



the newsletter of the
Department of Educational Leadership
at UNC Charlotte

Welcome

The fall 2022 semester is a wrap! Final papers and projects have been submitted and grades issued. Many of you were exceptionally busy this semester with not only your coursework but also conference presentations and meeting programmatic benchmarks. I recognize how challenging it can be to dedicate time to academic efforts when there are multiple competing interests, such as family and work commitments. During this time of the year, take a moment to reflect on the challenges and successes of the semester and the tough choices you are making to obtain your end goal. That often seems very cliché when all you really want to do is just watch Netflix and sleep, and I support that action plan. Take time to unwind and unplug in ways that make sense for you that are restorative, safe, and healthy. Remain mindful of your wellness needs as we prepare for the winter break and gather with family and friends. Seek out necessary support resources as needed.

On behalf of the Department of Educational Leadership congratulations to the fall 2022 graduating class! You are wished all the best as you move forward with new opportunities.

To everyone, enjoy a happy and safe winter break and holiday season!

Cathy Howell, Ed.D.

Ed.D. Graduate Program Director
Interim M.Ed. Higher Education Director

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Staff Spotlight

Behind The Desk **Laurie DeBlock**

Assistant Office Manager, Mother, and Grandmother

Growing up, Laurie always knew she wanted to be a homemaker like her mom. The journey to achieving her goal was filled with taking care of things around the house, caring for her children, landscaping, paying bills, carpooling, and more. Laurie is mother to Denny and Wes, and a grandmother to Harper (2 years old), Max (3 years old), and Mila (1 year old). She has always valued caring for loved ones and brings a "family" mindset and versatile skills to her role in the department.

Laurie moved from New Jersey to North Carolina in January of 1993 and started working at UNC Charlotte in January 2014. She has many ties to the university and the Cato College of Education. Laurie and her family supported the basketball team, as the head coach was a neighbor and family friend. Wes, her youngest son, attended basketball camp at the University while growing up. Her oldest son, Denny, dreamed of studying architecture at UNC Charlotte from the time he was in 5th grade and succeeded in doing so. Denny is also close friends with an Ed.D. program alumnus, Dr. Brad Smith, who has been part of their lives since childhood, so it seemed like a family member graduated.

"UNC Charlotte was always a big part of our lives."

Laurie's involvement in The Department of Educational Leadership began when a friend who had retired from UNC Charlotte said, "Laurie, you have to work at the university." She had been an assistant activities director at a continuing care retirement community and had office experiences, but welcomed the challenge of working in higher education. Laurie has seen her position as assistant office manager come full circle over the years. She manages travel, ordering office supplies, and maintains workroom equipment. Laurie's favorite part about her position is the people. She loves getting to know the faculty and students on a personal level. She is typically the first person whom individuals meet when coming into the office.

"If somebody needs something, they can come to me."

Laurie manages stress by listening to music and creates an inviting office environment with her warm smile, friendly greetings, fun stories, and photos of her grandchildren. Laurie portrays a lifetime of knowledge and compassion centered on family, faith, and determination. She is always willing to be a resource for anyone who needs help and her work is greatly appreciated.



Hometown

Bergen County, NJ

Fun Fact

Laurie's first job was making artificial arteries out of dacron polyester. While working, she also played for a softball team for the first time in her life.

Dream Vacation

Laurie's dream vacation is a visit to her Dad's lake house in the Adirondacks. Her family started snowmobiling there in 1979!

Bucket List

Laurie once took a spontaneous trip to the mountains for solace and prayer. She would like to take a trip again, this time driving around the country!



Student Spotlight **Larry Gourdine**

What made you interested in educational leadership?

I have been working in Higher Education for almost twenty years and feel that a lot has changed during that time period with respect to student retention rates and success. I am focused on how institutions of higher education can improve student success and retention rates, and believe that the Educational Leadership program will provide me the training and knowledge to address issues of student retention impacting colleges and universities across the country.

What brought you to UNC Charlotte?

I grew up as an army brat where my dad was stationed in Fort Bragg, so North Carolina is one of the places I call home. I have lived in Raleigh-Durham and Charlotte. They are both great cities and have received big accolades over the years as being best places to live. I would say I like being in Charlotte, if I had to pick one of the two cities as being preferable. Charlotte has professional soccer, basketball, and football sporting teams. Charlotte is a great sporting town.

What is your research focus?

My research focus is on declining male enrollment broadly, but specifically, black male enrollment in post-secondary education. What is the cause of the decline in black male enrollment? What is the cause of why black males are leaving higher education?

