In May, 2014, the School of Education became the first college in the United States to receive Initial Accreditation from NCATE and CAEP. Every program in the School of Education has also been nationally recognized by its SPA. In November, Professor Matt Koopmans, Arlene Zimny and Evelyn Paredes presented a national Webinar outlining our accreditation process as an exemplar of excellence.

Two issues of the Global Education Review were published this semester. Professors Diane Scricca and Mary-Ellen Freeley (St. John’s University) were co-editors for “Teacher Observation: Formative Professional Growth Strengthening Teacher Effectiveness.” Professors Terri Germain-Williams, Amanda Gunning and Meghan Marerro were the editors for “Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) Education.”

Dr. Nancy Heilbronner, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, continued the SoE’s commitment to excellence by creating a series of six “Projects-to-Go.” All full-time faculty are involved in “Projects-to-Go” committees based on their varied professional and scholarly interests.

Education faculty have a new public forum. Journal News, which serves our surrounding communities, has asked us to write monthly columns on high-interest educational issues. Faculty received favorable feedback on their columns: “Teaching is More than a Checklist” (Dr. Andrew Peiser), “Parents can Help Their Kids Develop Persistence to Learn” (Dr. Patrick McCabe), “Why Science Education Matters” (Dr. Nancy Heilbronner) and “Keeping Your Middle School Child Safe from Bullying” (Drs. Howard Miller and Ilene Rothschild).

The School of Education was awarded a Math-Science Partnership Grant with the Yonkers Public Schools to support the integration of EngageNY common core modules into Grades 5-8 mathematics teaching. More than 75 mathematics teachers and 28 school leaders are participating in professional development led by Drs. Terri Germain-Williams, Ronni David and Bill Farber at our Bronx and Dobbs Ferry campuses. The project includes an online initiative, with Professor Emerita Carol Gladstone providing Blackboard training.

There are many more exciting initiatives being planned for this academic year, so stay tuned!
MERCY WELCOMES: Associate Dean Dr. Nancy Heilbronner

Dr. Nancy Heilbronner has assumed the position of Associate Dean of Academic Affairs for the School of Education. Dr. Heilbronner joined Mercy College after four years as an assistant professor in the doctoral program at Western Connecticut State University. She works closely with Dean Posamentier and Associate Dean Hoffman and teaches courses for the School of Education.

The majority of the work she does as associate dean includes handling curricular issues and guiding the development of new programs. In addition, she is implementing innovations and changes that are designed to achieve better student academic outcomes. She acknowledges the importance of our student success on the new state tests and is working with the School of Education to support our teacher candidates. Currently, this includes initiatives to help students with certification tests.

Recently, she proposed ‘Faculty Projects-to-Go.’ This has been successful as faculty have developed projects related to improving student writing, grant work, communication with adjuncts, digital literacies, improving online learning, and faculty scholarship.

While juggling her responsibilities and projects, Dr. Heilbronner keeps her vision for the future of the School of Education in mind: “We have grown tremendously in the past few years and become more cohesive. For the future, I would love to see increased work with the community, maybe a lab school and the development new and innovative programs for our teacher candidates.”

In her private time, Dr. Heilbronner enjoys hiking with her husband and her dog and taking summer trips to Maine to explore Acadia National Park. She also is a voracious reader including non-fiction, biographies and historical fiction novels.

MEET MERCY FACULTY: Dr. Olga DeJesus

Last summer, Dr. Olga DeJesus’ book English Language Learners: International Undergraduate English Language Learners’ Perceptions of Distance Learning was published by Scholar’s press. Her research focuses on students’ perceptions of on-line learning, cultural differences, second language acquisition, and acquisition of content. The factors that influenced students’ attitudes toward on-line learning were levels of language proficiency, experiences with on-line learning, and amount of time spent in the U.S. Her book includes recommendations for instructional designers, instructors, and administrators.

Dr. Olga De Jesus, a faculty member in the Department of Literacy and Multilingual Studies, has been an educator for 20 years, the last 14 at Mercy College. She holds two Master degrees: Elementary Education and School Building Leadership. Additionally, she obtained an Ed.D degree in Educational Leadership from Liberty University in Lynchburg, VA.

