

Fall 2022

Alumni Newsletter

Higher Education
Program



UNIVERSITY OF
ARKANSAS

College of Education
& Health Professions
Higher Education



What's in this Issue?

Page 2		Alumni Spotlight
Page 6		Alumni News
Page 10		Spring 2022 Graduates
Page 12		New Masters Students
Page 14		Meet the HIED Faculty
Page 15		Support the Program

Woo Pig Sooie!

After 62 years, our community continues to thrive and we enjoy using this space to reflect on memories, congratulate accomplishments, and share our exciting plans for future growth.

We are proud of the alumni who make a positive impact around the world. Thank you for your continued support of the Higher Education program!



Alumni Spotlight: Kawanna Leggett

M.Ed., 2004



Dr. Kawanna Leggett is a 2004 graduate of the HIED M.Ed. program and now works as the Senior Vice President for Student Affairs at Loyola Marymount University (LMU). Leggett was appointed to her new post in June 2022. She says it's been a wonderful transition. Prior to her current role, Leggett spent five years at Washington University in St. Louis where she was the Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs.

When reflecting on her time in the M.Ed. program, Leggett noted that her favorite memory from her graduate school experience was being part of a cohort. She mentioned that it was truly amazing to meet, work, and learn with numerous professionals who are still in the field.

Leggett added that the cohort-based program meant that students had different assistantships across campus, and that this unique characteristic made both learning in the classroom and on the job a rich experience. She appreciated the support from her cohort who became friends and peers. Leggett also enjoyed her classroom experience with well-known professors. She distinctly remembers Lyle Gohn, Michael Miller, Christopher Lucas, and many other professionals who helped guide her through the program. She remembers well how knowledgeable professors were in their areas of expertise, which contributed to both a sense of student support and motivation throughout the program. As a program alum, Leggett said she always looks back on her time in Arkansas fondly. She thinks of Arkansas, particularly Fayetteville, as a hidden gem and thoroughly enjoyed the many opportunities the region had to offer.

During her time in the program, Leggett stayed motivated by remembering her calling to work in higher education and provide better support for students. She learned to balance being a student and being a student affairs professional. She worked in student housing, an area that later became her career for 20+ years. Leggett also noted that the theoretical background she got from her classes has served her well over the years, enabling her to do student affairs work better.

One class that had the most impact on Leggett's professional career, which also happened to be her favorite course, was Dr. Miller's Management course. She said his energy and focus on engagement in higher education and the corporate setting helped her understand the key elements of management, including how to be a good leader. Leggett still uses the foundations learned in Dr. Miller's course today, reflecting that the course gave her a keen eye toward leadership and equipped her with a wide variety of tools to grow as a leader and manager.

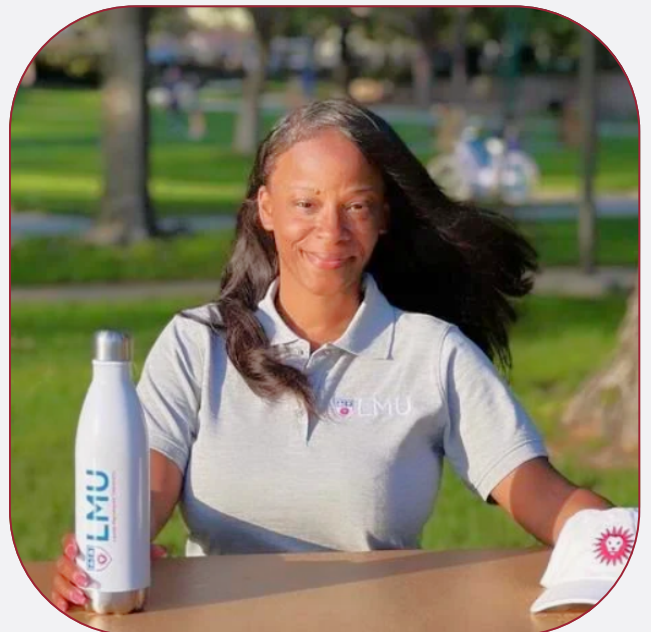
Alumni Spotlight: Kawanna Leggett

M.Ed., 2004



Leggett's advice to current HIED students is to give themselves grace. Graduate school often seems overwhelming, especially while holding an assistantship or full-time job. Leggett recommends taking the graduate school journey one day at a time and enjoying the experience, including getting outside of the classroom and being a student by making friends, attending campus events like homecoming, and getting involved.

