Over 60 members of the Manhattanville Doctoral community gathered on December 20, 2017 for the Annual Doctoral Retreat at Reid Castle. Students, faculty, and alumni connected over cocktails and conversations to celebrate and support one another through their unique doctoral journeys.

Facilitated by Master of Ceremonies, Dr. Emily Hersh of Signature Cohort 1, the evening began with a rousing welcome from Dr. Shelley Wepner, followed by an insightful keynote presentation by Dr. Ray Blanch, the Superintendent of Somers Central School District, who shared research around equity in education and provided the innovative ways Somers is currently addressing equity for its students.

The attendees were then treated to a helpful question-and-answer session by an esteemed panel of Ed.D. alumni. The panelists included Dr. Brandon Beck, and Dr. Cheryl Champ, Dr. Danielle Da Giau, Dr. Andrew Ecker, and Dr. Andrew Patrick. These panelists answered questions generated by the students in attendance, spanning topics from finding work-life-school balance to the most difficult assignment they tackled during their program.

This year, doctoral students also participated in a sock drive that yielded the donation of 164 pairs of socks. The Center for Educational Partnerships and community organization Chi Nu Alpha Christian Sorority, Inc. (with which Shana Eustay of HIED Cohort 2 is affiliated), joined forces to meet the needs of students and families during the winter season and hosted a winter sock drive for elementary school PS 85X of the Bronx. N.Y. PS 85X has a population of students that experience great challenges socio-economically, personally, and culturally. The donations received from doctoral students gathered at the retreat helped Chi Nu Alpha Christian Sorority, Inc. exceed their 500-sock goal. A huge success, the retreat concluded with recognition of recent graduates and students who have successfully defended their dissertation proposals in the last six months. A special thanks to the Doctoral Alumni Association Retreat Committee, Emily Hersh, Monique Reilly, Ryan Fisk, Patricia Gannon, Jackie Levine, and Renee Gargano, for organizing another fantastic event for the doctoral community!
Leadership That’s Home Grown

As a 15-year-old student at Walter Panas High School, Dr. Letitia S. Payne had no way of knowing how a talk she was invited to attend would shape her future, propelling her into the field of education and leading her to earn a doctorate from Manhattanville College.

Dr. Payne was tapped for the talk by a newly formed group called “Today’s Students, Tomorrow’s Teachers,” offered by Putnam | Northern Westchester BOCES as a way of promoting students of color to consider the teaching profession.

At the time, Dr. Payne said she was thinking about becoming a school psychologist but the program helped her to see teaching as her calling. The program, which was later spun off from PNW BOCES, allowed students to observe teachers in classrooms, tutor students in their district, conduct mock interviews with superintendents, and work with mentors in high school and college.

Manhattanville offered 50 percent scholarships to students who came through the program, a perk that extended through Dr. Payne’s master’s degree.

“I think this program provided opportunities for students of color to see themselves in front of a classroom. It allowed both men and women of color to see that they could have a place in education as role models to students,” she said.

Dr. Payne, who has taught in the Ossining Union Free School District for 16 years, said Ossining has hired many teachers who came up through “Today’s Students, Tomorrow’s Teachers.” Dr. Payne holds a master’s degree in English Secondary Education as well as in Special Education from Manhattanville and a master’s degree in Literacy from Walden University.

Dr. Payne, who holds state certification as a school building leader and school district leader, said she was surprised when she decided to pursue a doctorate to find her interviewer was Renee Gargano, who had launched her on the path to teaching years earlier through “Today’s Students, Tomorrow’s Teachers.”

Dr. Payne recently defended her dissertation entitled “Evaluating The Effect of Response to Intervention Implementation in Middle School Settings within the Hudson Valley and Long Island Regions of New York.” When asked “what’s next?” she said “the sky’s the limit”!

She also praised Renee Gargano, former deputy superintendent at PNW BOCES and founder and program developer for the Center for Educational Leadership, as an unfailing cheerleader. “She has been at every important educational milestone and celebration along the way, and has always been there to support me on this journey,” Dr. Payne said.

