



MASTER OF ARTS IN COMMUNITY AND TEACHER LEADERS

MACTL News & Notes | Summer 2020

The MACTL Program strives to work in solidarity with #BLM and other struggles for liberation. We grieve the deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Tony McDade and the many others killed by police and by white supremacy. As a community of scholars, educators and organizers, we commit to continuing to deepen our commitment to challenging anti-Black racism, ending oppression, and collectively working to create the flourishing communities we know we need.

Message from the MACTL Faculty

Dear MACTL Alumni,

We hope all of you and your loved ones are doing well and staying safe!

The year 2020 has been an unusual year with a lot of unexpected happenings. Since the outburst of the pandemic, we have been working remotely. Although the work mode has changed, our zest for our work and our love for our students are as strong as ever. Each of us has been, as usual, diligently teaching, doing research, advising students and providing professional service. Working hard and professionalism are our beliefs. They are also valuable qualities that a leader should possess. Happily, we see these qualities in our MACTL students! The Fall, 2020 semester is around the corner and we are looking forward to welcoming a new cohort of MACTL students. We are also excited to share the wonderful success stories of our program's alumni with the new students...so keep those stories coming!

This difficult time will eventually be gone. What we have experienced will be kept in our memory. What we have accomplished will be put in records. Despite the disturbance and uncertainty in this hardness, let's continue moving forward steadily with hope, respect, determination and grace!

- Dr. Hua Bai
- Dr. Nicole E. Holland
- Dr. Eleni Makris
- Dr. Erica R. Meiners
- Dr. Isaura Pulido
- Dr. Durene Wheeler



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Nilay Zan Donmez

Valeriu Gava

Sarah Glazer

Jose Rodriguez

Samantha Rudolph

Congratulations on Graduation

On May 12, 2020, the MACTL program held a virtual graduation ceremony to honor our five 2020 graduates. The Interim Dean and the Associate Dean of Daniel L. Goodwin College of Education, the MACTL faculty, the graduates’ families and friends in other countries all joined the celebration. WE ARE PROUD OF OUR GRADUATES!

Faculty Spotlight

Dr. Erica R. Meiners, Professor



“While I was a [Visiting Professor](#) in New York City this spring – I had many wonderful opportunities to connect with and learn from local organizers – particularly those working around educational justice and abolitionist practice – and shared my work at a range of forums including at Beyond the Bars (Columbia University) and at the Gender, Race, Suffrage and Citizenship Convening (Hunter College & The Roosevelt House Public Policy Institute).

I returned to Chicago at the end of March due to COVID 19 and I have been active in local and national organizing related to defunding policing and investing in authentic forms of community safety – webinars (including some with MACTL members!), [public statements](#), and other organizing. The organization I help coordinate, the [Prison Neighborhood Arts & Education Project](#), is ongoing – despite the lockdown in prisons across the nation and we will have online events this fall (and a cool online art fundraiser in August... check the

website!)

My newest co-authored book – *The feminist and the sex offender: Confronting harm, ending state violence* (Verso Press) is [excerpted](#) in the most recent issue of n+1, with a range of other interviews and webinars. *FYI - potentially of interest in this moment: two recent collaboratively authored articles that came out in the last few months that are linked to this moment* “[Will white people work collectively to trump white power? Stepping up for struggle beyond the yard sign](#)” and “[Abolition by the Numbers Mathematics as a Tool to Dismantle the Carceral State \(and Build Alternatives\)](#)”.

In my spare time I am trying to keep running in the early mornings in August – to avoid the heat – and reading some fiction. Email me if you have any good book recommendations – I would love to hear from you!”

-- Erica (e-meiners@neiu.edu)

facebook

Like MACTL on Facebook



The MACTL program now has a Facebook page where we encourage our MACTL graduates and students to post events, presentations, readings, videos, links, updates, etc. We hope this continues to be a place where we can establish community, share ideas and causes, and network. Please [join and Like us!](#)

Alumni Engagement

Nurys Uceta

Nurys graduated from the MACTL program in 2017. She is currently working with Chicago Public Schools and has the privilege of being a program coordinator for the district's Sustainable Community Schools Initiative. This a unique collaboration between CPS, the Chicago Teachers Union and the Grassroots Education Movement to support 20 schools throughout the city and establish a whole child approach to education using shared leadership and collaboration. The schools create a reflective learning culture, racial justice and equity, transparency and trusting relationships, self-determination and governance from community strengths and wisdom by using data, best practices and evidence. "I'm so excited for this opportunity especially because I get to use the knowledge and experience from the MACTL program in my day to day work!"

