Diversity Initiatives in the College of Education 2017-2018

Project IMPACT
The College of Education welcomed the second cohort of Project Increasing Male Practitioners and Classroom Teachers (IMPACT) students. The purpose of Project IMPACT is to recruit and retain diverse male students in education. IMPACT students receive academic, financial, and mentoring support. The Men of Color (MOC) mentor are diverse male educators and leaders from across South Jersey. Students meet monthly as a group with the MOC Network to address socio-emotional development and address problems of practice in teaching. There are 11 students in cohort 1 and 9 in cohort 2.

Student Organization: Students for Diversity
Dr. Kate Kedley, an Assistant Professor in Language, Literacy and Sociocultural Education Department advises this student led organization that focuses on issues of social justice and equity and organizes events and brown bag lunches.

The Rowan Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies
The Rowan Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies is an interdisciplinary Center that is co-sponsored by the College of Education and the College of Humanities and Social Sciences. The Center focuses on Holocaust and Genocide Education on Rowan’s campus, as well as the greater community. It is Co-Directed by Dr. Jennifer Rich (Education) and Dr. Stephen Hague (History).

International/Global Study Abroad Experiences

Teach and Discover India & Cambodia Trips. John Quinesso, Instructor at Interdisciplinary and Inclusive Education Department has developed and led several cultural immersion trips abroad for College of Education students throughout the past few years. A total of 60 students traveled to India as part of this program over the years. Experiences in both countries include volunteer teaching work at community schools, visiting historically relevant sites, and immersing in the food, music, and language of each culture. He now has a specific Special Topics course that supports the learning and experiences in Cambodia. Students are required to attend class sessions, actively participate in all abroad experiences, and keep a reflective journal regarding their learning.

Dominican Republic. Dr. Sarah Ferguson & Dr. Brent Elder, assistant professors from Interdisciplinary and Inclusive Education Department developed a course that will be offered in summer, 2018 in the Dominican Republic for students to learn about different cultural contexts.

Language, Literacy, & Culture in Oaxaca, Mexico: A Rowan Summer Experience for K-12 Educators. Funded by the Fulbright Hayes Small Groups Abroad Program, Dr. Stephanie Abraham, an assistant professor from Language Literacy and Sociocultural Education Department will take 12 educators, both pre and in-service, to Oaxaca, Mexico for a one month study abroad program in July 2018. These educators will study Spanish, Mexican culture, and pedagogical practices in Mexican schools.

Honduras - Literacy in Public Spaces. Dr. Kate Kedley and Hector E. Flores Asiego, a Honduran teacher and activist, work with youth in Honduras to “reclaim public space” from the violence that is so
prevalent in the country with the world’s highest murder rate. Students write poetry, prose, and music and on evenings go to public street corners and work to make these spaces more associated with the arts than with state and gang violence. Dr. Kedley is new to New Jersey and actively looking for community partners in the area to use technology to collaborate with the Honduran youth.

Rowan Urban Teacher Academy (RUTA)

The Rowan Urban Teacher Academy (RUTA) serves as an excellent long-term recruitment strategy to increase the pool of candidates interested in becoming urban teachers. The goal of this program is to utilize students’ interest in education and broaden it to a greater perspective of urban education and the functions of schools. Students will gain experience in an urban classroom setting as they become acquainted with teacher practitioners and teaching on a personal and professional level. Working in small groups, students will plan and teach mini-lessons and/or activities to urban elementary school children. Each participant will be required to complete all assignments, keep a portfolio, and write a summary report about his/her experiences in the Urban Teacher Academy. The RUTA program is currently being offered in school districts. 17 high school students were served through this program in the summer of 2017.

