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Developing Capacity for Policy Leadership: The Policy Development Series

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As the largest research and professional association in the United States focused on leadership preparation and support, the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA) has an important role to play in providing high-quality information to legislators and policymakers at the local, state, and federal levels. Scholars, including many in our field, have urged policymakers at the local, state, and federal levels to use research to inform the development, adoption, and implementation of education policy (Borgenschneider & Corbett, 2011; Cairney & Oliver, 2020). Prior research has suggested that effective dissemination of information begins early, establishes support, engages partners, and is responsive to context (Ashcraft et al., 2020). Policy briefs are standalone documents designed to communicate information efficiently using nontechnical language, illustrations, and tables. To support the UCEA community in developing policy briefs, the policy team is preparing a new series, which we refer to collectively as the

Policy Development Series. The aim of this series is to increase UCEA's capacity to engage with policymakers at the local, state, and federal levels as well as to stimulate conversations across the network about which issues should be part of a national policy conversation.

The first brief in the Policy Development Series is "[Communicating for Policy Audiences: The Role and Development of Effective Policy Briefs](#)" (Lochmiller & Thelen-Creps, 2025). The brief introduces the field to the characteristics of an effective policy brief as well as the strategies for writing and communicating policy briefs effectively. This article provides a high-level overview of the brief.

Beginning With the End in Mind: Understanding the Legislative Process

When writing policy briefs for legislative audiences, it's important to understand the basic structure of the legislative process, which begins with the introduction of legislation, continues with its development in specific committee(s) with technical expertise, and then shifts to a floor debate and vote. The process concludes with executive action. Understanding this process ensures that the author of a policy brief best informs the decision-making process and therefore has the greatest possible effect on their views about a particular policy issue. Consistent with prior research, it's critical to focus on the early stages of this process when legislators or their staff are considering policy ideas. At this stage, policy briefs can be helpful in identifying issues for legislative action. The objective is to present evidence before an issue has been framed and to influence its framing in ways that are beneficial to the organization or its constituents.

Yet, the introductory phase is not the only place where policy briefs can be helpful. In fact, committee staff often rely on policy briefs to inform the guidance they provide to legislators about issues before them. As such, developing briefs that can

In This Issue...

Policy Development Series	1
New UCEA Advocacy Guidebook	5
From the Executive Director	6
From the Dean's Desk	7
New Member: California State U, Fullerton Excellence in Educational Administration	8
Awards	9
Daniel Moraguez: In Memoriam	10
Tribute to Eustace Thompson	11
Gwendolyn Baxley: In Memoriam	12
Program Centers Corner	13
RFP Research & Action Networks	14
RFP to form a new UCEA Program Center	15
RFP to Host JRLE	18
Call for Applications: UCEA AD for Faculty Development & AD for Publications	20
Request for Institutions to Pilot the LEAPP Survey	23
Interview: Soraya Sablo Sutton	24
New Member: Texas A&M International	28
In the Lead with UCEA: Season 5	29
Reflections on UCEA Belize Study Tour	30
UCEA 2025 Convention	37
Graduate Student Summit	54
Graduate Student Council	56
Call for Nominations: 2026 Clark Seminar	57
Jackson Scholars Network	58
UCEA Calendar	59
PSRs	60
UCEA Staff	61

Contributing to the Review

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Deadlines: April 1, August 1, December 15

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be used by committee staff and their peers working in subcommittees is one of the most important strategies that authors should consider. Policy briefs can be used to inform expert testimony, submitted as part of the committee’s official record, or disseminated to members of the media covering a committee who need technical guidance about the issues being discussed. Augmenting policy briefs with more robust research reports also can be useful, as can making available datasets for analysis by committee members. Indeed, as Ashcraft et al. (2020) observed, research reports and policy briefs are the most used “channels” for disseminating information to policymakers and are far more common than in-person (1:1) meetings, research summaries, or traditional and social media (p. 9).

The Basics: Developing and Sharing Policy Briefs

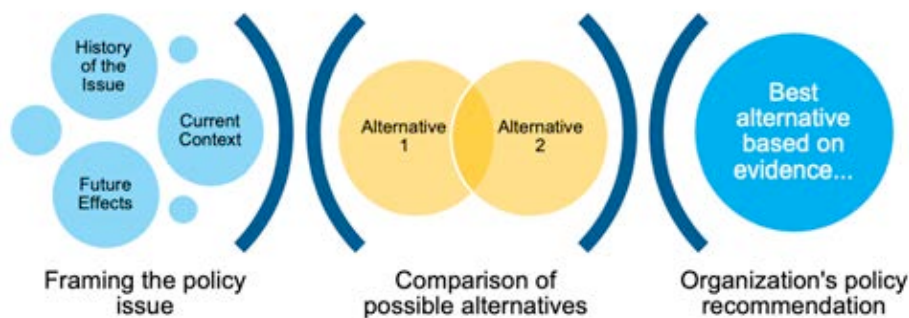
What does an effective policy brief look like? Several formats, structures, and designs are commonly used to communicate information to policy makers, and it is far beyond the scope of this short article to summarize them all. Yet, drawing upon guidance from published literature, it’s possible to discern the structure of an effectively written policy brief. The clarity of the argument plays a central role in the development of the brief. Arguments within a policy brief are intended to move the reader toward increasing awareness about an issue, the various choices available, and ultimately communicate the organization’s recommendation. Figure 1 illustrates how this argument might be arranged in a typical policy brief that uses existing research to communicate multiple policy options. Most often, the argument begins by identifying and framing a policy issue. The framing ensures that the issue is situated within the historical, current, and future context. The historical context should help the reader understand how the issue has come about or become a significant concern. The current context should provide the reader with a clear, cogent summation of the issue and give a sense of its current scope. Current descriptive data are often helpful to present, especially when drawn from national datasets. Finally, the discussion of future context serves as a response to the question: “What happens if?” In establishing this context, the brief increases the reader’s familiarity with the issue and increases the reader’s motivation to respond to the issue. For briefs that consider different policy options, as is assumed

here, the argument presents a comparison of those options for the reader’s consideration. This section is instrumental for readers, particularly those in policymaking roles, as it gives them a range of options and (ideally) presents evidence that shows which options are most and least effective. The brief concludes with a clear statement of the best alternative and grounds that statement in research. This recommendation serves as the organization’s position relative to the policy issue.

The basic organizational structure for a policy brief is consistent across many disciplines and professional fields. The organization is designed to make it easy for the reader to quickly discern the most salient points from the brief. According to information available online (e.g., Writing Center, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, n.d.), the structure of a policy brief can be summarized as follows:

- **Executive Summary.** Written in a paragraph or two, the executive summary summarizes the entire argument presented in the brief and highlights the most important information. The summary should sufficiently inform an individual so that no further reading is necessary, though encourage it by presenting the most compelling pieces of the argument. It cannot be understated that many policymakers and their staff will only read the executive summary.
- **Description of the Issue.** The issue should be presented in clear, nonacademic terms. The description often begins by presenting issue directly and then proceeding with a discussion about the issue’s magnitude, its scope, and its evolution. Throughout this section, the reader should begin to see and clearly understand the issue as framed by the author of the brief, which necessarily leads them to a set of prescribed actions. In this section, it can be helpful to draw upon well-known, publicly available datasets.
- **Description of Alternatives.** The presentation of viable, empirically based alternatives is the essence of an effective policy brief. This section should present information in a thoughtful and unbiased manner, meaning that it should identify clearly the potential and limitations of the alternatives. Where possible, this section should incorporate specific examples to illustrate or illuminate possibilities and invite the reader to explore their own. Wherever possible, the alternatives should highlight known issues related to implementation as well as the potential costs (i.e., human, financial, etc.) associated.

Figure 1
Best Structure of a Policy Argument



- **Recommended Actions.** To appeal to policy audiences who are not directly engaged in legislative activities, such as nonprofit leaders or communities, it can be helpful to include a section specifying actions that an individual or groups interested in advocating for the proposed recommendations can take.
- **Resources (optional).** If actions proposed include reaching out to legislators, connecting with community leaders, or otherwise engaging stakeholders, providing templates or other resources that can be modified for a local context can be useful. This ensures that individuals have the necessary tools to guide their engagement.

Thinking Strategically About Policy Engagement

Successfully communicating policy priorities depends on engagement with broad constituencies and the development of coalitions who share interests and values. The network of research centers affiliated with UCEA and its members provide one resource to fuel dissemination and to influence policy across contexts. Indeed, there are several well-regarded research centers hosted at UCEA institutions, including those found at Michigan State University, University of Connecticut, Indiana University Bloomington, University of Texas at Austin, University of Utah, and the University of California at Berkeley, among others. These centers produce and disseminate information that informs PK-12, higher education, and policymaking audiences within their regions and across the nation. Tapping these resources is an important step toward engagement in policy conversations and amplifying their work, when appropriate and aligned with the organization’s values, serves to provide an important spotlight on the critical issues facing educational leaders, their practice, and ongoing support. What is more, UCEA has key partners available to further expand its reach. These partners include the

American Association of School Administrators (AASA), National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP), National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), and Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). These organizations and their state affiliates serve as “champions” who engage with professional communities and policymakers. As such, these partners provide an important secondary voice to UCEA’s own efforts. In addition, these organization provide valuable insights and analyses derived from practice.

Central to effective engagement is to understand how policy briefs and other publications resonate with their intended audiences. Scholars have analyzed the impact of these strategies on different audiences. Their work indicates that policy briefs, opinion pieces, newspaper editorials, and social media have the greatest influence on decision-making audiences while traditional academic research tends to have more limited influence. As illustrated in Table 1, community leaders, school district administrators, philanthropic partners, government officials, and the general public turn to policy briefs, opinion pieces and editorials, and social media. Thus, in thinking about how to position our work to reach audiences beyond UCEA, the development of policy briefs and other innovative publications can be essential to this effort.

Closing

In closing, the Policy Development Series provides members of the UCEA community with resources needed to advance and widely share impactful research about educational leadership practice, preparation and support. Future briefs in this series will address issues related to issue advocacy, coalition building, and strategies for effectively translating research into policy guidance. In sharing these tools with the UCEA community, we seek to enhance the field’s capacity to meaningfully impact policy at all levels and to fulfill a central part of UCEA’s revised

Table 1
Considering the Influence of Different Types of Communication on Their Audience

Intended audience	Type of communication				
	Traditional academic research	Research or technical reports	Policy briefs	Op-eds or traditional media	Social media
Academic audiences and researchers	●	◐	◐	◐	○
Boards of education	◐	○	●	●	◐
Community leaders	○	○	●	●	●
District and school leadership	○	○	●	●	◐
General public	○	○	◐	●	●
Government staff or administrators	◐	◐	●	●	◐
Legislative staff	○	◐	●	●	◐
Philanthropy or foundation leadership	◐	◐	●	●	◐
Policymakers or elected officials	○	◐	●	●	◐
Practitioners/nonacademic audiences	○	◐	●	●	●
Professional associations	◐	◐	●	●	◐
University administration	◐	◐	●	●	◐

Note. Author’s estimates based on published research (e.g., Ashcraft et al., 2020). Filled circles indicate more influence on the intended audience, and partially or unfilled circles indicate less.

mission, which involves positively influencing local, state, and national educational policy.

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UCEA Releases Advocacy Guidebook for Quality Leadership Preparation

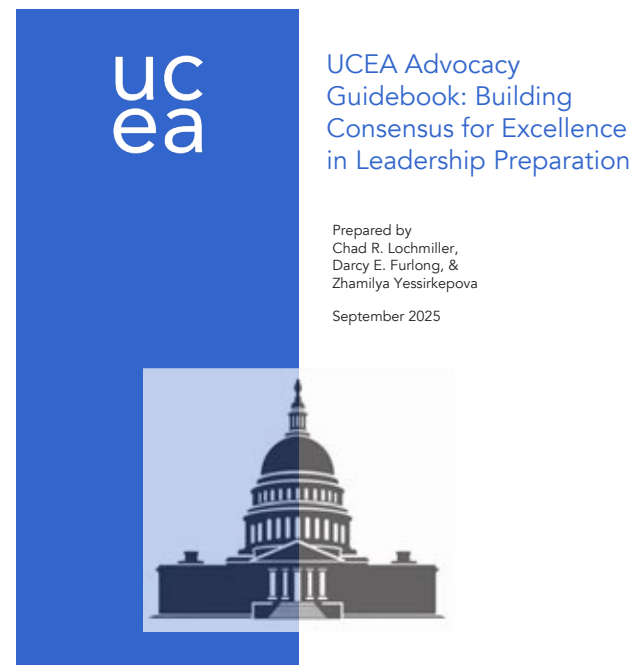
These are uncharted times for the education community, particularly for researchers and education professionals who are subject to new policy positions at the federal and state level. At the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA), we recognize that this uncertainty is fueling various levels of apprehension about the future of our field and the direction of impending policy proposals. Despite this apprehension, the opportunity to advocate and the importance of doing so have never been greater.

The University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA) is pleased to release its first-ever guidebook for scholars seeking to advocate for policies that support high-quality leadership preparation. Meant as a resource for members of the educational leadership field and those with a vested interest in leadership development, the *UCEA Advocacy Guidebook: Building Consensus for Excellence in Leadership Preparation* serves to inform those who wish to support development of federal, state, and local policies which safeguard the important role that university-based leadership preparation plays in PK-12 workforce development activities.

“Our new Guidebook is a direct response to emerging needs among faculty to advocate for and with educational leaders and school communities,” shared UCEA Executive Director Mónica Byrne-Jiménez. “My hope is that this Guidebook will be used as both a policy and pedagogical tool in educational leadership preparation programs across the country.”

Structured around publicly available tools and resources, the Guidebook introduces the legislative process, presents strategies for researchers to connect with elected officials, and discusses effective communication strategies. Throughout, the authors provide readers with practical examples to showcase how these strategies can be used. A companion teaching guide will be released in 2026 to provide instructional resources for UCEA faculty wishing to engage students in their advocacy efforts.

“We’ve heard from our field that there is an interest in advocating but there has been a dearth of resources



that support them in doing so,” says Dr. Chad Lochmiller, UCEA Associate Director for Policy and Advocacy and the Guidebook’s lead author. “This Guidebook is our first step in providing this support and it’s part of our long-term commitment to create avenues to share the research that defines what effective leadership preparation looks like, how it supports working and learning conditions in schools, and to explain why universities are essential partners in federal and state workforce development.”

The Guidebook parallels other UCEA resources, including a recent brief describing how to write policy briefs to inform policy debates. Moreover, UCEA will host a town hall focused on advocacy in early 2026 and provides members of our field with two workshops designed to stimulate efforts to inform policy development at the state and federal levels.

https://www.ucea.org/ucea_advocacy_guidebook.php



Winter has arrived in Michigan. Our first snowfall was beautiful and inspired contemplation. The quiet that comes with the snow makes space for thoughts that have long been pushed down to emerge.

It has been a challenging semester—more so than usual. It is not often that I use this letter to share personal thoughts, yet I think it is appropriate now.

As an organization, as a community, we lost four colleagues,

friends, mentors, thought partners, and more over the past few months. Each made an impact on different parts of our organization so their absence will be ripple across our community and for years to come.

- **Olof Johansson.** Olof was an active member of UCEA for decades and professor at Umeå University in Sweden. He was part of the team of researchers from around the world that developed the International Successful School Principals Project (ISSPP), a collaborative exploring the role and leadership of principals. He also played an active role in the inception of UCEA’s Center for the Study of Leadership and Ethics in Education (CSLEE). CSLEE is a consortium of international universities advancing the understanding, appreciation, and practice of moral and ethical leadership in educational settings across international contexts since 1996. He helped UCEA begin to define itself as an international community.
- **Eustace Thompson.** Eustace was a member of UCEA since he left P12 leadership as a district leader to become an academic in the early 2000s. He was one of the longest serving Plenary Session Representatives (PSRs) making sure that Hofstra and other small private universities were at the table. He was involved in UCEA’s Leadership for Diverse Learners FIPSE grant, where his leadership insights were key to the entire project, most especially to the module for English language learners. In all those years he mentored countless graduate students, junior faculty, and me—as a colleague at Hofstra and after. His wisdom, kindness, and warm humor made him the gentleman of UCEA.

- **Danny Moraguez.** Danny joined UCEA as a doctoral student. He was a graduate assistant at UCEA when we were headquartered at UVA. There he helped coordinate the Jackson Scholars program and happily became a Jackson Scholar in 2020. Danny did many other things, too, since he was always looking to help. He soon joined Florida State University as an assistant professor, where his hard work and big heart made him an invaluable member of Anne’s College. He served as the PSR, where his unique talents were not lost on me, and he also became a leader in the Leadership for Social Justice SIG. In the many conversations we had, he once mentioned that he wouldn’t mind having my job one day. I wouldn’t have minded that, either.
- **Gwendolyn Baxley.** Gwen also joined UCEA as an emerging scholar while completing her doctoral program at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. She was a Jackson and Clark Scholar and recipient of a National Academy of Education and Spencer Dissertation Fellowship. At the University of Buffalo, she codirected the Black Liberation in Education, Schools and Society (BLESS) Co/Lab dedicated to advancing Black liberation in education. As a gifted poet and critical methodologist—quant and qual—she focused on those school-community-family spaces in which Black youth can resist, heal, and thrive. In her own words, “I am the pulse of my people. I am the fist and the fight.” Her passion, talents, and integrity will go on in the fight every time we embrace our communities and make sure our work remains grounded in the people and places we love.

As I write these few words I can’t help but think about what it means to be a member of this community. The speed at which the world moves, the increasing pressures to “do more,” the constant blurring of our why in the face of those pressures, makes it difficult to stop and see each other, really see each other. Be it the senior scholar who slowly withdraws or the midcareer scholar who we occasionally say “what happened to so-and-so” or the emerging scholar who is rushing from session to session because they don’t know they can—and should—slow down, how do we hold space with and for each other? To be a member of a community is to have, among other things, a shared sense of belonging, purpose, and care. How are we doing? How are you doing?

My sincere hope is that Olof, Eustace, Danny, and Gwen knew that within this community they were—*are*—loved and their lives will continue to make a difference to all of us. My deepest hope is that you all feel that way.

From the Dean's Desk

In the Shadow of Policy: Confronting the Consequences of Federal Decisions on Public Education

Jerlando F. L. Jackson

*Dean and MSU Research Foundation Professor of Education
Michigan State University*



This fall, we find ourselves at a troubling crossroads. Recent Presidential Executive Orders and related actions from the White House signal a political and ideological shift that threatens the very foundations of public education as we know it. Framed as a move toward “parental rights,” “curricular neutrality,” and “local

control,” these directives mask a more unsettling agenda. One that undermines the role of educators, restricts inclusive curriculum, and disrupts the equitable mission of our public schools.

For those of us in the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA) community, this moment is not only consequential but clarifying. It reminds us that education is not a neutral enterprise. It has never been. Leadership preparation, policy research, and organizational reform must not exist in abstraction from the political realities shaping our schools. We are called, now more than ever, to defend public education, in words and informed action.

Unpacking Executive Orders: Rhetoric vs. Reality

While presented as an effort to empower families and streamline education systems, Executive Orders in question severely limit federal support for initiatives addressing racial, cultural, gender, and linguistic diversity in schools. It rolls back equity-focused guidance, restricts funding for teacher diversity pipeline programs, and calls for a review of “ideologically driven” curricula. Language has already been weaponized to challenge teaching about race, LGBTQ+ identities, and American history.

It also directs federal agencies to “encourage civic literacy without political bias,” a seemingly benign statement that, in practice, opens the door for widespread curricular censorship. The decision to defund several federal discretionary grant programs focused on culturally responsive leadership, mental health supports, and inclusive education only deepens the concern.

These developments do not happen in a vacuum; they shape the conditions of K-12 schooling, influence leadership decisions, and set the tone for what educational equity means in practice. More than policy signals, they are policy signals with real consequences.