“If it hadn’t been for Today’s Students, Tomorrow’s Teachers and for the partnership between PNW BOCES and Manhattanville and all the opportunities I was offered, I don’t know if I would be at this point. I am truly grateful for it all,” she said.

Scholarly Success Stories

Dr. Jen Harriton-Wilson (Signature Program Cohort 1) has received the Outstanding Research Award in Adaptive Schools in the category of Doctoral Dissertations. Its purpose is to promote the scholarly study of the theory and practice of Adaptive Schools and to broaden and deepen its supportive research base.

Dr. Gregory Brown (Signature Program Cohort 4) has been nominated for the SAANYS Leader in Digital Education Award for 2018. This nomination recognizes his creative leadership in the areas of blended learning and curriculum development, which harnesses the potential of technology to further teaching and student achievement.

Dr. Andrew J. Ecker’s (Signature Program Cohort 4) article “Evidence-Based Practices for Teachers: A Synthesis of Trustworthy Online Sources (2016) was cited in the new textbook Redesigning Special Education Teacher Preparation: Challenges and Solutions (Goeke, Kossar, & Mitchem, 2017).

Three Manhattanville doctoral alumni were selected as members of New York State’s State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) Design Team and Workgroups. Dr. Letitia Payne is a member of the Usable Innovations Workgroup, Dr. Mary Foster is a member of the SSIP Implementation Design Team, and Dr. Andrew J. Ecker is a member of the Professional Development and Coaching Workgroup. The SSIP is a 2-year pilot across 15 schools focusing on implementing Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) to improve literacy of students with learning disabilities in grades 3 to 5.

“With the first year behind me, I feel more accomplished than I ever imagined. I have seen as tremendous improvement in my thought process, writing and ability to view issues through a variety of lenses...”

Robert Zegarelli, ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL, RYE HIGH SCHOOL EDD STUDENT, SIGNATURE COHORT #8
Capstone Reflections:
Brian Doherty Reflects on Music Symposium for Lower Hudson Valley Region

My doctoral capstone project was to plan and offer a music technology symposium at PNW BOCES. The Capstone Experience requires doctoral students to identify both individual and group projects that identify an existing need or problem within the educational community and to apply theory and research to make a direct contribution or to deliver a solution to an issue within an educational setting.

This program, the Music Educators Technology Symposium, was the first of its kind offered in the region and featured more than 40 music educators from Westchester, Putnam, Dutchess, and Albany counties. It began with a networking breakfast, followed by a keynote speech featuring Barbara Freedman, and then continued with presentations from scholars in the field of music technology.

A great deal of logistical planning and coordination went into this project. I also learned important lessons about transparency and effective communications. In addition to PNW BOCES Curriculum Center’s marketing of the symposium, I created my own comprehensive public relations strategy. This entailed writing and submitting press releases, identifying journalists who cover education, music, and/or technology, and communicating with editors in the industry.

As a result of the successful symposium, new professional opportunities have developed. A major educational institution has inquired about my assistance in planning future music professional learning events. The interest that the symposium sparked has also provided me with a vehicle for planning similar events at colleges and institutions of higher learning. As a music educator and scholar, technology expert, and arts consultant, I am exploring all avenues related to planning, coordinating, and promoting future music education conferences and events as a result of this successful doctoral capstone experience.

Manhattanville Self-Study: Putting Research into Practice

Last fall, Cohort 8 of Manhattanville College’s Signature Pathway in Educational Leadership and the Doctoral Program Faculty collaborated to conduct a review of the doctoral program. The report contains findings from the surveys and interviews conducted during the fall of 2017 and spring of 2018. The results of the study are being carefully analyzed and will be used as a blueprint for further program development.

