Cristina Veresan, TIP ’06, joined an expedition to Galápagos in December as a National Geographic Grosvenor Teacher Fellow Alumna. See more alumni notes on page 5.

GREAT TEACHERS AND LEADERS ARE THE HEART OF GREAT SCHOOLS.

UVEI’S MISSION HAS ALWAYS BEEN CLEAR: we believe teachers and leaders are the heart of great schools, and we strive to support and guide them in their efforts. Our vision of teaching and leadership remains anchored in relationships, community, deeper learning, growth, and equity. Now that school buildings are closed and we are in the midst of an unprecedented shift in how schools work, our mission and vision is more critical than ever. Our candidates and participants have been asked to take on a Herculean task, without any model or road map, and the range of student needs is as varied as ever.

We’re supporting our candidates in two important ways: navigation of remote learning practices, and personalization. The UVEI faculty have a range of experience with remote learning, but we are not experts. We’re learning side-by-side with our candidates, asking questions, and sharing best practices when possible. We offer support by listening to candidates’ dilemmas and challenges, and trying to help them find productive ways forward while holding an important tension: meeting their immediate needs while still preparing them for the future and ensuring that they meet their credit, licensure, and/or degree goals.

More than ever, our future teachers and leaders are dedicated, talented, compassionate, and solutions-oriented. Deb Kardane, principal candidate (’20) and curriculum and assessment coordinator at Windham Southeast Supervisory Union, said she’s learned so much about “the importance of working toward a shared goal [implementing the food delivery program for 2,500 kids within two days], and the importance of clarity in a shared vision [trying to navigate daily guidance from the state while helping colleagues stay focused on the schools’ goals and mission].”

Cheyann Ellis, an elementary teaching candidate (’21) and Colby-Sawyer College senior, was several weeks into her first internship when both her placement school and her college moved to remote learning platforms. It’s taught her a lot about how to be an educator. “This world is ever changing and there are always going to be things to juggle,” she said. “This change can either scare us or it can prepare us to drive improvement in education for our students.”

What we hear in Deb and Cheyann’s reflections is, to put it simply … heart. Teachers and leaders all over Vermont and New Hampshire are showing tremendous heart by meeting the diverse needs of their communities during an exhausting time. We can’t thank them all enough for their hard work.
I started my career as an outdoor experiential educator. From the beginning, I saw the power of real and dramatic experience for transformative learning. Experience (or looming experience) not only focused the mind on what needed to be learned in the moment, it taught people that they could do things they never imagined they could do.

The inspiration I draw from the power of experiential learning has never waned, and it is why I work at UVEI. For more than fifty years, our programs have centered on real teaching, in real schools, with actual students. And anyone who has spent time in schools knows that learning this way means no shortage of dramatic experiences.

From this approach came our mission: To prepare teachers and leaders to have a real impact in schools. But our ethos is probably best summed up in the immortal words of our founder, Barbara Barnes: “You can’t learn [some things] from a book, you have to do it.”

The world has dramatically changed as I write this letter. We are in the midst of an unprecedented shift in how schools work, without a rule book to guide us. This year’s newsletter is filled with examples of ways, old and new, that we are working to make powerful experiences the heart of learning. Our principal and teaching interns continue to find themselves in novel situations through their internships (pg. 3). The Barbara Barnes Initiative for Collaborative Learning, launched last year, continues with a focus on fostering the learning of early childhood education instructional leaders (pg. 4). Because of the support of the Jack and Dorothy Byrne Foundation, the Barnes Initiative is just getting started, and we will have the opportunity to support networks of educators to learn together for years to come.

All of these projects, along with the updates from alumni and the programs we are offering in the year ahead, have one thing in common … You learn by doing!

I hope everyone in the UVEI community stays well and stays committed to the best learning outcomes for our students. I hope we can gather together soon.

R Page Tompkins
Executive Director

“We are in the midst of an unprecedented shift in how schools work, without a rule book to guide us.”
Teacher candidate Felix Ackerman, ’20, reflects on his internship at The Sharon Academy in Sharon, Vermont. Internships are experiential in nature, and The Sharon Academy’s Interim creates powerful learning experiences for both students and teachers. As Felix writes, “I’m not sure I would have volunteered for Interim had I known what I was signing up for. The prospect of stepping outside my comfort zone as both a teacher and an English guy might have been just too intimidating.” That’s experiential learning at its best!

