



## *News Brief* **School of Education**

"The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically.  
Intelligence plus character – that is the goal of true education."

– Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

June, 2025

Issue 11

### A Celebration of Excellence



In honor of Women's History Month, the School of Education hosted an Evening of Excellence to celebrate trailblazing women in education whose leadership, service, and impact continue to shape and strengthen our learning communities. Among the honorees were the Deputy Commissioner of Education, Dr. Angelique Dingle-Johnson, our local District Superintendents, cooperating teachers, distinguished alumni, SOE administrators, faculty, academic advisor, and student teachers. The event featured formal acknowledgments, awards, and a celebratory dinner, recognizing the dedication and transformative work of women educators at every level. It was a powerful evening of reflection, inspiration, and community, honoring those who continue to pave the way for future generations in education.



## Whispers from the Bookshelves

By Patrick Blessinger (SOE Adjunct Instructor)

In the silent alcoves of libraries,  
where the scent of aged parchment lingers,  
and echoes of footsteps murmur,  
bookshelves rise—  
stoic guardians of thought,  
enduring vessels of culture,  
catalysts of social change.

Each book cradles a story—  
turning points, milestones,  
maps of the human condition.

Each page—  
a mirror, a window,  
reflecting and revealing,  
posing questions,  
unveiling truths.

To those who pause to listen,  
books whisper their secrets:

“I championed courage  
in a world fractured by hate,”  
declares *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

“I revealed the despair of the forgotten,  
kindling empathy in hearts grown cold,”  
proclaims *The Grapes of Wrath*.

“I unveiled the shadow of human nature,  
the thin veil between civility and chaos,”  
affirms *Lord of the Flies*.

“Through us,” the shelves murmur,  
“flow your narratives,  
your histories, your dreams.”

And so, they stand, ever patient,  
waiting for the next curious mind  
to pluck a volume from their embrace,  
to turn a page,  
to be moved,  
to move the world.

Author's note: I wrote this poem to show how books are vehicles of timeless truths and how libraries have become hallowed places of knowledge and wisdom. The shelves stand for the permanence of knowledge and its capacity to spur social change. The personification of well-known novels demonstrates how great books reflect and motivate social change at the same time. The poem's respectful tone reminds readers of the power of literature to influence the world and invites them to interact with it.

# Congratulations!

## School of Education Dean's List - Fall 2024

Abigail Daly	Danielle Satenspiel	Jamael Johnson	Laura Cadena	Rebekah Russo
Adam Antosiak	David Sheridan	James Sesti	Lauren Elliott	Riley Pettinato
Akshay Bhasin	Destiny Downing	Jamie Bonfanti	Lauren Genna	Rosalynn Rubio
Alessandra Heimbauer	Diana Alvarenga	Jamie Ferriso	Leann Taylor	Roselyn Iglesias
Alexander Perfetti	Dianna Sutherland Glenn	Janine Hernandez-Gonzalez	Lenita McCray	Rowena Charles
Alexander Zabierowski	Eleanor Casale	Jarely Garcia	Lincy Reyes	Ryan O'Sullivan
Alexandra Ketcham	Elena Tavaréz	Jarred Berenger	Lindsay Flanagan	Ryan Vicino
Alison Gidwill	Elisa Bonilla Turcios	Jasmin Lucero	Louis Tamiso	Samantha Graci
Aliye Murphy	Elizabeth Figueroa	Jennifer Bonilla	Mackenzie Owen	Sarah Fleishaker
Allison Necroto	Elizabeth Perkins	Jessica Manuel	Marely Rodriguez	Shane Knipe
Alyssa Nugent	Elizabeth Schade	Jessica Schweers	Maria Doran	Shania James
Amanda Montefusco	Emily Anderson	Jessica Villegas Banegas	Matthew Oberhaus	Sheza Nadeem
Amy Hughes	Emily Famillette	Joao Pedro Freitas	Maya Ghalib	Sofia Razo
Ana Pazmino	Emma Nimphius	Jocelyn Lovelace	Mayeni Hernandez	Stephanie Adames
Angel Chavez Rubio	Erica Vlahov	Jonathan David	Megan Nunez	Stephanie Fratianni
Angela Pepe	Erick Radtke	Julia Desiderio	Melanie Portanova	Stephanie Lopez
Angelica Figueroa	Eugene Nelson	Julia Fusco	Melanie Sena	Galdamez
Avalos	Ezekiel Davila	Julia Garcia	Melissa Benitez	Stephanie Villatoro
Anna Papadopoli	Fiza Asad	Julia Redman	Michael Livingston	Sumaya Khanfri
Arianna Lipari	Francelia Torres Orellana	Julianna Hannan	Michael Spoltore	Tashauni Rainford
Arlene Cajavilca	Francine Olivera	Julianna Josey	Michaela Rella	Tatiana Ferman
Ashley Cosgrove	Frank Cozzolino	Julicia Thompson	Michelle Aguilar	Tatiana Ruiz
Ashley Kajetanowicz	Gabriella Sparacio	Julisa Acosta	Monica Salinas	Tiffany Cardona
Ashley Neyra	Gabriella Torre	Karen Torres Segovia	Nadriana Rickett	Tyler Cintron
Ava Golio	Gianna Trotta-Centonze	Karyme Ananca	Natalie Henriquez Guzman	Tyler Locke
Bianca Rivera	Gina Bartnicki	Katerina Ulloa Flores	Nathalia Acosta Fernandez	Vanessa Mojica
Blake Morang	Hailey Julian	Katherina Flourmoy	Nicole Perez Santiago	Veronica Garcia
Branden Metzger	Hannah Lewis	Kathryn Johnson	Nora Rodriguez	Victoria Del Prete
Brayan Mendoza	Hannah Rodriguez	Kayla Calos	Olivia Allocca	Victoria Gravagna
Breanna DeBernardo	Hayline Torres	Kayla Lewis	Olivia Genova	Victoria Mejia
Breslyn Perez Veliz	Hunter Gelfman	Kayla Mieszerski	Oluwadarasimi Johnson	Victoria Vasquez
Brooke Donovan	Ingrid Luna	Kayla Sinagra	Owen McCain	Vincent Joaquin
Calib Keefe	Iris Alvarado Melar	Kelly Yanes	Patricia Mohammed	Wendie Furnari
Cassandra Lopez	Isabel Canales	Kevin Tuffy	Patricia Tworogowski	Zachary Manzo
Chavonne Toussaint	Isabel Carpio	Kiara Corea-Rosales	Peyton LoSardo	Zahra Dhirani
Christina Felitti	Isabella Recine	Kimberly Bonilla		
Cindy Bardhi	Isabelle Raskin	Kimberly Cruz		
Colin Hervey	Jack Sienkiewicz	Kira Borsellino		
Courtney Blaskey	Jackelyn Cruz	Kristiana Laplanche		
Danielle Howard	Jaclyn Rossano	Kristine Yanza		





