



Ph.D. Education Leadership, Research, and Policy Newsletter – January, 2022



PhD Educational Leadership,
Research, and Policy

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO **COLORADO SPRINGS**

Welcome back. While 2021 was a difficult year to be certain, when I look around this January there is a feeling of resilience as we adjust to our ongoing COVID world. This issue expands upon the concepts of resilience, and includes an interview with UCCS Ph.D. graduate Dr. Justin Stoddard whose research centers overcoming adversity and barriers to success. This newsletter also features our most recent retiree, Dr. Dick Carpenter. As many of you know, Dr. Carpenter was instrumental in the development and expansion of the Ph.D. program and his continuous work leading dissertations and quantitative data analysis helped make the program what it is today. Page three features a run-down on the contributions of Dr. Carpenter and it is well worth a read. As always, please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or story ideas for upcoming newsletters. Have a great 2022!

- Dr. Robert Mitchell

Welcome 2021 Cohort!

The LRF Department welcomed eleven new doctoral students to UCCS in August, 2021. This group of students marks the start of the eleventh year of the Ph.D. program in Leadership, Research and Policy – a program with more than 100 graduates! A brief introduction to each student is listed below:

Jennifer Abeyta – Currently a school administrator in the Aurora Public Schools, Jennifer returned to UCCS after earning her M.A. in Curriculum and Instruction. She also spent her undergraduate years in Colorado Springs attending Colorado College.

Talha Elsayed – The current Imam and Executive Director of the Albuquerque Islamic Center, Talha is a former resident of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and completed his undergraduate studies at the Islamic University in Al Medina before graduate work in Egypt.

Brittany Galaydick – A long-time k-12 educator, Brittany returned to UCCS after completing her MA in Leadership in 2020. She currently teaches English at Mesa Ridge High School and attended Colorado State University as an undergraduate.

Bridget Guerrero – Bridget is a professional in the new Colorado Cybersecurity Apprentice Program at UCCS and is also the founder and CEO of One World Quest, a non-profit focused on developing global perspectives for k-12 students in real-world situations.

Derion Ibarra – Derion is presently the Executive Director of Greatness – an organization focused on health, education and performance opportunities in the greater Pueblo area. After obtaining his Bachelor of Science from CSU – Pueblo, he completed his Master of Arts in Educational Leadership from UCCS.

Ann Kasunich – Ann is the Founder and Owner of Well Chosen, a professional coaching service that focuses on leadership. She also has experience in the education profession as an administrator in both Colorado and California. Ann received her B.A. from Miami University in Oxford, Ohio and her MBA at the University of the Redlands.

James Mattox – James Mattox is a former senior leader in the U.S. Army where he served as the Chief Operating Officer for the Mission Command Training Program at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. James is a long-time Mountain Lion after receiving his undergraduate degree at UCCS.



Emma Reeve-Lobaugh – A former Iowan, Emma received her BA and MA from the University of Northern Iowa. She currently teaches English/Language Arts at Lewis-Palmer High School in Colorado Springs. Past experience also includes international school education based in Cairo.

Leslie Rutberg – The founder of Smart Prep Colorado, Leslie is a long-time educator with experience as a high school English teacher. She also has extensive experience in working in Gifted Education. Leslie completed her undergraduate in Flagstaff at Northern Arizona University.

Ida Wilding – Currently teaching as an American Sign Language (ASL) Senior Instructor at UCCS, Ida joins the Ph.D. cohort with extensive experience in providing ASL instruction with a focus on equity and access in education. She earned both her B.A. and M.A. from Gallaudet University.

Marissa Williams – Marissa comes to UCCS from Tennessee where she served as a middle school English/Historical Literacy/SPED teacher. She completed her undergraduate education at Tusculum College in Greenville, TN where she played soccer.



Faculty News – Dr. Dick Carpenter Retires

Dr. Dick Carpenter, one of the founders and creators of the Ph.D. program in the Department of Leadership, Research, and Foundations announced his retirement this fall. It is truly a bittersweet event as he embarks on new projects and directions in retirement, but it is also with a hint of sadness as he will be missed.



“Dr. Carpenter played an integral role in the design of the PhD Program in Educational Leadership, Research, and Policy,” said Dr. Sylvia Mendez, Chair for the LRF Department. “If it were not for his expertise in advanced quantitative research methods and statistics this program could have never launched. He has left an undeniable mark on this program and our department. Dr. Carpenter will be greatly missed.”

