Comparative and International Education meets Educational Policy & Leadership at the University at Albany - SUNY
**History and Overview:**

The **EPL Department** at the University at Albany has a long-established tradition in comparative and international education scholarship, leadership and capacity building at the national, regional and global levels. For more than 30 years EPL faculty have carried out analytical and practical work to support policy development, administration and evaluation in countries throughout the world.

**Examples of EPL faculty engagement in comparative and international education abound:**

- Levy directs the Program for Research on Private Higher Education (PROPHE), an extensive international research network undertaking studies of private sector development in postsecondary education.
- Valverde has been designated a Senior Advisor to the Latin American Laboratory for Assessment of the Quality of Education.
- Leventhal led a global Higher Education Working Group while serving as Senior Advisor on Academic Affairs to the United Nations Global Compact.
- Benavot recently served three years as Director of UNESCO’s Global Education Monitoring Report.
- Wagner continues research on educational finance and labor market issues drawing on his 14-year tenure in the OECD’s Directorate for Education, Labor and Social Affairs.
- Meyer, who has written extensively on global education governance, is contributing to OCCAM (Outcomes and Causal Inference in International Comparative Assessments), a European interdisciplinary training network for PhD students.
- Lane directs (together with former EPL professor Kevin Kinser) the Cross-Border Education Research Team (C-BERT), which studies the expansion of higher education programs across geopolitical borders, particularly in the Middle East and Southeast Asia.

**Since the 1980s,** when Philip Foster was President of the Comparative and International Education Society (CIES), EPL faculty have held prominent positions in CIES. These include on the Board of Directors (Benavot and Valverde), co-editor of Comparative Education Review (Benavot), and CIES President (Valverde). EPL also hosted the CIES Secretariat (2010-13), during which time Lane and Benavot served as Secretary and Wagner as Treasurer. Many EPL students have also contributed to CIES: for example, Treisy Romero supported the CIES Secretariat; Maria Khan and Dante Salto were elected as co-Chairs to the New Scholars Committee.

**The above distinctions** follow from robust faculty recruitment and activities in the EPL Department since the mid-1990s, further strengthening the department’s international engagement, contribution and expertise in comparative and international education. That decade saw Levy’s publication of IADB’s first ever Strategy Paper on higher education and Valverde’s service as Associate Director of the US Research Center for the Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and appointment to the Steering Committee of the Working Group on Testing and Standards of the Program to Promote Educational Reform in Latin America (PREAL).
In 2002, the EPL Department established the Comparative and International Education Policy Program (CIEPP), which utilized research and training to improve the links between public policy, educational institutions, and educational effectiveness. CIEPP’s scholarly work revolved around two broad themes: shifting public/private dynamics and quality/accountability. The PROPHE network directed by Levy is a manifestation of the first theme and draws on his extensive scholarship on private higher education in Latin America. CIEPP and PROPHE, primarily with multi-year funding from the Ford Foundation, had a record of success in hosting international conferences, supporting doctoral research, and generating relevant research and scholarly publications. Under the second theme, Valverde heads the Educational Evaluation Research Consortium (EERC), a partnership between UAlbany and universities in the Dominican Republic, which has thus far garnered USAID grants in excess of USD $1.5 million for capacity development in the areas of monitoring and evaluation. Finally, since 2009, Benavot has coordinated two UNESCO-funded comparative projects, the first examining the intended curriculum in primary school mathematics and reading in developing countries; and the second exploring curricular learning approaches in the areas of education for global citizenship and sustainability.

A common thread in EPL’s engagement in the field has been the strengthening of decision-making at all levels of national education systems, through the training of government officials and the development and use of timely, high quality, and relevant knowledge and data. Beginning in the mid-1980s, EPL faculty have led or contributed to education and human resource sector assessments in the more than 20 countries in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, through the support of UNDP, UNICEF, USAID, OCED, the Asian Development Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank. Particular attention was devoted to the development of appropriate management information systems and the capacities to use such systems. For example, EPL and the University at Albany shouldered administrative and managerial responsibilities for USAID projects focused on Improving the Efficiency of Educational Systems, which concluded in the 1990s. At the request of the National Research Council and the National Academy of Sciences, past EPL Professors Cresswell and Windham authored the *Worldwide Education Statistics: Enhancing UNESCO’s Role*, which was a basis for the full-scale review and re-design of UNESCO’s Division of Statistics (now UNESCO’s Institute for Statistics).

