestone toward degree completion. Proposals are generally comprised of chapters 1-3 of the dissertation: introduction, literature review, and methodology. Successful completion of all coursework, the qualifying portfolio, and the proposal defense acknowledges students as doctoral candidates prepared to complete their dissertation research.

**Porscha Street Elton**  
**Ed.D. Higher Education**  
Dr. Alan Mabe, Chair  
Dr. Jae Hoon Lim, Member  
Dr. Ryan Miller, Member  
Dr. Spencer Salas, Grad. Rep.

**Susan Gann-Carroll**  
**Ed.D. P-12 Superintendancy**  
Dr. Rebecca Shore, Chair  
Dr. Jillian La Serna, Member  
Dr. Carl Westine, Member  
Dr. David Pugalee, Grad. Rep.

**Nickcoy Findlater**  
**Ph.D. Educational Research, Measurement, & Evaluation**  
Dr. Xiaoxia Newton, Chair  
Dr. Sandra Dika, Member  
Dr. Stella Kim, Member  
Dr. Anne Cash, Grad. Rep.

**Courtney Green**  
**Ph.D. Educational Research, Measurement, & Evaluation**  
Dr. Sandra Dika, Chair  
Dr. Xiaoxia Newton, Co-Chair  
Dr. Mark D’Amico, Member  
Dr. Brett Tempest, Grad. Rep.
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Scott Holcomb
Ph.D. Educational Research, Measurement, & Evaluation
Dr. Rich Lambert, Chair
Dr. Kim Stella, Member
Dr. Carl Westine, Member
Dr. Anne Cash, Grad. Rep.

Yi Wang
Ph.D. Educational Research, Measurement, & Evaluation
Dr. Sandra Dika, Chair
Dr. Kyle Cox, Member
Dr. Mark D’Amico, Member
Dr. Mary Stearns, Grad. Rep.
Dr. Michael Bohlig, Member

Bryndle Bottoms
Ph.D. Educational Research, Measurement, & Evaluation
Dr. Rich Lambert, Chair
Dr. Carl Westine, Member
Dr. Rebecca Shore, Member
Dr. Kelly Anderson, Grad. Rep.
Upcoming Dates

December 17-18
Commencement

December 17
Summer Classes Available Online

December 20
Final Grades Due

December 24-31
Winter Break

January 3
New Year’s Day Observed

January 10
First Day of Classes

January 17
Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day

January 20
NCARE Early Bird Registration Closes

February 11
Deadline to Apply for Spring Graduation

February 24-25
NCARE Virtual Conference