

# News & Notes

Master of Arts in Community & Teacher Leaders  
Spring 2023



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# Fall 2022 MACTL Graduates



**Deirdre Garcia**



**Vanessa Gonzalez**

**Congratulations to our most recent Teacher Leader Endorsement earners!**

We're proud of our students who recently completed the State Board of Education recognized Teacher Leader Endorsement.



**Christi Rose**



**Griselda Puentes**

# Sixth Annual MACTL Research Symposium

Congratulations to the students and faculty for an impressive presentation of the research that MACTL students have been working on over the past year! We especially acknowledge the hard work of the MACTL presenters who endured the challenges of remote learning, full time jobs, family obligations and so much more. They are excellent examples of resilience, professionalism, and perseverance.

We also thank those family, friends and co-workers who have supported and loved them throughout this journey. The MACTL community applauds the camaraderie, commitment, hard work, and accomplishments of our graduate students. We are honored to have them as a part of our MACTL community!

**Dulce Enriquez**—Studying DACAmented Individuals: Personal, Academic and Professional Pursuits

**Faviola Fernandez**—Latinx Parental Involvement in their Children’s Learning

**Deirdre Garcia**—Diverse Representation in Elementary Classroom Materials

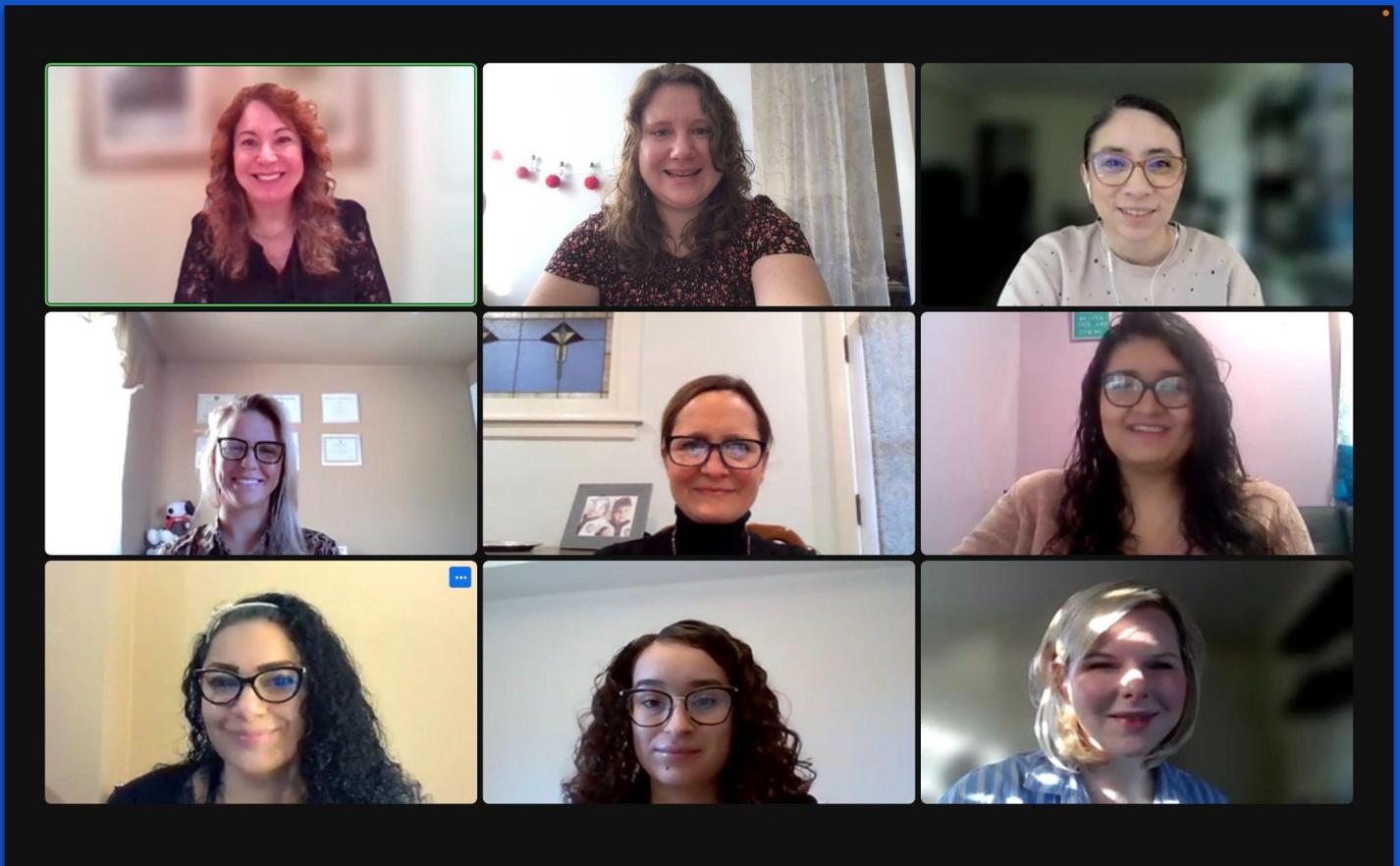
**Vanessa Gonzalez**—Special Education Teacher Satisfaction: Factors Attributing to Retention and Attrition

