In his first year on the job, Tim Nguyen’s enthusiasm for teaching is infectious. “I love it,” he says of teaching fourth-graders at Lairon College Preparatory Academy in San José’s Franklin-McKinley School District. “I wake up looking forward to going in. I’m usually the first one on campus and one of the last to leave. Just being around the kids and hearing what they have to say—they telling you about their lives and seeing them when they’re working so hard. They think they can’t get it and it clicks and they say, ‘Mr. Nguyen, it’s so great!’”

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THE DEAN

Roberto Bain

2015-2016

THE IMPACT

Connie L. Lurie College of Education

San Jose State University

The results of our efforts are evident in the 50 states. These proposed regulations will result in the rating of teacher preparation programs based upon the test scores of K-12 students in the classrooms of graduates as many as three years after they have earned their credentials. Problems with the validity of such measures have been well documented by well-respected psychometricians, statisticians and other assessment experts. The California Commission for Teacher Credentialing, the California Board of Education and the California Department of Education estimated the cost of implementing the federal regulations in California. They concluded the state would have to spend more than $232 million just to implement the new reporting system, and more than $485 million a year to maintain it. These costs do not include what each university and campus program would have to spend to meet the federal regulations. The California State Universities estimated it would cost an additional $4.7 million each year for all the campuses to meet these requirements—money spent on reports, not on instruction.

Something that costs more and is less effective is no one’s idea of a bargain. My friends in agriculture remind me that if you want to fatten livestock, you don’t keep weighing them—you feed them. Let’s do a little less weighing and more feeding of our instructional programs. We are all committed to the same goal—preparing excellent and effective teachers for all children.

Elaine Chin
Dean
luriecollege@sj州.edu

FROM THE DEAN

MELLING WITH THE WORLD

LEE SHULMAN ZEROS IN ON E.D.D.

The students in the Lurie College’s inaugural doctorate class have heard their mission described in a number of ways. They are the stewards of the discipline of education. Deep thinkers. Leaders of the future. Education scholar Lee Shulman has another, more provocative, description: People who will mess with the world.

“Once you mess with the world, you’re responsible for the mess you have made.”

While the Ph.D. develops skills to prepare for careers in research, most people seeking a terminal degree in education are preparing for careers in educational leadership. Therefore, Shulman says, the Ed.D. must be as demanding as the Ph.D., but structured to turn out effective practitioners of other people that you can’t mess with. In education. He was blunt about what he remembers to this day, and what he asked the future Lurie College Ed.D.s to consider: “And once you mess with the world, you’re going to have to define ‘engineer.’”

Their answer was “somebody who uses math and the sciences to mess with the world by designing and making things that other people will buy and use.” It was the second half of their answer that Shulman found. “The Ph.D. in education is a fraud,” Shulman said.

Shulman’s theme of messing with the world comes from a study he found. “The Ph.D. in education is a fraud,” Shulman said.

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New teacher Tim Nguyen lives for the aha moments when his fourth-graders and the material click.

In addition to teaching 8th grade, Daisy Alicante coaches the girl’s basketball team.

Hearts and minds, page 3

Nguyen, 25, who graduated last spring from the Critical Research Academy in the Lurie College with his master’s degree and a multiple subject teaching credential, identifies with the experiences of his students, 90 percent of whom are English language learners.

“I remember when I was going through school, it was, ‘You gotta do it in English, you gotta do it in English,’ and I lost my ability to speak fluent Vietnamese,” he says. “I tell my students all the time, ‘Really embrace your culture. Don’t lose that part of you where you came from or where your family came from.’

Nguyen’s passion, engagement and clear vision that each of his students brings a unique self into the classroom are just what the Critical Research Academy program intends to instill in new teachers.

The Lurie College program overseen by Colette Rabin, an associate professor in the Department of Elementary Education, emphasizes critical research in language, culture and society for K-8 teachers who are interested in exploring social justice and the development of cultural literacy and pedagogy for teaching in urban schools.

It is a demanding two-year M.A. program that aims to engage future teachers in deep thought and quantitative research while they also meet the requirements to earn a California teaching credential.

“When they first come into the program,” Rabin says, “they begin to think about what really drives them to become teachers, what really keeps them up at night about how they could improve the field and better meet the needs of their students.”

Rabin, a former teacher herself, says the Critical Research Academy’s approach is designed to launch enthusiastic, committed new teachers into Bay Area school districts—teachers steeped in ethics, social justice and a commitment to developing culturally and linguistically sensitive curriculum.

