“The only way to do great work is to love what you do. If you haven’t found it yet, keep looking. Don’t settle.”

-Steve Jobs.

Who is inside?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thomas Fisher</th>
<th>Candace Mazze</th>
<th>Michelle Newnman</th>
<th>Tatia Prieto</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carl Hamm</td>
<td>Clyde Wilson</td>
<td>Chrystal Brown</td>
<td>Makena Stewart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curtis Carroll</td>
<td>Laura Hart</td>
<td>Kimberly Chinnis</td>
<td>Page 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shantelle Jenkins</td>
<td>Niesha Douglas</td>
<td>William Crews</td>
<td>Page 9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Message from Dr. Howell
Clinical Assistant Professor
Educational Leadership Program Director

This was not intended as a special edition, but rather, as a section within the February edition. As with many things in life, things did not go accordingly to plan and we are so glad that it didn’t. Initially, the request was for 3-4 alumnus to respond to questions from the doctoral graduate assistants, Nhu Nguyen and Neda Pouraskari. After contacting numerous alumni through email we ended up with the responses that you will read in this edition. There are over 100 alumni who have graduated from the Ed.D. program and we were curious about what they have been up to since completing their degree and thought that they may have some suggestions for those who remain in the program. The following are condensed versions of their responses to the following questions:

1. What job or career did you have prior to admission into the doctoral program?
2. What job or career were you able to obtain with your doctoral degree?
3. What advice would you give to current doctoral students based on your professional experiences?
### Ed.D. Alumni Spotlight

#### Dr. Thomas Fisher, 2010
**A comparison of the effectiveness of measurements used to evaluate program treatments in determining significant difference between body mass index of pre and post means of elementary school students**

Dissertation Chair: Dr. J. Allen Queen  
Dissertation Committee: Dr. Robert Algozzine, Dr. Jim Watson, and Dr. Mitchell Cordova

What job or career did you have prior to the doctoral program? Prior to beginning work on my Ed.D. I was employed with Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools in the Curriculum & Instruction Department as a Social Studies Content Coach. In that role I worked with Title I and lower performing schools on the state tested courses in Social Studies.

What job or career were you able to obtain with your doctoral degree? Currently I am employed here at UNC Charlotte as a Clinical Assistant Professor in the MDSK Department and the Office of Field Experiences with a focus on supervision of student teachers and the capstone project known as edTPA.

What advice would you give to current doctoral students? I don’t think you need to know specifically your career arc while in the program BUT the program will help you identify those strengths and will help you pinpoint where you can fit. All but 2 of the people in my cohort of 12 were set on school administration. I was not, but also not opposed to it, but my focus and skills lead me more to teacher professional development and the opportunity within my program allowed me to network and eventually end up where I am today.

#### Dr. Carl Hamm, 2011
**An investigation of a high school peer tutoring program**

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Corey Lock  
Dissertation Committee: Dr. Rebecca Shore, Dr. Do-Hong Kim, and Dr. Clarrice A. Rapisard

What job or career prior to the doctoral program? I retired from the US treasury department and entered teaching as my second career where I was encouraged by my advisor Dr. Corey Lock.

What job or career were you able to obtain with your doctoral degree? It was basically the challenge and be all you can be and shortly after graduation I retired. It was difficult but well worth it.

What advice would you give current doctoral students? Never give up and keep plodding along. Listen to your committee and get their support and you will find solace there.
Ed.D. Alumni Spotlight

Dr. Curtis Carroll, 2013
Dissertation Chair: Dr. James J. Bird
Dissertation Committee: Dr. Chuang Wang, Dr. Lisa Driscoll, and Dr. Dorothy Smith-Ruiz
Dissertation Committee: Dr. Allen Queen, Dr. Robert Algozzine and Dr. Joseph Winters

What job or career prior to the doctoral program? Principal Harding University High School, Achievement Zone Learning Community Superintendent

What job or career were you able to obtain with your doctoral degree? West Learning Community Superintendent

Advice for current doctoral students: Stay the course and finish. UNCC has an outstanding doctoral program which will provide you with unlimited opportunities.

Dr. Shantelle Jenkins, 2013
Faculty perceptions of, and experiences with, African American male students at a community college
Dissertation Chair: Dr. James Lyons
Dissertation Committee: Dr. Allen Queen, Dr. Robert Algozzine and Dr. Joseph Winters

What job or career did you have prior to your doctoral admission? Prior to my admission to the doctoral program, I was the Assistant Director and Program Coordinator for Upward Bound at Central Piedmont Community College (West Campus).

