



School of Education
Office of the Dean

Dear Faculty and Staff,

Onward we move into Spring and hopefully into more peaceful times but also with much work ahead. Last semester, I laid out five [priority areas](#) for the School of Education. I would like to give you an update in each of these areas:

Navigating the Pandemic

- The SOE did an amazing job navigating the many challenges that the pandemic placed on us. While still working and teaching remotely, the SOE faculty and staff have come together so that our students can have the best online experience possible. Queens College continues to face financial challenges and, with much thanks to our three Chairs, the SOE was able to find efficiencies that contributed to cost savings. Moving forward, the budget forecast is still uncertain; however, there is some optimism that cuts will not be as deep as originally expected. We will continue to be financially smart in our decision-making process, while protecting the quality of our educational enterprise.
- Full time and part time faculty have been participating in online training offered by our Center for Teaching and Learning. Two certifications are being offered this Spring:
 - Full Teaching Online Certification is offered both on Blackboard and Google Classroom. Faculty who successfully complete the training will receive a certificate of completion and \$500 compensation for their participation.
 - Emergency Teaching Online Certification is only offered on Blackboard. Faculty who successfully complete the training will receive a certificate of completion and \$150 compensation for their participation.
 - For more information and to register, [click here](#).

- The SOE has created a repository of resources for [Online Teaching and Learning](#). Please help to build our learning community by suggesting additional resources that might benefit your colleagues.
- COVID-19 (and its variants) still impacts our community. CUNY has announced the transition to in-person learning beginning Fall 2021. This, however, does not mean that we will be 100% in person by September. The QC Reopening Committee will provide further guidance, which I will share when available so we can begin to plan accordingly.
- The pandemic has had a major impact on our field and clinical placements. Our field coordinators, staff and clinical professors have worked tirelessly to ensure our students can still get high quality experiences. New guidance from DOH, CDC, NYSED, and CUNY is ongoing. I have gathered this guidance into one "Clinical Guidance memo" for the SOE to ease planning. Please let me know if you would like a copy of this memo or ask your program's field/clinical coordinator.
- The pandemic has provided unexpected opportunities to support local community agencies who work with children and youth. Helping others navigate the pandemic is a crucial part of who we are and can be! If you are interested in exploring ways to enrich the student experience with meaningful community-based work, let's chat! In the meanwhile, here are some student comments from one of our new field connections led by Professor Aprile:

Many of the families whom I was able to get in contact with had the basic necessities covered but what was clear to me was the need to be heard.

... with the help of a very professional case manager... we succeeded in the mission to help three families with the tablets for their children, and made them feel happy, comfortable, and develop their learning skills. The most interesting thing that I saw in this experience was that the 'case management team' believed that every child can thrive, given the right skills, education, and development progress.

Working together with parents could be crucial and the internship with Child Center of NY has given me the opportunity to practice active listening with parents, and we recognize their efforts. The goal is to provide the best support to parents to help their children in the best possible way and to build a positive relationship between home and school. Also, the goal is to be more sensitive about how the pandemic has affected families and to understand any unusual behavior that students may demonstrate in class due to the stress parents are going through.

We will need to understand and address the long-term effects of the pandemic on student learning as well as faculty research and scholarly output. Here is a recent study from AERA that is the first in highlighting the complexity of the issues that faculty are facing:

https://www.aera.net/Portals/38/VoicesFromTheField_WEB_final.pdf

Restoring Accreditation

- You may have heard that our CAEP Accreditation for our Initial Programs went well. We have since submitted the Rejoinder and the CAEP Board will meet in the Spring to make a final decision. I am proud that in such a short time, we have built a Quality Assurance System that will lay the foundation for our assessment work in years to come. Thanks to the deep investment of our faculty and staff in our success, I am hopeful that we indeed will have a positive outcome.
- Now we must keep the momentum. We have much to do to ensure our Quality Assurance System is fully operational. Please assist by making sure your Chalk and Wire assessments are up-to-date and being completed by students. We are also working on making this system more affordable for students.
- Our Self Study for Advanced Programs is due September 1, 2021. Advanced Programs are already working on their worksheets and phase-in plans and Spring 2021 will require intense and collaborative efforts to make headway. Luckily, we have a great team at the helm!

Three Taskforces

- Our three taskforces (Clinical, Curriculum and Policy) have worked throughout the fall and will continue to work through the spring with a forthcoming set of recommendations to our SOE community expected at the end of the spring semester. We will kick off Fall 2021 with a Town Hall meeting to debrief on the findings of the three taskforces as well as the findings of our Equity Study (see below) in an effort to engage in some deep visioning for the SOE in the years to come.

Will to Change

- I continue to be committed to equity and inclusive engagement. We have much more to do to heal and progress and single initiatives will not suffice in supporting a SOE focused on inclusive excellence in K-16 and graduate education. I hope we can pave the way together!
- Under the auspices of the Will to Change series, I am excited to announce a few new events:
 - Our Spring event, *Moving Towards Discomfort*, led by Karen Zaino, and in collaboration with our Complicated Conversations series, is scheduled for March 24th. It aims to be spectacular, so please register at Eventbrite: <https://tinyurl.com/y4hazvqq>.
 - The SOE has hired Dr. TaJuan Wilson as a consultant to lead a Climate Survey in the Spring as part of our Equity work. Please see attached flyer for more information.
 - I am also delighted to welcome Dr. Deepa Vasudevan, as a postdoctoral research fellow whose research on campus will also focus on equity, and more broadly will help us to address the question: How is equity embodied in practice (or not) within the SOE? Please see attached flyer introducing Dr. Vasudevan.

Illuminating our Ethos

- After listening and learning from our SOE faculty and staff, it is clear to me that the SOE is steeped in a culture of deep commitment to quality, hard work, and social justice. Our faculty are engaged in amazing teaching and research and give themselves endlessly to the various committees and operations that make the SOE so great. Now that Ethos must be illuminated boldly and without apology. The website continues to be a challenge, though we have made some headway. The college is moving the website to WordPress and we hope that this shift will occur in the spring allowing the SOE to have a vibrant web presence.
- In an effort to ensure our faculty have a national web presence, I would like to begin work on our website including creating faculty profile pages. I will be asking faculty to submit headshots and research abstracts/narratives soon.

We each accomplish so much on our own, but we do even greater things together.

Best wishes for a wonderful spring forward.

Dana

Dr. Dana Fusco
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School of Education