# Honors Convocation Spring 2025

Congratulations to our outstanding candidates who were honored at the 45<sup>th</sup> Honors Convocation Ceremony!

**Undergraduates: Academic Excellence 4.0 GPA, Outstanding Achievement 3.75-3.99 GPA**

**Graduates: Academic Excellence 4.0 GPA, Outstanding Achievement 3.85-3.99 GPA**

## ADOLESCENCE EDUCATION

### **Outstanding Achievement**

Nicholas Dellarocca, Amy Naomi Hughes, Arianna Rosa Lipari, Tyler Quinn Locke,  
Ryan William Vicino

### **Adolescence Education (7-12) in Biology M.A.T. Program**

#### **Academic Excellence**

Alexandra Bougas.

#### **Outstanding Achievement**

Arthur Erb, Brendan William Franko

### **Adolescence Education (7-12) in English M.A.T. Program**

#### **Academic Excellence**

Noah Arbesfeld, Jonathan James Hock, Briana Marie Lauria, Thomas Steinert,  
Jessie Townsend, Korinne Rose Utting

#### **Outstanding Achievement**

Liliana Rose Pelliccia, Matthew Petit, Sean William Saporito, John Schebece,  
Tali Helena Zingman,

### **Adolescence Education (7-12) in Math M.A.T. Program**

#### **Outstanding Achievement**

Faith Danielle Ginther, Elizabeth Ann Ricchetti

## **Adolescence Education (7-12) in Social Studies M.A.T. Program**

### **Outstanding Achievement**

Cody Richard Altieri, Cyndy Bonilla, Joseph Robert Falcon, Andrew Fred, Vincent Grabinsky, Alexandra Nicole Kvapil, Michael William John Lind, Elizabeth G Molinaro, Maria Angelina Pellegrini, John Thomas Phelan

## **Adolescence Education (7-12) in Spanish M.A.T. Program**

### **Academic Excellence**

Rosa Marcela Portillo

## **CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND LITERACY**

### **Academic Excellence**

Fiza Asad, Jarely J. Garcia, Stacey Tamara Garcia Orellana.

### **Outstanding Achievements**

Emily Yesenia Alvarenga, Natalie Almendares, Gina Marie Bartnicki, Alexandra Brooke Bossie, Yosselyn Iveth Castillo-Turcios, Stephanie Dawn Cassella, Frank Cozzolino, Jossie Karolline Escobar, Sophie W. Fischetti, Stephanie Fratianni, Amanda Marie Giacometti, Dicsia Granados, Roselyn Elena Iglesias, Osatohanwen Judy Imasogie, Nicole Louise Kwas, Isaac Laguerre, Ingrid Luna, Erika Cruz Morel, Emma Catherine Nimphius, Nicole Rubie Perez Santiago, Breslyn Perez Veliz, Daniela Ragusa, Tashauni Shani Rainford, Matthew Riccardi, Rebekah Russo, Lincy Nicole Reyes, David James Sheridan, Leann Marie Taylor.

