

IMPACT REPORT

FALL 2020

SCHOLAR SUCCESS

How a Working Mother of Five Rises Above Challenges to Pursue Her Passions in Education

Darline Saeidifar is a master of time management. A veteran of the United States Marine Corp., the mother of five juggles family commitments, a full-time job at Ford Motor Company, and a standard EMU course load towards her Bachelor's in Early Childhood Development.



DARLINE SAEIDIFAR

Between driving her children to appointments, taking classes on her days off from work, and working on homework in the evenings, there's little time to enjoy for herself—but despite the hard work, she knows there is a rewarding career waiting for her upon graduation.

"Everything I'm going through is worth it to me," Saeidifar says, "because getting a college degree/education is very important and something I have to do for me."

Saeidifar had been out of school for twelve years before selecting Eastern Michigan for a nursing degree. Her father-in-law, an EMU alumnus, had highly recommended she attend, knowing the school would be a great fit for her. A couple years into her degree, Saeidifar made the switch to education, confident this new career path was where she was meant to be.

Saeidifar decided she would pursue her major in Early Childhood Education and give to a child the experience she did not get as a student—the feeling of being welcome and valued. Originally from Port-au-Prince, Haiti, she remembers the difficulty of fitting in with other children in her classrooms, as well as the subsequent bullying and feelings of loneliness she endured growing up.

"I want to provide for every student that walks through my door a place of safety, friendliness and love where they feel important, wanted, and that they matter regardless of their popularity, ethnicity, or if they're from a different country." (Saeidifar)

With the COVID-19 pandemic largely affecting EMU's Winter 2020 semester, Saeidifar has done her best to keep a positive outlook, viewing the long period of free time as a much-needed vacation with her family and noting her thankfulness for having time off work to complete her classes online—the availability of which she found helpful even prior to the stay-at-home order.

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Like our student body, the array of scholarships available at EMU is diverse. They cover every college, every discipline, and were established by donors from differing backgrounds. The commonality is that they provide often-crucial support to recipients. Scholarships help ease the growing financial burdens of college while motivating students to excel in their studies and stay on track to graduate. These scholarships exist because you established and contribute to them. This report provides a small snapshot of the impact of your continued support. You ARE the difference. Thank you for your generosity.

Dr. James Barott Reflects on His 23-Year Teaching Experience Within the College of Education



Dr. James Barott is a well-known and admired faculty member within the EMU College of Education. For the past 23 years, he has been teaching a wide variety of courses in Educational Leadership and made significant contributions to the success of countless students along the way. Most notably, Dr. Barott has advised and encouraged doctoral students to follow their hearts and pursue dissertation topics they are passionate about.

Having a philanthropic heart to make a difference in the world of education can create effective positive change, and nobody exemplifies that philosophy more than Dr. Barott. Satisfied with the role he has long played in developing the educational leaders of tomorrow, he has announced his retirement after the 2020-21 school year.

23 years ago, Dr. Barott began teaching with the EMU College of Education in a cooperative doctoral program with Grand Valley State University, taking him to numerous branch locations throughout the state in his first five years of teaching. As EMU's Educational Leadership Program moved entirely to the Ypsilanti campus, he planted roots in the city and went on to teach a variety of doctoral courses including Education Organizations, Organizational Theory, Qualitative Research, Educational Leadership, and more. For his final year, Dr. Barott will be learning to adapt as the 2020-21 school year veers toward a predominantly online schedule.

When asked about his fondest memory working with the EMU College of Education, Dr. Barott proclaimed, "I love the dissertation defenses, and view this as a rite of passage where the individual moves from student to colleague." His greatest accomplishment? Having the privilege to train and develop students who have gone on to become superintendents, principals, university presidents, provosts, deans, educational program managers, and other leadership positions.

During Dr. Barott's last year, he hopes to continue advancing the educational and developmental health and prosperity of the local community, state and nation. He believes great teachers and leaders are extremely important in this time of increased complexity and plans to join in with EMU alumni and colleagues to ensure young people continue to have the best learning experience possible.

Upon retiring, Dr. Barott and his wife plan to move to Cape Cod, MA, where he looks forward to buying a boat and spending his golden years fishing on the bay.

PROGRAM BRIEF

Helping Students and Alumni Find Jobs Amidst a Pandemic

Many EMU College of Education (CoE) students struggle to meet the financial challenge of getting their degrees. At the university, more than 60% of students receive some level of scholarship aid, and more than 75% must work part-time or take time off to meet financial obligations—often delaying their dreams.

As a way to assist with these challenges, the CoE recently set up a listserv to help connect families interested in a tutor with students looking for job opportunities. As we receive tutoring opportunities from the community, we send them out to the listserv.

