

Summer 2021

Premier, Summer 2021

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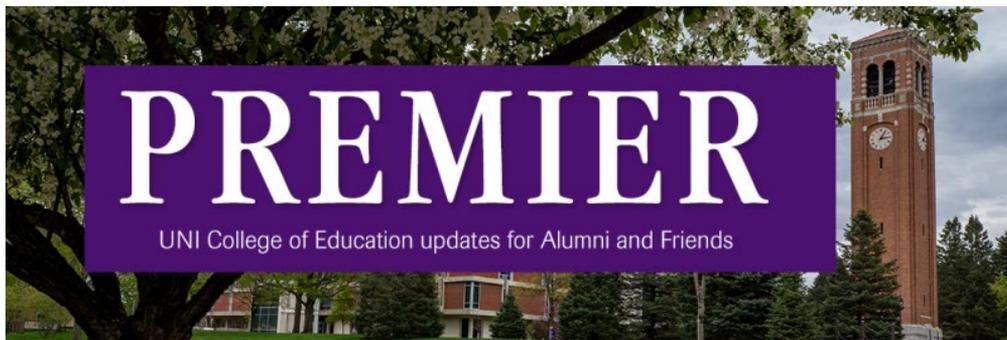
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Premier Summer 2021 E-Newsletter



Premier Summer 2021

Premier is published for University of Northern Iowa College of Education alumni, friends, faculty and staff

[From the Dean: Delighted, determined and ready to go](#)

Thankful as we emerge, carefully, from a pandemic, excited for the future.

[Alumni reflections: Life during a pandemic](#)

A series of alumni profiles reminds us that we were all in this together this past year.

Landmark 2+2 distance education program notes 25 years

Online learning is nothing new for the graduates of this early leader in remote education.

Research explores hidden links between diversity and leisure

Research shines spotlight on overlooked pioneer who built cross cultural bridges.

Perspectives: Social justice teacher education in an era of division

David Hernández-Saca considers a humanistic response to new challenges in education.

Class Notes

Celebrating Excellence

College News and Notes

UNI Foundation News

- Hampton senior receives Strottman scholarship
- FY 21 Donor Roll

From the Dean: Delighted, determined and ready to go

Dear Friends and Colleagues:



Last December, I wrote of finding a new rhythm as we transitioned from the initial disruption of COVID-19 into a full semester of life that was not-yet-normal. As spring semester unfolded, the first vaccinations were beginning. As the semester ended, our new graduates had the option to walk the commencement platform -- many took the opportunity.

I cannot help but be amazed, delighted, and humbled by the collective effort that carried us

all from March 2020 to now.

For this past year's incoming students, the "altered reality" of their first academic year is all they have known. Through the most challenging of years, our faculty remained remarkably focused and flexible. Then there are our partners, many of them our alumni and friends.

From clinical and community preceptors to cooperating and mentor teachers, the level of your support is unique and part of the lifeblood of this institution. As our alumni features in this issue of Premier attest, you had your own professional and personal challenges this past year.

And yet, so many of you were there for our students once again. I find your support truly extraordinary.

After a year unlike any other, we now face a new academic year shaped by our recent past, but fully focused on the future, led by our strategic guideposts:

- Amplify student success
- Actively engage in diversity, equity and inclusion
- Transform our status quo
- Enrich our partnerships

We plan to give greater meaning to those goals over the next year. In the next few weeks, we look forward to welcoming new leaders, starting new programs and engaging on and off campus.

Through these past 15 months, our determination and commitment to our students has never waned. But as the new year beckons, you can feel something that, not too long ago, seemed out of place: a sense of excitement.

Perspective remains as we follow continuing developments in the world around us. But, yes, we're back. We're ready.

Forward!

Colleen S. Mulholland

Dean, College of Education

Alumni reflections: Life during a pandemic

COVID-19 left vacant office buildings and empty classrooms across the country and sent flocks of workers and students home. In many ways, life seemed to grind to a halt, but for two College of Education alumni, the global pandemic resulted in a frantic year.

From the depths of the Alaskan wilderness to the virtual hallways of a Des Moines elementary schools, these alumni tell us how the pandemic altered their working lives.



Sam Braband, Ranger

Sam Braband ('10, BA) has a job where the concept of “working from home” doesn’t really apply.

As chief ranger for the northern region of the Alaska State Parks, he's never quite certain what a day will bring. Tasked with helping oversee, maintain and enforce hundreds of thousands of acres of rugged, backcountry wilderness on the untamed fringes of the country, Braband could be responding to a wildfire or maintaining snowmobile trails or chasing wildlife from a campground. It's what he loves about the job.

"There's so much diversity to what I do in this job," Braband says. "It keeps me on my toes and excited to go to work."

And when COVID-19 hit and travel restrictions became more onerous, it would seem logical that park attendance might dip. But the opposite occurred. The pandemic prompted a marked increase in park attendance, as Alaskans, who are used to frequently traveling outside the state to see friends and family, were kept in by the travel restrictions.

"We saw more use in our park units this last season than years prior," Braband says. "And I think it's because people weren't leaving the state. It was busier and more challenging in a lot of ways."

The increased attendance made normal occurrences more dire, especially those forces over which a global pandemic holds no sway. Wildfires, for instance.

Recently, in late June, an Alaska Fire Service helicopter spotted a column of smoke. The fire started slowly, but by early July had rapidly increased



in size, prompting Braband to clear and close trailheads and prepare for an evacuation. One morning, he woke up at 6 a.m. to a call that a

bear had gotten into the kitchen of a fire service crew.

Other days could be more mundane, where Braband would make contact with campers and hikers at trailheads. And then there are times when he enforces laws and restrictions. As a member of the U.S. Forest Service, Braband is a fully commissioned peace officer.

“I’ve responded to some pretty hot calls with the Alaska State Troopers,” Braband says. “I’ve been the first responder for someone who got shot and helped track down an arsonist.”

