Celebrating our Graduates!

GSEAP’s graduate reception was a festive event, with approximately 150 graduates and proud family members attending the afternoon ceremony in the Kelley Center. Four of those graduates were honored with the Dean’s Award of Excellence:

- **Meagan Bolton**, psychological and educational consultation
- **Leah Rambush**, marriage and family therapy
- **William Pitcher**, educational studies and teacher preparation
- **Timothy Sather**, counselor education

**Ellen Israel**, graduating with a degree in secondary education, addressed the crowd and spoke movingly of her experience in going through the program as she dealt with her son’s illness. Both, she said, confirmed the importance of meeting individual and family needs, and the teaching of her professors underscored that.

**Robert Schmidt**, professor of counselor education, received the adjunct teaching award. “Bob has a trajectory of success in teaching and mentoring students in GSEAP” noted Dr. Bogusia Skudrzyk, who chairs the Awards Committee. “He has over 30 years of experience, first in teaching in public school and then in becoming a school counselor. Most of all, he was recognized for his unwavering commitment to modeling what social justice and advocacy means. He has conducted numerous pro-bono workshops in order to reach out to survivors of tragedies. He has organized groups of people, clubs, and professional organizations to raise funds for much needed counseling services for victims of trauma. And he advocated in Washington, D.C. on behalf of American soldiers for a bill allowing counseling services for PTSD.”

GSEAP also used the occasion to honor **Theresa Tillinger**, M.A.’02, principal of St. Ann School in Bridgeport, and GSEAP’s own **Dr. Joseph Ricciotti**, director of GSEAP’s internship program, for their extraordinary service.

*continued on page 8*
Leadership Transitions in GSEAP

Dean Susan D. Franzosa, who has so ably led the Graduate School of Education and Allied Professions (GSEAP) for seven years, has announced her desire to leave her post at the end of this academic year. After a sabbatical this fall, she will return to the teaching faculty.

Dr. Franzosa oversaw GSEAP’s national accreditation in teacher education (NCATE) in 2008, national and state professional association approvals of degree programs within the School, and the formation of the inaugural GSEAP Advisory Board. Under her direction, the School developed ongoing partnerships with the Bridgeport public school system, founded the Kathy P. Kissol Center for Marriage and Family Therapy, and developed scores of new programs, including a five-year undergraduate-graduate dual degree teacher education program, a Master’s in Family Studies, and several Advanced Training Certificates.

“I wish to express my gratitude to Dr. Franzosa for all of her work and dedication to Fairfield University in general and to GSEAP in particular during a time of tremendous growth and change,” said University President Jeffrey von Arx, S.J. “During her tenure, GSEAP matured on a number of fronts, and she is in large part responsible for leading that growth and innovation. The Graduate School of Education and Allied Professions is in a strong position for future growth thanks to Dean Franzosa’s leadership and perseverance.”

Changes in GSEAP Leadership

With Dean Susan Franzosa stepping down to return to the faculty following her seven year term, a number of administrative changes are taking place in the Graduate School of Education and Allied Professions.

Dr. Faith-Anne Dohm, professor of psychology, will serve as interim dean of the Graduate School of Education and Allied Professions for the 2013-2014 academic year. The University will conduct a national search in the coming year for the next dean of the school.

Dr. Dohm will begin her term as interim dean on August 1. She has served as associate dean since 2007.

“[Dr. Dohm] will be an able supervisor of our professional staff members, and she will be an excellent mentor to faculty colleagues, with particular attention to the newest members of our community, guiding them towards success,” said the Rev. Paul Fitzgerald, S.J., Fairfield’s senior vice president for academic affairs. “Faith-Anne will also be a clear advocate for GSEAP within the University and the surrounding communities.”

Dr. Dohm holds a Ph.D in clinical psychology from the University of Maryland Graduate School in Baltimore. She has been a member of the faculty since 1998 and a licensed psychologist in the state of Connecticut since 1990. She is the author or co-author of many peer-reviewed studies, several with student co-authors. Her list of academic awards and honors, and her list of presentations at academic conferences are extensive, as is her service as a peer reviewer of the scholarly work of her colleagues in her fields of inquiry.

