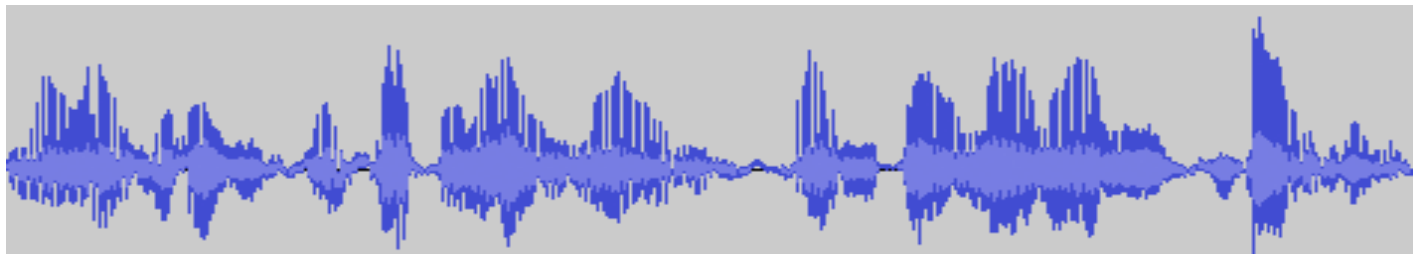


# UCEA REVIEW

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## Voices 4: Seeing Through the Noise

### Insights on Opportunities and Challenges in Leadership Preparation

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As a consortium of higher education institutions committed to advancing the preparation and practice of educational leaders, the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA) has a genuine interest and investment in studying problems of practice by sharing relevant and timely research. To support this aim, UCEA initiated and conducted the Voices From the Field series of longitudinal studies. Beginning in 1996, each phase of the Voices study has involved data collection with practicing administrators across the United States. The series began with Voices 1, titled *A Thousand Voices From the Firing Line: A Study of Educational Leaders, Their Jobs, Preparation, and Problem* (Kochan et al., 1999). Pounder (1999) noted the purpose of this phase was “to gather data broadly from school principals and superintendents about the most vexing problems of practice” (p. 5). The researchers wanted to explore the realities of life on the frontlines of administrative practice through one-on-one interviews. Salsberry (1999) noted in her excellent, thorough review of Phase 1’s research that the 29 principals shared similar perceptions related to problems and situations they could not control, such as funding, as well as problems and situations they could influence, such as their school’s bureaucratic structures and issues related teaching and learning. However, Salsberry reported that in the 25 superintendent interviews, “unpredictable, random, and idiosyncratic events permeated their conversations” (p. 113). Across both groups, participants expressed interest in more field experiences during preparation in a range of educational settings.

Building off of this initial work, LaCost and Grady (1999) led Phase 2 of the project, using focus groups rather than one-on-one interviews (DiPaola et al., 2002). Acker-Hocevar and Ivory (2006) led Phase 3. Each phase was intended to maximize the



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## Contributing to the Review

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strengths and minimize the weaknesses of previous phases. Many conversations with colleagues at national conferences provided input on how to design group interviews on superintendents' and principals' perspectives on school improvement, social justice, and democratic community (Murphy, 2002). The Voices 3 project was launched just as principals and superintendents were beginning to deal with No Child Left Behind Act and included 27 focus groups across the country. The findings of the Voices 3 project can be read in *Snapshots of School Leadership in the 21st Century: The UCEA Voices From the Field Project* (Acker-Hocevar et al., 2012). Voices 4 is the latest phase of this long-term project.

## Methods

The research team for Voices 4 includes 10 faculty members and one scholar-practitioner in educational leadership. We continued the Voices tradition of qualitative research, using focus groups to capture the voices of principals and superintendents from rural, suburban, and urban districts across the United States. Each researcher was responsible for obtaining Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, recruiting participants, transcribing, and de-identifying focus group data. An overall IRB approval for the national research was obtained from Eastern Kentucky University.

### Data Collection

The Voices 4 research team collaboratively developed a focus group protocol based on the Voices 3 protocol with additional questions developed from key gaps identified in a 2017 literature review on educational leadership (Reynolds et al., 2017). Nine 90-min focus groups were conducted across the United States, 2018–2021 (see Table).

### Data Analysis

To analyze the focus group transcripts, we began by individually reading and coding one transcript each. We then met as a team to share our memos and our emerging coding, which led to the identification of four central ideas: social justice in principal preparation, theory versus practice, mentoring of principals and principal candidates, and advice to preparation programs. We broke apart into four mini-teams,

each focused on one of the four ideas. The entire research team collaborated to develop a shared set of findings. We decided to incorporate the “advice” findings into the other three findings because of significant overlap.

### Challenges and Opportunities of Voices 4 Data Collection

Through our data collection and analysis, we have identified three challenges to our work, which we position as opportunities for future work.

1. We only had nine focus groups. We attempted to recruit more members to our research team with a working session at UCEA 2021. However, our overall participant pool is relatively small, and certain regions and types of districts are not well represented.
2. About half of the focus groups were conducted prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the remaining occurred in the middle of the pandemic. This changed the nature of leadership, the concerns that districts were facing, and the conversations that arose within the focus groups, making it difficult to identify patterns across both sets of focus groups.
3. We had intended to recruit relatively homogenous groups (e.g., rural principals, urban superintendents), but the focus groups ended up with greater diversity, including nonprincipals and a mix of district types.

Altogether, as will be discussed below, these challenges, along with the findings from these focus groups, provide the foundation to reposition this study as a pilot for the Voices 5 study. Our methodological challenges and the key findings will support the development of a revised focus group protocol and set of recruitment criteria.

### Emergent Findings

The three central ideas are social justice in principal preparation, theory versus practice, and mentoring of principals and principal candidates. These three ideas intersect, overlap, and at times align. We present each finding followed by a discussion and consideration of implications for future research.

**Table.** Focus Group Demographics

Region	Year	Type of districts (self-identified)	Participants	Years of experience	
				Avg.	Range
Central Illinois	2018	Rural, suburban, small city	6 principals	6	4–12
Chicago area	2018	Suburban, urban	4 principals	12	3–21
Florida	2019	Urban	4 principals	10	6–13
Kentucky	2019	Rural	8 principals, 1 superintendent	9	1–25
Ohio	2019	Rural, suburban	6 principals	10	1–18
Mississippi	2021	Rural	4 principals, 2 central office administrators	6	1–15
Georgia	2019	Rural	5 principals	7	3–15
Texas	2022	Rural	5 principals	6	2–15
California	2021	Urban	4 principals, 2 central office administrators	13	10–18

## ***Social Justice in Principal Preparation: A Continued Absence?***

Across the nine focus groups of experienced educational leaders, a consensus developed in relation to ways that leadership preparation addressed issues of social justice. Unfortunately, the answer was a resounding “no.” Almost all participants recalled nothing specific in their preparation related to preparing them to work with diverse student populations, let alone to address issues of social justice and inequity. “I don’t think I did,” responded a Kentucky principal, and a Florida principal concurred: “In my preparation, we did not delve that much into multicultural, social justice, things like that.” An Illinois principal reported, “Equity was not a word I ever heard of” in preparation coursework. Of note, participants also reported a lack of preparation for conversations related to equity and social justice. One California principal shared, “One of the most important things is to have courageous conversations with the staff or parents. I didn’t feel prepared for this.” These types of difficult conversations will undoubtedly happen, whether principals are prepared or not.

**Hints of Social Justice Coursework.** Principals who did recall content related to diversity or social justice generally discussed a single course, reading, or assignment. A Georgia principal shared, “We had a class on multicultural education.” A principal from Ohio also recalled a class with more specificity: “There was a course on special populations, but it didn’t really dive into diversity or some of the implicit bias that we all have. I don’t think it did a good job ... at that at all.”

Three participants, including one who went through their preparation right after NCLB was passed, recalled coursework focused on disaggregating data into different categories and demographic subgroups. A Texas principal also discussed disaggregation of data as the only moment in preparation related to diversity: “Nothing specifically [except] a module on the data desegregation when you look at testing and all of those things, you know that really had us delve into race.” However, despite these hints of social justice preparation, there was no discussion of an intentional, program-wide approach to issues related to diversity or social justice. A recurrent recommendation of principals was that principal preparation programs strengthen understandings of equity-driven leadership and working with culturally and linguistically diverse students. As California principal shared, “Helping aspiring school administrators to know how to combat inequities is essential.”

### **Unintended Social Justice Learning Opportunities.**

Participants who did report learning about social justice leadership in preparation pointed to two aspects of preparation that seemed almost unintended but powerful. First, principals noted the benefit of having peers in their preparation program who were already committed to issues of social justice. This is exemplified in this remark by a principal from Mississippi:

Fortunately, I think because of the cohort I was in, there were people in our cohort committed to social justice who pushed that issue, who could turn conversations that weren’t probably intended to be

about social justice into a conversation about that. It made some people in my cohort very uncomfortable.

Of note, three participants noted that students in their principal preparation classes were relatively homogenous in terms of background and felt this was detrimental to their learning.

The second aspect that participants felt supported their learning about diversity and social justice was the opportunity to learn about the unique assets and challenges of different school contexts, especially in regard to working with different student populations. This occurred especially in relation to internship and practicum placements, though no participant said this was typically as a fortunate and likely unintentional outcome of clinical placements. A Florida principal who was a teacher in “the really inner-city schools of New York City” did their preparation program at a school in the suburbs. This principal recalled course readings and discussions that supported developing connections between “urban settings, suburban settings, any demographics, socioeconomic factors. ... That is what enlightened me to see more.”

## ***Theory Versus Practice: Tell Me What to Do!***

A second theme reflects many participants’ unfulfilled expectation of being told exactly what to do once they became school principals. In part, this might be because when they took on their first principalship, they realized the magnitude of the role and the range of their responsibilities. A Chicago principal shared,

I don’t think that you go through the program understanding the scope of the job. ... In the 1st week in my job [as assistant principal], my principal sent me ... to the boiler room because it was now my job, when the boiler alarm went off, to reset all the boiler things. Where was that in the principal preparation?

While there was laughter at this comment, principals across focus groups wished they had received more direction in different aspects of their job.

Many participants emphasized the importance of use of real scenarios in classes and inviting current principals to be guest speakers. One principal from central Illinois summed up these sentiments, stating, “I wish we had, for every class, a principal come in and be like, here’s *what you need to know*. Here’s an actual day. Here’s an actual scenario. Here’s the application of what my job actually looks like.” Another described, when asked about instructional strategies, a collaborative learning space with peer input but would have preferred “*more clear teacher time*,” meaning more faculty-directed instruction.

**Handling Ambiguity.** Several participants expressed interest specifically in how to handle difficult, ambiguous situations. One participant reflected, “My coursework was very much all the technical stuff that you build a course around, but leaders need the most help and practice with ambiguous situations.” A principal in a partially rural district in Ohio added, “You don’t know what you don’t know ‘til you have to do it. And then you don’t know it!” One participant described having to fire a teacher and asked, “What do you need to be thinking

about the be concerned with thinking through?" Rather than the legal aspects of releasing a teacher, this participant seemed to be reflecting on the emotional difficulty of letting a teacher go. Participants implied an expectation of receiving a magical "how to do it" manual or a cheat sheet of sorts that would cover the unknown.

**How to Lead for Social Justice.** Participants noted that social justice was a specific area where they would have liked more explicit instruction. When discussing preparation for the increasing diversity and persistent inequities in schools, one participant from central Illinois said, "I didn't have any courses specifically that said, this is how you navigate [situations]." A principal from Texas added that they would want to know how to deal with issues related to gender and race that are current news topics:

I would want to ... know, the best way to handle—you know, I felt like it [preparation] was more just general, like you should be a good person and think of other people, but really it could have been more beneficial to be directed specifically at what was going on in the world around us and how you're supposed to address those issues as a public school servant.

Instead of acknowledging the contextual nature of addressing equity-related issues, this participant wanted "the answer." Overall, participants' interest in being told what to do suggested limited attention to theoretical understandings of leadership or change as they searched for "best practices."

### ***Mentoring of Principal Candidates***

Overall, participants in most focus groups did not refer to mentorship as an integral part of their principal preparation or induction. However, those who did spoke positively of their involvement. One seasoned Texas principal explained,

Probably the thing that stood out the most for me was having a mentor that was assigned to us through the preparation program. The mentor brought a lot of different ideas and perspectives that maybe I wasn't looking at. ... It was probably the most enlightening piece for me.

Another principal commented that being able to dialogue with their mentor about the realities of the principalship was most helpful, as program expectations did not always align with district practice: "There were some tasks that I felt like didn't really happen in real school or ... I would tell my mentor person, 'I have to do this,' and it was like, 'That's not, you know, what we do.'" A similar response from a Florida principal suggested that the feedback they received from mentors helped them understand that different approaches work in different contexts: "There are things that I learned from the mentor I had that I was like, 'Oh, I don't think that would work in my school.'"

Generally, participants did not always clearly distinguish between formal and informal mentorship experiences. The type of mentorship experiences is open to some interpretation. For instance, several respondents discussed the value of job shadowing. "The opportunity to job shadow was very helpful. A substitute was provided for a conference period or for a day

to shadow and gain a chance to ask questions and engage in dialogue while I observed the principal."

Conversely, some participants wished they had had a mentor. An Illinois principal noted that the lack of a mentor hindered preparation and that having a mentorship program would have greatly enhanced their preparation.

To have a mentor in place who is documented, so to speak, someone who has gone through the ranks, who has, who can be honest, someone you can follow after to be able to guide you in the way that yields, will hopefully yield success, creating those safety nets. A go-to person. I feel that if I had had a mentor that would have just helped me that much more in becoming a 1st-year administrator, principal, whatever that is. So, having a mentoring program in place would be key.

In thinking about mentoring and growth as leaders, another principal asked his focus group, "What types of activities, strategies and behaviors accelerate a principal's ability to successfully lead schools?" Reflecting on the resultant focus group discussion, he answered his own question.

At least one of my revelations during this piece so far has been, it can never be too early to have a mentor. I wish I had a mentor the day before I started the principal program. And I had that mentor or multiple mentors all the way through. How can principal prep programs establish mentoring relationships with students from the start to the end of the program? Because I think that you sort of need it all the way through.

Mentoring was a desire more than a reality for most participants across focus groups.

