MISSION | Leadership for Educational Equity

Prepare and inspire education and mental health leaders to have a profound impact in fostering student opportunity, achievement and success in urban and diverse communities.

STRATEGIC GOALS
- Impact leadership and practice through our students and other stakeholders.
- Foster an environment in which all faculty, staff and students can excel and be recognized.
- Ensure an organizational culture that invites, engages and retains diverse faculty, staff and students.
- Increase recognized and/or funded research and programs.
- Increase and diversify funding, Link allocation of funds to strategic goals.
- Develop and maintain flexible, effective and efficient infrastructures.

2011–2012

TEACHER EDUCATION LICENSURE PROGRAMS
- Elementary Education
- Secondary Education (all core subject areas)
- K–12 Special Education
- Early Childhood Special Education

UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE PROGRAMS
- College of Liberal Arts and Sciences BA and BS degrees with teaching licenses in Elementary Education and Secondary Education (all core subject areas)

GRADUATE DEGREE PROGRAMS
Masters
- Administrative Leadership and Policy Studies
- Counseling Psychology and Counselor Education
- Curriculum and Instruction
- Early Childhood Education
- Educational Psychology
- Information and Learning Technologies
- Special Education

EdS
- Administrative Leadership and Policy Studies
- School Psychology

DOCTORAL DEGREE PROGRAMS
EdD
- Leadership for Educational Equity
PhD
- Educational Studies and Research

CONTINUING EDUCATION
- We offer an exciting array of professional development courses and programs designed to help busy educators and mental health professionals master current challenges in today’s schools.
Dear alumni and friends,

I am delighted to present this year's EDition magazine. It is my hope that its stories will propel you into a compelling new era for the University of Colorado Denver and our School, a time that is filled with momentum and forward movement. You’ll find an increased sense of energy, innovation and resourcefulness going on within our walls.

It’s an exciting point in time to study and work in the fields of education and counseling. Our state and nation are facing many important questions: how to recruit, best prepare, evaluate and support teachers and educational leaders; how to provide P-20 students with compelling, personal and effective opportunities to learn; how to ensure every student is prepared for post-secondary education or a career path in an increasingly competitive and technological global environment; and how to educate and support informed and engaged citizens. Our School’s faculty, students and alumni are living and breathing these important questions.

As a leading research institution, we generate new knowledge and understanding about the most pressing educational questions in partnership with and to support educators, schools, families and policymakers. Sound, practice-focused educational research has never been more important than it is today because it is imperative that we understand students’ educational outcomes and address areas where there are inequities or significant gaps. In the pages that follow, you’ll hear how members of our school of education are impacting the ever-changing field of educational research and assessment, including Maria Ruiz-Primo’s internationally-acclaimed research on science learning. And, you’ll experience the efforts of an early childhood education state policy team in our story about the Pyramid Plus program.

The School’s faculty integrate practice and research by working collaboratively with education administrators, teachers, and community members. We have been expanding and deepening our collaborative efforts. As an example, you’ll read about a strong cross-disciplinary research collaborative with the Denver Public Schools which involves more CU Denver researchers and DPS administrators than ever before. The focus of this partnership is to inform and shape educational outcomes for English-language learners for years to come.

You’ll also meet Margarita Bianco and Nina Conley, who developed and implemented an innovative high school class called, ‘Introduction to Urban Education.’ The course, now offered in several high schools within Denver Public Schools, inspires youth from a variety of social and linguistic backgrounds to interrogate and research the field of education and explore post-secondary education opportunities including programs that would allow them to become teachers and leaders in education. This course is a critical component to our broader initiatives to create and support pipeline programs into educator preparation.

The School of Education & Human Development attracts deeply committed, thoughtful and creative graduate and undergraduate students who are motivated to make a difference in the lives of youth and our local communities. It’s like watching stars rise when you witness their increased understanding and questioning. You’ll learn how you can make a commitment to build brighter futures for them as they work hard to achieve their academic goals.

All the best. Enjoy the magazine and keep up the momentum in your daily lives as alumni and friends!

Deanna Sands
Interim Dean

Visit us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/CUDenverSchoolofEducation
Assessment is gaining newfound attention in education. Assessment is increasingly important in formal and informal educational settings as educators commit to quick response times between administering assessments, analyzing data and using data to provide meaningful feedback or changes to programs to increase the power of student learning experiences.

We’ve pulled together some inspirational assessment stories from our School to give you a snapshot of what’s beginning to take shape and evolve in the field of educational assessment.

**Innovations in Evaluating Science Learning**

Associate Professor Maria Araceli Ruiz-Primo received national and international accolades this year for her groundbreaking research findings, published in the prestigious *Science* magazine. Her 2011 article, titled “Impact of Undergraduate Science Course Innovations on Learning,” found that research conducted in studying teaching innovations in undergraduate education tends to suffer from weak design and inadequate reporting. “I believe that a partnership between professors, methodologists and assessment experts will bring a more solid knowledge about the impact of innovations on student learning, knowledge that we can purposefully accumulate rather than just having bits and pieces from methodologically unsound studies,” said Ruiz-Primo. “In the innovation study, when the assessments used to test learning were more aligned with what students were studying, the impact was more clearly seen than when external assessments were utilized. This finding was similar to results from a study I conducted some years ago and is related to the work my lab [LEARN] is doing right now. To add to this line of research, I’m currently working on a National Science Foundation-funded project on the construction of a robust approach for developing and evaluating instructionally sensitive science assessments, the DEISA project. This research is exciting because we’re creating assessments that are developed at multiple distances to the enacted curriculum (close, proximal and distal) and are more sensitive to what students actually have learned in their classrooms and can transfer to different contexts.” This work on instructionally sensitive assessments has been considered by experts as a critical contribution in the assessment field.