**Michelle Ludwig**—The Impact of a Teacher Preparation Program: Teacher Candidates’ Perceptions

**Mackenzie Grattan**—The Long Term Impact of High School Theatre on Social and Emotional Learning

**Catherine Malek**—The Transition Experience: From Textbook to a Fully Digital Curriculum

**Julie Sajovec**—Teacher and Parent Expectations for Successful Parent Teacher Conferences



# News & Recognition

## MACTL Alumni Wins Chicago 26th Ward Alderperson Seat

Jessie Fuentes, director of policy and youth advocacy for the Humboldt Park-based [Puerto Rican Cultural Center](#), won the election for the 26th Ward alderperson.

At 32, Fuentes will be the ward's youngest alderperson in years. She will also be the ward's first queer Latina leader. Fuentes is also the co-chair of the [Puerto Rican Agenda](#), another local group.

Read more about Jessie's exciting win [HERE!](#)

*Pictured (left to right)--Dr. Isaura Pulido, Jessie Fuentes, Dr. Erica Meiners, Dr. Maria Luna-Duarte*



## 2023 Audrey Reynolds Distinguished Teaching Award

Of this year's nominees, the Reynolds Award Committee selected four finalists after careful consideration of nomination letters submitted by colleagues and other members of the NEIU community. The finalists demonstrated evidence of excellence in teaching, and in each of the

dossiers the committee found evidence of innovation, high standards and a positive impact on students at the University.

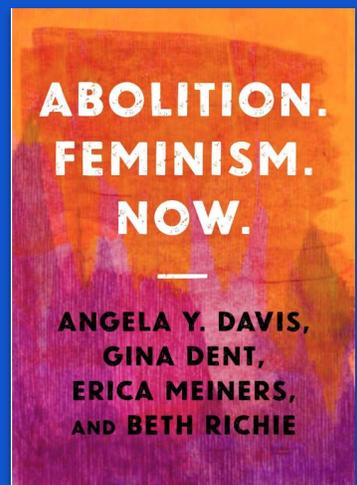
After careful review, the committee recommended Professor Wheeler as this year's recipient of the award. The award will be formally presented at the Faculty Institute in August.

As the Audrey Reynolds Distinguished Teaching Award recipient, Durene Wheeler will receive \$5,000 and will make a presentation regarding excellence in teaching. **CONGRATULATIONS!**

Professor of Women's Gender and Sexuality Studies and Educational Inquiry and Curriculum Studies Erica R. Meiners co-authored an op-ed in [Truthout](#) titled "As Governments Push Us 'Back to Normal,' Don't Forget About Prison Conditions."

