



UConn

Early College Experience

MAGAZINE

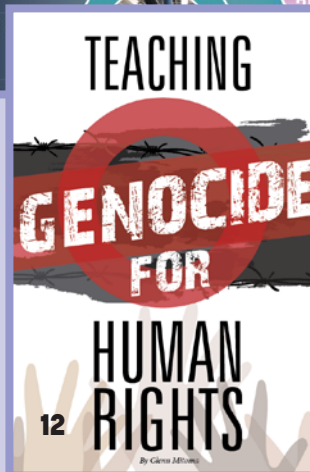
A PUBLICATION FOR THE UCONN ECE COMMUNITY

We Stand Together:

Living & Learning in 2020

Principal Confidential —
People, Places, & Pedagogy
(see page 22)

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The Director's Thoughts

Welcome to the Winter edition of the UConn Early College Experience (UConn ECE) Magazine. I am happy to introduce this edition of the UConn ECE Magazine to you, because it also introduces a new approach to how the editorial board plans that the Magazine will continue for the future. This edition kicks off our vision of looking at our UConn ECE Community as a source of inspiration, positive change, and good work. We want the Magazine to engage with the issues of our time and show how our community is handling these issues. We want the Magazine to be a source of information, wisdom, and positive energy. The Magazine will continue to update our community on program changes, enhancements, and report important data. That part will not change. We are adding to the Magazine so that administrators, instructors, and students find useful examples of leadership and motivation. We want to tap into the richness of our community and reflect the best of what is going on as a guide to others. That said, we are not attempting to show inherent attribution – because they are UConn ECE, they are wonderful. Rather, the approach is, let's all look at the successes of our UConn ECE community and let's be inspired by their words and actions.

There is a great deal of research that suggests that the news we read influences our cognitive biases and mental health. Bad news reinforces the search for more bad news and confirms that all is going down the chute. We don't want to stick our heads in the sand and pretend that there is no negative news; we want to be a positive source of information and discussion on what we can do about it. To that end, this edition of the Magazine will address issues of teaching and learning during COVID-19. Chris Malinoski, Ph.D., writes about moving biology labs to an online platform and Professors Glenn Mitoma and Alexia Smith write separately about teaching in the social sciences during a period when group inequality is evident in society. Four high school principals will lend us their voices and share how they are caring for their communities. We have also reached out to our community and are highlighting three "agents of positive change". In addition, we have program statistics, the largest programs, the News Brief, and other interviews to keep you interested. Let us know your thoughts – we improve by listening, reading, and considering your words seriously. That is good advice for us all.

Thank you for being part of our UConn ECE community, and we hope you enjoy reading.

Brian A. Boecherer, Ph.D.
Executive Director

THE HEROES OF OUR TIME

By Brian A. Boecherer

For those of you familiar with the *Eurovision* Song Contest, you may recognize the title of this new section of the UConn ECE Magazine as a refrain from the 2015 song contest winning song, Heroes. The phrase is used in other modern songs too, and naturally, for those who know Russian literature, it is nearly identical to a famous Mikhail Lermontov novel from 1840 - *Hero of our Time*. We are using this as a title to highlight members of the UConn ECE community who help promote social well-being, social cohesion, and improve the lives of others. They are everyday heroes who engage in current issues of our times - they are members of the UConn ECE community who provide leadership in the form of education, the arts, activism, and more. Their energy and interactions change lives in a personal way and offer us examples of how our engagement helps others, as well as ourselves.

Jane Yalof

*UConn ECE Alumnus 2016-2017, Glastonbury High School
Singer, Mentor, Community Leader*

“ Think about what your own interests and passions are. Do what you want to do, not what others want you to do. Don't worry about achieving leadership experience, that will come if you do what you love. If you are doing what you are passionate about, you will want to be a leader. ”

Jacob Skrzypiec

*UConn ECE Instructor in Human Rights
Educator, Activist, Thought Leader*

“ We need to prepare students to be civically engaged, decent, educated, and paying attention. This is a response to the current political climate....We need students to practice human rights in the classroom and in their lives. ”

Fizza Alam

*UConn ECE Alumnus 2016-2017, Waterbury Career Academy
Proactivist, Thinker, Optimist, Community Educator*

“ Because of the pandemic, we all have the opportunity to stay inside our house and look outwards. This is true about our own person too. There are so many communities that are hurting. I want people to have a little bit of sympathy. Take away your own personal interests for a second and see if you can consider someone else's and help them. Don't do it because you want... ”

THE HEROES *of our time*

“Everything you do doesn’t have to be related to your major or what you want to do after college. All of these things have transferable skills. I don’t want to be a professional singer, but the skills are transferrable – I am basically a lesson planner as the Music Director. It is all helpful when you apply for jobs.”



Jane Yalof

*UConn ECE Alumnus 2016-2017, Glastonbury High School
Singer, Mentor, Community Leader*

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Young people need to understand that good leaders come with a host of other positive characteristics – humility, an adventurous spirit, and the ability to cultivate communities. Jane Yalof is such a leader, and her story is as impressive for a young adult as it is for a seasoned professional. Jane is active in a diverse array of activities at the University of Connecticut and is a leader in all of them. As she told me, she did not set out to be a leader, “it just sort-of happened”. And lead she does. Over her time at UConn, Jane has been active mentoring students, teaching mentoring to students, and

continues to enliven female students as Music Director and singer in the all-female acapella group, Drop the Bass.

Jane is a UConn student who will be graduating Spring 2022 with a combined undergraduate and master’s degree in the Neag School of Education. She is light-hearted, bright, and has an optimism in society that has come from her deep engagement with it. Over the last five years she has seen how one person’s engagement can positively affect others. That’s how she started her activity as a mentor, by being mentored. Since then she has been actively involved as a mentor and teaching assistant through First Year Programs and through her involvement in Community Outreach. Jane engages in these community-oriented activities because her actions help others and teach others to help society in their own personal way. At the end of our hour-long conversation it is clear to me that Jane counts her successes in terms of the communities she fosters, the relationships she makes, and the tough conversations she helps other students have as a facilitator. It is impact on a personal level that counts. “[As a mentor and teaching assistant] we really created a safe space and helped students through tough issues. Many times, just by listening, and often by sharing our own personal stories. It is about learning to care for each other and protect each other.” Giving yourself to create a community makes you vulnerable, but it tends to make the community strong. Jane gives her time freely and extensively to help lead and educate others on the power of themselves.

In addition to her extensive mentoring and community outreach, which has also led her to a local elementary school as a tutor and to Alabama to engage on issues of racial injustice, Jane spends a great deal of time in the all-girl acapella group, Drop the Bass, where she serves as the Music Director and Vice President. “Do you get the name?” she asks me. “Drop the Bass – we are an all-girls singing group. ‘We don’t need no man’,” she says, with a joking lilt. This engagement, however, has become more than a creative outlet – it has become a community of young women who are interested in supporting young women and understand their layered identities, their power, and their impact on others. It is a community that works together to express important messages. As Music Director, Jane teaches music, runs rehearsals, supports others for voice parts, finds music to arrange (or arranges it herself) so the group of 16 young women can vote on what they will practice and perform for the community.

“It is very girl-empowering, with a deep impact. It is about the singing, it is about enjoying what you are doing. It is about service too.” Their genre is female power ballads – “Cosmic Love”, by Florence + the Machine, and “The Village”, by Wrabel, (a gender power ballad) about a person who is transgender and their parents do not accept them yet. “The song is about there being nothing wrong with you. Rather, there is something wrong with them if they cannot come to you and ‘get’ you.”

They are currently working on, “Don’t Worry About Me”, by Frances, which is dedicated to families and friends of those who lost their loved ones to COVID.

It has not been easy working together during COVID, because they are working together at a distance, using Zoom. But they are recording their parts and working with another UConn student to synchronize it and make a video.

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Talking with Jake about human rights and about making society kinder, smarter, and less polarized is anything but depressive. During the course of my interview, Jake makes me feel like I am the single most important person for making change happen. He is right, change starts with our everyday interactions with others. But indeed, in a climate where some politics has turned populist and daily human rights can be fragile, his words have a touch that unlock optimism and encourage a “benefit of the doubt” to others. What are we personally doing to make things better? Jake suggests that we should focus on what we can affect, make it better, and then reach a little bit further.

Jake (MA, UConn Neag School of Education, 2014) is a UConn ECE Human Rights instructor at Manchester High School (certified 2015) and is one of the founding figures in helping to develop a UConn ECE Human Rights program. Manchester High School (MHS) is unique in its vision of human rights as in June 2015, MHS made human rights a required course for graduation. Every student in Manchester has to take human rights, and with their five certified UConn ECE human rights instructors, most students are leaving the high school learning the “for and through” of human rights, but also walking away with UConn credit.

Jake mentions the *for and through* of human rights throughout our conversation. A brief explanation for us newbies: The Council of Europe succinctly explains that education is a right, but also a way for realizing rights, and we “put our rights and democracy into practice, and defend our rights and those of other people, if they are not respected – LEARN FOR THEM. Experience and feel the principles of human rights and democracy – LEARN THROUGH THEM.”

“How do we move kids and adults to think about the *for and through*? By practicing human rights in the classroom and in their lives.” For the last five years Jake has engaged in tempestuous issues with students to model and teach civility and open dialogue. Among other things, Jake teaches listening to others, even when you disagree, so that you may learn about what motivates others.