Nurys is thankful that she has been able to continue to work with various scholarships that support undocumented students, such as the CPS Dream Fund, The Fiesta del Sol Scholarship and the Peace and Education Scholarship are very important initiative especially during a time when there is financial uncertainty.

When Nurys is not working, she has spent a lot of time working out, cooking and doing everything that she can to support BLM. Having difficult conversations with family members and friends addressing anti-Blackness in the Latinx community, as well as translating educational materials relevant to the movement into Spanish. Most importantly, continuing to be mindful of her own privileges and reminding folks that BLACK LIVES MATTER, today, tomorrow, the next day and them days after that!



"I'm so excited for this opportunity especially because I get to use the knowledge and experience from the MACTL program in my day to day work!"

Nicholas Pegarsch



Nicholas graduated from the MACTL program in 2018. Two years ago, Nicholas started the [Black Student Union](#) (BSU) as a space for the growing African American population at Round Lake High School.

They are working on two large projects. First, they started a mentoring program at one of the elementary schools to develop a pipeline of young African American leaders in the district. Also, they are working with Human Resources to send students to job fairs at schools with diverse student bodies. They hope to encourage more diverse candidates to apply for positions within the district when they hear directly from the students. The BSU also hosted a large panel that focused on women of color in politics. Two of the senior BSU members were the emcees for the event.



Milli Salguero

Milli graduated from the MACTL program in 2018. She teaches Humanities at Orozco Community Academy in Chicago's Pilsen neighborhood. During remote learning, she worked with her colleagues to engage in the [Reparations Won Curriculum](#). Students learned the history of Burge, stories of the victims, policies, systemic racism, etc. They were engaging in this work during the George Floyd protests. This was emotionally draining difficult work to do but so powerful. The students' responses to a survey revealed that they appreciated how real Milli and her colleagues got with the content because it's what's important to learn rather than memorizing war dates.

My students and I were organizing a big Census Awareness Fair at our school. We put together two videos and posted on Twitter. Watch it in [English](#) or in [Spanish](#).

Milli Salguero



Mike Friedberg

Mike Friedberg began in the first MACTL cohort in 2016. After taking a break he will finish his electives and graduate by the end of 2020. He has been working with youth since 2007, first in the community center world, and as a Chicago Public Schools teacher since 2012. His thesis, presented in 2017, has been accepted in two chapters in an upcoming book from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, *Economic, Political and Legal Solutions to Critical Issues in Urban Education and Implications for Teacher Preparation*, which will be released in spring 2021.

Jose Rodriguez

Jose graduated from the MACTL program in 2020. Since graduation, he has continued his work as Dean of Restorative Practice at Roosevelt High School, going into his 5th year and has been promoted to be the head of the SEL team. He will be putting his research project into action and will be leading the team in strengthening the Adult SEL and cultural competence. His goal is to work collectively with his students, families, and community to involve them in the process of enhancing the overall culture and climate. In addition, he led some Peace Circles for the school community in support of the pandemic and response to George Floyd's death. He is also working with Alderwoman of 33rd ward, Rossana Rodriguez and her staff on their Health and Wellness Campaign (Violence Prevention). They have a Public Space Activation event coming up on July 17th.

"I'm SO HAPPY and feel PRIVILEGED to have chosen the MACTL program, the timing was so right and prepared me to provide the support our community needs during this time "

Jessie Fuentes

Jessie Fuentes graduated from the MACTL program in 2018. Jessie's work has centered on empowering young people in the Humboldt Park community, the release of Oscar Lopez Rivera, anti-gentrification work, education reform, and the independence of Puerto Rico. She is now the Dean of Student Affairs at Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos Puerto Rican High School.

In addition to her work at the high school, Jessie co-chairs the Puerto Rican Agenda of Chicago, a non-profit organization committed to Puerto Rican self-determination through policy and advocacy. Jessie's leadership in the Puerto Rican Agenda included the coordination of relief efforts following Hurricane Maria in 2017. Alongside many others in the Puerto Rican community, Jessie organized emergency fundraisers, gathered supplies and worked with commercial airlines to get critical supplies to the island within days of the hurricane. Jessie relief work continued in 2019 following a series of earthquakes that rocked the island of Puerto Rico.

In June, Jessie was the host of the 42nd annual Puerto Rican People's Day Parade. Due to the pandemic, this year's parade was celebrated virtually. Visit their [Facebook page](#) or [web page](#) for more information.



Got an update? Please email us. We will be sending out a periodic MACTL News & Notes. We would love to share your news!