### **Discussion**

In reflecting on these findings, we must consider the work of educational leadership and the purpose of leadership preparation programs. Education and the work of school leadership are contextual, uncertain, unpredictable, and ambiguous (Yurkofsky, 2022). This was highlighted and magnified by the compounded crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic, its disruptions to the educational system, and the shifts that it has caused to leadership practices (Reyes-Guerra et al., 2021). Huber (2002) proposed, "As leadership educators, we help people to understand what it means to be a leader" (p. 31). Brackett et al. (2014) added, "The role of educational leadership preparation programs is to prepare educational leaders for the landscape that they will encounter, even though this landscape continues to change" (p. 74). Byrne-Jiménez and Byrne (2020) described the need when preparing educational leaders to

integrate the managerial aspects of leadership with the [knowledge] ... so important to recognizing our common humanity. ... In a field committed to diversifying the leadership and professor pipeline, we must prepare to embrace alternate epistemologies, ontologies, and methodologies that allow us to see and be more.

Accordingly, educational leaders are ideally being prepared to synthesize all that they have learned about the various aspects of leadership (Moore et al., 2011) to inform their practice within their respective contexts. However, the “whole educational system is still geared more toward categorizing and analyzing the patches of knowledge than to threading them together” (Cleveland, 2002, p. 215).

School leaders tend to prefer relying on their own experiences or on locally available information (Birkeland et al., 2005; Corcoran et al., 2001; Nelson et al., 2009; Yoshizawa, 2022) than to conduct research themselves. At the same time, when they lack an understanding of an issue, they often comply and adopt imposed visible practices in a superficial way that does not support a comprehensive purpose (Anagnostopoulos & Rutledge, 2007; Ganon-Shilon et al., 2020; Seashore Louis & Robinson, 2012). That is why it is important for leaders to develop a deep understanding of their context and relevant issues as they navigate complex and ambiguous environmental expectations (Ganon-Shilon & Schechter, 2019; Rigby, 2015). They can do this through the process of sense making, where they tap into their prior experiences, professional identities, and organizational context (Rigby, 2015; Yurkofsky, 2022) to inform their decisions and actions.

### ***Social Justice***

Disappointingly, participants across focus groups shared little explicit attention to issues of diversity, let alone social justice and antiracist leadership practices. These findings are in line with previous research on the topic, despite significant research arguing for the need for these topics within preparation programs (e.g., Khalifa et al., 2018).

Smith et al. (1997) identified exposure to multiple different culturally diverse groups—whether through friends or colleagues—as a factor that positively impacts the cultural competence of students in educator preparation programs. This aligns with study participants’ perceptions of the importance of having peers who are committed to social justice as a powerful yet sometimes unintended social justice learning opportunity. In this study’s finding regarding social justice in educational leadership preparation programs, practicum and experiential learning that allows for working with different student populations was identified as another powerful factor fostering meaningful learning about social justice and equity. This also aligns with literature stressing the importance of internship when preparing educational leaders for social justice (McKenzie et al., 2008). Black and Murtadha (2007) added that internships in diverse settings allow students to “move beyond isolated university classrooms and work in problem-solving teams as educational leadership interns, collaborating with university liaisons and field-based educators and/or policy makers” (p. 14).

### ***Theory Versus Practice: Tell Me What to Do!***

The majority of educational leadership theories (e.g., Agosto & Roland, 2018) reinforce the homogenized nature of an agreed-upon model of good leadership, a mold to which everyone is expected to fit (Barakat, 2022) and where what the leader does (often scripted, linear, and compliance-oriented)

is “more important than who they are” (Lumby & Morrison, 2010, p. 6). These focus groups showed that many students of educational leadership programs have become socialized into that prescriptive. They are comfortable with a directive, top-down approach, where they expect to be told what to do and what the right answer or course of action is, even in complex situations. Some administrators wanted their programs to provide them with the right answers to complex situations or clear guidelines to arrive at the right answer. This finding raises many important questions for preparation programs around how to balance understandings of theory with “best practices.”

It is important for preparation programs to provide educational leaders with the opportunity to develop the skills of self-efficacy, autonomy, and agency, which are characteristics of effective leaders, as well as an understanding of the purpose guiding the educational leader. Students need to research relevant issues and find solutions themselves, which can result in deriving meaningful insights and outcomes (Coburn et al., 2009). A narrow focus on task fidelity, compliance and the “one right course of action” instead of strategic and situated agency has the potential to radically transform the educational leadership community from a dynamic, professional, autonomous one into a passive community that ignores its own expertise, conscience, and human capital (Dover, 2022).

### ***Mentoring***

We use Kram’s (1985) conceptualization of mentoring as an intense and developmental relationship that involves advising and counseling from mentor to protégé. The pair works on issues related to career support and psychological support. At the same time, we acknowledge the many definitions of mentoring, and we agree with Merriam (1983) that “how mentoring is defined determines the extent of mentoring found” (p. 165). Our findings showed few mentoring relationships at all for participants, and those who had the opportunity of mentor offered little indication of the type of mentoring relationship described by Kram.

It was surprising to find little or no information on how mentoring was used in these aspiring principals’ preparation programs to help them become successful school leaders. However, those principals who spoke of mentoring did so in a positive way. Working with their mentor helped them recognize the realities of the principalship and understand the decision-making process. Several principals stated that having a mentorship program greatly enhanced their principal preparation. These findings support the research on mentoring results. Ragins et al. (2000) posited that informal or formal mentoring results in stronger job satisfaction. However, Eby and Allen (2002) cautioned that some formal program assignments can result in a poor dyadic fit. One must consider factors such as ethnicity, culture, and gender differences that may hinder the mentor–mentee relationship.

Kram’s (1983) mentoring research revealed the importance of a mentor relationship to enhance career development and psychosocial development of both individuals. Therefore, principal preparation program faculty members should arrange the structure to support formal

mentoring relationships. Chao et al. (1992) noted that formal mentoring relationships are established and managed by the organization and, unlike informal mentoring relationships, are not spontaneous.

## Moving From Voices 4 to Voices 5

The limitations of the Voices 4 study and its emerging findings lead us to identify a set of guidelines to develop the Voices 5 research project in two critical areas: participant recruitment and focus group protocols.

### Participant Recruitment

Because we are interested in the current state of principal and superintendent preparation, we must recruit recent graduates. Our findings reflect the preparation of educational leaders who participated in preparation programs 15–20 years ago. It is our hope that many programs throughout the nation have been transformed since that time. To this end, our recommendation is to recruit participants who graduated from their preparation programs within the last 5 years. This will give us a more up-to-date sense of how leadership preparation programs are responding to growing concerns related to social justice, anti-Black racism, and equity.

### Updated Focus Group Protocol

Principals who were interviewed acknowledged that many preparation programs have changed since the time that they were in classes of principal preparation. Our emerging findings related to social justice, the expectation of being told what to do, and mentoring offer clear directions for a more targeted set of questions within the protocol. We envision a revised protocol that probes more deeply into participants' understandings of what leadership for social justice means, as well as how their preparation programs addressed, if at all, current justice-related issues, including the attack on critical race theory, the COVID-19 pandemic, trauma-informed schooling, and the need for crisis leadership.

## Call for Researchers

Thank you to the readers who are engaging with our findings. We now invite you to join the Voices From the Field team. We are looking for graduate students and faculty members interested in leadership preparation who are interested in conducting a focus group and joining the team to analyze the shared data. You can contribute to research on the state of leadership preparation. If you are interested in learning more, [please sign up here!](#) For questions, you can email Dr. Rachel Roegman at [roegman@illinois.edu](mailto:roegman@illinois.edu)

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# From the Executive Director

Mónica Byrne-Jiménez  
UCEA Executive Director



Dear UCEA Community,

Welcome back to campus—be it in person, virtual, or hybrid! I hope the fall semester is off to a great start. Equally important, I hope your summers were restorative both physically and creatively.

This summer was particularly busy for HQ. In May we headed to Cairo, Egypt for our third International Study Trip. From conversations with Egyptian educators and students

to walking along paths that are thousands of years old, the trip was both inspiring and humbling (see pages 19-23). In June we hosted the 2023 Convention Planning Committee and watched them bring their vision of an enhanced experience for attendees to life (see pages 32-34). In July, I attended the BELMAS Annual Conference in Liverpool where we hosted a small event for “UCEA-ers” presenting there. Also in July, I attended the 8th Women Leading Education (WLE) Across Continents conference in Tagaytay, Philippines (see pages 26-28). UCEA was integral to the development of this network and proudly offers scholarships to faculty from across the world to attend. Lastly, we welcomed the Executive Committee in August to begin a strategy formation process to help UCEA step into the future in responsive and expansive ways.

In this *Review* you will be introduced to UCEA’s new Associate Directors for Faculty Development, Graduate Student Development, International Initiatives, and Policy and Advocacy (see pages 13-15). I am deeply indebted and grateful to our outgoing Associate Directors Ed Fuller, Jane Lindle, Hollie Mackey, Angel Miles Nash, John Nash, and Michael O’Malley for their service to UCEA, especially as I stepped in as Executive Director and HQ moved to MSU. They helped the organization maneuver through those changes with commitment, patience, and heart.

Also please read more for two important opportunities for becoming involved in UCEA:

- The first is to become a Mentor for the Jackson Scholars Network (JSN). If you are a tenured professor or an assistant professor beyond your 3-year review, then you are eligible to be a Jackson Scholar Mentor. JSN mentors work with scholars over a 2-year period while attending UCEA and AERA—and in between (see page 35). If you are interested, complete the [JSN Mentor Form](#) by September 17.
- The second is in planning the next effort of research on leadership preparation. “Voices 5” is the latest phase in *A Thousand Voices From the Firing Line: A Study of Educational Leaders* (1999) to understand current leadership realities, opportunities, and challenges (see pages 1-8). The current researchers are looking to expand the team and seeking new contributors (see page 8). Keep an eye out for a special UCEA session during the Convention.

We are also happy to welcome new member, Eastern Michigan University (see page 15). You will also see updates about the 2022 Excellence in Educational Leadership awardees, UCEA Research Centers, The Wallace Foundation, ESSER policy, and graduate student news.

Lastly, I want to draw your attention to an open letter to UCEA penned by Drs. Clement, López, and Welton in the wake of the Supreme Court decision overturning decades of educational progress for institutions and individuals alike (see pages 10-12). Their voices are a powerful call to stay grounded in the values that have been vital to UCEA and to build on those to ensure that we meet this latest challenge to racial and social justice.

As always, take your time reading this *Review*—whether you agree or disagree, are inspired or concerned, look forward to seeing each other in November or dread writing your paper, please engage with the work and words of your colleagues in this issue.

I look forward to seeing you in Minneapolis!

Adelante UCEA,  
Mónica Byrne-Jiménez

## ucea23

Minneapolis, MN  
November 16-19, 2023  
Hyatt Regency Minneapolis

[www.ucea.org/conference/2023-annual-convention/](http://www.ucea.org/conference/2023-annual-convention/)

# An Open Letter to UCEA Regarding Recent U.S. Supreme Court Decisions: A Call to Action

Davis Clement  
Eastern Michigan University

Gerardo R. López  
Michigan State University

Anjalé D. Welton  
University of Wisconsin–Madison

Dear UCEA Friends and Colleagues,

Since June 29, the U.S. Supreme Court has made several decisions that both undermine our community—current and future—and question the rights of many of us. In response, I asked Drs. Davis Clement, Gerardo R. López, and Anjalé D. Welton to pen an open letter about the implications, yes, but more importantly about the work that needs to be done to ensure that we remain an equity-oriented, diverse, and expansive organization. Please read their letter and take some time to think about how you, your program, and your institution can remain committed to the values of what we know makes for effective educational leadership, while making a difference in your communities in light of these decisions. The Executive Committee will be meeting in August, and this will be part of our ongoing discussion of the vision and future of UCEA. We will not waiver in our commitment to just and equitable pK-20 educational systems or all the communities we serve from birth to doctorate, and beyond.

Adelante UCEA,

Mónica Byrne-Jiménez, UCEA Executive Director  
Michigan State University



As individuals who were directly and indirectly affected by the recent onslaught of U.S. Supreme Court decisions (*Students for Fair Admissions, Inc. v. President and Fellows of Harvard College*, *Biden et al. v. Nebraska et al.*, and *303 Creative LLC et al. v. Elenis et al.*), we pen this open letter to the UCEA community, its governing bodies, and Executive Director. First, we are writing to express our concerns surrounding the implications of these court decisions on UCEA because they impact key constituents within our organization: namely, LGBTQ+ communities, people of Color, student borrowers, and low-SES populations. We believe the Supreme Court not only used its supermajority to undo decades of progress towards equality and equity for a wide range of minoritized groups, but that it will take years—perhaps decades—to undo these setbacks given the current structure of the Supreme Court.

Second, we are writing to express our frustration with the U.S. Supreme Court, whose regressive decisions came on the heels of other legislative and policy setbacks across the nation, including (but not limited to): the curtailing of reproductive rights, antitrans bills, bans on drag performers, book bans, critical race theory (CRT) bans, and attacks on the fundamental principles of human rights for immigrant and religious minorities. We believe that the proliferation of these harmful laws and policies—particularly those emerging from the state and local levels—were deliberate, well-coordinated, and funded by a network of conservative interest groups who would readily destroy American democracy in exchange for short-term political gain.

Given the current state of affairs in our country, we are writing to implore UCEA's leadership to take immediate, visible, and proactive action on the following:

1. To guarantee that its commitments to diversity, equity, and inclusion will remain firmly at the center of UCEA's values and mission.
2. To assure that its various social justice efforts, initiatives, and graduate student development opportunities within UCEA will be protected and undeterred.
3. To have member institutions "recommit" to UCEA's goals and ideals of social justice, as a key component of their membership and expression of support for minoritized individuals.

To be certain, we worry that the recent court and legislative decisions will have a "chilling effect" on our member institutions. We feel that some UCEA member institutions might limit and/or consider forgoing support for diversity efforts within UCEA altogether (such as the Jackson Scholars Network) in order to avoid legal scrutiny or possible retribution. If enough member institutions

reduce or limit their support in this way, it will have serious implications for the future of our field, as it will fundamentally alter the make-up and direction of our profession and knowledge base.

Now is not time for political indolence, contemplation, or reflection. We cannot stand idle while our colleagues and students are political targets of the conservative Right. We also cannot cross our fingers and hope that these Court decisions will not seriously impact our field—or simply assume that things will remain the same in light of these decisions. We must take a proactive stance now. The implications of the recent SCOTUS decisions are serious and deep. We must take time to understand their potential impact in order to forge a positive path forward.

