Fordham Receives Prestigious Robert Noyce NSF Grant to Educate Math Teachers

The National Science Foundation awarded a team of Fordham professors more than $1 million for the Fordham University NSF Robert Noyce Teacher Scholarship Program. A team of four Fordham professors has been awarded a National Science Foundation (NSF) grant to fund the Robert Noyce Teacher Scholarship program. The program is designed to attract and encourage talented undergraduate science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) majors and professionals to become teachers of secondary mathematics in high-need public schools.

The team includes the principal investigator, Usha Kotelawala, Ph.D., assistant professor of mathematics education at the Fordham University Graduate School of Education (GSE); and co-principal investigators Robert Graham, Ed.D., clinical associate professor of education, GSE; Melkana Brakalova-Trevithick, Ph.D., associate professor of mathematics and chair of the Department of Mathematics at Fordham College at Rose Hill (FCRH); and Janusz Golec, Ph.D., associate professor of mathematics, FCRH.

The NSF Noyce Scholarship Program will enable the Graduate School of Education, in collaboration with the mathematics department at Fordham College at Rose Hill and the New York City Public Schools under the Fordham Partnership Support Organization (PSO), to increase its impact in training, induction, and support of new teachers in high-need public schools in the New York City metropolitan area. The Noyce Teacher Scholarship Program will further expand the partnership between GSE and Fordham’s mathematics department.

The five-year grant, totaling more than $1 million, provides funds for three cohorts of six graduate students each to pursue a Master of Science in teaching degree at GSE and to teach middle and high school mathematics. Each cohort will take classes over a period of two years, including 12 courses at GSE and two courses in the mathematics department. The students will be trained through a clinically rich, field-based teacher training program that uses a model of the Japanese lesson-study practice adapted for teacher education in the New York City Public Schools, and which was developed by the principal investigator, Usha Kotelawala.

“This intensive and structured approach to planning lessons involves collaborative planning, observed presentation of the lesson to actual classes of students, and revision of the lesson based on the observers’ critique and the teachers’ own perceptions of the lesson’s strengths and weaknesses,” said Kotelawala.

Upon graduating, the Noyce scholars will be obligated to teach in high-need schools for at least four years. During the first two years, the scholars will participate in continuing lesson studies and additional workshops.

“Noyce scholars continue to interact with the program during their difficult first two years of teaching, helping them to remain in the classroom despite conditions that drive many teachers away from the profession,” Kotelawala said. “High-need schools struggle in retaining strong mathematics teachers. The pressures and struggles that teachers face—especially during their first two years—are great. Collaboration with peers can lead to both support for teachers and better teaching.

“Overall, this program can become a model for teacher preparation while serving the broader need of providing qualified teachers with high mastery of their content to the high-need classrooms of New York City,” Kotelawala said.

By Joanna Klimaski

A World-Class Community of Leaders

Our alumni excel in the K-12 sector and beyond, as administrators, teachers, counselors, and psychologists, and are leaders in urban school systems, both nationally and internationally.

GSE’s distinguished faculty are major contributors in areas such as multicultural and urban education, K-12 partnerships, and cutting-edge research.

In 2011, more than 150 GSE graduates were hired as teachers by the New York City Department of Education.
The Graduate School of Education (GSE) and the Brooklyn Diocese have jointly created the Catholic School Accreditation Association (CSAA), the establishment of which was marked at a signing ceremony at the diocesan offices on May 25.

“The purpose is to bring the credibility of a major Catholic university into the process of accrediting Catholic schools … We are focusing on the Catholic identity of schools and also focusing on academic excellence,” said James J. Hennessy, Ph.D., dean of GSE. “[It will also] help communicate more broadly about the high academic quality of accredited schools, thus boosting enrollments and perhaps reversing the trend of closing schools.”

Characterized by its dual attention to academics and Catholic identity, CSAA provides parochial schools with an alternative to the Middle States accreditation process.

“Principals were dissatisfied with the accreditation process from Middle States,” said the Most Rev. Nicholas DiMarzio, GSS ’80, bishop of Brooklyn. “We want academic excellence—that’s what our schools are about—but we also want them to be Catholic schools. We want to make sure these … are in concert with one another.”

CSAA will develop accrediting standards for Catholic nursery, elementary, and secondary schools. Though it will be geared initially toward Brooklyn schools, the group foresees having a wider scope.

Brooklyn Catholic schools have a new way to earn accreditation, thanks to a recent partnership forged between Fordham and the Diocese of Brooklyn.

Joseph M. McShane, S.J., president of Fordham, and Bishop DiMarzio presided over the signing ceremony, which was witnessed by Chadzutko and Hennessy. In his remarks, Father McShane noted that by centering on the preservation of Catholic education, the partnership promotes a higher cause.

“We’re not fighting just for the future of Catholic education, as much as we see that as valued. The schools have been the way of ensuring the Church’s future in the United States,” Father McShane said. “This partnership will enable us to help one another in very significant ways. Fordham is delighted to do it, honored to do it, and committed to the work.”

“This is a visionary response to really look at accreditation practices and pave the way for other organizations to model,” said Thomas Chadzutko, Ed.D., superintendent of schools for the Diocese of Brooklyn. “CSAA fully understands what it means to be urban and Catholic, and understands what it means to be a diocese in a diverse city … It will allow for growth and will in turn allow for other dioceses and archdioceses throughout the country to participate.”

