



**EAST
STROUDSBURG
UNIVERSITY**

COMMENCEMENT

Graduate Studies

Friday, May 9, 2025

Koehler Fieldhouse

A Member of Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education

East Stroudsburg University Commencement

Welcome to East Stroudsburg University's Commencement celebration for our graduates. Congratulations to our students who have completed their academic programs, and to their family and friends who have supported them on this journey.

Academic Procession

An usher will lead the faculty followed by the graduating students. Candidates are placed according to the degree to be conferred, and each group is preceded by a commencement marshal. Once all are seated the grand marshal leads the platform participants and the president.

Academic Attire

The tradition of academic costume began in the medieval universities of Europe where gowns were everyday dress, providing for their wearers not only distinction but, quite possibly, warmth during long hours of study in poorly heated buildings.

Today, academic attire is seen on American campuses only at formal affairs such as commencement, Founder's Day, dedications and inaugural ceremonies. In 1895, an Academic Costume Code was established, and has since been adopted by most of our colleges and universities. When the code is followed, one can identify the degree which the wearer holds, the university that awarded it, and the course of study it represents. The distinguishing features are the cut of the gown, the length and colors of the hood, and the color of the tassel on the cap.

The bachelor's and master's gowns are generally made of plain black cotton without trim, while the gown for the doctor's degree is faced with black or colored velvet and has three bars of the same material across the sleeves. The bachelor's gown has long open sleeves, the master's gown has longer closed sleeves with arm slits at the elbow, and the doctor's gown has bell-shaped sleeves extending to the wrist.

The hoods can be distinguished by both the length and color. The bachelor's hood measures three feet, the master's, three and one-half, and the doctor's, four. The color of the velvet edging, which is wider for degrees higher than the bachelor's, indicates the subject area to which the degree pertains. In addition to the colored edging, the hood shows in its lining the official color or colors of the institution which awarded the degree. The hood is worn such that a large part of the lining is visible.

The black mortarboard cap with tassel is worn with each type of gown. Those holding the doctorate wear gold tassels, while holders of the bachelor's and master's degrees generally wear a black tassel, although in recent years it has often been customary to wear the colored tassel symbolizing, like the hood, the subject area of the wearer's degree.

In nearly every academic procession, a few costumes may be seen which do not conform to the standard patterns described above. Gold braid is frequently added to the gowns of academic administrators, and most faculties include several members who hold degrees from foreign universities, some of which prescribe very colorful attire.

The following colors are associated with the various faculties. It is mandatory that they be used on hoods and optional that they be on the tassels and the velvet used with the doctor's gowns.

Faculty.....	Color
Agriculture.....	Maize
Arts, Letters, Humanities	White
Commerce, Accountancy, Business	Drab
Dentistry	Lilac
Economics	Copper
Education.....	Light Blue
Engineering	Orange
Fine Arts, including Architecture	Brown
Forestry	Russet
Journalism	Crimson
Law	Purple
Library Science	Lemon
Medicine.....	Green
Music.....	Pink
Nursing	Apricot

Faculty.....	Color
Optometry.....	Sea Foam Green
Oratory (Speech)	Silver Gray
Pharmacy.....	Olive Green
Philosophy	Dark Blue
Physical Education	Sage Green
Podiatry-Chiropractic	Nile Green
Public Administration including Foreign Service	Peacock Blue
Public Health	Salmon Pink
Science	Golden Yellow
Social Science	Cream
Social Work.....	Citron
Theology.....	Scarlet
Veterinary Service	Gray

The Presidential Medallion

The medallion, or pectoral, has long been a symbol of the rights, authority, and power of kings and queens. At the inception of the university around the year 1000 A.D., and to this day in many European institutions, the reigning monarch still functions as the chancellor of the institution, its chief executive holding appointment as vice chancellor. With the establishment of the academy independent of the crown, the royal medallion has been retained as a symbol of the responsibilities and authority vested in the office of the president of the university by the state.



The East Stroudsburg University medallion was commissioned by the Student Activity Association in 1969, and first used by President Frank D. Sills at his inauguration. It was designed by Dr. Irene Mitchel, professor of art at East Stroudsburg University, and struck by Mr. Leslie Smith, an Allentown, Pa., craftsman. The chain of the pectoral was designed and crafted by Mr. Richard E. Phillips of East Stroudsburg, Pa.

The medallion has, on its obverse, the seal of the university. The seal is surrounded by the torch and the mace representing the light of learning and the authority of the university. These two symbols are superimposed on an abstract rendition of the Delaware Water Gap, so much a part of the geography of the region. On either side of the seal are representations of the original Stroud Hall (1893) and the current Koehler Fieldhouse (1967). Below the seal are the extended rays representing the fourteen institutions of the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education.

The University Mace

The mace was originally a weapon of hand-to-hand combat in medieval times. With the advent of firearms, such a weapon became archaic and was adopted to symbolize the power and authority of kings and queens. Early in the history of the academy, the mace was borrowed from royalty and utilized to symbolize the authority of the institution given to it by the kings and queens and hence, the state, to grant baccalaureate and advanced degrees so specified. The mace is used at all official university functions of an academic nature.

The original East Stroudsburg University mace was commissioned by the ESU Alumni Association for the inauguration of President Frank D. Sills in 1969. It was designed and created by Mr. Richard E. Phillips, a local Pocono artisan. The redesigned mace, incorporating many features of the original mace and symbolizing the achievement of university status by East Stroudsburg State College, was commissioned by the University Commencement Committee in 1987. Mr. Phillips was again requested to modify the mace to reflect the transition from college to university, and Cherry Valley artisan Abby Porter completed the silver work. The current mace is made of cherry and is approximately 38 inches long. The mace has overlays made of hemlock, dating from 1893 from the original Stroud Hall. The black and red coloring represents the school colors.

