

UConn Early College Experience
MAGAZINE
A PUBLICATION FOR THE UCONN ECE COMMUNITY



Transitions:
Looking ahead and moving forward

WINTER 2022 • VOLUME 8

Adrian



UConn ECE by the numbers
13,889 students are enrolled in UConn Early College Experience (ECE) courses
 Check out our registration numbers:
 1,412



Passion Drives Wealth - Student Success Plan
 Brian A. Boecherer

14 The definitions of success, wealth, and happiness (and their relationship with each other) are confusing for many in society, but for high school students making their way through a world of transitions, they are even more difficult to locate on a map. Students hear and read countless times that the conception of success with narrowing variability. Is success and happiness the same as a high-paying job? This is an important conversation to have when helping students to develop their goals for the future. What is the role of happiness in student success?

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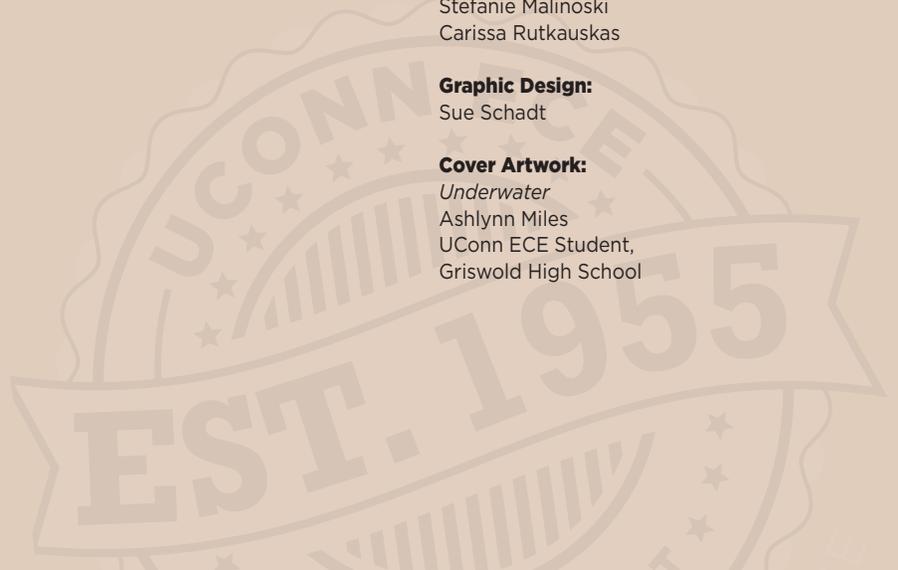
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The Director's Thoughts

Welcome to the Winter 2022 edition of the UConn ECE Magazine – Transitions: *Looking ahead and moving forward.*

I hope this edition of the UConn ECE Magazine finds you happy and healthy. When the editorial staff of the UConn ECE Magazine met to discuss the theme for this edition, we all came to the table with the same thoughts – transitions.

While the Summer 2021 edition focused on adaptability, this edition's focus is on transitions, which engages with slightly different elements. Transitions are often part of our landscape, they are part of how time marches on, we set course within them, and they affect who we are. Transitions can be purposeful, predictable, or they simply happen to us. It is what we do in that transition that becomes meaningful. These tests reveal our character. Do we lean into the challenge? Do we walk away? Or worse yet, as Dante describes in *The Inferno*, do we just give up on our principles and follow the breeze, because it is most convenient and/or expedient?

We wanted to dedicate our thoughts to the theme of transitions because we are all in the middle of many big transitions as we figure out how to create a new normal in our classrooms, in our schools, in our communities, and in our country. During normal times high school students are at a point where their life is filled with transitions, all the time. But these are not normal times. The pandemic continues to affect us. This academic year has started off with increased student anxiety and upset, as well as teachers and administrators describing themselves as being “June tired.” On a national level, democracy is a more partisan battle than in recent memory, and partisanship is more interested in scoring points and putting political parties ahead of national interests or democracy itself. This has created a type of “cloud cover” which has affected our students and ourselves. As a people who have historically been identified as optimistic and can-do, we are struggling with our fractures and unprincipled warfare against ourselves.

How do we manage this transition for ourselves and for those we influence?

I have found valuable ponderances in an unexpected place. In the book, *Greenlights*, the memoir by Matthew McConaughey, he describes an interesting scene in his real life. While traveling down the Niger River in Mali, he stops at a village and is challenged to a wrestling match by a tribesman. The wrestling match resulted in a draw. Ultimately, the villagers see Matthew as the winner, not only because they know how great their best wrestler is, but also because Matthew was simply willing to accept the challenge. He reflects on that moment and what his bush guide explained to him. “It is not about win or lose; it is about do you accept the challenge.” That conception offers us meaningful guidance in our current times. Often we “win” by just accepting the challenge and being a participant, because it defines who we are – most importantly for ourselves.

Transitions include elements of change and challenge, and how we respond defines who we are and what we will become. In addition to accepting the change and challenge of our transitions, we must add some qualifiers. First, we cannot take on all challenges. We must account for the unexpected being added to our agenda and we should focus on our priorities with the intention of finishing what we start. Second, we shouldn't want to “win at all costs.” We need to be true to ourselves. Our character is measured by our words and our actions. It may

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The Director's Thoughts

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be easier to win a wrestling match by throwing sand in our opponent's eyes. But who do we become by doing that? Third, our energy and motivation are strengthened if we can reframe the change and challenge found in the transition as an opportunity, not something that will stop us in our tracks. How can we look at the transition another way and find meaning and purpose? The troubles of our time, or any time, expose imperfections that reveal opportunities for improvement.

We can help each other by engaging in civil society. Attend community organizations, clubs, and school groups; help write mission statements that are purposeful; schedule meetings, organize, lead by example – don't wait for it to happen, be the agenda setter and cultivate a community; reduce distractions and social media noise; and explore what is meaningful for yourselves. Through our interactions, we give a face to an opinion and show humanity to those with differing viewpoints.

In this edition of the UConn ECE Magazine we engage with some of these ideas. But I invite you to take on these opportunities in your daily life. I will be doing the same. Concurrent enrollment (offering university courses in the high school) is a very powerful tool for social change and increasing social, economic, and intellectual capital. I intend on doubling-down and supporting that mission for the expansion of concurrent enrollment in all communities. I am making my own transition as I leave the director's position, but will continue advancing this important work. In these parting thoughts, I thank the entire UConn ECE Community from the bottom of my heart for doing this important work and the times we have had together. I am proud of being part of this community with you.

