

May 2024

RENZULLI CENTER NEWS

Special Category

Congratulations to Our PhD Graduates!

We were thrilled to celebrate the graduation of several of our students on May 6, 2024! The following individuals completed their PhD programs within the last year in Educational Psychology with emphasis in Giftedness, Creativity, and Talent Development. Read about their dissertation work and next steps below!

Rachael Cody

Rachael Cody is currently a postdoctoral research fellow at the United States Coast Guard Academy, researching the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on cadets' learning. Within the year, she plans to implement an intervention related to effective learning strategies designed to mitigate some of the challenges the cadets face that are associated with post-pandemic learning. She will also be working with the Xavier House, which is a program that identifies and supports high-potential youth in foster care, by engaging in a multi-step screening process to identify suitable candidates for the program. Rachael's dissertation was a thematic analysis that examined high-achieving university students' perceptions of agency experiences. She hopes to continue her work researching the role of agency in education and educational practices that enhance academic outcomes for students facing challenges in gifted education, such as students experiencing foster care and students who are twice-exceptional.

Luis Ferreira

Luis's research focuses on understanding the causal role of psychosocial interventions in promoting achievement while reducing stress and anxiety in talent development programs. In his dissertation study, a randomized controlled trial, he examined the effects of a biofeedback wearable on these factors among honors and non-honors students. The results showed significant decreases in anxiety across both groups and a moderate reduction in stress levels. This August, he will begin his appointment as a visiting scholar at the University of Pennsylvania's Graduate School of Education, where he will continue exploring how psychosocial strategies can enhance both academic success and emotional well-being.

Stacy Hayden

Stacy Hayden is currently a K-12 Evaluation Project Manager at Shaffer Evaluation Group, a small evaluation firm based in Williamsburg, Virginia. As an evaluator, she partners with school districts, institutes of higher education, and other organizations to implement new programs and interventions. Her dissertation explored perceptions of academic risk-taking among students enrolled in a college honors program.

Sarah R. Luria

Sarah R. Luria is a justice-focused scholar working in the areas of creativity, educational equity, and human rights pedagogy. Her work has been published in the Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences, Oxford Handbooks, and Psychology in the Schools. Sarah's dissertation, *Out of the [caste]Box: Examining the Relationship between Creativity and Equity Orientation*, was supported by the P.E.O. Scholar Award, the Gavin Dissertation Award, and a Gladstein Family Human Rights Institute research grant. Looking ahead, she will be continuing her research developing a theory of Social Change Creativity, exploring distortions of student dissent in school discipline paradigms, and teaching courses in anti-oppressive practice.

Pam Peters

Pam Peters is currently a quantitative data analyst at Michigan State University. She analyzes data from undergraduate education programs focused on equity and student success and develops and conducts studies that examine equity across undergraduate education. Her dissertation was an examination of gifted identification matrices from a measurement perspective, using real data to test 36 matrices and 9 non-matrix weighted composite systems.

Kenneth Wright

In his dissertation, Kenneth explored how gifted specialists and classroom teachers co-taught in mixed ability classrooms. After graduation he will be starting a new job as Dean of Talcott Mountain Academy, a STEM-focused school for high-achieving students.

In addition to this group, **Clarisa Rodrigues**, who has been on the research teams for Project LIFT and Project Focus, also completed her PhD in Educational Psychology with emphasis in Special Education. Clarisa is continuing to work with the Renzulli Center team as a postdoc on Project Focus!

Congratulations to Dr. Cody, Dr. Ferreira, Dr. Hayden, Dr. Luria, Dr. Peters, Dr. Rodrigues, and Dr. Wright!

For more information, contact: Catherine Little at catherine.little@uconn.edu

Fun and Useful Resources: From Us to You

How the Gifted Program Changed My Life

by Alexandra Trahan

Students of color are often shut out of advanced placement courses, but the truth is that this path begins in elementary gifted and talented programs. The inequitable distribution in gifted and talented programs is one of the first barriers Black students face in education.