An important pivot point for Jake happened about three years ago. In his UConn human rights course, he had two students debating about transgender rights – both on opposing sides. The conversation got heated and turned into what he called a “bickering match”. Jake had to separate the students and administration got involved. Jake has reflected on that moment and says, “That anger, deep fear, and the unknown of someone else’s perspective struck me. Students are still developing and trying to learn, often as they speak.” But it struck him as being emblematic of society. “It is important to focus on the skills of communication, academic discourse, basic patience, and humility with our students so that they can be good adults.”

In addition to his work in the classroom, which includes teaching human rights at UConn in the summer for University of Connecticut’s College Access and Preparation Program (UCAP), Jake has been at the forefront of bringing human rights to social studies curriculum throughout the State and on the national level. It started when MHS gave him and his colleagues the latitude and encouragement to develop a human rights program for the school. But to do that well, Jake reached out to the Thomas J. Dodd Research Center and the Connecticut Human Right Partnership – bringing organizations and individuals together for human rights advocacy. From there he helped to build the Human Rights Summit, which is a human rights workshop day for teachers, students, and the community. Then Jake, along with fellow UConn ECE human rights instructor, Chris Buckley (Brookfield High School), became the regional representatives for Human Rights Educators USA, to advance human rights education, advocacy, and opportunities on the national level. “It is a diverse organization, a powerful group,” Jake says bluntly and with pride.

Jake is also part of the leadership group in The National Council for the Social Studies, Human Rights Education Community, which works to promote human rights as an academic concentration in the high schools, and develop a new C3 social studies standard in human rights. “Four years ago [they] were more hesitant to embrace human rights education in K-12, but today that dynamic has completely changed. There is now a thirst for this curriculum to embed human rights into national social studies standards. There has been a cultural shift here.”

Circling back to the beginning, how does Jake stay positive and how does he help his students from turning morose in the face of historical and current atrocities?

“It’s hard; it’s not an easy task. We might be looking at a human rights violation – voting rights for example – and look at the history of suppression. We have to acknowledge there are screwed up things going on, but we also have to look at the positive work that is going on. Let’s focus on the accomplishments and the tools to make things better. It is important to give students tools to work at resolving issues.” It is also about self-care. Since COVID hit, Jake has been on over 70 hikes, not to lose himself or his connection with family and friends. “There still is positivity in the world. We need to focus on that too,” he says. He also invests time into writing. His recent article entitled, “A Ripple of Hope,” Media Voices for Children, Vol. III, explores how students are often more hopeful and ready to get involved than adults. “We need to build on youth voice. Support it, cultivate it. The kids get it,” he says with a smile in his voice. “Going to class every day, I love it, I can see hope in students’ eyes. They are engaged and excited about it. This is good stuff. We have to bring out that hope and optimism. That’s our job.”

THE HEROES *of our time*

Fizza Alam

UConn ECE Alumnus 2016-2017, Waterbury Career Academy

Proactivist, Thinker, Optimist, Community Educator

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to feel better about yourself. ...That's fine too... But there are people out there – our neighbors – who are cold, hungry, and in need. Be empathic about one thing and try to make local action. See how you can help one person and execute it to the end. I don't know all the ways, but people are innovative – donate clothes, start a community garden in a food desert, mentor... If everyone did one thing, all the problems wouldn't go away, but we would know that we live in a caring society. We can be in a better place together. These things are so simple I sometimes don't feel like I can put it into words."

Fizza says many times during our 90-minute conversation, "I am just like everyone else." By the end of the interview her insistence that we all share the same characteristics of a generous spirit and care of others leaves me wondering about the different stages of how environment influences conceptual schema – thoughts progress to words and words to actions. In other words, how do we stand up and take action in what we believe. Fizza says that she is a product of good luck – good parents, good mentors, and environmental inequality. The combination has given her insights into how neighbors live side by side – how they help each other and what may happen if they don't.

Fizza was born in Pakistan, from a family that was forced to migrate due to the partition of India in 1947, and migrate again in 2001 because of societal dangers. When she was a year and a half old, her family immigrated to the United States – Waterbury, Connecticut. She enjoyed growing up in Waterbury, where "neighbor helps neighbor," but it wasn't until she was in the tenth grade that she realized that her majority-minority city "had serious issues". She was recommended and was accepted to attend the Global Leadership Institute at Taft School in Watertown, Connecticut, just one town over. "I went into this gorgeous building, and the dining hall was filled with nutritious foods, the teachers had advanced degrees, and everything was totally different. I saw the differences." Fizza saw the inequality and realized that access to opportunity – access itself – was what made the difference in a person's life. "I don't think kids should be put at a disadvantage because of where they grow up. Kids have aspirations and need access."

Growing up, Fizza says, her parents were like her friends' parents – they worked multiple jobs, sometimes 14-hour days – and Fizza, like her peers, would go home after school, take care of siblings and help around the home doing laundry and making food. She enjoys the diversity of Waterbury, although she admits that not everyone is welcoming of Muslims. She says it is because they don't really know the culture. She recalled a situation that happened to her in kindergarten, when she was five, and had henna on her hands for Eid. "My teacher took me by the hands to wash them, forcibly, with soap and scolded me for "dirtying" them with marker. I couldn't understand why and felt wrong." It wasn't until later that she realized it was a lack of education.

Since then she has made education and educational campaigns a central part of her approach to making change happen. In 2019 Fizza earned a summer internship with Congresswoman Jahana Hayes, where she worked directly with the congresswoman in Waterbury. As a capstone project, Fizza organized a panel on immigration at Naugatuck Valley Community College. "Congresswoman Hayes really gives women of color an opportunity and a voice." Fizza told me that Congresswoman Hayes bought a select number of tickets for her interns to join a fundraising dinner so they could see what that "other world" looks like and sit at the table with leaders like Nancy Pelosi.

"I have had such great mentors in life. I rolled the dice and got really lucky. If I didn't meet these people, I would have been very different. So, I am grateful for all that I have. It is luck. Really good luck." It has also been really good effort.

Fizza has continued her education and awareness campaigns with a large voter registration effort in partnership with Be (A)Part, a non-profit that supports youth involvement, engagement, and activism. Fizza has been working on advancing the issue of absentee voting since 2018, when she was also working on the Hayes election campaign. She sees absentee voting as an issue of access. "We need to expand the vote, because the elderly and low income [people] need greater access." Be (A)Part reached out to her as she had positioned herself as the youth expert in absentee voting. She says she brought the perspective of an urban woman of color and could speak to how people were being left out because of where they lived and how they lived. As part of the campaign, Fizza was part of a voter outreach and suppression panel. "I love how you can take an idea and then do something with it."

As Fizza is slated to graduate this spring with a double major in political science and economics, she is making plans for her next steps. "I want to make an impact on my community. God willing, I will attend law school next fall. I am an American, and an immigrant, and a

Registration for the 2020-2021 academic year created many new challenges for high schools and their students to navigate. At various points in the year, schools made the decision to move to remote learning and could only communicate with students through e-mail and video calls. This means that each school had to adjust how they helped students register for their UConn Early College Experience (ECE) classes. The article below highlights some of the creative ways that Site Representatives found success in helping students register for classes this year.

Registration Reflections: Holly Saad and Maureen Steinhoff Stonington High School

We are honored to be featured in the Early College Experience Winter Magazine as the Site Representatives for Stonington High School. We are both school counselors and have been Site Representatives together for three years. Just when we felt we had the UConn ECE registration process down, COVID-19 forced us to switch to distance learning mid-March. This school year, we've been operating in a hybrid instructional model, splitting our student body into two cohorts. [With little to no contact with students], it was necessary to create new ways to communicate and follow through with our UConn ECE Students and families.

One procedural practice that we've always had in place that has helped us tremendously during distance learning and the hybrid model, is making our internal deadlines for students about a week earlier than UConn's deadlines. This allowed us time to cross check rosters with the application and enrollment status reports and track down the students that had yet to complete the process.

"Tracking down" students looks different these days. We can't always pull students from study hall (or class when we are desperate) if they are not in the building, so we've been proactive with our frequent email reminders. We created email groups for UConn ECE Students and their parents/guardians. This was a time-consuming task, but well worth it with all of the deadline reminders, instructions, and links to resources we've been sending. When email hasn't been

an effective way to communicate, we divide and conquer and make calls home. We have also utilized our daily morning announcements to remind students of deadlines and resources for assistance. The resources on the UConn ECE website have been super helpful, and we share them with students often.

It'd be remiss of us not to thank Todd Blodgett for his help and accessibility throughout the registration process. In a typical school year, we would hold workshops to assist

students with the process and Todd would join us to answer questions and expedite the process. During full remote learning in the Spring, we advertised and held a couple Q&A Google Meets to assist students. The Google Meet link was sent out to all of our UConn ECE Students and families encouraging them to join, and Todd was there as well to assist.

Communicating with our UConn ECE Instructors has been helpful as well. We've asked them to relay information to their students and we have even joined their classes to assist students with the process.

Thank you to all our Site Representatives who are working so hard to make sure our students are successful and have the support they need during these unprecedented times. We are all in this together. Please don't hesitate to reach out to our office if you need anything, and know that we are here for you year round.



HOLLY SAAD - Site Representative



MAUREEN STEINHOFF - Site Representative

by the numbers

12,571

students



are enrolled in UConn Early
College Experience (ECE) courses

Check out our registration numbers:

1,408



**UConn ECE
course sections**

offered throughout
Connecticut

982



**UConn ECE
Instructors**

teaching
throughout
Connecticut

188



**Connecticut
High Schools**

participating
[208 total partner
schools]



Welcome to our new partner school!

