GSEAP earns NCATE accreditation

After months of preparation and a site visit tour by a national review team last spring, GSEAP is pleased to announce that the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education has granted full accreditation with no stipulations to the School, making it the first denominational school in Connecticut to earn this distinguished recognition.

Dean Susan Franzosa thanked the School’s faculty, staff, students, and alumni for their assistance in preparing for the rigorous review and site visit required for national accreditation.

“Our faculty and students are delighted with the result,” said Dean Franzosa. “National accreditation from NCATE is the most prestigious recognition a school of education can receive. Fairfield is the second independent and the first religiously affiliated institution of higher education in Connecticut to receive this award. This really speaks to the excellence of our programs and the Jesuit values inherent in a Fairfield education. GSEAP strives for academic rigor and its graduates are some of the best examples of ‘men and women for others.’ ”

Fairfield received full and unreserved NCATE accreditation at the initial teacher preparation and advanced preparation levels through September 2013. The School also holds full program approval status through September 2013 from the Connecticut State Board of Education.

NCATE is a national accrediting body authorized by the U.S. Department of Education. It determines which schools, colleges, and departments of education meet rigorous standards in preparing teachers and other school specialists to serve in today’s schools.
Did you know?

Diversity Day, Mighty Math Club, Saturday Science Star: They have much more in common than nifty alliteration. All three of these popular school programs would not exist without the faculty, candidates, and alumni of GSEAP.

The Mighty Math Club at Bridgeport’s Bryant School is 40 students strong – and boasts a waiting list. Think about that: an afterschool math program (grades 3-6) that children are clamoring to join. “We have a theme – Math In, Around, and For Our Community – so we talk about Bridgeport, Fairfield University, and United States’ facts and figures,” said Dr. Jennifer Goldberg, who started the program five years ago with Bridgeport Numeracy Coach Mayra Medina. The strategy works: At a recent meeting, third-grader Adrian Robbes said the club means more to learn. “You’ve got to learn more math,” he said, his eyes wide. “I might be a teacher or a cop!”

Mary Nelson ’08, a sixth-grade teacher in Bridgeport, actually gets elementary school children to come in on Saturdays for her Science Stars program at St. Andrew’s. She strives to increase science literacy and show students how science plays a part in all our lives. Thirty-five fourth and fifth grade students from the Bridgeport Diocese converge each spring and fall for inquiry-based science programs that engage students’ interest in science. “I knew the project was working,” Nelson said, “when a student I had taught two years ago showed up at a summer science camp I was teaching at my current school.” Now in its third year, the Saturday Science Stars is looking to double enrollment for Bridgeport students.

In suburban Shelton’s Mohegan School, Dr. Paula Gill Lopez spends a week each year presenting a diversity art project to a whopping 600+ students in K-6 classrooms. This year, she had the children create individual teacups to decorate a map of the world, and told them about Fall Convocation speaker Greg Mortenson’s bid to build schools in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and his Pennies for Peace drive (see story on page 7). “I knew in certain countries they have very poor villages,” said 11-year-old Logan Vidal. “But I never knew how I could help them and know I do. I’m going to get a lot of pennies.”
Faculty news

Dr. Marsha Alibrandi attended the Environmental Systems Research Institute’s education conference in San Diego and presented “GIS and Teacher Education: Field Notes from Middle Schools, A Tale of Three Cities: Implications for GIS in Educational Research.” She presented at the Connecticut Social Studies conference on Nov. 7 and delivered “Comparing Spatial and Linguistic Cognition to Teach for Sustainability” at the National Council of Social Studies conference on Nov. 13 in Houston.

Dr. Susan Franzosa, dean of GSEAP, gave the presidential address, “Shaking the Foundations: Women’s Studies and Educational Studies,” at the 40th annual conference of the American Educational Studies Association on Nov. 1 in Savannah, Ga. “I focused on higher education and how schools of education are training teachers and working in schools.” She also reminded the nearly 800 conference participants of the work still needed to counter gender and racial discrimination.

Dr. Jennifer Goldberg is the lead author on the chapter “Negotiating Participation in a Bilingual Middle School Science Classroom: An Examination of One Successful Teacher’s Language Practices” in Talking Science, Writing Science: The Work of Language in Multicultural Classrooms (Routledge, 2008).

Dr. Ingeborg Haug attended the certification program “Bright Beginnings” at the Ackerman Institute in New York City. The program applies attachment theories and family therapy techniques to assist parent-child bonding and well being.

Dr. Diana Hulse co-authored an article in the Fall 2008 The Group Worker with recent graduates Krissy Henriksen and Whitney Andrews entitled “The Use of Process Observations to Enhance Learning in Group Work Courses: Reflections on Two Process Observers.”


