Note from the Director

Greetings! I am excited for all that this new semester has in store for the HESA Program. But to uphold my value of authenticity and vulnerability, I must admit that new beginnings also scare me, especially when they involve a cross-country move. Like many of our incoming first-year students whose hometowns range from Visalia, CA and Peoria, AZ to Haskins, OH and Long Island, NY, I packed up a place I had called home for many years and set out in route to Connecticut this summer. As our program kicked off the year with the HESA Academic Welcome Day for first-year students and the Welcome Back Retreat for second-year students, I delighted in building new relationships and engaging in new learning endeavors while simultaneously longing for the familiarity of the relationships and routines I had established during my time in Ohio. I never thought I would miss taking public transportation to campus, but as I searched for a parking spot at UConn, I found myself wishing I could just step off the bus and walk toward my office. And, as much as I appreciate the opportunity to connect virtually via Facetime and Skype, it just is not the same as seeing longtime friends and colleagues in person. All of us likely experience this paradox—wanting to embrace newness without letting go of familiarity—each semester. Some semesters bring more newness for us than others, but all semesters bring new students, colleagues, and initiatives to our campuses. My hope is that we collectively can hold space for both the excitement and fears that come with newness. May we empathize with the desire for familiarity and support one another through community as we all embrace what’s new for Fall 2017.

In this issue of HESA Happenings, we highlight our program’s beginning-of-the-year events, faculty and staff who have joined the HESA team or taken on new responsibilities this year, and the redesigned first-year practicum course. To stay in-the-know about the HESA Program, check out the Fall 2017 HESA Schedule and Calendar of Events. Also, see how our newest HESA alumni are putting their skills and knowledge into practice. For more ways to connect with the HESA Program, check out our social media sites.

HESA Staff & Faculty Updates
Kari Taylor is an Assistant Professor-in-Residence and Director of the HESA Program. After completing her dissertation, which is entitled *Contextualizing How Undergraduate Students Develop Toward Critical Consciousness*, and moving from Ohio to Connecticut, Kari is excited about her role at UConn. She is enjoying meeting all members involved with the HESA Program and facilitating open and collaborative dialogues about the program’s core values. This semester, she is excited to be using a problem-based learning approach to co-teach EDLR 5122: College Student Development-Programs and Services with Reginald Blockett. She also is looking forward to presenting findings from her dissertation research at the Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE) annual conference in November. Other research projects in which she is engaged include examining the role of dissonance in collegiate learning and understanding college student development from a Black feminist perspective.

Milagros Castillo-Montoya is an assistant professor of higher education and student affairs in the Department of Educational Leadership. Milagros is currently teaching EDLR 5126: Leading in a Multicultural Educational
Environment and co-teaching EDLR 5105: Structured Group Dialogue in Student Affairs. She is also working on a few projects including a critical discourse on Black Lives Matter and its relevance for higher education practice, a project on supporting faculty learning to teach through diversity, and a meta-synthesis on first-generation college students. She will be co-presenting with two doctoral students (Joshua Abreu and Abdul Abad) a paper “Black Lives Matter’s Contributions to Culturally Relevant Pedagogy” at the upcoming Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE) conference in November. Milagros continues to advise HESA master students as well as doctoral students in the Leadership and Educational Policy Ph.D. program. Milagros is also now engaging in more national leadership opportunities. She was recently voted member–at–large for the Division J (Higher Education) section of the American Educational Research Association (AERA) and invited to serve as an editorial board member for Review of Higher Education, a leading journal in our field.

Reginald Blockett is a visiting assistant professor of higher education and student affairs in the Department of Educational Leadership in the University of Connecticut’s Neag School of Education. Reginald currently teaches the EDLR 5108: Leadership Challenges in Higher Education course and co-teaches EDLR 5122: College Student Development– Programs and Services. His scholarly interests center on the sociocultural experiences of Black and Brown LGBTQ collegians, Black doctoral students’ socialization, and social justice practice and pedagogies across educational contexts.

Reginald is a proud native of Detroit, Michigan, where he first learned the value of education, family, and community. He earned a bachelor’s in Sociology with a concentration in social inequality from Saginaw Valley State University, his master’s degree in student affairs from Iowa State University, and is currently
completing his Ph.D. in higher education and student affairs from Indiana
University Bloomington. Reginald’s professional higher education experience
includes working at Rutgers University as a residence life coordinator and as an
instructor for first-year women students in a residential college. Reginald has
extensive college teaching experience as an interdisciplinary educator with
concentrations in women’s and gender studies, sexuality studies, and queer
studies.

