



OF NOTE

SPRING 2026

Recent Highlights from UMBC Language, Literacy, and Culture Program

A Note from the Director

Dear LLC Community,

As we bring the 2025–2026 academic year to a close, I find myself filled with an immense sense of pride and gratitude for this community. When I look at everyone's accomplishments in this newsletter, I am reminded of just how special the LLC program truly is. We are a community that continues to embody what it means to engage in "Scholarship that Matters."

First and foremost, I want to offer my heartfelt congratulations to our newest LLC graduates during this academic year. Drs. Squires-Caesar, Seidel, Chisholm, Hossain, Mays-Williams, and Taj, you have done it! Earning a doctoral degree is no small feat. Reaching this milestone is a testament to your brilliance, persistence, and commitment to the work. But as you know, the degree is not the destination, it is just the beginning. The world needs your research now more than ever, and I am charging each of you to go forth and continue to use your scholarship to uplift society. LLC will always be your home, and we will be cheering you on every step of the way.

I also want to extend a very special congratulations to my colleague and fellow LLC faculty member, Dr. Tanya Saunders, and to myself, on our promotions to the rank of Full Professor. This milestone belongs not just to us, it belongs to every person in our community who has poured into us, pushed us, and believed in our work.

And I would be remiss if I did not give a very special shoutout to our phenomenal Program Coordinator, Cathy Myers, who earned her master's degree. Cathy, you show up every single day to support this program with grace, dedication, and expertise. We appreciate you!

Catherine Myers

Program Coordinator, Editor

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As we head into the summer months, my charge to each of you is simple: rest. My plan is to spend some time with my family in California, play some golf, and relax. Our scholarship is critical work, but we cannot pour from an empty cup. Take the time to unplug, recharge, and enjoy the summer. You have more than earned it. I look forward to seeing you all refreshed and ready when we reconvene in the fall!

Dr. Goings, Director



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LLC PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS AND MILESTONES

Ph.D. graduates honored in December 2025

Kara Seidel
(cohort 23)

Faculty as Translators: Disability Policy, Culture, and Discourse in Higher Education

Chair: Ramon Goings, Language, Literacy, and Culture



Dr. Goings with LLC graduates, Sonya Squires-Caesar and Kara Seidel.

Sonya Squires-Caesar*
(cohort 13)

Money Tales: Tangled Financial Socialization of US Immigrants' Use of Rotating Savings and Credit Association

Co-chairs: Craig Saper and Ramon Goings, Language, Literacy, and Culture

**Summer 2025 graduate*

Ph.D. graduates honored in May 2026



Nneka Chisholm
(cohort 23)

Black Love on Screen, Black Women's Lived Romance

Co-chairs: Ramon Goings, Language, Literacy, and Culture, and Emerald Christopher, Georgetown University

**Shahin Hossain
(cohort 23)**

Measuring College Students' Reliance on Large Language Models in Academic Writing: A Sequential Explanatory Mixed-Methods Study at a Minority-Serving Institution

Chair: Ramon Goings, Language, Literacy, and Culture



**Chelsea Mays-Williams
(cohort 23)**

**Black Women Navigating West
Baltimore by Homeplace:
Methodologies of
Homeplace for Resilience**

Chair: Ramon Goings, Language,
Literacy, and Culture



LLC graduates (L-R) Shahin Hossain, Nneka Chisholm, Chelsea Mays-Williams, Zareen Taj.

**Zareen Taj
(cohort 22)**

Journey of a Scholar-Activist: An Autoethnographic and Multimodal Inquiry

Chair: Tania Lizarazo, Modern Languages, Linguistics & Intercultural Communication,
and Joby Taylor, Shriver Center



Catherine Myers

LLC Program Coordinator, Cathy Myers, graduated in May with a
Master of Professional Studies in Community Leadership.

Congratulations!

SHARING OUR GOOD NEWS

Christine Mallinson (LLC faculty)

Dr. Christine Mallinson was invited to be UMBC's 2025 Winter Commencement Speaker. In her commencement address, she reflected on the power of language and communication—encouraging graduates to value their voices, embrace diversity, and use communication to build connection and equity, especially in our rapidly changing, technology-driven world.