A former k-12 educator and administrator, Dr. Carpenter specializes, teaches and researches in quantitative research methods, issues involving school policy and school choice, and reliable assessment techniques to illustrate the impact and effect of policy change.

“Dr. Dick Carpenter has made significant contributions in teaching and research during his academic career at UCCS,” said Dr. Valerie Martin Conley, Dean of the UCCS College of Education. “His commitment to student success in quantitative methods has contributed to the overall quality of the only Ph.D. program in the College of Education. He will be missed.”

Important dates and reminders:

- January 18, 2022 – Spring semester classes begin
- March 21-27, 2022 – Spring break
- April 4, 2022 – Summer registration begins
- April 15, 2022 – Last day for dissertation defense for spring commencement
- April 18, 2022 – Fall registration begins
- May 13, 2022 – Spring commencement
- August 1, 2022 - Synthesis I and II submission deadline
- August 15-16 – Synthesis presentation and review

Kudos and Alumni Updates

Dr. Terainer Brown (18) has taken over as Chief, Education and Training Branch for the United States Air Force Pacific Command. Dr. Brown also previously served as Assistant Dean to the college until her relocation to Hawaii ... **Brian Donelson (ABD)** was appointed the new principal at St. Mary's Catholic School in Greeley. The school has approximately 190 students enrolled in pk-8th grade ... **Rich Sinclair (2nd Year)** was recently awarded one of the inaugural LEAD Cybersecurity Scholarship Awards in May, 2021 ... the Ph.D. program reached an important milestone in 2021 as **Dr. Martin Garner (21)** became the 100th graduate in program history. Dr. Garner is currently the Director of the Library at Amherst College in Amherst, Massachusetts ... **Dr. Stacy Aldridge (19)** is now the Assistant Superintendent for Student Achievement in District 12 in Colorado Springs. She was formerly the principal of Skyway Elementary School in the district ... **Dr. Justin Stoddard (19)** will be presenting "Resilient Leadership: The what, why, and how" at the 23rd Annual Global Leadership Conference in Geneva, Switzerland this fall. More

information about Dr. Stoddard's work can be found on the last page of this newsletter ... **Dr. Nancy Hernandez (17)** was presented with a honorary degree by Colorado College for her work with pre-collegiate students. Dr. Hernandez is currently the Director of the Pre-Collegiate Program at UCCS.



(Dr. Nancy Hernandez, center, receiving her honorary degree at Colorado College)

Congratulations to members of the 2020 cohort who completed their doctoral coursework in the summer of 2021.

Members of the 2020 cohort met with former CU Regent Chance Hill as a component of LEAD 7300 (Ethical Leadership and Democratic Values in a Multicultural Society).



Faculty News ...

- **Dr. Andrea Bingham** and **Dr. Patty Witkowski** collaborated on a chapter titled “*Analyzing and interpreting qualitative data: After the interview*” in C. Vanover, P. Mihas, & J. Saldaña (Eds.) 2021 book *Deductive and inductive approaches to qualitative data analysis* ... **Dr. Sylvia Mendez** and **Dr. Valerie Martin Conley** continue to explore new ground and research through IMPACT (Increasing Minority Presence within Academia through Continuous Training) with numerous publications and presentations highlighting this collaborative project between UCCS, Georgia Institute of Technology, and Morehouse College ... **Dr. Robert Mitchell** has been featured in various television stories and newspaper articles for his ongoing work with



the proposed Educator Compensation Act for the 2022 Colorado legislative session ... **Dean Valerie Martin Conley** has been named Vice President of Academic Affairs and Provost at Idaho State University in Pocatello, Idaho. She will assume her new role in July, 2022 ...

Alumni Spotlight – *Dr. Justin Stoddard*

Dr. Justin Stoddard (19) has had a unique and distinguished career research and refining our concepts related to resiliency and overcoming adversity. From his time in the military, to his work in the private sector, he has established himself as a true thought-leader in helping us understand the importance and essential nature of resiliency – a critical component during the COVID pandemic. We asked Dr. Stoddard about his work, his perspective on ongoing challenges associated with “bouncing back,” and new directions in this field.

Since you completed your Ph.D. at UCCS, you have been active in exploring new directions in leadership. Can you provide some details on your work?

