International Connections

A Great iDEA

College of Education Needs and Priorities

Evaluation Unit Serves Clients from Kansas to China
A Lifelong Commitment

Forty-seven students with developmental disabilities arrived on campus Saturday, Sept. 15, for this semester’s first class in the Project Extending College Education for Lifelong Learning, or EXCELL, program.

This is the third year Project EXCELL has been in operation, and it provides individuals with mild developmental disabilities an opportunity to experience college life. There are two five-week sessions per academic semester, and classes are held on Saturday mornings in the K-State Student Union. Teachers are given a small stipend while another 60 volunteers donate their time throughout the year.

Warren White, Project EXCELL founder and professor of special education, counseling and student affairs, said the program has received attention since its inception in 2009. Since that time, the program has won several awards, spawned a sister program in Salina and received a $4,000 donation from the Little Apple Pilot Club.

“Because of the Little Apple Pilot Club, we are able to operate for another semester,” he said. “It’s amazing what we can do for people with special needs when we come together with a common goal. I am honored to be part of this program because of the joy it brings to the students and volunteers.”

A College of Education ambassador helps Project EXCELL class members.
Greetings from the College of Education!

There is an energy and excitement in the College of Education. My transition to the deanship has been smooth, but swift. We are engaged in many initiatives as we define our future and strategically plan our contributions to the K-State 2025 vision.

The College of Education is preparing to celebrate K-State’s 150 years of excellence. College activities related to the sesquicentennial celebration include an electronic anthology focused on teachers prepared at K-State and a children’s alphabet book about K-State experiences. Please plan to return to campus for the kickoff weekend, Feb. 14–17, 2013.

We have hired 21 full-time faculty and staff in the past year. Additional internal moves involve Dr. Linda Thurston’s appointment as the inaugural Associate Dean for Research and External Funding, and Dr. David Griffin joined the Center for Student and Professional Services as Assistant Dean and Director.

As part of the College’s emphasis on technology, each full-time faculty member received an iPad along with ongoing professional learning sessions to enhance teaching and learning. In addition, we completed a comprehensive technology assessment, and classrooms will be upgraded with the goal of preparing our preservice teachers for the nation’s P-12 classrooms.

Faculty and preservice educators teach and learn in Blumont Hall and around the world. Recently, faculty and students provided professional development and outreach to poverty stricken and special needs students in several countries: Guatemala, Tanzania, Grenada, China, Cuba and Ethiopia. We also hosted almost 90 teachers from Ecuador for the summer, welcomed another 60 this fall, and look forward to ongoing training in teaching English as a Second Language to additional Ecuadorian cohorts.

Sometimes we don’t have to travel very far to have a national impact. The Next Generation Science Standards are currently being developed with the insight of two COE faculty members. Others are involved in national conversations as part of the Science and Mathematics Teacher Imperative. K-Staters are also serving on state teams addressing the achievement gap between subgroup populations and developing new standards for our teacher preparation programs. Additionally, a team of faculty and school partners is developing digital resources related to the common core standards in mathematics and English/Language Arts that infuse cultural competences.

The impact of the College is far-reaching: We have trained more than 5,700 currently practicing Kansas school educators and leaders. Further, we boast of alums in all 105 counties, all 50 states and 48 foreign countries. We offer many ways to stay connected — check out our website (coe.ksu.edu), “like” our FaceBook page, or follow us on Twitter (@ksucoedean).

As you read and reflect on the stories in this edition of “Connections,” there is no doubt we are impacting the world by preparing knowledgeable, ethical, caring decision makers for a diverse and changing world.

With purple pride,

Debbie Mercer
Diane DeBacker, Kansas commissioner of education and 2012 College of Education alumni fellow, believes the education and experience she gained while working toward her Ed.D. in educational leadership prepared her for a professional career filled with change, growth and challenge.

But this highly capable, influential educational leader was not created overnight. She, like all teachers, was once new to the profession. As a first-year teacher, she received quite a shock leaving school one day: Four male students were carrying her burnt orange Mercury Capri down the street. “What do you do?” she asked, pointing out her lack of experience and empathizing with new teachers. (DeBacker said she occasionally sees a couple of these students who are now successful businessmen.)

While on campus for alumni fellow activities, DeBacker spoke with preservice teachers and passed along four pieces of advice:

1. Teachers need passion. “You have to have that passion and enthusiasm for teaching and guiding others.”
2. Know your students. “You have to know those students when they walk in that door. They are bringing their lives with them every day.”
3. Stay healthy. “Teaching is a very demanding profession, and you will be exposed to every cold and every bug.”
4. Find a mentor. “You will be assigned a mentor, but that may not be who should be your mentor.”