The recent Court decisions have unsettled two foundational assumptions about the judicial system—and therefore the civil and human rights the courts are sworn to protect and defend. These are *stare decisis*, or the deference to precedent, and legal standing, or the legitimacy of a plaintiff's interest in a particular case. By overturning decades of precedent that protected the rights of people of Color and of women, and by granting standing to a plaintiff who (we now know) faked standing (Slevin et al., 2023) in order to claim a right to discriminate, the Court has invented—out of whole cloth—a new and improved constitutional right to bigotry, misogyny, and White supremacy for the 21st century.

We also know from the relatively recent examples of Michigan, Washington, and California that bans on affirmative action in higher education immediately resulted in drastic drops in the enrollment of students of Color. Despite this knowledge—along with the various *amicus* briefs filed in the current case warning the Court about this possibility—the Court nevertheless decided to strike down affirmative action. The fact that the Courts rendered their decision under the guise of “equal protection” only adds a sick irony to this case and to the future of diversity in higher education.

In addition, the U.S. Supreme Court's recent overturning of *Roe v. Wade* has, and will continue to have, deleterious effects on comprehensive health care, particularly for low-income individuals. The United States is now an outlier among the United Nations for failing to protect the basic human right of access to reproductive health care. In short, the Court has initiated a contravention of medical, ethical, and political consensus through their decisions.

It is a profound understatement to say these decisions will have an immediate chilling effect on diversity efforts in higher education, female bodily autonomy, and the safety of marginalized communities. Military leadership have repeatedly made a national security case for diversity, equity, and inclusion along a number of identity markers, including race, gender, sexuality, and health access. Curiously, the Court has acknowledged the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion in our institutions by leaving a “carve-out” for military academies in the Harvard and UNC decisions, without identifying why such concerns are not appropriate for civilian education. As educators, we must be vigilant of the ways this new constitutional order will affect our students and our institutions. For leadership preparation programs, like those in

UCEA, this means minding the diversity of our applicant pools and leadership corps.

In a recent special issue of *Leadership & Policy in Schools*, our colleagues made a sound case for the benefits of a diverse leadership pipeline and identified how a number of member institutions maintained diverse enrollment (including many practices not related to specific admissions policies that contribute to the enrollment and success of students of color in leadership programs). For scholars of education (especially those in the “nonelite” institutions not technically implicated in these decisions), it means actively foregrounding the voices of scholars, educators, and communities of Color, thereby heightening the distinctions between diverse institutions that accept over 60% of their applicants, and the whitening of elite institutions now constitutionally prohibited from diversifying their student bodies.

Since the SCOTUS decision, numerous universities and learned organizations have drafted statements of concern as well as commitments to “double-down” on efforts to maintain diversity. We believe that such statements are often reactive and performative in nature, with no proposed plan of action, institutional accountability, or follow-through. Just 3 years ago, at the onset of George Floyd's brutal murder by Minneapolis police, a global “racial reckoning” occurred where institutions of all sectors (including PK-12 and higher education) made explicit statements to redress racial inequities within their organizations. Unfortunately, most of these institutional displays of commitment have been slowed, reneged, or abandoned altogether. We are not interested in similar platitudes or empty rhetoric. We would like to see UCEA, as our professional organization, commit to action by having a concrete plan on how it proposes to move forward in light of the recent court decisions.

What can UCEA do? As a starting point we suggest reexamining priorities fundamental to UCEA, especially its commitment to graduate student and early career faculty development, policy advocacy and justice, and quality leadership preparation. The Jackson Scholar Network, in particular, prepares graduate students of Color for the “hidden curriculum” of the professoriate. Its alumni are leading scholars in the field. Yet, Jackson Scholar enrollment is declining, and we fear that the recent Court decision on affirmative action may speed this decline by sending a chilling effect to member institutions. Something must be done.

In the past, UCEA has led significant policy advocacy efforts in educational administration such as the push for an explicit equity focus in the 2015 refresh of the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders. Yet, as an organization, we can and must do more. We must critically consider how certain members of UCEA are still not thoroughly reflected in our conceptions of equity and policy advocacy—such as members of our LGBTQ+ community. To be certain, several leading scholars in our organization laid the blueprint for LGBTQ+ policy research in educational leadership (e.g., Alston, 2019; Hernandez et al., 2015; Koschoreck, 2003; Lugg, 2016; McQuillan, 2022; O'Malley & Capper, 2015). However, UCEA could do much more to formalize its commitment to LGBTQ+ policy advocacy. Our second UCEA Presidential Spring Lecture



Series (Alston et al, 2023) in May is just one example, but how can our organization act on the policy priorities discussed in this panel? Some suggestions would be to (a) charge the new UCEA Associate Director for Policy and Advocacy with the task of creating an explicit focus on LGBTQ+ policy research, (b) develop a UCEA Program Center devoted to LGBTQ+ issues, and (c) examine how current supports for “gender-inclusive” or “women’s” leadership initiatives often render invisible trans and nonbinary individuals, and then actively work to redress them.

There is no doubt that the recent U.S. Supreme Court decisions directly targeted members of our UCEA community. They also have significant implications for several of our social justice initiatives and graduate student development efforts. It is imperative that UCEA’s governance and leadership take a strong and visible stand to condemn these court decisions and to provide reassurances to the broader community that our diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts will continue to grow and thrive despite these setbacks. We recognize that UCEA’s leadership cannot do this alone and that these efforts will require an equally strong commitment from **all** our member institutions and their deans. The Courts have put these issues before us. It is now our turn to act.

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# New UCEA Associate Directors

## Associate Director for Faculty Development

### Jennifer Ng

Dr. Jennifer Ng is a professor in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies at the University of Kansas. She also served as Interim Vice Provost for Diversity and Equity at the University of Kansas before being appointed Associate Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs. Jennifer's research and teaching have explored how the social contexts of schooling affect educators' work, especially in demographically diverse and hard-to-staff urban and rural areas. Jennifer earned her bachelor's as well as master's degrees from the University of Iowa and her doctorate from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. She was also a middle school English teacher in Houston, Texas, before beginning her faculty career in higher education.

As UCEA's inaugural Associate Director for Faculty Development, Jennifer is excited to work with others and think creatively about how the association can support the needs of faculty throughout their careers.



Associate Director for Faculty Development is a new UCEA position. Since its founding, UCEA has been committed to the support, improvement, and success of educational leadership faculty. Over the years, UCEA has expanded opportunities for faculty collaboration, mentoring, programming, and professional development. The purpose of UCEA's focus on faculty development is four-fold:

1. To strengthen the pathway for faculty from assistant to full professor and into higher education administration,
2. To broaden the scope of our faculty-focused programming to better support needs of the field and faculty,
3. To advocate for promotion and tenure criteria/processes that recognize the scholarly and practitioner-oriented interests and needs of the educational leadership discipline, and
4. To ensure UCEA functions as a leader in equity-oriented faculty development by raising attention to inequities in promotion/administrative pipelines and countering such inequities through support and advocacy.

## Associate Director for Policy and Advocacy

### Chad Lochmiller

Chad Lochmiller, PhD, is an associate professor in the School of Education at Indiana University and currently chairs the Department of Educational Leadership & Policy Studies. In addition, he is serving a 2-year term on the Indiana Commission for Higher Education. Lochmiller's research focuses on leadership and policy issues, including instructional leadership and supervision, school and district resource allocation, and more broadly issues related to continuous improvement. Lochmiller has served as a delegate to the Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate, a member of the National Faculty for Improvement Science with the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, and a fellow with the Big10 Academic Alliance's Departmental Executive Officer's Program; he has been deeply involved in accreditation activities. He is a past recipient of the UCEA Jack A. Culbertson Early Career Award. His published work has appeared in *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *Journal of Educational Administration*, and other outlets. Lochmiller earned his PhD in Education Policy from the University of Washington in 2010.

"As Associate Director for Policy and Advocacy, I look forward to working with the UCEA community to produce high-quality policy research on current policy issues and to promote engagement across the consortium on policy issues impacting the quality and success of educational leaders. Given the challenges confronting leaders and their communities, our collective voice as a consortium has never been more important."

The Associate Director for Policy and Advocacy is focused on policy analysis, advocacy, and developing graduate students as both policy analysts and future policy educators. UCEA must continue to develop as a leader in educational policy in order to live up to our vision of improving the leadership and policy that supports the learning and development of all children. The purpose of UCEA's policy focus is threefold:

1. To disseminate information regarding educational policies that impact educational leaders, the preparation of educational leaders, or research on educational leadership;
2. To engage collaboratively with scholars to proactively address policy issues that affect educational leaders and practitioners in schools and districts; and
3. To strengthen the voice of educational leaders and educational leadership faculty in national policy discussions.



## Associate Director for International Initiatives Maysaa Barakat

Dr. Barakat is associate professor at the Department of Educational Leadership and Research Methodology, Florida Atlantic University (FAU), and past president of the Florida Association of Professors of Educational Leadership. A Clark Scholar, she received her master's and PhD in Educational Leadership from Auburn University, Alabama. She has over 15 years of school leadership experience, both in Egypt and the United States. Dr. Barakat's research focuses on issues of cultural competence, identity, social justice, educational leadership preparation, and international education, with a special focus on education in Egypt. Dr. Barakat coordinates a partnership that fosters collaboration, intercultural exchange, and shared learning between FAU and Egypt. She also has been leading the development and delivery of diverse professional learning opportunities for over 15,000 educators in Egypt since 2016. Maysaa's publications include peer-reviewed articles, book chapters, and an edited book on educational leaders and educational leadership in international contexts. She was a delegation leader for the UCEA trip to Egypt this spring. Dr. Barakat's inclination towards internationalization and the necessity for global interconnectedness between educators aligns with UCEA's international focus. She will support UCEA's quest to better understand educational leadership in the United States, address issues that face educational leaders in schools, and better develop leadership preparation systems through learning from and with international colleagues who operate in many diverse contexts and are guided by different and non-Western perspectives. Dr. Barakat will employ the skills, dispositions, and cultural knowledge gained from her international experiences to build on the existing efforts and continue to create opportunities for members of the UCEA to engage with international scholars, practitioners, and governmental and nongovernmental educational organizations in multiple meaningful ways.

For over 10 years, UCEA has expanded opportunities for collaboration with leadership organizations in other countries; the development of international research projects; and, more recently, travel study programs. UCEA is involved in international leadership projects and has MOUs with a variety of international associations in educational leadership and management. The purpose of UCEA's international focus is threefold:

1. To broaden our understanding of educational leadership in the United States by learning from and with international partners;
2. To engage collaboratively with international scholars, practitioners, and governmental and nongovernmental educational organizations to address issues that face educational leaders in schools; and
3. To strengthen the development of educational leadership preparation as a field of study around the world and impact the quality of school/educational leaders in the U.S. and worldwide.



## Associate Co-Directors for Graduate Student Development Chris Willis

Dr. Chris Willis is an associate professor in the School of Counseling, Higher Education, Leadership, and Foundations at Bowling Green State University. He teaches courses in instructional leadership, special education law, organizational change, and leadership for diversity. He received his EdD in Educational Leadership from Indiana University. Prior to coming to Bowling Green State University, he was a faculty member at Mississippi State University in Starkville. While at Mississippi State, he was a part of the Studio Schools project that was awarded the 2015 Leadership for Social Justice Bridge Award. He also had a successful career as a building- and district-level leader in multiple districts in Central Indiana. His research interests include effective leadership for special education, the impact of policy on school practice, and structural and historical barriers to school reform. His work has been published both domestically and internationally.

"UCEA has played such an important role in my own journey from graduate student to tenured professor. I am excited and honored to have this opportunity to work with UCEA. I look forward to continuing our strong traditions and to shape new ways that UCEA can help foster the coming generations of educational leadership scholars."



## DeMarcus Jenkins

DeMarcus A. Jenkins is an assistant professor in the School of Social Policy and Practice with a secondary appointment in the Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Pennsylvania. Broadly, his program of research centers on important policy- and practice-relevant issues concerning Black and other vulnerable populations in relation to education, housing, and criminal/juvenile justice. Specifically, his work focuses on (a) the interconnectedness of education and criminal justice, including the strategies, technologies, and logics of carceral systems that appear in schools; (b) the relationship between education reform and urban development with a focus on housing policies; and (c) the politics of policy change or how marginalized populations interact with the policy process. He investigates



the intersection of race, urban space, and policy and its implications for educational equity and justice. Dr. Jenkins's interdisciplinary scholarship draws on critical theories of race, critical spatial theory, Black geographies, critical policy studies, and urban sociology. His research has been funded by the Spencer Foundation and the William T. Grant Foundation. Dr. Jenkins earned his PhD in Urban Schooling from the University of California, Los Angeles. He received his EdM from Georgia State University and MA from American University. He holds a BA in English and Afro-American and African Studies from the University of Michigan.

UCEA is committed to the support, improvement, and success of graduate students in educational leadership. The purpose of UCEA's focus on graduate student development is four-fold:

1. To strengthen the scholarly and research pathways for graduate students from doctoral studies through the faculty job search and early transitions,
2. To broaden the scope of our graduate student focused programming to better support the emerging needs of the field and future faculty in higher education,
3. To ensure that UCEA functions as a leader in equity-oriented graduate student development by continuing to build the Jackson Scholar and Alumni Network, and
4. To develop graduate student leadership within the organization (e.g., Graduate Student Council) and with UCEA partners (e.g., Division A).

## New UCEA Member



UCEA welcomes Eastern Michigan University as a new associate member. Eastern Michigan University (EMU) was founded in 1849 as the Michigan State Normal School and in 1899 launched the first ever 4-year teaching degree in the United States. The College of Education houses 98 different academic programs and was the first in the nation to offer coursework in special education. Education faculty at EMU continue to lead in pedagogical innovation, community partnership cultivation, and research expansion under the leadership of Dean Ryan Evely Gildersleeve.

The K-12 Educational Leadership program at EMU comprises a master's and certificate in Building Administration, a specialist's degree and endorsement in Central Office Administration, and a PhD in Educational Leadership. With seven tenure-line faculty, seven clinical faculty, and over 300 students in six new cohorts per year, EMU is one of the largest educational leadership preparation programs in Michigan. EMU is located in Ypsilanti and serves the communities of Ypsilanti, Ann Arbor, Dearborn, Detroit, and many other schools and districts throughout Michigan and the nation.