The Erosion of Trust and the Leadership Dilemma

In K-12 schools, we are already witnessing the chilling effect of these directives. District leaders report increasing pressure from school boards to limit discussions of race, gender, and identity. Superintendents are navigating legal gray zones about what can and cannot be taught. Teachers are self-censoring. And leaders prepared to advance equity are finding their efforts delegitimized or defunded. This creates a dilemma for school leadership preparation programs: How do we prepare leaders for equity and excellence when the broader system penalizes those very goals?

The answer, I believe, lies in redoubling our efforts, not retreating from them. Our programs must equip leaders with the courage, political savvy, and research-based tools to navigate complex policy landscapes while holding fast to their ethical commitments. We must train leaders who are not just implementers, but advocates capable of interpreting law, resisting harmful policies, and sustaining equity-centered practices under pressure.

The Role of Education Researchers: Truth-Tellers in a Time of Misinformation

As researchers, we are stewards of truth in a time when truth is contested terrain. The White House’s decisions present a challenge to the research community: to counteract the



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weaponization of misinformation with clear, accessible, and actionable evidence.

This means going beyond publishing in academic journals. It means translating findings into policy briefs, op-eds, and school board testimony. It means working alongside practitioners to cocreate knowledge and tools that address immediate needs, particularly in underresourced schools now facing compounded policy constraints.

Education researchers have a responsibility to track and expose the impacts of regressive federal decisions on local schools: Who is being excluded? What programs are being lost? How are student outcomes being shaped? And how are leaders responding?

These stories must be told not just in national outlets, but in local communities where battles over curriculum, teacher autonomy, and student identity are playing out daily.

Standing With Schools, Not Just Studying Them

The danger of a moment like this is detachment, of assuming that what happens at the federal level is too political or too distant for us to intervene. But we must remember, our institutions of higher education are part of the public education ecosystem. When our schools suffer, our communities suffer. When students are silenced, the pipeline of future educators, leaders, and citizens is fractured.

We must make ourselves useful not just as scholars, but as partners. This means showing up in schools, supporting leaders under fire, and creating spaces where aspiring educators feel seen, heard, and prepared.

We must also resist the temptation to normalize what is happening. These are not “just policy shifts.” They represent a step backward in our nation’s long, uneven march toward educational equity. And history will judge how we respond.

Conclusion: Courage and Clarity in Uncertain Times

As dean of a college of education, I am acutely aware of the stakes. Future teachers and leaders walk our halls daily. They are watching how we respond. They are listening for guidance and looking for models of integrity.

UCEA has always stood for a vision of education rooted in equity, excellence, and leadership that matters. That mission does not change with administrations; it becomes more vital.

We must act with urgency, clarity, and courage. And we must not lose sight of our role: to shape a future where public education serves all students, regardless of background, identity, or zip code.

UCEA Welcomes New Full Member: California State University, Fullerton

California State University, Fullerton, offers an MS in Educational Leadership and Administration as well as a several doctoral programs. The MS degree is a hybrid program with online and in-person sessions, with the PASC credential part of the program. Cal State Fullerton offers three EdD programs: Community College Leadership, PreK-12 Educational Leadership, and Educational Leadership.

The EdD in Community College Leadership uses a 3-year, hybrid, cohort model to prepare educators to take on the roles in areas such as senior administration, faculty leadership, student affairs, or business and human resource administration in the community college setting.

The EdD in P-12 Educational Leadership also uses a 3-year, hybrid, cohort model. The program is designed to prepare preschool and K-12 educators as administrators, educational researchers, or teacher leaders to design and renew excellent educational institutions across the P-12 landscape.

The EdD in Educational Leadership, launching in 2026, is a fully online 3-year program with in-person residencies. This flexible program includes in-person residencies each term for networking and applied learning, along with a global studies component that connects leaders to international perspectives and practices.

<https://ed.fullerton.edu/edleadership/>

The logo for Cal State Fullerton, featuring the words "Cal State" in blue and "Fullerton." in orange.



2025 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.

Jeremy Madden

*Principal, Northside High School
Nominated by University of Alabama*

Jeremy Madden, PhD, is principal of Northside High School, Tuscaloosa County Schools, Alabama. Dr. Madden has made significant contributions to the University of Alabama program in teaching, research, and service—ranging from guiding doctoral students and supporting faculty research to hosting data collection and serving as a panelist at program events. What is especially commendable is that he has done all of this while serving full-time as a school principal for over 10 years.

Michael Robinson

*Director, A. Lindwood Holton Governor's School
Nominated by University of Virginia*

Michael Robinson, PhD, is the director of A. Linwood Holton Governor's School, Abingdon, Virginia, the Commonwealth's first virtual Governor's School, having served for the past 9 years. Prior to his tenure with A. Linwood Holton Governor's School, Dr. Robinson served as the superintendent of Smyth County Public Schools for 9 years. He was named 2017 Region VII Superintendent of the Year, an honor that was bestowed upon him by his peers, which covers 19 school systems from Radford to Lee County. Dr. Robinson received a bachelor's degree in mathematics education and a master's degree in counselor education, both from Louisiana Tech University in Ruston, Louisiana, and earned a PhD in educational leadership from the University of Virginia. Prior to serving as Smyth County superintendent, he held other administrative and teaching positions in Orange County and Charlottesville. Throughout his career Dr. Robinson has counted on the support and love of his wife, Laura, and their three children, Kyle, David, and Hope. Some of the hallmarks of Dr. Robinson are coordination of partnerships with community organizations for expanded grants and funding opportunities for area school systems and providing quality education opportunities and secondary education preparation for students.

Planning for 2026 Awards

The nomination deadline for the 2026 annual Excellence in Educational Leadership Award awards is **April 30, 2026**. The UCEA Executive Committee is asking for nominees in recognition of practicing school administrators who have made significant contributions to the improvement of administrator preparation. This distinguished school administrator should demonstrate an exemplary record of supporting school administrator preparation efforts. The UCEA Plenum Representative (PSR) at each participating university should consult with colleagues and other constituencies designated by faculty to identify a worthy recipient. To nominate a candidate, PSRs should navigate to the following link and follow instructions for the following:

1. Navigate to https://www.ucea.org/award_excellence.php
2. Upload a letter of nomination.
3. Complete the fields in the electronic nomination form, which include specific bio data fields and a field for a one- to three-sentence Statement of Significant Contribution.

Nominations must be received by April 30, 2026. Email awards@ucea.org with questions.

Dr. Daniel Moraguez: In Memoriam

Margaret Thornton

Rowan University



UCEA lost a cherished friend when Dr. Daniel Moraguez, an assistant professor at Florida State University (FSU), died after a brief illness in October. Loved by all who knew him, Danny was as good a person as anyone could hope to meet. Dr. Eric Ludwig, the EdD Program director at FSU,

remembered Danny as “committed to making the world a better, more just, more inclusive place, and that was evident in the care and commitment he brought to everything he did.”

Danny began his time with UCEA as a graduate student assistant when headquarters was located at the University of Virginia, where he earned his PhD in Administration and Supervision. In that role, he served as the HQ representative to the Graduate Student Council while also supporting the Jackson Scholars Network. Then-Executive Director Michelle Young remembers that “the curiosity, heart, and commitment he brought to [the UCEA] community made my heart sing.”

Other colleagues from the University of Virginia remembered Danny as a thoughtful and caring teacher. Dr. David Eddy-Spicer, while acknowledging how difficult it is to distill Danny’s tremendous impact on those around him into a few words, settled on one: open-hearted. “Danny’s presence created its own space of welcome,” Dr. Eddy-Spicer said. “That open heart opened him up to others’ pain, especially those that the dominant culture had deemed less than.”

This open-heartedness carried into Danny’s research agenda, too, and other scholars remarked on his strong and thoughtful work on preparing more culturally competent school leaders. FSU colleague and assistant professor Annie M. Wofford noted that Danny was a “one-of-a-kind scholar” with an “unmatched generosity” for all who knew him. His dissertation advisor at UVA, Dr. Sara Dexter, noted the significant work Danny has done focusing on justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion in principal preparation. “Danny’s research promised to move leadership for social justice forward in actionable ways,” Dr. Dexter said. “He was forging new directions for pedagogy in educational leadership preparation, and his untimely death is so unfortunate for the field.” Dexter also noted that Danny’s dissertation received the 2023 Gansneder Mixed Methods award and the 2023 AERA Leadership for Social Justice (LSJ) SIG’s dissertation award.

After completing high school in Florida, Danny enlisted in the Marines, where he served for four years he remembered as some of the best of his life. In 2002, he completed his undergraduate studies at Florida International University. He then became a multilingual teacher serving students from New York City to Taipei. After successfully defending his dissertation on developing social justice leaders, Danny accepted a position as an assistant professor at FSU, where he continued to love and care for all those around him. He had recently completed a successful third-year review and was well on his way to earning tenure.

Even with his robust research agenda, colleagues noted Danny’s generosity with students and faculty alike. “What mattered most to him was his people, and so that was how he spent his time,” FSU Assistant Professor Erica Harbatkin said, noting that Danny was the type of person who would help students define and then meet checklists for their dissertations while simultaneously helping another student find a babysitter for class. “Danny went way beyond what regular people, even the good ones, do,” Dr. Harbatkin continued, “and he did it with a total lack of pretense or expectation of anything in return. It was all just love and care.”

In addition to his time as a graduate assistant at HQ, Danny continued to serve UCEA and the wider educational academic community. He was FSU’s plenum representative and in 2023, served on the Minneapolis convention planning committee. A member of the Leadership for Teaching and Learning and Leadership for Social Justice Special Interest Groups, Danny also served as the Secretary/Treasurer of the Access, Detracking, and Tracking SIG.

As people began to hear the sad news of Danny’s illness and death, more than one person remarked that Danny was the “life of the party” wherever he went. Many remembered funny stories from a recent UCEA trip to Belize. Others shared stories of dancing with Danny at UCEA banquets in years past. FSU Assistant Professor Mario Jackson summed up the feelings of the entire UCEA community when he noted, “We have not only lost a colleague but a dear friend.”

I, like many of you reading this, will remain forever grateful that Danny was my friend and so very heartbroken that we lost him far too soon. Whether it was wrestling with a meaty problem in my writing, experiencing frustrations in cat parenting, or reaching the top of the Christmas tree to place the star, Danny always stood ready to help while offering a joke. Danny was an incredible person who spoke three languages, loved everyone he met, and strove to make the world a better place every day. May Danny’s gift to us be a recommitment to a life of service to each other and the students around us.

Tribute to Dr. Eustace Thompson

Catherine DiMartino
St. John's University

I met Eustace in 2010. Our first exchange was a salary negotiation—I was a newly minted professor, he was an associate professor, program director, experienced school leader. It's no wonder he had such artful negotiation skills. I didn't stand a chance! Yes, he did out-negotiate me (though I did get a new computer!). In reality, we both won because it was the beginning of a wonderful professional and personal friendship.

When I think of Eustace, I think of his wisdom, his laughter, and his presence as a leader, mentor, and friend. He had an extraordinary gift for seeing people—not just their titles or roles, but their whole selves—and for investing in them with honesty, care, and joy.

Before he came to Hofstra, Eustace dedicated over four decades to public education. He was a teacher, a principal, a district leader. In each of those roles, he was committed to equity, to high expectations, and to building schools where every child could thrive. He brought that same dedication to the Educational Leadership and Policy Program at Hofstra, which he led with Dr. Karen Osterman and Mónica Byrne-Jiménez—truly a dream team of thoughtful scholars and outstanding researchers.

As a curriculum auditor, program evaluator, and author, Eustace's scholarship contributed nationally to conversations on leadership and equity. Eustace carried that passion into his national and local service. He was a long-time member and plenum representative of UCEA. More locally, Eustace was a member of the Metropolitan Council of Educational Administration Programs (MCEAP). He served as Vice President and Member-at-Large and was a key part of MCEAP's Diversity Leadership Initiative, a statewide effort supported by the State Education Department to expand and diversify the leadership

pipeline by recruiting and supporting candidates from underrepresented groups.

For me, what stands out most about Eustace is not only his professional leadership, but the way he lived that leadership in relationship with others.

When I was a brand-new assistant professor, eager to say yes to everything, Eustace was the one who protected me. When people asked me to serve on committees or join projects, he would cut in firmly: "No—she has to write, she has to teach, she has to become." Because of him, I had the space to learn, to write, and to find my footing as a young professor. He was showing me what true mentorship looks like—how senior faculty care for and shield junior colleagues so they too can succeed.

His office door was always open. He mentored students, he mentored me. Whether I was struggling to teach statistics or facing pushback in class, he gave feedback that challenged me to be a more reflective teacher. He pushed me to think deeper and to do my job better—and to always put students first.

Even after I left Hofstra for St. John's, we kept in touch. We worked together on projects, attended national and local conferences. Those meetings were never just about work. They were about family, politics, kids, and life. That was Eustace—he invested in the whole person, and he made every space warmer by his presence.

I miss Eustace dearly—as a mentor, as a colleague, and as a friend. I also believe the greatest way we can honor his legacy is to live out the gifts he shared with us: to guide others, to look out for one another, to create community, and to lead with generosity, just as he always did.



Dr. Gwendolyn Baxley: In Memoriam



Dr. Gwendolyn Baxley, 1991–2025
Assistant professor, Educational Leadership and Policy,
University at Buffalo.

Her poem, *Black Magic*, was published July 2019 in
the *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in
Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09518398.2019.1635285>



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Black Magic

My mother and aunts are magicians
when bank accounts were
as bare and starving as our stomachs
somehow dinner still
appeared out of thin air
on our table

every day

somehow they turned
every Christmas
every birthday
every holiday
into such miracles
Houdini himself would envy in awe

my mother and aunts are mystical beings
making a way out of no way
with tricks up their sleeves I'm still learning till this day

we come from a history of mystical beings
Black people making a way out of no way
when I first learned of Oakland Community School
I knew it was a part of this magic
a miracle made that day in 1973

for Black babies
in 1960s Oakland
Education mean entering public schools like prisoners
violenced, silenced, policed
deemed
uneducable
unwanted
Black Brains Brilliant
and Starving

OCS was an oasis for the Black community that day in 1873
when it was Birthed by the Black Panther Party
started with a small band of brave young people
soon bursted at the seams
waiting list: 400

CASTLE

Members of the CASTLE team recently published a piece in *Leadership and Policy in Schools* where we analyzed 23 articles from U.S. educational practitioner publications during ChatGPT's first year to understand what leadership advice was being given to P-12 school leaders about integrating artificial intelligence into their schools. The piece, titled "What's the Chatter About AI and School Leaders," presents four practitioner-focused themes: stay attuned to equity, use AI to enhance teaching and learning, collaborate with stakeholders, and remain open to the affordances and pitfalls of AI.

To promote a new edtech-based pedagogical tool, CASTLE members are pioneering the new "digital case" format in the *Journal of Cases in Educational Leadership*. Workshops at UCEA and online via the LTEL SIG will illustrate case characteristics and explain the authoring tools. See Convention Session 227, Developing Leaders: Programs, Approaches, and Tools, for our paper presentation, "CASTLE Session: What is JCEL's New 'Digital Case Format' and How Can You Author One?" These cases emphasize branching decisions, which allow learners to practice decision-making and consider the consequences of their actions.

CASTLE also is launching a new podcast, CASTLE Conversations, that will feature people who are living at interesting intersections of leadership, technology, and innovation.

UCEA Center for the International Study of School Leadership

This year was an exciting period of growth and collaboration for the UCEA Center for the International Study of School Leadership. We proudly welcomed two new codirectors, Dr. Betty Alford, California State Polytechnic University, and Dr. Nathern Okilwa, Baylor University. Together, Betty and Nathern bring decades of expertise and a wealth of experience in educational leadership, with extensive backgrounds working alongside schools and leaders across diverse cultural, national, and international contexts. Their leadership strengthens the center's commitment to fostering global perspectives on educational leadership and advancing research that bridges theory and practice.

In 2024-2025, the Center collaborated with the International School Leadership Development Network (ISLDN) to launch several global research initiatives. Our ambitious project builds on one UCEA supported with a mini-grant in 2023-2024 that brought together principals from New Zealand, Hong Kong, Mexico, and the United States. Again using coconstructed case studies, we are exploring the

resilience of school leaders and the communities they serve worldwide. The project highlights the challenges leaders face in turbulent times and the strategies, innovations, and personal strengths enabling them to guide schools toward success and sustainability.

A distinguishing feature of this project is its emphasis on practitioner voices. Practitioners are positioned as lead authors, ensuring that the research is informed directly by lived experiences and grounded in practice. By elevating practitioner perspectives, the center is advancing more inclusive, collaborative, and meaningful approaches to scholarship. This work reflects our mission to connect research and practice while cultivating leadership that thrives across international contexts.

UCEA Center for the Study of Leadership and the Law

A continuing commitment of the UCEA Center for the Study of Leadership and the Law, especially in our current climate, is to significantly raise and improve the level of legal literacy among today's school leaders and educators, especially those working in low-wealth, school communities. The center released a pilot online survey addressing how rural educators in Arkansas acquire their legal information and knowledge. The plan is for this pilot study to become a national survey of legal literacy in the nation's rural school communities.

Beginning at the 2026 UCEA Annual Convention, the center plans to have an annual David M. Schimmel Research Presentation on Legal Literacy in Schools. David was a long-time faculty member in the Department of Educational Policy, Research, and Administration at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, who devoted his life to legal literacy and civic engagement. David was the author or coauthor of over 75 articles and seven books about law and education, including *Principals Teaching the Law: 10 Legal Lessons Your Teachers Must Know* (2010) and *Teachers and the Law*, 9th Edition (2015). He is the recipient of the Education Press Association of America's Distinguished Achievement Award for Excellence in Educational Journalism, the Education Law Association's McGhehey (lifetime achievement) Award, and the University of Massachusetts's Distinguished Academic Outreach Award. The primary goal of the David M. Schimmel Research Presentation on Legal Literacy in Schools will be to share quality research on topics related to improving legal literacy in the nation's K-12 public schools.

Another ongoing service of the Center for the Study of Leadership and the Law is to provide low-cost or free mediation services in Arkansas for public school districts to use mediation practices instead of pursuing costly and time-

consuming litigation to resolve special education and other legal disputes in school settings. Center Director Kevin Brady is a licensed mediator in the Arkansas Civil Courts. In Fall 2025, the center plans to reach out to faculty at UCEA member institutions who teach education law or a related course to share resources, including course syllabi and relevant educational law and policy research.

Program Center Sessions at the UCEA 2025 Convention

The following sessions are scheduled for the UCEA 2025 Convention in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Note that session numbers may change before the Convention, so check the updated online Convention Program as the Convention approaches.

Thursday Nov. 20

- 060. The UCEA Center for the International Study of School Leadership: Stories of Resilience From the Field
- 107. UCEA Center for Educational Leadership and Social Justice (CELSJ): Engagement Through Resiliency, Equity, and Social Justice

Friday Nov. 21

- 123. Get to Know UCEA Program Centers: Ignite Presentations
- 139. Get to Know UCEA Program Centers #1
- 159. Get to Know UCEA Program Centers #2
- 178. Get to Know UCEA Program Centers #3
- 198. Get to Know UCEA Program Centers #4

Saturday Nov. 22

- 218. UCEA Joint Center for Research on the Superintendency and District Governance Session: Wicked Problems
- 241. Program Centers Directors Development
- 245. CSLEE Symposium: Investigating the Conditions and Enactment of Leadership Ethics and Values amid Intensifying Pressures
- 257. Learning and Teaching in Educational Leadership Executive Committee SIG
- 258. Program Centers Directors Development Lunch
- 270. UCEA Center for the Study of Leadership and the Law Session
- 273. The Center for Urban School Leadership: Leadership Challenges Confronting Urban School Principals

Request for Proposals: Research & Action Networks

UCEA COMMITMENT

The purpose of UCEA's Research and Action Networks (RANs) is to encourage discussions and innovation related to issues of identity, broadly defined, or research interests or leadership issues relevant to the improvement of leadership preparation, school/district leadership, or educational policy.

