A fall 2019 visit by Chinese educators (pictured below) has been followed by a unique university partnership. See page 6.
I hope this newsletter finds you safe, healthy and hopeful. Communities worldwide have undergone dramatic change in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. DePaul took swift action in March to pivot to remote learning for the spring quarter, ensuring a safe environment for our university community while maintaining academic excellence. The College of Education (COE), for its part, has provided uninterrupted instruction, programs and services in many ways.

Our Center for Educational Technology provided virtual workshops to faculty on online teaching and resources for success to students. Mentors in our Academic Success Center helped students map strategies for remote learning and managing their anxiety. Our Education and Counseling Center, where graduate students under faculty supervision provide counseling and tutoring services to the surrounding community, maintained robust online interactions as well.

COE’s Office of Field Experiences and Student Teaching has worked closely with local and state officials to monitor changes in placement sites and communicate licensure updates. Our administration worked closely with the state of Illinois to develop a plan for continued internships. Counseling interns engaged in tele-counseling for children and adults in schools, community agencies, hospitals and universities. Doctoral defenses proceeded as scheduled but remotely.

As we near the completion of another academic year powered by exceptional collaboration, I also want to highlight the contributions of our associate deans and department chairs. These faculty leaders provide inspiration and oversight on decisions that shape students’ experiences. Their drive is evident in daily pursuits that prepare our students to enter the education and counseling fields with excellence.

Associate Dean for Student Development Ronald Chennault oversees student-related processes, including exceptions to academic policies and student conduct. He teaches multiculturalism and serves on the board of Chicago Survivors, a nonprofit organization providing services to family members of homicide victims.

Associate Dean for Curriculum and Programs Barbara Rieckhoff helps faculty develop curriculum proposals in alignment with state guidelines. Having served as a teacher and administrator in public and Catholic schools, she understands our school partners’ needs, knowledge that helped her develop our global Catholic and superintendent educational leadership programs.

Roxanne Owens has served as chair of the Department of Teacher Education while imparting her expertise in children’s literacy. She is also generating partnerships with Chicago Public Schools to provide more school nurses for the district and developed our online school nursing program to address the shortage in Illinois.

Department of Leadership, Language and Curriculum Chair Sonia Soltero has dedicated her career to bilingual education and advocating for linguistically diverse children and learners.

Jennifer Walberg, department chair of counseling and special education, is a licensed K-12 special education teacher. She also helps families navigate the individualized education program process and led COE’s efforts to earn accreditation for all of our counseling programs.

Their commitment to our mission is mirrored by all of our faculty, staff, students and alumni. Now, more than ever, I’m especially proud to belong to this community.
The College of Education (COE) were a car in a NASCAR race, its Academic Success Center (ASC) staff would be the pit crew. COE students motoring toward their careers as educators and counselors can get support specific to their studies, career path and personal challenges when they’re running on fumes and need help to get back on track.

Director Nora Murphy and her team of graduate assistants formulate test-taking and study strategies; tutor students bound for elementary and middle schools in reading, writing, math and science; acclimate transfer and international students to DePaul’s academic system and social-network supports; and help blocked students overcome obstacles.

“We try to help students and faculty with whatever they need,” says Murphy. Murphy came to DePaul in 2005 to help create and guide the ASC. She focused first on intervening for students on probation or trying to return after dismissal, as well as preparing prospective teachers for the Test of Academic Proficiency, a basic-skills test eliminated as a requirement in Illinois in 2019. Now, the ASC team helps students prepare for the Educational Teacher Performance Assessment (edTPA), a subject-specific, portfolio-based assessment of readiness for teaching jobs, as well as content-area tests in subjects they’ll cover as teachers. Murphy, who has a counseling background, also helps counseling students prepare for the National Counselor Examination.

“Elementary school teachers especially have to cover a broad base,” says Stephanie Labront, the ASC’s math and science specialist, who tailors her tutoring to each student. “You uncover their areas of struggle, learning style, approach to problem solving, and go from there.”

Reading and writing tutor Emily Caliendo says that many students aren’t struggling, but benefit from weekly check-ins to plan how they’ll get assignments done on time.

“Just having that accountability buddy can be helpful,” says Caliendo.