Dr. Rona Preli will take on the role of acting associate dean. Dr. Preli joined the Fairfield University community 25 years ago and ever since has directed the nationally accredited Marriage and Family Therapy program, one of the few at a Jesuit University in the U.S. Dr. Preli will continue as Chair of MFT and will teach an essential clinical course to our graduate students in the program.

Dr. Preli earned her Ph.D. in Marriage and Family Therapy from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University after earning a post-master’s certification in Strategic Marital and Family Therapy from the Family Therapy Institute of Washington, D.C. She also holds an M.S.W degree with a specialization in Juvenile and Criminal Justice, from the University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Social Work and a B.S. from the University of Connecticut with a specialization in Human Development and Family Relations.

Dr. Evelyn Bilias Lolis was appointed interim associate dean in February 2013 when Dr. Christine Siegel became the new associate vice president for Academic Affairs. In September Bilias Lolis will begin a three-year term as associate dean. In this role, she will serve as the University’s Certification Officer and liaison to the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE). Her responsibilities will also include overseeing GSEAP curriculum and program development initiatives, accreditation and program assessment, and all aspects of GSEAP’s extensive community partnership work.

After earning her doctoral degree from the University of Connecticut, Dr. Bilias Lolis worked as a school psychologist in an urban high school. She later served as the District Department Chair of Psychology for the Stamford Public Schools. Dr. Bilias Lolis was appointed assistant professor of school psychology in GSEAP in 2010.

Dr. Christine Siegel, formerly GSEAP associate dean, is now the University’s associate vice president for academic affairs. In this role, she will expand the work that she has initiated during the past two years as Faculty Consultant for Assessment of Student Learning, with primary responsibility for the coordination of University-wide academic assessment activities and management of assessment results.

Dr. Siegel will continue to teach courses in learning theory, developmental psychology, and assessment in GSEAP.

Dr. Bilias Lolis with her appointment letter.

Dr. Rona Preli will serve as acting associate dean.

Dr. Christine Siegel, formerly GSEAP associate dean, is now the University’s associate vice president for academic affairs.

Dr. Evelyn Bilias Lolis

Dr. Christine Siegel

Dr. Faith-Anne Dohm

Dr. Rona Preli
Caring for the Caregivers

As the news began to circulate about the shootings at a Newtown elementary school on that awful morning last December, Dr. Paula Gill Lopez, director of GSEAP’s program in school psychology, couldn’t stop thinking about the caregivers — the legions of teachers, school psychologists, social workers, and administrators who would be so deeply traumatized by the events.

Within hours, she put together a series of meetings, open to the school communities, to help them talk about their experiences and feelings.

“We [GSEAP] have so many connections with Newtown — our students intern there, our alumni work there. Those affected spent hours talking about the events, what was happening at the firehouse afterwards, what it was like being with those parents,” she recalled. “For some, it was the first chance they had to debrief.”

A follow-up effort included a two-part crisis management presentation that lasted three full days in March. Approximately 100 people attended the workshops, some travelling from Massachusetts, New York, and Vermont.

The workshops were based on the evidence-based PREPaRE School Crisis Prevention & Intervention curriculum. The curriculum provides school based mental health professionals and other school personnel training in how to establish and implement effective prevention and early intervention plans. The workshops were particularly helpful in guiding Noriv when talking to parents, who were very concerned about what they should say to their children in the weeks following the tragedy.

“This is an evidence-based program conceived by the National Association of School Psychologists,” Dr. Gill Lopez said. Once she completes training, she will be able to teach the program, which will be required for all students in GSEAP’s School Psychology program and will also be offered to practitioners in the surrounding communities. After all, “you can’t provide a good response in a crisis if you’ve never thought about the issue beforehand,” she said.

All-Day Writing Workshop for Bridgeport Students

“I love poetry I love anything to do with art,” noted Reed Middle School student Deborah Pierre. She confessed she would love to write a book one day. “I already started one and now I think I’ll finish it,” added the challenging eighth grader.