**Linking Accountability and Performance**

Associate Research Professor Carolyn Haug is industriously leading and overseeing program outcome assessments for our School and collaborating with the Colorado Department of Education and Colorado Department of Higher Education. Her work includes teacher education assessments. “We are analyzing student outcome assessments and a body of evidence (including work samples and scores on licensure tests for teacher candidates) to discern how our School’s students have improved their knowledge and abilities while enrolled in our programs,” said Haug. “We’re also working on measuring the impact of our alumni. Where do they accept work? How do they perform in their jobs? What impacts are they having on K–12 students? And, how can we continuously improve and inform our work at the university to fine-tune our syllabi, courses and programs? We’re collaborating closely with the Colorado Department of Education’s new educator ID program and closely...
monitoring Colorado Senate Bill 191 on teacher effectiveness. It’s an exciting time to be in the educational assessment field because of new data being collected and our ability to do much more sophisticated analyses.”

**Changing the Role of Assessment in the Classroom Context**

**Julie Oxenford O’Brien**, director of the School’s Center for Transforming Learning and Teaching, works with educators nationwide to provide professional development opportunities that are changing the role of assessment in the classroom, as well as in teacher and principal preparation arenas. “Assessment can play a much richer role in instructional settings,” said Oxenford O’Brien. “For a long time, educators thought about assessment as only being used for a ‘grade.’ But the key to excellent classroom learning success is continuous feedback between students and teachers to make sure that the learning is on track. Many times, students need that extra feedback in order to intentionally make new choices and engage fully in their own learning processes. And sometimes teachers need to better describe the learning targets or find new ways to shape and present lessons. As assignments become more relevant to learners, learning gaps will diminish.” Oxenford O’Brien and her team also play an advisory role in the implementation of Colorado’s state educational standards, provide professional training on the Colorado Growth Model, and help low-performing schools with improvement planning. They truly engage educators and educational leaders at the intersection of theory and practice.

**Teacher/Student Cooperation in Assessment**

**Bonnie Utley**, associate professor in the Special Education program, and **John McDermott**, senior instructor in the Urban Community Teacher Education program, are collaborating on the Teacher Work Sample, an assessment that holds all teachers accountable for the growth of their students’ academic progress. It instructs teacher candidates in curriculum, instruction and assessment practices that they will use with their K–12 learners. And, it identifies and implements new Urban Community Teacher Education program assessments that exemplify the values and methods we teach. “The Teacher Work Sample is a natural and necessary evolution of the goal-setting and review processes that have been going on in the field of special education for years,” said Utley. “The goal is for all teachers and students to collaborate on what is being taught and learned so that everyone has deep clarity about the learning objectives as well as shared ownership for learning outcomes.” Sometimes this means that teachers allow students the chance to resubmit assignments until they can demonstrate that they understand the agreed-upon learning objectives. “School should be about the learning, not a grade competition,” said McDermott. “This is motivating and engaging for me and others on the team. It’s about giving learners a chance to provide meaningful feedback and tying that feedback back into the learning process. We’re getting pushed out of our comfort zone, and that’s good.”

**New PhD and Certificate Program in Assessment and Measurement**

As the assessment field in educational settings grows and evolves, our School is staying ahead of the curve by adding new programs to meet student demands. “Our faculty added a new PhD concentration area in research assessment and evaluation, which is generating great interest,” said Nancy Leech, associate professor in the Research, Statistics and Evaluation Methods program. “It is geared for students who are interested in becoming professors in assessment, evaluation and/or research methods. We are also excited to begin a nine-credit-hour assessment certificate for educators, which is slated to begin in January 2012 and is designed to help P–12 teachers, principals and others working in educational settings increase their understanding and ability to interpret and use data for decision making at all levels (instructional, school and district).”
The Dawn of a New Physics Lab at Aurora Public Schools

Robert “Bud” Talbot of the School of Education & Human Development, Randy Tagg of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and Ron Rorrer of the College of Engineering and Applied Science, all faculty members at the University of Colorado Denver, are engaged in an electrifying collaboration with Aurora Public Schools (APS). The new Innovation Hyperlab at APS’s Vista PEAK Campus is a place where robotic horses dance, radio waves peak and plunge, motors are fine tuned, sensors sound, magnets collide, fluids boil and freeze, biological experiments come alive and global energy is analyzed. Students are busy cooperatively learning in small groups, connecting their classroom lessons to real problems, acquiring advanced skills needed in the workforce and making unique innovations for the 21st century.

The goals of the new lab are to (1) improve middle and high school students’ desire and ability to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering, mathematics and the health sciences by introducing cutting-edge physics and engineering research projects; (2) study the learning outcomes of students and teachers; and (3) engage local businesses to inspire students to work on problems important to the region’s economy.

