



News Brief **School of Education**

"Teaching is the greatest act of optimism." –Colleen Wilcox

December, 2025

Issue 13

SOE Residency Program Launched to Address Mathematics Teacher Shortage

At the start of the fall semester the School of Education launched a new Residency Program in partnership with the Academy Charter School, for the M.A.T. Mathematics program. This program directly addresses the critical shortage of qualified mathematics teachers by preparing classroom-ready educators through an immersive, practice-based model.

The residency places M.A.T. mathematics candidates in sustained, year-long classroom experiences alongside experienced mentor teachers, allowing candidates to integrate theory and practice while developing strong instructional expertise in a high-need subject area. This approach not only strengthens candidate preparation but also supports partner schools by building a reliable pipeline of well-prepared mathematics teachers.

The program further enhances our school-district partnerships by fostering collaboration between university faculty and the Academy Charter educators, ensuring preparation is aligned with real-world classroom needs. This residency

reflects the SOE's commitment to addressing workforce demands, strengthening partnerships, and advancing high-quality teacher preparation.

SOE/BranchED Partnership

Dr. Donna Egan Selected as BranchED GenAI Field Test Facilitator

Dr. Donna Egan, Assistant Professor of Exceptional Education & Learning in the School of Education, has been selected as a Field Test Facilitator for an innovative national initiative led by BranchED, titled *Pedagogy Meets Possibility: Purposeful Practice through Generative AI*. This first-of-its-kind project explores how Generative AI-driven simulations can enhance practice-based teacher preparation by supporting instructional decision-making, confidence, and reflective expertise.

As part of a small cohort of selected educators from across the country, Dr. Egan will participate in a sponsored three-day launch in Atlanta, Georgia where facilitators will engage in hands-on training with AI-enabled instructional simulations. These immersive experiences are designed to mirror real classroom challenges and align with high leverage teaching practices, allowing educators to rehearse instructional moves in a safe, authentic environment.

Following the launch, Dr. Egan will implement the field test with pre-service and in-service educators, facilitate guided simulation experiences, and contribute feedback and reflections that will directly inform the future design of AI-supported professional learning tools. Her participation also includes collaboration with national researchers and education leaders examining the responsible and meaningful integration of AI into teacher education.

This selection reflects Dr. Egan's ongoing commitment to innovative, practice-based learning, her leadership in educational technology and AI integration, and the School of Education's broader mission to prepare educators who are reflective, adaptive, and forward-thinking.

OW Celebrating 60 Years!

Congratulations to Catherine Johnson



Campus pride is expected to be extra high this academic year as SUNY Old Westbury looks back across its history and hosts special events, exhibitions and more while celebrating the institution's 60th anniversary.

One student in particular also might be walking a bit taller after having her design selected to serve as the anniversary year's official logo.

Catherine Johnson, a junior **Adolescence Education: Mathematics** major from Syosset, New York, had her logo design selected as the official emblem for the campus' anniversary year.

With large, interlocking numbers that form "60" along with the silhouette of the stand of trees featured on the campus' official logo, Johnson's work earned first

place in a competition that began last spring. The two other finalist designs were both created by Visual Arts Major Sydney Eckstein.

“It was kind of surprising,” said Johnson of her selection. “I saw the second and third place submissions had more detail, and mine was simpler. To me, for a logo, you want it to be something simple and distinct. You want people to be able to recognize it easily and that’s what I wanted to create.”

Johnson entered the contest while enrolled in Graphic Design 1 taught by Associate Professor of Visual Arts Patricia Harris, who coordinated the contest and worked with the students to take their work from concept to design. But Johnson's interest in art and design started well before that.

“Art has always been a hobby for me,” she said, noting that she took art classes throughout high school even after having fulfilled her requirements. “I have been drawing for as long as I can remember and am really into design and fashion.”

With a focus on becoming a middle school teacher, Johnson is already thinking about how her interest in art and design might inform her future work.

“When most people think about math and art, they see them as opposites where math is more ‘technical’ and art is more ‘free,’” she said. “For me, being interested in both math and art, it helps me look at things from different perspectives. I think if that relationship helps me to be able to understand what others are thinking, that same relationship might help me help others learn and understand.”

Submitted by The Current Newspaper

Congratulations!

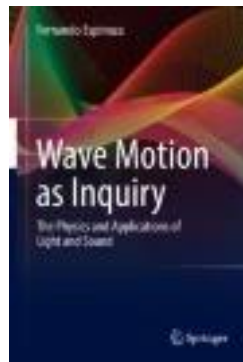
Congratulations to Dr. Xavier Marechaux on his promotion in rank from Associate Professor to **Professor!**



Professor Fernando Espinoza Makes Waves with His Textbook and Leadership Award



Dr. Fernando Espinoza's textbook *Wave Motion as Inquiry* has been among Springer's top 20% sold and downloaded books of the past year. As a result, Dr. Espinoza has been asked to produce a second edition of the text. Leading in the fields of globally acclaimed scientific, technical, and medical subjects of concern, Springer remains the most sought-after publication house. It continues to be the top research source that is read, cited, and authored by experts in the field, with over 2,900 journals spanning all subject areas.



