

HPSE HIGHER AND POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

Teachers College, Columbia University

NEWSLETTER

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WELCOME!

We are well into another amazing academic year! We welcomed one of our largest cohorts of MA students to date and we have not looked back since. We have so many exciting things to share with you about student and faculty accomplishments, and new programming for the year. Our newsletter says it all, and I welcome you to read it thoroughly.



Best,
Noah D. Drezner
Associate Professor, Higher Education
Program Coordinator, Higher & Postsecondary Education

to me until a few days leading up to our kickoff event. I had never been in a space to co-produce programming so meaningful, personal, and professionally in line with my salient identities. This faculty and student perspective really signaled to me, that our program really is, at its core - focused on social justice through the lens of higher education as its tool. I felt honored to be involved with our faculty in this way. What leadership, especially for graduate students that might typically be left out of a program's 'statement,' so to speak."

Weeks into the semester, second year student, Brian Allen introduced to the BLM initiatives fellow MA student, Charlen McNeil '18, in her first year of the program. Bringing in a new voice, at the start of her graduate career was truly invigorating and a great balancing act for three busy, involved, active, and focused master's students. One of the most important touch points of the planning was figuring out what should be said, and over what amount of time. Black Lives Matter -ing to the Higher Education program at Teachers College was the biggest and most important statement that the committee decided to make. Not diluting the message, or what BLM is really about, we set our kickoff event on the history of BLM and the events at University of Missouri in Fall 2014. Preparing an introductory event, with a solid connection to the movement, higher education's place in this, student activism, and finally what that meant for us at Teachers

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BLACK LIVES MATTER IN HIGHER EDUCATION

— By Brian Allen, Kat Stephens-Mothudi, and Charlen McNeil

Over the summer of 2016, the country was faced with more tragic, unexplainable deaths of Black men and Black women. Many of us felt stuck, and unable to move in a productive direction. These events seemed to be happening more frequently, and more visibly, thanks to social media's ability to spread content faster than most news outlets pick up a story. Fast forward to the Fall 2016 semester, and a conversation started to come to life about what potential programming the HPSE program could do in relation to the Black Lives Matter movement.

Associate Professor Noah Drezner & Assistant Professor Corbin Campbell, both from the Higher & Postsecondary Education program in the Organization & Leadership department, reached out to HPSE masters students Brian Allen '17 and Kat Stephens-Mothudi '18. At this point, a small task committee was formed and brainstorming began. Stephens-Mothudi, a second year Ed.M student shared, "I don't think the magnitude of this collaboration became real

*CONGRATULATIONS!***Jayne E. Brownell & G. Case Willoughby**

HPSE MA and EdD alums Dr. Jayne E. Brownell and Dr. G. Case Willoughby were both selected as 2017 ACPA Diamond Honorees. The prestigious Diamond Honoree Program, established in 1999, is a way for those that care about students – and the research, scholarship, and programs that promote student development and success - to help advance ACPA's efforts.

Liza Bolitzer

EdD Candidate Liza Bolitzer has been awarded the Anna Neumann Supporting Student Research Award. The award is granted annually to one or more doctoral students as a research advancement fund. The fund supports doctoral researchers' studies of professors' work and careers, and/or college teaching and learning.

Leslie Williams

EdD Candidate Leslie Williams has been awarded a Predoctoral Teaching Fellowship in the Department of Educational Leadership at the Neag School of Education at the University of Connecticut. This fellowship provides him with the opportunity to teach and advise students in the UConn Higher Education and Student Affairs program, while he completes his dissertation research.

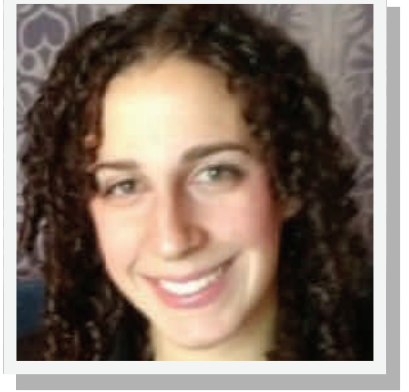
RESEARCH INTERESTS FUELED BY PERSONAL & PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCES

— *By Jessie Ostrow*

Along with my application to the Higher and Postsecondary Education program, I submitted a personal statement that discussed my passion for learning about students by way of a metaphor using mountains and nature. Although I spent my former years lusting to protect our natural environment, I used the nature metaphor as way to articulate my research interests. However, after many conversations with faculty, hours spent reading, thinking, writing, and thinking some more, and cups of coffee, I have been afforded the privilege to be working on my dissertation which weaves together my two greatest passions: college teaching and learning and environmentalism and sustainable development. As I reflect upon the years I have spent as a student at Teachers College, I feel humbly grateful to have the opportunity to intertwine my most cherished personal and scholarly interests in order to make a difference in our world through research. It is wonderful to use research to advance topics that I care deeply about.

