Students Voices

Maria, phase 3 student
Maria is a fourth year student in the Ed.D. program in Educational Leadership, Superintendency concentration. She successfully defended her proposal and is now writing her dissertation, Skills and Characteristics of Successful Sustained Charter School Leaders. She says although the program is challenging, she is grateful for the experience to work with such a great group of professors and colleagues. Forming a cohort and finding support among classmates helped her stay engaged and motivated. She also doesn’t hesitate to ask for help and has found that being proactive and seeking support from her advisor, faculty, other resources, and fellow students has been very helpful. She advises students to make sure they celebrate every milestone and be proud of even the little accomplishments.

Nhu, phase 3 student
Nhu is a third year international student from Vietnam. She is in the Ed Leadership program, Higher Education concentration. She says that being an international student has many challenges, including feelings of isolation and disengagement with the program, difficulty with American English proficiency and navigating cultural differences. However, she feels she has been able to overcome these challenges and is proud of the fact that she passed her qualifying exams and is now ready to tackle her dissertation proposal. Her advice to all the new students is to become actively engaged with the program, don’t be afraid to ask for help from other students and professors and be confident enough to knock on doors and let people know what you need. Also, getting involved in social, non-academic campus activities and groups helped her to stay connected and engaged. (continued on page2).

Degree Works is LIVE!

In the last Ed.D. Ledger, you learned about Degree Works. Beginning in summer 2016, the Graduate School no longer requires the Candidacy Application form. The DegreeWorks audit shows the courses students have taken. Make sure you visit Degree Works: http://my.uncc.edu
Students Stories

"My advice to students as they are moving through the foundation component of the program would be to sample a wide variety of classes, in as much as this is possible within program specifications and scheduling parameters. I am currently in my fourth Ed.D. course and I've been fortunate in some respects because I haven't overburdened myself with too many courses (I have been taking just one per semester) so I have really been able to immerse myself and maximize my time/effort into each given subject area. For me, this experience is a marathon, not a sprint and I'm of the belief that each person has to know themselves, their responsibilities to family and work and make that decision knowing you will be supported either way. I have had three outstanding instructors in Dr. Rebecca Shore, Dr. Mark D'Amico and Jesh Humphrey (UNC Charlotte General Counsel). Each has been more than willing to mentor/advise me while simultaneously challenging me and offering me constructive criticism to promote professional growth as well. I work full-time at UNC Charlotte's College of Education in the Office of Field Experiences as a Teacher-in-Residence where I supervise student teachers as they complete their final student teaching internship in area middle/high schools. I also teach the companion course to this experience for our undergraduate candidates. I continually remind myself that it is and always will be a process and that so long as I gather meaning from those classes and instructors I'm involved with, I'll emerge a better leader and professional because of it."

Neda is a second year student in the Education Leadership program, Higher Education concentration. She says the first two semesters were difficult and it was challenging to learn the academic culture. She says she feels lucky to have had a great mentor and advisor in Dr. McMahon, good friends and great professors. She just passed her qualifying exams and she feels really good about it. Her advice to new students is “Don’t freak out! Just be patient, have a good balance in your life and little by little you will get things done.” She encourages students to stay in close contact with other students and professors, spend more time on campus and talk to people. (continued in page 5)

Connect

Want to meet our students and get to know our students and faculty better? (Details on page 5)
Faculty Spotlight: Dr. Lisa Merriweather

Lisa R. Merriweather is an Associate Professor at the University of North Carolina, Charlotte. She received her PhD in Adult Education with a graduate certificate in Qualitative Inquiry from the University of Georgia in 2004. Her research focuses on issues of equity and social justice within the historical discourse of adult education, informal education, and doctoral education. She explores the critical philosophy and sociology of race and antiblack racism and employs Africana Philosophy, Critical Race Theory, and qualitative and historical methodology to investigate topics found at the nexus of race and adult education.

