

GEAUX HIGHER

Louisiana State University Higher Education Administration



LSU

College of
Human Sciences & Education

**SPRING
2021
ISSUE**



FIERCE FOR THE FUTURE

The mission of the College of Human Sciences & Education is to advance cognitive, social, emotional, communicative, and physical development across the lifespan through programs in Education, Human Resource Education and Workforce Development, Kinesiology, Library and Information Science, Social Work, and the University Laboratory School. Through teaching, research, and service, the college plays a significant role in addressing the complex human issues and policy decisions facing Louisiana, the nation, and the world.

The LSU Higher Education Administration program prepares practitioner-scholars for rewarding careers in higher education. The program offers a traditional and online Master of Arts and doctoral degree. The curriculum helps candidates develop the leadership vision, higher education knowledge, and management skills needed to assume leadership positions across a broad spectrum of higher education fields—including (but not exclusive to) recruiting, admissions, orientation, financial aid, counseling, Greek affairs, student activities, academic support services, student athlete support services, career planning and placement, and faculty.

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EXECUTIVE EDITORS

Joy Blanchard, PhD

Writer/Designer: Gillian Foss

DEAN OF CHSE

Roland Mitchell, PhD

DIRECTOR, SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

F. Neil Mathews, PhD

HIGHER EDUCATION FACULTY

Joy Blanchard, PhD

Yu “April” Chen, PhD

Ashley Clayton, PhD

Roland Mitchell, PhD

Please send any story tips or ideas to hea@lsu.edu to be included in future issues!



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**DEAN, COLLEGE OF
HUMAN SCIENCES AND EDUCATION**

Roland Mitchell, PhD

E.B. “Ted” Robert Endowed Professor

Welcome to the LSU Higher Education program: the largest, most diverse, and arguably most engaged graduate program in the College of Human Sciences & Education. Our unwavering mission is to educate students who are dedicated to improving quality of human life across the lifespan. By joining us in these aims, you will learn from world-class educators including executive-level university administrators, law and retention specialists, and student affairs professionals. The value added to joining the Higher Education Administration program is the opportunity to engage our well-respected network of alumni who are sitting presidents, tenured faculty, education policy experts, endowed professors, and university research center directors, all committed to making an impact on our state, nation, and world.

n and Director



DIRECTOR, SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

F. Neil Mathews, PhD
Director, Olinde Endowed
Professor

The LSU School of Education's Higher Education graduate program has been meeting students' educational needs since the early 1990s. The program was the first in Louisiana with a full enrollment of degree seeking students, and it has increased diversity among its students and faculty as it has grown. Over the years, additional degree specializations have been developed within the MA, EdS, and PhD in Higher Education. For example, the MA program has expanded to include online courses and services to a broader range of students who previously lacked access to a high-quality higher education program. It caters to an increasing student population with diverse needs and varied career goals.

I invite you to read the Spring 2021 edition of the *Geaux Higher* publication to learn more about our graduates, faculty accomplishments, sponsored events, and research currently underway. It is filled with useful information for both current students and perspective applicants. At the conclusion of your perusal of this publication, please let us know your thoughts as to how we can improve the magazine for future editions. Also, please remember that we want to continue to remain in contact with you as we serve your higher education career needs.

We are proud of our ambitious program and believe that our students and faculty have a bright future meeting the needs of the higher education community through their teaching, research, and service careers. LSU's Higher Education program is helping shape the future of higher education in Louisiana, throughout the nation, and world. I personally wish you well if you are either an LSU higher education graduate, current student, or are considering one of our higher education programs.

CALLIN' BATON ROUGE?

Important dates and information for prospective HEA Students

1 Choose a Program.

The Higher Education Administration department at LSU offers three degree programs:

- Master of Arts (MA) in Education with an emphasis in Higher Education & Student Affairs (HESA)
- Online Master of Arts in Education with a Specialization in Higher Education Administration
- PhD in Educational Leadership & Research: Higher Education Administration

2 Write down the application deadline.

The Higher Education Administration programs at LSU admit for fall semester only, but the HEA Online MA program has 6 starting dates per calendar year.

- The application deadline for HEA's fall 2021 programs is April 1, 2021.
- It is possible to take up to 6 credits of non-matriculating coursework, should prospective students wish to familiarize themselves with program rigor prior to the fall semester in which they intend to enroll in the on-campus program.

3 Submit application materials.

For unconditional graduate admission, the Graduate School has a universal requirements:

- A Bachelor's degree from an accredited U.S. institution or the equivalent from a foreign institution.
- A grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.00 (A = 4.0) on all undergraduate work (or in the final 60 credit hours) and any graduate work already completed.

For the HEA MA and PhD programs, you will need:

- Official undergraduate and/or graduate transcript(s), and three letters of recommendation.
- *PhD applicants also need to submit a scholarly writing sample and GRE scores.*

For MA Students ONLY: As of fall 2019, the Graduate School has gone Test Optional!

- You may still opt to submit your GRE/GMAT scores, but it is not required.

4 Transferring from another program?

- Students who wish to transfer to our programs may transfer up to 12 credits from an accredited institution.
- Per the LSU Graduate School handbook, course credits from another program can only come from classes where letter grades (i.e., A, B, B+) were earned; pass/fail course credits will not count.

5 Who to contact for further info:

On-Campus MA and PhD Higher Education Administration Programs:

- Joy Blanchard, PhD, Program Director: hea@lsu.edu

Online MA in Higher Education Program:

- Michael Rutledge, Program Director: mrutle3@lsu.edu

For general LSU School of Education queries:

- Joy Blanchard, PhD, Program Director: jlblanchard@lsu.edu
- For SOE Assistantships (Preference given to doctoral students): Lois Stewart, Graduate Administrative Program Specialist: lstewart@lsu.edu

For general Graduate School queries

- Admissions: gradadmission@lsu.edu
- Student Services: gradsvcs@lsu.edu

6 Connect with HEA!



[facebook.com/LSUHESPA](https://www.facebook.com/LSUHESPA)



[@lsu_hespa](https://www.instagram.com/lsu_hespa)



Q&A with the VPSA



Meet Jeremiah Shinn, PhD, Vice President for Student Affairs (and HEA affiliate faculty member!), as he reflects on his first two years at LSU.

1 What initially drew you to the role of VPSA at LSU?

A couple thoughts come to mind: During my career, I have been fortunate to cross paths with several LSU alumni. They have been some of the smartest and most principled colleagues I've had – and they all absolutely love LSU, so I thought it was worth considering. During my interview process, the (now former) LSU President shared with me that LSU was probably the only big flagship university left that was still in the process of becoming what it would eventually become. That was very attractive to me, because I'm someone who is energized by progress and change. Maintenance isn't really in my professional DNA.

2 You teach Introduction to Student Affairs in the Higher Education Administration MA program. Ultimately, what do you hope that students gain from your course?

A former colleague of mine used to say: "...to the novice, the options are many, but to the expert the options are few." Leadership in student affairs requires the ability to appreciate and navigate nuance and complexity, so I hope students leave my course with that appreciation and navigational awareness. I also hope they go forward with the confidence that if they're willing to do the hard work, they can build the capacity necessary to be successful as leaders in student affairs.

3

Looking back at your first couple of years at LSU and in Louisiana: What has surprised you? Challenged you? Do you have a favorite memory or experience?

Surprised: I continue to be amazed by how important LSU is to this state and to its alumni. I knew it would be, but the intensity of it is like nothing I've experienced in higher education.

Challenged: I think this is a very 2020 answer, but navigating a global pandemic while simultaneously learning a new role and building a life in a new city have been challenging. I don't know if anything in my career fully prepared me for what 2020 would bring...and I'm not sure if all of 2020's lessons will be easily translated into other situations that follow. It's an odd time to lead, but I'm thankful to do so alongside a team that is genuinely dedicated to doing right by this institution and its students.

Favorite Memory: I recall being in Tiger Stadium at the beginning of the 4th quarter of the 2019 Florida game. Though I've been fortunate to experience the Final Four, multiple Indy 500s, NBA Playoff Games, European Soccer Matches, college football rivalry games, etc... in that moment, I thought: "...this is as good as it gets." I'll always remember that.

4 **Do you have any major goals for the Division of Student Affairs within the next few years?**

Of course there are many specific things we want to accomplish, but my role is to be sure we're laser-focused on increasing the quality of our programs, services, events, and experiences, while also ensuring that they are inclusive, accessible, and intentionally-built to foster a sense of mattering and belonging. I want us to work with a sense of urgency and embrace an accelerated pace of change. And ultimately, I hope the staff in our division will be known as the ones who are easy to work with, who get things done, and who are unconcerned with who gets the credit for serving students well.

Inclusion through **ASSESSMENT**

This summer, alongside nationwide demonstrations calling for the dismantling of systemic racism in America, LSU Athletics sought to create councils dedicated to diversity and inclusion efforts within the department. This is where Dr. Ashley Clayton—HEA Assistant Professor—came in. She conducted a racial climate survey, the findings of which will serve the department in all future D & I efforts.



As Ashley Clayton, PhD, has long been a fan of college athletics. She attends nearly every LSU football game, and can also routinely be found cheering on the Tigers at baseball games, basketball games, and gymnastic meets. This summer, the widespread reckoning on racial inequality in America spurred her into action, quickly combining that love for college athletics with a longtime research and service tenure that involves diversity and inclusion efforts at all levels of a student's education. Dr. Clayton was invited to serve on the inaugural Athletics Leadership Council on Diversity and Inclusion by Stephanie Rempe, COO of LSU Athletics, joining ranks with eleven other institutional leaders such as Fran Flory, Head Volleyball Coach; Lori Martin, Professor/Faculty Athletics Representative; and Walt Holliday, the Executive Director of the Academic Center for Student Athletes.

The purpose of the Diversity and Inclusion Leadership Council, as per TIGERS UNITED Goals, is to "chart a path of sustainable progress toward a clear vision of results-oriented change in the area of Diversity and Inclusion (D&I); serve as a leadership body; make needed connections in the department, campus, and the community."

