

Faculty Profile: Dean Hank Nicols

Dean of Bridges Graduate School
Hank Nicols has had a circuitous journey to BGS. After college, Hank became a high school teacher and later served in the Army as a military police investigator. After receiving his DD 214, he served as a police officer in several departments and retired as police chief in Cooperstown, New York, where he still lives with his wife. His adult children and their families live nearby. Hank was later recruited to teach for Buffalo State SUNY in their international graduate program, where he taught for nearly 20 years, traveling to more than 120 countries.



Although Hank earned his bachelor's and master's degrees from SUNY Colleges in Oneonta, Binghamton, and Buffalo, New York, he says that his real education began when he met BGS Provost Dr. Susan Baum on a teaching assignment in Budapest, Hungary. Hank and Susan traveled frequently together through Europe, Asia, Southeast Asia, Africa, Central and South America, and the Middle East, and they received two Department of State Overseas Grants to study students in international schools.

During travels with Dr. Baum, Hank was exposed to and learned to value the power of talent-focused, strength-based education. Most of his courses were about conflict and leadership. Hank saw the transformative power of focusing on gifts and talents. It changed him, his teaching, and his life experience. He claims that his experience with 2e is by experience and osmosis.

When BGS began as a concept, Hank was chosen to help prepare the program, working on the application and licensing for BGS to become the school we are growing into every day. Hank says that he is so proud of how far we have come and how well prepared and poised we are for the future. BGS is already a world-class advocate as well as a respected educational institution, and we have just begun! The best is yet to be.

We will be conducting a virtual open house on Wednesday, December 1, at 5 p.m. PT, for anyone interested in learning more about the programs at Bridges Graduate School of Cognitive Diversity in Education.

Whether you are considering a certificate in 2e, a master's in education, or a doctorate in education, an open house is a great way to meet our faculty, learn about our programs, and ask questions.

Make sure to spread the news — [and the link](#) — about our upcoming open houses!

[Click Here for Registration Link](#)

Doctoral Candidates' Internships

Marcy Dann, M.A.

Marcy Dann, M.A. is a board-certified educational therapist who has been in clinical practice for over 35 years. She also provides consultation at Bridges Academy (2004 - present).

Dann was the coordinator and adjunct faculty member of the master's and post-master's Certificate Programs in Educational Therapy at CSUN (2004 - 2021). She was president of the Association of Educational Therapists (2010 - 2012) and was honored by AET as a Fellow for her exceptional work performed on behalf of the profession of educational therapy. She is a contributing writer and workshop presenter.



[Click here for Marcy's website.](#)

Marcy's Internship with the Belin-Blank Center

As a graduate student in Bridges Graduate School, I was interested in establishing an internship with the Belin-Blank Center at the University of Iowa, which is known for empowering and serving the international gifted community through exemplary leadership in programs, research, and advocacy. Under the supervision of Dr. Alissa Doobay, supervisor of psychological services, I had a wonderful opportunity to advance my professional knowledge, skills, and leadership capacities as I learned about psychological assessment, counseling, and consultation services for the gifted and 2e population of students.

During the internship, I provided the Suite of Tools™ Strength-Based Assessment (SOT) and discussed the results with parents who signed up. We also talked about the results and recommendations from their child's recent

Belin-Blank Center psychoeducational assessment and brainstormed additional talent-development opportunities that aligned with each family's resources and interests. It was an empowering experience for the parents to meet leisurely and consider ways to support their 2e child using a positive psychology approach. The parents were guided to accentuate their 2e child's gifts, talents, and interests, and each were provided with an individualized written summary report to share with their child's school.

Following the meeting, each family was asked to complete a survey rating the effectiveness of this strength-based, talent-focused assessment process. Among the responses, parents indicated that they strongly agreed that a supportive setting in which to talk, share, and learn about their child had been created. The parents who participated had a powerful combination of tools as they had both their child's Belin-Blank psychoeducational assessment summary report and the SOT summary report to guide their 2e child at school, outside of school, and at home. With my educational therapy background, the content learned in our foundational courses in our BGS program, and this dynamic internship experience at the Belin-Blank Center, my theoretical knowledge of 2e was applied in a real-life, impactful way with families of 2e children across the country. It would be wonderful to expand this internship experience at additional clinics and centers in order to provide much needed and welcomed support for parents who are raising their 2e children as they develop into actualized adults.

Kim Vargas, M.S.

Kim Vargas, M.S., taught in the public school system for 26 years before coming to Bridges. She received her bachelor's degree from USC Rossier School of Education and studied under Dr. Barbara Clark to earn her master's degree in special education for the gifted and talented. Kim holds a post-graduate teaching credential in mild/moderate learning disabilities.

In addition to overseeing admissions for the Bridges Graduate School and the new online high school, Kim is the site administrator for the 2e Center.