Dr. Mallinson giving commencement address on December 17, 2025.



Tania Lizarazo (MLLI faculty)

Tania Lizarazo's book *Postconflict Utopias: Everyday Survival in Chocó, Colombia* received the Asociación de Colombianistas' Best Book Award in 2025 and the Latin American Studies Association's Latinx Studies Section's Best Book Award in 2026.

Francis Hult (EDUC faculty)

UMBC hosted the annual state-level conference of the Maryland Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) association in November 2025 under the leadership of affiliate faculty members Professor Francis M. Hult and Professor Shannon Sauro with support from LLC doctoral student María Razcon Echeagaray.

Professor Francis M. Hult, affiliate faculty member from the Department of Education, will serve as vice president of the American Association for Applied Linguistics (AAAL) during the 2026-2027. In this role, he will be the organizer and chair of the national AAAL conference in March 2027.

Michael Hunt (LLC Ph.D. '25)

received the UMBC Alumni Award in October 2025.

Dr. Hunt was elected Secretary/Treasurer of the American Educational Research Association (AERA) Mentorship and Mentoring Practices Special Interest Group (SIG). 2026-2028.

In January 2026, he presented at the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) Annual Meeting. He presented "RESTORING BELONGING: Centering Holistic Critical Mentoring to Anchor Student Success in Divided Times."

That same month, he also presented at the Association for Association for Undergraduate Education at Research Universities (UERU) National Conference, "Sacrificing the Sacred Idol of 'Faculty Know How to Mentor': Making Space for Holistic, Equity-Centered Mentoring in Undergraduate Research."



Shawntay Stocks-Williams (LLC Ph.D. '19)

Dr. Shawntay Stocks became the Associate Director of Transform Mid-Atlantic in January 2026.

Fan Yang (MCS faculty)

Dr. Yang was invited to Fudan University in Shanghai for a talk titled "Shenzhen, the Media-infrastructure Complex, and the Making of Navigational Subjectivity."

While in China, she also did field work for an invited contribution to the Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Food Studies on "Chinese Foodways in the Digital Age."

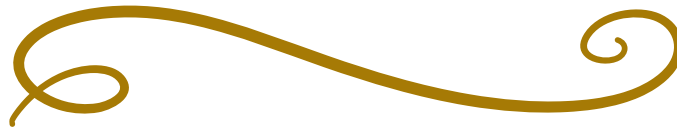
Karsonya Wise Whitehead (LLC Ph.D. '09)

For Black History Month 2026, Dr. Whitehead worked with Taharka Brothers Ice Cream to develop an ice cream flavor that connected with and could be used as a teaching tool for Black History. "Dr. Kaye's Touch of Freedom" combines Madagascar vanilla ice cream with deep shards of chocolate chips. Growing up in Jim Crow South Carolina, [her] grandmother would always tell [her] stories about how Black folks could not buy vanilla ice cream, so [she] chose vanilla as a form of resistance. For many years it was kept from [them], and as a sign of freedom [she is] "taking" it back, reclaiming it, and using it as a teaching tool.



Craig Saper (LLC faculty)

Professor Saper was awarded a Drescher Center book completion award in 2025.



Viridiana Colosio-Martinez (cohort 27)

has been accepted into the new two-year cohort of HASTAC Scholars, joining a dynamic community of innovative scholars. HASTAC is a community that thrives at the intersection of technology, the arts, the humanities, and the sciences, and is recognized as the “world’s first and oldest academic social network.” The program is currently hosted by the Futures Initiative at the Graduate Center, City University of New York (CUNY). As a HASTAC Scholar, Viridiana will have the opportunity to interview leaders in the digital research and digital humanities fields, host online forums, collaborate in organizing events on the future of higher education, and lead collaborative book reviews. Currently, Viridiana is collaborating on a book review of *The Campus Crisis Toolkit: Strategies and Solidarity for the Rest of Us*, edited by Lisa M. Di Bartolomeo and Kevin M. Gannon.



