

# News & Notes

Master of Arts in Community & Teacher Leaders  
Fall 2024



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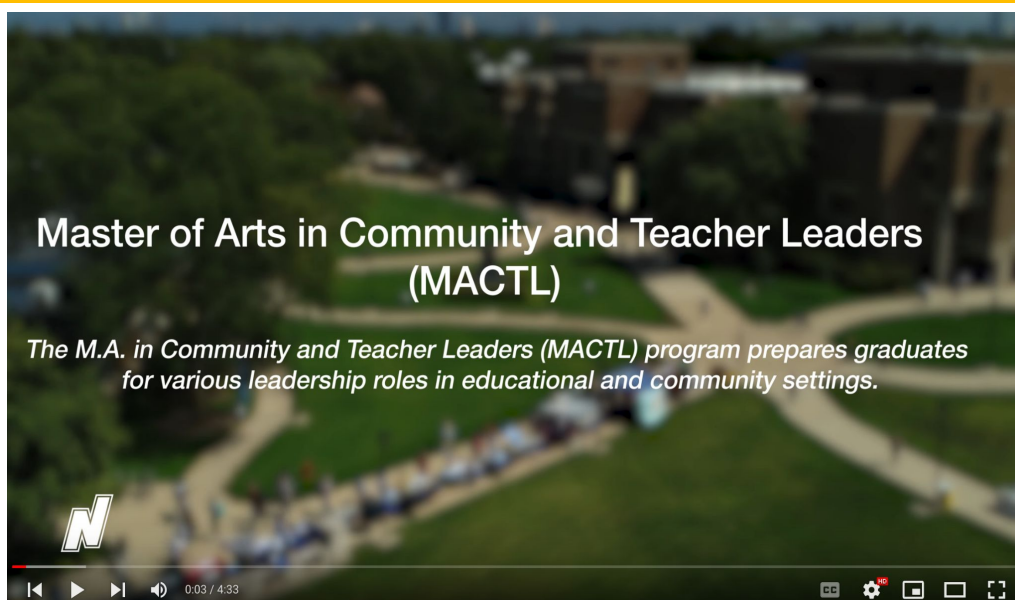
# WELCOME TO THE FALL 2024!

## Much is in the air...

We know our MACTL community is hard at work - many of us are back in classrooms this fall! Amidst all the uncertainty in the world, we know this MACTL community is working to make our classrooms and communities more just and beautiful.



Check out our snazzy 2024 MACTL alumni video



**MAJOR congratulations**  
to our hardworking and fabulous  
**Spring and Summer 2024**  
**MACTL Graduates!**

**Sam Barouch: MA+TLE**

**Meghan O'Keefe: MA+TLE**

**Valerie Figueroa: MA+TLE**

**Yaritza Rodriguez: MA+TLE**

**Bridget Land: MA+TLE**

**Tiana Farley: TLE**



Photo: Meghan O'Keefe, Yaritza Rodriguez, Sam Barouch

# Alumni Highlights



**Guadalupe Rivera (MACTL Graduate 2019):** graduated in 2023 with a Masters in Public Policy and a minor in Public Administration from UIC. In January 2024 Guadalupe was accepted into the Illinois Women's Institute for Leadership Training Academy Program. Guadalupe will take the LSAT in November 2024 and recently won an LSAT scholarship from the Hispanic Lawyers Association of Illinois and plans to attend Loyola for their weekend JD program. In March 2024 she won an outstanding teacher award from County Commissioner Alma Anaya.

## CONGRATULATIONS!

**Berhane Hailemichael (MACTL Graduate 2017):** journalist, community educator and the starter of Eritrean Assistance Organization in Chicago - which offers Tigrinya language classes, soccer matches and support for new migrants, published a new book in the Tigrinya language, *Light in Darkness*, based on his experiences and analysis of the Eritrean struggle for liberation and independence. Berhane was an Eritrean freedom fighter, and the book chronicles his experiences and the long struggle of the Eritrean Peoples Liberation Front against colonialism and for freedom.



