Our momentum is greater than ever, and together our potential is unlimited.

GLENN GOOD, PH.D.
Dean, College of Education, UF
I’m thrilled to welcome you to this year’s FLORIDA EDUGATOR! This issue celebrates the growing momentum at the College of Education. We are challenging our students, transforming education, and strengthening our society. Together, we are Building a Brighter Future.

Our shared success is evidenced by our rankings. U.S. News & World Report again lists UF as the top-ranked education school in Florida and our Online Graduate Programs are ranked #1 in the nation! These standings reflect the intellectual leadership of our faculty, the dedicated work of our staff, and our collaborative partnerships across the nation.

This fall we aim for new heights as the University of Florida launches its most ambitious capital campaign to date. We have answered the clarion call from Century Tower and aligned our goals; the University’s aspiration is our aspiration. We appreciate your support in advancing the UF College of Education!

With a progressive research and training agenda, designed to address society’s greatest needs, we are focused on four key impact areas: Early Learning, Educational Technology, Student Success, and Leadership. Read about these initiatives here and then learn more at: education.ufl.edu/capitalcampaign.

Finally, I am pleased to report that planning is fully underway for major renovations to historic 87-year-old Norman Hall. Read more about this long-awaited project on page 31.

Thank you for being a part of our EduGator family and for the role you play in moving us ever forward.

Glenn E. Good, Ph.D.
Dean, College of Education
Children, families, educators, teachers-in-training, schools and communities all benefit when UF education scholars work together to find solutions to complex problems facing society and the education world. Through vigorous education research, we are working together for a greater purpose to make a greater impact on the lives of people everywhere.

With greater emphasis on interdisciplinary collaborations, College of Education faculty members and their doctoral students continue to raise the college’s research enterprise to new heights. In 2016-17, COE faculty researchers collectively held an all-time high of $102 million in funded grants and contracts — topping the hundred-million-dollar milestone for the first time ever. Forty-seven new grants awarded last year account for more than $15 million of last year’s funding growth.

College research funding has reached new record highs in four of the past five years. Despite diminishing federal spending on academic research in the United States, COE faculty researchers have generated nearly 70 percent of current external research dollars through grants awarded by federal agencies.

“Education research is the lifeline of positive change in schools, communities and families,” says Thomasenia Adams, associate dean for education research. “When education research results translate into practices that help people overcome challenges and experience success, all of society benefits.”

Revenue from new research grants in 2016-17 support UF education scholars finding solutions to some of the most critical issues and needs in education, such as:

- Providing intensive professional development and certification programs for Florida’s early learning practitioners
- Personalizing online learning experiences
- Supporting teachers of English language learners in rural areas of Florida
- Teaching students to get along in the classroom through problem-solving exercises
- Web-based intervention to help early childhood teachers working with young children with chronic problem behavior
- Reducing relational aggression between middle school girls

“Outstanding undergraduate and graduate awards, research grants and contracts, and professional recognition bestowed upon our students, faculty and staff are a testament to our efforts to advance the college’s mission,” says COE Dean Donald J.:red

Rachelle “Shelly” Curcio received the Outstanding Professional Practice Award for her extensive educator preparation activities, including pedagogy, best practices, assessment and translation of research to improve practice. Curcio has a bachelor’s (’95) and master’s (’96) in Elementary Education from UF, and in August earned a doctorate in Curriculum, Teaching and Teacher Education. Before returning for her Ph.D., Curcio spent 13 years as an elementary teacher, reading coach and assistant principal, and has piloted a distance-learning coaching program for the Lastinger Center.

Elizabeth Currin, a Ph.D. candidate in Curriculum, Teaching and Teacher Education, accepted the Graduate Leadership Award for demonstrating commitment to service and leadership. Currin received a masters of arts in English from the University of North Carolina, Greensboro (’07) and a bachelor’s in English, summa cum laude, from Wake Forest (’05). As president of UF’s Student Alliance for Graduates in Education (SAGE), she received praise from faculty for organizing a research symposium for scholars.

Brian Zaboski earned the Graduate Research Award for his outstanding scholarship and strong evidence of publications, professional development and presentations in support of the college’s mission. Zaboski expects to receive his Ph.D. in School Psychology in August 2018. He also serves as an advanced practicum student at UF Health Shands Psychiatric Hospital and provides weekly cognitive-behavioral therapy at UF Health’s Springhill outpatient clinic.

Abigail Andrews received the Outstanding Unified Elementary Education ProTeach Award. She has appeared multiple times on the Dean’s List and is active in the campus community with her sorority, of which she has served as president, and a member of UF’s education honor society, Kappa Delta Pi.

Sulhae Christina Na received an Outstanding Unified Early Childhood Education award. Also a member of Kappa Delta Pi, she is currently completing her bachelor’s in education and plans to earn a master’s through the ProTeach early childhood program. Na was named an Anderson Scholar of Distinction by the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, the highest recognition bestowed on students during their first two years of college.