Kim's Internship

My interest lies in identifying specific challenges that twice-exceptional students encounter during their transition from high school to college and into adult, independent living. In pinpointing these challenges, my motive is to find ways to help teachers and parents best support our 2e students throughout these transitions. My internship experience has been three pronged and has provided valuable training that will benefit the parent community at Bridges Academy. It has also given me the opportunity to learn the best research practice protocols from renowned researchers in my topic area.

To further my expertise in parental support, I completed the facilitator certification training program from the SENG organization (Supporting the Emotional Needs of the Gifted) with one of my doctoral cohort classmates. Once we completed the training, we partnered to co-facilitate a parent support group, modified the topics, and found resource materials to meet the needs of parents raising 2e children. In the years ahead, it is my intention to continue facilitating these parent groups, building valuable resources and helping our parent community.

Additionally, my internship has afforded me the privilege of observing the entire research process from theory to practice and review by attending regular meetings of a Javits grant research committee as they develop and execute a two-year project. The grant affords a free summer program for high school students who are specifically 2e with autism spectrum disorder. The goal is to support high school students as they begin to transition into post-high school years and prepare for college. By providing opportunities for 2e high school students to try a rigorous and rewarding educational experience, explore their interests and talents, and learn more about themselves through the specialized workshops created for them, the surveys and feedback from this first summer reveal insight into how parents, teachers, and educational support professionals can support these students to be successful in their transitions into adulthood.

National Association for Gifted Children Conference

BGS was well represented at the National Association for Gifted Children's (NAGC) 68th Annual Convention last week in Denver.

BGS Provost of Academics Dr. Susan Baum stressed the importance of including talent development opportunities in the IEP process in her presentation, *When the IEP is not enough: Advocating for Strengths*.



BGS faculty member Joy Lawson-Davis participated in the *Culturally Responsive Practice* session, and presented *What Causes Disproportionality in Gifted Education and How Do We Address It?* and *Eliminating Gifted Programs Increases Inequity*. Joy was also recognized as one of four Dr. Martin D. Jenkins Scholars.

Doctoral student Holly Kincaid presented *Help! I am a Gifted Coordinator, and I still Don't Have All the Answers*. Along with her presentation, Holly staffed the Bridges Education Group exhibitor booth, at which she shared insights about 2e and information about Bridges' various offerings with convention attendees — many of whom showed great interest in learning more about the graduate program. Graduate student Barry Gelston also attended the conference and wrote about his experience in a piece for 2eNews.com

Gifted Education: The Best and Worst of Times

The 2021 National Association for Gifted Children convention's closing session posed the following question to a group of panelists: "During this time of unprecedented change, what words of insight and inspiration do you have for gifted educators and advocates as they leave our convention and return to districts and schools?"



[Click here to read the response given by Dr. Richard Olenchak of Purdue University.](#) Dr.

Olenchak currently serves as professor of educational psychology and research methodology, professor of gifted/creative/talented studies, and professor of higher education at Purdue University. He also is a member of the Bridges Graduate School faculty.

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A lot of exciting work is taking place every day. Make sure to follow us on social media so you can stay up to date and connect with some of the most innovative and dedicated students and professionals in the world!

Career Opportunities

The Bridges Education Group (BEeG), comprised of Bridges Academy Los Angeles, The Graduate School of Cognitive Diversity in Education, Bridges 2e Media (2enews.com), and the 2e Center for Research and Professional Development, is in the stages of opening a new school in Seattle, Washington. By design, Bridges Seattle will be a small, independent school specializing in twice-exceptional students in Grades 4-12. Current plans call for opening in September 2022. We invite to you to consider Bridges Academy Seattle in your career plans.

Assistant Head/Founding Director

The search for the Assistant Head/Director of Bridges Seattle School is still open. This is a great opportunity to take the 2e movement forward and for a meaningful career. We are working with consultant Joan Beauregard from Educators Collaborative to find the perfect candidate. If you are interested in applying, please contact Joan. If you have a colleague who might be interested in this position, please forward this information.

Teaching Assignments

Our search for the Bridges Seattle inaugural faculty is now under way. We are looking to fill positions in our elementary school (4-6), middle school (7-8), and high school (9-12) programs. Teachers for all academic disciplines and enrichment programming are encouraged to apply.

We are working with CalWest Educators Placement to find this amazing faculty team. Matt Carroll, the Bridges Seattle administrative assistant, is organizing and supporting all internal matters related to the search. If you have a colleague who might be interested in this position, please forward this information.

For more information or to apply, please contact:

Maria Anderson at MAnderson@calwesteducators.com

Matt Carroll at matt.carroll@bridges.edu

General Information: <https://calwesteducators.com/current-openings/>

Counselors

Our search for the Bridges Seattle inaugural counseling team has also begun. We are looking to fill one position in each of the following divisions: elementary (4-6), middle school (7-8), and high school (9-12). Bridges Seattle administrative assistant Matt Carrol is supporting the counselor search.

Email Matt for the basic job description. To apply, send Matt your cover letter, resume, and references. If you have a colleague who might be interested in this position, please forward this information.

Matt Carroll at matt.carroll@bridges.edu

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