



Fall 2019
The HELP!
Newsletter

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Editor's Note

As someone who has recently experienced a transformational career and life change in the past year, I find myself still in the *'how's the new job'* phase with my friends and family. The first thing out of my (very excited) mouth is always that I have the most amazing students. I'm certain I have family that are more aware of your professions and aspirations than my own. It is with this pride and admiration that I wanted to find a proper way to share the accomplishments, milestones, external opportunities, and lives of the people who make up the HELP program, and with this newsletter Ross and I hope to build a reflective album of the people that shape our lives for future cohorts to experience. And as always, we want to hear from you! Please continue to contribute your accomplishments and let us know what else you would like to see in the newsletter. - KRA

As many of us were before starting the HELP program, I was skeptical about the experience of a completely distance learning program. I have been pleasantly surprised and encouraged by the ways in which modern forms of communication have enabled the cohorts to bond, encourage, and learn together. To break barriers and create this same type of camaraderie across the program, we have gone back to a good old fashion quarterly newsletter to share news, spread success stories, and stay connected. As the student representative on the HELP program committee, I will provide transparent updates on program changes, curriculum, initiatives, and be a voice for the students in the meetings. As the adage goes, 'success breeds success,' it is my sincerest hope that we are all encouraged by the accomplishments of other students and faculty across the HELP program. - RS

Faculty Spotlight

Michael Lanford, PhD



Tell us about yourself.

I am an assistant professor of higher education at the University of North Georgia. From 2013 to 2019, I worked in the Pullias Center for Higher Education at the University of Southern California, first as a Provost Ph.D. Fellow and then as a Postdoctoral Research Associate. Before that, I was a research assistant at the University of Hong Kong, a writing center coordinator at the University of Central Florida, and a Harvey Fellow in American Studies at Washington University in St. Louis. For several years, I also taught undergraduate and graduate classes in world cultures, music history, music theory, and aesthetics at various universities in the Southeast U.S. I came to UNG in August 2019 because of the institution's commitment to teaching and a desire to return to the Southeast U.S. Most of my childhood was spent in Georgia, so this position is a return to home in many ways!

Tell us about your professional activities.

Since I started my Ph.D. program in 2013, I have been fortunate to publish in a variety of scholarly journals, such as the American Educational Research Journal, Educational Forum, Higher Education, Higher Education Handbook of Theory and Research, Journal of Research on Technology in Education, and Policy Reviews in Higher Education. I have also been a guest editor for special issues in Qualitative Inquiry and the International Journal of Comparative and International Higher Education. Next year, I hope to have my first book on innovation published by SUNY Press.

What is your role in the Ed.D. program?

I teach classes on research methods, organizational culture, student success, technology, and globalization in the Ed.D. program.

What are your research and/or professional interests?

I generally employ a multidisciplinary theoretical perspective to explore the social dimensions of education. Some of my recent publications focus on educational equity, globalization, institutional innovation, organizational culture, and the workforce of the twenty-first century.

What advice do you have for EDD students?

Two pieces of advice: 1) to follow their passions in their research and 2) to stay as organized as possible so that they can find time to spend with family and friends.

What are some attributes of the most successful students you have mentored?

Organization, flexibility, and a strong vision for their long-term professional trajectory. I honestly think every student brings different types of experience and skills to the table. It's my job to strategize the best way to leverage those experiences and skills so the student can be successful.

What is your favorite place you have visited, and why?

I have a strong attachment to many parts of the world, but the town of Assisi in Italy may always have a special place in my heart. It was one of the first places I visited when I saved enough money to travel abroad for the first time.

What do you enjoy doing outside of your professional role?

In my spare time, I mentor first-generation and low-income students, perform as a pianist and percussionist, and enjoy a variety of sports.

What has been the most impactful book you ever read?

I honestly consider *The Wire* to be a foundational piece of American literature, even though it was a five-season series on HBO. It certainly impacted my decision to study education.

If you could have dinner with three people (dead or alive) who would they be and why?

Franz Liszt, Alma Mahler, and Mark Twain due to their lasting influence on artistic culture and their notoriety during their lives.

Student Spotlight

Erika Gravett ('21)



Tell us about yourself.

I was born and raised in San Pedro, California. I left California almost 30 years ago to attend Howard University and never looked back. Family is very important to me. I come from a large family as my dad is one of 11 and my mom is one of 15. Most of my family remains in southern California and I make it a point to go home for a visit several times a year. After graduating from Howard University, I attended the University of Georgia School of Law and then moved back to Washington, DC. I moved back to Georgia in 2011 to be close to three of my Godchildren. I have been back in Georgia for almost nine years now. I have enjoyed watching my Godchildren grow up and I love being a part of their lives.

What is your goal upon graduation?

When I graduated from law school, I knew I wanted to complete a doctoral program. I am now working towards completion more than 20 years later. I consider myself a lifelong learner and really wanted a strong educational foundation in higher education. This program is certainly giving me that foundation. With that said, my career goal is to become a chief of staff to a president at a public institution and I believe this program will get me there.

