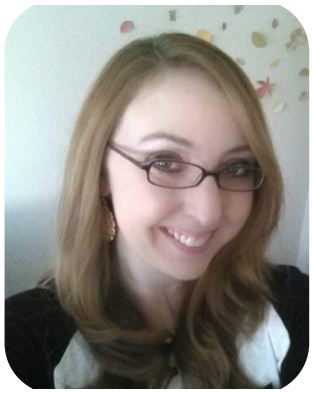
M.Ed. Student Catherine Plitcha Receives NYC DOE Grant



I first started Empire State College with the goal of enhancing my professional development and teaching practices. I have been a music teacher in the New York City Department of Education for the last seven years and I currently teach band, orchestra, symphony, modern band and choir at Park Place Community Middle School, MS 266 in Brooklyn. I also work as an Arts Facilitator for Secondary Music in Brooklyn and lead professional development for music educators in the NYC DOE. In addition, I was a quarterfinalist in the 2016 Grammy Awards for my work as a music educator. My students have performed with Gloria Estefan, Nico & Vinz, and V Bozeman from the hit TV show Empire. When I started at Empire State College, one of my biggest fears was how much my course work would compete with the demands of a flourishing music program. I could not have imagined that within only one semester I could have my coursework make such a dramatic impact on my classroom and school community.

I had the privilege of taking New Media and New Literacies with Dr. Elizabeth Bradley. Throughout this course, I was constantly challenged and captivated as we discussed the use of technology and media in the classroom, debated the definition of literacy itself, and engaged in thoughtful conversations around best practices that engage and illuminate teaching and learning. The course has had a profound impact on my own professional development inquiry work and shaped the topic for my thesis. However, it was our "Community Engagement Proposal" that had a truly dramatic and unexpectedly direct impact on my classroom. We were asked to write a proposal to our local educational organization, in my case the New York City Department of Education. I applied for the "Arts Continuum" Grant, which helps address the educational gap that often exists in arts education between elementary and middle schools and offers $24,000 in funding to be shared between two schools.

When I realized what a great opportunity this grant could be, I reached out to Dr. Bradley and asked if I could use this grant as my proposal. Dr. Bradley gave me all of the support, resources, and encouragement that I needed. I worked with my incredible principal, Ms. Glenda Esperance, and we decided to partner with the Noel Pointer Foundation and the Teunis G. Bergen Elementary School, PS 9.

Before taking Dr. Bradley's class, I would not have felt confident enough to write a grant proposal this extensive; however, I had the tools and supports I needed to be thorough and precise. Several weeks later, we received the email from Paul King, stating that our project was fully funded. Both the elementary and middle schools will receive extended orchestral instruction from the Noel Pointer foundation, funding for musical instruments, and students will collaborate in an end of year performance playing Beethoven's "Ode to Joy." This experience illustrates what can happen when professors, leaders, and administrators can come together to provide the link between higher education and the professional work setting.

MBA Alum Snapshots: Jeffrey Pietrzak & Heather Kolakowski

My capstone project was directly related to my role as Learning and Development Manager for my previous company, Ryerson Holding Corporation. I discovered two key components to improve Ryerson's differentiation: value-added component fabrication and vertical marketing strategies.

The company viewed my work as a foundation of a new effort, and has since developed a vertical marketing department that largely mirrors my research and suggestions. I am currently a PhD student focusing on Human Capital Management at Bellevue University near Omaha, Nebraska. After spending the better part of three years in MN, I have been fortunate enough to return to New York with my new role; a role that would not be possible without the MBA from Empire State College.

As a recent graduate of the MBA program from ESC, I have been able to utilize my degree to transition into a new teaching position at Cornell University's School of Hotel Administration at Cornell University's School of Hotel Administration (SHA) from the Culinary Institute of America.

My new position at SHA as a Lecturer in Food and Beverage Management is centered primarily on teaching core courses to the students. I have spent the past several months creating and planning for a new course entitled Hunger, Health and Nonprofit Social Enterprise. My goal is to inspire our student body to apply the knowledge that they have gained through the core curriculum and business related coursework during their time at SHA. I am excited to teach this course in the Fall 2016!

MAAL Alum Profile: Danielle Torrance

When I started my postsecondary education at Onondaga Community College, I never thought I would end up teaching High School Equivalency (HSE) classes to adult learners.