The Leadership Council was one of four new organizations that LSU Athletics created this summer:

1. Leadership Council on Diversity and Inclusion
2. Student Athlete Council
3. Staff and Coaches Council
4. Black Student-Athlete Association

Dr. Clayton also took an active role this summer in co-facilitating both educational and support town hall-style sessions, coined the HEARD Series, including an Allyship and Wellness Check Session on June 4. The Allyship Session provided a space for student-athletes to engage in safe, amplified conversation regarding events around the nation while also identifying key institutional support services and best practices for mental health and self-care during tumultuous times. To reach the ultimate result of an "inclusive, equitable, and transformational athletics program," action steps and goals were clearly outlined. Goal One, however—the very first endeavor of the new Leadership Council—is where Dr. Clayton and select members sought to assess the current understanding of racial equality.

To do this, Dr. Clayton incorporated her expertise (she teaches the Assessment and Evaluation course in the HEA program) via the creation, dissemination, and reporting of a department-wide racial climate survey that yielded 300 respondents. She went through the Institutional Review Board (IRB) process in order to utilize research standards to increase response rates and ensure participant confidentiality. While serving as the PI for the project, Dr. Clayton collaborated with Dr. LaKeitha Poole, and Milan Stokes on the survey's creation and dissemination in September 2020. The survey results initially yielded fifteen reports, spanning the fifteen sections of targeted assessment. Dr. Clayton then partnered with Dr. Sarah Becker to transfer these findings into one large-scale final report during the months of November and December, which was then shared with the entire Athletics department in January 2021.



Dr. Ashley Clayton joined ranks with the head coaches of LSU's basketball and volleyball teams—Nikki Fargas (left) and Fran Flory (right)—to show solidarity at the Enough is Enough Rally on June 12. The three women also serve on the LSU Athletics Leadership Council on Diversity and Inclusion.

Fast Facts about the Racial Climate Survey:

The Racial Climate survey conducted by Dr. Clayton and the Survey Team was a massive undertaking and cornerstone of Goal One's eventual success. Below are some of the standout metrics that makes this assessment so critically important to all future informed decision-making within the Athletics Department.

74% **Response Rate**

Full-Time Employee Respondents **232**

4 Major Sections of Report:

- Workplace Environment**
- Workplace Practices and Responsibilities**
- Police Brutality and Activism**
- Workplace DEI Efforts**

For more information on the new councils and their respective initiatives within the LSU Athletics department, please visit:

<https://lsusports.net/feature/diversity>

Introducing: The Affiliate Faculty

Highlighting some of the extensive consortium of practitioner-scholars who bring their diverse expertise to the on-campus and online HEA programs.



PROFESSIONAL TITLE:

Vice President for Student Affairs
at Louisiana State University

DEGREE(S) EARNED:

BS, Arkansas Tech University;
MA, University of Michigan;
PhD, Eastern Michigan University

**COURSE(S) TAUGHT IN THE
HEA PROGRAM:**

Introduction to Student Affairs

Jeremiah Shinn, PhD

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY:

I view learning as a collaborative partnership where the student is responsible for their learning, while the instructor is responsible for providing a structure that facilitates active engagement in the discovery process. I recognize that learning is dynamic and not limited to what happens in any particular time or place, so the classroom is one of many places where learning will occur during any given course or program of study. I believe knowledge and experience are inextricably connected with one being a prerequisite for increasing the other, therefore as a scholar-practitioner, I strive to connect theory to practice, with context, history, and culture as the bridge.

Members of HEA

Edward F. Leonard III, PhD

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY:

My philosophy is to create as “real world” exploration of the topic as I can. In Organization & Administration of Higher Education, we explore the new American university and reengineering higher education through readings and case studies. In Finance of Higher Education, we explore the financial statements used by the institution’s senior leaders and governing board to make strategic decisions; we then enter a “computer-simulated real world” to further explore the implications of financial decisions.

FAVORITE PART ABOUT TEACHING IN THE HEA PROGRAM:

My experience with the graduate students in the HEA program over the last four years has been extremely positive. While almost all are actively employed, I continue to be impressed with their ability to balance their graduate work and professional work.



PROFESSIONAL TITLE:

Retired President:
Bethany College (KS)

DEGREE(S) EARNED:

BA, William Jewell College;
MBA, Saint Louis University;
PhD, University of Missouri-
Kansas City

COURSE(S) TAUGHT IN THE HEA PROGRAM:

1. Organization and Administration of Higher Education
2. Finance of Higher Education



PROFESSIONAL TITLE:

Director, LSU Flores MBA Program

DEGREE(S) EARNED:

BA, University of Massachusetts at Amherst;
MA, Boston College;
PhD, Louisiana State University

COURSE(S) TAUGHT IN THE HEA PROGRAM:

1. Foundations of Higher Education
2. Higher Education Finance

Dana Hart, PhD

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY & BACKGROUND

I have always been drawn to the educational enterprise. Following a family tradition (at least it turned out that way), I graduated from The University of Massachusetts at Amherst in 1998. After a brief stint in financial services and business development, I completed a master's degree in higher education administration at Boston College in 2002.

At that time, I transitioned my career into admissions, financial aid, and enrollment management at Harvard Business School. After several wonderful years at Harvard, I then pursued an exciting opportunity in MBA career development and corporate relations at the MIT Sloan School of Management.

I have been working at LSU for 12 years. In my professional role, I lead the Flores MBA Program at LSU. I oversee all aspects of the MBA program, including academic and faculty affairs; student recruiting; enrollment and student services; career development; corporate relations; and budgeting functions across campus-based and online MBA operations. I also teach our leadership course for our full-time and part-time MBA students.

I completed my PhD at LSU in higher education administration. A historical study, my dissertation is titled, “Toward an Ideal of Moral and Democratic Education: Afro-Creoles and Straight University in Reconstruction New Orleans, 1862-1896.”

My teaching interests include the history of higher education, higher education economics and finance, leadership, and organizational development, among other areas. My teaching philosophy parallels my research interests in higher education history, economics, and policy.

“I strive to be a reflective practitioner, to always be improving my practice, so that my teaching will serve all students. In that sense, I want my classroom to become a laboratory, through which I learn more about my subject matter, my students, and, ultimately, the craft of teaching.”

FAVORITE PART ABOUT TEACHING IN THE HEA PROGRAM:

I am a passionate alumnus of the higher education administration program at LSU. It's wonderful to connect and engage with so many talented students in my classes. My goal is to always help students become reflective practitioners who develop a deep understanding of both how and why institutional change must occur in order to better serve diverse student communities. This is essential for the higher education enterprise. As higher education scholars, practitioners, and students, it's important that we link theoretical perspectives with our everyday lived experiences.



PROFESSIONAL TITLE:

Director, New Student & Leadership Programs, Tulane University

DEGREE(S) EARNED:

BS, Southern Illinois University - Carbondale
MS, Southern Illinois University - Carbondale
PhD, Louisiana State University

COURSE(S) TAUGHT IN THE HEA PROGRAM:

1. Student Development Theory
2. Intro to Student Affairs

Kourtney P. Gray, PhD

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY:

My teaching philosophy is centered on application. I believe theory and research is only important if people can apply it to make change to their lives.

FAVORITE PART ABOUT TEACHING IN THE HEA PROGRAM:

I love teaching in general because I learn from every group of students, to observe how they think and pull so many experiences from their lives. I like to mentor and build connections.

“It is always a great privilege to help new students learn new things each course.”

Missy Korduner, PhD

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY:

At the foundation of my teaching is the philosophy that students be able to utilize the information learned in class, assignments, and activities and actually apply this knowledge to their daily lives. It's not enough to simply learn the information—I want students to be able to truly embrace it and apply it in the real world. I also feel an obligation to do everything possible to support my students in their quest for a degree. In working with the practicum course, the focus is on supporting and preparing students for the job search process to help them successfully enter the professional workforce in Higher Education/Student Affairs.

FAVORITE PART ABOUT TEACHING IN THE HEA PROGRAM:

I enjoy teaching the practicum course as it gives me an opportunity to support and help develop the future leaders of the field of Higher Education/Student Affairs. In addition, it provides real life, hands-on experience to our students in the work environment, which not only enhances their knowledge of a new functional area but gives them invaluable experience in working with students and developing their skills in the profession.



PROFESSIONAL TITLE:

Assistant Professor of
Professional Practice – School of
Leadership and Human Resource
Development

DEGREE(S) EARNED:

BA, University of Connecticut;
MA, University of Connecticut;
PhD, Louisiana State University

COURSE(S) TAUGHT IN THE HEA PROGRAM:

Internship in Higher Education



Emeric Imre Császár, PhD, LPC-S, NCC

PROFESSIONAL TITLE(S):

-Assistant Professor of
Professional Practice
-Admission Coordinator –
Counselor Education
Program

DEGREE(S) EARNED:

BS, Toccoa Falls College;
MS, Stetson University;
PhD, Louisiana State
University

COURSE(S) TAUGHT IN THE HEA PROGRAM:

Basic Counseling Skills/
Interpersonal Communication

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY:

One of the first and the main foundations of my teaching philosophy is the emphasis on the importance of student-educator relationship. I think building relationships with students is one of the cornerstones on any level of education. Virginia Satir developed the Human Validation Process Model (later known as Conjoint Therapy Model) and she believed that it doesn't matter how well someone delivers a technique or a skill if they do not build a strong relationship with their clients first. I find that true to be in teaching/education also. If I don't spend time developing relationship between the student and myself, the student's level of success may be less than desired. And what does student success really mean? To me, student success means more than just getting/earning a degree, but it is about learning something applicable that a student can retain and apply in both her/his professional and personal life while at school as well as after graduation.

The other benchmark of my teaching philosophy is the embodiment of a multiculturally competent pedagogue. This idea is based on the American Counseling Association's Multicultural and Social Justice Counseling Competencies. According to this theoretical model, at any given time one must be aware of the possible interaction between the matrix of underserved/underrepresented - privileged individuals. More importantly, awareness is no longer sufficient.