The octagonal head of the mace represents the disciplines of the traditional academy, and four disciplines of contemporary higher education: science, arts, humanities, and philosophy. Surrounding the head are silver hands bearing the names and dates of the five precursor institutions. The handle is inset in silver with black onyx and red carnelian. The university seal crowns the mace.





Kenneth Long
President

Kenneth Long was appointed president of East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania by the Board of Governors for Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education, effective November 2, 2022, after serving more than two years as the interim president. Long has more than 35 years of progressive experience in higher education. Prior to the interim appointment, which began July 31, 2020, Long served as the University's chief administrative, financial, and operations officer. Among his many accomplishments at ESU, he has been responsible for: stabilizing the University's financial condition; increasing the University cash reserves and reducing capital debt; lowering costs and increasing availability and access to student health services by partnering with a regional medical center; initiating the University's first academic space utilization study; enhancing campus accessibility; coordinating the development of an athletic master plan and upgrading athletic facilities, including adding air conditioning and a generator in Koehler Fieldhouse, painting and branding Eiler-Martin Stadium, replacing the turf for all outdoor sports, and partnering with the local municipality

and little league for baseball and softball facilities; coordinating the construction of a new student housing building which included new counseling and testing centers and the offices of the Dean of Student, Student Conduct, Accessibility Services and Title IX; and facilitating land development plans for a new student center which is scheduled for completion in fall 2025.

Prior to joining ESU, Long held leadership positions at two other Pennsylvania State System institutions, Kutztown and Cheyney universities. He served five years as assistant vice president of administration and finance at Kutztown University and during that time he worked six months as interim vice president for finance and administration at Cheyney University, in a loaned executive capacity. Long has served on a number of taskforces, committees and workgroups over his nearly 20 years in the State System, including: Tuition Alignment Committee, System Appropriation Funding Review Committee, State of PA 529 Advisory Board, co-chaired the State System Budget and ESU Sports Alignment Taskforces, and Kutztown University General Education Committee.

Prior to coming to the Pennsylvania State System, Long held multiple leadership positions at the University of Toledo and University of Toledo Physician Practice Group and played an instrumental role in the merger of the University of Toledo with the Medical University of Ohio. Long started his career in higher education at DeVry University – New Jersey where he worked for 18 years beginning as an assistant director of the office of student accounts and working his way to the chief administrative and financial position of the New Jersey campus. As one of the most senior administrative and financial officers in the northeast region, Long assisted with the opening and staffing of DeVry locations in New York, Florida, Pennsylvania and Virginia.

Long earned his bachelor's degree in math and political science from Drew University in Madison, N.J., and an M.B.A. from Monmouth University in West Long Branch, N.J. He has experience teaching college courses in business administration, financial accounting, and managerial accounting and statistics, and during his career has made numerous presentations at regional and national meetings and conferences. In 2013, Long was selected to serve on the Board of Directors for the Eastern Association of College and University Business Officers (EACUBO) and in 2017 he was selected as the association's treasurer, which he served until 2022.

Since being appointed into the University's chief executive role in 2020, President Long has been recognized by the Governor's Advisory Commission on Latino Affairs, the Monroe County NAACP, the Pocono Mountains United Way, and the Monroe County Chamber of Commerce. While serving as interim president, he was selected to serve as the chairperson of the PASSHE Freedom of Speech and Title VI Task Group. President Long currently serves as the presidential liaison to the PASSHE Board of Governors' Governance Committee, vice chair of the PASSHE Commission of Universities, a member of the Board of Directors for the Pocono Center for the Arts, and an advisory board member for Communities in Schools of Eastern Pennsylvania. In 2024, he was appointed by Pennsylvania Governor Josh Shapiro to the newly established State Board of Higher Education.

Long is married to Evelyn and has three daughters, Alysha, Peyton, and Taylor.



***Susan Dillmuth-Miller, Au.D., CCC-A, FAAA, Grand Marshal
University Senate President***

Dr. Susan Dillmuth-Miller is an associate professor in the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders. She is ESU's clinic audiologist and manages the on-campus audiology clinic. She serves as the president of the University Senate.

Dr. Miller teaches both undergraduate and graduate courses. She has presented internationally on the effects of rheumatic disease and hearing manifestations and educational management of deaf/hard of hearing children. She has published in various journals on various audiologic interests. Her research interests include concussion and complex auditory listening, examining knowledge and attitudes of excessive noise levels and hearing protection in young adults and Auditory Processing Disorder. She advises the ESU Sign Language Club.



***Ashlee Grennan M'10 M'25
Graduate Student Commencement Speaker***

Ashlee Grennan, a master's degree candidate from Saylorsburg, Pa., was selected from a pool of student speaker candidates to serve as the graduate student speaker for tonight's commencement ceremony.

Grennan, a graduate student in reading, is earning her second master's degree from ESU after receiving her M.Ed. in special education in 2010 and also has her supervisory certification from the University. She has nearly 20 years of classroom experience and has been a special education teacher at Stroudsburg High School since 2019. She has also worked in the Pleasant Valley School District, through Colonial Intermediate Unit 20, and the Lehigh Valley Charter High School for the Arts. She holds her bachelor's degree from State University of New York, College at Oneonta, in speech communication.

Grennan is a lifelong learner, an advocate for education, and a dedicated special education teacher who is deeply committed to the importance of quality education. She is also the mother of two college graduates. Since first joining the ESU community in 2008, she has witnessed the incredible support that the institution provides for its students, and is grateful to have been part of that experience.