Professor Espinoza has also been selected as one of 30 faculty from across SUNY's 64 campuses to be part of the inaugural cohort of the SUNY Research Leadership Academy: Empowering the Next Generation of Top Tier Researchers at Stony Brook University. Faculty were selected based on the strength of their research, leadership, and commitment to advancing collaboration, communication, and inclusive excellence in STEMM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics and Medicine).

The year-long program offers:

- Four in-person intensives and virtual programming throughout the academic year
- Hands-on training in the world-renowned Alda Method® for science communication
- Network building opportunities with up to 30 SUNY faculty colleagues in STEMM
- Project-based collaboration focused on equity and public engagement
- Skills development at the intersection of research, inclusion, and public trust

Dr. Sieben Presents at NY State English Education Conference with M.A.T. English Candidate and Alumna



In October 2025, Dr. Sieben of the SOE Adolescence Education Program and SAS English Department, presented a session at the New York State English Council (NYSEC)'s Annual Conference in Albany, NY, titled, **"Writing Hope Found in Uncertain Times: Inspiring Hope Beyond"** alongside graduate M.A.T. English candidate, Kerrin Denuce, and M.A.T. English Alumna (Class of 2017) Nicole DuBois-Grabkowicz. In their interactive session for secondary and post-secondary English educators, the presenters shared ELA teaching strategies, theories, and projects that they have used in middle school, high school, and college classrooms,

particularly in recent years, to find, build and maintain hope for and with their students, their colleagues, and themselves during uncertain times. Attendees were invited to participate in reenactments of these strategies in order to garner hope in these moments and in new moments in their own classrooms.

SUNY Old Westbury – School of Education Exceptional Education Faculty Shines at the 2025 NYSATE/NYACTE Conference



The Exceptional Education & Learning program proudly represented SUNY Old Westbury at the 2025 NYSATE/NYACTE Conference, held October 29–31 at the historic Gideon Putnam Hotel in Saratoga Springs.

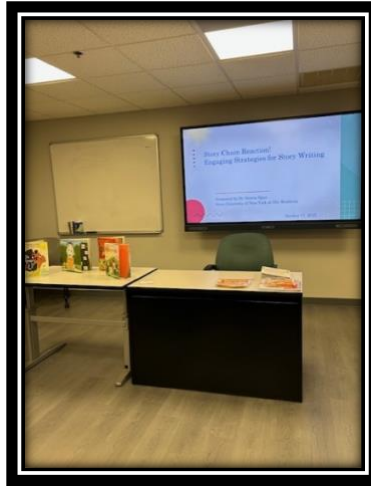
Faculty members Dr. Donna Egan and Dr. Lina Gilic presented two dynamic sessions, *AI Ready Educators: Integrating Artificial Intelligence into Teaching and Learning for Diverse Learners* and *Empowered Classrooms: Engaging Diverse Learners Through Technology*, highlighting innovative approaches that prepare future educators to use technology and AI responsibly and creatively in inclusive classrooms.

Additionally, Dr. Lina Gilic and Dr. Julio Gonzalez shared insights in their presentation, *Transforming Teacher Development: The SUNY Old Westbury Teacher Residency Program*, showcasing the program’s impact on high-quality teacher preparation and community partnerships.

The conference brought together teacher educators from across New York State to exchange ideas, strengthen professional networks, and celebrate excellence in teacher education, where SUNY Old Westbury continues to lead with innovation, collaboration, and heart.



Dr. Donna Egan Presents at Molloy University's Inaugural Literacy Conference



Dr. Donna Egan, Assistant Professor in the Department of Exceptional Education and Learning at SUNY Old Westbury, was among the featured presenters at Molloy University's first Literacy Conference, *"Back to the Basics of Literacy: Engaging and Equitable Practices to Bring Joy and Excitement Back into Learning, PreK–20,"* held on Friday, October 17.

Dr. Egan's workshop, "Story Chain Reaction! Engaging Strategies for Story Writing," introduced creative, evidence-based approaches to inspire student writers through collaboration, movement, and multimodal learning. Her session highlighted how joyful, inclusive literacy practices can empower diverse learners and strengthen classroom communities from early childhood through higher education.

The conference, organized by the Molloy University School of Education and Human Services, brought together educators, administrators, and literacy leaders to explore practices that meet the needs of 21st-century learners. Attendees engaged in sessions focused on the Science of Reading, writing instruction, cultural and linguistic diversity, and equitable literacy practices.

Dr. Egan's participation underscored SUNY Old Westbury's commitment to advancing literacy education through innovative, research-informed, and student-centered instruction.



SOE-Students' Club

Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) Student Chapter

Sweet Success! CEC Club Bake Sale Raises Funds for St. Jude's Children's Hospital



The halls of the Commons smelled like victory (and vanilla frosting) on Wednesday, October 15th, as the CEC Club hosted a wildly successful bake sale to benefit St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. From brownies that defied gravity to cookies that could melt even the toughest professor's heart, our exceptional education candidates proved they can whip up kindness as skillfully as lesson plans.

Thanks to the CEC Club's hard work, teamwork, and generosity, every cupcake sold brought us closer to supporting children and families in need. A special shout-out to the club members who managed to resist "sampling" too many of their own creations, true heroes of self-control and service!

The School of Education couldn't be prouder of the CEC Club for leading with heart, humor, and a sprinkle of sugar.

