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## Summer at the School of Education

### FROM THE DEAN



As we begin the 2025–2026 academic year, I am reminded of the deep sense of responsibility that guides our work. At the School of Education, our mission calls us not only to prepare the next generation of educators and leaders, but to positively impact classrooms, clinics, schools and communities.

This summer, our faculty and students lived out that mission in powerful ways. Through innovative research and partnerships, we engaged over 1,000 K–12 students in high-caliber learning opportunities while providing our education students with clinically-rich teaching experiences. As we welcome new and returning members of our community, I am inspired by the energy and commitment that drive us forward.

— Dean Rob Knoeppel

## SUMMER HAPPENINGS



### Camp EAGER again breaks attendance records

This summer marked the fifth year of Camp EAGER and another step in expanding its impact.

Initially launched in 2021 with 40 students, Camp EAGER continues to grow significantly each year. Last year, it served approximately 500 participants, and this year the team welcomed 700 students ranging from rising third-graders to rising 10th-graders. In addition to serving K-12 students, the camp offers an immersive, field-based experience for student teachers-in-training with projects including coding, robotics, city planning and drone camp. A total of 16 master's-level preservice teachers from the School of Education gained hands-on classroom experience. **More .**



### The Optimist Project returns

**The Optimist Project (TOP)** returned to William & Mary for a second year this summer. TOP is a new initiative sponsored by the **Jack Kent Cooke Foundation** and developed and administered by the W&M School of Education's **Center for Gifted Education (CFGE)**.

The 2025 cohort of 53 rising ninth graders visited campus to study civic engagement, history and strength-based leadership. Students enjoyed enriching field trips, including visits to Colonial Williamsburg and Jamestown Settlement, as well as a multi-stop trip to Washington, D.C. There they visited the National Museum of the Marine Corps (NMMC), the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, the National Museum of African American History and Culture, the White House, the W&M Washington Center and more.



## Shelagh A. Gallagher appointed new Executive Director of the W&M Center for Gifted Education

Shelagh A. Gallagher, Ph.D., an internationally recognized scholar, advocate and leader in gifted education, has been appointed Executive Director of the William & Mary Center for Gifted Education (CFGE) and named the Jody and Layton Smith Professor of Gifted Education and Talent Development. Gallagher brings more than three decades of distinguished experience in research, curriculum innovation, policy development, advocacy and teacher preparation to her new role.

“Her extraordinary scholarship, her innovative approaches to curriculum and advocacy, and her deep commitment to equity in gifted education align perfectly with the Center’s mission to transform the lives of high-ability students,” said Dean Robert C. Knoepfel of William & Mary’s School of Education. **More.**



## 2025 Summer Showcase

The second annual Summer Showcase once again highlighted the innovative and inspiring programs led by the W&M School of Education. Hosted by Dean Knoepfel, the event brought together development board members, university supervisors, educators and other guests for a full day of visiting W&M students gaining hands-on classroom experience in settings that directly support the local community.

The day began with an overview of the **Orton-Gillingham Scholars Program** from Associate Director of T/TAC Elizabeth Auguste Ph.D. '18 and O.G. Scholar Audrey Dolak '25. The duo discussed the program and highlighted its specialized, multi-sensory reading method designed to support students struggling with reading or reading disabilities.

In a visit to Ella Fitzgerald Middle School in Newport News, guests engaged with Camp EAGER K-12 students and observed hands-on STEM learning facilitated by W&M teachers-in-training, Professor Meredith Kier and Associate Professor Lindy Johnson. Guests also spoke with W&M preservice teachers about their roles in the camp and their preparation for classroom teaching.

Returning to campus, the group toured the Flanagan Counselor Education Clinic (FCEC), guided by Clinic Director Erin Woods, and learned about the spaces designed specifically for clinical training in the Counseling programs. During lunch, guests heard from the W&M Literacy Lab, where Associate Professor Kristin Conradi Smith '99 showcased literacy development initiatives and instructional strategies supported by faculty and student researchers.