What job or career were you able to obtain with your doctoral degree? Attaining my doctoral degree in 2013 has opened doors to graduate level teaching opportunities at various institutions here in the northeast where I currently reside. I have taught and currently teach both masters and doctoral level students through adjunct faculty appointments.

Currently, I am the Director of Assessment at Eastern University, where I oversee all assessment functions including student learning assessment, administrative unit assessment, and the assessment of General Education curricula. I also serve as the advisor to the President and his leadership team on all assessment and evaluation functions at the university. Through our Loeb College of Education, I am developing curriculum for a course titled Global Education that will be offered for the first time online this summer. Global Education, EDUC 545 is a required course offering in the as part of the MEd in Multicultural Education program.

What advice would you give to current doctoral students? Your journey is your own. Comparing yourselves to other students will only add unnecessary stress.
What job or career did you have prior to your doctoral admission? Elementary school teacher

What job or career were you able to obtain with your doctoral degree? I've been in higher education since obtaining my degree in 2013. Most of that time has been as a Dissertation Chair for an online university. I've also been consulting for education organizations, specifically on curriculum, assessment, and program evaluation.

What advice would you give to current doctoral students? Your degree can be more than just for a promotion or increase in pay.

I went into my doctorate thinking I'm meant to do something more than be a classroom teacher, maybe something behind the scenes, maybe a facilitator or within a district's accountability department. I was passionate about how and what students learn and thought those would be the directions to follow. However, I'm not in either role and am instead working with EdD students on their doctorate. My role uses not only my professional experience but also my doctoral experience, and most importantly my passion.

What advice would you give to current doctoral students based on your professional experiences?

1. Your word is your bond. Be honest with yourself and only commit to what you can realistically accomplish.
2. Take your first semester in the doctoral program to intentionally learn how to think for yourself. This requires active engagement, not passive listening and regurgitation.
3. Some of the greatest catastrophes in pursuing the doctoral degree can be avoided by a little intelligent foresight.
4. Sometimes you have to go off grid. However, be sure to find time to catch up with your family and friends.
5. Find a routine that works for you.
6. Write, write and write some more.
**Ed.D. Alumni Spotlight**

**Dr. Laura Hart, 2014**  
An investigation of the impact of single-sex classrooms on self-esteem in middle school girls  
Dissertation Chair: Dr. Jeanneine Jones  
Dissertation Committee: Dr. Corey Lock, Dr. Chuang Wang, and Dr. Allison Stedman

I was a long-time educator! I was a teacher in two school systems teaching English and Theatre arts for seven years, and then I was an assistant principal in the Cabarrus County schools for five years. I transitioned and was hired as the Teacher-in-Residence at UNC Charlotte in 2006; my primary area of responsibility was supervision of student teachers, which was a perfect fit for me! I began my doctoral program in 2008.

As a result of my Ed.D., I have been able to apply for positions within the College of Education that I would not have been qualified for otherwise. Specifically, I became the Director of Accreditation and in 2015, “Assessment” was added to my title (along with all the responsibilities of an assessment director as well). As the accountability movement continues to gain momentum, assessment has become more and more important in both public schools and higher education. My doctoral degree has allowed me to pursue this path within UNC Charlotte. From my program, I also learned how to conduct a research study, which has allowed me to author or co-author several articles since I completed the Ed.D. This kind of productivity is not part specifically part of my job, but it has helped me increase my impact in the field of teacher education.

**What advice would you give to current doctoral students based on your professional experiences?** Consider doing projects for your courses that can assist you in building a knowledge base for your dissertation. And remember: your dissertation, while important, really comes down to demonstrating that you are able to conduct a viable research study. Don't let it consume you! You don't have to cover every single angle of your topic of interest in your study in fact, the more narrow your focus, the better you will be able to discuss your knowledge in-depth.

**Dr. Niesha Douglas, 2014**  
First year residential traditional-aged college students' first semester experience and its impact on their social identity  
Dissertation Chair: Dr. Lisa Merriweather  
Dissertation Committee: Dr. Chuang Wang, Dr. D'Amico and Dr. Bettie Butler

What job or career prior to the doctoral program? I was an adjunct instructor at Winston-Salem State University in the Sport Management Department.

What job or career were you able to obtain with your doctoral degree? I am currently developing coaching/personal development classes with a substance abuse company for recovering drug addicts.