RANs identify and tackle important issues that could benefit from broader discussion through networking and meetings where member presentations and experiences may be shared. The RANs also provide an avenue for members to share challenges and goals, and, more importantly, develop research projects or initiatives. Lastly, RANs ensure that UCEA lives up to its mission and strengthen our community.

REGISTRATION PROCEDURE

Submit the following information to ucea@msu.edu for review:

- Name and Contact Information of Group Submitting Application
- Proposed RAN Name
- Purpose of RAN
- Proposed Leadership Structure (e.g., co-chair) and

Names

- and Emails of Individuals
- Proposed Initial Members with Contact Information
- Plan for Recruitment of New Members
- Proposed Activities/Events

REVIEW PROCESS

Applications will be reviewed by the Executive Director, Headquarter Associate Directors, along with the Project and Events Coordinator and UCEA Post-Doctoral Fellow. RAN leadership will be contacted after our review.

Please email ucea@msu.edu with questions.



Request for Proposals to Form New UCEA Program Center

UCEA is pleased to announce a Request for Proposals (RFP) to establish new Program Centers organized around a variety of educational leadership issues. Suggestions for Program Centers targeted interest areas are sought from UCEA member universities, the Executive Committee, the Executive Director, Plenary Session Representatives, directors of existing program centers, and the general UCEA membership.

The primary purpose of a UCEA Program Center is to conduct research and identify targeted areas of collaborative work over 3 years. The Program Center promotes research and project development through the leadership of faculty colleagues at UCEA member institutions, nonmember institutions, school districts, and governmental agencies. Program Center efforts serve UCEA's mission by involving UCEA member faculty in significant work in focused inquiry areas of contemporary importance and interest, by creating multi-institutional interest networks, and by giving broad recognition to the efforts of UCEA institutions and their faculties.

Program centers advance UCEA's mission of improving preK-12 educational leadership, policy, and organizations, including conducting and disseminating research that benefits schools, communities, and society. Further, centers address UCEA's strategic priorities:

- promoting, sponsoring, and disseminating research on essential problems of practice;
- improving the preparation and professional development of school leaders and professors; and
- influencing policy and practice through establishing and fostering collaborative relationships.

UCEA Program Centers advance knowledge through inquiry in the targeted area of interest. Program Center directors are strongly encouraged to engage in high-quality research, seek external funding to support such research, and form research groups to exchange ideas relating to lines of inquiry that promise to provide significant insights for preparation and practice.

Major activities of a UCEA Program Center include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Developing a sustained research agenda to deepen the fields understanding, provide implications for leadership preparation, and support educational leaders and school communities.
2. Identifying a network of individuals interested in participating in the center's research foci. Whenever possible, faculty from multiple universities, practicing school administrators, and state education agency leaders should be involved to promote effective liaisons with other organizations and individuals who share the center's interests and goals.
3. Creating work groups to develop curriculum and other materials useful in improving the preparation of educational leaders, advancing educational administration and leadership practice, and improving educational policymaking.
4. Organizing seminars, workshops, conferences, and other outreach activities to share new understandings, practices, and materials with others who share UCEA goals for advancing the field of educational administration and leadership.
5. Sharing center interests, action plans, accomplishments, and products through special network meetings at the annual UCEA Convention; meeting periodically with the executive director and members of the Executive Committee; and participating at conferences of other professional associations dedicated to improving administrator preparation and practice.
6. Establishing an advisory board to guide the work of the Program Center.

Proposal Information Requirements

While a response to the RFP need not be a lengthy document (typically 6–9 pages, plus supporting letters), each institution applying to host a UCEA Program Center must provide information related to the following areas:

1. Purposes and work plans relating to the proposed center that include information as to (a) what the primary focus will be and what the center will do, (b) when the center will implement its plans over the

- initial 3-year hosting arrangement, (c) how the center will accomplish its stated purposes, and (d) how the center will address the UCEA's strategic goals.
2. University, academic division, and department (or school district/agency) commitments, including provisions for staff and resource support (e.g., release time for professional and staff personnel, graduate assistants, monetary support, facilities, and equipment).
 3. Operational procedures related to such matters as the composition and role of the center's advisory board, relationships with other universities, partnerships with school districts, and/or education agencies/professional associations. All UCEA Program Centers must have a representative advisory committee, with the size of that board set by the Program Center director(s) in consultation with the UCEA Associate Director of Program Centers. It is expected that most of the advisory board will be from UCEA member universities. Advisory board membership is subject to approval by the UCEA Executive Committee.
 4. Qualifications and time commitment availability of the individual(s) who will have primary responsibilities for directing the center's activities.
 5. Statements of institutional commitment regarding UCEA expectations for program centers relative to (a) the 3-year summative report for the center, (b) wide dissemination of center reports and products, for example, at the annual UCEA Convention and UCEA website, as well as (c) appropriate inclusion of UCEA in any external funding proposals related to program center operations, as negotiated by the Program Center Director and the UCEA Executive Director.
 6. Support letters from appropriate institutional officials. In the case of universities, letters from the department chair and dean are appropriate. Partnership districts might have the school superintendent and/or board president write such letters. Proposals involving state education agencies might include support letters from the chief executive officer of the state education agency or the state board of education president.

UCEA Commitment of Support to the Program Centers

Per Article 8.4 of the bylaws, UCEA is committed to assisting each approved Program Center in realizing its mission and in maximizing the contribution of each center to improving educational leadership knowledge and practice. UCEA support includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- **Headquarters Support**
 - o Consultative and coordination support provided by the UCEA Associate Director of Program Centers and the Program Center Advisory Board.
 - o Consultative visits to program center sites and active participation in program center conferences by a member of the Program Center Advisory Board and/or the UCEA Associate Director of Program Centers.
 - o The use of the UCEA logo and organizational identification, with the written approval of the UCEA Executive Director, on/in program center letterhead stationery, program advertisements, publications, and external funding grant proposals.
- **Publications**
 - o Program Center events, activities, and lists of publications/products will be promoted in issues of the UCEA Review. In addition, each Program Center will be featured on the UCEA website, and internet users will be able to connect directly with the center's home page.
 - o Assistance to Program Centers in publishing, advertising, and distributing their projects, including possibilities for actual publication by UCEA, will be based on negotiations involving the Program Center Director(s) and the UCEA Executive Director. These negotiations will focus on not only the potential contributions of the proposed publication but also UCEA budget guidelines and UCEA publications policies, as established by the Plenum and the Executive Committee.
- **Annual UCEA Convention**
 - o Program Center Directors are strongly encouraged to submit session proposals annually to the UCEA Convention. This will allow them to present and discuss their respective Program Centers' recent efforts and encourage participation from others. Centers are given one highlighted session and one business meeting at the Convention.
 - o An annual meeting of all Program Center Directors held in conjunction with the UCEA Convention to explore center opportunities, propose changes in UCEA policies and procedures related to the centers, and explore collaborative ventures among centers. This meeting shall be convened and chaired by the UCEA Associate Director of Program Centers.

- o Each Program Center will receive no-cost display spaces, support personnel, and equipment at the annual UCEA Convention to display and disseminate its reports and products.
- **Research Awards**
Proposals for competitive research awards of up to \$5,000 each fiscal year will be submitted to the UCEA Associate Director of Program Centers and the Program Center Advisory Board for evaluation and recommendation to the Executive Committee. UCEA will award up to two competitive research awards each fiscal year. The purpose of the grants is to assist established centers in research and facilitate conferences around the program center's focus, activities, and product and research dissemination. Award funds are to be used to cover direct costs associated with center activities.
 - o Competitive research awards proposals are due in the UCEA Associate Director of Program Centers around April 15 of each year. They must include the following: (a) purposes of the grant, (b) specific outcomes projected from the use of grant funds, and (c) a detailed budget. The UCEA Associate Director and members of the Program Center Advisory Board will evaluate the grant proposals and make funding recommendations to the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee will make research award decisions at its summer meeting, and funds will be available for the following fiscal year, beginning July 1. A detailed report on the uses of the funds and the results (reports, meetings, publications) must be submitted to the UCEA Associate Director of Program Centers by April 15 of the following year. Program Center Directors are required to develop an exhibit, session, or paper on the research or event supported by the research grant for the annual UCEA Convention. Any center receiving research awards and not submitting the required report will not be eligible for grant support in subsequent funding cycles until the report is received and officially accepted by the Executive Director and Executive Committee.
 - o UCEA funds may not be used to pay indirect costs. Research award funds may not be used to support conference travel.
 - o UCEA also supports the annual Graduate Student Research Award. These awards are given to doctoral students of UCEA institutions who work directly with a UCEA Program Center that is not associated with their home institution. Students receive a modest stipend for this work. Priority is given to students interested in the professoriate.

Submission Details

A letter of intent to start a new center is due **May 1**.

The full proposal is due **August 1** of that year. The Associate Director will submit a copy of the Program Center hosting proposal materials to the Program Center Advisory Board for review. At this point, the Associate Director or the Advisory Board may provide feedback. The Advisory Board will then send their review and recommendation to the Executive Director and Executive Committee.

The Executive Director and Executive Committee will review the Program Center application and the Advisory Board recommendation. At this point, the Executive Director and Executive Committee may provide additional feedback before a vote is taken.

The Program Center Advisory Board and the Executive Committee will complete their evaluation of the applications prior to the annual UCEA Convention of that year. If successful, the announcement will be made at the Plenum Session of UCEA.

Submit proposals to Jayson W. Richardson, Associate Director of Program Centers, at jayson.richardson@wm.edu.

Request for Proposals to
Edit and Host the
Journal of
Research on
Leadership Education

JRLE

<https://journals.sagepub.com/home/JRLE>

Sage Journals

The University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA) requests proposals to host the editorial functions of its influential *Journal of Research on Leadership*. Established in 2005, JRLE is a peer-refereed electronic journal published four times a year as part of the Sage Education Bundle. 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. *JRLE* accepts empirical and conceptual articles and embraces both traditional and emergent research paradigms. JRLE encourages submissions related to:

- Innovative approaches and techniques for leadership preparation pedagogy, programs, and professional development
- Research on leadership preparation pedagogy, programs, and professional development, including evaluation of impacts and outcomes (e.g., student learning)
- Analysis of current policy trends influencing leadership preparation and development (e.g., political and contextual issues that impact leadership education such as state changes in teacher and principal evaluation systems, impact of Common Core Standards on programs, and/or other timely and relevant policy topics)
- International and comparative studies of leadership preparation pedagogy, programs, and professional development

This is an exciting opportunity for the new editor, with potential for taking the journal to its next phase of progressive growth. JRLE has continued to expand its reach, fast becoming the go-to journal for educational leadership faculty to learn from each other. Host responsibilities will begin August 1, 2026.

Criteria for Host University:

- UCEA Full Member
- Strong commitment to the purposes of JRLE, its development, and expansion
- Willingness and dedicated resources required to host JRLE for at least 5 years

Host University Contributions:

- Release time or equivalent for Editor(s)
- At least one 12-month doctoral graduate assistantship committed to working 20–30 hours a week as the Managing Editor
- Equipment and limited expenses associated with copying/supplies
- Travel to UCEA Convention as needed for the annual JRLE Editorial Board Meeting

UCEA Contribution and Supports:

- UCEA provides an annual journal stipend to support the work of the editorial team.
- UCEA hosts the Annual Editorial Board Meeting.
- Sage Publications provides an online manuscript submission and review system.
- Sage Publications provides copyediting services.
- Sage Publications provides an annual performance report of EAQ.



JRLE RFP Timeline

Letters of intent: September 30, 2025
Proposal due date: December 15, 2025
Final decision: May 2026
Transition process begins: August 1, 2026
Send submissions to Mónica Byrne-Jiménez at uceaexecdir19@gmail.com

JRLE Editor Qualifications:

- Intense interest in being editor with journal reviewer experience
- Expertise in educational leadership preparation and research
- A strong record of scholarly publication
- Experience in English editing, publishing, or journalism
- Expertise within the field of educational administration and relevant topics

JRLE Editor Responsibilities

(about 20% of professional time):

- Oversee management of the publication (e.g., quality & timeliness)
- Directly supervise the Managing Editor and other personnel
- Recruit and supervise a diverse group of associate editors, Editorial Board, and reviewer pool
- Conduct the JRLE Annual Editorial Board Meeting
- Prepare JRLE annual report for UCEA Executive Committee

Submission of Proposals (Deadline: December 15, 2025)

Please answer the **key questions** below. It is particularly important that the UCEA Executive Committee be provided a clear description of the resources available within your institution to support JRLE's editorial offices. Send inquiries to UCEA Executive Director Mónica Byrne-Jiménez, uceaexecdir19@gmail.com, or email the current JRLE editors April Peters-Hawkins (apetersh@central.uh.edu) or Catherine Horn (chorn@central.uh.edu).

Key Questions:

1. As a host university and editorial team, what is your vision for the JRLE, how does it align with UCEA's mission, and how will you fulfill it?
2. As a host university and editorial team, how does JRLE align with your institutional mission?
3. Who are the proposed editor(s) and associate editor(s) for JRLE? How will responsibilities be allocated to the various editorial positions?
4. What qualifications make the proposed JRLE editor and associate editor(s) strong candidates? (Attach current vitas of members of proposed editorial team.)
5. Will there be release time for the editor(s) to ensure effective performance of their editorial responsibilities? Explain.
6. What other resources will the university be able to provide?

Submit letters of intent by September 30, 2025. Proposals are due December 15, 2025 to UCEA Executive Director Mónica Byrne-Jiménez at uceaexecdir19@gmail.com.

Selection of JRLE Editor and Host University

- All UCEA full-member universities will have equal access to the selection procedures.
- The UCEA Executive Committee will select the new host university for JRLE.
- The new host university will be responsible for JRLE beginning August 1, 2026.
- Changes in the editorial policy must be made in consultation with the UCEA Executive Director.
- All major changes in executive editorial personal that occur during term must be made in consultation with the UCEA Executive Director. Changes will not take effect until approved by the UCEA Executive Committee.

Current JRLE Structure and Operations

- JRLE is an electronic, peer-reviewed journal published four times a year by Sage (March, June, September, December)
- Each issue is approximately 130 published pages (3–5 articles per issue)
- Submitted manuscripts undergo a rigorous, blind review process by qualified scholars, and Sage provides final copyediting for accepted manuscripts
- Accepted articles are posted on Sage's Online First system for early access and citation
- The JRLE Editorial Board consist of 42 members serving staggered 3-year terms, with an additional Reviewer Pool of 40+ scholars

Call for Applications: UCEA Associate Director Positions

Deadline: November 15, 2025

UCEA Associate Directors

The University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA) is pleased to announce a call for applications for the **Associate Director for Faculty Development** and the **Associate Director for Publications**. 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.

UCEA Associate Directors work with the UCEA Executive Director, the Executive Committee, and the UCEA Headquarters staff to support the mission of the consortium and to build visibility and connections supporting the focal area of responsibility. UCEA Associate Directors gain valuable leadership experience, grow their professional networks, and make significant contributions to the consortium. These are voluntary leadership positions with a term of appointment of 3 years renewable. The positions include an annual travel stipend for UCEA-related activities.

Application Process

Interested individuals must submit their materials by **November 15, 2025**. Review of applications and interviews will begin soon after. A final decision regarding these positions will be made as soon as possible with a start date of January 15, 2026.

Applicants should submit

- A letter addressing their interest in the position and qualifications;
- Curriculum vitae;
- One letter of recommendation that details experience and research, teaching or related partnerships, and current work; and
- A letter of support from the applicant's department chair or dean including any resources that will be offered to the applicant.

Contact UCEA Executive Director Mónica Byrne-Jiménez with any questions. Application materials should be sent by **November 15, 2025**, to

Mónica Byrne-Jiménez
executivedirector@ucea.org

Include the specific Associate Director role in the subject line ("Associate Director for Faculty Development" or "Associate Director for Publications").

Associate Director for Faculty Development

The University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA) is pleased to announce a call for applications for the Associate Director for Faculty 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

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

UCEA must continue to engage with members as lifelong learners to meet our goal of improving the preparation and professional development of educational leaders, faculty, researchers, and scholars.

Responsibilities

The Associate Director of Faculty Development plays an important leadership role within the consortium. The person who holds this position works closely with the Executive Director to

- Contribute to a strategic plan for the development of faculty through collaborative projects with UCEA Centers, existing mentoring programming, other partners, and the Associate Director for Graduate Student Development. These may include research, teaching/learning exchanges, conference presentations, etc.;
- Cultivate and strengthen a network of scholars—active and retired—to support faculty across their professional trajectories;
- Coordinate and refine existing faculty development-focused sessions during the Annual Convention;
- Chair the Faculty Development Advisory Board, which will advise the Associate Director on existing projects and future initiatives; and
- Ensure effective communication with UCEA headquarters and submit biannual reports focused on goals and achievements.

Those interested in the position should have experience in fostering professional learning within different leadership contexts, either in research or other school leadership-based work.

Required Qualifications: Earned doctorate in Educational Leadership, Educational Policy, or a relevant discipline. Employment as a Full Professor at a UCEA member institution. A documented record of research on topics that directly relate to educational leadership and the professional development of leaders and/or faculty. Evidence of, or potential for, strong collaboration with and mentorship of graduate students and junior faculty in research and/or writing efforts. Evidence of a commitment to working collegially and with individuals from diverse backgrounds.

Preferred Qualifications: Publications of research/briefs, op-eds, and/or other publications targeting nonacademic audiences. Evidence of involvement in and leadership of university professional development opportunities, participation in university/college promotion and tenure processes—including review of promotion and tenure criteria, mentoring of junior colleagues to assistant and other colleagues from associate to full professor.

See above for application process. Contact Mónica Byrne-Jiménez directly with any questions: executivedirector@ucea.org. **Deadline: November 15, 2025**

Associate Director for Publications

UCEA is pleased to announce a call for applications for the Associate Director for Publications. Since its founding, UCEA has been committed to the improvement the field of educational leadership by the development and dissemination of new knowledge through its journals, book series, and other publications.

The purpose of UCEA's focus on publications is four-fold:

1. To **strengthen** the pathway for the dissemination of knowledge that improves the field of educational leadership and preparation
2. To **broaden** the reach of our publications within UCEA and with organizational partners
3. To **develop** a leadership pipeline for journal editors, boards, hosts, and reviewers
4. To **ensure** UCEA functions as a leader in equity-oriented educational leadership knowledge generation by identifying barriers in the publications pipelines, supporting the ethical standards and norms around intellectual property within UCEA, and working with journal/book editors to develop more equitable processes

UCEA must continue to engage with members to meet our goal of improving dissemination of research on the practice, preparation, and policies that impact educational leaders, faculty, researchers, and scholars.

Responsibilities

The Associate Director of Publications plays an important leadership role within the consortium. The person who holds this position works closely with the Executive Director to

- Contribute to a strategic plan for the development of a robust pipeline for the generation and dissemination of new knowledge. This may include collaborative projects with UCEA Centers, existing mentoring programming, other partners, and the Associate Directors for Graduate Student and Faculty Development.
- Cultivate and strengthen a network of scholars—junior, senior, and retired—to work with journals, editorial boards, and who contribute to strengthening the field.
- Coordinate and refine existing publications (e.g., *UCEA Review*, journals) and publication-focused sessions during the Annual Convention.
- Chair the Publications Advisory Board, which will advise the Associate Director on existing projects and future initiatives.
- Ensure effective communication with UCEA headquarters and submit biannual reports focused on goals and achievements.

Those interested in the position should have experience working with journals, other types of publications, authors, and publishers.

