

After teaching for a combined 50 years, Janet Peirce TIP '02 and Eric Peirce UVEI '81 are enjoying an active retirement. See more alumni notes on page 5.



GREAT TEACHERS AND LEADERS ARE THE HEART OF GREAT SCHOOLS.



News

Spring 2021



BRAVE CONVERSATIONS: EXAMINING PROBLEMS OF PRACTICE AROUND RACE AND EQUITY

CONVERSATIONS ABOUT RACE and equity among educators are not happening enough in Vermont and New Hampshire schools. When conversations occur, they often happen in isolation, sometimes a single educator working alone, or in small pockets of the school

with equity issues; practice the habits of equity consciousness; and take action in schools. The protocol is being piloted this year and has been of value to educators.

Meg Hopkins, a UVEI teaching program graduate ('07) and school librarian at Sharon Elementary, explained why she wants to learn more about how to have Brave Conversations: "In almost all of my classes we've had a steady flow of conversations [about race and equity]. I want to be able to feel

more comfortable talking to students, talking to parents. I'm co-facilitating an anti-racism PLC for our supervisory union."

Rachel Stanton, school counselor at The Lyme School, recently presented a dilemma during a Brave Conversation which included teachers and leaders across several schools. She explained why conversations centered on equity and race are critical. "The process of participating in Brave Conversations was really insightful and reflective. I want to become braver. I'm building that muscle to be stronger and more courageous."

community. The need for conversations about equity and race is felt across our community, and it's especially challenging in predominantly white communities with predominantly white educators. White educators often don't know where to start, how to have these conversations, or how to be braver and examine equity challenges in their own classrooms and schools.

This year, working with Groundswell Change, UVEI designed a discussion protocol to develop educators' capacity to see and describe equity-centered dilemmas; think about how identities, including race, influence our interactions

"In no other capacity is a problem solved by not talking about it. And yes, it's extremely hard to treat racism. It's extremely painful. Just like it's extremely hard to treat cancer." — IBRAM X. KENDI



DEEPER LEARNING
FOR EDUCATORS
PAGE 3

NEW PROGRAM FOR
TEACHING LITERACY
PAGE 4

UVEI Team

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Michael Harris, *Chair*
Joan Holcombe, *Vice-Chair*
Anne Hill, *Secretary*
Robert Webber, *Treasurer*
Jacqueline Allen
Jenny Bradley, '21
Tom DeBalsi
Michael Foxall
Paul Morrison
Leah Wheelan, '18
Kristin M. Wilson

EMERITI

Barbara Ragle Barnes (1923-2018)
Carolyn M. Clinton
Peter Coburn
Cornelius C. Rose

ADVISORY COUNCIL

Astrid Berger
Sarah Glass
David Grant
Lorie McClory
Deborah Meier
John Merrow II
Adam Patridge
Charles Rattigan
Helen Schotanus
Anne Silberfarb
Nancy Faust Sizer
Ian Smith
Tony Wagner
R. Stewart Wood, Jr.

STAFF AND PROGRAM FACULTY

R Page Tompkins, *President*
Kristen Downey, '03, *Director of Teacher Education Programs*
Nan Parsons, *Adjunct Faculty*
Andrea Feid, *Business and Operations Manager*
Marie McCormick, '07, *Registrar and Operations Associate*
Christopher Ward, *Academic Dean, Coordinator of Graduate Studies*
Becky Wipfler, *Literacy Educators Program Coordinator*
Jill Koppers, *Adjunct Faculty*
Marie Wesson, *Chief Financial Officer*

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Kristen Downey, '03

Stay in Touch

603-678-4888
www.uvei.edu
staff@uvei.edu

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

UVEIconnect
company/uvei
UVEIconnect
uppervalleyeducators-institute



Socially-distanced principal candidates at an outdoor seminar at UVEI

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

I HAVE SEEN A FEW THINGS in my time in education, and I have watched educators confront, endure, and overcome many things; but I have never experienced anything like this last year.

The pandemic has challenged us to redefine and re-commit to our relationships with students, our colleagues, and the communities we serve. This has not always been easy, and the expectations for teachers and leaders have frequently been unfair. I am always inspired by the compassion and commitment of educators in the face of seemingly insurmountable systemic barriers, and that has never been more true than over the course of the last year.