Danielle DeRosa is the Student and Staff Development Manager for the
Department of Educational Leadership. She works with campus partners to
design and provide student and staff development across the Department of
Educational Leadership with a special emphasis on the Higher Education and
Student Affairs and Husky Sport programs. Danielle serves as the instructor for
EDLR 5105: Structured Group Dialogue in Student Affairs, as well as a 1-credit
service learning course, EDLR 1162. This year Danielle will continue to serve as
the Assistant Director of Student and Staff Development for Husky Sport, as
well as provide support to the HESA program through working with students as
an academic advisor and working with the HESA Village and graduate
assistantship sites.
Rico Destinvil (formerly known as Ricardo) is now a second year in the program and is excited to continue his role as the HESA Graduate Assistant. As the HESA GA, Rico is eager to cultivate the community, while organizing the annual interview days process. This year, Rico hopes to implement some fresh ideas and changes within the two-day process with equity guiding his decision making process.

In addition to managing interview days, Rico is tasked with maintaining our social media platforms. There, he updates current and potential students, alumni and campus partners with information directly related to the program. This year he is hoping to live his best life and successfully transition the legacy of the HESA GA role to another passionate student entering the field.

Carissa Rutkauskas is a Program Coordinator in the Department of Education Leadership, with an affection for the support that she provides the HESA program. A U.S. Army veteran, she earned bachelor’s degrees in Fine Arts/Graphic Design, Spanish/Language and Literature, and a master’s degree in Geography – all from UConn. She provides support regarding GA offer letters, HESA website administration, summer contact with potential students, and an array of other student, faculty, and partnership needs.

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Fall 2017 HESA Schedule
### First-Year Course Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Instructor</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday 2:30 PM - 5:00 PM</td>
<td>EDLR 5122: College Student Development-Programs and Services</td>
<td>Dr. Kari Taylor &amp; Reggie Blockett</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesdays 2:00 PM - 4:30 PM</td>
<td>EDLR 5105: Structured Group Dialogue in Student Affairs</td>
<td>Dr. Milagros Castillo-Montoya Danielle DeRosa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursdays 2:00 PM - 4:30 PM</td>
<td>EDLR 5102: Assessment, Evaluation, &amp; Research in Student Affairs</td>
<td>Christine Wilson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursdays 8:00 AM-10:30 AM</td>
<td>EDLR 5092: Practicum in Higher Education</td>
<td>Mark Flynn Krista O'Brien</td>
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### Second-Year Course Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Instructor</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thursdays 9:30 AM - 12:00 PM</td>
<td>EDLR 5126: Leading Toward a Multicultural Educational Environment</td>
<td>Dr. Milagros Castillo-Montoya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursdays 4:30 PM - 6:00 PM</td>
<td>EDLR 5092: Practicum in Higher Education</td>
<td>David Clokey Dr. Eleanor Daugherty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesdays 2:30 PM - 5:00 PM</td>
<td>EDLR 5108: Leadership Challenges in Higher Education</td>
<td>Reggie Blockett</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elective</td>
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<td>Elective</td>
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*Class only meets the following days:
- September 28
- October 27
- November 30

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**What We've Done ...**

**UCSAA Orientation**
On Saturday, August 19th, the first-year HESA cohort was welcomed to UConn by the UConn Student Affairs Association (UCSAA). The day was led by the UCSAA executive board, which is made up of seven 2nd-year HESA students.

The first half of the day was designed to allow time for the first-year cohort to get to know one another. First up was an icebreaker that allowed each student to temporarily take on the identity of another student in an effort to allow everyone to learn each others names and fun facts. First–year students then got the chance to talk more deeply with 5–6 students in a speed-friending activity that involved questions about their hometowns, hobbies, cultures, and more.

The second half of the day then focused on life as a graduate student. In small groups, the first-year students were asked to examine the self-care practices that have proven successful for them in the past and think about ways they will be able to continue to rely on those practices as graduate students. They were also encouraged to consider the concept of squad care and how they can lean on the other members of their cohort for support when needed.

Finally, the day concluded with a panel of second–year students sharing their experiences thus far in the HESA program. All questions asked were generated by first–year students and ranged from living on a graduate assistant stipend to opportunities to get involved on campus outside the HESA program to favorite/least favorite classes and beyond.

To learn more about the Class of 2019, feel free to read their student bio's!
On August 21, the HESA program kicked off the new academic year with an Academic Welcome for first and second year-students. The HESA program is appreciative to HESA faculty and campus partners for their contributions to such a great day. A special note of recognition to the planning committees that worked diligently to put together a day of enrichment and learning for our students. The first-year planning committee was comprised of: Danielle DeRosa, Alisa Geller, Elsie Gonzalez, Dr. Jennifer Lease Butts, Stacey Murdock, and Dr. Kari Taylor; the second-year planning committee was comprised of: Danielle DeRosa, Dan Doerr, Kim Hill, and Dr. Kari Taylor. Below find a few highlights from each event.

