

UCCS LEAD PHD E-Newsletter



Ph.D. Educational Leadership,
Research, and Policy

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO COLORADO SPRINGS

Winter 2018

Hello, LRF PhD Community! In this edition of the E-Newsletter you will find College and Department updates, successful proposal hearings and dissertation defenses, as well as news on alumni and faculty professional and scholarly endeavors. This spring the Department will be celebrating the 10-year Anniversary of the PhD program, more information will be provided later this semester. Additionally, the Department is in the midst of hiring a new faculty member to replace Dr. Winters who has settled nicely into faculty life at Boston University. For those eyeing a spring 2018 graduation, please note **the last day for a spring dissertation defense is April 13th; spring commencement will be held on May 11th at the Broadmoor World Arena.** As always, please feel free to contact me any time with your questions or concerns. –Dr. Sylvia Mendez



Faculty Spotlight: Dr. Dallas Strawn



A highlight of my teaching career has been my involvement in the Educational Leadership, Research, and Policy PhD Program at UCCS. From the inception of the program to its current status, I have been peripherally involved, and when asked, have enjoyed every minute of participating in its direction. I have been involved in interviewing PhD candidates and have been recently teaching the *Ethical Leadership and Democratic Values in a Multicultural Society* course. Additionally, I have been asked by several students to be a reader on their doctoral dissertation committees. All of my involvement in the program has been challenging, yet extremely rewarding. A particular strength of the PhD Program

is the fact that it supports a wide variety of student academic foci and interests. Students are admitted from many occupations other than those specific to education. All candidates with whom I have worked with have demonstrated leadership initiative in areas of community service, research, policy development, college or university leadership/professorships, as well as involvement in public and private educational administration. One of the exciting aspects of teaching ethics in the PhD program is that it allows me to challenge students with the identification of their life's purpose and ethical constructs. In class, we discuss how their ethical beliefs may be challenged by organizations in which they are currently working or may eventually work. A simple question about how students remain in organizations that require them, as part of their job, to violate their ethical standards causes dissonance and conversation that keeps every class lively. After all rigorous academic standards have been met for our PhD program, I believe there will always be challenges of how, as leaders, our graduates will ethically serve others and consistently maintain their ethical beliefs.

Congratulations, PhD Summer and Fall 2017 Graduates



Dr. Jason Brosseau, USAF Major, Headquarters Air Force Space Command, Chief of Space Systems Basing Branch, International and Strategic Affairs Division

“Evaluating Leadership Influence on Military Sexual Assault Prevention Efforts: A Mixed-Methods Approach to Explain Military Court-Martial Convictions”

Chair: Dr. Mendez

Dr. Pat Green, University Supervisor, UCCS Department of Teaching and Learning; and Adjunct Instructor, Argosy University

“The Stories within our Voices: Black Males Navigating Educational Achievement”

Chair: Drs. Mendez and Ramirez

Dr. Donita Torres, Assistant Professor of Education, Eastern Washington University

“Why Performance Pay? An Analysis of the Predictors of State Performance-Pay Policy Adoption”

Chair: Drs. Mendez and Ramirez

Successful Proposals from Fall 2018

Matthew Lunn

“Change in Use of Force Policy: The Experience of Officers”

Chair: Dr. Carpenter

Eric Mason

“Find a Better Way: A Study of the Conditions that Led to the 2015/2016 Historic Parent Test Refusals of Colorado K12 State Assessments”

Chair: Dr. Mendez

Faculty Spotlight: Dr. Elisa Thompson



Dr. Thompson is the Writing and Qualitative Methods Coach for first-year doctoral students in the Department. Her goals are to assist students in developing a strong command of APA formatting and qualitative research methods as they complete their first-year studies and move into their Synthesis Project. Dr. Thompson earned a doctorate in Educational Psychology from the University of Arizona with a specialization in Teaching, Learning and Development. Her minor areas of study were Family and Marriage and Research Methods. She received her master's degree in Educational Psychology from the University of Arizona and her Bachelor of Science in Psychology summa cum laude from Florida State University. Dr. Thompson has taught at the college level since 1999. She has taught in the areas of psychology, research methodology, and statistics at Pikes Peak Community College and University of the Rockies, where she also serves as a methodology specialist on dissertation committees. During the 2009–2010 school year, Dr. Thompson conducted large-scale survey research within Colorado Springs School District #11. From 2005–2010, she served as the co-founder and president of a nonprofit organization, Graying Grace Resources, which addressed the emotional and spiritual needs of the caregivers of the aging and dying. She is completing a four-year term as Director of Parish Education at her church where she helps create and guide weekly educational offerings for infants to nonagenarians for approximately 250 members. Dr. Thompson is completing a Professional Certificate in Spiritual Gerontology from the Johnson Institute. With this certification, she will redesign the church's educational and support offerings for adults over 55.