By Joanna Klimaski
Jesuit Education Deans Weigh Challenges

The winds of change that are buffeting education in the United States were the subject of conversation last fall at the Lincoln Center campus.

There, the deans of nine Jesuit education schools came together for the annual meeting of the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities.

The morning session, which drew administrators from across the nation, addressed the ebbs and flows of enrollment. A common concern was that the value of professional training in education is under assault.

Mark Meyers, Ph.D., dean of the College of Social Science, Health, and Education at Xavier University, noted that Ohio’s new governor eliminated the pay raise that teachers traditionally received when they earned a master’s degree.

In addition, there are contradictory messages coming from the top tiers of state government about whether there will be more jobs in teaching, he said.

“No one’s going to sign up to take a graduate course if they don’t know whether they’ll have a job,” he said.

Jon Sunderland, Ph.D., dean of the School of Education at Gonzaga University, concurred.

“Our biggest hit—because of state legislation—has been in professional development activities. The State of Washington also took master’s degrees off the payroll increment scale, so people are not looking for master’s degrees; it does them no financial good,” he said.

A recent report by Stanford University that questioned the value of a master’s degree in teaching has done incredible damage, said Shane Martin, Ph.D., dean of the School of Education at Loyola Marymount University.

“All over the country, and particularly in California, folks hold that up and say, ‘Research definitely says that a master’s degree in education doesn’t do a damn thing,’” he said.

“Id’d like to see us address that, because our master’s programs do have value.”

On the issue of enrollment, most attendees reported that they had declines this year.

There were some bright spots in the conversations. Michael Pardales, Ph.D., dean of the School of Education and Human Services at Canisius College, noted that counseling programs seemed to be faring well. He suggested that—like their business school counterparts—education schools should emphasize the uniqueness of Jesuit education.

“Having come to Canisius from a state institution, I’ve seen a definite difference in the way we prepare teachers,” he said. “It could be a piece of the overall puzzle of how to leverage our brand.”

David Prasse, Ph.D., dean of the School of Education at Loyola University Chicago, agreed that for-profit schools are a threat because privatization is so in vogue, many for-profit schools are allowed to operate even after they have been exposed as inferior.

Susan Douglas Franzosa, Ph.D., dean of the Graduate School of Education and Allied Professions at Fairfield University, said that tuition increases have had an undeniable effect on enrollment, which surged two years ago, then leveled off, and then dropped this year.

She advocated taking a long view, though, noting that the fortunes of professional schools have always been subject to swings.

“If you think back 15 or 20 years, nursing was having a lot of trouble, but now there are not enough spaces to educate nurses,” she said.

New GSE Program Aims To Benefit Both Undergrads and Struggling Schools

Fordham’s Graduate School of Education (GSE) started off 2012 impressively.

The school recently launched a new program aimed to help struggling New York City public schools. Last week, the school announced on its blog that the scholarship-funded program, Teacher Residency Scholars Program in Adolescence Education, will combine academic coursework with an ongoing residence in a classroom setting.

The scholars—undergraduates pursuing a career in teaching—will serve as student teachers in four Bronx schools, offering participants a hands-on experience in the classroom while they assist schools in their neighborhood. Following their completion of the program, residency scholars must go on to teach in struggling New York state schools.

The program, funded by a $2.5 million grant from the state Department of Education, will allow participants to pursue a Master of Science in teaching degree and become eligible for certification in New York.

The school also released its latest edition of GSE: Facts & Figures, which outlines the school’s most recent statistics, including its ranking in US News & World Report’s top 20 private schools of education and its participation in the Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate.

By Joanna Klimaski
At P.S. 175 on West 134th Street in Harlem, where a Fordham banner hangs high near the entrance, Principal Cheryl McClendon works hard to “move her building.” She devises strategies to boost student achievement, develops arts programs in music and dance, and keeps up on the latest metrics used by downtown education officials to judge her school.

Teach the Teachers

Helping New York City Schools Help Themselves

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The school scored a “B” on the New York City Department of Education’s 2010 progress report, based in large part on improvements her students made that year. She said Fordham’s Partnership Support Organization (PSO), which assists P.S. 175 with budgeting, fundraising, and academic support, has played a critical role in her school’s improvement.

“Fordham keeps us on the cutting edge,” McClendon said.

P.S. 175 is among 31 city public schools served by Fordham’s PSO, run by the University’s Graduate School of Education (GSE). It is New York’s only graduate school to take on such a responsibility, with GSE now overseeing schools serving 17,000 students in the Bronx, Manhattan, Brooklyn, and Queens.

“This is talking the talk and walking the walk,” said GSE Dean James Hennessy, Ph.D., who came to Fordham in 1974 as an assistant professor of counseling and became dean of GSE in 2004. “Along with preparing professionals, we should be able to contribute in meaningful ways to improve the schools. It’s a risk, but we’ve been doing it for five years, and we haven’t failed yet.”

New York City Schools Chancellor Dennis Walcott, GSS ’80, said Fordham’s PSO shows how partnerships between universities and public schools can benefit both parties.

“It’s such a positive development for universities to become more interested in the needs of the schools,” Walcott said. “And it’s making the university a more well-rounded place as well.”