**First-Year Students**

Students in their first year of the HESA program began their day with breakfast and informal introductions among students and the fall HESA faculty. The aim of the day was to give students an overview of the HESA program, as well as the opportunity to begin to understand specific components of the HESA program. In preparation for the day, students were asked to read two articles; Imel, S. (2002). *Adult learning theory in cohort groups* and Reason, R.D., & Kimball, E.W. (2012). *A new theory-to-practice model for student affairs: Integrating scholarship, context and reflection*.

After breakfast, students kicked-off the morning by thinking about their role in the development of college students. HESA first-year students were prompted to think about their ideal college environment in small groups, and then spent time as a larger group discussing their thoughts. Through this group work students had the opportunity to begin to get to know each other and break the ice!

Continuing with the day, students participated in a series of workshops that touched on information about the HESA program, the Neag School of Education, and the Division of Student Affairs. Students also spent time learning and discussing fundamental components of the HESA program, including; the cohort experience, applying theory to practice, and the role of reflection in practice. In an effort to keep the day engaging and interactive, each topic was presented to students in a unique way. Some modes of presentation included small-group discussion, large-group discussion, and panel discussions featuring HESA faculty and HESA alumni.

First-year students Kayla Wong and Jessica Gramajo work together in a small group as they discuss the dynamics of an academic cohort experience.

In a session developed by second-year student Cristina Carpentier, first-year students discussed the cohort experience, using the visual of a tree to depict the components of a cohort. The leaves pictured above, capture what students hope to
Second-Year Students

The HESA 2nd Year Retreat began with an opportunity for students to reconnect with each other and HESA advisors over refreshments. After the group had the opportunity to catch up on their summer adventures, the group transitioned and began to think about their own professional growth and development. To prepare for the afternoon, students were asked to read: Taylor, K, B., & Baxter Magolda, M. (2012). Building educators’ capacities to meet twenty-first century demands.

The article served as an anchor for the afternoon’s conversation as students thought about their own professional learning and development. As a way to encourage students to think more intentionally about their own professional learning, they participated in a "World Cafe". This method of collaboratively engaging in conversation allowed students to think about when they have experienced learning and growth, as well as associated challenges. In addition, students were prompted to think about how the cohort model could help to maximize learning and growth.

As a result of participating in the HESA 2nd Year Retreat, it is the hope that students are able to begin to articulate a professional plan of action that is connected to the HESA competencies, demonstrate an ability to engage in discourse with cohort mates, and engage in reflective learning about their professional identity.

Second-year students used the World Café method to engage in discussion. While engaged in conversation, students were encouraged to record their own thoughts, or the thoughts of others on paper tablecloth.

Second-year students Michelle Meek, Danielle Berkman, and Rico Destinvil enjoy some snacks at the HESA 2nd Year Retreat!

Ice-Cream Social
What better way to end a day of learning than with an ice cream social featuring ice cream from the UConn Dairy Bar? HESA students and faculty spent time continuing to invest in building relationships and breaking the ice over an ice cream sundae. To everyone's surprise, Jonathan the Husky stopped by to welcome HESA students and faculty back, too.

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**HESA Curriculum Update**

EDLR 5092, previously known as the First Year SYE Practicum course, has been redesigned to meet the existing goals of providing the first-year HESAs with an opportunity to facilitate educational experiences for undergraduate students at UConn. To achieve these goals, the course structure has changed significantly. For the first five weeks of the semester, students will be attending classes focused on experiential learning, culturally relevant pedagogy, group development, universal design, reflection, and program design.

They are responsible for the creation of a 5-week workshop series on a topic for a group of undergraduate student leaders, which they will facilitate in pairs during the month of October. The workshop topics are Cultural Competency, Authenticity, Organizational Values, Self Care, and Civic Engagement.

The HESA pairs will be guided along their facilitation growth with the help of eight coaches, staff who have volunteered their time and their expertise to the first year cohort. The eight coaches include: Robert Drago, Alisa Geller, Monique Golden, Kim Hill, Stacey Murdock, Angela Rola, Alessia Satterfield, and Ashley Vrabely.
Thoughts From Instructors

"I am excited about the opportunity to help the first year HESA students to develop a personal philosophy of facilitation grounded in educational and experiential theory and guided by good practice. Facilitation skills are central to our work in the field, regardless of functional area, and I hope this class is a touch point that they can refer back to even long after they've graduated." - Krista O'Brien

"Engaging with the first year HESA’s in their application of the course materials into a practical facilitated experience for undergraduate students is most exciting. Through that hands on approach and intentional reflection we will have a lens on the individual facilitation styles, skills, and knowledge within the cohort. I believe it will be a great stepping stone for their remaining year and half at UConn and as professionals moving forward." - Mark Flynn

What We're Up To ...