Samples of Faculty Research Projects

Research Seminar, PhD in Education. Phd. in Education students from cohort one are engaged in a research practice partnership with a local school district, to conduct an equity audit of all schools within the district. The study is designed to understand what systems are in place that support students’ education, including factors that impact the capacity of faculty and staff to deliver access and opportunity to ensure equity in educational outcomes. Co-investigators will review existing data collected by the district that measures student participation, placement, achievement, completion, and progression to college. We will also look at reports of job satisfaction, professional learning opportunities, and organizational culture. Additionally, new data will be collected via surveys, and individual and focus group interviews conducted within the school district with a variety of stakeholders. For purposes of this project, we define equity as removing barriers to student learning and providing resources in order to ensure engagement, representation, and opportunity for all students and their social support systems. In addition, we define equity as providing an exceptional educational experience by promoting academic success and social, emotional development through culturally responsive
curriculum and inclusive pedagogy, and the development of students’ critical consciousness and resilience. We define the overall goals of equity as encouraging students’ holistic development, changing the status quo, and challenging societal oppression and injustice.

**Participating in Diversity Research with Educational Testing Services.** Members from the Office of Educator Support and Partnerships participated in a research study by Educational Testing Services (ETS). ETS conducted a study on Education Preparation Programs (EPPs) who have innovations and initiatives to help increase diversity. The College of Education’s Teacher Education Recruiter, Professors-in-Residence and Project IMPACT students participated in the group interview to discuss the great opportunities the college offers.

**Research with Bridgeton Elementary Schools.** A research project by Dr. Zeynep Ercan, Associate Professor and Associate Dean and Dr. Cori Brown, Assistant Chair and Assistant Professor form Interdisciplinary and Inclusive Education Department focuses on

- Cultivating culturally responsive teachers: Changing teachers’ perceptions of diverse primary students through project-based learning, and
- Building capacity for learning: Urban first graders exploring dinosaurs through project-based learning and 3D technologies.

**Mighty Writers: El Futuro.** Dr. Stephanie Abraham and Dr. Kate Kedley are partnering with Mighty Writers in Philadelphia to study the emerging bilingual and biliteracy practices of young Latinos. Their project draws on educational ethnography and participatory action research to partner with the center in shaping the project and offering bilingual writing workshops for young emerging bilinguals.

**Sample Trainings/ Workshops / Speeches / Conferences**

**Professional development with local school districts.** The Center for Access, Success & Equity (CASE) is doing work with three local school districts to assist them in achieving their goals for equity by facilitating leadership team discussions, training equity councils, providing professional development for faculty and staff, reviewing curriculum, and facilitating student led action research projects.
**Real Talk Series.** This is a free monthly discussion group organized by CASE for educators and students in the South Jersey area - one session each month is hosted on the Glassboro campus, and on in the Camden Academic Building. The series is organized to promote small group discussion, Q&A and resource sharing for all educators who want to explore how to talk with their students about issues of race, gender, identity, power and privilege - from early childhood to college classrooms.

**Training of Child Care Programs for Becoming Culturally Responsive and Serving Dual Language Learners.** Dr. Zeynep Ercan partnered with the Institute for Families, School of Social Work Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey as a content expert and trainer for child care programs and Technical Assistance Specialists participating in Grow NJ Kids system. The goal is for programs to serve dual language learners effectively.

**Teaching Language through a Lens of Social Justice.** Dr. Beth Wassell, Professor & Chair of the Department of Language, Literacy and Sociocultural Education has served as a Summer Institute presenter at the Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition (CARLA) at the University of Minnesota in 2016, 2017 and will offer the 5-day workshop again in 2018. The workshop, geared toward P - 20 teachers, focuses on integrating issues of justice and equity into world language and English as an additional language curriculum and instruction. [http://carla.umn.edu/institutes//2018/socialjustice.html](http://carla.umn.edu/institutes//2018/socialjustice.html)

**Rowan Rally for Peace and Justice.** Zalphia Willson-Hill, Instructor, Dr. Barbara Williams, Professor, and Dr. MaryBeth Walpole, Professor and Chair in the Educational Services and Leadership Department organized, in collaboration with the university senate, a Rowan Rally for Peace and Justice on September 12th on the patio outside Boyd Recital Hall following the Response to Charlottesville community forum. Individuals wrote on ribbons which were then displayed on Campbell Library.

**Conference Presentation at American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education.** The COE Diversity Committee has been presented a roundtable at the March 2017 Annual Meeting of American Association for the Colleges of Teacher Education. The session is titled “Growing Diversity Knowledge in Pre-Service Teachers”. Presenters are Dr. MaryBeth Walpole, Dr. Nicole Edwards, Assistant Professor, Dr. Amy Accardo, Instructor, Dr. Hector Rios, Associate Professor, Dr. Susan Browne, Associate Professor, and Dr. Midge Madden, Associate Professor.