During this time, we at UVEI and many of the educators we work with have re-committed to confronting racial injustice and inequity in schools with increased depth and focus. It would have been easy to claim that this was not the year for this work, given the other challenges facing K-12 education and higher education alike, and I am grateful to my colleagues and our network of educators who have remained determined to keep the fight for justice at the forefront of our work. At UVEI this has meant an institutional and program wide equity audit, re-centering equity in

our coaching and curriculum, designing and engaging educators in a structured approach to talking about inequality and race, and focusing a network of educators through the Barbara Barnes Initiative

How are we confronting racial injustice and inequity in our schools?

- Conducting an institutional and program-wide equity audit
- Creating a structured approach to talking about inequality and race
- Engaging in deeper learning into race and social justice issues

for Collaborative Learning on deeper learning for educators on issues of race and social justice. While these efforts are only the start, I marvel at our faculty and candidates' ability to see systemic drivers of inequality without allowing that to stop them from taking action where they can.

Education has never felt more vital as a means of building a better country for all our people. I am deeply grateful to be a part of an institute, a network of educators, and a group of schools that are committed to doing their part.

R Page Tompkins, Executive Director



Follow Page on Twitter
@pagetompkins

Network of Educators Gathers for Deeper Learning



EACH YEAR, UVEI convenes a network of educators to work on a shared design challenge, and UVGSE MEd candidates are invited to be “co-researchers” in the network. “We are drawing on the local needs of rural schools, which are often isolated from one another,” explains Chris Ward, Academic Dean and Graduate Studies Coordinator. “Our goal is to bring these schools together to solve shared problems.”

This year, with the continued support of the Jack & Dorothy Byrne Foundation and the UVEI Board of Directors, the initiative is focused on deeper learning for educators with an emphasis on equity and antiracism. Our essential question: How can we design for educator professional learning as “deeper learning” in order to promote an equity-focused and antiracist pedagogy? Six Barnes Initiative co-researchers, as site leaders, are working with their colleagues across schools in Vermont and New Hampshire.

After surveying teachers in their school settings, the six co-researchers identified a two-pronged problem of practice. Gerlisa Garrett, a

Stowe Middle School teacher, MEd candidate, and co-researcher, explains, “Teachers’ learning tends to be episodic, fragmented, isolated, and divorced from classroom practice. Additionally, teachers rarely examine the equity and antiracism implications of their practice, and when they do, it tends to be done in isolation.” She elaborates, “We find that teachers don’t have deeper learning opportunities to examine race and equity, like learning in communities of practice and engaging in cycles of reflection, for example.”

The research will culminate in August with a presentation of the research and findings at UVEI’s annual Innovations in Education Forum. The group will publish and disseminate their work in the fall.

Pictured above, from left, this year’s MEd co-researchers are: Colby Baker, Coe-Brown Northwood Academy (NH); Gerlisa Garrett, Stowe Middle School (VT); Jenny Bradley, Hanover Street School in Lebanon (NH); Laura Bradley (VT); Liz Spriggs, Sharon Elementary School (VT); and Emily Marshia, Tunbridge Elementary School (VT).



Six co-researchers are studying equity-focused and antiracist pedagogy and working with colleagues across schools in Vermont and New Hampshire.

WE’RE ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS

- UVEI Teacher Intern Program
- UVEI Principal Intern Program
- UVEI Curriculum & Assessment Specialization
- UVEI Literacy Educators Program

UVGSE MASTERS PROGRAMS

- Master of Education in Teaching
- Master of Education in Teacher Leadership
- Master of Education in School Leadership
- Master of Education in Literacy Teaching/Leadership

Learn more  603-678-4888  registrar@uvei.edu



RUNNING THE NUMBERS

UVEI satisfaction rates over the past 3-5 years



95%

End-of-Program
Satisfaction Rate



96%

Employer
Satisfaction Rate



100%

Alumni
Satisfaction Rate

UVEI KICKS OFF FIRST YEAR OF LITERACY EDUCATORS PROGRAM

MANY TEACHERS in UVEI partner schools face a wide range of student knowledge and skills in literacy. Many of their students struggle with learning to read, and our schools and teachers asked for more support. In response, UVEI launched a literacy educators program designed to help teachers improve their literacy instruction, assessment, and leadership. The new two-year program leads to recommendation as a specialist in both Vermont and New Hampshire.

Becky Wipfler, a UVEI trained coach and facilitator, literacy teacher, and coordinator of literacy programs at UVEI, is coaching two educators, Eileen Lusenskaskas and Marisa Keifaber, in this pilot year to help them improve their literacy instruction and assessment. They will focus on literacy leadership skills in year two of the program.

