As we welcome the new year, 2022, we are mindful of what a new year symbolizes. A new year is symbolism of a fresh start and new opportunities. The Teacher Preparation Program (TPP) at Pepperdine University is excited to welcome the new year and provide a reboot, if you will, to help continue to prepare teacher candidates for school across the country.

Although the last 21 months have challenged all of us as we navigate a new landscape in schools since COVID-19, we at TPP continue to lean on each other and you. Your support and contributions to TPP have allowed us to reach many accomplishments in 2021!

Your collaboration as mentor teachers, university field supervisors, alumni, student teachers, or community partners helped us secure a successful accreditation site visit in March 2021 from the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC). We are happy to report that we received full accreditation and received positive feedback for both the undergraduate and graduate pathways. Additionally, both pathways report successful completion of candidates who are now new teachers across California and nationally. See Coordinator Updates from Carrie Wall and Anthony Collatos.
We are also excited to report that the number of candidates we recommended for a preliminary clear credential in 2020-2021 has increased over the past year, indicating the quality and strengths of our programs. See Accreditation Updates from Senior Certification Manager Terrance Cao.

Finally, as we toggle back and forth between regaining some normalcy or remaining apprehensive about a new COVID variant, we know that our partner schools have done a fantastic job of adapting. Linda Darling-Hammond, President, and CEO of the Learning Policy Institute reminds us to be bold about the possibilities to create new approaches to schooling. She says, “[N]ow is the time to reimagine traditional structures and practices; to rethink the way in which schools are organized around time, physical space, educator expertise, curriculum, and instruction; and to redesign schools around principles of authentic learning, stronger relationships, and wraparound supports centered on the whole child.”

At Pepperdine University TPP, we are constantly looking for ways to improve the development of new and creative teachers. We are excited to welcome new faculty to our team, Terrell Sales and Jennaca Cotton, as they help us expand expertise to our candidates. Under the leadership of the clinical directors, Ricardo Vigil, EdD and Somer Levine we have expanded our student teaching placements to over 30 school districts.

Finally, our faculty know that their work does not end as our candidates leave our programs, in many cases they become our colleagues. Evidence of this is how faculty continue to mentor teacher candidates beyond their programs and prepare for the annual conferences with new teachers for the American Educational Research Association (AERA) and the California Association for Bilingual Education (CABE). So as we prepare for the possibilities of 2022, again, we thank you for your past support and we look forward to your continued collaboration!

New Hire Spotlight: Jennaca Cotton

Dr. Jennaca Cotton is a Visiting Professor who serves as the MAT program site coordinator for the Calabasas campus. Additionally, Dr. Cotton teaches multiple courses for the MAT program at both campuses. Dr. Cotton first joined the Pepperdine community when she attended Seaver College for her undergraduate degree in elementary education. After graduating, she taught in Los Angeles at the elementary level and served as a literacy specialist before transitioning to working with pre-service candidates. Dr. Cotton has an M.A. in Reading Instruction with a Reading Specialist Credential from Loyola Marymount University and an Ed.D. in Educational Leadership from the University of Southern California. Dr. Cotton is passionate about literacy, equity, and social and emotional learning, and feels so grateful to work with the GSEP teaching candidates as they embark on their journey as educators.
Updates from Field Experience

By Dr. Ricardo Vigil & Somer Levine
Clinical Directors

Happy New Year! For our teacher preparation program, the past year has marked a return to in-person instruction and, as anyone would imagine, it has been anything but a return to normal. The requirements and demands of the clinical experience remain and mentors/candidates alike have been tasked with meeting new challenges. Challenges that are both instructional and structural but also full of socio-emotional and mental health concerns.

The opportunity to improve, however, is ever present and we are grateful for the collaboration and support from our partner schools/districts and the ever-steady guidance of our mentors. Teaching is an incredibly rewarding endeavor, yet, it is also a difficult one.

The return to in class teaching has been tough, exhausting and at times frustrating. It is filled with new uncertainties, new demands and with an ever shifting landscape across various domains. Yet the work continues and Pepperdine remains eager to take on these challenges with incredible opportunities to learn and apply the best elements of our programs.

Now, more than ever, there is a need to truly understand the dynamics of learning theories and apply them in practical ways out in the field. We know there is a need for flexibility and innovation in the field and we continue to work in tandem to provide our candidates opportunities to meet these challenges head on. We are proud of all of our candidates, who have shown resilience, adaptability and have met this evolving educational environment with a fresh perspective and spirit. Our candidates are the new wave of educators that are ready to reshape the world of education and we are excited to continue this journey with them!

