

*Lorita Rowlett, M.Ed., and Peter Azmani M.Ed., both doctoral students in the department of Special Education, Early Childhood, and Prevention Science, have been selected as 2021 Holmes Scholars. Read on for how Lorita and Peter plan to utilize the supports offered through the program.*

The University of Louisville College of Education and Human Development is pleased to recognize two students as 2021 Holmes Scholars. Lorita Rowlett, M.Ed., and Peter Azmani, M.Ed., are the recipients of the Holmes Scholar Award. Housed within the Nystrand Center and led by Dr. Geneva Stark, the Holmes Scholar Award is presented to students from historically underrepresented communities enrolled in doctoral programs in education. The award provides recipients with support through the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE), including mentorship, peer supports, and professional development opportunities.

“I was encouraged to apply for the Holmes Scholar Program by Dr. Geneva Stark and Dr. Ginevra Courtade,” said Lorita Rowlett. “They saw something in me that they believed would be a great fit for the Holmes Scholar program. I am looking forward to networking with and learning from fellow PhD students of color. I am also

looking forward to supporting and being supported by individuals that look like me. I believe the Holmes Scholar program will afford me these opportunities.”



Peter Azmani echoes these sentiments. “When presented with the opportunity to be a part of the Holmes Scholar Program, I saw it as an opportunity to access a network of other Ph.D. students from around the country,” he said. “As networking has never been my strong suit, I determined I would benefit greatly from the program. I was also intrigued by the opportunity to attend and present at the annual AACTE conference. This will provide me with invaluable experiences in presenting and communicating my ideas.”



Dr. Geneva Stark, Director of the Nystrand Center for Excellence in Education and professor in the department of educational leadership, evaluation, and organizational development shared her excitement and vision for the program.

“Since 1991, the AACTE Holmes Scholars Program has supported graduate students from historically underrepresented backgrounds pursuing careers in education at AACTE member institutions. As a member institution, the University of Louisville is committed to supporting two Holmes Scholars during their studies in the College of Education and Human Development,” Dr. Stark said. “This program benefits the university in being a part of a national network to increase

the number of students of color in higher education. It also aligns with the University of Louisville's strategic plan regarding diversity and inclusion, and provides the CEHD an opportunity to recruit, hire and retain individuals of color."

Ms. Rowlett believes the program will be an asset to her future career aspirations. "My long-term career goals are to research and implement effective practices surround transitioning to adulthood for individuals with complex needs. As someone who has sat on both sides of the table, as a parent and a special educator, I am aware of the challenges surrounding transition services and practices for individuals with complex needs. I would also like to research self-advocacy and self-determination for individuals with complex needs."

Mr. Azmani is looking toward the future as well. "My long-term career aspirations are to become a faculty member at a major university, research pedagogy found in urban education, and consult school districts who wish to better students' educational experiences."

The College of Education and Human Development is proud to support our 2021 Holmes Scholars, and looks forward to all they will accomplish, in our college and beyond.

