Research Assistantship
Department of Educational Policy, Research, and Administration

One 10 hour/week research assistantship is available for Spring 2013.

Responsibilities include: Coordinate activities of the Research and Consulting Services Center (RCSC) of the Psychometric Methods (PM) Doctoral Concentration. Activities include advertising services of the RCSC, meeting with faculty and graduate students in the School of Education to assist on their research projects, assigning PM faculty and students to clients of the RCSC, and serving as a liaison between the School and PM faculty on matters relating to the RCSC. Assistance provided will include interpreting output from statistical programs, providing tutoring on statistics and research design, assistance in running statistical software, and consultation on survey development.

Qualifications include: All applicants must have a background in psychometrics, statistics and mathematical modeling of educational assessment data. All candidates must also have knowledge of classical test theory, item response theory, multidimensional scaling, test construction, test validation research and experience working in educational assessment.

To apply, please contact Dr. Craig Wells at cswells@educ.umass.edu.

The Beacon Deadline is FRIDAY
- Please submit general news and announcements to: dms@educ.umass.edu by 5:00 P.M. on Friday for inclusion in the following issue. All assistantship notices will run in two issues.

- Please submit notices of examinations and formation of dissertation committees to Linda Guthrie. These types of announcements will run for one week.
Project Assistantship
Department of Teacher Education and Curriculum Studies
Mathematics, Science and Learning Technology (MSLT) concentration

One 10 hour/week project assistantship position is available for Spring 2013.

Responsibilities: Support the research and academic work of the MSLT faculty. Tasks may include, but are not limited to: data-entry, information gathering, document editing, helping with the creation of record-keeping systems, copying/scanning, website support, and other forms of support as assigned.

Qualifications: Ability to work independently, follow through on commitments, and meet deadlines; highly organized, punctual, and detail-oriented; excellent writing and editing skills; ability to use library and online database research tools; knowledge and familiarity in using various software programs, e.g., Word, Excel, Power Point; and ability to manage multiple projects simultaneously. Preferred qualifications include familiarity and experience with the university’s various offices, procedures, and personnel.

To apply: Submit a cover letter of interest, resume, and names and contact information for two references to Dr. Martina Nieswandt (mnieswan@educ.umass.edu).

Graduate Assistantship
Department of Educational Policy, Research, and Administration

One 10 hour/week graduate assistantship is available for Spring 2013.

Responsibilities: This student will work with the Higher Education concentration, as well as the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education in the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences, on issues of undergraduate student success. The student will review empirical and theoretical literature on student success, research existing Centers and Institutes of Student Success, collect data concerning student success programming, assist with planning of the New England Conference for Student Success, and contribute to the conceptual development and planning of a possible future Center for Student Success.

Qualifications: The ideal candidate will have strong writing, organizational, and time management skills. The ability to work in collaboration as well as independently is required for this position. Good interpersonal skills, research skills, and knowledge of higher education, student affairs, and student success programs are also needed.

To apply, please send a brief cover letter and CV to Sheila Seuffert at seuffert@educ.umass.edu.

Statement of the Problem: Concerns over fairness permeates every aspect of the testing enterprise, and one characterization of fairness in testing defined by the Standard (AERA, APA, & NCME, 1999) is a fairness as lack of bias. One important way to study bias in the context of college admission concerns the degree to which validity coefficients and prediction equations are equivalent for different groups. To the extent that the AP variables are used together with admission test scores and previous academic records to predict future academic achievement, “it is important to know if members of one group are systematically predicted to obtain lower or higher grades than they actually achieve on the average” (Linn, 1990, p. 309). By examining the differential predictive ability of AP variables and controlling for predictor unreliability, we can better understand the extent to which these predictors are biased against particular groups. With this understanding, test users can be informed of the extent to which the inferences drawn from these variables are supported by strong validity evidence regarding fairness in admission.

Chairperson: Dr. Jennifer Randall.


