



# Spring 2021 The HELP! Newsletter

Volume 2 | Issue 3 | The University of North Georgia

## Editor's Note

It's hard to believe three years have gone by. Despite life and my studies having its ups and downs, God has truly blessed my time in the HELP program. I'll never forget when my wife and I were going back and forth for a few days in the spring of 2018 deciding whether or not we should pursue this degree. With four kids and a crazy work schedule, it is hard to get a period of un-interrupted time to really think. God works in mysterious ways though, and all of the sudden one night our power went out (which never happens) when the kids went to bed (which never happens....). We spent that time discussing what sacrifices we would have to make and what this degree could mean for our family. As it turns out, every area of concern we had from finances, work/life balance, to the "ability/intellect" to complete this degree was fulfilled by God who brought the right people into our lives. It amazes me to think that even after these three years I still haven't met any of my professors or classmates in person!

While I still do not know exactly how this degree will influence my future career, I do know that the faculty, staff, and students I met in this program will have a lasting impact on every aspect of my life. The teamwork and comradery cohort 2 developed during our time was incredible. Our system of support, accountability, and the learning environment we created was the biggest surprise for me by far. A close second was the incredible amount of support and individual development I received from the faculty. Life happens, but when it does in this program there is more than enough HELP and consideration to ensure students can still attain their goals.

Lastly, it's been an honor to serve as the GRA for the program and a great learning opportunity in and of itself. I wish you God's speed in all future endeavors and when you all are college presidents in 10 years, please hire me!

-Ross

## Faculty Spotlight

### Bob Michael, PhD



#### **What are your research and/or professional interests?**

My research interests are in the areas of organizational change, innovation, teacher preparation and accreditation, teacher education policy, and international education programs for preservice teachers.

#### **What advice do you have for EDD students?**

- Stay organized
- Stay ahead of your assignments
- Read, read, read
- The only dumb question is the one that is not asked

The attributes I look for in a doctoral student: Inquisitive, Organized, Persistent, Thorough, Thoughtful, Committed, and Self-motivated/Self-starter.

There are incredible opportunities for networking and support. Work closely with and encourage your colleagues in the program, and engage with the faculty at every opportunity. What is so unique about this program, I think, is that the faculty truly are your advocates. They clearly want you to succeed, so please let them help you do so.

#### **What do you enjoy doing outside of your professional role?**

Reading, international travel (the incredible mixture of people, cultures, languages, sights, etc. Never a dull moment, and you are always testing your limits, patience, adaptability {Have Vaccine – Will Travel}), exercise (clears the mental cobwebs).

#### **What has a doctoral degree done for your professional career and personal goals?**

It opened the door to an incredible array of possibilities in higher education. It also helped with a personal goal of trying to figure out what life could be like beyond teaching in a middle grades classroom. In a phrase -- career mobility.

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

"Coretta Scott King - Mrs. King was so much more than the wife of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King. I would like to hear her story from her, especially how she navigated through the Civil Rights Movement.

Harry Chapin - Singer, songwriter, activist dedicated to ending hunger. Harry Chapin was an incredible story teller and was able to show the value and humanity of *the little person*. His activism to end hunger helped bring the issue (particularly in the US) from out of the shadows.

Any local activist working for social justice - I stand in awe of these folks who have the tenacity, strength and bravery to take on local social justice issues (such as the folks who brought the Flint water contamination scandal to light; voting rights advocates). The power of their convictions is incredible!

#### **Tell us about yourself.**

Recently retired (2018) from the University System of Georgia; prior to that, served for 18 years as the first dean for the College of Education at UNG. Including currently serving as an adjunct professor in the HELP program, have been in the University System of Georgia for over 40 years.

Began my career as a middle and secondary English and science teacher, which led to coordinating a mainstreaming program for middle grades students with extensive learning disabilities. After that, I moved into the world of post-secondary education as a program advisor while completing my doctoral degree. With the ink on the sheepskin still drying, I began my teaching career in higher education and eventually gravitated toward higher education administration as an assistant dean. For the remainder of my time in higher education, I have been a faculty member and have held administrative roles as an associate vice president for academic affairs, a dean of education, and an associate vice chancellor for educator preparation and policy.

Currently, I work with Dr. Katherine Adams and Dr. Michael Lanford in the design and delivery of the research seminar for all first-year students. Also serve as a dissertation committee chair and committee member for multiple students.