Since 2001, Dr. DeJesus has served as graduate education academic advisor, certification officer, Director of Graduate Education at the Yorktown campus, and instructor in the department of Literacy and Multilingual Studies. In addition to teaching and mentoring students, Dr. DeJesus has made presentations to the New York State Association of Bilingual Educators (NYSABE) and provided workshops to parents of school age children through the SOE Parent Center and workshops to K-12 teachers in the Yonkers School District. Most recently, Dr. DeJesus presented her research “International ELLs Perception of Distance Learning” at the International Week for Teachers of Education in Vienna, Austria.
Jorge Sandoval is more than an adjunct instructor. He is an innovative Social Studies educator at the Academy of Urban Planning in Bushwick, Brooklyn and an inspirational community leader. He is a co-creator of “Day of Dialogue” which is part of a larger initiative that facilitates student action research on stereotypes and racism that impact his school community.

Mr. Sandoval’s success with students in a traditionally underperforming district is one of the reasons Mercy College is lucky to have him teaching our students. He opens his school and classrooms to Mercy students and says that almost every year he invites a Mercy student “...to visit my school and observe my fellow teachers in action and spend the day with me teaching and observing. One Mercy student enjoyed herself so much that she interviewed with a school on our campus the following year.”

Sandoval credits some of his own success to Mercy College. Recently, he advanced to the position of assistant principal. “The experience of teaching online and sharing my blueprints with other teachers through Mercy pushed me to seek out the position of assistant principal at my current school.”

Mr. Sandoval found that teaching Mercy College students as an adjunct has improved his practice. He encourages his students to be creative, which sparks his own creativity. “Since we try new strategies such as e-portfolios and formative assessments, it inspires me to revise my own leadership, I asked my own staff to implement similar formative assessments used in my EDUC 506 course. Our meetings now include case study reviews and Next Steps which is what I encourage my Mercy students to engage in after they assess their own students.”

Mr. Sandoval’s knowledge, experience, commitment and excitement make him an integral part of the Mercy College community.

Amanie Riley is enrolled in an accelerated five year program and will graduate with a Bachelor’s Degree in Psychology and a Master’s Degree in Special Education. Prior to college, Ms. Riley excelled academically and athletically despite having a visual impairment, which she considers, “a situation not a disability.”

By the age of four, she was completely blind. She and her family were active in seeking the necessary supports and resources to help her be successful. From age four to thirteen, Ms. Riley attended Yonkers Public schools, received assistive technology, braille instruction and was provided a Teacher of the Visually Impaired (TVI) who assisted her with her daily academic routine and testing modifications. For high school, she attended the New York Institute for Special Education, a school specialized for the blind and visually impaired. In 2011, Ms. Riley graduated valedictorian with recognition for her strong academic achievements and extracurricular activities.

Ms. Riley hopes to become a TVI to assist others with visual impairment. She has expressed her gratitude for the Office of ACCESSibility and the support, resources, and guidance they provided.

Ms. Riley has received numerous scholarships and awards for her academic and civic achievements. She is an active public speaker at events for cancer survivors. She serves as an inspiration to many and as stated in the Mercy College student newspaper, “although unable to see, this Mercy student has a clear vision of who she is in life.”
Austrian Teachers Visit Mercy College for Austrian-American Educational Academy

Mercy College hosted the first “Austrian-American Educational Academy: English for Professional Use in U.S. Early Education” at the Dobbs Ferry and Manhattan campuses from August 4th to August 15th, 2014. This was a collaboration between the Department of Childhood Education and the Austrian American Educational Cooperation Association (AAECA).

Eleven Austrian kindergarten teachers came to Mercy to practice their English language skills and learn about topics concerning early childhood education in the U.S.. The workshops led to numerous discussions and comparisons of the educational systems in both countries. Dr. Elena Nitecki, the chair of the Department of Childhood Education, stated "Hosting the Austrian kindergarten teachers was an enlightening experience for both groups. In the rapidly changing field of early childhood education, it was interesting to examine critical issues from an international perspective."

The program included excursions to the Children’s Corner Learning Center in Scarsdale and to the Head Start Program at Educational Alliance in Manhattan, which the Austrian teachers enjoyed and appreciated as interesting learning experiences. Kelley Ann Shelswell, who served as an organizer of the Austrian group stated “It was fascinating to see that in the USA and in Austria people with similar traits work in this field: highly motivated, inquisitive, critical, eloquent, and socially competent.”

The academy included social excursions to Manhattan for typical American food like barbecue in Harlem and pastrami sandwiches at Katz’s Deli. They took a guided tour of the New York Public Library and visited the Museum of Mathematics. These experiences enhanced the cross-cultural friendships, one of the desired outcomes of the program.

The Department of Childhood Education hopes that this is the beginning of a long collaboration between Mercy College and AAECA. “The Educational Academy for Early Education Teachers organized by the AAECA and Mercy College has proved to be a successful initiative promoting transatlantic cooperation,” said Dr. Franz Schimek, the Executive Director of AAECA. Planning for the second workshop in August, 2015 has already begun.