“Teaching literacy is nuanced and requires specialized attention and focus,” said Becky. “In typical teacher preparation, these foundational and complex skills can’t receive the attention they deserve because there are too many other teaching skills competing for focus.”

Eileen, a fourth grade teacher at Fair Haven Elementary, shared her reasons for choosing this program. “I wanted to improve upon my own knowledge of literacy. I wanted to gain more experience with reading and writing, so I could better help my students. I also wanted to be a part of UVEI again. I really enjoyed my time in the teaching program and I wanted to work with the very knowledgeable, flexible, and understanding faculty at UVEI. I feel like I am heard and understood going through this program, and it is personalized for me.”

“Participating in the program so far has already improved my ability to better understand the struggles some of my students have with reading on a daily basis,” Eileen added, “I am learning strategies on how to best support them during whole class instruction as well as in small groups and one-on-one instruction.”

“We need literacy leaders in all schools to support both students and teachers in literacy work.” — BECKY WIPFLER

NEW FACULTY JOIN THE UVEI TEAM

UVEI HAS HIRED two new faculty members, Elijah Hawkes MEd and Adam Norwood EdD. In July, Elijah will start as the Director of School Leadership Programs, and Adam will serve as Coordinator of the Barnes Initiative.

Elijah earned his School Administrator Supervisor Certificate & Masters Degree from the School of Public Affairs, Baruch College, City University of New York. He’s been the

principal at Randolph Union High School and Middle School in Randolph, Vt., since 2011. “For years I’ve been a guest teacher at UVEI, leading discussions on the moral dimensions of school leadership. And for years I’ve had the privilege to mentor UVEI’s



ELIJAH HAWKES

school leadership candidates and work with teacher education candidates,” Elijah said. “I’m joining UVEI because the organization’s values are strong, the model is effective, and because the program’s reach and positive impact on schools is extensive.”

UVEI’s outgoing Director of School Leadership Programs, Nan Parsons, led the program through a period of significant growth in her seven-year tenure. She is the Assistant Principal at the Ray School in Hanover, N.H., and continues with UVEI as an adjunct faculty member.

Adam Norwood earned his Doctorate in Education from Northeastern University and



ADAM NORWOOD

has served as Lyndon Institute’s Assistant Head of School for Student Affairs for 12 years. “Adam has worked at the intersection of instructional leadership, deeper learning, applied research, and networked learning, said Page Tomkins, UVEI Executive

Director. “His experience bringing educators together to build capacity, engage in inquiry, and design solutions to common problems will be invaluable to us as we embark on this next chapter as a graduate school and institute.”

“My rewards were the many thank you notes from appreciative parents and students given to me throughout my almost 20 years of teaching.”



LOOKING BACK AFTER RETIREMENT

BOTH MY HUSBAND AND I ATTENDED UVEI in its earlier days. On the day of September 11th, I was a teaching intern in a first grade classroom and have vivid memories of that day as a beginning educator. Later, I found my niche as a fifth grade teacher in Christian education. UVEI prepared me well to teach all subjects to 10 and 11 year olds in a self-contained classroom, first at St. Mary School, and then at Claremont Christian Academy (C.C.A.).

Last June, I joined my husband, Eric Peirce, in retirement. He is a 1981 graduate of UVEI, then called the Upper Valley Teacher Training Program. He taught in public schools for 32 years, first at Unity School in sixth to eighth grade for five years, and then in fourth and fifth grades in the Claremont Public schools for 27 years. He was a beloved teacher whom the students adored, which made them more motivated to learn. After retirement he taught part-time for several years at C.C.A.

By earning his teaching certification, Eric financially supported our family of five throughout the years. My teacher salary paid half of our three daughters' undergrad college expenses at a private college. Thank you, UVEI, for your excellent program that positively impacted our family.

● By **Janet Peirce** TIP '02

Astrid Berger, TIP '09, teaches language arts and social studies at Grantham Village School. Like many schools, hers followed a hybrid model this year, with four in-person days and one remote day. “We had already become a one-to-one school, so that made the transition to remote learning last spring and hybrid learning this past fall a lot smoother.”

Marjie Bish, TIP '18, MEd '19, is in her second year teaching 3rd grade at the Ray School, where she has been taking her students to their outdoor classroom weekly. “I feel so fortunate that I have been able to teach in person for the entire school year. My students and I are regularly in a state of gratitude.”

