Bucknell University has reached a monumental year: 2016 brings a celebration of 100 years of the Department of Education. Since its founding, the department has enhanced educational practices, influenced pedagogy and educated generations of students who would go on to become teachers, administrators, scholars, policy makers and other professionals inside and outside of fields of education. Throughout the century, the department has responded to significant changes in regulation and world events by shaping its programs to consistently offer relevant learning experiences that prepare students for professional and personal success.

Beginnings
Thirty years before the official designation of the Department of Education, Bucknell was already preparing a new wave of educators. Students with a desire to teach participated in lectures and courses on the theory, history and philosophy of education. At the start of the 20th century, the Department of Philosophy was created, housing a modest education sub-division.

Courses available in 1915:
- History of Education (ancient and medieval)
- History of Education (modern)
- Principles of Education
- Educational Theories
- Psychology of Education
- Comparative Psychology
- Child Psychology
- Secondary Education
- Religious Education
- Latin (for teachers)
- English (for teachers)
- Mathematics (for teachers)

At the time, the University was successfully teaching the keystones of pedagogy but was not yet providing the technical training that young professionals needed to prepare for the classroom. As the state of Pennsylvania began requesting certification with increasingly stringent requirements, Bucknell launched forward its efforts to prepare teachers. Mildred L. Fox, Class of 1927, who worked as a teacher briefly before she married, reflected on this stage of growth in “The Evolution of Education at Bucknell,” an article published in the Bucknell Journal of Education in 1926. Fox wrote:

At first, of course, this training was of the most simple sort. In fact, it absolutely did not exist. In those days, a teacher was a teacher born, a teacher by divine right, a teacher by instinct, a person who imbibed and absorbed knowledge, and by a sort of intellectual photosynthesis transformed it into usable material which he transmitted to his pupils by any means or method he happened to choose.

Training for teaching was eventually secured due to the accomplishments of a few key leaders.
In 1916, Professor Llewellyn Phillips, Class of 1892, led the establishment of the Department of Education. Courses previously offered by the Department of Philosophy found their rightful home within the new department. As head of the department, Prof. Phillips worked tirelessly to build and maintain the new academic unit while continuing to invest time in the students. After Prof. Phillips's death in 1923, Professor George B. Lawson became the new head of the department, overseeing major changes in the curriculum. He initiated a program for students to observe and teach in classrooms outside of the University. This vital change allowed Bucknell to maintain an output of well-prepared teachers and keep pace with increasing Pennsylvania standards.

**Educational Alchemy**

Teacher education progressed rapidly through Professor F.G. Davis's direction as the successor to Prof. Lawson. Davis aimed to form a professionally oriented curriculum that would be refreshed with each new year. Due to the incredible success from nearly every program initiated, Davis and his colleagues were referred to as "educational alchemists" in the 1990s book entitled *Places Where Teachers Are Taught* by John Goodlad, Roger Soder and Kenneth A Sirotnik.

Prof. Davis’s major changes to the department included:
- New courses specifically tailored to teaching
- A Bachelor of Science in Education degree
- A Teacher Placement Bureau that helped Bucknell graduates secure employment
- A Demonstration School allowing classroom observation and teaching in local schools
- An Education Club
- Annual Education Conferences
- Bucknell Junior College (now Wilkes University)
- Guidance Workshops and corresponding Workshop Weekly newsletters

In addition to making these enhancements, Prof. Davis published multiple articles on pedagogical topics including supervised teaching, youth guidance and secondary school activities.

Developments including the Bucknell Education Club, *Bucknell Journal of Education*, Guidance Workshops and Education Conferences were some of the first examples of the kinds of research, networking and professional learning and community outreach efforts the department continues to support today. The yearly Education Conferences were platforms for hundreds of mentors and mentees from various high schools and universities to exchange problems and solutions. Professors from other prominent universities shared their knowledge and experience with the younger generation of eager students as well.

**The Tumultuous ’30s and ’40s**

Bucknell was not impervious to the world’s events of the 1930s and 1940s. Conference themes, such as “Education & the National Emergency” and “Education & the War Emergency” were aptly assigned as a reflection of the challenges facing the nation. Significant fluctuations in enrollment were experienced with floods of students abandoning college, resulting in a loss of about one third of Bucknell’s total enrollment. As the economy recovered, enrollment grew once again and students began to seek programs offering professional training. Alongside sciences, mathematics and languages, education became a prominent field of study, specifically as a consequence of the post WWII teacher shortage.
During these decades, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania mandated more rigid regulations. Elementary teachers were now required to have a bachelor’s degree while superintendents and principals had to pursue a rigid certification process not mandatory prior to 1931. In response, Bucknell created a degree program for elementary education. The Pennsylvania State Council of Education approved only five institutions to train these professionals. Bucknell was selected for this exclusive group. As a result, its reputation as an institution for highly trained educators was greatly elevated.