What is your area of research for your dissertation?

Almost half of college/university presidents come directly from the provost/chief academic officer position. The average age of a college/university president is 62 years old and the average tenure of a college/university president decreases every year. Given the volume of anticipated presidential retirements, there is a need for a qualified diverse pool of candidates beyond those in the provost's position. I am conducting a qualitative study to identify the skills and experience that prepared former chief diversity officers for the position of college/university president. There are only eight of them. I am looking for my study to reveal whether the chief diversity officer position legitimately prepares one for a college/university presidency.

What opportunities outside of coursework have you been able to take advantage of?

I had the opportunity to co-teach the Title IX module in the Trends & Issues course. At the time, I was a Title IX Coordinator and this allowed me to utilize my professional experience to facilitate discussion in the Trends & Issues course.

What course has been the most impactful in your understanding of higher education and leadership thus far?

For me, this is a tie between the Trends & Issues and Legal Issues courses. We covered the entire landscape of higher education in the Trends & Issues course. I loved the variety and the course helped me become a more well rounded higher educational professional. The last several years of my career involved legal issues. The Legal Issues course allowed me to apply the knowledge I had and also increased my knowledge.

How do you manage the work-family-life balance?

It's tough. During orientation, two second year students shared experiences about their first year. I recall one saying do not wait until the weekend to do all of your school work. I took this to heart my first year and I started school work on Monday of every week. This allowed me to complete weekly assignments early during the week and utilize the latter part of the week for papers and projects. This formula worked well and allowed me to do work, family and school. I drifted from that model and need to get back on it.

If you could have dinner with three people (dead or alive) who would they be and why?

Lori Lesure - Lori was my cousin and we grew up together. She passed away three years ago unexpectedly and she was planning to come to Atlanta for a visit. I miss her and want to talk to her. The other two would be any of my family members. When you have been away from your family for almost 30 years, any time with them is golden.



Erika and her Goddaughter Keegan attending a cheer competition at the Georgia World Congress Center

Mental Health Corner



Eve Humphrey poses with her five-chapter dissertation in a “baby” photo shoot to celebrate her accomplishment. (Photo credit: Korie Mitchell of JessaCole Photography)

Click the image below for information regarding mental health in graduate students

MENTAL HEALTH

47%

A study by the University of California, Berkeley, found nearly half of postgraduate students met criteria to classify them as depressed.¹

WHAT YOU MAY BE EXPERIENCING/FEELING (YOU ARE NOT ALONE, I PROMISE)

<p>7 in 10 IMPOSTER SYNDROME</p> <p>Some people experience imposter syndrome throughout their careers. Someone is going to figure out you don't belong here soon. You look good on paper, but passing that exam was a fluke. I don't have what it takes to do these experiments, write a thesis, succeed in academia. These are all classic signs of imposter syndrome. Tip: reframe your thinking. Aim for progress, not perfection.</p>	<p>NO MORE TICK BOXES</p> <p>You got pretty good at doing essays and lab reports - they were all short term tasks. You also got good at figuring out what questions might be asked in exams. Now you have an open ended project, with the end nowhere in sight. You no longer have grades to tell you if you are doing a good job. Transitioning from this undergraduate mentality can be particularly tough. Tip: break down your research into small, manageable goals.</p>
<p>FIRST TIME FAILING</p> <p>You've always been the best student at school, and you did pretty well at university too. Now your science isn't working and everyone around you seems to be getting on just fine. These feelings can come about as an undergraduate level, experiments (believe it or not) are designed to work. Tip: remember, you are at the forefront of scientific research - if it was easy it would already have been done!</p>	<p>ISOLATION / GUILT</p> <p>Writing your thesis can be a particularly lonely, isolating task. This can also be coupled with feelings of guilt when going about your daily life as "you should be writing". Tips to manage this include: attending research group meetings/departamental seminars whilst writing. This can also be coupled with "writer's block". Tip: when writing, start by making figures - it is far easier to write about what a figure means.</p>
<p>COMPETITIVE LANDSCAPE</p> <p>Unfortunately, academia often fosters competition over collaboration, when it should be the other way around. This is made worse by the fact that often the only way to gauge how well you are doing is to compare yourself against others. Tip: no two PhD projects are the same, so avoid comparing them.</p>	<p>55% THE WORK LIFE STRUGGLE</p> <p>There is an inherent culture of acceptance in academia of long work hours. In fact, 40% of academics report working more than 56 hours a week.² This is a fault with the system. Presenteeism is a common trait observed in academia, where people work long hours due to anxiety/stress, but are not being efficient in these long hours. Tip: aim to be efficient inside normal working hours then focus on "you" time.</p>

1. A hard truth is only 7 in 10 PhD graduates become full professors. ²Being your PhD, make sure to work on other "soft skills" as well as doing your research. Like making a poster for an online Twitter competition for example.

