Welcome from Dr. Tai Arnold
Dean, School for Graduate Studies

With great pride and enthusiasm, I welcome you to the first issue of the Graduate Student Research and Professional Development newsletter. In here, you will find some of the treasures of the School for Graduate Studies’ students, alumni and faculty. We have a strong and growing agenda of research, professional growth and student success and we want to make that work visible to all. My colleagues and I look forward to sharing this news with you regularly.

The School for Graduate Studies has grown and developed a wide range of options for graduate studies in recent years. We have added degree programs in teaching and learning, learning and emerging technologies, adult learning, global leadership, and community and economic development, along with a dozen certificates. We will soon launch accelerated programs allowing undergraduate students to begin their graduate programs while completing their bachelor’s degree.

As we move forward, we will put even more emphasis on supporting student research projects, collaboration with faculty and with other students, and on student professional development. We encourage you to participate in the graduate research conference this spring or the Student Academic Conference next fall and consider presenting your work beyond Empire State College. We welcome your ideas and thoughts about this newsletter and what you would like to see in future issues. We want this to be a resource and a source of inspiration to the graduate student community.

Upcoming SUNY Masters Level Conferences

SUNY Graduate Research Conference
Date: Feb 11th
Location: Legislative Office Building, Albany
Submission Deadline: January 9th
http://system.suny.edu/facultysenate/poster-symposium/

Note: For the SUNY Graduate Research Conference, students are required to work with a faculty member who will serve as their research mentor to prepare their submission.

Master’s-level Graduate Research Conference
Date: April 2015
Location: SUNY Brockport
Deadline TBA but most likely December
http://digitalcommons.brockport.edu/gradconf/

Graduate Student Association
We are in the process of developing a Graduate Student Association. Interested in participating? Check out the group’s website at: http://commons.esc.edu/escgsa/
MALS Student Research: Michael Tester

Accepting Whitman’s dare, Michael Tester’s public history project ROGUE ROMANCE: A Good Man is Hard to Define, integrates queer, progressive age ephemera with musical theatre, to suggest a gay American history grounded more in joy, than depictions of the self-loathing closet-queen have previously considered.

This public history event will be held December 17th at the Fredrick Lowe Room of the Dramatists Guild of America in Times Square. Objects in an interactive exhibition (including WWI letters, postcards, advertising, and sheet music) will be employed or referenced in the original musical theater piece, “Rogue Romance.” Thus the signifiers of the exhibition inform the signified in the performance. In the alchemy, the latent and manifest functions of objects interact with the performativity of gender to construct gender and community on the eve of the invention of “homosexuality.”

Michael Tester made his writing debut in the London fringe scene with the musical satire Amoebas on Parade!! Hailed by the New York Times as displaying “the development potential of a major humorist.” He is co-author of Ken Davenport’s Awesome 80s Prom (Winner: Interactive Show of the Year), and The National Foundation for the Advancement of the Arts Body & Soul gala at Manhattan’s Baryshnikov Center. His original musicals include Hollywood Exposed (Actor’s Playhouse Miami) The Pirate Musical! (Baker’s Plays), and with Dramatic Publishing Co: The Mummy Musical, and Most Likely To: The Senior Superlative Musical (nominated for 11 MITF Awards), and recently published ML2 Monologues.

MAAL Student Research: Kim Redmond

For my final project, I am conducting a case study of a New York metropolitan area adult learning center from the vantage point of its program director and adult educators, who are charged with preparing students for the NYS new high school equivalency (HSE) exam, called the TASC™.

The case study will analyze how adult educators view the shift to the new HSE exam, and its impact on their students and their work. It will explore how they are approaching the new test, its curriculum and standards in order to foster successful outcomes for their students, and how they view the level of support that they have received as a result of this shift.

Beyond examining the specifics of the shift to the new exam, the study is meant to critically understand how adult educators are positioned between their students and policymakers.

In essence, this project will capture the realities that adult educators face in their day-to-day practice in order to closely examine their concerns, challenges, goals and successes within the larger political landscape of adult basic education.

This project has allowed me to see the value in the principles and theories that I have learned in my graduate program at ESC. I can now see clearer that the theories that I have learned emanate from reality – they are not just intangible ideas floating above and apart from the real world.
Faculty Profile: Eileen O’Connor

During this past year, I was fortunate to have the opportunity to extend my research and development in several ways. First, I worked on the STEM Exploratory Real/Virtual Environment. For a number of years, I have been working on creating a STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) hub that will be an intersection of science and education resources, a virtual-reality simulation, an educational framework and model with teaching materials and documents, and a web-based communication and resource-sharing system. I have been working on interactions with possible participants (in America and in Africa) and how to bring aspects of this model to other countries.