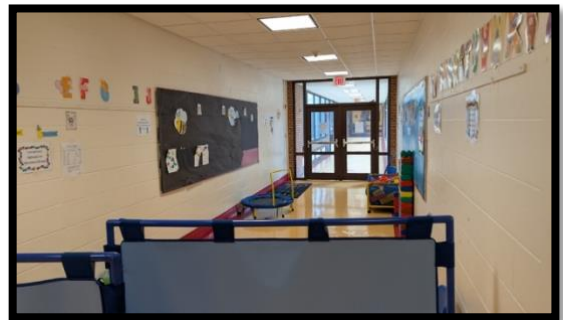
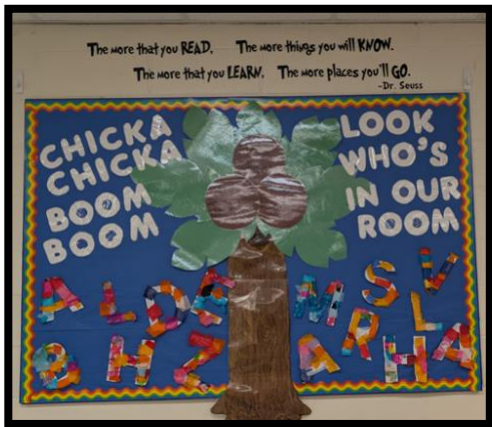
CEC Club Hosts Inspiring Q&A and Field Trip to Alternatives for Children



The CEC Club had an exceptional week of professional learning and community engagement! During their regular meeting on Wednesday, November 12th, members participated in an inspiring and informative virtual Q&A session with Principal Margaret Bua-Lanza from Alternatives for Children in Dix Hills. Candidates asked thoughtful questions, gained insights into leadership in special education, and engaged in a rich exchange of ideas about inclusive practices.

To build on this meaningful experience, the CEC Club visited Alternatives for Children in Dix Hills on Friday, November 14th. During the field trip, students toured the school, observed its welcoming and inclusive classrooms, and learned directly from educators who make this environment so extraordinary.

This powerful two-part experience allowed our future special educators to see high-quality inclusive education in action and left them inspired, informed, and energized for the work ahead.



Answering the Call: Preparing Teachers for Today's Schools

A Night of Connection, Inclusion, and Inspiration: SFAH Alumni Visit to SUNY Old Westbury



The School of Education experienced something truly special on Thursday, November 19th, when alumni from the Southampton Fresh Air Home (SFAH) joined Dr. Egan's Low-Incidence Disabilities graduate class for an evening of learning, collaboration, and genuine human connection.

SFAH Program Manager Emma Herrmann opened the session with a powerful overview of SFAH and its life-changing programs, and the moment became even more extraordinary when she and her mother, Dr. Donna Egan, shared the unique joy of co-teaching. Their seamless partnership, blending personal connection and professional passion, set the perfect tone for the night.

From there, SFAH alumni and SOE graduate candidates worked together on a hands-on "Build an Inclusive Teacher" activity, quickly turning the classroom into a vibrant hub of shared stories, perspectives, and creativity.

The room buzzed with energy as each group blended lived experiences with professional insight. Laughter mixed with deep reflection, and the conversations that unfolded were as meaningful as they were transformative.



During the share-out, students spoke openly about what they learned, what challenged them, and what moved them.

One graduate candidate captured the essence of the evening perfectly:

"I appreciated the building of human connection that was developed today between the SOE students and SFAH."

It was more than an activity. It was a reminder of why inclusive education matters and how powerful it is when communities learn *with* and *from* one another. And for Dr. Egan and Emma, sharing this moment as mother and daughter made the experience even more unforgettable.





Dr. Sarju's Undergraduate Class works with Academic Explorers Child Care



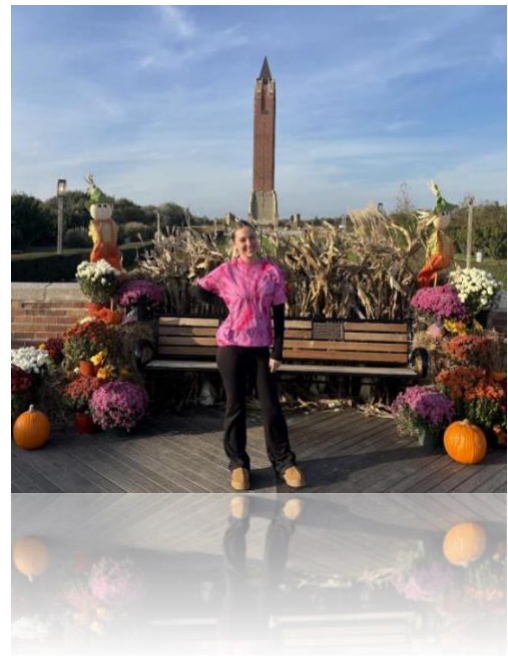
Students enrolled in Dr. Shalinie Sarju's undergraduate course, *Language Development and Instruction*, recently had the opportunity to share their interactive storybook baskets with the preschoolers of Academy Explorers, located on campus. This hands-on experience allowed our

teacher candidates to apply theory to practice by engaging young learners through literacy-rich, developmentally appropriate activities. The experience was both highly valuable for our future educators and filled with joy and excitement for the preschoolers - making it a meaningful and fun learning opportunity for all involved.

