

News & Notes

Master of Arts in Community & Teacher Leaders
Fall 2022



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“After a year doing other educational work in the community, I am excited to be returning back to the MACTL Program as Co-facilitator..

I am fortunate to be able to work alongside wonderful students, staff and faculty - including two key people - the MACTL Co-facilitator Dr. Hua Bai and Student Support Specialist Vanessa King.

I am particularly energized to connect with our powerful community of MACTL students. You are on the frontlines! Again, this is a key political moment for engagement as we continue to struggle - for example across the US policies and practices emerge daily that harm transgender students and undermine teacher's abilities to talk about crucial content, like race and power.

I am honored to have the opportunity to learn and organize alongside our MACTL community and to continue to grow the kinds of communities we need - in and beyond schools. I look forward to our connections. Stay tuned for updates about exciting programming for the upcoming academic year!”

Spring 2022 MACTL Graduates



Alethea Busch



Priscilla Marie Chico



Fabian A. Lopez



Tess N. Love



Berenice Pond



Recognition & Alumni News

President's Inclusive Excellence Award, 2022

David D. Robertson

B.A. 2016 University Without Walls; M.A. 2018 Community and Teacher Leaders

The Award Selection Committee received close to 70 inspiring nominations detailing the breadth of NEIU talent and heartfelt commitment to uphold and advance the University's core values of equity, diversity and inclusion.

David Robertson is the founder and executive director of the [Hope Is Foundation](#). David is a graduate student at Columbia University School of Social Work majoring in Clinical Social Work and a student advisor for the Actions For Black Lives Lab. David holds a Master of Arts in Teaching & Community Leadership from NEIU.

David has created Northeastern Illinois University's first [endowed scholarship by a Black alumna in its 154-year-old history](#), self-love advocate and founder of Hope Is Foundation, an organization Robertson is committed to leaving the world better than he found it. This mission fuels his passion to help others identify courageous actions they can take in their own lives through mindful practice, therapeutic writing, volunteerism, community accountability, and now, through an NEIU Foundation Scholarship



2022 John Sargon Albazi Research and Creative Activities Student Symposium

Priscilla Chico

B.A. 2017 Art Education, M.A. 2022 Community and Teacher Leaders

Priscilla Chico presented her research "The Impact of Student Developed Public Art: A Community Perspective" in the 2022 John Sargon Albazi Research and Creative Activities Student Symposium. This research studied to what extent community members believed local elementary school students have the power to change their neighborhood through public art. The findings informed communities, schools, and local and state leaders how best to allocate funds and resources to support arts-based youth programs that place students in leadership roles.

Community members from Chicago's 10th Ward were surveyed on their community engagement, attachment, usage, and participation. Community members' perceptions of public art's impact on their community, and of the value of student-developed public art will also be measured. The study found that community members are highly supportive of youth-led art projects, believe these add real value in the community and would like to see more of it.

Impacting Communities:

Current MACTL student, Maria Gross Pollock, appointed as a Member of the Illinois Rare Disease Commission. Read her story



I spent Christmas 2014 in a hospital where I was highly sedated and under psychological care. After a shoulder surgery I had become delirious with pain. I was accused to be a drug seeker. My husband and I were bewildered. A few months later I had a DNA test. It showed that I have a unique condition: My body is not able to activate most pain medications. I was 47 years old, had a successful business as piano technician, and two teenage children. The hospital's treatments harmed my central nervous system. Two years later I had to file for disability.

In fall 2021, I received my acceptance letter for the MACTL graduate program at Northeastern Illinois University. I had been through several leadership programs, corporate leadership training by Weight Watchers International and leadership and advocacy training by the U.S. Pain Foundation. I had been on the board of directors of my professional organization, the Piano Technicians Guild. The masters program in community and teacher leadership was perfectly tailored to my new leadership in advocacy.

The MACTL program equipped me with practical and theoretical skills. I learned to analyze leadership styles and assess my own leadership skills and talents. My advocacy benefitted and I became more intentional. I started recruiting more leaders for our local support group.