## **M.S Literacy Education Graduate Program**

### **Academic Excellence**

Jordyn Axelrod, Katherine Birmingham, Jessica D'Antonio, Julia Dunlop, Victoria Lynn Erdman, Allison Grace Hough, Kirstyn Marie Kilmeade, Tracy Lopez, Erica Rojas-Reyes, Nerilyn Rosa, Sydney Lauren Ross, Elizabeth Grace Hatzfeld (Royen), Jaclyn Riley Signorelli, Brenda Silverman, Darby Taylor Stow, Gianna N. Ventiere, Paulette Wyatt, Nicholas Zaharia.

### **Outstanding Achievement**

Noor Abdelaziz, Morsal Amin, Valentina Ciminera, Maria Eugenia Lecuna Huelmo, Gizem Memis, Patrick Francis Metzger. Adriana Jasmin DeCaires, Jacob Friedenborg, Cathy L. Phan, Amanda Rogawski.

## EXCEPTIONAL EDUCATION AND LEARNING

### Outstanding Achievement

Eleanor Casale, Veronica Alejandra Garcia, Alexandra M. Ketcham, Isabelle Joy Raskin,  
Gabriella Sparacio, Hayline Torres, Kristine Yanza.

## M.S. CHILDHOOD SPECIAL EDUCATION GRADUATE PROGRAM

### Academic Excellence

Isabella Teresa Adamo, Daniel Bassett, Maria Dunat, Kelsey Healy, Julia Elizabeth Horan,  
Michael Luke Macolino, Rachel Marie Pabisch, Emily Palermo, Julie Marie Tufanio.

### Outstanding Achievement

Alexandra Barbara Christy, Daniela Dunat, Hailey N. Fiordiliso, Nicolette Alexis Galvez, Leanza Gavinovich, Abigail Greaves, Owen Lee Grennan, Thomas Jeremiah Hirdt, Sarah Nicole Lopes, Raven Alexandria Marcel, Rachel L. Murphy, Nicole Emel Oralis, Aniko Csepe Ramsaroop, Alyssa Reiter, Julianna Sandman, Victoria E. Scelzo, Catherine Smith, Jessi P. Zimmermann.





# SOE Candidates' Awards

## Congratulations

### Adolescent Mathematics Student Teacher Award

Elizabeth Ricchetti was honored with the Outstanding Adolescent Mathematics Student Teacher Award from the Nassau County Mathematics Teachers Association. We are proud of you Elizabeth!



## Academic Excellence and Leadership Award

SOE candidate, Tashauni Rainford, was honored at the 45<sup>th</sup> Honors Convocation Ceremony on March 24<sup>th</sup>, 2025 with the Academic Excellence and Leadership Award! We are proud of you, Tashauni!



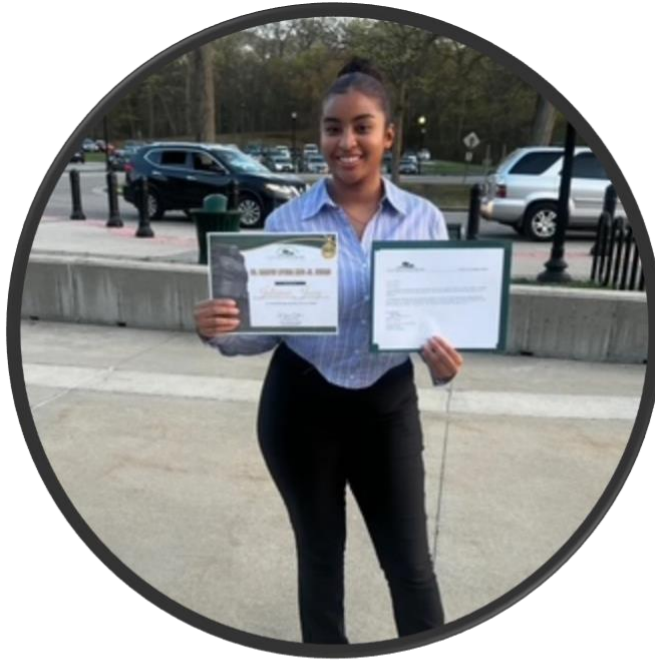
## **M.A.T. English Education Student, Kerrin Denué, Honored at Delta Alpha Pi Honor Society Induction**

SOE English education graduate student, Kerrin Denué, was recognized for her academic accomplishments and was inducted into the 2025 Cohort of Delta Alpha Pi International Honor Society Honorees at SUNY Old Westbury this April. At the ceremony, a special note of thanks was also shared by Delta Alpha Pi SUNY Old Westbury Advisor, Stacey DeFelice, to those faculty members nominated by the 2025 inductees of Delta Alpha Pi as “faculty and staff members who went above and beyond in their support of students.” Among those mentioned were several faculty members who teach in our SOE graduate and undergraduate programs.



## Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Award

SOE candidate, Juliana Josey, received the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Award for her outstanding work in leadership at the 45<sup>th</sup> Honors Convocation Ceremony on March 24th, 2025. We are proud of you, Juliana!



## Resident Assistant Award

SOE candidate, Oluwadarasimi Johnson, was honored with the Resident Assistant Award. We are proud of you, Dara!

