



**College of Community**

**Innovation and Education:**

**Exceptional Education**

**Graduate Program**

**Handbook**



*Last updated* ***March 21, 2019***

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## 

## Introduction

Dear Ph.D. Scholar,

Welcome to the Ph.D. Program in Education - Exceptional Education Track at the University of Central Florida. We in the School of Teacher Education look forward to helping you further your professional development. This handbook is a supplement to your official Ph.D. in Education Program Handbook and will help guide you through your program. This handbook is intended to serve as a description of specific requirements in the Ph.D. Exceptional Education Track including the coursework sequence, required 3-year mentorship program, co-teaching experience, intern supervision, scholar organization and outside activities.

We look forward to working with you toward your endeavors and wish you much success! We hope you will let us know if you have any questions or concerns throughout this collaborative journey between doctoral scholars and faculty as you prepare for a future leadership role in the field of special education.

Sincerely,

Lisa Dieker, Pegasus Professor

Ph.D. Program Coordinator

Eleazar Vasquez, Associate Professor

Director, Toni Jennings Exceptional Education Institute

Rebecca Hines, Associate Professor

Coordinator Exceptional Education Program

## 

## Curriculum

Please visit the [Graduate Catalog](http://catalog.ucf.edu/index.php?catoid=4) to see the current curriculum for our program <https://www.ucf.edu/degree/education-phd/exceptional-education/>

**1st Year of Graduate Training** *\*20 hour Mentorship/Assistantship Required 12 months*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Fall | Spring | Summer |
| * EEX 7936 Current Trends & Issues in SpEd. (3) * IDS 7501 Issues and Research in Education (3) * EDF 7475 Qualitative Research in Education (3) | * EEX 7428 Personnel Preparation in Special Education (3) * EEX 7320 Program Evaluation & Plan. in Special Education (3) * EDF 7403 Quantitative Foundations of Ed. Res. (3) | * EDF 7463 Analysis of Survey & Qualitative Data (3) * IDS 7500 Research Seminar in Education (3) |
| Semester Total: 9 credit hours | Semester Total: 9 credit hours | Semester Total: 6 credit hours |

**2nd Year of Graduate Training** *\*20 hour Mentorship/Assistantship Required 12 months*

### 

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Fall | Spring | Summer |
| * EEX 7865 Teach. Intern. in Ex. Ed. (3) * IDS 7500 Research Seminar in Education (taken twice) (3) * EEX 7527 Prof Writing/Grant Writing SpEd (3) | * EEX 7866 Internship/Prac. in Supervision in Ex. Ed. (3) * IDS 7502 Case Studies in Educational Research (3) * EEX 7766 Technology Res./Prep. Special Education (3) | * EEX 7939 Research Cluster/ Summer Internship(3) * EDF 7406 Multi Stat in Ed. Or Research Meth. Elective (3) |
| Semester Total: 9 credit hours | Semester Total: 9 credit hours | Semester Total: 6 credit hours |

**3rd Year of Graduate Training** *\*20 hour Mentorship/Assistantship Required 12 months*

### 

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Fall | Spring | Summer |
| * EEX 7980 Dissertation | * EEX 7980 Dissertation | * EEX 7980 Dissertation |
| Semester Total: 9 credit hours | Semester Total: 9 credit hours | Semester Total: 6 credit hours |

**ADDITIONAL HOURS OF EEX 7980 CAN BE TAKEN UNTIL DISSERTATION IS COMPLETED**

*Total Credit Hours: 72*

[Doctoral Program Courses](http://catalog.ucf.edu/content.php?catoid=4&navoid=241)

## Doctoral Comprehensive Examination Process

**Ph.D. in Exceptional Education Track**

**Committee Composition**:  The comprehensive exam committee must consist of at least three faculty members in the exceptional education track.  Additional outside members or additional members are accepted at the discretion of the committee chair but must be approved as a member of the graduate faculty.

**Exam Process:** The comprehensive exams will be conducted in three phases.  The student preparing for each phase should work closely with his or her committee chair as he/she moves through each phase of the process.

**Phase I**

Student must have submitted a paper to a peer-reviewed journal.  The article does not have to be accepted but must be submitted and a copy of the paper under review be provided to the student’s comprehensive exam committee.

**Phase II**

Students will be asked to write for 4 hours on each of three questions, which will be scheduled at the discretion of the committee chair.

Question 1 – Students will respond to a question related to an overview of the field of special education. Students may use a computer and bring in reference material, but they will be expected to respond to a question created by the faculty with a 5-7 page double-spaced response using appropriate citations and APA format.

Question 2 – Students will be asked to respond to a question selected by their committee related to a content specific area. The focus of this question should relate to current issues in that topic area and reflect that in this area the student is ready to prepare highly qualified special educators. Students may use a computer and bring in reference material, but they will be expected to respond to a question created by the faculty with a 5-7-page double-spaced response using appropriate citations and APA format.

Question 3- Students will be given a research topic and they will be asked to design a study providing the following: (could be related to their topic area but should not be the same type of design as the dissertation – committee discretion)

Theoretical framework for the study

Research questions

Methodology

Subjects

Setting

Methodology

Reliability

Validity

Fidelity of Treatment

**Phase III**

Once the responses from Phase II are completed, then the student can complete the last phase of the comprehensive exam process, which is a 10-page paper and a final oral defense of the comprehensive exam process. This phase is to help with the preparation of the dissertation topic but is not meant to replace the need for a dissertation proposal defense.  During this phase the student will be asked to write a condensed version of their dissertation proposal, chapters 1, 2 and 3 (should be about 20-pages and recommend this is completed within one week).  Once this paper is completed, the scholar will meet with his or her committee including the outside committee member to review this final paper. This phase is again not to replace the actual dissertation proposal defense but is a chance to see a student’s ability to write a full proposal and to encourage the student towards further development or remediation depending on the quality of the response.

At the oral defense the student should provide the committee with a paper copy numbered and in a 3-ring binder that includes the following

1. Updated vita
2. Responses from questions 1-3 from the comprehensive exam
3. Copies of the 10-page paper of chapters 1-3
4. Updated online portfolio

At the oral defense the scholar should be prepared to discuss each of the questions related to any gaps in their responses and to share their updated via and *Livetext a*ccount highlighting their work in teaching, research service and a content area. The oral comprehensive defense will conclude with a discussion of the 10-page paper if responses to questions 1-3 are at a level to allow the candidate to move forward.

NOTE: Students cannot enroll in dissertation credit hours until all three phases of the comprehensive exams are complete.

**Phase IV**

Once students have completed all three phases, then they are ready to finalize their full chapters 1, 2 and 3 and prepare for a proposal meeting for defense of their first three fully developed chapters.

Once students move into the dissertation proposal stage they must defend their proposal before submitting for IRB approval.

For final dissertation defense dates, the student must submit his/her completed dissertation to the committee at least 30 days prior to the final submission date of the university committee.

These policies are effective beginning December 2009

## Competencies for PhD Program Checklist

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Competency** | **Definition** | **Mastery Experience** | **Participatory Experience** | **Introductory Experience** |
| **Teaching** | | | | |
| **Course Development** | Modification and creation of college level coursework. | Independent development of asynchronous virtual content, synchronous virtual content, and face- to-face content for undergraduate and graduate instruction. | Practice of independent development of asynchronous virtual content, synchronous virtual content, and face- to-face content. | Collaboration with faculty to modify and update existing course curriculum including asynchronous virtual content, synchronous virtual content, and face-to-face content. |
| **Instruction\*** | College level instruction. | Independent delivery and facilitation of asynchronous virtual content, synchronous virtual content, and face-to-face content for undergraduate and graduate instruction. | Practice with independent delivery and facilitation of asynchronous virtual content, synchronous virtual content, and face- to-face content with faculty supervision. | Collaboration with faculty to deliver and facilitate course curriculum including asynchronous virtual content, synchronous virtual content, and face-to-face content. |
| **Program Evaluation** | Understanding methods of program evaluation, research design, and evaluation proposal development. | Application of program evaluation in the educational field. | Identification and development of appropriate evaluation models. | Knowledge of each program evaluation model and respective components of each model. |
| **Personnel Preparation Grant Development\*** | Contribution to all components of personnel preparation grant writing. | Development of elements and sections of personnel preparation grant proposals. | Research for contribution to personnel preparation grant-writing activities. | Observation of personnel preparation grant writing activities, editing, and procurement of documents to contribute to personnel preparation grant writing. |
| **STEM**  **Personalized**  **Learning Plan** | Learning plan to enhance the ability to work with teachers of students with disabilities in STEM areas. | Development of sections of personalized learning plan. | Research of students and teachers in STEM for contribution of  personalized learning plan writing. | Observation of the development of a personalized learning plan, including writing and development of goals. |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Competency** | **Definition** | **Mastery Experience** | **Participatory Experience** | **Introductory Experience** |
| **Learning** | | | | |
| **Integration of**  **Technology** | Ability to adapt to and infuse the most recent technological advances  throughout professional  activities. | Development of new technologies, and innovative applications  for existing technology. | Application of technology  into the field of special education and one's own areas of interest. | Familiarity with existing and  emerging technologies and  applications. |
| **Understanding**  **the History of**  **the Field** | Knowledge of the history of the field of special education, with the ability to educate others in this area. | Ability to share the  history of the special education to advance the understanding of others across  disciplines. | Integration of historical  understandings into the development of new ideas and research. | Study of the history of special education an related legislation. |
| **Developing**  **Professional**  **Relationships** | Experience networking,  making professional  connections and identifying  opportunities to collaborate within and across fields to  advance special education  initiatives. | Collaboration with  professionals within the  field of special  education and in cross- disciplinary  environments to  advance research and understanding. | Communication with other professionals to identify common interests and opportunities for collaboration. | Identification of experts in the field. Embracing opportunities to meet other special education researchers at other universities. |
| **Transition (College and Career Readiness)** | Develop a plan of college and career readiness for students with disabilities | Development of elements and sections of college and career readiness plan. | Research college transition and best practices for students with disabilities. | Collaboration with faculty and students to implement preexisting college and career readiness plans. |
| **Research to Practice** | Can identify how analysis of research builds the innovation of evidence-based practice to support needs of students with disabilities in high needs LEAs. | Ability to share how innovative evidence based practices advance support needs of students with disabilities. | Integration of innovative evidence-based practices into the development of new ideas and research in supporting students with disabilities in high needs LEAs. | Study of innovative evidence-based practices for students with disabilities in high needs LEAs. |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Competency** | **Definition** | **Mastery Experience** | **Participatory Experience** | **Introductory Experience** |
| **Research Grant Development \*** | Participation in the process of development and submission of research grant proposals. | Development of elements and sections of research grant proposals for submission. | Research for contribution to research grant-writing activities. Identification of opportunities for research grant applications. | Observation of research grant writing activities, editing, and procurement of documents to contribute to research grant writing. |
| **Participation in the Research Process** | Contribution to all parts of the research process. | Design and execution of innovative research studies in one’s own field of interest. | Development of research studies and refinement within in-progress studies. | Providing support and assistance to existing research projects. |
| **Data Analysis** | Experience identifying and practicing advanced analysis of quantitative and qualitative data, including large data sets. | Analysis of data collected for one’s own research purposes. | Critical analysis of existing data reports. | Analysis of existing data sets. |
| **Publication\*** | Written dissemination of research. | Preparing manuscripts for submission as primary author. | Formatting manuscripts for specific journals.  Taking on a supporting role a non-primary author. | Editing manuscripts for submission. Familiarity with high-impact journals in special education and other fields. |
| **Presentation\*** | Dissemination of research | Independent and collaborative presentations on one’s own research. | Co- presentation with faculty and other scholars in the general forum. | Participation in student- centered presentation activities. |
| **STEM**  **Research to Practice Project** | Research project designed for students with disabilities in high needs LEAs with a focus on STEM | Develop and implement an evidence-based practice STEM research project for students with disabilities in high needs LEAs | Develop a STEM based research project. | Research and collaborate with faculty to identify STEM needs for students with disabilities in high needs LEAs. |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Competency** | **Definition** | **Mastery Experience** | **Participatory Experience** | **Introductory Experience** |
| **Collaborative**  **Partnerships \*** | Development and  maintenance of  professional relationships  between universities and  school districts and other  community organizations. | Development of  programs and  partnerships to further  initiatives of the  university and school  district and community  partnerships. | Contribution to university  sponsored events for the  benefit of local school  districts and community  organizations. | Participation in and  contribution to events to  strengthen the university-­‐  community partnership on  campus and in the  community. |
| **Membership in**  **Professional**  **Organizations** | Membership, participation,  and contribution to local, state, and national organizations committed to advancing the field of special education. | Contribution to  professional  organizations including  participation in  committees, reviewing  proposals submitted to  the organization, and other activities to advance the initiatives of professional organizations. | Organizational  involvement, including  conference attendance and dissemination of research through  organization outlets. | Maintenance of memberships  in organizations aligned with  one’s own professional  interests. |