Classmate Felipe Silva was interested in spending time at Fairfield University. “I know some people who went here and all I hear are great things about it.” The morning workshop he attended stressed the importance of writing in college and was led by Will Johnson, associate dean of students, and Nakh Laeng, associate director of undergraduate admission.

Organized by Dr. Bryan Ripley Crandall, director of the Connecticut Writing Project (CWP) - Fairfield, the Writing Our Lives conference highlighted the importance of writing in and out of school in a wide variety of genres, from poetry to writing for college, to creative non-fiction, to journalism. The conference was sponsored in part by Bank of America.

Judging by the buzz in the room, punctuated by laughter at key points, keynote speaker, author, and poet Kwame Alexander had the middle and high school students completely engaged as he recited snippets from his poems and stressed that saying “Yes!” to opportunities led to his career as a writer, publisher and educator.

“The one word I can use to describe the conference was ‘amazing!’” said Dr. Crandall. “Although we had pre-registration for 68 students, over 115 were in attendance. We made 140 writer’s notebooks and every single one of them was distributed, with requests from many who wanted additional journals to take home.”

Student Teacher Celebration

All smiles: GSEAP students who completed their student teaching this past year, plus faculty and supervisors at schools in the region, were invited to a year-end celebration to mark a job well done. Drs. Bryan Crandall and Marsha Alibrandi coordinated the event.

The keynote speaker was Cromwell fifth grade teacher Blaise Messinger, just named Connecticut’s 2013 Teacher of the Year. Formerly an actor, he went into teaching when he noticed the positive influence of a great teacher on his son Ethan, who is autistic. Messinger’s talk was inspirational, reminding those in attendance why they went into education and urging them not to become discouraged on days that seem to be filled with administrative tasks and testing.

New Faculty

GSEAP is pleased to welcome three new faculty members for the 2013-14 academic year:

Erica Hartwell, assistant professor of marriage and family therapy, department of MFT

Belinha De Abreu, associate professor of the practice in educational technology, department of psychological and educational consultation

Ryan Cowell, assistant professor of childhood education, department of Educational Studies and Teacher Preparation

From left: Dean Susan Francisca, Dr. Emily Smith, associate professor of educational studies and teacher preparation, and keynote speaker Blaise Messinger.

A few of the GSEAP faculty and students in attendance.

Keynote speaker Kwame Alexander was so popular that students lined up for his autograph.
Commencement 2013

No rain could dampen the spirits of the many GSEAP grads – some with master’s degrees and others with certificates of advanced study – at the May Commencement ceremony. Overall, Fairfield graduated over 400 with advanced degrees at the afternoon ceremony.

Sr. Patricia Farrell, Order of St. Francis, and former president of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, was awarded an honorary doctor of laws degree. She has spent her life doing pastoral work, community organizing, and behavioral health, largely in Latin America.

Dr. Patrick Kelley ’76, P’12, director of the Board on Global Health of the Institute of Medicine, received an honorary doctor of science degree and addressed the crowd.

Dr. Kelley has said that the strong liberal arts background he received at Fairfield “...has been relevant in some way to the work I've subsequently done.”

“...The work I do today is much broader than that typically expected of a physician. Almost every course I took at Fairfield…has been relevant in some way to the work I’ve subsequently done.”

Commissioner Stefan Pryor: Educational Reform

Occasionally controversial and always provocative, Connecticut Commissioner of Education Stefan Pryor spoke to a group of approximately 250 teachers, students, and community members last October about his plan for educational reform. His talk was sponsored by GSEAP as part of the University’s Arts and Minds series.

His talk, “Urban Educational Reform: A New Vision for Connecticut,” began with the history of education in Connecticut, which was once seen as a leader in public education for the country. That’s no longer the case, said Pryor, who cited statistics that indicated quite clearly that the state has slipped from the top, envy-of-the-country position it held a generation or two ago.

“Connecticut has the highest achievement gap in the country,” he said, noting the difference in testing levels between those in affluent districts and those in poor, urban areas.