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Scholars Fellowship + Program

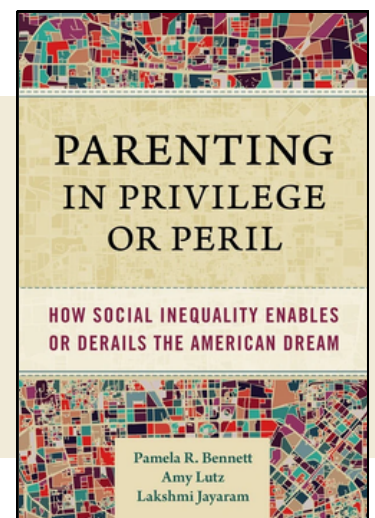


Sherella Cupid (LLC Ph.D. '20)

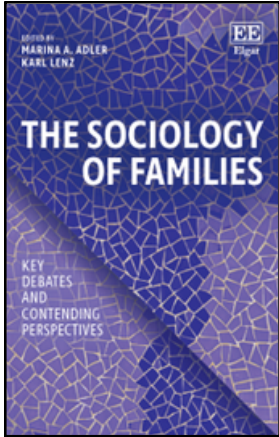
Drs. Sherella Cupid and Shawntay Stocks are featured in the platonic comedy movie, *Caught Out There!* This film was produced by alumna, Dr. Tahira Mahdi, '10, '14, Ph.D. '18, Psychology. About the movie: Heartly and Malik are star-crossed singles who join a Zodiac-based matchmaking service. Things get complicated when they discover extraterrestrials in the dating pool. Available on streaming services: Xumo, Relay, and Tubi.

Pamela Bennett (PUBL faculty)

Dr. Bennett's collaborative book was reviewed in the ASA journal *Contemporary Sociology*. The authors use parent interviews alongside census, school, and crime data to show how middle- and working-class parents navigate very different social contexts as they endeavor to help their children achieve upward mobility through education, organized activities, vigilant monitoring, and school choice. The book, titled *Parenting in Privilege or Peril: How Social Inequality Enables or Derails the American Dream*, is published by Teachers College Press of Columbia University.



HOT OFF THE PRESS



Marina Adler (SAPH faculty)

Professor Emerita Marina A. Adler, together with Karl Lenz, co-edited the volume *The Sociology of Families: Key Debates and Contending Perspectives*, published by Edward Elgar Publishing in December 2025.

In 2025 Professor Emerita Adler co-published with Tino Schlinzig “*Teaching and Learning Community-Based Participatory Research in an Underserved Neighborhood: Reflections on a Pedagogy for Graduate Sociology Courses*” in the journal *Sociology*.

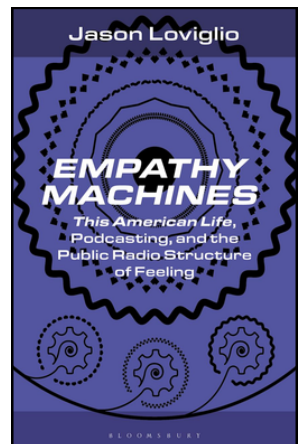


Tania Lizarazo (MLLI faculty)

Bill Shewbridge, Bev Bickel, Tania Lizarazo, Charlotte Keniston, Jamie Gillan, and Kaleigh Mrowka published “The Story in the Middle”: The Power of Collaborative Story Processes in Story Work for a Just Future: Exploring the Plurality of Knowledge and Method within the Digital Storytelling Community published by the Smithsonian Press on December, 2025.

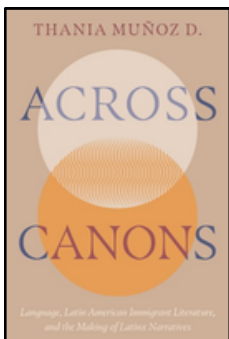
Jason Loviglio (MCS faculty)

Empathy Machines: This American Life, Podcasting, and the Public Radio Structure of Feeling was published in February by Bloomsbury.



Michael Casiano (AMST faculty)

In February 2026, Dr. Casiano published “*Dragging the Waters: Pestilence, Policing, and the Public Good in Postbellum Baltimore*” in the *Journal of Urban History*.