Chris Cassell, TIP '06, was featured in his local paper honoring the Peace Corps' 60th anniversary. “My service in the Peace Corps turned out to be a great stepping stone for a career in international teaching.” Chris taught in Saudi Arabia for six years, and he now teaches 4th grade at Samuel Morey Elementary in Fairlee, VT.

Sarah Deuell, TIP '14, heads the science department at Belmont High School. She co-designed and teaches Field Studies in Earth, Ecology and Environment, which allows students to design and execute their own studies based on real-world data collection in the local community.

Marianne Hunkin, MEd '20, is a facilitator for Embracing Equity, where she “cultivates the mindsets and practices necessary to create an affirming, inclusive, and equitable educational ecosystem.”

Violet Nichols, PIP '19, MEd '19, is director of learning and technology at Addison Northwest School District, where she leads the Educational Leadership Team, introduced an instructional coaching program, implemented research-based literacy practices, and engages in conversation about equity and anti-racism.

Brian Emerson, PIP and MEd '16, directs the River Bend Career and Technical Center. This year he served on the Legislative Committee of the Vermont Association of Career and Technical Education Directors, offering testimony before the Vermont Senate Education Committee. The association supports fundamentally shifting the way career and technical education is funded in Vermont, and this is gaining support at the state level.

Keenan Haley, PIP '20, was in his first year as the principal of Sharon Elementary School when the pandemic hit. Because teaching and learning during the pandemic can be dispiriting, Keenan's focus is on bringing joy. “I've been writing songs and playing the ukulele for all the classes. Keeping joy is always at the forefront of my mind.”

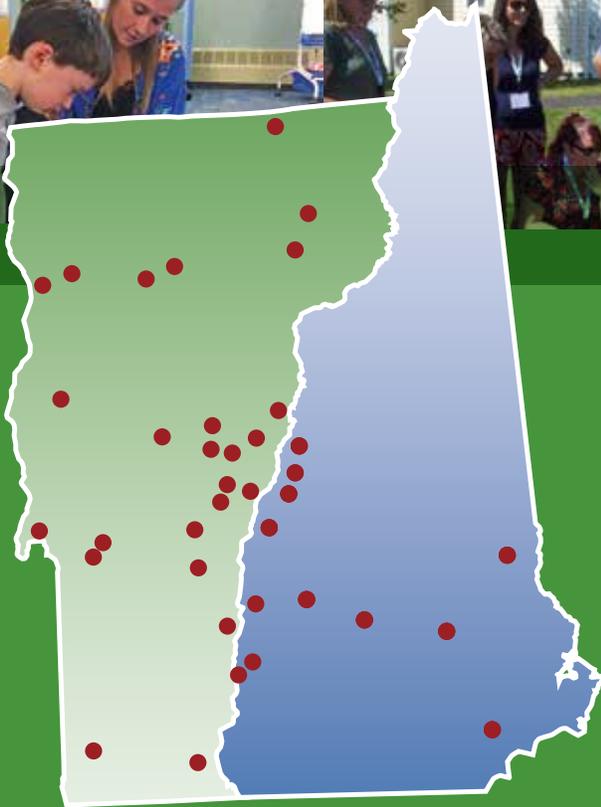
Sarah Hisman (née Cota), TIP '12, and her family returned to the Upper Valley in 2019, after she taught for seven years in the Northeast Kingdom. Sarah now teaches grades 6-8 science at Hartford Memorial Middle School. She's also mentoring a UVEI teaching candidate and recently started a doctorate program with Southern New Hampshire University.



GETTING CREATIVE

Jon Warren, TIP '16, MEd '20, an art teacher at Lebanon High School, instructs his remote students in portraiture.

**SPRING
2021 NEWS
INSIDE**



2019-2020 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
- Barnes Initiative for Collaborative Learning Network



MUCH ADO ABOUT ... MITTENS?

Jen Ellis, TIP '06, classroom teacher at Westford School in Vermont, made haute couture headlines on Inauguration Day when Senator Bernie Sanders sported her repurposed sweater woolly mittens and instantly went viral. Despite the new opportunities, Jen told Seven Days, "This is not my get-rich-quick moment, and I didn't need it to be. I have a job: I'm a schoolteacher. I have a really good job." Jen has seized the opportunity to raise thousands of dollars for charity instead.