“I felt I came out better prepared to teach,” Nguyen says. “We really got to take apart curriculum and analyze pedagogy and ways of teaching and how things are done and how you could sell it,” he really bought into that. I felt the best way to reach my students and teach my students is to know them as a person.

Again, he relates what he learned in the Lurie College to his own educational journey. “I’ve had teachers in the past who I felt didn’t really know me,” he says. “They didn’t know who I was or what I was interested in. It wasn’t until I got into the master’s program that I realized there was a different dimension.

Nguyen, who grew up just a few miles from where he now works, was the middle of three children raised by parents who came to the U.S. from Vietnam in the late 1970s. His parents, who started a plumbing business, always emphasized the importance of getting an education as an avenue to success.

“They really were on all of us,” he says. “They said, ‘You need to do well in school. This is going to lead you to a better life, because you don’t want to have to struggle like we did.’”

After he graduated from a small private high school, his parents hoped he would become a doctor. When he enrolled as an undergraduate at San José State University, he started out as a biochemistry major.

“I was taking the courses, but I just lacked motivation,” he says. A stint working as a summer day camp counselor was a revelation. “I was just loving what I did. I thought, ‘Where can I do this and work with kids and just be a kid myself?’”

Before long he had switched to a major in child and adolescent development—without telling his parents. As graduation approached, he was torn between pleasing his parents and finding a career that he found personally fulfilling. “Deep down inside, I knew I wanted to be a teacher,” he says.

Nguyen gets his greatest satisfaction from helping students surmount familiar impediments to learning.

Earlier this year, he told a mother that her daughter had one of the highest reading scores in the class—a girl who until just a couple of months ago didn’t know any English.

“The mom, the daughters and my fellow teacher started crying,” he remembers. “She was just thanking us, thanking us, thanking us. It was really emotional. Seeing that, I thought, ‘That’s what it looks like. That’s why I wanted to be a teacher.’”

Daisy Alicante grew up in a family of Filipino immigrants in East San José and was drawn to teaching by her own feeling of being shortchanged as a student.

“What really drew me to teaching was this need to go back and teach students who were pretty similar to me,” the 27-year-old says. “Growing up minority, low-income people of color, I felt like we were always lacking something.”

When she finished her bachelor’s degree in social science in preparation for teaching, she wasn’t necessarily looking for a traditional master’s degree. But the tenets of the Critical Research Academy lined up perfectly with her ideas about what teaching should be.

“It was that social justice aspect,” she says. “It was already in my heart. I remember taking those classes and not being able to sleep, worrying about how are we going to change the current climate of education.

Alicante received her master’s in 2014 and is in her first year teaching eighth grade English at the Alam Rock campus of Downtown College Prep, a public charter school whose mission is to prepare first-generation students for college success. And she truly has come full circle. The school is across the street from where Alicante grew up.

Alicante entered the Critical Research Academy thinking that one of its core components—recognizing that children are unique individuals with lives, languages and cultures outside the classroom that influence how they learn—should be obvious to any teacher.

“At the beginning I was like, ‘Of course they’re kids and they have their own lives,’” Alicante says. Then she became a new teacher in a full classroom. “When you teach, when you are one teacher with 30 children looking at you, it’s very easy to lose sight of human beings sitting in front of you. It can turn into a power struggle.

With that in mind, Alicante started a “dialogic circle” early in the year. She sits in a circle with her students each morning and checks in with a question: How ready are you to learn today?”

Each student does a silent rating using a scale of one to five—from “I’d rather not be here” to “I’m so excited to learn today.” Then she passes around a stuffed S.J. Sharks, the mascot of the San José Sharks NHL team, and they talk about why they’re feeling that way.

“At first I didn’t get a lot of answers,” Alicante says. “But after a while some students started opening up and then some students who could relate, so they would give advice or tell their stories.”

After that, she lets the class pick an issue to discuss: “Anything goes,” she says. “We went from bullying to racism. We talked about teen pregnancy at one point. It’s a bit of Russian roulette because they like racy topics.”

But the process of drawing out her students and engaging with them as people has paid dividends in classroom engagement and behavior.

“I honestly think if I didn’t start doing those circles, the trust in my classroom would have been minimal,” she says.

Alicante says she’s grateful she has the theories of the Critical Research Academy ingrained in her.