With an eye to the future the EPL Department is helping to establish the school-wide Institute for Global Education Policy Studies (IGEPS), whose core goal is to enhance the “internationalization” of educational research, teaching and service in the School of Education as well as the University at Albany. IGEPS intends to support scholarship and applied work in comparative and international education (CIE); augment master’s degree studies with international-oriented courses and field experiences; attract foreign and international-oriented Ph.D. students and visiting scholars; initiate a series of public presentations by prominent scholars and policy makers on comparative and international education; and develop intensive CIE-oriented courses for delivery worldwide.
Dr. Benavot’s interests focus on comparative education research, global education policy, and the interplay between education and sustainable development. His scholarship examines the changing contours of basic education and curricular content, approaches to monitoring lifelong learning, and issues involving global citizenship education and education for sustainability. He has served on the CIES Board of Directors and as a co-editor of Comparative Education Review. He currently serves on the advisory boards of ten education and social science journals and has been invited to make keynote presentations at the UN and many international venues in Asia, Latin America and Europe. During 2014-17 Dr. Benavot served as Director of the Global Education Monitoring Report, an editorially independent, evidence-based annual report published by UNESCO that monitors progress on international education targets. He recently co-founded NISSEM, a network that supports children and youth in post-conflict and low resource settings through the promotion of social and emotional learning and key sustainability themes in educational materials.

Dr. Lane’s work focuses on leadership and governance of higher education, particularly as it relates to the emerging relationship between higher education, policy and politics, and globalization. A Fulbright New Century Scholar, he has conducted research in more than 30 countries on the development of multinational colleges and universities. Dr. Lane has authored more than 75 journal articles, book chapters, and policy reports; authored or edited 11 books; and been awarded over $1 million in grant funding. He is the co-director of the Cross-Border Education Research Team (C-BERT) and the founding executive director of the SUNY Academic & Innovative Leadership (SAIL) Institute. In addition, he has served on the governing board of CIES, the Council for International Higher Education, the Gulf Comparative Education Society, and SUNY-Korea. Dr. Lane’s research has received numerous awards, including the award for outstanding contributions to international education research from the Association for the Study of Higher Education.

Dr. Lawson is an interdisciplinary scholar working at the intersection of four disciplines: Educational Leadership and Policy, Social Welfare, Public Health, and Kinesiology. His research and development initiatives focus on school-family-community-university partnerships, with a priority for vulnerable children and families challenged by poverty, social exclusion and social isolation. Lawson has authored over 100 refereed journal articles. Three of his eight books provide international and comparative perspectives, emphasizing new institutional designs and cross-border lesson-drawing. External funding in support of his work has exceeded ten million dollars. In addition to his appointments at five universities in the US and Canada, he has worked in Indonesia, Brazil, Iran, Australia and many European countries. In 2014, the AERA awarded him its national award for best research review. In 2018, UAlbany honored him with the Inaugural Lifetime Career Achievement Award for Outreach and Engagement Scholarship, recognizing his career-long work with innovative schools; community health, mental health, and social service agencies; colleges and universities; and state departments of education.
Mitch Leventhal  
(Ph.D., University of Chicago),  
Professor of Professional Practice & Entrepreneurship

Dr. Leventhal is a practitioner-scholar who previously served as Vice Chancellor for Global Affairs at the SUNY System Administration. A specialist in global higher education management and leadership, Dr. Leventhal has led international quality assurance and standards reform in student recruiting practice, implemented new financing paradigms in support of internationalization, and created improved IT systems to support comprehensive internationalization. Leventhal is founding president of the American International Recruitment Council and has served as Senior Advisor on Academic Affairs to the United Nations Global Compact. His higher education research interests include global strategy; risk management; private equity flows; entrepreneurship; cross-border mobility; and leadership philosophy. His doctoral dissertation focused on the development of for-profit medical schools and their impact on Caribbean development. Dr. Leventhal has founded several companies, including a publicly traded global payments company and a Yale University spinoff which facilitated technology transfer to the private sector.

Daniel Levy  
(Ph.D., University of North Carolina),  
Distinguished Professor

Dr. Levy is the author of ten books and over one-hundred articles about higher education policy, non-profit sectors, and Latin American politics. His research focuses on the interplay of educational institutions with civil society and the state. He founded and directs the Program for Research on Private Higher Education (PROPHE), the preeminent research center focused on global private higher education. He has lectured extensively at top national and international universities and consulted widely for international agencies, foundations, governments, and development banks. Dr. Levy has served as chair of some thirty dissertation committees, including four recent UA Presidential Distinguished Dissertation Award recipients. He has been awarded lifetime and long-term achievement awards, respectively, from CIES and the Association for the Study of Higher Education.