Required Qualifications: Earned doctorate in Educational Leadership, Educational Policy, or a relevant discipline. Employment as a tenured professor at a UCEA member institution. A documented record of research on topics that directly relate to educational leadership. Evidence of, or potential for, strong collaboration with faculty in research and/or writing efforts; and evidence of a commitment to working collegially and with individuals from diverse backgrounds. and mentorship of graduate students and junior

Preferred Qualifications: Previous experiences as a journal editor; publications of research articles, briefs, op-eds, and/or other publications accessible to a wide range audiences. Evidence of involvement in journal/manuscript reviews and leadership on editorial boards.

See above for application process. Contact Mónica Byrne-Jiménez directly with any questions: executivedirector@ucea.org. **Deadline: November 15, 2025**



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UCEA Request for Institutions to Pilot the Leadership Education and Administration Preparation Program (LEAPP) Survey

UCEA has embarked on a survey project that is fully aligned with the new National Educational Leadership Preparation Standards or (NELPS) and designed to provide actionable information to institutions of higher education that educate and/or certify K-12 school leaders. The newly created Leadership Education and Administration Preparation Program (LEAPP) Survey was designed by UCEA in collaboration with an advisory board made up of experts from UCEA member institutions.

UCEA is looking for institutions willing to take part in the first administration of the survey.

Survey Purpose

The survey is designed to

- provide the necessary data to meet the needs of the new accreditation process through CAEP;
- track student progress through the program on all leadership standards;
- provide information to programs that will allow program faculty to modify their practices/ curriculum/instruction to improve student outcomes;
- provide information on multiple constructs embedded within the national standards such that programs can identify skills, content areas, or standards that need more attention; and
- gather data from member schools to understand the state of the field broadly.

Benefits

In addition to helping UCEA understand members' contexts, program benefits include

- receiving reports about how programs are incorporating the NELP standards,
- receiving data on student/graduate experiences and knowledge for continuous improvement and accreditation, and
- providing input into how the reports from the survey will be structured and the design of the survey portal.

UCEA will provide participating institutions

- semiannual reports about how their programs are addressing the new NELP standards, question by question, and
- an Excel file of responses sortable by standard, skill, or professional content, which could provide insight into how specific skills, standards, or professional content are being received by students in participating programs.

Finally, there are no significant risks to participating in the piloting of the survey. The survey can be done all at once or as the standards are taught in the program, so there is no timing restriction for the field testing.

If your program is ready to participate in the survey please click the [LEAPP Survey link](#) to provide your information to UCEA.

If you have any additional questions about the survey, please contact HQ Associate Director John Yun at jyun@msu.edu or the UCEA office at ucea@msu.edu.

[Click here for more information on piloting the LEAPP Survey](#)

Celebrating Program Excellence: An Interview With Soraya Sablo Sutton, Program Director of the Principal Leadership Institute, University of California, Berkeley, 2024 EELPP Award Recipient

Christine Thelen-Creps
UCEA Headquarters, Michigan State University

As part of UCEA's ongoing effort to celebrate and bring attention to exemplary leadership preparation programs, we present an interview with [Dr. Soraya Sablo Sutton](#), program director of the 2024 [UCEA Excellence in Educational Leadership Preparation Program \(EELPP\) Award](#) recipient. [The Principal Leadership Institute \(PLI\)](#) at the University of California, Berkeley exemplifies the planning and relationships necessary to create a responsive, equity-driven, and sustainable program. Read on to learn about PLI's unique approach to leadership preparation.

The EELPP Award is sponsored by [The Wallace Foundation](#). This interview has been edited for length and clarity.



Chris: I would love to hear about your background in ed leadership, education in general, or even as a student. How do you feel that has influenced your work at PLI, and how has it influenced the organization itself?

Soraya: I have kind of a nontraditional trajectory in terms of my career. I earned my PhD here at UC Berkeley back in 2003, and my area of focus was language, literacy, and culture within the Education Department. So, I wasn't a leadership scholar to begin with. I was really interested in social interaction and discourse analysis. I did my dissertation on literacy and identity in secondary school contexts, and after that, I became an elementary school teacher. I quickly noticed that there were systems that could be improved. I was a researcher by training, so I was watching everything that was going on, and I thought, "You know what? I think I have some ideas about how schools could be led," which actually brought me back to PLI.

Many of the things that I learned as an early career leader are definitely attributed to my preservice training in PLI, and they also influence how I support future leaders in the program. An example of that is that I learned very early on that strong relationships with staff and family are essential to getting anything done as a leader. Particularly when you're serving marginalized families, folks who don't



see themselves as having agency and power within school systems. The schools that I worked at, I always tried to reach out intentionally to uplift those voices of folks who didn't really have a seat at the table. It's something that we try to instill very early on in PLI students, even right when they arrive with us.

Something that really surprised me when I was a new leader was the amount of pushback I encountered when trying to do equity work. I used to think, "If I just land at my site and do a good job and push for what's right for kids, everyone's gonna come along." And realizing that no, folks have different ideas about what's important to them. So really thinking about how to help leaders develop that kind of nuanced leadership stance. It was something that I had to develop as a leader, and it's something that I try really hard to support PLI students to do. Then just managing the kind of workload and building up your own resilience through community, through mentorship, through finding ways to have balance between the demands of a very long work week and in your personal life, I think is really important, because we know that leaders have to stay in their site for a good period of time in order to make change. This constant churn of leaders burning out and leaving, it's something that we try to really prepare future leaders to be able to counteract. Not saying the job is going to be easier, right? It's always going to be difficult. But we focus on thinking about how you can mitigate that? What supports can you put

in place that help to fill your buckets and help you stay in the work? Those are some of the things that come to mind.

Chris: How do you think the program has developed and unfolded over the years? What stakeholders have been involved in that development?

Soraya: PLI this year is celebrating its 25th year, which is very exciting. We've had over 700 alumni leaders who've graduated from the program. When I was in the program, I was a member of Cohort 13, so I was kind of right in the middle of that 25-year trajectory. The first thing I'll say is that a lot of the things that were true when I was a student started from the very beginning of the program, and have been consistent over time, and I've tried my best to uphold some of those values around reflective practice and around centering equity and social justice, a focus on interrogation of your own identity. It's kind of always been that way, and we've tried to really maintain that throughout the years.

Some of the kind of structural changes that have happened over the past 10 years have to do with the program milestones that students complete to obtain their admin credential and master's degree in Educational Leadership. We've moved away from the requirement of a master's thesis to a Continuous Improvement Inquiry Project. PLI students practice engaging in leadership actions that mirror the work they will have to do as future leaders, where they attempt to support teachers to shift their practice. Their work is informed by the scholarship in the field of social justice leadership, change management and whatever specific topic they are interested in, such as supporting English learners. They design an inquiry project that allows them to demonstrate a mastery of both the scholarly literature and the practical implementation of leadership actions. They also engage in a master's-level Oral Exam where they are assessed by the Berkeley School of Education Senate faculty members. Students describe this as a significant and challenging learning experience.

One of the reasons for this shift was an attempt to be responsive to our partner districts, the local LEAs [local education agencies] around UC Berkeley. We meet with them regularly, and we ask them, "What are the things that you really need leaders to be able to do when they land in your districts as assistant principals?" They tell us that they need leaders who can think on their feet, who can be responsive, who are knowledgeable about the latest pedagogy, the latest adult learning theory, but can also really talk to folks and connect with folks. And so, we thought, you know what, the oral exam might be more connected or more aligned to what school leaders need to do when they get into the job than writing a full-blown master's thesis. It's really changed the structure of our courses and also the process towards degree and licensure.

Another significant change in the PLI program is the addition of a new state licensure exam that all aspiring leaders in California must pass in order to receive an administrative

credential. That probably is one of the biggest shifts that's happened since I've taken the role as director. We had to really think deeply about how we support our leaders to pass the state exam because they could get all As in all of our classes here, but if they don't pass that state licensure exam, they will not get their credential and be able to get a job. So, we had to think really carefully about how to integrate the skills that the exam is asking for with our current curriculum without compromising some of the things that we really hold dear and that we know are strong pedagogy.

Another major development was the addition of the partnership with the Alvin Ailey Dance Company, which started right around 2014. The Alvin Ailey Dance Company has a residency here at UC Berkeley, where the actual company comes every year and performs at UC Berkeley. They also have a national summer camp that is hosted for middle school age students, ages 11 to 14. It's entirely free, and they host about 75 middle schoolers every summer. The way that PLI is connected with the Ailey Camp is that our students, when they're in their first semester with us, have an immersive experience with the Ailey Camp. They conduct observations of the instruction that's happening there. They observe the leader, they do one-on-one and focus-group interviews. They essentially collect data, attempting to answer research questions like, "What does the leadership look like in this context? How is the leader engaging with the students and the teachers in this space? What about this leadership model aligns with what we know about culturally responsive school leadership?" That's one of the frameworks that they learn about.

Our hope with that partnership is that they walk away with a real-life example of ways to support minoritized student populations, because most of the campers who participate in the program are African American students from lower income schools in the Oakland, Richmond area, close to Berkeley. What the PLI students often see is that these are kids who, in a typical K-12 setting, might be the ones that you see in the office, or the ones that you see being less successful in a traditional K-12 school setting. However, in this Ailey Camp setting, there's so much joy, and so much rigor, right? It's hard, what they're doing. The PLI students write a research paper throughout the summer based on their observations and their inquiry there. It aligns very much with our belief that leaders need to be researchers and operate in a constant state of inquiry. We hope that when they land in their job, they carry some of those inquiry skills into their practice, so they're always noticing, they're always considering, "What could I emulate from the Ailey Camp experience?" That's another thing that wasn't always in existence. It's been going on since around 2014, and it's amazing. It's unique, right? I don't know other leadership preparation programs that have that element, and it amplifies the need for arts education as well.

That's another goal of ours. We want leaders who are going to advocate for the importance of arts in schools. We're like, "You're gonna see firsthand what a highly successful arts-integrated program can do for kids and adults." I think it's one of the shining features of our program.

Chris: Are there any other major elements of your program that you'd like to talk about and highlight?

Soraya: We do a lot of performance assessment, and that is something that I think is very much aligned to one of PLI's core values, which is that leadership is an embodied practice. We believe that it is not enough for our leaders just to have read all of the relevant theory and be able to write about it and talk about it. You have to actually feel it in your body in order to be prepared to be effective in your future jobs as leaders.

Throughout our program, we build in opportunities for simulation across all of the PLI classes. I teach a class on school supervision, instructional supervision. We do lots of role plays of what it means to coach a teacher, what it means to help teachers work through how to improve their practice and how to shift mindsets. We have our students practice engaging in hard conversations. We have an activity in another course called the Hard Conversation Remix, where what they do is think about a missed opportunity to engage in a hard conversation, something that really happened in their real life. We have them rewrite a script where the idea is if you had that opportunity again, because you may not always know exactly what to say in the moment, but in retrospect, in hindsight, if you could have that conversation with that person again, what would you do? How would you prepare for it? What would you say? What do you hope they would say? And they actually script it out, and then they act it out with their classmates in order to experience what it feels like in your body to say the things that you really know you should have said. What does it feel like to actively attempt to disrupt inequities in real time?

Another opportunity for embodied leadership happens in the spring semester when we have our students engage in mock interviews, right when they're about to go on their job search to become new administrators. We invite between 60 and 100 district leaders, everything from HR directors to superintendents, assistant superintendents, site principals, who are actually really looking for the next entry-level leaders. We invite them here to campus on a Saturday, and we have our students go through performance assessment activities in front of a live panel. Through this activity, they are able to experience what it feels like to be in a performance assessment situation before they have to do it in real life.

Additionally, our fall and spring semester ends with an assessment center activity—it's based on a case study—and includes a series of live simulations from live coaching role plays in front of a panel of simulated ILT [Instructional Leadership Team] meetings, where live actors come in, like a parent will come in to the middle of the ILT meeting and say, "I'm really upset about this thing. Are you the principal? I need you to tell me what you're doing about this issue." And they have to respond in the moment. We're trying our best to replicate what the life of an administrator would be, because it is critical to provide them with these experiences to feel the real-time stress, draw upon everything that they learned, including their emotional acuity and their stance and tone. All of that is what's part of becoming a leader. Then they are

given the opportunity to reflect, because they're not gonna make the best decisions every single time. So it's like, "Oh, I wish I would have paused more," or "I wish I would have listened to that teacher more, or expressed what I wanted to say in this way." We hope it's a safe space for them to practice, enacting their leadership in the hopes that when they do it in real life, they have this bank of experiences to pull from. That's one of the things that I think makes our program really unique, leaning into the embodiment part of becoming a leader.

We also have a home group structure, maybe lots of programs do this, but our cohorts range in size usually around 20. We put them into small groups that change every semester. And we intentionally place them with people who have different identity markers like race, religion, and gender identities, those who work in different contexts, elementary folks with high school folks, for instance, and just bringing lots of different perspectives to the table. The purpose of this intentional structure is that we believe in collaborative leadership. A lot of their assignments they must complete are group assignments that they have to work together on. We encourage them to lean into asking each other really hard questions and not falling victim to the "bobblehead syndrome," if you will, where everybody's just like, "Yep, you agree, okay, we're all on the same page." That's not real life, and so we encourage them to be honest if something's not working, or they disagree, or they have dissonance with someone. You need to lean into that. You need to have that conversation now. You need to think about what it feels like to push somebody, to hold someone accountable, to be held accountable, to learn how to work together, because when you get into your job, you won't be able to pick your team. You're not going to get along with everybody, and you're still going to have to show up and do the work. The tensions that arise are intentional, and the students say year after year that they feel they've grown as a result of the small-group interactions. That's part of the growth process: learning to be productive with this group of people that they do not know, and that they may not get along with for whatever reason. They grow really, really close together because of that.

I think your original question is what makes the program unique. We have a really high expectation for deep levels of interrogation of your own identity at every level: race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, how you were raised, what your schooling experience was like. We believe that all of that factors into the type of leader that you are becoming. From the very first summer, the PLI students write an autobiography about their identity and an autobiography about their experience in schools. They think really deeply about questions such as, "What does it mean to be a White woman walking into a mostly Black and Brown school context?" and "How are people gonna receive me?" and "How do I feel about that? What biases and privileges do I bring with me?" There's a lot of personal reflection that, again, we're doing in preparation because we hope that they'll continue it when they become practicing leaders.

Chris: You made me think about the word *practice*. We talk about practitioners, and we talk about pedagogical practice

and leadership practice. It's really interesting to hear how PLI has focused so intently on lots of different forms of practice, like in the work, practice makes perfect.

Soraya: Practice makes practice, right?

Chris: There are also opportunities in the program for all of that self-reflection, because that's such a key component, both as a student preparing to be a leader, and then being an in-service leader as well. Are there other goals in addition to those two things that you feel are really integrated in your program's organizational documents, or in your messaging that you give to students, or from your colleagues who are preparing future leaders?

Soraya: Absolutely. I think something that I haven't talked about is this idea of taking a systems-level perspective. Most of our students, when they come to us, are schoolteachers. That's the primary professional experience that they've had. I'd say about 80%–90% of each cohort are teachers, so their sphere of influence is the four walls of their classroom. A challenge that we have is to get them to widen their aperture to think about schools as not only a schoolwide perspective, but schools as part of a district or a system. And to think about how any leadership action that they take has impact, and it reverberates throughout the entire system. You, as a leader, have these lever points that teachers may not even be aware of, where you can access resources that can help multiple populations, or can have multiple levels of impact. Thinking about the possibilities is really fun.

Understanding that the weight of the responsibility comes with social justice leadership is another major part of their learning as aspiring leaders. Being able to pull back and realize, whoa, this discipline decision is going to impact this kid and their family, and it's going to send a message to the teachers and the community. And each decision rests within a larger sociopolitical and historical context of oppression that is perpetuated in K-12 schools. It's kind of daunting when you realize what's on their shoulders, but it's so important for them to grapple with the heavy responsibility that they are thinking about taking on. It's so fun to see their transition from coming in with a very narrow scope of, "This is what I can do as a teacher, this is my responsibility, this is my lane." Then by the time they leave us, they have widened their aperture so much. They take a class in the third and fourth semester on school resources and finance, and they are challenged to think beyond money because money is not our only resource. How can they leverage all of the resources in their community and within the school system to solve a particular dilemma that we present to them? I think that's one of the core values, or the goals of the program, really building these systems thinkers who are creative and who are always leading with equity and justice in mind. And helping them think about what kind of courage they need to be able to do the job, and how they can really creatively use all of the resources that are at their disposal.

Chris: Could you talk some more about key relationships that feed into the program?

Soraya: Our faculty here at the School of Education have tenure-track, Senate-level professors who teach in the PLI, which is wonderful. We also have lecturer practitioners who teach in the program as well. One of our lecturers, for instance, is an assistant superintendent at a local district. Another one is a former CBO and current board trustee who does all the finances for one of our local districts. So, we benefit from both the scholarly, research-based faculty, as well as the practitioners who are doing the leadership work on the ground every day. That balance is so critical, because we're preparing leaders who are going to go directly into the field. I think if you didn't have both the theoretical inputs and the practical aspects working in partnership, there would certainly be something missing in the learning opportunity. We have intentional instructors' meetings where the lecturers and the Senate faculty get together and talk about their goals for the class, they talk about what they're hoping to learn. It's really a wonderful collaboration that I think helps to maintain the essence or the intention behind the program. We've been really lucky to have people like Travis Bristol and Eos Trinidad and Jabari Mahiri, some of the faculty who are here at Berkeley. Our faculty really embrace the goals of the PLI and are excited about being a part of our program and are excited about moving the work forward. None of them have been school leaders. They're scholars in their own right, but they haven't led schools, and so that kind of partnership between the lecturer practitioners who have actually led schools and the ones who know a whole lot about schooling and school systems provides a really, really wonderful connection.

I think another internal relationship that's really important to highlight is that PLI sits within a larger umbrella here at Berkeley called Leadership Programs. The other programs that are within Leadership Programs include our induction program known as LSP: Leadership Support Program. LSP's curriculum design is greatly influenced by the PLI program. PLI graduates are able to continue their education and the support that they receive from leadership coaches as they begin their first jobs as new leaders. We also welcome early career leaders who were not trained by PLI to join our induction program, so we are able to serve an even wider group of new admins across the field.

We also have our EdD program, the LEAD program, which stands for Leaders for Equity and Democracy. LEAD is in its third cohort and focuses on systems-level leadership. We also have our grant-funded programs like 21CSLA (the 21st Century School Leadership Academy), which provides professional learning for site-based teachers, site leaders, and district-level systems leaders across the entire state of California. We're able to leverage the intellectual knowledge, the resources across all of those programs to impact the PLI, so our students are eligible to participate in all the professional learning opportunities. For instance, the 21CSLA grant hosts affinity groups throughout the entire Bay Area. Right now, we have four affinity groups with about 60 or so participants. There's a White antiracist group, there's an African American leaders group, an Asian American Pacific

Islander group, and a Latinx group. Our students in our program are invited and encouraged to attend those sessions, in addition to being in PLI, to learn an affinity with leaders who share backgrounds and identity with them.

We're really, really fortunate to be a part of the Leadership Programs structure because the benefits are very reciprocal. We meet together as a Leadership Program staff frequently, and we build off of each other. PLI contributes to the work that they're doing, and we get a lot back from the partnership as well. Those are some of the really important relationships that help us to continue to fuel our learning and to push us to continually get better at what we're doing.

I spoke before about our partner district relationships. Those are really important as well. We have four partner districts: Berkeley, Oakland, San Francisco, and West Contra Costa, and about 50% of our students come from those districts and end up going back to work in those districts. Their input is really important. They tell us what type of leaders they want. They tell us what their pain points are in terms of the type of school reform initiatives that they're working on. Then we, in turn, incorporate that into our curriculum. As we learn more about the things that they really care about, we make sure that our leaders are really steeped in that knowledge.