“I feel like it’s a part of me. I have the theories in my pocket and that’s how I approach teaching. When I think back to the classes, especially in my moments of frustration, it reminds me of the purpose of teaching. It’s about the love and understanding that they’re humans. To be aware that my job is not to be the one in power, but to educate.”

Rabin says that’s a core component of the master’s program, which doesn’t stop at quick fixes and demands that its students develop habits that will have them analyze...

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Impact

Connie L. Lurie College of Education

San José State University

Spring 2015
“Having the tools and the agency from the beginning of one’s career to study one’s practice from an intellectual stance, is empowering. They can make informed choices and justify them with what they know and not get stuck in one way of teaching.”
—Collette Rabin

Hearts and minds, from page 5

“Having the tools and the agency from the beginning of one’s career to study one’s practice from an intellectual stance, is empowering. They can make informed choices and justify them with what they know and not get stuck in one way of teaching.”
—Collette Rabin

"When I graduated from here," says Lurie grad Esther Cho, "my heart was in second and third grade. Now I got fifth grade and I love it."
n its sixth year, the annual Marion Cilker Conference for the Arts in Education decided to shake up its Saturday session for working professionals. Instead of having teachers gather for workshops in one place, the conference spread out across arts venues peppered throughout downtown San José.

The result was an infusion of excitement, enthusiasm and fun, highlighted by a rousing session built around parachuting Gummi bears.

The Saturday Gummi bear kickoff session last November was how to use Amish quilts to teach patterning, color and shape. At the Museum of Quilts and Textiles, for example, the topic was to design and build a parachute and basket from a pile of art materials, then send them airborne to see whose aircraft kept the sticky little candy bears aloft the longest.

“Teachers were able to get a hands-on lesson in learning from art,” said organizer Robin Love, an associate professor in the Lurie College Department of Child and Adolescent Development, said everyone had a blast. “They seemed to have such a good time. It got everybody so energized,” she said. “It really got everybody jazzed.”

From there, participants fanned out to museums throughout the downtown core and participated in a 90-minute workshop from a menu of offerings all designed to use art to teach standard academic concepts.

At the San José Symphony, for example, the topic was how to use music to teach fractions. The San José Symphony demonstrated how to employ music to understand fractions. The Children’s Discovery Museum used dance to teach mapping.

The previous day, 250 students had taken advantage of 20 free workshops on campus that were geared toward using the arts to teach science, technology, engineering and mathematics concepts. The experiment in fanning out into downtown venues was such a big success that Love said it is sure to become a staple of the conference, which will be held this year Nov. 13-14.

“They teachers said it was like a field trip for teachers,” Love said. “They loved the new venues.”

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It’s a long way from Manhattan’s Upper East Side to downtown San José, but Paul Cascella doesn’t seem to have any difficulty making the transition.

Cascella, who recently joined the Department of Communicative Disorders and Sciences as a tenured full professor, spent the previous eight years at Hunter College, a campus of the City University of New York. Most recently, he served as chair of the Department of Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology there.

Relaxing outside Sweeney Hall on a warm February afternoon, Cascella reflects on the two colleges as they relate to his research into the communication challenges faced by people with severe disabilities, such as autism spectrum disorders, intellectual disabilities and cerebral palsy.

“The population in California is different from the population in New York,” says Cascella, who grew up on Staten Island. “I think this population will be different, and so I’m going to have to think about how it fits within the cultural context here. That’s fun for me. I like thinking about that kind of stuff.”

Most of his research has to do with communication patterns for people who are blind or deaf and blind. His work tends to be therapy-focused, aimed at identifying the most effective assessment methodologies and treatment models.

Recently, he and two colleagues have been studying the use of tangible object symbols by public school teachers in educating people who are both visually impaired and intellectually disabled.

Like many who are drawn to the field of communication disorders, he had a family member who faced challenges communicating. “As a young person, I met any number of speech-language pathologists who I was impressed by,” Cascella says. “I’ve always liked the service element of the discipline, but I also liked that it was rooted in science and research.”

He earned his undergraduate degree at Marquette University and his master’s from SUNY Buffalo. He worked in a variety of clinical settings, including public schools, schools for special needs, a state institution, group homes and private practice before starting his Ph.D. program at the University of Connecticut.

With his doctorate in hand, he joined the faculty of Southern Connecticut University, where he spent 11 years before moving to CUNY. Those educational experiences help explain why he feels at home at San José State. “Honestly, I’ve always liked state schools,” Cascella says. “I like the opportunities that state schools provide students.”