Oriana caught up with me in the hallway as I headed toward my mentor Maria’s room. “Felix, they’re really struggling with this three-part harmony, and I’m not sure what to try?”

“Have you given them the chance to practice the parts separately? Can they definitely sing them? What if you leave out the middle?” This could be, in other circumstances, a totally normal conversation between a music teacher intern and his mentor. But, the thing is, at the Upper Valley Educators Institute I’m working towards a certification in English. My entire music background is piano in middle school and chorus in high school. And Oriana is an 11th-grader tasked with teaching her peers their singing parts for Seussical the musical. The Sharon Academy takes their practice of Interim seriously.

Every November TSA halts classes for two full weeks and requires every member of the school to participate in putting on a musical. But the product, as Michael Livingston, Head of School, reminds the students before their opening night, “is not the show that we put on, but the community that we create through this experience.”

As a teacher and an intern, my role is characterized by instruction. I am working daily on all the mechanics of planning, assessing, differentiating, managing classrooms, and being in a professional community. During Interim I suddenly found myself on equal footing with Oriana. I brought to her a different perspective, but one with no more knowledge in the discipline or practice with the skills than any other bystander. Imagine what that does for a classroom! Being suddenly on a level field with the kids asked me to trust them in their ability to lead, and asked them to trust my ability to guide, and they learned that I can support them in their learning beyond my official “English teacher” designation. On the other side of this experience I have discovered that Interim creates relationships with students that are rewarding within and beyond the classroom space. Students will continue to inform and enable my teaching for years to come. I’m not sure I would have volunteered for Interim had I known what I was signing up for. The prospect of stepping outside my comfort zone as both a teacher and an English guy might have been just too intimidating. But I’m so glad I jumped in with The Sharon Academy on this whole crazy project.

— Felix Ackerman, ’20

Learning on a Level Playing Field

BY THE NUMBERS

UVEI satisfaction rates over the past 3-5 years

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BY THE NUMBERS

UVEI satisfaction rates over the past 3-5 years
THE 2019-2020 BARBARA BARNES INITIATIVE FOR COLLABORATIVE LEARNING

Each year, UVEI convenes a network of educators to work on a shared design challenge. The initiative works to break down the tendency in the small district environments of Vermont and New Hampshire for teacher leaders and small teams to work in relative isolation rather than leveraging their work and learning across multiple settings.

This year, with a grant from the Couch Family Foundation and with the continued support of the Jack & Dorothy Byrne Foundation, the initiative is focused on supporting early childhood education instructional leaders from across the greater Upper Valley in collaboratively designing approaches for improved instructional leadership. Research indicates that for young children to thrive, effective teachers are essential. Instructional leaders play an important role in developing and supporting teachers. Through research, site visits, outreach, and interviews, the project is both assessing needs and piloting solutions.

One of the project leaders is Jill Kopplers, an early childhood education special educator and instructional coach in Orange East Supervisory Union and a UVGSE MEd candidate and co-researcher. The initiative has impacted her as a teacher-leader. “The initiative allows me not to just touch the surface of the research,” she says, “but to look at it deeply and from multiple perspectives. I’ve loved sitting down with early childhood directors and hearing what they’re grappling with day to day.”

Interested in next year’s Initiative? Please reach out! 603-678-4888

WE’RE ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS

- UVEI Teacher Intern Program
- UVEI Principal Intern Program
- UVEI Director of Curriculum
- UVEI Literacy Specialist Program

UVGSE MASTERS PROGRAMS
- Master of Education in Teaching
- Master of Education in Teacher Leadership
- Master of Education in School Leadership

PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION
(2 and 3 graduate credit options)
- Teaching for Deeper Learning
- Project-Based Learning
- Collaborative Lesson Study
- Analysis of Student Work
- Instructional Coaching and Mentoring
- Coaching for Equity
- Inquiry into Curricular Leadership
- Data-Based Curricular Leadership
- School Improvement and Teacher Learning
- Specialized Inquiry Into Practice

FOR MORE INFORMATION | 603-678-4888 | registrar@uvei.edu
Pete Ginsbury, TIP ’10, is in his 6th year at the Jackson Hole Community School in Jackson, Wyoming. He teaches 9th grade Big World History and 12th grade Postcolonial World, as well as History of the American West. Peter also coordinates the senior capstone project, and organizes outdoor and experiential trips.