Chasing out bears and catching arsonists wasn’t on Braband’s mind when he came to UNI from Des Moines Valley High School. He only knew he wanted a different experience.

“I was really looking for a unique experience where I could branch out on my own,” Braband says. “And I’m really happy with my decision to attend UNI because I had an awesome time there.”

Finding a career in the outdoors

While he earned his degree in [leisure, youth and human services](#) with an emphasis on outdoor recreation, Braband threw himself into outdoor works. He helped with trail construction and controlled burns with the Tallgrass Prairie Center and worked with the Outdoor Recreation Program guiding students on trips.

He also participated in the national student exchange program, traveling to the University of Alaska southeast, where he earned a certificate in outdoor studies and picked up lessons in ice climbing, mountaineering, glacier travel, crevasse rescue and others.

For Braband, UNI offered everything he could imagine.

“The sky was the limit. You’re only limited by your own imagination,” he says. “If you wanted to do something you could probably figure out somebody to help support you and help make that happen.”

After graduating, Braband joined the trail crew of the U.S. Forest Service in the Bob Marshall Wilderness in northwest Montana, where he also spent two years working as a river ranger. He also worked with the outdoor recreation programs of both Sacramento State University and the University of Alaska Fairbanks before becoming the chief ranger of the northern region of the Alaska State Parks.

And while park activity and attendance is starting to come back to normal, he said he looked back on the frantic year of COVID fondly.

“Being able to connect with the natural world is really important for our human existence and I think during stressful times having some place in nature that you can go and kind of recharge and restore is really critical,” Braband says. “And while our park units were in some ways overwhelmed by COVID, it definitely felt good to be able to be a part of providing that kind of escape for people during the pandemic.”

Traci Shipley, Principal



Traci
Shipley
(’13, ASC

Principalship) was used to working long days as principal of River Woods Elementary in Des Moines Public Schools. She’d regularly come in at 6:30 a.m. and stay until at least 5 p.m., managing faculty and students, meeting with parents and sending out school-wide communications. But when COVID-19 hit, her days got even longer and unpredictable. “Things were changing so continuously ... nobody knew what the best thing was to do, every decision was unprecedented,” she says.

ShIPLEY was undeterred. With the support of her district and the help of her assistant principal and staff at River Woods, ShIPLEY facilitated drive-by events, where families could pick up sack lunches and homework packets and technology; attended meetings to make plans for hybrid and virtual class schedules; and even went to families' homes to help them access and understand the tools they'd need for virtual learning. It was challenging but necessary says ShIPLEY, who describes herself as a "hands-on principal," but it was also a lot to process day after day.

"I feel like everything that everybody went through, every emotion everybody went through, I went through it, too, but I went through it quicker," says ShIPLEY. "There was just so much that had to be done ... I just had to keep pushing forward."

She credits UNI with giving her the passion to push through challenges (she holds an [advanced studies certificate \(ASC\)](#) in educational leadership from UNI) and encourages other educators to see challenges as a learning experience. "UNI really instilled in us that it's not OK just to be mediocre. You need to give 110 percent," she says. "Don't focus on the negative. Focus on the positive, and take every opportunity that you have as a learning opportunity to do better. We learned a lot of things that we will do differently to support our students post-COVID."

Some of the things ShIPLEY learned include the benefits of social distancing on campus — ShIPLEY said that in addition to helping prevent the spread of COVID, social distancing markers helped students with body and voice control and she plans to keep them up in the school year-round. She also learned just how much can be accomplished with a strong team and the right attitude.

"Teachers can do amazing things; schools do amazing things. And we do it with little guidance, little financial resources. We figured it out," she says. "Any challenge that I face, after being an administrator during COVID, it's just like a small bump."

Landmark 2+2 distance education program notes 25 years



Just over 25 years ago, the Des Moines Area Community College reached out to the University of Northern Iowa with a problem: Rural areas of Western Iowa were having trouble attracting quality teaching candidates. The solution to this issue is still flourishing today: the [2+2 Elementary Education Program](#), now the longest-running partnership between a university and community college in the state. As the year turned to 2021, the program celebrated its 25th anniversary with the largest student class in its history.

The 2+2 program offers students who cannot relocate to Cedar Falls the ability to take two years of classes at DMACC followed by two years of upper-level classes delivered by UNI through a combination of in-person, online and hybrid approaches.

The program, which has been available at DMACC's Carroll, Ankeny and Boone campuses, has graduated 307 students as of May 2021. Many of these graduates have gone on to teach in rural districts that face an aging teacher population and social and financial challenges to attracting qualified teachers.

“We’re providing rural districts that can have trouble attracting qualified candidates with teachers who are trained by the best teaching school in the state,” said **Marc Renning**, the program coordinator and an instructor with the College of Education.

Graduates rave about the accessibility and educational quality of the program.

“The UNI/DMACC 2+2 program is incredibly convenient, affordable, and understanding of non-traditional students, without watering down the content and importance of learning,” said 2017 graduate Caitlin Bailey, who landed a position in the Waterloo School District upon graduation. “Professors were very flexible and went the extra mile to accommodate our group.”

The success of the program is leading to further opportunity. Beginning in January 2022, the 2+2 program will accept students for new cohorts on an annual basis instead of every two years. To help support this effort, **Erin Conlan** has joined the College of Education as an advisor and student support specialist who will work out of the DMACC urban campus. The college is also working to strengthen agreements with other community colleges whose students can also take advantage of the 2+2 program after completing their two-year degrees.

[Read the full story on the 25th anniversary here.](#)

Exploring hidden links between diversity and leisure

In 1919, Ada S. McKinley founded a settlement house in Chicago to help veterans returning from World War I and homeless families migrating from the South. What she began endures. Today the Ada S. McKinley Community Services helps more than 7,000 people a year in Illinois, Indiana and Wisconsin.