Adjunct Patrone's Student teachers from ED5940 Course have Truly Immersed Themselves in Their School Communities!

Alison Gidwell attended a Breast Cancer Walk with the staff and wrote:

“Every October is Breast Cancer Awareness month. In Boardman Elementary, I have the pleasure of wearing pink every Friday with my co-workers. We support Breast Cancer Awareness all month long. This past weekend I had the pleasure of attending the annual Breast Cancer walk at Jones Beach. This fundraiser benefits not just me but families and friends who have lost a loved one due to this cancer. A walk on the Jones Beach boardwalk helps raise money for families and friends. You can walk as far and as long as you would like, and all proceeds go towards Breast Cancer awareness. I gained a lot by going to this event and it is a great feeling to give back to a great organization. I look forward to participating in more events with my 9E family!”



Hailey Sternberger Attended the Back-to-School Bash and Wrote:

“For the district event assignment, I attended the Back to School Bash at Birch Lane. The bash had lots of stuff for the children such as face painting, food trucks, Italian ices, bounce houses, and a DJ. I had the opportunity to socialize with other teachers and staff at the school. Additionally, I got to see some of the children and their parents from my 1st grade class. I even got to meet some of my students' siblings which was so cute! It was a pleasant experience getting to see the children outside of the classroom. I am grateful that I got to experience this event. I truly love Birch Lane and the community I get to be part of!”



Adjunct Scully's Class

Teaching, Leading, Succeeding: Professional Wisdom from the Field

Herb Silkowitz visited Professor Scully's class as a guest speaker and shared valuable insights drawn from his extensive experience in education. Mr. Silkowitz is a retired Assistant Principal from the East Meadow School District and has also served in several short-term administrative roles in districts including Amityville.

During his visit, he spoke with students about classroom management, professional expectations, financial planning (including annuities), professional dress, and effective interviewing strategies. His presentation was engaging and informative, prompting thoughtful questions and meaningful discussion.

We were fortunate to have Mr. Silkowitz share his expertise, and the students gained practical knowledge that will support their transition into the teaching profession.



Exploring the Teaching Path: A Classroom Visit in Action

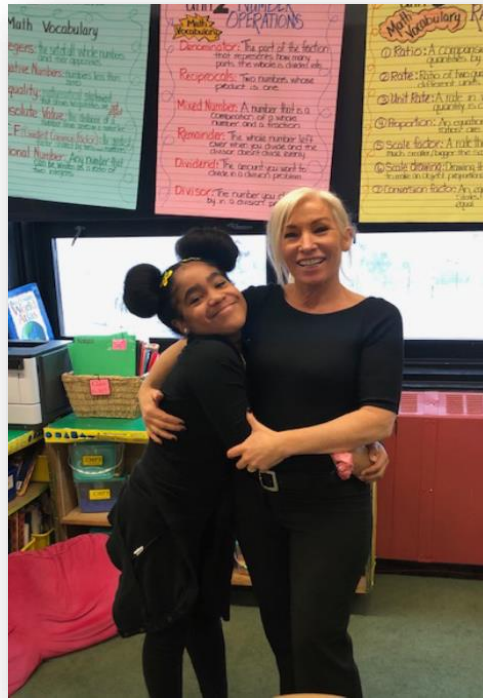
Miles Johnson visited Adjunct Scully's class on Wednesday evening as a guest observer. A junior at Grace Christian Academy, Miles expressed interest in experiencing a college-level course after learning about it through his sister, Catherine, who is currently enrolled in the *Reading Across the Curriculum* course.

During his visit, Miles was an engaged and enthusiastic participant, contributing thoughtfully to class discussions. It was a pleasure to welcome him into our learning community, and we hope his experience encourages him to consider SUNY Old Westbury in the future, as his sister has.



Adjunct/Alumni Spotlight

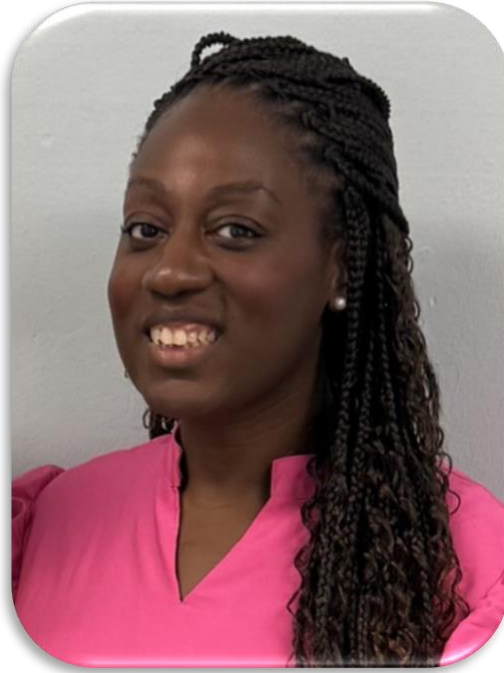
Coming Full Circle: From Student to Mentor at SUNY Old Westbury