Faculty Grant Procurement Highlights for 2018-2019



Dr. Carpenter is working on two grant-funded projects. For the first, he is working with Dr. Julaine Field to study mental and behavioral health interventions in a number of schools across Colorado. The second project has him continuing his work on occupational licensing, which he wrote about in his 2016 book.



Dr. Mendez and Dean Valerie Martin Conley have two grants funded from the National Science Foundation. One examines the efficacy of mentoring of underrepresented minority engineering faculty by emeriti engineering faculty. The other brings together academic and industry stakeholders to examine the role of mentorship in the career success of underrepresented minority engineering faculty by emeriti faculty and embodied conversational agents.



Dr. Morris is working with Dr. Carpenter and Freddie Rodriguez (PhD candidate) on a private foundation grant to evaluate the effects of wellness exercises and curriculum on mental health stigma among first year student veterans. Dr. Morris is also involved in a U.S. Department of Education grant examining curriculum interventions in gateway math courses and is collaborating with UCCS Department of Communications faculty on how student veterans communicate advocacy to stakeholders through a 2018 CU Diversity and Excellence Grant.



Dr. Witkowsky obtained three grants this year. The first is a grant from the UCCS Global Intercultural Research Center to conduct a study focusing on understanding the experiences of U.S.-trained student affairs professionals working in higher education abroad. In collaboration with Dr. Grant Clayton, the other two grants, one funded by the UCCS Committee for Research and Creative Works and the second funded by NACADA: The Global Community for Academic Advising, were focused on understanding concurrent enrollment in Colorado.

Student Spotlights

Regina Winters

Regina Winters is a first-year doctoral student in the PhD program. She currently teaches a variety of public service management and policy courses for the UCCS School of Public Affairs and serves as their Assistant Dean. Equipping public service students serving in government agencies, nonprofit organizations, or social good groups with skills and experiences to enhance public forums keeps her busy. Colorado Springs is her hometown, and Regina is able to serve the kind community that supported her education through her work with the University. She uses service learning in her courses, connecting faculty expertise, community experience, and student energy to address critical organizational needs. She and her students have worked with a variety of community projects in the Pikes Peak Region including local food pantries, neighborhood associations, specialty courts, and local government agencies.



Regina wants to provide her students with the best public service education possible, and this has led her to join the LEAD program. Even though Regina is at the beginning of the program, she believes that the program has helped her write better and understand the world of higher education administration with more depth.

In her spare time, Regina plays flute with local groups, knits hats and blankets for fun and charity, listens to National Public Radio, and visits with friends and family.

Stacy Aldridge

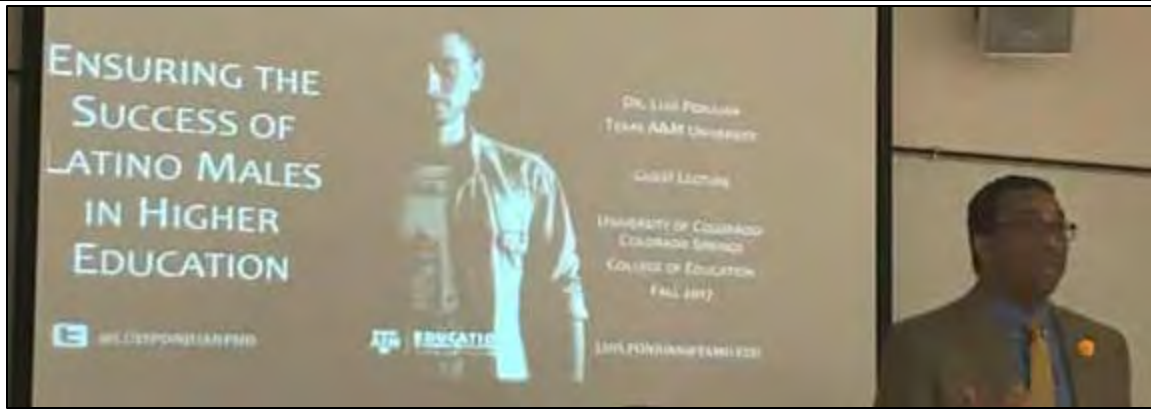


Stacy Aldridge is a second-year doctoral student in the Department. Over the past 22 years she has been an elementary school teacher, an Assistant Principal, K-12 Curriculum Coordinator, and an Elementary Principal. Her current post is Principal at Skyway Elementary School in Cheyenne Mountain School District #12.

Stacy's roots are in the great northwest where she attended Linfield College to earn her BA in Elementary Education. Her MA in Curriculum and Instruction from Boise State University sparked a long-time interest in life-long learning, which was continued as soon as she moved to Colorado. She became interested in pursuing a doctorate degree in Educational Leadership, Research, and Policy in an effort to initiate positive change for underserved populations in public schools. Specific research interests include those with foundations based in social justice, especially when it relates to supporting students of poverty. Her research ambitions include understanding how perceptions toward poor students impact their understanding of those students' potential. Hoping that knowledge is power she aims to open doors for students that need advocates so they can maximize opportunities they do not even know about...yet!

