

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/>

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



RE Enjoyment
Engagement
Enthusiasm
for Learning **ENZULLI** **center**

for

creativity, gifted education, and talent development