Sincerely,



Brian A. Boecherer



UConn ECE Students are invited to submit a packet of poems to be judged in the [UConn ECE Wallace Stevens Poetry Contest](#). The Wallace Stevens Poetry Program awards a cash prize and invites the top three winners to the annual program where the first place winner is

invited to read their masterpiece. **Deadline for submissions is Friday, January 14 and the virtual event is Thursday March 31.**



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SESSION 1 JULY 10 - JULY 16	SESSION 2 JULY 17 - JULY 23	SESSION 3 JULY 24 - JULY 30	SESSION 4 JULY 31- AUG 6
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A Lasting Legacy

By Carissa Rutkauskas & Jessica Dunn



Background

Brian A. Boecherer began his 21-year involvement with the program as a high school student at Norwich Free Academy. The UConn English and Modern European History courses he completed while still in high school were a success, but he found his Chemistry course to be very challenging and made the tough decision to drop the course. Dropping the course wasn't a failure though: it opened the door for Brian to explore his academic interests while in high school and shaped the future of his academic career.

In the fall of 1999, Brian matriculated to UConn to study German and International Relations of Russian and Eastern Europe with nine UConn credits under his belt. It didn't take long for Brian to seek employment at UConn, and was hired as a student worker for the High School Co-operative Program for Superior Students, under the leadership of Michael Menard. After a period of neglect, lack of leadership and funding, the program was in a period of revitalization and needed institutional support. With only one and a half professional support staff for the Co-op program, Menard



Concurrent enrollment at the University of Connecticut, a 66-year institution, has prospered under the guiding wing of Dr. Brian A. Boecherer, Executive Director of the Office of Early College Programs. Much of his success can be credited to his uncanny ability to create positive and memorable relationships with everyone who crosses his path.

relied heavily on Brian's work ethic and interpersonal skills and tasked him with professional staff responsibilities as a freshman. Brian took great pride in his role in the office. He studied Menard's leadership style closely with emphasis on student, faculty, and instructor engagement, he was given the opportunity to act independently and make programmatic decisions, and preserved the history of the program as he saved countless primary institutional documents from the shredder.

Brian continued a relationship with the Co-op program, working in the summers, while pursuing his first Master's Degree at the University of Toronto. Brian's experience and institutional knowledge of the program was integral, as through a retirement and promotion, there was a complete office turnover in 2004. Under the newly hired Director, he was appointed Assistant Director in 2005, a role which he held for six and a half years. Under this title, he created a development plan to reintroduce schools to the program, presented a professional development plan, and championed a name change



from the High School Co-operative Program of Superior Students to UConn Early College Experience. Realizing that a strong rapport between the schools and the Co-op program needed to be strengthened to preserve true partnerships, he started a "UConn ECE road show." Brian got on the road and single handedly visited 100% of partner schools in 2006, and 75% in 2007. In this time he built up strong partnerships with all high schools and made it a priority to maintain them ever since.

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A *Lasting* Legacy

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In 2008, with strong high school partnerships in place, Brian shifted his focus to serve the students. Brian pioneered one of the first student events, The Globalization Conference which has remained an annual event. For this event UConn ECE Students are invited to a UConn campus where they are tasked with presenting a critical review of the year's chosen topic and offer concrete solutions to the issue that are both politically and economically viable.

The Last 10 Years

In 2012, Brian became the Director for Research and Development of UConn ECE and the Associate Director of the Office of Early College Programs. During this time, he communicated the programs direct impact on departments/programs and research initiatives to University administration and engaged in research for program improvement. Brian was instrumental in UConn ECE's 2014 NACEP reaccreditation. He was awarded a NACEP grant to create a credit transfer database and also developed an advising portal, both of which are updated annually and still used today. During this time he continued to make and strengthen his connections with faculty, staff, and students.

Brian became the Executive Director of the Office of Early College Programs & UConn Early College Experience in May 2015, having just completed a second master's degree in Political Science and Government. The 2016-2017 school year marked UConn ECE's first year of offering competitive student scholarships and classroom grants, as well as grants to enhance faculty coordinator-led professional development for UConn ECE. During this time, he was finishing up his Ph.D. in Political Science and was awarded Doctor of Philosophy in 2017. His ability to draw people



together for a common goal also led to UConn ECE supporting the Connecticut High School Ethics Bowl, Connecticut History Day, and the Connecticut Science Olympiad. Brian's encouragement of others to do the same has inspired the development of events such as the Marine Science Symposium, Chemistry Days, language immersion days and quiz bowls, and countless other events.

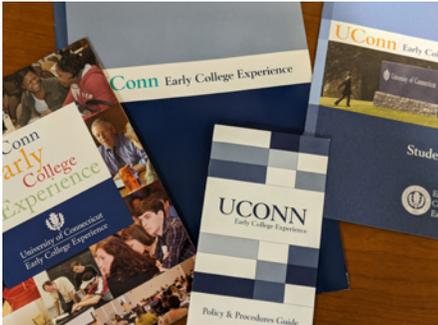
In 2020 he won the UConn Unsung Hero Award, awarded to a person who is continually both a real benefit to coworkers and a stable, dependable resource for the entire University and consistently goes above and beyond, without fanfare or public recognition. Eighteen of his colleagues nominated him, with sentiments of appreciation such as:

- ...he expanded the office and changed the ethos into a smooth running machine serving programs across the state. He favors an idea-driven environment over a task-driven one...

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- With over 20 years of service to the University, Brian is a true idol... he made it a personal and professional goal to open the door to higher education for all students of Connecticut...
- His creativity, enthusiasm, politeness and grace

system eliminating an onerous 5 step process; and started a partnership with the Connecticut Department of Correction's Unified School District #1 to offer UConn courses to high school students in juvenile detention.



always made me feel at ease. I knew that I could reach to Brian for any concern or new idea that I had.

- It takes a brave person to provide that kind of autonomy to such a crew of diverse employees, but courage is only one of his noteworthy attributes.

Two thousand twenty was also the year that COVID-19 came into our lives. Brian navigated this new challenge with grace and elegance, continuously communicating with our high school partners to create a sense of stability to UConn ECE students and families in a sea of unknowns.

The pandemic didn't slow Brian's receptive and innovative nature down. Over the last 21 months of remote work, we've successfully transformed the Professional Recognition Awards Ceremony from a refined, sit down dinner event to an on-line show; transitioned to a state-of-the-art student registration.