<https://www.emich.edu/coe/programs/phd-educational-leadership.php>

## New UCEA Graduate Assistants



### Andii Layton

Andii Layton is the past Chair of the Graduate Student Council with the American Educational Research Association and a PhD student in the College of Education at Michigan State University. Prior to joining the College of Education, she earned a master's degree from the

University of Chicago in Social Work Administration with a specialization in community schools and a bachelor's degree in Sociology and African American Studies from Rutgers University. Andii began her professional career as a project manager where she managed three signature programs that provided residential college experiences for students who come from marginalized communities. She has over 10 years of experience in teaching, programming, diversity, equity, and inclusion. She is a Teach for America alumni, where she taught seventh-grade humanities. Her critical research centers on issues of racism, racial equity, the politicization of school culture, teacher training, and creating equitable and inclusive school climates in K-20 school settings.

### Yashi Ye

Yashi Ye was born in Chengdu, China. She earned a bachelor's degree in finance from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro in 2016. After working in the K-12 educational industry for 5 years, she completed her master's degree in international teaching and Global Leadership Cohort in Creativity from Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland, in 2022. Since 2017, Yashi has been employed with the Sichuan Xichuan Hui Education Group and the Sichuan Xichuanhui Jindu K-12 Private School. Over the course of her career, she has transitioned from a teaching role to school administration and currently focuses on research in K-12 educational administration. Her academic interests lie in the areas of principal leadership, teacher professional development, and school management.





# 2022 Excellence in Educational Leadership Awards

The Excellence in Educational Leadership Award is for practicing school administrators who have made significant contributions to the improvement of administrator preparation. Each year, the UCEA Executive Committee invites member university faculties to select a distinguished school administrator who has an exemplary record of supporting school administrator preparation efforts. This is an unusual award in that it affords national recognition, but individual universities select the recipients. It provides a unique mechanism for UCEA universities to build good will and recognize the contributions of practitioners to the preparation of junior professionals.

## **Mr. Rob Anderson**

*Assistant Vice President for Mission, Catholic Extension  
Nominated by Loyola Marymount University*

Rob Anderson is the assistant vice president for Mission at Catholic Extension, a national nonprofit organization focused on supporting the growth of the Catholic Church in the United States. Rob works with Catholic Extension's 87 Extension Dioceses to strategically coordinate over \$15 million in financial assistance annually to areas of each diocese's greatest needs. He also leads the Catholic School Leadership Initiative, which has helped dioceses identify and develop more than 120 talented future leaders for their Catholic schools; the Seminarian Endowment Challenge, which has created over \$17 million in long-term seminarian education endowments; Catholic Extension's annual Lumen Christi Award; and other programs and initiatives to assist dioceses support their most important ministries and needs. Rob previously worked in development at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles (LMU) for 11 years. While at LMU, he raised over \$4 million in total funding for LMU athletics, receiving three CASE VII awards for excellence in educational fundraising, and managed the university's leadership donor programs' annual giving team. He holds both a bachelor's degree and an MBA from LMU.

## **Dr. Tiffany Anderson**

*Superintendent, Topeka Public Schools  
Nominated by Kansas State University*

Dr. Tiffany Anderson is the first African American female superintendent of Topeka Public Schools. She has been a public school educator for 28 years, with the majority of that time as superintendent. Dr. Anderson advises Kansas officials on postsecondary policies, equity policies, and legislation. She has served as a public and postsecondary health advocate and has improved achievement and closed achievement gaps for students in Virginia, Missouri, and Kansas. While superintendent in Virginia, Dr. Anderson led Montgomery County Public Schools in earning the Virginia

Governor's Competence to Excellence Award. After leading as superintendent in Jennings, Missouri, the district moved from possible state takeover due to poor performance to earning accreditation with distinction. During her tenures in Kansas and Missouri, achievement scores, graduation rates and college placement rates increased. Topeka has received four national Magna Awards from the National School Board Association and various local and state recognitions under Dr. Anderson's leadership for equity initiatives in schools, innovative public health programs addressing mental health, and academic achievement. Dr. Anderson is credited with leading the district to become a trauma-informed district, eliminating teen suicides in the district for 3 years and reducing homelessness by 20%.

Dr. Anderson earned her undergraduate degree and doctorate from Saint Louis University. Dr. Anderson is also a professor of practice for Kansas State University and adjunct faculty for the Association for Schools and Curriculum Development. Dr. Anderson's publications include her books on transforming schools along with several articles on public health and equity in education. In 2020, Dr. Anderson was a Kansas finalist for Superintendent of the Year after serving only 5 years and was also named a Kansas Icon in Education. In 2021 Dr. Anderson received the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Living the Dream and the Living Legacy Awards. In 2016, Dr. Anderson was recognized as one of the top six People with Purpose at the Oscars for her innovative work in education.

## **Dr. Thomas Fasano**

*Principal, St. Anne's Parish School;  
Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction,  
Massapequa Public School District (Ret.)  
Nominated by St. John's University*

Dr. Fasano served as assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction at Massapequa Public School District, New York, for 13 years. After 34 years in public education, Dr. Fasano retired and returned to serve as principal at St. Anne's School in Garden City, New York. He also has been an associate professor at St. John's University since 2005. His

skills include curriculum and instructional supervision, school law, e-learning, lesson planning, educational technology, and instructional design. He is an experienced educator and administrative professional with a Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership and Administration from St. John's University.

### **Dr. Brian Jordan**

*Executive Director, Kansas Association of School Boards  
Nominated by Kansas State University*

Beloit, Kansas native Dr. Brian Jordan serves as the executive director for the Kansas Association of School Boards (KASB). In his 21 years in education, Dr. Jordan has served as a teacher, principal, and assistant superintendent before coming to KASB. He earned his bachelor's degree in education at Kansas State University, his master's in education administration at Emporia State University, and his doctorate in education leadership at Kansas State. His dissertation focused on school funding and accreditation. Dr. Jordan uses his passion for school finance and leadership to work with educators and leaders every day to benefit student success.

Dr. Jordan has worked with schools across Kansas, helping train thousands of board members on effective leadership, planning, and operations. Districts frequently call upon him to assist in transitions, such as hiring a new superintendent or bringing on new board members. He has worked closely with leaders at the Kansas State Department of Education. Dr. Jordan also had a significant role in two leadership programs within KASB: Leadership for Tomorrow and the Business Operations Leadership Development program. These two programs support and develop education leaders as they work to improve their systems. Leading change in educational settings is an area of expertise that Dr. Jordan is frequently called upon to support school district leadership teams.

### **Dr. Glenn McClain**

*Superintendent, Platte Valley School District (Ret.)  
Nominated by University of Northern Colorado*

Dr. E. Glenn McClain, Jr. (Glenn) has served as an administrator in the Platte Valley School District in Kersey, Colorado, for the last 31 years. After serving as a director of admissions in higher education institutions, Glenn moved to Colorado in 1991 to become the business director in Platte Valley. In 1999, he was appointed superintendent and retired at the end of the 2021-22 school year. Glenn has a BA in Bible, BS in Business Administration, MBA in Organizational Management, and an EdD in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies. He also has his administrative/superintendent's license and

is a Certified Administrator of School Finance and Operations. He has served as president of the Colorado Association of Superintendents and School Administrators, the legislative committee chair for the Colorado Association of School Executives, and co-chair for the National Forum on Educational Statistics PK-12 Data Model. Glenn has given numerous presentations at the annual CASE Winter Conferences and CASE Superintendent Conferences. He has been recognized as an outstanding administrator by the Colorado State Association of FFA and FCCLA and as Superintendent of the Year for the Colorado Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents. Although Dr. McClain is retiring as the Platte Valley School District superintendent, he will work with the Colorado School Finance Project and the Colorado Association of School Executives as a consultant regarding finance, taxpayer initiatives, and superintendent-school board relationships. He will also continue to serve as an adjunct professor for the University of Northern Colorado and a mentor to other school and district leaders.

### **Dr. Phyllis Pajardo**

*Superintendent, City of Fairfax Schools  
Nominated by University of Virginia*

In 2017, Dr. Phyllis Pajardo was named superintendent of the City of Fairfax Schools. Dr. Pajardo had joined the City of Fairfax Schools as assistant superintendent in 2015 after retiring from Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS). Dr. Pajardo began as an elementary classroom teacher in 1981 and held a number of leadership positions throughout FCPS during her 34-year career. Dr. Pajardo became a consulting teacher, assistant principal, principal, staff developer, project manager, cluster director, and cluster assistant superintendent. From 2011–2015, Dr. Pajardo was the assistant superintendent for human resources for FCPS, recruiting, hiring and developing a diverse workforce for the district.

Dr. Pajardo earned her bachelor's degree in Elementary Education from the University of Virginia (UVA) and her master's in education from George Mason University (GMU). She completed her doctorate in education from UVA in 2009. She completed the executive leadership program for educators through the Curry School of Education and the Darden School of Business at UVA. She serves as an adjunct faculty member in leadership preparation/development for GMU, UVA, and Virginia Tech as well as ASCD and has given presentations at national, state, and local conferences.

**Dr. Jon Smith**

*Superintendent, Lawrence County Schools  
Nominated by University of Alabama*

Dr. Jon Bret Smith is the Superintendent of Lawrence County Schools. Previously, he was the principal of Hatton Elementary School. During his 18 years of service in the educational field, he has worked with students and educators from pre-K to graduate school. Smith has performed numerous roles including principal, assistant principal, and teacher. In addition, Smith has recently been an adjunct professor at the University of Alabama. Smith holds degrees from the University of North Alabama and the University of Alabama. Throughout Smith's administrative tenure in public education, he has been active in several professional organizations, and he serves on Athens State University's Board of Visitors for the College of Education. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Smith worked on the Alabama State Department of Education's (ALSDE) SEAL task force to set immediate educational and general operational priorities for schools statewide.

As superintendent, Smith has directed his school district to new milestones. After losing student enrollment for more than two decades, Lawrence County Schools has increased student enrollment for the last 2 years. The school system's general fund budget has increased every year under Smith, and it is now at approximately 3 times the amount required by the ALSDE. Student data were analyzed and used by the school system to develop an academic plan, which led to an increase in the system's state report card score. A career tech plan was also established under Smith that resulted in an expansion of the career tech center and career tech programs. Providing mental health access for all students has been a focus for Superintendent Smith as well as creating a program to identify and retain local students who want to return to Lawrence County as teachers.

**Mrs. Michele Torres**

*Principal, West Mesa High School, Albuquerque, NM  
Nominated by University of New Mexico*

Dr. Michele Torres, an educator for 29 years, currently serves as the principal of West Mesa High School in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Ms. Torres began her educational career in the Los Lunas School District, New Mexico, in 1992 as a sixth-grade teacher at Raymond Gabaldon Intermediate School. Michele moved to Albuquerque Public Schools (APS) in 1995 and taught Grades 4 and 5 at Kirtland and Zuni Elementary Schools. She obtained her Literacy: Reading-Language Arts National Boards Certification in 2010. Michele accepted her first principal position in 2016 at Truman Middle School, where she and her team worked together to become an AVID National Demonstration School in 2019.

Michele's educational experiences have allowed her to collaborate with diverse people to meet the common goals of increasing student achievement and social-emotional well-being. Her educational philosophy is based on the uncompromising belief that *all* students can learn and thrive when they are members of a positive and inclusive learning environment. Mrs. Torres received a bachelor's degree in Elementary Education from the University of New Mexico (UNM) in 1992. She returned to UNM to earn her master's in Educational Leadership in 2014.

Michele currently works with the Alliance Leading and Learning Program, where APS and UNM collaborate to identify and train aspiring principals to help improve student learning. The program focuses on the role of principals in improving student learning with an emphasis on developing successful, culturally responsive leaders, especially for academic growth in high-need schools.

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# EGYPT 2023



Photo from Mariela Rodríguez

In May 2023, UCEA delegates visited Cairo, Egypt. Led by Mónica Byrne-Jiménez, UCEA Executive Director, Michigan State University, and Maysaa Barakat, Florida Atlantic University (FAU), with the support of the Education First Foundation, the program gave participants an unfiltered lens into the world of education in Egypt. In addition to sightseeing and cultural activities, delegates attended the BalancED-Florida Atlantic University International Education Conference.



Photo by Mónica Byrne-Jiménez

# Egypt '23: Junior Scholar Reflections

Daniel Moraguez  
*Florida State University*



Upon reflecting on our recent study tour of Cairo, Egypt, it occurred to me that the ways we (Americans and Egyptians) educate students is more similar than it is different. In all of the schools we visited, one would see engaged students, committed teachers, involved administrators, and caring parents and staff. Additional obser-

vation would certainly reveal numerous differences and add nuanced understandings to their approach, but it is impossible to deny there are many commonalities between our systems. In many respects our grammar of schooling is much like their grammar of schooling. What does that mean for them? Us? The future of education? Those questions, unfortunately, will be answered at another time. In this reflection, you will learn why I would look forward to a return to Egypt for research or other educational pursuits.

## Colleagues

On the trip we had the opportunity to meet and interact with many educational leadership colleagues and their family members, many of whom I had not had the privilege of speaking much to in the past. The time on the trip allowed me to get

to know them as people and not just academics. We spent a lot of time chatting at the airport and on the bus to the various destinations. As such, we learned who is often early, late, hungry, thirsty, chatty, quiet, funny, loud, and mischievous (you know who you are). I feel like I made many new friends.

## School Visits and Conference

The highlight of the trip, slightly beating out the pyramids in Giza, was visiting the public and private schools in Cairo. At these visits, we were able to interact with students, teachers, and administrators who welcomed us into their buildings and let us experience a day at their school. What stood out the most during these visits was the joy students exuded as they delivered science, technology, health, biology, engineering, art, math, and geography presentations. Students at Obour STEM School were eager to display their excellent English presentation skills and enthusiastically discussed their projects, shared accomplishments, and informed us about their future plans (which were often a combination of taking advantage of educational opportunities abroad and returning to Egypt to contribute to its continued growth and development). We could not help but be impressed by all the students who presented their work or those who participated in a fantastic STEAM fair at New Generation School that included art, science projects, dancing, and singing (brilliant singing, actually).