#### **Tell us about your professional activities.**

My current professional activity, besides serving in the HELP program, is as a board member for the Center for the Advancement and Study of International Education. From CASIE's web page: CASIE is a non-profit organization that works with educators to promote international understanding through education programs, research, discussion, policy planning, and workshops. I have served on CASIE's board for over 10 years. Prior to retiring from the USG, I did a lot of work on teacher education accreditation and program approval, as well as developing and/or participating professional partnerships for teacher educators, such as the P-20 initiative in Georgia and EDUVENTURES, a research, analysis and advisory organization for higher education leaders.

## Thank you Dr. Michael!



At the end of the spring 2021 semester, Dr. Robert Michael will be stepping back from his role within the HELP program. Dr. Michael has been an incredible resource of information, experience, and advice for the program as a whole and individuals alike. Dr. Michael will surely be missed and his influence will be felt in this program for years to come. We wanted to dedicate this space of the newsletter for students and faculty to express their gratitude for Dr. Michael's years of mentorships.

Early in the development of my dissertation topic, Dr. Michael took the time to discuss my ideas and provide valuable insights. His knowledge of student success and higher education in Georgia broadened my thinking and helped guide me to my current research work. I am thankful for his willingness to listen and share.

- **Elizabeth Hutchins**

I met Dr. Michael in my first-semester EDD 8000 class, and before the year was over he agreed to chair my dissertation committee. This proved to be a defining moment for me: Dr. Michael has been encouraging, helpful, and his critical suggestions have improved everything I've written. His positive attitude has been infectious, and he's never failed to inspire me when I really needed it. And he is also humble: At one point, I told him that I wanted to contact the USG system office for some information. He offered to "ask around." I responded "sure, if you know any of those folks." It was months later that I discovered he was a retired Vice-Chancellor for the USG! I truly feel blessed to have gotten to know and work with Dr. Michael.

- **Keith Luoma**

Thank you for your great work in building a strong foundation for the HELP program! I benefit from each conversation with you. Wishing you every day is filled with health and happiness! Thank you.

- **Yizhe Huang**

I consider myself very lucky to have drawn Bob Michael as my dissertation chair! Bob listened, provided sage advice, showed genuine interest in my work, offered encouragement, was responsive, and kept me motivated. In other words, he modeled what it means to be a "mentor." Bob, thank you for your service and commitment to the UNG EdD program. I truly appreciated your mentorship.

- **Keith Atonia**

Thank you for your dedication to this program and for every time you asked "so what?" Your perspective makes our work unquestionably stronger during this doctoral journey and your encouragement is so appreciated. I'm grateful I got to know you and learn from you. Best wishes

- **Ashlee Pollard**

As one of the EDD students from the cohort that began in Fall 2020, I have had the pleasure of taking Bob's EDD 8000 course for the past two semesters. With his knowledge of higher education and the University System of Georgia, he has helped me clarify and focus the topic of my dissertation. Working with him has been such a pleasure. I am saddened that he will be stepping back from teaching, but happy for him to be able to have more time to pursue other interests. He will be truly missed.

- **Melissa Johnson**

Ever since I arrived at the University of North Georgia, you have been a tremendous resource of wisdom concerning higher education in Georgia and the Southeast U.S. Moreover, you have epitomized grace and generosity in your enthusiasm to help us build a special Ed.D. program at the University of North Georgia. You will always be welcomed in our classes and dissertations, and we hope you enjoy retirement with all of the vitality you brought to our lives.