In addition, there are five other elements of my teaching philosophy. These encompass John Dewey's ideas on experiential learning and experiential teaching. The first of this is constructivism. I don't believe in deconstructing the individual/student but rather believe that students come to the classroom with knowledge and experience already that can be built upon. Learning can occur as the students actively engage in building on what they already know. Perhaps later, the student can (re)construct what she /he knows by her/his own choice as she/he becomes exposed to (new) knowledge and engages in research. Constructivism in learning is also about how the knowledge becomes alive for students; how they may search and find meaning; and how that meaning becomes alive as well as practical/usable knowledge. Collaboration is also important. Opportunities must be provided where the student is able to engage with the material she/he is learning from in a meaningful way. Beyond that, students are learning by engaging discussions with the educator, with each other, and also by how those interactions take place.

The next element in my teaching philosophy is that learning needs to be inquiry based. I encourage students to ask questions, search for answers tirelessly, and develop a desire to become life-long learners. An integrative approach in teaching is also central. The curriculum I create in my courses must fit (in/with) and support the program's mission and goals. In some sense, it is a part of the puzzle presenting important pieces to create and be part of a holistic learning process. Lastly, I believe reflection is essential part of learning. Reflecting on the materials included, what other resources may possibly be included, how one assesses the learning, what is important, how can components be improved - are just a few ideas how reflection may be deepening the learning method.

Emeric Imre Császár, PhD, LPC-S, NCC

“ As an educator, I believe my awareness calls me to compassionate action to create an anti-oppressive stance in a culturally responsive and socially just manner...the notion of someone as a mere student is foreign to me because of students’ previous experiences are present in the classroom. Students indeed can learn from each other and the educator her/himself can indeed learn from students. ”

FAVORITE PART ABOUT TEACHING IN THE HEA PROGRAM:

Most students in the Higher Education Administration Program come from/with diverse backgrounds (by all meaning of the word diverse). I love these differences. I share the idea/value that differences do not separate us, but rather help us grow and become better. Some students already have some experience working in higher education and some have a great desire to do so. Either way, students in the Higher Education Administration Program have high levels of longing and enthusiasm to learn, work, and help others. Experiencing this type of a disposition and energy is captivating as well as contagious. I like working with students in higher ed because I can be part of their progress and part of their excitement. At times, I can also see struggles and although struggles can be difficult to face, I like to be part of the solution. Being part of the entire development as an educator is pretty cool.

Monique Cain, PhD



TEACHING PHILOSOPHY:

Being a Black female and first-generation college student heavily influences my research and teaching philosophy. I believe that classrooms are learning environments meant to help students flourish as they develop skills, knowledge, and gain exposure which enhances and influences their innovation, ideologies, and success. I love that in my classes, I provide mentorship and navigation assistance for coursework, career paths, and professional opportunities. I do this by creating meaningful course-related projects that students can add to their portfolios and resumes at the end of each course to help them overcome possible challenges inherent in their experiences and positionalities.

DISSERTATION TITLE:

"Impact on the Engagement of At-Risk Students: Evaluation of Postsecondary Living Learning Communities"

FUN FACT:

In addition to her other professional roles, Dr. Cain also owns HillTop Barbershop and Beauty in Baton Rouge!

PROFESSIONAL TITLES:

- Director - Information and Security Services for LSU Residential Life
- LSU Black Faculty and Staff Caucus President

DEGREE(S) EARNED:

- BS, Louisiana State University;
- MPA, Louisiana State University;
- PhD, Louisiana State University

COURSE(S) TAUGHT IN THE

HEA PROGRAM:

1. Student Development Theory
2. Administration of Technology Programs (Ed. Tech. Program)

International Reverse Transfer Students: A Critical Analysis Based on Field, Habitus, and Social and Cultural Capital

*An excerpted article first-authored by Dr. Yu “April” Chen, as published in full in
Community College Review, Volume 48, Number 4, 2020, pp. 376-399.*

Abstract

Objective: *International reverse transfer students are international students who begin their post-secondary journey at a four-year institution but subsequently transfer to a community college. In this qualitative study, we examine the lived experiences of international reverse transfers to understand the reasons for reverse-transfer and to understand the students’ learning experiences.*

Methods: *Using a phenomenological approach, we recruited 10 international reverse transfer students attending one four-year university or one of the two community colleges. We conducted individual interviews with all participants and analyzed transcript data through Bourdieu’s sociological theory of field, habitus, and social and cultural capital.* **Results:** *We identified three types of international reverse transfer students: undergraduate reverse transfers, temporary reverse transfers, and postbaccalaureate reverse transfers. Each type reported different reasons for reverse transfer but shared similar influential factors of the reverse transfer process as well as the learning experiences while enrolled at the community colleges.* **Contributions:** *This study helps to fill an information and research gap regarding international reverse transfer students. We present the academic, social, and cultural challenges faced by international students and offer practical implications for higher education practitioners for improved understandings and better processes to serve international students from diverse cultural backgrounds.*

Keywords: *reverse transfer, international students, social and cultural capital, and field theory*

Currently, more than one million international students are studying at U.S. higher education institutions (Institute of International Education [IIE], 2018a); more than double the number from the last decade. Of these international students, about 8.6% or 94,562 students are attending community colleges (IIE, 2018b). While some international students use a community college as a stepping-stone to a four-year university (Bohman, 2009; Hagedorn & Lee, 2005); others attend a community college for other reasons. Although rarely discussed or studied, some international students arrive in the United States to study at four-year colleges and universities but subsequently transfer to a community college (Hagedorn et al., 2016; Zhang, 2015b). Transfers from the four-year sector to the two-year is termed “reverse transfer” (Townsend & Dever, 1999, p. 5). International reverse transfer students have rarely been identified, counted, or studied.



The reasons for reverse transfer are as diverse as the students themselves. Some students transfer due to significant academic challenges at the four-year institutions; others may earn additional credits during the summer thus expediting academic progress toward a bachelor's degree (Hagedorn & Castro, 1999; Townsend & Dever, 1999).

Yet another group of students already holding bachelor's degrees may subsequently enroll in a community college for career or technical education (Friedel & Friesleben, 2017; Quinley & Quinley, 1999). Previous studies have focused on different aspects of reverse transfers and implications to institutions for serving this population (e.g., Hagedorn & Castro, 1999; Hossler et al., 2012; Townsend & Dever, 1999). However, with only a few exceptions (i.e., Hagedorn et al., 2016; Zhang, 2015b), studies have been limited to domestic reverse transfers.

Although international reverse transfers may share similarities with their domestic counterparts, they have unique backgrounds and characteristics. For example, culture adjustment may play a critical role in international students' learning experiences within the four-year institutions and subsequently influence their decision making of reverse transfer. Furthermore, since most international students aspire to achieve a bachelor's degree (IIE, 2018b), it might be that fewer of them would consider attending a community college after obtaining a bachelor's degree; or international students may consider postbaccalaureate reverse transfer for reasons other than professional development. To better understand this unique but growing group, it is crucial to examine the reverse transfer experiences from the perspective of the international students themselves.

Literature Review: We collected and examined relevant literature in three areas:

- (a) studies on reverse transfer among domestic students
- (b) studies on international students' adjustment to U.S. colleges
- (c) international students' learning experiences within community colleges

Domestic Reverse Transfer Students

National statistics indicate that 10% to 15% of the initial four-year students will reverse transfer to community colleges at some point in their educational journey (Hossler et al., 2012; Kalogrides & Grodsky, 2011). Townsend and Dever (1999) identified three types of reverse transfers:

- (1) Undergraduate reverse transfer students (**URTS**) who transfer to the two-year college without immediate plans for a bachelor's degree.
- (2) Temporary reverse transfer students (**TRTS**) who attend community college for a short period of time (i.e., summer only) and transfer the credits back to the four-year college to be applied toward a bachelor's degree.
- (3) Postbaccalaureate reverse transfer students (**PRTS**) who attend the community college after earning a bachelor's degree.

“This study fills a gap through firsthand, in-depth qualitative data from international students to understand their perspectives and lived experiences regarding reverse transfer.”

International Reverse Transfer Students: A Critical Analysis Based on Field, Habitus, and Social and Cultural Capital

International Students' Adjustment

Responding to the rapid increase of international enrollment during the last decade, previous studies focused on international students' adjustment and transition to U.S. postsecondary institutions. Some common topics include (a) engagement and campus involvement (e.g., Glass & Gesing, 2018; Mamiseishvili, 2012); (b) psychological challenges and adjustment (e.g., Li et al., 2014; Young, 2011); (c) interaction with American and international peers (e.g., Rose-Redwood & Rose-Redwood, 2013; Trice, 2004); (d) academic challenges (e.g., Adhikari, 2018; Durkin, 2008). We focus on academic challenges because it is the top reason international students reverse transfer (Hagedorn et al., 2016).

A language barrier is one of the most important factors contributing to academic challenges for most international students. The effects of poor English proficiency include the need to take English remedial classes which require time and attention, and academic difficulties due to poor listening and reading fluency (Hung & Hyun, 2010; Sato & Hodge, 2009). In addition, many international students must culturally adapt to a Western learning style (Durkin, 2008; Kim, 2008). The rapid increase of international enrollment was due in large part by international undergraduate enrollment from East Asian countries.

International Students in Community Colleges

In an era where community colleges face underfunding and program reduction, international students can contribute to tuition income and a higher retention rate (Raby et al., 2015). Currently, 17.8% of the international student enrollments (or 78,819 students) are within community colleges (IIE, 2018b). Responding to these numbers, researchers have taken notice of international students enrolled in community colleges.

Some literature discusses the rationale, historical background, and philosophical premise of including international education into community colleges' missions (Raby et al., 2015; Raby & Valeau, 2007). Other empirical research focuses on examining various aspects of international community college students. For example, previous studies examined the reasons why international students attend community colleges. These reasons include lower college entry requirements, lower tuition costs, and the opportunity to transfer to a four-year university (Bevis & Lucas, 2007; Bohman, 2009, 2014; Hagedorn & Lee, 2005). In addition, since many foreign countries do not have any higher education institutions that are similar to the community colleges in U.S., prospective international students' perceptions about community colleges may influence their choices (Zhang & Hagedorn, 2014).