Mitchell L. Cordova '92, Ph.D.
Keynote Speaker

Dr. Cordova has served Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU) for the past 13.5 years. In his role as Founding Vice President for Student Success & Enrollment Management for 6.5 years, Dr. Cordova led a comprehensive division comprised of four units containing 15 departments all aimed towards optimizing and maximizing FGCU's efforts in: admitting best-fit students to FGCU, enhancing student engagement and campus life, improving student retention, persistence, and four-year graduation rates, as well as decreasing the cost of attendance while enhancing the employability of students following graduation. Under his leadership, FGCU achieved a 23 percentage point increase in four-year graduation rates and launched many initiatives supporting student success across Student Life, Academic Support, Career Readiness, Military & Veterans Student Success, and Enrollment Services. Additionally, he led efforts in transforming many campus buildings to align with student success efforts. As Dean of the Marieb College of Health & Human Services, Dr. Cordova led efforts in building

and refining innovative academic programs leading to strong student and program outcomes and raising \$19 million to support student scholarships and faculty development and excellence in teaching and scholarship.

Prior to his arrival at FGCU, Dr. Cordova served as professor and chairperson of the Department of Kinesiology at The University of North Carolina at Charlotte for six years where he also served as Founding Director of the Biodynamics Research Laboratory and Research Faculty in the Center for Bioengineering Systems. Before joining the faculty at UNC Charlotte, Dr. Cordova was on faculty at Indiana State University for eight years, serving in many capacities, including: Department Chair, Director of the MS and PhD programs in Athletic Training and Sports Medicine, and Director of the Sports Injury Research Laboratory. An accomplished scholar, Dr. Cordova's research endeavors have culminated in more than 65 peer-reviewed scientific journal articles, textbook chapters, and textbook reviews. He has also delivered over 130 professional research presentations, symposia, and invited lectures at the national and international levels. Dr. Cordova has been recognized nationally for his research accomplishments and is a Fellow of the American College of Sports Medicine, the National Athletic Trainers' Association, the Association of Schools of Advancing Health Professions, and a Distinguished Fellow of the National Academies of Practice. Dr. Cordova earned a B.S. in Athletic Training from East Stroudsburg University, an M.A. in Athletic Training from Indiana State University, and a Ph.D. in Biomechanics from The University of Toledo. He also completed the Crisis Leadership in Higher Education certificate program at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government.

Program

PRELUDE: Fanfare and Celebration March, Yo Goto.....	<i>Music from My Neighbor Totoro, Joe Hisaishi, arr. Hiroki Takasashi</i>
PROCESSIONAL: Procession of the Nobles*	<i>Mlada, Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, arr. Brian Hodge</i>
Greetings	Kenneth Long <i>President</i>
NATIONAL ANTHEM: The Presentation of the Colors.....	ESU ROTC
Singing led by	Madison Boltz <i>ESU Sophomore</i>
Performed by	East Stroudsburg University Ceremonial Band <i>Brian Hodge, Director</i>
Greetings from the Council of Trustees	L. Patrick Ross '67 <i>Chair</i>
Graduate Student Commencement Address.....	Ashlee Grennan M'10 M'25
Commencement Address	Mitchell L. Cordova '92, Ph.D. <i>Founding Vice President for Student Success and Enrollment Management, Florida Gulf Coast University</i>
Presentation of Candidates and Conferring of Degrees	Margaret J. Ball, D.M.A. <i>Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs</i>
Underscore: Selected Piano Works of Claude Debussy.....	Brian Hodge
Greetings from the Alumni.....	Danica Hartenfels '97 <i>Vice President, East Stroudsburg University Alumni Board</i>
Singing of Alma Mater* (lyrics on last page)	Madison Boltz <i>ESU Sophomore</i>
RECESSIONAL: Great Gate of Kiev+	<i>Mussorgsky/arr. Sohei Kano</i>

* Please stand for Processional and Alma Mater.

+ Please remain seated for Recessional.

Thank you to the following participants in this evening's ceremony:

Reader: Shawn Watkins, Associate Professor and Department Chair of Reading

Please turn off cell phones during the Commencement Ceremony. Thank you.

Candidates for Doctoral Degrees

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

**Leigh Ann Gruen**

B.A., University of Kentucky, 1995

M.A., Cedar Crest College, 2021

Dissertation: What is the Impact of Small Group Explicit Instruction Using the CRA Framework in a 2nd Grade Classroom? An Action Research Study

Chair: Dr. Diane Holben

Leigh Ann Gruen's work seeks to improve the outcomes of all early elementary students through the practical application of academic research. In her ninth year as an elementary teacher in the Parkland School District, Leigh Ann's study applies best practices from current research on math instruction to a general classroom setting, rather than its typical application as small group intervention. In her tenure at Parkland, Leigh Ann has held several leadership roles. She has served as a faculty and student teacher mentor, as well as on several curricular committees: Math in Focus Implementation, ECRI Explicit Phonics Pilot Committee, Social Studies Curriculum Committee, and the STEELS Science Implementation Committee. Her doctoral internship at the Greater United Way of the Lehigh Valley aligned with her dissertation research focused on improved math outcomes for elementary students. Her second internship with the Parkland School District was focused on the elementary school implementation of the new statewide STEELS Science Standards for the 2024-25 school year. Outside of her work at Parkland, she is mother to Lauren, Will, and Katie and wife to Dr. William "Chip" Gruen.

Dissertation Abstract: Prior research indicates that students from lower socioeconomic families enter school with a gap in their math foundational skills, and that current pedagogy is not effective in remediating this gap. Student math performance is a predictor of educational outcomes including college readiness, future employment, and wages. The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of explicit small group math instruction within the Concrete Representational Abstract Framework among students in two subgroups: those that receive Free and Reduced Lunch (Low SES) and those who do not (High SES). Fourteen general education math students participated in this research as part of a convenience sample. As a mixed methods, practical action research study, both qualitative and quantitative data were collected to measure student academic achievement, student perceptual data of their math self-efficacy, and if there was a correlation between the data. Using Ryan and Deci's (2000) Self-Determination Theory as a conceptual framework, study results were analyzed through students' competence, autonomy, and connection with others. Study findings indicate that growth in student self-efficacy, a combination of math enjoyment and self-perception, shows a strong correlation to growth in math achievement. In academic achievement, the Low SES students were able to reduce the pretest gap to a nearly equal performance among their High SES peers in the post-test. Future research is recommended among a larger sample size and among multiple classrooms to further validate these findings.