Heinz-Dieter Meyer  
(Ph.D., Cornell University),  
Professor

Dr. Meyer’s current research interests are comparative studies of higher education and the emerging regime of global education governance. He has authored over 50 articles in international journals of organization and education, including Organization Science; American Journal of Education; Teachers College Record; Comparative Education Review; and Comparative Sociology. His most recently published books include The Design of the University: German, American, ‘World Class’ and PISA, Power, Policy (with A. Benavot). He has chaired over fifteen dissertation committees and has taught in France (INSEAD) and Germany (Goettingen), and held visiting appointments at Peking University, Boston University, Penn State, and the East-West Institute, Honolulu. Dr. Meyer was a Harman Fellow at Harvard University and is recipient of numerous awards, including from the National Endowment of the Humanities. He is also a member of OCCAM (Outcomes and Causal Inference in International Comparative Assessments), a European Training Network for international and interdisciplinary research and training for PhD students.
Susan Phillips
(Ph.D., Columbia University),
Professor

Dr. Phillips’ research interests include career development and decision making, as well as quality assurance and accreditation in higher education. Her work has been published in the *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, the *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, and *The Counseling Psychologist*. She is past chair of the National Advisory Council for Institutional Quality and Integrity, developing recommendations to the United States Secretary of Education on matters of higher education institutional accreditation and quality assurance. Previously, she led the American Psychological Association Committee on Accreditation - one of the largest accrediting agencies in the nation. She was appointed by the New York State Board of Regents to their policy advisory group, the Professional Standards and Practices Board for Teaching. A licensed psychologist, Dr. Phillips is a professor in both the Department of Educational Policy & Leadership and the Department of Educational and Counseling Psychology.

Kathryn Schiller
(Ph.D., University of Chicago),
Associate Professor

Dr. Schiller is a sociologist with expertise in educational stratification and academic trajectories, organizational and policy analysis, and research methods. Her research has been supported by the National Science Foundation, the National Institute of Child Health and Development, the National Center for Education Statistics, and the New York State Department of Education and Regents Research Fund. In addition to two books, Dr. Schiller has published papers in journals such as *Sociology of Education*, *American Journal of Education*, and *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, as well as chapters in edited volumes. While much of her research focuses on K-12 education in the US, she draws upon comparisons with international school systems to better understand how individuals’ life chances are shaped by institutional structure. In addition, Dr. Schiller collaborates with Dr. Kinser on an evaluation of a five-year international research and education partnership between UAlbany and Taiwanese universities.

Teniell L. Trolian
(Ph.D., University of Iowa)
Assistant Professor

Dr. Trolian’s research focuses on educational experiences and dynamics that influence college choice and college outcomes. Her recent work investigates the influence of high school experiences on aspirations to earn a college degree and the impact of college student-faculty interactions on student outcomes. She is also an expert on diversity in higher education. Dr. Trolian’s research findings on K-12 experiences and higher education offer lessons for educational policy and practice in the U.S. and other countries, and she has presented her research at international conferences in Finland, Canada, and Portugal sponsored by the Consortium of Higher Education Researchers and ACPA-College Student Educators International. Dr. Trolian’s research has been published in U.S. and international journals, including the *Journal of Higher Education*, *Research in Higher Education*, *Higher Education*, *Journal of College Student Development*, *Education and Work*, and *Teaching in Higher Education*. 
Gilbert Valverde  
(Ph.D., University of Chicago),  
Associate Professor and Acting Chair, EPL Department  
Dr. Valverde’s scholarship focuses on curriculum policy and international assessments, STEM education and reading comprehension policy, and the international political economy of global policy regimes in education. He has consulted for NASA; UNESCO; UNDP; World Bank; Inter-American Development Bank; and the U.S. Agency for International Development and for governments, universities and non-governmental organizations. Dr. Valverde also served as President of the Comparative and International Education Society (2013). In 2015, he received the SUNY Chancellor’s Award for Excellence in Academic Service. He has been designated a Senior Advisor to the Latin American Laboratory for Assessment of the Quality of Education (LLECE).

Sandra Vergari  
(Ph.D., Michigan State University),  
Associate Professor  
Dr. Vergari is a political scientist whose research focuses on education politics and policy including federalism, state policy, charter schools, political campaigns, and learning standards. Her comparative work focuses on education governance and policy in Canada and the United States. Her work has appeared in books and journals including American Journal of Education, Educational Policy, and Publius: The Journal of Federalism.