New Hire Spotlight: Terrelle Sales

Dr. Terrelle B. Sales has worked in many capacities during his tenure in public education beginning as a Middle School Mathematics teacher all the way up to a High School Assistant Principal of Mathematics and Science Instruction. He currently works as the Assistant Professor of Teacher Education at Pepperdine University and works with the Commission on Teacher Credentialing for the state of California on the Education Specialist Teacher Performance Assessment Design Team. In Spring of 2020, Dr. Sales was elected to serve on the Board of Directors for the California Council on Teacher Education (CCTE) and has also been appointed Editor for CCNews. Dr. Sales’ research interests include education, religion, critical pedagogy, critical theory, critical theology, and theology. His dissertation topic focused on the interconnectivity of theology and critical pedagogy, ultimately leading to what he has deemed the Pedagogy of Jesus Christ. Dr. Sales has been happily married to his wife Porsha Sales for 15 years and ecstatically looks forward to spending the rest of his life adoring her. They share the joint calling of foster care and sees it as a ministry to help show the love of Christ to children of all ages. They currently have three children Levi (9), Ashton (7), and Sharia (5). Dr. Sales’ dissertation “An Emancipatory Pedagogy of Jesus Christ: Towards a Decolonizing Epistemology of Education and Theology” was published as a book in June of this year by Hamilton Books. Dr. Sales received his B.A. in Liberal Arts from Pepperdine University, his M.A. of Education in Teacher Leadership from Vanguard University, and his Ed.D in Educational Leadership for Social Justice from Loyola Marymount University.
On a recent trip to Yosemite, my husband snapped this beautiful picture of a rainbow framing Half Dome. The picture was a gentle reminder that good things often come after difficult things. Rainbows come after storms. Though the storm of COVID is by no means over, we are seeing sunshine poke through the clouds and appreciate the sunshine like never before!

As I travel around to schools and see educators enthusiastically teaching and students eagerly learning in person, I’m grateful for the rainbow after the rain. Eighteen of our 19 spring graduates secured teaching jobs last spring and our current student teachers are overjoyed to be teaching in person. Justice recently shared an African folktale with her 7th graders, infusing the story with questions asking them to predict, make text-to-self connections, identify rhetorical devices, and connect the folktale to what they learned about Africa. Izzy compared the “underdog” story of David and Goliath to the American Revolution, having students wrestle with the advantages and disadvantages of both sides and the magnitude of the victory. In her lesson on ionic bonds, Jennifer engaged her students in Chemical Speed Dating. The students were assigned an element, mingled around the classroom, asked questions of their peers to determine their charge and chemical group, and located the person/element with whom they would chemically bond the best. Rainbow moments are following the pandemic rain.

Thank you, Mentor Teachers, for your hospitality throughout the pandemic in welcoming our candidates into your classrooms (and Zoom screens). Thank you, administrators, for stepping up to the difficult task of leadership during a tumultuous time. Thank you, teacher candidates, for resiliently rising to the challenges before you. Thank you, students, for returning to school with renewed energy and optimism. As the COVID storm begins to wane, may our goal not be to return to education as usual, but rather may we seek to reimagine how schools can be more inclusive, responsive, and purposeful in meeting student needs, facilitating learning, and supporting well-being as the sun begins to shine again.
edTPA Care Packages

In November 2021, the Master of Arts in Teaching program and the Pat Lucas Center for Teacher Preparation once again provided care packages for teacher candidates completing their teacher performance assessment (edTPA) portfolio. The edTPA is a culminating portfolio submitted to illustrate that candidates have mastered the skills and tools necessary to become effective k-12 teachers. Successful completion of the EDTPA portfolio leads to a recommendation for a multiple or single subject teaching credential from the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC).

The candidates were deeply appreciative to receive the edTPA care packages. Multiple subject candidates, Stephanie Garcia and Megan Randazzo described the unexpected packages as the “Best surprise ever!” and “Such a nice surprise.”

Dr. Collatos, Director of the Pat Lucas Center, shared, “It is always a privilege to provide the edTPA care packages for our candidates. This particular cohort showed incredible resiliency by navigating multiple delivery models throughout the pandemic. The care packages are just a small way to support our candidates during a stressful week.”