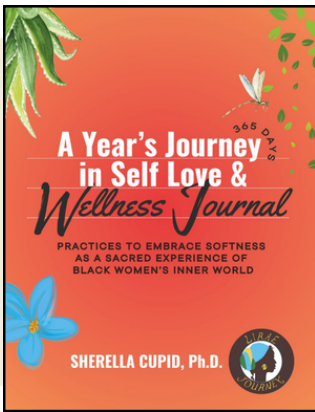
Thania Munoz (MLLI faculty)

Dr. Munoz published *Across Canons: Language, Latin American Immigrant Literature, and the Making of Latinx Narratives*.



Maria Razcon Echeagaray (cohort 26)

Maria published a short piece at the [AAAL Grads Newsletter](#) titled: Engagement in Fanfiction Author Notes: A Genre Analysis. She looks into discourse and engagement to negotiate distance, community and positioning in fanfiction archive sites.



Sherella Cupid (LLC Ph.D. '20)

Dr. Cupid's *A Year's Journey: A Self Love & Wellness Journal*, available now on [Amazon](#). The journal is designed for users to embark on a 12-month journey through wellness and love, either individually or with sister circles. Grounded in the 8 dimensions of wellness, each month features a theme (e.g., self-compassion, navigating change, & bodily wisdom) that guides reflection on how users are embracing life, along with invitations and practices to help better attune to their sacredness.

Francis Hult (EDUC faculty)

Professor Hult published an article together with Professor Lisa J. McEntee-Atanlianis (Birkbeck, University of London) titled "[Agency and Structure in Language Policy: Morphostasis and Morphogenesis](#)." It appears in the journal *Current Issues in Language Planning*.



Jessica Burstrem (LLC Ph.D. '25)

From early 2022 to early 2026, Jessica was part of the editorial team with Dean Kimberly R. Moffitt, co-editor of the National Communication Association's critical/cultural media and communication studies journal *Critical Studies in Media Communication* for volumes 40-42 (2023-2025). First, Jessica served as the Book Reviews Editor; then, after she was promoted to Associate Editor in early 2024, she mentored the team's next Book Reviews Editor, Jessica L. Chaplain.

Together, they just published an invited editorial, "[Mentorship and the Role of the Book Reviews Editor in the Future of Scholarly Publishing](#)" (42.3-4). Since there is very little guidance for authors of scholarly book reviews and even less for book reviews editors, they detail their processes for both—and justify them, since they argue that early career scholars (such as they) can and should be engaged in both book reviewing and book reviews editing, with appropriate mentorship.



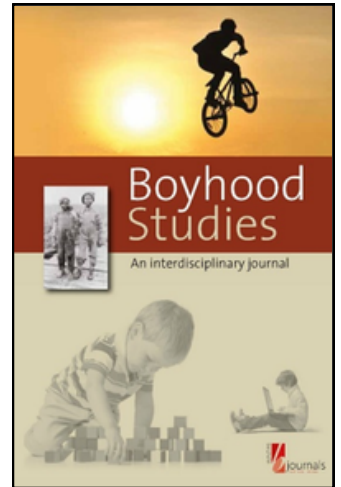
Irina Golubeva (MLLI faculty)

Dr. Irina Golubeva's peer-reviewed article on "[Digital Humanities Pedagogy in Action: Insights from Intercultural Telecollaboration Exploring Inclusiveness of University Campuses through Art](#)" was published in the *Language and Intercultural Communication* journal by Taylor & Francis.

Steven Dashiell (LLC Ph.D. '20)

Steven Dashiell published "Adultification and Survivonomics Impacting Well-Being of Boys of Color: The Discourses of Baltimore's Squeegee Boys" in the journal *Boyhood Studies*. This paper examines media reports of "squeegee boys" in Baltimore and analyzes their discourse, unearthing elements of adultification and survivonomics.

He also published "Fandom Influence and Gamer Agency in Jury-Rigged Games" in the journal *Transformative Works and Cultures*. This article discusses how players modify their playstyle to affect the games they play, making them more difficult in some ways.



