



Ph.D. Education Leadership, Research, and Policy Newsletter – June, 2023



PhD Educational Leadership,
Research, and Policy

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO COLORADO SPRINGS

It's been an unusually busy (and rainy) spring/summer within the College of Education. We are very proud of our 10 PhD graduates from this past spring, and we are looking forward to welcoming new students in the fall after receiving a record-number of applications for admission to the PhD program. Combined with the usual hectic pace of the end of the semester – May became a battle against exhaustion for many. Fortunately, summer provides time to recharge, refocus, and remember that there is life outside the classroom, office, library, or school. Remember to take a break every once in a while and enjoy the outside and the quiet before the excitement of another academic year begins again in August. Colorado is amazing – even if you just want to look at the mountains from afar.

Dr. Robert Mitchell

Dr. Witkowsky heads to sea

Dr. Patty Witkowsky was recently selected to join the Fall, 2023 Semester at Sea to serve as the Residence Director for the global learning ship as it travels throughout Europe, Asia, and Africa. For Witkowsky, this is a long-term goal that connects to both her passion for global education and college student development.



“Sailing on the Fall 2023 Semester at Sea voyage is a 20-year dream in the making,” said Witkowsky. “I first learned about this opportunity while pursuing my master’s degree in student affairs. I interviewed once in 2004, but I had other responsibilities that prevented me from pursuing the opportunity further. Now that I have a sabbatical, I will be serving as a Resident Director, which will call upon my student affairs educator roots of community development, programming, and wellness.”

The 105-day journey will visit 11 countries on three continents. Witkowsky begins the journey in Belgium in September and finishes in December in Thailand. This opportunity provides Witkowsky to connect with higher education administration practice, but also provides other benefits that will impact her entire family.

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Semester at Sea's MV World Odyssey

"I am thrilled to be able to combine my passions of contributing to students' intercultural development with my own travels and exploration of the world. My family will be joining me as well, so this is an amazing opportunity for our 10- and 12-year-old sons to learn more about themselves and the world around them at an influential age."

Patty's dedication to expanding her and her student's perceptions of global mindedness has been consistent throughout her time in higher education. Her previous work with the former Global Intercultural Research Center at UCCS, and her willingness to take students on trips around the world are designed to provide global and diverse perspectives – not just on higher education and student affairs, but also on larger issues such as social and cultural diversity, equity, and bias.

"This quote sums up the ultimate purpose of our participation in Semester at Sea," said Witkowski. "Mark Twain wrote, 'Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness, and many of our people need it sorely on these accounts. Broad, wholesome, charitable views of men and things cannot be acquired by vegetating in one little corner of the earth all one's lifetime.'"



*Associate Professor
Dr. Patty Witkowski*

I mportant dates and reminders:

- July 31, 2023 – Synthesis submissions due by 12:00 p.m. (Mountain time)
- August 14-15 – Ph.D. synthesis review
- August 21 – Fall, 2023 semester begins
- September 4 – Labor Day (no classes & campus closed)
- Mid-November – Last day for dissertation defense (*exact date: TBA*)
- November 20-26 – Fall break
- December 15 – Winter commencement
- January 16 – Spring, 2024 semester begins

S tudent and Alumni Updates:

Dr. Kathryn Watson ('23) was selected for a post-doctoral fellowship at the University of Iowa for this fall ... **Derion Ibarra** (2nd year) recently co-submitted a \$1.3 million dollar grant to the U.S. Department of Education to develop university pathways for high achieving students in eastern Colorado ... **Marissa Williams** (2nd year) has been named the Graduate Student Representative for the Northern Rocky Mountain Educational Research Association (NRMERA). She will be