Something that's really exciting is one of the newest developments. Last year, we began working with three of our partner districts on a 3-year grant from the state of California. It's called the DELPI Initiative. It stands for Diverse Educational Leader Pipeline Initiative. It was a \$1.2 million grant, which the LEAs received because they are in partnership with us as their provider for leadership preparation. The grant provides scholarship funding for our students to cover 90% of their tuition and fees with the agreement that once they leave our program, they go back and work in those districts. It's really helped us to strengthen these district partnerships that we've had for decades, make them even stronger, because now the districts are heavily involved in the recruitment process. They're going out and they're finding those diverse teacher leaders who are interested in culturally responsive leadership, they're funneling them to apply to our program. We're in Year 2 now of the grant, and already we've seen a shift in the program demographics. In the past, approximately 60% of our PLI students were candidates of color. The current cohort is comprised of 95% candidates of color who will be ready in about a year to begin transforming schools in their home districts. It's an amazing investment in leader preparation that we haven't seen in the state of California. There've been a lot of teacher preparation grant initiatives, but not on the leader preparation side. We were really excited to receive this grant and to receive the opportunity to give back to students who wouldn't be able to afford an education at UC Berkeley and who may not traditionally envision themselves as school leaders. And, we know that the real beneficiaries are the students and families at the schools that the PLI graduates are going to lead for the rest of their careers.

UCEA Welcomes New Associate Member: Texas A&M International

Affordable and convenient, the online education programs at Texas A&M International prepare students for educational leadership roles that widen their influence in the classroom and beyond, positively impacting fellow educators, students, and the community. Students benefit from the quality and prestige of the Texas A&M University System as well as the flexibility of 100% online courses, multiple start dates and affordable tuition—everything students need to further their education while continuing to work.

The online MS in Educational Administration can be completed in as few as 10 months. The program was designed to meet the rising demand for school administrators who aim to lead change in diverse organizations while inspiring achievement across challenging student populations. Featuring 100% online coursework, this affordable program provides the knowledge and credentials needed to be an effective leader in increasingly complex school systems. Students will increase their aptitude for passing the principal exams required by the Texas Education Agency for standard certifications. Students learn the following:

- Interpret education policy, public financing and school accountability to develop and implement effective campus teaching and learning processes.
- Evaluate research, theory, and data to facilitate the development of a campus vision for learning, communication, legal and ethical interactions with a variety of stakeholders.
- Assess the principles of effective leadership, management, and data-driven decision-making to ensure safe and effective learning environments.

<https://online.tamui.edu/online/edu-adminldr-sap3-221021/>





UCEA presents pivotal conversations with people making an impact on educational leadership preparation, practice, and policy. Learn about the latest happenings and cutting-edge research from UCEA's community of scholars.

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In the Lead with UCEA Season 5

In the Lead with UCEA has been featured on the 80 Best Educational Leadership Podcasts by FeedSpot.

Hosted by Executive Director Mónica Byrne-Jiménez, this podcast presents pivotal conversations with people making an impact on educational leadership preparation, practice, and policy. Learn about the latest happenings and cutting-edge research from UCEA's community of scholars. Catch new episodes every other week, streaming on all the major platforms!

This season, we talk with district and university partners who are part of the Equity Centered Pipeline Initiative (ECPI). Launched by The Wallace Foundation, ECPI partners eight large school districts and local university preparation programs. Their collective goal is to codevelop comprehensive, aligned pipelines that produce principals who advance educational equity. Our conversations explore how district and university partners are working together to recruit, prepare, develop, and support the next generation of school principals.

Season 5 Episodes Feature:

- Rotunda Floyd-Cooper, The Wallace Foundation
- Shawn Bird, San Antonio Independent School District
- Juan Manuel Niño, University of Texas at San Antonio
- Macon Tucker, Baltimore City Public Schools
- Darryl Williams, Morgan State University
- Carla Finkelstein, Towson University



Looking for even more great content on ed leadership preparation, practice, and policy? Check out past seasons of In the Lead with UCEA:

- Season 1 featuring the University Principal Preparation Initiative (UPPI).
- Season 2 featuring UCEA Past Presidents
- Season 3 featuring research and initiatives supported by The Wallace Foundation
- Season 4 featuring collaborative advocacy among education-focused organizations

We would like to thank The Wallace Foundation for their support of this podcast and the UCEA community of scholars committed to creating equitable, ethical, and socially just outcomes for each child through research, leadership, and policy.

university^{FM}

Belize Study Tour

SO! This Is Back Home

Carmen M. McCallum
Eastern Michigan University

All my life, I heard stories about the beautiful country of Belize. My father and his siblings, who emigrated to the United States in the 1950s, often spoke fondly of their childhood by the sea—mornings spent swimming in clear blue waters, afternoons flying kites or playing marbles, and evenings filled with the scent of tamales and fry jacks drifting through the air. Their voices would soften as they reminisced, painting vivid images of a Caribbean life filled with laughter and light.

But beneath those memories lay the reason they left. My family endured deep poverty in Belize. They lived in a small wooden house raised on stilts above the muddy ground of their village. Their clothes were threadbare, food often scarce. The dream of a better life led them across the sea. And while their hearts never stopped longing for home, only one of my father's nine siblings ever returned to live there. The others visited once, carrying both nostalgia and the quiet understanding that some journeys change you so deeply, you can never fully go back.

Decades later, I found myself returning to the country they had left behind. Traveling to Belize with UCEA was more than a professional opportunity—it was personal. For the first time, I walked on the same soil where my father once played as a child. That moment was grounding, filled with wonder and emotion. I wasn't just visiting as a tourist; I was there as an educational scholar. That distinction opened doors I never would have found on my own and introduced me to extraordinary educators, including one who traced my family lineage and connected me with a relative who had known my father as a boy. To my amazement, she too was an educator—a retired principal who welcomed me to her former school. Standing there together, sharing stories and memories, was a moment I'll always hold close. It reminded me that education doesn't just shape futures—it reconnects us with our past.

Over 10 days in Belize, I learned as much about the country as I did about myself. The trip organizers were intentional, ensuring we experienced the full tapestry of Belizean life—from its bustling cities to its quiet, tucked-away villages. We ate like locals, savoring meals prepared by families in roadside kitchens. At one stop, a fisherman-turned-chef pulled our dinner straight from the water and fried it with special seasoning I am sure you can only find in Belize. Though we spent time visiting schools in Belize City, most of our days were deep in the countryside, bouncing for 45 minutes in a 10-passenger van with weak shocks along rocky roads to reach remote schools without running water or electricity. Yet in those modest classrooms, joy filled the air. The children were bright-eyed and free, and their teachers—resourceful, passionate, and deeply committed—found ways to make learning thrive despite every limitation. It was there, in the heart of Belize, that I saw the truest meaning of resilience and hope.

One of the most memorable stops on our journey was Belize's first STEAM high school—a groundbreaking institution blending

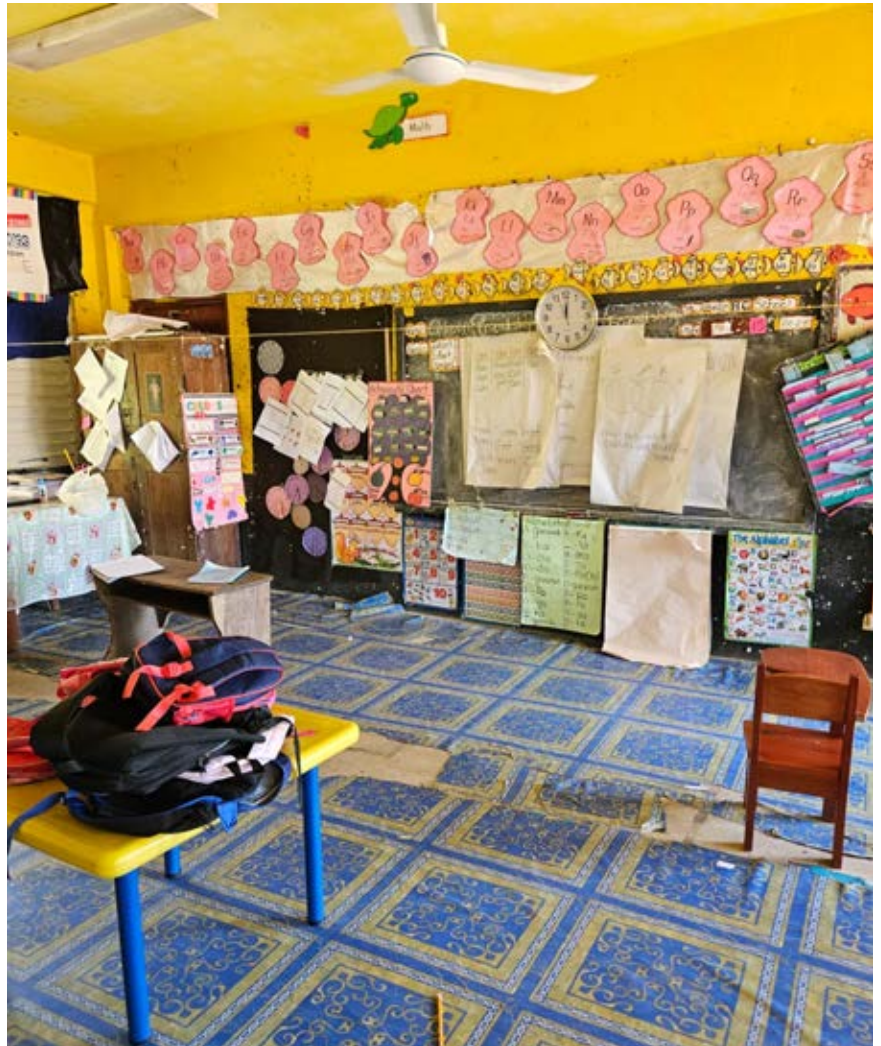


science, technology, engineering, the arts, and mathematics in ways that felt both innovative and deeply human. The principal was a force of creativity and dedication, radiating pride as she guided us through classrooms alive with curiosity and invention. Her students were remarkable—focused, self-directed, and genuinely invested in their learning. The school operates without bells; instead, students manage their own time, transitioning between classes on their own. It's a system built on trust and accountability—and it works. When we asked about discipline challenges, the principal smiled knowingly: "Cell phones." We all laughed, recognizing that some challenges transcend borders.

I'd be remiss not to mention the incredible educators who shared this journey with me. Over the course of 10 days, we became more than colleagues—we became a community. Our early-morning coffees and late-night reflections turned into spaces for deep dialogue about teaching, equity, and the shared calling that brought us all to Belize. Though we came from schools and universities scattered across the United States, our different perspectives only enriched the conversation. Each exchange reminded me that education, at its core, is both deeply personal and profoundly collective. By the end of the trip, I didn't just leave with professional connections—I left with a network of scholars I can lean on and a circle of new friends who share the same unwavering belief in the power of education to transform lives.

This transformative journey wouldn't have been possible without the vision and leadership of Dr. Rema Vassar, professor of Educational Leadership and Policy at Wayne State University and founder of Centering Black Children in Education. Her commitment to developing servant leaders—grounded in radical hope and love—opened the door for me to experience Belize in such a meaningful way. I'm equally grateful to Drs. Wesley Hickman and Yanira Oliveras, whose thoughtful planning created a rich, culturally immersive experience. Their approach invited us to learn with communities rather than simply observe them, ensuring that every interaction was rooted in respect, reciprocity, and shared humanity.

If you're considering a future UCEA travel experience—say yes. Give yourself permission to grow, both personally and professionally. Step away from the noise of daily life—silence your phone, close your laptop, and allow yourself to be present in every moment. These experiences invite you to slow down, to see education through a global lens, and to rediscover what it means to lead and learn with purpose. You'll meet people whose stories shift how you view the world and whose resilience will remind you why you chose this work in the first place. You'll reflect on your own practice, your impact, and your capacity to serve with compassion. The lessons you carry home will stretch far beyond the journey itself—shaping not only how you see others, but how you see yourself. And when you look back, you'll be grateful you took the leap.



Educational Leadership for Student-Centered Classrooms and Nation-Building: You Better Belize It!

Natasha Neumann

California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo

When one imagines Belize, the mind drifts to postcard images of Caribbean-blue waters, palm trees swaying in the breeze, and coconuts resting on white sand. But what I witnessed on the UCEA Belize Study Tour was far more colorful than that idyllic picture. Because of the remote locations we would visit, our delegation was limited to just 15 scholars, though I quickly learned that my concept of *remote*, coming from Los Angeles, was nothing like the Belizean reality. Reaching schools often meant driving along pothole-filled roads or bumping for hours through dense rainforest on unpaved tracks. I rode in Dr. Yanira Oliveras's van and was in awe of how she handled that 12-seater, maneuvering the terrain like a Dakar Rally driver.

When I landed in Belize City, I was greeted by Dr. Wes Hickey, who immediately made me feel welcome. Leaving the airport, I noticed that even in the former capital, many roads remained unpaved, a visible reminder of both the nation's developing infrastructure and its resilience. The capital was later moved inland to Belmopan to avoid the devastation of repeated hurricanes that have pummeled Belize City for decades, forcing its people to rebuild again and again.

Nation-Building

That spirit of rebuilding, of creating and recreating with determination, echoes through Belize's schools. As a young democracy established in 1981, peacefully separating from the British crown, Belize is still shaping its national identity. Nowhere is that work more evident than in education. The Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology, along with visionary principals, teachers, and university leaders, is laying the foundation for an inclusive, student-centered system that prepares young people for the future while offering pathways back into learning for adults. What we witnessed across the country was education as nation-building in real time and powered by resilience, ingenuity, and a profound belief in the transformative power of teaching and leadership.

Student-Centered Spaces

Our journey began in the Toledo District at Jalacte Roman Catholic Primary School, a small but vibrant community near the southern border. Principal Omar Requena and his wife, both educated in Texas, returned home to serve their jungle community, still without electricity or safe drinking water. At Pearleen's Restaurant in Big Falls, we reflected on the morning's visit and the realities of teaching where resources are scarce but hope is abundant. At the University of Belize Toledo Campus, faculty shared their mission to expand access to higher education for all Belizeans, including adults returning to school.

In Barranco, a Garifuna village surrounded by rainforest, we visited St. Joseph Roman Catholic Primary School, where

leadership was defined by humility and heart. Principal Loma Rodriguez sang, danced, and led her students in Garifuna, modeling deep communal ties. Classrooms were multilingual, with signage in Garifuna, Spanish, and English.

We continued to Independence Junior College, meeting first-generation students determined to build better futures. At the Xunantunich Mayan Ruins, reached by a hand-cranked raft and jungle hike, we were reminded that Belize's story is layered, both ancient and modern, indigenous and global.

In Belmopan, we stayed in the rainforest and attended a reception hosted by Dr. Vincent Palacio, president of the University of Belize, who spoke candidly about the challenges of developing an education system in a young democracy still dependent on neighboring Mexico and Guatemala for power. A sign in one hotel read, "*If the power goes out, give it 30 minutes. It should come back on.*" Yet, Belize is striving for energy independence and a curriculum reflecting its own culture rather than its colonial past. That evening's Garifuna music filled the air as we danced with university faculty under the stars.

A Look to the Future

Back in Belize City, we met Principal Christine Coc of Itz'at (Mayan for *Wise One*) STEAM Academy, the first of its kind in the country. A Belizean who earned her master's degree abroad, she returned home to lead the next generation. Her modern secondary campus buzzed with creativity: students in the STEAM lab built projects by hand, while others worked in the computer lab on digital art. The colorful murals of jungles and oceans reflected both pride and purpose.

Our final stop at San Pedro High School revealed a coastal community investing in sustainability and marine science. Dean Paul Kelley envisions students tackling challenges like fertilizer runoff and ocean warming, equipping them to protect the ecosystems that sustain their island home.

Each stop revealed that Belize's greatest resource is its people. Educators here are builders of both knowledge and nationhood, teaching with limited means but limitless faith in their students. We met teachers who walk miles on unpaved roads; teach multigrade classrooms; and still weave art, language, and culture into learning. For us, 19 scholars from across the United States, this journey was humbling and transformative. We laughed, sang, shared home-cooked meals, and found inspiration in the educators who remind us that true leadership is not measured by systems or resources, but by the ability to serve, to uplift, and to place students at the heart of all we do.

Belize Study Tour: Earworms, Rainforests, and the Tenacity of Educators

Maysaa Barakat
Florida Atlantic University



When we signed up for the Belize Study Tour, we expected sunshine, cultural immersion, and a rural context unlike any previous UCEA international experience. What we got was so much more: a whirlwind of music, meaningful conversations, belly laughs on seemingly endless unpaved roads, heartfelt hugs, and a crash course in educational resilience that left us inspired, humbled, and still humming “A Tootie Ta” in our sleep.

This tour offered a profound opportunity to witness the intersection of educational leadership, cultural richness, and community resilience. As we journeyed through lush rainforests and along miles of rugged terrain to reach rural schools, we were immersed in a landscape where leadership is not defined by titles, but by tenacity, heart, and deep-rooted community ties.

The Warmth of Belize (and Not Just the Weather)

Belizeans don’t just welcome you; they adopt you. From the moment we arrived, we were treated like family, fed family-style most nights, and even became privy to a bit of community gossip. The country’s stunning cultural mosaic, Garifuna, Maya, Mestizo, Creole, and more, creates a dynamic educational environment where diversity is not only present but joyfully celebrated.

We were invited to join in dances and songs, learning the stories told through movement by students and teachers in the Garifuna village, and by musicians from the Garifuna Collective at the University of Belize’s welcome reception. But the most lingering musical impact came from the pre-K students at the UB Lab School, who enthusiastically performed “A Tootie Ta”—a moment that reminded us that joy and learning go hand in hand. That song now lives rent-free in our minds, a cheerful earworm and a symbol of the spirit of Belizean’s love of music and movement.

Educators Who Swim, Walk, and Drive Miles: Ain't No Mountain High Enough!

Here's where Belize truly impressed. We met educators who swam through rivers during floods and walked miles to reach their schools. We bumped along unpaved roads for hours, getting a tiny taste of their daily commute. These leaders exemplify what Olmo-Extremera et al. (2022) described as "resilient leadership," which is marked by adaptability, motivation, commitment and an attitude of service. These leaders are "mentally, emotionally, socially, ethically, and physically strong humans who beat the odds" (Özmuşul, 2017, p. 1).

In resource-constrained environments, strategic decision-making becomes essential. Leithwood (2021) and Ngoben (2025) emphasized that successful leaders in underfunded schools rely on strategic resource allocation and community partnerships to improve student outcomes. In Belize, we saw this firsthand where educators leverage local networks and cultural capital to enrich learning experiences.

We witnessed true community engagement, where the lines between school and home blurred. Children went home for lunch and returned as if crossing rooms in the same building. School meals were prepared and served by mothers, aunts, and neighbors. Younger siblings and family pets (including piglets) accompanied students as they walked to school. It was intimate, relaxed, and deeply communal. These educators don't just teach, they lead communities in casual practical attire, building futures with chalk and determination, sometimes in facilities with no electricity or running water. They are, quite simply, superheroes.

Yanira and Wesley: The Heart of the Tour

Every great adventure needs great guides, and we had two of the best. Dr. Yanira Oliveras and Dr. Wes Hickey weren't just our coordinators; they were our Belizean family. Drawing on a 15-year partnership between the University of Texas at Tyler and Belize, their deep community ties gave us access to stories, places, and people we never would've found on our own.

Their leadership was quiet, powerful, and deeply personal. They exemplified servant leadership and reminded us that real change starts with relationships. As Fisher (2021) noted, effective leadership in multicultural contexts requires adaptability, trust-building, and culturally attuned communication, which were qualities Yanira and Wesley embodied throughout the tour.