Pathways Academy of Technology and Design

Highest Number of Students Enrolled in UConn Courses:

315	Edwin O. Smith High School	179	Southington High School
277	Manchester High School	171	Ridgefield High School
240	Norwich Free Academy	169	Frank Scott Bunnell H.S.
215	Berlin High School	167	Cheshire High School
204	William H. Hall High School	166	Fairchild Wheeler H.S.

Highest Number
of Students enrolled:
E.O. Smith
High School

315

2020 - 2021 ACADEMIC YEAR

2019-2020

to

2020-2021

Highest enrollment
increase:

Engineering and Science
University Magnet High
School

358%

Highest Percent Enrollment Increase From 2020-2021:

358%	↑	Engineering and Science University Magnet H.S.
300%	↑	Greenwich Academy
133%	↑	Hartford Public High School
115%	↑	Northwestern Regional High School
111%	↑	Nathan Hale-Ray High School
91%	↑	Seymour High School
86%	↑	West Haven High School
81%	↑	Holy Cross High School
67%	↑	Kolbe Cathedral High School
61%	↑	Old Saybrook High School



Most Credit Hours Taken:

2,482	🕒	Edwin O. Smith High School
1,838	🕒	Manchester High School
1,812	🕒	Norwich Free Academy
1,792	🕒	Berlin High School
1,757	🕒	William H. Hall High School
1,666	🕒	Daniel Hand High School
1,342	🕒	Masuk High School
1,336	🕒	Marine Science Magnet High School of Southeastern CT
1,310	🕒	Conard High School
1,240	🕒	The Woodstock Academy



TEACHING



GENOCIDE FOR

HUMAN RIGHTS

By Glenn Mitoma

This past November marked the 75th anniversary of the opening of the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg, which sought to bring to justice two dozen high ranking German leaders. Over 11 months, prosecution teams from the United States, France, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union, led by US Supreme Court Justice Robert J. Jackson, conducted a systematic autopsy

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of the Nazi's war crimes, crimes against humanity, and crimes against peace. Alongside Jackson worked a young Connecticut lawyer named Thomas J. Dodd, for whom the University of Connecticut's Thomas J. Dodd Research Center is named. Jackson, Dodd and the other prosecutors at Nuremberg were attempting not only to convict the individual Nazi leaders like Reichsmarschall Hermann Göring, industrialist Gustav Krupp von Bohlen und Halbach, and propagandist Julius Streicher, but also to present before the world the architecture of death and destruction we now know of as the Holocaust. The trial was an exercise in education as much as law, and many of the participants hoped that the lessons learned would help put the world on a path to peace and justice.

Seventy-five years later, the lessons of Nuremberg are as important as ever. In Connecticut, the General Assembly recently adopted a statute requiring education about the Holocaust and other genocides to be part of the social studies curriculum in every school district. Today, reflecting on the legacy of Nuremberg, we have a responsibility and an opportunity to teach about the Holocaust and genocide in a way that supports human rights.

Teaching and learning about the Holocaust and genocide, while important, can be fraught. By definition, these topics are traumatic and include episodes of extreme dehumanization, violence, and brutality. At best, students can find genocide difficult to comprehend; at worst, students can become traumatized (or retraumatized) in the face of such material. Teachers, too, will grapple with the challenges of understanding and

presenting age-appropriate learning materials about something so fundamentally inappropriate. Clear guiding principles and learning objectives, such as those provided by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, are essential.

Despite these challenges, the importance of learning about genocide and the Holocaust has never been greater. In recent years, rising authoritarianism, racism, and anti-Semitism have demonstrated that the building blocks of genocide exist in every society. At the same time, the spread of disinformation, propaganda, and conspiracy theories—often, like those targeting billionaire philanthropist George Soros, reviving anti-Semitic tropes—have found an all-too-eager audience online and in the real world. Effective genocide education can be one important way of confronting these troubling trends and building a broader culture of human rights and democracy.

This semester, I piloted a new course for our Human Rights program, introduction to Genocide Studies. Designed as a critical, interdisciplinary, and practically engaged course, the learning objectives encompass areas of knowledge, values, and skills. These include:

- Students will demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how and why particular genocides have occurred, with reference to the key historical, political, and social contexts.
- Students will analyze social and psychological factors that enable or constrain genocide.
- Students will apply their knowledge to the world outside the classroom to identify contemporary impacts or risks of genocide.

- Students will apply their knowledge to the world outside the classroom to commemorate, advocate against, or prevent the perpetration of genocide.
- Students will develop empathy for victims or targets of genocide.
- Students will foster the respect for diversity, common humanity, and justice.

The course materials, such first-person testimonials, primary source documents, documentary films, monuments and memorial, as well as scholarship, are selected to allow students to explore the ways historians, psychologist, lawyers, political scientists, and others have tried to understand genocide, and on what and how we can know about genocide as a human experience. Reflective journals, structured classroom dialogues, and an emphasis on supportive relationships are all used to try to avoid easy moralizing and distancing of genocide and to help students think about power and responsibility in relation to genocide perpetration and prevention. In the end, my hope is that the course is fundamentally anti-genocidal in that it pushes back against the frames of mind that makes genocide possible, and equips students with the ability to take action and contribute to or develop practical efforts commemorate, advocate against, or prevent the perpetration of genocide.

The design of this course follows not only recommendations for responsible teaching and learning about genocide, but also the basic tenets of human rights education (HRE). Rooted in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the HRE framework emphasizes not only teaching about human rights as

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TEACHING GENOCIDE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

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subject, but also teaching through human rights (i.e., pedagogical approaches that honor and uphold students' dignity and humanity) and teaching for human rights (i.e., learning outcomes that make students better equipped to claim their own rights and respect the rights of others). For genocide education to avoid leaving students feeling depressed and disempowered, it needs to embrace the opposite of genocide: a vision of justice and humanity that teachers and students together can work toward.

Like the Nuremberg Tribunal, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was the result of a post-World War 2 effort to come to terms with the legacy of violence, dictatorship, and atrocity that had characterized the preceding years. The UN Human Rights Commission, chaired by Eleanor Roosevelt, drafted the Declaration mindful, as the Preamble states, that "disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind." But while Nuremberg provided the first autopsy of the horrific crimes of Nazi regime, the Universal Declaration provided a vision for how the world might build a more just, free, and equal world by centering "the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family." Toward that end, the Commission not only recognized that the right to education was among those "equal and inalienable rights," but that teaching and learning were at the core of how we would build that better future.

Now, therefore THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY proclaims THIS UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States themselves and among the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction. (emphasis added)

As we emerge from the forced isolation of the COVID-19 pandemic, there will be much work to be done to address the devastating impacts it has had on our individual and collective lives. Among the things we can take from both the Nuremberg Tribunal and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is that the path to a better future often begins with learning the lessons of the past. This includes confronting difficult truths and acknowledging accountability for violations of human rights. But it also includes articulating a vision of the future, rooted in shared values and fundamental principles, toward which we can work together. Holocaust, genocide, and human rights education are an important part of that work.

UConn ECE News Briefs

By Carissa Rutkauskas



NACEP 2020 Connect 2020: The NACEP Digital Forum

Brian Boecherer, UConn ECE's Executive Director and Carissa Rutkauskas, Program Specialist for Outreach and Evaluation, presented "Pivoting to Online During COVID – Data and Trends" on October 26th for the annual national NACEP Conference: Connect 2020. Seventy attendees from around the country streamed the 40-minute session. The presentation touched on topics like communication strategies that foster a stronger community, solutions to common classroom problems, best and worst practices from the UConn ECE professionals, qualitative and quantitative student data, and UConn's new practice of recording high school teachers and their lessons.



NACEP 2020 Accreditation Commission

On November 4th, Brian Boecherer, UConn ECE's Executive Director, presented at NACEP's Accreditation

Commission, and spoke about UConn ECE's approach to accreditation standards. Familiar with the process, UConn ECE has been accredited with NACEP since 2007. UConn is one of 116 concurrent enrollment programs throughout the country that holds this distinction and the only program in New England.

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NACEP 2020 Concurrent Enrollment Review

On November 5th, Brian Boecherer, UConn ECE's Executive Director, presented with colleagues Fabiola Juarez-Coca of Boise State University and Melanie Nappa-Carroll and Sean Conrey of Syracuse University on the much-anticipated peer-reviewed concurrent enrollment journal: The Concurrent Enrollment Review (CER). This peer-reviewed academic journal on concurrent enrollment, which is three years in the making, will be the first to offer educational professionals, researchers, and policymakers insight into this interdisciplinary model of education.

UConn ECE 101

What is UConn ECE? What courses are offered at my school? How much do courses cost? How does it differ from Advanced Placement? Answers to these questions and more can be found on our new UConn ECE 101 page. ece.uconn.edu/uconnECE101



Middle School Outreach

On November 25th, UConn ECE staff spoke with students at Mansfield Middle School for the third year in a row during their College and Career Readiness Day. Although we were unable to be in person this year, we were still able to interact virtually and play a dynamic game of UConn ECE and College Ready Jeopardy with the

students. If you know of a middle school who would like more information on UConn ECE and outreach activities for their students, please contact us at ece@uconn.edu.