# Faculty Updates

**Durene Wheeler** published "Talking About Teaching : The Psychosocial Benefits of Critical and Compassionate Classrooms" in the Journal of Mental Health and Social Behavior. 6(1):187. This commentary explores the psychosocial benefits of integrating critical and compassionate approaches within contemporary classrooms.

**Nicole Holland** was awarded the 2023 and 2022 Faculty Excellence Awards for Service! Congratulations to the amazing Dr. Holland!

**Erica Meiners** published an op-ed in Truthout "Illinois Aims to Spend \$900 Million Revamping Prisons. Let's Close Them Instead" and scholarly articles in journals such as Visual Arts Research; Theory, Research and Action in Urban Education.

**Hua Bai** published "Introducing computational thinking and coding to teacher education students" in a new book edited by C. Bosch, L. Goosen & J. Chetty, Navigating computer science education in the 21st century. This chapter reports on a study that examined development of students' computational thinking knowledge and block-based coding skills as well as their perceptions of integrating these knowledge and skills into education.

**Isaura Pulido** was accepted into the Chicago Latino Caucus (CLCF) Leadership Academy and is the 2024 Special Assistant to the NEIU President for Hispanic Serving Institution Affairs. Dr. Pulido was awarded the 2024 President's Inclusive Excellence and Diversity Award (this is the third year in a row MACTL faculty have won the award).

## Retirement from NEIU!



Dr. Eleni Makris, has announced her departure from Northeastern Illinois University (NEIU). Dr. Makris has served NEIU for 21 years and is now re-entering the private sector. Working with a cohort of families, she is helping to establish a foundation that will provide grants to non-governmental organizations that serve asylum and refugee seekers in Greece. Throughout her decades at NEIU, Dr. Makris has taught multiple courses as an Educational Foundations (EDFN) faculty member, revised EDFN curricula, and served as the EDFN Coordinator. Dr. Makris was instrumental in co-creating the Master of Arts in Community and Teacher Leaders (MACTL) program and was a leader in the successful launch of the program. Throughout her tenure she was a staunch supporter of and recruiter for MACTL, and she participated in many efforts to promote and develop the program. Dr. Makris served as the co-Facilitator of the MACTL program, and the Interim Department Chair. She has won multiple Faculty Excellence Awards and was one of the first professors to teach online courses at the university.

Serving as a faculty sponsor, Dr. Makris helped students found NEIU's chapter of Alpha Psi Lambda which is the nation's first and largest co-ed Latino Fraternity/Sorority.

Active at the university level, Dr. Makris has been chair of the Committee on Organized Research, Advisory Committee on Faculty Awards, Research Community Grants Committee, Educational/Sabbatical Leave Committee, Summer Research Grant Committee, and multiple Search and Screen Committees. She has also served on the McNairs Scholar Program, Student Research and Creative Activities Symposium, Study Abroad/International Programs, Non-Traditional Degree Programs, and 20 years on the Institutional Review Board.

Within the Goodwin College of Education (GCOE), Dr. Makris has served on multiple committees including the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, GCOE Assessment, GCOE Diversity Proficiency, GCOE Scholarships, GCOE Merit Awards, GCOE Finance Committee, Jean Carlson and Diane Ehrlich Advisory Committee, Department Personnel Committee, Department Budget Committee, and has served as a Faculty Mentor to six faculty and numerous students.

Dr. Makris has also served and been a proud UPI union member and a union organizer. She is thankful for the opportunity to have learned from the thousands of students she has taught. Dr. Makris will continue her research interests and philanthropy which focus on how people facing high levels of adversity are able to overcome it by exercising resilience, grit and faith.

Dr. Makris has been a respected leader at Northeastern, and a dedicated faculty member to the Educational Foundations Program and the Masters in Community and Teacher Leaders Program.