Vivianne Rivera received an Outstanding Unified Early Childhood Education award. With a bachelor’s of arts in special education, Rivera is set to work on her master’s in the ProTeach program. She is a member of UF’s Golden Key International Honor Society and a Minority Teacher Education Scholar.
Best-selling novelist, donor
James Patterson meets with his scholarship students

James Patterson (left), America’s best-selling novelist and a scholarship sponsor for 16 UF elementary education majors, fielded questions from fellow author Michael Connelly, a UF journalism grad, in an “author-to-author” conversation as part of a weekly Friday GatorNights event earlier this year at UF’s Reitz Union. Patterson also met with his 16 scholarship recipients at a Norman Hall reception held before his GatorNights appearance.

Special Ed. grad’s latest challenge: heading Florida’s largest school district

UF Special Education alumnus Larry Feldman (BAE ’72, MAE ’73) thought he had seen it all during his 44-year education career. Then, in 2008, he was elected to the first of three terms to the board of Miami-Dade County Public Schools, the largest district in Florida and fourth largest in the nation. Last November, Feldman assumed perhaps his biggest leadership challenge yet as chairman of the school board. Feldman says he is proud to have played a part in the district’s dramatic gains in achievements by black and Hispanic students, raising academic standards, and budget improvements.

Ed. Leadership alumna is new head of local schools

Double EduGator Karen Clarke (BAE ’91, MEd ’99), former deputy superintendent for Alachua County Public Schools, became the district’s new superintendent on July 1. Clarke, herself a graduate of Alachua County schools, has been an educator for more than 25 years, including several positions in district administration. Much of her community work addresses root causes of disparity and the achievement gap.

Student Laurels and Appointments

Will Atkins, currently pursuing his Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction, this summer was named new executive director of multicultural and diversity affairs at the University of Florida. He had served as interim executive director since October 2016.

Lisa Lundgren,a Ph.D. candidate in Science Education, along with Kent Crippen, a STEM professor and Lundgren’s co-principal investigator, were awarded third place in the 2017 Social Media in Practice Excellence Awards, at the European Conference on Social Media for The FOSSIL Project and the use of social paleontology to bring together paleontologists from across the spectrum of expertise.

Student Excellence | Laurels and Appointments
**OUTSTANDING EDUCATORS**

**HIGH ACHIEVERS IN 2016-2017**

**INTERNATIONAL & NATIONAL RECOGNITION**

Mary Brownell  
Special Education  
DISTINGUISHED ALUMNA AWARD  
University of Kansas School of Education

Kent Crippen  
STEM Education  
SCIENCE TEACHER EDUCATOR MENTOR OF THE YEAR  
Association for Science Teacher Education

Ester de Jong  
ESOL/Bilingual Education  
PRESIDENT  
TESOL (Teachers of English Speakers of Other Languages)

Kristina Depue  
Counselor Education  
RESEARCH IN COUNSELOR EDUCATION & SUPERVISION AWARD  
American Association for Counseling Education & Supervision

Henry Frierson  
Research & Evaluation Methods  
PRESIDENTIAL CITATION  
American Educational Research Association

Leslie Hull  
Counselor Education  
OUTSTANDING PRACTITIONER OF THE YEAR  
Chi Sigma Iota

Dennis Kramer  
Institute of Higher Education  
FELLOW  
U.S. General Services Administration Office of Evaluation Sciences

John Kranzler  
School Psychology  
AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH  
Mensa International Education & Research Foundation

Isaac McFarlin  
Institute of Higher Education  
FACULTY RESEARCH FELLOW  
National Bureau of Economic Research

Shon Smith  
Counselor Education  
PRESIDENT-ELECT  
Association for Multicultural Counseling and Development

Shon Smith  
Counselor Education  
ANTI-OPPRESSION AWARD  
Association of Counselors for Social Justice

Elizabeth “Buffy” Bondy  
Curriculum, Teaching & Teacher Education  
UF FACULTY DOCTORAL MENTORING AWARD  
UF Graduate School

Nancy Dana  
Curriculum, Teaching & Teacher Education  
UF ONLINE EXCELLENCE AWARD  
UF Distance & Continuing Education Office

Gayle Evans  
Mathematics Education/UFTeach  
TEACHER OF THE YEAR  
UF College of Education

Nick Gage  
Special Education  
EXCELLENCE AWARD FOR ASSISTANT PROFESSORS  
UF Office of the Provost

John Kranzler  
School Psychology  
UFRF PROFESSORSHIP  
UF Research Foundation

**UF & COLLEGE**

**IN MEMORIAM**

Professor Emeritus  
A memorial service was held March 3, 2017, for COE Professor Emeritus William “Bill” Wolking, a UF faculty member in Special Education from 1968 to 1994. Dr. Wolking was a leading expert in behavior analysis and precision teaching. He passed away February 13 at age 90.