Highlights of the major findings include:
• The overall perception of students and faculty is that the doctoral program, its faculty and students are of high quality
• The doctoral students highly praise the program’s cohort model
• The doctoral students greatly value and appreciate the individualized feedback provided by the doctoral faculty
• Before choosing Manhattanville’s doctoral program, more doctoral students considered enrolling in Columbia’s educational leadership program, followed by Fordham’s, than any other (as they had in the 2013 program review)

#MvilleLeads #TakeItUpADegree – Special Thanks to Dr. Steve Caldas, Dr. Robert Monson and Cohort 8

Panelists Address Legal Issues in Higher Education at Manhattanville Leadership Symposium

On February 9, leaders in higher education from across the tristate area gathered at Manhattanville College to learn about “Hot Legal Issues in Higher Education” from a panel of distinguished experts in the field. Panelists Joanna Silver, J.D., Monica Barrett, J.D., and Brian Rose, J.D., provided attendees with the opportunity to learn, collaborate, and analyze case studies in the areas of student conduct, free speech, and immigration. Emphasis was placed on the legal implications and challenges faced by leaders on college campuses across the country when dealing with this specific subset of student affairs. Attendees obtained critical knowledge that will have a direct and immediate impact on their respective campuses.

“Manhattanville’s faculty reconfirmed for me the power of the teachers’ role – even in academia – to form meaningful relationships and to hold high expectations for and with students. With these meaningful relationships, their thought-provoking guidance, and student-commitment, a doctoral candidate can achieve in the Manhattanville Executive Ed.D. Program!”

Laura Bigaouette
PROGRAM DIRECTOR, FORDHAM UNIVERSITY | Ed.D. STUDENT, HIGHERED COHORT #1
Congratulations to our Recent Graduates!

While commencement ceremonies are held in May, doctoral candidates successfully defend dissertations throughout the year and may officially graduate at three different times: August, January and May. We celebrate the following individuals who have successfully defended their dissertations from July to December:

Dr. Danielle Da Giau | Dr. Mary Foster | Dr. Stefanie Maffei | Dr. Andrew Patrick
Dr. Letitia Payne | Dr. Lori Roberts | Dr. Jonathan Woods

Congratulations to all of our graduates! We look forward to celebrating your accomplishments at our May Graduation Reception and Ceremony!

First Higher Ed Cohort Delivers with Masters Course in Student Affairs

Three Manhattanville doctoral alumni were selected as members of New York State's State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) Design Team and Workgroups. Dr. Letitia Payne is a member of the Usable Innovations Workgroup, Dr. Mary Foster is a member of the SSIP Implementation Design Team, and Dr. Andrew J. Ecker is a member of the Professional Development and Coaching Workgroup. The SSIP is a 2-year pilot across 15 schools focusing on implementing Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) to improve literacy of students with learning disabilities in grades 3 to 5.

Inspired by their Spanish-speaking parents, Natalie Alemán (Higher Ed Cohort 1) and Kennybel Peña (Exec EdD Cohort 4) presented at La Conferencia Anual de Liderazgo para Padres Hispanos on November 3, 2017. They facilitated a roundtable dialogue with Spanish immigrant parents on the essentials of how to help their children realize the dream of a college degree.

Natalie Aleman (Higher Ed Cohort 1) was inducted into Kappa Delta Pi in December 2017. Of this accomplishment Aleman said, "As a First-Generation college student, it makes me happy to make my parents proud with my academic accomplishments and recognition." Michael Kealy (Signature Program Cohort 5) was named a semifinalist for the CoSN Next Generation Leaders Program. The program recognizes exemplary individuals with a promising future in educational technology. He had the honor to be selected as 1 of 28 educators nationwide being considered for this program.

Dr. James Filippelli (Signature Program Cohort 1) and Manhattanville professor, Dr. Rhonda Clements, published: Filippelli, J. & Clements, R. (2017). Can today’s superintendents be both instructional leaders and community leaders? Educational Administration and Supervision Journal, 35.

COMING SOON: 2018 COMMENCEMENT

**Tuesday May 15, 2018 Pre-Graduation Doctoral Reception**
Reid Castle at 5:00 pm

**Thursday May 17, 2018 Commencement Ceremony**
The Quad - Rain or Shine at 6:00 pm

Superintendents
- James M. Ryan, Ed.D
  DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT
- Todd Currie
  ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT

Board Members
- Richard Kreps
  PRESIDENT
- Lynn Allen, Ed.D
  ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT
- Catherine Lilburne
  VICE PRESIDENT
- John McCarthy
  ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT
- Anita Feldman
  TRUSTEE
- Douglas Glickert
  TRUSTEE
- Mary Cay Nilsen
  TRUSTEE
- Frank Schnecker
  TRUSTEE