With a reassignment during the summer from the Center for Mentoring and Learning, I was able to focus on developing these resources, which can help my teaching and upcoming sabbatical efforts too. I also worked with an educator and cleric from Africa, as we considered ways to implement this project and integrate it into Father Naakule’s work in Tanzania.

During the summer, I was also able to work with a colleague, Dr. Frank McDonald, to research and report on ways that emerging technologies are revolutionizing the way the world communicates, works, and learns.

Keeping up with these changes has been a challenge for educational enterprises so along with the work of Dr. McDonald and myself, Ms. Maria Ruggiero (a graduate student) joined in assembling a policy-and-practice paper entitled: “Scaffolding Complex Learning: Integrating 21st Century Thinking, Emerging Technologies, and Dynamic Design and Assessment to Expand Learning and Communication Opportunities.” This paper has recently been accepted for publication by the Journal of Educational Technology Systems.
Graduate Student Research and Professional Development

Fall 2014 Newsletter

MAT Alumni Research: Lisa Michaels

Lisa R. Michaels (ESC Alum - BS 2008 and MAT 2013) is a second year doctoral student at the University at Albany in the Department of Literacy Teaching and Learning. Ms. Michaels is the co-author of a book chapter, Mobile Phone Use and Children’s Literacy Learning, which was accepted for publication in the 2015 Encyclopedia of Mobile Phone Behavior (Vol. 1-3).

Most recently, Lisa has been involved in a research study that examined Kindergarten Teachers’ Beliefs and Transition Practices in the Era of the Common Core Standards. She will join her professor, Dr. Jaime Pucciioni, in presenting the results of this research at the Literacy Research Association Conference and the 2012 SUNY Student Academic Conference in Buffalo. On both occasions, my research was well received and, as a result, I was asked by my current affiliate, the Outreach Training Institute, to incorporate key elements of my findings within the curriculum I developed for their CASAC training program.

Social and Public Policy Alumni Research: Cristy Dwyer

Having left my long time position as clinical director of a substance abuse treatment facility to become a full time graduate student, in 2010, I began work as a part time teacher of adult students seeking to earn their Credentialed Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Counselor (CASAC) certification. It was here that I began to see just how difficult it was for many of my older students to gain meaningful employment during the aftermath of the Great Recession. Furthermore, I soon discovered they were not alone in their fight for economic independence in a changing world of disappearing jobs and economic polarization. My interest in their process became the subject of my master’s thesis entitled “Unemployed Over 55: The Emerging Policy Threat of Jobless Older Workers in America.”

Through a narrative analysis based on secondary data collected by the media project Over 50 and Out of Work’s - 100 Stories (2012), my study examined the bio-psychosocial effects of unemployment through a qualitative lens while analyzing data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Quantitative findings suggested that age was predictive of greater unemployment duration. Surprisingly unemployment was not correlated with increased incidence of alcohol or illicit drug use.

I was pleased to have the opportunity to present my research at the 2012 SUNY Brockport New York Masters Level Graduate Research Conference and the 2012 SUNY Student Academic Conference in Buffalo. On both occasions, my research was well received and, as a result, I was asked by my current affiliate, the Outreach Training Institute, to incorporate key elements of my findings within the curriculum I developed for their CASAC training program.

It is my hope that this research will inspire others to keep this growing cohort of older unemployed individuals in mind as we enter an era where the United States population aged 65 and over is expected to double in size within the next 25 years. Without meaningful social policies aimed at ensuring older workers’ rights to find meaningful employment based on their skills and abilities today, society will undoubtedly be held accountable to support their living and healthcare expenses tomorrow.
Mentor Peggy Tally, Chair of Policy Studies, and Despoina Betty Kakamanidou co-edited a book collection exploring the television series, HBO’s "Girls," published by Cambridge Scholars Publishing. Tally and Kakamanidou, who also collaborated on a recent book collection titled, "The Millennials on Film and Television," (McFarland, 2014), offered this description of the "Girls" collection: "Young women today have achieved as much as, and in many cases far exceeded, males in both educational and occupational terms. While this presents many opportunities, it also creates confusion in terms of renegotiating traditional gender roles. The fictional representation of young women in recent film and television shows demonstrates how these tensions, created by the specific sociopolitical climate of the post-recession era, are being worked out."