Alan Wagner  
(Ph.D., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign),  
Professor  
Dr. Wagner is an economist interested in education policy in the U.S. and abroad, whose current work concerns higher education and workforce development. He holds an affiliate appointment as Senior Fellow, Rockefeller Institute of Government, and serves on the boards of the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (currently, chair) and the Greater Capital Region Principals’ Center. Previously, he held a senior position in the Directorate for Education, Employment, Labor and Social Affairs at the Paris-based Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). His work has appeared in Economics of Education Review; European Journal of Education; Higher Education: Handbook of Theory and Research; Higher Education Management; International Encyclopedia of Education; Journal of Human Resources; and Lavoro e relazioni industriali.
The Institute for Global Education Policy Studies

is a nascent interdisciplinary center focused on comparative education and global education policy studies. Drawing on the EPL Department’s rich history and experience in these fields, the school-wide Institute, once formalized, will serve as the focal point for expanding research and applied work; securing external funding; sponsoring prominent visiting scholars; recruiting international students; internationalizing the curriculum and offerings; and advancing internationalization at the University at Albany. IGEPS seeks to engage in a range of outreach activities, at international, national, state and campus levels, that will capitalize on its expanding scholarship, expertise, scale, profile, and networks in comparative and international education.

Cross-Border Education Research Team

(cbert.org), based at University at Albany and Pennsylvania State University (PSU), was founded in 2010 and is co-directed by Kevin Kinser (Professor and Head, Department of Education Policy Studies at PSU) and Jason Lane (Associate Professor and Interim Dean, School of Education at University at Albany). C-BERT researches cross-border higher education from organizational, sociological, economic, and political perspectives and maintains the only comprehensive list of international branch campuses around the world. The group maintains a website (CBERT.org) detailing cross-border ventures of higher education institutions, and serves as a clearinghouse of relevant news, current events, information, and research.

Educational Evaluation & Research Consortium

is a partnership led by EPL that currently includes the Pontificia Universidad Católica Madre y Maestra in Santiago de los Caballeros, and INICIA Educación, a private foundation from Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. Since 2003, the EERC has conducted a series of longitudinal research studies of nationally representative samples of primary school students - conducting surveys and vertically scaled tests in mathematics and reading comprehension and has partnered with the Ministry of Education of the Dominican Republic in evaluating policy initiatives and experimental programs in primary mathematics and reading education.
International Curriculum and Textbook Archive

consists of two types of documents, which have compiled over the course of the past decade: 1) official curricular statements and guidelines; and 2) reading and mathematics textbooks, mainly for the upper grades of primary education. Most documents in the first category are in digital format and can be obtained through ICATA or downloaded from existing websites. Most textbooks in the ICATA were obtained in a printed format and are considered intellectual property, the copyrights of which are held by national ministries, private publishers and/or other entities. ICATA contains curriculum materials for over 60 countries, mainly in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Arab States.

Networking to Integrate SDG Target 4.7 and SEL Skills into Educational Materials

(nissem.org), founded in 2017 with contributions from Dr. Aaron Benavot and the EPL Department, is a networking platform of academics, practitioners and donor agency staff, which supports children and youth in post-conflict and low resource settings. NISSEM links groups and specialists concerned with social and emotional learning and Sustainable Development Goal Target 4.7 themes, and promotes efforts to embed 21st-century skills, life skills, gender equality, cultural diversity, and non-violent conflict resolution in textbooks and other educational materials. NISSEM works towards the development of guidelines for contextualizing Target 4.7 themes through materials development for early grade reading and mainstream school subjects, in formal and non-formal education, as well as teacher training, and monitoring, measurement and assessment.

Program for Research on Private Higher Education

(prophe.org), seeks to build knowledge about private higher education around the world. PROPHE neither represents nor promotes private higher education. Its main mission is scholarship, which, in turn, should inform public discussion and policymaking. Founded in 2000, PROPHE received multiple Ford Foundation grants through 2008. It presently functions only on the voluntary efforts of its members, along with indirect funding from the University at Albany. We welcome inquiries about potential financial grants to PROPHE or about other collaborations.
Beginning with a soon to be launched double master’s degree program with the Pontificia Universidad Católica Madre y Maestra in the Dominican Republic, the EPL Department is planning to further master’s degree-granting partnerships with other institutions around the world. The IGEPS initiative will serve as the launching point for a School of Education organized research center for global initiatives in education to extend and promote the internationalization of research, teaching and service throughout the School’s departments and programs.

In addition to its main MS and Ph.D. degree programs, the EPL Department has recently established new master’s level programs in Higher Education and International Education Management and certificate programs in Community College Leadership and International Education Management. Information about all of these degree and certificate programs can be found on the Department’s website:

www.albany.edu/epl/

Plans are apace to establish new master’s level degree and certificate programs in the area of Comparative Education/Global Education Policy in the coming year as well.
The EPL Department offers the following graduate degree and certificate programs:

- **PhD** in Educational Policy & Leadership
- **MS** in Educational Policy & Leadership
  (also with a concentration in global comparative education policy)
- **MS** in Higher Education
- **MA** in International Education Management and Leadership
- **Graduate Certificate** in International Education Management
- **Graduate Certificate** in Community College Leadership

More information on these programs can be found on the Department's website:

[www.albany.edu/epl/](http://www.albany.edu/epl/)