Jennifer Mata-McMahon (EDUC faculty)

Dr. Mata-McMahon published "Understanding Children's Spirituality: Conceptualizations by Chilean In-Service Early Childhood Educators" in the *International Journal of Children's Spirituality*. This article resulted from a cross-cultural study conducted in Chile. Xixellonje Nebihu, an LLC doctoral candidate, was a member of the research team and co-author on the publication.

She also published "Expanding the Framework: U.S. In-Service Early Childhood Educators on Children's Spirituality" in the *Journal for the Study of Spirituality*. The article emerged from an ongoing research project examining children's spirituality. Ms. Nebihu served as a member of the research team and co-author.



Maria Celleri (GWST faculty)

Dr. Celleri's new book, Uncovering the Virgen del Panecillo: Quito's Postcolonial Urban Transformations (Illinois Uni Press 2026) will be coming out soon! Celleri examines the eighty-year effort to complete Quito's soaring monument to the Virgin Mary. Focusing on the negotiations behind the project, Celleri uncovers the links between the government and Church, links that became stronger during moments of political and economic transition. Celleri also investigates how the city's residents and activists, and artists like filmmakers, graffiti artists, and photographers, interact with the monument. Throughout, she looks at questions like the Virgen del Panecillo's service to Ecuador as a form of cultural capital, the Virgen's symbolic meanings to different groups, and the often-hidden connections between colonialism, Catholicism, and artistic production.

Craig Saper (LLC faculty)

After a decade of research and writing, Professor Saper published Auteur-Publishers: Small Press Practices as Avant-Garde Writing with Edinburgh University Press in December of 2025.

He also reviewed PERFORMING CHANCE: The Art of Alison Knowles In/Out of Fluxus by Nicole L. Woods in an issue of *Rhizomes* in early 2026.

Yolanda Gonzalez Mendoza (GES faculty)

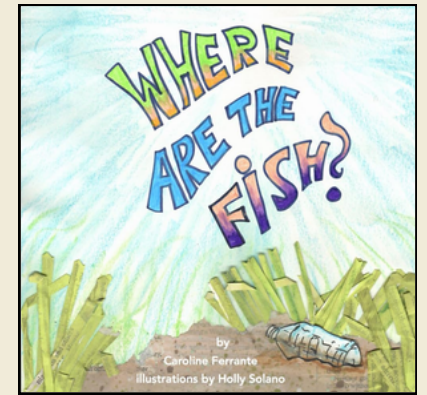
Dr. Gonzalez Mendoza published “Rooted in Resilience: Communitary Practice Across Borders” in the 2025 collection *Weaving Together the Americas: Communities, Bridges, Belonging*, from Abya Yala to Turtle Island, published in the *Journal of Latin American Geography*. The article emerged from her participation as a panelist in a plenary session for the Latin American Geographies Specialty Group at the American Association of Geographers’ 2025 annual meeting.

She also co-authored the book chapter “Renarrating the Land–Body Relationship and Weaving Struggles in Times of Global Crisis,” published in *Weaving Indigenous Re-existences: Struggles for the Defense of Water and Territory in Mexico and Canada* (José María Luis Mora Research Institute Press, 2025). The chapter examines Indigenous struggles for the protection of land, water, and territory across Mexico and Canada, highlighting connections between community resilience, environmental justice, and collective action during times of global crisis.



Caroline Bagesaanaatig Ferrante (cohort 27)

Caroline published the children’s book *Where Are the Fish?* (November 2025), co-authored with Holly Solano, and continues her work as an artist-in-residence with the Grasonville Elementary School Judy Center and the Queen Anne’s County public libraries. Through a series of community-based story time programs, Caroline engages families with preschool-aged children in multimodal storytelling practices that explore Chesapeake Bay ecologies through movement, sound, and collaborative narrative.



Drawing on Pawnee-inspired storytelling techniques, these programs invite participants to learn through voice, gesture, rhythm, and embodied interaction, emphasizing storytelling as a relational and participatory practice. This work reflects Caroline’s broader research in LLC, which examines how multimodal forms of expression shape knowledge, communication, and participation across educational and community contexts. Her community-based storytelling practice extends this research by exploring how alternative narrative forms can support early learning, ecological awareness, and shared meaning-making.