Interpersonal encouragement is also key to Get Unstuck, a program Murphy runs for overwhelmed undergraduates who have fallen behind, missed classes and may feel embarrassed about returning to the classroom.

“We’re not therapists or their moms,” says Murphy. “We’re more like transitional adults they can vent to. When students get stuck, helping them break things down into small pieces lowers anxiety and makes their goals manageable.”

When the COVID-19 pandemic required DePaul students to complete the spring quarter safely at home through online interactions with faculty, Murphy’s team expanded their Get Unstuck and academic coaching programs. All university students, many of whom were taking classes remotely for the first time, learned strategies for doing so successfully and coping with anxiety caused by the crisis.

The ASC also helps transfer students hit the ground running.

“They have to figure out a lot quickly,” says Murphy. “Applying for student teaching, starting field experiences, getting background checks, adjusting to our quarterly system.”

ASC’s peer mentor program connects transfer students to four-year COE students, who help them feel part of a mutually supportive community. ASC contributes by organizing its own social events for newcomers, from basketball game outings to pizza parties.

“The goal is to help them build their network and know about resources before they get stuck,” says Tina Roberts, who oversees the program. “Also, some transfer students might have had a negative experience at a past college. It’s important to remind them there’s community support and they can get help right away.”
The gentrification of Chicago’s north-side Edgewater/Andersonville community is not a rising tide that lifts all boats. The area remains home to economically disadvantaged and immigrant families who may need a helping hand. Middle school and high school girls from these neighborhoods risk missing out on a college education that could help close gaps in educational disparities based on economic imbalances.

Fortunately, a partnership between the College of Education (COE) and the Edgewater/Andersonville-based Penedo Charitable Organization is making a positive difference, not only for such girls, but also for DePaul graduate students who want to become professional counselors. COE’s Education and Counseling Center (ECC) staff, graduate students, and faculty and staff across COE help Penedo girls stay on the path to college by providing them with tutoring, counseling and mentoring services.

Penedo began its program to educate girls in Edgewater/Andersonville in 2010. In 2014, the ECC, where supervised graduate students serve the surrounding community while earning their degrees, became involved when it invited Penedo to send its clients to participate in a summer literacy program.

“Our girls responded very well to coming to the center,” says Onelia (Nely) Berringer (BUS ’84), co-founder and executive director of Penedo. The program continued through 2015, with counseling services added. Grant funding for the program ended that year, however.

When Martha Mason became director of the ECC in 2016, she heard about Penedo through Sunny Chico (MEd ’88), co-founder of Penedo, a member of COE’s Dean’s Advisory Council and Berringer’s sister.

“I reached out to see how we could collaborate and get our students who were in the counseling program involved with working with the girls from Penedo,” Mason explains. “I found Nely to be a kindred spirit, and immediately we went to work on getting the partnership going. We started with a summer camp in 2016 and ended up becoming the primary service provider for Penedo during the following school year.”

Since then, Penedo has participated in programming provided by COE students consisting of academic supports such as tutoring, homework help and high school and college readiness training; social-emotional support, including counseling, psychoeducation, group activities, mindfulness training and yoga;
and friendship- and socialization-building activities.

The young women ordinarily come to the ECC at the Lincoln Park Campus Mondays through Thursdays “after school, where they receive help from students majoring in education or counseling,” Mason says. When the COVID-19 pandemic compelled DePaul faculty and students to complete the spring 2020 quarter safely at home through online interactions, COE didn’t miss a beat.

Kathy Iwashima, hired earlier this year to coordinate and expand the program as its full-time program manager, brought in associate professors Roxanne Owens and Jennifer Cohen, who’ve helped maintain continual online support by providing graduate-student tutors from their teacher-training courses. Cohen and Iwashima, a former Chicago Public Schools counselor and teacher, are designing a math-focused curriculum to help participants get accepted at selective-enrollment schools. Iwashima also connected participants with Donna Kiel, director of COE’s Office of Innovative Professional Learning. An online women empowerment program designed by Kiel provides in-depth, social-emotional coaching.

All of the high school seniors currently in the program have been accepted into the colleges of their choice. Being at DePaul helped them understand and prepare for college life.

“Penedo has been turning girls’ lives around for 10 years,” says Iwashima. “We’re building on their successful template by adding tailor-made professional programming and demystifying the college experience.”