Community Reviews

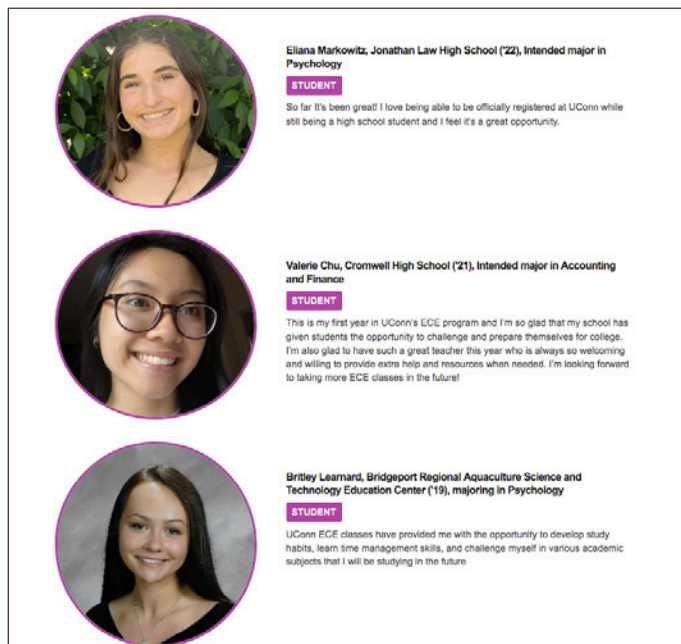
You can read reviews about restaurants and hotels before you go... here is your opportunity to read about UConn ECE before taking a course. Take advantage of this new program feature to discover first hand experiences of others, or complete a review to share your own UConn ECE experience: ece.uconn.edu/about/uconnecereviews



Instructor Jason M said I had the honor and pleasure of teaching UConn ECE History 1300/1400 during my 15 years of teaching. Every high school should have an ECE program. As an instructor, I collaborated with high school and college peers to better myself and students via new primary resources and up-to-date research methods. I furthered my student's college experience taking them to UConn for a day to experience a lecture, conducting research at the main library, eating at the dining hall, and exploring the Co-Op. By far, UConn ECE courses provide more than just college credit. They create a lasting collegial partnerships that enables you as an instructor to continuously flourish along with your students. There is no program that can match UConn's ECE experience.

Meet our Community

Who are the people of UConn ECE? Visit our newly updated "Meet our Community" page for insights from UConn ECE Students, Alumni, Instructors, Site Representatives, Principals, and Faculty Coordinators. Complete the form to be featured on our website as well! ece.uconn.edu/meet-our-community.



From our Faculty Coordinators

By Melanie Banks

Get to know our faculty and learn some tricks of the trade with advice they have to offer. A few of our faculty coordinators have answered questions about their personal and professional interests as well as how they have transitioned to teaching during these challenging times.

Q&A WITH



MARY BERNSTEIN, Ph.D.

*Professor, Department of Sociology
Co-Director, InCHiP Gun Violence
Prevention-Research Interest Group
UConn ECE Sociology Faculty Coordinator*

Q. To say that we are living through a turbulent time may be an understatement. As a professor in Sociology, how have you adjusted your classes to teach to the moment?

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A. I think that COVID-19 has really focused public attention on the collective health and mental well-being of those around us. It has also laid bare the racial and economic inequities in our society. As faculty, it is incumbent on us to help students understand the origins of these disparities in institutional racism and racist ideologies that have produced such gross inequities.

I think we've had two different moments in the crisis. The first came with the abrupt lockdown when the campus community was told on Friday, March 13th that we would not return to campus following spring break and that we were to transition our classes online. We were all scared as no one knew much about how the disease was transmitted, such as whether we could catch it from our mail or our groceries. We all know so much more now and as educators, we know that informative, concrete, empirical data is power. Science should not be political.

So, in Spring 2020, I moved my Sociology of Law class online to an asynchronous format. Since I believe that students learn best when they are engaged in thoughtful discussion, I thought that it would be harder to accomplish that goal on WebEx, so I made online-based discussion a graded requirement of the class. What I found really surprised me. First, the shy students participated equally, and this allowed more people to engage fully in the discussion. Second, I made the discussion questions which were posted on HuskyCT very targeted, requiring close engagement with the readings. I found that in responding to my discussion prompts, students referred more closely to the readings and because everyone had to participate, they engaged more fully with the text.

I heard from many students who did not have easy access to the internet or who, because they were now living at home, had to take on more responsibility

such as caring for younger siblings who were struggling to attend school online. As students reached out, I was able to make accommodations as needed. I found out that one of my advisees was living in a homeless shelter, going to the public library to take her online classes and do her homework. Together with UConn staff, we were able to find her housing and to improve her situation.

In my graduate class, we continued to meet online synchronously. We generally started each class with a check-in where we learned that some of us were introverts and adapting well to the isolation, others were single parents struggling to balance work, school, and home as they took care of small children who no longer had daycare or playdates. In short, the lockdown provided more of an opportunity for us to know each other as people and to understand how the constant struggle for work-life balance affected each of us differently, and how that struggle was accentuated because of the pandemic. I think that the pandemic has provided for many of us an opportunity to practice compassion and understanding.

This fall 2020 semester, things feel a bit easier. We understand the disease better and know what we should do to keep ourselves as safe as we can be. But the struggles for students with younger siblings or family obligations or for those who have to work with the public that increases their exposure to COVID-19 continue. As a teacher and advisor, my go to question for students who are struggling, is, "What is keeping you from being able to complete assignments or keep up with your classes? Can we come up with a plan to make things easier?" This opens the dialog to greater empathy and to think through ways to support our students.

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From our Faculty Coordinators

Mary Bernstein, *continued from page 17*

Q. Professors in the humanities and social sciences are uniquely positioned to read the news and put it in a larger context. How do you engage with the news in your classes and give structure to the moment we are living in?

A. Sociologists are uniquely positioned to place the disparate effects of the pandemic in a broader context. We can raise and discuss important questions such as why are Black, Brown, and Indigenous people disproportionately affected by the pandemic and why are they dying at higher rates than their European American counterparts? Who has access to healthcare and who does not? What explains these differences? What has the pandemic taught us about how society is organized, what we would call the division of labor? After all, we depend on the people who continued to work at the grocery stores and of course all of the healthcare workers which, without them, we quite literally would not survive. Who keeps them safe? What are they paid? Why do some people react with compassion and others with fear?

Q. While you give structure and context for your students, how do you advise students who come to you confused, disaffected, and/or angry and not knowing how to make positive change?

A. The unequal racial impact of the pandemic has brought the racial inequities of our society into stark relief. For many European-American people, the murder of George Floyd by police officers in Minnesota laid bare the racism embedded in the criminal justice system and sparked uprisings across the country. For Black and Brown people, the police murder of Floyd was one more example of a criminal justice system where Black and Latinx people who constitute approximately 25% of the population make up

59% of the prison population. Compared to similar nations, the U.S. incarceration rate is five to ten times higher. Understanding structural racism is a critical part of what sociologists study. With the increased organizing for racial justice, there are myriad ways for students to get involved and they can start by looking online. For those who do not feel safe protesting in person, many social movement organizations now meet online which I believe for many makes participation easier, though of course, we all miss the in person contact. Whatever issue you care about, whether it is climate change or voting rights or something else, you can find a group that is working for positive social change.





SCOTT CAMPBELL, Ph.D.

*Associate Professor, Department of English
Hartford Campus Writing Coordinator
UConn ECE English Faculty Coordinator*

Q. To say that we are living through a turbulent time may be an understatement. As a professor in English, how have you adjusted your classes to teach to the moment?

A. One thing I've been telling teachers and students is that writing is a technology designed for bridging gaps between people. If we're all in the same room anyhow, we don't actually need to write. Going online or being physically apart helps students see the need to consider audience, situation, and the goals of writing: who needs to hear this and how can I affect them? We're using writing, more than ever, to locate ourselves in a conversation and see ourselves in relationship to others.

Q. Professors in the humanities and social sciences are uniquely positioned to read the news and put it in a larger context. How do you engage with the news in your classes and give structure to the moment we are living in?

A. Our focus this semester is on education itself, which allows students to share experiences and write as experts, since they are themselves, of course, deeply involved in educational systems. Additionally, because education is supposed to be a place for engaging with and we hope changing the world, we talk and write about where our schools and courses come up short and what we might want them to be. What

should a school be leads into questions of inequality, injustice, and systemic racism, and we've read about and explored a range of possible responses to the emergent needs of our world in 2020.

Q. While you give structure and context for your students, how do you advise students who come to you confused, disaffected, and/or angry and not knowing how to make positive change?

A. I am entirely online this semester, which makes the personal interactions with students, most of whom are in their first semester of college, much harder to initiate. I worry quite a bit that we're not hearing enough from students in need. My personal style is to be talky and energetic in videos, constantly sending emails, writing individualized notes to them, being present in online conferences. It takes time, but I think many or most begin to trust that I am telling the truth when I insist that I am here to help them. Our course is a seminar, which means it needs their contributions and will go in a direction they choose. My role is to help them see that school can be a resource for them to do and make things that interest them.



ALEXIA SMITH, Ph.D.

*Associate Professor, Department of Anthropology
Director of Undergraduate Studies for Anthropology
UConn ECE Anthropology Faculty Coordinator*

Q. To say that we are living through a turbulent time may be an understatement. As a professor in Anthropology, how have you adjusted your classes to teach to the moment?

A. This semester I am teaching a graduate seminar on Professional Development in Anthropology and Anthropology 1500, a large introductory general education course on Great Discoveries in Archaeology. The introductory course satisfies two general education requirements, so it is typically popular with freshmen looking to check off two requirements at once and explore a topic that they may not have been exposed to before. This semester 150 students are taking the class, and a class of this size can often feel impersonal, even when the class is held in person. At the beginning of the semester, I felt that it was important to welcome each student individually, so that everyone felt that they had at least one faculty member they could reach out to and realize that, despite physical distancing, we are all still part of a bigger class and college community here at UConn. I feel really lucky to be teaching this course—I have been teaching it for more than 15 years and love it! Last year, well before anyone had heard of COVID-19, I worked closely with Betsy Guala, a course designer here at UConn within the Center for Excellence

in Teaching and Learning to develop a fully-online version of the course. While the online course was developed with a much smaller group of students in mind, having the online course shell available made it easier to pivot to online instruction this fall. As an aside, for any interested instructors out there, this course has been approved as a UConn ECE course and the online shell is available for you to use!