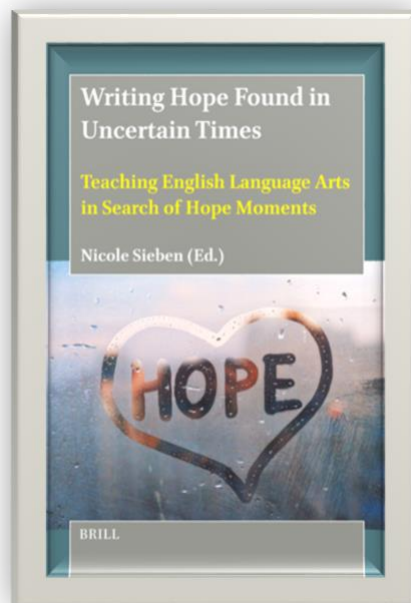




# Congratulations!

### Dr. Sieben Completes Book Project Featuring Campus 'Voices that Inspire Hope'

Nicole Sieben, Associate professor of English Education in the Adolescence Education and English Departments, recently completed a book project that features voices from SUNY Old Westbury that inspire hope during challenging times. The 2025 book, ["Writing Hope Found in Uncertain Times: Teaching English Language Arts in Search of Hope Moments,"](https://brill.com/display/title/71431) is a collection of research-based, narrative-driven chapters that share stories and strategies of hope found in educational contexts that can lead to other explorations and destinations of hope in education and beyond. Contributors include SUNY Old Westbury School of Education faculty, and current and former graduate students from the M.A.T. programs in English Education and the M.S. Program in Literacy. The Foreword is written by Dean Diana Jones-Sukhram. Chapters and essays are written by: Sean Brady, Emily Carty, Kerrin Denué, Nicole DuBois-Grabkowitz, Lindsey Gordon, Jonathan Hock, Katie Hoffmann, Dean Diana Jones-Sukhram, Dr. Elizabeth A. Morphis, Kate Oberg, Cait O'Connor, Kasey O'Connor, Dr. Josefa Pace, Jenna Palmeri, Liliana Pelliccia, Christopher Perkowski, Jazmine Pirzada, Heather Lynn Rieger, Jake Roche, and Dr. Nicole Sieben. A link to the book's website with additional details about its contents can be found here: <https://brill.com/display/title/71431>



## Dr. Sarju Held Workshop

On March 28th, Dr. Sarju, Assistant Professor in the SOE hosted a workshop sponsored by the Human Resources Department at SUNY Old Westbury. The two-hour session, “Meeting the Needs of Neurodiverse Students in College: Developing Inclusive Classrooms,” was attended by faculty and staff. Discussion points included using Universal Design for Learning and Differentiation strategies to remove barriers from our lessons and interactions with students. Attendees also reviewed strategies for moving toward more inclusive content delivery, student learning processes and interactions, student products, and the classroom/working environment. The workshop’s primary focus was preventing and reducing classroom inappropriate behaviors through these inclusive strategies.

(Submitted by Shalini Sarju of Special Education)



## Dr. Schneider Edits Book

Dr. Stephanie Schneider of the School of Education’s Childhood Education & Literacy Department edited a book entitled *Locating Quality in the Dynamic Educator Preparation Landscape* which was published in March 2025.

(Submitted by Stephanie Schneider, School of Education)

## Dr. Donna Egan Holds Talk with the CEC Chapter

The School of Education chapter of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) recently welcomed Dr. Egan for an engaging interactive presentation on artificial intelligence (AI) in education. Drawing from her personal experiences navigating the educational system with her own children, Dr. Egan shared valuable insights that inspired CEC members. Her research focuses on utilizing technology as an independent learning strategy to support literacy acquisition for students with exceptionalities, reflecting her commitment to the Gandhi quote she lives by: "Be the change you wish to see in the world." Students were particularly captivated by Dr. Egan's innovative approaches to developing technological tools that support learning for academically marginalized populations. The presentation provided attendees with practical strategies and renewed inspiration for their future work with exceptional learners. CEC members expressed gratitude for Dr. Egan's passion and expertise, which reinforced their commitment to inclusive educational practices.

*(Submitted by Lina Gilic, Special Education Faculty)*



## Dr. Blidi Stemn Presents at Liberian Studies Association Conference

Dr. Stemn of the School of Education presented his paper at the 56th Annual Liberian Studies Association Conference held at Morgan State University from April 24 to 26. His paper focused on promoting equitable and inclusive math and science education for sustainable national development in Liberia. The Liberian Studies Association is a non-profit, scholarly organization that provides a means for effective cooperation among persons interested in furthering research in all scholarly disciplines on topics relevant to the Republic of Liberia.

*(Submitted by John Butler, Communications and University Relations)*

## Dr. Bustamante and OW Alumni Present at Regional Conference

Associate Professor Carolina Bustamante of the Adolescence Education and Modern Languages departments, and recent graduates of the Adolescence Spanish Education program, Quishiana Aguilar and Natasha Vaughn, presented at the Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages annual conference in New York City on March 1st. Their presentation, “Learning Units on Cultural Identity for Spanish Heritage Speaker Classes,” included a pedagogical framework for heritage speaker instruction, connections to the New York State world language standards, and units of instruction that used inquiry and project-based approaches to explore students’ cultural identity.