## Exceptional Education UCF Mentorships

The majority of the students in the Exceptional Education Doctoral Program hold assistantships or mentorships (aligned with federal grant support). The scope of work conducted as a graduate assistant ranges from supporting teacher preparation efforts, teaching courses, working with funded teacher preparation and research grants, supervising student teachers, supporting faculty in state or national leadership initiatives as well as numerous other teaching, research and service opportunities. The roles of the assistantship are not flexible like those of the mentorships. The mentorship aligns with projects on federally funded leadership grants or for international students who are self-funded. These mentorship activities are to provide scholars with experiences that are essential to their future role as leaders in the field of special education. These mentorships are aligned with students’ interests, faculty expertise, research activities in exceptional education, and projects within and across the program area. Scholars on federally funded leadership grants will have specific mentorships aligned with those written into the project and led by the Project Principal Investigator. Overall assistantships and mentorships are provided to indoctrinate students into the field of exceptional education as they are being prepared to become faculty members in higher education. The assistantships and mentorships are designed to provide both a depth and breadth of preparation experiences. Students with full time assistantships and with mentorships typically are assigned to projects and activities for 20 hours a week for 12 months. Students’ responsibilities for mentorships and assistantships include but are not limited to:

* Ensure ongoing communication and collaboration with assigned faculty member(s)
* Provide blocks of time on a regular basis to complete tasks as assigned
* Maintain the highest level of professionalism related to all assigned task
* Ensure strict confidentiality of all matters and materials related to assigned role
* Pursue opportunities provided that will enhance overall preparation experience
* Share concerns that arise with assigned faculty member or Ph.D. Program Coordinator
* Follow all guidelines as outlined in the Graduate and College of Education material related to assistantships

Typically, students are assigned to a faculty member or a group of faculty members to work with for their assistantship or mentorship. Faculty members assigned scholars should follow all guidelines as presented in the Graduate College material. In addition, faculty members with scholars assigned to them should:

* Provide ongoing activities for students that will enhance their preparation as future leaders in exceptional education
* Provide opportunities for publication of scholarly research of at least one publication a year.
* Regularly communicate with the assistant about tasks needing to be performed or any concerns that arise
* Serve as a mentor for induction into the profession
* Share updates with the Ph.D. Program Coordinator regarding performance or any concerns that arise

## Co-Teaching Experience

Supervised co-teaching experience in design, delivery, and evaluation of a college course in special education or disability services. Variable Credit, up to 6 semester hours, minimum 3 semester hours.

**Course Objectives:**

Upon completion of this course the student will be able to:

1. identify, sequence and elaborate content in the area of special educator disability services for delivery in a college course;
2. select methods and materials to motivate adult learners of divers cultural groups;
3. prepare a syllabus and other learning materials for a college course;
4. select appropriate techniques to present course content, including lecture, discussion, demonstration, media presentations, and guest speakers;
5. maintain a classroom climate conducive to learning through interactions with students as individuals and groups;
6. develop formats for assessing student knowledge and skills, including quizzes, exams, and interviews;
7. develop formats for evaluating course content and instructor effectiveness; and
8. maintain accurate student records for assignment of course grades.

Required assignments will include keeping a reflective journal and assisting in a variety of ways with plans, teaching and assessment.

## Intern Supervision Experience

Supervised experience in observing, supervising and evaluating internship performance in a practicum setting in special education or disability services.

**Course Objectives:**

Upon completion of this course, the student will be able to:

1. provide supervision of interns and cooperating professions during clinical experiences in a special education public school classroom or disability services setting;
2. review and critique individual and group lesson plans prepared by interns;
3. select appropriate observation instruments to record and assess teaching events;
4. identify the components of the clinical educator model;
5. analyze and discuss observation data with interns and cooperating professionals;
6. conduct supervisory conferences to provide feedback to interns on their teaching performance;
7. prepare written evaluation of intern performance; and
8. review observation records and teaching products to document the attainment and demonstration of the Florida Educator Accomplished Practices and Florida Sunshine State Standards.

## Mentorship Opportunities for Doctoral Students

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Teaching** | **Research** | **Service** |
| **Math** | * Lockheed Martin * Supervision Course * Supervision of Interns * Holmes Partnership | * Learning Stream * Holmes Partnership Schools * PedsAcademy at Nemours Children’s Hospital * CREST/TeachLivE | * TJEEI * Holmes Partnership Schools * PedsAcademy at Nemours Children’s Hospital |
| **Science** | * Lockheed Martin * Supervision Course * Supervision of Interns * Holmes Partnership School | * Learning Stream * Holmes Partnership Schools * PedsAcademy at Nemours Children’s Hospital | * TJEEI * Holmes Partnership Schools * PedsAcademy at Nemours Children’s Hospital |
| **Reading/**  **Language Arts** | * Reading Endorsement * Florida Inclusion Network * ESOL online * Holmes Partnership Schools | * Learning Stream * Holmes Partnership Schools | * TJEEI * Holmes Partnership Schools |

## Policy Internship in Washington, DC

Policy Internships in Washington, DC may be available at a variety of sites during the second or third summer of the program. Interns are invited to attend events as schedules permit. Plans are that 4.5 days will be spent at internship sites. Additional services include: housing near metro stations, local contact for problem solving or emergency information such as medical needs, and local arrangements made via TWC. Listed below are four excellent sites which have agreed to accept applications from Education Doctoral Students at the University of Central Florida.

Organization and General Description of Experiences Available as Provided by Sites:

**1. American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education**

* + engage in policy relevant research and prepare reports
  + develop written materials to communicate with a policy audience
  + participate in policy coalitions with other national organizations
  + develop communications in collaboration with legislative personnel

**2. Council for Exceptional Children**

* provide ‘hands on’ experience with development of public policy both with the Congress and the Administration.
* provide experience with a full array of advocacy strategies at the federal, state and local level, including aspects of supporting a grass-roots network

**3. National Association of State Directors of Special education**

* collect and disseminate research, reports and resources and general information from IHE’s, DOE’s, LEA’s, national and regional centers and organizations on:
  + personnel needs in special education related professions
  + best practices and research on effective strategies in recruitment and preparation
  + preparation program descriptions

**4. U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs**

* opportunity to engage in wide ranging activities aligned with the **OSEP** mission including the discretionary grants process.
* interns may shadow senior officials in their daily work
* may be assigned to specific work related to policy including policy implementation
* may participate in policy briefings by senior Department officials

**5. Association for Persons in Supported Employment**

* opportunity to shadow corporate director to learn about policy initiatives for persons with
* supported employment.
* provide experience with a full array of advocate with federal, state, and local legislators for
* legislation promoting integrated employment

## Student Dismissal from the Program Procedures

Student dismissal from the program will occur immediately if a behavior is deemed a violation by UCF’s Golden Rule and will be decided by a committee of 3 faculty members including the student’s advisor. Other reasons students will be considered for dismissal after a semester of probation without satisfactory progress.

* The student does not return to good academic standing following probationary semester(s).
* A GPA of 3.0 was not achieved…
* The student failed to meet requirements of first year review for teaching, research, and service.
* The student earned grades that made it impossible to return to good academic standing, thus rendering graduation impossible.
* The student failed to show acceptable improvement in research/scholarly progress after a probationary semester.
* The student exceeded the time limit for the degree program without completing the degree.
* The student was proven to have committed academic/research misconduct or other ethical violation.
* The student failed to demonstrate professional competency and/or exhibited conduct inappropriate to the profession.
* The student failed a qualifying exam, comprehensive exam, or defense twice.
* Dismissals will normally be initiated at the end of a semester following the posting of grades unless the dismissal is a result of misconduct or unethical/unprofessional behavior.

*Dismissal will be initiated using the following protocol:*

The student’s advisor and/or department chair will schedule a termination review with the student. The purpose of this meeting is to communicate the justification for dismissal and to provide written documentation of any extenuating circumstances. This meeting should be conducted face to face when possible. If the student cannot meet face to face, the meeting should take place via telephone, videoconference, or conference call. Email is acceptable but should be used only if personal communication is not possible. The termination letter is to be signed by the advisor, program coordinator, and scholar.

Adapted from The University of Southern Mississippi.

## 

## Outside Activities

(Conferences, Scholarships, Internship Opportunities, Partnerships, etc.)

|  |
| --- |
| **Conference or Activity** |
| CARD Conference  (Center for Autism and Related Disabilities) |
| DLD Conference  (Council for Exceptional Children Division of Learning Disabilities) |
| ASCD Conference  (Association for Supervision in Curriculum and Development) |
| AERA  (American Education Research Association) |
| CEC (Council for Exceptional Children) National Conference |
| OSEP Project Directors Conference  (Office of Special Education Programs) |
| FFCEC Annual Conference  (Florida Federation Council for Exceptional Children) |
| TECBD Conference (Teacher Educators of Children with Behavioral Disorders) |
| TED Conference  (Teacher Education Division - Council for Exceptional Children) |
| AACTE  ( American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education) |
| DCDT  (Division on Career Development and Transition-Council for Exceptional Children) |

## LEAD Travel Policy/Protocol

**BEFORE YOU TRAVEL**

1. Prior approval from your supervising faculty member is required for all travel with a business purpose, even if you are funding the trip yourself.
   1. Submit a budget estimate of funds needed for travel to your supervisor for approval (At least one month ahead of the conference pre-registration date). If approved, you will need to submit a travel authorization form and submit to LEAD assistant –

***2 WEEKS BEFORE TRAVEL***

1. The Travel Authorization Request (included in the handbook) is the method by which the College of Community Innovation and Education documents the approval. Fill out the form completely. If there are areas that you are unable to complete, contact the LEAD assistant for help.
   1. The most common items that can be reimbursed are:
      1. Registration
      2. Airfare
      3. Hotel: (there are limits on the daily reimbursement amounts in the US, unless the conference hotel is used)
      4. Meals: (on a per diem basis: breakfast $6; lunch $11; dinner, $19…no receipt needed, but the meal reimbursement depends on what meals are provided at the conference and are listed on the conference agenda)
      5. Mileage: (will be confirmed by MapQuest or Google Maps)
      6. Car Rental: (Must justify why a rental is needed)
      7. Parking
      8. Taxi/Shuttle/Tolls
2. For all international travel, you must register with UCF Global: https://studyabroad.ucf.edu/index.cfm?FuseAction=Abroad.ViewLink&Parent\_ID=0&Link\_ID=22A78786-A74C-EE57-F0590A60D3229687

**DURING TRAVEL**

1. At check-out, ask the hotel for a printout and email you the zero-folio balance.
2. Save and Print receipts for items you are requesting reimbursement

(no receipt = no reimbursement).

\*If you do not submit request on time, you ***MUST*** speak to Dr. Dieker

\*\*\*NOTE: submitting the Travel Request form does not guarantee reimbursement submitting the Request make reimbursement possible

**AFTER YOU RETURN FROM TRAVEL**

You have 2 days to complete:

1. Complete and SUBMIT to LEAD assistant - Travel Reimbursement Form (included in handbook)

2. Attach ALL Receipts. No receipt = No reimbursement

2 work DAYS after your return to ORLANDO:

return Sunday - MUST HAVE BY TUES.

return Monday - MUST HAVE by WED.