While she will be missed, we wish Dr. Makris all the best in her future endeavors!



## Featured Event: Celebrating Latinx Leaders in Higher Education

On September 20, 2024, Isaura Pulido was a featured speaker at a transformative event on the NEIU campus honoring Latinx history and culture, "Celebrating Latinx Leaders in Higher Education." Dr. Pulido presented an overview of Latinx demographics in the U.S., emphasizing that Latinx students now represent 32% of all college students nationwide!

Following her, Leticia Barrera, Director of the Parent Mentor Program at Palenque/LSNA, shared her inspirational journey of overcoming immense challenges to earn a B.A. in Interdisciplinary Studies from Northeastern University in 2017. The keynote address was delivered by Dr. Susana Rivera-Mills, President of Aurora University and one of the few Latina university presidents in the country, who shared her migration story from El Salvador and the challenges and isolation she faced as a first-generation college student in a predominantly white institution. A transformative moment in her journey occurred when she attended a campus event featuring author Julia Alvarez, whose words resonated deeply with her. Rivera-Mills described this moment as the first time she could "see" herself in an author's words. Moved to tears, Rivera-Mills waited in line after the event to speak to Alvarez and express her deep appreciation for her words. Dr. Rivera-Mills' powerful keynote inspired the audience to lead with humility and authenticity, center relationships, and go where people are rather than expecting them to come to you. She concluded her address by reading the Hopi Elders' Prophecy: "We are the ones we have been waiting for."



Photo: Olivia Sánchez (ENLACE student), Gabriel Cortez (ENLACE Director/NEIU Faculty), President Susana Mills-Rivera (Aurora University), Isaura Pulido, Leticia Barrera (Palenque/LSNA), Araceli Muñoz Salazar (ENLACE student)



Join us on Tuesday, November 12, 2024  
6:00 – 8:30 pm

for the annual Jean Burke Carlson and Diane Berger Ehrlich Memorial Lectureship with Distinguished Guest Speaker: Dr. Mirelsie Velázquez

**"Our Stories Matter: Archiving Puerto Rican Community Histories for Radical Educational Practices."**

Mirelsie Velázquez, PhD, is an associate professor of Latina/o Studies at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Her keynote address will explore how community stories and archives allow Puerto Ricans and other ethnic communities to lead much needed conversations about our collective future. These artifacts at times serve as monuments that remind us about our reservoirs of strength and the experience of marginality and oppression. Drawing from Chicago's Puerto Rican community and the history of Northeastern Illinois University, the Speaker will advocate for community-based stories and archives as pedagogical tools for fostering justice-oriented education.

## DR. KENNETH N. ADDISON LECTURE

Stay tuned for the date for the **Dr. Kenneth N. Addison Lecture for Multicultural Education and Social Justice** - an annual event that celebrates, and grapples 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.

**We are also fundraising to support a scholarship in his name!**

Support this important initiative - and help us offer scholarships for fabulous students like YOU!

To DONATE: visit [donation site](#). Under Gift Preferences or Designation - name the Kenneth N. Addison Fund! Dr. Nicole Holland - who is our point person for this initiative! - is reachable at [N-Holland@neiu.edu](mailto:N-Holland@neiu.edu).

## COMING UP IN DECEMBER 2024

Celebrate the [#Giving Tuesday at Northeastern](#) on December 3, 2024.

Giving back is part of our calling at NEIU, so get ready to participate and support!

**This is also a good opportunity to support the scholarship in Dr. Addison's name.**

Be on the lookout for our MACTL fundraising emails reaching you from mid-November through Giving Tuesday.

This year donating will be even easier with a new Zelle option! If your bank is set up with Zelle, you can easily donate through your banking app and no fees will be charged.

**SEND US AN UPDATE!**

We want to know how you are doing  
and what you are up to!

**Email us at [mactl@neiu.edu](mailto:mactl@neiu.edu)!**

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