After a visit to Camp Launch at VIMS and W&M's Batten School for Coastal & Marine Sciences, the showcase concluded on the W&M campus, where guests visited a second Camp Launch site to observe middle school students diving into advanced STEM topics. Camp Launch is directed by Clinical Associate Professor Mihyeon Kim and guided by W&M students, who serve as mentors and instructional leaders throughout the program.

## NEWS & NOTES



### Pamela Eddy Honored for Pioneering Leadership

In the months leading up to her retirement on July 1, Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs and Development Pamela Eddy was honored with the 2025 Outstanding Leadership Award from the American Council on Education (ACE) Women's Network of Virginia. The award recognizes Eddy for decades of scholarship and her transformational impact on leadership development in higher education. It celebrates her contributions not only to William & Mary but also to leadership education across the nation.

"Pam has been an outstanding leader, mentor and friend to the W&M community," said Provost Peggy Agouris. "Her humility and wisdom are matched by a deep personal warmth and a genuine commitment to leading with integrity and building community. She set a powerful example of leadership that brings people together in pursuit of a shared academic mission. I feel privileged to have worked alongside her." **More.**



### Serving the community the William & Mary way

This year's winners of the President's Award for Service to the Community have both fully embraced the idea that education is not something that ends at the edge of William & Mary's campus.

Katherine Barko-Alva (right), associate professor in the School of Education, takes her approach to bilingual education directly to the area's K-12 schools, to community centers and to faith-based organizations.

Barko-Alva joined the faculty in 2016. She arrived for her first day in August at 7 a.m. and found herself locked out of the School of Education because her ID had not been activated. She tried every door until she spotted a delivery truck and, with her ID in hand, asked the driver if she could kindly let her into the building. "I called mamá to tell her about my ordeal, and she said, 'I am glad you got in through the service door. Always remember, it was the service door.'" **More.**



## Chandra Floyd on “With Good Reason”

Director of Curriculum at the Center for Gifted Education Chandra Floyd Ph.D. '20 was recently interviewed on “With Good Reason.” They discussed gifted education, special education and the education of children in the juvenile penal system. Click the link to listen to her episode, “Inequities in Gifted Education.” **Listen.**



## Kristin Conradi-Smith Podcast

Last month, Associate Professor of Education Kristin Conradi Smith '99 was the guest host of the popular Teaching Literacy podcast. She interviewed Utah State University Assistant Professor Jake Downs about the ‘secret soup’ of highly effective K-2 teacher teams. **More.**



## Free Research One-Pagers for Teachers

The TRIP Fellowship program focuses on building teachers’ knowledge of empirical research. **TRIP Fellows** translate cutting-edge scholarship into practical one-pagers for teachers, making a lasting impact on literacy education. Access them through the Literacy Lab’s library of free resources **available for download.**



## 27th Annual SURN Leadership Conference

Educational leaders from across Virginia came together at the School of Education on June 16-17 with a shared purpose: to sharpen their leadership and deepen their impact. Hosted by the **School-University Resource Network (SURN)**, the 27th Annual SURN Leadership Conference afforded participants an opportunity to explore the theme “*Learning Leaders DECIDE – What are you going to do?*” The conference was designed to inspire and equip educational leaders with the tools they need to thrive in their roles. This year’s event opened with a keynote from W&M economics professor Peter Atwater '83, a nationally recognized expert on the impact of confidence on decision-making and author of “The Confidence Map: Charting a Path from Chaos to Clarity.” **More.**

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Sept. 12-14: W&M Women's Weekend

Sept. 16: Difficult Conversations Book Club

Oct. 1- Apr. 29: Word Up! Unlocking Literacy with UDL and Assistive Technology

Oct. 8: EDventure Academy Teaching Reimagined Learning Reinvigorated

Oct. 16-19: Homecoming & Reunion Weekend

Oct. 17: Prospective Students Day

Nov. 6: The Science of Teaching Reading

Nov. 17-20: Education Week 2025

### SHARE A STORY

Let us know what you're up to!

### MAKE A GIFT

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