Impact

Brian leaves a legacy of hundreds of thousands of students who were given the opportunity to experience a college course in high school. From a program of roughly 2,000 students when he started his first professional role at UConn in 2005 to the end of 2021 with an enrollment of nearly 14,000 students, students in the state of Connecticut have had more opportunities because of him. There has been over a 40% increase in school partnerships through his tireless outreach and course offerings have more than doubled since 2005. As editor-in-chief of the bi-annual UConn ECE Magazine, he offers his insights and sparks contemplation to the UConn ECE community through his "Director's Thoughts" and eloquent pieces.

Brian has contributed to the greater field of concurrent enrollment through the publication of his chapter, Bridging the High School-College Gap:

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A Lasting Legacy

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The Role of Concurrent Enrollment (Chapter 16), and annual presentations, board membership, and volunteer service at NACEP and NEACEP. He is a concurrent enrollment advocate in the state, often presenting at legislative meetings and working with the State Department of Education. Brian has always been willing to speak to and offer advice to developing programs – whether they are within the UConn ECE realm, other CT institutions or out-of-state.

In 2020, Brian was instrumental in a state-wide initiative which finally put dual/ concurrent enrollment programs on par with Advanced Placement in the state of Connecticut. The State added dual/ concurrent program on Next Generation Accountability Index (Indicator 6), which is used to rank high schools in the State of Connecticut. In this 2019 email to UConn ECE partners, Brian advocates:

The State Department of Education has what is called the Accountability Index that gives high schools an overall rating based on the programs they provide and also the programs their students use. There are 12 indicators that form a score for the high school. Indicator 5: Preparation for Postsecondary and Career Readiness – Coursework gives a high school points for the percentage of students in grades 11 and 12 who take AP/IB and dual enrollment courses (i.e., UConn ECE). We were always part of Indicator 5. Indicator 6: Preparation for Postsecondary and Career Readiness – Exams give schools points based on the percentage of students who earn “benchmark score[s]” in SAT, ACT, AP, and IB. Indicator 6 states that it is about student performance on college/career readiness exams, and we were previously not a part of this indicator, which resulted in external pressure to choose other advanced programs instead of UConn ECE for the benefit of high school rank.



His tireless work promoting the value of college classes in high schools to the State Department of Education and encouraging UConn ECE partners to advocate their worth resulted in this major victory of dual/ concurrent enrollment programs to be counted in both Indicator 5 and Indicator 6 Accountability Index.

But Brian won't tell you any of that. Or that the above only talks about one, albeit the largest of the four programs in his purview as Executive Director of the Office of Early College Programs. He is more concerned about you, his colleague, his student, or his friend. His naturally altruistic outlook and belief that every student should have access to, and preparation for, higher education can't help but result in strong relationships to all those who meet him.

The UConn ECE community is happy to hear that Brian will continue on this path of supporting institutions of learning to build a better society as he launches his new business, [Olive Shade Higher Education Consulting](#), where he will support early college programming for high schools. Brian, we wish you infinite success in your exciting new endeavor! ■

Investing in Continuing Education

By Stefanie Malinoski

With close to 1,500 certified UConn ECE Instructors as part of the program, UConn ECE follows a thorough certification process to review and vet all applicants. All certified Instructors through UConn Early College Experience must meet the rigorous certifications standards set by each University Department that we work with to offer UConn courses in our partner high schools. These certification standards are the same standards used when hiring adjunct

faculty members to teach the courses on campus. Many disciplines require a master's degree in the content area in order to qualify for certification. Other disciplines may accept a master's degree in Education, with a bachelor's degree in the subject area and two or more content-based graduate courses in the appropriate discipline. But what happens when a motivated teacher may fall short of the Department's standards for certification?

In 2007, UConn ECE began a scholarship program to assist current high school teachers who are looking to become certified to teach UConn courses in their high schools. Currently, UConn ECE offers two scholarships each semester — Fall, Spring, and Summer — to teachers who are interested in UConn ECE certification. The scholarship allows interested teachers to take graduate courses or necessary undergraduate courses in their content areas at any college/ university to become more qualified candidates for certification.

To date, almost 60 scholarships have been awarded to high school teachers helping them achieve certification with UConn Early College Experience. After many years of classroom teaching experience, it can be daunting for teachers to transition back to a student role. However, it is clear we work with dedicated teachers who exhibit the willingness to go the extra mile to offer UConn courses at their schools and build their professional resumes. Their commitment to complete additional coursework is indicative of their superior education and tireless efforts found at the high school.

For some instructors this is a process that may take a significant amount of time. In 2018, Seth Murphy (Thomaston High School) inquired about the possibility of becoming certified to teach UConn's POLS 1602: Introduction to American Politics. At the time, Seth was already certified through UConn ECE to teach U.S. HIST 1501 and 1502 (2018) but was looking to expand his certification to include other courses so they could be offered to the students at THS. Based on his unique background and interests, he believed he would be a good fit for certification to teach additional UConn courses in European History and Political Science through UConn ECE. After his transcripts and application materials were reviewed by the Faculty Coordinators from European History and Political Science, they determined additional coursework would need to be completed in each discipline before certification could be reconsidered. While some teachers may be unable to dedicate the time or have the ability to complete additional coursework, Seth set out on a plan to complete graduate-level political science and history coursework so he could achieve certification in the future.



In 2020, after two years of completing graduate level coursework and utilizing the [UConn ECE Graduate Scholarships](#), Seth achieved certification to teach HIST 1300, and 1400 and POLS 1602 in 2021. Seth says “The scholarships have allowed me to offer my students up to fifteen college credits. When I started at my school the only UConn history courses, we offered were 1501 and 1502, but now they have five different classes to choose from. I am proud that, by taking my classes, my students can earn an entire semester of college and be one step ahead of the game.” As of the 2021-2022 year, an entering freshman at Thomaston High School now has the ability to earn thirty-four UConn credits throughout their academic careers at THS. Seth shared that students can graduate high school and enter college with enough credits to be considered second semester sophomore status. ■

by the numbers

13,889

students 
are enrolled in UConn Early
College Experience (ECE) courses

Check out our registration numbers:

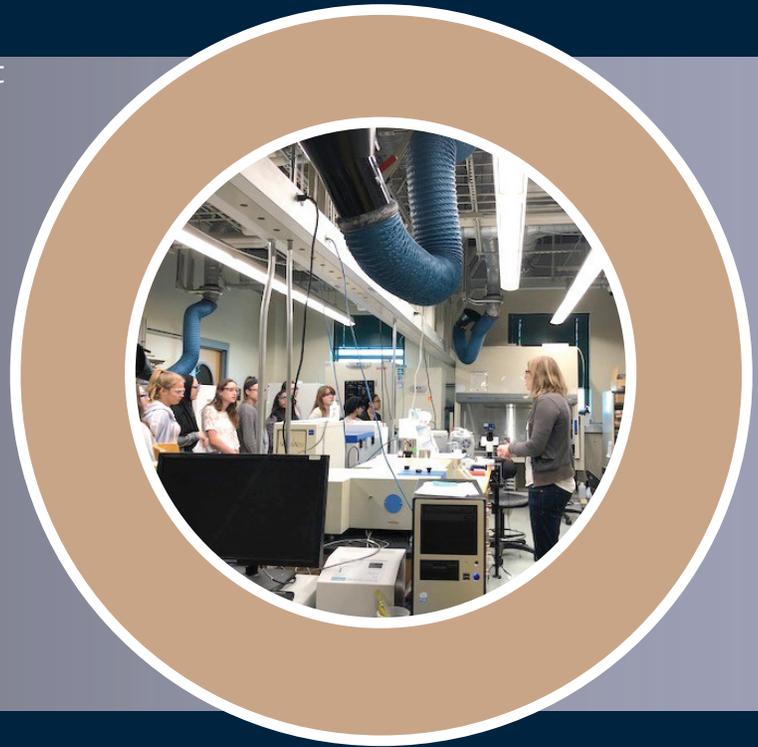
1,486

**UConn ECE
course sections**
offered throughout
Connecticut

1,015

**UConn ECE
Instructors**
teaching
throughout
Connecticut

189

**Connecticut
High Schools**
participating

Welcome to our new partner schools!

Manson Youth Institute

Bullard-Havens Technical High School

Farmington High School

Highest Number of Students Enrolled in UConn Courses:

328	Edwin O. Smith High School	224	Avon High School
273	Norwich Free Academy	220	Xavier High School
248	William H. Hall High School	211	Glastonbury High School
247	Manchester High School	209	Berlin High School
244	Conard High School	192	Southington High School

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

328

2021 - 2022 ACADEMIC YEAR

2020-2021

to

2021-2022

Highest enrollment
increase:

Simsbury High School

367%

Highest Percent Enrollment Increase From 2020-2021:

367%	↑	Simsbury High School
320%	↑	H. C. Wilcox Technical High School
240%	↑	Lyman Memorial High School
176%	↑	New Fairfield High School
163%	↑	East Windsor High School
140%	↑	James Hillhouse High School
133%	↑	Kingswood Oxford School
130%	↑	East Hartford High School
120%	↑	Fairfield Ludlowe High School
106%	↑	Stafford High School



Most Credit Hours Taken:

2,626	🕒	Edwin O. Smith High School
2,128	🕒	Norwich Free Academy
1,860	🕒	William H. Hall High School
1,710	🕒	Xavier High School
1,700	🕒	Conrad High School
1,552	🕒	Berlin High School
1,523	🕒	Glastonbury High School
1,499	🕒	Manchester High School
1,278	🕒	Daniel Hand High School
1,149	🕒	Avon High School





Passion Drives Wealth - Student Success Plan

By Brian A. Boecherer

The definitions of success, wealth, and happiness (and their relationship with each other) are confusing for many in society, but for high school students making their way through a world of transitions, they are even more difficult to locate on a map. Students hear and read countless times that getting into a good college will help them get a good job and good jobs will make them happy. In these engagements a “good job” is infrequently defined, but we have all seen the supplementing graphs in such articles and presentations that show which jobs make the most money and the rest is up for interpretation. The relationship between success, wealth, and happiness can be confusing for students as they plan for life after high school. What does success mean? Is it a concrete thing? A destination? With the pressure to validate one’s successfulness at every turn, we grasp for measures that satisfy a listener and reinforce

the conception of success with narrowing variability. Is success and happiness the same as a high-paying job? This is an important conversation to have when helping students to develop their goals for the future. What is the role of happiness in student success?

Over the years I have been struck by multiple conversations with students where they choose the potential for a high salary over their own preferences (or even exploring their own preferences). One vivid example occurred when I taught a First Year Experience course at UConn. On the first day of class I would go through the traditional round robin of student introductions, learning names, where each student was from, whether they were a UConn ECE alumnus, and their current major. During the procession one student announced he was going to be a business major to which I asked...

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“What interests you about business; which areas do you want to explore?”

“I want to make money,” the student responded.

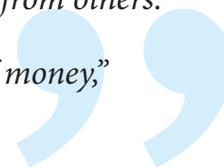
“What will you do with the money once you earn it?”

“I will be rich.”

“Then you will be happy?”

“It’s better than being poor.” A response met by polite chuckles from others.

“You should look into being an accountant, they make a lot of money,” another student chimed in.



At the time, it never occurred to me to ask the student, “How much money do you need to be happy or to consider yourself a success?” I explored some answers to that question much later, but wish I had been better equipped to offer the conversation to my students when I taught the course.

According to research on the relationship between money and happiness, we find a statistically significant relationship between the two, but the evidence also shows that after a point the relationship bears diminishing returns. When looking at the happiest countries in the world, the Scandinavian countries rank highest in terms of happiness and well-being. They also rank among the richest. Causation? The numbers by themselves do not show the whole picture. The respondents in the study reported their happiness was based on having a comfortable standard of living, the freedom to make life choices, supportive social networks, good health, and trust in their government (United Nations World Happiness Report, 2021). Certainly, the first two variables may equate to wealth, but not necessarily.

Harvard University psychologist Daniel Gilbert, also confirms that money plays a part in happiness. While happiness scores go up as salaries go up, the correlation does not last past a certain point. When your annual income gets between \$40,000 and \$70,000 a year, the research attests, “you’ve bought almost all the happiness you can get.” (Gilbert, D., American Psychological Association, 2010). After that, happiness comes from other sources, and thus, a comfortable standard of living is more of a foundation, than the source. In terms of how we can support our students when navigating their time of great transitions, there is a large body of research that clarifies the conversation on happiness. The two things that matter the most are strong relationships and a sense of meaning and purpose. These two variables interact, as pursuing something that is purposeful often puts us into the orbit of like-minded individuals, helping us to develop deep and lasting relationships.