Like many of Fordham’s graduate and professional schools, GSE was created, in part, as a response to the needs of the city. Founded in 1916 as Fordham Teachers College and later known as the School of Education, GSE held its first classes in the Woolworth Building—across the street from City Hall and near the Tweed Courthouse, current home of the Department of Education. The school moved a few blocks north, to 302 Broadway, in the 1940s, before finding a permanent home on the University’s Lincoln Center campus in the late 1960s.

Today, with its headquarters at Lincoln Center, GSE serves approximately 1,250 students in its master’s and doctoral degree programs. That includes 60 undergraduates in a five-year program that leads to a combined bachelor’s and master’s degree in education.

Fordham’s PSO is just one part of GSE’s multifaceted involvement in New York City’s public and private schools. GSE trains teachers, administrators, school counselors, and psychologists. It provides technical assistance on bilingual education. And its Center for Catholic School

(Continued on page 6)
Leadership and Faith-Based Education attracts teachers and fledgling leaders from religious schools who are seeking to move up the professional ranks.

Patricia Kelly-Stiles, Ed.D. (TMC ’70, GSAS ’75, GSE ’82 and ’99), the Center for Catholic School Leadership’s associate director, earned her master’s degree through Fordham’s program while teaching fifth- and sixth-grade social studies at Saint Teresa’s School in Woodside, Queens. She later earned her doctorate at Fordham. Today, she oversees a program that offers a 40 percent reduction in Fordham tuition to teachers at faith-based schools. The program currently has students teaching at Catholic, Jewish, Quaker, and Protestant schools. It also works closely with the dioceses of Brooklyn, New York, and Rockville Centre, on Long Island, to develop future principals. These programs operate at schools throughout the region, including Archbishop Molloy High School in Queens and Xaverian High School in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn.

When the archdiocese decided to close several schools in 2011, the center helped displaced educators find new jobs by offering workshops on resume writing and interviewing skills at Fordham’s Westchester campus.

"It was a very painful time for everyone," said Kelly-Stiles. "We have the resources to offer, and my colleagues in admissions and careers services lent their expertise."

Pat Mangan, GSE ’92, discovered Fordham’s program for Catholic schoolteachers while teaching English and history and coaching basketball at Rice High School in Harlem in the late 1980s. Not long after Mangan earned his Fordham degree, Rice basketball was crowned city and state champions.

Mangan subsequently left Rice to establish the basketball program at Frederick Douglass Academy, a Harlem high school where he leverages top academic performance through athletics. A sign in Mangan’s office spells out his philosophy: A + B = C + D—Academics + Basketball = College + a Degree. One of his former students, a 2011 graduate, won a four-year Gates Millennium scholarship, which covers the costs of undergraduate and graduate studies at any university in the United States.

"We have the high standards ingrained in me by the Jesuits," said Mangan, who graduated from Fordham Preparatory School and Santa Clara University before attending GSE. "I tell my kids that only a team can win a championship, but many of them can win scholarships. And that’s the ship we want to be on."

Other Fordham initiatives have helped the Catholic system as well. Since 1997, GSE’s Bronx Project has linked graduate psychology students, under the supervision of licensed psychologists, with schools in the South Bronx and Harlem to provide services to about 140 at-risk students.

Faculty and students’ desire to work in underserved neighborhoods has fueled Fordham’s outreach to New York City schools. And that outreach has transformed the University’s relationship with the system.

(Continued from page 5)
Catholic schools. Student teachers at GSE must complete 112 days in the classroom—almost triple the state requirement, said Anthony Elia, Ph.D., GSE’s director of field-based education.

But Fordham’s relationship with the city’s schools has deepened since GSE became a contracted service provider with the Department of Education. In August 2011, GSE earned a $2.5 million grant from the New York State Education Department to help place teachers in underperforming schools.

As part of the Graduate Level Clinically Rich Teacher Preparation Pilot Program, 24 GSE students will begin receiving instruction from Fordham faculty members in May. And this fall, the students will continue their coursework in underperforming city schools under the guidance of mentor-teachers. The program will help change the way GSE students spend their time—from roughly 70 percent on campus and 30 percent teaching in actual classrooms to a 40-60 percent split, respectively, said Marshall George, Ed.D., associate professor of English and literacy education, and chair of GSE’s Division of Curriculum and Teaching. “One of the reasons we were so successful in the grant proposal,” he said, “is that we were already moving in this direction.”

Participating schools will be drawn from a list of low-performing institutions with high populations of minority students. Which is in keeping with the University’s mission, said Joseph M. McShane, S.J., president of Fordham.

“This is what Fordham is about: teaching teachers and helping them set hearts on fire in their students,” he said, “so that a greater city and a greater nation can be built.”

Father McShane said Fordham’s Center for Educational Partnerships, established in 2006, has done much to advance GSE’s mission as “a service school and a partner school.” The center aims to provide professional and technical assistance to teachers, administrators, students, and parents, in an effort to help students achieve and succeed. In the past five-plus years, the center, under the direction of Anita Batisti, Ed.D., has earned more than $45 million in city and state contracts. That includes funding for Fordham’s PSO and the provision of coaching services for teachers of literacy, math, and English-language learners in 25 schools throughout the five boroughs.

“At the beginning, we had no money—just Dean Hennessy’s vision about being in New York’s public schools,” said Batisti, an associate dean at GSE. “We’ve rolled up our sleeves and done it.”