As my research interests in resiliency continue, I have been exploring how resiliency impacts leadership in terms of individual and team resiliency in the face of challenges and adversity. Interestingly, the concepts that explore and explain individual resiliency also apply to teams and organizations. I recently presented a workshop at the 23rd Global International Leadership Association (ILA) Conference on Resilient Leadership highlighting the importance of embracing challenges and adversity not only as individuals, but as leaders, small teams, and larger organizations. Resilient Leadership explores the challenges of overcoming adversity when in leadership positions, while practicing leadership with others, and looks at how distributed and shared leadership practices help teams work together to develop, grow, innovate, and connect with others. In light of a variety of current individual and organizational

challenges around the globe, the message of overcoming adversity and connecting with others really resonates with people from diverse backgrounds and professions.

Can you talk about your current role at the U.S. Air Force Academy and how your past doctoral work fits within your current position?

I am currently an Assistant Professor of Character and Leadership Innovation and I work as the Branch Chief for Character and Leadership Prototyping and Innovation. I explore, assess, develop new character and leadership development programs in support of the USAFA mission to develop leaders of character. My research in resiliency and the coursework I completed during the PhD program prepared me to conduct research, understand educational leadership and development in the higher education arena, and understand the nuances of policy development. Conducting research and producing meaningful and actionable findings is itself a challenging task and trying to turn that into effective policy development is another challenge altogether. I feel the rigor and depth of this PhD program prepared me very well for the work I'm currently engaged in.



Dr. Stoddard takes a break from presenting at the 23rd Global International Leadership Association (ILA) Conference on Resilient Leadership in Geneva, Switzerland

The need for effective leadership in all organizations seems to be more important now more than ever. How do you see the role of organizational leaders changing in the future? How has the pandemic necessitated change?

At USAFA, we speak about leadership in terms of behaviors and not necessarily positions. We talk to cadets about what leaders do, how to develop leadership skills, and the underlying core values that build their understanding of becoming leaders of character. At the ILA conference, Ilya Gokhman from Oglethorpe University in Georgia presented fascinating research about astronaut teams preparing for missions to mars who experienced a higher rate of mission accomplishment when they allowed for distributed and shared leadership practices to emerge from the group regardless of formal roles or titles. Several speakers focused on the necessity of global, multi-lateral, collaborative leadership practices to face “challenges without borders” such as pandemics, climate change, and global poverty. Our traditional understanding of leadership may be insufficient to deal with the complex challenges we face as members of a global society. Diverse, expansive, inclusive leadership practices that not only invite underrepresented voices to the table but rely upon their input to resolve global challenges is needed now more than ever.

As a program graduate, you both survived and completed original research and your dissertation. What advice do you have for current students in the program? What helped you see your way to the finish line?



The best advice I ever received was that the best dissertation is a “done” dissertation. Just get it done! Honestly, the research and constant reading about resiliency played a large part in my success as it constantly reminded me to keep going, stick with it, and find a way to chip away at each assignment. I was medically retired from the Army, had a total knee replacement, moved to another state, and had a variety of other distractions, and while it seems like a miracle sometimes, I was still able to finish successfully. There were also two key elements that were vital to my success: sharing the load with my fellow cohort buddies and finding a subject early on that I was interested in researching. A few of us enjoyed getting dinner delivered during class and we also went out together for food a few times outside of class. I am still working with a couple of my colleagues on some projects, and we

enjoy talking about how hard the PhD program was. We were in it together and we cheered each other on. I never felt any competition with them and in fact, my colleagues carried me through some of the tough classes and I tried to contribute extra help whenever I could. Early in the program one of my colleagues introduced me to the concept of resiliency and the resiliency conceptual framework. I was immediately hooked and all my research from that point forward was somehow related to resiliency, overcoming adversity, and moving forward despite the obstacles. My advice? Remember your research doesn’t have to change the world. It just shows that you know how to do research so you can go do more of it.

Anything else you would like to add?

I completed a PhD because it was a step on my path to getting a job as a professor. Without that goal I’m not sure I would have finished. I would recommend that before starting the program make sure to identify a goal that makes getting the PhD important. If someone is already in the program and doesn’t have a goal, create a goal. During the long nights of writing, and rewriting, and rewriting again, the goal is what keeps you moving forward with the patient, resilient resolve to eventually cross the finish line. It’s an amazing feeling that I’ll never forget and has opened a door to a whole new world of personal and professional development.

Graduation – December, 2021

Congratulations to our Fall, 2021 Ph.D. graduates:

Joy Armstrong

Lilika Belet

Michelle Buchanan

Nicole Ferguson

Malia Franklin

Victoria Garduño

Martan Garnar

Kathryn Starkey

(photos courtesy of Dr. Patty Witkowski)