Shani Fleming (LLC Ph.D. '24)

Publications co-authored by Dr. Fleming:

Fleming S, Gordes KL, Kulo VA, Donegan R, Kayingo G. “Optimizing Clinical Education Through a Regional Coordinating Center: Lessons Learned From a State-Wide Initiative.” *Journal of Physician Assistant Education*. 2025 Oct 8.

Fleming S, Kulo VA, Gordes KL, Donegan R, Ohm C, Garugiulo J, Pennington D, Kayingo G. “Effectiveness of Telehealth-Enabled Standardized Patient Encounters in Behavioral Health Training for PA Students.” *Journal of Physician Assistant Education*. JPAE-25-82R1 accepted for publication.

Ana Oskoz (MLLI faculty)

Publications co-authored by Dr. Oskoz:

Oskoz, A. (2024). “Language Skills and Digital Literacy: Podcasts and Digital Storytelling.” In J. Muñoz-Basols, M. Fuertes Gutiérrez, & L. Cerezo (Eds.), *Teaching Spanish through Technology: From Social Justice to Artificial Intelligence* (pp. 294–310). Routledge.

Elola, I., & Oskoz, A. (2025). “Navigating in the HL/L2 Language Writing Curriculum: Delicate Balance Between Genres and Modes.” In A. Reyes-Torres, M. E. Brisk, & M. Lacorte (Eds.), *Multiliteracies, Multimodality and Learning by Design in Second Language Learning and Teacher Education* (pp. 47–64). Routledge.

Manchón, R. M., Elola, I., & Oskoz, A. (2025). “Teaching Writing.” In C. Sanz, E. Serafini, & I. Taboada (Eds.), *Handbook for the Training of Spanish Language Teachers* (pp. 268–299). Wiley-Blackwell.

Jiyoon Lee (EDUC faculty)

Articles co-authored by Dr. Lee:



Lee, J., Evans, K., Pereira, A. (2025). “Challenges Facing Immigrant Students in US Public Schools from Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Framework: A Systematic Review.” *Journal of Education*.

Evans, K., Lee, J., Rodriguez, J., & Gawens, S. (2025). “Barriers to Success: How U.S. Newspapers Frame the Challenges of Immigrant Students in Public Education.” *Social Sciences*, 14(6), 358.

Ramon Goings (LLC faculty)

Dr. Goings published a co-authored journal article titled, “Localized Teacher Recruitment Through ‘Grow-Your-Own’: Impacts of the High School Teacher Academy of Maryland Program” in the *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*.

SCHOLARLY PRESENTATIONS

Nicole Morse (LLC faculty)

Dr. Morse spoke on a panel at Johns Hopkins “Critical Diaspora Studies Program hosts Trans Justice in the Carceral System” on November 4, 2025.





Irina Golubeva (MLLI faculty)

Dr. Golubeva presented a lecture, "Intercultural Communication in Action: Exploring Conflict Styles and Fostering Empathy through Virtual Exchange," in Tucson, Arizona, at the 10th International Conference on the Development and Assessment of Intercultural Competence. Her talk contributed to the conference theme, Intercultural Competence in a Rapidly Changing World: Supporting Sustainable Futures for All.



Jessica Burstrem (LLC Ph.D. '25)

Jessica presented the following conference papers in November 2025:

"The Cultural / Economy in the Indigenous-Led Washington Football Team Name Change Movement," at the National Communication Association conference "Communicate to Elevate" in Denver, CO.

"Susan S. White: Oneida Leader, Organizer, and Advocate for Indigenous Sovereignty and Survivance," at the National Women's Studies Association conference "An Honour Song: Feminist Struggles, Feminist Victories" in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

"Good Cop: Activist Investment for Dismantling the Colonialist Social Order," on the panel "Liberalism-Fascism: The Good & Bad Cop of (Sport) Imperialist Capitalism," at the North American Society for the Sociology of Sport annual conference in Seattle, WA, and Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.

Steven Dashiell (LLC Ph.D. '20)

Dr. Dashiell presented at the National Communication Association conference in Denver in November 2025. He presented his research on masculine practice in men who paint gaming minatures in the Game Studies Division, and presented on work on veterans and their feelings about injury - data collected during his dissertation - in the Communication and Military division.

