The School of Education (SOE) has had an outstanding year. We hired two highly qualified faculty members who represent an exciting future for our students, as well as filled two new staff positions through our grants office, and collectively our team had some remarkable accomplishments. Our faculty reached new heights in securing external funding in recognition of their scholarship. Among all principle investigators and co-principal investigators in SOE, we exceeded $10 million in grant funding this year. Faculty scholarship involved collaboration across multiple departments and colleges on campus, a variety of community organizations and several California State University (CSU) campuses. This year’s level of productivity collectively achieved by SOE faculty was nothing short of outstanding.

Our accreditation efforts required the submission of two large reports that provided evidence on each individual program, as well as our collective impact. Both of these reports were well received, with one being used as a model by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) for other institutions to follow. We will have a site visit in March of 2020, which is the culmination of a seven-year accreditation cycle. We are in great shape because of the remarkable team effort over the past six years. We anticipate being granted continuing accreditation next year because of how our exemplary faculty and staff go about their work — day-in and day-out. We have an outstanding level of teamwork and dedication to the process of continuous improvement.

I’m in awe of how much the School of Education accomplished in 2019, and I’m very excited for the potential to build on those accomplishments as we move into the new year. As one of our stakeholders, please accept our sincere thanks for your contributions to our collective success.

— J. Kevin Taylor, Director
From EmpowerED to EngagED

Each year SOE identifies a shared learning theme to anchor our continuous improvement, assessment and community of practice efforts. Our 2018-19 theme, **EmpowerED: Responding to Diverse Learning Needs**, was a timely opportunity to assess and deepen our practices to serve students who receive special education services, those who are emergent bilinguals, students with social-emotional learning needs and others with a diverse range of learning challenges and opportunities.

As part of our 2018-19 theme and community of practice, SOE hosted a quarterly scholar talk from a faculty member. Professors Andrew Byrne, Tanya Flushman, Jessica Jensen and Briana Ronan, along with Multiple Subject Program Coordinator Julee Bauer, shared their research and learning with the SOE community last year. These talks were a great success as we enjoyed learning about new research in gamification, leadership development and high-leverage teaching practices, while also celebrating our faculty’s scholarly expertise.

For 2019-20, SOE has selected **EngagED: Building Cultural Responsiveness** as our community of practice theme. During our fall retreat, we reflected on our existing successes and the work that has been done, while also committing ourselves to ambitious next steps and critical conversations for the year ahead. One of our top priorities is to refine our shared knowledge and codify our shared language for how we understand and frame cultural responsiveness as education professionals (check out our feature What We’re Reading to see some of the books that we’re using to anchor our learning and dialogue). We are also committing to engage in the critical work of building trust, honesty, belonging and psychological safety to lay the groundwork for more open and responsive dialogue around issues of diversity, equity and inclusion.

We are fortunate that our SOE Committee on Equity and Inclusion is providing visionary leadership and expertise as we embark on this journey, and we are equally fortunate to be part of a community of practice where all members are passionate about building our capacity for equity and social justice. Although we have chosen Building Cultural Responsiveness as a dedicated theme for the year ahead, we recognize this as essential and enduring work for us and for all education professionals.

New Grants Support New Opportunities for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

During the 2018-19 academic year, The School of Education received exciting news of two new grant awards totaling over $6.8 million to support SOE initiatives and reform efforts.

The U.S. Department of Education’s Teacher Quality Partnership (TQP) awarded a $4.1 million proposal, Pathways and Partnerships, to Principal Investigator Megan Guise, Co-Principal Investigators Tanya Flushman and Briana Ronan and grant manager Sarah Hegg. The grant supports SOE’s practices around community-based teacher preparation and reform efforts for equity and inclusivity including: recruiting teachers from underrepresented populations and teacher shortage areas; implementing a two-year, formalized induction program to support and retain new teachers; developing teacher learning around disciplinary literacy; and continuing reforms to courses and fieldwork that better prepare teacher candidates to serve diverse California learners.