At the FAU-Balanced Conference, the UCEA delegates interacted with local educators in round table and workshop sessions. In these sessions, we exchanged experiences and ideas regarding the COVID-19 global pandemic, how to lead change, school evaluation, teacher burnout and retention, and other educational leadership topics. While separated by thousands of miles, our experiences pre- and postpandemic were also similar, and the solutions shared seemed applicable on both continents. We all agreed there was not enough time to complete our in-depth conversations and would hope to have new opportunities to do so in the future.

### Food and Fun

The trip, however, wasn't all work. The itinerary included visits to two museums (Egyptian Museum and National Museum of Egyptian Civilization), the pyramids of Giza, the Sphinx, a shopping excursion through Khan El Khalili street, Old Cairo Coptic churches, a Nile dinner cruise, an Omar Khairat concert at the opera house, an impromptu rooftop dinner, and for a lucky few (not me) a Nile River cruise. Perhaps most fun was the experience of driving in Cairo traffic, which is best described as organized chaos!

We were also well fed on the trip. In addition to constant, and I mean constant, water consumption, our days always began with a great breakfast buffet at the hotel. Our lunches varied between a local restaurant, a boxed lunch, or one particularly fantastic meal with views of the pyramids. Dinners were always at thoughtfully curated restaurants including a riverboat cruise on the Nile and a scenic evening at the beautifully manicured Al-Azhar Park (a must see if ever in Cairo). Gladly, our official and patient guide, took great care of us and addressed every one of our incessant whims (she is also a must if visiting Egypt).

### Conclusion

Visiting Egypt in the summer is not for everyone. The first 24–48 hours in Cairo were challenging, as they were also very active days. Heat exhaustion was a real threat. After much rehydration and a couple of days of acclimating, I finally felt “normal” and could enjoy the planned activities.

I can't write about the experience without thanking Dr. Maysaa Barakat, Florida Atlantic University, as well as Dr. Salma El Bakry, Education First Foundation, whose ongoing collaboration facilitated our study tour in Egypt. Dr. Barakat wore many hats while serving as our unofficial local expert, guide, and host. She provided much leadership and guidance as we navigated the business portion of the itinerary, which culminated in a meeting with the Minister of Education and representatives of the Ministry of Higher Education. I may speak for many when I also give thanks to UCEA HQ for planning and coordinating this epic tour. In the end, the study tour to Egypt was a rewarding experience, and I look forward to the next trip to either Chile or Peru (wink, wink).



Photo by Mariela Rodríguez



Photo by Mónica Byrne-Jiménez

# Reflections on My Travels to South Africa and Egypt

Susan C. Faircloth

*Independent Education Consultant*

I have been most fortunate to have participated in two of the UCEA-sponsored international travel experiences.

In March of 2020, I traveled with UCEA to Johannesburg, South Africa. The days leading up to this trip were filled with a mixture of angst, excitement, and the unknown as the world was just beginning to learn about COVID-19. Little did we know that life as we had once known it would be thrown into chaos and uncertainty within the span of a few weeks. Arriving in Johannesburg, I was immediately struck by deep and lingering disparities in wealth and social class. Although I had read about these disparities, I'm not sure I was prepared to experience them in real time.

But, what impacted me most was visiting Nelson and Winnie Mandela's home, seeing the prison where countless numbers of men and women were held as punishment for their fight against apartheid, walking the streets of Soweto and sensing the eerie presence of lives lost much too young, and knowing that what happened in South Africa is still happening today in many places around the world. It's an experience that words alone cannot adequately describe.

On a lighter note, I had the opportunity to travel the countryside on a day trip with a new colleague and friend, Ian, from the UK. Together, we talked to the lion cubs and laughed as they nipped at our hands and clothes and nuzzled against our legs and feet. It was like being on a mini safari! On this day trip, we were able to take in the natural beauty and awe of South Africa.

After nearly 2 weeks in South Africa, we prepared for our return flights to the United States. But, as fate would have it, COVID was spreading like wildfire, and international borders were beginning to close, raising the question of if and when we would be able to return to our homes. Fortunately, we were all able to return home with relative ease, only to

learn that many states were going into lockdown, schools were closing, store shelves were bare, and our health and safety were in question. Regretfully, this jarring transition made it difficult to slow down and process all that I had experienced in South Africa.

In hindsight, I recognize that my ability to be fully present in South Africa was compromised by the uncertainties of the impending global health pandemic, coupled with my own unconscious biases, particularly my biases around safety and security traveling in a country that the U.S. State Department has advised against traveling to due to widespread crime and unrest. Even though I have spent my entire career working to advance equity, inclusion, and justice, I still had by own internal work to do. That recognition alone made this experience worthwhile and reaffirmed my commitment to doing the personal and interpersonal work necessary to live and act more equitably, inclusively, and justly. As Maya Angelou wrote, "Perhaps travel cannot prevent bigotry, but by demonstrating that all peoples cry, laugh, eat, worry, and die, it can introduce the idea that if we try and understand each other, we may even become friends."

Two years later, I had the opportunity to travel with UCEA to Egypt. Fortunately, COVID was under control (or so we thought), and it seemed safe to travel internationally once again. Arriving in the early morning hours, I was struck by the traffic in downtown Cairo (ask those who bravely crossed the highway—on foot—in search of hot fries and a Big Mac from McDonalds). After settling into our hotel, we were off to visits with educators and education officials. In hindsight, I wish that I had done a more in-depth study of the educational systems and structures in Egypt, prior to this trip. Conversations with educators left me wanting to know more about teacher and principal preparation, both preservice and inservice; curricular design; the role of languages and cultures; gender and socioeconomic equity, etc. Most of all, I wanted to spend time with the children and youth, hearing about what's working or not working in their schools and their lives. So many questions and so little time!

But, what struck me most, other than the intense heat (Cairo is hot!) and arid terrain, was the fact that we were in the midst of ancient cultures, civilizations, and histories. Never did I think I would be standing next to the Great Pyramids, much less climbing the stairs inside one of the them; touring the temples of Luxor and Karnak; viewing the tomb of King Tut; traveling through the Sahara Desert; cruising along the Nile River; or taking a sunrise hot air balloon ride across the Valley of the Kings. If I had to describe this experience in three words or phrases, I'd say, "Life Changing, Breath Taking, and Amazing"! My only regrets are not riding a camel and not traveling to the city of Alexandria. Two weeks is simply not enough time to see and experience all that is Egypt!





For those of you considering joining an upcoming UCEA sponsored travel experience, do it! Invest in yourselves and your own personal and professional growth and development. Turn off your cell phones and computers. Lean into the discomfort of navigating new and unfamiliar terrains, climates, and cultures. Be in the moment. Ask questions. Listen. Look. Journal. Reflect. You won't regret it.

For me, both of these international experiences, underscored the following:

1. the dangers of cultural voyeurism and the need to consider not only the where of these trips, but the what and the why;
2. the imperative to do no harm to the people and places we visit;
3. the need to own our individual and collective privilege in being able to participate in these experiences;
4. the importance of reciprocal exchange; and
5. the power of connection.

Kudos to UCEA for convening these trips. I look forward to our next great adventure! As Anthony Bourdain wrote, Travel isn't always pretty. It isn't always comfortable. Sometimes it hurts, it even breaks your heart. But that's okay. The journey changes you; it should change you. It leaves marks on your memory, on your consciousness, on your heart, and on your body. You take something with you. Hopefully, you leave something good behind.



### *Educational Administration Quarterly*

EAQ publishes prominent empirical and conceptual articles focused on timely and critical leadership and policy issues of educational organizations. The journal embraces traditional and emergent research paradigms, methods, and issues. The journal particularly promotes the publication of rigorous and relevant scholarly work that enhances linkages among and utility for educational policy, practice, and research arenas. UCEA bestows the annual William J. Davis Award to the authors of the most outstanding article published in EAQ the preceding volume year. <https://journals.sagepub.com/home/eaq>



### *Journal of Research on Leadership Education*

JRLE provides an international venue for scholarship and discourse on the teaching and learning of leadership across the many disciplines that inform the field of educational leadership. JRLE seeks to promote and disseminate rigorous scholarship on the teaching, learning, and assessing of leadership preparation and practice, the political and contextual issues that impact leadership education, and the links between leadership education and student learning. <https://journals.sagepub.com/home/jr>



### *Journal of Cases in Educational Leadership*

JCEL offers peer-reviewed cases appropriate for use in educational leadership preparation across the globe. The journal's editorial staff seeks a wide range of cases that focus on timely or enduring issues germane to educational leadership preparation. <https://journals.sagepub.com/home/JEL>

## UCEA Graduate Student Fellowship Winners

We are proud to announce the winners of the UCEA Graduate Student Fellowship, which aims to provide research, mentoring, and career development opportunities for an outstanding graduate student who is enrolled in a UCEA member educational leadership program and intends to enter the professoriate. The UCEA Graduate Student Fellow works with one of the UCEA programs centers (contingent upon acceptance from the individual center’s ability to host a student) during the summer.

**Beulah Rangel** is a doctoral candidate at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. Beulah’s current research focuses on exclusionary discipline. She will be working with the **Center of Urban School Leadership** to create a plan for principal preparation programs to support leaders to successfully implement restorative justice practices in their schools.

**Candace Doak** is an Elementary and Secondary Administration PhD graduate student at Auburn University. She studies in the College of Education Department of Educational Foundations, Leadership, and Technology. She is studying principal preparation programs and the school counselor–principal collaboration in Alabama. Through the 2023 UCEA Graduate Student Fellowship, Candace will work with the **Center for the Advanced Study of Technology Leadership in Education (CASTLE)**. Under the supervision of Dr. Sara Dexter, she is planning to assist with the Virtual Practicum Initiative. Some areas of focus will be planning for standards-aligned simulations for developing school leaders that generate performance data scored by AI, analyzing performance data from simulations completed by developing school leaders, and researching the need for simulated practice opportunities from the perspective of educational leadership graduates and their faculty.

**Erin Gill** is a PhD student in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis and a predoctoral fellow in the Interdisciplinary Training Program in Education Sciences at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. Her research interests include LGBTQ+ students’ well-being, education policy, rural schools, and teacher professional development. As a UCEA Graduate Student Fellow, she will be working with the UCEA **Center for the Innovative Rural Collaboration for Leadership in Education (CIRCLE)**, under the direction of Dr. Kristina Hesbol. Erin will support the development of a qualitative study investigating promising school practices that support rural, queer youth. She will collaborate with CIRCLE in the design of the study, selection of sites, and data collection.

**Rong Zhang** is a graduate student at the University of Alabama. Rong states, “My research focuses on school leadership and education policy. This summer, I have the

opportunity to work at the **Center for the International Study of School Leadership**. I will engage in an international school leadership study and assist with an upcoming conference. I am excited to contribute my knowledge to this endeavor and am looking forward to making meaningful contributions to the field.”

## National Center for the Evaluation of Educational Leadership Preparation and Practice (NCEELPP)

With the adoption of the new Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL) and National Educational Leadership Preparation (NELP) standards, NCEELPP has focused on the development of aligned tools and resources that can be used by leadership development programs to gather and use evaluation data to support program improvement, accreditation, and reporting. The development work parallels the growing national, regional, and state accrediting expectations for programs as well as preparation program partners’ desire for a deeper understanding of program practices, quality, and opportunities for growth. NCEELPP continues to incorporate the work of the INSPIRE Leadership Survey Suite, a set of preparation program assessments that address the need for valid and reliable instruments that assess the influence and impact of leadership development programming. The INSPIRE Leadership Survey Suite, which is a proprietary and validated survey instrument aligned to the NELP and PSEL, is a beneficial program improvement and accreditation support.

In Fall 2022, INSPIRE Leadership added a new reporting tool to its resource toolkit. The new tool permits institutions and departments to utilize longitudinal data from the INSPIRE Graduate Survey to examine how well a graduate program is meeting the needs of graduates, including how well the candidates perceive the program to have prepared them to be “ready, Day 1” to lead. Further, this new resource



permits the analysis of patterns, changes over time, and areas of concern for cohorts and candidate subgroups—the kind of information that can be transformational for continuous improvement efforts, accreditation, redesign, and communicating the value-add of leadership preparation and development.

For information on the work of the National Center, the INSPIRE Survey Suite, or the tools offered by the center, please reach out to Center Co-Directors Andrea Rorrer, Utah Education Policy Center ([andrea.rorrer@utah.edu](mailto:andrea.rorrer@utah.edu)); Yongmei Ni, University of Utah ([yongmei.ni@utah.edu](mailto:yongmei.ni@utah.edu)); and Michelle Young, University of California, Berkeley ([MDYoung@Berkeley.Edu](mailto:MDYoung@Berkeley.Edu)).

<http://www.ucea.org/initiatives/nceelp/>

<https://uepc.utah.edu/our-work/inspire-leadership/>

## UCEA Program Center for the Study of Leadership and the Law

Director: Kevin P. Brady, University of Arkansas—Fayetteville

A continuing commitment of the Center for the Study of Leadership and the Law is to significantly improve the legal literacy of today's school leaders and educators, especially those working in low-wealth school communities. A new project to be released in the Fall is titled, Ozark Mediation Services. The Center will provide low-cost or free mediation services to public school districts to use alternative dispute resolution practices instead of pursuing costly and time-consuming litigation to resolve special education and other legal disputes in school settings. The Center's Director, Kevin Brady recently received his state mediation license to serve as a mediator in legal disputes within the legal jurisdiction of Arkansas. There are plans to expand the mediation practice to the neighboring states of Missouri, Oklahoma, Kansas, and Texas. In 2022, the Center founded a new, open-access peer-reviewed journal, *Journal of Disability Law and Policy in Education (JDLPE)* hosted by Scholastica. The journal serves to address an existing gap in the research literature on special education law and policy employing multiple research methodologies. The journal's website is available at <https://jdlpe.scholasticahq.com/>.

In 2022, the center's director, Kevin Brady, along with coauthors, Jackie Stefkovich, Traci Ballard, and Lawrence Rossow, published the comprehensive textbook, *Education Law: Cases and Materials* (3rd ed.), with Carolina Academic Press. To date, this is the only educational law textbook addressing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on legal issues in the nation's schools.

Stefkovich, J. A., Brady, K. P., Ballard, T. N. W., & Rossow, L. F. (2022). *Education law: Cases and materials* (3rd ed.). Carolina Academic Press.