SOE Adjunct - Bonnie Patrone

"I graduated from SUNY Old Westbury in 1987 and began a fulfilling 36-year career as an educator in the New York City public school system that fall. With a deep commitment to equity, creativity, and lifelong learning, I dedicated decades to shaping young minds and inspiring students from all backgrounds to reach their fullest potential. Throughout those years, I maintained high standards of teaching while fostering a positive, engaging classroom environment. I also mentored new teachers and contributed to a collaborative, forward-thinking culture within the school community. Now, returning to SUNY Old Westbury as an adjunct professor, I am excited to give back to the institution that first ignited my passion for teaching. Drawing on decades of real-world classroom experience, I hope to guide and mentor the next generation of educators—helping future teachers build the confidence, compassion, and skills needed to make a lasting impact in their own classrooms and communities. It's a full-circle moment—coming back to where it all began—with the goal of inspiring others just as SUNY Old Westbury once inspired me."

CONGRATULATIONS!!!



Ebony Jones (class of 2020) received tenure in Elementary Education from Bay Shore School District, October 8, 2025. Ebony joined Mary G. Clarkson School in 2021, teaching 1st grade. As a member of the MGC team, Ms. Jones currently serves her community by teaching in a 2nd grade CWC inclusion class, facilitating various cultural events, engaging in family activities with the school PFA, hosting extracurricular activities and participating in ongoing professional development. Ms. Jones is honored to receive tenure from her home district and enjoys giving back to the community that has nurtured her success from a young age. In regards to her career moving forward, she stated, “I am excited to continue my career working alongside colleagues that helped shape me into the educator I am today and being the same kind of teacher, I loved and hoped for when I was a student.” Ms. Jones is currently pursuing her graduate degree in Literacy Education at SUNY Brockport.

Southampton Hires New High School Principal from Pat-Med



Southampton schools has named Derek Robinson as the new principal of Southampton High School.

The East Islip resident joins the district having served as an assistant principal at Patchogue-Medford High School since 2020. He previously worked as summer school principal for grades 6–12 in Pat-Med, as well as a middle school assistant principal and director of student and family support.

“We are excited to welcome Derek Robinson to our district,” Southampton schools Superintendent Fatima Morrell said in a statement. “His commitment to education and his impressive leadership experience make him a perfect fit for this role.”

Before his administrative roles at Pat-Med, Robinson taught Spanish at William Floyd High School, where he also worked as adviser for the Foreign Language Honor Society. He has also taught in New York City schools, leading classes in bilingual U.S. history, global history, economics, government, health, English and AP Spanish.

Robinson has received recognition from the Our Community Salutes Brookhaven Town Chapter for his work with students who enlisted in the U.S. military after graduation, as well as Congressional recognition for community service. He also enjoyed great success coaching soccer and lacrosse at Paca Middle School in the William Floyd District.

Robinson earned a bachelor’s degree in Spanish adolescence education and a master’s in Spanish education from SUNY Old Westbury, along with a master’s in educational leadership from LIU Post. He is currently pursuing a doctorate in educational leadership at LIU Post.

“My goal is to work collaboratively and build a strong, trusted relationship with the staff, students and families of Southampton,” Robinson said, “to embrace a culture of care and celebrate the diverse community that makes Southampton so special.”

Submitted by The Current Newspaper

Learning from the Field SOE HOSTS TEACHERS' PANEL

SUNY Old Westbury School of Education

Teachers' Panel: A Conversation with Regional School Teachers!

Featured Speakers:



Chavonne Toussaint
Int. School of Liberal Arts
District 10, Bronx



Courtney Nelson
Baldwin Middle School
Baldwin UFSD



Roderick Peele
Northern Parkway Elem.
Uniondale UFSD



Kerri Schmalacker
Islip High School
Islip UFSD



Amanda Callahan
North Babylon H.S.
North Babylon UFSD



Lauren DeMarinis
Jackson Elem. School
Jericho School District

Thursday, October 23, 2025 5:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
In-Person on Campus: 233 Store Hill Rd, Old Westbury, NY 11568
Room: Recital Hall in the Campus Center

The School of Education hosted a dynamic Teachers' Panel that brought together practicing educators to share their real-world experiences with our teacher candidates. Panelists spoke candidly about their journeys into teaching, the rewards and challenges of the profession, and what it truly means to support students in today's classrooms. Their honest insights, passion for teaching, and practical advice provided invaluable learning for our candidates as they prepare to enter the field.

We are grateful to our panelists (alumna and P-12 partners) for their time, expertise, and continued partnership in preparing the next generation of educators.



Students' Reflections on the Teachers' Panel

"I gained some memorable insights from the panel. One insight is to acknowledge that you are human and demonstrate this to students, thereby creating a closer bond with them and fostering their trust in you. Another insight related to understanding the workload, making sure to respond to emails, students' questions, and adult responses and creating a balance-not to overwork yourself.

The teachers' experiences relate to our class experience- through discussions- that are realistic, practical, and comprehensive in supporting the role of an adolescent teacher. This profession can be very rewarding, but it is also demanding, requiring hard work and dedication, and it is ever-changing with ongoing challenges. In class, I always try to participate in creative thinking during discussions or when answering questions, which was further supported by a conversation I had with one of the panelists regarding how to keep conversations natural and how to keep students engaged, interested, and participating. What stood out to me when I listened to the panel was that everyone taught a different age group of children. However, a lot of the responses that they gave can be used for any grade level, and all can be successful. The response that stuck with me was when one of the panelists said that in

order to succeed as a teacher, you have to put your “all” into it as well as truly accepting and loving what you do.”