When I graduated from SUNY Cortland in 2012 with a BA in Adolescent Social Studies Education, and History, I started volunteering at the SUNY Syracuse Educational Opportunity Center (EOC). Eventually I was hired as a tutor, and the next semester I started teaching. The Syracuse EOC is an adult education center that focuses on serving adult secondary, vocational, and ESL students. College preparation classes are also offered. The Syracuse EOC provides relevant training for students of all skill levels and abilities; the wide range of programs available allows the center to reach many students. For my final project, I chose to study student success; my guiding questions was "What makes a student successful from his or her point of view?" The results of my research produced an academic paper, a PowerPoint presentation for adult educators and administrators, and a pamphlet for students containing tips for success. These three pieces are individually important because they each address a unique audience. The triune nature of this project speaks to importance of connection in adult learning; students, faculty and administrators, and the academic community should all be working together to create classrooms and curricula that are conducive for adult learning.

In my own professional development, I have taught a variety of classes at the Syracuse EOC, as well as taken on the role of Learning Lab Coordinator. This project and my MAAL classes have made me a better teacher; I consider my students more, and think about how best to meet them where they are to facilitate success. I am so grateful to have been able to complete this project as well as my degree.

SUNY Undergraduate Research Conference

In 2015, six ESC undergraduate students presented at the SUNY Undergraduate Research Conference (SURC).

The students (with their mentors in parentheses) and presentation titles were:

- Eric Schultz (Seana Logsdon): *Development and Curation of an Osteological Collection.*
- Yolanda Mabry (Steve Tischler & Deborah Noble): *The Impact of Social and Digital Media on Stress.*
- Yazid Bahloul (Deborah Noble): *Regional Economic Integration: The EU Case.*
- Shannon Mulstay Cox (John Hetherington & Nancy Mingus): *Books and Censorship in the Modern Age - To Ban or Not to Ban?*
- Kristofer Tipton (Julie Gedro): *Is Your Smartphone Destroying the Planet?*
- Tehmina Ashraf (Catherine Bliss): *Utilizing LaTeX to Research Pathological Functions: The Continuous but Nowhere Differentiable.*

The success of these students will help them transition to graduate school, as their research can been seen as a significant part of preparation for graduate school, ensuring their readiness in line with our expectation of students.

The presentations of the selected students were impressive and supported by their Mentors. Deborah Noble said:

"As Empire State College's liaison for the SUNY Undergraduate Research Conference, I was responsible for getting the request for student participation out to the college and doing the follow up…I attended the conference and was very impressed with the SUNY students and the level of their research work. The oral presentations as well as the poster presentations were excellent…SURC offered the students and Mentors who attended an excellent opportunity to meet SUNY family from across the state. I congratulate the students and mentors for a job very well done. I look forward to our ESC students' participation in the 2016 conference and hope Empire State College will host the SURC event in coming years."

Similarly, John Hetherington supported and applauded his student Shannon Mulstay:

"Shannon Mulstay is a dedicated and thoughtful student who says that writing has been her outlet to express herself. She says that she has always loved being surrounded by books, especially at the library. She began writing to express herself while growing up in the New York State foster care system, and she pursued writing in online outlets while preparing for college level work. As a first year ESC student she has already begun working to lay the groundwork for future graduate studies by developing a strong bachelor's degree in creative writing as preparation for graduate level work. Her research for her paper "Books and Censorship in the Modern Age: To Ban or Not to Ban?" allowed her to explore the intersection of literature and the law, and highlighted the strengths of her research skills by turning this research project into an interdisciplinary exploration of how literature impacts individuals and society beyond the page. Shannon says that her paper was inspired by the librarians she has known through years because librarians helped her to develop her love of reading and writing by letting her remain at the library for hours simply reading."