In November 2011, GSE won yet another grant. The $2 million award makes Fordham the Regional Bilingual ESL Resource Network for New York City, providing instructional and technical assistance to schools serving 175,000 English language learners.

For the past five years, GSE’s Bilingual Technical Assistance Program has provided professional development and compliance assistance to schools in the Bronx. Now it will serve the entire city. And its Bilingual School Psychology Support Center will continue to serve as a clearinghouse to recruit bilingual practitioners into New York City schools. Fordham received the award as the Department of Education unveiled a new plan for the city’s immigrant youth.

“The timing is impeccable,” said Batisti. “Our center will be vital to this plan.”

But Fordham’s deepest involvement comes through its Partnership Support Organization, and with schools like P.S. 175 in Harlem. Every New York City public school is linked to one of 60 networks, with most linked directly to the Department of Education. But others join networks led by private groups.

Schools choose their PSO, which provides support with human resources, budgeting, health services, fundraising, and nutrition. Fordham started with 10 schools in 2007. By 2011, its network had more than tripled to 31 schools, including 16 in the Bronx and seven in Brooklyn.

Among the benefits schools receive from Fordham’s PSO: professional development from Fordham educators, assistance with data analysis, and access to the resources of Fordham’s counseling faculty, which helped put together bereavement teams in 2010 for nine deaths among students and faculty members in Fordham PSO schools. The partner schools also get to hold graduation ceremonies in halls at Fordham’s Rose Hill or Lincoln Center campus.

“When you manage a school, it’s twenty-four seven,” said Batisti, who noted that Fordham’s PSO is “research based and outcomes oriented.”

With resources tight in the New York City system, Fordham has also helped its schools with private fundraising through foundations, public grants, and corporations, bringing in an average of $1 million a year, Batisti said.

That includes a grant from the city’s Department of Cultural Affairs that supports dance education. DanceBrazil, a local dance company, teaches the dance form called capoeira to students at three elementary schools, including P.S. 175, where 25 students are taking 90-minute classes in an after-school program. The grant came at just the right time, as the position for the school’s physical education teacher was cut in a recent budget squeeze.

“We were looking for an afterschool program in the arts. Anita had the connection, and she helped with the grant,” said McClendon, P. S. 175’s principal. “The kids like the physical activity. And our school has been enriched by it.”

By David McKay Wilson
Education That Works

Founded in 2004, the school is part of the 25-school Cristo Rey Network, headquartered in Chicago. That’s the site of the first Cristo Rey school, established in 1996 under the leadership of John Foley, S.J.

In the Cristo Rey model, low-income students in grades 9 to 12 work one day a week at a local business, sharing that job with four other students. The students each earn $6,000 a year, which goes directly to the school to cover part of their tuition costs.

What was designed as a way to make a college-preparatory Catholic education available to low-income students has grown into a character-building program that develops mature teens who converse readily with adults and shake hands with confidence upon greeting a visitor.

“The work-study program is far more important for these students’ maturation process,” said Joseph Parkes, S.J., JES ’68, president of Cristo Rey New York, and a member of Fordham University’s Board of Trustees. “When you treat them as adults, they start responding like adults.”

Father Parkes and fellow Fordham alumnus Bill Ford, GSAS ’98, played a central role in bringing the Cristo Rey model to New York. Ford, the school’s founding principal, was the architect of the feasibility study that led to its establishment in 2004. He recruited Father Parkes, who became the school’s founding president.

Joseph M. McShane, S.J., president of Fordham, attended the school’s opening Mass. He visits Cristo Rey each spring for his annual pizza party, at which time he hands out Fordham caps and encourages Cristo Rey students to pursue their college dreams. Since 2004, 13 Cristo Rey graduates have matriculated at Fordham, including seven in the Class of 2015.

“We take our students to games and lectures at Fordham, and many of our faculty and volunteers are Fordham alumni,” said Father Parkes. “Fordham has been outstanding for us.”

The work-study program sends students to jobs at top New York firms such as JP Morgan Chase, McKinsey & Co., Skaaden Arps Slate Meagher & Flom, and MetLife. HSBC underwrites the cost of job teams at City Parks Foundation and Common Ground.

The students’ income from the workplace—about $2 million in 2010–2011—covers nearly 45 percent of Cristo Rey’s annual budget, said Father Parkes. Fundraising brings in another $2 million, and tuition payments from families—whose average annual income is $31,000—covers the rest. Few parents pay the full tuition of $2,000, but every family makes a financial contribution.

Each July, freshmen arrive for a three-week summer academy. They receive English and math instruction in the morning, and take part in a Business Boot Camp in the afternoon, where they learn the hard and soft skills needed for success in the workplace.

At the school’s renovated brick-faced building at East 106th Street near Park Avenue—once a tenement house, and later a convent—college banners line the hallways, representing the schools Cristo Rey graduates have attended.

Jacqueline Acero, a senior who has worked at the Jones Day brokerage firm and St. Vincent’s Hospital, recalls being intimidated on her first work assignment. But she stuck with it.

“As the months went by,” she said, “I got accustomed to the workplace and felt just like one of them.”

Ariel Gonzalez, a senior, said he’d be the first in his family to attend college. His mother is semi-retired and his father works as a custodian on Wall Street. He wants to study communications and said he feels well prepared for what comes next.