Dr. Wendy Kohli presented “Embodied Learning and Spiritual Knowing: Rethinking Critical Pedagogy” at the annual meeting of the American Education Studies Association in Savannah, Ga., in November. She gave the keynote address at the annual meeting of the New England Philosophy of Education Society on Oct. 4 at Boston College. Her talk was entitled “Embodied Learning and the Social Imagination: Reclaiming Emancipatory Education for Our Children’s Future.”

Dr. Elizabeth Langran presented at the Connecticut Social Studies conference on Nov. 7 in New Britain.

Dr. Tracey Robert co-wrote “The Interaction of Work Adjustment and Attachment Theory: Career Counseling Implications,” for the Journal of Employment Counseling. Dr. Robert collaborated on a research project with Carol Pomarico in the School of Nursing, producing a manuscript resulting in a grant for assessing faculty integration of adult learning needs in second degree nursing.

Dr. Anibal Torres, Marriage and Family Therapy, secured a grant from the Connecticut Department of Higher Education to help address the shortage of mental health services for urban, poor, immigrant, and minority families in Fairfield County.

Siegel holds interim post

Citing her strong collaborative skills, Dean Susan Franzosa named Dr. Christine Siegel, assistant professor, as the interim assistant dean of the Graduate School of Education and Allied Professions.

“She has impressive organizational skills, but, even more important, she also has a marvelous ability to really listen to her colleagues and collaborate to get things done,” said Dr. Franzosa. Dr. Siegel will use those skills, along with experience including candidates on her research teams, to help advise and mentor candidates in her new role.

Dr. Siegel, who came to Fairfield in 2005, holds a Ph.D. and a C.A.S. from the State University New York at Albany, and a master’s and bachelor’s degree from Marist College. She is an assistant professor in the Department of Psychology, Special Education, and Educational Technology, and she has taught courses in developmental psychology, behavior therapy, and integrated assessment, among other topics.
Reflections

Election Day outreach

More than 60 area teachers spent Election Day discovering the vast Library of Congress web archives, learning about NPR’s “Story Corps,” and tinker- ing with Flip digital cameras at a popular professional development day organized through GSEAP. Held at Fairfield Museum, “Documenting It: Teaching with Primary Sources” focused on giving teachers tools they could access and apply in their classrooms immediately—sometimes for free.

“I liked it because it’s things you can actually see and use,” said Adrian Solis, a GSEAP candidate who student teaches at Bunnell High School in Stratford, Conn.

The day featured five speakers, including two GSEAP assistant professors, Drs. Marsha Alibrandi and Elizabeth Langran. Dr. Ann Canning, a Library of Congress ambassador, helped participants access the LOC’s 11 million digitized resource materials, from 19th century maps to songs, books, and oral histories that can make history come to life for their students.

A second event, “What is GIS and Historical GIS?” is planned for this semester. For more information, contact Dr. Alibrandi at (203) 305-2800.

Dr. Canning was also the featured speaker for “Wine & Cheese, Primary Sources… and Politics?” a program for University faculty and library personnel held the night before at the Museum.

Back on campus, Dr. Paula Gill Lopez, director of the School Psychology program, welcomed a standing-room only crowd for a free school psychologists workshop with national expert Dr. Peter Isquith, who covered executive function in children (see sidebar). More than 100 school psychologists from across the region attended. On Nov. 21, Dr. Gill Lopez also organized the 14th annual Conversations in School Psychology, during which Fairfield alum Robert Arnold returned to his alma mater to discuss cognitive assessment, intervention, and other topics with students, alumni, faculty, and field supervisors.

School psychologists examine executive functioning

With changes to the federal guidelines for the provision of school-based services to students with disabilities, it has become increasingly important for school psychologists to have a comprehensive understanding of executive functioning—the constellation of cognitive controls that help us mentally navigate through life—and its relationship to learning problems. Therefore, it is no surprise that there was standing room only during the Nov. 4 workshop “Executive Functions in Children: Concepts, Assessment and Intervention.” Dr. Peter Isquith, co-author of the Behavior Rating Inventory of Executive Functions (BRIEF) addressed school psychologists in the DiMenna-Nyselius Library. Fairfield University, the Westport School Psychologists, and Psychological Assessment Resources, Inc. sponsored the free workshop.

Dr. Isquith discussed brain development, the related characteristics of executive functioning, and their presentation in clinical disorders, such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. He emphasized the importance of assessing executive functioning when working with adolescent populations given its relationship to general adolescent risk-taking behavior, and to impairments often seen in adolescent athletes who incur sports-related head injuries.