“It’s all about real-world preparation. When we challenge students with authentic problems and provide professional-grade tools to solve them, these students will surprise us with creative solutions,” said Tagg.

Scientific Assessment of Behavior

The School’s Continuing and Professional Education office is now offering two online course sequences in behavior analysis, as well as associated practicum courses, to prepare individuals to become effective board certified behavior analysts (BCBAs) or board certified assistant behavior analysts (BCaBAs). It’s the first program of its kind in Colorado and surrounding areas.

The certificate was developed by faculty member Patricia Oliver and is taught by a team of five outstanding BCBA instructors. Students interested in the BCBA sequence must either hold or be in the process of completing a master’s degree in education, psychology or a related field from a U.S. accredited university. BCaBA-interested students must either hold or be in the process of completing a bachelor’s degree.

Professionals engaged in applied behavior analysis scientifically assess and provide services to meet the behavioral needs of widely varying individuals in diverse settings. “Our students are completing the sequence programs to enhance our community capacity in the field of behavior analysis. They are preparing to practice in a high-demand field. We have students who currently practice as teachers, psychologists, administrators and speech and language pathologists. We are very proud of our first cohort and hope to prepare many other students in our state,” said Oliver.

For more information, please visit www.ucdenver.edu/education/certificates or www.BACB.com.
New Research Collaborative Aims to Help English-Language Learners

The School of Education & Human Development (SEHD) and Denver Public Schools (DPS) are demonstrating the power of academic teamwork through a formal CU Denver-DPS Research Collaborative now completing its first year. The first joint research project of the collaborative was designed to find schoolwide practices supporting the achievement of English-language learners (ELL). A group of 13 SEHD faculty and three DPS researchers used mixed methods to identify and study schools that were having exceptional success serving ELL students. The eight schools that surfaced based on jointly developed criteria were:

- Abraham Lincoln High School
- Bruce Randolph School
- Bryant-Webster Elementary School
- Force Elementary School
- Goldrick Elementary School
- Math and Science Leadership Academy
- Merrill Middle School
- West Denver Prep, Federal Campus

Analyses of the multiple case studies revealed that exemplary English-language acquisition (ELA) schools shared a coherent approach to data use, instruction and professional development that was informed by a “language lens.” These schools valued language knowledge and language development as schoolwide strengths and responsibility responsibilities. For them, language development was integral to their students’ learning, not something to be fixed prior to learning.

Currently in DPS, more than 26,000 students are in the process of developing the English-language skills needed to succeed in school. Spanish is the primary language for 15,246 (87 percent) of these students, while other common languages include Vietnamese, Arabic, Somali, Nepali and Karen/Burmese. The Research Collaborative continues to work on ELA issues, building on the initial study by looking at classroom practices, family engagement, school leadership and approaches to assessment.

Susana Cordova (MA, Administrative Supervision and Curriculum Development with a license in Educational Administration), chief academic officer at Denver Public Schools and member of the DPS Research Collaborative Advisory Board, believes that this research work shows great promise for meaningful changes. “Because of the nature of the relationships within the group, there is increased emphasis on really using the research to inform future decisions that will impact teaching and learning in our classrooms. We also are committed to continually revisiting the research, using it as a touchstone as we work on future case studies and initiatives.” It is the hope of the team that this research will ultimately inform the instruction that goes on at the University of Colorado Denver—instruction for new teachers and seasoned teachers as well as school administrators on how language and literacy are best taught and learned. And, the research will also feed into school district support systems for DPS students.

The team plans to report on their work annually, with a final report expected in three years’ time.

“One of the things that makes this collaborative such a success is that everyone on the team is committed to the same social justice work embodied in the School of Education's core values,” said Cordova. “Enthusiasm and passion run deep in our meetings. We are all extremely dedicated to helping our ELL students succeed.”
Influencing Policy: Early Childhood Education

Pyramid Plus: The Colorado Center for Social Emotional Competence and Inclusion

The first five years of life are so important. Young children grow and flourish in the context of caring and dependable relationships with relatives, caregivers and peers. And, that’s why Pyramid Plus, housed at the CU Denver’s School of Education & Human Development, is so important. Pyramid Plus: The Colorado Center for Social Emotional Competence and Inclusion, the first state-funded project of its kind in the nation, was created to promote the positive social-emotional development of all infants and young children and the inclusion of children with disabilities in all early childhood settings.

Under the leadership of Drs. Barbara J. Smith and Phil Strain, Pyramid Plus partners with a state policy team to inspire Colorado legislators, as well as parent groups, caregivers and the general public, to think differently about the complexities and importance of providing optimal learning environments for young children with a variety of talents and needs.

The Pyramid Plus State Policy Team is made up of representatives from state agencies, higher education and other stakeholders to develop public awareness and policy support for the sustainability and scale-up of Pyramid Plus services. The State Policy Team has the following vision and mission:

VISION: All early childhood settings support the social and emotional development and inclusion of all children from birth through five.

MISSION: To promote a collaborative professional development system that fosters and sustains the state-wide, high-fidelity use of the Pyramid Model and SpecialQuest Approach, with other related evidenced-based practices integrated with relevant Colorado efforts.

