

# CESA/CES Newsletter

Department of Counselor Education  
Northeastern Illinois University  
Counselor Education Student Association

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Join us in grassroots equity activism at the college, department, and classroom level: students have launched a peer-led **Social Justice Working Group** in collaboration with Goodwin College of Education (GCOE) and Counselor Education leaders. Members of the student Working Group collaborate with faculty to make necessary changes within the GCOE that promote an inclusive, anti-racist learning environment.

The Working Group will have **three positions opening** at the end of the Spring 2021 semester, with opportunities for interested students to collaborate on event and leadership planning throughout 2020 & 2021. Any student who feels committed to active, weekly participation is invited to contact **Bridget Sutton** or **Tiffani Clay** for more information.

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**Dr. Andrea Evans**, Interim Dean of the Goodwin College of Education and Director of the Carruthers Center for Inner City Studies met with the CESA Board/Working Group students to discuss the Goodwin College of Education's response to the student **Call to Action** letter. Read an excerpt of Dr. Evans' response in the Faculty Spotlight section and her **full letter** attached below.

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CESA has launched the **Speaker Spotlight** series, a Counselor Education community space held digitally once per month. Students and community members lead a talk and Q&A session featuring a wide variety of topics. These events are typically an hour or less in length, and are intended to unite, engage, and inspire. Reach out if you want the spotlight, or know someone who deserves it!



Recently, athlete and activist **Connor Ryan** joined a **CESA Spotlight** event, where he spoke about Indigenous Peoples' mental health, and his personal activism.

Connor is involved through **Natives Outdoors** and **Break the (BI) cycle**, a group of Black and Indigenous men utilizing cycling to start discussions about mental health and breaking the cycle of PTSD and suicide.

November 2020



# Faculty Spotlight

## Dr. Andrea E. Evans

Interim Dean of the Goodwin College of Education  
Director of the Carruthers Center for Inner City Studies

### How Dr. Evans Recharges/Relaxes:

Reads memoirs/biographies, watches History Channel, works out (a little), bike rides, watches sports on TV.

**Northeastern**  
ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

November 6, 2020

“Conversations are taking place across the Goodwin College of Education about what it means to commit to diversity, equity and inclusion. At the moment, I do believe that we can - and should - take the kinds of steps needed to be more inclusive, to see and honor diversity, and to ensure equity and equality in all we do. I see this as a very serious work that is multi-layered and multi-faceted. It requires lots of conversation and self-reflection. It requires learning. It requires a personal commitment from each person and a professional commitment from departments and programs across the college. As the interim dean, I hope to be part of this kind of work in the weeks and months ahead.

### Here is what I can commit to:

- Diversity, equity, and inclusion training for GCOE faculty and staff that will include the kinds of personal and professional reflection needed to ensure that our classrooms, curriculum, and interpersonal relations honor, respect, and reflect diversity and difference that exists on our campus and in our communities and society. As I mentioned, our campus via Pedrosa Center and the Center for Teaching and Learning have already started this work. I plan to begin some college-level training in early spring semester 2021.
- Work with our programs to identify any gaps or barriers to a diverse student body and/or diverse faculty and seek to remedy them.
- Diversity, equity, and inclusion workshops/training for GCOE students. All of the majors in the Goodwin College of Education (education/teaching, counseling, human resource development) focus on people and the human experience. Therefore, these issues should be viewed as central to the education and training of students seeking to enter these professions. I will work with you and other students to plan these workshops so that they are meaningful and relevant. We will plan to offer these workshops/trainings in Spring 2021 with the hope of sustaining them over the long term.”

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## Student Spotlight



### Alyssa Rathan

**School Counseling and Marriage  
Family Certificate Student  
Anticipated Graduation: May 2022**

#### **A Little About My School Counseling Journey:**

Hi everyone! I am currently in my sixth semester at NEIU. Slow but steady :) I have been a Special Education Classroom Assistant in Chicago for almost five years now. I realized that I loved working with youth, especially youth in low income communities that are looking for a lot of extra support and love. I want to be able to advocate for children on a deeper level and I feel that this journey will bring me closer to that.