**What advice would you give current doctoral students?** My advice would be for current doctoral students to think outside the box and explore other careers besides higher education. The field is competitive and it may take a while to secure that position, but there are also other companies that can use those same skills.
Ed.D. Alumni Spotlight

Dr. Michelle Newnam, 2014
Instructional relationships and predictors for eighth grade student academic achievement as measured by the North Carolina end of grade comprehensive reading scores to the number of visual arts classes completed during middle school
Dissertation Chair: Dr. J. Allen Queen
Dissertation Committee: Dr. Do-Hong Kim, Dr. Jim Watson, and Dr. Delane Ingalls Vanada

Before entering the program at UNCC I taught visual arts in middle school. I also worked on the county and state level in NC on creating and analyzing performance assessments and creating rubrics for the assessments in visual arts.

What job or career were you able to obtain with your doctoral degree? I obtained a job as an assistant principal in an elementary school during the time I was writing my dissertation.

My advice for current doctoral students is to make sure they network with their fellow doctoral students. When I was in the program I was in class with superintendents to classroom teachers to students. When I was in the program I was in class with superintendents to classroom teachers to community educators and gained knowledge and opportunities through my interactions with them.

Dr. Chrystal Brown, 2016
Understanding the impact of racism and sexism on the development of the professional identity of African American women principals
Dissertation Chair: Dr. Lisa Merriweather
Dissertation Committee: Dr. Claudia Flowers, Dr. James Bird, and Dr. Janaka Lewis

What job or career did you have prior to the doctoral program? I was a high school assistant principal prior to my admission into the doctoral program.

What job or career were you able to obtain with your doctoral degree? I am currently the Liaison for the Early College/Career & College Promise Programs at a community college.

What advice would you give to current doctoral students? I would advise current doctoral students to take advantage of research opportunities and professional memberships that are available to you as a student. Those experiences broaden your skillset and make you a more well-rounded candidate when applying for positions after graduation.
Ed.D. Alumni Spotlight

Dr. Kimberly Chinnis, 2016
The underperformance of gifted elementary school students
Dissertation Chair: Dr. Jim Watson
Dissertation Committee: Dr. Claudia Flowers, Dr. Rebecca Shore, and Dr. Cindy Gilson

Before beginning the doctoral program, I was a middle school principal.

What job or career were you able to obtain with your doctoral degree? I am currently an elementary school principal. Obtaining my degree was a personal goal and it has deepened my understanding of what encompasses the field of educational leadership and the challenges that we face. When I am ready to move on to my next career, I know that I will be prepared.

I would advise current students to first, not give up. Obtaining a doctoral degree is a process that can be difficult to balance along with a career and family, so you have to remember to find a balance and not lose yourself or sense of purpose. It is also important to maintain the collegial connections that you make while in the program because your colleagues and professors understand the path that you are on and will support you through the program and after graduation. These relationships will be invaluable throughout your career.

Dr. William Crews, 2016
Exploring the perceptions of African American women on how diversity training has impacted their upward mobility into senior leadership
Dissertation Chair: Dr. Lisa Merriweather
Dissertation Committee: Dr. Mark D’Amico, Dr. Bettie Butler, and Dr. Brenda McMahon

What job or career did you have prior to admission into the doctoral program? I was the Program Chair, for the Human Resources program at Central Piedmont Community College (CPCC). In my role, I oversaw the development of human resource program curriculum and maintained constant communication throughout term with full-time faculty and adjunct instructors. Developed and monitored diverse human resources and relation courses in accordance with general education requirements of program for multi-campus needs.

What job or career were you able to obtain with your doctoral degree? My career change occurred during my tenure in the program. I resigned from CPCC and obtained a position with the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP), as the Assistant District Director for North and South Carolina. In the current positions, I plan and direct reviews of federal contractor programs for compliance with applicable equal employment opportunity laws, Executive Orders, diversity policies, procedures and regulations. In addition, I ensure federal contractors are in compliance with all Executive Orders, laws and regulations administered by employee Standards Administration. However, I am certain my doctoral studies along with my professional experience played a major role in obtaining the job.

What advice would you give to current doctoral students based on your professional experiences? I would recommend that current doctoral students keep an opened mind regarding different career opportunities. Based on my experience, UNCC’s Educational Leadership doctoral program will help to expand your my career opportunities and options. Unknowingly to me, courses taken throughout the program provided a solid foundation in my current career. Therefore, current students should take full advantage of the knowledge and expertise of the current professors.
Ed.D. Alumni Spotlight

Dr. Tatia Prieto, 2016
An analysis of administrative spending across education organizational forms
Dissertation Chair: Dr. Mickey Dunaway
Dissertation Committee: Dr. Claudia Flowers, Dr. Corey Lock and Dr. Amy Good

What job or career did you have prior to the doctoral program? I was running my own PreK-12 consulting firm and wanted to expand my tool box in the areas of statistical analysis, organizational analysis, and program evaluation.