Mason adds, “This program helps our students grow professionally and also do something meaningful for the community.”

Penedo benefits from the partnership by being able to offer its young clients “a safe place to grow, learn and be supported, beginning in sixth grade and continuing through their middle school, high school and postsecondary school years,” Berringer says.

Yasmin Corrales was a high school student who appreciated the work of the graduate students. “They were really helpful for me, especially during a time when there were things I couldn’t talk to my parents about,” Corrales says. “But I could talk to the in-training master’s students provided by DePaul.”

She also found the program’s tutoring services helpful. “We were able to request tutoring in specific subjects,” says Corrales, who now attends Lake Forest College. “Sometimes in high school, it’s difficult to get tutoring, and sometimes you’re a little nervous to ask, but DePaul was there for us.”

The partnership “has accomplished a unique situation not seen in university settings, where a practicum student can immediately practice the skills he or she learns in the classroom and provide one-to-one and group support to a high-risk population,” Berringer says. “The Penedo girls, in turn, reap the many benefits of this direct contact and support.”

“You cannot possibly provide any kind of human services without making a difference,” Mason says. “The girls who receive services in the ECC are impacted by the students, faculty and staff they work with every week, and we are impacted by them.”

The partnership has been so successful that Penedo began officially transferring its permanent home to COE last fall. A financial gift from Penedo supports services and Iwashima’s position. Once the transition is completed, Penedo will forfeit its 501(c)(3) nonprofit status, Berringer says. She hopes that under COE the program will expand beyond Edgewater/Andersonville.

Like Berringer and Chico, “The majority of Penedo’s board are graduates of DePaul,” Berringer adds. “All of us are very heavily influenced by the Vincentian mission.”
China’s modern industrial revolution has transformed the country into a global economic titan. It has also radically reshaped the nation’s traditional family unit. Two-income households have increased as more women enter the workforce. Multigenerational households, with grandparents available to care for young children while both parents work, are less common. Career-minded professionals spend more time at work, which is also a consequence of the rising cost of living. These societal changes have exposed an imperative need for early childhood educators in Chinese preschools, elementary schools, daycare centers and social service organizations. However, postsecondary institutions providing training for such educators are scarce across the country.

To meet this pressing need, China’s Ministry of Education and the institutions it serves have reached out to experts in Western countries where early childhood educational systems have long existed, and to American universities in particular. Since 2015, COE’s Office of Innovative Professional Learning (OIPL) has facilitated professional development workshops for hundreds of educators in Beijing’s Haidian district. Twenty-three of those teachers spent three weeks at DePaul last fall to take workshops, observe master classes and visit Chicago public and private schools affiliated with DePaul.

Thus, when China’s Hainan Normal University decided to develop its early childhood teacher-training program, DePaul topped the list of partner candidates. COE and DePaul’s Global Engagement division are creating an unprecedented undergraduate program with Hainan Normal. The program, funded in part by the Chinese Ministry of Education, provides an instructive template for such cross-cultural collaborations.

“China needs people with bachelor’s degrees who understand childhood development theory derived from research, and how those findings can be applied to classroom and childcare center practices,” says Marie Donovan, associate professor and early childhood education program director. “They’re especially interested in American early childhood teacher education because we view children and students in relation to family units. That’s a very Chinese focus as well.”

The university is located in Haikou, the capital of China’s subtropical island province, Hainan, situated along the southeastern coast in the South China Sea. Palm trees, beaches and forested mountains attract vacationers and tourists. The university, founded in 1949, draws students from across China and is well regarded for its teacher education and openness to experimenting with new pedagogies. Hainan Normal was impressed by COE’s comprehensive training that prepares students for classrooms and other...
environments and by its community-service-oriented interactions with diverse populations.

“They’re on a mission to change how they do things in their courses, and looking to us as experts,” says Donovan. “The hands-on community focus unique to DePaul is attractive to our Chinese colleagues.”

Donovan was part of a team that traveled to Hainan in 2019, prior to the first reports of COVID-19 cases in China, to meet with administrators and faculty, tour the campuses, observe classes and negotiate the program’s structure and curriculum. The group also included COE Dean Paul Zionts; Roxanne Owens, chair of teacher education; Global Engagement Associate Provost GianMario Besana; and Hui Lin, a Driehaus College of Business associate professor and associate director for regional initiatives in China.