Candidates for Doctoral Degrees

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

**Amanda L. Hinkel**

B.S.Ed., Kutztown University of Pennsylvania, 2003

M.S., Wilkes University, 2008

Dissertation: Leading Through Crisis: The Experiences of Lehigh Valley High School Principals Through the COVID-19 Pandemic

Chair: Dr. (Mary) Elizabeth Azukas

Amanda Hinkel is a principal at James Buchanan Elementary School in Bethlehem Area School District. This is her 21st year serving the Bethlehem Area school district in which she was an English teacher and Assistant Principal of Curriculum and Instruction at Liberty High School. She received her bachelor's degree in secondary education: English at Kutztown University and a master's degree in educational leadership at Wilkes University. She resides in Nazareth with her husband, Ryan, and sons, Teagan and Logan.

Dissertation Abstract: The COVID-19 global pandemic led to rapid and unprecedented changes in education, requiring school leaders to navigate complex challenges. Limited qualitative studies have been published describing the principal experience during the pandemic. The purpose of this qualitative narrative study was to explore the leadership experiences of high school principals in the Lehigh Valley through the lens of Boin's Strategic Crisis Leadership Framework (2017). A demographic questionnaire was used to select three participants for semi-structured interviews. This study was guided by three research questions: (1) How did high school principals in the Lehigh Valley experience the pandemic? (2) To what extent did they exhibit Boin's Five Critical Tasks of Strategic Leadership? (3) What are the most significant lessons learned from leading through the pandemic?

Findings revealed that sense-making was characterized by uncertainty, the need for human-centered leadership, and the importance of support. Decision-making and coordination highlighted collaboration and teamwork but also exposed the strain on school systems. Meaning-making underscored the necessity of transparency, while accountability revealed challenges in planning for an uncertain future. Learning emphasized teamwork, communication, and crisis preparedness. Additionally, two emergent themes—crisis finality and mental health—underscored the lasting impact of the pandemic on school leaders. While this study is not generalizable due to its small sample size, it provides valuable insights into the lived experiences of school leaders during a crisis and contributes to the growing body of literature on educational leadership in times of disruption. This study's findings highlight weaknesses in educational systems, emphasizing the need to integrate crisis preparation into principal preparation programs, and establish more robust support system for principals. While this study sheds light on the challenges of high school principals leading during a crisis, its most critical takeaway is the need for continuous reflection and sustained support of school leaders.

Candidates for Doctoral Degrees

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

**Catherine T. Klingler**

B.A., Indiana University of Pennsylvania, 1992

B.A., Indiana University of Pennsylvania, 1993

M.F.A., Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, 1995

Dissertation: Intricate Patterns: Bronfenbrenner's Model and Perceptions of STEAM Professionals on Informal Learning Influences toward Career Choice

Chair: Dr. Beth Rajan-Sockman

Catherine Klingler came to ESU in 2015 as the curator of Schisler Museum of Wildlife and Natural History & McMunn Planetarium, where she guides students in experiential learning for educational and cultural careers. Prior to ESU, Cathy enjoyed a 20-year career in leadership at Carnegie Museum of Natural History in Pittsburgh. In addition to her professional work, Cathy consults and volunteers for conservation, cultural, and educational groups, creatively combining her interests in science and the arts with public advocacy. As the spouse of a scientific illustrator and mom to a budding ecologist, and having started out as a technical writer herself, Cathy is passionate about helping young people find their pathways to STEAM careers.

Dissertation Abstract: STEM stands for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math, widely hailed as tools for success in global innovation and economics. Attrition is high in United States STEM education and careers, leading to what is known as the leaky STEM pipeline. The STEAM model, which stands for STEM + Arts, was developed to strengthen the career pipeline with the creative thinking and contextual perspectives of the liberal arts. However, STEAM outcomes have been difficult to assess due to a lack of consensus on tools and standards. The lived experience of STEAM professionals may help identify successful influences toward a STEAM career choice.

The purpose of this mixed-method phenomenological study was to survey STEAM professionals through the lens of Urie Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Model of Human Development, which offers a framework for the environmental influences that shape a person's psychological makeup. Influences from informal (outside the classroom) learning can happen anytime and anywhere, such as through a museum visit, personal interaction, backyard exploration, or community engagement. Survey results from 20 professionals across 18 STEAM careers indicated that informal learning experiences were the key influence toward the choice of a STEAM career. These findings may help inform educational and career interventions for rising STEAM professionals.

Candidates for Doctoral Degrees

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

**Helen Michelina Sclama Zaleski**

B.S.Ed., Millersville University of Pennsylvania, 1998

M.S., Wilkes University, 2001

Dissertation: Exploring the Educational Experiences of Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education (SLIFE): A Qualitative Study

Chair: Dr. (Mary) Elizabeth Azukas

Helen Sclama Zaleski is the proud daughter of immigrants, shaped by their sacrifices and dreams. With 20 years of experience as a teacher and eight years as both a high school and elementary school principal, she is passionate about creating environments where students and educators feel supported and valued. Public education is not just her career; it's her belief that every child deserves the opportunity to succeed. Helen resides in Bucks County with her husband, Greg, whose unwavering encouragement has been invaluable. They are proud parents to three remarkable young men, each of whom brings his own unique source of inspiration and joy. She is deeply grateful for the love and support of her family and friends, who inspire her to live with a heart full of gratitude. These relationships remind her of the simple yet powerful truth: kindness can make a real difference in our world.