Fall 2021 MAT Teacher Candidates Explore the Possibilities: “To Teach or Not To Teach”

In fall 2021, the Pat Lucas Center for Teacher Preparation gathered current and former MAT candidates to discuss the benefits and challenges of teaching full time during the MAT program. The panel entitled, “To Teach or Not to Teach”: An Exploratory Conversation about Candidates Teaching Full Time included multiple MAT alums:

Alexx Robles, 2nd grade teacher at John Thomas Dye School (MAT Summer 2020); Brooke Gorin, 8th grade social studies teacher at Vista Charter Middle School (MAT Fall 2020); Joe Schwartz, 9th grade English teacher at Animo Leadership High School (MAT Summer 2021); and Christal Green, 3rd grade teacher at Libertas College Prep Charter (MAT Fall 2021)

In his introduction, Dr. Collatos explained the impetus for the event, “The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the K-12 teacher shortage in California. We are receiving calls weekly from Districts and schools that are in desperate need of teachers. We created a space tonight so our Clinical 1 candidates can explore whether pursuing a full time position is a good fit for them when the opportunities arise.”

Maria Harfouche, MAT Clinical 1 teacher candidate shared, “Hearing other student’s accounts of interning while in the MAT program made me realize what a high pressure balancing act it is. It allowed me to look at that option from every angle and properly assess if that was something I would actually consider during my time at Pepperdine.”
Pat Lucas Center Prepares MAT Alums to Apply for LACOE’s Teacher of the Year Grant
In January 2022 the Pat Lucas Center for Teacher Preparation provided a workshop for recent MAT alums to learn about the Los Angeles County Office of Education’s (LACOE) Equitable Innovation Grant provided through their Teacher of the Year (TOY) program. During the workshop, Dr. Collatos and MAT alums reviewed the application process and discussed strategies for completing a competitive application.

Teacher Candidate Award Winners Announced at the Fall 2021 MAT Capstone Symposium
On December 9th, the Pepperdine Masters of Arts in Teaching candidates presented research involving the impact of COVID-19 on teaching and learning at the fall 2021 capstone symposium. After a successful presentation by the MAT candidates, several awards for teaching excellence were announced. MAT candidate, Brittny Azari, received the Fall 2021 MacNair Loan Forgiveness Scholarship. The MacNair scholarship is provided to graduating teacher candidates who demonstrate outstanding clinical fieldwork, planning, instruction, assessment and professionalism with staff, students, and colleagues. Candidate recommendations are provided by university field supervisors and faculty and a committee of MAT faculty decides the final recipient(s).

In addition to the MacNair Teacher Loan Forgiveness Scholarship, Dylan Shapiro received the Pat Lucas Center Award for Excellence in Teaching. This award is granted to graduating teacher candidates that have exhibited excellence in their coursework and clinical experience. Dr. Anthony Collatos, Director of the Pat Lucas Center, shared, “Dylan continually exhibits a commitment to his students and the profession. His attention to detail and this dedication to his teaching will greatly benefit any school community.”

In fall 2021 we were blessed to introduce a new award, the Mortensen Endowed Scholarship, that recognizes eligible candidates committed to teaching at least three years after graduation in underserved schools and focused on math, history, English, literacy and bi-literacy. Christal Green received the first Mortensen Endowed Scholarship. In addition to the fall 2021 recipients, in summer 2021 we presented the following awards to MAT candidates located at the West Los Angeles and Calabasas centers:

**MacNair Teacher Education Loan Forgiveness Award Recipients**
Cristina Arrelano, Jacob Fisch, Alia Martinez, and Hovsep Sarafyan

**Pat Lucas Award for Excellence in Teaching**
Ellin Avanesian and Ilana Lemos

**CABE Bilingual Teachership Award**
Elianna Campos

During 2021 these awards provided approximately $35,000 of additional funding for MAT candidates.
Adriana Baez, a senior Liberal Arts for Education major, has been selected as the 2021-2022 student liaison to the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing. As the student liaison, Adriana attends all the CTC meetings and sits as a non-voting member. Her role is to represent the views and experiences of teacher candidates. During the school year, Adriana will be attending regular day-long meetings via Zoom and two-day meetings in person in Sacramento.

The application for this position was circulated by the CTC to all deans and directors of California teacher preparation programs, stakeholders, and the public. Applicants submitted an application, including an essay. The first paragraph of Adriana’s essay recalls her earliest school experience, as a two-year-old preschooler:

Upon being dropped off at childcare from the early age of two I never did cry for my mom to come back and save me from the classroom. I was born to a young immigrant mother who was only twenty-two years old. I have always been eager to be in a classroom. Every morning at 7:00 am I would get dropped off. Then I would wait. I would wait by the door and greet every peer of mine. I would embrace them with a hug and an enthusiastic “GOOD MORNING!” I am a first generation university student who is a prospective teacher looking to revive what it means to be an inclusive educator.

As part of the selection process, Adriana and two other finalists were interviewed via Zoom by representatives of the CTC. Adriana writes, “I am honored and overcome with joy as I enter this liaison position as well as my teaching career. I have learned so much already and look forward to making a positive impact on my future students. In my liaison position I will work hard to accurately represent the next generation of teachers.”