Professor Emeritus  
Dr. Newell, a professor emeritus of Educational Psychology and a 30-year member of the graduate faculty at the UF College of Education, passed away June 11, 2017, in Gainesville. He was a longtime instructor in the Department of Foundations of Education and served as acting director of the unit from 1981-1983.

Former Dean Emihovich closes out distinguished career

Catherine Emihovich, the first woman dean of the UF College of Education who headed the school from 2002 to 2011, retired in May from her tenured faculty position in the College, effectively closing out her distinguished career in higher education.

As the College’s 12th dean, Emihovich worked with faculty to infuse “engaged scholarship” as a core principal of the College’s teaching and research programs — connecting academic scholarship to the practical concerns of educators and to benefit the public good. Enduring the Great Recession in the late 2000s and early 2010s, the College emerged as a national leader in education reform, largely by partnering with school districts and communities to transform teaching and learning. A major milestone was the 2010 creation of an interdisciplinary, campuswide program now known as the Anita Zucker Center for Excellence in Early Childhood Studies. Another marquee program — the Lastinger Center for Learning — grew during the Emihovich Era to become a national role model for outreach efforts emphasizing whole-school improvement and educator professional development.

“I am indeed proud of what the College has accomplished on my watch, thanks to the vital support of our faculty, staff, and supportive stakeholders,” Emihovich said. “Our accomplishments are the foundation for even greater achievement in the years to come.” Emihovich and her husband, Ron, have retired to South Florida, “where we have two grandsons and a third grandchild — hopefully a girl — on the way.”
Through our work in the area of Early Childhood Studies we are leading the way to a future where every child is prepared to enter school. Giving children the opportunity to succeed through transdisciplinary collaboration is a key initiative in the University’s quest to be a top 10 research institution.

Starting Ahead, Staying Ahead
With the aim of identifying tangible, scalable solutions for developmental success, the Anita Zucker Center of Excellence for Early Childhood Studies collaborated with colleges from across UF to convene the Early Childhood National Summit in February 2017.

$10M in Grants to Personalize Virtual Learning
In a cross-disciplinary collaboration, our researchers are exploring large-scale data sets to personalize virtual instruction for future math students and to adapt visual educational technology for visually impaired students.

Our endeavors reach far beyond the classroom, focusing on leadership and education policy. With challenges both known and unknown ahead, we are working to prepare students and faculty to administer and implement complex policy at the school, district, state and national levels and to influence the transformation of education.

From Gainesville to Washington
Dennis Kramer, co-director of the Institute of Higher Education at UF, has been selected as a fellow to the federal Office of Evaluation Sciences. Kramer will spend the upcoming academic year conducting research aimed at improving U.S. public service.

Everyone deserves the opportunity to achieve. Through a variety of approaches our faculty are actively removing barriers and building bridges for the success of every student. In areas of literacy, special education, counseling, and even social justice, we are lighting the way toward a more inclusive and brighter future.

University of Florida Literacy Initiative
To close a learning gap that typically ends in dropout, we are engaged in teacher and reader development using emerging technology and ongoing research. Our faculty and partners are working to deploy evidence-based academic literacy instruction at a national scale.
STARTING AHEAD MEANS STAYING AHEAD
Anita Zucker Center hosts Early Childhood National Summit

Giving children a strong start in their first five years doesn’t just help children and their families. The benefits of their success radiate throughout their communities — as do the consequences when they struggle. But the many fields that help shape what happens for young children and their families during these critical years don’t always connect.

Collaborating across disciplines related to early childhood development and learning was one of the challenges posed to over 100 scholars, policy makers, advocates, philanthropists and practitioners who gathered last winter in Orlando for the University of Florida’s Early Childhood National Summit. In the first five minutes, UF President Kent Fuchs made it clear that the summit was focused on creating actionable ideas and steps to move the field forward.

“It is crucial that our work on behalf of children is tangible, that it is scalable, and that it reaches the children who need it,” Fuchs said.

The Anita Zucker Center for Excellence in Early Childhood Studies convened the event, which was attended by scholars from across the nation, along with professors from six UF colleges and the deans of UF’s College of Education, Levin College of Law, College of Medicine, and College of Public Health and Health Professions. After a welcome from philanthropist and InterTech Group CEO Anita Zucker, the group heard from keynote speaker Jacqueline Jones of the Foundation for Child Development. After her speech, Jones, who served as the U.S. Department of Education’s first deputy assistant secretary for policy and early learning, stressed the importance of working to retain bipartisan support for early childhood initiatives.