The commissioner of education is appointed by the Kansas State Board of Education, which is composed of 10 elected members from across the state. They serve four-year terms, with half the board up for re-election every two years. Five members were up for re-election this year.

“I am always six votes away from not having a job,” DeBacker said. Even with the pressure of that reality, she firmly believes Kansas has the ideal structure. “We have it best in Kansas because an elected board best represents the state.”

DeBacker said her responsibilities fall into three categories: the school board; the agency, the Kansas Department of Education, or KSDE; and the field, the 289 school districts across the state.

KSDE has about 250 employees. “I am constantly juggling three balls,” she said of the position she assumed in September 2010.

Kansas has about 1,350 schools and 450,000 children. There are more than 40,000 active teachers and counselors in Kansas and an additional 27,000 nonlicensed employees, such as bus drivers, custodians and paraprofessionals who all tier to DeBacker.

By state statute, the standards for five content areas — math, English, science, social studies and writing — must be reviewed every seven years. DeBacker said the Obama administration encouraged states to come together and evaluate and determine standards for math and language arts. The result was 48 states banded together, merged best practices then internationally benchmarked the data. The Kansas State Board of Education adopted the common core standards in October 2010, and they will be fully implemented in August 2014.

“These standards will make our students more competitive and better prepared,” DeBacker said.

The process was so efficient and effective that more than half of the 48 states opted to work together again to adopt the Next Generation Science Standards. Four K-State faculty members, including two from the College of Education, were invited to lead the effort in drafting new science common core standards for the country.

DeBacker explained that with new standards come new assessments. The common core standards represent a seismic shift from No Child Left Behind, President George W. Bush’s flagship education reform program.

“Assessments have ruled our world for the last 10 years, and I say that reluctantly,” she said. “We had to put so much emphasis on
Little did DeBacker know that a decision made years ago when pursuing her Ed.D. — she earned her doctorate in 2002 — would become so relevant, and it stemmed from what she calls "the best piece of advice I ever got." She was vacillating between a focus on educational leadership and school finance when her major professor, David Thompson, professor and educational leadership chair, provided clarifying insight.

"He said, 'I can help you either way you decide to go, but I can help the most in the area where I have the most expertise,"' she said. She chose to focus on school finance. DeBacker took seriously the degree's internship requirements, which she completed under state Sen. Dwayne Umbarger and Dale Dennis, KSDE deputy commissioner. Dennis is considered by many to be the education finance expert in the state, including by the doctoral candidate who was later named commissioner of education.

"My two internships set the stage for where I am today," DeBacker said. "School finance was absolutely critical and that background has been invaluable, especially this last year."

"As leader, I set the tone on what initiatives we are working on. We are small enough that we are a family. But I am also expected to be a visionary, a steady voice, a cheerleader and the person who brings passion and excitement."

— Diane DeBacker

DeBacker Named 2012 Alumni Fellow
Volunteers read the book written in Swahili and produced by faculty and staff in the College of Education to children at the Irente Rainbow School.
Here are just a few examples of how College of Education faculty and students touch lives around the world.

**China:**
Five preservice teachers working toward their ESL endorsements spent three weeks in China observing then teaching for two weeks in a high-needs school. “The students come back with a renewed passion for teaching because their passion for teaching reached a new level,” said Socorro Herrera, professor in elementary education and executive director of the Collaborative Intercultural and Multilingual Advocacy, or CIMA, center.

**Ecuador:**
The CIMA center hosted 87 teachers from Ecuador who spent the summer at K-State as part of their country’s Go Teacher program. Ecuadorian President Rafael Correra, whose goal is to prepare 3,000 educators to be highly qualified teachers of English and learn the most successful pedagogical practices, heralds the program. This summer’s program was so successful that an agreement has been reached for all 3,000 teachers to be trained through a network of institutions with K-State leading the effort. Another benefit: Many teachers in the first wave of cohorts plan to pursue their master’s degrees through K-State Online.

**Ethiopia:**
The Ethiopian people are so hungry for knowledge when word spread about a K-State professor coming to provide professional development, the instructor’s session was televised on Ethiopian National Television (ENT).

Laurie Curtis, assistant professor of curriculum and instruction, traveled to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in mid-May for two weeks where she provided expertise in literacy instruction for Ethiopian administrators, teachers and librarians. She also served as the keynote speaker for a three-day professional development conference where participants learned new strategies to engage students in literacy instruction that addressed the challenges of the schools’ limited resources and large classes. The typical Ethiopian class has between 50-100 students.