The departure point for my dissertation is the premise that American higher education is a mechanism for manifesting socially useful members of society, who are mindful of global crises like sustainable development. Therefore, higher education has been charged in cultivating sustainably mindful citizens, one such way through Education for Sustainability (EfS). Although prior research reveals that college level EfS courses increase students' sustainability literacy and encourage sustainably responsible behaviors, this kind of education is not happening at the quantity nor quality necessary to truly steer society towards social change. In order to make a case to policymakers to increase funding of faculty development on EfS, motivate faculty members to integrate EfS into their courses, increase students' sustainability

learning outcomes, and in turn, cultivate a more sustainably engaged citizenry, new research must investigate students' opportunity to learn about sustainability, the kinds of teaching practices they experience, and the extent to which their exposure to, and quality of, EfS influence their sustainability learning outcomes.



My dissertation explores the extent to which higher education coursework provides students with the opportunity to learn about sustainability; for students who have the opportunity to learn about sustainability, the extent to which they experience promising practices of teaching and learning about sustainability; and, the relationship between students who experience promising practices of teaching and learning about sustainability and sustainability learning outcomes. I have spent my personal life passionate about protecting the natural environment and committed to creating a world that will be livable and prosperous for our children and our children's children. I have spent my academic life enthralled by the power that higher education holds to transform students' contributions to society at large. I am thankful to have the opportunity to work on a dissertation that combines these two important parts of my life. However, I know this dissertation work is just the beginning. I look forward to making my research actionable, and I am hopeful for a more sustainable future, starting with the education of our college students.

ADVICE FOR NEW STUDENTS

— *By Brian Allen*

Welcome new students to the Higher and Postsecondary Education Program! Whether you are an MA, Ed.M. or Ed.D candidate you can be sure to find a host of educational, professional and research opportunities that are available to you through our program, and the College as a whole. As a 2nd year MA student, I would highly recommend that you get to know your professors. We have a phenomenal set of faculty, who are extremely supportive of their students and who are excited to see you excel

within the field of Higher Education. If you have questions, don't be afraid to ask them; tell them about your interests and your future goals because more than likely they will be able to help advise and guide you to the path you envision yourself taking after your complete your degree.

Another word of advice is to find community during your time here at Teachers College. No matter if you are completing the program in a year, or if you decide to stay for an additional year like I did, finding a space or a

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— *By Ty McNamee*

Welcome to our new HPSE MA students! I am looking forward to serving as your advisor for the academic year! During my master's in Higher Education and Student Affairs at the University of Connecticut and the first year of my HPSE doctoral program here at Teachers College, I gained some valuable pieces of advice that I am happy to pass on to you all:

(1) Be focused. Working in higher education, there are many functional areas (e.g. residence life, career services, student activities, etc.) and tracks (e.g. administration, faculty, etc.) in which you can pursue opportunities. Be sure to understand the exact professional experiences and skills that each of those areas and tracks consistently look for in successful candidates. For example, if you plan to work in residence life, it is more than likely that you will need skills in crisis management. Try to find internships, volunteer experiences, or other opportunities that will help you gain those types of skills. You can look at job descriptions, become involved in professional associations, or even meet with or shadow professionals in the areas you want to pursue so that you can learn exactly how to focus your time at Teachers College to gain the experiences you need.

(2) Be flexible. While it's important to be focused, also be open other opportunities that may come your way. When I came into my master's program, I thought I wanted to be an administrator in either international education or career services. It wasn't until I gained experience in other areas and had a conversation with a UConn faculty member that I even discovered other areas and tracks I hoped to pursue! You should stay focused on your goals in higher education and student affairs, but please remember that is okay for those goals to change. Become educated on the new areas you open yourself up to, and set new goals for yourself at any time during your graduate work.

(3) Lean on others. In all your graduate work and beyond, whether it's your fellow students, faculty members and administrators, or friends and family, make sure that you have a support system set up that you can lean on. Graduate school is stressful, and it's difficult to make it through alone without others to help you out, listen to you, and support you in both times of success and times of hard work. We in the HPSE program are here for you if you ever need guidance or support along the way!

Don't hesitate to reach out to me as your advisor at tcm2131@tc.columbia.edu. Good luck with the rest of the year!

BLACK LIVES MATTER IN HIGHER EDUCATION (CONT.)

College in our own research and practitioner-supported program, was integral.

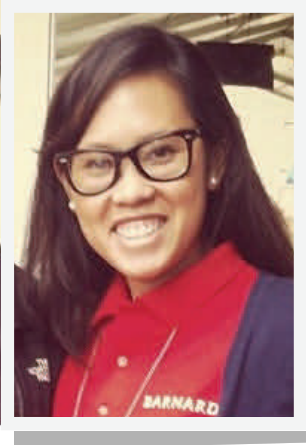
Our kickoff event was foundationally for the current students and faculty in our program, with some alumni showing support as well. "It was amazing to see how much the HPSE program cares about its students. Having the ability to speak out on matters that are close to me, shows that my voice is allowed to be heard and that I matter to this program just as much as it matters to me," Charlen McNeil stated. We were pleased with the turnout and thoughtful, intelligent conversation stemming from the rich turnout. In that vein, we were paid a surprise visit from David Johns (M.A. '06). Mr. Johns was appointed Executive Director of the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for African Americans in February 2013, and was recently awarded the Early Career Award as a Teachers College Alumni, in 2016. This welcomed surprise really brought the conversation full circle with someone directly involved with and creating initiatives on the federal level, merged with engaged faculty and staff, looking to make change in the classroom and outside of the classroom. As future higher education practitioners, faculty, policy makers and researchers, we are beyond excited to continue with a year's worth of programming for the higher and postsecondary education community. Our next event, to be held in December 2016, will examine higher education, Black Lives Matter, and the intersection with mental health and wellness on our campuses. Racial Battle Fatigue is so real for all of our cohort, and not easily escapable with the seemingly non-stop loop of the internet at everyone's fingertips. We look