“The teachers here really want us to succeed,” he said. “They want you to do something really good with your life.”

—David McKay Wilson

Fordham Hosts Education Dean/New York Regents Meeting

The leaders of the institutions that train teachers came together in November 2011 at Fordham’s Lincoln Center campus to meet with Merryl Tisch, the chancellor of the New York Board of Regents.

The meeting, which was attended by John King, the New York state commissioner of education, and New York area deans of schools of education, was meant to address changes being proposed for teacher evaluation and preparation.

James Hennessy, Ph.D., dean of the Fordham Graduate School of Education, chaired the meeting along with Joan Lucariello, Ph.D., university dean for academic affairs at the City University of New York.

“We’re joined here today by members of the board who really committed to understanding your issues. We would prefer that you lay everything out so that some fresh air can enter the dialogue between us. It is not helpful for us if you have your conversations by phone with each other,” Tisch said.

“As with anything, there will be points that can be addressed, there will be points of commonality, and then there will be points of disagreement.

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By Patrick Verel
GSE Joins Effort to Revamp Education Doctorate

A new initiative in the Graduate School of Education’s Division of Educational Leadership, Administration, and Policy (ELAP) could bring extensive changes to one of the school’s doctoral programs.

In September 2011, ELAP was accepted into the Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate (CPED), a national effort to revamp the education doctorate, or Ed.D. Launched in 2007, CPED comprises a consortium of colleges and universities working to update the degree to meet the current needs of school practitioners, clinical faculty, administrators, and others who obtain the degree.

Traditionally, the Ed.D. has been regarded as a degree grounded in practical experience, while its counterpart, the doctorate of philosophy, or Ph.D., was research-based. But according to CPED’s administrators, it was feared that the Ed.D. had become too similar to the Ph.D.

“The Carnegie program was established because some thought there wasn’t enough rigor in the Ed.D.” said Gerald Cattaro, Ed.D., chair of ELAP. “There were a lot of fly-by-night programs coming up, weekend programs, programs that served as CPED representatives for pursuing the doctoral degree?”

When more than a dozen institutions of higher learning joined the first phase of CPED, bolstering the Ed.D. was at the forefront of the project. But as the group analyzed the issue more closely, a second problem surfaced: Though the Ed.D. and Ph.D. are theoretically distinct degrees, the practical difference between them often was unclear.

“How an Ed.D. is different from a Ph.D. is a fundamental question. Should they be different and, if so, to what degree?” said John Lee, Ed.D., vice chair of ELAP. “The people in the two programs have different goals and are in different places in their professional lives. So how do we make the degree more appropriate to their purposes and what they see as the reason for pursuing the doctoral degree? The Carnegie group started that conversation.”

In Fordham’s case, it was the ambiguity between the degrees that most concerned ELAP administrators.

“We had either surpassed, or were as rigorous as the others, in terms of the program, but … it mimics the Ph.D. program,” Cattaro said. “What we’re looking for is something that would be clinically rich, something like an M.D., that would involve a lot of practice.”

With this in mind, ELAP formed a team consisting of Cattaro, Lee—the former superintendent of Queens high schools, the largest school district in New York City—and Carlos McCray, Ed.D., an associate professor in ELAP who focuses on urban education. According to Cattaro, they will be able to apply their unique perspectives of the education system to serve as CPED representatives for ELAP, and vice versa.

During the first phase of the project, the CPED institutions drafted working principles that would better delineate the degree, including defining what it means to be a “scholarly practitioner” and to conduct a “dissertation in practice.”

The second phase will pair newly participating institutions, such as Fordham, with first-phase participants that can serve as mentors.

“One of the things that being part of the CPED project is encouraging us to do is to have conversations, to take a look at our program and address how to move it to the next level to make sure it’s responsive to the needs of our students and the changing students that we’re getting,” Lee said.

CPED attended the fall convening at the University of Vermont, where it commissioned nearly 30 more colleges and universities. Cattaro, Lee and McCray next relayed CPED ideas to ELAP faculty during a full-day retreat in January. There, the group began to discuss its vision of the new Ed.D. at ELAP—a vision that will take Ed.D. students into the community.

 “[We’ll] build more relationships in the community, form those partnerships where our students can be of assistance to schools out in the field,” McCray said. “As part of that practical base, our graduates and our students would be able to assist in some capacity, help these schools in the city solve some of the problems that they’re dealing with.”

The refurbished degree would also involve more programs geared toward students preparing to become administrators in higher education. In addition, Cattaro said, the degree would prepare students for the trend toward performance-based accountability in education, according to which the success of schools is judged by students’ test data.

Most importantly, though, the process of unraveling the new Ed.D. will allow ELAP to examine its effectiveness as a New York City program.

“One of the key things is that there is no particular model that the Carnegie project is looking to develop and promote,” Lee said. “Every institution is going to be unique because we all operate in a context; we have different students, we operate in a different locale. But what we can do is share ideas with each other and then adapt, modify, and create … That’s one of the strengths of the program—the national dialogue.”

By Joanna Klimaski
GSE Workshop Showcases Job Possibilities for Education Graduates

“WITH A LITTLE MADNESS, YOU CAN CUT THE ROPE AND BE FREE.”