<http://www.ucea.org/initiatives/center-leadership-law-education/>

## UCEA Center for the International Study of School Leadership

The UCEA Center for the International Study of School Leadership had a robust year of activity. At the UCEA Annual Convention 2022 in Seattle, the center awarded the biannual Jeffrey Bennett Award to Edwin Bonney (Radford University) for his paper, "The Colonial Master Left, yet Colonial Aspects of Educational Leadership Persist Today: Discourses From Ghanaian Leaders," and an Honorable Mention to Pia Scott (Stockholm University) for her paper, "Successful Health-Promoting School Leadership—A Question of Synchronization." Through a peer-review process, the Bennett Award identifies the most outstanding papers focused on international perspectives from the previous year's UCEA Annual Convention. The center also honored Bruce Barnett, Professor Emeritus (University of Texas at San Antonio) with the Lifetime Achievement Award for his vast contributions to the field of educational leadership in international contexts.

UCEA awarded the center a mini-grant to enhance the participation of international practitioners in the organization. The grant supports the creation of case studies of leadership in times of crisis written by practitioners from four countries. This work connects to the center's aim of partnering with school leaders on the entire scope of the research and publication processes. The center is also hosting a UCEA Graduate Research Fellow, Rong Zhang (University of Alabama), as she continues her research on the findings from the International Successful School Principals Project.

Bonney, E. N. (2022). The colonial master left, yet colonial aspects of educational leadership persist today: Discourses from Ghanaian leaders. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603124.2022.2081875>

Skott, P. (2022). Successful health-promoting school leadership—A question of synchronization. *Health Education*, 122(3), 286–303. <https://doi.org/10.1108/HE-09-2020-0079>

<http://www.ucea.org/initiatives/ucea-center-international-study-school-leadership/>

# Women Leading Education Across Continents: WLE Conference 2023

Teresa Wasonga  
*Northern Illinois University*

Nicole Pierce-Davis  
*East Carolina University*

Carrie Morris  
*East Carolina University*

Founded in 2006, the Women Leading Education (WLE) Across Continents is a group of intergenerational scholars from different parts of the world who are committed to documenting the status of women in educational leadership across the globe. Its mission is to inspire women to lead in educating and empowering individuals and communities to bring about positive change. The participants in the biannual convening share their research and advocacy work in order to develop more gender inclusive leadership theories, policies and practices related to education and link this to international human rights. Past WLE conferences were held in Rome, Greece, Germany, New Zealand, Brazil, United Kingdom, and Ghana. The 2023 conference was the first in Asia and was held in Tagaytay City, Philippines July 23–27, 2023 in collaboration with UCEA, AQRA, AIIAS, AUP, LMU, VCU, AHSRA-Asia, and AASA. UCEA is proud to sponsor women from around the world to attend the conferences. <http://www.thewle.com/>

## Teresa Wasonga:

I have been part of the Women Leading Education (WLE) group for about 8 years and have always attended meetings at UCEA conventions. However, due to the timing of WLE conferences, I have not attended the conferences until this year. The conference was in the Philippines hosted by The Adventist University. It was a pleasure to be in attendance.

The WLE conference is unique in a sense. Unlike most, it is held outside of the United States and largely in developing countries. There are several advantages to this, notably

1. Visa regulations are less cumbersome, enabling folks from all over the world to attend with minimal issues.
2. The cost of hosting and attending the conference is much lower, making it possible for folks from developing countries to attend comfortably.
3. The conference brings together people from countries that are largely underrepresented in major conferences like UCEA or AREA.
4. The presentations focus on a particular theme, making it possible for attendees to draw connections across the globe.
5. The set-up of this conference is very friendly. Everyone attends every session, one paper at a time, and the presenters get the full attention of the audience, which gives a sense of respect, humility, and belonging (this was the most important for me).

Participants are all engaged, providing opportunities for meaningful and in-depth discussion and Q&A. Together, these are helpful strategies for presenters in making improvements to the papers/presentations.

I would be remiss if I did not mention the great diversity that comes with this conference. At this meeting there were delegates from Brazil, Ghana, Kenya, Pakistan, Ruanda, Australia, India, UK, US, South Africa, Philippines, Uganda, New Zealand and more (what I can remember); people from all walks of life in terms of gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, etc; and various forms of research and perspectives based on nontraditional theoretical frameworks. The synergy at this conference was different. It was revealing to hear folks say they were sharing ideas and research that they were not yet comfortable sharing in other conferences. A couple that I remember well were on (a) widows in educational leadership and (b) how teaching could be conceptualized as something pleasurable. These topics were not only well received, but also breathtaking in their foundations.



Photo from Mónica Byrne-Jiménez

At this conference, there were lots of opportunities to network, to learn about different countries and the goings on in the different countries regarding women in educational leadership and research. Several presentations surfaced the use of Indigenous frameworks that are yet to be exploited, explained, or applied in improving education worldwide. It was nice to be in a place where the focus was less Eurocentric. The Brazilians presented in their language, which would never happen in other conferences. This led to a conversation about the use of different languages at various conferences and how this would open avenues for folks who do not speak the dominant language of English. The ambience at this conference enabled conversations between and among people with similar interests in research, service, and life, but in very different circumstances and contexts/countries. As in previous WLE conferences, we got to experience the local culture and food of the Philippines through dances, visits to cultural sites and eateries (under a waterfall), and interactions with natives of the Philippines. I loved the native fruits.

In the end, I left the Philippines feeling more connected with the field and fulfilled with a real sense of sisterhood. I have never had so much contact or follow-up with people after a conference as I have with WLE. Centers for collaboration are forming continuously, and I am so glad I made the trip to the Philippines for WLE. I believe WLE is in a league of its own, unique, friendly, and most welcoming.

### **Nicole Pierce-Davis:**

We are recent EdD graduates from East Carolina University and were honored to present our research at the Women Leading Education Across Continents (WLE) conference in Tagaytay City, Cavite, Philippines this July. As new attendees to the conference, we were asked to reflect on this experience.

I was struck by the intelligence, warmth, and critical compassion that filled the unique conference space. I noted a beauty in how WLE participants collectively realize a vision that has not yet been codified, and yet has been and continues to be jointly developed over decades by the women who attend. The WLE mission is not stagnant, prescriptive, or predetermined; rather, participants engage in productive struggle where cultural tensions are surfaced and global ideals are at times in conflict. Although sometimes challenging, this conflict is refreshing and inspiring. WLE possesses an authentic quality that stems from a collision of international norms and values that frame feminism and womanhood in a wide variety of ways that are undoubtedly influenced by diverse social contexts across continents and countries as well as within nations and local regions. These tensions surface as participants consider how to respond to universal inequities—whether or not a woman should look within herself to find peace and the strength to push through hardships, or disrupt the inequitable system that pathologized her instead of the implicit and explicit structures that upheld the existing inequity, or perhaps she should do both in order to navigate through her marginalization? Similarly, should we use our collective time and power to center on fighting for women to own property or for women to find the work/life balance required of sustaining leadership, or both? And while I

personally may not have agreed with where every presentation landed (nor should I expect to), others struck a uniquely personal chord, as only an affinity space of communing women can achieve.

There is no question among participants that women deserve to thrive the world over, and we all have work to do. We acknowledged that we cannot always create a “safe space” for everyone, but the WLE experience was most definitely what Arao and Clemens (2013) call a brave space. As participants push themselves to hear alternative perspectives and simultaneously share our own, we realize that we offer and receive these perspectives as a way of challenging our own beliefs and ideals. We may be moved to change, or move others to change, but either way, we leave moved.

### **Carrie Morris:**

The WLE conference, very different from typical conferences, was a gathering of women, for women. We heard the realities of women educational leaders in countries across the globe and learned more about the beautiful cultural traditions of the Philippines. The experience increased my confidence as a new researcher; provided a special opportunity for international travel; and connected me to colleagues and mentors, many of whom are researchers I read and cited in my own dissertation. Serendipitously, I was reading Heather Plett’s *The Art of Holding Space* during my travels, and it is this concept of holding space for ourselves and for others that is resonating with me after the WLE conference.

Plett (2020) describes “holding space” as the practice of witnessing, accepting, and supporting others without judgment, while also retaining a sense of self and personal boundaries. Collectively, we listened to stories about discrimination, harassment, violence, and struggle while also celebrating women’s empowerment research through graffiti art and affinity spaces, metaphorical representations of women as “goddess warriors,” women leading through compassion using a culturally relevant lens, and many other thought-provoking presentations. A discussion about what it means to create safe and brave spaces emerged. We held this tension and nourished our bodies and minds with conversation, connection, curiosity, the Philippine culture, and food. Overall, the experience was a unique chance to leave behind the traditional hierarchy of academic conferences and “hold space” in circles with inspirational women leaders. This trip was possible because of a WLE scholarship which I hope to pay forward to a future attendee, and I look forward to continuing the discussions as a part of WLE in the future.

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Dr. Arceli Rosario,  
President of Adventist  
University of the Philippines,  
2023 Planning Committee Chair



## Women Leading Education Across Continents

<http://www.thewle.com/>



Photos courtesy of WLE and Mónica Byrne-Jiménez

# Updates From The Wallace Foundation

Chris Thelen  
Michigan State University

UCEA would like to thank [The Wallace Foundation](#) for their support of two of Convention’s highly successful events: The 2022 UCEA Awards Luncheon and the 2022 UCEA–Wallace Town Hall.

The 2022 UCEA Awards Luncheon recognized outstanding faculty contributions to the educational leadership field. [Click here](#) for more information about this year’s distinguished winners.

The 2022 UCEA–Wallace Town Hall featured the topic “How University Preparation Programs Evolve: Learnings From UPPI.” The University Principal Preparation Initiative (UPPI)—funded by The Wallace Foundation—has demonstrated the success of sustained and systemic program redesign as a lever for educational improvement. This Town Hall explored the key learnings from the [final RAND study](#) (Herman, Wang, Woo, et al., 2022) and the work of program faculty over the 6-year effort. Moderated by Angel Miles Nash of The Wallace Foundation, participants included Susan Gates of RAND, Tim Drake of North Carolina State University, and Daniel Reyes-Guerra of Florida Atlantic University.

## Recent Wallace-Sponsored Research Reports

[One report](#) published by the [RAND Corporation](#) dives into six case studies of collaborations between schools and program partners to support student social and emotional skills (Tosh et al., 2022). As highlighted in the 2022 UCEA–Wallace Town Hall, a [second report](#) from RAND (Herman, Wang, & Gates, 2022) studies the UPPI as a promising partnership initiative between leadership preparation programs and school districts to improve principal preparation and practice.

From [Policy Studies Associates](#), [new research](#) (Turnbull et al., 2022) details the impacts of the ESSA Learning Leadership Community, a collaborative effort among district leaders, state education officials, and community leaders to foster the development of equity-minded principals.

Combining findings from both the ESSA Learning Leadership Community and UPPI, a [report](#) from Manna (2022) details how states can play an important role in fostering fruitful partnerships among key stakeholders in leadership preparation and development.

[Learning Policy Institute’s recent literature synthesis](#) (Darling-Hammond et al., 2022) focuses on the importance of access to high-quality learning opportunities for principals.

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# Considering the Complexities, Opportunities, and Challenges of ARP ESSER: A UCEA Policy Brief Series

Chris Thelen  
*Michigan State University*

The Elementary and Secondary Schools Emergency Relief Fund of the American Rescue Plan (ARP ESSER) provides over \$122 billion in federal funding to address the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on K-12 educational systems in the U.S. With its codified focus on equity and helping students most impacted by the pandemic (U.S. Department of Education, 2021), this massive influx of funding has created a complex policy landscape.

This series of UCEA policy briefs addresses the many facets of this landscape and considers implications for sustainable, equitable change in the educational leadership field. These myriad facets include accountability, the educator workforce, and support for students who need recovery resources the most. Our detailed explanations also address the complex federal, state, and local policy environments in which ARP ESSER is implemented.

In addition to informing readers about ARP ESSER, these briefs serve as guides and teaching resources for educational leadership scholars and faculty who are educating future leaders about the implications of this policy for their practice. They also provide insights for educational leaders who want to learn more about the policy and make informed decisions about selecting, implementing, and evaluating interventions.

## **Exploring the ARP ESSER Fund**

*Christine Thelen-Creps, Davis Clement, Mariama Nagbe, & Talgat Bainazarov*

The first brief in our series offers a summary of the most important aspects of ARP ESSER, examining the content and context of the legislation. We also consider implications for equity and sustainability and provide insights for further research, policy, and practice.

Our analysis draws on the ARP ESSER legislation itself and guidance documents from the U.S. Department of Education. We find that the main goals of the legislation are to support learning recovery for students, with important stipulations to promote equity. However, we also argue that equity might be threatened by the persistence of structural inequities in both policy and practice (Diem & Welton,

2020; Horsford et al., 2018). We provide recommendations for leadership scholars and practitioners to consider these potential challenges to equity and offer promising avenues to promote equity through fund allocation and intervention implementation.

## **A Logic Model Framework for Evaluating ARP ESSER Intervention Programs**

*Christine Thelen-Creps & Lane Clark Lindle*

ARP ESSER requires local education agencies to spend some funds on academic interventions—programs designed to compensate for unfinished learning throughout the course of the pandemic. Local education agencies must fund programs in ways that maintain equitable funding for historically marginalized students and target students who need supplemental services the most. This brief provides a framework for understanding the broader ARP ESSER context and how academic intervention programs are situated within it.

Through a theory logic model (Meyer et al., 2021), we detail how school and district leaders can assess intervention programs in their entirety, from theories of change to evaluation of results. We emphasize the need for programs that are sensitive and adapted to local contexts while working toward equitable, sustainable improvements. This funding is limited in time and scope, so educational institutions—especially public ones—have a stake in showing that they have spent funds responsibly and generated the intended impacts.

## **Unpacking the ARP ESSER State Plans**

*Yi-Chih Chiang, Talgat Bainazarov, Yujin Oh, & Christine Thelen-Creps*

Given that ARP ESSER funding was funneled directly to state educational agencies, an examination of each state plan is an important avenue of inquiry. Each state educational agency was required to submit a spending and implementation plan to the U.S. Department of Education. Looking at all 52 state plans (including Puerto Rico and the

District of Columbia), we investigated which areas states chose to focus on and how they plan to go about that work.

Specifically, we investigate how plans discuss issues pertaining to educational leadership, the educator workforce, and research and evaluation. We give general insights across plans and isolate exemplar state plans in each of these key areas of interest. Findings suggest some widespread commonalities across most plans in the types of instructional programs they intend to provide, but we find and address important differences among plans as well. This brief provides important insight into how states plan to spend their funds to support leaders and provide avenues for research and evidence-based improvements during this complex and challenging time.