Pryor spoke of some of the points outlined in Gov. Dannel Malloy’s plan for educational reform. Lifting the performance of Connecticut schools, he said, begins with elevating the profession of teaching, and that can be achieved by raising the bar for entry into teacher preparation programs, tuition and loan forgiveness for teachers, and recognizing, coaching, and rewarding good teachers. The plan for urban educational reform also includes “intensive” efforts to turn around the lowest performing schools, allocating more resources to targeted schools, and expanding high-performance models, including charters and magnets.

The governor has also promised to streamline the red tape and numerous regulations that hamper teacher creativity.

“Quality education for all of our children is vitally important and should be at the forefront of any conversation about our future,” noted Theresa D. Tillinger, chair of the GSEAP Advisory Board and principal of St. Ann School in Bridgeport.

Catholic Deans: Serving Children of Immigrants

Responding to the growth of media attention about immigration and the changing landscape for Catholic schools, Deans of Schools of Education at 19 major Catholic universities called for a greater role in supporting and sustaining a seamless Catholic elementary education last week at a historic meeting in New York City. Hosted by St. John’s University’s School of Education Dean, Dr. Jerrold Ross, Dean Susan Franzosa was an invited participant in a Deans of Education Think Tank.

The focus of the Think Tank conference was to generate “big ideas” to move forward as policies and practices more closely tied to the original mission of Catholic schools; that is, serving the needs of poor and immigrant children and their families.

“Catholic schools need to retain their identity, their traditional values, their adherence to social justice and response to the needs of new populations who are ‘the hurting people of society,’” affirmed the Deans in a statement released to the press. Catholic colleges and universities can help by providing the research and support needed to counter the decline in Catholic elementary school numbers and promote 21st century learning in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM), the arts and humanities, and global understandings.

Reaching beyond their traditional role in training teachers and administrators, the Deans proposed closer collaborative partnerships with K-12 school. “Service learning, needs based professional development, and internship programs, like those we’ve pursued in the Diocese of Bridgeport and at Saint Martin de Porres Academy in New Haven,” noted Dean Franzosa, “are models of what we would like to see established more widely.”

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Poetry for a Purpose

Whenu Fairfield professor of creative writing Carol Ann Davis, a parent in the Newtown, Conn., school system, and Newtown fourth grade teacher Lea Attanasio came up with the idea of facilitating a six-week poetry writing workshop for parents and students in grades three through six, they had no idea how many would sign up.

To their delight, over two dozen budding young writers and many of their parents took up the challenge, an endeavor undertaken for both creative and therapeutic reasons. The result: a published volume of poems, In the Yellowy Green Phase of Spring. “As happens in any workshop built to reflect the humanity of its participants, the writing we did spoke often to our common experiences and sometimes to those experiences that remain difficult or private,” the facilitators note in the introduction.

The Connecticut Writing Project-Fairfield, based on the University’s campus, and the University’s Office of Service Learning and Humanities Institute, helped sponsor the project. The organizers hope to take the Newtown model into schools and community centers in Bridgeport in the coming year.

Celebrating our Graduates

continued from page one

“In Mrs. Tillinger has served as the chair of the GSEAP Advisory Board since its founding in 2009,” said Dean Susan Franzosa, adding that she has been an invaluable advisor and ally during that time.

Dr. Ricciotti has overseen the growth and development of an internship program in conjunction with the Bridgeport public schools that will fund tuition for over fifty graduate students in 2013-2014.

Learning in the Digital Age

A luncheon sponsored by GSEAP’s Board of Advisors and hosted by Board Members Denise Lewis and Randi Infusino drew 30 community members, many of them new to the work GSEAP does and eager to hear about the many programs within the School.

“Denise is a local attorney and has been one of our most committed Board members. She’s given a great deal of her time as chair of our lecture committee,” noted Dean Franzosa gratefully. Randi Infusino joined the Board this past spring.

The focus of the April lunch was on school library media and technology, with a discussion, “Re-Imagining How We Learn in the Digital Age,” led by Dr. Gayle Bogel and Dr. Belinha de Abreu, who will join the faculty this fall.

