

# CEHDconnect

THE MAGAZINE OF THE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

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## AMBIGUOUS LOSS

When closure doesn't exist



WINTER 2024



from the  
DEAN



**CEHD IS A DESTINATION** college. This past fall, we were visited by White House staff, MN state legislators, and European school leaders, among many others. And as in the past, CEHD faculty, staff, and students continue to expand boundaries by connecting with communities locally and around the world. Some of these stories are on the following pages.

Introduced in 2023, we are providing a new feature in some stories. Be on the lookout for QR codes that provide access to videos and other resources. For example, at the end of the story about the work of Pauline Boss on page 21, there is a QR code in the bottom right corner. With your smartphone, start the camera and point it at the QR code—then tap the banner that appears on screen to access the online resources.

Did you notice the QR code in the Fall 2023 issue following the story about Josie R. Johnson? If not—be sure to revisit that issue to see two great videos on her incredible achievements and impact.

Finally, I would like to take a moment to reflect on the work of Pauline Boss in ambiguous loss. Knowing that it’s okay to be angry, my adopted son deals with the pain and trauma of spending several years in the child welfare system. When parental rights are terminated, while those parents remain alive yet absent, many children experience repeated trauma and develop a false sense of fault. Ambiguous loss calls out the unrealistic expectation of closure, allows us to acknowledge the loss, grants permission to be angry, and provides a pathway to move forward. Pauline’s work impacts my life daily—Thank you Pauline.

And thank you for your continued support and partnership with CEHD. I hope 2024 brings you great things.



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+ HUMAN DEVELOPMENT  
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- EDITOR** Kevin Moe
- DESIGNER** Kirsten Mortensen
- WRITERS** Hannah Baxter, Ann Dingman, Sarah Jergenson, Kevin Moe, Janet Stewart
- PHOTOGRAPHER** Jairus Davis
- OFFICE OF THE DEAN**
- DEAN** Michael C. Rodriguez
- ASSOCIATE DEAN FOR GRADUATE EDUCATION AND FACULTY DEVELOPMENT** Tabitha Grier-Reed
- ASSOCIATE DEAN FOR UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION, DIVERSITY, AND INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVES** Nicola Alexander
- SENIOR ASSOCIATE DEAN FOR RESEARCH AND POLICY** Frank Symons
- ASSISTANT DEAN FOR PROFESSIONAL AND ONLINE EDUCATION** Cassie Scharber
- CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER AND CHIEF OF OPERATIONS** Gail Renteria
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Connect is published three times a year by the University of Minnesota College of Education and Human Development for alumni, faculty, staff, and friends of the college. Send correspondence to the editor, 110 Wulling Hall, 86 Pleasant St. S.E., University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN 55455. For address corrections, contact us at 612-301-2663 or connect@umn.edu.



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# Policy Breakfast: accountability system for MN schools

IN OCTOBER, CEHD HOSTED more than 120 educational leaders and policy makers for a Policy Breakfast at the Historic Chateau Theatre in Rochester, Minnesota. University of Minnesota Chancellor Lori J. Carroll welcomed attendees to Rochester and the event. Katie Pekel, CEHD’s Executive Director of Educational Leadership, moderated a panel of experts, including CEHD Dean Michael C. Rodriguez, Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) Commissioner Willie Jett, and Superintendent of Rochester Public Schools Kent Pekel. The panel discussed the current accountability system for schools in Minnesota, how it compares to other states’ systems,

and what the future of accountability could look like as the state continues to strive for equity, justice, and improvement. In Minnesota, the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCAs) measure the effectiveness of schools and districts relative to the state’s academic standards. However, individual scores are also reported to students and their families. “We should stop reporting individual student scores and not send them home. The MCAs are not designed to provide diagnostically relevant measurement per student,” argued Dean Rodriguez. When asked what an ideal state accountability system would look like, Rodriguez suggested that performance assessments, while difficult to carry out reliably, could help shine a light on student thinking, uncovering the deeper learning that occurs in our schools. He said performance assessments done by teachers more readily uncover what students know and can do better than the current assessments do. “The U.S. curriculum is a mile wide and an inch deep. I would like CEHD to attract students who are creative, critical thinkers who dig deeper. If you don’t dig deeper, you don’t make progress and innovate,” he said. Superintendent Pekel proposed that Minnesota should also look at what’s going well. “We should not only be identifying the schools at the bottom of the MCA distribution but also the schools that are making the most improvement,” he said. “This would help us shine a light on the high performers and learn from them.” The panelists also discussed the READ (Reading to Ensure Academic Development) Act, a \$70 million investment by the state of Minnesota to provide teachers and instructional support staff with resources and professional development to teach reading based on evidence-based reading instruction approved by MDE. “Being able to read well is a conduit for academic success. The READ Act helps students throughout their academic journey,” said MDE Commissioner Jett.

—SARAH JERGENSEN

SARAH JERGENSEN

# Advancing computing education in MN

THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA announced that it will lead a new effort to advance computer science education across the state of Minnesota and nationally with the Northern Lights Collaborative for Computing Education. Researchers in the collaborative, part of CEHD, aim to create a just and equitable society where computing education is universally accessible, inclusive, and responsive to the unique needs and aspirations of all learners and educators. “Most people don’t realize that Minnesota is dead last in the state rankings for K-12 computing education. One of our main goals is to drive awareness and support for computer science education across Minnesota,” says Jennifer Rosato, director of the collaborative. Northern Lights is part of a group partnering with Minnesota legislators on the Computer Science Education Advancement Act and the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) on a state plan for Computer Science Education. The collaborative is preparing to help districts and schools implement the plan.

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Northern Lights will provide critical support to schools in order to equip Minnesota’s students with the knowledge and skills they will need to be successful in our tech-enabled society. Data from MNTech’s State of the Tech Talent report in November showed only 28 percent of Minnesota high schools offer foundational computer science education courses. In contrast, the national average is 58 percent with eight states, including Minnesota’s Midwest neighbors North Dakota and Nebraska, now requiring computer science for graduation. “The Northern Lights Collaborative for Computing Education supports CEHD’s mission to contribute to a just future by increasing access to computing as a critical new literacy for Minnesota’s students. We are proud to be a part of this work,” says Dean Michael C. Rodriguez.

—SARAH JERGENSEN

Learn more: [northern-lights.umn.edu](https://northern-lights.umn.edu)

## NEW GIFTS AND COMMITMENTS

**\$500,000 TO \$1,000,000**  
The **Richard M. Schulze Family Foundation** renewed its commitment to the Schulze Future Teacher Scholars Program.

**\$250,000 TO \$500,000**  
**Schmidt Futures** supported the LEVI Engagement Hub Project in the Department of Educational Psychology.

**\$100,000 TO \$250,000**  
**Patrick J. and Shirley M. Campbell** added to the Patrick and Shirley Campbell Innovations Fund.

**Arnold Ness** made a pledge to establish the Arnie and Judy Ness Grad Student Fellowship.

**Luong B. Tran and Minh-Tam T. Lu** added to the Lu Mong Chi Memorial Scholarship.

**\$50,000 TO \$100,000**  
**Lily E. Christ** added to the Duane M. and Lily E. Christ HI-TECH PREP Math Scholarship.

**\$25,000 TO \$50,000**  
The **Best Buy Foundation** supported the CEHD Immersive Makerspace Program.

**Gail J. and A. Stuart Hanson** made a pledge to the Gail Taylor Hanson Fellowship in Special Education.

**Valdemar Olson** added to the Marilyn Nordstrom Olson and Valdemar Olson Scholarship.

**Lynn Slifer** gave to the Slifer Family Early Childhood Scholarship.

**Harry J. and Belle M. Yaffe** supported the Tribal College Partnership Program Fund and the Belle and Harry Yaffe Family Pathways for American Indians Scholarship.

**HERITAGE SOCIETY\***  
**James W. Hansen** increased his gift to the Louise DiGirolamo Hansen Scholarship.

**Jerry Guerrero** increased his gift to the School of Social Work Fellowship.

**Marie A. Meyer** made a gift to the Jean K. Freeman Endowment for the Women Coaches Symposium.

*\*The University of Minnesota President’s Club Heritage Society recognizes individuals who have made estate or other planned gifts to benefit the University. To learn more, contact [cehdexrl@umn.edu](mailto:cehdexrl@umn.edu).*

**ESTATE GIFTS RECEIVED**  
The estate of **Elizabeth A. Reese-Marton** gave to the CEHD Access Scholarship.

The estate of **Joan B. Hanson** made a gift to endow the Joan Hanson Scholarship Fund for students in elementary education.

*Includes gifts made between June 15 and November 16, 2023.*



# White House Hispanic Initiative executive director visits CEHD

**MELODY GONZALES, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR** of the White House Initiative on Advancing Educational Equity, Excellence, and Economic Opportunity for Hispanics, was in the Twin Cities on October 11 to speak at an event and had time to visit CEHD with Melisa López Franzen, UMN executive director of government and community relations.

Gonzales took a tour of Campbell Hall and heard from Institute of Child Development (ICD) PhD student Jasmine Banegas about her interdisciplinary work with School of Social Work Assistant Professor Saida Abdi to provide trauma-informed services to Latine children and families in Minneapolis Public Schools.

“Melody noted, after visiting with me, Ryan Warren, Tabitha Grier-Reed, and staff and students in ICD and FSOS [Department of Family Social Science], how readily we are able to translate research to practice in areas of critical need,” says Dean Michael C. Rodriguez. “She also noted the opportunities for underrepresented faculty, staff, and students to be engaged in this work—and how essential that will be to secure successful futures for so many students, families, and communities. She looks forward to working with us more in the near future.”

—KEVIN MOE



## CEHD Community Fund Drive volunteers receive People’s Choice Awards

Several CEHD employees were named People’s Choice Award winners for their support of this year’s Community Fund Drive, in which CEHD raised \$47,362 for area non-profits. The award celebrates the hard work, creativity, and dedication of these volunteers. Winners include:

- *Nina Brown, Sarah Jergenson, Kirsten Mortensen, and Amy Pavlick (CEHD administration) for their Trick-or-Treat Bake Off, which featured many scary treats such as Tricia Wilkinson’s Raspberry Spider Web Cheese-cake (top, right).*
- *Doug Robertson (Department of Curriculum and Instruction), who is tireless in promoting the Community Fund Drive throughout the college.*
- *Carolyn Vue (Department of Educational Psychology), who helped run a crock pot cookoff and a move-a-thon, which encouraged people to be active (running, biking, dancing).*

JAIROS DAVIS; NINA BROWN; OFFICE OF HUMAN RESOURCES



# Addressing trauma in Southeast Asia

*How CEHD is collaborating with Malaysian experts to support refugee trauma survivors*

**THE SOUTHEAST ASIAN COUNTRY** of Malaysia has emerged as the largest recipient of refugees and asylum-seekers in the region, hosting a substantial population of displaced individuals. Recent reports place the number of registered refugees at 180,440. Additional estimates suggest there may be as many as 140,000 unregistered individuals seeking asylum in Malaysia.