State representative LaPointe's initiative led the governor to appoint me to the Illinois Rare Disease Commission. Our American system has made it very hard to secure accessible and affordable care for disabled people with rare conditions. Data by the EveryLife Foundation figure the extra financial burden of rare disease at an average of \$22,000 per year per person. That is a lot of money out of pocket for a person or a family. The burden of medical debt often wears on families and leads to divorce, homelessness and mental illness.

Insurers routinely deny coverage for out-of-network specialists. Rare disease patients are forced to get care from non-specialists—I was sent to a spine specialist for altered drug metabolism once. It's like sending a person with a heart attack to a dentist. Many patients with rare disease are sent to the hospital where they become profitable for the hospital but rarely get appropriate care for their condition. Hospitals often stock only one or two kinds of opioids, antibiotics, or steroids. If a patient needs a pain medication or drug that is not on the formulary, they are on their own.

Education of our communities is key. It takes passion to bring people with all sorts of rare diseases together to empower them. The Illinois Rare Disease Commission can be instrumental in amplifying the voices from patients, their families and care providers to leave fewer people without qualified care.

Through my studies at NEIU I became sensitized to racist issues in medical care. Colored people are disproportionately labeled with mental disorders and their pain is belittled. The MACTL program has been helpful in orienting my perspectives on local and national issues. I feel well-prepared for the meetings of the Illinois Rare Disease Commission.

“Education of our communities is key. It takes passion to bring people with all sorts of rare diseases together to empower them.”

Mother's Sacrifice, Kindness and Bravery is Ocean Deep By Berhane Hailemichael M.A. Community & Teacher Leader 2017

Berhane joined the Eritrean armed struggle in 1977. Following six major and minor injuries, he served behind the war front in places around Tserona, Mereta Sebene, Egele Hamus, Tsin'adigle, Ala and other stations, since 1982. In the early years of independence until 2000, he produced various programs as journalist in the ministry of information. Since then, he migrated to the US and completed his master's degree.



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ኣብ ፈለግ ናጽነት ናብ ምኒስትሪ ዜና ተመዲቡ ከሳዕ 2000 ዝተፈለለ መደባት ከዳሉ ዝበቐዐ ምክር ጋዜጠኛ እዩ። ካብ ነሐሴ 2000 ኣትሒዙ ድማ ኣብ ዝቐመጥ ኣመራካ ትምህርቲ ብምቕጻል ከሳዕ ናይ ደረጃ ማስተርስ ትምህርቲ ኣጠናቐቐ።

እዛ “ቅናት” ዝሰመዖ መጽሓፍ፣ ከልተ ከፋላት ዝሓዘት እዩ። ቀዳማይ ከፋላ ንጅግንነት፣ ሕሰምን ጽንዓትን ደቂ-ኣንስትዮ ኤርትራ ዝምልከት ከኸውን ከሎ። ካልኣይ ከፋላ ድማ ብኣደኡ ኩነ ኣሕዋቲ ኣቢሉ ዝዘነቐ ታሪኽ ስድራቤቱን ዝሓ-ርእሱን እዩ።

This book has two parts. The first part narrates the unparalleled greatness and perseverance of Eritrean mothers. The second part focuses on the history of his family that used to be told by his mother and siblings.

At this time, *Mother's Sacrifice* is only available in the Eritrean/ Ethiopian language called Tigrinya. Plans for translations are forthcoming.



WELCOME NEW STUDENTS! Fall 2022 Cohort

- Eli Ayala • Sam Barouch • Tiana Farley • Valerie Figueroa • Bridget Land • Katherine MacLennan-Chung • Meghan O’Keefe • Jasmin Ramirez • Yaritza Rodriguez • Cristina Rojas • Chiquorie Schaffer • Elizabeth Sotelo • Maryam Sultan • Rashad Tonth • Gregory Vecchio • Lenny Zieben

Teacher Leader Endorsement: Mari Garvonado • Katie Keesbury • Rahi Patel

Bookmark MACTL’s curated events page!