The Importance of Developing Social Skills in Young Children

Social skills in young children are more closely associated with school readiness and success in Kindergarten and first grade than with cognitive and academic skills. (Raver & Knitzer, 2002; Smith, 2004) And yet, in a study commissioned by the Colorado Legislature, early childhood teachers in Colorado ranked their need to learn how to teach social skills and deal with challenging behavior as their number one training need. (Hoover, 2006) Likewise, nationally, early childhood teachers report that challenging behavior and social skill problems are their greatest challenges. These programs report expelling preschoolers at a rate three times that of school-age children. (Gilliam, 2005; Hemmeter et al., 2007)

“Pyramid Plus is using evidence-based strategies to foster positive social-emotional development and address behavioral health problems in young children,” said Colorado Health Foundation Program Officer Brenda Sears. “Children served by this project will have a lower risk of serious mental health disorders later in life. In addition, they are more likely to be self-sufficient and better able to positively contribute to their community and to society.”
The Pyramid Model for Promoting the Social and Emotional Development of Infants and Young Children and the SpecialQuest Approach Models

Pyramid Plus has found that two educational models work extremely well in early care and education settings. These are the Pyramid Model for Promoting Social and Emotional Competence of Infants and Young Children and the SpecialQuest Birth–Five approach to early childhood inclusion. The goal is to scale-up the implementation of these models and other evidenced-based practices statewide.

The Pyramid Model was developed by two national, federally-funded research and training centers: the Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL) and the Technical Assistance Center on Social Emotional Intervention (TACSEI). These centers’ faculty, including faculty at the University of Colorado Denver, are nationally recognized researchers and program developers in the areas of social skills and challenging behavior. Based on evaluation data over the last five years, the Pyramid Model appears to be a sound framework for early care and education systems, and extensive training materials, videos and print resources have been developed to help states, communities and programs implement the model.

States report that only 48 percent of preschoolers with disabilities spend 80 percent or more of their time in inclusive settings, meaning with typically developing peers. Additionally, social skills in young children with disabilities are greatly improved in settings where they are with their typically developing peers. (Rous and Smith, 2009) The SpecialQuest Approach, the Building Blocks model, LEAP Preschool and other evidence-based models and practices have been shown to improve the quality and effective inclusion of young children with disabilities into early education and community settings with their typically developing peers.

A State Collaborative

Pyramid Plus is funded by the Colorado Department of Human Services, Division of Child Care; Division of Developmental Disabilities Early Intervention Colorado Program; Division of Behavioral Health; and the Colorado Health Foundation.

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The Pyramid Plus Center collaborates with and builds on other statewide early childhood initiatives such as Qualistar Colorado, Head Start, Healthy Child Care Colorado, Center for Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation, Incredible Years, work groups, parent groups and the Inclusion Consortium.

State Policy Team

Pyramid Plus’ State Policy Team is driven to spread public awareness and help provide greater access to Pyramid Plus’ educational models. They collect and translate data for policy and program improvement and engage in public relations and awareness. Members include: Rosemarie Allen, Division of Child Care, Colorado Department of Human Services; Penny Dell, Colorado Department of Education; Ardith Ferguson, Division for Developmental Disabilities, Colorado Department of Human Services; Linda Forrest, Early Childhood Education, Arapahoe Community College; Sarah Hoover, JFK Partners, University of Colorado Denver; Joyce Johnson, Early Childhood Council Coordinator, Colorado Department of Education; Phyllis Lucas, Qualistar Colorado; Laura Merrill, Division for Developmental Disabilities, Colorado Department of Human Services; Sudy Opsahl, Colorado Office of Professional Development; Heather Tritten, Head Start Collaboration Director, Office of Lieutenant Governor; and Claudia Zundel, Colorado Division of Behavioral Health, Colorado Department of Human Services.

For more information, please visit www.pyramidplus.org.
Step into the teachers’ lounge at most public K–12 schools, and chances are you’ll be surrounded by teachers who look different from the student body. Despite a steady rise in the percentage of students of color attending U.S. schools, statistics show roughly 90 percent of teachers are white and more than 70 percent are women—figures that have changed little in the past decade.

That troubles Margarita Bianco, EdD, an assistant professor in the University of Colorado Denver’s School of Education & Human Development. “As a person of color, I never had any teachers throughout my public school education who looked like me,” she says, noting that throughout her undergraduate and graduate programs, and when she started teaching, she met few colleagues of color. “With each new experience, it became more apparent that I needed to do something about this.”

In 2010, Bianco teamed up with CU Denver alumna and Montbello High School teacher Nina Conley, MA ’10, to launch Pathways2Teaching, an ambitious pilot program aimed at addressing what the two see as an urgent need to boost the number of teachers of color in Colorado.

The program centers on a new elective course, Introduction to Urban Education, which offers juniors and seniors at ethnically diverse Montbello and George Washington High Schools a chance to learn about postsecondary education options, the teaching profession and how to explore the tough subject of educational justice. Students earn three college credits for taking the course over an academic year.

During the course’s inaugural semester at Montbello High School, which began in August 2010, 33 students went through an eight-week teaching methods training program and were paired with fourth-grade elementary students to teach them vocabulary. They also had the opportunity to communicate with educational leaders of color—including Vanderbilt University scholar Donna Ford—via Skype. And, they immersed themselves in research projects exploring sticky questions such as Why is there an achievement gap between whites and nonwhites? How do drugs, teenage pregnancy and growing up in the foster care system impact a youth’s education? And, most importantly, What can be done to improve things?