Ada S. McKinley

However, this important Black voice in Chicago history has largely gone unnoticed in contrast to the more well-known settlement activist Jane Addams. Rodney Dieser, professor, recreation, tourism and nonprofit leadership in the University of Northern Iowa College of Education

assistant professor of parks, recreation and tourism management at North Carolina State University, they published [a paper on McKinley](#) which was named Best Research Paper for 2020 by The Academy of Leisure Sciences.

In a feature in InsideUNI in spring 2021, Dieser explained that settlement houses were an early form of community recreation

centers, a focus for the leisure studies scholar. Such centers aimed to promote social connectedness and reduce poverty in low-income areas. In addition to establishing South Side Settlement House, McKinley also worked closely with Addams.

In this Q&A excerpt from the InsideUNI feature, Dieser speaks about his decades-long research on diversity and leisure, this project and its implications, and his vision for the future.

What are some of your research interests? How did they lead to this project on McKinley?

Of the over 100 articles I have published, probably about 70% of my writing is on the issue of diversity. Leisure for people from different ethnic backgrounds, leisure for people with disabilities, leisure for people with mental health struggles, leisure, from a different socioeconomic status, people who are poor, struggling. This latest project with Ada Sophia McKinley, it's just part of the research agenda that I've been doing for 20 years.



Rodney Dieser

How did you get involved in this project?

I was reading about Jane Addams, who is considered the mother of social work, and also parks and recreation and youth services. She created one of the first playgrounds in America. She purchased the house of Charles Hull in Chicago — Hull

House — and in essence she opened up a community recreation center. I wrote a couple of articles on Jane Addams and Hull House. Then I came across this tiny little article. It had Jane Addams holding locking arms with Ada McKinley. I didn't even know who an Ada Sophia McKinley even was. So I started researching a little bit. I presented at the 2017 Canadian Congress on Leisure Research and I had one slide on Ada McKinley, because that's all I knew. After I was done presenting,

a professor from North Carolina State University, Dr. Jerry Lee, came up to me and said, 'Ronnie, I was really intrigued by Ada McKinley ... if I'm willing to take the lead, would you be willing to work together?'

What was the settlement house movement and how does it relate to your work and research?

Ada McKinley, as Jane Addams, they tried to use leisure services and play — play for children, recreation for adolescence and so forth — to build cross cultural bridges. And today, there's an actual theory called contact theory. The general thinking is when you can get people from different elements of diversity together, when they are working together on something, that has benefits. The settlement houses all in general, that's one of the things historically they did well, is they brought in people that could work together. That history really paves the path in front of us, for lessons learned in the profession of leisure services. I think leisure services have a really important place in society, of getting people to recognize the stereotypes that we have and ... work together to realize that in "the other," there are some differences, but there's also some similarities in there, too.

What implications does this have for today, especially during a time when our country is making more efforts to confront racism?

What Ada McKinley did with Jane Addams, I think draws great parallels to right now. We have to acknowledge there's race issues. White people, I think, need to spend a lot more time reflecting and listening. To me, that's what that whole story of Jane Addams and Ada McKinley did — they worked in partnership at a time that was really violent. The 1919 Chicago Race Riot was deadly. And we've seen this in the last four years or so — you're seeing, very similar to what happened to the race riots, an African American person getting killed at the hands of white people. We're in a pretty bad place in America right now. So I think those are parallels and it shows that we can work together, but I do think the onus is more on white people to pause and understand. Gain some empathy. Listen to the stories, know your history and try to be reflective.

What are your plans for future research?

I will continue to write on therapeutic recreation and diversity. With the social settlement houses, the plan is for us to find more social settlement houses that had a diversity perspective. I find it hard to believe that there's only one Ada McKinley, so we need to go out and find these counter narratives that are there. This is connected to a

broader project and a book that I just finished writing that's supposed to come out this summer with Dr. Ken Mobily from the University of Iowa. It's called "Recreation, Underground and Hidden Histories." There's so much writing about how Jane Addams created this playground that was wonderful, but few people know that Jane Addams tore down tenement houses and basically created homelessness amongst immigrant people to build that playground. Each chapter has historical research of those sort of the hidden or ugly parts of the leisure professional. It's not to discredit Jane Addams. It's to tell the truth. It's to tell multiple historical narratives — and that's what I believe the truth is. I don't believe there's one single history. I think there's multiple narratives and counter narratives, and they all need to be shared.

Learn more about careers and studies in the fields of [recreation, tourism and nonprofit leadership](#) at UNI.

Perspectives: Social Justice Teacher Education in an Era of Division

By David Hernández-Saca

David Hernández-Saca is an assistant professor in the Department of Special Education at the College of Education. In his scholarly studies, he focuses on learning disabilities, emotion, culture and dis/ability studies in education.



Since the early months of 2020, each sector of society responded accordingly to meet the demands created by the COVID-19 crisis.

However, the pandemic, and its associated effects, have put a spotlight on historical oppressions that Black, Indigenous and People and communities of Color (BIPOC) have had to and continue to deal with,

due to the legacies of slavery.

As we enter mid-summer 2021, I, along with many others in the United States, realize we are witnessing more than just the COVID-19 pandemic. Another current pandemic is the wave of anti-critical race theory and “divisive concepts” policy bills introduced and passed

through state legislatures, including Iowa's.

The recent bills are born out of fear and ignorance and do not represent the intellectual foundations of critical race theory which was first introduced into sociological and legal studies by African American scholars such as W.E.B. Du Bois (1903) and later developed by Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw (1991), an American lawyer, civil rights advocate, philosopher, and a leading scholar.

As a gay Latinx dis/abled cisgender male dis/ability studies and special education faculty member at the University of Northern Iowa, I see how these bills are further dividing our country along race and other markers of difference. I further recognize that these divisions have a social and emotional dimension within educational contexts as well. I reflect on the urgent need for critical thinking, feeling and reflecting—what we educators call critical emotion praxis as part of social justice-focused teacher education within K-16 education.

Defining a new normal in midst of crisis

To put today's events in historical perspective: After the U.S. Civil War, came a period of reconstruction (1865 to 1877), and after World War II, came a second period of reconstruction, the Civil Rights Movement (1945 to 1968). Some have argued we are living in a third reconstruction period for race-relations, spurred by the deaths of Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery and George Floyd.