Many of these asylum-seekers experienced war trauma and torture, which places them at a higher risk of developing serious psychiatric illnesses, including post-traumatic stress disorder and major depression. Thus, a need for evidenced-based, trauma-focused, and

JAIROS DAVIS

culturally adapted training for the treatment of refugee trauma survivors is urgently needed.

Mahinder Kaur is a psychoanalyst from Malaysia living in St. Paul. In 2021, she had been supervising school-based practitioners who were working with child trauma survivors from refugee families in Kuala Lumpur, the Malaysian capital. It was her involvement with the school that became the impetus to set up a trauma treatment training program.

“Many of the practitioners did not have training in trauma treatment to help refugee families with trauma-related symptoms and problems,” says Patricia

Shannon, a licensed psychologist and an associate professor in the School of Social Work. “Dr. Mahinder had been searching for a way to bring trauma education to Malaysia and she reached out to me due to my background teaching trauma treatment and providing treatment to refugees and asylum seekers from around the world.”

Shannon recognized the need and saw a huge opportunity in the possibilities that Zoom might offer for international training. “I wondered if we might leverage this technology to provide international access to continuing education,” she says.

She then contacted fellow experts Chris Mehus, a research assistant professor in the Department of Family Social Science, and Julie Rohovit, the director of the Center for Practice Transformation (CPT). “I wanted to invite Dr. Mehus due to his expertise in teaching evidence-based trauma treatment for refugee populations,” she says.

CPT was contacted because of its history of providing effective and engaging virtual training. “Given that CPT had the platform and expertise in offering professional development workshops and training to a national and global audience, Dr. Shannon approached us to support the logistics and execution of the trauma-informed training,” Rohovit says.

The objective of the project was to collaboratively develop and evaluate the feasibility of a practical, scalable, and sustainable model for international trauma training for mental health practitioners. “We also hoped to develop decolonizing and community-based models for sustainable trauma training by critically engaging Malaysian partners in the development and evaluation of inclusive curriculum and in planning toward sustainable, train-the-trainer processes for ongoing education,” Shannon says.

This approach is essential in that it addresses concerns about Western practitioners attempting to solve problems in communities without adequately involv-





ing local stakeholders. The collaborative approach, involving local participants and stakeholders, ensures that the training aligns with their needs.

“This training was designed not only to enhance the clinicians’ understanding of trauma and its effects, but also to provide them with practical tools and techniques for effectively assisting refugees who have experienced severe stress and trauma,” Dr. Mahinder says. “By doing so, the intention was to improve the overall quality of mental health services available to this vulnerable group.”

30-HOUR VIRTUAL CURRICULUM

A 30-hour, 10-week curriculum was ultimately developed and evaluated in partnership with local stakeholders, including Dr. Mahinder and other educators and providers. The virtual curriculum incorporates elements such as understanding secondary trauma and self-care, assessment and diagnosis, and culturally adapted treatment interventions, all of which were developed in partnership with Malaysian providers, like psychiatrist Dr. Andrew Mohanraj, president of the Malaysian Mental Health Association and a university professor in Malaysia. He provided locally relevant education on intersections between trauma therapy and psychiatric treatment in Malaysia.

When Dr. Mohanraj was invited to come on board the training faculty, his immediate response was, “I would be happy to be part of the training even if it is only for one module. I see the value and impor-

tance of such a training, and I will do all I can to support this training and it will be an honor to be on the UMN faculty.” As part of the training, the participants received instruction in Narrative Exposure Therapy, or NET, Mehus says. “NET is an evidence-based treatment for post-traumatic stress disorder, particularly for survivors of multiple or complex traumatic experiences. NET was originally designed to be relatively easy to implement in any setting and has been used effectively in countries all around the world,” he says. Mehus has 10 years’ experience in providing training in NET.

Also brought on the project was Will Carlson, a licensed clinical social worker and doctoral candidate in the School of Social Work. “I previously worked with Dr. Shannon as a doctoral research assistant on various projects related to refugee mental health,” he says. “She invited me to join this project due to my prior experience with NET and providing therapy for refugee clients.”

Carlson says participant evaluations of the training indicate significant improvement in their confidence and comfort providing mental health treatment. “The course appears to have increased participant’s perception of the treatability of post-traumatic stress overall,” he says. “They noted that the course’s emphasis on cultural adaptation of evidence-based practices increased

the on-the-ground applicability of their learning. This has been further verified by their subsequent uptake of NET in their professional practice.”

On a fundamental level, the training sought to foster greater awareness among clinicians about the complexities of trauma, especially in the context of the refugee experience, Dr. Mahinder says. “By empowering these professionals with a deeper understanding and practical approaches to trauma treatment, the hope was to enhance the therapeutic outcomes for refugees, leading to improved mental health and well-being,” she adds.

Pam Guneratnam, a clinician and founder of HumanKind, an organization that works with refugee clients, says that she feels fortunate to have taken the training. “NET has become a very important tool that we use in our work,” she says. “The approach is simple and effective, which makes it very practical for our work here in Malaysia.”

Clinical psychologist Ang Wen Fang has been involved in refugee work for nine years. “The program is one of the most comprehensive evidence-based, trauma-focused treatments that I’ve attended thus far,” she says. “I have already started using NET with four refugee patients with PTSD and I can see significant improvements in symptoms throughout the sessions. A Pakistani refugee patient that I have worked with through 13 ses-

◀ Clinicians work with patients on the very first stage of Narrative Exposure Therapy (NET) called the lifeline. The lifeline entails the creation of a chronological portrayal of the patient’s life, employing tangible symbols to represent both traumatic incidents and positive encounters. In NET, the lifeline is a reference and focus of the treatment, leading to the unfolding of the narrative of the patient’s trauma.

sions of NET demonstrated a significant reduction in PTSD symptoms.”

Thulasi Munisamy, a social worker with Protect and Save the Children, says one of the most important things she learned was the universality of NET. “The course focused on refugees, but it can be applied and made accessible to any client who has experienced traumatic events in their lives,” she says, adding that she will be applying her new knowledge in her advocacy work.

As the project continues, Rohovit says two central goals for its future are decolonization and accessibility. “We are explor-

ing ways to make it sustainable by sharing and transferring the trauma expertise to Malaysian trainers and practitioners,” she says. “Likewise, this project may serve as a model for others with similar aims.”

Mohamed Faiz, a registered clinical psychologist and senior lecturer at one of the main universities in Malaysia, is already working on sharing what he’s learned. “I started to integrate the knowledge from the course into our academic curriculum at the doctoral level, which focuses on trauma,” he says. “I see a huge potential to train others, especially our in-house clinical trainees at the postgraduate level.”

Although this project is currently based in Malaysia, a longer-term goal involves building a collaborative center for trauma education serving all of Southeast Asia. One of the systemic challenges to sustainability continues to be cost and currency valuation between countries with different economies. The International Trauma

Treatment Education Fund was developed by Dr. Mahinder to help provide future scholarships to offset training costs.

“Creating a local network of providers and trainers who can eventually support one another through peer consultation and support the next generation of refugee-focused providers by providing trauma treatment education has always been the long-term goal of this project,” Carlson says.

Through its collaborative approach and commitment to decolonizing knowledge, this pioneering effort stands as a beacon of progress in the field and offers hope for improved mental health outcomes in Southeast Asia and beyond.

—KEVIN MOE

Support the International Trauma Treatment Education Fund: [z.umn.edu/ITTEF](https://z.umn.edu/ITTEF)

Upcoming events

- Call for Nominations: CEHD Rising Alumni**  
The CEHD Alumni Society honors outstanding individuals through the Alumni Awards of Excellence, Rising Alumni Awards, and the Distinguished International Alumni Award. Do you know an exceptional CEHD graduate who deserves recognition?  
► Info: [cehd.umn.edu/alumni/society/awards](https://cehd.umn.edu/alumni/society/awards)
- CEHD Research and Innovation Day**  
*Thursday, March 21*  
*McNamara Alumni Center*  
Join us at our annual faculty and student research showcase  
► Info: [cehd.umn.edu/research/research-day](https://cehd.umn.edu/research/research-day)
- Commencement**  
*Friday, May 10*  
► Info: [cehd.umn.edu/commencement](https://cehd.umn.edu/commencement)



COURTESY OF MAHINDER KAUR

JAIKUS DAVIS



# Intersections: Exposing and closing disability research gaps

*How the Institute on Community Integration is helping to overcome these disparities*

**WHILE STILL A TEENAGER**, Anjali Forber-Pratt filed a lawsuit against her school district, alleging it failed to provide accessibility features. Among other alleged shortcomings, she was prevented from registering for an applied technology course that made use of a wind tunnel. The case settled, but for Forber-Pratt, it was just the starting line.

“I was a wheelchair racer, and was intrigued by the experiments and the data that a wind tunnel could generate,” Forber-Pratt recalled in a meeting last fall at CEHD’s Institute on Community Integration (ICI). ICI’s Research and Training

Center on Community Living brought together Forber-Pratt and other prominent disability activists and scholars within and outside the University of Minnesota to establish a research agenda addressing racial, ethnic, linguistic, cultural, and other disparities in the disability experience.

Forber-Pratt, who was born in Calcutta, India, and adopted by a U.S. family, shared that her experience was further complicated because she was not only a person with disabilities, but a person of color in a nearly all-white school.

“What I’ve learned throughout my life is that we can’t be afraid to talk about

that, to dissect it, and study it,” she told the attendees. “The layers and systemic forces of oppression that I experienced are at the heart of what we mean by intersectional research.”

Forber-Pratt went on to become a Paralympic medalist, a disability advocate, and a principal investigator at Vanderbilt University before being named the current director of the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR).

“Conducting research in partnership with people with disabilities is a high priority of hers, and in addition to leading an important funding agency, she deeply understands intersectionality,” says Amy Hewitt, ICI’s director, who has focused the organization’s research agenda squarely around principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion in the context of intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD).