Purposes and Research Question:

Simply stated, there is a dearth of studies on international reverse transfer students. To fill this gap, this study seeks to understand the unique experiences of international reverse transfer students. In particular, this study examines why and how international students reverse transferred to a community college and, more importantly, how these students perceive the reverse transfer process as part of their college journey in the United States. The following research questions guided this study:

Research Question 1: Why did international reverse transfers decide to attend a community college?

Research Question 2: What factors influenced international students' reverse transfer process? From whom and how did international reverse transfers learn the process?

Research Question 3: How do international reverse transfers understand their learning experiences in community colleges?

Research Question 4: Did the reverse transfer experiences help international students to reach their education goals?

Theoretical Framework: The theoretical framework for this study was adopted from Bourdieu's (1973, 1985, 1986) theory of *field*, *habitus*, and *social and cultural capital*. In particular, we utilized Bourdieu's theory as "an analytical approach" rather than "a static formal system" (Martin, 2003, p. 24). As an analytical framework, Bourdieu's theory can help interpret why international students struggle with unexpected challenges and experiences and choose to reverse transfer.

Methodology: The Phenomenological Approach

We adopted a phenomenological approach to examine the lived experiences of international reverse transfers highlighting reverse transfer behavior as the focused phenomenon. We collected data through individual interviews from international students who participated in the reverse transfer process. We adopted a hermeneutical phenomenology approach to highlight the interpretation of the reverse transfer phenomenon. In addition to describing the what of the phenomenon (the textural description) and the how individuals experienced this phenomenon (the structural description), we also brought an "interpretive process" to interpret "the meaning of the lived experiences" (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 78).

Research Sites and Participants: Participants were recruited from one research-intensive public university and two large public community colleges located in the state of Iowa. The two public, multi-campus community colleges are located in different cities. Each institution is close to a large public university in a nearby city (one of the four-year institutions was our research site). According to the institutional reports, the community colleges had 230 and 280 students identified as nonresident alien, respectively. Both nearby public universities enrolled approximately 1,800 international undergraduates. This study is part of a mixed-method research project where all international students enrolled in the research sites were invited to participate via a survey or interview. In this paper, we focus solely on the interviews. Ten international reverse transfer students participated in the interviews.

FACULTY BRIEF

Table 1. Background Information of the Participants.

Pseudo name	Age	Gender	Major	Nationality	Type	Current enrollment
Terra	21	Female	Liberal Arts and Sciences	China	URTS	Full time 2-year
Brandon	21	Male	Liberal Arts and Sciences	China	URTS	Full time 2-year
Victor	25	Male	Liberal Arts and Sciences	China	PRTS	Full time 2-year
Chris	20	Male	Business	India	URTS	Full time 2-year
Lizy	21	Female	Biology	Malaysia	TRTS	Full time 4-year
Eric	20	Male	Civil Engineering	India	URTS	Full time 4-year
Amber	19	Female	Animal Science	China	TRTS	Full time 4-year
Shelley	22	Female	Industrial Engineering	Malaysia	TRTS	Full time 4-year
Olivia	21	Female	Advertising	Malaysia	TRTS	Full time 4-year
Maddie	28	Female	Accounting	China	TRTS	Full time 4-year

Note. URTS = Undergraduate Reverse Transfer Student; PRTS = Postsecondary Reverse Transfer Student; TRTS = Temporary Reverse Transfer Student.

Data Collection: We conducted individual, face-to-face interviews with each participant using a semi-structured interview protocol. Each interview lasted approximately 45 to 60 minutes. Interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. To provide a more comfortable environment, some interviews were conducted in Chinese by a native speaker.

Data Analysis: Analysis included open and axial coding of the transcript data (Creswell, 2014). First, we performed an initial open coding process to obtain a general understanding of the reverse transfer phenomenon from the perspectives of the interviewees. Two researchers open-coded the transcripts independently and compared their codes for inter-rater reliability (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). Second, we conducted axial coding among different codes. We identified repeating patterns to form underlying categories. Finally, we adopted both deductive and inductive approaches to generalize themes that present international reverse transfer students' perceptions and experiences.

Trustworthiness: We conducted member checks with the interview participants during the study. Two bilingual scholars (Chinese and English native speakers) who were not involved in the interviews reviewed the translation of the data. In addition, we triangulated the data through different sources such as the international student office website and university or college policies. We also interviewed international student advisors at one of the community colleges for triangulation purposes.

Researchers' Role in this Study: We advocated the researchers' identification and embraced the subjectivity it brings to this qualitative study (Creswell, 2014). The lead researcher identifies as a Chinese international scholar. She was a graduate international student in a four-year university. The second researcher is also a Chinese international scholar. The third researcher is a native English speaker who is a senior administrator and professor in a four-year university.

Results: This study confirmed that the Townsend and Dever's (1999) categorization of the three-type reverse transfers holds true for international students. We discovered:

- (a) international URTS, students who were compelled to leave the original four-year institution and study in a community college;
- (b) international TRTS, students who enrolled in community college courses during the summer and transferred earned credits back to their four-year institution;
- (c) international PRTS, students who attended a community college despite a previously earned bachelor's degree.

The three types of international reverse transfers have both similarities and differences in terms of their experiences. Specifically, the three types share similarities in terms of their learning experiences within community colleges as well as influential factors of the reverse transfer processes. However, they also had distinctive reasons for reverse transfer.

Reasons for Reverse Transfer: Differences Among the Three Types

URTS: Community college as a safety net. These four students turned to a community college for a rescue that would hopefully allow them to maintain legal student status and remain in the United States while continuing to earn eligible college credits that could ultimately be credited toward a bachelor's degree.

TRTS: Community college as a helping tool.

TRTSs took community college courses to help them obtain a bachelor's degree faster, more economically, and possibly with a better GPA.

PRTS: Non-academic purpose. Only one participant (Victor) was classified as a PRTS. Victor attended a local community college because he needed legal status to stay in the United States while waiting for the approval of his permanent residency (green card).

Factors Influencing the Reverse Transfer Process: Similarities Among the Three Types

Limited resources from the family. Before making any decisions related to reverse transfer, international students must understand the community college system, transfer, and reverse transfer mechanisms. In most foreign countries, there is no community college system. It is therefore understandable that international students obtain little to no related information from parents, family, or friends in their home country.

Roles of an academic advisor. Most of the international students in our sample made the reverse transfer decision without the benefit of an academic advisor. It was only after the reverse transfer decision was made that they met with an advisor for specific resources such as course offerings and necessary paperwork. The reason for not seeking advice from an academic advisor varied.

Roles of peers. Compared to family and academic advisors, the students found friends and peers as more important resources regarding reverse transfers. When asked "where did you learn about community colleges and reverse transfer," most participants mentioned roommates, friends, and classmates. They learned from others who had transfer or reverse transfer experiences.

Learning Experiences in Community Colleges: Similarities Among the Three Types

Class instruction. Both international URTSs and TRTSs reported positive learning outcomes from community colleges. They benefited from smaller class sizes and in some instances, more attention from instructors.

Increased knowledge about U.S. higher education system. Through their reverse transfer experiences, the international reverse transfer students obtained important knowledge about the American postsecondary system and the role of community colleges. Both international URTSs and TRTSs indicated that their perceptions of community colleges were changed due to their experiences.

Discussion: This study applied Bourdieu's theory as a theoretical framework to analyze international students' decision making and experiences regarding their reverse transfer from a four-year university to a community college. Many international reverse transfer students in this study came from middle to upper class families in their home country. According to Bourdieu's theory of social and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1973, 1986), their parents should have been able to transfer the knowledge and skills regarding how college works and provide the economic capital to send their children to study abroad. It would be expected that these international students would have inherited the social and cultural capital to provide a privileged position with respect to college attendance. However, the international reverse transfers in this study, especially the URTSs, experienced unexpected negative experiences in their original four-year universities.

Stories from the four URTSs, Brandon, Terra, Chris, and Eric inferred that they lacked a specific segment of social and cultural capital that is essential for success in a U.S. four-year university.

Based on Bourdieu's discussion about social field and habitus (Bourdieu, 1985; Reed-Danahay, 2005), these international students may possess inherited social and cultural capital that can help them adapt to a college life in their home country. But the same social and cultural capital may not be equally valuable in a new *field*, namely, a U.S. four-year university. Their *habitus*, or their beliefs, values, tastes, and cultural preferences that were nurtured back in their home country appear not to be compatible within this new field. For example, as observed in some of our interviews, international students (e.g., Brandon and Terra in this study) may not understand the American definitions and rules regarding plagiarism, academic misconduct, and dishonesty (Bamford & Sergiou, 2005; Bista, 2011). Similarly, many international students (e.g., Lizy and Maddie in this study) face challenges within the classroom due to their unfamiliarity with the Western-style of teaching and learning. Students from Confucian cultural heritage countries often see instructors as a guru to respect and would therefore never challenge or present negative behaviors toward the instructor (Choi & Nieminen, 2013). These students are taught to never present ideas that may oppose the views of others because this may cause someone to lose face and cause disharmony within the group (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005; Kirkbride et al., 1991). For these reasons, East Asian international students may feel uncomfortable and not know how to respond in a discussion section within the four-year classroom.

While the above discussion refers to the academic challenges international students face at four-year institutions, it also relates to why international students tend not to seek help from student service professionals (i.e., making the reverse transfer decision without consulting with advisors). In particular, student services staff may be viewed as individuals with higher positions in a structured hierarchical power system by many international students. A student, who is often placed on a lower position in such a system must show respect to the academic advisors, counselors, administrators, etc. rather than actively seek suggestions and help from them. Therefore, international students may rely on other resources (i.e., peers, online resources) to get the information they need.

“In sum, the beliefs, cultural preferences and worldviews (or, the habitus) might create barriers, both in and outside of classrooms, to international students.”

Although some inherited social and cultural capitals were not as helpful as expected for international students, other capitals may be critical for them to be resilient and eventually successful in the new field.