Mercy Faculty Present at the International Week Conference

Faculty members were honored to again be invited to attend the International Week conference in Baden, Austria, hosted by the University College of Teacher Education in Lower Austria from May 26 to May 30, 2014. The conference attracted lecturers from Eastern Europe, Scandinavia and Austria to discuss current educational issues such as pedagogical content knowledge, inclusion, leadership and research. The featured keynote speakers were Klaus Koerner from the European Commission in Brussels (Belgium) and Mercy College School of Education Dean, Dr. Posamentier.

The following Mercy College faculty presented at the conference: Joyce Coppin, Olga DeJesus, Sheila Gersh, Nancy Heilbronner, Kathy-Anne Jordan, Susan Lapidus, Sudha Ramaswamy, and Helge Wasmuth. Dr. Maria-Luise Braunsteiner, a professor at the University College of Teacher Education in Lower Austria, stated, “Mercy College’s recent emergence as one of the top schools of education in the New York City metropolitan area significantly enhanced our second international conference at our Pedagogical University in Lower Austria. We truly value the relationship that has developed with Mercy College’s School of Education.”

The conference was an enriching professional development experience. “The opportunities for collaboration and professional development afforded through this experience were truly amazing.” said Dr. Heilbronner. “I can’t wait to go back!”
Mercy College School of Education Bronx Parent Center has received national attention. It was featured in the Education Week “Partnership in Bronx Aims to Build Skills on Behalf of Parents: Mercy College Education School Reaches Out.” The article explains the center is a first-of-its-kind, faculty-led initiative by the Mercy College School of Education. It is an innovative model for working with Bronx schools to promote and expand parent engagement and leadership in order to improve student achievement and to close the achievement gap for students in Pre-K-12 schools.

This fall, Dr. Charlotte K. Frank, long time benefactor and supporter of the BPC, was recognized for her generosity in a dedication ceremony naming one of the rooms at the BPC after her. Dr. Frank is a Bronx native and a senior advisor for McGraw-Hill Educational. As a teacher, supervisor, executive director of the Division of Curriculum and Instruction for the New York City Board of Education, and a Regent of the State of New York, she has been at the forefront of championing education causes.

Since the center’s grand opening in September 2012, the faculty offered over 50 free parent workshops in both English and Spanish to a diverse population. Topics ranged from health, nutrition, and financial planning to reading strategies, navigating the special education process, and preparing for the NYS standardized tests (grade 3-8) and the High School Regents exams. The center also serves as a research base for faculty to investigate best practices in parent engagement and a laboratory for teacher candidates.

The new Chancellor of the New York City Department of Education, Carmen Farina, has made public that one of her top priorities is parent engagement throughout the city’s public schools. We believe this will give new traction to our efforts in supporting parents at the Bronx PC.

More than 100 enthusiastic parents from Districts 8, 9, and 10 in the Bronx, with children in grades Pre-K through middle school, attended the Common Core English Language Arts breakfast workshops at the Bronx Parent Center this fall with Associate Professor and Director of the center, Dr. Aramina Vega Ferrer.

The dedication ceremony of the Dr. Charlotte K. Frank Room at the Bronx Parent Center where Dr. Frank proudly cut the ribbon joined by President Tim Hall, School of Education Dean Alfred Posamentier, and Drs. Aramina Vega Ferrer and JungKang Miller.
Summer Literacy Partnership Addresses At-Risk Elementary Students in Dobbs Ferry

Dr. Barbara Keckler is responsible for bringing together Mercy School of Education students, Springhurst Elementary School and Cabrini Immigrant Services, a community services agency located in Dobbs Ferry. Dr. Keckler’s pilot program developed as she was seeking a summer field experience opportunity for her students enrolled in EDUC 605 Assessing and Correcting Literacy Problems Practicum in Early Childhood and Childhood. Dr. Keckler contacted Julia Drake, the principal of Springhurst, who connected Dr. Keckler with Robin Larkins, Director of Cabrini Immigrant Services. Larkins was planning the annual summer reading program focused on at-risk, low-literacy children from households where English is not the primary home language. 100% of the students receive free or reduced-price lunch.

Mercy students were paired with elementary students (entering grades 2-4) and worked on individual assessments and strategies to improve reading skills, comprehension and interest in literacy activities. Graduate student Alfred Fley commented: “The greatest challenge was making the material appropriate for my student’s age and reading level while also not making it too easy.” The attitude assessment also indicated a majority of these children did not like reading on their own. Graduate student Shelly Ann Simpson concluded from her experience, “My confidence in planning lessons grew as I saw and heard my student’s reading improve.”