Hometown

Clarksville, TN

Employed

UNC Charlotte, Division of Student Affairs
Associate Dean and Director
Student Assistance and Support Services

Previous Institutions

North Carolina State University
University of Georgia
University of Illinois
at Urbana-Champaign

Research Interests

Black Male Enrollment

Other Interests

Sporting Events
TV Shows for a good laugh
Cheering on Tennessee Volunteers
Relaxing at Coffee Shops

Dissertation Defense

The dissertation defense is the final milestone toward degree completion. A doctoral candidate disseminates the results of their study during the final defense to the research committee and academic community.



Dr. Julia Hajar
**Ph.D. in Educational Research,
Measurement, and Evaluation**

Combatting ceiling effects: Modeling higher-ability student growth using multilevel tobit regression

Dissertation chair: Dr. Richard Lambert
Dissertation committee: Drs. Kyle Cox, Stella Kim, and Michael Matthews

Dissertation Proposal

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.



Emily Kraftson
P-12 Superintendency

"An Investigation of the mental health literacy of high school advanced placement teachers"
Dissertation chair: Dr. Rebecca Shore
Dissertation committee: Drs. Hank Harris, Walter Hart, and Amy Good



Emily Shaw
P-12 Superintendency

"An exploratory study of barriers and supports faced by women superintendents"
Dissertation chair: Dr. Walter Hart
Dissertation committee: Drs. Debra Morris, Jimmy Watson, and Joan Lachance



Kudos Corner

A space to celebrate exciting news beyond the doctoral program! Kudos to the following students:

Jordan Holliday-Millard

Ed.D. in Educational Leadership, Higher Education

Recipient of the 2022 Normal K. Russell Scholarship from the Association for Orientation, Transition, and Retention in Higher Education, otherwise known as NODA.

Sayde Brais

Ed.D. in Educational Leadership, Higher Education

Conference proposal acceptance of posters at [NASPA](#) and [NCARE](#) and a research-in-process proposal at [ACPA](#).

- Presentations are *"Exploring a Sense of Belonging Among First-Generation College, Second-Generation Immigrant Students."*

Krista Collins

Ed.D. in Educational Leadership, Learning, Design, and Technology

Joined Apex Tool Group, LLC, a global tool company with 30 locations worldwide. In her role as a Senior Manager for Talent Management, she works directly with the Human Resources leadership team to lead learning and development functions within the company.

Cynthia Stone

Ed.D. in Educational Leadership, Higher Education

Conference presentation during a roundtable discussion at [AAACE](#) in October and a poster presentation at [ASHE](#) in November.

- Presentations focused on *"Underrepresentation and Experiences of Black Women in Intercollegiate Athletic Leadership."*

April A. Williamson

Ed.D. in Educational Leadership, P-12 Superintendency

Named the Rowan Salisbury School System Principal of the Year

Alumni Spotlight



Dr. Courtney Green, Ph.D., P.E.

UNC Charlotte
Structural and Material Forensics
Project Engineer
Teaching Assistant Professor
Freshman Lecturer, and Advisor

Alumni

Spring 2022 Alumni
Ph.D. in Educational Research,
Evaluation, and Measurement

Dissertation

Persistence of Engineering Transfer
Students: Identifying Student-
Influenced and Institution-Influenced
Academic Success

Awards

Graduate Dean's Distinguished
Dissertation Award for 2022 &
2023 Barbara K. Townsend Dissertation
Award

Dr. Thomas Reynolds, Graduate School Dean at UNC Charlotte, presented Dr. Green with the Dean's Distinguished Dissertation Award for 2022. The award recognizes outstanding research and scholarship by a doctoral student.

Dr. Green was awarded by the National Institute for the Study of Transfer Students (NISTS) the Barbara K. Townsend Dissertation Award. The recognition acknowledges high-quality dissertations that make a significant contribution to transfer student literature. Dr. Green will present her work and be publicly honored at the February 2023 NISTS conference in Portland, OR.



LEDGER Did you know???

Personal branding has become a growing concept throughout a range of disciplines. Although it originated in the field of marketing, personal branding has remained essential to professional development in graduate studies, career building, and mental health. Personal branding is a great way to invest in your future, as it requires you to establish an action plan that will adequately work towards your overall value and goals. Coslet (2019) acknowledged that personal branding helps individuals be authentic and showcase what they stand for, adding value to others. It helps you promote your strengths and be honest about your weaknesses. Whether it is maintaining healthy mental health habits or developing an academic proposal, personal branding can be the next step in elevating your future. UNCC provides different resources that can assist you while developing and maintaining your personal brand. Please feel free to utilize any of the resources to invest in your brand.

"Your brand is what people say about you when you're not in the room."
- Jeff Bezos
Founder, executive chairman, and former president and CEO of Amazon

Career Center:

Career coaching: Have questions about your career development? Career Coaching is available to all students and alumni, from as soon as you're admitted to the University, through your time on-campus, continuing through graduation and beyond.