As she begins her new role at Loyola Marymount University, Leggett is excited to build momentum for the future of her division by creating vision, setting goals, and recruiting new team members. She wants to be able to have an impact not only at LMU but broadly across higher education and student affairs industry. Getting involved in regional and national associations and attending conferences is part of her plan to give back to the profession.



Alumni Spotlight:

Randall Brumfield Ed.D., 2007



Dr. Randall Brumfield serves as the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs for the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission. In this dual role, he shares his time with the West Virginia Council for Community and Technical College Education. He completed his Ed.D. at the University of Arkansas in 2007.

When reflecting on his time in the program, Brumfield fondly recalled the HIED Governance and Policy class he took with Dr. Miller at the beginning of his program as one of the highlights of his educational journey. The course had a lasting impact on his career.

In the class, he recalled tracking an issue at the time called the “C Rule”, which only allowed courses with final grades of C or higher to be transferred. This project, as well as putting together a meaningful literature review and doing original research, contributed to Brumfield’s passion for governance and policy. Brumfield also enjoyed the HIED History and Philosophy class with Dr. Lucas. He said Dr. Lucas brought energy to the classroom and he learned valuable information about the roots of higher education dating back to the Greek era.

During his time in the program, Brumfield stayed intrinsically and extrinsically motivated. He had a strong internal drive to finish the program, not wanting to finish “A.B.D.” (“all but dissertation”). He also wanted to finish the program for his wife. Brumfield said she supported and motivated him by giving him the luxury to work on assignments while she helped care for their infant child. He didn’t want to let her or other people down by not completing his degree. Another important source of motivation and encouragement for Brumfield was Dr. Miller, whom he would not have completed the program without.

Brumfield’s advice to HIED students is to benefit from the dialogue in class with their professors and colleagues and to try to take that classroom knowledge and apply it as a practitioner at work. He recommends harnessing students’ passion for student affairs work and bringing it to the classroom.

In his current role, Brumfield has big plans for the future. Right now, he is in the process of working with the Chancellor of the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission to develop state policies that will hopefully make a difference for student success in the state of West Virginia.

Alumni Spotlight: Kayla Loper

M.Ed., 2014



Dr. Kayla Loper is currently the Associate Director of Leadership & Campus Life at Oklahoma State University (OSU) where she leads programs, staff, initiatives, and research aimed at understanding and increasing sense of belonging among OSU students.

A 2014 graduate of the HIED M.Ed. program, Loper said one of her favorite memories at the University of Arkansas was when her adult kickball team, THE Overachievers, lost the Toilet Bowl championship game, which truly meant they won the whole thing as the ultimate losers! Loper added that it was so fun and that the team had so many members even though they weren't very good at kickball.

Loper stayed motivated during her time as a student by building relationships with her students. She loved all the students she had the opportunity to advise through her assistantship in New Student & Family Programs. Loper has always been very passionate about making a difference as an administrative leader in higher education and having those formative relationships with students motivated her to continue work because her students deserved it.

When asked about which class had the greatest impact on her educational journey, Loper mentioned a specific assignment that she will never forget from Dr. Hevel's Student Development Theory class. Students picked a movie off a list to watch and then applied student development theory to the characters. Loper chose the movie "Mona Lisa Smile" and said that watching the movie was an extremely validating experience. Loper believes many of the themes in that movie have influenced her work in higher education in ways she hasn't even fully realized yet.

Loper advises current HIED students to explore a variety of focus and functional areas in higher education while they can through internships, assistantships, and class assignments. She said, "You never know what doors might open or what life circumstances you might encounter that require you to make an unexpected shift!"

Loper graduated in May 2022 with her Ph.D. in Educational Psychology from OSU and was promoted to her current role of Associate Director in July. Eventually, she'd like to assume a faculty role and teach higher education or quantitative research methods courses.

Alumni News

*Note: Degrees listed are only the ones earned at the Uof A

Karl Anderson, M.Ed (2008)

Anderson was appointed as the new Assistant Director of Admissions at the University of Nebraska.



Christina Smith, Ed.D. (2021)

Smith has been named the Director of Development, Principal Gifts, Development at the University of Texas Dell Medical School in Austin.



Rebel Smith, Ed.D. (2006)

Smith is now the Associate Dean of Undergraduate and Graduate Programs for the John Chambers College of Business and Economics at West Virginia University.



Mario Brown, M.Ed. (2005)

Brown, First Horizon Bank's Chief Talent Development Officer, was honored with the Charles Q. Harris Award. This award recognizes outstanding individuals who exemplify the characteristics of initiative, dedication, and bravery.



