

2024



RUTGERS-NEW BRUNSWICK
Graduate School of Education

CONVOCATION
May 2024





Dr. Wanda J. Blanchett

*Dean of Rutgers Graduate School of Education
and Distinguished Professor*



A MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

WELCOME



Processional

Class of 2024

National Anthem

PERFORMED BY

Anna Rehberg

Vocalist

& Mason Gross School of the Arts Brass Quintet

Welcome

Dr. Wanda J. Blanchett

Dean & Distinguished Professor

GSE Student Awards

■ **Nancy Higginson Dorr Award**

■ **New Jersey Distinguished Clinical Intern Award 2024 Nominees**

PRESENTED BY

Dr. Nora Hyland

Associate Dean of Academic Affairs & Faculty Director of Teacher Education

GSE Alumni Association Dissertation Awards

■ **Evelyn Headley Award**

■ **Angelo Tomaso Award**

■ **Arleen Urban Award**

PRESENTED BY

Dr. Barbara Trueger

President, GSE Alumni Association

Student Speaker

Brittany L. Marshall

INTRODUCTION BY

Dr. Dan Battey

Professor, Learning & Teaching

Distinguished Leader in Education Award

■ **Dr. DeForest B. Soaries, Jr.**

President & CEO of Corporate Community Connections, Inc.

PRESENTED BY

Dr. Wanda J. Blanchett

Dean & Distinguished Professor

Doctor of Philosophy Graduates, Doctor of Education Graduates

Dr. Juan Pablo Mejía-Ramos

Director of Ph.D. in Education Program, Learning & Teaching

Education Specialists, Master of Arts in Education Graduates

Dr. Michelle Macchia

Assistant Professor of Professional Practice, GSE-CSPN Partnership Leader, Learning & Teaching

Master of Education Graduates

Dr. Michelle Macchia

Assistant Professor of Professional Practice, GSE-CSPN Partnership Leader, Learning & Teaching

- Adult and Continuing Education
- College Student Affairs
- Counseling Psychology
- Dance Education
- Early Childhood/Elementary Education
- Educational Administration and Supervision
- Education, Culture, and Society
- Educational Statistics, Measurement, and Evaluation
- English/Language-Arts Education
- Language Education
- Learning, Cognition, and Development
- Literacy Education
- Mathematics Education
- Reading Education
- School Counseling
- Science Education
- Social Studies Education
- Special Education

Alma Mater

On the Banks of the Old Raritan

Lyrics on following page

PERFORMED BY

Anna Rehberg

Vocalist

& Mason Gross School of the Arts Brass Quintet

Concluding Remarks

Dr. Wanda J. Blanchett

Dean & Distinguished Professor

Recessional

Class of 2024

ON *the* BANKS of *the* OLD RARITAN

From far and near we came to Rutgers,
And resolved to learn all that we can;
And so we settled down,
In that noisy college town,
On the banks of the old Raritan.

REFRAIN:

On the banks of the old Raritan (my friends)
Where old Rutgers evermore shall stand,
For has she not stood
Since the time of the flood,
On the banks of the old Raritan.

Then sing aloud to Alma Mater
And keep the scarlet in the van'
For with her motto high
Rutgers' name shall never die
On the banks of the old Raritan.

(REFRAIN)

STUDENT AWARDS

Nancy Higginson Dorr Award

PRESENTED BY

Dr. Nora Hyland

Associate Dean of Academic Affairs & Faculty Director of Teacher Education

The Nancy Higginson Dorr Award was established by her son to honor graduates who show promise of being exceptional teachers. Nancy Higginson Dorr attended the Dearborn Seminary in Chicago in the 1860's and later became a remarkable teacher who, according to one of her children, "somehow kept alive the inborn curiosity and spirit of inquiry and exploration with which children are born." To the recipients of this award go "deepest wishes that you might get from it the same fullness of life which it helped bring to her."