Important Dates
New Assistantship Highlights

**Site:** Husky Sport

**Brief overview of position:** Using the power of sport, Husky Sport collaborates with community and campus partners to support youth and college student development through shared teaching, learning, and practice committed to equity. The Graduate Assistant will have the opportunity to work with Husky Sport’s student staff to develop and deliver professional development opportunities to empower them as equitable and culturally relevant sport-based youth development practitioners.

**Site:** Office of Early College Programs, Pre-College Summer Program (PCS)

**Brief overview of position:** Pre-College Summer, offered through the Office of Early College Programs, allows high achieving and socially mature rising high school juniors and seniors to experience college in a safe, supportive environment. Participants will be able to explore their academic interests before jumping head first into the demands of college life.

**Site:** Office for Diversity and Inclusion (ODI)

**Brief overview of position:** The Graduate Assistant in ODI reports to the Director for Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives and is responsible for assisting in the development of inclusion programs and initiatives on campus.

**Site:** School of Nursing

**Brief overview of position:** The Graduate Assistant will be responsible for developing informational materials with admission criteria. Furthermore, they will lead informational sessions for UConn undergrads interested in nursing and inform prospective students and parents about School of Nursing.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Calendar Events</th>
<th>Dates</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GA contract starts</td>
<td>August 23, 2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fall Semester Classes Begin</td>
<td>August 28, 2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>Homecoming</td>
<td>October 15-21, 2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spring 2018 Course Registration Opens</td>
<td>October 23, 2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fall Break</td>
<td>November 19-25, 2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gallery Walk</td>
<td>November 28, 2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam Week</td>
<td>December 11-17, 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment Day</td>
<td>April 26, 2017</td>
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For a listing of our most current dates, please visit our [calendar page](a).
Looking Ahead ...  

Alumni Spotlight  

Name: Abigail Smith  
Class: 2017  
Position: Residence Hall Director, Pace University (Pleasantville)

I remember reading updates of past alumni from the program and always wondered what my update would read, if I ever gave one— if I ever graduated. That’s not to say I was a horrible student but, there were nights I thought about packing up and heading back home to Jamaica. I couldn’t seem to figure out WHY I was putting myself through what felt like hell at times.

Thankfully, this July my WHY became more apparent. There is life after Storrs yall. I currently work at Pace University— Pleasantville as a Residence Director. In my new role, I co– oversee a residence hall of 550 students and I directly supervise 7 Residence Assistants who work with 4 First Year Interest Groups (think quasi living– learning communities). Pace’s small community has allowed me to feel valued and needed to the students, division of student affairs and also faculty who I have the opportunity to work with daily. I am growing in a community that values equity, embraces change and validates my black womanhood, #BlackLivesMatter.

My message to the second years is to breathe easy, own your search and be confident in the work that you have produced. The mere fact that you have made it this far speaks volumes. You are interviewing positions more than they are interviewing you, be reflective of your time in the field and be intentional about what you are looking for in a professional setting.
You may not get everything you want but, you should not settle on your non-negotiables. First years, enjoy your time at UConn, make use of the many opportunities. You will all have different experiences, there is no need to compare your journey. Challenge yourself and your classmates to have difficult conversations- we owe it to our marginalized colleagues and students to be equity minded professionals who are committed to justice in higher education.

To both classes– Find your tribe and love them hard. Your dreams lie on the other side of your grit.

Current HESA Students

Have you recently accomplished something great? Consider sharing it with us! The HESA program would like to feature news about student achievements on our website.

Submit achievements here!

Stay Connected …

Our HESA students and alumni have been extremely busy accepting awards, attending and presenting at various workshops and conferences, and writing blog posts related to their experiences. Check out all of the amazing things they have done!

HESA News

In addition to students and alumni, we also want to highlight our HESA Faculty for the valuable contributions they've added to the field. Keep up with these updates below!

Publications, Presentations, and Service
Consider Giving Back

We welcome HESA faculty, staff, students, and alumni to consider donating to the Dr. Sue Saunders Professional Development Fund to support the professional development expenses of current HESA students. In 2016–2017, we were able to support the professional development of 13 current HESA students for travel to professional conferences, membership of professional associations, and more. Your support to the Dr. Sue Saunders Professional Development Fund can help us continue to support future HESA students’ efforts to grow and learn as rising professionals in the field. To donate, please click here and be sure to note that you want to give specifically to this fund.

Donate Here!

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