- **Michael Lanford**

On August 8, 2019, I sat in a classroom in Dunlap Hall eagerly awaiting the start of the Fall 2019 EDD HELP Orientation and the launch of my terminal degree program. We quickly advanced through a series of welcomes by various administrators, deans, directors, and other distinguished speakers. During one particular moment, I turned from my front-row seat to scan the rest of the room and noticed a stoic, almost judgmentally visaged man in the back row. He had yet to speak throughout the morning's activities and few had spoken with him. Who was this person, I thought? I knew very little of the leadership at UNG at the time. I did not know if this was a member of the president's cabinet, a USG representative perhaps, or even someone from another institution present to simply observe the events of the day. Later that morning I learned that this was Dr. Bob Michael. I did not think much more about that moment until I realized I was enrolled in his section of EDD 8000. This was an uncomfortable realization as over the next two days, I had conversations with Dr. Lanford and Dr. Adams but no interaction with Dr. Michael. How would this first experience go I wondered? I soon came to realize what an amazing and caring person Dr. Michael truly is. During my first semester in the program, Dr. Michael was very communicative, caring, and guiding. He went out of his way to meet with me, coming to Kennesaw State and sitting with me to discuss my research interests, personal interests, and professional goals. Immediately, he filled a mentor role for me. I was so pleased when he became my committee chair and has played a key role in the completion of that committee as well as the preparation of my prospectus. Although I have developed solid relationships with the other faculty in HELP, Dr. Michael has been most instrumental in my overall development as an EDD student. For those like me who have had the honor and privilege of Dr. Michael's leadership, I am sure they share similar sentiments, and for those future students, I am saddened that they will not be afforded the same opportunity. Thank you, Dr. Michael, for your service, for your guidance, and for your patience. Your retirement is much deserved but will certainly leave a hole in the HELP program that will not soon be filled.

– **Jon Justice**

Your guidance during my dissertation has been phenomenal! You have brought a very pragmatic approach to the assignment that I needed. The full scope of a dissertation can be so overwhelming to consider, but you so aptly broke it into component pieces that I could understand and accomplish. You have also been a great supporter of me through the health issues I encountered along the way, always stopping to ask how I was feeling. I will always value your personal encouragement of me through this program. Take care in retirement, and please do not be a stranger.

– **Ken Crowe**

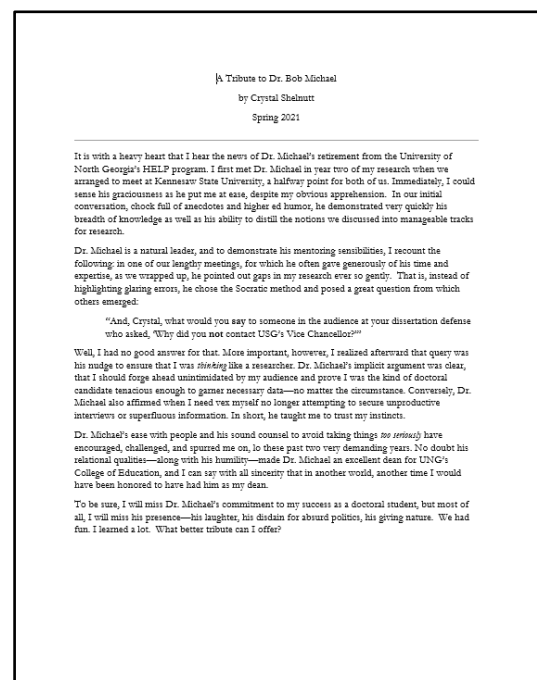
Throughout the doctoral program, Bob has always been there for me - offering kind words of support through difficult times. His guidance really helped keep me on track. As I aged through the program, I'll never forget the words he said that had perhaps the greatest impact on me, "Never pass up a chance to use the restroom."

– **Walley Beck**

"To be sure, I will miss Dr. Michael's commitment to my success as a doctoral student, but most of all, I will miss his presence—his laughter, his disdain for absurd politics, his giving nature. We had fun. I learned a lot. What better tribute can I offer?"

– **Crystal Schelnutt**

(excerpt – to read the full letter click the image below)



## **Student Spotlight** **Julius Fleschner ('23)**



### **Tell us about yourself.**

Greetings, salutations, and happy spring! I am Julius Fleschner. I live in Cartersville with my spouse Christina and two little ladies, Louise and Eleanor. We also cohabitate with a pair of aging animals, Lola the Beagle (12) and Penny the Tabby (14). I am a librarian by training, having earned my Master's of Library and Information Science from the University of South Florida in 2010. My current position is Dean of Libraries and College Testing at Georgia Highlands College where I work with a wonderful group of faculty librarians and staff to ensure students have access to excellent services at our four libraries and testing centers. Before moving to Georgia, we lived in Sioux City, Iowa where I was the Director of Library and Information Services at Briar Cliff University.

### **What has been your experience learning in an online platform? Any Surprises?**

I took some online classes as part of my undergrad program so I generally knew what to expect. For those who have not had that experience, I recommend they pay close attention to due dates. At the start of every term, I put all the due dates on my calendar and set alerts two weeks and one week in advance. I also carve out time every weekend to make sure all my discussion board posts are completed. It was also helpful to set aside Monday and Tuesday as "reading days" to get all the readings completed for the week. All in all, you can do this!