ARE THOSE AROUND YOU STRUGGLING? HERE ARE SOME POSSIBLE WARNING SIGNS

INCREASED DRINKING	INCREASED EATING	DECREASED EATING	WORKING LONG HOURS	BEING ABSENT	JOKING ABOUT SUICIDE	LOOKING DISHEVELLED
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<https://ung.edu/student-counseling/>

SOME WAYS TO HELP MANAGE YOUR MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

SEEK MEDICAL ADVICE	TAKE SOME TIME OUT	FOCUS ON YOU	REQUEST COUNSELLING
TALK TO YOUR SUPERVISOR	TALK TO YOUR PEERS / POSTDOCS	CREATE MANAGEABLE CHUNKS	READ LITERATURE

REFERENCES

#TIMTOTALK #RSCPOSTER

*ALTHOUGH I DID SURVIVE A PhD

Mark Your Calendar!

November 15

TAP Application Deadline
Consult your TAP Coordinator

November 25-29

Fall Break

December 6

Last Day of Classes

December 14

Fall Graduation

Student Ambassador Program

Think back to when you were applying for this program. If you were like me, you did not even know what questions you should be asking or if this degree was the “right thing to do at the time.”

There are certainly a lot of unknowns before making the decision to begin any education program, but we are trying HELP this by providing applicants with a current Ed.D. student ambassador who are willing to share their experiences. More detailed information regarding this program will be published soon, but we would like you to consider leveraging your experiences and being an ambassador for the HELP.

If you are interested in serving in this capacity, please contact Dr. Adams or Ross Skilling.

Student Accomplishments

Please continue to update us as you grow and experience success stories in both your personal and professional lives at the following link:

[Student Accomplishments Survey Link](#)

Congratulations for all the accomplishments and achievements!

Erika Gravett ('21)– Was hired by Georgia Tech as the Deputy Director of Human Resources and serves as an advisor to the Chief of Human Resources.

Keith Antonia ('20) – Had a surprise birthday thrown in his and his wife’s honor for turning 60 years old this year. Keith’s daughter is due with his 7th grandchild. Keith is also making strides working on his Chapter 4 of his dissertation.



Yizhe Huang ('22) – Joined the UNG Dragon Boat Team and won first place at the 25th Annual Atlanta – Hong Kong Dragon Boat Festival. She also presented a project entitled “Using a Project-Based Language Learning Approach in the Advanced Chinese Classroom to Promote Language Proficiency and 21st Century Skills” at the Georgia Conference on Teaching of Chinese in Grades K-16.

Ross Skilling ('21) – Welcomed his 4th child to the world on 20 August 2019. Elsie Yvette Skilling was born weight 7 lbs 3 oz and 20 inches long. After surgery and a long stay in the NICU, mother and baby are doing great! Ross was also the recipient of the Mariam Couch Scholarship for Fall 19 and Spring 20 semesters.



Elizabeth Hutchins ('21) – Presented a poster from her final group project in the Trends of Higher Education Class at the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) conference. The group included Daphene Blackmon, Will Douberly, Elizabeth Hutchins, Ben Pearce, and Nikki Simpson.



Stephanie Gericke ('20) – Has completed her second year of the HELP program and is excited to only have 1/3 left.

Kristie Kiser ('20) – Successfully defended her prospectus this summer and received IRB approval for her research.

Haley Worst ('21) – Lead author of a peer reviewed publication in 2019.

Worst, H., Henderson, N., Decarreau, R., Davies, G. A. Novel Test to Assess Change of Direction: Development, Reliability, and Rehabilitation Considerations. *International Journal of Sports Physical Therapy*. 2019; 14(2): 228–236.

Post-Master's Certificate in Transfer Leadership and Practice

The Post-Master Certificate in Transfer Leadership & Practice is an incorporated graduate certificate designed for experienced education professionals who seek to develop their leadership potential in facilitating transfer student success. This program is the only credit-bearing certificate program for transfer leadership and practice in the country. Participation in this program while enrolled in the EDD program grants course substitutions and requires major advisor approval and an internal application. Contact Janet Marling or your advisor for more information.



EDD Committee Report

The following is a summary of pertinent items discussed during the EDD Committee meeting on September 9th, 2019:

Graduate Opportunities Update: In addition to the programs already published, Katherine and I are working on building a Grant Writing Academy for Spring Break 2020. This will consist of a one-day workshop (physical and online locations) to teach students how to effectively write academic grants. Upon completion, students will have the opportunity to write a grant to support their research or professional development. Two small grants will be awarded, and all grant applications will receive thorough feedback from trained readers.

Website/Recruiting: The HELP program is looking to update the website and the recruitment material that is published. If you have any recommendations on what information might be helpful from the time you were applying we would love your ideas!

Should you wish to have an topics brought up to the committee, please reach out to the student representative at rmskil6635@ung.edu.

HELP Newsletter Feedback

Please tell us what you think of the HELP Newsletter! Click the button below to let us know how we can improve our communication and better serve the students and faculty of the HELP program. We hope that you have found this edition to be a source of inspiration. Happy Fall!



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