Before summit attendees broke out into workgroups, panelists with expertise in psychiatry, pediatrics, psychology, law, education and advocacy shared perspectives to inform the discussions. Their presentations illustrated just how high the stakes are during early childhood, detailing chronic medical conditions with roots in early childhood and factors that influence children’s potential before they’re even born. Then the workgroups got down to the business of the summit: creating recommendations and actions on how to move forward.

By the afternoon, each workgroup had addressed three themes — discovering the keys to opening young minds, influencing the influencers to unlock children’s potential, and inspiring new initiatives for the next generation — drawing on the diverse backgrounds and expertise of participants.

The day closed with talks by UF Provost Joseph Glover, Zucker and early childhood advocate David Lawrence Jr., a UF alum, president of the Early Childhood Initiative Foundation and chair of the Children’s Movement of Florida. The next morning, Anita Zucker Center Director Patricia Snyder, UF’s David Lawrence Jr. Endowed Chair in Early Childhood Studies, presented each workgroup’s recommendations for feedback and further development.

“The recommendations and action steps will compel us to continue to be a convener of early childhood activities and will help elevate this work to a broader level,” Snyder said.
Rodney, a student at Ruleville Middle School in Sunflower, Mississippi, said he used to have trouble grasping algebra concepts and rarely felt confident in his answers to homework questions and tests. He would spend hours studying, but it wasn’t until his teacher introduced him to Algebra Nation that he began to look at algebra as a subject he enjoyed rather than loathed.

Launched in Florida in 2013, Algebra Nation is a powerful, interactive online tutoring tool that gives students access to some of the state’s best math teachers and e-learning resources aligned with state standards — while supporting the work of their math teachers. Students and teachers have embraced the system and not only in Florida — Algebra Nation has since expanded to Mississippi, Alabama, Michigan, South Carolina and New York City.

The University of Florida Lastinger Center for Learning developed Algebra Nation in collaboration with Study Edge, a Gainesville education technology company. They shared a goal of improving student achievement in Algebra 1, a required course that is a key gateway for students to higher-level math courses and STEM careers.

As a free, one-stop hub accessible through a browser or mobile app, Algebra Nation is available anytime, anywhere. Students can:

» take notes in their Algebra Nation workbook while following along with Algebra Nation’s instructional videos;
» receive after-hours homework help on the Algebra Wall where expert teachers and peers provide immediate assistance;
» and, prepare for the Algebra 1 end-of-course exam with Algebra Nation’s “Test Yourself!” Practice Tool that features over 500 practice questions that mimic the computer-based test.

Teachers also have free access to Algebra Nation’s Teacher Area — a platform where they can share lessons and teaching tips with their peers and view reports on student usage and progress. Today in Florida alone, more than 350,000 students and 8,000 teachers, from 3,000 schools in all 67 school districts, use Algebra Nation each year.

To gauge Algebra Nation’s impact on student achievement, a team of researchers from multiple disciplines at UF’s new Virtual Learning Lab is evaluating the system’s efficacy in improving student understanding of and success in algebra. The effort, part of a federal study supported by nearly $9 million from the Institute of Education Sciences, is headed by Education Technology Professor Carole Beal and co-principal investigator Walter Leite, a professor of Research and Evaluation Methods. Leite’s “big data” analyses are conducted in partnership with the Florida Department of Education.

Preliminary findings in Florida indicate that Algebra Nation is positively impacting student achievement: The average pass rate of students taking the Algebra 1 end-of-course exam increased 6 points from 2016 to 2017; students at schools with a high-usage rate improved their average pass rates by 20 percent; and, students from low-income families or minority students also showed significant improvement.

COE makes its mark at nation’s largest gathering of education researchers

Some 65 UF education scholars — COE faculty researchers and graduate students — made their presence known among the 15,000 scholars from around the world who converged on San Antonio in late April for the 2017 annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association. The AERA conference is the largest gathering of international scholars in the field of education research.
Keaghan had failed third grade and was falling further behind. Reading below first-grade level, she had trouble identifying the sounds letters make, and read excruciatingly slow, with little comprehension of what she read. Last school year she finally received a formal diagnosis: dyslexia. To catch up she needed specialized help from a tutor trained to use evidence-proven techniques to help struggling readers.

In June, Keaghan received the help she needed while attending a reading camp at UF’s P.K. Yonge Developmental Research School with intensive, one-on-one tutoring provided by graduate students from the University of Florida’s College of Education. Five days a week, she participated in literacy games and engaged in carefully designed multi-sensory activities to help her recognize and verbalize letter sounds and blend them into words.

In three short weeks Keaghan’s reading jumped to second grade level. Just as importantly, her confidence soared as she learned to apply new strategies to read, says her tutor, Elizabeth Rockey, a master’s student in the College’s rigorous five-year Elementary ProTeach teacher preparation program.

Such results are not unusual for children receiving instruction from students trained in tutoring methods from the University of Florida Literacy Initiative (UFLI, pronounced “you fly”).