One television show focused on intelligent young women caught up in these contradictions is HBO's "Girls." The show explores the lives of four female friends living in Brooklyn, two years after their college graduation, as they try to support themselves with low-paying jobs, and deal with struggles around relationships, careers and friendships.

This book collection is the first to discuss the cultural, political and social implications of this innovative series. Contributors examine "Girls" through a variety of lenses: sexual, racial, gender, relationships between the male and female characters, and friendships between the young women.

MBA assistant professor Dr. Kymn Rutigliano, developer of the course “Leadership, Crisis and Coping Strategies,” participated in an Active Shooter exercise at a Nevada hospital this past summer.

Named “Operation Wilcox” after a police officer killed in the line of duty during a workplace violence incident, the full-scale exercise, which involved law enforcement, SWAT, fire department and emergency responders, was the brainchild of Nancy Newell, co-chair of Southern Nevada’s Healthcare Preparedness Coalition and emergency preparedness coordinator at Centennial Hills Hospital.

“I was fortunate to have met Dr. Rutigliano two years ago when she came to Nevada to present her online crisis simulation at a conference. Having her involved in Operation Wilcox brought the much-needed perspective of crisis leadership to our preparation and education efforts” said Newell.

Newell and Rutigliano are co-conveners of the First Annual Global Conference on Crisis Leadership. The conference will be held next year and include plenary sessions exploring crises across a variety of contexts. ESC’s Student Affairs Committee is a sponsor of the conference and will fund up to three students to attend and later present at the Fall 2015 Student Academic Conference. For more info, contact Dr. Rutigliano at kymn.rutigliano@esc.edu.
Professional Development: MAT Student Eric Davenport

An interview with Eric Davenport about creating his own instruments

How did you get interested in making your own instruments out of found objects?

I played guitar and brass instruments growing up. After graduating high school I dropped playing music for about 20 years. My wife bought me a guitar for my birthday and I was instantly hooked again. I wanted another guitar, but the cost didn’t make sense for my leisure time activity. In a search for music online one day I found a YouTube video of someone in the UK who had made a small battery-powered amplifier in a little tobacco tin. I knew I could do the same and set off looking for the parts for my first guitar.

Is this a popular practice? Where did it originate from?

Building string instruments from primitive materials has roots in Africa where gourds would be combined with a stick and some gut for string to form a banjo-like instrument. Closer to home, bluesmen in the Mississippi delta couldn’t afford to buy a “proper” guitar during the depression and so would fashion one from whatever they could put together. Often, children who expressed an interest in guitar would be given a Diddley Bow which is simply a stick with one wire taken from an old broom.

What are your three favorite instruments you’ve made, and why?

I have made over thirty instruments in the last three years and it is difficult to single out three. My first absolute favorite is a five-string guitar I made from a 1931 New York license plate, given to me by a high school friend. My second favorite is an instrument I built for a friend who works in Saudi Arabia as a geologist. It is one-of-a-kind with some exotic details and a steampunk theme. My third favorite is an electric upright bass I built with the help from my nine year-old daughter. It is her home practice instrument for her first year playing bass in the school orchestra.

How is it different playing instruments you’ve made versus ones you’ve bought?

A performer will have no greater connection with their music than what is provided by making their own instruments. I take great joy in hearing the guitar’s first voice and the first song it plays for me. It is a very Zen experience.

How will your passion for music influence your teaching practice?

Music is an experience that can connect people and their minds. It has inspiring power. As a chemistry teacher, I’m not sure how it will be incorporated into a specific lesson plan, but I will certainly be interested in forming some kind of music group or club based on handmade instruments of any type. I will specifically look for this to be a route to students that need extra help or an inspiring mentor regardless of whether they are chemistry students or not. It is very empowering to make something extremely inexpensively with your own hands with which you can play serious music.
MAAL Student Professional Development: Tara Brettholtz

When my boss suggested I should do something to further my education and professional development, I couldn’t imagine how it would get done. As a working mother - a corporate trainer in a financial services firm - with two young children and a volunteer board position in a national organization, I thought I had some good reasons to leave any formal learning to the distant future.

But then my dad developed a terminal illness - and sadly, he was gone just four months after I learned his diagnosis. Suddenly, I had the sense that the clock was ticking for me to achieve the life I imagined - but had been putting off for a more convenient time that might never have come. Losing my dad was the impetus I needed to begin this journey.