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| ■ Angel Cabrera | ■ Gabrielle Lopez |
| ■ Judee Channaoui | ■ Sarah Magno |
| ■ Zach Composto | ■ Rimsha Najmi |
| ■ Ashley Ellis | ■ Theresa Nguyen |
| ■ Breanna Fabriczi | ■ Julia Patterson |
| ■ Kaylee Garcia | ■ Lauren Rha |
| ■ Mackenzie Heckman | ■ Nicole Stavrakis |
| ■ Miles Jack | ■ Molly Weidmaier |
| ■ Abhik Khanna | |

STUDENT AWARDS

New Jersey Distinguished Clinical Intern Award 2024 Nominees

PRESENTED BY

Dr. Nora Hyland

Associate Dean of Academic Affairs & Faculty Director of Teacher Education

The New Jersey Distinguished Clinical Intern Award is a prestigious honor presented jointly by the New Jersey Department of Education and the New Jersey Association of Colleges for Teacher Preparation. This annual award publicly recognizes the top 15 graduates of New Jersey's teacher preparation programs. The nominees for this award have all demonstrated outstanding achievement during their student teaching placement. An independent panel of educators evaluates the credentials of each nominee and selects 15 award recipients in June. The following students have been selected to represent the GSE in the statewide competition:

- Ashley Ellis
- Mackenzie Heckman
- Sarah Magno

DISSERTATION AWARDS

Evelyn Headley Award for Outstanding Dissertation

PRESENTED BY

Dr. Barbara Trueger

President, GSE Alumni Association



Molly Elizabeth O'Connor, Ph.D.

*Across Oceans and Campuses:
HBCU Presidents and the Search
for Democratic Ideas Abroad in the
Early-Mid 20th Century*

Dissertation Chair:

Dr. Juan Pablo Mejía-Ramos

The Evelyn Headley Award for Outstanding Dissertation was named in 1986 in honor of a loyal alumna who graduated from the GSE in 1956. Evelyn Headley had a long career in education and was a leader in the Edison Township School District. She received the Distinguished Service Award from the GSEAA in 1964. Dr. Headley was a member of the Rutgers University Board of Trustees at the time of her death in 1985.

DISSERTATION AWARDS

Angelo L. Tomaso Excellence in Dissertation Award

PRESENTED BY

Dr. Barbara Trueger

President, GSE Alumni Association



Kristen Amman, Ph.D.

*Relearning: Understanding How
Previous Experiences Learning Algebra
Influence Students' Perceptions in
Developmental Mathematics Programs*

Dissertation Chair:

Dr. Benjamin Justice

The Angelo L. Tomaso Award for Excellence in Dissertation was named in 1993 following the sudden death of Dr. Angelo L. Tomaso, who was a member of the Graduate School of Education Alumni Association Executive Committee and its membership chair. He had retired as Superintendent of the Warren Township School District in 1989 and was named a "distinguished alumnus" by the GSE Alumni Association. The Washington Valley School in Warren Township was renamed the Angelo L. Tomaso School in recognition of his service to the district.

DISSERTATION AWARDS

Arleen H. Urban Excellence in Dissertation Award

PRESENTED BY

Dr. Barbara Trueger

President, GSE Alumni Association



Merylou Rodriguez, Ph.D.

Echando Pa'lante:

*RicanStructing Puerto Rican
Undergraduate Persistence*

Dissertation Chair:

Dr. Benjamin Justice

The Arleen H. Urban Excellence in Dissertation Award was established in 2017 to honor the life and work of Dr. Arleen Urban. Dr. Urban graduated from the Rutgers Graduate School of Education in 1986 with an Ed.D. She treasured the time she spent at the GSE and was active in GSEAA activities throughout her professional career. Dr. Urban completed a distinguished 41-year career as an instructor and supervisor at the Somerset County Technical Institute. In addition to receiving many formal honors, including the GSEAA Distinguished Service Award and the Rutgers Alumni Meritorious Service Award, Dr. Urban was recognized as an outstanding teacher, known for her deep personal dedication to education and her kind and generous nature.