From Cairo to Belize: Different Continents, Same Heart

Thinking back to our previous UCEA study tour to Egypt, if Cairo was a deep dive into ancient civilizations and modern educational challenges, Belize was a vibrant dance through rainforests and classrooms bursting with creativity. In Egypt, we marveled at pyramids and STEM fairs; in Belize, we were swept into Garifuna dances and serenaded by school children who proudly shared their learning in multiple languages.

Both trips reminded us that education is a global language that is spoken through culture, dance, song, resilience, creativity, and love. No matter where you go, educators are the heartbeat of every community. They show up, they innovate, and they do it all with limited resources and unlimited spirit.





What's Next? UCEA 2025 in Puerto Rico

If hearing about Belize left you inspired and stories from Egypt made you curious, then get ready for UCEA's next international adventure on the horizon! Updates about the upcoming international study tour 2026 will be shared during the UCEA 2025 Convention. We will reveal the amazing next destination for our UCEA International Study Tour and provide opportunities for Q&A.

Importantly, this year's Convention sets the stage for globally minded conversations. Several sessions will spotlight international perspectives on leadership, equity, and innovation. The next page is a quick list of sessions with an international focus to help you plan your itinerary. Hope to see all of you in Puerto Rico and on our next UCEA International Study Tour.

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International Sessions

UCEA25 Convention, Puerto Rico

THURSDAY Nov. 20

- 8:00 to 10:50 am 022. UCEA/BELMAS Research Collaboration: The International School Leadership Development Network
- 2:15 to 3:30 pm 060. The UCEA Center for the International Study of School Leadership: Stories of Resilience From the Field
061. Social Justice Leadership in International Contexts
- 3:45 to 5:00 pm 085. Partnering for Professional Learning: International Perspectives on Partnerships for Educational Leadership Preparation and Development
092. International Terrace Talk 1: International Work: How to Get Started

FRIDAY Nov. 21

- 8:00 to 9:10 am 133. International Terrace Talk 2: International Projects: How to Become Involved
- 10:40 to 11:50 am 145. Developing Leaders With Resilience: Signature Practices From the U.S. and Europe
- 1:20 to 2:30 pm 165. Fostering Rural Partnerships for International, Indigenous, and Immigrant Spaces: Leading Through Collaboration and Community-Building
- 2:40 to 3:50 pm 176. Resilient Leadership in International Settings
- 178-3. Get to Know UCEA Program Centers #3: Center for the International Study of School Leadership
- 4:00 to 5:10 pm 194. International Perspectives on Leadership

SATURDAY Nov. 22

- 8:00 to 9:10 am 217. Leadership Development and Resistance in International Contexts
- 10:40 to 11:50 am 256. International Terrace Talk 3: International Organizations and Involvement
- 1:20 to 2:30 pm 269. International Summit: Global Dialogues in Educational Leadership: Navigating Politics, Democracy, and AI
- 3:00 to 4:10 pm 290. International Terrace Talk 4: International Work: The Impact on Professional Experience From Multiple Perspectives



The graphic features the UCEA logo on the left, consisting of the letters 'uc' stacked above 'ea' in a blue, sans-serif font. To the right, a blue triangular shape points downwards and contains white text. The text reads: 'Career Opportunities in Education Leadership, Research and Policy', 'Find the best jobs! Hire the top scholars! This is the place for higher ed jobs in education leadership, research, and policy', and 'Bookmark our job board and stay current on all the exciting opportunities within the Educational Leadership community.' At the bottom of the triangle, the text 'UCEA Job Board' is written in a smaller, blue font.

https://www.ucea.org/job_board.php



“Fostering Leadership Resilience Through Collaboration and Community”
 “Fomentando la Resiliencia de Liderazgo a través de Colaboración y Comunidad”

UCEA Convention November 19–22, 2025 Registration

Registration Rates

Attendee type	Late/on-site rate Oct. 16-Nov. 22
Faculty	
UCEA members	\$385
Not UCEA	\$465
Graduate student	
UCEA members	\$180
Not UCEA	\$215
Postdoctoral researcher	
UCEA members	\$255
Not UCEA	\$295
Practitioner	\$255
BELMAS	\$385
Community member, K-12 student, or other designation	Please contact UCEA Headquarters for registration details

For assistance with registration for UCEA25, please email convention@ucea.org.
 Our team is happy to help with any questions or concerns.

UCEA Convention 2025 Schedule-at-a-Glance

<https://www.ucea-convention.org/attendee-info/program/>

Wednesday, November 19, 2025

2:15–6:00 pm	Pre-Convention Workshops, CSLEE work session
5:00–6:00 pm	Graduate Student Summit (GSS) Opening General Session
5:00–5:40 pm	Julie Laible Memorial Session for New UCEA Jackson Scholars
5:50–6:20 pm	Jackson Scholars Network Research (JSN) Convocation
6:30–7:30 pm	Plenum & Graduate Student Reception

Thursday, November 20

7:15–8:00 am	Breakfast for GSS participants and Jackson Scholars
7:30–10:45 am	UCEA Plenary Session & Breakfast
8:00–10:50 am	Pre-Convention workshops, GSS research presentations, JSN Research Symposium presentations & feedback sessions
11:00 am–12:15 pm	Opening General Session: Patricia Virella: From Colonial Legacies to Collaborative Leadership: Policy Change and Resilience in Puerto Rico's Schools
12:30–2:00 pm	UCEA Awards Luncheon or open lunch time
2:15–3:30 pm	Convention sessions, GSS Programming
2:15–5:00 pm	Researcher Development Program (RDP) presentations
3:45–6:30 pm	Convention sessions
6:30–7:15 pm	Research Action Networks & UCEA partners business meetings
7:30–8:30 pm	Reception in Honor of Past UCEA Presidents

Friday, November 21

8:00–9:10 am	Convention sessions, GSS programming, Resilience-Focused Capacity-Building Workshop 1
9:20–10:30 am	General Session II: Elevating Practitioner Voices: Discussions on Resilience Through Collaboration and Community
10:40–11:50 am	Convention sessions, GSS research presentations
12:00–1:10 pm	Open lunch time, GSS programming, RANs business meetings
1:20–2:30 pm	Convention sessions, GSS research presentations
2:40–3:50 pm	Convention sessions, The Wallace Foundation symposium, GSS research presentations
4:00–5:10 pm	Convention sessions, GSS programming, GSS research presentations, Developing the Communication & Engagement-Oriented Capacities of the UCEA Community Workshop 1, Resilience-Focused Capacity-Building Workshop 2
5:30–6:30 pm	General Session III: UCEA Presidential Address with Karen Stansberry Beard
7:00–8:00 pm	Barbara L. Jackson Scholars Recognition Ceremony
8:00–9:00 pm	Barbara L. Jackson Scholars Reception

Saturday, November 22

8:00–9:10 am	Convention sessions, Resilience-Focused Capacity-Building Workshop 3
9:20–10:30 am	Developing the Communication & Engagement-Oriented Capacities of the UCEA Community, Workshops 2–7
10:40–11:50 am	Convention sessions, UCEA Executive Committee Fireside Chat, Resilience-Focused Capacity-Building Workshop 4
12:00–1:10 pm	Open lunch time, RANs business meetings
1:20–2:30 pm	Convention sessions
2:30–3:00 pm	Afternoon refreshments & networking
3:00–4:10 pm	Convention sessions
4:20–5:30 pm	Convention sessions
6:00–9:00 pm	UCEA Annual Banquet



Hotel: Sheraton Puerto Rico Resort & Casino

Guest Room Rates:

- Run of House (room type selected based on availability at check-in): \$199 + tax
- Single: \$209 + tax
- Double: \$214 + tax

Rooms available at group rate Nov. 13-27. We encourage you to make your reservation early as rooms sell quickly. All reservations must be made by Monday, October 24, 2025, to receive rates listed above. Reserve your room online or call 1-866-932-7269 and use code AEC.



About the Convention Logo

Sonidos del Borinken

From the jíbaro playing plena to the singing of the coquí; from the echoes of the bomba drums to the roars of the wind and ocean in El Morro... these are all iconic sounds that define Puerto Rico. Finding the beauty and richness of our culture in not just the colorful environment and people, but in our music, our way of speaking, and our surroundings. Because even in the most silent nights with the sky covered in stars, the silence is uniquely... boricua.

The artist, Mónica Paola Rodríguez, is a professional illustrator who grew up loving art and telling diverse stories. She earned her Bachelor Degree in Fine Arts at SCAD in Savannah, Georgia. From then on, she has been representing her Puerto Rican culture by freelancing, illustrating children's books and products for various clients. These include Scholastic Inc., Disney Publishing, McDonald's, and many more. Mónica is from and currently residing in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

<https://www.monicandraw.com/>

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In the 39 years that UCEA has held its convention, many institutions have served as generous sponsors and exhibitors. These cooperative endeavors created a more dynamic relationship between UCEA and those institutions and organizations. UCEA acknowledges the substantive contributions that the following sponsors and exhibitors have made to this year's convention. We greatly appreciate their support and continuing endorsement. The following are confirmed UCEA25 sponsors at the time of publication of this issue of the *UCEA Review*.

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UCEA25 Opening General Session: *Mitstifer Lecture, Sponsored by Penn State University:* From Colonial Legacies to Collaborative Leadership: Policy Change and Resilience in Puerto Rico's Schools



Patricia Virella, Montclair State University

Thursday, November 20
11:00 a.m.–12:15 p.m.
San Juan 4-5



Session 056. Puerto Rico's education system has long been shaped by the dual forces of colonial inheritance and the persistent pursuit of local agency. This keynote examines the historical underpinnings of Puerto Rican schooling, tracing how U.S. colonial policies in the 20th century, especially efforts to impose language, curriculum, and governance reforms, sought to reshape local identity and citizenship through education. Drawing on archival materials and contemporary analysis, the talk illuminates key policy milestones, such as the gradual decentralization of educational authority and significant postdisaster reforms, emphasizing their effects on issues of equity, access, and resilience. Through the lens of recent crises, including economic turmoil and natural disasters, this session explores how communities, educators, and especially youth resisted, adapted, and forged new collaborative leadership pathways. Ultimately, the Puerto Rican experience offers lessons in resilience, revealing how collective action and policy transformation have opened opportunities for building more equitable and sustainable educational futures, both within the island and beyond.



This year's UCEA convention takes a capacity-building perspective as our key approach for supporting our community and the field of educational leadership at this moment in time. Our opening keynote address launches these efforts and builds a bridge to some of the workshops that will occur later in the convention designed to cultivate resilience through collaborative and partnership-oriented efforts.



Resilience-Focused Capacity-Building Workshops

Friday & Saturday
November 21 & 22, 2025

Workshop 1—Intergenerational Leadership in Action: Practical Strategies for Equity and Community Collaboration

Friday, November 21 8:00–9:10 a.m. San Juan 1

Session 126. This interactive workshop explores intergenerational organizing as a pathway to educational equity and leadership resilience. Cofacilitated with a youth leader, we will draw on case studies of youth and family leadership to

highlight the promise and challenges of building authentic, community-centered spaces. Grounded in a scholar–mother praxis—where the roles of caregiver and scholar are intertwined—we surface how intergenerational relationships shape leadership and justice work. Participants will examine how adultism and deficit perspectives inhibit authentic partnerships and engage with hands-on tools, including a bridge-building activity and a family–community engagement project that can be adapted for practice or preparation courses. These activities invite reflection on positionality and provide strategies for transforming adult-centered practices into intergenerational coalitions. Attendees will leave with practical tools and frameworks to lead alongside youth, families, and communities in building resilience through collaboration.



Katherine C. Rodela is associate professor and department chair of Educational Leadership and Sport Management at Washington State University. As a third-generation Mexican American and first-generation college student, her research, teaching, and leadership center family, youth, and community voices as vital to advancing equity and justice in PK–20 education. Her scholarship draws on scholar–mother praxis, intertwining caregiving and scholarship to envision educational leadership as collaborative, justice-oriented, and grounded in community.



Rudolfo “Rudy” David Rodela Duncan is a ninth-grade student leader in Portland Public Schools. He created Lent Leopard Leaders, the district’s first elementary, youth-led leadership group, and now serves as cochair of Portland Public Schools’ Racial Equity and Social Justice Community Advisory Committee, where he is one of only three student representatives. Rudy comes from a multiracial family with a deep history of public service and social justice activism and identifies as Latino, Black, and Jewish. Outside of leadership, he enjoys playing saxophone, producing music, drawing, and competing in golf and lacrosse.

Workshop 2—Scholarship in Action: A Workshop on Building and Sustaining Research–Practitioner Partnerships

Friday, November 21 4:00–5:10 p.m. San Juan 1

Session 205. This capacity-building workshop will examine both the possibilities and challenges of forming strong partnerships between academic researchers and educational practitioners, especially when engaging with politically contested topics such as LGBTQ+ inclusion. Drawing on real-world examples and lessons learned from collaborative work with school districts and community organizations, we will explore strategies for initiating and sustaining partnerships that are grounded in trust, mutual benefit, and shared goals. The workshop will also address common barriers—including institutional constraints, policy climates, and differing timelines and priorities—and offer practical tools for navigating these tensions. Participants will leave with a clearer understanding of how to approach partnership-building and how to frame their work in ways that resonate with practitioners while still maintaining scholarly rigor.



Mollie McQuillan is an associate professor at the University of Wisconsin–Madison’s Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis. Drawing on their background as a public school teacher, Dr. McQuillan investigates how educational policies, leaders, and organizational practices shape school climate and health, particularly for LGBTQ+ populations.

Workshop 3—Building Resilient Systems: Being Resilient Leaders

Saturday, November 22 8:00–9:10 a.m. San Juan 8



Session 231a. This workshop will focus on leaders’ resilience, well-being, and humanity, as they stand in the epicenter of community, bridging the expanse between the imperfect and vulnerable self and the public nature of skilled and effective leadership. Through a series of reflections and exercises, participants will gain and enhance strategies for supporting themselves and others, to do effective work, nurture relationships, and build more equitable systems.

Sharon Radd is Professor of Organizational Leadership at St. Catherine University. Her research examines and re-envision leader development toward more equitable, just, and humane leadership, organizations, and systems.

Workshop 4—Seizing the Moment: Policy Windows, Policy Change, and Building Resilient Education Systems

Saturday, November 22 10:40–11:50 a.m. San Juan 1

Session 249. Periods of crisis often expose both the vulnerabilities and the possibilities within education systems. These moments also open “policy windows”—unique opportunities to reimagine and reshape education policy in ways that can have lasting impact. This interactive 70-minute workshop will explore the current landscape of education policy during times of disruption and uncertainty, and how leaders and advocates can leverage these moments for meaningful change. Facilitators will briefly frame the conversation with examples of how crises create space for reform, then guide participants through activities that encourage reflection and dialogue about coalition-building, partnership development, and sustaining shared values. Together, participants will consider strategies for using the present policy window to pursue common goals and strengthen resilience in education systems, ensuring that equity, collaboration, and long-term vision remain at the center of reform efforts.



Casey D. Cobb is the Raymond Neag Professor of Educational Policy at the Neag School of Education at the University of Connecticut. Dr. Cobb is a National Education Policy Center Fellow and a member of the Research Advisory Panel for the National Coalition on School Diversity. His current research interests include policies on school choice, accountability, and school reform, where he examines the implications for equity and educational opportunity.



Maria E. Hyler serves as the director of the Learning Policy Institute’s Washington, DC, office. She directs the Educator Preparation Laboratory (EdPrepLab, <https://edpreplab.org/>) in partnership with Bank Street Graduate School of Education. EdPrepLab is a center on teacher and leader preparation for deeper learning and equity working to transform educator preparation through the alignment of research, practice, and policy.



Cathy Yun is a senior researcher at the Learning Policy Institute and deputy director of the EdPrepLab network. Prior to joining the Learning Policy Institute, Yun was an associate professor and department chair at California State University, Fresno where she led comprehensive continuous improvement efforts in the teacher preparation program; coordinated the early childhood education master’s program; and worked closely with community partners to promote local policies that support children, families, and teachers.



Developing the Communication and Engagement-Oriented Capacities of the UCEA Community

UCEA Convention Workshop Sessions

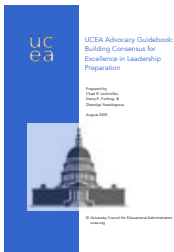
Friday, November 21, 2025 4:00–5:10 pm

Saturday November 22, 2025 9:20–10:30 am

This year's Convention is being designed as a space for the presentation of research and also for participant learning and capacity-building. This year's Convention features a set of workshops designed to build communication and advocacy skills. The first workshop occurs on Friday at 4:00 pm, and the remainder are on Saturday morning at 9:20 am.

196. Workshop 1—Advocating for Educational Leadership: Tools for the Field

UCEA has a long commitment to influential engagement with education policy and sees this as a priority for the field of educational leadership at this tumultuous time. Given this, UCEA developed the *UCEA Advocacy Guidebook: Building Consensus for Excellence in Leadership Preparation* (Lochmiller, Furlong, & Yessirkepova, 2025) to support members with the tools and resources to engage with policymakers across local, state, and federal levels. The guidebook identifies different avenues that UCEA members might take to engage with elected officials, leverage connections across different types of organizations, and utilize various communication strategies to influence public policy. In this session, participants will take an in-depth look at the guidebook and discuss specific strategies that they can implement in their local contexts. Dr. Chad Lochmiller will be supported in this session by guidebook coauthors **Darcy Furlong**, Indiana University, and **Zhamilya Yessirkepova**, Michigan State University.



Chad Lochmiller, Ph.D., is UCEA Associate Director for Policy & Advocacy and professor of Educational Leadership at Indiana University Bloomington. His research examines leadership and policy issues, including those related to school improvement and leadership development.

234. Workshop 2—Invisibilized but Not Erased: Leveraging Invisibility as a Strategic Power for Educational Justice Engagement

The purpose of this interactive, community-building session is to support P-12 educational leaders and higher education researchers to learn how to navigate issues of social justice in more challenging political times. Currently, leaders in P-20 education are subjugated to authoritarian leadership with vague rhetoric and legislation, weaponizing school systems with anti-social justice agendas that demand educators' unquestionable compliance. To navigate this totalitarian context, leaders must leverage attempts at their erasure with strategic invisibility as a form of quiet resistance to affirm students' rights to equity and social justice in education. Dr. Daniel Liou will be supported in this session by the following faculty: **Taeyeon Kim**, University of Nebraska–Lincoln; **C. A. Langerud**, Arizona State University; **Grace Liang**, Kansas State University; and **Ishmael Miller**, Arizona State University.



Daniel D. Liou is an associate professor of education leadership at Arizona State University. As a community-based researcher and former school board president, Daniel's scholarship explores the sociological manifestations of expectations in the organization of classrooms, schools, and society, contextualizing educational practices in relational, curricular and institutional terms.

235. Workshop 3—Strengthening Your Public Communication and Engagement Skills to Educate, Communicate About, and Challenge Issues of Inequity Through Blogs and Social Media

The purpose of this interactive session is to learn how to effectively write blogs, engage in podcasts, and use other social media platforms to educate, communicate about, and to challenge issues that are unjust or to advance research findings that are critical for policy actors or the general public. We will consider how to create a web presence and platform for broad communication, how to craft stories that will get attention, and approaches for connecting the public to your communication. This session will be instructive, hands-on, and immediately useful for attendees who want to build or strengthen their public communication and engagement presence.



Julian Vasquez Heilig serves as a Professor of Educational Leadership, Research, and Technology at Western Michigan University. Julian’s accomplishments across seven academic leadership positions reflect a steadfast commitment to enhancing institutional prestige, fostering inclusive excellence, and driving growth and innovation in higher education. He launched and has utilized the website Cloaking Inequity over the last decade to educate, communicate about, and challenge issues of educational inequity—with over 1.5 million views and readership in more than 200 countries.