**Center for Access, Success, and Equity (CASE) Mini-Conference.** Friday, February 9, 2018 4:30–8 pm College of Education, James Hall. In this conference, panelists from the COE departments will discuss key issues focusing on educational practices and policy, culturally responsive teaching and educational research. Program highlights include: Keynote speaker Dr. Michael Apple, ’67 alumnus, author and educator in the field of education reform for social justice.

**Curriculum Development / Innovation**

**New B.A. in Inclusive Education.** In response to the New Jersey’s Department of Education (NJDOE) interest in developing innovative approaches to educator preparation programs, the Department of Interdisciplinary and Inclusive Education in the College of Education proposes a new undergraduate degree program, the B.A. in Inclusive Education. In addition to focusing on teaching students with exceptionalities by offering both a general education teaching certificate (early childhood or elementary) and a special education teaching certificate, this program further supports the moral imperative of focusing on inclusion education more broadly, including other “culturally devalued groups of students”
thus providing opportunities of access, success, and equity for all learners. The first cohort in this program will begin in Fall 2018.

**New M.A. in Urban Education and Community Studies.** The objective of the new M.A. in Urban Education and Community Studies is to prepare urban educators, community organizers, policymakers, school leaders, and youth-focused change agents to understand the contradictions of current urban school systems and meaningfully address the educational and broader socioeconomic disparities that urban communities too often face. The program meets its primary objective through focus on students understanding and applying a range of critical perspectives to study urban education and communities including from historical, legal, sociological, and political economic lenses. Beyond illuminating the complexities often found in urban education and communities, the program emphasizes hands on opportunities to engage within the communities they hope to impact while building applicable skills and knowledge of how the confluence of political, social, economic, historical, and structural systems shape how urban students and families live, educators work, and policies and practices are institutionalized and challenged.

**New CUGS in Bilingual Education and ESL Education.** These new programs will provide an undergraduate option for students to gain the expertise and instructional certification to become educators in bilingual or English as a Second Language (ESL) settings. Both Bilingual and ESL are currently areas with critical teacher shortages both in NJ and across the US. This program will respond to this increasing number of multilingual, immigrant, and refugee students in NJ who need highly qualified, effective teachers.

**Assessing Students Knowledge, Skills and Dispositions Related to Diversity.** The College of Education Diversity Committee is using a scale to assess our students’ knowledge, skills, and dispositions related to diversity upon entry to our programs, and again at graduation in order to more holistically assess our programs.

**Sample course projects:**

1. **Collaboration with Parents of Children with disabilities.** Dr. Amy Accardo, Dr. Midge Shuff, and Dr. Joy Xin’s project on collaboration with parents of children with disabilities is involved in the clinical and seminar courses for students in the TOSD program to prepare teacher candidates to be competent to work with parents and families of children with disabilities.

2. **Principles and Pedagogies Course in the Interdisciplinary and Inclusive Education Department.** This core course for several undergraduate teacher preparation programs focuses on developing teacher candidates who are committed to a social justice stance, rooted in sociocultural learning theory. Key assessments in the course require candidates to explore and examine personal assumptions and biases and to question ways of thinking and responding to students’ cultural, racial, linguistic, gender, and ability differences in the classroom.

3. **Context of Education in the Inclusive Classroom.** This new course is an educational philosophy course that covers an extensive array of issues, using *Case Studies in Diversity and Social Justice Education*. Students are introduced to an Equity Literacy framework. Topics such as socioeconomic status, religion, ethnicity, culture, race, sex, gender and gender identity, disabilities, sexual orientation, language and immigrant status are covered.
**Mentoring / Professional Development of Faculty/ Staff**

**Book Clubs Focusing on Equity and Social Justice.** For the academic year 2017-2018, College of Education faculty members engage in multiple book clubs exploring and discussing books related to social justice and equity with the question: “What does a college that focuses on social justice and equity look like?” Some sample book clubs are included below:

1. **LLSC Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy Working Group:** The Department of Language, Literacy and Sociocultural Education, along with some colleagues in the Department of STEAM Education and the Department of Inclusive and Interdisciplinary Education, are participating in a Spring semester book club around the new text *Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies: Teaching and Learning for Justice in a Changing World* by Paris and Alim. The group will meet biweekly and engage in discussion about issues raised in text and ways that we can Integrate CSP into our programs’ curriculums, our instruction with RU students, and our ongoing work in the COE and University.