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

DISTINGUISHED LEADER *in* EDUCATION AWARD

PRESENTED BY

Dr. Wanda J. Blanchett

Dean & Distinguished Professor



Dr. DeForest B. Soaries, Jr.

*President and CEO of
Corporate Community Connections, Inc.*

Dr. DeForest "Buster" Soaries is a minister and author, and former secretary of state for New Jersey. He studied under Dr. Samuel DeWitt Proctor who became a formative mentor. From 1999 to 2002, Dr. Soaries served as New Jersey's Secretary of State, making him the first and only African American male to serve in that office. He also served as the former chairman of the United States Election Assistance Commission, which was established by Congress to implement the "Help America Vote Act" of 2002.

He is an education champion, a giant in New Jersey, and an impassioned speaker. As senior pastor of First Baptist Church of Lincoln Gardens in Somerset, NJ, Buster has devoted himself to helping his community, focusing on educational excellence, economic empowerment, and managing day-to-day challenges.

"This country was founded on the loftiest principles of any country ever in the history of the world: Equal justice, inclusion, respect for the dignity of every person. Those standards give us something to strive for, something to protest about, and something to work together to achieve," Dr. Soaries says.

DOCTOR *of* PHILOSOPHY *in* HIGHER EDUCATION

Magy Georges

*Women in Interdisciplinary Engineering: Building a Foundation
for Success in STEM through Community and Curriculum*

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Marybeth Gasman

Gina Camille Tigri

*Becoming a College Student: Exploring How Classroom
Experiences Shape First-Year, First-Generation Students'
Transitions into University Life*

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Marybeth Gasman



DOCTOR *of* PHILOSOPHY

Moosa Ali Abdullah AlHadi**

*Effects of Chunking Intervention on Enhancing Geometry Performance
in High School Students with Mathematics Learning Difficulties*

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Dake Zhang

Brittany Leslie Marshall

*It's Not Magic!: Instructional Practices that Cultivate Positive
Mathematics Identity in Middle School Black Girls*

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Dan Battey

Ana Paulina Morron

*To Look For a Better Life: Examining the Experiences of Undocumented
Latina/o Youth on their Higher Education and Employment Aspirations*

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Beth Rubin

Joseph Olsen*

*A Comparison of Student and Theory-Based Evaluations of Explanation
Quality in an Introductory Physics Course for Engineers*

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Gerald Goldin

Daniel Henry Smith

*Paternalism and Resistance: The Impact of Global Intervention on
Teacher Training in Liberia*

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Tanja Sargent

* October 2023 Diploma ** January 2024 Diploma

DOCTOR *of* EDUCATION

Jazzme Anin Blackwell*

Developing Young Professionals after School: Considering the Social Contexts of Marginalized Youth in an Urban Afterschool Program

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Carrie Lobman

Tamiah Niambi Brevard-Rodriguez

*The Beauty Performances of Black College Women:
A Narrative Inquiry Study Exploring the Realities of Race, Respectability,
and Beauty Standards on a Historically White Campus*

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Benjamin Justice

Jenna Budge

*Training Practitioners to Conduct Trial-Based Functional Analysis with
Adults with Autism using Pyramidal Behavioral Skills Training*

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Judith Harrison

Alice Debowski

*"We're More Than Just Kielbasa and Pierogies": Generational Language Shift
and/or Maintenance in Children of Polish Immigrants*

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Sandra Tomlinson-Clarke

Kevin Jermaine Ewell

*Academic Advising Experiences of Black Male Students at a PWI:
A Critical Race Perspective*

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Beth Rubin

* October 2023 Diploma ** January 2024 Diploma

DOCTOR *of* EDUCATION

Timothy Patrick Hart-Ruiz

*The Implementation of Math Conferences in an Elementary Classroom by
Early-Career Teachers: Struggles in Agency and the Messy Middle*