Michael Ruppel, PIP ’18, writes, “I am excited to be in my first year in a formal school leader role here at Springfield after being on the teaching staff for several years. As a school, we are working to build a system of learning that is relevant, engaging, and rigorous, and the best part of my work is my daily interactions with our talented and dedicated faculty.

Bella Stachowski, TIP ’19, is co-teaching first grade, and teaching K-5 Spanish at St. Elizabeth’s School in Denver, Colorado. She was married in July. She and her husband are expecting a baby girl by Memorial Day!

John “JJ” Vasko, TIP ’12, joined the Peace Corps and taught at a small village school in Uganda. He is currently the head of the math and science department and STEM coordinator at 7Hills International School in Kampala. “We are a very innovative school,” writes John. “UVEI prepared me so well for this environment.”

Cristina Veresan, TIP ’06, was honored as a National Geographic Grosvenor Teacher Fellow Alumna and joined an expedition to Galápagos in December. “On the voyage, I took photos and videos and learned as much as I could from expert naturalists with the goal of developing curriculum and sharing the experience.” See Cristina’s travel blog at: veresan.com/blog.

NEW TO THE UVEI BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Michael Foxall has been an educator for almost forty years. He began his career as a fifth-grade teacher in Tilton, N.H., before moving to Quito, Ecuador, to teach fifth grade at the Academia Cotopaxi where he met his wife, Elise, also an educator. Michael’s international teaching and leading experience spanned the globe. He taught high school in Islamabad, Pakistan; Jakarta, Indonesia; and held administrative positions in Santiago, Chile; New Delhi, India; and most recently Ankara, Turkey; where he was the principal at Bilkent Laboratory and International School. Michael’s impact has also been felt locally. He was the first teaching principal at the Warren Village School until 1996; the principal at Mt. Lebanon School in West Lebanon for seven years until 2013, and most recently the principal at Samuel Morey Elementary School in Fairlee, Vt., for two years. No matter where in the world Michael was teaching or leading, he has called Canaan, N.H., home for twenty-five years.

Paul Morrison was a professor of Operations Management at Boston University’s Questrom School of Business for 21 years, retiring in May 2019. He was vice-president for quality and special projects at Ames Safety Envelope for 10 years. While living in Carlisle, Mass., he served on the Carlisle School Committee and the Parish Committee of the First Religious Society (Unitarian Universalist) for six years. Now a resident of Enfield, N.H., he taught a course on Artificial Intelligence at Osher@Dartmouth and joined the Osher Finance Committee. Paul is a graduate of Harvard College and received his MBA and DBA from Harvard Business School.

Leah Wheelan has lived in New Hampshire for seven years and is the principal at Canaan Elementary School. Prior to this, she taught high school math in the Mascoma Valley Regional School District and served as a member of the Dresden/Hanover school board. Leah moved to N.H. from Chicago, where she taught in a public turnaround school and a charter school and managed a nonprofit scholarship foundation. Leah previously spent 10 years working in consulting for technology start ups and then founded a financial application consulting firm. She holds a bachelor’s degree in Computer Science from Dartmouth College, a teaching certificate from Northwestern University and a MEd from the Upper Valley Graduate School of Education.

Jenny Bradley is a fourth grade teacher at Hanover Street School in Lebanon, N.H., and a UVGSE master’s degree candidate. She graduated from Stonehill College in North Easton, Mass., in 2014 with a double major in Elementary Education and Sociology. She was a volunteer teacher at Saint Andre English Medium School in Tripura, India in 2015, and now lives and plays in Fairlee, Vt.

Jenny is currently teaching students remotely from her makeshift home classroom.
2018-2019 UVEI PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

Placements Throughout Vermont and New Hampshire

- UVEI Teacher Intern Program
- UVEI Principal Intern Program
- UVGSE Graduate Degree Program
- UVGSE Comprehensive School/District Partnerships
- UVGSE Professional Education Program
- Barnes Initiative for Collaborative Learning Network