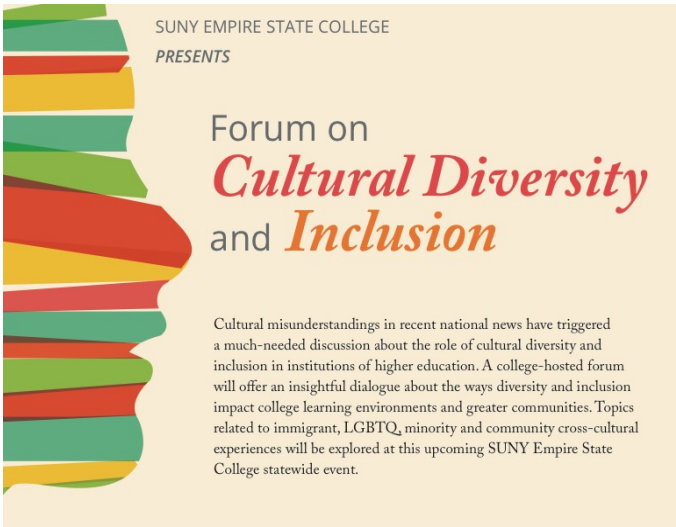
On behalf of the Graduate Student Research and Professional Development Committee we would like to express our gratitude for mentoring our future graduate students so well!

Join Us in the Graduate Student Collaborative!

The Graduate Student Collaborative (GSC) is a student organization established to encourage the convergence of graduate students from across SUNY Empire State College and varied disciplines so they may engage, and support each other in their academic, social, and professional developments.

Our mission is to promote and sustain educational and cultural experiences that will inspire graduate students to broaden their knowledge, generate communal interaction, and develop a collective of scholarship amongst our diverse student body. We would like to enhance the ESC graduate student experience with prospects for collaborative research, college-wide events and activities, attendance at graduate conferences, and increased support to the college's effort for diversity and inclusion. We hope to bring positive energy to a diverse population of students, create an atmosphere of cohesion, provide a platform to network and collaborate on research. We want to help bridge the gap amongst graduate students who sometimes feel isolated from peers while pursuing their collegiate goals in a non-traditional environment.

We will do this by hosting mixers at the residences where students meet, network, and share critical issues/questions with faculty and staff. Online students will be engaged via webinars and will have a way to voice their issues and concerns, and ask questions about capstone projects, etc. We hope to enrich members through the promotion of diverse disciplines and perspectives. We are very excited and welcome new members. GSC is a SUNY Empire State College student organization that will demonstrate and foster the inclusive academic culture.



Date and Time | **April 27, 2016** | **7 - 9 p.m.**

The forum will be accessible to the public online through ESC-TV (www.esc.edu/esc-tv) and at the college's distributed locations.

Our current efforts for the 2016 calendar year include plans for a presentation at the Wellness Retreat and a college-wide forum on Cultural Diversity and Inclusion.

Club officers are: Carolyn Massey, President; Julian Wylie, Vice President; Vashti Ma'at, Secretary, Elenora Levin, Treasurer; and Lori Mould; Social Media Coordinator. Dr. Rhianna Rogers is the club's faculty advisor.

For more information visit: http://commons.esc.edu/escgsa/

Contact Dr. Rogers at Rhianna.Rogers@esc.edu

Facebook link: https://www.facebook.com/groups/792109240917783/?ref=br_tf.

This newsletter was created by the Graduate Student Research and Professional Development Committee: Elizabeth Bradley (chair and newsletter editor), Meg Benke, Betul Lus, Dianne Ramdeholl, Rhianna Rogers, and Sylwia Starnawska. Content was written by the students, alums, and faculty featured in the articles.

Interested in submitting a piece for next year's issue? Please email Elizabeth Bradley at Elizabeth.bradley@esc.edu with questions and content.

MBA News: Healthcare Leadership Launched and Faculty Profile

By Barry Eisenberg

In Fall 2015, Empire State College launched the MBA in Healthcare Leadership (HCL) with an initial group of thirteen students. Our students have a broad range of backgrounds, including finance, quality management, insurance, clinical work, risk management, information systems, and hospital administration. The program will help students enhance knowledge and skills in economics, health policy, information systems, patient satisfaction, healthcare finance, operations management, ethics and legal issues, and inter-professionalism, while taking a number of electives that allow them to customize the program to their particular needs. They will conclude their program by developing strategic plans for their organizations.

The first of three retreats was held in October in New York City. Dean Tai Arnold welcomed the students and discussed the rigors and value of the graduate program. Sessions on healthcare management theory and application, the Affordable Care Act, bioethics, the physician's perspective, and health communication were presented by HCL faculty – Norman Angell, Alan Belasen, Jeff Ritter, Howard Zwickel, and myself. A presentation by our keynote speaker, Dr. Rich Boehler, CEO of St. Joseph's Healthcare in Nashua, NH, centered on the economic challenges of organizing a health insurance plan for employees.