When she has free time, Stacy enjoys reading, watching hummingbirds throughout the summer, and camping. Her husband, Rusty, is the Sites Coordinator in Harrison School District #2 and her loudest supporter. Stacy looks forward to vacationing in Hawaii after graduation before pursuing the next chapter in her career, either as an educational researcher, public education advocate, or Assistant Superintendent.

Fall PhD Research Seminar Series: Dr. Luis Ponjuan



This fall the Department hosted Dr. Luis Ponjuan, Associate Professor of Educational Administration and Human Resource Development at Texas A&M University, for our LRF PhD Research Seminar Series. His presentation focused on the Latino experience in higher education, as well as the ways in which to improve Latino educational success rates. Dr. Ponjuan's presentation proved to be informative and inspirational.

Fall PhD Admission Deadline: March 15

Please share this information with colleagues and friends!

Application for admission to the PhD in Educational Leadership, Research, and Policy program begins with completion of the online graduate application found at www.uccs.edu/~apply/. Other materials include:

- \$60.00 application fee (International student application fee is \$100.00)
- Tuition classification form
- Career goal statement
- Curriculum vitae or professional résumé
- All college/university transcripts
- The name, title, organization, and email of three references. References must be in a position to give feedback regarding one's ability to be successful in a doctoral program; references are required to be from a former instructor, a current supervisor, and a professional colleague (recommendations from current LRF faculty are not accepted)
- Graduate Record Exam (GRE) scores for the verbal, quantitative, and analytical sub-tests taken within the past five years

Financial Resources

LRF PhD Student Travel & Dissertation Research Funding Request:

<https://www.uccs.edu/coe/student-resource-office/department-downloads/lrf.html>

UCCS Graduate School Financial Resources:

<https://www.uccs.edu/graduateschool/uccs-finances/finance-resources>

Alumni Profiles

Dr. Meghan Stidd, UCCS College of Business Director of the Career Development Center



Dissertation Title: A Comparative Analysis of Freedom and Educational Outcomes using TIMSS and PIRLS

Upon graduation, Dr. Stidd continued her professional career with Mountain Pacific Troops to Teachers where she was promoted to regional director. In this role, she managed a 12-state region focused on assisting current and former military members during their transition to careers as public school teachers. In 2016, Dr. Stidd transitioned to her current role with UCCS where she is the Director for the College of Business Career Development Center. In this role, she assists students with internships and employment, develops partnerships with local business leaders, and conducts a variety of professional development workshops. Dr. Stidd has focused her post-doctoral research on business ethics and internship programming.

Most recently, she presented on ethical interview practices, integrating ethics into the internship curriculum, and best practices for building quality employer relationships through the Daniels Fund Ethics Initiative at UCCS and the Cooperative Education and Internship Association. Since completing the PhD program, Dr. Stidd and her husband welcomed their now four-year-old daughter. During her free time, you can find her volunteering and attempting to keep up with her daughter's many activities, which include Celtic dance, gymnastics, and swimming.

Dr. Paul Medina, Colorado Springs School District 11 Research Analyst



Dissertation Title: Exploring the Effects of Closing Schools on Student Outcomes

Dr. Medina, a native born Texan living in Colorado, now serves as the District Research Analyst for Colorado Springs School District #11. There, he employs analytics in program evaluation, project management, organizational analyses, forecasting, research, policy, and the dissemination and exploitation of performance results. Dr. Medina enjoys the outdoors, physical fitness, the theater, and has an appetite for fabulous meals at great deals. He has experienced magnificent meals across Europe, Latin America, and the U.S., thus, he has high expectations and cannot resist events such as Denver Restaurant Week. His best friend in the world is Freddie Von Hans (shown in the pic), he is his most valued research assistant and remains by his side late into the night, always. Previously, Dr. Medina served as a Lieutenant Colonel in the US Army, serving in rapid deployment, light, and heavy mechanized units in country and abroad. After military service, he worked for Denver Public Schools and then the corporate world, before entering education as a teacher and progressing to his current position. Dr. Medina has multiple degrees in business and education, including a Principal License. He enjoys giving back to the community, as all good patriots should do.



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PhD Research Seminar: Strengthening Qualitative Research Projects

*with Dr. J. Amos Hatch, Professor Emeritus
of the University of Tennessee*

The presentation will focus on how to avoid pitfalls that novice researchers often face when designing, completing, and writing up qualitative research projects. Critical decision points are identified, and ways to strengthen qualitative studies at each stage of their development will be discussed.

**Thursday, February 22nd
4:45-6:15pm
Centennial Hall 192**

For more information, please contact Dr. Sylvia Mendez, Chair of the Department of Leadership, Research, and Foundations (smendez@uccs.edu; 719-255-3476)