During a lecture in January 2021, noted critical race educational theorist and teacher educator Gloria Ladson-Billings, PhD, called for a reset in education given these newfound challenges to justice, and rightly so. She spoke of at least three other pandemics: white supremacy manifested in anti-Black racism; a coming economic collapse; and an environmental/climate catastrophe. Ladson-Billings sees these multiple pandemics as an opportunity to resist going back to "normal," since "normal" for BIPOC in education was unjust.

As part of a recent podcast with UNI colleagues Scott Ellison, Scott McNamara and graduate student Joyce Levingston, we identified another pandemic: misinformation. Prompted by Ladson-Billings' challenge to educational equity researchers and teacher educators, we asked: How can we better respond? Individually and collectively? Personally and professionally?

Today's bills represent an ongoing historical narrative about the unimportance of identity within U.S. institutions, when nothing could

be further from the truth. Ultimately, we came away from our discussion with the reflection: social justice change doesn't just happen; it requires sustained activism and work.

Ensuring a human-centered education

Social justice education is part of that activism. As a social justice educator, it's really about a mind-and-heart-set and preparing teachers and others in education as reflective leaders who are open, collaborative and sharing and actively seek to create equitable learning spaces.

One of the things I engage in with my special and inclusive education candidates here at UNI is accounting for critical emotion practice before we act within educational systems and relationships. These include the technical, contextual and critical components of educational practice.

- The technical components include the policies and practices such as the **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act** or the **Iowa Common Core**.
- Contextual aspects are people, backgrounds, context(s), and local, national and global histories,
- Critical components are emotionality, power, privilege, difference, social justice and identities.

Accounting for all three components is key to ensuring a human-centered education for teacher candidates and their pedagogical practices in K-12 contexts involving students with and without disabilities, especially BIPOC students, so they receive the equal educational opportunities entitled to them under both IDEA and the **Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015**. Such education should go beyond technical compliance, humanizing our moment-to-moment interactions with self, others and macro-level policies and practices in educational systems.

Through critical emotion praxis, it is our hope to enable critical consciousness and critical actions within teacher education, and foster vulnerability and courage in our teacher candidates so they have the capacity to reason and process emotions that may come up when engaging in their relationships with their students and implementing equitable educational practices.

Closing reflection

In the backdrop of current legislation, it is important to apply such a

framework across K-12 educational settings and to take a critical, yet humble stance against such fear and ignorance that erases the lived experiences of BIPOC students and communities. Such bills contribute to a culture of silence, fear, and inaction—which perpetuates the survival of structural racism—and represent the opposite of a spirit of democracy. The U.S. spirit should be one of inclusion beyond disability, and one that accounts for intersectional markers that are sources of decolonization, pride, identity, empowerment and transformation.

The future of teacher education, and K-16 and beyond education, should honor the ongoing civil rights movements toward transformative inclusion for ALL. K-16 educational systems would then account for race, gender, LGBTQIAA, and other forms of difference as sources of radical love—respect, knowledge, responsibility and care (Fromm, 2000)—and thus value, instead of fear and stigma, as recent bills represent. We need teacher education programs that account for the full humanity of our students and families.

Premier Class Notes: Summer 2021

Class Notes are compiled from information sent in personally by alumni and from news releases. If you would like to share your news, go to unalum.org/submit_class_notes or mail to UNI Alumni Association, 304 Commons, Cedar Falls, IA 50614-0284.

Have you moved and need to update your mailing address? Send an email to alumni@uni.edu or call 319-273-2355 to update your information.

From June 1, 2020, to May 14, 2021

1950s

'50 Audrey (Guenther) Ercolini, BA, North Sioux City, SD, is enjoying her new apartment complex with a pool, teaching bridge for the last five years at a senior center, reading and watching old movies.

'56 Joann Beardmore Scott, 2 yr Cert., BA '62, Huxley, retired in 1998 after 42 years of teaching and is excited to have a granddaughter attending UNI.

'59 Gus Pappas, BA, Farmington, NM, retired from teaching in 1991 and has been married to Mary Frances (Brackin) Pappas, BA '58, for 61 years.

1960s

'69 Chuck Gantenbein, BA, MA '73, Mooresville, NC, retired after 44 years as a school psychologist in Iowa, Michigan and North Carolina.

1970s

'70 Barbara (Norris) Corson, MA, Splst '78, Waterloo, was named one of the Waterloo/Cedar Falls Courier's 8 Over 80 for 2020.

'70 Lyle Luckow, BA, Grimes, is enjoying retirement after more than 32 years as a claims adjuster and litigation specialist and more than nine years as a legal administrator and investigator. Working out, traveling, reading and memories of days at UNI fill his days.

'70 Mary (Gehring) Rees, BA, Houston, Texas, earned a PhD in psychology and interdisciplinary inquiry from Saybrook University in San Francisco, Calif., in 2019.

'73 Linda (Wulf) Peeters, BA, Eldridge, retired in May 2012 after teaching special education for 39 years in the Davenport Community Schools.

'77 Charlene (Western) Montgomery, MA, Waterloo, was named one of the Waterloo/Cedar Falls Courier's 8 Over 80 for 2020.

1980s

'82 Julie (Moeller) Jensen, BA, Marion, retired from educational administration with Grant Wood Area Education Agency in 2019. Her career also included time with Linn Mar schools and the Iowa Department of Education.

'83 Kirk Anderson, BA, MA '85, Mission Viejo, CA, was named one of the 100 Most Influential People of 2020 by the Orange County Register. He is program administrator for Juvenile Hall School and created the first distance learning model for incarcerated youth in OC during the pandemic.

'89 Lora (Moore) Kester, BA, Marshalltown, is principal and district curriculum coordinator at Mease Elementary in the Humboldt (Iowa) Community School District.

