



**Manhattanville**  
COLLEGE®

**PNWBOCES**  
PUTNAM | NORTHERN WESTCHESTER  
*Service and Innovation Through Partnership*

**Take it UP a degree!**



VOLUME 01

FALL 2017

## School of Education Awards Record 18 Doctorates

The School of Education awarded eighteen (18) doctorates in Educational Leadership in May, 2017, the largest number of such degrees that Manhattanville has granted in a single year. "We are very pleased with the growth of the Ed.D. program," said Dean Shelley Wepner. "With the addition of a concentration in Higher Education Leadership as well as an Executive Ed.D. (All But Dissertation) program in recent years, we expect that our doctoral program will continue to grow," Wepner noted.

The scholars who were graduated in the spring were largely from the School of Education's Signature Program representing P-12 school leaders.

One graduate, Dr. Jeremy Luft, who was recently appointed to his new position of Director of Learning and Innovation in Putnam Valley Central School District, stated that, "The Manhattanville doctoral program pushed me to become a better student, educator, and researcher. The cohort model allowed us to form close relationships with our fellow students. This network of friends was vital to my success and continues to exist today. The Manhattanville doctoral program pushed me to think outside the box, analyze complex problems, develop leadership skills, and to



approach all problems with a critical lens; all of these skills easily translated into my current role as a district administrator."

Dr. Ramon Sanchez, STEM Instructional Leader for the Department of Education NYC, a graduate of the Executive Ed.D. program reflected upon his doctoral journey. According to Dr. Sanchez, "The Doctoral Program at Manhattanville College was instrumental in re-engaging me in scholarly work and, as a result, it has changed my worldview about education."

## Surviving and Completing Your Doctoral Program



Manhattanville College created a program for individuals just like me who were ABD (all but dissertation) and were interested in finishing the doctoral degree once and for all. I enrolled in 2014 and successfully defended my dissertation in January of 2016.

For tips from Dr. John Falino on how to successfully complete your doctorate, visit his blog at [www.johnfalino.com](http://www.johnfalino.com).

**Try This!**

# Doctorate in Educational Leadership Welcomes Three New Student Cohorts



New students in the Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership were welcomed this fall at a reception hosted by Manhattanville and Putnam | Northern Westchester BOCES, partners in this unique advanced degree. The event, held at Manhattanville's grand Reid Castle, was also attended by the program's alumni, current students, and professors.

The Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) program at Manhattanville is designed as a cohort model, which means a small group of students begin and remain together for the duration of their program.

The students cited the cohort experience as central to their positive experience in the doctoral program. "It's valuable to meet other people with similar concerns about the direction of education," said Charles Garfield, English Teacher and Assistant Dean of Greenwich High School, in Greenwich, Connecticut.

The Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership has offered the Signature Educational Leadership program since 2010 and an Executive Ed.D. since 2013. In January 2017, Manhattanville added its first cohort in the Higher Education concentration. The 2nd cohort, introduced at the reception, is all women. They nicknamed themselves WW2—a nod to "Wonder Woman 2" that hit the box office about the same time they added a doctoral journey to their already full lives.

As Renee Gargano, the Assistant Program Coordinator for Manhattanville's Doctoral Program and Founder and Program Developer of the Putnam | Northern Westchester BOCES Center for Educational Leadership, welcomed all to the annual reception, attendees gathered around tables in Reid Castle's gracious dining room, naturally grouping themselves by cohort. "You are embarking on a rich and life-changing experience," said Gargano. "Our outstanding faculty and staff are with you every step of the way. We look forward to celebrating at your graduation and calling you 'Dr.'"

Manhattanville's President, Dr. Michael E. Geisler, struck a tone of both empathy and humor with the students by putting the writing of a doctoral thesis in the context of the five most traumatic experiences of a lifetime.

Shelley B. Wepner, Dean and Professor at Manhattanville's School of Education, followed with a lighthearted recount of her own Ed.D. journey, complete with multiple job changes and twins born six weeks before her dissertation defense, to help the students understand the power of their own determination.

Robert Monson, Coordinator of the Doctoral Program and Visiting Associate Professor in Educational Leadership, reminded students of the importance of family time while pursuing a doctorate.