Implications for Policy, Practice, and Further Research: International reverse transfers have been given little attention in the community college literature. This study explored the decision-making process and learning experiences among international reverse transfer students. Findings of this study are particularly important to international programs and offices, instructors, academic advisors, and administrators at both four- and two-year institutions.



Implications for Policy and Practice

Our findings indicate different experiences and needs of the three types of international reverse transfers. It is critical that community college professionals understand the nuances among these three types and provide specific services to meet students' needs. We suggest that community college professionals provide official, practical, and clear guidance on applying and transferring back to a four-year institution. International URTSs may also benefit from the growth in non-cognitive skills such as multi-tasking and time management. We suggest community college professionals or community college international offices create special orientations and workshops that are intentionally designed to nurture these skills. Community college professionals should be aware that these students may highly benefit from counseling services. Second, it will be beneficial for community college professionals and university international offices to work together to educate new international students about the community college system and the transfer/reverse transfer mechanism. Third, student affairs professionals at both two and four-year institutions should be aware of the cultural differences and the subsequent support necessary for international students to be successful.

Implications for Future Research

Further exploration in other states and geographical locations is necessary. We also recommend future studies highlight the voices of international URTSs who are less or not successful. Finally, we recommend that future studies include more international reverse transfers from other Asian and non-Asian countries.

**Read this article in full in
*Community College Review!***

Thesis Route?



Two MA alumni weigh in on their

Regina Schneider, MA

Success Coach at University of Maryland Global Campus

OVERALL EXPERIENCE: The thesis was definitely a labor of love; I put in a lot of late hours working on it. I was unable to take electives at the same time, which was initially disappointing, but I would not have been able to do both! It made me realize how much I enjoy doing research and am interested in pursuing that route in the future. I really enjoy doing qualitative work, especially when it makes people feel heard. I was nervous about pursuing this route; I only had a little bit of research experience, but I learned a lot from doing a thesis, and it made me realize how much more I still have to learn.

ON MENTORSHIP: I could not have done it without the guidance of Dr. Chen—she is a great mentor. I became a better researcher because of her.

ADVICE FOR FUTURE STUDENTS: The most challenging part is finding participants—my advice is to use every avenue you have, whether it be advertising with flyers on campus, reaching out to people you know, or sending out emails to various groups on campus. Also, there will always be people who detract from your work or question your judgment and even competence. The people who matter will appreciate your work. And remember that, in the end, it's about making a positive impact.

WHAT'S NEXT? I would love to participate in research again in the future, whether that means pursuing another MA degree or moving to the PhD route. I don't have any concrete plans at the moment; I am mainly trying to see where I want to go in the future, career-wise. I will probably be a lifelong learner, whether it's through taking classes or getting certificates/degrees.



Thesis Title:

“There is Enough Food on the Table”: Religious Minority Students’ Experiences with the Campus Spiritual Climate.



R Portfolio Route?

respective capstone choices.

Nick Aniol, MA

Residence Life Coordinator, Louisiana State University

OVERALL EXPERIENCE: Preparing a professional portfolio as a capstone project was a way for me to reflect on my academic accomplishments, my growth as a practitioner, and my aspirations. The portfolio option was an opportunity for me to revisit each of the course I had taken in the program, my original interest in higher education, and the experience gained in my assistantship.

COURSEWORK AS PREPARATION: In addition to a professional biography and a resume, the portfolio requires a brief synthesis of the courses taken, select artifacts from coursework, and a philosophy statement. Largely, my portfolio included work and perspectives learned from Student Development Theory, College Students in the U.S., and Finance in Higher Education courses. These courses provided the artifacts and shaped my philosophy statement, which focused on an institution's obligation to not only provide access to higher education, but to ensure holistic student success.

ADVICE FOR FUTURE STUDENTS: As future MA students consider and craft their portfolio, it's incredibly important that they consider this a personal and unique opportunity to reflect on their own areas of passion and experiences. Though there is a rubric, there is an expectation that each portfolio will be reflective of their own academic interests, work and assistantship experiences, and ambitions.

WHAT'S NEXT? Overall, the portfolio prepared me for my next step after graduation—full time employment. After another few years in Residential Life, I plan to pursue a doctorate in higher education; having a PhD will prepare me for holding a role in university leadership. While often the thesis or comprehensive paper are presented as the best options for individuals who plan to pursue a terminal degree, I am confident that the courses I've taken have prepared me!



Above and Beyond:

Nick won the “Outstanding Portfolio” award for the HEA program during Spring 2019 commencement.



Spotlight on the **Online MA:**



Interview with Callista Brown, a recent alum, on her experience in the online Higher Education Administration master's program at LSU.

1. How would you describe your overall experience in the HEA online MA program at LSU?

I really enjoyed the LSU's HEA online program. This program provided me the flexibility to obtain my master's degree while still remaining employed in Houston, Texas. I was able to make connections in higher education both locally and nationally because of this program. I also felt the professors really cared about their students and invested time into helping the students learn and develop professionally.

2. Do you have a favorite experience from your time in the program?

My favorite assignment during the program was in the Leadership in Higher Education course with Dr. Campbell. Dr. Campbell connected each student with a higher education professional for an interview assignment. Dr. Campbell took the time to understand each student's goals and offered a valuable connection in the field. This was an amazing networking opportunity and occurred at the perfect time for me. I was struggling with my career path and this interview opportunity offered me some much-needed perspective and support.

CALLISTA BROWN, MA

PROFESSIONAL TITLE:

Program Manager for the Masters of Statistics and Data Science Program at the University of Houston.

For more information on the Online MA program in Higher Education Administration, please direct questions to Michael Rutledge at mrutle3@lsu.edu.

3. Did you have any particularly transformative courses and/or professors during the program?

Yes, several! Professor [Dana] Hart was one of my first professors in the program. At the time I was feeling insecure about returning to school. He was very supportive and encouraging. At the time, I had adopted a “just get through this program” attitude, lacking inspiration and passion for this educational journey that I had embarked on. Professor Hart’s passion for and knowledge of the history of higher education inspired me and, because of the confidence I gained in that class, my attitude completely changed.

Dr. [Joy] Blanchard was another transformative professor. Her Law and Ethics Class was one of the more challenging courses in the program. I was impressed by her knowledge on the topic. Since this program is an asynchronous program, there are not many opportunities for face-to-face time with the professor. Dr. Blanchard offered weekly Zoom sessions to support the learning process. Those Zoom sessions were extremely helpful to understanding the course content. Also, during those Zoom sessions, she demonstrated real life application of higher education law and ethics. I have, more than once, found myself taking her approach to how law and ethics apply in real life practice.

4. How have you transferred any new skills and/or knowledge that you gained from the program to your current professional and academic endeavors?

This program offered me perspective and changed the way I look at my role in higher education. One example is that the program inspired me to join a committee at work. I would never have joined prior to the HEA program.

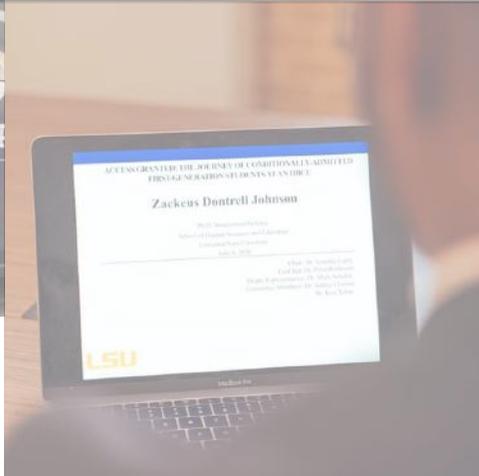
My career in HEA is a second career path and prior to my time in this program I often felt like an outsider. I believe the program offered insight into the higher education profession and allowed me to feel like I really belonged!

“I really enjoyed the LSU’s HEA online program. This program provided me the flexibility to obtain my master’s degree while still remaining employed in Houston, TX. I was able to make connections in higher education both locally and nationally because of this program.”

STUDENT SPOTLIGHTS:

Tigers who **geaux** above and beyond in research and **and** service...





...no matter the circumstances.

Defending During a Pandemic

Zackeus Johnson, PhD, a standout graduate of the Higher Education Administration program, details the good, the bad, and the need-to-know about his dissertation process in 2020.



ON HIS OVERALL EXPERIENCE IN HEA AT LSU:

My overall experience within the HEA doctoral program at LSU was amazing, even with a few small plot twists, including having multiple chairpersons and pivoting during COVID-19 to reach my goal of graduating in 2020. It was heartwarming to know that there were professors who genuinely cared for my success and the benefits of earning a PhD from an R1 research institution. The experiences, discussions, and group projects inside and outside of the classroom were dynamic.

FAVORITE MEMORIES:

There are many memories that were made within this program, but my most memorable moments include: Dr. Jennifer Curry agreeing to serve as my committee chair after my former chair resigned; and [former LSU President] Dr. F. King Alexander lecturing in my College Access course during my second year as a doctoral student, sharing his educational journey and his experiences prior to presidency. No matter where Dr. Alexander saw me from then on, he would either remember I worked at Southern University or that I was a member of the 100 Black Men of Metro Baton Rouge. That intentionality was really special.

PROFESSIONAL TITLE:

Dean of University College at Southern University - Baton Rouge

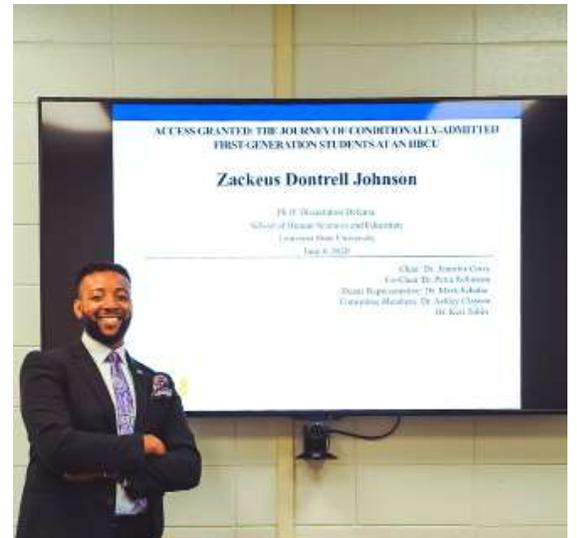
DISSERTATION TITLE:

"Access Granted: The Journey of Conditionally Admitted, First-Generation College Students at an HBCU."