Nearly two years later, I am a little more than halfway through the M.A. in Adult Learning program and I have been richly rewarded by it. I have been struck by the relevance of the courses, not only to my profession, but to my life. I have learned that other aspects of my life, such as my volunteer work, are valuable learning experiences I can draw from to enhance my paid work as a corporate trainer. I even learned that my experience dealing with my father’s passing was addressed by adult learning too, as we often seek out learning to help guide us through these difficult life transitions.

At work, I developed new training that was different from anything I had ever done at work before. I developed a Lunch and Learn program for professional development that was attended by the highest ranking executive in our business unit as well as interns and administrative assistants who were often being left out of training opportunities. I’ve added many new tools, techniques and methods to my training. I even got a promotion that I have no doubt arose from the growth I experienced as a result of the M.A. in Adult Learning program.

So while I am looking forward to graduation at the end of next year, it will be bittersweet. I don’t want to stop learning and growing. But I know that it will be up to me to keep learning as long as I live.

Note from the Editor: Conference Opportunities

The idea of presenting research at a conference may be intimidating, but it can be as simple as taking a course research paper one step further. Consider presenting the results of a literature review, or action research you have conducted. Approach a faculty member about being your research mentor, and they will help you format your proposal and select the right conference to apply to.

**Additional Conferences:**

32nd annual winter roundtable
Date: Feb 13-14th
Location: Teacher's College, Columbia University
Jan 15th submission deadline

National Council of Teachers of Mathematics research conference
Date: April 13-15th
Proposals due in July
Location: Boston, MA
http://www.nctm.org/researchconf/

Student Academic Conference
Location: Albany
Date: October 2015
Submission deadline TBA
http://residencies.esc.edu/student-academic-conference/


Elizabeth Bradley, Ph.D.
Newsletter editor and Graduate Education Studies Mentor
Grants and Scholarships

Graduate students seeking financial support from outside their college or university might consider grants and fellowships as ways to acquire additional funds. Some of the funding opportunities below may be relevant for your area of study. However, remember that the process of applying for a grant or fellowship can be very time-consuming. Most applications will require a curriculum vita, letters of recommendation, a proposal, and institutional approval, so be sure to allow ample time to complete your applications (Bradley, 2007).

Check out additional tips and resources at http://www.nasponline.org/students/documents/Applying_for_Grants_and_Fellowships.pdf

AAAS Mass Media Science and Engineering Fellowship
Focus: Media Art; Science Technologies; Engineering.
Funds: $450
To Apply: Applicants must fill out the application form. Applicants must submit a copy of resume including honors, awards and relevant activities; one brief sample of their writing (2-3 pages on any subject written in terms appropriate for the general public); journal articles; three letters of recommendation; transcript of their undergraduate and graduate work.
Deadline: January 15
For more information go to: http://www.aaas.org

ALPFA Scholarship Programs
Purpose: To financially support Hispanic students pursuing studies in accounting, finance, or IT.
Funds: $2,000-$10,000.
To Apply: Applicants must register first in order to apply online (please visit the website). Applicants must submit an official transcript; proof of family income and citizen status; an essay; letter of recommendation; resume; and The Financial Aid Verification (for semi-finalist only).
Deadline: January 31.
For more information go to: http://www.alpfa.org

American Association of University Women Career Development Grants
Purpose: To support women who hold bachelor's degrees and are preparing to advance their careers, change careers, or re-enter the work force.
Criteria: Applicants must be AAUW members and women of color who are pursuing their first advanced degree or credentials in non-traditional fields.
Funds: $2,000 up to $12,000.
Deadline: December 15.
For more information go to: http://www.aauw.org

Educational Portal of the Americas Graduate Scholarships
Purpose: To award a person to undertake undergraduate or graduate studies that lead to a degree and/or graduate research at a university or higher learning institution of member state.
Qualifications: Applicants must be enrolled in a Master's or Doctoral degree program.
Funds: $30,000.
For more information go to: http://www.oas.org/en/scholarships/educationalportal.asp

This newsletter was created by the Graduate Student Research and Professional Development Committee: Elizabeth Bradley (chair), Meg Benke, Frank McDonald, Dianne Ramdeholl, Rhianna Rogers, Kynn Rutigliano, Francois Silatchom, and Sylwia Starnawska

Interested in submitting a piece for our Spring issue? Please email Elizabeth Bradley at Elizabeth.bradley@esc.edu with questions and content.