---

## Scholar Joi Sampson Adds Italian Flare to Her Manhattanville Experience

Who says that the classroom boundaries for Ed.D. students were located between Yorktown Heights and Purchase, New York? Ms. Joi Sampson, Cohort 1 (Higher Education Leadership Concentration) added to her doctoral experience by participating in a study abroad program organized by St. Cloud College in Minnesota. "It was an opportunity for me to gain an international student's perspective," Joi noted, "while being immersed in the culture and environment of Italy. We truly lived 'among the town,' studied the language and culture, and completed a badge project for a local school."

"It really brought me back to student life," Joi commented. Ms. Sampson works for Manhattanville College as a student academic advisor. This experience offered me personal growth - the ability to learn about other cultures and meet new people."



*"While my doctoral work started elsewhere, and is difficult at times, I know it is feasible: at Manhattanville, I have the guidance, knowledge, and motivation provided through support of my peers in the cohort and faculty."*

**Kennybel Pena**

PROJECT MANAGER, CUNY DOMINICAN STUDIES INSTITUTE  
Ed.D. STUDENT, EXEC/ABD COHORT #4

# Three Manhattanville Students Begin Their First Superintendency This Fall



DR. RON HATTAR

Kindergartners and first-time high school and middle school students are not the only newbies excited about the start of a new school year. In Peekskill, Pelham, and Yorktown, newly minted superintendents are starting the tough, but rewarding, job of leading a school district.

All three – Cheryl H. Champ in Pelham, Mary Keenan Foster in Peekskill, and Ron Hattar in Yorktown – are graduates of, or current students in, the Manhattanville College Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership, which is offered in partnership with Putnam | Northern Westchester BOCES. The program is designed for mid-career professionals who already have leadership experience and is structured to accommodate the busy schedules of working professionals.

Dr. Champ credits the Manhattanville program with giving her entre into the world of school leaders who are, as she notes, “committed to equity, social justice, scholarship, and service to their communities. They were the people who made things happen and put their heads on the pillow at night knowing they had made the world a better place, one student at a time.”

Dr. Champ came to the program after participating in an Education Policy Fellows Program, also offered by BOCES. While there, she met many of the educational leaders who serve on the Manhattanville faculty and was inspired to advance her education even further.

“The courses at Manhattanville, in addition to being incredibly intellectually stimulating and relevant, provided opportunities for more relationships with former, current, and future superintendents,” Dr. Champ said, adding that it made her see that the position of superintendent was within her reach and a good match for her skills.

For Mary Keenan Foster, Manhattanville’s themes of “becoming a sophisticated practitioner scholar and developing self and others” resonated with how she viewed her own career in education. “It has been the most rigorous, challenging, and rewarding experience of my career,” Foster said.

Foster said she was humbled to serve as Interim Superintendent of the Peekskill City School District, adding, “I am committed to sharing my belief that every child holds within themselves the ability to be whatever they choose and to achieve whatever they dream.”

Dr. Hattar, who earned his doctorate four years ago, had been serving as an assistant superintendent in the Eastchester Union Free School District before being tapped for the Yorktown position. Dr. Hattar embraced the job with great enthusiasm, noting that he lives in Yorktown and has children attending schools in the district, so he is doubly invested in the success of the system.

Like his counterparts in Peekskill and Pelham, Dr. Hattar credited the Manhattanville Doctoral Program with preparing him for his current position. “The Manhattanville College Doctoral Program provided me an intellectually stimulating array of courses with some of the most brilliant minds in the region,” he said. “In reflecting on my experience at Manhattanville College, it was the relationships with my fellow doctoral students and faculty that had the most profound impact on me.”