Dr. Merriweather is dedicated to the project of communalism, guided by the spirits of Sankofa, and inspired by the ethos of Ubuntu all of which provide ideological grounding for the work in which she engages. Recent projects include service learning as informal science education as a means of stimulating interest in STEM among underrepresented racial populations; culturally responsive mentoring as embodied by the Afrocentric concept of other mothering; race pedagogy in adult learning; and orality as informal learning in African American communities.

Area(s) of Interest and Research:
- Critical philosophy of race; the Black experience of adult education both historically and contemporaneously; and application of Africana philosophy to the theory and practice of adult learning, to the study of anti-Black racism within adult education, and to issues of equity and social justice in adult education. Both historical and qualitative research methodologies are used to explore the connections between race, racism, and adult learning.

Doctoral Writing Consultations

Doctoral students interested in improving their academic writing are encouraged to meet individually with Haadi Jafarian, CGL’s Doctoral Writing Fellow, about coursework, presentation and publications. Email gradlifefellows@uncc.edu to schedule your 45-minute appointment today.
Research Consultations

Project Mosaic
Drop in for yours today!

**Mondays:**
1:00-3:30 PM

**Wednesdays**
4:00-6:00 PM

Center for Graduate Life
Cone 268

Are you a graduate student in need of assistance with your research design, methodology or choosing specific software? Not sure how to implement your statistical analyses or interpret your theses and dissertations results? Take advantage of this free drop-in research consultation service provided by Project Mosaic. Meet individually with Chen Chen, Graduate Consultant with Project Mosaic!

Speaking Resources

Speaking Resources Center

**Tuesdays,**
10:00 AM-12:00 PM, 5:00-7:00 PM
Atkins Library Room G33

**Thursdays, 5:00-7:00 PM,**
Atkins Library Room G33

Have you ever been intimidated while giving an oral presentation in a class? Do you need some pointers for organization? Delivery? Content? Research? Or just want some extra aid in polishing up your speeches in order to take them to the next level? The Speaking Resources Center, sponsored by Communication Across the Curriculum (CxC) and cosponsored by the Center for Graduate Life, aims to provide students with aid in crafting oral presentations across a plethora of majors and courses at UNC Charlotte. Book your appointment today by emailing: Tgibso30@uncc.edu

Technology

LifeSafe App
(Apple/Android)
LiveSafe enables direct and discreet two-way communication with your community safety officials using text, picture, video, and audio. It also lets you virtually walk your friends and family home with SafeWalk.

PaTS offers a mobile payment app that allows visitors to pay for parking, extend a metered parking time, receive time expiration alerts, and view receipts. There are no refunds for Parkmobile transactions.
There are two major pieces of advice I would like give about, ‘hitting a wall.’ The first is to know that this will definitely happen throughout your graduate studies, so don’t be alarmed!

Sometimes in academia, we overload ourselves with reading and writing and it is easy to exhaust ourselves. But remember these two things: First, it is important to build personal relationships with the people in your courses or classes. These people will serve as a support system during this process. The beauty of this program is that it attracts many different people, with a variety of backgrounds, and this journey to obtaining your doctoral degree connects you on this common goal. When you hit a wall, take a break. Step away from the wall and think about something else. Then call your colleagues to discuss where you are and why you are hitting this wall. Your colleagues may be able to help you talk through the issues you may be having with your research and provide helpful insight on how you can overcome this road block. Secondly, it is important to have a hobby. This is a good way to take that break mentioned earlier. It should be something you can do for a couple of hours to relax your mind, especially when you are hitting a wall with your writing or coming up with ideas for your research. For me, I like to go to the gym. It’s mindless and doesn’t require me to do much mental work, so for me this is a great break when I am hitting a wall.

How do you keep pushing yourself to ‘stay positive’ and ‘keep moving’?

The first thing is realizing that this program is hard for everyone and that you won’t always be positive (and that’s okay, for a while). But the key to keep pushing even when you feel this way is to keep people around you that support you and believe in you, so that when you aren’t being positive they will speak positivity into your life. You can find this support from your family, your friends, people in your program, and/or your advisor.