Future plans call for Chinese students to spend their freshman, sophomore and junior years at Hainan Normal, then come to Chicago as transfer students for their senior year at DePaul. DePaul faculty may teach some sophomore- and junior-year classes in Hainan to ease students’ transition abroad. DePaul will also vet additional teachers recruited by an agency representing the Chinese Ministry of Education to ensure methods and syllabi are aligned with the DePaul-directed curriculum. The program will be taught in English, so students need to demonstrate proficiency.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, DePaul is taking all necessary precautions to ensure the health and safety of all program participants. As such, the timing of the first cohort’s formation and its subsequent arrival at DePaul may be postponed to ensure the health and safety of all program participants. As such, the timing of the first cohort’s formation and its subsequent arrival at DePaul may be postponed to
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of fostering critical and creative thinking in the classroom,” says Owens. In OIPL-led workshops, she says, teachers love participatory activities but are hesitant to use them in their own classrooms. “It was like they didn’t believe they were being given permission to teach in other ways. They were skeptical.”

Emphasizing the importance of play for early learners, especially in childcare and preschool settings, is key to building the joint curriculum. Curricular reviews prior to the team’s visit, however, suggested this wasn’t a shared belief.

“We don’t want a bunch of preschoolers sitting and doing worksheets,” says Owens. Owens and Donovan were delighted to discover Hainan Normal is embracing this new philosophy. During their visit in 2019, they observed developmentally appropriate play at a preschool on the university’s campus, as well as undergraduate students in an arts and culture instruction class learning how to act out folk tales. Owens pulled out her phone to show them photos of students in her children’s literature class at DePaul doing the same thing.

When students in the program’s first cohort eventually come to Chicago, immersive fieldwork that includes internships and shadowed student teaching will be an important part of their studies, just as it is for all COE preservice teachers. They’ll see theory spun into action. They’ll experience an open dialogue with parents and communities that’s not typical in China.

“Bringing parents and families into the school to see themselves as part of the school’s community isn’t the norm everywhere,” says Owens. “Many of their teachers have told their department chair, ‘We want to know more about what they do in America.’”

In order for these Chinese preservice teachers to fully learn American models of early childhood education, the field-based component of the COE program is critical.

“We don’t want them in the classroom every day,” adds Donovan. “We want them out in the neighborhoods learning how American families interact with childcare centers and schools. That’s key to understanding why our system works as well as it does. I really believe we at DePaul have a role to play in effecting change in how Chinese society views their young children’s needs. And I can’t think of anybody better than early-childhood teacher educators to help make that happen.”
Michael Cornell, a student in the Value-Creating Education for Global Citizenship master’s program, won the Outstanding Graduate Student Paper Award at the 40th annual Bergamo Conference on Curriculum Theory and Classroom Practice for his paper “Conceptual Research in Theoretical Studies: Intersections of Human Education and Curriculum.”

Associate Professor Marie Donovan, through her work as chair of the Faculty Advisory Council to the Illinois Board of Higher Education, collaborated with the American Association of Publishers to hold a university dialogue at DePaul on Nov. 21. Students, faculty, librarians, legislators and bookstore managers learned more about the burgeoning use of open education resources in place of traditional textbooks, as well as how publishers are reengineering the ways they provide learning content to students and faculty to save costs, provide ready access for all and ensure student success.

On Nov. 7, the DePaul Women’s Network and the Office of Institutional Diversity and Equity held the 15th annual St. Louise de Marillac Women of Spirit and Action Awards ceremony. The university recognized more than 55 faculty and staff, nominated by DePaul colleagues, who embody St. Louise de Marillac’s qualities of spirit, action, service and a strong work ethic. COE staff members honored this year were Jordan Humphrey, assistant dean for assessment, Nancy Hashimoto, director of advising, and Sandra Tanksley, academic advising assistant.