\* NOTE travel funds are subject to availability and the amount may change

## Summary of UCF Exceptional Education Faculty Ongoing Mentorship Activities

| **Project** | **Faculty** | **Synopsis** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Adapting Collaborating Classes to Equally Support Science Students (ACCESSS)** | Vasquez Faculty from physics and chemistry | This project proposes to explore how active learning science courses support students with executive function disorders, and to train physics faculty and chemistry graduate students to implement universal design for learning strategies to better support all students in these environments. |
| **Digital Promise** | Dieker | Creating micro-credentials in teacher education to support new and practicing teacher development in critical skills to impact student learning |
| **Down Syndrome Foundation Florida** | Hines  Dieker  Vasquez | Monthly workshop for children and families with Down Syndrome that provides both student interventions across speech, physical therapy, and special education. The program also involves monthly parent training on the critical skills provided to the students for transference to home. |
| **Inclusive Pre- Service Teacher Preparation** | Little Hutchison Reyes | With a continued focus to enhance and improve services and outcomes for students with disabilities within inclusive classroom settings, the State Leadership Team (SLT) of the Florida Department of Education determined a Performance Objective to “increase the knowledge and skills of all teachers working with Students with Disabilities (SWDs)”. To accomplish this stated objective, the activity in the SLT plan is to “create a model preservice program that better aligns Exceptional Student Education and General Education programs to meet additional demands without increasing program hours.” |
| **Intensive interventions to meet the reading and mathematics needs of struggling students** | Little Wenzel Kelly Ortiz Safi | The purpose of this research, instruction, and intervention proposal is to improve subject matter knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, and data use in mathematics and reading by undergraduate and graduate students to improve K-12 student learning through implementation of intensive interventions with individual K-12 students, specifically students with disabilities (SWDs) and at risk students (ARSs). A multi-disciplinary team of faculty, scholars, and teacher candidates will diagnose, research, and provide intensive interventions within a coordinated system. Previous funding through the Toni Jennings Exceptional Education Institute (TJEEI) in reading has resulted in statistically significant results in reading (Little & Hahs-Vaughn, 2014). The purpose for this project is to continue to research the intensive interventions in reading and extend the model to provide intensive interventions through data use in mathematics. |

| **Adapting Collaborating Classes to Equally Support Science Students. (ACCESSS)** | Vasquez Faculty from physics and chemistry | This project proposes to explore how active learning science courses support students with executive function disorders, and to train physics faculty and chemistry graduate students to implement universal design for learning strategies to better support all students in these environments. |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Intensive interventions to meet the reading and mathematics needs of struggling students** | Little Wenzel Kelly Ortiz Safi | The purpose of this research, instruction, and intervention proposal is to improve subject matter knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, and data use in mathematics and reading by undergraduate and graduate students to improve K-12 student learning through implementation of intensive interventions with individual K-12 students, specifically students with disabilities (SWDs) and at risk students (ARSs). A multi-disciplinary team of faculty, scholars, and teacher candidates will diagnose, research, and provide intensive interventions within a coordinated system. Previous funding through the Toni Jennings Exceptional Education Institute (TJEEI) in reading has resulted in statistically significant results in reading (Little & Hahs- Vaughn, 2014). The purpose for this project is to continue to research the intensive interventions in reading and extend the model to provide intensive interventions through data use in  mathematics. |
| **iSTEM Facutly Fellowship**  **Lockheed Martin/UCF Mathematics and Science Academy** | Vasquez  Dieker  Faculty STEM | Collaborative project across colleges at UCF for STEM programs for students with disabilities. The Lockheed Martin/University of Central Florida Academy for Mathematics and Science (LMA) is an education/ industry/community partnership aimed at improving mathematics, science and technology education in Central Florida. This unique partnership serves as a model for the educational reforms proposed by both national and state agencies by providing schools in Central Florida with outstanding teacher-leaders who initiate, implement and sustain mathematics and science reform efforts. The innovative model of initial and advanced preparation at the master’s level could only be initiated and sustained through the support of visionary leadership from Lockheed Martin and the University of Central Florida (UCF). |
| **National Urban**  **Special**  **Education**  **Leadership**  **Initiative: A**  **Model** | Martin  Lue-Stewart | This effort is designed to address the critical gaps between  the traditional preparation of urban special education mid-  level administrators and the skills, knowledge, and  dispositions needed for full implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) of 2004. |
| **Preparing**  **Highly Qualified**  **Personnel to** **Serve Students** **with**  **Severe/Profound**  **Disabilities** | Vasquez  Pearl | The purpose of this project is to prepare highly qualified  educators to work with students with severe/low incidence  disabilities with emphasis on recruitment of individuals from underrepresented populations. |
| **Project ASD: Preparing teachers to work with students with Autism Spectrum Disorder** | Vasquez Marino Pearl | Designed to increase the number, qualifications and diversity of special education teachers prepared to work with students with Autism Spectrum Disorders(ASD). |
| **Project iCAN** | Marino Vasquez | The “Interdisciplinary Coaching As a Nexus for Transforming how Institutions Support Undergraduates in STEM (iCAN)” is an exploratory project that will occur over two years.iCAN relies on coaching and mobile technologies (e.g., tablets & smartphones) to help undergraduates with disabilities achieve success in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). The project team is systematically investigating how a successful model for enhancing undergraduate STEM learning and persistence at Landmark, a small rural college in Vermont, can be migrated to the University of Central Florida. The project benefits both the graduate students who are pursuing a Master’s degree in Exceptional Education and undergraduate STEM majors. It provides practicing teachers with insights regarding how to better prepare students to be college and career ready. If this program proves effective as expected, it will enhance STEM learning, persistence, and entry into the STEM workforce for all undergraduate students. |
| **Project LEAD** | Dieker Wienke | A doctoral program designed to prepare highly competent special education leadership personnel, from culturally and linguistically diverse populations, for university faculty positions or for service in training positions in agencies or school systems. |

## UCF Thesis or Dissertation Requirements

**Dissertation Information**

Before being admitted into candidacy, students must:

1. Complete requirements for Live text Portfolio
2. Complete Phase I, II, & III of competency examination

24 Credit Hours Minimum

Doctoral students must present a prospectus for the dissertation to the doctoral advisor, prepare a proposal and present to the dissertation committee, and defend the final research submission with the dissertation committee.

**As stated in the PhD in Education Handbook:**

Dissertations are required in all doctoral programs. College of Community Innovation and Education candidates will follow the current APA (American Psychological Association) guidelines and the UCF Dissertation and Thesis Handbook and can be found at, [www.graduate.ucf.edu](http://www.graduate.ucf.edu).

*Exceptional Education Track Dissertation Defense additional Guideline:*

Students, who plan to defend their dissertation proposal for graduation, must have all completed chapters submitted to their committee at least 30 days prior to the final “Graduate Dissertation Submission Deadline”. See UCF academic calendar for this date each semester.

**Selecting a Dissertation Advisor:**

Your dissertation advisor may or may not be the same person as your program advisor. Your dissertation advisor should be a College of Community Innovation and Education faculty member who is qualified to direct dissertations and with whom you share a common research interest.

When you are ready to find a dissertation advisor, you should first discuss your need with your program advisor and with the Coordinator of the Doctoral Program. You may have a particular faculty member in mind with whom you would like to work. A faculty member might request that you work with him or her. That information should be shared with your program advisor and with the Coordinator of the Doctoral Program. The Coordinator will then initiate the Change of Advisor procedure. Changes in advisors must be approved by the Coordinator of the Doctoral Program and the appropriate Department Chair.

**Selecting a Dissertation Committee:**

Once you have a dissertation advisor, you will select a dissertation committee. Your dissertation committee will include a minimum of four faculty members, one of whom must be a faculty member from outside your program track. The typical committee however, is a five-member committee. Such a configuration serves as a precautionary measure in the event that a committee member leaves the university, becomes ill, or for some other reason cannot continue on the dissertation committee.

The selection of your committee members is a joint decision made by you and your dissertation advisor. Committee members are generally selected because of their research interests and expertise. Once you and your dissertation advisor have discussed your options, you are responsible for contacting the individual faculty members to see if they are willing to serve on your committee. After you have their consent, you should file the Dissertation Committee Appointments Form with the Doctoral Studies Office. This form requires that you list the names of your committee members and get approval (initials indicating approval) of the department chair (s) for the faculty serving on your committee. The committee must also be approved by the Ph.D. Program Coordinator.

Your topic choice drives the selection considerably, but so does your ability to work with people. Who have you worked with well in the past? To you, what are the most important characteristics of an advisor/committee? Who do you know that fits some or all of those characteristics?

Sometimes you have limited choices available for your committee. Flexibility is important in these scenarios. Interdisciplinary topics may require more committee members from more than one department or college.

**Committee Member & Student Responsibilities:**

Once a faculty member agrees to serve on a dissertation committee, he/she provides appropriate feedback to the student on the proposal and on the dissertation. Committee members will be expected to attend a minimum of two committee meetings: the proposal presentation and the dissertation defense. The committee members may provide their feedback about your progress either directly to you or through the dissertation advisor. Such procedural functions should be agreed upon at the proposal presentation.

**University Dissertation Requirements**

The College of Graduate Studies [Thesis and Dissertation page](https://graduate.ucf.edu/thesis-and-dissertation/) contains information on the university’s requirements for dissertation formatting, format review, defenses, final submission, and more. A step-by-step completion guide is also available on [Thesis and Dissertation Services](https://ww2.graduate.ucf.edu/ETD_Student_Services/) Site.

All university deadlines are listed in the [Academic Calendar](http://calendar.ucf.edu). Your program or college may have other earlier deadlines; please check with your program and college staff for additional deadlines.

**The following requirements must be met by dissertation students in their final term:**

* Submit a properly formatted file for initial format review by the format review deadline
* Submit the Thesis and Dissertation Release Option form well before the defense
* Defend by the defense deadline
* Receive format approval (if not granted upon initial review)
* Submit signed approval form by final submission deadline
* Submit final dissertation document by final submission deadline

Students must format their dissertation according to the standards outlined in [Thesis and Dissertation Webcourse](https://webcourses.ucf.edu/enroll/9X4TW3). Formatting questions or issues can be submitted to the Format Help page in the [Thesis and Dissertation Services](https://ww2.graduate.ucf.edu/ETD_Student_Services/) site. Format reviews and final submission must be completed in the [Thesis and Dissertation Services](https://ww2.graduate.ucf.edu/ETD_Student_Services/) site. The Dissertation Approval Form is also available in the Thesis and Dissertation Services site.

The College of Graduate Studies offers several thesis and dissertation [Workshops](https://graduate.ucf.edu/pathways-to-success/) each term. Students are highly encouraged to attend these workshops early in the dissertation process to fully understand the above policies and procedures. The College of Graduate Studies thesis and dissertation office is best reached by email at [editor@ucf.edu](about:blank).

## Student Annual Review

The first year review typically occurs early in the fall of the 2nd year. The purpose of this review is for faculty to get a short presentation of scholars current teaching, research, and service activities after one calendar year in the Ph.D. program. The scholars will provide at this meeting their current curriculum vita, their online portfolio developed their first semester in the program. Following the short presentation faculty will ask questions of the scholar related to research and current program competencies and review current grades and CV. Following the review faculty will rate using a program Qualtrics survey each scholar’s skills. The committee will then make recommendations to the program director about areas of strength and areas of concern. The program director will then meet individually with each scholar (and other faculty may attend as desired) to discuss strengths and weaknesses. If a student is deemed to be in need of remediation, a plan will be put in place created by the committee and signed by the student and program director. If a student is being considered for dismissal at this point, a formal remediation plan for one semester will be created with an additional review occurring the following semester. If satisfactory progress is not made at the next review, a formal termination process will be initiated. If the area of concern has been remediated, the scholar will follow standard program procedures.

## Graduate Research

Research is such a vital part of graduate education, particularly for doctoral students. The development of research skills and the practice of good research ethics begins with graduate study. Faculty serves a crucial role and are the primary source for teaching research skills and modeling research ethics.

**Institutional Review Board (IRB)**

All Human Research conducted by UCF faculty, staff, and students must be reviewed by the IRB and approved for compliance with regulatory and ethical requirements before it may be undertaken (unless the IRB determines that the activity is exempt from IRB review). Please see the [IRB website](https://www.research.ucf.edu/Compliance/IRB/Investigators/index.html) for more information.