1990s

'90 Lexy (Kness) Davies, BA, Clarinda, is the county youth coordinator for ISU Extension & Outreach in Page County.

'91 Rodney Zehr, BA, MA '02, Mason City, was awarded the Excellence in Teaching Award in Mathematics Education for Arts and Science at

North Iowa Area Community College.

'92 Korina (Dolen) Carlson, BA, MA '99, La Porte City, received the 2021 Gold Star Award for Outstanding Teaching. She is a 10-12th grade Spanish teacher at Union High School.

'93 Aimee (Weld) Hospodarsky, BA, MA, Monticello, was named the 2021 School Counselor of the Year by the Iowa School Counselor Association. She represented the state at a nationwide virtual gala.

'93 Tony Reed, BA, Marshalltown, has been executive director of the Central Iowa Juvenile Detention Center for 25 years.

'96 Amy (Slickers) McGovern, BA, Waterloo, received the 2021 Gold Star Award for Outstanding Teaching. She is a talented and gifted teacher at Lou Henry and Lowell Elementary Schools.

'97 Jason Knittel, BA, MA '04, ASC '14, EdD '19, Dysart, received the 2021 Gold Star Award for Outstanding Teaching. He is a 9-10th grade history teacher at East High School, Waterloo.

'98 Allison (Heland) Behne, BA, Jefferson, earned an MS degree from Walden University in 2005 and co-authored a book titled "The CAFE Book, Expanded Second Edition."

'98 Fred Lowery, MA, Grand Island, Neb., is in his 10th year teaching special education at Grand Island Senior High School. He is part of the Engineering and Technology Academy and teaches transition-related classes.

'99 Megan (Donahue) Youngkent, BA, Cedar Falls, received the 2021 Golden Plaque Award for Distinguished Coaching Golf from the Iowa High School Girls Athletic Union.

2000s

'01 Sammy Spann, MA, Toledo, Ohio, received the 2020 Distinguished Alumni Award from the Judith Herb College of Education at the University of Toledo. He is the associate vice president and dean of students at the University of Toledo.

'03 Jane (Kelly) Cline, BA, Waverly, received the 2021 Gold Star Award for Outstanding Teaching. She is a second grade teacher at North Cedar Elementary, Cedar Falls.

'03 Jesse Henderson, BA, MA '06, Waterloo, is nearing completion of

a double masters degree in public policy.

'03 Guy Sims, EdD, Blacksburg, VA, was appointed chief diversity and inclusion officer of The Free Library of Philadelphia in December 2020.

'03 Kelli Snyder, BA, EdD '12, Dunkerton, was named one of the Cedar Valley's 20 under 40 by the Waterloo/Cedar Falls Courier for 2020. She is an associate professor of health, recreation and community services at UNI.

'04 Griff Jurgens, BA, Honolulu, Hawaii, was named one of the Pacific Business News 40 under 40 for 2020. He is the education director of the Blue Planet Foundation, which is dedicated to clean energy initiatives.

'04 Ashley (Atherton) Thompson, BA, Ames, was featured as the cover story in the May 2020 issue of Business Record Iowa as part of its Rural Health and Healthcare Issue. She is the system director of government and external affairs for UnityPoint Health.

'05 Tara Raymond, BA, Cedar Falls, was named one of the Cedar Valley's 20 under 40 by the Waterloo/Cedar Falls Courier for 2020. She is a physical education teacher at Orange Elementary School.

'06 Brian Downing, MA, ASC '06, Milford, was named Iowa Bandmaster's Administrator of the Year for 2020.

'07 Pam (Davey) Bellows, BA, Parkersburg, received the 2021 Gold Star Award for Outstanding Teaching. She is a fourth grade teacher at Aldrich Elementary, Cedar Falls.

'07 Kyle Reeve, BA, Vinton, is principal at Tilford Elementary School in the Vinton Shellsburg Community School District.

'09 La Toshia Burrell, MA, Waverly, was named one of the Cedar Valley's 20 under 40 by the Waterloo/Cedar Falls Courier for 2020. She is the director of employee engagement at The Accel Group.

'09 Kimberly (Fleming) Mayer, BA, Saint Ansgar, earned a masters in teaching from Morningside College and is in her eleventh year of teaching.

2010s

'10 Creighton Jenness, BA, ASC '19, Humboldt, is assistant principal at the middle school of Humboldt Community School District.

'10 Shaun Juan, MA, San Diego, Calif., won awards at the 2019 and 2020 Indica in High Times Cannabis Cup Oregon with Deschutes Growery.

'10 Amy (Costliow) McKinney, BA, MA '12, Taga Cay, S.C., is the program development manager with Novant Health Presbyterian Medical Center Foundation.

'12 Alex Davey, BA, MA '16, Byron, Ga., is an environmental health specialist III with the Houston County Health Department.

'12 Megan (Kammarmeyer) McKenzie, BA, Manchester, was named one of the Cedar Valley's 20 under 40 by the Waterloo/Cedar Falls Courier for 2020. She is executive director of the R.J. McElroy Trust.

'13 Jesus Lizarraga Estrada, BA, MA '17, Cedar Falls, was named one of the Cedar Valley's 20 under 40 by the Waterloo/Cedar Falls Courier for 2020. He is the associate director for freshmen recruitment and access at UNI.

'14 Sheila Hollingsworth, MA, Waterloo, received the 2021 Gold Star Award for Outstanding Teaching. She is a first grade teacher at Irving Elementary.

'14 Joyce Levingston, BA, MA '17, Cedar Falls, was named one of the Cedar Valley's 20 under 40 by the Waterloo/Cedar Falls Courier for 2020. She is a community leader and director of One City's momentum program.

'14 Tyler Perry, BA, Alleman, is the family services coordinator for Des Moines Habitat for Humanity.

'15 Alyssa Turcsak, BA, Lansing, Mich., is the fundraising coordinator at Constellation Cat Cafe.

'16 Sarah (Hanson) Green, BA, West Des Moines, is vice president of philanthropy for Lutheran Services in Iowa.