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Jennifer Curry, PhD, Committee Chair
Petra Robinson, PhD, Co-Chair
Ashley Clayton, PhD
Kerri Tobin, PhD
Mark Schafer, PhD, Deans Representative

“I learned that being a perfectionist is 'ok' but providing a great piece of writing and recommendations for future readers is most important. Additionally, *delayed does not mean denied*. Defending your dissertation virtually is nothing short of amazing; all it lacks are the hugs from your committee members after successfully passing!”



DISSERTATION ABSTRACT:

"This qualitative case study was undertaken to understand the perspectives of first-generation, conditionally admitted students, regarding how their participation in a college access program may or may not have contributed to their persistence at a Historically Black College and University. This study was grounded in Tinto's (2012) Model of Institutional Action for Student Success, Schlossberg's (1990) Transition Theory, and Astin's (1984) Student Involvement Theory. This single case study was positioned at a university in the South, named Success State University for this research. The study included 5 female participants who participated in virtual interviews due to the unforeseen Coronavirus 2019 outbreak. Qualitative analysis was utilized to address and articulate the need for access programs on college campuses intended to aid the growing population of students who do not meet the regular admissions requirements, but have the drive and grit to gain access, persist, and become committed to their institution and its mission. All participants were first-generation college students who shared their unique experience as participants in the Journey2Success program. The participants in this study and their authentic experiences were necessary and deemed eligible for deliberations and discussions on expectations that should be met by institutions to (a) increase persistence, (b) retention (c) graduation rates, and (d) align with the overall mission of the institution. Findings confirmed that the implementation of the academic goals plan, in the first-year experience course, intrusive academic advising, peer mentoring, weekly reminders, motivational Mondays, coupled with tutorial services, ensured the participants in this study, were successfully equipped with basic knowledge, skills, and professional disposition to begin their second year of college and career exploration."

Defending During a Pandemic

ON PIVOTING DISSERTATION PROGRESS IN THE FACE OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC:

The navigation of COVID-19 was very challenging. I was working full time at Southern University and A&M College, assuming new roles and responsibilities all while attempting to finalize IRB documentation at two institutions, coupled with soliciting participation from participants who met the criteria for my study. As cases increased in Louisiana, my first thought was: “I’m not going to complete this dissertation and defend.” However, I was constantly encouraged by Dr. Curry; she did not take “NO” for an answer! As a result, my approach became more creative in order to overcome challenges during the uncharted times, such as:

Challenge 1: Due to students having to abruptly move off campus and immediately switch their modes of instruction, it was difficult to effectively recruit participants. I planned to interview at least 10 participants, but I was only able to capture five student experiences. However, all five students were both conditionally admitted and were first-generation, which perfectly fit my study’s definition.

Challenge 2:

Due to COVID-19 and the many restrictions in place, I was unable to host face to face interviews with my participants.

Therefore, I had to

pivot and utilize both Microsoft Teams and Zoom to interview and capture the rich, thick data that was needed for my dissertation.

Challenge 3: Scheduling interviews with my participants was slightly difficult. Participants were called in to work, interviewing for jobs, serving as caregivers for siblings and parents, and more. I had to be flexible and work around busy schedules even during a period where most folks were at home.

Challenge 4: Even after learning how to create breakout rooms and testing all technology prior to defending, the settings for my committee breakout rooms were not operating as planned. My chair pivoted and created a new Zoom Link for the defense portion. It was all a learning curve for us all that we navigated together!



"All in all, my entire dissertation journey was a pivot: there were many challenges, early mornings, late nights, and tons of re-writes. Though both my general exams and proposal defense were face to face, my final dissertation was virtual via Zoom. Yet: I will honestly state that it was the most humbling experience."

ON MENTORSHIP DURING THE PROCESS:

Dr. Curry was not only my chair, but an angel sent from above. She guided, directed, supported, and encouraged me, but most importantly, she executed my entire process with honesty, pride, dignity, and respect. She honestly did not allow me to fail or give up. Next in line for major support was Dr. Petra Robinson: she would spend hours with me to craft relevant research questions that aligned with my overall purpose. I am forever grateful for them both.

WHAT'S NEXT?

- 1.** I was recently promoted to Dean of University College at Southern University - Baton Rouge!
- 2.** I'm In the process of publishing a few articles based on my dissertation results.
- 3.** I have begun grant writing to continue assisting marginalized groups at HBCUS.

DR. JOHNSON'S TIPS ON DEFENDING VIRTUALLY:

- 1:** Pre-Defense: KEEP GOING and NEVER GIVE UP! There are staff and professional faculty who are willing and devoted to assisting you in reaching the ultimate goal.
- 2:** It helps to rehearse with family and friends that are aware of your topic and with those who are not aware of your topic.
- 3:** Consult with your advisors on best mode of delivery (Zoom, Microsoft Teams, etc.), and ensure that your internet is stable and secure.
- 4:** Share slides with your chair prior to defending to avoid grammatical errors. Make note cards or utilize the notes section of the PowerPoint to avoid wordiness on the slides.
- 5:** Practice! Practice! Practice!
- 6:** Plan your physical space.
- 7:** Dress in professional attire.
- 8:** Pace yourself!
- 9:** Watch your verbals and nonverbals.
- 10:** Do your absolute best! You're the expert!
- 11:** CELEBRATE!



Exemplary Research and Service:

Wes Heath, Assistant Director for Cross-Cultural Affairs in the Office of Multicultural Affairs at LSU, is the perfect example of a doctoral candidate who bridges groundbreaking research with daily practice as a student affairs professional. This year, that dual strength has been even more critical—yet, as his dissertation journey indicates, he's just getting started.

DISSERTATION TITLE:

“Making Room for Fat Student Affairs Professionals in Higher Education.”

DISSERTATION ABSTRACT:

"Sizeism is often called the last acceptable form of prejudice in our social world. Weight discrimination has been widely documented in job searches, doctors' offices, promotions, wage gaps, education, and even courtrooms. Despite decades of critical weight scholarship, little research has been done on fat higher education employees. Using the critical theory and the fat studies theoretical framework, this phenomenological study explores bias, prejudice, and discrimination experienced by fat student affairs professionals on college campuses and offers policy and practice implications to better support weight-diversity within higher education."

HOW IS YOUR DISSERTATION TOPIC REFLECTIVE OF YOUR PROFESSIONAL WORK?

In my current role as Assistant Director of Cross-Cultural Affairs, my work focuses on researching, designing, and implementing strategies that encourage members of the campus community to work across social lines and explore complex notions of diversity, intersectionality, and social justice. I am the primary advisor for Asian American, Latinx and Hispanic, LGBTQ+, and Native American student services, and university administrators regularly call on me as a specialist in intersectional identities.

My dissertation topic connects with my professional work in a couple of ways. First, our office maintains a broad understanding of diversity that encompasses race, gender, sexual orientation, nationality, and a host of other identities, as well as body size. With our focus on social justice, we cannot leave out a community of people who are routinely marginalized based solely on how much they weigh. Larger-bodied (or “fat,” a reclaimed word within the Fat Acceptance Movement) individuals are often stereotyped as lazy, lacking self-control, and as unintelligent.

For this reason, research has shown that fat people are overlooked for promotions, raises, or even being hired in the first place. By highlighting these stories in my dissertation, I hope to find new ways to better support weight diversity on college campuses.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR DISSERTATION PROCESS THUS FAR?

The dissertation process has certainly been interesting. I defended by comprehensive exam in-person on March 10th, 2020, only six days prior to LSU's campus being closed down for COVID-19. In the months that followed (March through August), I navigated working from home while also making time to prepare my proposal. The biggest challenge for me was adapting to my surroundings. For example, prior to the pandemic I would maintain my professional working life on campus and in my office. For my dissertation work, I would go to the public library and reserve a study room and spend entire days there. Home was where I relaxed and would unwind. Maintaining those boundaries helped keep me motivated, rested, and on-task. During the early months of the pandemic, LSU's campus and the public libraries, along with most businesses, of course, were closed.

I had to adapt to be able to make time for my professional work, my studies, and my personal time all within the confines of my home. This made it challenging to stay motivated, and it made self-care practically impossible. Now, I am back on campus and in my office for most of my professional work, and with the libraries reopening, I have been able to return to my old habits of spending my entire Saturdays writing away from the house (albeit in a mask and with copious amounts of hand sanitizer).

"My committee chair, Dr. Clayton, has been a phenomenal help during this process. She continues to challenge me while also affirming my abilities. She has remained extremely communicative during the pandemic, and I've truly enjoyed working with her!"

My colleagues in the Office of Multicultural Affairs, Michelle Carter and Evante Topp, have also both been extremely supportive of me during this process.

Exemplary Research and Service: Wes Heath

WERE THERE ANY SPECIFIC RESEARCH REVELATIONS, COURSES, OR LESSONS THAT YOU'VE APPLIED TO YOUR WORK IN 2020? HOW HAVE YOU ADAPTED TO CURRENT CIRCUMSTANCES TO BEST SUPPORT YOUR STUDENTS? ?

Without a doubt, all of the courses I've taken as part of the Higher Education Administration program have been transferrable to my professional work. Here's one example: a substantial portion of my job is assessment and evaluation of our programs and services, and all of the research courses I've taken (including Dr. Clayton's Assessment and Evaluation course, which I highly recommend for anyone completing this degree) have helped me develop better ways to track engagement and learning outcomes, as well as implementing necessary improvements. Everything is relevant—whether you're taking Legal Issues with Dr. Blanchard, or Higher Ed. Leadership with Dr. Clayton—what you learn in class helps you become a better student affairs professional. There are numerous occasions when I felt that something I read about in a Monday class would help me solve a problem on Tuesday; that is one of the benefits of being a scholar-practitioner within the field.