“It’s piquing their awareness,” says Conley, a Montbello graduate herself. “They are starting to question things, and they are starting to ask, ‘What changes can I make?’”

In Denver Public Schools, only 19.8 percent of students are Caucasian, but 78 percent of teachers are white. Statewide, 88 percent of teachers are Caucasian. According to a 2008 report by the Alliance for Quality Teaching, the percentage of students of color statewide rose from 32 to 38 percent between 2000 and 2005, while the number of minority teachers statewide rose just 1 percent and even declined in several districts. The report pointed to research suggesting that “students, on average, learn more from teachers of similar racial and ethnic backgrounds.” (Alliance for Quality Teaching, 2008)


Teacher candidate Lisa Baez with Montbello students Cynthia Hernandez and Alfonso Medoza-Catarino
As a person of color, I never had any teachers throughout my public school education who looked like me.” – Margarita Bianco

Luke Washington, 18, an African American student in the Introduction to Urban Education class, agrees. “I just feel like I can connect more and learn better when I have someone teaching me who can relate to my experiences,” he says.

Conley left a career in the airline industry in her mid-30s to earn her master’s degree in Administrative Leadership and Policy Studies at CU Denver’s School of Education & Human Development. In February 2011, she was honored with an Our Heroes teaching award by Stand for Children Colorado, a grassroots child-advocacy organization. She says she is thrilled to see young urban teens being turned on to the idea of a career in education.

“When I went here for high school, I never even thought about becoming a teacher. It just wasn’t discussed,” she says. “If I had taken this class back then, I would have been a teacher in 1986.”

As part of the course, the students have also been given a chance to visit college campuses and have received guidance on how to apply to universities, including a Saturday-morning college-essay-writing boot camp taught by CU Denver professor and former dean Dr. Lynn Rhodes.

Already, several students are planning their future careers as educators. Washington is one of them.

For his class research project, Washington—who has been in the foster care system for several years—explored some of the problems that surround foster care youth trying to succeed at school despite an often unstable home life.

“Sometimes foster children have had to deal with the eviction of their biological parents, becoming homeless, moving from home to home, parental substance abuse and lack of clean clothes to wear. And schools just don’t have the resources to help them,” he says. “If I were a teacher, I would ask every foster student, What is it that you really need to succeed? I would show them more support.”

Since joining the class, Washington has made up his mind that he wants to pursue a PhD in education with the hope of ultimately “helping educate others with a better understanding of what it means to be a foster kid.” He has applied to several colleges, presented his research report at the Teachers of Color and Allies Summit in November in Boulder, and is now working to plan a conference for teachers, students and community members about foster care and the educational system.

“This class has given students like me opportunities they have never had before,” says Washington. “There should be a class like this in every school.”

For more information, log on to www.pathways2teaching.com.
Faculty—New Books

Nancy Leech (1,2)

Donna Wittmer (3,4)
Imagine you’re a K–12 student studying volcanoes. There are films, photos and words describing these enormous vents in the Earth’s crust. Right...cool...when’s the test? Now imagine your teacher is describing his or her on-site experience, navigating the rocky terrain, feeling the steamy heat radiating from the mouth of the volcano or standing next to the orange and golden glow of the boiling lava in the dead of night. Whoa! Suddenly it’s personal, it’s real and exciting, and maybe someday, you’ll get to do the same!

“Experiential science learning is all about personal close encounters with the content, processes and emotions of science.”

You don’t have to tell Mike Marlow about the importance of experiential learning. Marlow, associate professor in science education in the School of Education & Human Development, has been a pioneer in the field, having taken students on learning excursions all across the United States for 40 years now. Marlow’s students have explored active Hawaiian volcanoes, climbed Mt. Kilimanjaro, rafted the turbulent waters of the Colorado River through Grand Canyon, conducted scientific digs in Galapagos, Micronesia, Peru, Chile and Wyoming and witnessed live fox bats and wallabies in beautiful Australia.

“We have been in Hawaii when PuuOoo was erupting 1,400 feet in the air. Lava was running down the mountain and into the ocean a half mile wide. We have gone scuba diving with 14 large manta rays,” Marlow recalls. “On Kilimanjaro, the majority of teachers hiked to the top—something about being from Colorado. On the way up, we viewed free-roaming wildlife and studied geology, volcanology, botany, biology and environmental science.”

Marlow has witnessed the positive impact these expeditions have had on his students and the breadth of their teaching abilities. “Experiential science learning is all about personal close encounters with the content, processes and emotions of science,” he explains. “It is a philosophy that emphasizes learning from direct first-person experience and a holistic perspective that includes the self-construction of knowledge as well as emotions, attitudes and beliefs that combine to form a learner’s ‘science identity.’ We think the very best teachers have great stories—experiences that make them who they are, impact their choices and open them up to doing science with their students, not just telling them or having them read about science. Our purpose is to uncover the ways educators and students construct extraordinary science learning experiences for themselves and their peers.”

Alumni are also welcome to sign up for Marlow’s adventures. For more information, please visit www.xsci-ucd.org.
New Faculty

It is with great excitement that we welcome the following new faculty members to our distinguished ranks. These extraordinary teachers and scholars will help us better achieve our mission and contribute significantly to our programs and research.