Dr. Isquith provided an in-depth explanation of the use of the BRIEF as an assessment tool in school settings. The BRIEF can be used to gather data from teachers, parents, and students about the ways in which students’ executive functioning skills impact their behaviors in home and school contexts. Specifically, it measures a student’s degree of emotional control, ability to shift focus, and ability to inhibit impulses, as well as the related abilities to self-monitor, organize, plan, remember, and initiate actions.

Bringing school psychologists-in-training together with current practitioners, this workshop provided a comprehensive review of a timely and important topic.
Connections & Conversations: The Counselor Education Series for Human Services Professionals

This spring GSEAP kicked off its new Counselor Education series, Connections & Conversations, a set of four exciting Saturday workshops geared to human services professionals. “The Counselor Education Department is sponsoring these four workshops on a wide range of topics of interest to counselors, therapists, educators, and student affairs professionals,” said Dr. Diana Hulse, chair of the Counselor Education Department. “These dynamic workshops will be facilitated by national leaders in counselor education.”

The first was “Impact Therapy: An Active, Creative, Multi-Sensory Approach” with its creator, Dr. Ed Jacobs of West Virginia University. The January 31 event introduced participants to Impact Therapy, which encourages clients to think, see, and do. It was especially useful to those who have limited time with their clients.

On March 14, join Dr. David Capuzzi, of Pennsylvania State University, for “The Many Facets of Grief.” Workshop topics will include the stages of grief and loss, the four tasks of mourning, blocks to successful grieving, helpful responses to bereaved clients, signs of recovery, and guidelines for facilitating loss support groups.

“Legal and Ethical Issues in Counseling” with Dr. Mary Hermann, of Virginia Commonwealth University, takes place on April 4. The workshop will assist counselors in identifying their legal and ethical responsibilities. Topics include the 2005 revisions of the American Counseling Association’s Code of Ethics, the 2004 revisions of the American School Counselor Association’s Code of Ethics, rights of minor clients, dual relationships, client suicide, clients who pose a danger to others, confidentiality, and supervision.

The final workshop is “Using the Creative Arts in Counseling,” with Dr. Sam Gladding, of Wake Forest University, on April 25. The workshop will examine the creative arts in counseling with particular attention given to the visual and verbal arts, such as drawing, imagery, photography, cartooning, movement, dance, drama, and music.

All workshops run from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. with lunch on your own. Registration, including all materials, is $90 for professionals; $35 for students. Participants may earn .6 CEUs per workshop. For more information, contact: Kim Baer, Dean’s Office, kbaer@mail.fairfield.edu, (203) 254-4000, ext. 2140.

Early Learning Center ceremony

And, in its first months, it has, according to those who’ve worked for three years to make real this vision of a nurturing, educational center for the young children of faculty, staff, and alumni. The center also provides an exciting learning space for GSEAP students and will be a vital part of the early childhood education program being created at GSEAP.

“This is a momentous occasion,” said Dr. Susan Franzosa, dean of GSEAP. “It is so in keeping with our Jesuit mission.”

Dr. Franzosa thanked each of the members of the original committee on creating the center, noting their diligence will help Fairfield become an early childhood leader in the state. She introduced Dr. Barbara Welles-Nyström, associate professor of Curriculum and Instruction, who is GSEAP’s liaison to the center. With observational windows already in place, the site will be “an important center of learning about children and their development for all students,” Dr. Welles-Nyström said.

The Center will hold an open house and begin re-registration this semester. For more information, call the Center at (203) 254-4028.
GSEAP welcomes new faculty

Dr. Aidin Amirshokoohi, an assistant professor of science education, comes to us from Indiana University, Bloomington, where he received his Ph.D., taught science education courses, and developed and modified curriculum material. Prior to that, he completed his M.A.T. and B.S. from the University of Iowa. His research interests include the interconnection of science, technology, and society, the role of values and ethics in the science classroom, and constructivist-based teaching and learning. He has published in the *Journal of Research in Science Teaching* and is co-authoring “Impact of an Inquiry-based Teaching Professional Development Program on Teachers’ Core Conceptions” for the journal *Science Education*. He has led professional development workshops for practicing teachers and environmental education workshops for teacher candidates. “A scientifically literate student population is one that realizes the interconnection between science and society, makes informed decisions on contentious social issues, and takes action to resolve them.”