### **Tell us about what previous professional roles you may have held.**

I am very proud of the path my career has taken thus far. I started as a reference and instruction librarian at Briar Cliff University in 2011. By 2013 I found myself in the right place at the right time. My director took a public library director job and I was appointed director. Finding myself wanting to grow and explore aspects of librarianship related to the field, I took a deanship at Georgia Highlands College in 2018. I have been extremely fortunate to report to very skilled VPAAAs who have expressed interest in

allowing me to grow and learn beyond librarianship. I am deeply indebted to their mentorship.

### **What has been the most rewarding aspect of the EDD program thus far?**

Working with the HELP faculty and my cohort has been deeply rewarding. They all have such a deep pool of knowledge and have been extremely willing to help no matter the circumstance. We are all truly fortunate to be able to learn from each other.

### **What is the best advice you would give a new student or potential applicant?**

Three pieces of advice. 1) Carve time out of your day now. Dedicate this time to schoolwork. Life, work, and school can all be incredibly demanding. By dedicating the time you are committing yourself to use your time wisely. 2) Take the opportunity to meet with your professors outside of class. They are truly fantastic individuals who care about success. 3) Buy the APA manual. Seriously.

### **What is your area of research for your dissertation?**

COVID-19 has presented some very unique challenges to higher education. These challenges range from public health measures to a financial crisis. In Georgia, the University System has worked to coordinate efforts across all the institutions. I am working to research how decisions were made in this crisis and what the future of higher education may be impacted by the pandemic.

### **How do you manage the work-family-life-school balance?**

Family support is the name of the game. Throughout my entire application phase, Christina and I discussed the time requirements of earning a doctorate. She agreed to support me throughout the program and we developed a routine. Each night after Louise and Ellie go to sleep, I put on some classical music with noise-canceling headphones and get to reading and writing. This compartmentalization has been helpful to family and work, also. I am aware more of my time commitments and able to focus more on the time I have to spend on each activity.

### **What are your personal hobbies or ways in which you decompress from work and academics?**

I am an unabashed movie buff. A dream of mine is to watch every movie in the Criterion Collection. In addition to movies, I love music and playing with new technology.

### **If you were stranded on a desert island and had all the food and water you needed to survive, what additional two items would you bring with you?**

If the pandemic and quarantine taught me anything, I could just about survive anywhere with wifi and an iPad. A satellite hot spot and an iPad are my two items. I imagine I could read a lot of books and watch a lot of movies before rescue.