Antwan Jefferson is a new instructor with the Urban Community Teacher Education program. He is currently finishing his PhD at the University of Colorado Denver and most recently worked as the dean of the Christian Vocational Training School in Aurora, Colorado. He is also a former English teacher at Montbello High School.

Jacqueline Leonard, PhD, has joined the Math Education program as a professor. She earned her PhD from the University of Maryland at College Park and most recently served as a professor at Temple University.

Brad McLain joined the Science Education faculty as a senior instructor and as the co-director of XSci (the Experiential Science Education Research Collaborative). He is completing his PhD at the University of Colorado Denver and most recently worked as a senior education associate at the Space Science Institute in Boulder.

Khawla Obeidat, PhD, has joined the Research, Statistics and Evaluation Methods faculty as an assistant professor. She completed her PhD at Arizona State University and subsequently finished a postdoctoral research fellowship at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Most recently, she worked as assistant professor in the Quantitative Research Methods program at the University of Denver.

Scott Schaeffle, PhD, is a new assistant professor in the Counseling Psychology and Counselor Education program. He earned his PhD from University of Nevada, Reno. Before moving to Denver, he taught counseling courses as an assistant professor at Central Washington University.

New Associate Dean

We are pleased to announce that Honorine Nocon, PhD, who worked as an assistant professor in Teacher Education and Linguistically Diverse Education from 2002 to 2007 and as an associate professor since 2007, has been promoted to associate dean for teaching and learning. In addition to designing, implementing and studying culturally and linguistically responsive learning environments, Dr. Nocon is an ethnographer of formal and informal learning contexts and an affiliate scholar with the Laboratory of Comparative Human Cognition at the University of California, San Diego.
Retirements

Sue Giullian, Clinical Professor
Dr. Giullian’s distinguished career at the university began in 1997. She had just retired from Adams 12 Five Star Schools, where she served as an administrator for 20 years, and prior to that she was a classroom teacher for five years. Dr. Giullian taught within the Teacher Education, Curriculum and Pedagogy and Administrative Leadership and Policy Studies programs. She also worked closely with PhD students. Dr. Giullian was a well-loved professor. She won the Non-Tenure Track Excellence in Teaching Award three times in the School of Education & Human Development and two times campuswide.

Rod Muth, Professor
Dr. Muth’s illustrious career at the university began in 1992 when he arrived as professor and coordinator of the Administrative Leadership and Policy Studies program. Throughout his career at CU Denver, Dr. Muth focused on improving the Administrative Leadership and Policy Studies and PhD programs, supporting students and ensuring that faculty have a strong voice in university governance. He served as chair of the UCD Faculty Assembly from 2001 to 2004 and as chair of the universitywide Faculty Council from 2004 to 2006. Dr. Muth is known for his ability to help students gain the knowledge and skills that they need to perform at high levels of expertise by facilitating cooperation in and collaboration on professional, problem-based learning activities. Over the years at UCD and his previous institutions, he advised or was a committee member for more than 170 dissertation students.

Lynn Rhodes, Dean
Across her career, Lynn K. Rhodes, EdD, made many important contributions to the University of Colorado Denver, the School of Education & Human Development and to the broader educational community. She arrived at CU Denver in 1978 as an assistant professor immediately after completing a doctoral degree in Reading Education at Indiana University. She served as chair of the Reading and Writing program, associate dean of Teacher Education for 10 years (1992–2001) and was promoted to professor in 1994. In 2001, Dr. Rhodes was appointed to serve as interim dean, and in 2003 she was named dean following a national search, serving through 2010. Dean Rhodes’ major accomplishments included establishing a model network of professional development schools to partner with the School’s Teacher Education program; supporting major program redesigns and new programs including undergraduate teacher education, the Urban Community Teacher Education program and the new EdD program; further developing the office of Continuing and Professional Education, which currently serves more than 6,000 educators annually; establishing The Evaluation Center; establishing significant support for faculty research and research collaborations; increasing attention to diversity and equity in all aspects of the School as evidenced by the adoption of the School’s mission (with the tagline “Leadership for Educational Equity”); reorganizing the School’s staff to create more effective support for students and faculty; and negotiating an outcomes-based system with state and national accreditation units. In her final years as dean, she established an endowment with the CU Foundation to support faculty initiatives at our School. We thank her for her years of leadership and vision!

Stephanie Townsend, Clinical Professor
Dr. Townsend came to the university in 1995 as adjunct faculty after a long career as a classroom teacher, reading specialist, assistant principal and principal in the public school system. In 1996 she became a full-time senior instructor, and in 2009 she was promoted to clinical professor. In that capacity, she worked with children and teachers in six School of Education professional development schools as a site professor. Her focus was teacher preparation in elementary literacy with respect to cultural and linguistic diversity. Dr. Townsend is considered an exemplary teacher by her students and her peers, having won the CU Excellence in Teaching Award in 2001 and the School’s Excellence in Teaching Award in both 2001 and 2005. We thank her for her contagious love for learning and for all the lives she has changed along the way while promoting reading and literacy.