ICI’s 2022 “State of the Science: Engaging Persons with IDD from Underserved Racial, Ethnic, Linguistic, and Cultural Groups in Research” meeting included



◀ Opposite page: NIDILRR Director Anjali Forber-Pratt with Kolton. Forber-Pratt, a Paralympic medalist, urged State of the Science attendees to include people with disabilities in all phases of research. Above left: ICI Director Amy Hewitt is serving a four-year term as editor of *Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities*, a peer-reviewed journal. Above right: Tawara Goode, director of the Georgetown University National Center on Cultural Competence, worked with ICI to develop critical new research questions about disability and race.



people with disabilities who are crime victims in a culturally and linguistically appropriate way?

Hewitt also challenged ICI’s principal investigators to embed DEI-linked investigative questions and partnerships with people with IDD in every research proposal.

“Having a disability and being from a racial, ethnic, linguistic, or cultural background that has historically been marginalized steers you to the largest disparities and equity issues that exist,” Hewitt says. “But, when you hear about diversity, equity, and inclusion, disability is far too often left out.”

Even within the disability research community, there are barriers. People with disabilities who use communication devices, or speak languages other than English, are deaf, or have mental health needs, are routinely left out of studies, says Goode, a longtime ICI collaborator who leads Georgetown’s National Center for Cultural Competence.

“The greater your support need, the more likely it is you’ll be left out and the message is, ‘you’re not even worthy of being studied,’” Hewitt says. The oversampling required to include racially,

linguistically, ethnically, and culturally diverse perspectives in a disability study is another barrier, as is the general difficulty in winning approvals from institutional review boards.

“The disability service system was conceptualized and developed by middle-class white people, so what is available to people with disabilities from diverse backgrounds may or may not be what they want or need,” Hewitt says.

She urged researchers to consider Goode’s cultural framework when evaluating public disability services. This includes assessing whether services are not only available and being used, but are truly accessible, acceptable, and of high quality for users from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

“Understanding the complexity within the context of the multiple dimensions of culture is so very important in the conduct of research,” Goode says.

“We haven’t figured out how to make disability services nimble and responsive enough to meet people’s needs, and yet we continue to wonder why white people utilize them in disproportionate numbers,” Hewitt says.

Last spring, Hewitt was invited to a White House “Communities in Action: Building a Better Minnesota” event. It left her optimistic, particularly in light of President Biden’s executive order calling for addressing equity and inclusion, which resulted in requests for research proposals requiring that differences in race, ethnicity, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds be explicitly explored.

“That order has already changed behavior,” Hewitt says. “It will influence researchers, and our documented proceedings and literature reviews around the importance of doing this work will hopefully matter, too.”

—JANET STEWART



STORYBLOCKS.COM; PHOTOS COURTESY OF INSTITUTE ON COMMUNITY INTEGRATION

# Welcome, George Veletsianos



**GEORGE VELETSIANOS** (Γιώργος Βελετσιάνος) is a professor of learning technologies in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction (C&I). He is a Cypriot-Canadian researcher and educator, and most recently he was professor and Canada Research Chair in Innovative Learning and Technology at Royal Roads University in Victoria, British Columbia. Veletsianos is a U of M alum, having received his MA and PhD degrees from the learning technologies program in C&I in the mid to late 2000s. He pursues a socially responsible and critical research agenda focused on responding to complex education problems in online and blended contexts, such as inequitable access, participation divides, and online harassment.

“As possible solutions to these difficult problems cut across multiple disciplines, my research agenda has embraced collaboration, interdisciplinarity, and methodological pluralism,” he says. This agenda is divided into three strands (1) design, development, and evaluation of online and blended learning environments, (2) the study of learning experiences and participation in emerging online environments, and (3) learning futures.

“These interests are driven by the understanding that even though technology can be a promising ally in addressing the enormous economic, demographic, political, social, and environmental challenges facing our K-16 education, its assumptions and solutionist tendencies can also be problematic,” he says.

**Fun Fact: If you could invite any figure—living or dead—to dinner, who would it be and why?**

Of course, I would want to have dinner with all the usual changemakers and visionaries and aim to glean insights about how to make the world a better place. But I think I would focus my time locally and have a series of ongoing dinners with local youth, learning more from them about what matters to them, what their aspirations are, how we can serve them better, and what kinds of futures they see for themselves in the world.

## CEHD hosts inaugural faculty recognition ceremony

**TO FORMALLY HONOR RECIPIENTS** of endowed chair, professorship, and fellowship positions for the 2023-24 academic year, CEHD hosted a faculty recognition

ceremony in September at McNamara Alumni Center. This inaugural event was to celebrate the successes of CEHD faculty who hold named positions and show

appreciation to the generous partners who endowed these awards, creating a legacy of impact. “Faculty members are at the heart of the University of Minnesota’s thriving academic community,” said Dean Michael C. Rodriguez at the event. “The range of knowledge and skill we bring, along with a commitment to advance knowledge through research and to impact future generations through teaching and outreach, remind us how essential faculty are to the University’s mission.”

See all faculty award recipients:  
[cehd.umn.edu/giving/gifts](http://cehd.umn.edu/giving/gifts)



## Honors

- Saida Abdi**, School of Social Work, received a 2023 President’s Award for Outstanding Service.
- Ronald Asiimwe**, Department of Family Social Science, received the International Centre for Excellence in Emotionally Focused Therapy John Douglas Award for his EFT initiatives in East Africa.
- Sara Axtell**, Department of Family Social Science, received a 2023 University of Minnesota Outstanding Community Service Award.
- Barbara Billington**, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, is the 2023-24 recipient of the Charlotte Striebel Equity Award. The award recognizes a U faculty or staff member who goes above and beyond daily responsibilities to promote access for the common good.
- Joan Blakey**, School of Social Work, received the 2023 Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) Established Faculty Service and Leadership in Social Work Education Award.
- Stephanie Carlson**, Institute of Child Development, received the James McKeen Cattell Fund Sabbatical Award for 2023-24.

- Lesa Clarkson**, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, received a University of Minnesota Outstanding Community Service Award.
- Debbie Golos**, Department of Educational Psychology, received an Education Excellence Award from the Minnesota Commission of the Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing.
- Jessie Kember**, Department of Educational Psychology, received the Provost’s Unit Service Award for 2023. The award recognizes faculty for exceptional service that has strengthened the functioning and climate of their unit or department.
- Kendall King**, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, received the 2024 Distinguished Scholarship and Service Award from the American Association for Applied Linguistics. She also was honored with the Linda Duttonhaver Distinguished Alumni Award from the University of California.
- Emily Kringle**, School of Kinesiology, was selected to receive the 2023 American Congress of Rehabilitation Medicine Young Investigator Award in Post-Acute Stroke Rehabilitation.

- Li Li Ji**, School of Kinesiology, received an honorary doctoral degree from the Hungarian University of Sport Science. He is also a recipient of a 2023 Citation Award from the American College of Sports Medicine and was honored by the Chinese Physiological Society for his decades-long collaboration with China.
- Traci LaLiberte**, Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare, was named one of the “Top 50 Women Leaders of Minnesota for 2023” by Women We Admire.
- Nicole LaVoi**, Tucker Center for Research on Girls & Women in Sport, was named a “Champion of Equality” by the 2023 US Open.
- Jana Lo Bello Miller** and **Keitha-Gail Martin-Kerr**, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, received the Fellowship Award on Antisemitism and Jewish Inclusion in Educational Settings from George Washington University.
- Mitch McSweeney** and **Landy Lu**, School of Kinesiology, received the EASM Best Conference Paper Award for their work titled “The Use of Bricolage in a Resource-Constrained Sport for Development and Peace Organization.”



## In Memoriam

**DR. BONNIE BRAUN** passed away on November 5 at her home in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. She was 76 years old. From 1994 to 1998, she served as the first associate dean for outreach and associate professor in the College of Human Ecology, which housed the Department of Family Social Science.

As associate dean, she was responsible for both Cooperative Extension and Continuing Education. She was challenged to generate revenue through adult education, grants, and contracts. She also served on the initial Great Plains Interactive Distance Education Alliance (IDEA) that envisioned family and consumer science degree programs delivered through internet technology.

In 1997, Braun teamed up with Professor Jean Bauer on an initiative to help people better understand the impacts of new federal legislation on welfare reform. Their goals were to measure the social and economic implications of welfare reform on families and to monitor state and local responses. Their project, “Responding Knowledgeably: From Welfare Reform to Well-Being,” received an award for Outstanding Achievement in Public Issues Education presented by the Farm Foundation and the National Public Policy Education Committee. *Read her full obituary:* [z.umn.edu/Bonnie\\_Braun](http://z.umn.edu/Bonnie_Braun).

JAIUS DAVIS



# Centering relationships and learning

*Faculty collaboration advances CEHD's international mission and diversity efforts*



## SCHOOL LEADERS RETURN TO CEHD

A GROUP of European school administrators visited CEHD for a week last fall as part of an educational exchange program that has been regularly taking place around the world since 2016. The International School Leaders Association (ISLA), officially named in 2020, brings together education leaders from Europe and the United States. Members leverage their unique expertise from their local communities to examine various approaches to promoting the economic and social advancement of minority, refugee, and immigrant youth. The CEHD visit this fall was co-sponsored by the U.S. State Department.

"It was a fantastic opportunity to make new connections and learn about new

practices and approaches, in addition to building upon very effective existing relationships and furthering my knowledge of different educational systems," says Graeme Brown, one of His Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) of Education in Scotland. Brown's duties include supporting improvement and providing assurance both within schools and across Scottish education.

An important takeaway for Brown was learning about different approaches to some common school problems. "I found work being done in Minnesota on anti-racist education and discussions around political literacy and education in the U.S. and beyond to be particularly interesting for my own education system's context and development," he says.



ISLA's annual meetings are an opportunity for colleagues to collaborate, share ideas, and exchange resources. Through the years it has become an important learning community for the group of international school leaders. "I loved meeting with my European and U.S. colleagues to share our visions of the world of education in our different countries," says Magali Gallais, a senior education advisor at Albert Camus Middle School in Clermont-Ferrand, France.

Gallais says French schools must be more open to different cultures. "I brought back with me a piece of North American culture—a culture of tolerance," she says. "As well I brought back a lot of friendship and human warmth."

Peter Stumpf, an associate headteacher at Cranford Community College in London, says the hospitality of the University, led by International Initiatives Director Marina Aleixo, was stunning. "The blend of formal input from University faculty and experts in the field combined with visits to schools and community groups was superbly planned and threaded seamlessly together," he says.