This semester, I am assisted by two Teaching Assistants, who help oversee weekly online discussions. About four weeks into the fall semester, I conducted a class survey to check how everyone was doing and I asked the students to share top tips on surviving the unusual circumstances we are all facing. Many students shared strategies they had developed for managing their struggling with time management and the many and varying demands placed upon them by their different courses. Some students reminded their classmates of the importance of eating, breathing, and sleeping and I have to agree—eat well, breathe deeply, and get good

sleep! Students are juggling many sets of deadlines and technology-related learning curves on top of the course content. This has been overwhelming for some. I try to make the technology and time management pieces for Anthropology 1500 as easy and straightforward as possible, by sending out regular updates and reminders, and checking in with students who appear to be falling behind. Given that so many freshmen take the class, I firmly believe in the need to provide instruction on strategies that help students succeed in college. Alongside discussions of archaeology, I provide links to resources on campus, strategies for approaching readings and taking useful notes, and exercises that help deepen critical thinking. It can be easy to focus on the challenges that many of us have faced as instructors in light of COVID. There are some silver linings too! As part of the online version of Anthropology 1500, students get to explore archaeology and engage with cultural heritage in a very different way—after watching a lecture on early art, for example, they can now dive straight into a virtual tour of Chauvet Cave in France (archeologie.culture.fr/chauvet/en/virtual-visit). Or they can virtually explore the galleries within the British Museum in London (blog.britishmuseum.org/how-to-explore-the-british-museum-from-home/) as part of our ongoing discussions of cultural heritage—or they can admire the view from the top of the Pyramid of the Sun at Teotihuacán in Mexico (www.360cities.net/image/pyramid-of-the-sun-teotihuacan) as part of our consideration of state-level societies in Central America. By diversifying the range of instructional materials, and allowing students to progress at their own pace, the course is, in some ways, better suited to a wide range of learning styles than the in-person version!

Q. Professors in the humanities and social sciences are uniquely positioned to read the news and put it in a larger context. How do you engage with the news in your classes and give structure to the moment we are living in?

Anthropologists are very well placed to provide instruction on cultural diversity, race, and racism, and I feel that we have an ethical responsibility to do all that we can to share this knowledge and enhance the cultural-literacy and sensitivity of our students. As part of Anthropology 1500,* students explore how colonial histories have shaped diverse views of the past. In addition to gaining a deeper understanding of the diverse ways of life of people across the globe and through time, students also gain a deeper appreciation of the complex relationships between the past and the present, and learn to discuss and debate multifaceted issues relating to cultural heritage from multiple perspectives. Issues relating to cultural heritage rarely have one simple correct answer. I believe that providing a safe space for discussion to allow students to explore new ideas and change their minds, possibly multiple times, is particularly important right now in light of the divisions we sometimes see in the media.

New archaeological discoveries often appear in the news—these are included as part of a “New Discoveries” forum within the class. Students are also provided the skills that they need to read a news article and evaluate it for thoroughness and potential accuracy. In addition to obtaining cultural sensitivity and emphasizing critical thinking, underscoring the need to evaluate readings for accuracy is essential for today’s students.

* The Anthropology Department is now offering two courses through the UConn ECE program: **ANTH 1000: Peoples and Cultures of the World** and **ANTH 1500: Great Discoveries in Archaeology**, both of which explore issues of race and cultural diversity throughout the world. Fully-developed online course content shells are available to certified UConn ECE Instructors to use as resources. If interested in learning more about **ANTH 1000** or **ANTH 1500**, please reach out to Alexia Smith (alexia.smith@uconn.edu).

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HIGH SCHOOL PROFILES IN THEIR OWN WORDS



Crosby High School, Waterbury
Cathleen Newmark, Interim Principal

"Crosby High School is an urban school in the City of Waterbury. It serves 1,220 students and has a staff of 140. The demographics of the student populations are: 733 Hispanic, 303 African American, 135 White, 20 Asian, 17 two or more race categories and 12 American Indian."



J.M. Wright Technical High School, Stamford
Phyllis Bartoli, Principal

"There are 450 students who are currently enrolled at J.M. Wright Technical High School. Our students primarily come from Stamford; however, other communities represented are Greenwich, Norwalk, Wilton, Westport, Darien, Fairfield, and Bridgeport. There are 9 trades (Automotive Technology, Carpentry, Culinary Arts, Digital Media, Electrical, Health Technology, Hospitality Management, Information Technology, and Plumbing & Heating), each with 2 instructors. On the academic side, there are 20 teachers."



The Woodstock Academy, Woodstock
Christopher Sandford, Head of School

"The Woodstock Academy is an independent "Town Academy" which was founded in 1801. There are only 22 Town Academies in the United States and three of them are in Connecticut. The majority of our day students come from six of our nearby towns. In addition, we have day students from the local area who pay tuition to attend along with up to 200 students who enroll through our boarding program. This boarding environment attracts students from all around the country and the world. In total, we have about 1,100 students in grades 9-13. While our school sits in a very rural area in northeast Connecticut, we have students in our boarding community who come from more diverse areas all over the world."



Xavier High School, Middletown
Brendan Donohue, Principal

"Xavier High School is an all-boys, Catholic, College Prep school located in Middletown, Connecticut. We are co-sponsored by the Xaverian Brothers and the Diocese of Norwich. We have 662 students enrolled in grades 9-12. We have 55 full- and part-time teaching faculty."

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Principal Confidential—People, Places, & Pedagogy

By Brian A. Boecherer

They say, *tough times make for resilient people*. If so, we are in a period of reinforcing our resilience and as a result we have become and will even still become stronger and wiser. What have we learned in 2020 that challenges and also reinforces our previous thinking and what will we carry with us into the future? As the pandemic rages on, most of us are still trying just to manage the current situation. Instructors are thinking about which parts of their curriculum can be restructured to fit a new course pace and how to offer compassionate assessments that suit the moment, but still require students to deeply engage. Principals are thinking about their students as well, along with district mandates; the health, well-being, and obligations of their teachers; and their high school as a cohesive society. This became clear from my interviews with four UConn ECE high school principals. They are thinking about the people, the place, and the pedagogy.

These four high schools show four very different spaces and highlight unique situations as well as some important similarities. To set the scene, all four schools have different demands based on whether their students are mostly onsite, mostly remote, and somewhere in between. The students who attend Xavier High School are mostly in-person, with a small percentage of students opting for distance learning. The Woodstock Academy, on the other hand, has gone completely remote, although they have a residential student population to consider as well. Crosby and Wright Tech are hybrid, with the majority of their students at a distance, but about a third of their students are on campus at any given time.

How does structure influence teaching and learning?

Cathi Newmark, Crosby High School: “Waterbury Public Schools is in a hybrid learning model. ALL students and their families were given the option to choose to attend school in-person or enroll in the district’s Virtual Academy. At Crosby, ALL students (in-person and virtual) participate in synchronous learning every day from 7:20 to 11:20 a.m., with an additional 80-minutes of asynchronous learning when they return home. In addition, all students and families are afforded the opportunity to meet with teachers from 1:25-2:00 p.m. for additional individual/small group assistance.”

Phyllis Bartoli, J. M. Wright Technical High School:

“Because students at J.M. Wright Technical High School manage two programs – trade and academic – they operate on two-week cycles. On their academic cycle, students have been divided into two groups (virtual/in-school) [to de-densify the building]. There are approximately 33% of students on campus daily. There are about four students per class, and they travel in cohorts. Teachers have designed their classroom so that students are sitting six feet apart. On the trade side, all students stay in their shop except for lunch. There is very limited hallway “traffic”. It is the students’ responsibility to recognize when they are to be on campus and when they are to access their academic program from home. Even with this model, [with all students and instructors wearing masks] there are families who have opted to do their learning completely virtually.”

Chris Sandford, The Woodstock Academy: “About six years ago we started a one-to-one program where every student has been given an iPad. This initiative has been a game changer in terms of technology, equity and shifting our overall pedagogy throughout the entire school. It has led to new courses being created or courses being restructured in almost every department which has expanded our ability to meet our mission as an institution.”

“Also, we have offered online classes in the evening for those students who may find those type of classes better suited for their schedule. We have eliminated snow days to provide a continuous educational experience that limits the movement of commencement. Right now, we are considering shifting our weekly schedule to one that has only four in-person days each week. This might be a way for students to become more familiar with the virtual format they will undoubtedly see in college, while providing more valuable and precious professional development time for staff.”

Brendan Donohue, Xavier High School: “Normally, Xavier has a seven-period day; 45-minute periods. This year we returned fully in person with a small percentage of students choosing to learn remotely due to family medical reasons. As part of our reopening plan, we reduced the number of classes per day and lengthened the periods. We now have five-periods a day [with] 60-minute classes. This was done in large part to minimize the number of

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times students are passing through the hallways. Of course, we have many other protocols in place that I am sure are universal in other schools. Designated dining areas [with plexiglass], directional signals in hallways, one-way stair wells, hand sanitizer in every room and in common areas, no lockers, etc.”

What is the most difficult part of managing a high school during COVID-19?