What job or career were you able to obtain with your doctoral degree? I’m still doing the same thing, just more and deeper.

What advice would you give to current doctoral students? It’s a long program - work through the doctoral program with your list of “wants” always in hand. What do you want to get out of the program? What skills do you want to develop? What knowledge do you want to gain? Don’t let yourself get too side-tracked by the interesting things that come your way but that are not on our list of “wants.” You can go down those side paths after you get the degree.

Dr. Makena Stewart, 2016
Faculty advisors’ perceptions of the impact of an academic advising Quality Enhancement Plan on organizational culture of a community college
Dissertation Chair: Dr. Lisa Merriweather
Dissertation Committee: Dr. Mark D’Amico, Dr. Do-Hong Kim, and Dr. Gloria Campbell-Whatley

Prior to admission in the doctoral program, my career was as a counselor in the Student Services division of South Piedmont Community College. After the completion of my coursework, I was promoted to the position of Dean of Student Development with South Piedmont Community College. In this role I oversee the support units of counseling, academic advising, and student activities, as well as disability services, career services, and a minority male success initiative grant program. I am also responsible for investigating student grievances, violations of the student code of conduct, and Title IX related concerns.

I would encourage current doctoral students to trust the process and take advantage of all of the resources that are afforded to them. Connect with your advisors often; they are a wealth of information and can help you grow both professionally and academically. I would also encourage students to get engaged both in the ongoing research being done in the Ed Leadership department as well as within their professional communities. The diligent prepare for opportunities that do not yet exist; opportunities for growth will present themselves to those who are ready.
Dr. Mark Little, 2016
Delivery of remedial community college mathematics instruction in an emporium learning environment: Predicting academic success, persistence, retention, and completion
Dissertation Chair: Dr. D’Amico
Dissertation Committee: Dr. Lynn Ahlgrim-Delzell, Dr. Mickey Dunaway, and Dr. Susan Harden

I worked in marketing and instruction at a North Carolina community college prior to and during my time in the doctoral program. Through these job experiences, I saw first-hand how N.C. community colleges are the great equalizers of access to educational opportunity for underserved populations throughout the state. I then made a commitment to working full-time within instruction, and to being an agent of change who is committed to bringing affordable, quality post-secondary education to as many N.C. residents as possible. An Ed.D. degree became my pathway to this new career trajectory.

I have transitioned into managerial and teaching roles within Academic Affairs. I currently work as a Department Chair within a division of an N.C. community college. In this job, I focus on vocational and technical fields such as Information Technology, Engineering, Welding, HVAC, and Automotive. These programs are able to serve the entire continuum of learners, from high school students enrolled in CTE pathways through Career and College Promise, to adult learners who may be completing a certificate, diploma, or degree through a combination of online and seated classes. These programs and the students they serve are also benefiting from a renewed focus on apprenticeship, which connects high potential students to companies who sponsor them as they complete their education while working at the sponsoring business.

What advice would you give to current doctoral students based on your professional experiences? It is very important to develop active listening skills. You must be able to parse and analyze information as it is communicated to you in real time. A thorough knowledge of regulations, policies, procedures, and guidelines is a must. Always have the courage to respectfully inject yourself into discussions affecting you and those you serve. Co-workers should be treated as colleagues, not as friends. Finally, seek out organizations that celebrate cultural contribution, as opposed to cultural fit. An overbearing focus on cultural fit is a sign of organizational entropy.

Dr. Adam Perrow, 2016
The perceptions of pre-service teachers on a program rooted in multicultural service learning: A case study
Dissertation Chair: Dr. Jae Hoon Lim
Dissertation Committee: Dr. Lisa Merriweather, Dr. Claudia Flowers, and Dr. Charisse Coston

Prior to admission in the Ed.D. program, I was a classroom teacher in Gaston County Schools teaching high school social studies. While completing my doctoral degree, I held several roles including a district-level position managing and coordinating curriculum, as a Director at a national non-profit designing and delivering leadership development for novice educators and managing and delivering leadership development and learning with Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools.

After graduating with my Ed.D., I began to explore opportunities within leadership development and organizational development. I joined Carolinas HealthCare System (now Atrium Health) after completing my program and currently serve as a Senior Consultant tasked with researching, designing and delivering leadership development curriculum for the system’s leaders and management.

My advice would be to be open to new ideas and new career trajectories. The Ed.D. program provides opportunities for students to learn from and beside diverse professionals across many professions. Course work, research and writing provided me with opportunities to uncover a passion for leadership development and has taken that into the education, non-profit and healthcare industries.