*(Submitted by Dr. Bustamante of Adolescence Education)*



L to R: Carolina Bustamante, Natasha Vaughn-Lagares, and Quishiana Aguilar



## Dr. Bustamante Hosts Session at Regional Conference

Associate Professor Carolina Bustamante, and Mr. William Anderson, World Language Chair at Massapequa School District and Adjunct Instructor at SUNY OW, hosted a session at the Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages Annual Conference in Manhattan on March 1st. In their session, “Pre-Service Teachers Meet World Language Chairs,” graduate students, student teachers, and alumni from the Spanish Education Program at SUNY Old Westbury had the opportunity to meet world language chairs from different school districts. Rotating through roundtables, they discussed with administrators what they are looking for in new teachers, how their departments are organized, advice for first year teachers, tips on resume and job applications, among other topics.

*(Submitted by Dr. Bustamante of Adolescence Education)*



### First Photo

L to R: Prof. Carolina Bustamante, SOE Adjunct instructors: William Anderson and Jayne Ameri, and SOE graduate students from the Spanish Education Program

### Second Photo

L to R: Alumni from SOE Spanish Education Program Nicole Bjarnason, Quishiana Aguilar, Natasha Vaughn-Lagares, Prof. Carolina Bustamante, Adjunct instructor Jayne Ameri, and alumni from the Spanish Education Program Laura Cortés and Brenda Bonilla.



# SOE Adjuncts' Spotlight

Poetry written by Adjunct Instructor - Patrick Blessinger

## Urban Hymn

*By Patrick Blessinger*

The city hums beneath my feet,  
its rhythm steady, unbroken, alive.  
Steel and stone rise with purpose,  
etched with stories of those who came before,  
those who carved their names into buildings,  
who built, who dreamed, who endured.

On the subway, echoes of riders linger—  
scraps of poetry on crumpled tickets,  
voices pressed into tunnels and tracks,  
whispers of ambition carried forward.

Graffiti spills across brick and glass,  
walls speaking in color and defiance,  
a conversation between past and future,  
where struggle and hope entwine.

Beneath the towers, life pushes through—  
a sprout in the cracks of concrete,  
roots reaching deep into forgotten stone,  
not because the city is gentle,  
but because it refuses to fade.

We see ourselves in its reflection—  
not just in light and shadow,  
but in motion, in endurance,  
in the pulse of what rises,  
again, and again, and again.

Author's note: *Urban Hymn* is a poem of motion, survival, and renewal. I wrote this poem to capture the city's unrelenting pulse, the way it carries the weight of history while pressing forward. Every sidewalk, every subway tunnel, and every graffiti-covered wall hums with the voices of those who came before—builders, dreamers, and survivors. Even in the concrete cracks, life pushes through. To live here is to endure, to move, to rise again and again. In its rhythm, in its resilience, we see ourselves.

# The Sanctuary of Thought

*By Patrick Blessinger*

Between 42nd and 5th,  
a citadel of stone ascends—  
The New York Public Library,  
    guarded by lions,  
Patience and Fortitude—  
steadfast sentinels of wisdom.

Inside, oak tables stretch wide,  
bathed in the amber glow of lamps,  
inviting readers to lose themselves—  
    each book—a doorway,  
each page—a voyage to uncharted worlds.

Nested among the endless shelves,  
locks of hair lie in repose:  
    Brontë, Browning,  
    Shelley, Whitman—  
silent echoes of genius,  
    preserved.

At its heart, the Gutenberg Bible:  
its ink—a spark of revolution,  
    its pages—a testament  
to the enduring power of ideas,  
and the courage to share them  
    with the world.

Author's note: *The Sanctuary of Thought* is a poem of knowledge, history, and quiet defiance. I wrote this to capture the grandeur of the New York Public Library—a silent fortress of words standing firm in a city pulsing with kinetic energy. Patience and Fortitude guard more than stone; they guard the past, the voices pressed into pages, the ideas that refuse to fade. Here, every book is a doorway, every idea a revolution. The library is not just about preserving history, it is about carrying our collective memory forward, forever alive.

# Field Trip to The Bronx Zoo

*By Patrick Blessinger*

California Sea Lions  
at The Bronx Zoo—  
marine acrobats in liquid arenas;  
twisting, rolling, leaping high,  
masters of their aquatic domain.

Children gather,  
wide-eyed with wonder,  
spellbound by these nautical performers,  
pirouetting with effortless grace—  
a ballet above and below the waves.

For morsels of fish,  
they leap and dive,  
twirling, darting, weaving—  
sea-faring gymnasts  
in a seamless dance  
through sapphire depths.

Their charm is irresistible,  
their antics playful and sharp,  
each movement a testament  
to nature's clever design.

They dazzle the crowd  
with breathtaking feats,  
a spectacle of joy and awe,  
forever etched  
in the hearts of children.