2. **Interdisciplinary and Inclusive Education Department Book Clubs:** Faculty across the department are part of two different book club groups as a means of using literature as “a way in” to discourse and dialogue surrounding issues of social justice in P-12 education. These Spring 2018 book clubs will meet bi-weekly to identify key themes and make connections to current course curriculum and program foci. The end goal is to seek opportunities for course and program changes to underscore the importance of developing socially just educators. Book titles are “Is everyone really equal? An introduction to key concepts in social justice education. By Ozlem Sensoy and Robin DiAngelo (2017)” and “Disability studies and the inclusive classroom: Critical practices for embracing diversity in education (2017)”.

**Distinguished Visiting Scholar.** Dr. Michael Apple, John Bascom Professor of Curriculum and Instruction and Educational Policy Studies, and a distinguished scholar of critical education policy and practice visited Rowan during early Spring of 2018 for leading a month-long professional development opportunities for College of Education faculty, staff, and students that focuses on topics around social justice and equity in educational settings.

**Sample Grants / Contracts**

**Camden Promise Neighborhood Grant.** CASE is providing evaluation services and participating on the leadership council for this project, which is designed to support a range of educational services for students and families in Camden, NJ. Camden City is proud to be a recipient of 2017 Federal Promise Neighborhoods Implementation funding. Promise Neighborhoods, based on Geoffrey Canada’s Harlem Children’s Zone model, aim to create a comprehensive pipeline of services and a cradle through college to career path leading to positive change for the children and families.

The Promise Neighborhoods award brings $30M to Camden over the next five years and will support the development and implementation of a pipeline of comprehensive cradle-to-college-to-career services to reach children at every age and stage of development. The Camden Promise Neighborhood Team, led by Center For Family Services and including community residents and community based organizations, is committed to providing children with access to great schools and strong systems of family and community support that will prepare them for college and career.

The Camden Promise Neighborhood grant is focused on four contiguous Camden Neighborhoods (Cooper Lanning, Bergen Square and parts of Centerville and Liberty Park) and children attending
schools in those neighborhoods (KIPP Cooper Norcross Academy and Wiggins College Prep School) and Camden High School, and the just under 14,500 individuals living and learning in these areas. Our focus is:

- Remaining community-based and focused on local community needs
- Maximizing educational achievements for children
- Ensuring that each of the individual programs within the initiative is effective
- Fostering strong links across programs to ensure smooth transitions and continuous services for families

**Campus Dialogue Grant.** Rowan University was one of 31 universities (from a pool of over 200 applicants) to receive a Campus Dialogue Grant from the Bringing Theory to Practice Project (BTtoP). The purpose of the grant is “to provide support for one-year projects based around thematically integrated gatherings or dialogues involving a core group of diverse campus constituents” (BTtoP, Request for Proposals). In order to meet this goal, stakeholders from across Rowan’s Glassboro campus developed a project built around Photovoice, a method of action research that asks participants to use photographs to document their experiences with the goals of: sharing about their community, promoting critical dialogue through discussion of the photographs, and reaching policy makers. Building on students’ photographs, we hosted a series of five dialogues during the Fall 2017 semester that addressed the following questions: How do students of different identities experience campus life at Rowan University? How can students, faculty, staff, and administrators better understand students’ varied experiences and invite conversations that address their different viewpoints, values, and experiences into their classrooms and other spaces on campus? How can university stakeholders leverage digital media to help build a campus culture that supports open dialogue, even—and especially—in a politically charged context? This project is sponsored by: Bringing Theory to Practice, Center for Access, Success, & Equity, College of Education Diversity Committee, and the Office of Research Office of Social Justice, Inclusion, & Conflict Resolution.