Dissertation Abstract: This dissertation investigates the educational experiences of Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education (SLIFE), emphasizing the multifaceted challenges they encounter and the resilience they exhibit. Employing qualitative research methods, the study conducted interviews with students, teachers, and counselors to obtain comprehensive insights into the factors influencing SLIFE's educational trajectories. The research identifies significant barriers such as language obstacles, educational interruptions, and limited access to support services, which collectively contribute to heightened risks of academic disengagement and underachievement. Through the triangulation of diverse perspectives, the study elucidates how various environmental factors within SLIFE's immediate contexts impact their academic performance and success.

The findings advocate for a transformative shift in educational practices, urging the adoption of proactive, student-centered approaches that holistically address both the academic and emotional needs of SLIFE. This research underscores the necessity for educational practices that are sensitive to cultural differences and tailored support strategies to foster resilience and academic success among these students. The implications of this study are significant for educators and policymakers, providing valuable insights into the development of effective interventions and policies aimed at enhancing the educational outcomes of this vulnerable student population. By embracing these insights, we can create a more supportive educational environment where every student has the opportunity to thrive.

Candidates for Doctoral Degrees

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

**Michael Slesinski**

B.A., College of Mount Saint Vincent, 2000

M.S., Mercy College, 2007

M.S., Lehman College, 2011

Dissertation: Analytics' Effect on Teacher Approaches to Student Research Practices

Chair: Dr. Andrea McClanahan

Michael Slesinski's career has spanned the worlds of communication and education, bringing a background in television broadcasting to his practice as a school administrator. After spending five years as a news and sports reporter, for the past 20 years Michael has worked in a number of New York City and Northeastern Pennsylvania schools and districts. Michael's years of experience in education has allowed him to prioritize building trusting relationships with students, parents, and colleagues. His mission is to build transparency and collaboration in the leadership processes of schools and districts. Most importantly, Michael is incredibly proud of his daughter, Jill, who is his whole world and who inspires him daily in his work to improve the experiences and outcomes for students and their families.

Dissertation Abstract: Throughout the history of civilization, methods of communication have evolved from the spoken word to today's instant social media access. In every generation, however, one goal has proven consistent – the goal of sharing factual information. One significant challenge to this tradition throughout the years has been the important duty of separating fact from fiction. In the past, hearsay and documented facts could be distinguished from one another based on the medium in which the information was presented. Today, with information streams coming from almost every conceivable source, and those sources all resembling one another, it is more important than ever for our educators to successfully teach students how to sort through the sources and determine which resources to utilize in gathering factual information. In this study, this researcher set out to review teachers' practices in preparing and delivering curriculum in how to conduct research. The researcher sought to determine if access to their students' Learning Analytics data would change any aspects of the teachers' preparations for teaching future lessons. This study was completed in cooperation with a suburban school district, and focused on teachers all from the same department at the district's middle school. During this study, the researcher encountered lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, which allowed for the unique opportunity to also review and document teachers' practices in the face of challenges presented by a lingering pandemic.

Candidates for Doctoral Degrees

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

**Deanna L. Webb**

B.S., West Chester University of Pennsylvania, 2004

MRPED, International Institute of Restorative Practices, 2009

Dissertation: Examining the Relationship between Teachers' Classroom Management Beliefs and Student Growth

Chair: Dr. Nurun Begum

Deanna Webb is a passionate educator with over 20 years of experience working with children. She holds a bachelor's degree in special education from West Chester University, a master's degree in restorative practices in education from the International Institute for Restorative Practices, and a principal certification from Moravian University. Currently, she serves as middle school principal for Southern Lehigh School District. Throughout her career, she has worked as an assistant principal and special education teacher, supporting students with diverse needs across different age groups, settings, and districts. Beyond her leadership in schools, she has traveled the country training educators and administrators in restorative practices, trauma-informed practices, and leadership. Deanna lives in Bethlehem with her husband, Bob, and their children, Bella and Bobby. She loves traveling, reading, and cooking, but her favorite moments are spent with family—especially cheering on her children at their events.

Dissertation Abstract: The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between teacher beliefs, classroom management practices, and student growth. This quantitative study surveys K-12 teachers in a small suburban school district in Pennsylvania to explore their perceived classroom management approaches. Data was collected using Martin & Baldwin's (2007) Behavior and Instructional Management Scale (BIMS), a Likert-style survey designed to identify classroom management styles. Demographic variables, including gender, years of experience, education level, and grade level taught, were analyzed in relation to teachers' management beliefs. Additionally, the study investigates potential relationships between these beliefs and teacher effectiveness as measured by Pennsylvania Value-Added Assessment System (PVAAS) growth scores.

Guided by the Teacher Behavior Continuum (1986) as a conceptual framework, this correlational and causal-comparative analysis applies descriptive and inferential statistics to uncover relationships between teacher beliefs about classroom management practices and student learning outcomes. The findings aim to provide insights into how teacher beliefs and management styles influence student outcomes, suggestions for pre-service teacher preparation programs, and in-service teacher professional development. The findings can also serve as a foundation for future research.

Candidates for Doctoral Degrees

DOCTORATE OF HEALTH SCIENCES

**Theresa Craig**

B.S., Pennsylvania State University, 1994

M.S., Pennsylvania Western University, 2019

Dissertation: The Effects of an 8-Week Multicomponent Training Program on Quality of Life, Fear of Falling, & Physical Performance in Community-Dwelling Older Adults

Chair: Dr. Shala E. Davis

Theresa Craig is an allied health professional with over 30 years of clinical experience in exercise science, specializing in designing and implementing exercise programs for individuals of all ages and abilities. In addition to her clinical work, she proudly serves as an adjunct faculty member in the clinical exercise physiology program at East Stroudsburg University and the Doctor of Physical Therapy program at Misericordia University. Her academic interests and previous research experiences have shaped her commitment to promoting a deeper understanding of exercise as a key intervention for chronic disease management and improved patient-reported outcomes in aging populations. She is passionate about continuing to advance the field of exercise science through both her teaching and professional development. Theresa wishes to sincerely thank the faculty, staff, and fellow cohort members who provided the most fulfilling academic experience. She is especially grateful for the continuous love and support from her family, friends, and colleagues.

