In the past year, it has been wonderful to talk with so many of you about the name change to our department and our current activities and programs. Most recently, at the New York State Reading Association conference, University at Albany literacy graduates and current students were everywhere! It was wonderful to see so many of you and catch up on your current education roles. In these conversations, some of you have asked us about continuing coursework after graduation from the MS degree. Perhaps your principal asked you to lead professional development opportunities for your district. Or, you are interested in teaching a university course for pre-service teachers or becoming a teacher educator at a university. Maybe you want to learn how to engage in inquiry/research to answer your many questions about education. Possibly, you are seeking a community of professional thinkers to converse about current issues and practices. What are your options?

Certificate of Graduate Studies in Teacher Leadership: We designed this 15-credit program for teachers in various leadership roles (e.g., literacy coaches, National Board Certified Teachers, data analysts). In consultation with an advisor, you will develop a set of coursework and practicum experiences that match your interests. For example, you might take a course on leading professional development or have a mentoring experience as a teaching assistant in a MS level practicum course. It is also a great way to resume coursework with a community of colleagues. In addition, you can always take a course as a non-degree student to try out a return to courses.

PhD or CAS in Reading: The paperwork is going through the process for a name change to Literacy! For the PhD, most graduates enter teaching and/or research positions at colleges and universities. Some graduates choose to continue their career in P-12 or adult educational settings with leadership roles. The program involves a set of coursework and research inquiry. If you are not sure about completing a dissertation for the PhD degree but want to take all the coursework, consider the Certificate of Advanced Studies (CAS) option.

If you are interested in extending your coursework, be sure to send along an email message with any questions or arrange a time for a conversation. I look forward to catching up with you and thinking through next steps for your professional career.
Dr. Donna Scanlon is a recipient of the 2015 University at Albany Award for Excellence in Research. Dr. Scanlon has built a national reputation as a researcher, scholar and educator in early literacy. Her research has focused on the characteristics of children who experience substantial difficulty in learning to read and on how to prevent and remediate reading difficulties. She and her colleagues developed an approach to early literacy instruction and intervention, the Interactive Strategies Approach (ISA), which effectively helps teachers to reduce the incidence of reading difficulties in the early primary grades.

Dr. Kelly Wissman was selected as a 2014 Educator of Excellence by the NYS English Council. The Educator of Excellence Award honors those teachers who are leaders in the classroom, collaborators with colleagues, and mentors for teachers new to the profession. Teachers implement best practices that they know to be true and challenge their students to become skillful readers and writers. Their work shows a dedication to their own learning and to their profession that inspires their students and their colleagues.

Dr. Erica Barnes is the recipient of the 2015 American Educational Research Association (AERA) Early Education and Child Development SIG Outstanding Dissertation Award. The award acknowledges an exceptional dissertation which investigates a topic related to the development of children between birth and age 8. Dr. Barnes was recognized for her dissertation entitled, "Head Start Preschool Teachers’ Commenting Practices During Shared Book Reading Sessions: Describing Learning Opportunities for Children with Varying Vocabulary Abilities," at the American Educational Research Association annual meeting this past April.

Dr. Erica Barnes was appointed to the International Literacy Association's Standards for Literacy Professionals Revision Committee. She was re-appointed to the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) Accreditation Council and IB Commission.

Roseann Maurantonio, a fourth grade teacher at Rosendale Elementary School in Niskayuna, NY, was awarded the Milken Educator Award on November 12, 2014. Considered the "Oscar of Teaching," The Milken Educator Awards recognize up to 40 teachers, specialists, and principals across the country every year for their work in furthering education. Maurantonio, an adjunct instructor in the Literacy Teaching and Learning Department, is the only teacher in New York state to receive the award this year. Maurantonio is a Long Island native who joined the Niskayuna school district four years ago after six years of teaching in Manhattan.

Dr. Virginia Goatley was appointed to the International Literacy Association's Standards for Literacy Professionals Revision Committee. She was re-appointed to the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) Accreditation Council and IB Commission.

**Did You Know?**

It is the 15th Anniversary of our fully online program. The Childhood Education and Early Childhood Education degrees are popular with students from several states and countries, including military locations and International schools. Our newly revised MS in Reading program is open to students who are not interested in the certification path. At the helm of these successful degrees is Trudy Walp, our Online Program Manager. Trudy advises students throughout the degree to ensure their success.
Dr. Cheryl Dozier and Dr. Christy Smith, Assistant Dean for Professional Studies, continued their work with the C-Ten grant. The goal of the S-TEN (SUNY Teacher and Leader Education Network) and C-TEN (Campus Based Teacher and Leader Education Network) initiative is to support higher education faculty and education partners to engage in collaborative conversations to meet the needs of today's children. This grant focuses on four areas central to the Regents Reform Agenda: Clinically-Rich Teacher and Leader Preparation, Common Core Standards, Performance Assessments of Pre-Service and Practicing Educators, and Data Driven Instruction. UAlbany C-TEN members include superintendents, assistant superintendents, principals, teachers, CASDA director, BOCES superintendent, College of Arts and Sciences faculty, and School of Education faculty. Early Career Conversations with panel presentations by recent graduates across the School of Education will continue this year. These informative conversations will continue to strengthen our collaborations with alumni and community colleagues. The University at Albany was awarded nearly $45,000 to facilitate activities and seminars for UAlbany faculty, staff, and community partners.