'18 Renae Drey, BA, Cedar Falls, received the 2021 Gold Star Award for Outstanding Teaching. She is a first-second grade teacher at St. Patrick's Catholic School.

'18 Veronica (Greene) Schiltz, BA, Overland Park, Kan., is a student at Cleveland Chiropractic College.



In Memoriam

'51 **DeWaine Silker, BA**, died 11/4/2020 in LaCrosse, Wis.

'52 **Harold Burshtan, BA**, died 10/13/2020 in Wheaton, Ill.

'62 **Bonnie (Debower) McKean, BA**, died 1/20/2021 in Bonita Springs, Fla.

'71 **Diana (Wicks) Johnson, BA**, died 9/26/2020 in Zearing.

'79 **Karen (Stoever) Hansen, BA**, died 8/27/2020 in Buckeye, Ariz.

'63 **Sharron (Hanson) McElmeel, BA**, died 7/26/21 in Cedar Rapids, Iowa

Celebrating Excellence: Summer 2021

Amy Schmidt receives Educational Leadership Legacy Award



Amy Schmidt ('99 BA, '14 ASC-Principalship) has been awarded the 2021 UNI Educational Leadership Legacy Award.

Schmidt currently serves as Hoover Middle School principal in the Waterloo Community School

District. She completed the Advanced Studies Certificate (ASC)-Principalship program in 2014, and was immediately hired as the Irving Elementary principal. She has been with Hoover since 2018. At UNI, she was a dual major in elementary and early childhood education.

Schmidt is a regular guest speaker for students seeking their ASC or MAE offered by the UNI College of Education principalship program. Nominators wrote: "Amy is an outstanding listener who genuinely cares about the perspectives and lenses that others share with her. Her ability to listen and understand those perspectives allow her to respond to situations in ways that validate concerns, solve problems and restore dignity all at the same time."

The UNI Educational Leadership Legacy Award program is sponsored in part by a gift in memory of former educational leader, Vernon Kirlin

(BA, '46). It recognizes graduates of the UNI educational leadership programs who demonstrate its core values of learning, service and change. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, no award was given in 2020.

UNI among best graduate schools for master's in education and online programs



The College of Education was among those receiving significant recognition in early 2021 with the announcement of two rankings by U.S. News & World Report:

- Top 25% in online master's of education programs for 2021
- Among 2022 US News and World Report "Best Graduate Schools" for its graduate education courses.

The college offers 11 master's programs in education represented within the parameters of the "best graduate schools" ranking, from early childhood, elementary and special education advanced degrees to literacy education, postsecondary education: student affairs, school psychology and principalship.

"This comprehensive ranking for the entirety of our master's in education programs at the college speaks to the quality of the continuum of professional preparation for educators offered at University of Northern Iowa," said UNI College of Education Dean Colleen Mulholland. "Paired with our doctoral program and complementary graduate degrees in secondary education and related areas like school counseling, UNI is certainly a leading choice for future and current educators and administrators."

In addition, in its first year of submitting information for the online ranking, the UNI programs tied for 72nd among 296 ranked programs. Seven of the nine programs included in the submission were College of Education programs, all coordinated by the UNI Online and Distance Education.

"These rankings highlight how well established UNI is in the preparation of high quality educators who commit to the profession of teaching and lead from their classrooms, no matter the format," adds Dean Mulholland.

University awards and recognition



UNI Outstanding Teaching Award: **Ron Rinehart**, Educational Psychology, Foundations and Leadership Studies

2021 faculty summer fellowships

- Curriculum and Instruction: **Laura Edwards, Joan Bessman Taylor, Irene Walker, Beth VanMeeteren**
- Educational Psychology, Foundations and Leadership Studies: **Morgan Anderson, Gregory Bourassa, Suzanne Freedman, Shelley Price-Williams**
- Kinesiology: **Scott McNamara, Terence Moriarty**
- Special Education: **Whitney Hanley**

Each faculty member received an award of up to \$4,000 for research to extend their knowledge in a focused area related to their discipline.

Alumna among Presidential Award finalists

Recognized this year as a 2021 finalist in the Presidential Awards for Excellence In Mathematics and Science Teaching is **Sarah Martin**, (BA, '99; elementary education/middle level dual; MA, '11, math, middle level). She teaches at Shenandoah (Iowa) Middle School. This is the highest recognition for teachers in the United States.

Faculty and staff honored by peers

- **Becky Hawbaker**, Department of Teaching, received the AAUP Outstanding Achievement Award from the American Association of University Presidents in May.
- **Chelsea Lowe**, Health, Recreation and Community Services, was awarded College/University Athletic Trainer of the Year by the Iowa Athletic Trainers' Society.

Rouse joins Board of Regents

Greta Rouse (M.A., '12), a leisure, youth and human services alumna from Emmetsburg, Iowa, was appointed to the Board of Regents, State of Iowa.

COE undergrads and grad students earn UNI student awards

2021 Student Leadership Awards

Three College of Education students were among those honored during the 2021 Student Leadership Awards which were again held virtually.

They included:

- Drake Martin Gold Star Award: **Josh Malek**, elementary education/middle level dual.
- Dr. Sue Follon Scholarship for Women in Leadership: **Joana Maria**, elementary education/middle level dual major
- Outstanding President in a Student Organization: **Kara Hooper**, public health and education double major (wellness and fitness, women's health)

Graduate College awards for Outstanding Doctoral Dissertation

- First place: **Belinda Creighton-Smith**, Ed.D., emphasis in allied health, recreation and community services, "A Study to Explore Linkages Between Reports of Institutional Racial Oppression, International Racial Oppression and Self-Efficacy in African American Youth in Predominantly White Colleges and Universities (PWIs)."
- Second place: **Rob Griffin**, Ed.D., emphasis in educational leadership, "Grading and Equity: Inflation/Deflation Based on Race, Gender, Socio-economic and Disability Status when Homework and Employability Scores are Included."