WHAT ADVICE MIGHT YOU HAVE FOR OTHER DOCTORAL STUDENTS GOING THROUGH THE DISSERTATION PROCESS?

I began my PhD journey in January 2018. I remember my first day back in classes, thinking: "This is going to take forever! Why am I doing this to myself?" Now, I reflect back to that moment, thinking about how quickly it passed by. I would give this advice to anyone: completing your PhD is never going to be easy, but it is achievable. Find your support network and get started! There will never be a perfect time to start because no matter where you are in life it will require a good percentage of your time, as well as some financial investment. On the dissertation process: here are some helpful things I wish I would have known two years ago:

1. Find a research topic early on and use that topic for coursework as often as you can to build a library of resources.

2. The dissertation is manageable!



I used to think about the dissertation as this unrealistic, unsurmountable task. The thought of having to write one someday was scary. Well, as someone who is now nearing the end, I can honestly say none of that is true. Yes, the dissertation is challenging, but it is entirely doable. If it helps, think about the dissertation as five term papers that you're pulling into one tidy portfolio. Furthermore, you can take years to write it if you want to! Don't let the idea of a dissertation stop you.

"My third and final piece of advice is that this is YOUR degree, so make it about YOU. There is no perfect formula to a doctorate; pick the electives that fit your interests and find an advisor that enjoys your research topic. At the end of the day, this your doctorate and you should be proud of it."

And, to my fellow full-time professional staff members out there, a PhD is achievable. Find a timeline that fits your interests, set attainable goals, and work hard.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Earning my PhD has been a lifelong dream of mine, and I want to help share the message that first-generation students can achieve great things. I want to support others who have that dream. I would love to continue working in higher education, specifically in diversity work, but I'm open to new ideas as well. I want to continue doing social justice work no matter what type of position I may land in. As for my research, I would love to leverage my study in a way that helps colleges and universities adopt more weight-inclusive policies and practices. I'm excited for whatever comes next!



Wes was recently recognized for exemplary work in his professional role, too. He is one of the 2020 recipients of the LSU Foundation Outstanding Staff Service award!

Conference Collaboration

A major strength of the Higher Education Administration programs at LSU derives from the willingness of our faculty members to engage in groundbreaking research projects and subsequent conference presentations with MA and PhD students. Below are some examples of current research collaborations between HEA faculty and students!



**YU "APRIL" CHEN,
PHD**

**Transfer Students
Retention and
Success: Social
Capital, Social
Engagement, and
Peer Mentorship**

Dr. Chen, along with co-PI Alyssa Jacobs of LSU's Student Advocacy and Accountability Department, utilized the research abilities of Kimberly Davis, a current HEA doctoral student, to explore the post-transfer adjustment of LSU transfer students. The three researchers collected survey and interview data from all LSU transfer students about their experiences on campus, and also piloted a peer-mentoring program for all transfer students using funds from a CHSE Dean's IMPACT grant. The scholars presented preliminary research at the 2019 ASHE conference, and are now working on turning the data into a full-length manuscript to be published in a high-impact, peer-reviewed journal.



**JOY BLANCHARD,
PHD**

**The Case for
Students for Fair
Admissions and the
Case Against
Rodriguez**

Dr. Blanchard has partnered with Gillian Foss, current doctoral student, on a number of education law-related research efforts. In November 2020, Blanchard and Foss presented preliminary research at the Education Law Association's (ELA) annual conference, introducing the argument that as legal challenges to race-based admissions pose threats to its existence, more advocacy should be put toward a judicial remedy where courts recognize education as a fundamental right. They are currently working on turning their research into an article for a peer-reviewed journal. Additionally, Blanchard and Foss will be co-authors on the Sports Law chapter of ELA's *Yearbook of Education Law* in 2021.



ASHLEY CLAYTON, PHD

Considering Both HBCU and PWI Options: Exploring the College Choice Process of First-Year Black Students.

In 2019, Dr. Clayton was the recipient and Principal Investigator of a \$5,000 Dean's Circle Grant from the College of Human Sciences and Education. Using those funds, she partnered with Dr. Tenisha Tevis, a faculty member at Oregon State University, and two LSU doctoral students, Raeshan Davis and Langley McClay, to begin an extensive research project on college choice and first-year experiences at PWIs and HBCUs. They collected interview data in 2019 and presented their first paper, "Considering Both HBCU and PWI Options: Exploring the College Choice Process of First-Year Black Students," at the 2020 American Educational Research Association (AERA) conference. This manuscript is currently under review for a high-impact journal publication. Their second paper, "Preparing for the 'Real World': Exploring Black Students' First-Year Transitional Experiences at a PWI," was presented via roundtable at the 2020 ASHE conference.

Dr. Clayton also collaborated with three additional doctoral students in the HEA program—Jenifer Godfrey, Amber Brown, and Becca Hubbard—on "Posh Pipeline: Gaining College Admission at Any Cost." This article was accepted in the forthcoming issue of *Journal of Cases in Educational Leadership*. Dr. Clayton also partnered with Godfrey on a 2019 book review of Buckley, Letukas, and Wildavsky's *Measuring Success: Testing, Grades, and the Future of College Admissions*, and the review was published in *The Review of Higher Education*.

ACTIVE AT ASHE:

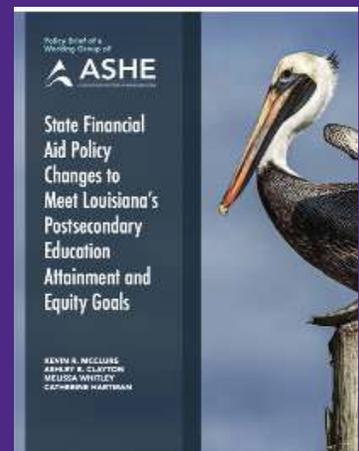
While the COVID-19 pandemic prevented the Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE) conference from being hosted in-person in New Orleans, both full-time faculty and students in the HEA program remained extremely active participants and represented Louisiana well.

HEA Doctoral students Stephenie Franks and Gillian Foss were the two students from LSU selected to attend the ASHE Graduate Policy Seminar. Two more HEA doctoral students, Kimberly Davis and Raeshan Davis, presented on their respective research endeavors (see more on these latter presentations on p. 53).

Dr. Clayton served on the ASHE Program Committee as lead for the roundtable and poster sessions. She also, alongside HEA doctoral student Melissa Whitley, collaborated on the College Affordability Team to publish a critically important ASHE Policy Brief, "State Financial Aid Policy Changes to Meet Louisiana's Postsecondary Attainment and Equity Goals." This policy brief was an integral part of the 2020 ASHE-Spencer Research to Practice project, which sought to shed light on higher education-related challenges within Louisiana (many of which also have national implications). This brief bridges research and practice and will help guide future policymaking nationwide.

Dr. Blanchard also served as a principal contributor in an op-ed titled, "Louisiana's Public Community Colleges and Universities Are Great Option in The New Economy." The op-ed ran in several local newspapers in the state.

Read the 2020
ASHE Policy Report [here!](#)



HESPA: UNSTOPPABLE

The LSU Higher Education Student and Professional Organization (HESPA) faced a particularly tough challenge as the 2020-21 academic year began. In-person gatherings were limited, most courses went online, and sheer unpredictability on campus hampered long-term planning. However: these obstacles did not deter HESPA in the slightest. Thanks in part to the leadership of President Christopher Stockdale, the executive board, and faculty advisor, Dr. Ashley Clayton, HESPA engaged in new, innovative ways to give back on a local scale and to foster ambitious, supportive community within their cohort (and within others around the nation).



BATON ROUGE FOOD BANK

Economic downturn from the COVID-19 pandemic has placed palpable focus on food insecurity around the nation, and as with many communities, Baton Rouge has needed to respond to the pressures of increased dependence on local food banks. At least one Friday a month, HESPA members volunteer to help with that effort, helping to sort and distribute food supplies to those who need it most.



GEAUX PREAUX!



Now in its third year, Geaux Preaux once again allowed for MA and PhD students to engage in valuable professional development opportunities. Pivoting the event online in no way prevented the participants from benefitting from mock interviews and other informative sessions with department leaders, HEA affiliate faculty, and even LSU's VPSA, Dr. Jeremiah Shinn. Once again, Geaux Preaux provided the perfect opportunity for HEA students to prepare for impending internship and job interviews!

SERVICE



HESPA HANGS OUT WITH UM SPA

HESPA continues to host “HESPA Hangouts” on a monthly basis to encourage collegiality with peers beyond the formal monthly meetings—and, taking full advantage of the virtual meeting format, even organized a hangout with University of Mississippi’s Student Personnel Association on November 20! The meeting served as a wonderful way to network with peers from another Southeastern Conference (SEC) institution and also have fun! There was an SEC Scavenger Hunt, higher education trivia, and prizes. Until next time!



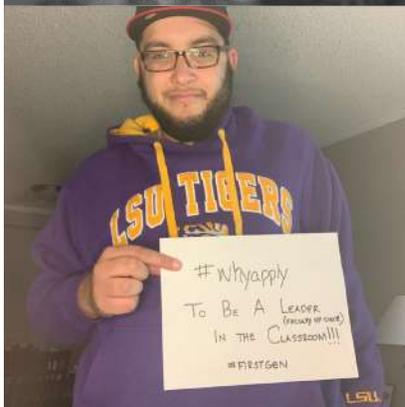
OTHER HESPA EVENTS/INITIATIVES OF 2020-21:



#HESPA Healthy: Continuing the initiative from last year to strike a balance between holistic health and graduate school obligations, HESPA members (and HEA faculty) participated in a “Virtual Turkey Trot” in November 2020. Participants were charged with running or walking 26.2 miles between November 1-30, and those who logged their miles were further incentivized with raffle prizes!

#WhyApply Day: On September 20th, HESPA members engaged in the nationwide social media campaign, #WhyApply, to encourage and inspire graduating high schoolers to apply to post-secondary institutions.