Nicholas Cruz-Wegmann



“1. The most meaningful lesson I gained from the panel is that all educators around the world are still learning as they continue their careers. It made the panel a comfortable setting that allowed for us to learn from current educators who are still learning.

2. The teachers on the panel shared their experiences and perspectives that are connected to my own experiences or aspirations as an educator in training. Now that I am a teaching assistant when the panel communicated such things as having relationships with our students and how students do not listen to people who they do not like, allowed for me to want my classroom to be a safe space and genuinely get to know my students to show them that their voices matter.

3. The conversations that took place also allowed for me to see as an educator we need structure. We need to schedule and be organized which is a key takeaway that refers to me. I hope to have my lesson plans done early. I hope to balance my work life and personal life.

4. What stood out to me the most was that the panel allowed for us to also reward ourselves as educators. The seriousness of the job can sometimes overwhelm us and to mentally stay healthy we as educators must take time for ourselves. I thought this was a brilliant way [to] acknowledge the hard-working educators.”

Diamond Avery



“I learned that not every student learns the same way, some students learn better through videos or pictures. While other students prefer to learn in a more traditional way.

The teacher I was talking to after the panel was teaching in Baldwin, this was very helpful for me as I work in Rockville Centre, so many students from RVC are from Baldwin so the two communities are very close and have similar students. Some of the strategies that she was talking about could work at RVC too and I will be looking forward to implementing them. When I was talking with the teacher, I was on the same page as her as we have had similar experiences in the past, due from being in a similar area. I think that changing your way of teaching based on the student’s needs is very important, if you as a teacher can’t teach a certain student you must be able to adapt.”

John Reill

OW- SOE Hosts NYS My Brother's Keeper TOC II Symposium



Chancellor, Board of Regents, Dr. Lester W. Young Jr.



SUNY Old Westbury hosted the TOC II Symposium in October, bringing together educators, scholars, and students for a dynamic exchange of ideas centered on teaching, learning, and equity. The symposium featured an inspiring keynote address by Dr. David Kirkland, whose powerful life story and unwavering commitment to student education and success deeply resonated with attendees.

The event showcased the outstanding work of our SOE–TOC II alumni, current TOC II students, and the TOC II team, highlighting their research, leadership, and meaningful impact in the field. It also served as an opportunity to present SUNY Old Westbury as a welcoming and viable college option, reflecting our strong academic programs, inclusive campus community, and commitment to access and excellence.

We extend our sincere gratitude to Dr. Anael Alston and his team for selecting SUNY Old Westbury as the host site and for their leadership in organizing a meaningful and highly successful symposium.



SOE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAY FOR TEACHER CANDIDATES



SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Professional Development Day


Keynote Speaker

Felicia Thomas-Williams

Regent

*New York State Board of Education
&
Old Westbury Alumna*

**November 21, 2025
8:00 a.m.- 4:00 p.m.
Campus Center Atrium**



Regent Felicia Thomas-Williams, our keynote speaker for Professional Development Day, inspired our teacher candidates through the authenticity of her personal and professional journey. She offered valuable insights into the qualities principals seek when hiring new teachers, providing practical guidance and encouragement to our future educators as they prepare to enter the profession.

We extend a special thank you to our SUNY Old Westbury alumni, keynote speaker, and presenters, our P–12 district partners, including superintendents, principals, assistant principals and teachers, as well as our School of Education faculty presenters and planning committee. Your dedication, thoughtful preparation, and commitment to excellence were evident throughout the day and were instrumental in making our semi-annual Professional Development Day a continued success.

The overwhelmingly positive feedback from our teacher candidates reflects the meaningful learning experiences and professional growth opportunities you helped create. Thank you for your collaboration and for supporting our shared goal of preparing confident, well-equipped, and committed educators.



Empower

Lead

Inspire



In Memoriam
Dr. Jeanne Shimizu



Words of Reflection from Dr. Jeanne Shimizu's Students...

“My friends and I are very sad to hear the news. She will be missed deeply.”

ER

“When I met Dr. Shimizu by zoom, she was a supportive woman. In person, she was really a nice person. Dr. Shimizu was my Advisor, my Professor, and above all she was my friend. I used to talk to her after her class most of the time. She gave me great advice all the time. The sad news affected me too much. Rest in peace Dr. Shimizu. I will miss you!!

PPS

“From Dr. Shimizu's lesson, I learned that you want to show as many examples and NON-examples as possible. By showing more than one of each, you allow students to make connections and develop an understanding on the topic of the lesson. Let's take a topic as simple as defining odd numbers, if you show the number 33 as your only example students might believe that the number 36 is also odd because it contains a 3. However, you can start by listing the numbers between 30-39 and split each of them into categories of what is odd and is not, then expand using other numbers like 89 or 57 as examples. Then allow students to think about it, and have them come up with their own examples/non-examples. “

JAC

“Dr. Shimizu's teachings have taught me that learning is about exploring, allowing both her students - us; and the younger generation we plan to teach to just “explore”. For example, one day in class she handed out Ficycle logs and even though we were familiar with what they were, she didn't want us to think about the math behind it, but rather just play around and explore with them. This method she went over made me realize that when working with manipulatives just let students play around with them and ask the question: “What did you notice?”