His studies into the nuances of communication inform what he does in the classroom. Cascella says, “A lot of my teaching is embedded with the same strategies I would use with my clients.”

Working at the intersection of service and education fulfills multiple interests at once, he adds. “I like community engagement,” he says. “I like social justice issues—people who may be devalued because they can’t communicate. It’s not easy stuff. It’s complicated. It’s serious.”

COMMUNICATING COAST TO COAST

PAUL CASCELLA TRADES IN NEW YORK FOR SAN JOSÉ

Paul Cascella trades in New York for San José

Paul Cascella reflects on the two colleges as they relate to his research into the communication challenges faced by people with severe disabilities, such as autism spectrum disorders, intellectual disabilities and cerebral palsy. Like many who are drawn to the field of communication disorders, he had a family member who faced challenges communicating. “As a young person, I met any number of speech-language pathologists who I was impressed by,” Cascella says. “I’ve always liked the service element of the discipline, but I also liked that it was rooted in science and research.” He earned his undergraduate degree at Marquette University and his master’s from SUNY Buffalo. He worked in a variety of clinical settings, including public schools, schools for special needs, a state institution, group homes and private practice before starting his Ph.D. program at the University of Connecticut. With his doctorate in hand, he joined the faculty of Southern Connecticut University, where he spent 11 years before moving to CUNY. Those educational experiences help explain why he feels at home at San José State. “Honestly, I’ve always liked state schools,” Cascella says. “I like the opportunities that state schools provide students.” His studies into the nuances of communication inform what he does in the classroom. Cascella says, “A lot of my teaching is embedded with the same strategies I would use with my clients.” Working at the intersection of service and education fulfills multiple interests at once, he adds. “I like community engagement,” he says. “I like social justice issues—people who may be devalued because they can’t communicate. It’s not easy stuff. It’s complicated. It’s serious.”
Shulman, from page 9

cal researches and theorists who will work as principals, program directors, superintendents or even secretaries of education. Shulman was instrumental in helping revise the doctorate in education nationally to reflect its unique mission and combine a focus on inquiry and research with the practical challenges of working professionals.

“How can you be responsible for the mess you will make if you don’t have the skills to observe and document, measure and analyze the mess you’ve made?” he asked. “Educational leaders have to develop habits and mind of practice that give them the tools to interrogate what seems obvious, to question what seems unquestionable—without being a pain in the ass. You’ve got to learn to be lovable and annoying at the same time. That’s what means to be a leader, often.”

San José’s program is practicing what Shulman preaches. The new doctorate in educational leadership is developed by full-time professionals in school districts in the region and puts them through a rigorous degree program that uses their real-world experience as a core of its mission.

Arnold Danzig, the program’s director, said he hoped Shulman’s perspective gave the students a better understanding of their mission.

“To have him—a founding thinker in the Ed.D. program—here to articulate what the meaning of an Ed.D. program is gives them the sense that they are participating in an important professional program to enhance their own practice,” Danzig said.

Rebecca Burciaga is a member of the committee for the establishment of the National Alliance for the Study of Latino Educational Leadership. She serves as chair of the board of directors for the California Faculty Alliance for Higher Education Multidisciplinary Junior Faculty Fellow Program. With Rita Khalil and Marcus Piza- no, she also co-founded and is a co-coordinator of the Institute for Teachers of Color Committed to Racial Justice.

Carol-Dawson Taylor told us her alma mater led her to support the College. Marcella and Robin Love have created a survey to gather information to help create a young alumni network. If you’re interested to participate, please do so. For more information, leave a message for our college at the College of Education Multidisciplinary Junior Faculty Fellowship.

The board will honor three local educators at the Honored Teacher Reception on May 23, at the One Room Schoolhouse in History Park in Kelley Park off Santa Teresa Parkway. Our alumni board will host this reception to honor and recognize alumni and former students.

By Cherie Donahue, Alumni Board Secretary
The students in the Lurie College’s inaugural doctorate class have heard their mission described in a number of ways: They are the stewards of the discipline of education. Deep thinkers. Leaders of the future. Your investment in the Lurie College of Education will help us prepare the next generation of inspiring educators. Please consider making an investment in tomorrow’s educators by going to sjsu.edu/giving to give to the college’s annual fund. If you are considering a planned gift, please email Betty Tseng at betty.tseng@sjsu.edu.

If you would prefer to receive this newsletter in an electronic format, please email your preference along with your name and zip code to pat.cunningham@sjsu.edu. We will replace your paper copy with an e-copy.

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