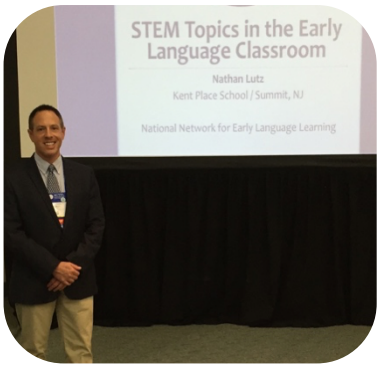
The retreat was an opportunity for students to meet faculty and staff and network with one another. All of us involved in the HCL program and in planning the retreat were very much encouraged by the enthusiasm of our students and their dedication to making the world of healthcare better for all.

Dr. Alan Belasen is a full professor at the School for Graduate Studies. As graduate Faculty Chair and MBA Chair, Alan initiated extensive program development leading to new graduate certificates, partnership programs, business programs, and combined programs. He also led the accreditation of the MBA and that of several certificates. Recently he co-led the development of the Masters in Finance. Currently he is working on the design of the Doctor of Business Administration.

Dr. Belasen has received a number of honors. In 2011 he received the Outstanding Reviewer Award from the Academy of Management. He is also the winner of the 2003-2004 SUNY Empire State College's Susan Turben Award for excellence in scholarship and the recipient of the 2014-2015 SUNY Chancellors' Award for Scholarship and creative activities.

Active in scholarship, Dr. Belason has yielded over 50 co-authored or co-presented conference papers, articles, and book chapters. Currently he is working on ***Women in Management: A Framework for Sustainable Work-Life Integration.*** The critical question the proposed book sets out to answer is: How do you create a sustainable set of work-life interactions? The reality for most women is that they must find ways to combine multiple responsibilities - and they may do so in ways that bring multiple benefits. "The book enables an understanding of the paradoxes faced when navigating work and personal responsibilities and how individuals can realistically manage these sets of responsibilities." The book is under contract with Routledge. Alan plans to complete the new book during his upcoming Sabbatical.

M.Ed. Student Lutz Presents at ACTFL Convention



This past November, M.Ed. Student Nathan Lutz, attended the American Council on the teaching of Foreign Languages Annual Convention and World Language Expo in San Diego, CA. Lutz presented his research into content-based world language instruction for young learners. His session focused specifically on the teaching of STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) for early language learners. Lutz' session was chosen by the National Network for Early Language Learning to be one of their specially sponsored sessions.

In his session, Lutz showed how science, technology, engineering, and math topics can serve as the content and discussion framework for world language classes. Research shows that students learn language best when engaged in hands-on activities. Content-based language teaching simultaneously promotes language acquisition and advances content knowledge. By selecting STEM topics, world language teachers can foster language learning by engaging students in important, real-world projects, while having students utilize their second language knowledge, skills, and abilities to complete the work. Project-based learning integrates all four language skills (listening, reading, speaking, and writing), incorporates collaborative teamwork, and challenges learners to use the target language in different capacities inside and outside the classroom.

Lutz is the recipient of a Hallsey Grant, a fund provided by his school to write curriculum during the summer. His department is also the recipient of a FLENJ (Foreign Language Educators of New Jersey) Mini Grant to purchase the materials to bring this research to life.

Lutz is the primary school French teacher and the Global Learning Coordinator at Kent Place School, an all-girls independent school in northern New Jersey.

Upcoming Research Conferences

Consider attending an upcoming conference, or submitting a proposal to present at a conference if the deadline has not yet passed. Many conferences will accept graduate student presenters.

Emerging Learning Design
June 2-3, 2016
Montclair State University, Montclair, NJ
Submissions were due in November
http://eld.montclair.edu/

NYSATE and NYACTE Annual Fall Conference
October 20-22, 2016
Saratoga Springs, NY
Submissions for the 2016 conference are due in September
http://www.nyacte.org/conference/conferences.html

Canadian Association for the Study of Adult Education (CASAE)
May 29-31, 2016
University of Calgary in Calgary, Alberta
Submissions were due in March
http://www.casae-aceea.ca/?q=node/30

Adult Education Research Conference (AERC)
June 2-5, 2016
University of North Carolina at Charlotte
Submissions were due in October
http://conferences.k-state.edu/adult-education/

New England Educational Research Organization
April 27-29th, 2016
Portsmouth, NH
Submissions were due in July
http://www.neero.org/#!conference/c21kz