“Our student teachers leave us with the knowledge and skills and the confidence they need to teach anyone to read,” says Holly Lane, associate professor of special education and a nationally recognized expert in evidence-based methods of helping struggling readers.

Unfortunately, young students who struggle to read often don’t receive such specialized instruction, says Lane, who also directs the College’s School of Special Education, School Psychology and Early Childhood Studies.

That may be because dyslexia is among the most misunderstood of educational topics and myths of dyslexia are widespread: most people think it’s a visual issue notable for children reversing the order of letters or words. Such behavior is actually common among beginning readers, Lane says. Instead, it’s related to difficulties processing speech sounds and mapping sounds to letters. Some think it has to do with intelligence, but the truth is dyslexia has nothing to do with a person’s intellect.

Dyslexia is a life-long language-processing deficit, which essentially means the brain is miswired for language — and thus reading. Experts say at least 10 percent of students have dyslexia. Some highly accomplished people have spoken out about their struggles to read, including actress Keira Knightley, director Steven Spielberg, financier Charles Schwab and former Gator quarterback Tim Tebow.

Importantly, if students with such reading challenges are not identified early and receive specialized lessons, they may feel humiliated and their motivation and ability to succeed in school will suffer; the gap with their peers will inevitably widen, ultimately jeopardizing their career prospects and quality of life.

“Research shows that 9 out of 10 high school dropouts were struggling readers in third grade.”
Every year, thousands of young adults throughout Florida drop out of college before completing their degrees. A team of researchers at the University of Florida’s College of Education wants to find out whether a “nudge” will help these former students re-enroll.

The researchers recently launched a two-year study to determine whether ex-students at five Florida state or community colleges who receive targeted emails and financial incentives are more likely to return to finish their two- or four-year degrees.

“We’re trying to nudge these students to re-enroll and ultimately reap the benefits associated with completing their degree,” says Justin Ortagus, an assistant professor of Higher Education Administration and the project’s principal investigator. Other members of the research team are co-principal investigators Isaac McFarlin and Dennis Kramer, both of whom are faculty members in the college’s Higher Education Administration and Policy program. The project is supported by a $300,000 grant from the nonprofit Helios Education Foundation.

Ortagus says the study could determine if a relatively low-cost directed email campaign can help address a troubling issue: The rising number of students who drop out of college before completing their degree. Numerous studies have shown that students who complete a college degree have higher earnings and an improved quality of life when compared with those who don’t.

The research team has partnered on the 2017-2019 study with leaders at five large Florida community colleges — Broward, Hillsborough Community, Miami Dade, Palm Beach State and Valencia — because of their diverse student bodies and high enrollments.

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With the help of the college leaders, they will examine several thousand students who failed to complete their degrees at participating colleges. Ortagus says. The students will be randomly assigned to one of three groups. Some will receive an email with re-enrollment and financial aid information before critical deadlines, others will get the same info and a small financial incentive, and a control group will receive only a single email. The researchers will conduct a randomized, controlled trial and a survey to evaluate whether students re-enrolled and the overall effectiveness of the program.

Study: For students with disabilities, bullying involvement occurs at all grade levels

Studies have shown that students with disabilities generally are more often the victims — and perpetrators — of bullying in schools than other students. Now, a new research report co-authored by UF Special Education faculty researcher Nicholas Gage reveals that this discrepancy in bullying behavior continues over the years even as students advance in grade levels.

Researchers get $3.5 million boost to help improve social, emotional behavior of schoolchildren

Ever since teachers have taught, they have also had to manage the classroom behavior of their students. In recent years, though, primary grade teachers are reporting a spike in the number of young children who struggle to handle their emotions and control their behaviors — meaning more students have issues such as being unable to follow instructions, resorting to tantrums and arguing with peers.

Now, after receiving $3.5 million from the federal Institute of Education Sciences, four UFCOE faculty researchers are further studying the effectiveness of a promising, new curriculum they developed through a previous pilot study. They aim to provide teachers and schools with new tools to improve the social and emotional “literacy” of the youngest schoolchildren.

Approximately 1,400 students in kindergarten and first grade at 60 urban and rural elementary schools in Florida will participate in the project over the next three years following a screening process to select students at risk for emotional and behavioral problems. In this first year, 20 schools in five school districts are participating — in Baker, Bradford, Levy, Marion and Putnam counties. Twenty more schools will join the study in each of the next two school years.

“If these children don’t receive support during this critical time they could develop more serious and chronic behavioral problems that will interfere with their future school success,” said Ann Daunic, scholar emeritus at the UF College of Education and principal investigator on the project.

Daunic’s co-investigators are Nancy Corbett and Stephen Smith from Special Education and Professor Emeritus James Algina from Research and Evaluation Methodology.
On Feb. 9, 1962, Gerardo González, his parents and younger sister landed in Miami from Cuba. He was 11 years old, didn’t understand English, and his working-class family was broke, having escaped Cuban dictator Fidel Castro’s regime with few possessions.