Board members have been asked to host smaller, focused events such as this one, held at Aspetuck Country Club, in order to introduce community members to GSEAP, to allow them to meet faculty in a more intimate setting, and to encourage conversation about education in general.
Recent Faculty Publications and Grants


Franzosa, S.D., Editor’s preface to the inaugural volume and Changing the educational landscape for girls and women, Educating Homes: The Journal of the Society for Educating Women.


McDermott, P.J., & Hulse, D., Strengthening police organizations through interpersonal leadership. FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin.


GRANTS

Bogel, Gayle. Applied ethics for information and technology professionals: Facets of community engaged learning, University Applied Ethics Research Stipend Award.

Campbell, Anne & Zera, David. The B.E.S.T. Education Project, Bilingual and Special Education, US Department of Education.

Craddall, Bryan. CT Writing Project, Young Writers’ Institute, Writing Our Lives Conference and Summer Fellowships, and the National Writing Project SEED Grant for a High Needs School, CT State Department of Education.

Faculty Notes

Dr. Gayle Bogel received the prestigious Hilda and John Jay Award for “significant professional achievement to the library media field at the local, state and national level” at the annual spring dinner of the Connecticut Association of School Librarians.

Dr. Bogel’s commitment to state and national organizations has included extensive work with the Connecticut Library Association, the Connecticut Association of School Librarians and the Connecticut Library Consortium, where she served as a board member from 2008-2012. She was a founding member and elected officer for the school librarians’ special interest group for the American Educational Research Association, and served as an associate editor for the national Journal of the American Association of School Librarians and as a writer/reviewer for the peer-reviewed journal Evidence Based Practice in Library and Information Science. She currently serves as a reviewer for the peer-reviewed Journal of Online Teaching and Learning.

Dr. Wendy Kohl wins prestigious book award

By Meredith Guinness

Dr. Wendy Kohli, professor of educational foundations, has won a 2012 Critics Choice Book Award from the American Educational Studies Association (AESA) for her book, Feminism and Educational Research (Rowman & Littlefield). Dr. Kohli co-wrote the book with Nicholas C. Burbules.

The book was nominated by a member of the organization and reviewed by a committee of AESA members. They stated the book “makes an outstanding contribution to scholarship in the Social Foundations of Education field” and added it to the 2012 winners list.

“This is a significant achievement,” noted Susan Franzosa, dean. “We are certainly proud to have such an accomplished scholar on the Graduate School of Education and Allied Professions’ faculty. Professor Kohli’s work enriches the education our students receive here at Fairfield.”

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Message From the Dean:

Dear Alumni and Friends:

As you will see from the articles in this issue of Reflections, the Graduate School of Education and Allied Professions (GSEAP) had a very busy and productive year. It was also a year that posed exceptional challenges for the communities that the GSEAP serves. A hurricane displaced families and students, a snowstorm of gigantic proportions disrupted lives at work, school, and the University, and most significantly, most heart rending, the tragic event at Newtown affected us all. We all had some tie to Sandy Hook Elementary School—as affiliated faculty members, interns, counselors, parents, and friends. GSEAP faculty and students organized support services for Sandy Hook colleagues and the Newtown community. Rather than paralyzing us, the tragedy helped to mobilize us. It was a forceful reminder of the centrality of our mission to serve. GSEAP graduates have been enacting that mission since Fairfield University conferred its first graduate degrees in 1951. We now have over 14,000 GSEAP alumni, many of whom have become leaders in their professions. Their leadership is sorely needed in today’s world as we face the challenges of the future.

I have been honored to serve as the dean of GSEAP and work with such inspiring faculty, gifted students, committed alumni, and a dedicated advisory board. As I return to the faculty, I extend my thanks to all who have contributed to GSEAP’s success and offer my very best wishes to GSEAP’s interim dean, Dr. Faith-Anne Dohm, as she begins her term.

On behalf of the faculty, staff, and students of GSEAP, thank you for your continued support.

Susan Douglas Franzosa, Ph.D.
Dean and Professor

Summer 2013