Second, remember the reason you started this program and constantly refer back to this goal when things get hard. Third, it is helpful to do a timeline, so you can see a clear end to your goal. (This way you can reward yourself when you complete each milestone and it won’t be as grueling!) The most important factors in staying positive and keeping it moving are to acknowledge when times are hard, and to keep things and/or people around you that help you realize you can achieve your goal.

How did you feel before, during, after the Qualifying Exam?

I was very nervous before the qualifying exam. Who wants to take an exam that tests all of the coursework they’ve taken over the last 2 years!!?!?! So to be honest I was very nervous. During the exam, I was overwhelmed. It was a tough month for me, but during this process you realize how much you have learned over the course of the two years. During my time in the program I was checking the requirements off not realizing how I was evolving as a doctoral student. During the exam it required us to utilize the skills that we’ve been consciously and subconsciously learning in our courses: researching theories, referring back to the foundational pieces, and checking to see if the research is valid (etc.) After the exam, I was relieved and happy that I passed!!!

What advice would you give students to prepare for that experience?

One of things that is important during this exam is time management. Don’t take on any additional responsibilities or work during the semester you plan to take your comprehensive exam. You will need the time to focus. Also, know that you can do it 😊 !
Students Voices

My name is Monica Allen. I am currently a doctoral candidate in the dissertation proposal stage in the Education Leadership program. As a full time student, I have truly enjoyed my time in the program. My tips to others would be to 1) get to know your professors, they are valuable resources; 2) use your elective courses to take courses in other departments that support your research interests; 3) determine what you want to contribute to the field and start working on in while you are in the program; and 4) identify any opportunity you can to get your professional writing published or presented at conferences. Enjoy the journey!!!

What is it that 'keeps you going' when you 'hit the wall'. How do you keep pushing yourself to 'stay positive' and 'keep moving'?

Getting through challenging times in the program is, for me, about perspective and relationships. When coursework builds and deadlines near (on top of life's many other responsibilities), it's easy to become overwhelmed with the stress of the moment. It's important in those times to remember that you did actually sign up for this, that you have a successful track record of making it through the similar moments in past semesters, and that, once you do the same this time around, you'll feel so much better and even more accomplished. Relationships are key to helping me through this process. I've been in the program long enough now to have built some great friendships with classmates and faculty, and the sense of community and support that accompanies those relationships is very appreciated.

How did you feel before, during, after the QE? What advice would you give students to prepare for that experience?

My QE experience was interesting because our twin daughters decided to make an early appearance and arrived a week and a half before my first exam. To say the least, that was challenging month. Thankfully, I had started preparation far in advance (in anticipation of this possibility) and was able to stay on schedule. My advice to others preparing for the QE would be to do the same. Once your participating faculty are selected, start thinking of what questions are likely to come your way and begin reviewing material and thinking through possible responses. Once the questions arrive, make a schedule and get to work. Remember that the written portion is only part one of the QE and that you'll have the opportunity to, as needed, explain and expand upon your work during the oral defense. Expect to be pushed during the defense because you will be, and prepare by critically reviewing your writing in advance. You'll feel such relief and achievement when it's all said and done!

Brad
How to Graduate Before You Run Out of Time 😊

Lessons I learned:

1. Don’t take a break. Take at least one class every semester, even during the summer. Taking a break will only remind you of the things you’re giving up in order to be in the program, like vacation and sleep. Better to not get used to those things again, until after you’ve finished. I estimate that the one summer I took off cost me about six months of momentum.

2. Use your social media habit to get to work. Writing chapter 2 of the dissertation was in my top three for painful experiences (for some perspective, my #1 was birthing my son without pain medication). I finally found that getting up 30 minutes before everyone else and writing for 15 minutes a day cracked the nut of chapter 2. If I didn’t do the 15 minutes, no Facebook. Period. Don’t laugh, it worked.

3. Pick your dissertation topic in the first year. That way, you can spend years thinking about it and reading about it as part of your coursework. Some of the bones for chapter 2 came from papers I wrote in several of my classes.