[CLICK HERE!](#)

Updates will be made frequently. Supporting these events help illuminate and elevate reflection, collaboration, transformation, social justice, equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging. Events are open to the public.

Requesting Alumni Guest Speakers

We would like to invite our alums to speak to the current MACTL students. This can be done informally during the cohort orientations or more formally as guest speakers in our classes. We know our MACTL alums are doing great things in their lives, workplace, communities and families that we believe will inspire our current and future MACTL students.

We would like to begin a MACTL presentation series wherein members of the MACTL community present to the NEIU university and beyond. If you are interested in presenting in this type of forum, please let us know. Contact Dr. Hua Bai (h-bai@neiu.edu).

Faculty Highlights

President's Inclusive Excellence Award 2022

Northeastern Illinois University held its inaugural President's Inclusive Excellence and Diversity Awards on April 27. The ceremony honored seven members of the Northeastern community who are significantly advancing the University's goals in the areas of equity, diversity and inclusion.

We are proud to say that Dr. Durene Wheeler was a recipient of this exciting award! Dr. Wheeler is a professor of [Educational Inquiry and Curriculum Studies](#) with core faculty appointments in [African and African American Studies](#) and [Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies](#).

You can view all the wonderful award winners in [NEIU's News and Announcements](#).



Dr. Isaura Pulido has been promoted to Full Professor.



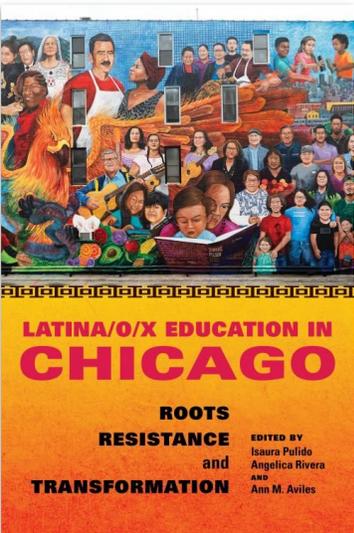
Dr. Erica Meiners has received a Professional Advancement Increase and moves into the role of co-facilitator of the MACTL program.

A SPECIAL THANK YOU to Dr. Eleni Makris for her service as the co-facilitator of MACTL over the past years.

The Dr. Kenneth N. Addison Lecture for Multicultural Education and Social Justice

On April 12, 2022 MACTL hosted our 7th annual Dr. Kenneth Addison Social Justice and Multicultural Education virtual event entitled *Latina/o/x Education in Chicago: Roots, Resistance, and Transformation*. **We invite you to watch a recording of this event!** (LINK PENDING)

This was a particularly noteworthy event because for the first time we highlighted people who currently and previously worked at NEIU including MACTL's very own Dr. Isaura Pulido.



A (Virtual) Conversation With the Editors of **Latina/o/x Education in Chicago: Roots, Resistance, and Transformation**



Isaura Pulido is associate professor at Northeastern Illinois University. She teaches in the Educational Foundations and Latina/o/x and Latin American Studies programs.



Angelica Rivera is director of Proyecto Pa'Lante at Northeastern Illinois University. She teaches for the ENLACE Higher Education Master's Program at Northeastern Illinois University.



Ann M. Avilés is associate professor in Human Development and Family Sciences at the University of Delaware.

The **Dr. Kenneth N. Addison Lecture for Multicultural Education and Social Justice** is an annual event that the Educational Foundations program spearheads, along with the support of other programs, departments, and units throughout the University to celebrate, and grapple with, the intersections of cultural pluralism, multicultural education, social justice, advocacy and activism.

This event is named after Professor Emeritus Dr. Kenneth Addison, who after 30 years of service to the Northeastern Illinois University community retired from being a core faculty member in the Department of Educational Inquiry and Curriculum Studies and the African and African American Studies program.

Let's ensure this wonderful series can continue!

In your donation, please state if you would like to contribute directly to the **Kenneth N. Addison Annual Lecture Fund**.

Contact **Vanessa J. King** vjking@neiu.edu after you have donated to confirm that your funds have been placed in the correct account.

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