We currently have hundreds of passionate future educators subscribed to the listserv and ready to help. If your family is looking for a tutor and interested in finding one through our student listserv, send an email to emu_coe@emich.edu with

relevant information about the position, including:

- Location (city and setting)
- Student ages
- Hours
- Pay

If you are an EMU alumnus looking for opportunities, the University Advising and Career Development Center (UACDC) provides many resources and services to help you approach your future fearlessly. Use our job search network or the Handshake app to find available positions.

To keep Eastern Michigan affordable for the increasing number of CoE students who need financial support to stay enrolled, we seek support from our alumni and parents, faculty, staff and

→ **Scholar Success cont'd from pg.1**

While still excited for her field experience and student teaching, Saeidifar understands she'll need to dedicate extra time toward accomplishing her degree in-person. With a 3.6 GPA and inclusion on the Dean's List, she aims to remain successful by taking advantage of campus services and assistance that helps with homework and writing.

"I have so many things in my life that I could use as excuses to quit, said Saeidifar, "but because of my children, my husband, work and my age, I have become more determined to succeed to show other working, married (or single) moms out there that pursuing and getting a college degree can be done and is attainable!"

EDITORS NOTE: Many veterans like Darline are supported through GI Bills and Veterans Affairs, but some veterans and their spouses are not. For those people, donations to military-related scholarships make a profound impact in helping students succeed in their educational journey. To make a gift to one of EMU's many available scholarships, visit <https://www.emich.edu/foundation/give/>.



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friends for the following priorities:

- Need-based and Merit-based Scholarships
- Program & Faculty Support
- Student Emergency Funds

To learn more about any of these areas of designation, contact Christa Reid at (734) 487-0496 or, to make an immediate gift, visit our Make a Gift page.

GIVING MAKES A DIFFERENCE

YOUR Support is Needed Now, More Than Ever...

As the country shifts, and we continue our mission of building pathways to success for students, faculty, alumni and friends, your support of these vital funds can make a profound difference in the lives and futures of many in the EMU Community.

- The College of Education Student Emergency Fund
- Leadership and Counseling Department Fund
- Teacher Education Department Fund
- Special Education Department Fund
- The College of Education Endowment

Give as generously as you can by visiting www.emich.edu/give.

Your online gift makes an immediate impact. **For additional questions or to learn more about ways to support EMU, contact Christa Reid, Director of Development, at (734) 487-0496.**



EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
FOUNDATION

The EMU Foundation is an institutionally related, 501(c)3 nonprofit organization soliciting and managing funds on behalf of Eastern Michigan University. Created in 1989 by the EMU Regents, the foundation is governed by an independent Board of Trustees that elects its own officers. All trustees serve as volunteers.

A Fall Update from the College of Education

For more than 150 years, the EMU College of Education has offered practice-oriented degrees for curious and critically reflective individuals seeking careers as teachers, administrators, scholars, counselors, speech & hearing clinicians, and advocates.

Now in the midst of both a global pandemic and a fresh school year, teachers across the nation have been experiencing abnormal challenges—extending themselves to better address the academic needs, wellbeing and interest of their students.

As alumni and supporters of this college, we recognize the incredibly difficult situation that teachers are dealing with, especially in regard to unanticipated, oft-uncontrollable levels of work being done from home instead of in schools.

Our classes undoubtedly look a bit different this semester; however, we remain wholeheartedly committed to our longstanding traditions of innovative and empowering practices, relevant and practical learning experiences, and world-class education for diverse learners.

If you are looking for ways to help, supporting the Student Emergency Fund for the College of Education has an immediate impact on our future educators facing challenges, especially crises stemming from COVID-19. Funds will be made available to students in dire need, and often make the difference in being able to complete their education. There has never been a more appropriate time to make your investment, and online donation options make it easy to give.

Additional on-campus student resources such as Swoop's Food Pantry remain open, albeit with limited hours and appropriate social distancing and cleaning protocols. Volunteers and/or donations of non-perishable food items and financial assistance are always welcome.

We hope you will consider making a gift—any amount helps. For questions about the emergency fund, student resources, or other ways you can give back to the College of Education, please call (734) 487-0496 or email CReid20@emich.edu.

Thank you.
Mike Saylor, Dean-College of Education
Christa Reid, Director of Development, EMU Foundation



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JUST THE FACTS

110+
SCHOLARSHIPS
\$54k
AWARDED LAST YEAR

100% of our K-12
Counselor
completers
received an **effective or
highly effective score.**

LEADERSHIP
was named one of the top affordable
programs in K-12 leadership **nationally**