4. When all progress seems to stall, go to Dissertation Lock-In. The graduate school offers these days about once a month. You check in, confess your struggle, hear the struggles of others, then sit together in silence for six hours to get past them. No social media, no email, no distractions.

5. Remember, “finished is better than perfect.” Repeat to yourself as often as needed to keep the reading, writing, and analyzing going. It’s going to turn out better than you think anyway.

6. Kill your darlings, but hold onto the graveyard. As I edited sections, rather than delete them forever, I put the clips into another file and saved it as the graveyard. When I needed ideas for later parts of the dissertation, much of that stuff found a new home in the dissertation.

Tatia Prieto
In lieu of fall doctoral dinner this semester we scheduled two drop-in Pizza Socials.
*Be sure to visit our Facebook page to see other photos from our first pizza social!

Date: Wednesday, November 30, 2016
Time: 4:00 pm - 6:00 pm
Location: COED 261
RSVP: [https://goo.gl/forms/yGyTIjrTlzVLWeD2r1](https://goo.gl/forms/yGyTIjrTlzVLWeD2r1)

Congratulations to Marc Davis! He won the UNC Charlotte College of Education drink holder from our first pizza social!

Spring Doctoral Dinner Date is set!
Date: Thursday, January 19, 2017
Time: 5:00 pm - 6:30 pm
Location: Student Activity Center (SAC) Salons A & B
RSVP: [https://goo.gl/forms/PHTOK2wYAmZKWgcF3](https://goo.gl/forms/PHTOK2wYAmZKWgcF3)
Graduation Process

Check your audit
Effective 1st Summer 2016, DegreeWorks is the definitive record for graduation clearance. Students, faculty, and staff may access DegreeWorks via http://my.uncc.edu. Students are encouraged to routinely check their degree progress in DegreeWorks.

Meet with your advisor
Prior to the final term, all students are encouraged to schedule an appointment to meet with their advisor and/or graduate program director. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that he/she is making satisfactory progress towards graduation, based on the program requirements outlined in DegreeWorks and any additional directions issued by the graduate program.

How do I submit the ‘Online Graduation Application’?
Log into my.uncc.edu. Under Academic Resources, select ‘Student Records’. Under ‘Student Records’, select ‘Online Graduation Application’. Click “Continue” if this is the first time a graduation application has been submitted or “Create a New Application” if one has been submitted previously. After all sections are complete, click the "Submit" button. Learn more at http://graduateschool.uncc.edu/current-students/graduation

Enroll
Per academic policy, all students must be enrolled in the term of graduation, even if all degree/certificate requirements have been met.

Apply for Graduation
All students (doctoral, master’s, certificate) must apply for graduation by the published deadline in the final term. Students who fail to apply for graduation by the published deadline will not be evaluated for graduation and will be ineligible to participate in the commencement ceremony.

Commencement
In order to participate or "walk" in the commencement ceremony, a student must have successfully completed all degree requirements and have submitted all required forms by the published deadlines, including the Online Graduation Application (please refer to the Academic Calendar for these deadlines). All students will be asked to provide a phonetic spelling of their name for their commencement ceremony. Please note that Master’s diplomas and graduate certificates are not distributed at commencement; students should expect to receive the diploma or certificate 6-8 weeks after commencement.

How do I submit the Online Graduation Application?
Log into my.uncc.edu. Under Academic Resources, select ‘Student Records’. Under ‘Student Records’, select ‘Online Graduation Application’. Click “Continue” if this is the first time a graduation application has been submitted or “Create a New Application” if one has been submitted previously. After all sections are complete, click the "Submit" button.

Learn more at http://graduateschool.uncc.edu/current-students/graduation

Be sure to update your email and mailing address through my.uncc.edu in order to receive important information updates as well as the diploma/certificate. Detailed instructions on the line-up, procession, and ceremony can be found on the University's Commencement website. Graduate caps and gowns are available at the Campus Bookstore several months prior to commencement. UNC Charlotte also offers custom regalia.