DR. CHERYL H. CHAMP



MS. MARY KEENAN FOSTER

*To Learn More About Our Program and the Three Pathways To The Doctorate  
Visit Our Website at [Mville.edu/EDD](http://Mville.edu/EDD)*



*“The focus and individual attention that faculty give to students is remarkable. I feel like I am the only student in the program based on the level of attention and interest that each faculty members shows to me.”*

**Laura Bigaouette**  
PROGRAM DIRECTOR, FORDHAM UNIVERSITY  
Ed.D. STUDENT, HIGHERED COHORT #1

# Manhattanville Expands Educational Leadership Advisory Committee



The Manhattanville College School of Education released its list of Advisory Committee members for the 2017-2018 Academic Year. In addition to Coordinator of the Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership Robert Monson, Dean of the School of Education Shelley Wepner, and Assistant Coordinator Renee Gargano, the committee contains several faculty members,

including Higher Education Program Coordinator Susan Iverson, Professor Kenneth Mitchell, Assistant Professor of Economics Kyoko Mona, Coordinator of Ed Leadership Certification Programs Lenora Boehlert, Interim Dean of the Business School Steve Albanese, Associate Professor of TESOL and Foreign Languages Diane Gomez, and Professor of Psychology Alison Carson.

The Council is also replete with leading practitioners representing K-12 school districts, institutions of higher education, and Manhattanville alumni, including Head of Eagle Hill School Marjorie Castro; Yorktown Superintendent Ron Hattar; Mt. Pleasant Blythedale Superintendent Emily Hersh; Ossining Superintendent Ray Sanchez; Lead Teacher Certificates and Diplomas, EF Education First Angela Adamu; PNW BOCES Center for Educational Leadership Program Developer Joan Thompson; Pelham Superintendent Cheryl Champ; and Manhattanville's Vice President for Student Affairs Cindy L. Porter.

We are most appreciative of the support and guidance provided to us by this outstanding group of educational leaders.

## LOVE BEHIND LEADERSHIP FUND

*Your generosity is greatly appreciated!*

*The Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership Alumni Association at Manhattanville College sponsors the "Love Behind Leadership" fund to support special events and recognition of graduates at our annual graduation reception. This fund is used to provide thoughtful gifts to those within our doctoral program, acknowledging and celebrating achievements, and helping to comfort those in times of grief. To learn more about the fund and how you may honor a loved one, [Click Here](#).*

## First Higher Ed Cohort Delivers with Masters Course in Student Affairs

It did not take long for the scholars in Manhattanville's Cohort 1 of the Higher Education Leadership Concentration to deliver course content and teaching for the School of Education. Led by program coordinator Dr. Susan Iverson, members of the cohort designed and delivered a Masters-level course in student affairs this summer.

For several of the teaching scholars, it was a matter of applying both academic and practical principles to the subject matter, as they are long-time student affairs professionals. "It was a great experience. The students were eager to learn and absorbed an enormous amount of material in a very short period of time," noted Ms. Sharlise Smith-Rodriguez, Dean of Students at Manhattanville College and a member of Cohort 1.

Natalie Aleman, who manages the Academic Success Center at Berkeley College in White Plains, had similar thoughts. "The curriculum was designed to cover many of the important concepts for student affairs professionals today, such as human development theories, organizational behavior, and working in diverse environments. Our class discussions were awesome; these students were very engaged, as were their instructors!"

The course met over a period of 6 weeks, with sessions of 3 hours. Students were required to keep academic journals and prepare thoughts about the reading for each week's discussion. The course's major project was an interview of a student affairs professional in the area of the student's interest. Students were then asked to present their findings to the entire class.

Masters students commenting on the course in evaluations provided positive feedback, as well. One wrote, "I learned so much from both readings and class discussions. The doctoral students were a fantastic addition for help and experience." Another complimented Dr. Iverson's curriculum choices, noting, "The readings, discussions, and interview assignment provided a lot of practical knowledge that I haven't seen in a class before...[and] helped me understand and reflect upon the field of higher education and student affairs."

Expect to see more out of these future student affairs professional leaders and their mentors in Cohort 1!

### Superintendents

James M. Ryan, Ed.D  
DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT

Lynn Allen, Ed.D  
ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT

Todd Currie  
ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT

John McCarthy  
ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT

### Board Members

Richard Krepes  
PRESIDENT

Catherine Lilburne  
VICE PRESIDENT

Anita Feldman  
TRUSTEE

Douglas Glickert  
TRUSTEE

Tina Mackay  
TRUSTEE

Mary Cay Nilsen  
TRUSTEE

Frank Schneckner  
TRUSTEE