With students reporting higher rates of loneliness than ever before, the best antidote is re-centering students with conversations about what makes them happy. Ask students, “What are your

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Passion Drives Wealth - Student Success Plan

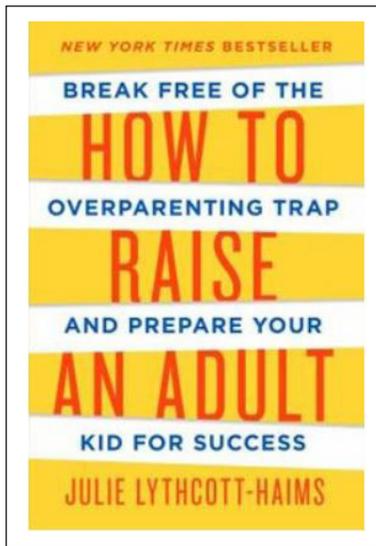
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passions and how do you plan on pursuing them during and after high school?” Research suggests that defining one’s passions is not easy for students and they revert to answers like, getting into a good college and getting a good job. These vagaries avoid self-exploration. As parents and teachers are a student’s best sources of advice and leadership, reflecting and sharing critical points in our own life story, is a key tool to help them unlock their own understanding.

In addition, as Dr. Martin Seligman, who founded the field of Positive Psychology suggests, it is vital to show students that meaning and purpose must be internally defined, not defined by others. That is, while there are many global issues that need our attention, being active on these issues or becoming a public leader should not be the absolute standard by which we define success or find purpose. Joining clubs, helping in your local community, advancing issues as we self-determine, and pursuing academic interests and hobbies are all part of a meaningful life. Being engaged and exploratory is to be passionate. The connection between passion and developing relationships is also clear. A simple Google search shows the millions of articles, ranging from academic journals to men’s and women’s magazines, that discuss why people who are passionate about something attract others. Passionate people never seem to be bored or boring to others. They have stories to tell, information to share, and are hungry to learn more, which requires communication. Passionate people are magnets for teaching, learning, and unlocking opportunities for themselves and for others.

Targeting happiness as a goal is also not the same as advocating for poverty. With such a diverse economy, following one’s passions often results in financial gains. The objective is to put the horse before the cart and advocate for passions leading to a comfortable standard of living, rather than a standard of living leading to happiness and fulfillment. Breaking the over-simplified and often extreme wealth-happiness conception may not be easy. Part of the issue is that the feeling of financial security is hard to define and when the world is less stable (since the Great Recession), money seems to be the best buoy on a rough sea. According to a study conducted by Ameriprise Financial in 2019, only 13% of Americans with at least \$1 million of investable assets felt wealthy. Six in 10 of these same people define themselves as “upper middle class”, while 25 percent identify as being “middle class.” (Ameriprise Financial, 2019)

Talking to students about the basics is the best approach in helping them include happiness, passion, and purpose as part of their student success plan. We are all afraid of admitting to what we don’t know. When a student can’t find a “satisfactory” answer to what things they are passionate about or what may give them purpose, the easiest deflection is over-simplification. The world is more complicated than ever before and with each generation the transition to adulthood is tougher. Let’s help each other by starting the discussion, sharing the statistics we do know, and leaving time for reflection and revision. ■



Book review:

How to Raise an Adult

By Carissa Rutkauskas

As the parent of three children, the eldest of whom is in his first year of high school, and someone who spends her weekdays promoting concurrent enrollment, I am always on the lookout for resources to help our family along our journey to produce happy, fully-functioning adults. Julie Lythcott-Haims's *How to Raise an Adult: Break free of the Overparenting Trap and Prepare Your Kids for Success* was mentioned in an online Facebook group I follow and I knew by the title that I had to read it (full disclosure: I don't have time to read, but audiobooks are great!)

I loved it. From the topic of each chapter, to the external references and resources she mentions, her personal experiences (as a college dean and mother), interviews, and research all held opportunities for thought to better parenting. In our household, we believe that independence, self-reliance, and self-efficacy is equally important as teamwork and communal experiences. Some of Lythcott-Haims's suggestions may seem extreme for some families, but it provides ideas that promote healthy boundaries in the parent-child relationship. All parents want to protect their kids, but at the same time, one of the greatest gifts we can provide are the tools for them to become capable, curious, autonomous humans.

I couldn't help but to self-reflect as I made my way through the chapters. Was I a permissive, authoritarian, or authoritative parent, or overlapping in some areas? (p. 146) Am I causing them psychological harm by doing for my kids what they can already do for themselves? (p. 94) Is it really true that there are fewer missing children than there were in the 1980s and that child abductions are done by a friend or relative? (p 15).

I would love to include the title of each of her chapters, as each speaks volumes on its own, but here are just a few, from Part 3: Another Way, for thought:

- | | | | |
|-----|-----------------------------|-----|--------------------------------------|
| 12. | The Case for Another Way | 17. | Let Them Chart Their Own Path |
| 13. | Give Them Unstructured Time | 18. | Normalize Struggle |
| 14. | Teach Life Skills | 19. | Have a Wider Mind-set About Colleges |
| 15. | Teach Them How to Think | 20. | Listen to Them |
| 16. | Prepare Them for Hard Work | | |

And it would be a shame not to include some of the books and articles that she references, as their clever titles lead to contemplation...

- Gist: The Essence of Raising Life-Ready Kids
- Less-Structured Time in Children's Daily Lives Predicts Self Directed Executive Functioning
- Helicopter Parents: An Examination of the Correlates of Over-parenting of College Students
- How Not to Talk to your Kids: The Inverse Power of Praise
- Daring Greatly: How the Courage to Be Vulnerable Transforms the Way We Live, Love, Parent, and Lead
- Homework's Emotional Toll on Students and Families
- Excellent Sheep: The Miseducation of the American Elite and the Way to a Meaningful Life
- The Decline of Plan and the Rise of Psychopathology in Children and Adolescents
- Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder

Parents want what is best for their children and sometimes the hardest thing is letting go, giving kids the opportunity to invent themselves and parents the opportunity to reinvent themselves. ■

Utilizing your credit: Making the most of your credit

Not sure if you plan on coming to UConn or going to another college or university? You are not alone!



Explore how to make your credits work for you. And remember, even if you don't decide to come to UConn, your credits have an 87% likelihood of transferring to the college or university of your choice.