The fall 2019 Education Issues Forum, “Supporting Our Students in a Racially and Politically Polarized Time,” highlighted the impact of anti-immigrant and antiblack rhetoric on students, and examined hate speech and white supremacy in schools. The Oct. 22 event offered educators ideas about what to do to address these issues in their classrooms. More than 150 attendees heard a panel moderated by Associate Professor Horace Hall that featured Chicago educators Nora Flanagan, an English teacher at Northside College Prep High School; Linda Perales, a special education teacher at Corkery Elementary School; Jackson Potter, a civics and social studies teacher at Back of the Yards College Prep High School; and Asif Wilson, associate dean of instruction at Harold Washington College. The winter forum on Feb. 26, “Creating an Inclusive Curriculum: Teaching LGBTQ History in Public Schools,” focused on strategies to meet requirements of the 2019 Illinois Inclusive Curriculum Act.

Sister Mary Paul McCaughey, O.P., professional lecturer in COE’s Department of Leadership, Language and Curriculum, led professional workshops on social-emotional learning in the context of empathy at St. Angela School in Chicago’s Austin neighborhood. Along with Donna Kiel, director of COE’s Office of Innovative Professional Learning, she led a similar workshop at DePaul that served more than 100 teachers from 11 Archdiocese of Chicago schools.

Additionally, she worked on board formation, led new board member orientation workshops and provided development workshops for 17 schools in the Archdiocese of Boston.
Associate Professor Jason Goulah was the keynote speaker at the second International Annual Conference on Value-Creating Education for Sustainable Development and Critical Thinking in a Global World at Kenya’s University of Nairobi. Professional lecturer Melissa Bradford presented her paper, “Value Creative Dialogue as a Collaborative Method of Inquiry,” at the conference. Curriculum studies doctoral students Nozomi Inukai, Ritsuko Rita, Mwende May, Joy Williams and Paula Estrada Jones also presented refereed papers.

Doctoral program student Markenya Williams became the first Diversity & Equity Chair for the Illinois Principals Association’s (IPA) Kishwaukee region, which includes approximately 700 IPA members.

Seven COE counseling faculty attended and presented last fall at the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision conference in Seattle. At the conference, DePaul also hosted a job talk with standing-room-only attendance.

Brian Coleman (MEd ’14; below, front), a counseling program graduate and the American School Counselor Association’s 2019 National School Counselor of the Year, was named to Illinois Governor JB Pritzker’s Affirming and Inclusive Schools Task Force.


Zoaib Mirza, former adjunct faculty member of DePaul’s College of Computing and Digital Media who is completing his EdD at COE, recently accepted a position as director of instructional design at Cornell University in Ithaca, N.Y.

Associate Professor of Counseling Melissa Ockerman and faculty at University of Illinois at Chicago and Rush University were funded by a Hektoen Institute of Medicine grant that let them participate in a six-workshop series on neurobiology and trauma applications in education, health equity and activism. Sessions combined talks on core topics with reflective practice, group discussion and the theory and practice of neuroregulation.

Gayle Mindes, an emeritus faculty member, recently published “Contemporary Challenges in Teaching Young Children,” with chapters contributed by many COE faculty, alumni and current students. The book provides both veteran and aspiring early childhood educators with the information and tools they need to build on their understanding of developmentally appropriate practice.

Published by Via Sapientiae, 2018
SINGING PRAISES
REMEMBERING A TRIPLE-DIVAM DIVA WHO DEDICATED HER VOICE TO RAISING OTHERS UP

Tecora Rogers (SCPS BA ’12, MA ’14, EdD ’19) was a talented gospel and jazz singer who toured internationally and entertained Spirit of Chicago passengers on Lake Michigan cruises. But that wasn’t the limit of her gifts. The example she set as an aspiring educator intent on lifting others up continues to inspire the DePaul community after she succumbed to cancer on September 6, 2019.

A whirlwind of activity to the end, Rogers was a managing director at a global staffing agency; produced and hosted “The Tecora Rogers Show,” a public-access cable TV show featuring interviews with dynamic individuals from Chicago’s African American communities; and traveled around the United States with her husband, Corneal Harper, to make documentary videos about African American history.

Rogers put all that experience and energy into her next goal, teaching at a higher-education institution, while pursuing her doctorate at the College of Education. Seven years earlier, she’d given the commencement address at DePaul’s School for New Learning (now the School of Continuing and Professional Studies) graduation ceremony after earning her bachelor’s degree from the school at age 57. She added a master’s degree two years later, and was in the final stages of writing her dissertation at the time of her passing.