Dissertation Abstract: Exercise is a non-pharmacological intervention shown to prevent and manage age-related loss of muscle mass, strength, and physical performance. A pre-mid-post-test research design was used to examine the effects of an eight-week multicomponent training program on quality of life, fear of falling, and physical performance in community-dwelling older adults. A convenient sample of community-dwelling older adults aged 65 years and older from an outpatient medical facility in northeast Pennsylvania was recruited to participate in the study. Sixteen subjects were divided into a group with no previous structured exercise training (NSET), a group with previous structured exercise training (PSET), and a control group (CG). Participants attended two 50-minute group-based standardized sessions per week in the outpatient facility. A repeated-measures ANOVA was performed to determine the main effects of the intervention, while a one-way ANOVA test determined between-group effects. The Sarcopenia Quality of Life questionnaire (SarQoL), the Falls Efficacy Scale (FES), and the Short Physical Performance Battery (SPPB) were utilized as outcome measures. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to assess subjects' overall intervention experience.

Despite reduced physical performance, outcomes revealed high perceived self-efficacy about avoiding falls in the three experimental groups. Qualitative data supported non-statistical changes in physical performance for subjects who performed the intervention that may warrant clinical impact for improved quality of life and physical independence. These findings support the use of both patient-reported outcome measures and physical performance outcomes to better understand the effectiveness of preventive health interventions for an aging population.

Candidates for Doctoral Degrees

DOCTORATE OF HEALTH SCIENCES

**Amy Rose Giannantonio**

B.A., Rutgers University, 1997

M.S., East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania, 2012

Dissertation: An Evaluation of the Perceptions of Efficacy of Occupational Therapy in Enabling Those with Friedreich Ataxia to Navigate Activities of Daily Living

Chair: Dr. Shala E. Davis

Amy Giannantonio is a dedicated educator with 25 years of experience. She is also a research scientist whose journey as a molecular biologist began at the Waksman Institute of Rutgers University and continued through her work at ESU's Wildlife DNA Lab. Most recently, Amy contributed to research on treatments for Friedreich's Ataxia at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. She is hopeful that earning her doctoral degree will allow her to make a meaningful impact in this critical field. She would like to sincerely thank ESU's D.H.Sc. Program's faculty, staff, and fellow cohort members who have made this academic journey so fulfilling. Above all, Amy is deeply grateful for the unwavering love and support of her family, friends, and colleagues, whose encouragement has been a constant source of strength throughout her studies.

Dissertation Abstract: Friedreich ataxia (FRDA) is a rare, inherited, multisystem neurodegenerative disorder characterized by rapid loss of functional autonomy, resulting in severe care burden. With no cure, occupational therapy (OT) is believed to be beneficial to the well-being of those with FRDA, possibly ameliorating disease manifestations. This mixed-method study evaluated perspectives of FRDA patients, their caregivers, and occupational therapists regarding the effectiveness of OT in enabling those with FRDA to navigate Activities of Daily Living (ADLs).

Statistical analyses of perception scores included a paired-samples t-test comparing mean efficacy scores for physical therapy (PT) and OT, one-sample t-tests to compare the mean scores of the Functional Independence Measure (FIM), and chi-square analyses of functional domains. The paired-sample t-test demonstrated no significant differences in perception scores for PT OT interventions. One-sample t-tests demonstrated statistically significant differences between mean perception scores and a test value for several categories of ADLs. Chi-square analyses identified the FIM domains for which OT is perceived as most effective. Qualitative data from caregiver surveys and OT interviews was thematically analyzed, revealing positive and negative perceptions of OT, with the frequency of favorable comments exceeding unfavorable comments. These findings suggest that this sample of FRDA patients, their caregivers, and occupational therapists perceive OT's efficacy as comparable to PT, and OT can be a valuable intervention to assist individuals with FRDA in navigating ADLs. Results from this study bolster support for the use of OT in the treatment of FRDA and may assist occupational therapists in developing more effective plans of care.

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B.S., East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania, 2023

Advisor: Dr. LuAnn Batson-Magnuson

Wendy Georgiana Setzer

B.S., East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania, 2023

Advisor: Dr. LuAnn Batson-Magnuson

Erica Rose Tout

B.S., East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania, 2023

Advisor: Dr. LuAnn Batson-Magnuson

Krystal L. Ulm

B.S., East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania, 2022

Advisor: Dr. LuAnn Batson-Magnuson

Magdelynn May Wigoda

B.S., East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania, 2022

Advisor: Dr. LuAnn Batson-Magnuson

Norma Zavala

B.S., The Pennsylvania State University, 2016

Advisor: Dr. LuAnn Batson-Magnuson

Exercise Science

Chrystiana Brettle

B.S., East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania, 2024

Advisor: Dr. Chad Witmer

Holly Louise Chambers

B.S., Ursinus College, 2023

Advisor: Dr. Chad Witmer

Eric Jason Falleni

B.S., East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania, 2024

Advisor: Dr. Chad Witmer

Brian Peter Finnerty

B.S., East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania, 2024

Advisor: Dr. Chad Witmer

Carina Gasparini
B.S., East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania, 2024
Advisor: Dr. Chad Witmer

Ashley Justine Goebeler
B.S., East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania, 2023
Advisor: Dr. Chad Witmer