**Proprietary and Confidential Information**

It is the intent of the University to foster the professional development of its faculty and students. In particular, the proprietary and patent policies serve to protect the interests of UCF graduate students so that they can engage in research that will ultimately be published. In no circumstances should the University knowingly enter into an agreement with outside agencies that would prevent the ultimate publication of the graduate student’s work, as a thesis or dissertation or other means. These policies also help to clarify protections for intellectual property contained in theses/dissertations for students who engage in employment outside the University. Please see the [UCF General Graduate policies website](http://catalog.ucf.edu/content.php?catoid=4&navoid=201#proprietary-and-confidential-information) for more information on Proprietary and Confidential Information.

**Ownership of Intellectual Property**

The “Patent and Invention Policy” for graduate students is included here in its entirety. Departments and colleges should discuss this policy with graduate students at orientations.

PREMISE: UCF has three fundamental responsibilities with regard to graduate student research. They are to (1) support an academic environment that stimulates the spirit of inquiry, (2) develop the intellectual property stemming from research, and (3) disseminate the intellectual property to the general public. In most cases, UCF owns the intellectual property developed using university resources. The graduate student as inventor will according to this policy share in the proceeds of the invention. Please see the [UCF General Graduate policies website](http://catalog.ucf.edu/content.php?catoid=4&navoid=201#proprietary-and-confidential-information) for more information on Ownership of Intellectual Property.

**Pathways Workshops**

Coordinated by the College of Graduate Studies, the Pathways to Success program offers the following free development opportunities for graduate students and postdoctoral scholars including workshops in Academic Integrity, Graduate Grantsmanship, Graduate Teaching, Personal Development, Professional Development, and Research. Please see the [UCF Pathways to Success website](https://graduate.ucf.edu/pathways-to-success/) for more information.

**CITI Trainings**

Researchers involved in the design, execution, analysis and/or reporting of research are required to complete UCF’s Institutional Review Board CITI training. The board will not approve a study until all researchers involved successfully complete the training. Please see the [CITI Program website](https://about.citiprogram.org/en/homepage/) for more information.

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## Association of Doctoral Students in Exceptional Education

(ADSEE)

The Association of Doctoral Students in Exceptional Education (ADSEE) was established in 2002. The mission of ADSEE is to assist College of Education doctoral students in the successful completion of their doctoral program and transition to professional employment.

The purpose of the ADSEE is to provide a support network for College of Community Innovation and Education doctoral students and doctoral candidates whereby issues related to achieving a doctoral degree and finding a postdoctoral employment can be addressed and resolved with group support. Activities would include assistance with academic progress (tutoring), dissertation research and writing, presentation of papers, interview preparation, access to research materials, transitioning into doctoral program, and other support and benefits to assist College of Community Innovation and Education doctoral students in completing the requirements of their doctoral programs. The organization shall also serve as an official channel of communication with the university and other entities.

**2018-2019 Officers**

President – Missy Glavey-Labedz

Vice President – Amanda Lannan

Secretary – Morgan Diaz

Treasurer – Whitney Hanley

KnightsED Talks Coordinator – Annette Romualdo

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## Forms

* [College of Graduate Studies Forms and References](https://graduate.ucf.edu/forms-and-references/)  
  A complete listing of general forms and references for graduate students, with direct links, may be found here.
* [Graduate Petition Form](https://graduate.ucf.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GraduatePetitionForm_Online-6.pdf)  
  When unusual situations arise, petitions for exceptions to policy may be requested by the student. Depending on the type of appeal, the student should contact his/her program adviser to begin the petition process.
* [Traveling Scholar Form](https://graduate.ucf.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Traveling-Scholar-Request-Form_Online-1.pdf)   
  If a student would like to take advantage of special resources available on another campus but not available on the home campus; for example, special course offerings, research opportunities, unique laboratories and library collections, this form must be completed and approved.

## Useful Links

* [Program Website](https://ccie.ucf.edu/teachered/exceptional-student-education/)
* [College Website](https://ccie.ucf.edu)
* [College of Graduate Studies](https://graduate.ucf.edu/)
* [Academic Calendar](http://calendar.ucf.edu/)
* [Bookstore](https://ucf.bncollege.com/webapp/wcs/stores/servlet/BNCBHomePage?storeId=16552&catalogId=10001&langId=-1)
* [Campus Map](https://map.ucf.edu/)
* [Counseling Center](https://caps.sdes.ucf.edu/)
* [Financial Assistance](http://finaid.ucf.edu/)
* [Golden Rule Student Handbook](http://goldenrule.sdes.ucf.edu/docs/goldenrule.pdf)
* [Graduate Catalog](http://catalog.ucf.edu/index.php?catoid=4)
* [Graduate Student Association](https://www.facebook.com/groups/UCFgsa/)
* [Graduate Student Center](https://graduate.ucf.edu/graduate-student-center/)
* [Housing and Residence Life](http://www.housing.ucf.edu/)
* [Housing, off campus](https://ucf.offcampuspartners.com/)
* [Knights Email](https://extranet.cst.ucf.edu/kmailselfsvc)
* [Library](https://library.ucf.edu/)
* [NID Help](https://extranet.cst.ucf.edu/PWSelfReset/pages/NidCheck.aspx)
* [Pathways to Success](https://graduate.ucf.edu/pathways-to-success/)
* [Recreation and Wellness Center](http://rwc.sdes.ucf.edu/)
* [Shuttles Parking Services](https://parking.ucf.edu/shuttles/)
* [Student Health Services](http://shs.sdes.ucf.edu/)
* [Thesis and Dissertation (ETD)](https://graduate.ucf.edu/thesis-and-dissertation/)
* [UCF Global](http://global.ucf.edu/)
* [University Writing Center](http://uwc.cah.ucf.edu/)

**Who’s Who in Exceptional Education at the**

**University of Central Florida**

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The College of Community Innovation and Education includes faculty from the disciplines of counseling, criminal justice, educational leadership, health management and informatics, learning sciences, legal studies, public administration, and public affairs. Although you may work with faculty across the Department, across the College of Community Innovation and Education, across the campus and across the State, we would like to highlight the roles, background and experience of faculty in the area of exceptional education. From these descriptions you will see that you will be working with faculty with a wide range of backgrounds, experiences, and leadership roles that range from local to international foci.

## Faculty and Staff Biographies

**Dr. Lisa Dieker** is a Pegasus Professor and Lockheed Martin Eminent Scholar Chair at the University of Central Florida. She received her undergraduate and master's degree from Eastern Illinois University and her Ph.D. from the University of Illinois. Her primary area of research focuses on collaboration between general and special education with a specific interest in the unique opportunities that exist in for students in urban and rural settings in the areas of mathematics and science. She also has a passion for how technology and simulators, TeachLivE™, can be used to impact teacher preparation and student learning. As the Lockheed Martin Eminent Scholar, she works collaboratively with outstanding UCF faculty in mathematics and science to Direct the Lockheed Martin/UCF Mathematics and Science Academy. The Academy encompasses two programs, the K-8 teacher leadership program as well as a Transition to Mathematics and Science Teaching (TMAST) program, both focusing on teacher preparation in mathematics and science education. Dr. Dieker has received and managed more than $15 million in grant funding and has produced 5 books and over 40 articles and chapters. She currently serves on numerous editorial review boards and is the past Associate Editor for Teaching Exceptional Children, Journal of Educational and Psychological Consulting, and the Editor of the Journal of International Special Needs Education. She has been awarded the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC): Children Advocacy Network Advocate of the Year Award, the CEC: Teacher Education Division (TED) Outstanding Service Award, the CEC:TED Outstanding 2014 Journal Article Award, the UCF Graduate Student Mentor of the Year Award, and the University of Illinois and Eastern Illinois University Outstanding Alumni of the Year Awards.

**Dr. Dan Ezell** is an Associate Professor. He received his undergraduate and master’s degrees from the University of Louisiana at Monroe and doctoral degree from The University of Alabama. His research interests focus on portfolio assessment with individuals with Intellectual Disabilities (InD). His current research projects include using magic tricks with individuals with InD as a self-confidence booster and as a method to enhance friendship among children with disabilities and their non-disabled peers. In addition, he has combined the use of puppets, Black Light Theater, animal balloons and magic tricks with children’s books as storytelling and character education to create an ultraviolet fun and educational experience for children with cognitive and developmental disabilities. At the national/international level Dr. Ezell served six years as treasurer of the Division on Developmental Disabilities (DDD) of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC). At the state level he served as president of the Florida Federation Council for Exceptional Children (FF-CEC) and secretary of the Florida Division on Developmental Disabilities (FL-DDD). At the local level, he is the faculty advisor of the Student Council for Exceptional Children (SCEC) Chapter 1050 (Brevard). Dr. Ezell is also the university faculty site coordinator of the UCF/OSC Holmes Partnership PDS School at Enterprise Elementary in Port St. John, Florida in Brevard County.

**Dr. Rebecca Hines** is an Associate Professor. She received her undergraduate degree from Florida State University and her master’s and doctorate degree from the University of South Florida. Her primary research interests include examining the effectiveness of the co-teaching model for students with disabilities, and exploring strategies for working with students with emotional/behavioral disorders. Service interests include improving the quality of life for adults with exceptionalities through age-appropriate leisure activities, and mentoring young adults transitioning from high school. Currently Dr. Hines is a Co-Principal Investigator for the program Teachers In Action with Persons with Disabilities through High-Tech High-Touch Service -Learning, a federal Learn and Serve grant between UCF and United Cerebral Palsy (UCP) of Central Florida.

**Dr. Mary Little** is a Professor and Coordinator of Graduate Programs in Exceptional Student Education at the University of Central Florida. She received her graduate and undergraduate degrees in Special Education and Curriculum and Instruction from the State University College at Buffalo and her doctorate in Special Education from the University of Kansas. Dr. Little has received in excess of $18 million in external funding for research and development from federal, state, and foundation funding agencies including the Institute for Educational Sciences (IES) and the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). Currently, she serves as the Principal Investigator for *Intensive Interventions,* a federally-funded research and development project through OSEP. The purpose of this project is to research, develop, and prepare educators to implement interventions in reading and mathematics to improve K-12 student learning especially within diverse, urban schools. Among her numerous articles, chapters, and books, three recent publications are entitled, *Teaching Elementary Mathematics to Struggling Learners, Response to Intervention for Teachers: Classroom Instructional Problem Solving* and *RTI and Mathematics: Practical Tools for Teachers in K-8 Classrooms.* Her professional experiences in the K-12 schools include roles as a secondary teacher, co-teacher, program coordinator and principal. Her research interests include evidence-based instructional practices, interventions, teacher efficacy, and student learning related to teacher learning. She teaches courses at the graduate and undergraduate levels using traditional and on-line formats, specifically in mathematics, assessment, instruction, action research, and program evaluation.

**Dr. Martha S Lue Stewart** is a Professor of Exceptional, Urban, and Multicultural education. A product of the rural southern soil, a Monticello, FL, she is a graduate of Florida A & M University, Tallahassee, FL, with a degree in Speech pathology and continued her graduate studies at the Universities of Missouri (Columbia) and GA State (Atlanta), culminating with a Ph. D. in Special Education Administration from the University of Florida. At UCF, in addition to teaching courses in exceptional education, she also teaches courses in diversity, multicultural and urban education, while serving as Program Coordinator for the Graduate Certificate Program in Urban Education. She was also the Founding Director of the Teacher Education for America’s Minorities (TEAM) program in the College of Education, a program designed to identify, recruit, and support preservice students of color in teacher education. Her research interests include: addressing the achievement gap through culturally responsive practices in teaching and learning; Emphasisin domestic diversity, with heightened interests in culturally, linguistically, and ethnically diverse learners and exceptional learners. The first African American female to achieve the rank of Professor at UCF, Dr. Lue Stewart has been nationally recognized for her work by being selected the recipient of the G Pritchy Smith Multicultural Educator Award, National Association for Multicultural Education; Distinguished Alumni Award, Florida A & M University, Orlando Chapter; and Excellence in Education Award, Orange County Black History Month Committee. An author of a textbook on identifying communication disorders in children, she has written numerous articles, serves on several editorial boards, written numerous grants, is a community volunteer and a mentor to several underserved youth in her community. A member of the public service sorority, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., she serves on its National Executive Board, as Chair, Distinguished Professor Endowed Chair Committee. Dr. Lue Stewart adds:

*It was Sir Isaac Newton who reminded us, "If I have seen farther than others, it's because I've stood on the shoulders of giants." As a product of the Southern soil, Monticello, Florida and a graduate of Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University (FAMU) in Tallahassee, Florida, I have been richly blessed. It was my parents who provided the nurturing, my teachers who saw the promise, my faith that sustains me, and the profession of teaching that empowers me to become a lifelong learner.*

**Dr. Matthew Marino** is an associate professor. His research, which has been supported in part by more than 3 million dollars in federal grants from the Institute of Education Sciences, the Office of Special Education Programs, and the National Science Foundation, focuses on the design and implementation of technology-enhanced STEM curricular materials. He is currently examining how the Universal Design for Learning framework can be included in video games, iPad apps, and online courses. Dr. Marino was a member of the design team for the national award-winning video game “You Make Me Sick!” and award winning technology-enhanced science curriculum “Alien Rescue”. Several of his empirical publications are featured on the National Center on Universal Design for Learning website. He is on the editorial review board for a number of special education and science education journals. Dr. Marino is a technical reviewer for the National Science Foundation and a member of the leadership team for the Universal Design for Learning Implementation and Research Network, an international organization dedicated to increasing the accessibility of curricular materials for individuals with disabilities and other traditionally marginalized groups.