That bit of wisdom, paraphrased from the movie Zorba the Greek, inspired Anne Marie Santoro to eventually become a nationally recognized education expert and founder of From The Heart Communications.

It is also the perfect phrase for people contemplating a graduate degree in education, she said in November 2011 at the Westchester campus.

Santoro delivered the keynote address at Careers for Educators: The Long and Winding Road: Stories of Extraordinary Career Paths, sponsored by the Fordham Graduate School of Education (GSE) and Career Services.

A similar workshop was held two days earlier at the Lincoln Center campus, where Ron Thorpe, Ed.D., vice president of WNET/Channel 13, spoke to participants.

At both events, the keynote speakers preceded a panel of current and former GSE students who had landed education jobs outside of traditional classrooms or left other fields for education.

People searching for examples of long, winding careers, could hardly do better than to learn about Santoro, who began as a teacher in P.S. 115 in Washington Heights, a job that she said she adored.

She then was offered a position as director of educational programs and services at the nascent Children’s Television Workshop, in part because dabbling in real estate had given her sales experience—a skill for which the workshop’s founders were looking.

“I was 28 years old, and I didn’t want to be 48 years old and have this question in my head: ‘How would my life have been different if I had taken that job at Channel 13?’” she said.

After a decade of promoting community outreach programs such as Sesame Street’s fire-safety and lead-poisoning projects, she managed to “cut the rope and leap out of Big Bird’s nest” to start her own company.

“I’m sure there are many people in this room who’ve had a moment like that in their lives. Or you might be at that moment right now. Now that’s something to really reflect on. These decisions that shoot up like this, may feel like a crisis place, but in a way they’re really a giant gift.”

During the panel discussion, David Cruz, (GSE ’01) an ESL teacher in the Lakeland Central School District, described how he began in the mailroom at Time Warner, and after 12 years was on the verge of becoming an assistant production finance manager at People magazine.

“At the time, I read a book by Herman Hesse called Siddhartha, and it was great. I said, ‘If I’m going to make a switch, I need to do it now.’”

After working briefly as a teaching assistant in White Plains, he earned his master’s degree in education through Fordham’s Bilingual/ESL Teacher Leadership Training Academy while working as a graduate assistant.

Thomas Frankie (FCRH ’96, GSE ’00), an educational specialist in the education division of the Wildlife Conservation Society at the Bronx Zoo, began following an even more roundabout path when he dropped out of law school in his third year.

“One of the things that I fell into was going to local high schools and talking about codes of ethics, and I absolutely love it,” he said. “I loved it so much more than any of the legal stuff I was doing, so that’s when that leap happened.”

He went back to school, and upon graduation, interned for a year with the Bronx Zoo—a position that turned into a full-time job.

When his wife decided to pursue her doctorate in Massachusetts, he took a position at the much-smaller Buttonwood Park Zoo in New Bedford.

“I worked there for four years, and it gave me the opportunity to interact with scientists on a level that was not possible in the Bronx because I was too far down the ladder,” he said.

That experience came in handy when his current position opened up. He was able to return to the Bronx Zoo, where he helps New York City teachers integrate science into their curriculum.

“I wouldn’t change a thing; it’s really terrific,” he said. “It’s been a long, winding road.”

By Patrick Verel
In the past, the indicators on which accreditation rested were primarily internal to programs, and in presenting information such as, ‘In my judgment, we’re doing A, B and C,’” Hennessy said. “That’s not what they’re looking for anymore. It’s ‘What are the candidates’ exam scores? What’s the knowledge base that they’ve acquired? What is their impact on the pupils and clients they serve?’

The changes were spearheaded by Vincent Alfonso, Ph.D., professor of psychology in the Division of Psychological and Educational Services, who was associate dean for academic affairs during the review process; and Anthony Cancelli, Ed.D., director of assessment, who worked with the administration and faculty to revamp GSE’s assessment system.

“It was tremendous preparation on the part of the administration, the faculty, and the staff to collect, analyze, and summarize all the necessary data,” Alfonso said. “We’re a pretty big school.”

“It was a real challenge for the school to design and implement a new assessment system,” Cancelli said. “Under the dean’s leadership, the faculty worked hard and, together with the administration, put into place a system that will serve the school well for years.”

Hennessy said that GSE is readying itself for the next round of certifications. “We will continue to aggregate information and demonstrate that we’re doing what we’re doing,” he said. “It has changed the way we function—to our advantage, in most instances. It’s led to an improvement in teacher preparation.”

By Patrick Verel
At 15, Fischer became the youngest chess grandmaster in the world. To Cold War-era Americans, Fischer’s victory in 1958 over the reigning eastern European champions rendered him a national hero, resulting in accolades like “genius” and “boy wonder.” His 1972 capture of the World Championship from Boris Spassky of the USSR is still considered to be the most widely watched chess match in history.

But over time, Fischer’s reclusive and increasingly bizarre behavior alienated him, until his vitriolic anti-Semitism and endorsement of the 9/11 attacks ultimately sank him into infamy. He died an exile in Iceland in 2008.

So, how could one of America’s greatest minds have ended this way?


“I wondered, what happened? How did he go awry?” Ponterotto said. “He was a gifted, brilliant prodigy, and I kept thinking that, if he would have gotten counseling and treatment early on, his life could have been very different.”