Adriana is now in her penultimate semester at Seaver and in the teacher preparation program. Along with her senior courses at Pepperdine, she is student teaching three days a week at NEW Academy Canoga Park for a class of busy first grade bilingual students. We are proud of Adriana and all our student teachers as they begin their careers in education.
Ellin Avanesian, Fifth Grade Teacher: I am highlighting her due to her dedication throughout the MAT program. She consistently showed up to office hours with insightful questions and stories about her ups and downs in applying new knowledge to her teaching practice. The effort on her work was always top-notch, and she was always ready to go above and beyond on imparting this wisdom to the rest of her cohort.

Ilana Lemos, 2021 graduate of MAT: marvelous addition to the Los Angeles Unified School District! Ilana explains that she loves seeing how proud her students get of themselves when they conquer something difficult. She sees her third graders growth consistently, but when they finally realize it, it's incredibly special!

Mason Markell, 2021 graduate of MAT: excellent Calabasas High School teacher, teaching honors biology and physiology with 10th, 11th and 12th graders! Mason is the advisor for the CHS Chapter of the National Honors Society as well as 2 student-run clubs. He is really enjoying being back on campus full time with everyone. He enjoys seeing all the school spirit and how eager students are to learn!

Elianna Campos, 2021 graduate of MAT: amazing student now in a dual-language program and recipient of CABE Teachership Award!

Thank You Recognition Gifts to our CTC Stakeholders and Mentor Teachers!

From a very busy and successful CTC accreditation site visit to chaotic clinical experiences, we wanted to take the time to celebrate our important power players. We thank you!
Accreditation Updates from Our Senior Certification Manager

By Terrance Cao

2021 has been an eventful and exciting year for accreditation. The Teacher Preparation Program began the year with a Site Visit from the CTC and are excited to have received the result of reaccreditation! It is with excitement that we continue preparing teacher candidates to the highest standards of purpose, service, and excellence.

The CTC has also updated its requirements on testing, providing new pathways for teacher candidates to fulfill them. Chief among these is allowing the usage of coursework to partially or fully waive the CBEST and CSET exams*. As further details of this policy are released, Terrance Cao has been diligently reviewing transcripts and reaching out to teacher candidates to keep them updated.

In response to test center closures and limited capacity upon reopening, the CTC has also begun opening an at-home testing option for its exams*. While the exams offered under this option are currently limited, the list will be expanded in the coming months.

Looking at 2022 and beyond, the CTC is looking to continue expanding its pathways on fulfilling the CBEST and CSET exams as well as transitioning the RICA exam into a coursework-only requirement. As always, we plan to communicate any progress on these updates at our advisory council meetings. Here’s to a wonderful finish to 2021!

If you have any questions about these provisions do not hesitate to contact Terrance Cao at terrance.cao@pepperdine.edu or (310) 568-5656.

Snacks to Celebrate the End of the Year!

MAT West Los Angeles Clinical I students enjoying snacks and beverages to celebrate the close of their first semester!

Garcia Ramos, R. (2021, March). California Association for Bilingual Education Annual Conference. Alumna Elianna Campos received the Chuck & Estella Acosta Teachership from CABE.


This year multiple Pepperdine Teacher Preparation Program (TPP) faculty, alums, and partners will co-present their research at the 2022 American Educational Research Association annual meeting located in San Diego, California.

Preservice Teachers as Researchers: Developing Equity-Minded Educators through Critical Research Within Teacher Preparation Courses
Dr. Anthony Collatos, Dr. Maria Wright, Mary Johnson, Alexandra Robles, Amelia Zaldivar, Elianna Campos, Joseph Schwartz, MJ Harmon-Saltz, Jensine Lucas, Ellin Avanesian, Cristina Arellano

Harboring as a Framework for Cultivating Care among Teacher Candidates in Virtual Spaces
Carrie Birmingham, Carrie Wall, and Elizabeth Yomantas

Making Space for Conversations about Multiracial Identity: A Critical Content Analysis of Multiracial Picture Books
Kevin Wong, Joseph Schwartz, Hovsep Sarafyan

Linking Reflective Practice to Transformative Action for Social Justice and Equity
Jennifer Miyake-Trapp and Kevin Wong

English Learners (ELs) and Online Instruction: High-Leverage Instructional Practices to Support EL Preservice Teachers
Kevin Wong

Studying Abroad in Shanghai: Exploring How a Living-Learning Environment Impacts Students' Socio-cultural Understandings of China
Stella Erbes