**Dr. Suzanne M. Martin** is a professor of Exceptional Education in the School of Teacher Education, College of Community Innovation and Education at the University of Central Florida. From 2000-2006, she served as the Assistant Dean of Education for the College. Prior to joining the College of Community Innovation and Education, Dr. Martin served as a department chairperson and faculty member at other institutes of higher education. Dr. Martin has a long history of leadership activities in higher education as well as educational organizations. In her career, Dr. Martin has taught elementary school students, junior high school students with special needs, community college students preparing to be paraprofessional in special education classroom, undergraduate students and graduate students. She has served as a President of the International Council of Exceptional Children and as a Program specialist/ Branch chief at the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services. She has been awarded grants from the U. S. Department of Education that have allowed her to pursue her work in teacher education and leadership training. She is the recipient of many awards and the author of numerous articles on teaching and leadership as well as a book on women in leadership.

**Dr. Cynthia Pearl** earned her Ph.D. in Education, Exceptional Education Track, at the University of Central Florida. Currently, she is the Co-Principal Investigator for three personnel preparation grants through the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs. She has directed Project ASD, *Preparing Teachers to Work with Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders,* at the University of Central Florida since the fall of 2003; Project SPD, *Special Educator Preparation in Severe/Profound Disabilities*, since the fall of 2007; and Project Bridges, *Special Education Preparation in Intensive Interventions since January 2015*. In this capacity, she worked closely with special education faculty, school districts, local agencies and families to develop UCF’s *Graduate Certificate in Autism Spectrum Disorders*, the *Graduate Certificate in Severe or Profound Disabilities,* and *the Intervention Specialist Certificate*. Dr. Pearl currently teaches several of the certificate courses at UCF. She has 16 years teaching experience in higher education and 18 years of experience working in the field as a special education teacher and a behavior specialist with students with disabilities. Dr. Pearl is a published author and has given presentations on topics related to teacher preparation and evidence-based best practices for working with students with disabilities at state and national conferences. In addition, she has served as a national expert on the review board for the National Professional Development Center on Autism Spectrum Disorders.

**Dr. Maria E. Reyes** is an Associate Professor. She received her undergraduate degree from University of Puerto Rico, a master’s degree from Fordham University, and a doctoral degree from University of Florida. Her research interests focus on culturally diverse families of children with disabilities. She has worked closely with Latino families of children with disabilities studying their needs and sources of support. Dr. Reyes is the coordinator of the Exceptional Education minor and she is also the director of the UCF Educators Summer Institute, which provides professional development in Exceptional Education for educators seeking re- certification.

**Dr. Eleazar (Trey) Vasquez** is an Associate Professor for the School of Teacher Education Exceptional Education Program, iSTEM Fellow, and Affiliate Faculty of Lockheed Martin UCF Academy. His current research focuses on the evaluation of academic and behavioral outcomes for students with autism utilizing technology to enhance instruction. Dr. Vasquez was recipient of the inaugural Reach for the Stars Award (2014) and has been recognized as a Teaching Academy and iSTEM Fellow at the University of Central Florida. Recently his research has expanded from K-12 schools to postsecondary institutions and other venues to prepare students who are traditionally marginalized, such as those with executive functioning disorder, for careers in STEM related fields. Dr. Vasquez research has been supported in part by $7.5+ million dollars from the National Science Foundation and Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs. Nationally Dr. Vasquez serves as the Teacher Education Division of the Council for Exceptional Children Technology Chair, Treasurer for the Universal Design for Learning Implementation and Research Network, and Technology Chair for the American Council for Rural Special Education.

**Dr. Wilfred Wienke** is Professor Emeritus and completed his BS in Elementary Education and Special Education at the State University College at Buffalo. In the city of North Tonawanda he taught adolescent students requiring special education services. His doctoral study was completed at the University of Northern Colorado with a major in Special Education and a minor in research methodology. His post-doctoral study was completed at the University of California at Santa Barbara. He has taught at San Jose State University and Bowling Green State University, and chaired the Department of Special Education at West Virginia University before coming to the University of Central Florida to chair the Department of Child, Family & Community Sciences. During his career he has guided the development of curricula and programs to prepare special educators to serve students from infancy through adulthood. He has also prepared programs to prepare scholars at the doctoral level in special education. Over the years he has authored or co-authored grants to support programs at each of these levels. He continues to work with Historically Black Colleges and minority universities in securing grant based funding to support their programs and students in special education at all levels.

**Dr. Caroline Marrett** graduated in spring 2008 from the University of Central Florida with a Ph.D. in Exceptional Education. She received her undergraduate degree from the State University College at Buffalo in Elementary Education and a master's degree from Teacher's College, Columbia University in Specific Learning Disabilities. She also holds a professional diploma from St. John's University in School Administration and Supervision. Currently, she serves as a Coordinator for the Exceptional Student Education Program and the Recruitment and Retention Program with Undergraduate Affairs & Partnerships in the College of Education and Human Performance at UCF.

## Former Ph.D. Student Biographies

**Dr. Monika Shealey,** graduated fall 2003, began her career was an assistant professor at the University of Milwaukee-Wisconsin and University of South Florida In 2006, she became. Today, she is an associate professor at Florida International University in Miami, Florida. In 2013, Dr. Shealey was appointed to Dean of the College of Education at Rowan University in Glassboro New Jersey. Recently, she was appointed the Senior Vice President of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at Rowan.

**Dr. Roanne Brice** graduated in and was is the Assistant to the Chair for the Department of Child, Family, and Community Sciences at the University of Central Florida. She is currently the director of Accreditation and Program Approval at the University of Central Florida’s College of Community Innovation and Education.

**Dr. Kimberly Spence-Cochran** graduated in summer 2004 and is the Coordinator of Training and Research Programs at the University of Central Florida, Center for Autism and Related Disabilities.

**Dr. Cynthia Pearl** graduated in spring 2004 and is a Project Director at the University of Central Florida. Her work focuses in the area of Autism Spectrum Disorders and Severe Disabilities.

**Dr. Jamia Thomas-Richmond** graduated in spring 2004 and is a Visiting Professor at the University of Central Florida, Daytona Campus.

**Dr. Mike (Chang-Hui) Lin** graduated summer 2005 and is currently an instructor at the Brigham Young University at Hawaii. He received his undergraduate degree from BYU-Hawaii and master's degree from UNLV. His research interests focus on The Effectiveness of Early Childhood Special Education, Early Childhood Transition/Activities, and Early Intervention Services in Pre-K Public School Setting. He is currently an assistant professor at Brigham Young University in Hawaii.

**Dr. Geraldine Perez-Turner** graduated spring 2005. She received her undergraduate and master’s degree from Georgia State University. Her research interests focus on low incidence disabilities, curriculum development for LD and transition issues.

**Dr. Mary Senne** graduated spring 2005. In 1992, she began working in the disability community in central Florida. Her efforts included development of a behavioral center for children with a diagnosis of autism, followed by the creation of a Center for Autism and Related Disabilities (CARD). During this same time worked closely with the local school systems and other community agencies to build capacity. Founded the Jennings Exceptional Education Institute in 1998 at the University of Central Florida with the goal of better preparing teachers to work with families of children with disabilities.

**Dr. Leslie Sena** graduated spring 2006. She received her undergraduate degree from the University of Colorado and master's degree from University of Central Florida. Her research interests focus on inclusion, technology, and community involvement. She is currently a professor at Bethune-Cookman College in Daytona Beach, Florida.

**Dr. Michelle Urquhart** graduated summer 2006. She received her Bachelor's and Master's Degree in Elementary Education from the University of Florida. She also received her Master's Degree in Exceptional Education from the University of Central Florida. Her research interests include a focus on the education of minority students in exceptional education in relation to overrepresentation, family involvement, and innovative practices that have been demonstrated by research to increase achievement for these students.

**Dr. Nancy Aguinaga** graduated summer of 2006. She received her undergraduate in Psychology and master's degree in Exceptional Education from UCF. Her research interests include Autism Spectrum Disorders, Behavior Disorders, Animal assisted therapy, and Inclusive education. She is began her career as a professor at the University of Southern Indiana. Today, she is an assistant professor at Southeastern Missouri, Cape Girardeau, Missouri.

**Dr. Laura King** graduated summer 2006. She received her B.S. degree in Special Education at the University of North Carolina, Pembroke and M.Ed in Varying Exceptionalities; Exceptional Education at the University of Central Florida. Her research interests include assistive technology, working with students with multiple impairments, and disability awareness issues within the educational setting. She is began her career as a professor at East Carolina University.

**Dr. Chris O’Brien** graduated summer 2006. He received his undergraduate degree from UCF in 1998 in Communicative Disorders studying Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology. He returned to UCF again receiving his master's degree in Communicative Disorders in 2000 with emphasis on Speech-Language Pathology. He is currently a tenured professor at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

**Dr. Charissa Marrah Owens** graduated summer 2007. She earned her bachelors and masters degrees in Varying Exceptionalities and Specific Learning Disabilities respectively at the University of South Florida. She is currently a professor and Director of Teaching Fellows at the College of Charleston in Charleston, SC.

**Dr. Mayra A. Ruiz** graduated summer 2007. She received her undergraduate degree in Psychology and her Master’s degree in Varying Exceptionalities from the University of Central Florida, as well. Mayra is currently an assistant professor at Lynn University in Boca Raton, Florida and continues her work on a TJEEI grant she received during her doctoral studies here at UCF.

**Dr. Todd Sundeen** graduated summer 2007. He is an assistant professor at Northern Colorado University. Prior to his employment at Northern Colorado University, Dr. Sundeen facilitated Project NeXT STEP and NUSELI for UCF.

**Dr. Kimberly Zgonc** graduated spring 2007. She received her undergraduate degree from Florida State University in Psychology and master's degree from the University of Central Florida in ESE. She is began her career as a professor at Georgia Southern University in Savannah, Georgia. Today, Dr. Zgonc is at Indian River State College in Ft. Pierce, Florida.

**Dr. Caroline Marrett** graduated in spring 2008. She received her undergraduate degree from the State University College at Buffalo in *Elementary Education* and a master's degree from Teacher's College, Columbia University in *Specific* *Learning Disabilities.* She also holds a professional diploma from St. John's University in *School Administration and Supervision*. Currently, she serves as the Director of the Toni Jennings Exceptional Education Institute at the University of Central Florida, College of Education.

**Dr. Karen Wagner** graduated in spring 2008. She received her undergraduate degree in psychology from the University of Central Florida and her master's degree in Mental Health Counseling, also from UCF. Her research interests focus on Behavior Analysis in education. Dr. Wagner is the Florida Federation Council for Exceptional Children Student Advisor, and she has served as President of the Florida Association for Behavior Analysis. Currently, Dr. Wagner has a company in Brevard County that provides in-home behavior analysis services as well as an Adult Day Training program for adults with disabilities who also have significant behavioral barriers.

**Dr. Heather Batchelder** graduate in summer 2008. She received her undergraduate degree in Telecommunication from the University of Florida and her Master’s degree in Varying Exceptionalities from the University of Central Florida. She is currently teaching at UCF Palm Bay.