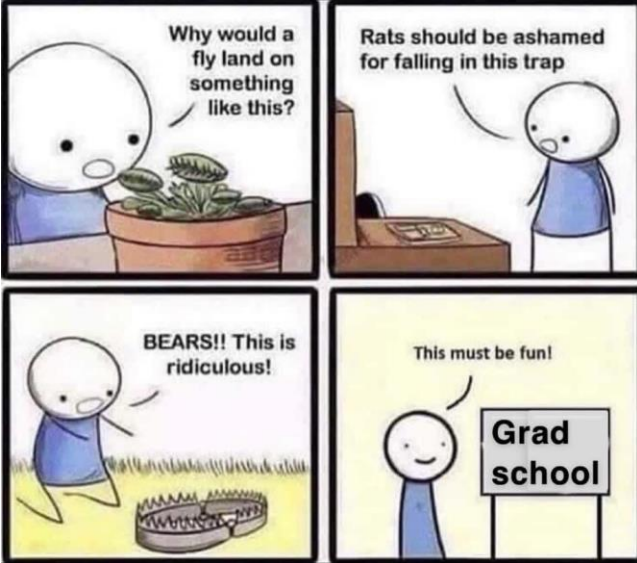
# Mental Health Corner

# Mark Your Calendar!

International News

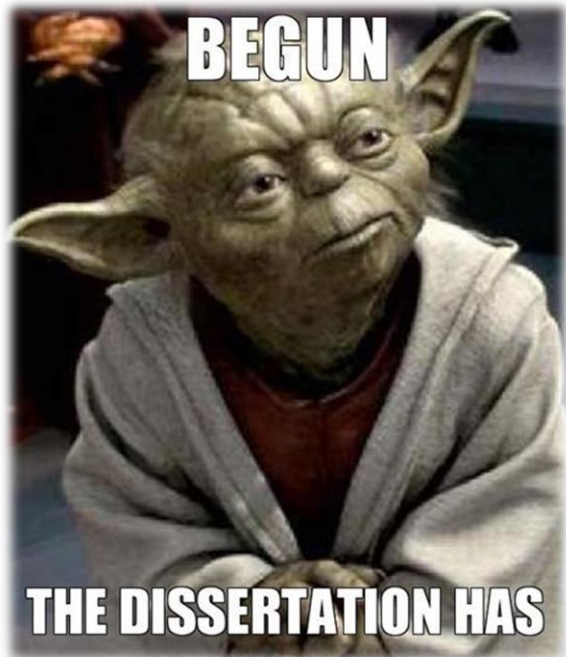
## Managing Your Mental Health as a PhD Student

Joanna Hughes July 25, 2019



\*\*\*Click the image above and below for information regarding [graduate student mental health](#) and [tips for writing your dissertation](#)\*\*\*

*"Tips for Writing – and Finishing – Your Dissertation"*  
Appeared in "Inside Higher Ed" on January 24, 2020  
By: Bertin M. Louis



### Summer 2021 Dates

- Summer Classes Begin:** June 7, 2021
- Summer Withdraw Deadline:** July 7, 2021
- Summer Classes End:** August 5, 2021
- Summer Graduation Date:** August 6, 2021
- Dissertation Submission Deadline:** August 10, 2021

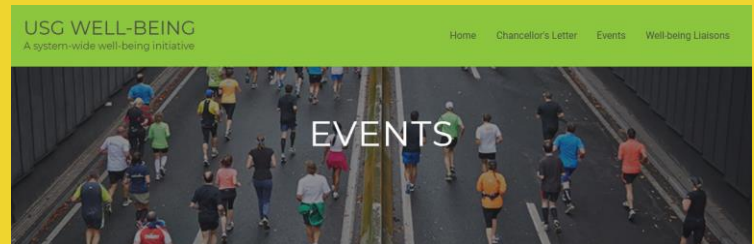
### Fall 2021 Dates

- Fall Registration:** March 29, 2021
- Fall TAP Application Deadline:** July 15, 2021
- Fall TAP Registration:** August 3, 2021
- Fall Classes Begin:** August 23, 2021

## USG Well-Being

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused an incalculable amount of stress at home, the workplace, and school alike. Activities that were once a source of stress relief and leisure have been severely impacted. Many of us are finding ourselves "strapped" to a computer and chair for extended periods of time.

For this reason, the University System of Georgia is sponsoring "Well-Being" activities from now through December. Throughout the months, various activities for people to participate in. The initiative is intended to be "A system wide culture and environment of well-being," and to "Create a comprehensive approach to achieving well-being that engages and empowers the entire USG community." To see a calendar of events and activities, click the image below.



## HELP Accomplishments

Congratulations! Please continue to update us here [link](#)

**Mario Sheats**– Published an article for the first time in the International Journal of Management Education. The title of the article is “Decoupling responsible management education: Do business schools walk their talk?” and can be found at the following [link](#).

**Brooklyn Herrera & Ashlee Pollard**- Won the Louise McBee Scholarship. They were two of 36 applicants from across the state of Georgia selected for the \$1,000 scholarship and Georgia Association for Women in Higher Education (GAWHE) conference fee waiver. A link to the press article can be found [here](#).



**Imani Cabell**- Is the 2021 recipient for UNG's Game Changer Award for Multicultural Student Affairs Women's Awards Day. She was recognized at the MSA virtual event held on March 31<sup>st</sup> which included a video dedication by her recommender, Dr. Katherine Adams.

**James Blackburn, Robert Myers, and Walt Justice**- Presented at the EERA Conference in February. Their presentation was titled “Design Thinking as an Approach to Leadership.”

**Michael Lanford, Yizhe Huang, and Ashlee Pollard**- Gave a presentation at the annual UNG Institute for Leadership and Strategic Studies Symposium on April 8. The presentation was entitled "Restoring State Investment to US Higher Education: Implications for National Security and Global Competitiveness." Michael Lanford also presented a paper entitled "Stimulating Higher Education Innovation in a Post Covid-19 Environment" at the annual conference for the

Comparative and International Education Society on April 27.