forward to having conversation that takes a closer look at what is really going on with our students, what they need, and what we are providing our most vulnerable groups, while they also are often leading the charge.

This initial series of events is something we, as students, hope will carry on beyond this first year of programming. We hope to open it up to more students in the program to get involved and let their voices be heard. With the full support of our HPSE faculty, we joined together to create a space that invites meaningful thought, inspiring conversation, and action. We recognize that difficult conversations can close some doors, but we also recognize that difficult conversations create powerful movements and sustainable action, just the type of thing our higher and postsecondary community is excellent at cultivating in future higher education scholars and practitioners alike.



STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: MEET DIANNE!



Dianne Delima, Ed.D

My journey to this point in the doctoral program has certainly been an interesting one. I never really thought I would pursue a doctoral degree. I started thinking about graduate school when I was working as an afterschool teacher in an elementary school in Long Beach, California. I have always had an interest in social justice and diversity, and I knew being an educator would be one way

to help my community in addressing social justice issues. While working with youth, I wondered a lot about the broader institutional structures that shape the educational trajectories for low-income students of color. This interest motivated me to pursue my Master's degree in Language, Reading and Culture at the University of Arizona. During my time there, I got the opportunity to take classes with extraordinary faculty who opened my eyes to multicultural theories and contemporary policy implications on young people's schooling. One faculty member whose ideas I really latched on to was Norma González. Her (and Luis Moll's) Funds of Knowledge lens shaped the way I viewed students as holders of valuable knowledge and as members of knowledgeable communities. While in Arizona, I did my Master's thesis on the Funds of Knowledge of Filipino-American undergraduate students. This research became the drive towards my pursuit of a graduate degree in Higher Education.

I initially came to TC wanting to learn more about how low-income students of color utilized their Funds of Knowledge as a means to access higher education. As I began to take classes with Anna Neumann, I began to reach back to my academic roots of wanting to focus on teaching and learning. My current research now focuses on the teaching and learning experiences of first-generation college students of color, particularly as they are enrolled in courses that focus on diversity. Much of what drives my current dissertation research is rooted in my prior work and interests in understanding further the social, political, and

educational implications for underrepresented students, especially students who are in pursuit of higher education.

During my time in TC, I have also been incredibly fortunate to work with Dr. Neumann, Liza Bolitzer and Jolie Harris Woodson on research projects that further develop my research interests and skills in teaching and learning in higher education. The work we have done as a team has focused on faculty teaching in urban higher education institutions and with high diverse student populations. From my involvement with these projects, I have gotten a more on-the-ground look into how faculty perceive their students, especially students who are considered first-generation. Having this kind of access to faculty's thoughts has been very helpful in how I view the ways in which my own research can be helpful in the field of teaching and learning in higher education.

Also, as Course Assistant for Dr. Neumann, I have had the incredible opportunity to meet a lot of Master's and Doctoral students in HPSE and in TC, and I have learned so much from each and every one of them. The way these students view their own teaching and learning experiences in undergrad and graduate school, and even in their own careers, has been influential in how I perceive the idea of Funds of Knowledge as applying to the lives of people from different phases and stages in their lives. It has been incredibly rewarding to learn from the graduate students I have come across over the years, and I am extremely grateful for the opportunity to teach and learn alongside them all.

As I move forward with my what's to come in my research and future career, I think about these moments - of thinking about what drove me to this point of doing a doctorate, of what keeps me going, and of where I think I fit in helping my community and other underrepresented communities in higher education. On this note, I'd like to end with a quote from Paulo Freire: "Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity or it becomes the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world." – from *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*.

ADVICE FOR NEW STUDENTS (CONT.)

group of people where you can be yourself and feel supported is so very important. You can join a student group on campus, attend HPSEA events and socials, or even just find classmates to study with throughout the semester, which will help you stay connected during times when you may feel like classes are the only things you are focusing on. Meeting folks from different programs and disciplines has also been extremely beneficial because I have been introduced to so many different perspectives and ways of thinking.

Lastly, have fun! Graduate school is a lot of work and it takes much dedication and discipline to be a successful student. Even though this may be the case, you can still find time to enjoy yourself. Don't forget that you are in one of the most diverse and fascinating cities in the world and you should definitely take advantage of that. Study off campus sometimes; go to a few shows on Broadway; leave Manhattan and explore a different borough; take a walk down 125th street. New York City has so much to offer, and you will be doing yourself a disservice if you never find time to spend outside of Teachers College Way. Best of luck to you all!