Dr. Jaime Puccioni received a grant through the UAlbany Faculty Research Award Program. Her proposed study will examine kindergarten teachers can play an important role in supporting children’s readiness for school by utilizing transition practices which aim to encourage parental involvement to support children’s transition to formal schooling. A qualitative case study was conducted with three kindergarten teachers to examine the ways in which their beliefs shaped their transition practices. Findings suggest that teachers’ beliefs about children’s early literacy skills and parental involvement in addition to their feelings of self-efficacy shape their transition practices. The findings highlight important issues related to developing home-school partnerships that aim to increase parental involvement to support children’s early literacy learning.

Dr. Erica Barnes received a grant through the UAlbany Faculty Research Award Program. Her proposed study will examine four mathematics curricula to address the following research question: What support and strategies are detailed in the curriculum for teaching mathematics vocabulary? Specifically, she will focus on identifying 1) selected vocabulary terms for instruction 2) strategies, methods, and resources for instruction, and 3) recommended assessments. The results of this study will be used to serve as a platform for observing teacher implementation of curricula, and to create professional development interventions that help teachers develop the knowledge and instructional base to support vocabulary instruction within these curriculum frameworks.

Dr. Margaret Sheehy (PI) and Dr. Donna Scanlon (Co-PI), completed their first year of the $1,413,915 grant awarded by the U.S. Department of Education Institute of Education Sciences (IES) for "Development of a Supplemental Instructional Course in Reading and Writing Arguments for Ninth Graders at Risk of Leaving School before Graduating." With the adoption of the Common Core Standards and their emphasis on argumentative reading and writing in English Language Arts, science, and social studies, this three-year project aims to develop and conduct an initial test of the effects of a course that will support students who are already at academic risk in learning academic, college-focused, argumentative literacy practices.

Dr. Virginia Goatley and Cheryl Dozier, along with Special Education colleagues Dr. Debi May, Dr. Jane Domaracki, and Lisa Grippo-Gardner completed The Graduate Level Clinically Rich Teacher Preparation Pilot Program designed to prepare the next generation of special educators to work with 21st century high school students in high needs schools. The master’s degree students, known as Resident Fellows, engage in a 67-credit program of study which includes coursework, elementary placements, literacy experiences, and a full year interning as consultant and resource support teachers at Amsterdam High School (AHS), working on supporting and differentiating instruction for all students. The Fellows gain invaluable experience in the year-long internship at AHS, and upon graduation will earn NYS teaching certificates. This project is a joint effort between the Division of Special Education and the Department of Literacy Teaching and Learning and is funded by the New York State Education Department.

Dr. Cheryl Dozier

received a 3 year renewal of the Teacher Leadership Quality Partnership Grant. TLQP is a NYS Education Department grant to, in part, promote collaborative relationships that will improve teacher preparation programs and professional development for in-service teachers.

Dr. Jaime Puccioni

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Dr. Anne McGill-Franzen (PhD 1988) received the UAlbany Alumni Association's Excellence in Education Award on May 2, 2015. Internationally known children’s literacy advocate and scholar, Anne McGill-Franzen has been committed to supporting the development of children in reading for over 30 years. She has been featured in the most prestigious literacy publications. McGill-Franzen is a professor of education at the University of Tennessee-Knoxville and director of the University’s Reading Center.

Congratulations to MS in Reading alums Paul Gronau, Wood Road Elementary, and Elisa Pepe, Schalmont Middle School, who received Educator of Excellence awards from the New York State English Council.


Dr. Christine Woodcock, (PhD 2003), published The evolution of us: Portraits of mothers and their changing roles. Each chapter of this book contains an intimate portrait of a mother with young children. Christine is currently an adjunct instructor for American International College, and is the Learning Disabilities Specialist at Northwestern Connecticut Community College.

Dr. Tisha Lewis Ellison received the National Academy of Education’s Postdoctoral Fellowship Award. An alumnus of the department, she is currently an Assistant Professor in Language and Literacy Education at Georgia State University. Her research explores the intersections among family literacy, digital literacies, and multimodalities. With the support of the Spencer Postdoctoral Fellowship, Dr. Lewis Ellison seeks to examine the digital literacy practices of African American fathers, these fathers’ ideologies of digital use to support their children, and the relative effects of their digital learning on their children’s education.