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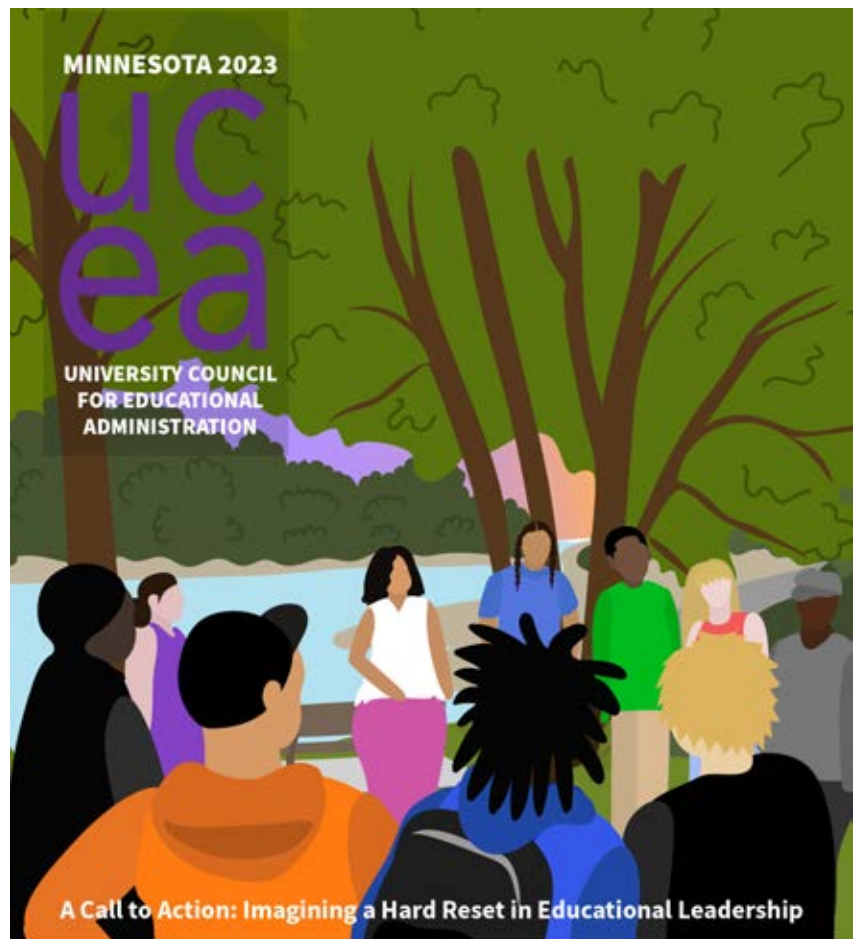
# UCEA Convention 2023

“A Call to Action: Imagining a Hard Reset in Educational Leadership”

## General Information

The 37th annual UCEA Convention will be held **November 16–18, 2023** at the **Hyatt Regency Minneapolis** in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The purpose of the 2023 UCEA Convention is to engage participants in discussions about research, policy, practice, and preparation in the field of education with a focus on the socioemotional and mental well-being of our learning communities. Specifically, we acknowledge the awareness and shifts, and hardships brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic and seek to engender collective responsibility among ourselves as scholars for the reimagining of our education system through Ladson-Billings’s (2021) notion of a “hard reset.” Members of the 2023 Convention Program Committee include Lisa Bass (North Carolina State University), Zorka Karanxha (University of South Florida), Darrius Stanley (University of Minnesota), Daniel Moraguez (Florida State University), Mario Jackson (North Carolina State University), and Karl Gildner (UCEA Events Manager).

As a context for our Convention, Minneapolis has been and continues to be a space of historical significance. The Twin Cities (and metro areas) were originally inhabited by the Dakhóta and Anishanaabe (Ojibwe) peoples. For the Dakhóta, this land located at the mouth of the Mississippi River, or Bdote, is known as a sacred space (Minnesota Historical Society, 2022). The Twin Cities continue to be a space that has both the presence and influence of local, Indigenous communities. Moreover, the Twin Cities have attracted cohabitants from across diasporic communities: Hmong, Black (African American), Somali, Indian, Ethiopian, Swedish, Vietnamese, Mexican, Norwegian, and many others (Minnesota Compass, 2018). The Twin Cities have also been shaped by a host of racialized catastrophes including, but not limited to, the destruction of the historically Black Rondo Neighborhood in St. Paul, Indigenous relocation acts, housing segregation, and the murder of George Floyd (Campbell, 2016; Montrie, 2022). In the face of these atrocities, the Twin Cities remain a ripe space for a hard reset through racial solidarities, healing, protest, and collaboration. Prince Rogers Nelson brought the towns together through his unique Minneapolis sound developed on 1st Avenue. Dr. Josie Johnson, a Black woman, educator, activist, organizer and lobbyist, fought vigorously to eliminate legal housing discrimination for Black Minnesotans. Currently, Peggy Flanagan, a member of the White Earth Band of Ojibwe, serves as the 50th lieutenant



## Artist Kprecia Ambers

The 2023 Convention logo is by Kprecia (Ka-pre-sha) Ambers, an artist hailing from Minneapolis, Minnesota. She is the proud owner of Kp Inspires, a digital illustration studio dedicated to spreading inspiration and encouragement through art and products. Her intention with Kp Inspires is to create a central space that celebrates representation and amplifies messages of resilience. She is renowned for her lively portrait art and has contributed to numerous projects such as publications, home decor, packaging, and advertising campaigns. Through her art, she expresses her deep interest in Black history, photography, and language. She takes great pleasure in bringing words to life and using vibrant color and movement to convey and evoke positive emotions. Ultimately, her dream is to have her artwork applied and displayed worldwide, connecting with audiences and spreading love.

governor for Minnesota. Her work has focused on education, human rights, and ending sexual violence in Indigenous (all) communities. Additionally, utilizing participatory research, mental health, and the arts, local Hmong community leaders and organizations are advocating for LGBTQIA+ inclusion for Hmong communities.

The Twin Cities emerge from the rubble of the pandemic and unrest, with a renewed spirit and commitment to imagining new possibilities. The Twin Cities are home to multiple professional sports teams; institutes of higher education, including the University of Minnesota, Metropolitan State University, Macalester College, and others; African American, Hmong, Somali, Ethiopian, and Indigenous businesses and cuisines; and a host of cultural, ethnic, community-based collectives. As such, Minneapolis provides a unique context and opportunity to deepen our commitments, solidarities, and collective efforts to heal and reset.

## UCEA Convention Theme

The 37th annual UCEA Convention theme, *A Call to Action: Imagining a Hard Reset in Educational Leadership*, is an opportunity to share and coconstruct knowledge, reflect, and react.

We are reminded daily that we continue to live in unprecedented times. Our current social and political conditions are coming together to create a storm of uncertainty, fear, and doubt in many, which are manifesting as a mental health crisis, a social political crisis, and economic upheaval. These conditions trickle down into U.S. school systems and show up as underperforming inequitable schools. To extend the metaphor of a *hard reset*, we consider how a reset is used in technology. Systems are *reset* when they crash or are clogged. In short, a phone or a computer may reach a point where it is no longer operational and must be shut off and restarted. We see this connection to the current state of our nation and education systems. We have come to a point where systems are no longer functioning. We suggest that scholars consider our state and adjust policies, practices, procedures, and dispositions to position school systems and students for success.

Ladson-Billings (2021) noted, “The challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic exposed many of the nation’s vulnerabilities—health care, economic, climate, and educational disparities—and put us all on alert.” This high alert challenges educational workers to reconsider our approach to our schools and communities so that we might rise to address the elevated set of responsibilities we now face during our new reality. We must consider how we will survive and thrive during the continuing COVID-19 pandemic, times of racial inequity and inequalities, and controversial political times in which our most basic freedoms are threatened. A reimagined *normal* should disrupt the status quo and minimize the

vulnerabilities, especially those that affect our most historically underserved and marginalized students. Ladson-Billings conceptualized this reimagining as a hard reset.

For purposes of this Convention, we conceptualize a *hard reset* as acknowledging the sociopolitical times in which we live and all of the extant issues that we currently face and adjusting our policies, behaviors and dispositions to match the needs of the constituents we serve. Specifically, we acknowledge the political challenges that are beginning to affect equitable educational policies in multiple states. We acknowledge the mental health crisis, the challenges amplified by the COVID-19 crisis, and the general lack of well-being felt by students and faculty at large. *A hard reset for educational leadership also calls for our field to move away from oppressive policies and practices by partnering and centering cultures of our students and youth, parents, and communities we serve.*

Our hope for this Convention is that we trouble the status quo, and reconceptualize our modus operandi, thereby initiating a hard reset (Ladson-Billings, 2021) of our systems and processes. In short, we are charged as educational leaders and researchers to reflect and think deeply through our motives, processes, methods, and policies so that we can best serve the youth we say we care about. As such, we challenge the field to begin to incorporate an ethic of radical care (Rivera-McCutcheon, 2021), an ethic of care in which we concern ourselves with the well-being of students, parents, teachers, and the greater communities in which our schools reside. With this, we must deeply consider the needs and outcomes of those we serve.

## Graduate Student Summit

Successfully launched at the 2012 Convention in Denver, the Summit will be returning once again this year for the 2023 Convention in Minneapolis, MN. **Further details regarding the Graduate Student Summit can be found on the Graduate Student portion of the UCEA website:** <http://www.ucea.org/graduate-student-opportunities/graduate-student-summit/>

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<http://www.ucea.org/conference/2023-annual-convention/>

### Mitstifer Lecture: Dr. Gloria Ladson-Billings

#### Are You ‘One of Them Ones?’ Leading the Education Reset



Thursday, November 16 1:45–3:15 p.m.

While devastating to our economy, our day-to-day relationships, and to education as we knew it, the COVID pandemic also presented us with some unique opportunities to reset and rethink how we might do education. However, many education leaders are consumed with returning to “normal” and maintaining the status quo. This talk reminds us to not squander the window of opportunity to lead in ways that are different, better, and designed for a new generation of learners and thinkers.

Gloria Ladson-Billings is Professor Emerita and former Kellner Family Distinguished Professor in Urban Education in the Department of Curriculum & Instruction and was Faculty Affiliate in the Departments of Educational Policy Studies, Educational Leadership & Policy Analysis and Afro American Studies at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. She is past president of the National Academy of Education and the American Educational Research

Association (AERA). She has been a Hagler Institute Fellow at Texas A&M University and a Fellow in the American Academy of Arts & Sciences and the British Academy. Ladson-Billings’s research examines the pedagogical practices of teachers who are successful with African American students. She also investigates critical race theory applications to education. Ladson-Billings is the author of *The Dreamkeepers: Successful Teachers of African American Children*, *Crossing Over to Canaan: The Journey of New Teachers in Diverse Classrooms*, and *Beyond the Big House: African American Educators on Teacher Education*. She is editor of eight other books and author of more than 100 journal articles and book chapters. She is the former editor of the *American Educational Research Journal* and a member of several editorial boards. Her work has won the H. I. Romnes Faculty Fellowship, Spencer Postdoctoral Fellowship, and the Palmer O. Johnson outstanding research award. She has received the AERA Social Justice in Education Award, the Brock International Prize in education, the George and Louise Spindler Award from the Council on Anthropology and Education, Wisconsin’s Martin Luther King, Jr. Heritage Award, and the Teachers College, Columbia University Distinguished Service Medal. She received the Distinguished Lifetime Achievement Award from the Literacy Research Association, the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Benjamin Banneker Association of the National Council for Teachers of Mathematics, the John Nisbet Award from the British Educational Research Association, the AERA Distinguished Research Award, and the AERA Division B Lifetime Achievement Award.

### UCEA Presidential Address: Dr. Carol A. Mullen

#### Speaking of Allyship—It’s Time to Leap Together in Educational Leadership

Friday, November 17 5:30–6:30 p.m.

UCEA President Carol A. Mullen, PhD, is a professor in the Educational Leadership and Policy Studies Program at Virginia Tech. An interdisciplinary researcher, she is a two-time Fulbright Scholar who studies global issues in education and leadership with a focus on social justice and equity. Her recent books include *Handbook of Social Justice Interventions in Education* (Springer) and *The Risky Business of Education Policy* (Routledge). Her alma mater, the University of Toronto, honored her with the 2020 Leaders and Legends Excellence Award, and she is the proud recipient of UCEA’s 2022 Master Professor Award and 2016 Jay D. Scribner Mentoring Award. A graduate mentor, Carol has completed over 33 PhD/EdD advisees and 48 as a committee member, as well as master’s students. She is past-president of the International Council of Professors of Educational Leadership and Society of Professors of Education, in addition to former editor of *Mentoring & Tutoring*. Carol focuses on improving education by building capacity for leadership and professional development in schools and academia. Topics include pedagogy, mentoring, collaboration, policy, and creativity from critical perspectives. One stream of this work centers allyship in education to promote a socially just world that is equitable and safe.





## Call for Volunteers

### 2023–2025 UCEA Jackson Scholar Mentors

Deadline: **September 17, 2023**

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# MENTORSHIP

The UCEA Barbara L. Jackson Scholars Network Advisory Board is calling for nominees for Mentors for the 2023–2025 Jackson Scholars cohort. This program, established in 2003, has over 300 alumni and develops and supports promising doctoral students of Color for the professoriate in the field of educational leadership and policy. Scholars are selected after a rigorous nominations and review process.

#### **Structured mentoring**

Mentors provide guidance in professional development, a model for students to reference when assuming mentor roles, and opportunities for networking. Mentors also serve as sounding boards for Scholars as they develop their dissertations, research agendas, and publications in preparation for becoming faculty.

#### **Networking**

Mentors should actively (a) introduce and guide their Scholars to engage in professional networking and (b) attend their Scholars' 2nd-year presentations, for which they also provide pre/post presentation support.

#### **Commitment**

Selected Jackson Scholars Network Mentors will be expected to attend all four program gatherings during the 2-year program experience: two annual UCEA conventions and two AERA annual meetings, all of which include Jackson Scholar Network workshops. This commitment provides opportunities for Scholars and Mentors to connect during these professional gatherings for guidance and networking opportunities.

# PROCEDURES

UCEA member institution faculty and faculty of non-UCEA member institutions may volunteer as Mentors.