▲ Above left: ISLA participants spend an afternoon at Edison High School meeting with school leaders and students. Above right: Director of International Initiatives Marina Aleixo gives the opening remarks at the ISLA welcome reception at McNamara Alumni Center.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVES

Stumpf says he was keenly interested in the work of Executive Director of Educational Leadership Katie Pikel, particularly her research into the workload of principals in Minnesota. He found they resonated with his experiences as a principal in the UK. "These challenges are not unique to one country or culture, and the demands of school leadership are similar across many countries," he says. "As a group we also had much time to talk about and share our experiences with each other."

Stumpf says Cranford is looking forward to welcoming Aleixo this spring to lead a workshop and to a future study trip for its staff to the U of M where they can continue to develop their partnership work together to support young people in need. "Thank you for a great week!" he says.

## FACULTY EXPERIENCE IN KAZAKHSTAN

FOR THE PAST two years, CEHD has been working on building its collaboration with educational institutions in the Central Asian country of Kazakhstan. "As a college we believe global partnerships are opportunities to gain new perspectives and deepen our understanding of different fields of study," says Aleixo.

In October, a group of CEHD faculty members spent 10 days in Kazakhstan visiting some of its educational institutions, collaborating in meetings, and presenting their research and work.

"Our trip to Kazakhstan was immensely educational and rewarding in so many ways," says Department of Organizational Leadership, Policy, and Development Professor Andrew Furco. "In addition to visiting a diverse set of higher education institutions in Almaty and Astana and learning about Kazakhstan's incredible history and its peoples, the members of our delegation had the chance to reconnect with CEHD alumni, share some of our

# THIS IS WHY I GIVE

IN IRENE OTT'S HOMETOWN of Albert Lea, 4-H was a vital part of the community, and her participation laid the foundation for a 30-year career in University outreach programs.

Ott enrolled in the College of Home Economics to pursue her dream of becoming an extension agent. (Home Economics later became the College of Human Ecology, which also housed the Department of Family Social Science, now a part of CEHD.) Unfortunately, a family health crisis forced her to leave school for a period. "My adviser gave me courage to decide to put my education on hold," she says. "I remember how much she helped me through that situation."

After three years of caring for her family and working, Ott was able to return to the U and complete her bachelor's and master's degrees. She then worked in Martin and McLeod Counties as a home economist, teaching practical skills and sharing the University's expertise with homemakers and 4-H groups.



▲ Former CEHD Dean Jean Quam and Irene Ott.

Ott realized that in order to advance, she needed more urban experience, and got a job in Genesee County, Michigan. There, she focused on parent education and worked with a much more diverse population. Eventually she joined Michigan State University and became the first female district supervisor, managing extension personnel and programs in 11 counties. Some of the "crusty old timer agents" thought they could test Ott by inviting her to visit their farms and get her hands dirty—"as if I'd never been to one," she recalls with a laugh. In 1980, she moved back to Minnesota

and worked as a program leader and state director, retiring six years later. She was recognized in 2014 with a CEHD Distinguished Alumni Award.

Ott's University and professional affiliations introduced her to students from all over the world. She noticed international students often needed additional financial assistance to go to professional conferences, hire writing tutors, and other needs. Taking advantage of a matching program, she established the Irene M. Ott International Fellowship in Family Social Science. "Travel is the best education you can get, and I wanted to support graduate students who are coming to Minnesota from their home country," she says. At age 92, Ott says she still keeps up with the field, and appreciates the strong leadership and forward-looking faculty in CEHD.

—ANN DINGMAN





own work with our gracious hosts and with each other, and plan future goals and new activities with our Kazakhstan partners.”

For Department of Family Social Science Professor Catherine Solheim, the experience was an opportunity for learning and reflection. “It renews my commitment to invest time and energy to build relationships and collaborate with scholars from this part of the world, and to share access to resources whenever possible,” she says. “The beauty of this is that while I hope our work together helps my international colleagues to achieve their goals, my own career and life are immensely enriched from our collaborations.”

Zhuldyz Amankulova, a current postdoc in CEHD, helped organize and lead the trip. “Our time in Kazakhstan provided

▲ Clockwise from above left: ISLA participants had the opportunity to join a pilgrimage to the George Floyd Global Memorial. The organization’s mission is to curate spaces for all people to grieve, pay respects, and be a voice for justice. The time at George Floyd Square was an opportunity to learn and reflect. ISLA participants visit LEAP Academy in St Paul. The high school is dedicated to serving students who are new to the United States and who are learning English. During the visit, the ISLA group met with students and teachers to learn about LEAP’s unique programs and learning approach. CEHD leaders reconnect with Kazakh scholars during their visit to the Bolashak central office in Astana. Faculty and Kazakh scholars take time during their visit to hike Shymbulak Mountain in Almaty, Kazakhstan.

a platform for dialogue and knowledge exchange, contributing to CEHD’s efforts to meaningfully engage with existing partners and foster new relationships,” she says. “One of the important outcomes of the visit was signing the Memorandum of Understanding with the JSC Center for International Programs, an administrator of Kazakhstan’s international programs such as the prestigious Bolashak scholarship and 500 scholars program.”

CEHD’s growing relationship with Kazakhstan is the result of its successful Research, Pedagogy, and Leadership visiting scholars’ program. CEHD faculty participating in the October visit had served as hosts and collaborators for Kazakh scholars in 2022. The college is currently welcoming its second cohort of scholars.

—KEVIN MOE

PHOTOS COURTESY OF INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVES



*How Pauline Boss’ groundbreaking theory changed our view of loss*

*By* KEVIN MOE

**SOMETIMES PEOPLE CALL DR. PAULINE BOSS A GRIEF EXPERT.** She always corrects them. “I’m not a grief expert,” she says. “I’m a loss expert.”

Loss leads to grief, she explains, but in the case of a missing person, for example, the ability to grieve is frozen. You are immobilized waiting for clear information which may never come. “You don’t know if that person is alive or dead,” she says. “People can’t grieve; they are stuck. Thus the theory of ambiguous loss is about stress, a deep, deep stress that without

certainty, may continue for a lifetime.”

Boss, a professor emeritus in the Department of Family Social Science, has spent nearly 50 years studying this phenomenon of ambiguous loss, a term she coined in the 1970s. Ambiguous loss describes a loss that remains unclear and thus has no resolution. It leads to feelings of confusion, anxiety, and chronic sorrow. To help guide people living with ambiguous loss to a steadier ground, Boss has practiced family therapy, trained fellow therapists, written numerous books, and

expanded on her theory, which has become recognized throughout the world.

David Olson is a fellow professor emeritus who has known Boss for nearly 40 years and has observed her work up close. “One significant characteristic of her academic work is that it bridges theory, research, and practice—what I call the ‘triple threat,’” he says. “This means that her ideas are theoretically sound, empirically validated, and relevant to helping individuals, couples, and families. Her major contribution to the family profession and



to individuals, couples, and families has been the development of the concept of ambiguous loss. May her ideas continue to enhance the lives of those under stress around the world.”

### IDENTIFYING AMBIGUOUS LOSS

Boss’ professional work in ambiguous loss first took root in graduate school, but the antecedents can be traced back much further than that. She jokes that she listened to the popular radio detective drama *Mr. Keen, Tracer of Lost Persons* growing up in

the 1930s and 40s. “But I think there’s a bigger reason I’ve stayed with this topic,” she says. “I’ve always had a love of family.”

Boss grew up on a farm in New Glarus, Wisconsin. She was one of four children in an immigrant Swiss family. She remembers her father receiving letters from relatives back in the homeland. Sometimes the letters had a black border—signifying a death in the family. Even though she didn’t know the Swiss relative personally, she could still feel a sense of loss through her parents. Immigrants by their very defini-

tion have ambiguous loss baked into their identities. As they move from one place to another, a part of their lives is missing. “Even if it is a voluntary immigration, you have lost something,” she says. “You have left something or someone behind.” That is a common kind of ambiguous loss.

As Boss entered the 1950s, there weren’t a lot of choices for women in college, but a combination of a love of reading, a desire for scholarly pursuits, and a streak of curiosity motivated her to seek her own path. She enjoyed teaching so she earned

since she had such a unique loss. Through a childhood friend, Carnes heard about Pauline Boss and her work and contacted her via email. In May of 2007, Carnes came to Minnesota and met with Boss over three days.

“She was a lifeline,” Carnes says. “I come from a scientific community and it’s hard to get our head around that we don’t have a solution to a problem.” Carnes recalls talking to people who didn’t know how to communicate with her. “A friend of Jim’s turned beet red and walked away from me,” she says. “He couldn’t talk to me. He felt so bad for me but he didn’t know how to handle it.”

Carnes met with Boss regularly for some years. “A practical jewel of wisdom I got from her was ‘don’t let anybody in any way pressure you to have an ending to this you are not comfortable with,’” she says. “People make up their own endings. I finally said to people, ‘You can make up an ending for Jim, but I don’t have an ending for Jim.’”

The biggest gift Boss gives is the understanding that a person can still have a life, Carnes says. “You can have ‘yes, he may be here’ and ‘yes, he isn’t’ and still be comfortable having a life with meaning. All these years later I still feel married. I asked Pauline if that was normal. It was very normal.”

Today, Carnes is retired from start-ups in Silicon Valley. She regularly travels between Madison, Wisconsin, and San Francisco with her two greyhounds. She likes writing poetry and she still skis. She and Boss coauthored an article called “The Myth of Closure,” from which Boss wrote her most recent book. “When I talk about ambiguous loss, I do all that I can to honor Pauline, because she is so helpful,” Carnes says. “And if talking about it can help other people—well, I would be grateful if anything I said could be of use for anyone who is walking that path.”

### Pauline: a very knowledgeable lady friend

**THE LATE LOCAL THEATER LEGEND** Dudley Riggs, a longtime friend, introduced his wife, Pauline Boss, to me decades ago at the “original” Guthrie Theater designed by Ralph Rapson. Over the years, Pauline, Dudley, and I would meet in various restaurants and attend many theater shows. These were the days when things were fun, interesting, and busy.

Fast forward to 9/11/2001. A terrible, unforgettable date. Shortly after 9/11, the NYC Twin Towers President of the Local Service Employees International Union contacted Pauline. This began a truly historical learning curve in NYC. With Pauline’s leadership, grief counselors and union staff members counseled families who had lost (or not) loved ones. Were people lost in the Twin Towers or surrounding area, were they dead, or alive walking around shocked, lost, or running away? Ambiguous loss, no closure. Grief counseling, under Pauline’s leadership, was invaluable, and is to this day.