Cathi Newmark, Crosby High School: “Students have varying responses to this new way of learning. Some are more comfortable and prefer learning at home, sharing a greater ability to focus with less distractions in place, while others miss the routine and social interaction of the traditional school day. They have all demonstrated resilience and an admirable ability to adapt to the pandemic and the uncertain times we are all navigating through together.

“While we recently had a change in administration at Crosby, the staff continues to navigate the challenges of teaching and supporting students during a pandemic with resilience. The faculty has stepped up and they offer each other support and guidance where and when they see the need. They share teaching tips with each other on our new platform, ParentSquare, which is a communication tool our district launched this year. They support each other emotionally and have demonstrated empathy and understanding when challenges arise.”

Phyllis Bartoli, J.M. Wright Technical High School:

“What’s most difficult is that the schedule changes daily. It is imperative to communicate the schedule on a weekly basis to families, students, and staff. Students are managing as well as possible. To establish consistency, online norms were created: Video on; Audio off, unless speaking; Arrive to class on time; Follow their schedule; Check their email; and Dress appropriately, preferably in uniform. Faculty are having a difficult time with hybrid teaching, namely, there are only a few students in their class and the rest of the class is virtual. Web cams were donated by the Parent Faculty Organization (PFO) to enhance video clarity. They feel, overall, comfortable with the way administration has managed the schedules and students. Communication is extremely important, so weekly staff update meetings have been scheduled.”

Chris Sandford, The Woodstock Academy: “Our largest challenge rests with meeting the social and emotional needs of our staff and students. Both our school goal and many of our Board of Trustees’ goals for this year were created with this focus. Fortunately, we have had very few issues with technology, but with our community so spread out and diverse, we are always concerned about the isolation of our students and staff.”

Brendan Donohue, Xavier High School: “A key characteristic of Xaverian education is “enduring personal relationships”. This is a hallmark of the Xaverian Brothers who have always had a presence at Xavier and who sponsor the school through the Xaverian Brothers Sponsored Schools network. Throughout the pandemic it has been hard to conduct many of our programs in the same manner that we typically do. This has hampered our ability to interact with our students in the manner we are accustomed to. Of course, it is also difficult to maintain these relationships with those students learning remotely. The freshmen are of particular concern.”

What is the biggest silver lining in teaching and learning that came from the pandemic?

Cathi Newmark, Crosby High School: “One of the greatest milestones we have achieved as a district is the increased access to technology for our students. The bar has been raised for educators and students to utilize technology to improve instructional practices and student assessment while using various online tools and platforms. This year, teachers have been afforded a wealth of professional learning time (daily) and have been using this time to focus on SEL [Social and Emotional Learning] practices, engaging students in the hybrid learning model and gaining certifications in the areas of Google and Kami as tools to guide their instruction.

“We have a very active Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) team that acknowledges and rewards both staff and students on a regular basis. We recognize that this is a difficult time for all of us and have increased our efforts to boost morale among our students and staff. Some of the initiatives that have taken place include sending handwritten postcards to all students and staff that are currently learning/teaching virtually and a FALLOWEEN celebration where we distributed treats to all students as they exited

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the building. We have implemented a walking club during our lunch block to encourage healthy practices and camaraderie amongst our staff. We promote FineArt Fridays and Music Mondays on our social media platforms where we post Crosby student pieces. We also announce an SEL quote of the day during our student-led morning announcements.”

Phyllis Bartoli, J.M. Wright Technical High School: “Wednesday is now a virtual day for students. They also operate on an early dismissal schedule. While teachers are on campus, the teaching portion of the day ends at 11:30am. They can have lunch delivered to the high school or step out. They then can use the rest of the day for collaboration and planning.”

Chris Sandford, The Woodstock Academy: “While it has been a struggle, I can say that I have never been prouder of the individuals that work and study at The Academy. This has not been easy on anyone, but what I have seen from adults and students has been nothing short of inspiring. Sitting with students in the boarding community around a fire pit and just chatting about how things will be different after the pandemic, or meeting with students (virtually) as they advocate for social justice issues, or hearing how people have coped while struggling with sick parents or family members (or their own sickness), has brought some important things into focus this year. Even though we have been forced to distance ourselves, we have never been more connected together.”

Brendan Donohue, Xavier High School: “People are resilient and innovative. They rally around each other in difficult times. That has been the greatest takeaway for us here at Xavier. Because of the pandemic, everyone has been forced to try new things. We have had to learn new ways to educate. Many of us find this very uncomfortable.

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Alexia Smith, *continued from page 21*

Q. While you give structure and context for your students, how do you advise students who come to you confused, disaffected, and/or angry and not knowing how to make positive change?

Sometimes students new to archaeology or the social sciences struggle with the way that information is structured. If a student is confused, I review the structure and scaffolding that archaeologists use to gather and interpret data. My background spans the sciences and the social sciences so I can often emphasize with the difficulties that students may be going through as they approach the topic, having experienced them myself!

I haven’t experienced too many students who are angry this semester, but I have interacted with a few. I know that technology struggles can sometimes push people over the edge, myself included! In those instances, I ask what the main issue is and brainstorm potential solutions. In one instance, I connected a student with a resource that could help provide them with access to a laptop. For students who are disaffected, it is a little more challenging this semester—I often send emails checking in to ask whether everything is ok and whether there is anything I can do to help. Oftentimes, this makes the student realize that they are not “unseen” or anonymous in a large online class and they re-engage. Sometimes they don’t engage, however, and that is the hardest part—given that email, or communication tools within the online course, are the only ways I have to communicate with students, I feel somewhat limited in those instances. I can only interact with them if they choose to reciprocate.

In some cases, it is clear that a student is experiencing difficulties well outside my area of expertise. I make sure that students are aware of the range of social supports or mental health resources we have in place on campus and ensure that they understand how accessible these resources are. More rarely, when I have sensed a deeper problem, I have reached out to the Dean of Students’ office to ask them to call a student to see if they are ok. The help is always there—sometimes the students just need a little guidance finding it!



2021 Applications are now open

Review the application materials and [apply now](#)



Prospective Students

Summer checklist, make a payment, course information, items to bring, and more.

[More Info](#)



Admitted Students

Summer checklist, make a payment, course information, items to bring, and more.

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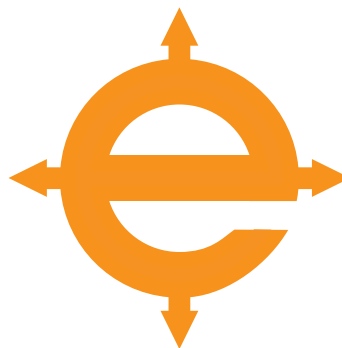
[More Info](#)

“Collaboration is a key component of our work as a program. Conferences provide our team with opportunities to connect and network with other pre-college programs across the country and the partnerships we’ve formed with other UConn offices are integral to creating a dynamic summer program. Building and maintaining relationships has been a challenge as of late, but this summer we set out to create a community of practice with similar programs on and off campus.”

Adapting

Something Old and Something New: How UConn Pre-College is Changing

By Nicole Hyman &
Cody Olson



*PCS Graduate Assistant &
PCS Program Coordinator*

Over this past year, hundreds of thousands of couples have had to move or postpone their wedding day due to Covid-19. Is it the responsible and safe decision? Yes, absolutely, but, that doesn't make it any less difficult. A wedding takes months to plan and coordinate, and there are so many variables to account for. Countless engaged couples are now grappling with the arduous task of rethinking their special day, and all the difficult feelings that come along with that process. We, at UConn Pre-College Summer (UConn PCS), can't fully relate to this feeling, but we know a thing or two about having to cancel a "special day."

After months of planning, we made the difficult decision to cancel our 2020 Pre-College Summer program to prioritize the health and

safety of our students, faculty, and campus partners. As a team that works year-round to prepare for a few special days in the summer, we did not make this decision lightly.

While we did not host a program, we made sure our summer did not go to waste. We spent time reflecting on the best aspects of our program, rethinking a few of our offerings, and retooling as we prepare for next summer. Our 2021 program will certainly look different, but that doesn't mean it will be

any less engaging, exciting, or enriching.

While we were planning and preparing this summer, we came to the realization that we would need to figure out how to marry our typical offerings to the university's e-learning and technological capabilities. Weirdly enough, the marriage of technology and our

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ns
open!

now!

Send message

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program was not the only wedding related thought we've had. In fact, as we reflect on the work we completed since March, we can't help but notice a matrimony motif emerge. Our efforts may be best categorized with the old wedding day adage: Something old, something new, something borrowed, and something blue. Our major projects from this past summer reflect these categories, and we are optimistic they are helping us work towards a "ring"er of a summer.

working to ensure that our student staff will have a safe and engaging experience. She has spent the last month rethinking the role our student staff will play and making sure that by the end of the summer our staff will have enhanced their leadership capabilities and grown in their professional competence.

Deanna is from West Sacramento, CA and graduated from the University of California - Davis in 2019 with a double major in English and Chicana/o Studies. She is

Something old, something new, something borrowed, and something blue. Our major projects from this past summer reflect these categories, and we are optimistic they are helping us work towards a "ring"er of a 2021 summer.

Something Old: Rethinking Student Workshops

For the UConn PCS team, summer 2020 meant adapting an older and integral component of our program: exploratory workshops. Traditionally, workshops allowed students a safe, in-person space to explore a wide variety of emerging academic and personal interests in addition to their class. Many of our wonderful workshop presenters worked with the PCS team to transition their workshop into a recorded virtual mini-workshop that was shared out with students who registered for the program. We understand that many students spend their summers preparing for their futures, and we were pleased to continue supporting students in their college and career preparations in a virtual space. These workshops all pertain to college preparation, and can still be accessed on the [Pre-College Summer YouTube Channel](#).