After Fischer’s death, Ponterotto, professor of counseling psychology in the Graduate School of Education (GSE), coordinator of GSE’s Mental Health Counseling program, and himself an avid chess player, launched a “psychological autopsy” of Fischer—that is, a posthumous psychological evaluation. He interviewed surviving family members, friends, chess masters, journalists, and biographers who knew him.

Between interviews and archives, including a 994-page FBI file on Fischer’s mother, Regina, Ponterotto pieced together how the former grandmaster’s genius degenerated into ostensible madness.

“People know his genius at the chessboard, and they know his bizarre behavior, but they don’t understand why,” he said. “No one really addresses what led to Bobby’s downfall—is aptly explained by his family history. His mother Regina was a polyglot who earned an M.D. and Ph.D. in hematology. Fischer’s putative biological father (the paternity of whom Ponterotto corroborates) was also extraordinarily intelligent.

“Bobby’s biological father, Paul Nemenyi, was a brilliant statistician and engineer. There’s even a theorem named after him,” Ponterotto said. “He had prodigious intellectual gifts, but he also had psychological troubles.”

Nemenyi’s coworkers described him as “an unstable and undesirable person” who exhibited bizarre behaviors, such as an aversion to wool and a proclivity for extreme cleanliness.

According to Ponterotto, it is possible that Fischer inherited not only his father’s genius, but also his maladies.

“There’s hereditary influence,” Ponterotto said. “And there’s some correlation between the neurological functioning in creative genius and mental illness. It’s not a direct correlation or a cause and effect … but some of the same neurotransmitters are involved.”

His creative genius, coupled with genetic predisposition to mental illness, and the stress of family dysfunction and early fame, meant that when Fischer relinquished chess—his sole source of stability and self-confidence—he was left even more susceptible to the onset of the disease.

Initially, he seemed merely eccentric, making outlandish requests of chess tournament directors to ensure optimal playing conditions. His behavior, however, grew more paranoid. His friends reported that he sometimes lashed out violently. One friend recalled when Fischer had the fillings in his teeth removed for fear the metal might pick up vibrations or even radio transmissions.

“The problem was that he didn’t have balance,” Ponterotto said. “His personal identity was fused with his chess identity. So when he stopped playing competitive chess, he lost that structure and became more vulnerable to possible mental illness.”
Although Ponterotto stresses that, ethically, he cannot formally diagnose Fischer, he can weigh others’ suggested diagnoses against Fischer’s behaviors, family history, and the stressors to which he was exposed.

Based on these factors, Ponterotto believes the evidence is strongest for paranoid personality disorder, a psychiatric condition characterized by unrelenting paranoia and suspicion of others, but is not schizophrenia.

The disorder, though serious, is treatable with psychotherapy.

“What would have happened if he’d gotten counseling early on? Instead of being world champion for three years, he could have been world champion for 10 years and lived a happier, healthier life,” Ponterotto said.

In his book, Ponterotto considers which services would have benefited Fischer, and each of his family members. He also examines how prodigious children today might be spared Fischer’s tragic outcome.

“It starts with elementary schools—school counselors, school psychologists, principals, teachers. We need to have systematic, comprehensive programs in place to support [not only] at-risk children, but also gifted and talented children,” he said.

The issue is complex, though. By encouraging prodigies to find balance in their lives, do we risk stifling their particular talents? How do we kindle creative genius without burning out its possessor?

The answers are still uncertain; but at the very least, a deeper understanding of Fischer’s story might help advance the issue.

“There may be an expense that comes with a gift,” Ponterotto said. “[In Fischer’s case,] we let a gifted prodigy fall by the wayside.”

Although Ponterotto publishes widely in multicultural psychology—he has written 12 books and nearly 100 articles—this new venture marks his first book targeted at a popular audience.

Evidently, he is reaching them: When part of his research was published in Miller-McCune magazine in 2011, the online story drew 18,000 hits within the first few days.

He and a GSE doctoral student, Jason Reynolds, are now examining Fischer’s life from different perspectives in psychology.

“I was able to coalesce … all my skills as a psychologist, a quantitative and qualitative researcher, and a historian into the intense study of one person, which is what I do in clinical therapy,” he said, adding lightheartedly, “It was like my midlife crisis was to do interdisciplinary research and re-engage my lifelong passion for chess.”

By Joanna Klimaski
New GSE Initiative Will Bolster Bilingual/ESL Education In New York City

The Center for Educational Partnerships at Fordham’s Graduate School of Education (GSE), under the leadership of James J. Hennessy, Ph.D., dean of GSE, is gearing up this week to launch an initiative that will establish the center as the linchpin of bilingual education in the New York metropolitan area.

The center was recently awarded the New York City Regional Bilingual ESL Resource Network (RBE-RN) contract from the New York State Education Department Office of Bilingual Education and Foreign Language Studies.

One of only eight RBE-RN technical assistance support centers statewide, the Fordham RBE-RN will assist networks, schools, and districts throughout the five boroughs in enhancing instructional practices for students learning English.

“We are here as a resource and an entity that will assist schools and the networks of schools in improving instruction for English-language learners,” said Anita Vazquez Batisti, Ph.D., associate dean of GSE and director of the center. “We provide further training for teachers, we help them analyze data—we are their resource.”

The 22-month, $2.2 million contract will enable the Fordham RBE-RN to offer professional development in literacy instruction, content area instruction, and compliance.