In 2004, Pauline invited me to attend “An Evening Honoring Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton and Professor Pauline Boss for Their Critical Help in Healing Families and Communities in the Aftermath of September 11th.” The event took place on July 23 on the 60th floor of Chase Manhattan Plaza, overlooking NYC. It was a rainy evening. We heard many heartfelt stories that night; including the loss of loved ones, the loss of friendships,



and the many friendships made among those grieving during the healing process, and their future of dealing with ambiguous loss. After the program, Pauline introduced me to a family she had helped. They briefly shared with me their journey. With them was the cutest little girl, with the cutest little dress and a big smile. The family was on its way to healing. I will never forget the little girl and her family. They all loved Pauline.

Our wonderful friendship continues to this day. We were recently together, with Pauline’s family members, to celebrate the ribbon cutting of Dudley Riggs Brave New Workshop on Hennepin Avenue in Minneapolis. We regularly enjoy dinner and attending opening night shows at the theater. It’s a true pleasure to share time with a very knowledgeable lady friend.

— Jane Mauer

President, Butler Properties, LLC  
Pauline Boss family friend

### ‘She was a lifeline’

**JANUARY 28, 2024, MARKS 17 YEARS** that Donna Carnes has lived with ambiguous loss. Her husband, famous computer scientist Jim Gray, disappeared while sailing off San Francisco Bay. Neither Gray nor the 40-foot vessel *Tenacious* were ever seen again.

“We suffered from the extreme end of ambiguous loss,” Carnes says. “We don’t know what happened. There is not one single clue as to what happened to Jim. It was a vanishing. This extreme type of ambiguity is very hard on people because you don’t have even one ‘maybe’ clue to try to shape a story or idea around.”

Carnes was skiing in northern Wisconsin with some friends when she heard the news. The Coast Guard set up a massive search, but extensive effort both above and below the water turned up nothing. “Frankly, a sailboat is a needle lost in a haystack,” she says.

Traditional support groups were not a good fit for Carnes

a degree in education from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She later became a family therapist and went back to graduate school to focus on marriage and the family. As she sat in on therapy sessions with families of troubled children, she noted the fathers were always angry about being there. “Fathers thought their role was to earn a living. They would say ‘Why am I here? I need to be at work.’” she says. “The families had a father, but they all said that the kids were mothers’ work.”

The fathers were psychologically absent but physically present in the family. Although this was the first kind of ambiguous loss Boss studied, it is now known as Type Two: psychological absence with physical presence. This can occur when

the individual is emotionally missing, such as the 1950s fathers, or anyone who is cognitively gone, such as those afflicted with dementia, traumatic brain injury, mental illness, addiction, or any condition that takes away one’s mind and memory.

The other kind of ambiguous loss, Type One, is defined as physical absence with psychological presence. Examples include kidnappings and those missing due to wars, terrorism, and natural disasters. Losses stemming from divorce and adoption are more common examples of Type One, as well as the loss of physical contact with families due to immigration—the feeling Boss’ parents had when they received those black-bordered letters.

Boss researched Type One in the early

70s when, for her doctoral dissertation, she studied the wives of men missing in action in Vietnam and Southeast Asia. It was then when she came up with the term ambiguous loss. “What I did was provide a name for a type of loss that’s been common but had not been acknowledged,” she says. “Giving this stressor a name helps people begin to cope with it.”

“It’s amazing she coined this phrase that we never knew how to approach before,” says journalist and author Krista Tippett, who hosts the popular *On Being* podcast. “Ambiguous loss has filled in such an important part of the puzzle for us.”

Tippett is an expert on moral wisdom and human understanding. She notes that Americans in particular focus so much on

PHOTO COURTESY OF DONNA CARNES

PHOTO COURTESY OF JANE MAUER



closure and moving forward, but that is actually not how people function. “Loss is a condition of being human,” she says. “Pauline has been able to help us understand this particular source of pain. Its biggest strength is taking seriously the fact that *uncertainty* is the reality much of the time, but we have to go on living.”

Boss was a featured guest on Tippet’s podcast in 2020 during the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. The show can be listened to at [z.umn.edu/OnBeing](https://z.umn.edu/OnBeing).

SIX PILLARS OF COPING

As Boss expanded on her theory, she looked for ways to help people mitigate the distress caused by ambiguous loss. She borrowed ideas from Eastern cultures which have a higher tolerance for ambiguity. She worked with many people with

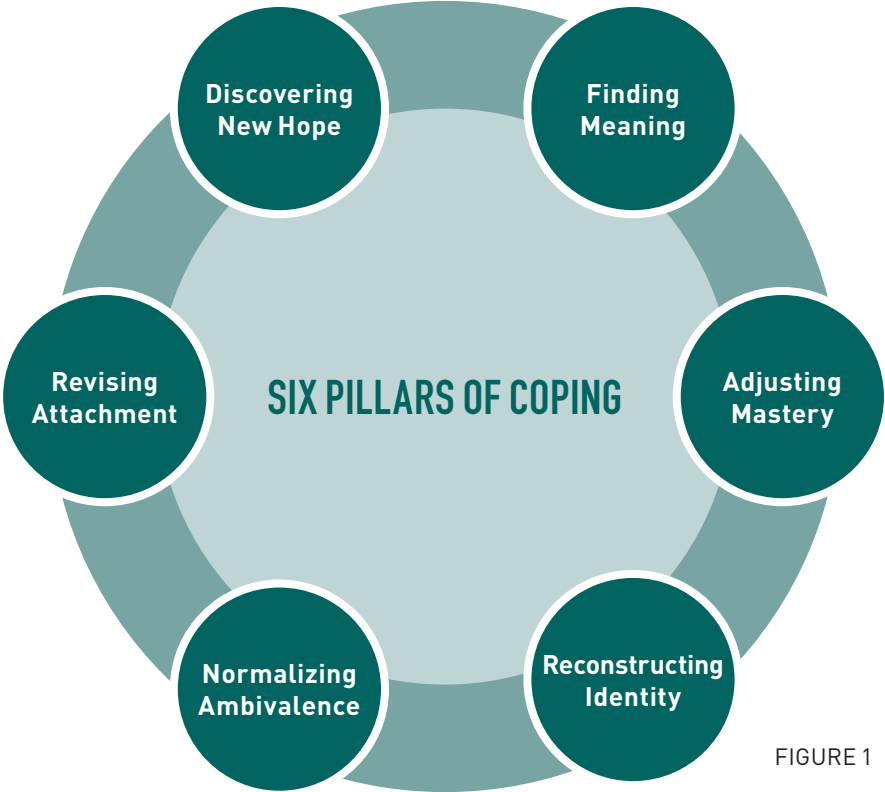


FIGURE 1

missing loved ones who have gone on to have relatively stable lives with some joy in them. “I was curious as to how they do that,” she says. “It was difficult and surprising for me because I like certainty.”

Boss did find some answers by studying families, for example after 9/11, to devise six guidelines for coping with ambiguous loss. “They are not linear,” she stresses. “It’s messy.” Boss recalls the five stages of grief developed by Elisabeth Kübler-Ross who wrote in her last book that she never meant for the stages to be thought of as a straight progression from denial to acceptance. Kübler-Ross came to regret that they were interpreted that way in the public’s mind.

Boss’s six guidelines to help people build resilience to cope with ambiguous loss are presented in a circle, and in no particular order. (See Figure 1) They are:

**FINDING MEANING** is all about making sense of the loss and finding a new purpose. For example, a mother turns the tragic experience of her missing son into campaigning to change legislation and working globally to prevent kidnapping and sexual abuse in other families.

**ADJUSTING MASTERY** is about recognizing your degree of control in the situation. “If we like control, we need to lower it,” Boss says. “We may have to live with not knowing for years, decades, or a lifetime. During the pandemic, people could not control the virus. It was no accident that so many people were baking bread. While they could not control the virus back then, they could control the baking of bread and the certainty of an outcome that was comforting.”

**RECONSTRUCTING IDENTITY** is how a person comes to understand their new identity. “Who am I now that my husband has been physically missing for 20 years? Am I still married? Or with Type Two ambiguous loss, can I have a relationship with someone else if my mate no longer

knows who I am? Yes, you can honor your marriage and also have some social relationships for the sake of your own health,” Boss says.

**NORMALIZING AMBIVALENCE** refers to coming to terms with conflicting feelings. When a person doesn’t know if a missing loved one is alive or dead, they often wish for the ambiguity to be over, but then realize that means they are wishing the person were dead. This leads to ambiva-

lence and guilt for having that thought in the first place.

**REVISING ATTACHMENT** is recognizing that a loved one is both here and gone. “He may be dead and maybe not. She may come back to the way she used to be and maybe not,” Boss says. “You learn to carry two contradictory ideas in your head at one time.” Loved ones are missing, but you keep them in your heart and mind while you also reorganize your life without their

‘THIS IS HOW I FEEL’



**WHEN THANKED** for taking the time for an interview, Ellen Blank says, “Anything for Pauline.” It’s a sentiment likely shared by hundreds of people across the world. A physical education alumna and longtime school administrator, Blank established the Lucile Garley Blank Fellowship in Ambiguous Loss to support rising scholars following in the footsteps of Pauline Boss.

Blank grew up in Roseville and found a strong community in the U’s physical education department. Even better, the program allowed her to participate in sports, a rare opportunity in pre-Title IX days. “One person coached both tennis and basketball,” she says. After graduating, Blank worked in Roseville in a variety of education roles, retiring as assistant superintendent in the same school district she had attended as a child. Blank kept up with the U of M, one day reading about Boss’ work in an alumni magazine. It was the first time she had heard of ambiguous loss and felt an incredible sense of validation. Blank’s mother, an active community leader and voracious reader, had Alzheimer’s disease and passed away after a long decline. The concept of ambiguous loss perfectly captured Blank’s emotions and experience with her mother’s disease.

After meeting Boss, Blank was sure this was an area she wanted to support with her philanthropy. Taking advantage of a matching program, she established the fellowship in memory of her mother. Blank says, “I have shared Pauline’s book with so many people, and every time, people say, ‘this is how I feel.’ It’s a universal experience, and it’s critical that graduate students continue to build the research and clinical work in this area so others can be helped.”