#### **What have been your highlights of this experience, thus far?**

It has been an honor to help create/be a part of the student task force, better known as the Working Group at NEIU. I have worked alongside some AMAZING women (Tiffani, Bridget, Aracely, Rachel, and Vanessa) who have all been deeply invested in ensuring that NEIU's Counselor Education program is a safe space for everyone to learn. It's a beautiful thing to be able to connect with like minded individuals that care about something so much bigger than themselves. I also was published back in August which was pretty cool. Here is the link if anyone is interested:

[https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.ilcounseling.org/resource/resmgr/divisions/iacac/newsletters/acaci\\_summer\\_2020\\_newsletter.pdf](https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.ilcounseling.org/resource/resmgr/divisions/iacac/newsletters/acaci_summer_2020_newsletter.pdf)

#### **What are your long term counseling goals and goals in general?**

I like to call myself a "ratchet professional." I meet people where they are, exactly as I am. I believe that radical women [of color] can continue to change the way professional spaces look and feel. I am hoping to also pursue my certificate in Family and Marriage Therapy. One day, I would love to open up a diverse practice that truly feels like a safe space for marginalized folks that have been afraid/unable to seek out the care they needed in the past.

#### **What do you do for self-care?**

Watching scary movies with my partner, going for a run with my pup, texting or FaceTiming a friend, Zooming with some awesome peeps, and the list goes on. I work hard and play hard, so if you need any further suggestions feel free to let me know :P

#### **What advice do you have for incoming students?**

You are soooo not alone. Reach out to professors, peers, family [whomever] and make sure you're on your own healing journey. Talk it out. Cry it out. Dance and laugh it out. Get on zoom and have a drink with an old friend. This quarantine life combined with all of the other scary pieces of the world is not easy to deal with. We can all get through together.

# CESA BOARD



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November 6, 2020

Hello Rachel and CESA members,

Thank you for speaking with me several weeks ago. As I mentioned when we spoke, I believe that each of you should feel proud of your letter and proud of the attention you brought to issues that have long been problematic in our country. Our nation and its institutions (including universities) have not adequately, thoroughly or completely dealt with issues of racial inequality. It will and does take students, faculty, and staff to continue to reveal and cover what is unfair and unjust, both off-campus and on-campus. You've already made a difference. I see this as an opportunity to continue to shape our campus, our curriculum, and our interpersonal relationships in ways that reflect a renewed commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion and equality.

The letter itself accomplished a couple of things. It elevated several critical and intolerable issues facing our nation-racism, injustice and police brutality- as felt and experienced by our students. Reading that letter, and considering that it likely exemplified the emotions of many other students, prompted me to think about how we (GCOE) need to prepare to highlight the voices of students on the critical issues facing the nation. Also, it is important to recognize that students have a perspective that we, as faculty or administrators, often cannot see, feel or experience. We need students to tell us what they see and feel. We need to make sure they feel confident that they will be heard and that they feel safe.

Luckily, we are part of a campus that pays attention to these issues. Our Pedroso Center sits at the center of our campus diversity, equity and inclusion examination and response. They've offered a variety of workshops and trainings for students, faculty and staff. Further, our Center for Teaching and Learning have had and will continue to offer training to faculty with the eye towards shaping curriculum to reflect the diverse issues and diverse lives on our campus. That work is ongoing.

In response to your letter, I believe Dr. Tavakoli and the Counseling Department have taken several steps to elevate the issues you raised and those raised by last summer's social unrest. She and the faculty discussed your letter in several meetings since the summer. Also, it is my understanding that the faculty took the step of reviewing course syllabi in order to determine whether and how issues of race or difference get addressed. I do not know the result of that examination, though I imagine it to be ongoing work. In addition, Dr. Tavakoli worked with the faculty to create a student survey in order to gather additional information and perspectives on how counseling students perceive their experiences in the department. As you know, that survey has been administered

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and data are being gathered. I recently learned about the “Zoom Hall” meetings where students and faculty can meet, greet, and talk. Finally, Dr. Tavakoli plans faculty professional development in the months ahead. She and I have discussed this and will collaborate on this effort.

Conversations are taking place across the Goodwin College of Education about what it means to commit to diversity, equity and inclusion. At the moment, I do believe that we can - and should - take the kinds of steps needed to be more inclusive, to see and honor diversity, and to ensure equity and equality in all we do. I see this as a very serious work that is multi-layered and multi-faceted. It requires lots of conversation and self-reflection. It requires learning. It requires a personal commitment from each person and a professional commitment from departments and programs across the college. As the interim dean, I hope to be part of this kind of work in the weeks and months ahead.

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Thank you all again for the conversation and for your commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion. I will reach out soon to discuss plans for Spring 2021.

Sincerely,

Andrea E. Evans, Interim Dean,  
Daniel L. Goodwin College of Education