BRYC Mentorship: Members of HESPA also volunteered as ACT and College mentors at the Baton Rouge Youth Coalition, a non-profit organization that provides postsecondary preparation and resources to high-achieving, under-resourced high school students.



Future Conferences

Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE)

2021: San Juan, Puerto Rico*

**Subject to change based on COVID-19 restrictions/may be hybrid.*

Preconference: November 3-4, 2021

Conference: November 4-6, 2021

American Educational Research Association (AERA)

2022: San Diego, California

Conference: April 22–25, 2022

2023: Chicago, Illinois

Conference: April 13-16, 2023

Association for Institutional Research (AIR)

2021: Virtual

Annual Forum: May 25–28, 2021

Association for Education Finance and Policy (AEFP)

2021: Virtual

Conference: March 17–20, 2021

Education Law Association (ELA)

2021: San Antonio, Texas

**Subject to change based on COVID-19 restrictions. Also potential of hybrid attendance for those who may want to attend virtually.*

October 20–23 (Oct 20 is the pre-conference day), 2021



NASPA: Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education

2021: Virtual

Conference: March 17—26, 2021

2022: Baltimore, Maryland

Conference: March 19—23, 2022

2023: Boston, Massachusetts

Conference: April 1—5, 2023

2024: Seattle, Washington

Conference: March 9—13, 2024

ACPA: College Student Educators International

2022: St. Louis, Missouri

Conference: March 6—9, 2022

2023: New Orleans, Louisiana

Conference: March 26—29, 2023

2024: Chicago, Illinois

Conference: March 17-20, 2024

SACSA: Southern Association of College Student Affairs

2021: Birmingham, Alabama*

**Subject to change based on COVID-19 restrictions. Dates for the 2021 are in progress.*

Conference: TBD [Typically November]



FIERCE SNAPSHOTS

Captured moments from the 2020-21 academic year.



At the recommendation of LSU's VPSA, Dr. Jeremiah Shinn (right), Dr. Clayton served as the 2020 Faculty Fellow for the Sigma Phi Epsilon fraternity at LSU. Dr. Clayton facilitated service activities for the fraternity's members, helped with academic needs, and introduced myriad campus partnerships.

Congrats! Committee members Dr. Petra Robinson, Dr. Ashley Clayton, Dr. Joy Blanchard, and Dr. Martin Johnson congratulate Ariana Vargas, PhD, after a successful final dissertation defense in spring 2020.



Franklin Soares, a doctoral student in the HEA program and adjunct professor at Southern University, proudly speaks out at the Enough is Enough Rally on June 12; the rally was a peaceful and momentous gathering of students, professors, and other members of both LSU and Southern University communities to address racial injustice in America..



Zackeus Johnson, PhD—Dean of University College at Southern University—smiles brightly as a member of the 2020 graduating class.



Dr. Ashley Clayton and Dr. Jeremiah Shinn, VPSA at LSU and HEA affiliate faculty member, pose for a picture after participating in the Tigers United Unity Walk on September 12, a campus-wide event sponsored by LSU's Black Student-Athlete Association.



Time at home during quarantine enabled Dr. Chen and her two children to have a great deal of fun in the kitchen. One of the most successful culinary ventures? Homemade fruit popsicles to offset the sweltering Louisiana heat!

Sydney Epps, PhD, participated in December 2020's socially distanced graduation ceremony in Tiger Stadium. Among other roles, Epps serves as an adjunct professor at LSU, teaching courses such as College Success and Study Skills and Special Topics in African and African-American Studies.





FIERCE SNAPSHOTS

Captured moments from the 2020-21 academic year.



HESPA President, Chris Stockdale (far left), Jawaun McClam (left-center), Dr. Ashley Clayton (right-center), and Brandy Gros (far-right) pose for a picture after yet another hardworking volunteer session at the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank.

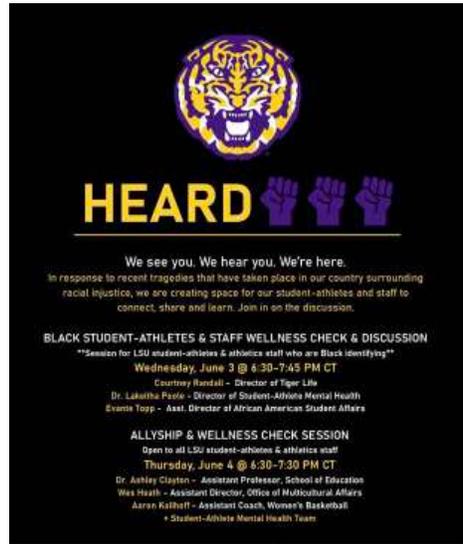
Amanda Martin, PhD—and Assistant Dean of Recruitment and Student Development in the College of Agriculture—poses in her doctoral regalia by Mike the Tiger before her December 2020 graduation.



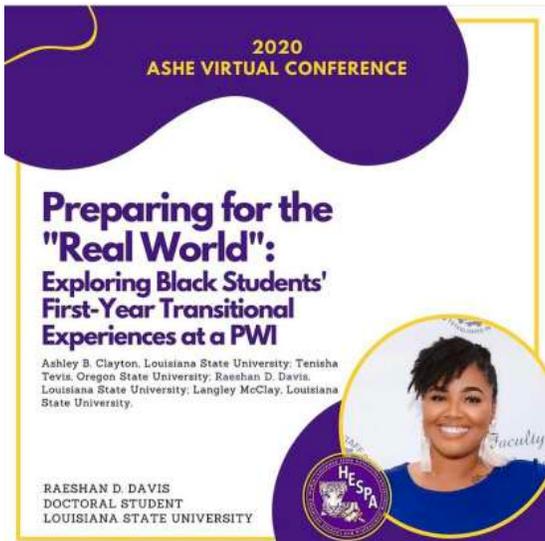
Full class! In February 2020, University Lab School Kindergarteners visited Dr. Chen's Student Development Theory course as part of their project on getting to know different occupations. Included among the excited students was Dr. Chen's daughter!



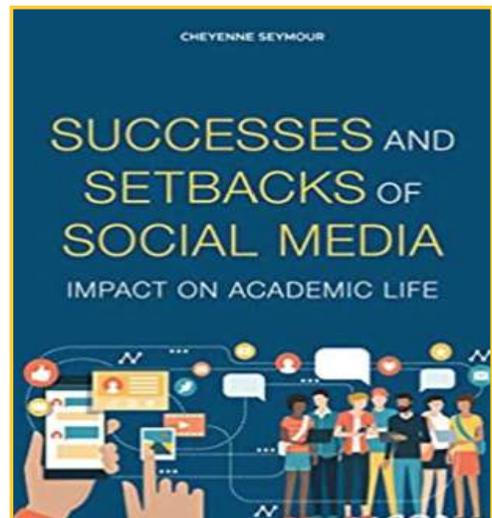
Kimberly Davis, PhD student, represented the LSU HEA program at the 2020 ASHE Conference, where she presented findings from a collaborative research project on both anti-hazing attitudes and hazing reporting patterns at the undergraduate level.



Dr. Clayton and doctoral student Wes Heath collaborated on an Allyship and Wellness Check Session on June 4 as part of the HEARD Town Hall Series for student-athletes. This particular session focused on mental health best practices while fostering safe, supportive conversation on national developments involving race.



Raeshan Davis, doctoral student and PhD representative for HESPA, led a roundtable discussion on her research at the 2020 ASHE Conference along with Dr. Clayton, Dr. Tenisha Tevis from Oregon State, and Langley McClay, a doctoral student in the PK-12 program at LSU.



Gillian Foss and Catherine Molleno, both HEA students at LSU, are contributors in Dr. Cheyenne Seymour's new textbook, *Successes and Setbacks of Social Media: Impact on Academic Life*. Their pieces add to the overall exploration of social media's impact—both good and bad—on graduate students and their academic pursuits.

#WHYAPPLY

Students and faculty share pictures explaining the 'why' behind their decisions to enroll in college, a campaign held annually in September. While this initiative remains a required component of Dr. Clayton's College Access and Choice class, its reach has extended to HESPA and even ASHE communities.



Kayla Gros (left) and Brittani Williams (right)—both alumni of the HEA MA program, and current employees at Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance (LOFSA)—shared their #WhyApply moment. Kayla applied to college because representation matters, and Brittani applied because first-generation students deserve a better quality of life!



Victoria Lloyd, first-year doctoral student, shares a picture from graduation at Oglethorpe University, her alma mater. Her #WhyApply? "I applied because I wanted to explore both theatre and physics and Oglethorpe University supported me on that journey!"



Hokie at heart! Dr. Ashley Clayton shared snaps from her time at Virginia Tech; she chose to apply to college, and, specifically, Virginia Tech, because her dad went there! Now, she says that "going to Virginia Tech was one of the best experiences of my life. As a VT alum, I've had doors open that I never could've imagined!"

FACULTY FACTS: QUARANTINE EDITION

Our full-time HEA faculty members went above and beyond in teaching, research, and service this year, despite the unprecedented impact of COVID-19. That said, they also made the most of their respective time at home, from foster dogs to front yard workouts! Here, they share pictures from their respective experiences.

JOY BLANCHARD, PHD

“Though I am a spin instructor at LSU UREC, I had not ridden a real bike in years (i.e., accident prone!). I purchased a bike and rode almost every morning. My other fun quarantine hobby was watching dog show reruns. I fell in love so much so that I became a foster, then ‘Foster Failure!’ Say hello to Denver!”



YU "APRIL" CHEN, PHD

“During quarantine time, we did a lot of home schooling with our two kids. We explored fun activities at home including making fruit popsicles and baking cakes. We also maintained an exercise/workout routine. We did workouts in our front yard and we biked a lot. We even built a gym in our garage!”

ASHLEY CLAYTON, PHD

While visiting the University of Arizona and Arizona State University in August, Dr. Clayton made the most of recreational activities that could be executed safely; on days off, she went on socially distanced hikes on the red rocks of Sedona!





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YOU'LL TAKE ALL YEAR.**

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EVEN IF YOU DON'T HAVE SYMPTOMS.**



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#MaskUpLSU