College News and Notes: Summer 2021

New look, feel to UNI brand reflects the UNI story



University of Northern Iowa introduced a new brand on February 8, 2021, with the launch of a new identity and an updated story which focuses on our core purpose: to help our students achieve their unrealized potential.

An initial flurry of communications in February to the UNI internal community, alumni and friends launched the initiative which was the culmination of nearly two years of effort. A research-based endeavor, the planning included input from nearly 4,000 constituents to help lay the foundation for the brand platform, messaging, creative and visual identity which emerged.

For the College of Education, that has meant a new logo lockup for the college, its departments and units and the beginning of an updated brand story -- including a new look for our website now in progress. You can also expect to see an updated Premier alumni magazine in the next year. [Read more about the new UNI brand.](#)

New year brings leadership changes

- **Benjamin Forsyth** has shifted from his position as head, Department of Educational Psychology, Foundations and Leadership Studies (EPFLS), to director, educator preparation. This College of Education position is part of a merger of the Office of Teacher Education and the COE Office of Advising into a new College of Education Advising and Teacher Education Success (CATS) Office. The CATS office will dually serve the advising needs of the college as well as oversee the admission and licensure preparation process for all undergraduate UNI Teacher Education students.
- **Robert Boody** will serve as the one-year interim department head for EPFLS.
- **Robin Dada** will serve a one-year appointment as interim head, Special Education, in addition to her role as head, Curriculum and Instruction. **Susan Etscheidt**, past head, is resuming teaching research and grant work.
- **Stephanie Schmitz**, associate dean, is returning to full-time teaching as part of the school psychology faculty.

Spring heralds completion of first Teach Waterloo class



The

triumvirate is complete. With spring 2021 commencement, **Pamela Palmer** and **Benjamin Smith** joined **Dawn Boone** as the first graduates of the Teach Waterloo program.

Palmer and Smith officially joined the ranks of graduates on May 8 after student teaching, while Boone finished in November 2020. The three began a shared journey in summer 2018 as part of the first class for this initiative intended to increase diversity within the teaching

workforce. It's been a partnership of the University of Northern Iowa College of Education and the Waterloo Community School District, with funding support from the McElroy Trust. [Read more.](#)

Boone, Palmer and Smith were also featured in [UNI Magazine](#). A second cohort of 8 students will begin its second year of studies this fall.

Kern grant extends impact of Institute for Educational Leadership

A new five-year, \$2.57 million grant from the Kern Family Foundation will bolster the University of Northern Iowa's Institute for Educational Leadership's "Leading and Learning with Character" program, which has provided professional development for Iowa school leaders since 2018.

"This work is focused on rich dialogue around ethical, character-driven leadership that positively impacts schools and communities," said **Denise Schares**, director and associate professor of educational psychology, foundations and leadership studies, in a UNI Foundation release. "We are creating a model of support for educational leadership and character development that is being shared nationally."

The first phase of the program was targeted to principals, superintendents and school board members in Iowa's rural school districts that may have limited access to professional development. The new grant will allow the IEL to connect with new audiences such as non-public school leaders, leaders supporting special education teachers and classroom teachers. With this second phase, Schares estimates that, cumulatively, the program should reach 75 percent of Iowa school districts and more than 3,000 educators.

The new funding coincides with recently enacted state standards for leadership, including an ethics standard, an area of focus for the program. The grant supports IEL leadership and staffing.

Pre-service teachers gather on Zoom for STEM education

face-to-face gatherings for the school year. This past spring, the College of Education's commitment to professional development and engagement was maintained with several notable virtual conferences:

- **African American Read-In**, which connected with nearly 1,000 first graders in Waterloo and Hudson schools despite a switch to a virtual format for its 15th year.
- **African American Children and Families Conference**, with around 400 registrants for its 10th year
- A series of nine sessions in the **Virtuous Educator Speaker Series** which averaged 22 to 38 attendees
- **Carlton-Mellichamp Lecture in Education**, March 30 and 31, with about 125 participants in four sessions. Guest speaker Justin Haegele, a leader in adapted physical education, led a virtual keynote presentation on "Questioning the Inclusiveness of Education," along with smaller conversations with fellow professionals, faculty and students.

Planning committees, particularly for the African American Read-In and African American Children and Families Conference, worked in conjunction with UNI information technology partners to ensure successful connections --sometimes, thousands of miles apart.

illuminating educators, students and staff



Steps toward broader conversation regarding diversity, equity and inclusion continued this past spring with these initiatives:

• A second "Diversity Dialogue" with teacher education students, featuring a virtual panel discussion on "Engaging in Difficult Conversations," a topic that emerged from a previous dialogue session. Among the panelists participating were alumni: **Brandy Smith** (BA, '95; MA, '05; EdD, '18), Cedar Rapids AEA early childhood consultant; **Zeina Yousof** (MA, '10; EdD, '16) school psychology graduate student; and **Sheena Canady** (MA, '15; ASC, '16) principal, George Washington Carver Academy, Waterloo

"The panel was amazing—such a great group of educators with diverse

experiences and backgrounds,” says Stephanie Schmitz, associate dean. “They were able to share experiences, learnings and suggestions with the groups and there were some good student questions as well.”

- “Illuminating Educator Series,” an opportunity to supplement information from classes with topical virtual conversations.

Speakers included:

- **Susan Etscheidt**, professor, special education, “What all educators need to know about IEPs and 504 plans.”
- School psychology graduate students **Leigh Hanefeld** and **Linda Spencer**. “Educating Educators about Student Mental Health Issues.”
- Book club review of “This Book Is Anti-Racist: 20 Lessons on How to Wake up, Take Action and Do the Work.”