COMING TO UCONN?

ece.uconn.edu/students-parents/coming-to-uconn



You do not need to order a UConn transcript, but you do need to meet with an academic advisor to accept or reject your credits.

- Meet with your College Advisor
- Accept or Reject your Credit



NOT COMING TO UCONN?

ece.uconn.edu/students-parents/transfer-credit-info/



Follow the steps below to request a transcript to be sent to the college or university of your choice to transfer your credits.

- Save syllabi
- Check your grades
- Explore our Credit Transfer Database
- Review your new college/ university's credit policy
- Request a transcript
- Speak to a college advisor
- Contact UConn ECE Program Office

What is UConn Early College Experience?

Who we are: UConn Early College Experience (UConn ECE) is a concurrent enrollment program that allows motivated high school students to take UConn courses at their high schools for both high school and college credit. Every course taken through UConn ECE is equivalent to the same course at the University of Connecticut. Students benefit by taking college courses in a setting that is both familiar and conducive to learning.



Established in 1955, UConn ECE is the nation's longest running concurrent enrollment program.

Our mission: UConn Early College Experience is committed to providing access to, and preparation for, post-secondary education programs through its ability to offer University of Connecticut courses to high school students. UConn Early College Experience is committed to excellence in education by fostering a relationship between higher education and partner high schools to create an effective transition for students who have made college a goal.

Contact your high school to enroll for the 2022-2023 academic year.

ece.uconn.edu



By Brian A. Boecherer

KEVIN MARIANO

Social Studies Teacher at Plainfield High School

Q. How long at Plainfield High School?

A. I am currently in my 14th year of teaching, all at Plainfield High School.

Q. Which courses do you teach?

A. I co-teach the Social Studies side of American Studies with Ms. Laura Maher who teaches the English side. I also teach Modern World History (10th grade) and a self-designed course entitled "Dialogue and Rhetoric" for grades 9-12. This immersive class is designed for students to refine public speaking skills and build empathy with one another to create a safe environment to hold meaningful dialogue conversations and deliberate compromise in a civil way. I also coach our competitive Debate Team and am the Director of the Fall Drama and Spring Musical Theater Programs.

Q. Tell us why you got into teaching and maybe a bit about how you see your role as a teacher?

A. In 8th grade I considered being a teacher but thought it would be boring to do the "same thing every year for 30 years." As I headed to college to study international relations a year after 9/11/2001, I considered becoming a US Diplomat to bring peace and healing to our country. Above all else, though, I wanted to be a dad someday. After some soul searching during my first semester of college at the University of Maryland, I knew that

"I didn't want to be a dad who was home for three weeks and traveling for three weeks." As such, history was "what made sense to me" and I ultimately wanted to "help kids now to encourage peace for our future." Teaching high school students has been a dream come true; building a rapport, earning their respect and bonding with students is the skeleton key to my job. Those moments fill me with joy. I am happy to inform my 8th grade self that teaching is "30% lessons and 70% psychology", meaning that each moment matters and if I am bored, I am not doing my job the right way. And, I am never bored.

Q. You won the Teacher of the Year Award last year at Plainfield High School and were a semi-finalist for the Connecticut Teacher of the Year this year. What would you say is core to your teaching philosophy?

A. I strive daily to build a genuine rapport with my students and faculty based on a single philosophy from Lakota Chief Crazy Horse's statement, "We do not inherit the Earth from our Ancestors; we borrow it from our Children." These connections are the foundation to building kind, empathetic, and self-confident humans who move on to help others in their lives. Upon reflection,

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this has been a pillar to the application of my philosophy. Our Debate Team was built from my (seemingly) bold decision to do “that” with “those kids” as some naysayers once taunted. The Team proudly competes in the annual Dr. Grace Sawyer-Jones Parliamentary Tournament held at Three Rivers Community College and consistently does well, winning the 2016 Championship. During remote learning last school year which paused the competitive Debate circuit, the Debate Team students connected to fellow students by creating “Panther Break Out Rooms” each Wednesday for eight weeks. Earning administrative approval and adding a link on the school website, Debate Captain Julia Koski reflected, “I learned about the power even single individuals have to cultivate change.” In sum, empowering students to help others is the zenith of our profession. Inspired kids inspire kids.

Q. As a UConn ECE Instructor of American Studies with your co-teacher Laura Maher, what sorts of things do you want the students to walk away knowing, so when they reflect on your class 20-years from now they still know?

A. In 20 years, Laura Maher and I want the students to realize that history will most likely repeat as we profess that American history is cyclical and our Forefathers’ generation battled similar issues that we negotiate today. Our aim is to engage the students to “destroy the box, build your own box, then constantly try to reshape it.” Never settle and always be working to “build a more perfect union for our posterity.”

Neither of us ever learned about “the present day” in depth while in our high school US history classes. Therefore, our first unit in American Studies revolves around the Obama and Trump presidencies, including, but not limited to, the impact of various social and political movements like Black Lives Matter and Blue Lives Matter. Our students are hungry to discuss and learn about these topics. They see it daily playing out on social media and in the news, and they plead to have dialogues about “things that matter.” We explore varying perspectives with the students, and have had guest speakers including a professor and a police officer educate our students on how political and the media’s rhetoric influences their lives/jobs and how, in the end, the “goal of the movements is to achieve the same thing.” Meanwhile, the students dissect the Broadway musical *Hamilton* as a form of historical and modern-day commentary, casting another light on immigration, women’s studies, and building “a more perfect union.” In sum, as we cover American history dating back to the 1920s, we are constantly making connec-

tions to the modern era, so the students can better understand the “cause/effect” of an era and determine for themselves to what extent progress has been achieved.

Moreover, Laura and I stringently target the quality of student writing over the entire course and assess the students on their ability to set new goals for the next paper (and to what extent they achieve their goals). Through all of this, students will hopefully appreciate their steadfast hard work, better understand the world they have been dealt, and feel confident to use their voice to impact our world for the better.

Q. We are living through some difficult social times, but Americans have lived through other difficult social times and come back stronger. Do you have any advice for the everyday person on how to play a part and make things better?

A. Americans have lived through many turbulent times, but never in the social media age. To just think that the political landscape will magically improve on its own is dangerous. Many of us have created our own worlds on our phones, liking and unliking, following the news we want and ignoring the news we may consider “fake” or disingenuous. While “yellow journalism” is not new, the “war on the truth for-profit” is cancerous, and today’s generation of students are, by far, the most SKEPTICAL that I have worked with in my career. Across the board, they appreciate that they are American, but know that adults in our society could set better examples of living up to the standards and ideals of this “City upon a Hill.”