Patti Gamboa, M.Ed. (2007)

Gamboa, previously the Director of Graduate and International Recruitment and Admissions in the University of Arkansas Graduate School and International Education, has been promoted to Assistant Dean of the Graduate School.



Alumni News

Gigi Secuban, Ed.D. (2011)

Secuban is the inaugural Vice President for Institutional Inclusive Excellence at Texas State University.



Meredith Brunen, M.Ed. (2005) & Ed.D. (2012)

Brunen is the Vice President for University Advancement and Foundation CEO at the University of West Georgia.

Zeak Naifeh, M.Ed. (2006)

Naifeh is the Associate Vice President and Dean of Students at Texas State University-San Antonio.



Jeremy Battjes, Ed.D. (2016)

Battjes is the Associate Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration for the Division of Student Affairs at the University of Arkansas.

Marla Strecker, Ed.D. (2009)

Strecker, previously the Provost at the University of Arkansas-Pulaski Tech, is now the Workday Student Lead for the University of Arkansas System.



Alumni News

Jen Edwards, Ed.D. (2021)

Edwards is now the Director of University Perspectives and Experiential Learning at the University of Arkansas.



Willis Jones, M.Ed. (2006)

Jones is an Associate Professor of Higher Education and Student Affairs at the University of South Florida.



Dustin Grover, Ed.D. (2021)

Grover is now the Vice President for Academic Affairs at Northeastern Oklahoma A&M College.



Rick Jakeman, Ed.D. (2007)

Jakeman is the Associate Dean for Master's Studies and Student Life and Associate Professor of Higher Education in the Graduate School of Education and Human Development at George Washington University.



Elizabeth (Saxman) Underwood, M.Ed. (2005)

Underwood is now the Executive Director of the New River Conservancy in North Carolina.



Alumni News

Lucas Simmons, Ed.D. (2022)

Is the Senior Advisor and Student Experience Coordinator for the Bumpers College of Agriculture, Food, and Life Science at the University of Arkansas. He also recently won the 2022 Academic Advising Council's Silo Busting Award.



Carolyn Rodeffer, Ph.D. (2022)

Is an Assistant Professor of Strategy, Entrepreneurship, and Venture in the Walton College of Business at the University of Arkansas.

Derrick Gragg, Ed.D. (2004)

Gragg is now the Combe Family Vice President for Athletics and Recreation at Northwestern University.



Congratulations to Spring 2022 Graduates!



**Chloe Jones,
M.Ed.**

Development
Associate

*University of
Texas Dell
Medical School*

**Clark Futch,
M.Ed.**

Assistant
Director for
Career Services
*Saint Leo
University*



**Serena Nastasi,
M.Ed.**

Student Account
Specialist

*University of
Arkansas*

**Abigail Waitrek,
M.Ed.**

Assistant
Director in the
Kernodle Center
for Civic Life
Elon University



**Ravan Gaston-
Hilson, M.Ed.**

Associate
Development
Officer

*Crystal Bridges
Museum of
American Art*

**Rachel Kremer,
M.Ed.**

Assistant Director for
Student Engagement

*Hampshire
College*



CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to Spring 2022 Graduates!



Tamara Kuykendall, M.Ed.

Academic Advisor
Intern

*University of
South Carolina*

Robin Young, M.Ed.

Residence
Director

*California Baptist
University*



Jonas Zabriskie, M.Ed.

Assistant Director
New Student &
Family Programs

*University of
Arkansas*

Chas Thomson, Ph.D.

Clinical Assistant
Professor

*University of
South Carolina*



Quincy Spencer, Ph.D.

Director of New
Student & Family
Programs

*University of
Arkansas*

Matt Meyers, Ph.D.

Associate Director of
New Student
Programs

*University of
Arkansas*



CONGRATULATIONS

Welcome to our new M.Ed. students!



Addison Sottile

Admissions
Counselor

*University of
Arkansas*

Ivan Anaya

Graduate Assistant:
Extended Orientation
Programs

*University of
Arkansas*



Madison Barnes

Study Abroad HEI
Program
Coordinator

*University of
Arkansas*

Katie Brocklesby

Graduate Assistant:
Volunteer Action
Center

University of Arkansas



Blake Mitchell

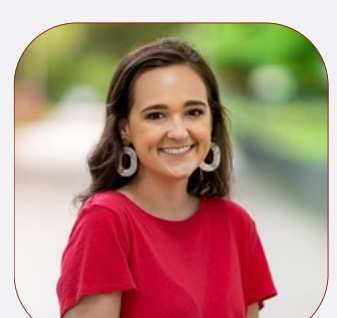
Walton College of
Business Academic
Advisor