In addition, the RBE-RN staff—consisting of executive director Eva Garcia, seven resource specialists, and a full-time clerical associate—will work out of four on-site offices located at Fordham’s Rose Hill and Lincoln Center campuses, Blessed Sacrament School in Jackson Heights, and I.S. 78 in Brooklyn. Each office will provide meeting spaces and offer resource materials for their communities.

“Fordham is very much aware that as a New York City entity, we should have a presence in the boroughs,” Batisti said.

The RBE-RN contract, which was celebrated with a kick-off event on Feb. 28, is the newest addition in GSE’s expansive bilingual education initiatives, which include the Bilingual School Psychology Support Center, the Long Island/Westchester Bilingual/ESL Teacher Leadership Academy, and extensive bilingual/ESL course offerings in GSE.

“I’m proud to say that we’ve been in the forefront of bilingual education with the master’s programs that we have,” Batisti said. “We are really bringing our expertise right into the schools and communities that we’re serving.”

Did You Know?

• GSE has been educating leaders to make a difference in the lives of children in the fields of teaching, psychological services, and educational administration since 1916.

• GSE ranks among the top 20 private schools of education in the United States, and is ranked second among Catholic schools of education by U.S. News and World Report.

• GSE is one of the few graduate-level only professional schools of education nationwide. We offer a tradition of excellence in professional preparation, delivered in innovative and non-traditional ways.

• GSE is nationally accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, and our doctoral programs in counseling psychology and school psychology are accredited by the American Psychological Association.

• GSE was awarded almost $12 million in city, state, and federal grants in 2011, which have helped our students and graduates to impact the lives of tens of thousands of schoolchildren.

• GSE has been a leader in bilingual education since 1972, and was the first school of education to prepare bilingual school psychologists.

• Faculty members in our Division of Educational Leadership, Administration, and Policy are currently working with a selective group of colleges and universities on the Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate, a national research and redesign effort aimed at strengthening the Ed.D. degree nationwide.
Graduate School of Education Unveils New Programs

Starting in July, the Graduate School of Education (GSE) launched three new programs, including a Ph.D. program in Contemporary Learning and Interdisciplinary Research (CLAIR), an Accelerated Master’s Program in Educational Leadership (A.M.P.E.L.), and an advanced certificate program in School District Leadership (SDL).

“Each of them serves a different purpose, but each of them is a response to the changes that are going on in K-12 education,” said James J. Hennessy, Ph.D., dean of GSE.

CLAIR, a vanguard interdisciplinary research doctorate, is a three-year program designed to involve students in cutting-edge research as they pursue one of four specialization areas. These areas—contemporary literacy, learning sciences, special education, and language, culture, and equity—are specifically designed for learning and schooling in the 21st century.

In addition to taking courses within their areas of specialization, students will take two courses outside of their specialization.

“A lot of times [in academia], we don’t learn to talk each other’s language,” said Karen Brobst, Ph.D., assistant professor of school psychology and coordinator of the CLAIR program. “The idea here is to create scholars who have an area of specialty, but also can work together in teams, which we think is an important piece … to building better schools.”

Students will also enroll in three one-credit modules offering condensed lessons on a variety of topics relevant to 21st century education—for example, classroom technology. The modules, Brobst said, allow the program to adapt with the changing discipline.

Graduates of the CLAIR program will be qualified to assume a variety of roles, including instructional leaders, teacher educators, program evaluators, and educational researchers, among others.

GSE has also unveiled two new programs targeted at school leaders. A.M.P.E.L., an accelerated master’s program, condenses the existing two-year program in school administration and supervision into a one-year program.

“In this economy, there are a lot of people who are really interested in getting their master’s degree, but they don’t feel they can spend two years,” said John Lee, Ed.D., vice chair of GSE’s division of Educational Leadership, Administration, and Policy (ELAP). “This [program] is for highly motivated individuals, people who are willing to make that commitment for a year, but who may not be able to make a two-year commitment.”

The program, which is open to anyone in New York City and the tri-state area, involves a unique schedule that began with two weeks of daily summer classes in July. Students will then begin an internship in the fall, and continue taking classes Friday evenings and Saturdays. By May, candidates will have completed the program, and be eligible to take the New York State School Building Leader Certification Examination.

“We’re looking for ways to meet the very real needs of students,” Lee said. “People have busy lives and limited resources, so this is a way that we can help them.”

The SDL advanced certificate program comes in response to a change in the New York State Department of Education’s certification exams. Before, graduates who passed the exam were certified for both school building and school district leadership levels. Now, the state has created two separate exams.

In response, the 15-credit SDL program prepares students for this exam, which certifies leaders on the district level, for example, as superintendents.

Dean Hennessy said that in September, the Department of Education would be opening 100 new schools.

“One hundred new schools require 100 new principals and assistant principals,” he said. “I’m hoping [our new programs] will be the pipeline programs that will staff the openings that are coming up.”

by Joanna Klimaski

Tell Us Your Story! The GSE blog—www.fordhamgraded.blogspot.com—seeks contributions from alumni, including human interest stories, news items, publications, events or any other information that may be of interest to the GSE community. Send submissions for consideration to Michelle Adams at miadams@fordham.edu. Please include your name and graduation year.
Give Back to GSE

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