**Dr. Kimberly E Bryant Davis** graduated in summer 2008. She received her Bachelors and Masters degrees from the University of Florida. There she was enrolled in a unified early childhood special education PROTEACH program. As a result she holds a BA in special education and MEd in early childhood education. While enrolled in Project LEAD, Dr. Davis interned within the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) within the Department of Education in Washington, DC. Dr. Davis has also had experience working with the Education Development Center and the Urban Collaborative with Dr. Lisa Dieker and her Leadership Institutes. Currently, Dr. Davis is the Project Coordinator for the National Urban Special Education Leadership Institute grant under Dr. Suzanne Martin. Dr. Davis is currently as Associate Dean and Associate Professor at the University of Missouri-Kansas City.

**Dr. David Grant** graduated in summer 2008. He has provided academic instruction and guidance to students classified as emotionally disabled in urban settings. His research interest is focused on the educational achievement and development of Black male youth identified as emotionally disabled. His goal is to establish an academy for Black male students focused on academic excellence and personal development. Dr. Grant is an assistant professor at Southeastern University in Lakeland, FL.

**Dr. Marcey Kinney** graduated in summer 2008. She received both her undergraduate and master degrees from UCF in exceptional student education. Her research interests include secondary students with high incidence disabilities, technology, and curriculum issues. Dr. Kinney is currently working with Teachers in Action as the Campus to Community Project Coordinator.

**Dr. Chrissy Ogilvie** is an Instructor in the Exceptional Student Education Department at Southeastern Louisiana University. She graduated from UCF with her Ph.D. in August 2008 and is currently enjoying her many hats at SLU. Before joining the faculty at SLU, Dr. Ogilvie served UCF for one year as a visiting professor with multiple duties: undergraduate advisor, internship coordinator, and professor of 2 classes. The focus of Dr. Ogilvie's dissertation was the impact of video modeling and peer mentoring of critical social skills for middle school students with moderate Autism Spectrum Disorders in inclusive settings

**Dr. Richard Reardon** graduated in summer 2008. His area of expertise is in best practices for inclusive education. He is currently working as the Director of Education, Director of the Castleton Center for Schools, and Director of the Center for Teaching and Learning at Castleton State College in Castleton, VT. He has helped to develop an internal assessment tool that allows schools and districts to identify areas of strength as well as areas in need of improvement as they move to become more inclusive. He has also worked as a consultant for the Florida Inclusion Network, working in counties throughout the state and assisting them with best practices for inclusive education.

**Dr. Shelby Colleen Robertson** graduated in summer 2008. She received her undergraduate and master’s degree from the University of Central Florida. She is currently the Project Coordinator for Project CENTRAL, UCF in Daytona Beach. She has been the Project Coordinator for Project AdD for two years. Her research interests include professional development for educators, specifically in strategies in mathematics as well as behavior disorders and a focus on increasing students’ engaged time and achievement in mathematics. Her dissertation focus is on achievement gains in algebra along with engaged time utilizing the Concrete-to-Representational-to-Abstract instructional model in mathematics. She has served as President of the Student Council for Exceptional Children at UCF and Travel and Professional Coordinator of ADSEE for the past year.

**Dr. Sara Aronin** is a 2009 LEAD graduate. She received her bachelor’s degree in special education with a focus on emotional disturbed and behavior disorders from Bradley University and her master’s degree in educational administration from Cambridge College. She relocated from Maui, Hawaii where she worked for an educational services company in public schools to change undesirable classrooms into positive teaching environments. Her research interests focus on inclusion in inquiry based science classrooms through universal design for learning and working with NASA. Sara served as a student representative to the Teacher Education Division of CEC. Presently, Sara is an Assistant Professor at west Virginia University.

**Dr. Beth Christner** is a 2009 Ph.D. graduate. She received her undergraduate degree from Penn State University and her master’s degree in Elementary Education from UCF. She taught Pre-K, 1st, and 3rd grade as a general educator, and Kindergarten, 1st, and 5th as a special educator. Currently she is employed by the Seminole County School District as an Elementary Math and Reading Specialist with the responsibility of ensuring implementation of Response to Intervention (RTI). Her research interests include math and reading interventions for students with learning disabilities, bridging the gap between research and practice, and enhancing relationships between special and general educators. Dr. Christner is currently serving as the Director for the United Cerebral Palsy (UCP) – UCF Bailes Campus.

**Dr. Kara Rosenblatt** graduated in 2009. She is a first-year Assistant Professor in the Curriculum, Instruction and Special Education Department at Mississippi State University. She received her undergraduate and graduate degrees in learning disabilities and emotional handicaps from Florida State University. Kara taught middle school in Florida and Maryland for five years. Her focus is on secondary students with high incidence disabilities, transition from high school to college and technology.

**Dr. Bi Ying Hu** is a 2009 Ph.D. graduate. Bi Ying Hu is an international student from mainland China. Having traveled alone to the United States nine years ago, she has spent all her time learning about teaching children with disabilities. Her work experiences included two years of teaching in an early childhood center for children with autism and developmental delays as well as two years of working with middle school students with severe and multiple disabilities. Bi Ying’s research interests include early childhood special education and inclusion with an international research focus. Her dissertation title is: “Exploring Teacher Variables in Facilitating Early Childhood Inclusion in China.” Dr. Hu is an Assistant Professor at Texas Christian University.

**Dr. Peggy J. Schaefer Whitby** is a 2009 Project LEAD graduate. Dr. Whitby is an Assistant Professor at the University of Nevada – Las Vegas. Ms. Whitby received a bachelors of science from St. Cloud State University and a master’s degree from the University of Houston-Clear Lake. Her research interests are in the development and adaptation of cognitive strategy instruction and meta-cognitive strategy instruction for children with high functioning autism and Asperger syndrome in the inclusive setting. Prior to starting her doctoral studies she worked as a behavior/autism support teacher for Orange County Public Schools. Dr. Schafer Whitby is currently an Assistant Professor at the University of Nevada-Las Vegas and Director of the Center for Autism Spectrum Disorders.

**Dr. Peña Bedesem** graduated in summer 2010. She received her bachelor’s degree in criminal justice from the University of Central Florida and her master’s degree in varying exceptionalities also from the University of Central Florida. She relocated from Clermont, Florida where she co-taught 5th grade for Lake County Public Schools. Her dissertation research focused on students with emotional/behavioral disorders and the integration of mobile technology as an instructional and behavioral tool. Additionally, Pena completed a policy and advocacy internship at the Council for Exceptional Children in Washington, DC. Dr. Bedesem is currently employed as faculty at Kent State University.

**Dr. Wanda Wade** graduated in summer 2010. She received her Bachelor’s degree in Special Education from Shaw and North Carolina State University. She completed her Master’s degree at University of Central Florida in Exceptional Education with a concentration in Varying Exceptionalities. Wanda is the graduate research assistant for the OSEP grant PACE (Paraeducators Acquiring Certification in Exceptional Education) focusing on teacher preparation and attrition. Her research interests focus on classroom support for preservice and first year teachers in special education through Bluetooth wireless technology. Dr. Wade is currently employed as faculty at West Florida University in Pensacola, Florida.

**Dr. Tanya Moorehead** graduated in summer 2010. She received her undergraduate degree in Education and her Master of Art in Special Education from the University of Connecticut. Before entering the doctoral program, Tanya was a middle school special education teacher for 7 years in Bloomfield, Connecticut. She is a Holmes Scholar and the secretary of the Holmes Partnership. Tanya is the coordinator of the Toni Jennings Teaching and Learning Tutoring Clinic. She had the opportunity to do an internship at Lockheed Martin's Simulation and Training department, as well as, with Dr. Bonnie Jones at the Office for Special Education Programs (OSEP) in Washington, DC. Her dissertation research focuses on the interaction behaviors of secondary co-teachers. She is currently employed as faculty at Montclair State University in New Jersey.

**Dr. Kimberly Pawling** graduated in summer 2010. She is interested in applying the Principle of multiple means of representation to secondary social studies content instruction. Kimberly earned her B.S. and M.S. in Special Education: Learning Disabilities / Behavioral Disorders from Florida State University. She taught high school students with learning disabilities two years, before she returned to Florida State University to earn an M.S. in Visual Impairments: Rehabilitation Therapy and Orientation and Mobility. After two years working for the Lighthouse of Central Florida, Kimberly returned to the classroom: two years as a teacher, two years as a dean. In 2007, she decided to pursue her Ph.D. While at UCF, she completed an internship at the National Association of the State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE) in Alexandria, VA. She served Florida CEC as the Student CAN Representative, the Council for Exceptional Children as a member of the Student Standing Committee, and treasurer for ADSEE. Dr. Pawling is currently employed as Student Dean at Colonial High School and pursuing her Educational Leadership Degree.

**Dr. Natalie Dopson Campuzano** graduated from the doctoral program in the summer of 2011. She was a McKnight Scholar, Rotary Club of Winter Springs Scholar, and Council for Exceptional Children Kayte M. Fearn Diversity Scholar. Natalie received her Bachelors of Science degree in Elementary Education and Education Specialist degree in School Psychology from the University of Central Florida. Natalie worked as a bilingual school psychologist for Seminole County Public Schools prior to studying her doctorate. Her research interests include: best practices in assessment and intervention for children with special needs from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and who are migrant, collaboration with families, and family literacy. Currently, Natalie is an Assistant Professor in Foundations and Social Advocacy at the State University of New York, at Cortland (SUNY Cortland).

**Dr. Kelly Grillo** earned herPh.D. at the University of Central Florida in August 2011. She received her bachelor’s degree in psychology from Rutgers University and her master’s degree in exceptional student education from University of Central Florida. Kelly began her journey into teaching at the PACE Center for Girls of Volusia/Flagler providing students with emotional disturbance support as the Spirited Girls Teacher and case manager. Two years later she joined the Volusia County Public Schools as a co-teacher in the Sciences. In, 2007-08 Kelly was awarded the CEC Chapter #563 Co-Teacher Team of the Year with then co-teacher Laura Hannan. Kelly was the lead graduate assistant for the UCF/Lockheed Martin Mathematics and Science Academy and a Project LEAD scholar. Her dissertation entitled *An Investigation of the Effects of Using Digital Flash Cards to Increase Biology Vocabulary Knowledge in High School Students with Learning Disabilities* compliments her mission of supporting content and digital literacies for students with language-based learning difference. Kelly’s primary research focus is on the achievement of students with disabilities in secondary science. Currently, Kelly is serving as the Vice-President for the Florida Council for Exceptional Children (FCEC) board and is also a board member for the Personnel Improvement Center at the National Association of State Directors of Special Education in Washington D.C. Her enthusiasm for supporting classroom teachers to achieve the mission of improved outcomes for persons with disabilities is a personal one. Kelly has become a national advocate for persons living with Learning Disabilities so that she herself can accept her own disability. Kelly is currently an Assistant Professor at Highpointe University in North Carolina.

**Dr. Jessica Hunt** graduated from the doctoral program in exceptional student education in August 2011.  She received a BS in Management, an MA in Mathematics Education from the University of Central Florida, and recently completed a post-doctoral fellowship at The University of Texas - Austin. Dr. Hunt recently transitioned to Utah State University where she serves as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Special Education and Rehabilitation.  Her current research includes the documentation of strategies, representations, and instructional trajectories for students with learning disabilities through single subject methods and micro genetic analyses.  Dr. Hunt also works on a dynamic assessment of rational number concepts as a part of her research.

**Dr. Marisa Salazar** graduated from the doctoral program in exceptional student education in August 2011. She received her Bachelors of Science in Psychology at the University of California, San Diego. She completed her Masters degree in Educational Psychology at Florida Atlantic University. Her area of interest is early childhood special education, with an emphasis in autism spectrum disorders. Her dissertation was in the area of collaborative planning between preschool teachers and parents to provide activity-based intervention for children with autism.  She is of Hispanic background, is bilingual, and has an interest in building cultural competence as well as working with families and children who are dual language learners. Prior to enrolling at UCF, she worked for the Center for Autism and Related Disabilities at Florida Atlantic University. She also worked as an Infant & Toddler Developmental Specialist for Orlando's division of Florida Early Steps.