Students present at UNI research conferences

Research at both the undergraduate and graduate levels is a distinctive part of the experience at UNI and the college. College of Education students participated in these spring sessions:

Honors Research Day

- **Baylee Smith**, elementary education/middle level dual: “Applying the Education Debt to Waterloo, Iowa,”
- **Grace Brady**, elementary education/middle level dual: “A Critical Examination of Corporate Ideology in Educational Policy and Practice: The Real Cost”

INSPIRE student research and engagement conference

- **Kristina Cavey**, kinesiology graduate program: “Halo Sport Ergonomic Effects on Older Individuals' Cognitive, Balance and Motor Performance.” Co-authored with COE faculty member **Kelsey Bourbeau**, it also received the 2020 Midwest Regional Chapter of the American College of Sports Medicine: Outstanding Graduate Research Project of the Year.
- **Abigail Auten**, kinesiology graduate program: “Effects of Transcranial Direct Stimulation of the Motor Cortex on Cycling Time Trial Performance and Prefrontal Cortex-A. Co-authored with Cavey and **Emily Busta**.

New program and options: Student affairs goes

online, public health major refined

New online option for student affairs professionals. In June, [a new online option](#) for students seeking to advance their career in the field of student affairs in postsecondary education received approval. This new, flexible pathway to the MA degree is in addition to the popular on-campus option which remains.

Regents approve redefined public health program. Beginning fall 2021, students in the Department of Health, Recreation and Community Services will earn a degree in public health, formally public health and education. "In our rapidly evolving environment, there is a great need to improve overall health and reduce risk to populations within communities. These professional areas of study are more important than ever," says **Kathleen Scholl**, department head. With this latest update, students can earn public health degrees with an emphasis in community health or environmental health science. They can also seek certificates in corporate fitness, wellness, women's health and global health and humanitarian studies.

Grants bring added opportunity for faculty, students

Space grant supports learning tool using NASA scenarios

Dana Atwood-Blaine, assistant professor and Jacobson Science Fellow, is among a group of four UNI faculty and staff who received a \$9,999 grant by the Iowa Space Grant Consortium for the project NASA Scenarios for Distanced STEM Curriculum on Information Literacy and Science Communication. The group plans to create an interactive prototype learning tool based on near-future NASA exploration scenarios which will engage students from diverse backgrounds and support remote teaching.

New grant awarded to CET will focus on trauma-informed care.

A new multi-year grant from Cedar Valley United Way will support a new partnership between the Waterloo Community School District (WCSD) and the UNI Center for Educational Transformation (CET). The program -- We Can! Building Relationships and Resilience -- has a goal to develop a system of trauma-informed care in the home and at school to help teachers and parents better recognize and respond to the symptoms of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). **Lisa Hooper**, Richard O. Jacobson Endowed Chair for Research and director of the

CET, says the economic, cultural and health impacts of the past year's pandemic added even greater urgency for trauma-informed training. The program will include partnering with parents and be culturally tailored to the specific needs of Waterloo community, families and school districts.

Faculty retirements

At the end of the 2020-21 academic year, the UNI College of Education wished a happy retirement to the following faculty and instructors who, collectively, represent 115 years of service to UNI and the college.

- **Barbara Bakker**, 14 years, Health, recreation and community services
- **Lynne Ensworth**, 25 years, Curriculum and instruction
- **Lea Ann Shaddox**, 36 years, Kinesiology
- **Deb Tidwell**, 31 years, Curriculum and instruction
- **Catherine Zeman**, 29 years, Health, recreation and community services

New student council, additions to Dean's Advisory group

A new Student Leadership Council composed of student leaders of College of Education-related student organizations and other key student roles was formed in spring 2021. "This will give our students an added voice at the table, and also allow us to build their capacity for leadership," says Dean **Colleen Mulholland**.

The student group joins the COE Leadership Council (deans, department heads, marketing and development) and the COE Dean's Advisory Council in providing leadership, guidance and advocacy for the college. New representatives for the COE Advisory Council include:

- **Ron Rinehart**, EPFLS, a COE faculty representative
- **Victoria Robinson**, emeritus professor, has also joined the council
- **Stephanie Mohorne**, associate superintendent, Waterloo Community School District

The dean's advisory council is primarily an external group of leaders in education, business and government. [See the full listing of members.](#)

Foundation News: Summer 2021

Hampton senior receives 2021 Strottman Scholarship



Rebekah (Bekah) Craighton, a senior at Hampton Dumont High School in Hampton, Iowa, was this year's recipient of the Sally Gearhart Strottman Memorial Scholarship in Elementary Education.

"Bekah will be a great teacher someday. She will teach with empathy, love and integrity," said one of her references in her application.

The \$10,000 scholarship is renewable for a total of four years. Awardees are selected from applications from 19 counties in northeast Iowa. The scholarship honors the late Sally Gearhart Strottman (1970, BA), a former educator in the Waverly-Shell Rock school district.

Gifts continue to make a difference

Hello Panther Family!



Thank you to all who made generous gifts to support students, programs, and faculty within the University of Northern Iowa College of Education. You are making a difference and impacting student success through your gifts.

Sharing a story on the difference a professor made on you as a student, how you met your soulmate at the dining hall or a shared class, and how groups of you still gather annually or as often as possible to reminisce about your time continues to inspire me about how much of an impact UNI has on you long after you graduate.

UNI alumni and friends continue to make a difference at UNI and the College of Education through their philanthropy in 2021. New scholarships and opportunities for program support were funded through generous gifts. Through this generosity, so many will feel the impact of these future graduates--in the classroom, in the community, in the office or on the field.

To give UNI students the highest quality learning environment and ensure a UNI education continues to be affordable, donor support takes on an even greater significance. I invite you to join us in taking the necessary steps to ensure a UNI education remains accessible and affordable for all. With your investment in scholarships, students can focus on their studies, enjoy all that a university education offers and contribute to our society and economy.

Please consider making a gift to support student scholarship or another area of passion. For more information, please contact me at 800-782-9522, 319-273-7319, or kimberly.hanna@uni.edu ✉

Go Panthers!

Kim Hanna '04
Director of Development, College of Education

FY21 Donor Roll

Thank you to the following donors who made cash contributions to the college between July 1, 2020 and June 30, 2021.

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