Professional headshots: Give your professional image a boost with a new professional photo. Having a professional photo on your LinkedIn or other materials gives strength to your personal brand. Photos are available to all currently-enrolled UNC Charlotte students, faculty & staff, and alumni. The service is free! The career center delivers your photos to you in approximately 2-3 business days after your session. Photos for appointments are emailed to the address of record in Hire-a-Niner.

Center for Graduate Life and Learning:

The Center for Graduate Life and Learning provides multiple academic courses which can be taken for credit, including career preparation, leadership, communication, research, and teaching courses. Find a list of courses offered below:

GRAD 6320/8320-Personal Career Branding: Identity, Management, and Promotion,

GRAD 6000 | Leadership Essentials for Graduate Students

GRAD 6000/8000| Navigating Graduate School as a First-Generation Scholar

GRAD 6304 |Intrapreneurship for Non-Business Majors

GRAD 6201/8201 | Teaching at the University Level

GRAD 6000/8000 | Creating Best Classroom Practices Using Psychological Theories

GRAD 8000 | Grants: Find, Study, Plan, and Prepare an Application

***** Note: Consult with your academic advisor. Courses vary per semester. Please check to ensure you are enrolled in the proper course before registering*****

Cheers to Fall 2022

Another semester means more exciting memories. Take a look at some of the events that took place this semester!



Ph.D. Educational Research, Measurement, and Evaluation
Research Colloquium & Social to Honor Dr. Flowers



Educational Leadership Student
Organization (ELSO) - Fall Social



Learning, Design, and
Technology - Fall Social



M.Ed., Educational Leadership
Higher Education
Commencement

Educational Leadership Student Organization

ELSO



ELSO End-Of-Semester Celebration
Trivia Night at Que Onda Tacos
2nd Place Winners of Trivia Night

Get Connected!

- **Educational Leadership and ELSO Facebook groups:**
[UNC Charlotte EdD Educational Leadership Student Organization \(ELSO\)](#)
- **Niner Engage:** Niner Engage is a university-wide platform to browse organizations and events. After becoming a member of ELSO, you will also be able to view invites and reminders specifically from the organization.
[ELSO Niner Engage](#)
- **Group Me:** GroupMe is a mobile group messaging app to help groups connect. ELSO members use this to contact each other, get event and meeting reminders, ask questions, and build community! Email Vice President, Jacob Frankovich, jfrank01@uncc.edu, to join the ELSO GroupMe.
- **Email Communications:** Look out for ELSO announcements in Department Emails

What is ELSO?

ELSO serves to satisfy the needs of COED graduate students by lifting student voices to campus stakeholders, as well as the general public. The mission of the ELSO is to encourage professional development and improve the experience of the COED students through initiatives that enrich the intellectual, social, and cultural aspects of their lives. In so doing, we hope to develop a stronger community among students interested in the Department of Educational Leadership and excellence within the COED.

Interested in ELSO?
Please contact Kristin Villanueva, ELSO President,
kvillan1@uncc.edu

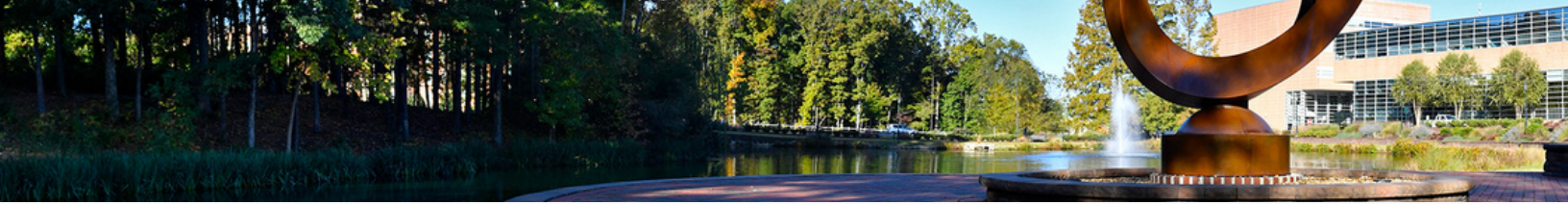


Educational Leadership
Student Organization
UNC CHARLOTTE



Upcoming Dates

December 16	Summer 2023 Schedule Available
December 20	UNC System L&T proposal deadline
December 23-30	Winter Break
January 2	New Year's Day Observed
January 9	First day of classes
January 16	Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day
January 17	Last day to add, drop with no grade
February 10	Deadline to apply for May graduation
February 16-17	NCARE 2023



Questions?
Ideas for a future newsletter?
Something to celebrate?
Let us know!
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