Based on her lessons I'd like to allow my students to be more hands on in their own learning. Sometimes the best motivator comes from the students themselves. You allow students to try and take responsibility in their own learning allowing them to become more curious in their knowledge, and open up and ask questions to either you or their classmates. Our knowledge in math is never ending. It's one of the few topics we keep until the very end as we as students are always evolving and expanding/questioning our knowledge. Through my education classes from my undergrad and now I plan to do my best to answer any questions my students may have, even if I myself cannot answer it, I'll do my own research to find the answer they seek while learning something new along the way.”

“I had the privilege of being a student in Dr. Shimizu’s class. She didn’t teach just for the love of math or because it was her job, she taught because she genuinely cared about her students and wanted to make a difference in their lives. Dr. Shimizu inspired me to see teaching from a new perspective and reminded me of the impact a passionate educator can have. I remember her emphasis on how to keep students engaged, strategies to make students succeed, and the art of teaching. She had so many wise and impactful strategies to share to help keep us future educators on our toes and to challenge us to be better.

Dr. Shimizu completely shifted my idea of what it means to be a teacher. I learned that teaching is not just about delivering material, but about building meaningful connections and relationships with every student. She helped me see the importance of understanding how each student thinks differently and how to guide them toward deeper critical thinking. She encouraged us to view mistakes as opportunities for learning and to challenge students in ways that help them develop confidence. Her passion for teaching and genuine care for her students left a lasting impression on me, inspiring me to carry these values into my own classroom one day.

In my future classroom, I hope to carry on the same love for teaching and dedication to building meaningful connections with my students. One technique that left a lasting impact on me was understanding how and why it’s essential to keep students engaged every single day to promote learning. I want to create a safe and supportive classroom environment where students can understand the material, feel comfortable participating, stay engaged, and ultimately succeed. The patience and time Dr. Shimizu devoted to each student showed me what it truly means to care about students as individuals and to help them reach their full potential.”

KW

“Dr. Jeanne Shimizu, Associate Professor and Coordinator of Graduate Program in Mathematics Education, was an exceptional professor and an extraordinary human being. I first met her virtually during my interview for the master’s Program at SUNY Old Westbury, and from that initial conversation, I immediately sensed her warmth, professionalism, and deep commitment to education.

As a professor, she had an inspiring approach to teaching and learning. One of the most impactful lessons I gained from her was the concept of the *Building Thinking Classroom (BTC)*. Through engaging, hands-on experiences, she encouraged us to step into the role of students while she modeled effective teaching practices. Her dedication, expertise, and genuine enthusiasm for helping others learn left a profound mark on my development as an educator. Beyond her remarkable academic influence, Dr. Shimizu was a truly kind and compassionate person. She built meaningful connections with every student, creating a classroom environment

filled with respect, trust, and joy. I will always cherish the conversations we shared after class, moments of reflection and encouragement that revealed her caring nature and generous spirit.

Dr. Shimizu was a true blessing in my life. She was the person who spoke on my behalf so that I could become part of the Teacher Residency Program at Hempstead High School, an opportunity that has shaped my path as an educator. Her support and belief in me went beyond the classroom; it reflected her genuine care for her students and her desire to see them grow and succeed. I truly believe that God placed her in my life for a reason, to guide me and to inspire me to be the best version of myself, both personally and professionally.

Dr. Shimizu's kindness, wisdom, and faith in others left a lasting mark on everyone she met. Her encouragement continues to motivate me to teach with the same compassion and dedication she showed every day. She will always hold a special place in my heart as one of the greatest blessings God put on my journey. Her passing is a tremendous loss, not only to the educational community but also to everyone who was able to have the privilege of knowing her. Dr. Shimizu will be deeply missed, yet her legacy of passion, kindness, and excellence will continue to inspire us all. May her soul rest in eternal peace."

PP

"I had the honor of taking Dr. Shimizu's Methods of Math Education class in the Spring of 2025. In her class, everything was new to me, because I am a career changer and I am not experienced in the field of education. In addition to having Dr. Shimizu as my professor that semester, she was my advisor that accepted me to the program and onboarded me to the school. I saw my success at Old Westbury as being a reflection on her and her department, so it was important to me to do well. It is still important to me now, to honor Dr. Shimizu.

I learned about different teaching methods and the types of content matter. Content can be a fact, a skill/procedure, a concept or a generalization. Each of these things require progressively more cognitive demands. Teaching can be inductive or deductive, and from Dr. Shimizu, I learned that inductive teaching allows students to generalize or infer things for themselves.

One way to do this would be to provide examples and non-examples, rather than a verbose definition or existing formula, and a student could get the pattern from it. This helps the student make sense of the content on many different levels. In another example, she had us solve the same problem in three different ways, so it gets us thinking about how many possibilities there really are when approaching classwork. There isn't just one way to think and one way to solve.