attending the 40th annual NRMERA conference in Omaha from October 4-6. Marissa also got married in June, 2023 ... **Dr. Jonathan Hood** ('23) led the Vassar men's soccer team to a 9-3-7 record and to the second round of the NCAA Division III championships in his first year as head coach of the Brewers ... **Dr. Rachel Cullen** ('23) has joined the Flippen Group (while continuing her classroom teaching) to support educator learning on Capturing Kids' Hearts. She also presented at the Innovation Education Colorado (InnEdCO) conference in early June ... **Dale Wilson** (ABD) was featured on a recent podcast from The Warrior Scholar Project about his work in strengthening military to higher education pipelines ... **Anneke Bruwer** (1st year) will be teaching first and second year students at Pike Peak State College this fall in the Psychology Department ... **Monica Furey** (ABD) has had a busy year as she continues her k-12 leadership as a board member for Cheyenne Mountain Schools and as a regional representative for the Colorado Association of School Boards. She will also be presenting at the Council for Social Work Education in Atlanta and contributed a chapter to the forthcoming book *Trauma and the Social Work Classroom* and will be defending her dissertation later this summer ... **Joe Palmer** (ABD) has been named to the American Council of Academic Physical Therapy's task force on clinical partner engagement in academic physical therapy. He is one of ten members of the taskforce for the national professional organization ... **Daniel Kirby** (1st year) will be serving as a Graduate Assistant with Dr. Mendez in 2023-24 and has been selected as the evaluator for a component of Colorado's Opportunity Now grant program ... **Kristi Maida** (ABD) has relocated to Durham, NC to begin her dream job as the Director of Education at PBS-North Carolina. She will be hosting an early childhood education summit in June and has been named a fellow with the North Carolina Education Policy Fellowship ... **Evelyn Adams** (1st year) recently completed her 20th year of teaching in Colorado. She plans to celebrate this accomplishment by hiking in Colorado's mountains, visiting family in New York State, and completing her Synthesis I project ... Checking in from Vermont, **Valerie Roberts** (ABD) finished her first year as a special education teacher. Wearing many hats, she provided instruction in English, Fine Arts, Spanish and Credit Recovery... **Michelle Kephart** (1st year) and several colleagues recently has a manuscript titled "The Impact of Academic Transformational Mentoring in an Online Nursing Program" accepted for publication in July ... Recent graduate **Dr. Kari Kuskie** (nee McIntyre, '23) has been invited to share her dissertation research on resilience at a private wellness retreat in the fall ... **Kristi McCann** (ABD) has also been busy with four academic presentations throughout the spring and summer, winning the Graduate Stop Scholar award at Mountain Lion Research Day, securing a mentored doctoral fellowship for 2023-24, and her promotion to Principal Instructor in the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry.

If you have updates or news you would like to share, please send an e-mail to: rmitchel@uccs.edu for inclusion in future newsletters

Faculty News: **Dr. Joe Taylor** has been awarded tenure within the College of Education at UCCS. This notable achievement recognizes Dr. Taylor's excellence in scholarship, teaching, and service to the college, university, and the profession ... **Dr. Sylvia Mendez** recently returned to campus from sabbatical and has assumed the role of department chair following the departure of **Dr. Andrea Bingham**. Dr. Bingham was recently appointed as a faculty member at California State University Channel Islands in Camarillo, California ... **Dr. Robert Mitchell** was the invited guest speaker at the Voices of Rural Colorado event in February where he spoke about the connection between education and the rural labor force ... **Dr. Nick Fuselier** has been exceptionally busy with the publication of journal articles in *College Student Affairs Journal* and *Innovative Higher Education*. He also had two book chapters published and presented with **Emily**

Kulakowski (ABD) at the ACPA annual meeting in New Orleans ... **Dr. Elisa Thompson** attended two Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) conferences this spring – the CU Social Justice Summit, and the UCCS Knapsack Institute. Both events support Dr. Thompson's service as a UCCS College of Education DEI Committee member and as an Inclusion and Excellence Partner for the UCCS Division of DEI. Additionally, both events offered many opportunities to strengthen her skills as an inclusive educator ... **Dr. Phillip Morris** and several of his doctoral lab students had the article Engagement and withdrawal for community college student veterans in the *Community College Journal of Research & Practice* ... **Dr. Robert Mitchell** was appointed to the State of Colorado Accountability, Accreditation, Student Performance, and Resource Inequity Task Force associated with Colorado House Bill 23-1241.

Commencement – Spring, 2023

The largest Educational Leadership, Research, & Policy Ph.D. graduating class recently celebrated their achievements at the Spring, 2023 UCCS commencement. Ten individuals completed their degrees and were hooded by their respective dissertation chairs.



(photos courtesy of UCCS)

A list of graduates and dissertation titles follow:

- Natalia Brunton – *Equity in Colorado public school funding*
- Rachel Cullen – *The cyclical experience of teacher-coaches: Understanding role conflict and relationships with students and athletes*
- Jeanette Dias – *An analysis of the Montana university system performance funding policy*
- Jonathan Hood – *The role of division III athletes in the workplace*
- Chelsea Lawson – *Authenticity and assessments: Using state assessment data to understand the impact of federal education policy change*
- Desiree Lovato – *Perceptions of public, voluntary feedback interactions*
- Kari McIntyre – *Fostering resilience through university resilience centers: Three models of intervention*
- Elizabeth Peterson – *Moving beyond the ordinal methodological controversy: A systemic review; Cubic spline interpolation for the treatment of ordinal outcome data in education: A model fit comparison of parallel approaches; Cubic spline interpolation for the treatment of ordinal outcome data in education: An empirical examination of select approaches*
- Kathryn Watson – *Meta-analysis of school-based mental health interventions*
- Paige Whitney – *Personal, behavioral, and environmental domains influencing the perceived health of university employees*



Congratulations to all our graduates!