Author's note: The relationship between nature and human curiosity is encapsulated in *Field Trip to the Bronx Zoo*. California Sea Lions are depicted as "marine acrobats" whose motions create a "ballet beneath the waves,". This poem uses imagery, including the animals "twisting, rolling, leaping high," to highlight their energy and grace. They turn the zoo into a natural outdoor theater. The poem's focus on children's wide-eyed delight emphasizes the transforming potential of such encounters.

## **Congratulations!** **Adjunct Professor Dr. Adam Davison earns Ed.D.**

Dr. Adam Davison is an adjunct instructor for both the Students with Disabilities and Literacy Graduate Programs at SUNY Old Westbury. Dr. Davison earned his Ed.D. in Educational Leadership and Policy from Hofstra University in May 2025. His qualitative case study, "Teacher Leadership in a Grade Team Program as a Capacity Building Model for School Leadership," examined the development of a middle school teaming program in a Nassau County public school district and how former teacher leaders applied their experiences as team facilitators in their current roles as school and district administrators. The study also explored how these leaders now support team facilitators in cultivating leadership skills. Through interviews and document analysis, Dr. Davison identified key themes such as trust, collaboration, diverse perspectives, mentoring, and shared leadership, alongside challenges like burnout and barriers to transitioning into administrative roles.

We applaud Dr. Adam Davison on his accomplishments and for his commitment to the field of education and our students at SUNY Old Westbury.

*(Submitted by Lina Gilic, Special Ed Faculty)*

## **SOE – Staff Corner**

### **SOE Administrative Assistant, Liselle Powder, Showcases Artwork**



On March 11<sup>th</sup> 2025, Liselle Powder - SOE Administrative Assistant held an art exhibit at the Recital Hall, in collaboration with students from first year program and their Adjunct Instructor, Jerusha Ahong.

*(Submitted by Liselle Powder - SOE)*



## **School of Education Staff presents at 2025 Quality Assurance Symposium**

Josh Fyman of the School of Education presented at the annual conference for the Association for Advancing Quality in Educator Preparation's "2025 Quality Assurance Symposium," on April 4. His presentation, "The Search for Validity: Engaging Your Personnel and Partners to Create Valid Instruments," explored types of validity in assessments, how to test for different types of validity, and when different types of validity are appropriate. The session also explained how to maintain validity practices that comply with the accrediting organization's guidelines.

*(Submitted by John Butler, Communications & University Relations)*

## **SOE – Students' Club & Chapter**

### **New Executive Board Members in Place to Head The Teacher Education Club**

The Teacher Education Club has a new executive board in place. President Michelle Aguilar and Vice President Karen Torres Segovia will lead the club, with Secretary Marely Rodriguez, Treasurer Leila Byrnes, and Public Relations Officer Krista Rakowicz completing the executive team. The new leadership aims to build a community of pre-service teachers at Old Westbury through events focused on professional development, community service, and social connections.

This semester, the TEC has partnered with The Book Fairies in Freeport to collect books from the Old Westbury community. A book drive was held in April, collecting donations that The



Book Fairies redistributes to under-resourced communities on Long Island, NYC, and internationally, helping provide children with equitable opportunities to learn and grow.

Look for information on upcoming events and ways to get involved with the Teacher Education Club in the coming semester!

*(Submitted by Dr. Amy Hsu of Childhood Department)*

## **CEC Hosted a Bake Sale Fundraiser to Benefit St. Jude's Hospital**



The School of Education chapter of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) recently hosted a successful bake sale fundraiser to benefit St. Jude's Hospital for Children. CEC members generously contributed homemade treats, from cookies to brownies, offering a delightful variety to ensure there was something sweet for everyone on campus to enjoy. The event, held in the Student Union building, drew enthusiastic support from students, faculty, and staff across departments. Through their combined efforts, the organization raised over \$250 for St. Jude's, supporting the hospital's mission to advance cures and prevention for pediatric catastrophic diseases. This fundraiser allowed us to connect our commitment to supporting exceptional children with direct action. The CEC Club plans to make this an annual tradition, with hopes of increasing their impact in years to come.

*Special thanks to Hunter Gelfman, Matt Jordan, Kayla Sinagra, Karen Torres Segovia, Gabriella Torre, Marely Rodriguez, Isabella Recine, and our very own SOE Administrative Assistant, Carolyn Jarvis.*

*(Submitted by Lina Gilic of Special Education)*



### Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) Chapter

Members of the School of Education chapter of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) recently dedicated their time and talents to support Alternative for Children in Dix Hills. The student volunteers engaged with children with diverse learning needs through educational activities, arts and crafts, and adaptive physical games. This hands-on experience provided CEC chapter members with valuable insights into education practices while making a meaningful difference in the lives of the children they serve. This volunteer opportunity allowed us to apply classroom theories in a real-world setting and reinforced our commitment to advocating for exceptional learners. The organization plans to maintain this partnership with Alternative for Children, with more volunteer events scheduled for the Fall '25 semester.