Judy Sanserverino, English Language Learning (ELL) Instructor at Springhurst, developed and facilitated a Summer Reading Circles program at Cabrini with these children, volunteered to coordinate between the school and the families. The sessions with the students met twice a week and were then followed up with Dr. Keckler’s classroom discussion. At the conclusion of the practicum, the children were awarded certificates and had a classroom party in their honor. Graduate student Veronica Gonzalez said: “This experience has taught me that I have to be flexible and prepared for each encounter with students. I learned that I have to continue finding different ways to engage and motivate my students in order to ensure their educational success.”
MISTI Program Kicks off Summer 2014

This past summer marked the beginning of student involvement for the National Science Foundation-sponsored Mercy College Intensive STEM Teacher Initiative (MISTI) (www.mercy.edu/misti) program. Principal investigator, Dr. Meghan Marrero, coordinated the planning and presentations of faculty in Mathematics and Biology at Mercy College, and Bronx Community College, for a three-week camp for students who completed their freshman and sophomore years. The camp was discovery-based and focused on collaborative, laboratory-based projects to enhance students' understanding of concepts and skills in STEM subjects and model effective teaching strategies. Students conducted authentic research using the Hudson River as a context and presented their findings at the New York State Marine Education Association (www.nysmea.org) conference in October.

The MISTI program continues this semester with meeting for current scholars and recruitment, both for the scholars program, which awards $45,000 in stipends and scholarships per student, and the 2015 summer experience.

MEET MERCY ALUMNI: Jeremy Galland

Jeremy Galland is a recent graduate of the Race to the Top (RTTT) Mathematics Teacher Education Program. RTTT provides funding to offset participants' tuition. Mr. Galland was excited about the compact, dual-certification program with a strong connection to practice within the school setting and left his career in finance to join Mercy College.

Mr. Galland attributes his preparation for teaching to the program and how it serves as a model for teaching in his own classroom. He explained, “The focus was directed towards our struggles trying to plan for and implement differentiated lessons and activities. This always made the whole curriculum feel so unified toward the obvious goal of giving us the widest set of knowledge, skills, stories, and tools to survive and excel in our first few years of teaching.” Mr. Galland secured a position as a middle school teacher in the Yonkers Public School District.

Reflecting on his job search, he noted, “After three months of ups and downs, I was thrilled to be interviewing for a Yonkers position, and was grateful that the administrators took a chance on a quasi-first year teacher, with a full year of student teaching experience in their own school district.” In addition to the preparation he received, he recognizes that the Mercy’s strong relationships with Westchester County school districts was an important part of obtaining a job.

Mr. Galland was pleasantly surprised by his first year of teaching. “Actually, the first three months have been great; better than I expected and way more disappointing at the same time. Pacing, units, assessing and grading have been a constant work in progress. On the other hand, I was well prepared to be constantly reflecting on my classroom environment and management strategies. My coursework and experiences with the Mercy faculty and mentors focused so much on having high expectations for all students.”
The Global Education Review - an Update

A year has passed since the Global Education Review (GER) published the inaugural issue in February, 2014, and a lot of growth has occurred in that year. One year later, February 2015, the School of Education’s innovative journal is doing well, and all indications are that the GER will continue to flourish.

One of the challenges of producing the first and second issues was getting enough content. This was understandable. What faculty member would submit an article to a journal that had never seen the light of day? This is especially important, since publication could influence a decision about a faculty member’s promotion or tenure. Fortunately, that has changed, and the GER faces the problem of having to reject perfectly fine articles because there are more submissions than can be accommodated.

None of that growth would have happened without the support and hard work of School of Education faculty, who volunteered to edit themed issues, write editorials, and review articles.

Over the course of the year, changes have occurred that will influence the future direction of the GER.

A notable change in format and content of the past year was the addition of a book review section. Forthcoming issues will include book reviews. Managing Editor, Dr. Eric Martone, volunteered to assume the major task of Book Review Editor — soliciting books to review, inviting reviewers, and editing the reviews.

Another change is distribution. The announcement of the inaugural issue was distributed to a list of 12,000 academics world wide, and we have to date had approximately 10,000 readers. Today GER is included in major online indices, and full text articles and abstracts will be available in ERIC.

Finally, faculty at other institutions have become involved with the journal and have suggested themes and offered to edit issues. The reviewer pool has grown to 177 professors throughout the world.

One thing will remain unchanged. The unwavering support of the faculty of the School of Education will continue. We welcome input from readers so that we can continue to improve our offerings.