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Dan Battey

Bruce Robert Henecker

*How Do Teachers Lose Tenure in New Jersey Based on TEACHNJ Legislation:
A Qualitative Content Analysis*

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Drew Gitomer

Melissa Edwards Kane

*The Implementation of Elementary Professional Learning Communities:
A Mixed Methods Study*

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Sharon Ryan

Sarah Windrum Kelly

Case Study of a Sexual Violence Informal Resolution Program at Rutgers University

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Sharon Ryan

Robert Samuel Kimmel

*Centering the Voices of Graduates to Shape Self-Advocacy in Special Education
Transition Programs: A Qualitative Study*

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Judith Harrison

* October 2023 Diploma ** January 2024 Diploma

DOCTOR *of* EDUCATION

Sharlene Mae Laud

Enhancing Teacher Diversity in New Jersey: Investigating the Career Decision-Making and Experiences of Teachers of Color in Alternative Route to Certification

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Dake Zhang

Christine Marie Morales*

Social Work Students' Perceptions of Environmental Justice

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Mary Curran

Holly Grace Nelson**

Ways of Seeing: A Qualitative Case Study of a Social Aspects of Design Class

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Clark Chinn

Mark Allen Pelham**

Strengthening the Third Pillar of Rutgers University: Exploring Practical Institutional Self-Assessment and Data Collection Practices in Support of a Public Service Mission

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Benjamin Justice

John Robert Severs Jr.*

Examining School Improvement through the Lenses of Change and Organizational Learning: A Multi-Site Case Study

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Cheryl McLean

* October 2023 Diploma ** January 2024 Diploma

DOCTOR *of* EDUCATION

Zabrina Songui*

*“I’m the Smart One”: FGLI Learning Identity Development
Through a Summer Bridge Experience*

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Beth Rubin

Alison Christine Stein**

*The Smallest Acts Go a Long Way:
Understanding Students’ Perceptions of Citizenship and Civic Identity*

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Beth Rubin

Yusra Azhar Syed*

*Assessing the Influence of an Institutional Muslim Life Program
on the Muslim Student University Experience*

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Carrie Lobman

Jennifer Lynn Valera

*Beyond Degrees: Exploring the Perspectives and
Design Features of Recent College Graduates’ Digital Badges*

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Alisa Belzer

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EDUCATION SPECIALISTS

Caroline McHugh Sitren**

MASTER *of* ARTS *in* EDUCATION

Nicole M. Boyd

Swati Dontamsetti

Carl Leikhram

Christian Matthew Orr-Woods*

MASTER *of* EDUCATION

AUGUST 2023 GRADUATES

Gabriele Bagdonas	Erin L. Fetzer	Alexandra Rees Martino
Emmanuel Barchue Jr.	Jacob R. Fuller	Jessica Meyer
Kristen Diane Bonomo	Nicole Galgano	Chaitali Ankur Patel
Gloria M. Briones	Hailey R. Gutowski	Neil Hitesh Patel
Holly Bruens	Elizabeth Anne Harrison	Elizabeth M. Ramirez
Kyra Colleen Burdick	Mark R. Hennelly	Priyanka Rangra
Sean Carney	Kimberly Lynne Herthel	Alyssa Sadye Ratner
Genesis Janae Castro	Heather Rose Heyer	Jillian Mary Rice
Alexandra Marie Chiodi	Audra Faith Hofacker	Skyler Leigh Schack
Cynthia Delgado	Anhar A. Islam	Kiri Lynn Skibniewski
Sabrina Lia Di Lollo	Alexis Samantha Kaufman	Julia Kauffman Van Ness
Gina Ethe	Kathryn Marie Lach	Mariel Van Landingham
Joseph Jordan Fackenthal	Arianna Lee	Abigail West