***Jackson Scholars Network Mentors must have at least 3 years as faculty, proficiency in mentoring doctoral students, and completed their mid-tenure review.***

Complete the JSN Volunteer Mentor Form by **September 17, 2023**. Click [here](#) to access form.

## UCEA JACKSON SCHOLARS NETWORK

Please email [ucea@msu.edu](mailto:ucea@msu.edu) with questions

UCEA welcomes the 2022–2024 Barbara L. Jackson Scholars. Jackson Scholars are urged to register for the Graduate Student Summit.

## 2022–2024 Jackson Scholars

Hanan Almiladi, Illinois State University  
 Amogh Basavaraj, Florida State University  
 Dalphne Bell, University at Buffalo, SUNY  
 Johnnetta Bell, Wayne State University  
 Aliya Bizhanova, Michigan State University  
 Jewel Bourne, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign  
 Tamiah Brevard-Rodriguez, Rutgers University  
 Melia Brown, Pennsylvania State University  
 Troy Brown, Bowling Green State University  
 Jessica Leila Carranza, University of Southern California  
 Yi-Chih Chiang, Michigan State University  
 Kimberly Clarida, University of Texas at Austin  
 Isabel Clay, University of Southern California  
 Melanie Daniel, Old Dominion University  
 Carl Donovan Greer, University of Wisconsin–Madison  
 Kelley Glover, Texas State University  
 Arlene Godwin, Auburn University  
 Deonte Iverson, University of Wisconsin–Madison  
 Mario Jackson, North Carolina State University  
 Sheeba Jacob, Loyola Marymount University  
 Kia Johnson, Loyola Marymount University  
 Cara Jones, Texas Christian University  
 Paul Koh, East Carolina University  
 Melanie Lockett, Auburn University  
 Ebony Love, Texas Christian University  
 Latrice Marianno, University of Delaware  
 Symone McCollum, Texas A&M University  
 April Mouton, Texas State University  
 Simone Ngongi-Lukula, University of Washington  
 Jenn Nguyen, University of Washington  
 Desiree O’Neal, University of Southern California  
 Florencio Olguin, New Mexico State University  
 Seijoon Park, University of Missouri  
 Ruby Pham-Stuart, University of Houston  
 Beulah Rangel, University of Texas Rio Grande Valley  
 Alana Raybon, University of Denver  
 Dasmien Richards, Michigan State University  
 Jason Richardson, Rutgers University  
 Maritza Salazar, University of Southern California  
 Olavé Sebastien, Duquesne University  
 Finune Shaibi, University at Buffalo, SUNY  
 Dre’Sha Singleton, North Carolina State University  
 Janet Solis Rodriguez, University of Texas at Austin  
 Andrea O’Sullivan, University of South Florida  
 Ash Taylor-Beierl, Virginia Commonwealth University  
 DeAnne Tucker-White, Illinois State University  
 LaVaughn Wesley, Duquesne University  
 Anthony White, University at Buffalo, SUNY  
 Chance Wideman, Duquesne University

## 2022–2024 Jackson Mentors

Jackson Scholars Network would also like to officially introduce its newest Mentors. As always, we are grateful to all our wonderful Mentors and their continued support of Jackson Scholars Network.

Israel Aguilar, University of Texas Rio Grande Valley  
 Judy Alston, Ashland University  
 Khalid Arar, Texas State University  
 Julia Ballenger, Texas A&M University Commerce  
 Terah Venzant Chambers, Michigan State University  
 Casey Cobb, University of Connecticut  
 Robert Cooper, University of California  
 Katherine Curry, Oklahoma State University  
 David DeMatthews, University of Texas at Austin  
 Dana Thompson Dorsey, University of South Florida  
 Timothy Drake, North Carolina State University  
 Mirriam Ezzani, Texas Christian University  
 Elizabeth Gil, Fordham University  
 Richard Gonzales, University of Connecticut  
 Mark Anthony Gooden, Columbia University  
 Lisa Grillo, Howard University  
 Fred Guerra, University of Texas Rio Grande Valley  
 Oscar Jimenez-Castellanos, Trinity University  
 Muhammad Khalifa, Ohio State University  
 David Knight, University of Washington  
 James Koschoreck, Texas State University  
 Van Lac, University of Texas at San Antonio  
 Kofi Lomotey, Western Carolina University  
 Gerardo López, Michigan State University  
 Melissa Martinez, Texas State University  
 Rick McCown, Duquesne University  
 Coby Meyers, University of Virginia  
 Khaula Murtadha, Indiana University-Purdue University  
 Indianapolis  
 Yongmei Ni, University of Utah  
 Juan Manuel Niño, University of Texas at San Antonio  
 Nathern Okilwa, University of Texas at San Antonio  
 April Peters-Hawkins, University of Houston  
 Jessica Rigby, University of Washington  
 Mariela Rodriguez, University of Texas at San Antonio  
 Martin Scanlan, Boston College  
 Haim Shaked, Hemdat Hadarom College of Education  
 Carolyn Shields, Wayne State University  
 Wei-Ling Sun, University of Texas at El Paso  
 Julian Vasquez Heilig, University of Kentucky  
 Yinyin (Helen) Wang, Georgia State University  
 Terri Watson, City College of New York  
 Jennie Weiner, University of Connecticut  
 Reginald Wilkerson, Clemson University  
 Sarah Woulfin, University of Texas at Austin  
 Irene Yoon, University of Utah

The 2021-2023 and 2022-2024 Jackson Scholars and their Mentors participated in paper presentations during the 2022 UCEA Annual Convention. The programming was kicked off at the Jackson Scholars Network Convocation. Immediately following the Convocation, 2nd-year Scholars presented their dissertation research to date in the annual Jackson Scholars Network Research Symposium. The Research Symposium presentations and participants were the following.

*Policy Analysis: Interrogation, Relation, & Revelation*

Andrew Johnson, Michigan State University  
Stephanie Marie Perez, Rutgers University  
Carrie Frances Whitlow, Kansas State University  
Mentor: Lolita Tabron, University of Denver

*Language & Learning: Investigations of Development, Multiplicity, & Elasticity*

Willie Chen, University of Utah  
Raisa Gray, Pennsylvania State University  
Christina Gómez Hernández, Texas State University  
Gerald LeTendre, Pennsylvania State University  
Mentor: Katherine Rodela, Washington State University

*K-12 Belonging: Relational Maturity Contra Weaponized Othering*

Soobin Choi, University of Missouri  
Roseann Gonzales, University of Texas at San Antonio  
Sahar Khawaja, University of Denver  
Fannie Thamara Martinez, University of Washington  
Mentor: Taeyeon Kim, University of Nebraska–Lincoln

*Practitioner & Parent Perceptions in Special Education*

Rahman K. Bell, Auburn University  
Jamillah Renee Gilbert, Illinois State University  
Tiffany Dion Mayes, Sam Houston State University  
Michael Ota, Texas State University  
Mentor: Gerardo R. López, Michigan State University

*K-12 Principals: Meaning-Making, Identities, & Leadership Actions*

Talgat Bainazarov, Michigan State University  
Brandon J. Britt, Ohio State University  
Christopher Darby, University of South Florida  
Shawn Wooden, Purdue University  
John Yun, Michigan State University  
Mentor: Julia Mahfouz, University of Colorado Denver

*Black Women's Practice: Journey, Reflection, & Power*

Racquel L. Armstrong, Ohio State University  
Anglesia Brown, Wayne State University  
Michelle Taylor, Wayne State University  
Jasmine Victor, University of Texas at San Antonio  
Mentor: Stefanie Marshall, University of Minnesota

*Higher Education: Experiences of Minoritized Populations*

Anita Dann, Sam Houston State University  
Montisha M. Hines-Goosby, Sam Houston State University  
Stacey Love, University of Kentucky  
Donald Moore, Rutgers University  
Mentor: Sarah Woulfin, University of Texas at Austin

*Community Engagement: Responsibility, Response, & Relationships*

Nateil Carby, Georgia State University  
Charity Chandler-Cole, Loyola Marymount University  
Kristina Martinez, Loyola Marymount University  
Claire Kehaulani Ramirez, Loyola Marymount University  
Meghan Schooler, Loyola Marymount University  
Mentor: Jo Beth Jimerson, Texas Christian University

*Identity, Trauma, & Transition*

Brandi Renee Avila, Loyola Marymount University  
Miguel Capers, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign  
R. Lynn Epps, University of Delaware  
Mentor: Elizabeth C. Reilly, California State University, Channel Islands

The Jackson Scholars Network is proud of all the members for their research and presentations. The Jackson Scholars Network is grateful for the dedication and guidance of the faculty facilitators and Mentors. The feedback and mentoring provided at this year's convention will serve our Scholars for years to come.

The Jackson Scholars Network also hosted the annual Julie Laible Memorial Orientation Session for new Scholars and Mentors, facilitated by Lawrence Louis, Michigan State University; Hollie Mackey, North Dakota State University; and Angel Miles Nash, Chapman University. Their time together included an overview of the expectations and responsibilities associated with belonging to the Jackson Scholars Network.

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## UCEA Graduate Student Council



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Benjamin Lebowitz, University of Wisconsin–Madison  
Dayna Muniz, Temple University

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Jeffrey Wooten, Virginia Commonwealth University

### 2021–2024 Representatives

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Andrea “Andii” Layton, Pennsylvania State University  
Jeana Partin, University of Tennessee, Knoxville  
Dre’Sha Singleton, North Carolina State University  
Nathan Tanner, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

<http://www.ucea.org/grad-student-focus/get-to-know-the-graduate-student-council/>



# 2023 DAVID L. CLARK SEMINAR PARTICIPANTS

The David L. Clark Graduate Research Seminar in Educational Administration and Policy was held April 12, 2023, right before the meeting of the American Educational Research Association (AERA) in Chicago. Sponsored by UCEA, Divisions A & L of the AERA, and SAGE Publications, the David L. Clark National Graduate Student Research Seminar in Educational Administration & Policy brings emerging educational administration and policy scholars and noted researchers together for presentations, generative discussion, and professional growth.

## 2023 Clark Scholars

Lara Altman, Northwestern University  
Brett Baldauf, University of Washington  
Katherine Blackburn, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
Melia Brown, Pennsylvania State University  
Crystal Charity, University of Maryland, College Park  
Yufei Chen, Loyola Marymount University  
Amy Cummings, Michigan State University  
Leticia (Letty) de la Garza, University of Arkansas  
John Emmett, University of Arkansas  
Sarah Fitzgerald, George Washington University  
Elvis Fonguh, University of Utah  
Matthew Fritzius, Florida Atlantic University  
Angela Adair Garrett, Auburn University  
Annie Gensterblum, Michigan State University  
Erin K. Gill, University of Wisconsin–Madison  
Jill Handley, University of Louisville  
Laura Elizabeth Pirkle Howd, Pennsylvania State University  
Mario Jackson, North Carolina State University  
Cara Jones, Texas Christian University  
Maya Kaul, University of Pennsylvania  
Caitlin E. Kearney, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
Paige Kinnaird, University at Buffalo, SUNY  
Adam Lara, University of Washington  
Kristie LeBeau, Cornell University  
Matthew Lieberman, Washington State University  
Anna Moyer, Vanderbilt University  
Donya Odom, Eastern Michigan University  
David Osworth, University of South Carolina  
British Reynolds, University of Illinois at Chicago  
Conor Scott, Rutgers University  
Janet Solis Rodriguez, University of Texas at Austin  
Cory Roseth, University of Wisconsin–Madison  
Daniel Spinka, George Washington University  
Kate Hasler Steilen, University at Buffalo, SUNY  
Natalie Truong, George Mason University  
Munube Yilmaz, Texas State University  
Huaiyue Zhang, University of Alabama  
Rong Zhang, University of Alabama

## 2023 Clark Faculty Mentors

Khalid Husny Arar, Texas State University  
Karen Stansberry Beard, Ohio State University  
Ira Bogotch, Florida Atlantic University  
Jennifer Clayton, George Washington University  
Davis Clement, Eastern Michigan University  
Shelby Cosner, University of Illinois at Chicago  
Sheryl Croft, Kennesaw State University  
Tim Ford, University of Oklahoma  
Emily Hodge, Montclair State University  
Eric Houck, University of North Carolina  
Decoteau Irby, University of Illinois at Chicago  
Jia “Grace” Liang, Kansas State University  
Gerardo R. López, Michigan State University  
Rebecca Lowenhaupt, Boston College  
Matthew Militello, East Carolina University  
Amanda Potterton, University of Kentucky  
Jeanne M. Powers, Arizona State University  
Mariela Rodríguez, University of Texas at San Antonio  
Jason Salisbury, University of Illinois at Chicago  
Virginia Snodgrass Rangel, University of Houston  
Chris Torres, University of Michigan  
Jennie Weiner, University of Connecticut



# ucea

## 2023 Calendar

### SEPTEMBER

17 Deadline, Jackson Scholars Mentors [nomination forms](#)

### OCTOBER

15 Deadline, virtual asynchronous video recordings for Convention

18-20 [International Conference on Educational Leadership & Management](#), Jamaica

31 Deadline, completed Convention virtual poster presentations

### NOVEMBER

1 Deadline, advance copies of Convention papers in All Academic

3 Deadline, submissions to [BELMAS 2024](#)

15 Graduate Student Summit, Minneapolis, MN

16 Jackson Scholars Research Symposium, Minneapolis, MN

16-18 UCEA Convention 2023, Minneapolis, MN

### DECEMBER

1 Deadline, David L. Clark Seminar Nominations <http://clarkseminar.ucea.org/>

15 Deadline, contributions to the Winter issue of the *UCEA Review*

## BELMAS 2024 Conference

## July 5-7, 2024

## Glasgow, Scotland



Theme: *Who or What is Educational Leadership for? Thinking about Purposes in Educational Leadership, Management and Administration*

Abstract submissions due November 3, 2023

<https://www.belmas.org.uk/events/belmas-conference-2024/>



# BELMAS2024

British Educational Leadership, Management and Administration Society



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 College of Education  
 Michigan State University  
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## Contributing to the UCEA Review

The *UCEA Review* is published three times a year (winter, summer, fall) and distributed as a membership benefit by the UCEA. If you have ideas concerning substantive feature articles, interviews, innovative programs, or point/counterpoints, *UCEA Review* section editors would be happy to hear from you.

*UCEA Review* deadlines:

April 1, August 1, December 15

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