Meiners also co-authored the article "shelter/in/place," which was published in a special issue of the journal [Visual Arts Research](#).

Her co-authored book, [Abolition. Feminism. Now.](#) was reviewed in the [Los Angeles Review of Books](#), and also in [Signs: Journal of Women and Culture in Society](#).



# Alumni Highlight

## ARTS FOR EMPOWERMENT (A4E)

### A letter from MACTL Alumna, Robin Fischer.

"I have spent my life dedicated to educating children and teens through the arts. My life's mission has always been to empower students through the arts by using art as a vehicle for academic success, emotional wellness, and empowerment.

I am excited to share the news about an innovative new organization called [Arts For Empowerment](#) (A4E). Arts for Empowerment is a 501c3 non-profit organization serving diverse elementary, middle, and high school students in Chicagoland. A4E offers multicultural art programs to improve and support development of our youth in neighborhood communities.

Through the A4E learning experience, students have developed and strengthened their skills in core subjects, creative writing, improvisation, communication, collaboration, and conflict management. They have gained a better understanding of each other, their communities, and ultimately themselves! Administrators, and educators firmly believe that every school would benefit from bringing Arts For Empowerment curriculum and programs into their classrooms.

What is novel about A4E is the integration of multiculturalism, performing arts and visual arts programming into school core classes. The integrated arts program provides an opportunity for students to develop cultural sensitivity and cultural values while promoting creative thought and action. Through artistic expression, students are empowered and enhance their understanding of how multiculturalism affects their everyday lives and how it impacts their self-efficacy, cultural awareness, and critical thinking. Results have shown being part of A4E makes a difference in students' lives."

**If you'd like to learn more about A4E or make a donation, you can visit [A4echicago.org](http://A4echicago.org)**



## 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](mailto:h-bai@neiu.edu)).



2023

KENNETH N. ADDISON LECTURE ON SOCIAL  
JUSTICE AND MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

Join this VIRTUAL conversation with leading  
Chicago-area educators and organizers.

# QUEER AND TRANS LIVES: SUPPORTING GENDER AFFIRMING SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES

Panelists will reflect on the national landscape for gender and queer affirming school policies and practices and offer their insights on local resources and more.

**DR. COREY BLAKE** is a trans nonbinary music educator in Chicago's Northwest Side and a co-chair of their school's GSA and of the LGBTQ+ Committee of the Chicago Teachers Union. Corey participates in the GSA Leadership Committee through Chicago Public Schools' Office of Student Health and Wellness.

**MO ANDERSON** (they/he) Mo has experience in non-profit management and diversity, equity & inclusion. They are planning an initiative centering mutual aid, to support Black and brown LGBT+ youth in the midwest access to HRT, food, gender affirming surgery, and more.

**LINDSEY WILLISTON** (she/her) is a long-time CPS educator and co-chairs the LGBTQ+ Committee of the Chicago Teachers Union and her school's GSA and is a union delegate. She has collaborated with many community-based organizations that support college and career readiness, mentoring, and student enrichment. Lindsey has been involved in the LGBTQ+ rights movement for over 20 years.

**JOIN US ONLINE APRIL 4  
7 PM - 8:30 PM**

**RSVP TODAY**

**[2023MACTL.EVENTBRITE.COM](https://2023MACTL.EVENTBRITE.COM)**



Event organized by NEIU's M.A. in Community & Teacher Leader Program and in support of Women's History Month.



This annual event creates spaces in the NEIU community where we are educated and empowered to help develop communities and contribute to social justice movements. Support this and future Kenneth N. Addison Lectures! [VISIT OUR WEBSITE](#) to learn how.

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](mailto:vjking@neiu.edu) after you have donated to confirm that your funds have been placed in the correct account.

**[DONATE](#)**

**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.

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