“For her dissertation, Tecora interviewed African American teachers working predominantly with black youth about their experiences implementing culturally relevant teaching strategies in their classrooms,” said Associate Professor Amira Proweller during a hooding ceremony last fall at which Rogers’ doctoral degree was posthumously conferred and presented to Harper. The occasion was a joyful remembrance, with performances by members of the Eleven Jazzy Divas, a group of female vocalists that had included Rogers.

“She often spoke with me of her deep hope that her research would not only give voice to the perspectives of African American teachers,” continued Proweller, “but, in doing so, would provide critical direction for improving the educational experiences of black students.”

John Zeigler, who directs the Egan Office of Urban Education & Community Partnerships at DePaul’s Steans Center, says Rogers was already doing so as a part-time school community organizer on his staff. Rogers was tasked to St. Malachy, a pre-K through eighth grade Catholic school on Chicago’s Near West Side. She connected the school, students and families with DePaul and community resources, and supported DePaul undergraduate students placed there as mentors and tutors.

“She built her rich life experiences into another narrative that propelled her work in a critical, authentic way,” says Zeigler. “It was, ‘I have this knowledge I was seeking, and I want to share it.’ What I’m left with is her unselfishness and genuine desire to make the world a better place. Tecora exemplified that in so many ways and touched so many lives.”
Kwaku Attoh Helps Athletes and Elementary School Students Make Strides Toward Success

As a DePaul student, Kwaku Attoh (EDU ’09) balanced his time between training and competing as a sprinter and his education. Today, he still straddles those worlds.

As assistant track and field coach at Widener University in Chester, Penn., he’s leading a new generation of runners to follow in his footsteps as champions. As an elementary physical education teacher at Charter School of New Castle in New Castle, Del., he’s teaching young children about sports. In both roles, he’s using lessons he learned at DePaul.

“I learned a lot from the College of Education, and it’s helped me become successful as a student, athlete and educator,” says Attoh.

As a sprinter at DePaul, Attoh was honored with a number of awards, including the BIG EAST Academic All-Star award. After graduating, he started his career as a coach at Northside College Prep in Chicago, and, in time, made his way to the East Coast, where he’s held various coaching positions at the high school and collegiate levels.

At Wesley College in Dover, Del., he trained seven national champions and 35 NCAA Division III All-Americans. Twice, he was a finalist for the U.S. Track & Field and Cross Country Coaches Association Mid-East Region Assistant Coach of the Year award.

He’s hoping to have the same kinds of successes in his new role at Widener. Vince Touey, who is head men’s track and field coach at Widener, says that Attoh understands what athletes need to achieve at the national level, and he’s able to guide the team in that direction. “Kwaku’s enthusiasm for every athlete makes him a coach that each athlete in his group looks forward to seeing every day for practice. This, coupled with Kwaku’s experience and knowledge, makes him a wonderful coach,” says Touey.

Attoh says many of his coaching tactics were influenced by his workouts at DePaul. “I learned about various training methods, how to lift more effectively. That helped me then, and it’s helped me as a track and field coach today,” he says.

Attoh finds coaching and teaching fulfilling in unique, but complementary ways. As a coach, he loves working with potential champions, who stand out not just because of their speed, but because of their outlook. “They have a mindset of thinking they can be anybody,” he says. As a physical education teacher, he gets to work with kids early, imparting the kinds of lessons about health, wellness and exercise that could one day lead them to become champions.

“I work at a low-income school that’s predominantly African American,” he says. “So as somebody who is African American, my having the chance to inspire kids to eat properly, exercise and be active, and get involved in games is very important.”

In both roles, he’s taking the lessons from DePaul that have shaped him and passing them on to future generations in hopes that they’ll do the same.
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DePaul Responds

You can be part of DePaul University’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Our students and other members of the DePaul community need your support for everything from technology support for online learning to emergency assistance with everyday and extraordinary expenses. Your gift means so much during this uncertain time.

Visit Inspire DePaul, the university’s crowdfunding website, to support efforts to help members of the DePaul community affected by COVID-19.

Be part of the response at inspire.depaul.edu.