He presented at the Mid-Atlantic Popular Culture Association (MAPACA) in Philadelphia, PA in November. He presented on the effect of cultural capital on African American men and leisure activities, which touches on topics that will be brought up in the monograph he was funded to write.



He and Jessica Floyd (LLC Ph.D. '17) both presented on a panel at the Modern Language Association (MLA) conference in Toronto in January. They served on the panel "Reconsidering the Sage: Models for Resurrecting Expertise in Classroom Instruction," where they talked about experiences interacting with students in the contemporary undergraduate classroom.

Caroline Bagesaanaatig Ferrante (cohort 27)

In March, cohort 27 Caroline presented at the [Association for Research in Society \(ARIS\) Summit 2026](#) on the design and scaling of Grants Made at Scale, an NSF funded cross-campus undergraduate research initiative spanning five universities. Her contribution focused on the development of a multimodal, cohort-based internship model that integrates structured professional development, mentorship, and curricular infrastructure to support a networked group of undergraduate research administration interns.

Caroline framed this model as an intervention into how institutions structure access to research administration and define pathways into the field. Her presentation demonstrated how program design, including selection processes, mentorship structures, cooperative learning, and shared curriculum, can expand participation and create pathways for students who may not otherwise have access to research administration careers within R1 and minority-serving institutional contexts.

Cari Godin (cohort 26)

Cari had the honor of presenting her research at this year's American Association of Geographers in San Francisco. She participated in the panel discussion session of "Feeling the City II: Perception, Power, and the Politics of Urban Space." She also presented at the session on Dispossession and the State a paper cowritten with Kevin Bonnell, PhD Candidate at the University of Waterloo, titled: "Where Slow Violence Lives: Affective Dispossession, Administrative Drift, and the Migration of State Harm."



Nicole Morse (LLC faculty)

Dr. Morse presented on two panels at the American Society for Criminology's annual conference in Washington DC in November: "Abolition Feminism" and "Music-Making in Generative Justice: Critical Criminology in Relationship with the Democratic Ideal."

They also spoke at the annual Wolf Conference at the University of Pennsylvania, presenting "Meaning-Making in 21st Century Classrooms: Identification, Mediation, and Spectatorship" which will be published as part of the forthcoming collection on media studies pedagogy: "Course Projections: Film, Pedagogy, Freedom."

Craig Saper (LLC faculty)

Professor Saper delivered a paper on "William Morris as a Hinge Figure for Way and Williams Publishers (in 1895)," at the Modern Language Association (MLA), Toronto, in January.

He delivered a keynote address at the School of Digital Arts, Animation, and Design (NAD) at the University of Quebec titled "From the Concrete Visual Poetry of Ferdinand Kriwet and Augusto de Campos to Experiments in Full-Dome Animated Poetry." He also produced and attended the premiere of Lynn Tomlinson's fulldome film "Mountain Nocturne" at Montreal's Society for Arts and Technology (SAT), in March as part of the SAT-Fest Official Competition of the best fulldome films in the world.

MEDIA AND OUTREACH



Sarah Fouts (AMST faculty)

Dr. Fouts was interviewed about ethics and research methodology as part of a scholarly roundtable in *US Latina & Latino Oral History Journal*. On December 25, 2026, Fouts helped on reporting and was quoted in the *Washington Post*. The article entitled, "For one migrant family, no Christmas lights in New Orleans.," discussed the Border Patrol surge and its impact on the Honduran immigration in New Orleans. Fouts is also co-coordinating the Homage to Baltimore Quilting Competition which is sponsored by Maryland Folklife Network and the Mayor's Office.

ON A PERSONAL NOTE

Carole McCann (GWST faculty)

Carole McCann, Professor of Department of Gender, Women's, and Sexuality Studies and longtime LLC affiliate faculty will retire on August 1, 2026 after 39 years at UMBC.



Thank you for your contributions to this edition of our newsletter! We love hearing from you.

Virtual copies of all *Of Note* editions can be found on our [website](#).

We regret any errors. If you discover any, please contact [Cathy Myers](#).