The project addresses teacher preparation reform through partnerships achieved by bringing together four colleges, Cal Poly’s Office of University Diversity and Inclusion, SOE’s Center for Engineering, Science and Mathematics Education and four high-need K-12 districts.

Also awarded in 2018-19, Cal Poly and SOE will serve as the lead campus on a $2.7 million National Science Foundation (NSF) grant to fund research and reforms to increase the retention of faculty of color across the California State University (CSU) system. Nearly a third of the tenure-track assistant professors of color hired in the CSU system between 2000 and 2012 left their universities, yet, according to multiple studies, a more diverse faculty improves the education of all students. Students of color benefit from role models they identify with, and students of all backgrounds benefit from a greater diversity of course content and teaching methods.

A group of colleagues across four CSU campuses designed a state-wide program to increase retention. The Cal Poly research team is being led by Principal Investigator Daniel Almeida, a professor and coordinator for the SOE’s master’s degree program in Higher Educa-
Upcoming Visits for Accreditation and Program Review

In March 2020, SOE will welcome a team from the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) to culminate our seven-year accreditation cycle and, we optimistically anticipate, recommend renewed accreditation for another seven years. As part of the accreditation process, we have already prepared and submitted evidence of our compliance with preconditions for program operations, documentation of our efforts related to five unitwide common standards, evidence of curriculum and quality educator preparation for each of our six CTC accredited programs, and annual data reports of our enrollment and timely candidate completion.

The School of Education has a collective commitment to quality in our work and to continuous improvement. It is this fierce commitment to quality that has made an impact on the educators we prepare and the community that we serve that ultimately makes us worthy of further accreditation. To this end, we are encouraged by the support and affirmation from CTC in our preparations for this site visit, and we are equally glad to receive their constructive feedback and ideas for improvement.

Following the CTC visit, we will also engage in the first graduate program review for our stand-alone master’s degrees in special education and in leadership and administration. Education scholars selected by the Provost’s Office will conduct the review to provide our faculty with feedback about academic rigor and graduate education. Our two other master’s degrees — in curriculum and instruction and higher education counseling/student affairs — will undergo graduate program review in the spring of 2020.

Next year, we look forward to reflecting and incorporating all the feedback we receive from our education colleagues as we endeavor to craft a new strategic plan for the unit.
Honors and Achievements

Professor Tanya Flushman was appointed as the co-director of the CSU Center for the Advancement of Reading and Writing. The center is dedicated to strengthening literacy education in California through developing high school and middle school curriculum, producing resources for faculty, addressing issues in teacher preparation and supporting statewide efforts related to literacy. Flushman’s recent research and scholarship emphasize disciplinary literacy learning, particularly in the field of science. While serving as co-director, Flushman will remain a member of the leadership team for the Teacher Quality Partnership grants and as coordinator for the master’s degree in curriculum and instruction.

Professor Andrea Somoza-Norton received the 2019 Professor of the Year Award by the Association of California School Administrators – Region XIII, for her excellence in teaching and research in Educational Leadership and Administration. Somoza-Norton’s work on biomimetic leadership, the practice of applying principles from nature and ecology to organizations and management, was featured during a two-day Nature-Centric Leadership Workshop for master’s students at the Portuguese Institute of Administration and Marketing in Porto, Portugal. Her most recent article, “Biomimetic Leadership: From Theory to Practice,” co-authored with alumna Shawna Whitfield, was published in October by the California Association of Professors of Education Administration (CAPEA) The Journal of Educational Leadership and Administration: Teaching and Program Development.

Professors Oscar Navarro and Briana Ronan, together with campus and community partners, organized and implemented the second annual Social Justice Education Conference at Santa Maria High School in May 2019. The event attracted 150 attendees who enjoyed presentations, workshops and a curriculum and resource fair to advance social justice in PreK-12 schools. Keynote speakers included Allyson Tintiangco-Cubales, a renowned ethnic studies scholar and activist from San Francisco State University, and Ricardo Valencia, an educator and community activist working at Santa Maria High School. The conference also featured presentations by Cal Poly’s education candidates from the Multiple Subject, Single Subject and Spanish Authorization programs.