—ANN DINGMAN



Pauline Boss selected bibliography

- 1 *The Myth of Closure: Ambiguous Loss in a Time of Pandemic and Change* (W. W. Norton, 2022)
- 2 *Family Stress Management* (SAGE Publications, Inc., 2017), with Chalandra Bryant\* and Jay Mancini
- 3 *Accompanying the Families of Missing Persons: A Practical Handbook* (International Committee of the Red Cross, 2013)
- 4 *Loving Someone Who Has Dementia: How to Find Hope While Coping with Stress and Grief* (Jossey-Bass, 2011)
- 5 *Loss, Trauma, and Resilience: Therapeutic Work with Ambiguous Loss* (W. W. Norton, 2006)
- 6 *Ambiguous Loss: Learning to Live with Unresolved Grief* (Harvard University Press, 1999)

\*Professor Bryant holds the Pauline Boss Faculty Fellowship at CEHD. She was featured in the Spring/Summer 2023 issue of *Connect*: [connect.cehd.umn.edu/fellowship-and-friendship](https://connect.cehd.umn.edu/fellowship-and-friendship).



physical presence. The last guideline is **DISCOVERING NEW HOPE**. “You can’t just wait for the missing person to come back because that would mean putting your life on hold,” Boss says. “You have to discover something new to hope for. Frequently, the new hope is to help other people avoid suffering from ambiguous loss as you did.”

### WORLDWIDE IMPACT

Since Boss developed her theory, it has been applied nationally and worldwide. Ambiguous loss theory helps shape in-

terventions used by the International Red Cross and the Red Crescent (ICRC) with families and communities coping with massive losses after natural and human-made disasters. Boss and her graduate students traveled to New York City to work with families of the missing after the 9/11 terrorist attacks. She also trained therapists to work with those suffering after the earthquake and tsunami in Japan in 2011 as well as the earthquake in Turkey in early 2023. With ongoing conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East, pandemics, and natural disasters, there

is tragically no shortage of those dealing with ambiguous loss.

“The ambiguous loss framework is being tested around the world in various kinds of situations and contexts. Thus far, it is holding up in different cultures,” Boss says. “However, a theory always needs testing, and there are now two generations of scholars who are doing this testing. I am deeply grateful for that. I hope when I stop working, others will pick up the work on ambiguous loss and develop the theory further.”

Although Boss has had a long and influential career, she considers its highlight

she contributed to the U of M Foundation to fund research in ambiguous loss.

“It was this fund that I, as a development officer, along with other benefactors and development colleagues such as Susan Holter and Brittany Barber, worked to grow into a faculty fellowship that would bear her name in order to carry on the scholarly work of ambiguous loss,” Gamblin says.

Gamblin also feels a more personal connection to Boss’ theory. “Like many people who have straddled two countries and societies—in my case, Japan and the U.S.—I have known and felt deeply the losses that come from having a hybrid national identity that is both and neither,” she says. “It was not until I encountered Pauline’s work that I understood that I was not alone, that it is often the condition of immigrants everywhere, and has been for perhaps all of human history. This understanding was the foundation on which I have tried to reconstruct my existence, and it has been more helpful than I can say.”

As a development officer at the U, Gamblin has encountered innumerable opportunities to give meaningfully. “When I made a professional commitment to try to grow Pauline’s fund into a faculty fellowship, I matched it with a personal commitment to contribute to the utmost of my ability, through near-term gifts and my estate plan,” she says. “I have seen up close what philanthropy can do. My dream is that this fund will grow into the Pauline Boss Professorship in Ambiguous Loss, and from there into a chair, as befits her legacy, both at the University of Minnesota and in the greater world.”

*Support the Dr. Pauline Boss Faculty Fellowship in Ambiguous Loss: [z.umn.edu/BossFellowship](https://z.umn.edu/BossFellowship)*



### Contributing to Boss’ legacy

**NORIKO GAMBLIN**, a former development officer at CEHD and now at the Carlson School of Management, was struck by how modest and accessible Pauline Boss was when they first met. “Huge theory, humble person,” she says.

Gamblin was intrigued by the steady stream of small contributions that were made for ambiguous loss research by family members of those lost in 9/11, mainly the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) workers whose bodies were never recovered.

Boss’ work with the families of SEIU workers led to a fundraiser in New York City (pictured above) in which she and Hillary Rodham Clinton were honored for their work on behalf of the surviving families. Boss received a discretionary gift, which

### Bringing ambiguous loss theory down under

**MY INTEREST IN LEARNING ABOUT LOSS** and grief goes back to the early 1990s when I started working as a social worker in the mental health services of Western Australia. I had the opportunity to work with many people who were affected by mental ill health and their family members where I heard stories of unresolved grief. Many said that others around them, even health professionals, did not see their losses as legitimate or deserving of support. The existing theories, skills, rituals, and community support at that time only addressed clear-cut losses. Thus, I began searching the literature to find a more appropriate understanding of the type of loss that I kept hearing about.

I came across Professor Boss’ first publication, *Ambiguous Loss: Learning to Live with Unresolved Grief*. I contacted her and as luck would have it, she informed me that she had been invited by St. Andrews Church in Adelaide South Australia to facilitate a workshop on skills training in working with ambiguous loss. I traveled to South Australia where I first met Professor Boss in March 2005. Thus began a journey where I was mentored, supported, and taught about ambiguous loss. I spent three weeks in New York learning and discussing ambiguous loss theory and interventions at the International Trauma Studies Centre where Professor Boss was facilitating a workshop. I had many discussions with her and she helped me liaise with services set up by her and her colleagues following the 9/11 incident in New York.

Following my return to Australia, I was acutely aware of the gap in knowledge and practice of working with people experiencing ambiguous loss and the need to address this gap. I was invited to write an article for the local newspaper. This prompted a lot of interest about ambiguous loss from the general public and health professionals. I was invited by various organizations to facilitate workshops and seminars.

In 2008, I was invited to study toward a PhD degree with an emphasis on ambiguous loss at the University of Western



Australia. Professor Boss served as an external supervisor. My coordinating supervisor, who was a professor of psychiatry and had a clinical practice, told me this after reading about the theory in the initial draft of my thesis: “Kanthi, now when I meet with my clients and their families, I remind myself to look at their experiences and stress they are going through, through the ambiguous loss theory.” I was very heartened by this remark.

I completed my PhD studies in 2014. Following completion, those who participated in my research suggested that I convert it to a self-help book. Professor Boss reviewed the draft and gave me feedback and very kindly wrote the foreword for the book. The book, *Hopeful Voyager: Navigating Your Way Through the Ambiguous Losses of Mental Ill Health*, was launched by the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust in October 2018.

The strengths of ambiguous loss theory are that Professor Boss has synthesized a vast amount of research grounded in her clinical experience and her publications are written in clear, accessible language which demonstrates a sincere respect for client diversity. I have found that the theory and clinical interventions she advocates can be shaped to fit a local culture.

I believe that her contribution to society and the world is immeasurable.

**— Dr. Kanthi Perera**  
*Social Worker, 2005 Churchill Fellow  
Perth Australia*

to have taken place just last spring. She was invited to Spain to give the keynote address at the World Family Therapy Congress hosted by the International Family Therapy Association. “I was honored deeply by that,” she says, reflecting

on delivering it to an audience of international practitioners who have applied and tested her theory all over the world. “It was gratifying and humbling,” she says. “I saw that speech as my swan song. But as you know, I’m still working.” ☺



*For more information, including two videos of Pauline Boss’ life and University achievements, visit [z.umn.edu/pauline-boss](https://z.umn.edu/pauline-boss) or scan the QR code.*

PHOTO COURTESY OF PAULINE BOSS

PHOTO COURTESY OF KANTHI PERERA





# 50 years of ‘giving away’ early childhood expertise

CEED celebrates milestone anniversary | by Hannah Baxter

**HEAD START WAS LAUNCHED** in the summer of 1965. *Sesame Street* premiered in 1969. Early Childhood Family Education was first proposed in Minnesota in 1973. In the 1960s and 1970s, interest in early childhood was growing nationwide. At the University of Minnesota, representatives from several academic departments met with early childhood professionals from the Twin Cities area to brainstorm about the state of early childhood education. Department of Educational Psychology Professor Richard Weinberg, Institute of Child Development (ICD) Professor Shirley G. Moore, and ICD staff member Erna Fish-

haut led the effort to organize the activities of staff and faculty whose work touched on early childhood. They established the Center for Early Education and Development (CEED) as an “interdepartmental unit” in 1973 to eliminate barriers to a burgeoning wealth of child development research and best practices coming out of the University. As Weinberg, who later joined ICD faculty and served as a director of both CEED and ICD, was fond of saying, CEED was created to “give away child development.”

In the years that followed, CEED received funding from the University as well as external funders such as the Bush

Foundation and helped launch new courses and a master’s program in early education. CEED staff convened conferences, workshops, and coffee hours; they mailed out publications like the *Early Report* newsletter; and established a lending library. Fishhaut became a frequent presence at the state capitol, where she met with legislators and passed out “Fact Find” pamphlets on child development. More than 100 staff and faculty, students, and community members answered CEED’s call to join the conversation around early childhood.

“Looking at CEED’s history, our activities have always been characterized by two

things: a desire to share evidence-based information and a desire to collaborate,” says Ann Bailey, director of CEED since 2019. “Our programs, our modalities, our curricula, those things have changed with the times and with advances in early childhood research. But sharing evidence-based information and collaboration are constants.”

## ALIGNMENT WITH STATE AND FEDERAL PRIORITIES

As the University’s only center for early childhood research and practice, CEED was well positioned to work on implementing federal legislation like the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), first passed in 1975. A shortage of trained special education providers hampered Minnesota’s ability to provide mandated services. From its inception, CEED provided continuing education to educators, health care providers, legal professionals, and others through its Professional Growth Institutes and Career Growth Fellowships. In 1982, CEED used that expertise to establish the Minnesota Early Intervention Summer Institute, which over the next four decades

would become a must-attend conference for early childhood special educators. CEED also helped create a joint licensure program in special education that offered common classes to ICD and educational psychology students.

“A lot of that work was through Mary’s leadership,” says Educational Psychology Professor Emeritus Scott McConnell. Mary McAvoy, professor of educational psychology, was director of CEED from the mid-1990s until McConnell took on that role in 2000. Frequently referred to as “a force of nature,” she was an expert on special education. In addition to work that flowed from IDEA, CEED became a key player in the implementation of Early Reading First in Minnesota.

“What was a federal initiative to promote literacy for preschoolers was really the beginning of Minnesota’s efforts academically and civically to improve our capacity in early childhood programming to support kids’ needs,” says McConnell. “There was a shift to being more inclusive and attentive of higher-risk kids and more historically marginalized communities.”

As awareness increased that early childhood programming could influence later academic and social-emotional outcomes, so did interest in improving early

childhood program quality. In the 2010s, CEED established a program conducting classroom observations and assessments. CEED also developed curricula for child care providers, some of which became on-line courses in Minnesota’s then-nascent training database, now known as Develop.