In the summer of 1946, the Bucknell Guidance Workshop was initiated to further assist students while simultaneously building relations with local schools. The program consisted of 48 education professionals including teachers, principals, administrators and guidance counselors. With frequent guest lecturers and consultants in attendance, the workshop continued offering multiple weeks of training sessions for over a decade. The proceedings of the workshops were documented in the Workshop Weekly, a student organized publication.

Modern Progress
The University’s education department continued to partner with other school districts in the 1960s when it received a grant of $105,000 from the Fund for the Advancement of Education of the Ford Foundation. The funding was used to create The Upper Susquehanna Valley Program of Cooperative Research consisting of 21 different projects. Bucknell partnered with 10 surrounding school districts to conduct research on ways to improve teaching instruction and curricula. This allowed students and local school staff to have a mutually beneficial classroom experience.

From this project stemmed Project SESAME, named with an acronym for Susquehanna ESEA Synergetic Activities & Multi-Innovative Experiences. ESEA represents the Elementary & Secondary Education Act, federal
legislation that frames some school policy and funding now known as ESSA (Every Student Succeeds Act). Bucknell graduate and undergraduate students had opportunities to work directly with students using experimental instruction techniques and materials while professors used the experience to gain knowledge of these new methods. Two complementary components, SESAME A and SESAME G, focused on art and games, respectively, to enhance students’ learning experiences. Project SESAME was phased out in the summer of 1971 after five years, and the Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit (CSIU) took over its coordination. CSIU serves five counties in central Pennsylvania, providing a multitude of educational services and programs to local school districts.

Soon after the end of Project SESAME, the chairman of the department, Professor J. William Moore, called for a program in education that emphasized research to better prepare undergraduate education students for graduate level work. This was to help them achieve a comparable level of experience with undergraduates from the sociology, psychology and mathematics programs. The advantageous new program gave education undergraduates higher success while reducing the time required to complete a master’s degree by one year.

Through the early 1990s, the department once again combined the themes of research and collaboration, like the conferences and workshops of previous decades had done. This series of educational research colloquia offered hour-long evening discussions located in various buildings on campus. Sessions covered topics like Pennsylvania law, leadership and instructional analogies. Colloquia continued into the new millennium as a social science series entitled “Higher Education and Civic Engagement: Fulfilling the Promise.” Guest speakers visited campus to discuss topics such as citizen empowerment, service and liberal education.

Today’s Focus
Today, Bucknell’s Department of Education continues to prepare students with a unique blend of knowledge in the social sciences as well as thorough professional training within many of the local school districts. Undergraduates may choose to earn a Bachelor of Science degree in education if they wish to become certified as elementary school teachers. Those interested in secondary teaching major in a discipline to teach and take additional courses for certification. Teaching certification for Pennsylvania is available for a range of content areas in the arts and sciences.

A Bachelor of Arts degree in education is also offered for students who want to pursue graduate school or non-certified employment after graduation.

The faculty has developed a curriculum highly relevant both to students’ professional needs and contemporary societal needs. The B.A. major currently offers concentrations in:

- College student personnel
- Contemporary landscapes of education
- Educational research
- Human diversity
- Learning and development across the lifespan
- Support services for children and adolescents

A master’s in education in college student personnel is also available.

All departmental courses aim to empower students to become critical thinkers and creative problem solvers so that they are able to adapt to new and changing environments. Introductory courses like Social Foundation of Education (EDUC101) provide students with a comprehensive understanding of the education system and provide broad-based knowledge for students pursuing any field of study.

During their time at the University, education students are assigned a department faculty member to serve as an adviser. Advisers provide mentoring and guidance for students as they progress through their years of study, helping them to reach their career goals. Students often participate in undergraduate research projects with faculty mentors who guide them in developing, executing and presenting professional-quality scholarly projects.

The faculty of the department is a diverse group of professionals who have made significant contributions to
the field including science education, educational psychology, school psychology, educational policy, sociology of education and school leadership. Professors attend disciplinary conferences, present papers on specialized topics and publish regularly in academic journals. Through extensive research, the faculty has identified effective educational methods and structures. Read more about Bucknell's education faculty.

Graduates of the department have established careers in fields both expected and unexpected. Along with the many successful teachers, professors, principals, superintendents and guidance counselors who have emerged from the program, Bucknell's education alumni include those working in finance, social work, marketing and public relations, healthcare, higher education administration, business, nonprofit organizations, museum work and music. Among them are CEO's and COO's, vice presidents, human resources administrators, college deans, entrepreneurs, authors, an Army colonel, a state police trooper and a pilot.

In celebrating its 100 year anniversary, the Department of Education has brought guest speakers, film presentations and an alumni panel. The 100th anniversary of John Dewey's book, Democracy & Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education is being celebrated concurrently. Dewey, an educator and philosopher, believed in learning through action, independent and creative thinking as well as citizen empowerment. He concluded that education was not a finite period in life, nor a means to an end. Rather, education is a fundamental component of life and a contributor to a successful democracy.

The department's evolution over the past century has reflected Dewey's ethos. With a legacy established and a foundation laid, the Department of Education will continue to educate its students to become change agents who will usher in a new age of education for communities around the world.

By Danielle Morelli