Allie Hanichak
B.S., Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania, 2023
Advisor: Dr. Chad Witmer

Aidan J. Hayward
B.S., East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania, 2023
Advisor: Dr. Chad Witmer

Thomas J. Hulle
B.S., The College of Saint Rose, 2019
Advisor: Dr. Chad Witmer

Samina Mohammad Kasam
B.P., Maharashtra University of Health Science, 2019
Advisor: Dr. Chad Witmer

Conner Wayne Michael
B.S., Lock Haven University of Pennsylvania, 2023
Advisor: Dr. Chad Witmer

Mikhail Samuels
B.F.A., University of Southern Mississippi, 2023
Advisor: Dr. Chad Witmer

Vanessa Marie Santopietro
B.S., East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania, 2024
Advisor: Dr. Chad Witmer

Alec Taylor Snyder
B.S., East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania, 2024
Advisor: Dr. Chad Witmer

John Donald Snyder
B.S., Towson University, 2015
Advisor: Dr. Chad Witmer

Karaline Stelma
B.S., East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania, 2023
Advisor: Dr. Chad Witmer

Francisco Armando Taveras
B.S., Lock Haven University of Pennsylvania, 2024
Advisor: Dr. Chad Witmer

Aaron Tobias
B.S., East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania, 2024
Advisor: Dr. Chad Witmer

Olivia Anna Tokonitz
B.S., East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania, 2023
Advisor: Dr. Chad Witmer

Christian J. Young
B.S., West Virginia University, 2023
Advisor: Dr. Chad Witmer

Health Education

Travis J. Edwards
B.A., Cortland University, 2019
Advisor: Dr. Kelly Boyd

Michael Justin Horvath
B.S., East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania, 2017
Advisor: Dr. Chad Witmer

Kimberly Klinger
B.S., Lock Haven University of Pennsylvania, 2019
Advisor: Dr. Kelly Boyd

Danielle Karen Mannerberg
B.S., Montclair State University, 2016
Advisor: Dr. Kelly Boyd

Gerald Matcovsky
B.S., SUNY Cortland, 2022
Advisor: Dr. Kelly Boyd

Scott Christopher Mish Jr.
B.S., East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania, 2023
Advisor: Dr. Kelly Boyd

Veronica Monges
B.A., Temple University, 2001
Advisor: Dr. Kelly Boyd

Desirae Grace Natale
B.S., East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania, 2023
Advisor: Dr. Kelly Boyd

Kristen Erika Robinson
B.S., SUNY Cortland, 2022
Advisor: Dr. Kelly Boyd

Brigid Shehan
B.S., Cairn University, 2015
Advisor: Dr. Kelly Boyd

Sarah Sherman
B.S., West Chester University of Pennsylvania, 2022
Advisor: Dr. Kelly Boyd

*Please note that every attempt has been made to include all graduates' names in the Commencement program by the production deadline.
We apologize for any omissions or errors.*

Graduation is contingent upon completion of all requirements.

We are committed to ensuring that our Commencement ceremonies are accessible to all attendees. Closed captioning is available during the ceremony, both through the video board at Koehler Fieldhouse and the live stream at esu.edu/commencement/ceremony.cfm. This service is provided to ensure that everyone can fully participate and celebrate this important occasion. If you have any questions or require additional assistance, please contact a staff member at today's ceremony.

Thank you to all of the ESU staff and faculty who have contributed to this spring's commencement ceremonies.

Today's graduates are now ESU alumni!

Follow the ESU Alumni Association on Facebook at East Stroudsburg University Alumni Association and on Instagram @esualumni.

Recognition of Post-Baccalaureate Certification Students

East Stroudsburg University and Graduate and Extended Studies are pleased to recognize the following students who have completed coursework and submitted documentation for specific Pennsylvania Department of Education instructional, specialist, and supervisor certificates.

Early Childhood Education PK-4

Kayla L. Blank
Victoria R. Lindner

Educational Specialist I Instructional Technology Specialist PK-12

Joshua D. Burak
Sandra K. Hartman
Anthony P. Murgidi
Justin Webb

Educational Specialist I School Speech & Language Pathologist PK-12

Hannah M. Bruce
Patricia J. Curley
Karen V. Fernandez
Rebecca G. Kugle
DaLina C. Lehman
Jada Leight
Jack H. Melquist
Katelyn L. Smith
Gabrielle S. Watson

Endorsement Online Instruction Program PK-12

Allie R. Caggiano
Meghan H. Kutzler
Kristyn L. Off

English 7-12

Nichelle M. Allen
Martha J. Crouthamel
Robert C. Fox, Jr.
Teresa Thompson

French PK-12

Nathalie G. Kpassou

General Science 7-12

Morgan J. Weaver

German PK-12

Elena Brooks

Grades 4-8 (All Subjects 4-6, Science 7-8)

Kaitlyn L. McConville

Intern Biology 7-12

D'Orsay L. Hockenbury

Intern Chemistry 7-12

Jennifer J. Edwards
Kathleen Lavelle

Mathematics 7-12

Gwen C. Boonyam

Physics 7-12

Jarrold A. Gibson

Principal PK-12

Amber Chiafulio
Lindsay M. Duffy
Kerilyn Klamerus
Brittany M. Neal
Christopher J. Ostapchuk
Nellianne B. Parr

Program Specialist – English as a Second Language (ESL) PK-12

Erica S. Quintero

Reading Specialist PK-12

Loretta M. Cassidy
Amber L. McFadden
Sarah F. Memon
Shannon C. Schupper
Kylie N. Rissmiller