236. Workshop 4—Strengthening Communication and Engagement Skills When Perspectives and Worldviews Collide: Lessons and Approaches From the Book *I Never Thought of it That Way* by Mónica Guzmán

WORKSHOP 4 CANCELLED

This session will help you to strengthen your communication and engagement skills with individuals who hold perspectives that are different than yours. We will draw from Guzmán’s book, which UCEA featured in its Summer Book Club reading. Guzmán’s subtitle for her book is “How to Have Fearlessly Curious Conversations in Dangerously Divided Times.” From this perspective, she encourages us to seek to understand and learn from others. That is exactly what we will consider in this session. This session will elevate some of the key insights from Guzmán’s book in a manner that is interactive and hands on. You will leave this session with some insights, skills and confidence to lean into these sorts of conversations in the future.



Martin Scanlan is a professor in the Department of Educational Leadership and Higher Education in the Lynch School of Education at Boston College. Martin’s teaching and scholarship interests focus on how schools can be organized to more effectively welcome all. Scanlan’s research primarily focuses on the organizational routines and practices of adults in schools, including the policies and procedures that shape these. While attending to multiple dimensions of diversity, his work has looked at how schools across sectors—including Catholic schools and public schools—can better serve students who have diverse cultural and linguistic heritages, as well as students with special needs.

237. Workshop 5—Strengthening Your Public Communication and Engagement Skills to Educate, Communicate, and Challenge Issues of Inequity—Writing Op Eds and Engaging With the Media

The purpose of this interactive session is to learn how to effectively write op eds and engage with the media (TV) to educate, communicate about, and challenge issues that are unjust or to advance research findings that are critical for policy actors or the general public. We will consider your selection of op ed outlet, development of relationships with editor and outlets, and how to craft strong op ed pieces. We will also consider how to effectively communicate to the media with an emphasis on televised interviews. This session will be instructive, hands-on, and immediately useful for attendees who want to build or strengthen their public communication and engagement presence.



David DeMatthews is the W.K. Kellogg Endowed Professor in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy at The University of Texas at Austin. David’s research primarily focuses on district and school leadership. More specifically, he aims to understand how educational leaders create and sustain schools where all students are present, meaningfully engaged, and achieving at high levels, with a specific focus on students with disabilities. Given the importance of stable district and school leadership to school improvement processes, he has cultivated a stream of research focused on superintendent and principal career pathways, job-related stress and burnout, and turnover. He also has examined the impact of school choice policies on public schools and historically marginalized students.

238. Workshop 6—Scholarship in Action: Crafting Research Conversations With Practitioners

Would you like to share your research in outlets that educators and policymakers regularly consult, where it can have an impact on people who can actually use the ideas to improve education and schools? Most practitioners do not have access to peer-reviewed scholarly journal articles. The academic jargon, citations, and exposition expected to be published in journals are often barriers to being in conversation with practitioners. In this workshop, we will examine different venues and approaches for writing up research for practitioner audiences (such as *Education Week*, *Phi Delta Kappan*, or *Educational Leadership*). We'll look at examples, discuss how this kind of writing is different from academic writing, and use your own ideas to workshop ways to communicate your research to educators, policymakers, and the broader public.



Ann M. Ishimaru is a scholar, writer, educator and the Killinger Endowed Chair and Professor of Educational Foundations, Leadership and Policy at the University of Washington College of Education. Through her community-engaged scholarship and as director of the Just Educational Leadership Institute, she cultivates the leadership and solidarities of educators; organizations; and racially minoritized youth, families, and communities to realize more joyful learning and just futures. In addition to many peer-reviewed articles in top-tier educational research journals, she is the author of *Just Schools: Building Equitable Collaborations with Families and Communities* (Teachers College Press, 2020) and coeditor of *Doing the Work of Equity Leadership for Justice and Systems Change*, with Decoteau J. Irby (Teachers College Press, 2025).



Decoteau J. Irby is a father, author, artist, and educator who works every day to advance education equity and justice for Black and Brown children and youth in community spaces, schools, and higher education. A professor at the University of Illinois Chicago (UIC), he teaches in the College of Education's Urban Education Leadership program, codirects the UIC Center for Urban Education Leadership, and leads the Brothers Teaching Initiative. He is the author of *Stuck Improving: Racial Equity and School Leadership* (2021) and coeditor, with Ann Ishimaru, of *Doing the Work of Equity Leadership for Justice and Systems Change* (2025).

239. Workshop 7—Fighting Back—Responding to Crisis and Slander on Social Media

Social media can be a powerful tool for misinformation, yet leaders can learn to fight back effectively. Drawing on my experiences navigating targeted online attacks during a local school board election, I will share the strategies I used to counter disinformation while deepening community trust. We will examine how and when to respond, and how leaders can leverage these kinds of hurtful experiences to build resilience and advance collective action, all while remaining firmly grounded in our core values.



Rosa Rivera-McCutchen is a Professor of Administration & Supervision at CUNY Hunter College and is a faculty affiliate in the CUNY Graduate Center's Urban Education PhD program and the NYU Metropolitan Center for Research on Equity and the Transformation of Schools. Dr. Rivera-McCutchen's research focuses on urban school leaders who enact "radical care" by centering antiracism and equity in their leadership practice. Her research, teaching, and activism are deeply informed by her experiences as a former student and educator in NYC public schools, as well as by the public-school experiences of her three Afro-Latinx children.



General Session II: Elevating Practitioner Voices: Discussions on Resilience Through Collaboration and Community

Friday, November 21, 2025
9:20–10:30 am San Juan 4-5
Session 134

Intentionally including practitioner voices in this general session aims to connect discussions of research, theory, and practice, making them relevant, actionable, and responsive to the complex realities of schools and communities in 2025. This panel will explore the equity-oriented efforts of these leaders and how this work has promoted leader resilience and cultivated resilience and community in their settings. These leaders will share how they build systems that foster collective belonging and advocacy for students. The conversation frames their work within the Convention themes of community, collectivity, and public advocacy—highlighting how resilience arises from, and is sustained by, relationships of care, courage, and culturally grounded practices. This session is sponsored by the University of Georgia Morrill M. Hall Endowed Chair in Educational Administration.



UNIVERSITY OF
GEORGIA

The Dr. Morrill M. Hall
Endowed Chair in
Educational Administration



Jaime Aquino, San Antonio Independent School District. Dr. Aquino became superintendent of the San Antonio Independent School District (SAISD) in May 2022. Within his first year, he began transforming the district’s culture to be more inclusive and community centered. Working collaboratively with the Board of Trustees and his executive team, Dr. Aquino helped craft a new declaration statement—one of the first in the nation to include a word in Spanish: *familia*. Dr. Aquino earned his bachelor’s degree from the Instituto Tecnológico de Santo Domingo. Following graduation, he was recruited by the New York City Board of Education to serve as a bilingual teacher. His excellence in the classroom was recognized in 1990 when he was named New York State Bilingual Teacher of the Year. Driven to deepen his expertise, Dr. Aquino pursued graduate studies at Fordham University, where he earned an MS in Bilingual Education and a PhD in Curriculum and Teaching.



Cathi Davis, Northshore School. Cathi Davis is an NAESP National Distinguished Principal and the 2025 Washington State Elementary Principal of the Year. She is the founding principal of Ruby Bridges Elementary School, a fully inclusive elementary school in Washington State. Davis has spent the last 25 years working in education as a teacher and principal. Her school is known nationally and internationally for its incredible culture of inclusion and belonging where all students attend and engage in general education together in universally designed and student-centered learning spaces. Davis and the Ruby Bridges Elementary team collaborate with educators, leaders and policy makers at the state, national, and international levels to support inclusive public education. Principal Davis is a leader, disrupter, and advocate for dismantling barriers to educational access and opportunities for all students.



Virginia Hill, Pittsburgh Westinghouse Academy, Pittsburgh Public Schools. Dr. Hill is the former principal of the Environmental Charter School. Virginia Hill has 35 years of experience as a teacher and an administrator. She has worked as a school principal, Executive Director of K-5 Academics, and interim COO at Environmental Charter School in Pittsburgh. While at the Pittsburgh Public School District, she has served in the roles of teacher; District Science Supervisor; assistant principal; and District Executive Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Professional Development. Her role as principal of Westinghouse is a full-circle career highlight. Dr. Hill, her husband, mother, sister, brother, uncles, and grandfather were all proud graduates of Westinghouse. Serving the community that has nurtured Dr. Hill has been her highest honor.



Ana María García Blanco, 2022–2025 White House Commissioner, Executive Director of the Instituto Nueva Escuela. Ana María García Blanco is a Puerto Rican educator with decades of experience working to improve student achievement and foster community engagement in public schools. Since 2009, she has served as the Executive Director of the Instituto Nuevo Escuela (INE), a nonprofit organization devoted to transforming public schools through the Montessori method. INE, which García Blanco cofounded, has enabled 55 public schools to implement Montessori. Prior to that, García Blanco served as a principal in a public school for 23 years. In 1990, she reopened the Juan Ponce de León School alongside community leaders, where she introduced Montessori pedagogy and the participative governance model, which increased student achievement and parents' participation, eliminated dropouts, and decreased violence. García Blanco holds a bachelor's from Harvard University, where she simultaneously worked in Cambridge and Boston

public schools. After obtaining her master's in education from the Harvard Graduate School of Education in 1981, she worked as an elementary school teacher in Puerto Rico until returning to Harvard and completing a doctoral degree in Education in 1990. García Blanco has taught at the University of Puerto Rico, the University of the Sacred Heart, and Interamerican University. In 2014, she served on the Board of Overseers of the University of Puerto Rico, and currently serves as a member of the Puerto Rico Governor's Commission to Eradicate Poverty. She has authored several publications, including "A Community-Based Approach to Education Reform in Puerto Rico," which appeared in *Melendez's Colonial Dilemma*, *Critical Perspectives on Contemporary Puerto Rico*, and "Montessori Crossed the Street: A Story of Access and Social Justice," published in *Montessori Collaborative World Review* in 2019.



FACILITATOR: Osly Flores, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Osly J. Flores is an assistant professor in the Department of Education Policy, Organization, and Leadership at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. His research focuses on two main areas: race-conscious leadership in K-12 schools and the persistence of graduate students of color in navigating higher education. In the first area, he explores three themes: equitable leadership practices, leadership ethics, and the experiences of school leaders of color. In the second area, he uses critical frameworks to highlight the successes and resilience of graduate students of color. His work has been published in various journals, including *The Urban Review*, *Urban Education*, *Teachers College Record*, *Journal of College Student Development*, *AERA Open*, and the *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*.

Policy and Politics and the Undermining of Public K-12 and Public Higher Education in Puerto Rico: Lessons and Implications for La Isla Del Encanto and the Rest of the U.S.

UCEA Convention: Friday, November 21, 2025

1:20-2:30 pm Session 166



Towards the end of Joe Biden's Presidency, the White House Initiative and Presidential Advisory Commission for Educational Equity, Excellence, and Economic Opportunity for Hispanics, in partnership with then Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona, advocated for public education in Puerto Rico. This effort culminated with a visit by commissioners to the Isla del Encanto (the Island of Enchantment/Puerto Rico) in September 2024 during which commissioners representing the Commission's K-12 and Higher Education subcommittees worked to understand, advocate for, and address the systemic and political challenges that have plagued public education in Puerto Rico.

Among the challenges they identified are the politicization of public education through centralized political appointments of all public school superintendents across the island, the push for local governance, and the push for privatization of both K-12 and higher education funding. In fact, Secretary Cardona and the Commission both advanced recommendations and guidelines aimed at addressing the significant loss of funding, enrollment, and educators across Puerto Rico's public education systems. Notably, the island has lost up to 50% -- and in some cases 2/3 -- of educators across public K-12 and public higher education systems.

Puerto Rico's challenges can be viewed as a canary in the coal mine for public education across the U.S. But there is also hope for strong public educational partnerships across the public P-20 pathways, as well as considerable organizing and advocacy for public education. This session will bring together commissioners and key members of the Biden Administration to speak to the systemic and political challenges of public education in Puerto Rico and to draw out implications for all of the United States.

FACILITATOR: [Cristóbal Rodríguez, 2022–2025 White House Commissioner, Associate Provost for Equity, Western Michigan University](#)



Dr. Cristóbal Rodríguez was born and proudly raised in the Texas Borderlands of El Paso under hard-working immigrant parents from Mexico; and along with studying in Germany as a U.S. Congress–German Bundestag Scholar enhanced the world views and research of Dr. Rodríguez, along with his Ph.D. studies in Education Policy and Planning with a portfolio in Mexican American Studies at The University of Texas at Austin. His leadership is distinguished by reflecting a global and reconciliation-oriented education, driving equity-centered student success initiatives, and advancing and sustaining institutional transformation for equity. Prior to his current role at Western Michigan University, Dr. Rodríguez spent 5 years as an Assistant Professor at New Mexico State University, his BA and MA alma mater and Hispanic Serving Institution; with an additional 7 years thereafter at Howard University, a top Historically Black University, as an Associate Professor and as the Director of

Graduate Studies of the School of Education, and thereafter spent 2 years as an Associate Dean for Equity at Arizona State University, a leading R1 and Hispanic Serving Institution. Across these institutions, he designed new doctoral programs, advanced faculty governance and development, and built equity frameworks in alignment with institutional strategic goals. Dr. Rodríguez was elected to a three-year term to the Executive Committee of the University Council for Educational Administration in 2019, and was appointed in 2021 to the Board of Directors for the American Association for Hispanics in Higher Education, for which he serves as its Immediate Past-Chair. Most recently Dr. Rodríguez was appointed in 2022 by President Biden to serve on the President's Advisory Commission of the White House Initiative on Advancing Educational Equity, Excellence and Economic Opportunity for Hispanics and Latinos through 2025. His national service and scholarship reflect a sustained record of advancing inclusive excellence, academic innovation, and institutional leadership.

PANELISTS



[Melody Gonzales, 2021–2025 Executive Director of the White House Initiative for Advancing Educational Equity, Excellence & Economic Opportunity for Hispanics for President Joe Biden](#)

Melody Gonzales is a community-oriented leader committed to building the capacity of organizations and leaders shaping a brighter, more equitable future for our nation. She leads the White House Hispanic Initiative, an office created by President Joe Biden's Executive Order 14045 and housed under the leadership of Secretary Miguel Cardona at the U.S. Department of Education. The Initiative works to advance education, equity, and economic goals in partnership with the White House, federal agencies, and external stakeholders; lead a 21-member commission; run a federal Interagency work group centered in advancing equity and access to federal resources for the Latino community; and lead in-person and virtual public engagement efforts. Melody joined the administration from the National Education Association, the nation's largest union representing 3 million educators – where she managed Latino grants, partnerships, and advocacy work. Her prior experience includes serving on the Biden-Harris transition team's Office of Personnel Management Agency Review Team; as a Senior Executive Service-level appointee in the Obama-Biden Administration, serving first as the U.S. Department of Labor's Mine Safety and Health Administration chief of staff and then as the U.S. Office of

Personnel Management's deputy chief of staff; as a legislative assistant then Director of Member Outreach for former Congressman Xavier Becerra and the U.S. House of Representatives' Democratic Caucus; and as the National Hispanic Leadership Agenda's founding director of the Latino Appointments Program and Latinas Represent. She began her career in her hometown of San Diego working for the local NBC News affiliate and working as general manager of the Chula Vista Convention and Visitors Bureau with the Chula Vista Chamber of Commerce.



Ana María García Blanco, 2022–2025 White House Commissioner, Executive Director of the Instituto Nueva Escuela

Ana María García Blanco is a Puerto Rican educator with decades of experience working to improve student achievement and foster community engagement in public schools. Since 2009, she has served as the Executive Director of the Instituto Nuevo Escuela (INE), a nonprofit organization devoted to transforming public schools through the Montessori method. INE, which García Blanco cofounded, has enabled 55 public schools to implement Montessori. Prior to that, García Blanco served as a principal in a public school for 23 years. In 1990, she reopened the Juan Ponce de León School alongside community leaders, where she introduced Montessori pedagogy and the participative governance model, which increased student achievement and parents' participation, eliminated dropouts, and decreased violence. García Blanco holds a bachelor's from Harvard University, where she simultaneously worked in Cambridge and Boston public schools. After obtaining her master's in education from the Harvard Graduate School of Education in 1981, she worked as an elementary school teacher in Puerto Rico until returning to Harvard and completing a doctoral degree in Education in 1990. García Blanco has taught at the University of Puerto Rico, the University of the Sacred Heart, and Interamerican University. In 2014, she served on the Board of Overseers of the University of Puerto Rico, and currently serves as a member of the Puerto Rico Governor's Commission to Eradicate Poverty. She has authored several publications, including "A Community-Based Approach to Education Reform in Puerto Rico," which appeared in *Melendez's Colonial Dilemma, Critical Perspectives on Contemporary Puerto Rico*, and "Montessori Crossed the Street: A Story of Access and Social Justice," published in *Montessori Collaborative World Review* in 2019.



Havidán Rodríguez, 2022–2025 White House Commissioner, President, University at Albany, State University of New York (SUNY)

Dr. Havidán Rodríguez is the 20th president of the University at Albany, one of the nation's most diverse research universities. The first Hispanic president of a SUNY 4-year institution, he took office in September 2017. UAlbany is one of the most diverse public research universities in the U.S. During Dr. Rodríguez's tenure, UAlbany has extended the reach of its globally significant research while also becoming a national leader for educational equity and social mobility. Highlights of his tenure include returning the College of Nanotechnology, Science, and Engineering to UAlbany, launching a university-wide AI Plus initiative, opening new engineering and research facilities, and earning the prestigious Seal of Excelencia in 2022 and recertification in 2025. He serves on the boards of the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities, Excelencia in Education, Campus Compact, and the America East Conference. He also serves as Commissioner for the Middle States Commission on Higher Education and is a member of the Presidents and Chancellors Council on Public Impact Research established by the Pew Charitable Trusts. Dr. Rodríguez served on President Biden's Advisory Commission on Advancing Educational Equity, Excellence, and Economic Opportunity for Hispanics. Dr. Rodríguez has over 30 years of experience as a leader in higher education and is a respected social scientist and scholar in disaster response and resiliency. Before coming to UAlbany, Dr. Rodríguez served as the founding provost and executive vice president for Academic Affairs at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley after having served as president, ad interim, and provost and vice president for academic affairs at the University of Texas–Pan American. He also served in various leadership roles at the University of Delaware and at the University of Puerto Rico–Mayagüez. Dr. Rodríguez earned a BS in Psychology from the University of Maryland, an MA in Sociology from the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee, and a PhD in Sociology from the University of Wisconsin–Madison. Born in Puerto Rico and raised on the island and the U.S. mainland, Dr. Rodríguez is fluent in English and Spanish.



Andrea Zayas, 2022–2025 White House Commissioner, Chief of Collaboration & Partnerships, National Alliance for Public Charter Schools

A nationally recognized leader in education policy and practice, Andrea Zayas envisions self-determined communities of color teeming with thinkers, doers, and makers who are inspired and prepared from youth to use their gifts in service to collective wellness. Since 1998, she has leveraged her experience as a public school teacher, leader, and mother to build bridges between families, educators, administrators, and policymakers—developing and implementing research-backed strategies that have been adopted around the country to maximize positive outcomes for Black and Brown youth. In 2008 and 2018, respectively, Zayas founded La Cima Elementary Charter School in Brooklyn, New York, and the New Orleans Youth Alliance, both award-winning institutions that center culturally responsive youth leadership as an integral tool in community sustainability. Zayas has also served as Regional State Turnaround Superintendent in Camden, New Jersey, director for Charter School Accountability for the New York City Department of Education, and chief academic officer at Boston Public Schools. Currently, she develops and executes education grantmaking as the National Director of K-12 Education at the Ballmer Group. Zayas is the founder of Upstream Education Consulting, a boutique firm of field leaders who support school systems and organizational leaders through advisement, coaching, strategy development, and implementation. She served on the Biden Administration's Commission on Advancing Educational Equity, Excellence, and Economic Opportunity for Hispanics. Zayas is a first-generation high school and college graduate and proud daughter of the African diaspora with indigenous Colombian and Afro-Boricua roots. She is a doctoral candidate in Urban Education Leadership at Xavier University of Louisiana. She earned her Master's in Education from Harvard Graduate School of Education and her bachelor's at Rutgers University.