**Dr.** **Angel L. Lopez, Jr**. is a Ph.D. graduate as of August 2012. The title of his dissertation was *Examining potential teacher bias of Hispanic males with emotional disturbances in virtual settings*. Angel received his BA from Cleveland State University, in Ohio, and his M.Ed. in Exceptional Education from UCF. Prior to entering the Doctoral program at UCF, Dr. Lopez taught as both a regular education and special education teacher in Central Florida. His research interest focuses on the infusion and use of technology to enhance the preparation and training of educators working with Culturally Linguistic Diverse (CLD) Exceptional Learners.

**Dr. Krista Vince Garland** graduated in August 2012.  She graduated from UCF with a B.S. in Liberal Studies and an M.A. in Exceptional Education. Her M.A. was funded by Project ASD. Krista taught middle school in Seminole County for three years, and she was the ESE Department Chair at her school. Krista is currently an Assistant Professor of Exceptional Education at Buffalo State College. Krista's research interests include promising practices for students on the autism spectrum, the use of immersive simulation in teacher preparation, and ESE inclusion in middle school science classrooms.

**Dr. Zachary Walker** is a 2012 LEAD graduate. Zachary is currently working as a special education and technology consultant. He was named one of five recipients of the 2012 Think College Emerging Scholar Award for his research on students with intellectual disabilities transitioning into postsecondary environments. Zachary’s two main research interests include educational technology and international human rights for students who are adversely affected due to gender, poverty, or disability. He has taught in the United States, England, Europe, Central America, and the Caribbean and recently spent a summer working with UNESCO’s International Bureau of Education (IBE) on educational policy. Zachary is a member of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), the CEC Technology and Media (TAM), the CEC Division of International Special Education and Services (DISES), the CEC Division of Career Development and Transition (DCDT), and the CEC Teacher Education Division (TED).

**Dr. Tracy McKinney** graduated with her Ph.D. in December 2012.  She received a BS in Deaf Education from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and a MEd in Special Education from Virginia Commonwealth University.  She has worked with students with special needs from Pre-K to 12th grade in a variety of settings in 3 different countries (USA, Japan, and Belgium).  She is a Holmes Scholar, a Toni Jennings Scholar, and a Project Lead Scholar.  Her dissertation title was entitled Using Bug in Ear Technology to Increase the Accuracy of Discrete Trial Implementation.  Tracy is currently a Post-Doctoral Research Associate at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

**Dr. Selma Powell** graduated with her Ph.D. in December 2012.  She received her Bachelor’s degrees in Learning Disabilities and Elementary Education from the University of South Florida.  After two years of teaching, she returned to the University of South Florida to earn a master’s degree in Exceptional Education through a federal funded project titled, STEP.  Prior to entering the Ph.D. program she advocated for families of children with exceptionalities while she stayed home with her own children.  Selma's work experience includes working in the public schools for nine years in a range of experiences that include working as a Staffing Specialist for Seminole County Schools, teaching children with varying exceptionalities, teaching general education Kindergarten and first grade and teaching in a pre-k special education class in Pasco County Schools.  Her research interests include: children with developmental disabilities in inclusive early childhood settings, technology and early mathematics skills.  Her dissertation is titled, *ENRICHING STUDENTS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DELAYS IN AN EARLY CHILDHOOD CLASSROOM USING iPADS WITH MATHEMATICS APPS*.  She is currently working as the grant director for Race to the Top Grant, Resident Teacher Professional Preparation Program (RTP3).

**Dr. Carrie Straub** graduated in December 2012 and was a Trustee's Fellow at the University of Central Florida. She received her Master's degree in Exceptional Education from the University of Central Florida and her undergraduate degree in Psychology from Flagler College in St. Augustine, Florida. Prior to this program, for six years Carrie was School Director of a private boarding school in a wilderness setting for at-risk males, ages 14-17. In 2007, she co-founded a private day school in Winter Springs, Florida, serving non-traditional learners in an inclusive environment at the secondary level. Her classrooms have always been multi-level, multi-age, and comprised of adolescents with diagnoses such as Oppositional Defiant Disorder, Bi-polar Disorder, Attention–Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, and Asperger’s Syndrome. She is dedicated to improving the field of education for students who are outside of the box of the traditional school setting.

**Michael O’Neal** - He received his Bachelor’s degree in management from Cameron University and his Master’s degree in educational administration from Texas A&M University - Commerce. He taught special education for eleven years, primarily in EBD classrooms in urban schools and also served as a campus administrator.

**Jacqueline Rodriguez** Jackie received her Bachelors of Art degree from The George Washington University. She completed her Master’s degree in Special Education from American University. Jackie has worked as a special education resource and inclusion teacher for students with special needs from ages elementary through high school in the District of Columbia Public Schools in Washington, DC, as well as in Brevard County, Florida. Her research interests include global inclusive education policy and practice- specifically in developing and post conflict areas, STEM education for culturally and Linguistically diverse students with special needs, and urban teacher preparation. Jackie is the program director for the TLE TeachLivE™ lab, a virtual teaching lab supporting pre-service and in-service teachers in content and pedagogy skill development.

**Lisa Finnegan** She received her Master's degree in K-8 Math and Science Education from the University of Central Florida; a Post-Bach Exceptional Education Certification in Learning Disabilities and Emotional Disabilities from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee; and her undergraduate degree in Psychology from the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay. Lisa taught in both general and special education classrooms in both public and private school settings. Lisa has an interest in utilizing evidence-based, promising, and innovative practices through the implementation of Universal Design for Learning principles to support teachers in their teaching of science content for mastery and assisting students in their ability to write science explanations with alignment to the common core standards. She has had the opportunity to attend Harvard Graduate School’s Universal Design for Learning Institute and to participate in an internship with Dr. Renee Bradley at the Office for Special Education Programs (OSEP) in Washington, DC.

**Dennis Garland** As a special educator, Dennis taught students with emotional and behavioral disorders and was the special education science and math teacher in a middle school setting. His dissertation involves covertly coaching novice science teachers to use evidence-based practices for managing behaviors of students with EBD via Bug-in-the-Ear. Dennis is past president of the UCF chapter of Council for Exceptional Children and has been elected as Student Representative to the Teacher Education Division of CEC.

**Katie Miller** She received her Bachelor’s degree in Childhood and Special Education and Master’s degree in Special Education from Daemen College located in Amherst, New York.  After graduating from Daemen, Katie moved to Kissimmee, Florida and began her teaching experience as a first grade general education teacher.  Katie then spent the next 4 years as a Varying Exceptionalities teacher in both Osceola and Lee County, Florida. She provided services to students in grades K-3 in both the resource and general education setting. Her research interests include utilizing evidence based practices in literacy instruction for elementary students with learning disabilities, with a particular focus in writing instruction. Katie participated in a policy internship at the National Association State Directors of Special Education in the summer 2012.

**Jillian Gourwitz** She received her Bachelor’s degree from Michigan State University in Elementary Education and Special Education, with a focus on Specific Learning Disabilities. She received her M.Ed. in Exceptional Education, with a focus on Autism Spectrum Disorders, from the University of Central Florida. Jillian has five years of teaching experience as an Exceptional Student Education Teacher (ESE) for Orange County Public Schools and Milan Area Schools. She provided co-taught and resource services for grades K-5, in both the special education and general education setting, for students with various exceptionalities. Her research interests include the use of portable visual supports for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder, in elementary inclusive settings, through the use of technology.

**Stacey Hardin** She received her Master’s degree in Special Education and her Bachelor’s degree in Mass Communications from North Carolina Central University. Prior to entering the doctoral program at the University of Central Florida she served students in K-12th grade in various settings. She has worked with Kindergarten through 5th grade students with mild to moderate disabilities in inclusive, pull-out, and resource settings while providing support in all core subject areas, 6th-8th grade separate setting for students with moderate to severe disabilities while providing support in all academic areas, and 9th-12th grade students with mild to moderate disabilities in inclusive settings while providing support in English and Mathematics. In 2008 Stacey was afforded the opportunity to teach Reading and Mathematics (in Spanish) to students in Kindergarten through 6th grade in Orizaba, Mexico. Stacey’s research interest include the disproportionality of females labeled as emotionally and behaviorally disabled and the effectiveness of STEM curriculum delivery to students of diverse backgrounds.

**Kelly D. Schaffer** She is a Board Certified Behavior Analyst and has served individuals diagnosed with severe and profound disabilities for 17 years. She received her BA in Psychology, Diversity from the University of Central Florida. She studied Applied Behavior Analysis at the Florida Institute of Technology, earning a Master of Science degree. She is a Severe and Profound Disabilities Project Assistant, an Assistant for Project ASD, a Project LEAD Scholar, and a Toni Jennings Scholar. Her interests include teacher preparation in effective practices for significant benefit to children with Autism Spectrum Disorders and other disabilities, specifically verbal behavior.

**Barbara Serianni** Special education students have been at the heart of her educational experiences since year two.  A career change educator going the alternative certification route in mathematics, she felt ill-equipped to handle the challenges of students with disabilities, which prompted her to return to school full time at UCF in the Masters in Exceptional Education program.   Barbara is an advocate for expanding technology use in the classroom and did her internship at Florida Virtual School.  Her focus in the Ph.D. program is on the integration of technology in teacher education, the use of digital media and remote observation to support and mentor novice teachers, as well as, online instruction, especially as it relates to students at risk and students with disabilities in STEM content areas.

**Kathy Becht** She received her BS in Exceptional Education from Indiana University, Bloomington and her MS in Exceptional Education from Syracuse University. Kathy taught students with autism spectrum disorders, intellectual, learning, and emotional disabilities and hard of hearing for 10 years in New York and Florida and codirected a Florida Department of Education supported employment demonstration grant training 47 Florida school districts. For the past 20 years she has advocated for families of children with disabilities at public schools, district, and board meetings, as well as presented at state and national conferences on exceptional education, transition and family issues. Additionally, Kathy has developed and conducted trainings for therapists, medical students, nurses, and school administrators on disability issues.

**Lauren Delisio** She received her Master of Science degree in Teaching from Pace University in New York City and her Bachelor of Arts degree in Communications from Rider University in Lawrenceville, NJ. She also received a certificate in Autism Spectrum Disorders from the University of Central Florida. Lauren began her teaching career after working for Bloomberg News as a multimedia producer. In 2003, Lauren was accepted into the NYC Teaching Fellows program, the largest alternative certification program in the country. Lauren taught for 7 years in Brooklyn and Staten Island, in a wide variety of elementary classroom settings. Lauren’s passion for working with students with exceptionalities arose when she began teaching in a pilot program for students with Asperger’s Syndrome in 2006. Upon relocating to Florida, Lauren continued to serve children with varying exceptionalities at a private school in East Orlando. Her research interests include improving instructional methods for reading comprehension for children with Autism in upper elementary grades, and teacher preparation in the area of behavioral data collection and analysis.

**Jennifer Gallup** She received her Bachelor’s degree in Human Development and psychology, with a focus on students with behavior disorders from Washington State University, Vancouver, Washington. She received her M.A. in Exceptional Education from the University of Central Florida. She is a Toni Jennings Scholar and Project LEAD Scholar. Jennifer’s interests are Positive Behavioral Support, transitions from high school to post high school, and visual supports to assist transitions pertaining to communication and employment.

**Dawnell Gernentz** was a high school intervention specialist for nine and half years at James A. Garfield Schools in Garrettsville, Ohio. She earned her Bachelors of Science in Education in 2002 and her Masters in Evaluation and Measurement of Curriculum in 2010. Both of her degrees were obtained from Kent State University. While in the classroom, Dawnell taught students, in grades ten and eleven, with mild to moderate disabilities in an inclusive (co-taught), pull-out, and resource setting. In the inclusive setting, she worked with all academic areas to strengthen the curriculum presented in the inclusive setting. In the resources setting, Dawnell worked on developing strategies to pre-teach grade level curriculum to students with mild to moderate disabilities. While teaching in a pull-out setting, she strengthened students’ with disabilities academic skills to main stream the students into and inclusive educational setting. Her research interest is in developing effective pre-teaching interventions and teaching instruction for students with disabilities in high school mathematics with a concentration in Geometry.