*University of
Arkansas*

Noelle Chesser

Graduate Assistant:
New Student &
Family Programs

*University of
Arkansas*



**Luis Negrete
Becerra**

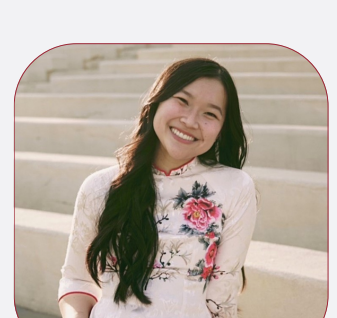
Graduate Assistant:
Greek Housing

*University of
Arkansas*

Aysia Nguyen

Assistant Tour
Coordinator

*University of
Arkansas*



Welcome

Welcome to our new M.Ed. students!



Victoria Aguilar
Graduate Assistant:
Center for
Educational Access
*University of
Arkansas*

**Savannah
Williamson**
Graduate Assistant:
Academic Counseling,
Office of Student
Athlete Success
*University of
Arkansas*



Emma Sawyer
Graduate
Assistant: Greek
Housing
*University of
Arkansas*

**Cheryl Ann
Cooper**
Office of Financial
Aid
*University of
Arkansas*



Skyler Smith
Graduate
Assistant: Greek
Housing
*University of
Arkansas*

**Esteban
Rodriguez**
Graduate Assistant
Facility Operations
*University of
Arkansas*



**Lupita
Camacho-Garcia**
GA for Programming
Honors College
*University of
Arkansas*

Welcome

Meet the HIED Faculty



Michael Hevel

Interim Associate Dean for Research, Strategy, and Outreach Associate Professor of Higher Education, RHRC Department

Ph.D., Educational Policy and Leadership Studies, University of Iowa

M.A., College Student Personnel, Bowling Green State University

B.A., Political Science, University of Kansas

Michael T. Miller

Professor of Higher Education

Ed.D., Community and Human Resources, University of Nebraska

M.S., Higher Education, Southern Illinois University

B.A., Political Science, Southern Illinois University



Kate Mamiseishvili

Professor of Higher Education, Interim Dean, College of Education and Health Professions

Ph.D., Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis, University of Missouri

M.A., Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis, University of Missouri

B.A., English Language and Literature, Akaki Tsereteli State University, Georgia

John W. Murry, Jr.

Associate Professor of Higher Education

Ed.D., Higher Education Administration, University of Arkansas

J.D., University of Arkansas, School of Law

M.B.A., Marketing and Management, University of Arkansas

B.S. B.A., Finance and Banking, University of Arkansas



Suzanne McCray

Associate Professor of Higher Education, Vice Provost for Enrollment, Dean of Admissions

Ph.D., English, University of Tennessee

M.A., French, University of Arkansas

M.A., English, University of Arkansas

B.A., English, University of Arkansas

Leslie Jo Shelton

Assistant Professor of Higher Education, HIED M.Ed. Program Coordinator

Ph.D., Higher Education, Michigan State University

M.Ed., College Student Personnel, Ohio University

B.A., Sociology and Criminology, Ohio University



UNIVERSITY OF
ARKANSAS

College of Education & Health Professions
Higher Education

Support the Program

The Higher Education Program at the University of Arkansas is proud to celebrate 62 years of educating and developing HIED professionals. It is with great pleasure that we once again dedicate this edition of the HIED Alumni Newsletter to our HIED alumni across the nation. Professionals in this field are critical to the daily operations of an institution, and the faculty, staff, and current students in the HIED program thank you for your dedication and serving at numerous institutions across the country. As a graduate of the Higher Education Program, we are proud of your accomplishments and the work that you do every day.

As the program continues to grow and our network of alumni expands, we always appreciate the willingness of alumni to support and serve our current HIED students. Make sure your **information is updated** so that we can contact you throughout the year for the following opportunities:

- Resume reviews
- Mock interviews
- Mentorship
- Guest speaking
- Alumni spotlights

To support the HIED program financially, please make donation checks payable to the University of Arkansas Foundation (memo line: COEHP Higher Education Program)

Mail to:

College of Education and Health Professions
C/O Tory Gaddy, Director of Development
Graduate Education Building, Room 311
University of Arkansas
Fayetteville, AR 72701

Give online [here](#).

We thank you for your continued support of the program!

**Connect:
@UARKHIED**



UNIVERSITY OF
ARKANSAS

College of Education
& Health Professions
Higher Education