Marsha Wiggins, Professor
Dr. Wiggins joined the faculty in 1993. Prior to this, she spent 11 years as a clergyperson and three years as a private-practice counselor and mental health agency provider. She was awarded tenure and promotion to associate professor in 2000 and full professor in 2006. She served as program chair/leader for the Counseling Psychology and Counselor Education program beginning in 2001 and was honored with the campuswide Teacher of the Year Award in 1998 and 2004. Throughout the years, Dr. Wiggins has been committed to collaborative learning, multiple perspectives, social justice, learning and service and has been deeply dedicated to her students’ growth. We thank her for her outstanding service to the university.
As deputy commissioner of the Colorado Department of Education, **Dr. Diana Sirko** (PhD, Educational Leadership and Innovation, 1999) examines inspirational ideas and implements innovative strategies that guide and prepare teachers and students for the journey ahead. Sirko oversees the realization of a number of critical initiatives, including the new statewide academic standards, the Educator Effectiveness program, the Colorado Achievement Plan for Kids (CAP4K, or House Bill 08-2120) and the development and implementation of the new statewide assessment system, which measures student academic growth by using the Colorado Growth Model.

“I believe very strongly that education is the vehicle of opportunity for all of our children... Education is our great equalizer.”

“Earning a PhD from University of Colorado Denver’s School of Education & Human Development has been of great professional value,” says Sirko. “I had the opportunity to work with world-class faculty who raised my awareness and gave me new filters and frameworks to analyze and solve pressing educational issues. My favorite PhD classes were in educational research, where I learned to effectively evaluate the impact of educational programs on children. My degree helped me understand the potential and possibilities that are out there to build capacity and to accomplish what’s most relevant and meaningful for our kids.”

Diana Sirko: Maximizing the Power of Learning

Sirko has a can-do spirit and a desire to serve the public good. Education, she believes, opens eyes, creates potential, changes paths and builds a solid foundation for a lifetime of accomplishments. As a child, she always knew that she wanted to be a teacher. In 1975, she realized that dream by becoming a middle-school science teacher in Gunnison, Colorado. Since then, she has spent 13 years teaching and 23 years administering in Colorado schools, including roles as principal and superintendent. “I believe very strongly that education is the vehicle of opportunity for all of our children,” said Sirko. “Our country’s forefathers had a vision to make the U.S. different from all other nations by providing access to a free public education for all. Education is our great equalizer.”
Grants with Momentum

Selected Research Grants

The School of Education & Human Development celebrates the scholarship and creativity of our faculty and staff, whose dedicated work has secured $22.5 million in external funding for current projects over the past years. Fourteen faculty and four professional staff secured external funding for 42 grant projects. Below, we highlight several grant projects with great momentum.

**Teacher PREP: Teacher Preparation, Retention and Empowerment Project**
Ritu Chopra, PI
U.S. Department of Education, Transition to Teaching Program
$2,531,262 over five years

This statewide initiative is led by the Paraprofessional Resource and Research Center (PAR2A) at CU Denver in partnership with the Colorado Department of Education, several high-need schools and local educational agencies and the Teacher Institute at La Academia. It prepares a total of 150 teachers over five years. Overall goals of the project are (1) to transition paraprofessionals, recent college graduates and mid career professionals to teaching positions in high-need schools and high-need subjects through an alternative licensure program; (2) to provide support and services that empower the candidates to remain in teaching positions and effectively address the academic and social needs of K–12 students in high-need schools.

**Autism Early Intervention Guidelines and Training Project**
Phil Strain, PI
Colorado Department of Human Services, Division for Developmental Disabilities
$400,000 over two and a half years

This project is intended to provide a consistent statewide approach for ensuring appropriate services and to increase the number of qualified personnel trained to work with young children with autism. It aims to develop, in collaboration with the funder, statewide guidelines and state training for the delivery of appropriate services for children under three years of age who have been diagnosed with autism or other severe communication, social, emotional and behavior impairments. Staff on the project will deliver intensive coaching to four community boards on evidence-based practices and evaluate project impact.

**Developing and Evaluating Measures of Formative Assessment Practices**
Maria Araceli Ruiz-Primo, PI
Deanna J. Sands, Co-PI
U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences
$1,438,082 over four years

This project investigates formative assessment practices that occur in elementary and middle-level science classrooms. Specifically, it focuses on the development and technical evaluation of instruments to measure the quality of formative assessment practices in situ. The project is guided by the following measurement questions: (1) What critical attributes define high-quality teachers’ formative assessment practices within middle-level science classrooms? (2) What measures can provide valid and reliable information about high-quality teachers’ formative assessment practices? (3) Which of these measures are more cost effective and user friendly for different users? The project team will develop benchmark instruments and surrogate instruments, which will be important to both researchers and practitioners.

**Civic Learning and Action Among Non-College Bound Youth: A Design-based Research Study**
Shelley Zion, Co-PI (collaborating with Ben Kirshner, PI, CU Boulder)
Spencer Foundation
Total UCB and UCD budget: $367,535 over four years

This study of critical civic inquiry (CCI), with projects in three public high schools, responds to the lack of information about how youth who are at risk for dropping out or not on a college track might develop into powerful civic actors. Further, this study addresses the need for research examining the school conditions that support and encourage student engagement and voice. The study revolves around CCI projects in which students, as part of a specialized course on civic inquiry, reflect on their school experiences, identify a problem, investigate it systematically and, together with school personnel, devise strategies to solve it. Through a combination of qualitative and quantitative data collected over three years, the study assesses individual and school-level change.
The Evaluation Center

The Evaluation Center strives to make program evaluation a widely accepted and valued practice. The center’s mission is to use rigorous, innovative evaluation processes to promote evidence-informed programs, practices and policies in schools, institutions of higher education, health care, and in our communities.