Something New: A New Graduate Assistant

For the UConn PCS team, summer 2020 brought a new teammate: a new Graduate Assistant, Deanna Gallegos. Deanna joined the team in August and hit the ground running working on social media and preparing to recruit, hire, and train our summer staff. While summer 2021 is looking different than those prior, Deanna is

now pursuing a Master's in Higher Education and Student Affairs in the Neag School of Education at UConn. We are elated to have her on the team!

Something Borrowed: Relationship Building and Benchmarking

Collaboration is a key component of our work as a program. Conferences provide our team with opportunities to connect and network with other pre-college programs across the country and the partnerships we've formed with other UConn offices are integral to creating a dynamic summer program. Building and maintaining relationships has been a challenge as of late, but this summer we set out to create a community of practice with similar programs on and off campus.

The community we are building came to fruition after our Program Coordinator, Cody Olson, conducted a benchmarking analysis this past summer. Since the completion of that project, we've been able to develop stronger relationships with other programs, share new and innovative ideas with our peers, and in many ways "borrow" unique practices and strategies that we will implement in coming summers. A project like this would not have been possible to complete in a typical summer,

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and the community of practice we are building will benefit us for years to come.

Something Blue: A New Pre-College Website

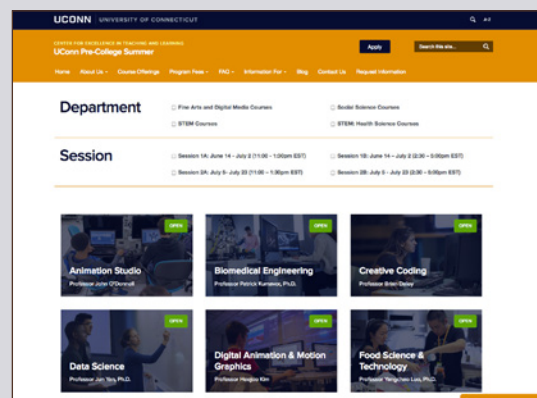
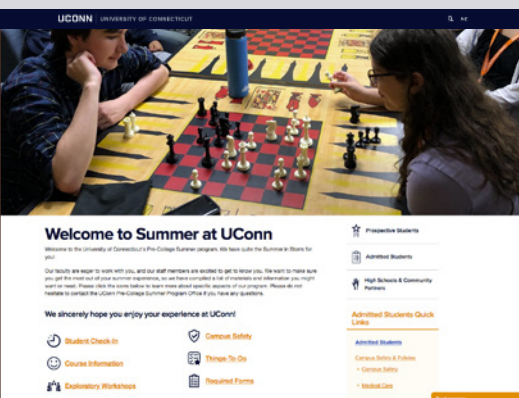
For our new website and branding, “something blue” means adopting a dynamic, minimalist design to bring us closer to our UConn Nation roots. This summer, we had time to develop a new website and rebrand the program—a major undertaking and something we may not have been able to do without the extra time we had this summer.

It’s not just the look of our website that has changed. We have also restructured the website to better address the specific needs of three different populations. We want to

be in the midst of preparing for this upcoming summer as we utilize the old, new, borrowed, and blue ideas from our unexpected summer of collaboration and growth.

We are excited to announce that #SummerAtUConn for 2021 will be held virtually. This includes online course offerings, workshops, and social programming for our student participants. Students can now submit an application at no cost by navigating to connect.pcs.uconn.edu/apply.

For a list of courses that will be offered, please see this link: pcs.uconn.edu/courses. Among the many courses that will be offered, we have a great opportunity for students interested in Geoscience. Through a collaboration of



directly communicate with students, parents and guardians, and high school and community partners as well as other program stakeholders. With education entering a new age of online and blended learning, we are excited to share our new website and to use it to better serve our students and their families.

Rain Date: Planning for Summer 2021

Like most happy couples planning to celebrate in 2020, we have a rain date for Summer 2021. We are thrilled to

UConn’s Department of Geoscience & UConn PCS, scholarships will be awarded to students to participate in the three-week virtual [GEOPATHS: Introduction to Geosciences](https://pcs.uconn.edu/geopaths) course at no cost. Visit pcs.uconn.edu for more information on this scholarship and overall program details.

2021 Summer Dates:

- Session 1A & 1B: 6/14/2021 - 7/2/2021
- Session 2A & 2B: 7/5/2021 - 7/23/2021

We want to directly communicate with students, parents and guardians, and high school and community partners as well as other program stakeholders. With education entering a new age of online and blended learning, we are excited to share our new website and to use it to better serve our students and their families.



Evolution & Adaptation: Introductory Biology Labs in the Time of SARS-CoV2

By Dr. Christopher Peter Malinoski, Laboratory Manager, Department of Biological Sciences

Adaptation (noun): modification of an organism or its parts that makes it more fit for existence under the conditions of its environment (from Merriam-Webster).

BIOL 1107 is a large introductory course at the University of Connecticut, Storrs campus, servicing nearly 1,300 undergraduates each year. The course guides students through a rigorous life sciences curriculum delivered through both lecture and laboratory components. Units of lab exercises are offered on topics like biochemistry, cell physiology, and molecular genetics. Students are also taught to use basic laboratory equipment, like microscopes, spectrophotometers, and pipettes.

The BIOL 1107 laboratory curriculum was designed to provide students with an authentic laboratory

experience. To say that we were unprepared for the sudden emergence of SARS-CoV2 and the COVID19 pandemic is perhaps an understatement. When the difficult decision was made to offer BIOL 1107 via distance learning during the Fall 2020, I knew that a significant challenge lay ahead.

The Process of Adaptation

The concept of adaptation is common in biology. The sudden change from in-person to distance-learning labs could be considered a radical

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shift in the learning environment. In a biological sense, then, we were being asked to suddenly alter the structure of the laboratory portion of the course to better fit the limitations (and strengths) of this new, online environment. How could we adapt a course designed to provide in-person, hands-on experiences to a fully hands-off format?

It was decided that the online course format would be as follows: Teaching Assistants would hold synchronous lab meetings at the regularly scheduled times using Collaborate, the Blackboard video conferencing tool. During these meetings, Teaching Assistants would administer password-protected quizzes and give lectures on the lab topics for the week. Students could be split up into smaller break-out groups and tasked with participating in relevant discussion topics. Additionally, on their own time, students would read through the exercises in the lab manual and complete weekly assignments.

Happily, the course was not starting from square-one with this transition. The BIOL 1107 labs already had a robust online presence in place. In 2015, in conjunction with the eCampus Learning Team and the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, a modern Blackboard site for the laboratory portion of the course was developed. Assignments and quizzes were designed to fit an online format that students would access in-lab using University-owned iPads. These assessments could be used in the distance-learning environment with little to no additional alteration.

In the time since the collaboration with eCampus, I had recorded background videos for each lab exercise. We were using these videos as part of pre-lab assessments, but now students would watch these videos to supplement the synchronous lectures. Being available online and asynchronously meant that students could watch and re-watch these videos as needed. With the increased dependence students would have on these videos in the new course format, I tried to incorporate best practices wherever possible. Some videos were

edited into 5- to 7-minute segments, and others had to be filmed again.

Thanks to the invaluable contributions of the BIOL Lab Services staff, we next began the laborious process of planning and filming a series of demonstration videos. These varied from simple equipment tutorials to full performances of the laboratory exercises. Staff were able to capture the needed footage using smartphone and tablet cameras in just a few weeks. The editing process then took a couple more weeks to complete. For exercises where it made sense, we filmed videos demonstrating experimental results, and we took photographs of samples both before and after the exercises so that students would be able to interpret experimental results for themselves.

The act of watching videos is obviously not equivalent to the traditional BIOL 1107 laboratory experience. Videos and online presentations do not provide students with the tactile experience and muscle memory that comes from physically working in a laboratory. I did not – and still do not – have a solution to this problem. However, to put this in another context, if I were going to try to change the brakes in my car – and I will be the first to admit I am not mechanically-inclined – would I rather try to do so on my own, or with the assistance of a YouTube tutorial video? For many visually oriented learners, seeing the proper use of laboratory equipment in a video can be an invaluable supplement to the written protocol.

The Evolution of a Course

It was important to realize that reconsidering the BIOL 1107 laboratory experience in the face of the pandemic was not just a challenge, but also an opportunity. How could we best utilize the strengths of distance-learning? What skills could we teach that would be equally as valuable and better suited to the online format? (The question is meant to be rhetorical, but the answer in our case was renewed focus on data analysis and scientific writing skills.)

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Evolution & Adaptation: Introductory Biology Labs in the Time of SARS-CoV2

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The following sentiments are ones that, I think, many educators will identify with: The prior course design was not broken, and years of iteration had culminated in what we considered to be the very best laboratory experience we could offer. At many times during the adaptation process, I felt as though I was leaving behind some of the best and most valuable parts of the student experience. I could not shake the feeling that I was somehow betraying the natural evolution of the course.

However, I was making a fundamental mistake in my understanding of evolution. It is a common misconception, the idea that evolution results in organisms that are perfectly adapted to a given environment. But that's not how evolution works. Evolution often only results in solutions that work well enough. Due to the pandemic, the BIOL 1107 laboratory experience would be different by necessity. The experience might not be perfect, but we would adapt.

And it would work.