Social Studies 7-12

Jane M. Fiore
Melissa E. Glavich
James C. Osinski
Matthew P. Schoenmakers

Spanish PK-12

Kaila M. Slack
Katherine M. Laclair
Mary Rodriguez

Special Education PK-12

Saraswati Acosta
Katielynn E. Bowers
Kathryn A. Frangos
Diandra B. John
Robin Johnson
Victoria R. Kunkel
Leslie S. Moyer
Melissa D. Seas
Celina Stolpen
Steven C. Struble
Megan T. Swick
Nicholas W. Tanzillo
Sabrina Walters

Speech & Language Impaired PK-12

Emily L. Clapp
Alyssa M. Day
Cierra M. Marks
Ashlynn R. Mixa
Sophia S. Poker
Elizabeth Velez
Abby M. Wrenfrow

Supervisory Special Education PK-12

Stacie A. Ammerman
Nadia L. Grau
Philip B. Haines
Rebecca K. Lewis

Graduate Scholarships for 2024-25

DR. ELI BERMAN ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP I & II

Recipients: Lindsay K. Foster and Zia R. Nicholson

Dr. Eli Berman is a retired ESU professor of exercise science. He spent a large part of his career as a cardiologist and internal medicine specialist in practice with Medical Associates of Monroe County in East Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania. This scholarship is awarded to two clinical exercise physiology students each spring.

DR. JEFFREY and MRS. AUDREY WEBER ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP

Recipient: Anthony Smith

Established in the names of Dr. Jeffrey and Mrs. Audrey Weber, recipients must be enrolled in either the Political Science or History master's degree program. The award will alternate between these two majors. Selected by the ESU Scholarship Committee.

DR. LEROY J. KOEHLER GRADUATE STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP

Recipient: Shanna-Kay J. Gordon

Leroy J. Koehler was a long-time member of the Social Studies faculty at East Stroudsburg State Teachers College. He served as President of the College from 1956 to 1968, during which time the institution's name was changed to East Stroudsburg State College. The scholarship is awarded each spring for the following academic year. This year's recipient is a graduate student in the sport management program.

GEORGE D. '58 and HARRIET D. '56 HALL GRADUATE ENDOWED AND ANNUAL SCHOLARSHIP

Recipient: Laura Nederostek

George D. Hall is an alumnus, Class of 1958 and his wife, Harriet Davis Hall is an alumna, Class of 1956. They met and married while attending East Stroudsburg State Teachers College and went on to careers in teaching. The Halls ultimately retired from the education faculty at Western Connecticut State University and currently reside in Sun City Center, Florida. The scholarship is awarded each fall for the following spring semester. Recipients must hold a baccalaureate degree with certification in elementary education and currently be pursuing a master's degree in elementary education.

JAMES C. RUTHERFORD, JR. '09 BIOLOGY GRADUATE ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP

Recipient: Audrey M. Sauter

The scholarship was established by James and Lael Rutherford in memory of their son, James C. Rutherford, Jr., Class of 2009. Recipients are selected by the East Stroudsburg University Biology Department Scholarship Committee. Preference is given to students who are working on their thesis or research project. Recipients are highly encouraged to present their findings at a biological conference. The scholarship is awarded to a biology graduate student each academic year.

MARY SUE '60 M'69 and LOUIS BALDUCCI ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP

Recipient: Emily Hegen

The scholarship was established by Dr. Mary Sue and Louis Balducci. Dr. Balducci received her undergraduate degree from East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania in 1960 and her Master's Degree from East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania in 1969. Recipients are selected by the Graduate Advisory Council Scholarship Committee. Applicants must be enrolled as a graduate student in the Exercise Science or Sports Management programs and must have a minimum of six credits earned at East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania with two years of work experience in a related field. Applicants must submit an academic resume of their achievements throughout their college career. Preference is given to students not in the graduate assistantship program and whose academic resume is accompanied by a letter of recommendation by an East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania faculty or staff member.

RYAN J. YANOSHAK M'05 ANNUAL SCHOLARSHIP

Recipient: Alessia K. Valente

Established in memory of Ryan J. Yanoshak M'05, recipients must be graduate students majoring in Sport Management. Preference will be given to graduate students interning in the ESU Sports Information Department. If there is no intern for Sports Information the award will be made to a worthy graduate student majoring in Sport Management who has demonstrated an interest in sports, media or sports management. The scholarship is renewable as long as funding is available and the recipient continues to meet the criteria. Selected by the ESU Sport Management Department Scholarship Committee.

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Rosemary Driebe Olofsson
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Kristine P. Bush '12
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Caitlin "Katie" Ord '07 M'08
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Stephanie Squires '06
Bryan Thomson '14

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Glenn G. Gottshalk '72
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Phyllis M. Kirschner '63
Sandra "Pinky" O'Neil-Seiler '57
Faye D. Soderberg '58
Virginia M. Sten '71

The Alma Mater

Alma Mater, thy halls so majestically stand
In the midst of a landscape unique,
Through the seasons we toil with our bodies and minds
In pursuit of the wisdom we seek.
A mystical charm binds thy children to thee,
Each incoming class feels its spell;
Those who leave thee regretful thy beauties recall,
Which deep in their memories dwell.

(Patrick Conny, 1912)

A photographer from GradImages is present at today's ceremony. Each graduate is photographed as they cross the stage.

Visit www.gradimages.com to view the professional photos taken of your grad today!

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East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania is committed to equal opportunity for its students, employees and applicants. The university is committed to providing equal educational and employment rights to all persons without regard to race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or veteran's status. Each member of the university community has a right to study and work in an environment free from any form of racial, ethnic and sexual discrimination including sexual harassment, sexual violence and sexual assault. (Further information, including contact information, can be found on the university's website at esu.edu/titleix.) In accordance with federal and state laws, the university will not tolerate discrimination.

This policy is placed in this document in accordance with state and federal laws including Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, Sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and the Civil Rights Act of 1991 as well as all applicable federal and state executive orders.