Doctoral students receive their diploma and are hooded during the Commencement ceremony. Each doctoral student may choose one faculty member to escort them during the ceremony and to assist in their hooding on stage. Because doctoral students and their faculty escorts are named during the ceremony, it is important that both plan to attend the practice session - generally held the Thursday afternoon prior to the ceremony in the Student Activities Center (SAC).

Graduating doctoral students and their advisors are invited to celebrate at a dinner hosted by the Graduate School which is generally held the Thursday night before Commencement. For additional information on the dinner, please contact Coren O’Hara at ceohara@uncc.edu.
What is Taskstream?

Taskstream is the name of the system the College of Education uses to collect data and assess student progress. Taskstream provides us with useful information about whether our candidates have reached important learning goals in their programs and about the progress of each candidate in those programs. SPECIFICALLY, Taskstream provides us with data for program improvement and accreditation. The College of Education’s Office of Assessment collects these data on candidates every semester, and uses that data to compile reports for accreditation and to show UNC Charlotte meets educator preparation standards (please visit the website for more information). If you have any other questions regarding assessment systems and accreditation, please visit the Office of Assessment website for more Q & As. If you have any questions about how to log in to Taskstream, submit assignments, or other how-to information, please visit the UNCC College of Education’s Taskstream website, where you will find how-to videos and be able to download help sheets and handbooks.

by: Ashley Flatley
UNCC COED Assessment Office Program Specialist

Call for Proposals – “Knowledge to Action: Research that Moves Us Forward”

The 2017 Annual Meeting of the North Carolina Association for Research in Education (NCARE) will be held February 16-17, 2017 in Chapel Hill, NC at The Friday Center.

NCARE invites proposals for scholarly papers and posters on any educational research or evaluation topic of interest to North Carolina educators – preschool through adult. Proposals linked to the conference theme – Knowledge to Action: Research that Moves Us Forward – are especially encouraged. Proposals on work in progress should be submitted for the Thursday opening reception and poster session. All proposals will be reviewed by at least two referees, using the criteria of quality, originality, and significance. Proposal submission will open online on November 1, 2016.

- Paper Proposals should be submitted electronically via the NCARE website [http://www.ncare.us/] by 11:59pm on Friday, December 2, 2016.
- Poster Proposals should be submitted electronically via the NCARE website by 11:59pm on Friday, December 16, 2016.

Blinded Proposal Submissions must include:

- Abstract (up to 200 words)
- Proposal summary (approximately 1,200 words or two single-spaced pages) with the following headings: a) Objectives or research questions, b) Perspective or theoretical framework, c) Method or techniques, d) Data sources, and e) Results and conclusions.

Questions? Send a message to proposals@ncare.us
Important dates

- December 9th - 16th: Final exams
- December 15th: Doctoral Graduate Rehearsal & Celebration
- December 17th: Commencement
- December 23rd: Winter break – university closed
- January 9th: First day of classes
- January 17th: Last day to drop all classes
- February 6th: Deadline to apply for Spring 2016 graduation

Find us on Facebook – UNC Charlotte Ed.D. Program

https://www.facebook.com/groups/1225560670840051/

About the Facebook Group: This is a closed group initiated by Dr. Wilkins, so members of the group must request access via the link. We are now 55 members strong!

If you have not joined yet, please send a request.

Purpose - Sharing successes (passing Qualifying Exams, Dissertation Proposal, sharing job opportunities, etc.)

Join other Facebook groups from UNCC.
Atkins Library: https://www.facebook.com/atkinslibrary

The Graduate School: https://www.facebook.com/UNCCCharlotteGraduateAdmissions/

Do you have an announcement, news, or information to share?

Newsletter suggestions are always welcome!

Please email Elvita Kondili at ekondili@uncc.edu.

Elvita is a third year doctoral student in the Counseling Department. She is responsible for creating the EDD Ledger. Elvita is working with Dr. Wilkins as her graduate assistant in the Fall 2016 and Spring 2017.