The Heroes of Our Times

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woman.” I am not sure where I want to go with that, but I am interested in the impact of law on war and on inequality. Many things go back to laws.” Fizza tells me more about the Sharia and how it is counter to most people’s modern perception of it. She explains how the Prophet, who she modifies with “upon him be peace,” explained that war takes things away from people – possessions, symbols, churches, meaning, people, concepts – and that there should be restrictions on how war is conducted. “I want society to better understand these concepts and expand them.”

Fizza’s philosophies are instructive and they help give perspective on how we can build a better society in our local community. She sees education as offering people

access to see how things work and gives them the tools to help themselves and others. She credits her parents and her faith with these perspectives.

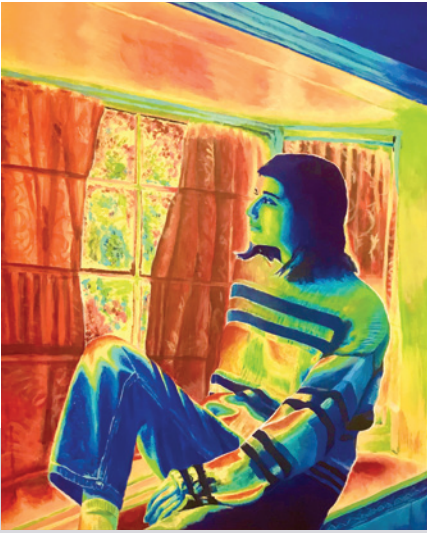
“I want to make an impact and help people. For example, the attorney general impacts our lives in so many ways that we never see. You need an education to figure out these things. If I make it through law school, I will be able to understand a new world and bring it back to my community. [Slight pause] I am here, and I don’t know when the next person like me will be in this situation, so I need to do it. When you focus on helping one person or one community, you can stay motivated and stay focused. I hope everyone can feel this way. Learn, and bring it back to your community. I don’t understand how this is a controversial way of thinking.”

Principal Confidential-People, Places, & Pedagogy

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I have watched our faculty and staff and students roll up their sleeves and figure it out. When this is all over, there will be many things that we will be glad to see go, but there will also be things we retain because the challenge has made us better - better educators and students, better people. I am eager to see what a Xavier

education looks like in the future because of this. Some things will always stay the same – academic excellence, enduring personal relationships, a strong moral foundation rooted in Catholic Social Teaching and Xaverian values. How we do things might look a bit different because of this experience. The Xavier community will be better because of this pandemic.”



UConn ECE Student Perspective: Learning in Today's Environment *By Elizabeth Kindt*

Being a high school student is difficult enough without any additional pressures or major world crises going on. In March of 2020, Connecticut high schoolers experienced a sudden switch to online learning due to COVID-19, and just two months later on May 25th witnessed widespread political action in the United States in response to the murder of George Floyd. Between the uncertainty and fear brought on by the pandemic, and the injustices of our country finally coming to light, our students are facing extreme global events as they try to navigate their own personal and educational growth. To better understand the challenges our UConn ECE Students are facing during these trying times, UConn ECE staff conducted interviews with some of our students to learn more about how the online educational changes and the current political discourse has impacted them in both their education and lives at home. We asked each student two specific questions to start the conversation; **“How has the current political discourse and injustice affected you? How has it affected your classes and learning both inside and outside the classroom?”**

Valerie, a UConn ECE Student from Cromwell High School answered, “For the first part of the school year, I have been virtually learning from home and I must admit, it has been challenging in multiple ways.” Her response to courses switching online was similar to other students, who found the transition difficult at first, but manageable towards the end of the school year. In making the most of a challenging situation, Valerie has been using her time at home to “continue to educate myself and keep updated on what has been going on in the world. I’ve also been making sure to keep myself in the mindset that there is always room to learn and improve.” Valerie concluded, “Overall, the current political discourse and injustice has really made me see how much I can do to help the community become a better place and continue to encourage others to do so as well.” Once again, her response mirrored other students who wanted to help their communities, despite setbacks as a result of the pandemic.

Another UConn ECE student, who wishes to remain anonymous, explained how the political discourse has affected their learning directly. This Manchester High School student answered, “[The political discourse] affected my classes and learning because more people

are talking about it and spreading awareness to it, so more people...can take action.” This was a common theme among students as many wanted to discuss what was affecting classroom learning. This student also mentioned that, “The most memorable [course] was UConn Human Rights because we were able to talk about current situations happening in the world.” Many other UConn ECE Students mentioned that in courses such as UConn Human Rights, and UConn U.S. History, instructors allowed for a more open discussion about the current events going on in the U.S. since these topics were aligned with their course curricula. Students were pleased when this happened and open to a discussion about how these events affected them and those around them.

We also had the opportunity to interview Camila Lopez, a sophomore at J.M. Wright Technical High School who spoke about the political events that affected both her family and her education. When asked about how her peers were getting involved with political issues she answered, “Here in Stamford, there have been a lot of protests downtown,” and continued by saying, “there are issues going on that need to be spoken about, and I’m a big fan

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of peaceful protesting.” When asked if today’s current events have also been addressed within the classroom she said, “Yes, especially since I’m taking the UConn ECE Human Rights course our teacher was like, ‘yeah we’re talking about this.’ What I really like about it, and what a lot of students I’ve seen like about it, is there’s more real-world

subjects.” She went on to say that she liked the platform students were given in class to speak their minds, especially in her UConn Human Rights course. She mentioned that, “What I like about it is the flexibility that the teacher has, like if there is a problem going on [our teacher will say], ‘does anyone want to talk about it?’ He’ll give us the platform so we can say what we’re thinking and then we start discussing it. There aren’t necessarily debates or arguments about it, it’s just discussing it in general which is really nice.”

Camila also mentioned that she and other students believe bringing up these issues in class is the first step to bringing about change. “There’s a curriculum but because it’s a human rights class you can kind of go off of it in different directions. You can have an assignment on race, but because there are still racial inequalities today, you can talk about what’s going on today.” Camila also mentioned that although students were quieter in their online classes, once a conversation was started on a controversial topic or current event, students were more willing to jump in and share their thoughts. She reminisced about being in the classroom in the beginning of the year and explained, “Once

one person starts [the conversation], it kind of goes from there, and with a couple of people joining it leads to more. I feel like with online classes a lot of kids are quieter than I’m used to seeing in class.” And although high school students may not be as outgoing or willing to participate over Zoom, Camila emphasized that their voices are still being heard.

Towards the end of the interview, we asked Camila how the political discourse had affected her family. Her response was, “I’m Guatemalan and I love talking about politics with my dad.” Once again she mentioned that talking about these issues is one of the most important things students are doing. At the end of the interview Camila reiterated how important it was to spread awareness about current topics in the class room, and to keep students involved in the conversations.

Although this school year has been an unexpected one to say the least, we found that students are ready to

get involved in both their communities and classrooms to make positive changes in the world. Despite the pandemic, many students feel more empowered and encouraged, even if it is through a computer, to speak out on the current political discourse and other issues they are passionate about. As we reflect on 2020, we are hopeful the new year will bring peace and good health to all our students and community partners, and the passion for change, dedication to taking action and raising awareness will continue to grow and their voices will be heard.

“ [The political discourse] affected my classes and learning because more people are talking about it and spreading awareness to it, so more people...can take action.”

– UConn ECE Student

“ What I like about it is the flexibility that the teacher has, like if there is a problem going on [our teacher will say], ‘does anyone want to talk about it?’ He’ll give us the platform so we can say what we’re thinking and then we start discussing it. There aren’t necessarily debates or arguments about it, it’s just discussing it in general which is really nice.”

– Camilla Lopez, UConn ECE Student

Living & Learning in 2020

We invited the UConn ECE community to respond to *Living & Learning in 2020* which resulted in some impressive student artwork submissions. Most of a spring semester, a summer, and the majority of a fall semester were like no other for students across the United States. The pieces selected for the Winter 2021 cover of the UConn ECE Magazine provide insight to how UConn ECE Students interpret living and learning during this time and in many ways depicts what many of us have been feeling: isolation, growth, and social injustice.



On the Inside Looking Out

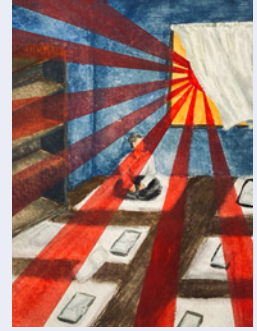
This is an 18" by 24" acrylic painting that I created at the beginning of the pandemic for my studio art class. Essentially, it's about seeing one's friends or family being together and feeling the fear of missing out. We are just spectators, watching other people live their lives while we try to maintain our health. I'm trying to convey the hopelessness of seeing loved ones together and

knowing that you could just go out and be with them, but being unable to. It's just out of reach and it's the dilemma that we all face at this time. Thus, this raises the question: how can one balance their social needs with their health? - Kara Rondinelli

Runners Up:



Light in Darkness
Rosemarie LaChance



As the Sun Rises
Madison Lee

Join the Group



To facilitate learning, knowledge, and opportunities by connecting UConn ECE Students with UConn ECE Alumni.



Join the UConn ECE Alumni Group on LinkedIn at bit.ly/UConnECEAlumni

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UConn ECE

65 YEARS STRONG

A circular seal with a blue border and a yellow center. The text "UConn ECE" is at the top, "EST. 1955" is in a blue banner across the middle, and "NATION'S FIRST" is at the bottom. The seal is surrounded by yellow starburst lines.

UConn Early College Experience was founded in 1955 and is proud to have offered hundreds of thousands of Connecticut high school students the opportunity to take college courses in high school over the past 65 years. UConn ECE is the nation's longest running concurrent enrollment program.

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