**Onur Kacoaz** He received his Bachelor’s degree in Elementary Education from Selcuk University in Konya, Turkey. After graduation, he worked as an elementary school teacher and then came to the United States to continue his education. He received his Master’s degree at the University of Texas at San Antonio with Special Education as his focus of study. His interest areas are reading comprehension of students with learning disabilities and special education teacher training program.

**Aaron Koch** He received his master’s degree and teaching credential in special education from California State University, Chico and his bachelor’s degree in psychology from Seattle Pacific University. He served as an education specialist of moderate/severe disabilities in rural, impoverished, and culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms in Northern California. His programs have included non-categorical special day class settings and day treatment settings, comprising students with emotional/behavioral disturbance, Autism Spectrum Disorder, mild to severe cognitive impairment, and multiple disabilities. Prior to teaching, Aaron worked as an instructional paraprofessional and behavioral assistant in numerous special education settings. His research interests include: educational technology, behavior, and special education law.

**Taylor Bousfield** is the Assistant Director of UCF PedsAcademy at Nemours. She graduated from the University of Central Florida with her Ph.D. in Exceptional Education in August 2017. Her research interests lies in the area of innovative teacher preparation for teaching students with low incidence disabilities. Specifically, preparing teachers in a community-based model and using virtual reality such as TeachLivE. She currently continues her work and research at Nemours Children hospital with PedsAcademy and is a part of the Cochlear Implant team.

**Faith Ezekiel-Wilder** is a post-doctoral research scholar at the University of Central Florida (UCF). In this role she works both for the Division for Early Childhood (DEC) and UCF PedsAcademy at Nemours Children’s Hospital. In her role with DEC, primary functions include developing annual social media strategies and marketing plans, as well as, assisting with annual fundraising for the national organization including both donor gifts and grant funds. In her role with PedsAcademy she serves as the Associate Director of Teacher Education and the Coordinating Teacher. She coordinates internship placements for elementary education majors along with mentoring and coaching preservice teachers to teach critically ill school age children, pre-K to 13 years old. As part of the PedsAcademy program the elementary interns take corresponding courses including Intro to Special Education, which she serves as the adjunct faculty.

**Matthew Taylor** is a post-doctoral scholar in STEM education and received his PhD in exceptional education from the University of Central Florida. His research and classroom instruction are influenced by his eight years of teaching experience in both elementary special education and general education. His research focus is early elementary students with intellectual disabilities using science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) content, and the professionals working with special education populations (e.g., parents, teachers, and related service providers). His research is highlighted by several studies, including robotics/coding instruction for students with disabilities, collaboration with the Down Syndrome Foundation of Florida, and collaboration with the Department of Human and Public Affairs using TeachLivE. Matthew currently researches at PedsAcademy, a collaboration between UCF and Nemours Children's Hospital developing a school for students who are medically fragile.

**Angelica Fulchini Scruggs** is a Technology Innovation post-doctoral researcher with the IRIS Center at Vanderbilt University and the Associate Director of the Center for Research in Education Simulation Technology (CREST) at the University of Central Florida. She graduated from UCF with her Ph.D. in Exceptional Education in August 2018. Her research includes using technology to prepare novice teachers in inclusive urban classrooms and reducing novice teachers stress using biofeedback.

**Rebecca Hopkins** is an Assistant Professor of Special Education at the University of North Alabama. She graduated with her Ph.D. in August 2018. The focus of Dr. Hopkin’s dissertation was on exploring the construct validity of a classroom observation tool entitled Quality Indicators for Classrooms Serving Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (QIASD). In her current position, Dr. Hopkins is enjoying teaching courses, engaging in research projects, and collaborating on the development of a post-secondary transition program for young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

**Celestial Wills-Jackson** is an Assistant Professor at Lehman College, City University of New York. She teaches graduate students in early childhood and childhood education. Additionally, Celestial is a behavior technician and works with families and children with autism. As a professor of graduate-level student-interns and student-teachers, Celestial is the Lehman College liaison to P.S. 291, an elementary school in the Bronx, NY. As liaison, she serves as an intermediary between Lehman and P.S. 291 and is focused on strengthening teacher performance and expanding teachers’ horizons to include postsecondary educational opportunities and career goals.

## Current Ph.D. Student Biographies

**Jamie Best** is a doctoral candidate in the Ph.D. Exceptional Education program at the University of Central Florida. Jaime received her B.S. in Psychology (concentration in Child Psychology) from Bridgewater State University in Bridgewater, Massachusetts. She received her M.S.Ed from Simmons College in Boston, Massachusetts and her teaching certificate in Special Education, PreK-12 for students with severe disabilities. For seven years Jaime worked at The New England Center for Children in Southborough, Massachusetts as a 1:1 teacher for children ages 1-18 with severe autism spectrum disorder. She also worked for one year at UCP of Central Florida as a Behavior Specialist. She is pursuing her BCBA at Florida Institute of Technology and works with young children in the behavioral clinic at the University of Central Florida. Her research interests include equipping preservice teachers with the skills to identify and help solve bullying situations for students with autism spectrum disorders.

**Jillian Schreffler** is a doctoral candidate in special education at the University of Central Florida and a Toni Jennings Exceptional Education Institute Scholar. She taught special education for 10 years in West Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Washington D.C. In her time at UCF, Jillian has been involved with the Down Syndrome Foundation and research on Universal Design for Learning in postsecondary STEM education to increase access for students with disabilities. Her research interests also include the sexual education of women with intellectual disabilities that have been sexually assaulted. Jillian’s mission is to examine the sexual education of students with disabilities with the goal of educating parents, teachers, community members, and students on ways to help protect students with ID from sexual assault.

**Morgan Diaz** is a second year doctoral student in the Exceptional Education program at the University of Central Florida.  She is a Toni Jennings Exceptional Education Institute Fellow.  She received her M.Ed. degree in Exceptional Education and her ASD Certification from the University of Central Florida as a Project ASD Scholar.  Morgan began teaching in Central Florida in 2012 as an elementary special education teacher.  She has worked as a support facilitation teacher, an inclusion teacher, and a literacy coach.  Morgan was the PBIS leader for her school, working alongside teachers in the school to strengthen Tier I instruction, ensuring teachers were teaching to the standards for all students. Additionally, Morgan worked closely with the MTSS team to help teachers develop and implement Tier 2 and 3 interventions.  Morgan has been recognized by the FLDOE as a High Impact Teacher for the success of her students.  She received the Teacher of the Year award for her school.  She is interested in improving behavioral and academic support and services for individuals with disabilities participating in the elementary general education classrooms.

**Whitney Hanley** is a second year doctoral student, AACTE Holmes Scholar, and LEAD scholar in the Ph.D. Exceptional Education program at the University of Central Florida. Whitney received her B.S. in Special Education from University of Louisville in Louisville Kentucky and her teaching certificate in Special Education P-12 for students with learning and behavior disorders. She received her M.Ed. from Georgia State University in Atlanta, Georgia. While teaching in Georgia Whitney also completed her Ed.S in Curriculum and Instruction at Piedmont College in Demorest, Georgia. For seven years Whitney taught in three different classroom settings. For the first six years of her teaching career she taught students with learning and behavior disorders in the Elementary setting. Her seventh year of teaching she taught 8th grade students with learning and behavior disorders. Her research interests include the use of evidence based practices to support successful transitions for culturally diverse girls with disabilities in urban communities.

**Eileen "Missy" Glavey-Labedz** is a current 2nd year Ph.D. student and LEAD-IT scholar in the Exceptional Education program at the University of Central Florida. She previously earned her Master’s in Exceptional Student Education along with endorsements in Reading, Autism Spectrum Disorder, and ESOL at the University of Central Florida. Missy has worked as an Exceptional Education teacher in preK through 12th grade self-contained and inclusive settings. Her mission is to research, identify, and advocate for evidence-based practices and policies that will have the greatest impact on improving the quality of inclusive education and the quality of life for youth with disabilities.

**Amanda Lannan** is a 2nd year PH.D. student, and LEAD scholar at the University of Central Florida. Throughout her 13 years of teaching general and special education, and in her advocacy work, Amanda has been committed to promoting an accessible inclusive education for all students. Lannan’s research focus is to increase the access and accessibility of STEM education for students with disabilities through innovative technologies such as mixed realities and gaming platforms. She hopes to directly influence new teachers, showing how high expectations, creative teaching, and sincere confidence in children leads to success.

**Annette Romualdo** is a current 2nd year Ph.D. student and LEAD scholar in the Exceptional Education program at the University of Central Florida. With a Masters in Secondary Education, mathematics emphasis, and experience in inclusive settings, Annette's passion is to increase equity and equality for students with neurodiversity in post-secondary settings. Annette's research interest is the academic achievement of persons born late-preterm, focusing on adolescence and transition.

**Jennifer Tucker** is a Clinical Assistant Professor at the University of Central Florida, the Director of UCF Go Baby Go!, and the Co-Director of the IMove Lab. Dr. Tucker is engaged in research projects exploring innovative approaches to promoting participation and physical activity in children with and without disabilities. These community outreach and research activities have focused on medically complex children with motor impairments including children with Spinal Muscular Atrophy. These research and service activities have been collaborative in nature incorporating other health care professionals and educators. The collaborative nature of her work allows for the complex needs of the children to examined through different perspectives resulting in novel approaches to promoting mobility and physical activity in enriched and inclusive settings. As a pediatric physical therapist with over twenty years of clinical experience, Dr. Tucker understands the medical complexities associated with different diagnoses , as well as, the psychosocial and educational implications. She has a long standing relationships in the community with medical professionals, as well as, teachers and school based therapists. These diverse relationships offer insights into both the medical and educational environments in which children live. Dr. Tucker is currently enrolled in the PhD program in Exceptional Education. She serves as a link between the medical and educational communities helping all stakeholders explore novel ways to collaborate and improve the quality of life for children. Dr. Tucker serves on the Medical Advisory Board for the Down Syndrome Association of Central Florida and the University of Central Florida Creative School. She has published and presented nationally on interprofessional education, physical activity in children, and novel approached to promoting mobility in children with motor impairments.

**Sami Algethami** is a first year Ph.D. student from Saudi Arabia in the Exceptional Education program at the University of Central Florida. He got his Master's Degree in Behavior Disorders at Shippensburg University of Pennsylvania. His goal is to work with other scholars in the same field to promote services for individuals with special needs in Saudi Arabia. Sami's interests include learning science and using technology with individuals with special needs.

**Sacha Cartagena** is a first year Ph.D. student on the Exceptional Education track at the University of Central Florida (UCF). Her research interests include evidence-based teaching strategies that promote social and emotional competence for students with moderate and severe cognitive disabilities. Her professional goal is to enhance the training of teachers who work with students with cognitive disabilities. Sacha is a Research Assistant for the Inclusive Education Services department of UCF and a Recruitment Liaison for the Undergraduate Exceptional Education Program of UCF. Currently, Sacha serves on the executive board for the Florida Council for Exceptional Children and the AACTE National Holmes Scholar Executive Council.

**Timara Davis** is a Ph.D. student and LEAD scholar in the Exceptional Education program at the University of Central Florida. She previously earned her Master’s in Special Education with an emphasis on Mild to Moderate Disabilities. Her research interests include teacher preparation and professional development for general education teachers in inclusive settings, retention of teachers with a focus on high needs populations, and personal growth of African American in higher education. Timara is dually licensed in General and Special Education. She spent most of her time teaching students with disabilities in high needs, Title I settings as the resource or self-contained teacher with some experience in the fully inclusive setting.

**Phillip Sasse** is in his first year of the Exceptional Education Ph.D. program at the University of Central Florida. Currently Phillip is a graduate assistant for the Florida Center for Students with Unique Abilities. Previously Phillip worked with the University of North Florida’s THRIVE transition program, along with earning his Master’s of Special Education, with a concentration in disability services. His research interests include developing college transition programs for students with disabilities, along with educating others on the importance of inclusion for individuals with disabilities.

**Jonathan “Nick” Solomon** is a current 1st year Ph.D. student and LEAD scholar in the Exceptional Education program at the University of Central Florida. He previously earned his Master’s in Exceptional Student Education at the University of Central Florida. Nick currently serves as the Student Representative on the Florida DCDT board of directors. His passion is to assist individuals with disabilities by ensuring that they are given every opportunity possible to reach their fullest potential. His research interests focus on the area of transition including education, independent living, employment, and community involvement.