*Special thanks to Karen Torres Segovia, Olivia Anne, Marely Rodriguez, Angela Pepe, and Hunter Gelfman for their time and dedication to a special day.*

*(Submitted by Lina Gilic, Special Education)*



## OW TOC candidates Attend My Brother's Keeper.



On May 1, 2025, the New York State Education Department hosted its 8th annual *My Brother's Keeper (MBK) Symposium* in Albany, New York. The event celebrated the induction of new participants into the MBK Fellows program and highlighted the leadership achievements of graduating high school seniors. Full details about the 2025 symposium are available at <https://www.nysed.gov/mbk/2025-my-brothers-keeper-symposium>.

More than 1,000 students, parents, educators, advocates, and thought leaders from across the nation gathered to support the MBK initiative, which is dedicated to helping boys and young men of color—and all students—reach their full potential. The symposium featured nationally renowned keynote speakers Brian Favors and Jordan Pierre, as well as dynamic student and educator panels.



Representing our university's **My Brother's Keeper Teacher Opportunity Corps (TOC II) program**, students **Francine Olivera** and **Roselyn Gomez Peña** attended the event and participated in the professional development breakout session titled:

**“Reaching Their Highest Potential: The Role of the Culturally Relevant Classroom in Student Belonging,”** presented by Drs. Yolanda Sealey-Ruiz and Autumn A. Griffin.

Throughout the daylong symposium, Francine and Roselyn had the opportunity to network with influential educational leaders, including **Dr. Betty A. Rosa**, Commissioner of Education, and **Dr. Yolanda Sealey-Ruiz**, a leading scholar in culturally responsive pedagogy.

*(Submitted by Richard Diaz-TOC, School of Education)*

## Dean Sukhram's Community Outreach



Dean Sukhram's ongoing commitment to community engagement has significantly enhanced the School of Education's visibility, impact, and partnerships across the region. By actively building and maintaining strong relationships with local school districts, Dean Sukhram is ensuring that SOE programs remain responsive, relevant, and deeply rooted in the needs of the communities we serve. Her recent involvement includes serving as a judge for the Westbury School District Spelling Bee, delivering the keynote address for the 'Girls Loving Ourselves' (GLO) Club at Baldwin Elementary, and contributing as both a steering committee member and student mentor for the My Brother's Keeper initiative in Uniondale High School. These roles exemplify her dedication to youth development, educational equity, and leadership. Through these efforts, Dean Sukhram not only uplifts the next generation of scholars and leaders, but also strengthens the connection between the SOE and surrounding communities. Her engagement fosters valuable experiential learning opportunities for SOE students, supports

school partnerships, and reinforces the SOE's mission to prepare educators who are culturally competent, socially conscious, and community-oriented.





## Coming Fall '25 Semester

Dr. Donna Egan leads an AI Real Talk, seminar this Fall 2025



**AI in Action: Real Tools. Real Talk. Real Impact.**

*Coming Fall 2025 to SUNY Old Westbury*

Artificial Intelligence is no longer a distant concept; it's here, shaping the way we teach, learn, write, research, and communicate. This fall, SUNY Old Westbury School of Education is launching a new digital space where faculty and students can connect, collaborate, and grow together in their use of AI: **AI in Action**.

This innovative online hub will be designed to spotlight how AI is being used across campus, by real people, in real classrooms, for real goals. From streamlining lesson planning and enhancing student engagement, to supporting research, writing, and studying, *AI in Action* invites our campus community to share their stories, tools, and takeaways, both the wins and the "learning moments."

**What will you be able to do in AI in Action?**

- **Explore AI tools** being used in your field of study or teaching practice.
- **Read testimonials and tutorials** from peers and professors.
- **Share your own experience** What worked? What didn't? What surprised you?
- **Find inspiration and guidance** across disciplines.
- **Learn about ethical use**, accessibility, and how AI supports, not replaces, human creativity and thinking.

This space will be available to all students and faculty through our campus login and will feature everything from quick idea-sharing boards and video clips to tool guides, monthly spotlights, and real talk forums.

Whether you're an AI pro or a complete beginner, *AI in Action* is your place to explore, experiment, and elevate your work. It's not just about using the latest tech it's about using it well and learning from each other along the way.

**Get ready to log in, level up, and lead the way. AI in Action arrives Fall 2025.**  
*Real Tools. Real Talk. Real Impact.*

### Dr. Shalinie Sarju & Sanja Cale Create Accessible Classroom



A flexible seating classroom will soon be installed in NAB, designed to support students with diverse learning needs through the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL). This innovative space will empower students by offering a range of seating choices that foster autonomy, engagement, movement, and collaboration.

Students will have options to select seating that best suits their comfort and learning preference, with options such as sofas, leaning seats, standing desks, bouncy chairs, and floor seating. By allowing for choice and movement in positioning, the classroom will encourage active participation and multiple ways of learning, fostering a dynamic and inclusive community.

Guided by UDL principles, this environment will create a more personalized and adaptable educational experience, ensuring that all learners can engage meaningfully in their studies. The School of Education's commitment to flexible seating represents a forward-thinking approach to education, one that recognizes the power of movement, choice, and accessibility in shaping enriched learning experiences.