González would go on to a distinguished career in higher education at the University of Florida and beyond and rank among America’s most influential Hispanics. He says his career trajectory is all the more implausible given how he admits he was an unmotivated and lackluster student through high school. But after losing a job he decided to attend a community college, where he finally found a love of learning and the spark he needed to pursue advanced degrees.

“A liberal arts education awoke in me a thirst for knowledge and lifelong learning,” he says.

In 1972, he came to the University of Florida in Gainesville, where he would earn three degrees (bachelor’s in psychology, master’s in counselor education and a Ph.D. in counseling and student personnel services) and founded one of the nation’s first campus-based alcohol awareness and abuse prevention organizations.

In the ensuing years, González was tapped for a series of more prominent roles at the College of Education, including chair of the Counselor Education department, associate dean for administration and finance, and, finally, interim dean. In 2000, he became dean of the School of Education at Indiana University, where he served for 15 years. González gained a reputation as a fearless education advocate for policies that best serve all learners, as well as Hispanic education concerns. In 2012, Hispanic Business magazine named him one of the 50 most influential Hispanics in the United States.

In the fall of 2016, González and his wife, Marjorie, established a fellowship at the College of Education to support graduate students who are pursuing research into the role of freedom of speech, academic freedom or student rights in higher education.

Doctoral student Jazmin Caton, a native of Sebring who now lives in Fort Worth with her husband and their newborn daughter, was named the first recipient of the scholarship. Caton is pursuing a Ph.D. in Educational Leadership through the college’s blended online-and-on-campus Leadership in Educational Administration Doctorate (LEAD) program. “I call these ‘deposits of hope’ that go into your bank to keep you going,” she says of the scholarship.

González says education is the key to improving people’s lives. “My story shows that in the United States as in other democratic countries, education is still the great equalizer. As Nelson Mandela famously said, ‘Education is the most powerful weapon we can use to change the world.’”

For a video and a full account of this story, visit: education.ufl.edu/alumni/gerardo-gonzalez

Anita Zucker: Provost’s Preeminence Award
Distinguished COE alumna Anita Zucker (BAE ’72) has received the UF Provost’s 2017 Preeminence Award, which recognizes “individuals who make singular contributions to the advancement of the university’s national preeminence goals.”

Through her personal vision and advocacy and several major charitable gifts, Zucker has been a driving force behind UF’s commitment to achieving preeminence status in early childhood studies. In 2011, she created the $1 million Anita Zucker Endowed Professorship in Early Childhood Studies at UF. In 2014, Zucker, a former school teacher-turned global entrepreneur from Charleston, S.C., committed $5 million, which UF turned into $10 million, to boost the efforts and expertise of the UF Center for Excellence in Early Childhood Studies. The interdisciplinary center, based in the College of Education, has since been named for Zucker in recognition of her generosity.

With the influx of Zucker’s gifts and more than $23 million generated in federal research funding since 2007, the Anita Zucker Center is now poised to make an even greater impact in the lives of young children, their families and early childhood practitioners.

Just as UF — and Anita Zucker — had envisioned.
PKY’S MICKEY MACDONALD WINS AERA TEACHER AS RESEARCHER AWARD

“Students aren’t all that interested in plants in the classroom,” says Mickey MacDonald (Ed.D. ’16), but at P.K. Yonge Developmental Research School “the outdoor garden changes everything.” MacDonald, P.K. Yonge’s high school biology teacher and the 2017 American Education Research Association Teacher as Researcher Award winner, is the inspiration behind the garden. Her special research interest in equity in learning opportunities inspired her to investigate different approaches — ultimately transforming the learning experience in her classroom and setting her on the path to doctoral studies at the UF College of Education.

“School just doesn’t work for a lot of kids, and for those kids 15 to 20 percent of their lives is spent doing something that doesn’t work for them. It’s just not OK,” MacDonald says. “Our ultimate goal as teachers is to make school work for ALL kids.”

Influenced by her research, MacDonald says her transfigured teaching approach emphasizes understanding differences between learners, determining strategic uses for technology, freeing up instructor time to provide critical support to learners, and determining the role of assessment. “Flexibility is the key,” she says. “Students do best when groupings can be altered and changed depending on student need as it arises,” and when labels are not ascribed to them based on a test or a seat in a particular class.

PKY’S MICKEY MACDONALD WINS AERA TEACHER AS RESEARCHER AWARD

ARE TEXTBOOKS THE ONLY WAY?

A Professional Learning Community examines technology for learning differences

In social studies class, potential barriers to success for students with learning differences are high. For many students, reading paper-based text can present an almost insurmountable challenge.

Reading requirements in text-heavy content areas inadvertently equate the ability to read paper-based text to the ability to learn about history or understand geographical concepts — and that’s a misconception.