Get to Know UCEA Program Centers

Friday November 21, 2025

Stop by **the Caribe Lounge on Level 2** of the Sheraton Puerto Rico Resort and Casino to learn more about the UCEA Program Centers. Representatives from the different centers will be on-hand to answer any questions you may have and to let you know the next steps to get involved. All sessions are **Friday November 21**.

123. Get to Know UCEA Program Centers: Ignite Presentations

8:00 to 9:10 am Sheraton Puerto Rico: Miramar 4

8:00

Join us for an energizing session featuring rapid-fire Ignite presentations from all nine UCEA program centers. Each center will deliver a 5-minute presentation highlighting their unique work, mission, and vision. This fast-paced format offers attendees a comprehensive overview of our diverse programs and their impact across UCEA.

139. Get to Know UCEA Program Centers #1

10:40 to 11:50 am Sheraton Puerto Rico: Caribe Lounge

10:40

- **Center for the Advanced Study of Technology Leadership in Education (CASTLE)**
- **The Center for Urban School Leadership**

159. Get to Know UCEA Program Centers #2

1:20 to 2:30 pm Sheraton Puerto Rico: Caribe Lounge

1:20

- **Center for Educational Leadership and Social Justice (CELSJ)**
- **Consortium for the Study of Leadership and Ethics in Education (CSLEE)**

178. Get to Know UCEA Program Centers #3

2:40 to 3:50 pm Sheraton Puerto Rico: Caribe Lounge

2:40

- **National Center for the Evaluation of Educational Leadership Preparation and Practice**
- **Center for the International Study of School Leadership**

198. Get to Know UCEA Program Centers #4

4:00 to 5:10 pm Sheraton Puerto Rico: Caribe Lounge

4:00

- **UCEA Joint Program Center for the Study of the Superintendency and District Governance**
- **Center for the Study of Leadership and the Law**

Navigating Your First UCEA Convention: Tips and Tricks for New Attendees

Join us for an engaging session designed specifically for first-time conference attendees! This session will guide you through the ins and outs of Convention participation, helping you make the most of your experience and maximize your learning! It will also provide you with some time for networking for relationship building with other first time Convention attendees, members of the Convention Planning Team, and UCEA Executive Committee.



Session 008a Wednesday Nov. 19 4:00–5:00 pm

2025 UCEA Awards Luncheon

Thursday Nov. 21 12:30–2:00 pm

Sponsored by The Wallace Foundation, this luncheon was established to honor the recipients of UCEA Awards. The UCEA Awards focus on contributions to scholarship, teaching, student development, and the improvement of educational leadership preparation and practice. Award recipients receive complimentary tickets for the Awards Luncheon. Ticketed event.



Wallace

UCEA Executive Committee Fireside Chat

Saturday Nov. 22
10:40–11:50 am



Join the UCEA Executive Director and members of the Executive Committee for an open conversation about UCEA's current work and the future of our community. Bring questions, concerns, and ideas!

UCEA–Wallace Foundation Symposium on Educational Leadership: Relationships Matter: Improving Principal Preparation Through Equity-Focused District Partnerships

How can districts and leadership preparation programs partner to develop sustainable, equity-centered pipelines? How are these partnerships shaping district and preparation program improvement? This symposium features the work of school districts and UCEA-member university partners who are part of the Equity Centered Pipeline Initiative (ECPI). Launched by The Wallace Foundation, ECPI partners eight large school districts and local university preparation programs. Their collective goal is to codevelop comprehensive, aligned pipelines that produce principals who advance educational equity. Our conversation will explore how districts and preparation programs are working to recruit, prepare, develop, and support the next generation of school principals. As ECPI nears its conclusion, we'll use this symposium to reflect on lessons learned with colleagues who were deeply involved in these challenging but rewarding pipeline design efforts.

Wallace

Session 182 Friday Nov. 21 2:40–3:50 pm

General Session III: UCEA Presidential Address



Karen Stansberry Beard, Ohio State University

Kasserian Ingera de la Comunidad: Inquiry, Sensemaking, and Engagement in Leadership Preparation

Friday Nov. 21 5:30–6:30 pm Session 213

The Presidential Address summons the cultural and racial influence mosaic of native (Taíno), colonized, and immigrant peoples' learning exchange. Using both the Maasai and Spanish languages the title, *Kasserian Ingera de la Comunidad* (meaning, "and how are the children of the community?") poses a universal question. Through Inquiry, Sensemaking, and Engagement research, Beard responds with the collective responsibility to prepare leaders focused on quality educational experiences and the well-being of all students as a guiding light and hope for the future.

International Summit: Global Dialogues in Educational Leadership: Navigating Politics, Democracy, and AI



Saturday Nov. 22 1:20–2:30 pm Session 269

The UCEA Advisory Board for International Initiatives is seeking engagement from U.S.-based scholars and graduate students working internationally and international scholars and students in this networking and sharing of ideas session. The session will proceed with a panel discussion of current issues facing educational leadership globally, including (a) the navigation of sociopolitical tensions and the promotion of pluralistic democracy within current global political contexts and (b) the influence of AI on organizational culture and leadership practices in K-12 settings while highlighting the leader's responsibility and role in guiding AI adoption. This will be followed by group discussion and networking activity. Light refreshments will be provided during the activity. All voices are welcome, and we invite you to bring colleagues who might be interested.

UCEA Banquet



Join us for a San Juan Nights celebration as we bring the vibrant heart of Puerto Rico to life—with delicious Puerto Rican cuisine, live entertainment, and tropical delights. The Annual Banquet will be poolside on Level 4 of the Sheraton Puerto Rico Resort and Casino. *Ticketed event.* Tickets are \$80/person for faculty and \$60 for grad students/post-docs and practitioners. All guests are \$80. [Register](#)

Session 306 Saturday Nov. 22 6:00–9:00 pm
Sheraton Puerto Rico Resort and Casino: Bellavista Terrace

2025 UCEA Graduate Student Summit (GSS)

https://www.ucea.org/gss_summit.php

GSS Preparation Webinar: Graduate students attending the UCEA Annual Convention in San Juan are encouraged to [register](#) for our Graduate Student Summit Preparation Webinar on Wednesday, November 5 at 7pm ET.

Graduate Student WhatsApp: The Graduate Student Council launched a new WhatsApp group as a space for graduate students to connect with peers, stay up-to-date on UCEA-related events, and find resources that can support their academic journey. Join the [UCEA Graduate Student WhatsApp group here!](#) We encourage using the space as a way to connect with other graduate students attending the GSS and Annual Convention. and find potential roommates for the [UCEA Convention!](#)

GSS Sessions

Require GSS registration

WEDNESDAY Nov. 19

- 009. GSS Opening General Session
- 012. Plenum and Graduate Student Reception

THURSDAY Nov. 20

- 013. Breakfast for GSS Participants and Jackson Scholars
- 019. Educational Outcomes and Technological Integration
- 020. GSS Ignite: Leadership Experiences and Resilience
- 021. International Perspectives on Successful Principals and Schools
- 024. Pathways to Inclusive Leadership and Equitable Schools
- 028. Leadership and Professional Development
- 032. Leadership and Student Engagement
- 033. GSS Ignite: Visions for Education
- 035. Justice-Oriented Education to Promote Safety and Well-Being
- 036. Systemic Factors Influencing Educational Opportunity
- 039. Enhancing Educational Outcomes for Multilingual and Immigrant Students
- 046. Leading to Foster Professional Growth
- 047. GSS Ignite: Understanding our Communities and Students
- 048. Social Justice Leadership in Shifting School Contexts
- 049. Critical Perspectives for Teaching Leadership
- 050. Navigating Accountability and Evaluation Policies
- 053. Educator Pathways to Empowerment
- 064. Voices, Perspectives, and Stories of Marginalized Groups
- 100. Promoting Cultural Responsiveness, Inclusivity, and Equity

FRIDAY Nov. 21

- 142. Inclusive Leadership in Diverse Educational Contexts
- 162. Culturally Responsive School Leadership
- 169. Graduate Student Roundtables 1

- 169-2. Campus and Community Engagement
- 169-3. Comparative Perspectives on Educational Leadership
- 169-4. Innovative Approaches to Educational Engagement and Support
- 169-5. Preparing Leaders for New Directions
- 169-6. School Leaders and Well-Being
- 169-7. Leadership for Equitable Learning
- 169-8. Leadership in Action: Equity, Evaluation, and Empowerment
- 181. Critical Conversations About Race
- 188. Graduate Student Roundtables 2
 - 188-2. Beyond the Labels: Special Populations
 - 188-3. Multicultural Affairs: Instruction and Policy
 - 188-4. Cultivating Equity and Cultural Diversity
 - 188-5. Culturally Responsive School Leadership
 - 188-6. Policy, School Reform, and Equity
 - 188-7. Supporting Teacher Efficacy and Effectiveness
 - 188-8. Beyond Access: Legitimacy, Belonging, and Justice
- 201. Student Learning, Motivation, and Cognitive Development

Graduate Student Council Programming

These sessions are open to all Convention registrants.

FRIDAY Nov. 21

- 122. GSC Programming: Navigating the Publication Process: How to Turn Your Conference Presentation Into an Academic Publication
- 153. GSC Lunch and Learn: Demystifying the Academic and Nonacademic Job Search: Tips, Tricks, and Considerations for Roles in and Beyond the Professoriate
- 210. GSC Programming: Professional Development Roundtable Sessions

SAN JUAN UCEA
University Council for Educational Administration
2025

Attending the 2025 UCEA convention?

Join Our Graduate Student WhatsApp

Connect with other graduate students & stay up-to-date on grad student resources and programming

tinyurl.com/UCEAGradConnex

Webinar for Graduate Students

Navigating the UCEA Graduate Student Summit and Annual Convention

November 5
7pm ET

HOSTED BY

UCEA Graduate Student Council Members

REGISTER

tinyurl.com/UCEA25nav



RESEARCHER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

RDP Scholars will present their work at the 2025 UCEA Convention at the Sheraton Puerto Rico Resort and Casino in San Juan:

Thursday Nov. 20
2:15 to 5:00 pm

Session 070. Researcher Development Program (RDP) Presentations and Orientation

Thank you to the scholars you recently signed up as mentors in the Researcher Development Program (RDP). Over 40 doctoral students were matched with a mentor in 2024, and many scholars will present their work at this year's Convention in San Juan on Thursday, November 20.

The Researcher Development Program (RDP) is a collaboration between the Graduate Student Council and the AERA Leadership for School Improvement SIG. The RDP facilitates year-round programming to support graduate student development. In addition to webinars and workshops, the RDP connects doctoral students with faculty members to facilitate and support their development of collaborative research projects and sustained mentor-mentee relationships. Year-round programs address the hidden curriculum to demystify academic practice to better position all graduate students for roles in academic and nonacademic spaces. The group recruits, matches, and supports dozens of mentor-mentee pairs each year.



UCEA Graduate Student Council

<https://www.ucea.org/gsc.php>

The **GSC mission** is to foster a community of emerging educational leadership, policy, and evaluation scholars by:

- Developing graduate students' capacity in research, teaching, and service.
- Supporting the transition from graduate student to faculty, practitioner, and industry-based positions.
- Planning and executing the Graduate Student Summit before the UCEA Convention.
- Planning and executing graduate student programming during the UCEA Convention and throughout the year.
- Cultivating innovative, inclusive, and progressive spaces for graduate students and emerging leaders in education, research, and policy.

2025–2028 Representatives

Eric E. Barnes, Texas Christian University
Kathryn Pegram, University of North Carolina at Greensboro
Marieke Timmer, University of Utah

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Debbie Jones, Ohio State University
Kathryn James McGraw, Vanderbilt University
Cheyenne Phillips, Southern Methodist University
Qurrat ul Ain Rasheed, Georgia State University
Rosita Tantaio, University of Denver

2023–2026 Representatives

Annie Gensterblum, Michigan State University
Johnathan Jerman, University of Tennessee–Knoxville
Benjamin Lebovitz, University of Wisconsin–Madison
Dayna Muñiz, Temple University

2025 Graduate Student Summit Team: Annie Gensterblum, Michigan State University; Johnathan Jerman, University of Tennessee–Knoxville; Qurrat ul Ain Rasheed, Georgia State University; Kathryn James McGraw, Vanderbilt University; Rosita Tantaio, University of Denver; Eric E. Barnes, Texas Christian University

DAVID L. CLARK

NATIONAL GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH SEMINAR IN EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION & POLICY

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

<https://www.ucea.org/clark.php>

Deadline: Monday December 15, 2025

The David L. Clark National Graduate Student Research Seminar in Educational Administration & Policy, sponsored by the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA), Divisions A and L of the American Educational Research Association (AERA), and Sage Publications, brings emerging educational administration and policy scholars and noted researchers together for one full day of presentations, generative discussion, and professional growth. The majority of Clark Scholars go on to become professors at major research institutions around the world. This year's seminar will be held tentatively on April 7, the day before the start of the 2025 AERA annual meeting in Los Angeles, CA.



Nominees should be **outstanding doctoral students in PK-12 educational leadership and administration and/or PK-16 education policy, seeking careers in research**. Nominees must have **substantially completed their courses and formulated a dissertation proposal**. (Students who have already started or completed their dissertations are unlikely to gain as much from the seminar as students who are in the early stages of formulating their research.) Nominations of students from **underrepresented groups** are strongly encouraged.

Each university may nominate up to two students. Nominations must be accompanied by a student research proposal, and all materials are submitted online via the UCEA website (forthcoming). An overview of the Clark Seminar process can be found [here](https://www.ucea.org/clark.php) (<https://www.ucea.org/clark.php>).

The nomination form must be filled out completely by the nominator via the link above, including



- nominator's information
- nomination statement
- student information
- an abstract of student research
- title
- blinded statement of proposed research

The student's statement of proposed research should be no more than two single-spaced pages, not including the reference list, and should outline the problem the student plans to pursue in the dissertation research, its intended contribution to theory and practice, specific research questions, and study procedures. The abstract, statement of proposed research, and file name must not include *the nominee's name and institution/affiliation*. Student proposals are *blind reviewed* by three prominent scholars.



Invitations will be issued to 42 doctoral students, based on the quality of the student's proposal and perceived capacity to gain from and contribute to the seminar. Both the faculty nomination and the student research proposal must be received by the deadline: 11:59 pm EST **Monday December 15, 2025**.

For info, email clark@ucea.org.



Sponsored by the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA), Divisions A and L of the American Educational Research Association (AERA), and SAGE Publications.

UCEA welcomes the
2025–2027 Barbara L.
Jackson Scholars**2025–2027 Jackson Scholars**

Abisola Adegunju, Miami University of Ohio
 Torye Banura, Michigan State University
 Mariah Barnett, University of Illinois at Chicago
 Breana Baskerville, Loyola Marymount University
 Regina Covington, University of North Carolina at Greensboro
 William French, University of Wisconsin–Madison
 Mya Haynes, University of Southern California
 Bron Jacobs, University of Missouri
 Yubin Jang, University of Delaware
 Alexandria Creer Kahn, University of California, Berkeley
 Karanjot Kaur, University of Texas at Austin
 Seungbae Kim, Florida State University
 Paloma Kumagai, Loyola Marymount University
 Araseli Martinez-Peña, University of South Florida
 Aldo Mogro, Rutgers University
 Shanae Neal, Southern Methodist University
 Shanea L. Neal, Southern Methodist University
 Edoarda Isabel Pérez, Purdue University
 Tiyanna Peterson, Michigan State University
 Javaris Powell, Miami University of Ohio
 Hina Rehman, Rutgers University
 Jamilah Scott, University of Denver
 Tiyacca Simms-Jones, Virginia Commonwealth University
 Akunna Uka, University of Southern California
 Robert Urrutia, Texas Tech University
 Tia Williams, Vanderbilt University
 Brandon Wooley, University of Texas at Austin
 Yashi Ye, Michigan State University

2025–2027 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.

Judy Alston, Miami University
 Andrene Castro, Virginia Commonwealth University
 Sheryl J. Croft, Kennesaw State University
 David DeMatthews, University of Texas at Austin
 Bryan Duarte, Purdue University
 Mirriam Ezzani, Texas Christian University
 Érica Fernández, Miami University
 Mark Anthony Gooden, Teachers College, Columbia University
 Decoteau Irby, University of Illinois at Chicago
 Demarcus Jenkins, University of Pennsylvania
 Detra D. Johnson, University of Houston
 Muhammad Khalifa, Ohio State University
 Grace Jia Liang, Kansas State University
 Kofi Lomotey, Western Carolina University
 Gerardo R. López, Michigan State University
 Khaula Murtadha, Indiana University–Indianapolis
 Tiffany Newsome, Western Carolina University
 Yongmei Ni, University of Utah
 Juan Niño, University of Texas at San Antonio
 Jayson Richardson, William & Mary
 Mariela Rodriguez, University of Texas at San Antonio
 Darrius Stanley, University of Minnesota–Twin Cities
 Dana Thompson Dorsey, Columbia University
 Terah Venzant Chambers, Michigan State University
 Shannon Waite, Howard University
 Terri Watson, City College of New York
 Rachel White, University of Texas at Austin

JSN at UCEA25 Convention**WEDNESDAY Nov. 19**

- 010. Julie Laible Memorial Session for New UCEA Jackson Scholars
- 011. Jackson Scholars Network Convocation
- 012. Plenum & Graduate Student Reception

THURSDAY Nov. 20

- 013. Breakfast for GSS Participants and Jackson Scholars

JSN Research Symposium Presentations

- 015. Gender, Resilience, and Intersectional Identity
- 016. Disability, Inclusion, and Special Education Leadership
- 017. Race, Representation, and School Policy
- 026. Black Educational Leadership and Advocacy

- 027. Curriculum, Equity, and Teaching Practice
 - 029. Community Engagement and Family Advocacy
 - 030. Educational Equity for Black Students and Families
 - 031. Climate, Well-Being, and Student Success
 - 037. Leadership in Changing Policy Contexts
 - 038. Immigrant Voices and Educational Access
- JSN Mentor Feedback Sessions**

FRIDAY Nov. 21

- 214. UCEA Barbara L. Jackson Scholars Recognition Ceremony
- 215. UCEA Barbara L. Jackson Scholars Network Reception

ucea Calendar

2025

OCTOBER

24 Deadline to receive group rate on hotel rooms for UCEA Convention

NOVEMBER

15 Deadline, application for UCEA Associate Director for Faculty Development

15 Deadline, application for UCEA Associate Director for Publications

5-8 Education Law Association conference

19-21 UCEA 2025 Graduate Student Summit, San Juan, Puerto Rico

19-21 UCEA 2025 Jackson Scholars Network Research Symposium, San Juan, Puerto Rico

19-22 UCEA 2025 Convention, San Juan, Puerto Rico

DECEMBER

15 Deadline, proposal to host JRLE

15 Deadline, Clark Seminar nominations



UCEA Convention 2025 Program Online

<https://www.ucea-convention.org/attendee-info/program/>

The program is available online and will be continuously updated as changes are made to sessions.

UCEA Plenary Session Representatives

UCEA Plenary Session Representatives (PSRs) serve an important function for their respective institutions and for UCEA. PSRs provide a link between institutions and UCEA, serve as a major part of the electorate for Executive Committee members, determine their institutions' contribution to UCEA's mission, and can serve as a catalyst for many UCEA activities.

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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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