One of the biggest take-aways I will have from her class is regarding lesson planning. She saw it as having much more than steps or a sequence. Every detail of the lesson will need to consider if there is something that the students will have trouble with, and how the teacher can be ready to address that. This is important because it reminds me it's not just about getting things done, or checking off a checklist. This should be incorporated into every lesson plan. She

even pointed out how the things teachers say can be taken the wrong way, or over-generalizations from younger grades can interfere with more nuanced topics in the upper grades. Teaching requires thoughtful consideration of the students' thinking, what they've previously experienced, and what the students are experiencing now.

The work we did in Dr. Shimizu's class directly relates to my classwork this semester and the observations I am doing in pursuit of my degree. Primarily it is about having the students be engaged in the classroom, be active participants in their learning and use existing knowledge to make new accurate inferences. This is similar to the concepts of the Building Thinking Classrooms that we have looked at. I started reading that book after Dr. Shimizu's class last semester because she recommended it. She taught us to always look at new methods and ideas in Math Education because it's a dynamic field. We have to be active participants in the field of Math Education whenever we can."

CC

"Dr. Shimizu wasn't just a mentor, professor, or human being. Dr. Shimizu was all those things. Being able to connect with and attend Dr. Shimizu's classes will forever be a lasting memory for the rest of my life. Dr. Shimizu not only cared for every one of her students, but she also took the time after each class to take care of any concern or even just to be someone you can talk to. Dr. Shimizu is the true model of what every educator should try to strive to be.

Over the course of attending classes at Old Westbury, I have had the privilege of taking Dr. Shimizu's class twice. But even though they were the same class, each time I came out with a new perspective on being an educator. Through Dr. Shimizu, I have had two lasting lessons that I will carry on for the rest of my life. First is building connections with your students. Dr. Shimizu had tons of students in her class and built connections with each and every student in that class. By having these connections with students, you can relate to them in ways that make sense to them, and through that, she was able to make things make sense through my interests.

Lastly, Dr. Shimizu showed me how to have empathy for students. Even when I was so frustrated and angry with whatever was going on in my life. Dr. Shimizu knew how to be there for someone and be able to help that person through the situation. She always took the time to communicate with her students and were able to show care and comfort for what they were going through during that time.

When you think in one way, it's very hard to think of other ways of doing things. This was a hard pill to swallow, but her teachings allowed me to grow as a student. Not everything in the classroom and life is going to have a simple answer. You must go back, reflect on what has happened, and brainstorm your next steps.

Dr. Shimizu showed me that not only as a teacher, but also as a person. Throughout her teachings, we looked at different ways to problem-solve and used some building thinking classroom ideas. By doing this, she allowed us to think from the perspective of students and see some responses that we may have as educators. But beyond the classroom, Dr. Shimizu helped me shape who I am today. During my time at Old Westbury, I can see how much I have evolved from her wise words, and could do especially when taking her class, the second time. Dr. Shimizu's teaching style and real-life examples will always stay with me.

Dr. Shimizu was the first person who ever told me, "You will shape up to be a great math teacher". I hope to make her proud of that statement, and hopefully, she will have the chance to see that. I will honor her throughout my teaching by building connections and having empathy with every one of my students. Dr. Shimizu showed each student in her class that times are changing, and we must constantly be continuous learners to survive.

Dr. Shimizu's mindset will always be a forever sticking point with me; she showed us her power of never giving up and persevering through anything that's in our way. Dr. Shimizu not only had a lasting impact on me, but all the students who came into her classroom. I will always be able to remember all that she has taught me, and I hope to honor her throughout my teaching as a future educator.

JL

Dr. Jeanne Shimizu's legacy and the impact on her students, colleagues, friends, and the larger OW Community will live on.

2026 Summer Institute

Get Ready for Our **2026** Summer Institute!

The School of Education is gearing up for an exciting **2026 Summer Institute**, and we can't wait to welcome educators, students, and partners for a dynamic experience of learning, collaboration, and inspiration.

This year's institute will feature engaging sessions, practical strategies, and thought-provoking conversations led by experienced educators and practitioners. Whether you're looking to deepen your practice, explore innovative approaches, or connect with colleagues across disciplines, the **2026 Summer Institute** promises to energize, challenge, and prepare you for the year ahead.

Stay tuned for more details; we look forward to learning and growing together this summer!

Happy Holidays

Happy Holidays!

As we approach the holiday season, I extend warmest wishes to our students, faculty, adjuncts, staff, alumni, and P-12 district partners of the School of Education. This time of year offers an opportunity to pause, reflect, and express gratitude for the dedication, resilience, and commitment you bring to the important work of educating and supporting others.

I am thankful for the collective efforts that continue to strengthen our programs, uplift our students, and positively impact the schools and communities we serve. Your passion for education and equity inspires hope and reminds us of the meaningful difference we make every day!

May this holiday season bring you rest, joy, and meaningful time with loved ones, and may the new year be filled with good health, renewed energy, and continued success.

Dean Sukhram

Rest, Joy, and Meaningful Time with Loved Ones!

UPCOMING EVENTS



Faculty, Adjuncts & Staff Meetings

February 6th, 2026

April 3rd, 2026

May 1st, 2026

Professional Development Day

March 6th, 2026

SOE ANNUAL FACULTY RETREAT

Date: TBA



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