To this reader, I assure you that this generation of students is watching the adults’ every move on the issues that mean the most to them: #1 climate change, #2 gun rights/violence, and #3 treatment of marginalized populations. This generation of youth is also the most inclusive group in terms of accepting people for who they are. For most teens, they want adults to know that technology is their friend and their catalyst to progress. Following the news daily can bring us to a dark place, which is why it is important to focus on the things we CAN control. In the classroom, I insist, “Make our world a better place by making your world a better place.” How? 1. Always help someone. You might be the only one that does. 2. Everyone you meet is struggling with something all of the time and it is normal to ask for help. 3. This world will be more peaceful if we listen to understand and act to compromise rather than remain tribal. ■

From our Faculty Coordinators

By Brian Boecherer

Get to know our faculty and learn some tricks of the trade with advice they have to offer. Here our Faculty Coordinator in Mathematics answers questions about his personal and professional interests as well as how he has transitioned to teaching during these challenging times.

Q&A WITH



ANTHONY RIZZIE, Ph.D.

Professor, Department of Mathematics

*2020-2021 winner of the Thomas E. Recchio
Faculty Coordinator Award for Academic
Leadership*

Q. How long teaching at UConn?

A. I started August 2015

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Q. How long in Teaching?

A. I taught my first class (officially) in August 2009

Q. Favorite course you teach at UConn and why?

A. Decisions...let's say Math 1030Q (Elementary Discrete Mathematics) because it may be my last chance to change someone's outlook on math for the rest of their life.

Q. Tell us why you got into teaching and a bit about how you see your role as a teacher?

A. I used to stay after school to do free tutoring in math in high school, and I continued tutoring regularly throughout undergrad at Ball State University. I got a chance to fill in for a professor for a class of Differential Equations for a week who was away at a conference, and that experience solidified for me my love of teaching math. I went to graduate school at Purdue University, and surprise surprise, but I loved teaching classes there and tutoring still whenever I could. I live to see a student's "aha" moment, and I strive to create a classroom environment that is both fun and helps shift students from a fixed mindset to that of a growth mindset.

Q. You won the Thomas E. Recchio Faculty Coordinator Award for Academic Leadership this past year. What would you say is core to your philosophy as Faculty Coordinator of Mathematics?

A. I wholeheartedly believe in running a program that is flexible and attentive to the needs of both the students and teachers. This past year, in particular, has been tremendously difficult for everyone, but it led to several unprecedented situations and abrupt changes-in-schedule that were disruptive in completing the standard ECE curriculum for the math courses and giving assessments in the usual way. We all made it work and worked within the parameters that we had (which varied significantly from school district to school district!), and I thank everyone teaching ECE Mathematics and in the ECE Office for their support and advice as we navigated that challenge together!

Q. As the youngest winner of this award, what advice would you give to other young professionals about leadership?

A. Listen. I think that listening and being receptive to feedback and change are among the most important aspects of being a good leader. Over the last few years, I have encountered vari-

ous policies, regulations, and rules that seem to be no longer working, worth maintaining, or are not worth the time cost for the little gain, so I have heard that feedback and made various changes while not sacrificing the rigor of the program and the consistency that we strive for with the UConn Mathematics courses.

Q. Your teaching methodologies are legend at UConn, tell me one thing you do that you think is especially cool.

A. Legend, huh? I guess landing myself in a few Reddit posts that went viral counts, but that's for another time...I started doing a "bad math joke of the day" in my Multivariable Calculus courses, which I taught for about five years straight. When I recorded videos for an online version of the course back in 2018, I made sure to record all of the jokes to create the same experience. I now regularly teach Differential Equations, and many of my students, coming from my Multi course, ask if I also do bad jokes in that class. After years of wearing me down, I finally gave in and created a "bad joke of the week" for that class as well, with each joke completely different from those in Multi! Students regularly tell me in course feedback that this is their favorite part of the course(s). Am I just a joke to them? ;)

Q. Many in our UConn ECE Community watched the awards ceremony and many of our teacher's and staff's children believe you are the real Spiderman. Can you offer a comment to our community?

A. You forgot the hyphen in my name; it's "Spider-Man"...I mean... *cough* his name. ■



By Carissa Rutkauskas

NACEP Conference



UConn ECE staff attended the annual NACEP conference for the 16th consecutive year. Blending lessons learned at last year's virtual conference with prior in person conferences, the 2021 conference was a blended opportunity for concurrent enrollment professionals to gather in person in Orlando, FL, or attend virtual breakout sessions. While Brian Boecherer and Jessica Dunn attended from a distance, Carissa Rutkauskas was on site, participating in outdoor conversations at the Tibet-Butler Preserve, [Latinos in Action, 20% time](#), a state and regional gathering (connection with Amy Hubbard, the new [NEACEP](#) president, among other presentations and networking opportunities. UConn ECE has proudly sponsored NACEP since 2005.



Welcome Jessica Hinckley

Please officially welcome Jessica Hinckley on board. Jessica is the



Office of Early College Program's Billing and Operations Specialist. She is responsible for managing program billing and fee waivers

and purchasing support materials for workshops and summer programs. Jessica attended the University of Connecticut where she earned a Bachelor's degree in Psychological Sciences. You may have already been in communication with Jessica, as she has worked with us during her undergraduate career!

Congratulations to David Wilock



Wilton High School. HIST 1400. Congratulations to Dr. Wilock for earning his Ph.D. in History from

St. John's University. His dissertation centered on Yale College during the American Revolutionary period.

10th Annual Cardboard Boat Race

Though UConn ECE did not participate for the second year in a row due to concerns over the coronavirus, Avery Point carried on the tradition on September 22, as did Waterford High School on September 30, albeit in a swimming pool! Michael O'Connor's

Marine Science and James Lovering's Physics students paddle their way across the pool in vessels made of nothing more than cardboard and duct tape.



PHOTO CREDIT: Sean Elliot, *The Day*

Elise Weisenbach, Branford High School, La Plaza Virtual

This summer, University of Connecticut Early College Experience Latin American Studies (Spanish/ LAS) students Sushant Kunwar, Andrew Bono, Alex Sweeney designed web pages using HTML and WordPress for the University of Connecticut's El Instituto: Institute of Latino/a, Caribbean and Latin American Studies.