The era of digital tools for learning opens a new door to students with learning differences — creating pathways to success inconceivable to many who were educated in the analog era. In every classroom, there are students who need to consume content in different ways in order to absorb essential information — by changing text type or size, by listening to an audio version of the material, or by reading transcripts of audio or video content. Today, tools like Google Read and Write provide ways to customize access to content based on learners’ specific needs or preferences.

With toppling learning barriers in mind, a professional learning community (PLC) composed of faculty members from P.K. Yonge Developmental Research School and the College of Education, convened at P.K. Yonge in January of 2017. The group began a year-long investigation of how technology, specifically Google Read and Write, can be leveraged to help students overcome barriers to learning.

The project promises to help teachers better understand learning differences and the ways technology can remove barriers for a wide variety of students.

The original PLC group members (professors Nancy Dana and Kara Dawson from the College of Education; and PKY instructors Christy Barba, Leigh Anne Brewster, Erin Cooke, Angie Flavin, Christy Gabbard, Kathryn Janicke, Ashley Pennypacker Hill, Jill Ozog, Claire Robinson, and Ross Van Boven) are continuing the original project work into the 2017-18 school year.

The goal is to “help all students become expert learners,” says Christy Gabbard, P.K. Yonge’s program development and outreach specialist. “It’s important that every student feels that he or she is in the driver’s seat,” says Gabbard, “and that means that they must have a deep understanding of themselves, the different learning tools, and when to use them.”
Jennifer Coxen (BAE ’06, MEd ’07) and Kristin Birdsey (BAE ’07) are sharing the College of Education’s Outstanding Young Alumni award for 2016-17. They also share a sense of entrepreneurship along with their love and skill at teaching.

Coxen not only teaches gifted fourth and fifth graders at a suburban Atlanta elementary school, she also owns a skin care business. In 2016, she found a way to help others who dream of becoming teachers when she and her husband, Stephen, established an education scholarship in her name at UF.

After graduating from UF, Birdsey worked at several preschools, but soon decided she could create a better school of her own. In 2010, she teamed up with her childhood friend and fellow UF EduGator alumna, Krista Frey (BAE ’08), to open their ultra-successful Education Station & Preschool in northwest Gainesville.

Learning disabilities group honors UF Special Ed. graduate

UF education alumnus David Allsopp (MEd ’90, Specific Learning Disabilities; PhD, ’95, Special Education) has been named the 2017 Sam Kirk Educator of the Year by the Learning Disabilities Association of America (LDA). The national award recognizes an outstanding educator in special education who has made a difference in the lives of individuals with learning disabilities.

Allsopp is an endowed professor of exceptional student education and assistant dean at the University of South Florida College of Education. He also directs the USF college’s teaching and learning outreach and alliance center.

Recent grad’s lauded study sheds light on effects of stress in adolescents with emotional, behavioral disorders

An award-winning dissertation study by recent doctoral graduate Michelle Cumming (PhD ’16, Special Education) is providing a better understanding of how basic mental processes related to stress may contribute to emotional and behavioral problems in middle school-aged kids.

Cumming has been recognized for her research by receiving the Student Award in Quantitative Design from the Council for Exceptional Children. COE Special Education Professor Stephen W. Smith was her adviser. Cumming now is on faculty at the University of Nevada at Las Vegas.
Impact Remembered

The sudden death of Triple Gator alumnus Brian Dassler (BA ’01, Med ’02, EdD ’16) on March 21 had many at UF, the College of Education, the Florida Department of Education and educators across the nation mourning the loss of the rising “public education superstar.” Dassler died of a natural causes in Tallahassee, where he was deputy chancellor of educator quality for the DOE.

At UF, where he earned three degrees — a bachelor’s in English, a master’s in secondary education and a doctorate in Education Leadership — Brian twice was named Outstanding Young Alumnus at UF, once each by the colleges of Education and Liberal Arts and Sciences. In 2006, while teaching at Stranahan High School, he was named Teacher of the Year in Broward County, Florida.

Brian had come to the Florida DOE from New Orleans, where he’d moved after Hurricane Katrina to become the founding principal of KIPP Renaissance High School, a part of the nationally recognized KIPP network of public charter schools. While working at FLDOE, Brian also served on the Council of Advisors at UF’s Bob Graham Center for Public Service.

Memorial Scholarship Fund

To honor Brian Dassler’s life and career, the College of Education has created The Brian Dassler Transformational Leader Memorial Fund to support graduate students seeking opportunities to transform schools. For more information about the fund or to discuss other ways to honor Brian’s legacy, contact Brian Danforth, director of Development and Alumni Affairs, 352-273-4141.

“Perhaps the best thing about Brian is that he was a wonderful friend to so many. It seemed that no one involved in education reform in Florida was more than two degrees removed from one another, because Brian connected us all.”