* October 2023 Diploma ** January 2024 Diploma

MASTER *of* EDUCATION

OCTOBER 2023 GRADUATES

Guadalupe Jeannette Espinoza-Urizar

MASTER *of* EDUCATION

JANUARY 2024 GRADUATES

Tyler William Amelio

Selale Anapa

Rachel Dana Armus

Joseph Darimathee Bae

Jennifer Miles Bello

Beth Alison Briant

Christina Briskin

Mark Alexander Edelstein

Maya Rose Finard

Victoria E. Guerriero

Christine D. Heisler

Stephanie Lauren Holtzman

Connor Patrick Kelly

Marie A. Lanza

Jessica L. Montgomery-Brown

Ian Nowicki

Brendan Michael Poff

Jessica Danielle Schildkraut

Michelle Marie Schnetzler

Anna Virk

Brianna Colleen Yeager

Claudia Zamora



MASTER *of* EDUCATION

MAY 2024 GRADUATES

Megan Marie Accetta	Kaneesha S. Clayton	Andrew Gapas
Mohammad Shayan Ahmed	Emily Lauren Cornish	Kaylee T. Garcia
Rachel S. Ahn	Kyra Marie Cox	Nicole A. Gargiles
Jackleen Angela Alvarado	Daniella Maria Cucunato	Emma Jackson Gentile
Quinn Magnus Androsko	Shannon Nichole D'Alessandro	Emily Gibbons
Ashley Rose Angarola	Alexandra Maria De Vivo	Cana Alicia Glick
Lucy Sungeun Bak	Scott Rotunda Delaney	Jennifer Lee Goldberg
Danielle Nicole Barber	Samantha Marie Lucie Denora	Benito W. González
Louis W. Bartolomeo	Janet Michelle Devine	David John Gonzalez-Silva
Kylie Nicole Baxter	Elisabetta DeVita	Jonathan Spencer Gross
Raquia Tilisa Belle-Durant	Marvin Luis Diaz	Caroline F. Harris
Michael Angelo Bendetti	Derek M. Edmond	Isabel C. Henao
Erin Renee Bonsall	Doreen Eggers	Jake Robert Hoffman
Emma Rose Brennan	Ashley Alicia Ellis	Ricky Terrell Holloway Jr
Angel Cabrera III	Judy Sophie Elmann	Maggie Elizabeth Hopper
Rebecca Elizabeth Carroll	Erica Eurich	Sarah Elisabeth Horne
Jennifer L. Casale	Jordan Farley	JoAnna Violet Howley
Carmen Rosa Castro	Nicholas Alfred Faulborn	Ezio Francesco Intriago Villavicencio
Koryn Chanda	Sarah N.Faysal	Nikita Dipak Joshi
Alexander Chiu Chang	Nicole A. Fitzgerald	Wendi Kane-Millard
Kelly Chang	Nathalie Franco	Dhwani Milind Kapure
Judee Hassan Channaoui	Susana Aguiar Freire	Mohammed Tawfik Khalil
Brianna N. Chapman		Abhik Khanna
Eunhye Cho		