The Evaluation Center was founded in November 2005 to provide evaluation services primarily to schools and school districts; the work has now expanded into the nonprofit world, higher education and medical education. The center has rapidly grown from a staff of one to a staff of 12, including an executive director, five senior evaluators, three evaluation specialists, one senior evaluation specialist and one graduate assistant. There are 14 active projects producing an annual budget of nearly $1 million.

Two of the largest evaluation projects are funded by National Institutes of Health. One such project will take center staff to Zimbabwe multiple times over the next five years. Other projects include Goodwill Denver, the Public Education & Business Coalition, the Colorado Clinical & Translational Science Institute, Denver Public Schools, the UCD Center for International Business Education and Research and the UCD College of Nursing.

"Evaluation is becoming central to major funding entities; funders want to know there is evidence that the programs they fund are achieving their program outcomes and are having an impact on their targeted population. Quality program evaluation has become a high-stakes endeavor,” explains Bonnie Walters, founder and executive director of The Evaluation Center.

The Center for Advancing Practice, Education & Research and Affiliated Projects and Organizations

The Center for Advancing Practice, Education & Research (CAPER) supports and expands the mission and vision of the School of Education & Human Development by engaging in entrepreneurial activities, research, professional development, technical assistance, outreach, engagement and policy development and advocacy. We strive to serve as a partner and resource on a local and national level through dissemination of research that affects children, schools and education practice. CAPER is dedicated to outcomes that raise the quality and accessibility of public education to impact and foster student opportunity and achievement. We are home to the following funded projects and affiliated organizations:

- **Continuing & Professional Education (CPE)**
  - Shelley Zion, executive director

- **Center for Evidence Based Practices in Early Learning (CEBPEL)**
  - Barbara Smith, executive director

- **Center for Transforming Learning and Teaching (CTLT)**
  - Julie Oxenford O’Brien, executive director

- **Culturally Responsive Urban Education (CRUE)**
  - Shelley Zion, co-director
  - Suzanne Arnold, co-director

- **The Evaluation Center**
  - Bonnie Walters, executive director

- **Experiential Science Education Research Collaborative (XSci)**
  - Michael Marlow, co-director
  - Brad McLain, co-director

- **Laboratory for Educational Assessment Research and innovation (LEARN)**
  - Mara Araceli Ruiz-Primo, executive director

- **Paraeducator Resource and Research Center (PAR²A)**
  - Ritu Chopra, executive director

- **Positive Early Learning Experiences Center (PELE)**
  - Phil Strain, executive director

For more information, visit www.ucdenver.edu/education and click on Centers in the upper right-hand corner of the home page.
Giving Back

Remembering Professor William Goodwin

In May 2011, the School of Education & Human Development lost a dear friend and colleague. Over the last 41 years, Professor William Goodwin oversaw both the Educational Psychology and Research Methods and Early Childhood Education programs at our School, and more recently also served as CU Denver’s liaison to three alternative teacher licensing programs in area private schools: Stanley British Primary School, Boulder Journey School and Friends’ School. Many of you will remember Bill’s humor, his humble and approachable nature and his talent for keeping students engaged. As Bill once said, “I estimate that I’ve interacted positively with probably three or four thousand students, and learning with and relating to students has most often been very enjoyable. And I’m very proud of the professionalism shown by so many of these UCD students as they then take up educational and leadership positions in the Denver area, in Colorado and in the nation.”

By now, many of you have heard about the University of Colorado’s Creating Futures fundraising campaign. The campaign gives alumni, faculty, students and community partners an opportunity to invest in the university’s four areas of excellence and impact, including learning and teaching initiatives that educate tomorrow’s leaders. Student scholarships are a major focus of the campaign, to ensure that all qualified students have access to the university, especially in these difficult economic times.

If you’d like to make a contribution to help fund student scholarships in memory of William Goodwin, thereby also supporting the university’s Creating Futures campaign, you may donate directly online at www.cufund.org/goodwinscholarship. You may also send a check made out to the CU Foundation with a memo line that says “In Memory of Bill Goodwin” to Matt Wasserman, University of Colorado Foundation, 1380 Lawrence St., Suite 1325, Denver, CO 80204.

Scholarship Recipient: Mrs. Colorado Foundation Scholarship

Ariane Wille, a current student in our Information and Learning Technologies–School Library and Instructional Leadership master’s program, is a third-grade teacher at Ann K. Heiman Elementary in Weld County District 6. “I want to further my education to become a certified school librarian so that I can spread my passion for reading and help children figure out how to find the answers to their questions,” said Wille. “I’m in the middle of my field experiences right now, and it’s awesome to help children learn through technology and other resources.”

“I’m so thankful for the Mrs. Colorado Foundation Scholarship. The financial gift lifted a weight and allows me to pursue my dream career.”

—Ariane Wille

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ABOUT THE FRONT COVER:
This photo features Luke Washington and his classmates at Montbello High School taking an elective course called Introduction to Urban Education. The course, organized by Margarita Bianco (CU Denver faculty) and Nina Conley (CU Denver alumna), offers urban youth a chance to explore teaching and related professions.