

# The Advisor

Newsletter of the Educational Studies Program at  
Eastern Michigan University

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## Editors

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Dr. Farrugia and her family

## Alumni Spotlight: Dr. Audrey Farrugia

Dr. Audrey Farrugia is a practicing speech and language pathologist and associate professor in the department of Special Education and Communication Sciences and Disorders at Eastern Michigan University. After earning her bachelor's degree in elementary education and her master's degree in speech and language pathology, Dr. Farrugia noted that many speech and language doctoral programs were narrowly focused and placed emphasis on theory over practice. Guided by the belief of changing systems of inequity from the inside, she centered her research topics on themes of equity and preparedness for speech and language pathologists working in urban schools.

Dr. Farrugia's work with equity, inclusion, justice and practice continues in her current work through EMU. She teaches a course on multiculturalism; coordinates diverse placements for SLP internships; and is currently serving on the College of Education's

RAIJE (Representing Anti-racism, Inclusivity, Justice, and Equity) Committee. The committee's initiatives include designing MLK Day programming for children, families, and communities and creating student-led professional development opportunities on diversity. The professional development seeks to answer the question: *how are we addressing racism and justice in the classroom, and what do we do with stories of injustice?*

Outside of her professional life, Dr. Farrugia stays busy keeping up with her family, which includes three children. She credits the educational studies program with developing practitioners over theorists and loves the idea of creating change from the inside out. To current students she says, "when you're in the program, don't define yourself as a student, define yourself as an agent of change. Even small changes will add up to larger-scale change eventually!"

Thanks, Dr. Farrugia, and best wishes for your continued success!

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## Dear Dr.

*As a doctoral student, can I take a public stance on current social issues? How vocal is it appropriate for an academic to be on social media?*

Dear Student on Social Media,

For a doctoral student, social media can be both an extraordinarily powerful tool but also a tool that can be potentially damaging to a career in the academy.

We should start by examining some of the positives. Your social media profile is a chance for you to connect your online persona to your research and interests. You can use social media connections to build a valuable community of like-minded researchers. In fact, many of the professional interactions you develop on social media can be richer and potentially longer-lasting than those you make in fleeting encounters at academic conferences. In addition to keeping up with current issues in your own subject area, you might also flag general conversations about life as a graduate student by following, for example, #phdchat or #gradschool.

Reading broadly and posting clearly can help you to develop your scholarly presence on social media. As you develop your own strong communicative voice you will share your passion for what you do and find much-needed energy in the interactions. Such devotion to your field of study is a sought-after characteristic in academia. So, too, is being supportive of the successes of colleagues.


However, these days there are many stories of university officials surveilling posts. Higher education institutions can live and die by their reputations so posts that reflect negatively on them may get some unwanted attention.

As you no doubt realize, politics and educational studies are tightly intertwined and even the most well-intentioned tweet or blog post could trigger a reaction. In a perfect world, if your post is well-reasoned and impeccably researched you should have nothing to be concerned about. Social media, however, is driven by reaction, emotion, and personality. It makes sense to review Eastern's social media policy, in particular, "[Oversight of Social Media Channels.](#)"

I think sometimes that all universities struggle to find that delicate balance between encouraging robust online speech and protecting its online reputation. That leaves you, my dear doctoral student, carefully finding that same balance, checking the political winds, making calculated decisions, and finding your place in the academy.

- Dr. Michael McVey

If you have questions about activism, education, scholarship, or career, please email Jennifer Bennett at [jvance@emich.edu](mailto:jvance@emich.edu) for inclusion in a future newsletter.



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## Search for a New Dean

The COE will soon begin a national search for a new dean. Dr. Dana Heller, Dean of College of Arts and Science will be the chairperson for the search committee, which will also include Dr. Wendy Burke, Head of Teacher Education, representing the Department Heads in the COE and six additional faculty members, including a representative from each department. Each department will prioritize criteria for the selection of the new dean, which will be shared with the COE Council to develop a composite list to be used by the search committee.

EMU's Provost, Dr. Rhonda Longworth, notes that the COE is positioned to attract highly qualified candidates, hoping to have the new dean hired prior to or soon after Dean Saylor retires on June 30, 2021.

Dean Saylor will be retiring on June 30, 2021, having served as the dean of the College of Education since June 1, 2015. Watch for an interview with Dean Saylor in the February issue.

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## Community of Scholars

The reimagined Community of Scholars events have gotten off to a great start, with many different past and present cohorts representing!

On Monday, December 7, we will be hosting [Dr. Johnny Lupinacci, alumnus of the Ed Studies program and current Assistant Professor of Cultural Studies and Social Thought in Education at Washington State University](#) to discuss current socio-political issues in education. Please join us from 8-9 pm on Zoom.

### *Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Studies*

*The Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Studies prepares educators from a variety of community organizations (P-12 schools, higher education and other community contexts) to engage in effective research and practice about teaching and learning within complex social, political and economic systems. A key underlying emphasis of the program is a focus on poverty and its specific impact on urban, as well as suburban and rural communities.*

## GRC 2021

The pandemic may have put a damper on your opportunities to share your research, but here's a chance to present your work! EMU will host its [Virtual Graduate Research Conference](#) on Friday, March 19, 2021. Students can present in a live session or prerecorded poster or oral presentation. The [application portal](#) will open on December 14, 2020, with proposals due January 29, 2021.

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## Season of Service

The holiday season is upon us, and with that, many students, faculty, and staff of the program are reflecting on what they are most thankful for and looking for ways to best serve their community. Given the ongoing pandemic, many service-based activities are being rethought, though the desire to give back is still present.

If you find yourself in that position, consider taking the [United Way of Washtenaw County's 21 Day Equity Challenge](#). This challenge is a series of curated, multimedia artifacts, as well as reflection prompts to go along with each day and culminates in a call to action with volunteer opportunities (including some virtual) on day 21. Not only is this a wonderful way to give back to our surrounding community, but it's also a way to take some of the theory learned in the Educational Studies program into action. (Plus, it will give you something great to do during your extended winter break!)