

# Nathalie Kees, Ed.D., LPC

Associate Professor, School of Education  
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## Growing Up

I was born and raised in rural Wisconsin on a dairy farm, the fifth of seven children in a large German Catholic family. Our farm had woods and a river running through it and I spent lots of time in nature as a child. I was also a part of a very hard working family, as anyone who's been a dairy farmer will attest. I learned my work ethic and life values from my family and 8 years of Catholic school.

## Education and Pre-CSU

I went to a small public high school in Hilbert, Wisconsin and graduated salutatorian. I was involved in choir and vocal music contests and chose to major in vocal music education for my undergraduate degree at St. Norbert College in DePere, Wisconsin. Even though St. Norbert's was just 20 minutes from home, I lived on campus and, as a first generation college student, found a whole new world of ideas and experiences. I worked my way through college and finally finished paying off my undergraduate loans when I got here to CSU as a faculty member in 1987. After my undergraduate degree, I taught music, got married, moved to Maryland and Wyoming, taught music in Jeffrey City, Wyoming, got a master's degree in counseling at the University of Wyoming, got divorced, was a high school counselor in Evanston, Wyoming, went on for my doctorate in Counselor Education at West Virginia University, and then came to CSU as a faculty member in 1987. I have enjoyed a wonderful career at CSU for the past 29 years and I owe so much of my good fortune to meeting two outstanding faculty mentors along the way: Dr. Molly Vass-Lehman during my master's program, and Dr. Ed Jacobs during my doctoral studies. They taught me the joy of counseling, teaching, and living life fully and without them I'm not sure where I would have ended up.



## CSU History

I have had the best job in the world. Where else do you get to teach, study, research, and write about ideas that are important to you both personally and professionally? I have so enjoyed helping students learn about themselves and others, improving communication, making life choices, and finding lives of meaning and purpose by helping their clients do the same. In return, my students have kept me alive and learning, continually growing as we have formed what Parker Palmer calls "a community of knowers" in the classroom. I have said several times over the past years, I am surprised each year to find that what I have to offer students is still relevant to themselves and the people they work with. That has been very gratifying. In return, my students have given me a life of meaning and purpose. What more could one ask for. I am forever grateful to them.

I think the biggest challenge has been that a faculty position is really a job that never ends. There is always more research that could be done, more grants applied for, more writing to do. The greatest reward for me has always been my connections with students, both in the classroom and beyond, as I've watched their careers flourish as they go on to help others.

My advice to young faculty would be to find your passion and focus early and research, write, and teach the hell out of it. Be careful not to be lured into others' research passions that may not be your own and into service work that doesn't also serve your needs in some way. That may sound selfish, but I think it's important for new faculty, particularly women and faculty of color, to remember this and be a little selfish as the opportunities and requests will be endless. My first year at CSU, my colleague Barb Kistler told me that I may be at a point in life where the choices one is offered are not between good and bad, but between good, better, and best. These decisions can often be the most difficult to discern.

My plans for retirement are to change have to's into want to's, enjoy some unstructured time, get back into my own rhythm and flow, and listen for that still, small voice inside which tells me what's next. I am forever grateful to my counseling and education colleagues at CSU and all of the faculty, staff, and students I have been fortunate enough to connect with over the years. Feel free to contact me at:

[Nathalie.kees@colostate.edu](mailto:Nathalie.kees@colostate.edu)