MASTER *of* EDUCATION

MAY 2024 GRADUATES

Julia Marie Kirk	Cheyenne M. Makosky	Juliet Lauren Pitre
Valbona Koxha	Kyle Matthew Malinosky	Cooper Anthony Prieto
Matthew Antonio Lam	Raymond Andrew Matson Jr.	Gina Rose Primerano
Margaret Mary Lamb	Antonella Mazzola	Fred P. Rago Jr.
Athena Amanda Lambos	Melissa McCulloch	Mia Catherine Ranallo
Annette Landin	Erin Moira McEvoy	Brittany Ann Redler
Leanne Langenmayr	Alyssa Nicole McKendry	Brittany J. Repak
Maximilian Lau	Lyla McLeod	Andrew Steven Reynolds
Michele Lau	Amanda Rose Mecca	Lauren Young-In Rha
Sabrina Lauredent	Alyssa Mei	Chelsie Riche
Julia Mary Lavernoich	Desirée Autumn Midby	Brianna B. Rinaldo
Sophia Rae Lazan	James Lawrence Miller	Marriam H. Rizvi
Jessica Emma Leguizamon	Du'aa H. Moharram	Skyla Kim Rizzi
Sharmaine Michele Lehmann-Pierre	David James Mooney	Timothy Lang Roden
Matthew Justin Liguori	Alexia Rose Morgan	Kayla Benes Roig
Cassandra F. Lis	Joseph Aloysius Murphy III	Justin Skylar Rosenthal
Alessandro LoMartire	Justine Dee Nagrowski	Jhasmany Saavedra- Pantoja
Stephanie M. Lonigro	Rimsha Javaid Najmi	Darlene Sanchez
William Loop	Theresa Nguyen	Ashley Mary Sayell
Gabrielle Anne Miranda Lopez	Michael David O' Brien	Madison Emily Scheideler
Melissa Madrid	Carlos A. Ortiz	Katarina L. Schmidt
Sarah Magno	Felicia Alexis Panny	Emma Leslie Semper
	Taylor Lynne Pepsin	Mary Buckley Shea
	Matthew Evans Peyrek	

MASTER *of* EDUCATION

MAY 2024 GRADUATES

Sarah Elizabeth Silva	Mary Ann Vargas	Celeste Rosetta Williams
Nicole Georgia Stavrakis	Yoana Y. Vasquez	Raquel S. Williams
Tahlia Chyanne Stephenson	Samantha Marie Vreeland	Gary D. Yablon
Samantha Carol Stratton	Erin Danielle Weems	Amanda Paige Yonks
Keshav Gangadhar Tallavajhala	Molly Elizabeth Weidmaier	Lauren Irene Young
Bridget Marina Torcivia	Nicholas Weiss	Paul Yunos
Julia Rose Udell	Miranda Elizabeth Lena Wheeler	Jessica Anne Zavodnick
Jenna Jakes Unger	Madison Sara Whitman	Yating Zhang
	Abigail Mia Williams	Kathryn Alyssa Zimbaldi



ABOUT THE GRADUATE SCHOOL *of* EDUCATION

Since 1923, the Rutgers Graduate School of Education (GSE) has been a national leader in preparing effective practitioners, transformative leaders, and accomplished researchers who create effective and equitable learning opportunities and who discover new knowledge that strengthens and advances educational equity. It is the top-ranked graduate school of education in New Jersey and among the top 50 graduate schools of education in the nation, according to *U.S. News & World Report*.

Rutgers GSE has 17,000 living alumni, many of whom live and work in New Jersey, helping to advance the GSE's mission of Advancing Excellence and Equity in Education. They include more than 20 university presidents, over 150 school superintendents, and other distinguished leaders, including deans, in P-12 schools and institutions of higher education.

Our graduates consistently have one of the highest rates of employment in New Jersey school districts, according to the New Jersey Department of Education. Students at the GSE are dynamic contributors to education, presenting at conferences and taking leadership roles in professional organizations such as the American Educational Research Association.

The GSE's world-class faculty has mentored some of the most influential education practitioners, researchers, and leaders of our time. Many have served in leading editorial roles in scholarly research journals. They are continually asked to share their expertise in national media and are regularly recognized for their ground-breaking research through sizeable grants, fellowships, and prestigious awards.

The GSE is also home to six award-winning centers and institutes: the National Institute for Early Education Research; Rutgers Center for Minority Serving Institutions; Rutgers Samuel DeWitt Proctor Institute for Leadership, Equity, and Justice; Center for Literacy Development; Robert B. Davis Institute for Learning; and Center for Effective School Practices.

For more information about the Rutgers Graduate School of Education or to apply, visit gse.rutgers.edu. Find and follow us @RutgersGSE on LinkedIn, Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube.