Statement of the Problem: One weakness of modern standards setting methods is the lack of cross-discipline research in the area. Standard setting is primarily a psychological judgmental process (Jaeger, 1990), but psychological theory has never been utilized in a major standard setting method. Kane (2001) pointed out that cut scores are relatively arbitrary, depending on the method used, the quality of rater training, and several other reasons. He is not the only psychometrician to criticize standard setting methods (see Black, 1978; Camilli, Cizek, & Lugg, 202; Hambleton, 1978; Linn, 1978).

Chairperson: Dr. Craig Wells.

AMANDA SOTO Proposed Dissertation Title: “Measuring Teacher Effectiveness in an Era of Consortium-Based Assessment.”

Statement of the Problem: Different models for teacher effectiveness may perform quite differently at the inter-state level (as opposed to the intrastate comparisons already being made). By comparing teachers to a broader student norm group, expectations for what characterize “effective” teaching may shift. Theoretically teachers should appear to be just as effective (or ineffective) when they are compared to the larger group of students. This paper explores the impact of consortium-based assessment results on teacher effectiveness measures computed using a covariate-adjusted value-added model and the student growth percentile method.

Chairperson: Dr. Lisa Keller.

KATE WAY Proposed Dissertation Title: “Speaking Back to Structure: Critical Multimodal Literacy and the Politics of School Reform.”

Statement of the Problem: How can multimodal literacy be developed within/ despite the current literacy mandates of education reform?

Chairperson: Dr. K.C. Nat Turner.
Teaching Assistantship
Department of Teacher Education and Curriculum Studies

10 hours/week teaching assistantship is available for Spring 2013 to support EDUC 698LB. This course is offered through the ACCELA Alliance, a school-university professional development partnership. It is taught off campus at Dean Technical High School in Holyoke, MA.

**Duties:** Support ACCELA teachers in: collecting data related to ESL students’ academic language and literacy assessments (e.g., samples of student writing, portfolio assessments, videotaped performance assessments, formal assessments & test data, informal assessments, etc.); Archiving data systematically and run data reports; Attending a weekly seminar on Thursdays from 4-7pm in Holyoke and a planning meeting on Wednesdays from 1:30-2:30pm.

**Qualifications:** Qualitative research experience; Advanced knowledge of testing, assessment and evaluation to use database management tools for scores, results, & reports; Ability to analyze multimodal discourse (e.g.: visual, oral, and written) or willingness to learn; Knowledge of second language learning and multicultural education research; Proficiency in a language other than English, in particular languages widely used by the school populations in Holyoke & Springfield, etc. Spanish is desired. Demonstrable excellence in academic reading, writing, and oral communication abilities. Demonstrable skill in managing multimedia data (e.g., video, audio, scanned documents). Demonstrable ability to contribute to teacher teams in a collaborative and professional manner. Demonstrable ability in creatively co-designing organizational systems and meeting deadlines.

Applicants should submit letters of interest, resume, and telephone contact for two references to Theresa Austin at taustin@educ.umass.edu. Application deadline: January 11, 2013. Applications will be reviewed until the position is filled. All hires are contingent upon funding.

FORMATION OF DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

PING GENG
Proposed Dissertation Title: “Identity and Investment in a Chinese Language Classroom.” **Statement of the Problem:** Learning Chinese language in K-12 schools is a relatively new phenomenon. The research in this area is very limited, which is especially true in the sociocultural spectrum. In order to bridge the gap, I will conduct an ethnographic study in an urban high school to see the identity and investment in the learning of Chinese language.”

Chairperson: Dr. Theresa Austin.

JOSHUA SCHULZE
Proposed Dissertation Title: “Supporting English Language Learners in Writing Persuasive Texts through Systemic Functional Pedagogy: A Case Study of Middle School Writers.”

**Statement of the Problem:** Common Core State Standards require all students, including English language learners, to use academic language to compose a variety of genres in school contexts. Current dominant perspectives influencing writing instruction emphasize the cognitive skills and creative expression without bringing significant attention to the ways writers develop control of linguistic resources to support their meaningful participation in socially and culturally valued ways of writing. System Functional linguistic Pedagogy seeks to support ELLs academic writing development by making visible the linguistic resources writers employ when participating in these culturally valued ways of writing.

Chairperson: Dr. Margaret Gebhard.