– Don Pemberton, director of the UF Lastinger Center for Learning

BY THE NUMBERS (FY2017)

$13.4 Million
Highest giving in COE history

5.5%
Class of 1978
Highest class participation

60%
of donors
COE alumni

91%COE annual gifts
Gifts below $250
(totally $110,209)

13new funds
New endowed and non-endowed funds

137scholarships
Awarded
(totally $431,450)

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Established by: Dr. Adrienne Garcia

A. Leon and Paula F. Polhill Family Endowment Scholarship
Established by: A. Leon and Paula F. Polhill

Barbara Keener Dissertation Research Fund
Established by: Dr. Barbara J. Keener

Brian Dassler Educator Excellence Memorial Scholarship
Established by: Ognjen Sosa & Jenny L. Klein-Sosa

Brian Dassler Transformational Leader Memorial Fund
Established by: The FL Governor’s Education Team

Della Rosenberg ProTeach Scholarship
Established by: Della Rosenberg

Dr. Dennis P. Gallon Endowed Fellowship
Established by: Dr. Dennis P. Gallon

Dr. Anne Davies Vicino Endowed Scholarship
Established by: Dr. Anne Davies and Mr. Frank Vicino

Fenton Family Scholarship
Established by: Mary Jo Askew

Gerardo M. & Marjorie A. Gonzalez Fellowship
Established by: Dr. and Mrs. Gerardo Gonzalez

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Established by: Robert S. and Mildred M. Baynard Trust

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MORE THAN A BUILDING

Norman Hall is a nexus of opportunity, teaching, challenge, and growth. The well-worn paths in Norman Hall bear witness to many great accomplishments and decades of use. This long-awaited rehabilitation project will transform our learning environment, creating spaces and opportunities for greater collaboration and greater impact — enhancing the student experience and dignifying this historic institution.

Each day we work to transform education and strengthen society. To help facilitate our ambitious undertakings, Norman Hall will be rehabilitated into a world-class learning environment. We will protect the historic value and character of Norman Hall, while making needed advancements in our aging facility.

This project begins with an overhaul of the historic building’s infrastructure, including new roof, windows, plumbing, electrical system, heating, ventilation and air conditioning, and removal of asbestos and lead paint. These repairs and renovations will enable the addition of many student-centered features, such as configurable classrooms and meeting spaces, an onsite café, increased research space, and structural support for technology needs.

Norman Hall is where we embrace the power of learning and prepare to change lives. Our beloved building holds more than a lifetime of memories. And now as we work toward building a brighter future we look forward to the opportunities ahead.

Join us as we go #AboveTheNorm. Visit education.ufl.edu/abovethenorm to sign up for updates and behind-the-scenes looks at what makes Norman Hall and the College of Education so special. Help write the next chapter for the College of Education.

New Counselor Ed. scholarship to spur research into international adoption

When Anne Davies Vicino and her husband, Frank, adopted an orphaned 5-year-old boy from Ukraine in 2013 they knew they faced challenges. Their son suffered from social and emotional issues as a result of living in an institution without adequate resources or care. They struggled to help him bond with his new family and adapt to an unfamiliar country and culture.

Vicino looked for academic research on ways to help internationally adopted children who suffer from developmental deficits, including post-traumatic stress disorder. As a Gator grad (BS in psychology 2004) and licensed therapist specializing in attention deficit, hyperactivity, and anxiety disorders, she was an ideal investigator. Unfortunately, she found scarce empirical research on successful methods for addressing her son’s needs.

“We kept running into ‘more research is needed,’” she said.

So Vicino decided to do something about it. She donated $50,000 to create the Dr. Anne Davies Vicino Endowed Scholarship Fund to support doctoral students in the college’s Counselor Education program (ranked eighth nationally by U.S. News) to research aiding children with developmental, attachment, sensory or trauma issues, particularly related to the adoption of children internationally.

Counselor Ed. associate professors Jacqueline Swank and Sondra Smith-Adcock worked with Vicino to refine the research scope. Swank’s research focuses on prevention and intervention strategies for at-risk children and adolescents and their families. Smith-Adcock’s research includes play therapy and expressive arts, prevention of delinquency and bullying, interventions for children and families in high-poverty schools, and mental health counseling in schools.

“There is a wide-range of research that can be done,” Vicino said, including foundational studies comparing adopted vs. non-adopted children.

“How can you ameliorate the symptoms from day one? Hopefully, they can start a lineage of research in that at UF.”

For the second consecutive year, U.S. News & World Report rated the UF College of Education as America’s best online graduate education degree program. What does it take to rank No. 1? U.S. News says the college’s online program stands out for its strong student engagement, admissions selectivity and faculty credentials, among other factors.

Learn more and see what students are saying at education.ufl.edu.

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For more information, contact:

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