Read more at <https://edtrust.org/the-equity-line/gifted-program-changed-my-life/>

Confratute Announcements

Early Bird Registration Open for Confratute!

Confratute is the longest running summer institute on enrichment-based, differentiated teaching that has been held annually at the University of Connecticut for over 40 years! We hope you are able to join us in person for another memorable year. [Register here.](#)

Confratute will take place at the University of Connecticut from July 14–18, 2024.

Upcoming Events

5/11 Free Webinar: Supporting Inclusive Gifted Services

Join us for a free webinar on May 11, 2024, with Dr. Dina Brulles on Building and Supporting Inclusive Gifted Services - read more below:

The hallmark of excellence in gifted education insists on equitable identification and inclusive gifted services, evidenced by vibrant, culturally diverse, and responsive classrooms. In this Webinar, we consider methods and approaches that can help integrate the needs of our diversely gifted learners into every aspect of school. Focusing on enfranchising all gifted learners and gaining administrative support, Dr. Brulles will share practical steps educators can take to develop and maintain inclusive gifted practices and programs.

[Read more and find the registration link here!](#)

For more information, contact: Del Siegle at del.siegle@uconn.edu

Special CAG Event: Unlocking Creativity at Home

The Connecticut Association for the Gifted and the Renzulli Center for Creativity, Gifted Education, and Talent Development Special Event:

Unlocking Creativity at Home: A Parent's Guide (and Teachers too!)

Thursday, May 23, 2024 from 7:00pm–8:00pm Online via Zoom

Creativity is a necessary 21st century skill. Despite the necessity, schools face challenges to fully cultivate creativity; therefore, parents can play a vital role in fostering this skill. During this session attendees will explore three major topics: Dispelling Creativity Myths, Cultivating

Creative Environments, and specific Guided Practice. Plan to walk away with a virtual toolbox of practical supports for high ability children grades K-8.

UConn Presenters: Jimmy Wilson, Shannon McDonald, and Mei Zheng

Please join us for this exciting presentation by signing up. Free and open to the public. You do not have to be a CAG member to attend. All are welcome! The Zoom link will be emailed to you on the day of the event.

Visit <https://www.ctgifted.org/> to register!

For more information, contact: Catherine Little at catherine.little@uconn.edu

Wallace Research Symposium: Registration Closing!

Registration is open until May 10 for the 2024 Wallace Research Symposium on Talent Development! Join us in Storrs May 19-21, 2024!

[More details and registration information available here.](#)

The symposium is collaboratively organized by the University of Iowa Belin-Blank Center; University of Connecticut-Renzulli Center for Creativity, Gifted Education, and Talent Development; and National Center for Research on Gifted Education.

For more information, contact: Del Siegle at del.siegle@uconn.edu

Research

Project Focus - Seeking Survey Participants

Project Focus, a Javits-sponsored project at the University of Connecticut, is seeking survey participants as part of a research study. The purpose of the survey is to learn more about teachers' self-efficacy, especially related to questioning and discussion in the classroom. The survey will contribute to the overall goals of Project Focus to support professional learning around questioning and discussion to challenge learners in the classroom.

We are seeking survey responses from teachers at grades K-12. We invite teachers who are currently practicing and those who taught within the last five years. Participation in the study will involve responding to an online, anonymous survey. The Self Efficacy survey should take about 10-15 minutes to complete. Participants are eligible to receive a \$10 electronic gift card for participation in the survey.

To learn more or to participate, please [click here](#) to access the survey. Please also consider forwarding this email to colleagues. If you have any questions, please reach out to Catherine Little at catherine.little@uconn.edu or 860-486-2754 or email the team at project.focus@uconn.edu.

For more information, contact: Catherine Little at catherine.little@uconn.edu

Awards, Publications, and Presentations

Neag Distinguished Researcher Award — Del Siegle

On May 3, 2024, Dr. Del Siegle, Director of the Renzulli Center, received the Neag School of Education's Distinguished Researcher Award. Congratulations, Del!!

Read more about Del's work [here](#).

For more information, contact: Catherine Little at catherine.little@uconn.edu



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