The website, [La Plaza Virtual New England](#), consists of curricula for Latino, Latin American, and Caribbean studies used by high school teachers and college professors across New England. The main goal was to make webpages as streamlined, organized, and accessible as possible for Sra.

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UConn ECE News Briefs

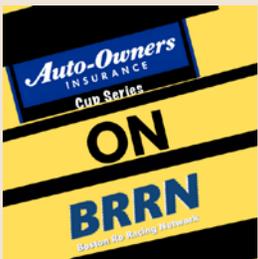
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Weisenbach's curricula: Cuba at the Crossroads, Human Rights in the Southern Cone: Spotlight on Argentina, Immigration: Cultural Crossroads of the Americas, and Cultural Heritage of Mesoamerica: Traditional Mexican Cuisine Across Time. ECE Spanish/LAS alum Hanna Bloomquist (BHS 2021, Columbia Univ. 2025) edited and revised documents.

Sammi Esposito (BHS 2020, UConn 2024) created a unit of study on European perceptions of native foods in Colonial Mexico (don't eat potatoes or your beard won't grow), the use of food to facilitate religious practices and to coerce native peoples into following Catholicism, the portrayal of food in Colonial paintings, and the impact of colonization on Mexican food culture. Mia Josephy-Zack (BHS 2020, UMass 2024) and Josh Josephy-Zack (BHS 2020, Harvard 2024) continue as technical consultants for the site. Also, Mia is writing a curricular unit, Threats to Traditional Mexican Cuisine with focus on how the environmental changes impact traditional food culture.

The department is proud of current and former ECE Spanish/LAS students pursuing their interest in culture, history and language during the summer by volunteering their time to work on the UConn website.

Jev Hohnson, Somers High School, Beats



Jev writes music and makes some beats with an EDM device. He posted a few songs to SoundCloud, including a jingle for an online motorsports league that he participates in.

<https://soundcloud.com/jeverett29/aorabrrn> ■

Next Generation of Student Registration: A Great Success

By Jessica Dunn

As announced in the Summer 2021 Magazine, UConn ECE has a new student registration system, DualEnroll.com. We successfully launched UConn.DualEnroll.com on August 23, 2021, and we have received very positive feedback from our community ever since.

We put a Student Registration Survey out to our Site Representatives once we closed registration in the beginning of October, and the responses were very encouraging. As it was the first year with the new system, there were indeed some bumps along the way, and some learning curves as we all worked to navigate the new system together, but there was nothing our resilient community could not overcome. With 13,889 students enrolled in UConn courses this year, a program record, we consider the registration period a great success!

We received responses from almost half of our Site Representatives, and open-ended responses that were echoed over and over included:

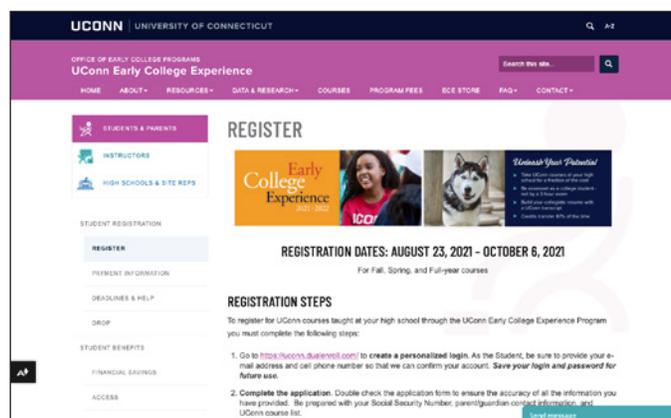
“The new system allowed the students to complete their portion in one step!”

“Quicker process, more user-friendly, and more streamlined”

“The online platform allowed me to track the status of applications more efficiently and support student registration.”

There were also a few responses which confirmed the need for minor improvements for next year. Things such as updating the language used in parent correspondence to clarify their steps, refining the student program fee waiver process, and improving the processing time of enrollments and payments. These are all items that are being addressed at this time and will be implemented for next fall.

As we look forward to next year's registration process, we are excited by the opportunity to fine tune the existing product and present a top-notch student registration process to our community. ■



The INCLUDE Mission:

We believe in the unique abilities of every person and every student. We are committed to creating an educational environment in the UConn Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering that embraces diversity of the human mind and supports different approaches to learning and creating. INCLUDE takes a strengths-based approach to empower neurodivergent students to succeed in engineering by fostering an inclusive learning environment, creating a supportive community, and cultivating students' unique strengths. We invite everyone to join our community.

About Neurodiversity:

Neurodiversity is diversity of the human mind. The neurodiversity movement challenges deficit-based labels and mindsets to empower people with different brains to see themselves as valuable, unique contributors to society. Some examples that fall under the neurodiversity umbrella are: ADHD, Autism Spectrum, Anxiety, Depression, Dyslexia, Dyscalculia, and Dysgraphia. The INCLUDE program uses a broad definition of neurodiversity which includes variations in sociability, learning, attention, mood, and other mental functions.

INCLUDE focuses on the following areas:

- Recruitment & Transition
- Community Building
- Teaching & Learning
- Holistic Support
- Career Transition & Employer Outreach

Program Offerings:

- High School Outreach
- Neurodiversity in Engineering Learning Community
- Redesigned engineering courses
- Specialized advising & mentoring
- Career Prep
- Academic Support



Maria Chrysochoou, Ph.D.
Professor and Department Head
Civil and Environmental Engineering

For more information, contact:

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About the 2022 Winter ECE Magazine Cover



Cover image

Ashlynn Miles, Griswold High School

Underwater

A painting of a woman in a white dress underwater using a type of medium called gash. This artwork is a symbol of transition and moving forward. It represents stepping into something new. A new perspective, its own glow and scope of color. It represents a feeling of weightlessness where gravity does not apply and the world is muffled and silent.



Runner up

Nicole Gallecher, Bolton High School

Flying Through Colors

When given a transitions assignment I automatically thought of the lifecycle of a butterfly. I started by sketching the branches, next the caterpillar, then the cocoon. I filled in each with a variety of colored pencils. After that I sketched the butterfly and added the color. Finally I included black marker to outline the butterfly and branches, and add in more detail to the cocoon and caterpillar.

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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66 YEARS STRONG



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 66 years. UConn ECE is the nation's longest running concurrent enrollment program.

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