CEED was involved in establishing Minnesota’s first quality rating improvement system, which today is known as Parent Aware, and the legacy of these efforts is still a major part of CEED’s work. Today, CEED’s team of trained observers

helps determine program quality ratings for child care providers who participate in Parent Aware. They also train classroom observers and coaches who work with child care providers. Since 2021, the statewide Trainer and Relationship-based Professional Development

Specialist Support (TARSS) program has been based at CEED. TARSS staff support child care trainers and relationship-based professional development specialists who work with licensed child care providers throughout the state. They even teach trainers to originate and develop their own trainings for early childhood educators. Minnesota’s early childhood ecosystem is vital and complex, and CEED expertise is tapped to strengthen it throughout.

“...CEED was created to ‘give away’ child development.”

◀ Opposite Page: collage includes Erna Fishhaut, Richard Weinberg, and Shirley G. Moore, who established CEED in 1973. Below, left: CEED staff at the ninth Minnesota Round Table in Early Childhood Education in 1983. Middle and far right: CEED staff with participants at the Professional Growth Institute in 1977.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF CEED



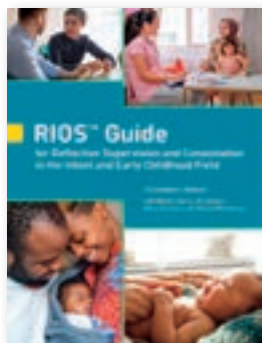


## A GROWING FOCUS ON RELATIONSHIPS

In 1995, Christopher Watson joined CEED to take on the position once filled by Fishhaut. (He would stay on at CEED until he retired in 2021, in capacities that included co-directorship of the center with Amy Susman-Stillman from 2008 to 2015.) Watson worked directly with early childhood educators and heard from them about the challenges they encountered.

“It was a real wakeup call for me to understand that there were kids who were so traumatized and so dysregulated that they behaved in ways that made their caregivers afraid to come to work,” says Watson. “For care providers, it’s not only about the physical impact of violence, but also taking all of that home with them emotionally.”

Watson wanted to help early educators support the children in their care, but he also wanted to understand how the educators themselves might best be supported. One promising technique was reflective supervision. Through regular group sessions or one-on-one meetings, reflective supervision encourages frontline professionals to explore work challenges through the



lens of relationships, and there’s evidence it helps improve effectiveness and mitigate burnout.

In 2011, with colleagues at CEED and elsewhere, Watson began developing the Reflective Interaction Observation Scale (RIOS) to measure the “active ingredients” that make reflective supervision work. Although the RIOS was created for use in research, practitioners immediately adopted this unique tool to guide actual reflective supervision sessions. In 2022, Watson, along with CEED’s Alyssa Meuwissen and others, published the *RIOS™ Guide for Reflective Supervision and Consultation in the Infant and Early Childhood Field* ([z.umn.edu/RIOS\\_guide](http://z.umn.edu/RIOS_guide)) to help them do just that.

## CONTINUITY THROUGH CHANGING TIMES

“CEED was very important, and it’s continued to be,” says Weinberg. “It’s mushroomed now into all sorts of wonderful activities far beyond what we did. It’s giving away workshops, printed materials, and more. I take such pride in seeing what CEED has become.”

From three paid staff members in 1973, CEED—now administratively housed as a center in ICD—has grown to 14 full-time and several part-time staff under Bailey’s leadership. The center contributes to the early childhood field not just through traditional in-person training and events, but also through online learning that allows people anywhere in the world to access CEED’s unique expertise. Outreach to practitioners continues through an active blog, email newsletters, and a newly refreshed series of research-backed tip sheets discussing urgent topics from trauma and resilience to authentic assessment.

Some of CEED’s current projects include leading the revision of Minnesota’s Early Childhood Indicators of Progress (early learning guidelines that describe what children should be able to do before kindergarten), studying a pilot reflective supervision program for county child welfare workers, and partnering with the Greater Minneapolis Crisis Nursery to update and publish their in-house training curriculum.

▼ Below, from left: CEED held the first Minnesota Round Table in Early Childhood Education in 1973; CEED celebrated its 10th anniversary with a party and remarks by its founding staff members.



Long-standing partnerships with state agencies have allowed CEED to have an impact at the state level. Meanwhile, collaborations within UMN have yielded results such as an online library of professional development resources ([cd4cw.umn.edu](http://cd4cw.umn.edu)) for child welfare workers co-created with the Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare and the Building Family Resiliency podcast ([ceed.umn.edu/building-family-resiliency](http://ceed.umn.edu/building-family-resiliency)) co-created with the Institute on Community Integration. Most recently, Bailey and

Elizabeth E. Davis, associate professor in the Department of Applied Economics, were awarded a four-year grant from the federal Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation. Bailey and Davis will study the impacts of subsidies on providers’ and families’ participation in child care assistance programs.

“We work with state and federal agencies, foundations, nonprofits, and businesses,” says Bailey. “Looking at the big picture, there’s a kaleidoscopic quality to the work we do: it evolves in response to the needs of the field, which are not static. Our funding sources also speak to the fact that the organizations who choose to work with us trust that we produce work that’s reliable and impactful.”

Kerri Gershon works with CEED as professional development policy and implementation specialist at the Minnesota Department of Human Services.

“People at CEED have a certain *je ne*

*sais quoi* that combines professionalism, passion, and compassionate humanity,” she says. “Often when we meet, in addition to discussing our agenda items, we’ll discuss important issues facing the field, how we approach our work, and best practices in providing high-quality education to both adults and children. I know that this content isn’t just work for CEED employees, it’s also their passion and area of expertise.”

Bailey agrees.

“I’m grateful for the people who have chosen to bring their talents, their curiosity, and their drive to CEED,” she says. “They show up every day excited to advance the early childhood field and ultimately, to have a positive impact on the lives of early childhood professionals and the children and families they serve.”

Learn more: [ceed.umn.edu](http://ceed.umn.edu)

PHOTO COURTESY OF CEED; JAIRUS DAVIS





## From a small rural village in South Korea to the U of M and beyond

*A C&I PhD student's international journey as an educator and scholar*

**AS AN INTERNATIONAL DOCTORAL** student, I am always enjoying interacting with and learning valuable lessons from my academic mentors, colleagues, friends, neighbors, and prospective teachers from different places around the world. How wonderful it is to engage with diversity and differences! And what an international life it is literally!

Actually, I was born and raised in a small rural village in the southwestern region of South Korea. According to my father, who has lived there for almost 70 years, there might be no more than five persons who pursued a doctoral degree in a foreign country before me throughout the history of my village. It is just like a typical farming village

in South Korea. In retrospect, affinity and kinship among the villagers were much more valued than diversity or difference there.

### REFLECTING ON WHAT BROUGHT ME TO UMN

I decided to become a teacher simply because I liked my teachers throughout my student days and enjoyed helping my friends to understand more easily what our teachers taught us. In my undergraduate years in elementary education in South Korea, I happened to read Paulo Freire's magnum opus, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, which made me critical of the taken-for-granted in schooling, particularly curriculum. So, in my second year as a public elementary teacher, I entered in earnest the field of

► At left, Dugyum Kim works as an elementary school teacher in South Korea. At right, Kim's hometown in South Korea.

curriculum studies for a master's degree in South Korea. While engaging in a variety of readings related to critical curriculum studies, I happened to meet Nina Asher, who is my current advisor, through her works about decolonizing curriculum, which was the serendipitous “a-ha moment” prefiguring that I would be her advisee. Since then, I have felt that decolonial perspectives could be meaningful in taking curriculum seriously and answering fundamentally asked questions regarding curriculum: what knowledge is/has been of most worth?, and whose knowledge is/has been legitimized? After that moment, I was strongly attracted to the culture and teaching program in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at UMN and influential critical works of other professors in the program. I felt as if UMN would be my academic home and dreamed of pursuing doctoral studies there, and the dream has come true!

“What an amazing international life!”

### MY DOCTORAL JOURNEY FILLED WITH EUREKA MOMENTS

This is already my third year as a doctoral student. My doctoral journey in the culture and teaching program has been enriched through a series of events and experiences related to recognizing cultural differences and diversity; making connections with mentors, academic “siblings,” “cousins,” and (prospective) teachers; and transforming myself. During my journey, I have also had great experiences making presentations with my academic “siblings,” Yulian Segura, Olga Natasha Hernandez Villar, and Charlene Cornwell at *The Journal of Curriculum Theorizing* Bergamo Conference last year and this year. I am currently doing research on teachers' agency in culturally relevant



teaching with an assistant professor at another university who is also an alumnus of my department. And also, through theory and critical autobiography—including self-reflection on my own past and present experiences as a student, teacher, doctoral scholar, and student teaching supervisor—I am examining the possibility for rethinking multicultural education.

These ongoing processes of “making the familiar unfamiliar” and raising questions on the taken-for-granted are challenging and at the same time enjoyable for me. I am inspired by my academic mentors and colleagues, and places where I am living now and used to live in the past.

### WITH PROSPECTIVE ELEMENTARY TEACHERS, ENJOYMENT AND CONTINUOUS LEARNING

As a student teaching supervisor, I am currently working with nine teacher candidates at three different elementary schools in the Twin Cities' area. I am not just supervising them, but also learning a lot from them. For example, I see how passionate they are about teaching and making amicable relationships with their students and how much they are working on developing their critical thinking for social justice. I am enjoying

meeting and talking with these student teachers, supporting their lessons in the classroom, and cooperating with classroom teachers. Student teaching supervision has been expanding my horizons as regards educational practices, allowing me to grapple with bridging theory and practice in substantive ways. So I am considering how to help and support my teacher candidates with my international experiences as a teacher and doctoral student—developing my own comparative perspectives on the culture of education by visiting schools; observing teacher candidates' lessons; and engaging in discussions with prospective teachers, cooperating teachers, and colleagues at UMN.

My lovely daughter was born in Minneapolis last year! I have become a graduate student parent and am trying to imagine what education will and should look like for my daughter and our future generations. I never dreamed of studying abroad when I was young, but now, I am dreaming of social justice-oriented education and making a difference with my mentors, friends, colleagues, and family across South Korea and the U.S. What an amazing international life!