Erin Gorter, SOE partner in Agriculture Education, was named a Teacher of Excellence by the California Agricultural Teachers’ Association (CATA) for developing highly effective instructional programs, her service and engagement with community and farm organizations, and her meaningful impact on the agriculture education profession. Gorter was also named a fellow in Class 50 of the California Agricultural Leadership Foundation. She will participate in a 17-month program to develop leadership theory, change management and other skills to contribute to the long-term success of the agricultural profession in the Golden State.

Professor Leah Wood published a single-case design research study in the Journal of Special Education Technology that examined the effects of technology and systematic instruction on comprehension of science e-texts for students with intellectual disability. This work provides additional empirical support for the Cotchett-funded science literacy curriculum Wood and Professor Stephen Crutchfield have developed with students from their program.

Virginia McMunn, SOE’s assessment and accreditation analyst, was selected as a fellow for the Educator Quality (EdQ) Center’s Data and Improvement Fellowship. As part of the year-long fellowship, McMunn will connect with 10 other assessment and data professionals at schools and colleges of education across the 23-campus CSU system. Together, the fellows will build capacity for continuous improvement and will work to enhance knowledge and skills for data collection and assessment of educator quality. McMunn’s selection as a fellow recognizes her efforts in developing our Comprehensive Assessment Plan, facilitating data-driven protocols and continuous improvement across our programs and leading our efforts to secure renewed CTC Accreditation in 2020.

Professor Oscar Navarro has been awarded the 2020 Faculty Fellowship by the American Association of Hispanics in Higher Education. This fellowship recognizes junior faculty members that show promise in scholarship and contribution to the enhancement of Latinas/os in Higher Education.
2018–19 BY THE NUMBERS

162 NEW STUDENTS ENROLLED IN SOE PROGRAMS

LESS THAN 80 DAYS until our California Commission on Teacher Credentialing accreditation site visit (March 1–4, 2020)

Clinical practice placements for 133 candidates in 11 partner districts

38 advanced credentials and master’s degrees completed

More than $300,000 in new scholarships awarded to candidates through the CSU Residency Scholarship

132 teaching credentials and bilingual authorizations completed
**GROWING OUR TEAM**

**TINA CHEUK** joined the Multiple Subject Teacher Preparation faculty in fall 2019 as part of Cal Poly’s diversity cluster hire. Cheuk’s research interests include language and literacy development in science learning contexts. She holds a bachelor’s in chemistry and biochemistry from the University of Chicago, a master’s in education policy and a doctorate in science education from Stanford University. She is a member of the Returned Peace Corps Volunteers.

**NATASHA NEUMANN** joined the Educational Leadership and Administration Program faculty in the fall of 2019 after more than 20 years serving in K-12 education as a bilingual teacher, middle school Spanish teacher, district-level curriculum coordinator and elementary school principal. She earned her bachelor’s degree in political science from UC San Diego and her master’s in educational leadership along with her administrative credential and single-subject Spanish credential from Azusa Pacific University. Neumann earned her Ed.D. in urban educational leadership from the University of Southern California. Her research addresses the continued need for equity, specifically for emerging bilinguals in K-12 education, the development of dual-language immersion programs and leaders in school districts, and the preparation of bilingual teachers to support multilingual programs.

**BENJAMIN GUISE** joined the team as recruitment coordinator for SOE and for the Center for Excellence in Science and Math Education (CESAME) in spring 2019. He spent six years teaching high school English in Pennsylvania before relocating to San Luis Obispo, where he taught first through eighth grade technology courses. His creative flair and eye for design has led to his involvement in an alternate reality gaming campaign, social media management and other creative endeavors. He graduated from Millersville University in Pennsylvania with a bachelor’s degree in English education.

**COURTNEY MOORE** joined SOE as the grant program assistant in May of 2019. Moore is in the Higher Education Counseling and Student Affairs master’s program and is participating in internships with Cal Poly Career Services and the Mustang Success Center. Prior to Cal Poly, she worked at Atlas Preparatory School as a summer fellow in admissions, assisting in enrollment and student support. Moore earned her bachelor’s degree in communication and studio art from Fresno Pacific University.