**Erika Gravett**- Erika successfully completed Georgia Tech's Leading Women at Tech development program in January 2021. Each year, Georgia Tech selects 25-30 women leaders at the Institute and engaged them in activities to strengthen leadership ability, enhance personal and professional growth, and support overall career development of the participants. Monthly program activities include skill building in the areas of efficacy, emotional intelligence, intercultural communication, mindful leadership, multiple role management, negotiation, and networking, among others.

**Anna Beth Gibbs**- Completed her first publication titled, “Critical Reflection and Communities of Practice as Professional Development Strategies for Educators.” Her article was published in the International Journal for Cross-Disciplinary Subjects in Education and can be found at the following [link](#).

**Katherine Adams**- Was nominated by her students and selected as the Alumni Association's Distinguished Faculty member of the year. She is the representative of the Gainesville, Cumming, and Oconee campuses. The awards banquet occurred on the 16<sup>th</sup> of April. In addition, Dr. Adams was selected to serve as a Chancellor Learning Scholar to explore teaching pedagogies across the university. A link to the press release can be found [here](#).



**Juman Al Bukhari**- In recognition of her teaching, scholarship, and service, the University of North Georgia (UNG) has announced promotions and granting of promotion and tenure for Dr. Juman Al Bukhari (Associate Professor) who is also a student in the EdD program. This will take effect at the beginning of the

2021-2022 academic year. In addition, Dr. Juman Al Bukhari is invited by the Royal Film Commission in Jordan to participate in a post-film screening discussion as a guest speaker. The film explores emojis as the new global digital language. On Friday, April 2, Al Bukhari talked about the effect of emojis on education, language, and culture as well as the factors that influence users' preferences for emoji use.

**Yizhe Huang-** Gave birth to her son on 1/21/2021. She is a first-time mom and really enjoying her new role. She will also be presenting at two conferences this April; the Symposium on the Implications of the COVID-19 Pandemic on National Security and the 2021 Chicago Language (Virtual) Symposium.

**Alexis Stinson-** As of March 1, 2021, the Office of Enrollment Services was officially opened on all campuses. Alexis has worked since December 2019 to make sure this dream of Georgia Southern came to life. This is the first of its kind at Georgia Southern University and is a big step in the right direction of service excellence for the university!

**Ross Skilling-** Selected as the University of North Georgia College of Education Doctoral Student of the year.

**Walt Justice-** Was promoted to Lead Learning Experience Designer at Georgia State University. He was selected as a presentation reviewer for the Online Learning Consortium's annual conference. He also completed his 80th review for Quality Matters as a Master Reviewer for the Higher Education online course review program.

## HELP Newsletter Feedback



have found this edition to be a source of inspiration.

Please tell us what you think of the HELP Newsletter! Click the button to the left 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

## Successful Milestone Defense Announcements

Congratulations to those of you who have successfully defended your prospectus defenses! Good luck on the rest of your research and future endeavors!

### Prospectus Defenses

**Jenica Alvarez:** *The Mental Health of Collegiate Student-Athletes. A Manuscript-Style Dissertation of Three Studies*

**Neil Duchac:** *Suicides on College Campuses and the Experiences of College Administrators: A Case Study*

**Rose Proctor:** *A Qualitative Evaluation of Weaknesses in the Definitions and Requirements for Institutional Integrity in SACSCOC Accrediting Standards and Policies*

**Richard Pruett:** *Cultural Capital Skill Development in Undergraduate Kinesiology Curriculum*

## HELP Policy Update

Prospectus must be completed no later than the end of summer semester of third year, or a grade of "U" will automatically be assigned for each subsequent EDD 8000 course in which prospectus is not completed.

Due to the program's current lack of ability to effectively teach the research design, dissertation studies are not to be conducted using mixed methods design.

## HELP Admissions Update

The HELP program was able to send early admission decisions for 20 applicants, and we are excited to announce that currently 19 have accepted! With one returning student, we will have 20-21 new students starting in fall 2021.

If you need this document in an alternate format for accessibility purposes (e.g. Braille, large print, audio, etc.), please contact the Social Foundations and Leadership Education department at [kathy.moody@ung.edu](mailto:kathy.moody@ung.edu) or 706-864-1757.