*Dugyum Kim is a third-year PhD student in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction's culture and teaching program.*

JAIRUS DAVIS

COURTESY OF DUGYUM KIM



from the  
PRESIDENT



DR. JENNA MITCHLER  
PhD '15,  
curriculum & instruction  
Assistant Superintendent,  
Bloomington Public  
Schools

DEAR FELLOW ALUMNI

Connecting with others can be such a source of joy. Because of that, I'm grateful to all those who joined us for our much-anticipated homecoming events at the end of September. Hundreds of CEHD faculty and staff, alumni, and their families took part, including walking in the homecoming parade on a beautiful Friday evening. Events like these are such a celebration of community.

And we are a remarkable community. CEHD is one of the largest colleges at the University of Minnesota, with over 75,000 graduates. Every year, we recognize several of them for their accomplishments and outstanding contributions. Please consider nominating someone you know for one of these awards at [cehd.umn.edu/alumni/awards](https://cehd.umn.edu/alumni/awards).

I'd also like to invite you to join us and connect with the community at an upcoming event. Our calendar is brimming with exciting opportunities to meet fellow CEHD alumni, share your experiences, and learn from others, and you can find them listed at [cehd.umn.edu/events](https://cehd.umn.edu/events). Let's continue to foster a sense of community and belonging.

Wishing you joy,

In memoriam



**FARRELL J. WEBB**, a U of M PhD alumni in the Department of Family Social Science (FSOS), died suddenly in early November in San Antonio, Texas, where he was serving as provost of the University of the Incarnate Word (UIW). Throughout his career, Webb built programs, led organizational change, and championed access, diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging.

Previous to UIW, Webb served in several roles, including college dean, at California State University–Northridge where he increased retention and graduation rates and led the implementation of new policies to support student success and recruitment of diverse faculty. He also served in several leadership roles at Kansas State University (KSU), Manhattan, where he was recognized for teaching and service to students with disabilities, mentoring graduate and undergraduate students, and supporting women in the sciences.

Tai Mendenhall, a FSOS professor who received his master's in marriage and family therapy at KSU, remembers Webb warmly. "Farrell was a wonderful, supportive, engaging, and inspiring professor and mentor—and later, friend—when I was a master's student at KSU, and over the years since this time. He will forever be a light in my path," he says.

A native of Southern California, Webb earned bachelor's degrees from Loyola Marymount University and master's degrees from CSU Long Beach and New York University. He was honored with a CEHD Distinguished Alumni Award in 2017. In 2019, he was honored with the Marie Peters Award from the National Council on Family Relations (NCFR).

"Farrell was in my grad classes, and was the brightest and wittiest of all," says FSOS Professor Emeritus Pauline Boss. "Then he became a respected colleague at NCFR and rose to the heights he truly deserved. I am so sorry he is gone. I will not forget him."



Share your news

Landed a new job? Celebrating a professional milestone? We want to share your news! All our alumni class notes are now published online. Go to [cehd.umn.edu/alumni/notes](https://cehd.umn.edu/alumni/notes) and send us your news—with photos if you have them. Read about people you know from CEHD.

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CEHD 2023 Homecoming

ON SEPTEMBER 29, more than 400 CEHD students, faculty, staff, alumni, and friends celebrated homecoming at a pre-parade party and then walked in the parade. Many thanks to CLA student Henrik Schleisman, who has multiple CEHD family connections, for leading the CEHD parade group in his 1986 LeBaron. The car was originally owned by Henrik's grandfather, Jim Schleisman, who was a coach alongside John Mariucci for the Gopher hockey team in the '60s. To cap off a perfect homecoming, the Golden Gophers defeated the Ragin' Cajuns of Louisiana 35-24 on September 30.



JAIRUS DAVIS



Kyla Wahlstrom receives U's highest honor

IN OCTOBER, Senior Research Fellow and Lecturer Kyla Wahlstrom, Department of Organizational Leadership, Policy, and Development (OLPD), was recognized with the U's highest honor, the Outstanding Achievement Award, at an event with family and friends. Wahlstrom has been a national leader in researching school start times and turning evidence into public policy.

Wahlstrom joined the U of M after two decades in K-12 education, holding roles including research fellow with OLPD and director of the Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement (CAREI). She holds a PhD in educational policy and administration from CEHD.

For over 20 years, Wahlstrom's groundbreaking work has been repeatedly confirmed, sparking a movement to provide adolescents with school schedules more aligned with their biological sleep rhythms.





# Toward a more equitable school system

*Educational psychology graduate is a tireless advocate for change*

**WHEN SHE WAS YOUNGER,** Annie Christenson (MA '19, EdS '20) rarely spoke up during classroom discussions. "During conferences, my teachers would tell my mother, 'We really wish she'd share her thoughts more often,'" she says. More recently, the Robbinsdale school psychologist testified before the Minnesota legislature on behalf of MTSS (Multi-Tiered

Systems of Support). She credits her time at CEHD and the colleagues with whom she found support for helping improve her confidence. "During my time in graduate school, I was fortunate to be in a cohort of women who pushed me to be better every single day," she says. "Who created a safe and supportive environment that gave me the

courage to share my thoughts and ideas. I am forever indebted to the relationships I built with faculty and students—I continue to lean on them whether it be for consultation or just life advice." Prior to attending graduate school, Christenson served two years in the community service program AmeriCorps as a Promise Fellow, which involves providing academic and behavioral support to students. "I really took to working with students one on one, getting the opportunity to

▶ Opposite Page: At left, Annie Christenson (second from right) receives her MA in school psychology in 2019. At right, Christenson testifies to the Minnesota Legislature on behalf of statewide MTSS.

JAIROS DAVIS

PHOTOS COURTESY OF ANNIE CHRISTENSON



build authentic and meaningful relationships with them and helping them figure out how they learn best," she says. "I also really enjoyed attending problem-solving meetings and thinking about making changes at a systems level to better support the needs of students." A school psychologist mentored her while in AmeriCorps and this relationship whetted her appetite for the field. "I love the hustle and bustle of being a school psychologist, that our days never look the same," she says. "I love that we get to wear many different hats in the building and that we are advocating for building a more equitable and inclusive school system for every student." In graduate school in the Department of Educational Psychology, Christenson helped with research projects related to social-emotional-behavioral assessments and interventions under the direction of Professor Faith Miller. She also was a member of the School Psychology Student Association and learned how to advocate for public education and students' rights at a public policy institute hosted by the National Association of School Psychologists. "These experiences shaped what I wanted to focus on in my work as a practitioner in schools," she says. "Increasing access to mental health services for adolescents and promoting culturally relevant and restorative practices." Now in her fourth year as a school psy-

chologist in Robbinsdale, Christenson says the job can be challenging and emotionally taxing. "Sometimes even isolating," she adds. "But being in community with others who are advocating and uplifting change in the field is what sustains me to keep forging on." Every day Christenson and her colleagues make decisions that impact students' educational careers. "My priority is to limit the amount of harm students are exposed to in what is very much a broken system," she says. She got her chance to address some of the inequities in the system recently when she was asked by a colleague to testify before the last Minnesota legislative session to advocate for statewide MTSS. "This was always a dream of mine to do, partly to honor the quiet child that I used to be and to honor who she is now," she says. MTSS assists educators in applying targeted support to students with various needs. Christenson's testimony helped move the needle toward statewide adoption of the system. "In the latest education omnibus bill, all Minnesota school districts and charter schools must be offered training and support in implementing MTSS," she says. "It's a really solid first

"I love the hustle and bustle of being a school psychologist, that our days never look the same."

step toward effectively and sustainably embedding the MTSS framework in Minnesota schools." Serving on the board of the Minnesota School Psychologists Association and as a member of its legislative committee, Christenson will be working tirelessly over the next few years to educate and support practitioners during this transition. Her experiences at CEHD will help. "I often tell people that the school psychologists who were trained from CEHD are fully equipped to tackle the demands and challenges of working in education right now," she says. "Outside of the foundational skills needed to be a school psychologist, I learned how to manage my own emotions and maintain control during crisis situations. I learned how to remain flexible even when there are competing demands. I learned how to avoid the sinkhole that is problem admiration and instead hone in on what we have control over, what we have the capacity to solve with the resources available to us."

—KEVIN MOE

Learn more: [edpsych.umn.edu/academics/school-psychology](https://edpsych.umn.edu/academics/school-psychology)



# Empowering sport for all

BY KEVIN MOE | PHOTOGRAPH BY JAIRUS DAVIS

**ANNA GOOREVICH** has a passion for gender equity in sport that is rooted in her own experiences as an athlete. “I played soccer growing up and throughout college, and I have first-hand experiences of the gendered barriers that many athletes face in sport,” she says.

In particular, in her first year of college in 2017, Goorevich suffered a season-ending injury due to RED-S (relative energy deficiency syndrome), a menstrual disorder common in women athletes that is shaped by various socio-cultural factors, like menstruation stigmas and misinformation.

Currently, as a PhD student in kinesiology and a research assistant at the Tucker Center for Research on Girls & Women in Sport, Goorevich recalls her days as a soccer player and strives to leverage her position and research to help make sport a better place for all athletes, regardless of their identity.

“Generally, my research interests revolve around gender and sport, but I have three specific areas of research at the moment: the gendered nature of coaching, menstruation and sport, and gender identity and sport participation equity,” she says. “My planned career path after my PhD is to enter the sport industry, sport governance, or the sport non-profit world. My aim is to use research to inform sport policy and programming that can help create sport into a more welcoming, inclusive, safe, and empowering environment for all athletes.”

Helping her on her journey are the Pam Borton Endowment for the Promotion of Girls and Women in Sport Leadership and Gender Equity in Sport Graduate Fellowship she received this year, and the Edith Mueller Endowed Fund for Graduate Education in the Tucker Center she was awarded last year.

“The assistance I have received has been instrumental in my academic and career development so far,” she says. “It provides valuable resources and time for growth and development, to ensure that I am not just doing research for the academy, but also finding ways to directly make a difference in people’s lives.”

For instance, the Tucker Center hosts a Gender Equity internship for high school and college students every summer. The internship and other Tucker Center-related fellowships gave Goorevich the support to directly participate in the program in a leadership role, where she was able to help guide the interns and focus on giving them a nourishing and transformative summer experience.

“Without the assistance from various scholarships and fellowships, I would not have been able to focus on the public aspect of my scholarship as much as I have,” she says. “Donors’ contributions and support are a key part of making the work that we do possible.”

“Donors’ contributions and support are a key part of making the work that we do possible.”

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its Give to the  
Max Day goal***

**THANK YOU!** Because of our amazing alumni and friends, CEHD raised more than \$19,400 for the Access Scholarship on Give to the Max Day 2023, exceeding our goal and raising critical resources for undergraduates. We are grateful to those who participated and made a direct impact on the success of our students.