## SOE Annual Retreat

The SOE extends our sincere thanks to the district partners (Hempstead UFSD, Roosevelt UFSD, and Jericho UFSD) who participated in the assessment validation activities during our annual School of Education Retreat. Your insights, experience, and thoughtful feedback were invaluable in ensuring our work remains relevant, rigorous, and responsive to the real needs of schools and communities. Your collaboration helps us strengthen our programs and better prepare future educators. We are grateful for your continued partnership and commitment to excellence in education.







# SOE Summer Institute Learning Conference



<https://www.oldwestbury.edu/school-education/summer-institute-teachers>

We at SUNY Old Westbury-School of Education sincerely thank all our sponsors for their generous support of this year's Summer Institute Learning Conference. Your investment made it possible for us to convene educators, scholars, and community partners in a dynamic and impactful learning environment. Your continued commitment to advancing education and empowering educators is both meaningful and inspiring. We are truly grateful for your partnership and belief in our shared mission. Thank you to...

Old Westbury College Foundation Board

Adjunct Di Re



## The Jules Family

Sandwich Express - Plainview

Café Dolce Vida – Jericho

Hand and Stone Spa - Jericho

Brendel's Bagel – Glen Cove





## MAY 10<sup>TH</sup> PRESENTERS VIRTUAL SESSIONS



**DR. ADETOKUNBO  
MARTINS**



**DR. DONNA  
EGAN**



**DR. ANDRÉ BENITO  
MOUNTAIN**



MAY 10TH, 2025 (REMOTE): EARLY REGISTRATION ENDS APRIL 30TH  
JUNE 7TH, 2025 (ON-CAMPUS): EARLY REGISTRATION ENDS MAY 15TH

**REGISTER NOW**

<https://shorturl.at/HnYjq>

CTLE  
Sponsor



## JUNE 7<sup>TH</sup> 2025 PRESENTERS

EMPOWERING EDUCATORS: INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO  
INSTRUCTION, TECHNOLOGY, ENGAGEMENT, & STUDENT SUCCESS



**PRISCILLA  
ZARATE**



**RICHARD  
BELLIS**



**DR. ARABELLE L.  
PEMBROKE**



**JARENA  
BROWN**



**ROLANDE  
ELIE**



**ELIA  
MARTINEZ**



**LENOX  
SMALL**



**DR. MARTY  
COOPER**



**RENATA  
ROBINSON-GLENN**

**REGISTER NOW**

<https://shorturl.at/HnYjq>



## SOE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAY FOR TEACHER CANDIDATES

A special thank you to our OW alumni Keynote Speaker and presenters, P-12 district partner presenters, superintendents, principal and teachers, SOE faculty presenters and the planning committee for making our annual **Professional Development Day** for student teachers a continued success. Your planning and commitment to excellence were evident in every aspect of our PD event. The positive feedback we've received from participants is a testament to your efforts and the value you brought to the day.

Thank you for supporting our shared goals!



SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

**AAQEP**

Association for **Advancing**  
**Quality** in Educator Preparation



**Calling All SOE Spring 2025 Student Teachers**



## **SOE Professional Development Day**



Keynote Speaker

*Dr. Nathaniel Marner - OW Alumnus*

*Principal*

*Cordello Avenue Elementary School*

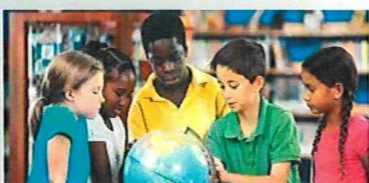
*Central Islip UFSD*

Required for all Spring 2025 Student Teachers

**When: Friday, March 7, 2025**

**Time: 8:50a.m.- 4p.m.**

**Where: Campus Center Recital Hall & NAB Classrooms**



Workshop presenters include: Faculty, Adjuncts, P-12 District Partners, and SOE Alumni

**Lunch will be provided**



# SOE ADVISORY BOARD

## SOE Advisory Board Meeting - Engaging with Our P-12 partners!

The School of Education maintains a dynamic and intentional partnership with our district collaborators through the ongoing engagement of our Advisory Board members. Throughout the academic year, district partners and school leaders are invited to campus to share updates and developments within their districts, including instructional priorities and technology, curriculum shifts, staffing needs, and professional development trends.

These visits are not only informative but also deeply collaborative. They provide a structured forum for mutual dialogue around how the School of Education can continuously refine its programs to meet the evolving needs of today's schools and communities. Discussions center on aligning teacher preparation with real-world district expectations, strengthening clinical placements, supporting mentor teacher development, and ensuring our candidates are equipped with the competencies to thrive in diverse educational settings.

This intentional partnership has become a cornerstone of our success. It has led to more relevant coursework, stronger field-based experiences, and a shared vision for what it means to prepare culturally responsive, trauma-informed, and equity-minded educators. The open exchange of ideas and priorities has deepened trust, enhanced program coherence, and contributed significantly to the School of Education's growth and impact in the region.





## UPCOMING EVENTS



### Faculty, Adjuncts & Staff Meetings

September, 2025

October, 2025

November, 2025

December, 2025

### Professional Development Day

November 7, 2025

**SOE Teacher Panel (TBA)**

**MBK/TOC Symposium (TBA)**



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