Dr. Anne Campbell, assistant professor and the new director of TESOL & Bilingual/Multicultural Education programs, returns to Connecticut from Washington State University where she was coordinator of TESOL and bilingual education programs. She holds a Ph.D. from the University of Florida, a master’s from the University of Hartford, and a B.A. from the University of New Hampshire. Her research interests include the social context of education and teaching English language learners mathematics. Dr. Campbell has published in the international journal *Mathematical Thinking and Learning* and the *Journal of American Indian Education*. She is co-authoring several articles based on a two-year research project teaching mathematics to English language learners and a five-year NSF informal science grant designed to bring interactive science exhibits and presentations to migrant and rural Hispanic communities in Washington. “I’ve seen the transformative power of education and the positive impact it can have on students’ lives, their families and community.”

Dr. Barbara Welles-Nystrom, associate professor of early childhood education and educational liaison to the University’s Early Learning Center, has been an associate professor in the Division of Reproductive and Perinatal Health Care at The Karolinska Institute in Stockholm since 1996. She has partnered with the Pediatric Institute of St. Petersburg, the University of Southern California, Harvard University, and Trivandrum Medical College in India, researching swaddling of newborns, adolescent life, and many other areas. “I’m very interested in cross-cultural perspectives, so I hope to help students to see there’s not just one way to think about things,” she said. Dr. Welles-Nyström holds a doctorate and master’s degree from Harvard Graduate School of Education and was a post-doctoral research fellow at the University of California, Los Angeles.

Reflections

2008-09 visiting faculty

Joining the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, Dr. Stephanie Burrell holds an M.Ed. from Kent State University and an Ed.D. from UMASS-Amherst where she recently completed her dissertation assessing the effect of a diversity course on college students’ perceived readiness for social action engagement. Formerly the assistant director of the Center for Academic Excellence, an associate professor and academic counselor, Dr. Burrell’s scholarly interests include curriculum design for multicultural/social justice education, student outcomes assessment, and faculty development.

Supporting the Educational Technology program, Dr. Maureen Hinkley holds an Ed.D. in international educational development and transcultural studies from the Teachers College at Columbia University, as well as MBA and M.S. degrees from Fairfield University. With professional experience in business and technology applications, Dr. Hinkley’s scholarly interests include the use of technology to establish worldwide learning communities and support interdisciplinary collaboration.

Dr. Anne Campbell

Dr. Barbara Welles-Nystrom

Dr. Aidin Amirshokoohi

Dr. Stephanie Burrell

Dr. Maureen Hinkley

Dr. Barbara Welles-Nystrom
Could I really begin the first weeks of school doing little else other than reading a book about building schools in Pakistan to 40 sixth graders? That’s the question I asked myself before embarking on reading *Three Cups of Tea* this autumn. Author Greg Mortenson’s visit to Fairfield was an opportunity I did not want my students to miss.

I jumped in with both feet, and spent 2 weeks reading and discussing Greg’s mission with my students who became increasingly engaged with the story. My goal was to use the book as a platform for student empowerment and social action in my classroom.

Meeting Greg in person did not disappoint, as he graciously spent time taking pictures, signing autographs, and listening to my student’s questions.

Was the experience successful? My students’ letters speak for themselves…

“You have inspired me to start a Pennies for Peace club at our school. I have a hope and dream that by the time our 6th grade class gets to 8th grade, we could have built a school for the people in Pakistan and Afghanistan… (When) you put your mind to something you will achieve it.” – Briah Johnson, 11

“Reading your book made me think about what I could do to help someone else so they can have a better life.” – Tamera Hallums, 11

“When I first heard about Pennies for Peace, I felt in my heart that I needed to get involved.” – Victoria Colon, 11

“You really inspired me to stick to one thing and never let it go, no matter how hard it is. Plus you made me think better about people and to help fundraise.” – Gena Gordon, 11

Yesterday I stood and watched this same group of students sponsor a Pennies for Peace assembly for the entire middle school. They told the story of a Muslim girl walking 3 ½ miles to her school, narrated a moving PowerPoint presentation on Mortenson’s mission, and read their own peace poetry. They ended with a poem written by fellow sixth grader Abby Ulman:

What if?
What if
One country
Or one town
Or one community
Or even one person
Reached out and tried to grab Peace
What if?
Congratulations!

GSEAP students and faculty celebrated the October induction of nine graduate candidates into the Jesuit honor society, Alpha Sigma Nu. Family and friends joined the inductees at a reception in their honor in Canisius Hall.

Sarah Anastasia – Curriculum and Instruction
Anne Frank – Applied Psychology
Cristina Gintoli – School Psychology
Robin Katzman – Counselor Education
Maryann LaBella – Marriage and Family Therapy
Dona Moriarity – Marriage and Family Therapy
Katelyn Ross – Counselor Education
Julian Saavedra – Bilingual Education
Laura Wrinn – Curriculum and Education

Dr. Hyun Uk Kim, Special Education, recognizes an inductee.