Dr. Sun Hwa Lee (PhD 2012) and Dr. Donna Scanlon published, The effects of the Interactive Strategies Approach on at-risk kindergartners' spelling in Reading and Writing: An Interdisciplinary Journal.

Dr. Cheryl Kreutter (PhD 2007) was awarded tenure and promotion to Associate Professor at SUNY Geneseo.

Dr. Marta Albert (PhD 2001) was awarded tenure and promotion to Associate Professor at SUNY Potsdam.

Three alums received National Board Certification this past year: Megan Christen ‘07; Natalie Fasnacht ‘08; Jennifer Paley ‘93

Dr. Marcia J. Brown, class of 1940, sadly passed away on April 28. Ms. Brown was an internationally recognized children’s author and illustrator and three-time Caldecott award-winner. The UAlbany library has the distinct honor of housing a unique collection of her sketches, correspondence, manuscripts and more.

Support the Department of Literacy Teaching and Learning

Your donations help to support our growing practicum courses and sites, the purchase of books and materials, and student scholarships. We wish to extend our sincere appreciation to all of you who have donated to these special projects in the past. Please make sure to specify the Department of Literacy Teaching and Learning when making your donation.

Mail: Checks should be made payable to: The University at Albany Foundation and mailed to: The University at Albany Foundation, UAB 226, 1400 Washington Avenue, Albany, NY 12222

Online: Complete the online form and use your credit card

Phone: Call the Foundation office at 800-577-7869 and use your credit card
Congratulations to doctoral student Thea Yurkewecz for receiving the Richard L. Allington Research Grant at the 2014 New York State Reading Association Conference. Thea also received the 2015 School of Education Excellence in Part-Time Teaching Award and the Dissertation Research Fellowship Award.

Incoming presidents for the Albany City Area Reading Council are Thea Yurkewecz and alumna, Linda Carr. Incoming Vice Presidents are Beth Wilson and alumna, Lois Letchford.

Students in the MS Literacy program worked this summer with the children in grades K-2 in the Troy City School District. Our students gain valuable teaching experiences at all of our practicum sites throughout the area—Albany, Troy, Cohoes, South Colonie, and Job Corps.


Belize 2015

During the January 2015 Winter Session, Professor Cheryl Dozier and doctoral student, Joy Stephens, led a group of 11 undergraduates for a 16 day study abroad experience in the Central American country of Belize. UAlbany students taught in both urban and rural schools, engaging with Belizian learners and families in a range of writing events. Cultural, historical, and ecological adventures included exploring Maya ruins, tubing through caves and jungles, hiking medicinal trails, snorkeling, and ziplining. Check out our Belize highlight video through the study abroad website. This year’s trip will run from January 2-January 17. For more information visit: www.albany.edu/studyabroad.
Did You Know?

Dr. Stephanie Affinito has been working within the Open SUNY initiative to develop and design both online and on-campus courses that meet high standards for learning and integrate new and digital technologies for teacher education. Additionally, she is continuing development with SUNY’s Tools of Engagement Project (TOEP) which will assist all online instructors develop innovative online practices.

Dr. Jolene Malavasic, the department’s instructor for ERDG 623, Practicum: Differentiated Instruction and Coaching, 5-12, again offered the course this summer at the Sanford Library in Colonie in partnership with students from St. Ambrose Middle School in Latham and students from South Colonie Schools. Literacy graduate students engage in collaborative teaching with middle school students utilizing a unit of study designed around reading and writing argumentative and explanatory texts. We continue to receive positive feedback from parents as well as from the middle school and graduate students involved in the course.
Department of Literacy Teaching and Learning

Interested in Advanced Study?

PhD—Our doctoral program prepares individuals for research and teaching positions in universities and colleges. It also serves those who have or seek positions in K-12 schools, government agencies, or educational foundations requiring a comprehensive understanding of literacy, the ability to conduct research, and/or the capacity to interpret or implement research findings.

Contact the Department of Literacy Teaching and Learning for additional information:

literacy@albany.edu

The Interactive Strategies Approach (ISA) and Response to Intervention (RtI) Professional Development Opportunities

Dr. Donna Scanlon and The Child Research and Study Center at the University at Albany provide extensive and job-embedded professional development for teacher leaders and primary level teachers and specialists (classroom, reading, special education, school psychologists, etc.). The PD involves a multi-phase process in which one or more teacher leaders from each school participate in professional development related to the ISA and RtI. Teacher leaders will, in turn, facilitate a book study for teachers in their schools, focusing on the same content, and support teachers as they begin to implement ISA-based RtI procedures. For more information, see:

http://www.isaprofessionaldevelopment.org/