Curtis’ greatest professional challenge of the trip presented itself on the final day of the conference. That’s when the news crew and children — 45 in one class and 60 in the next — arrived. She demonstrated literacy techniques as conference participants observed and a translator repeated her every word all while being filmed for TV.

**Grenada:**
In addition to her work in Ethiopia, Curtis also made her third trip to Grenada this spring, where she met with the Grenada Ministry of Education Officials, the permanent secretary and five officers. Curtis provided a professional development session on shared and guided reading for 20 teachers at a rural school. She met with the president of their newly formed reading association to discuss an electronic teacher collaboration project for K-State’s Reading Specialist graduate students and their practicing teachers (using the Edmodo website).

**Guatemala:**
Fourteen preservice teachers traveled to Guatemala City, Guatemala, from July 6-27 to gain teaching experience for their ESL endorsements.

According to faculty member, Griselda MacDonald, CIMA center program manager, the students left with the needed experience and a new worldview. “It was busy,
productive days,” she said about teaching both elementary and secondary students and teaching English to the faculty and staff at Apoyate en Mi (Lean on Me) school. “It was a humbling experience to witness this much poverty, but it was balanced by being greeted each morning by children getting off the school bus knowing they were homeless but arrived at school happy and ready to learn.”

Sudan:
Stephanie Pearson, doctoral student in curriculum and instruction, is currently working with the United Nations, UNICEF and several nonprofit organizations to increase awareness of the conditions of South Sudan.

In February 2012, Pearson received an invitation to present at the United Nations in regard to a weeklong series highlighting the obstacles and triumphs currently facing regions of Africa. While meeting with numerous representatives, she was given the opportunity to serve on several UN committees to begin the process of bringing education to the remote regions of South Sudan. While this is a lifelong process, Pearson and other officials have already begun to create curriculums for numerous areas that are essential to the Sudanese people, such as health education, literacy and community leadership.

Pearson was invited to speak at the United Nations this fall about the progress being made in the development of a suitable education system for the Sudanese people. She will travel to Sudan in January to meet with government officials and community leaders to begin the implementation of these newly formed curriculums.

Tanzania:
This year marks the fifth consecutive summer Marilyn Kaff, associate professor of special education, counseling and student affairs, led a contingent to Lushoto, Tanzania, to work with special needs children, their teachers and parents. The group of nine spent July 26–Aug. 9 at the Irente Complex, which includes an orphanage, the Irente Rainbow School and a school for the blind. The six preservice teachers were accompanied by three faculty and staff members and all made memories of a lifetime, especially when recounting reactions to “Chura Na Jongoo,” a children's book produced in the college that depicts the Tanzanian story about why frogs are ugly.

The 50 copies were such a hit that Kaff videotaped a school official at the Irente Complex telling other stories, and the group plans to develop more books.

“They have such an oral tradition in Tanzania,” Kaff said. “Creating this book is a wonderful way to preserve these stories, and we envision these stories being turned into books in both English and Swahili.”

While there, Kaff also taught professional development classes to a hand-selected group of 30 teachers. They were in the initial class of 138 students she taught five years ago.

International Students
Kay Taylor, associate professor of curriculum and instruction, Abulrahman Kamal, doctoral candidate, participated in “A Walk in My Shoes.”
is opening minds and creating learning opportunities for students thanks to a video project she initiated as a result of conversations with Dean Debbie Mercer.

“A Walk in My Shoes” is a documentary depicting a glimpse into the lives of international doctoral students and their cultures.

Taylor’s committee invited students to participate, and six students from six countries — Angola, South Korea, India, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia and China — agreed to take part. Their answers to select questions were videotaped and topics included the graduate students’ cultures, educational systems in their home countries, their experiences at K-State and advice for international students planning to come to K-State.

“We may be taking on a leadership role here because while there is information for international undergraduates, we couldn’t find much video content dedicated to international graduate students,” Taylor said. “What many Americans may not realize is that these are highly accomplished people who are often here on a strict timeline to complete their graduate studies. Some of them are expected to return to their home countries and begin work in a specific field.

Taylor said the videos will be made available to College of Education faculty for their classes on K-State Online, and she hopes this will start a trend where more disciplines will draw on the resources international graduate students bring to K-State.
Next Generation Science Standards
Kansas is one of 26 Lead State Partners tasked to redefine the nation’s Next Generation Science Standards, or NGSS. Jacqueline Spears, professor and director of the Center for Science Education, is one of four Kansas State University faculty on the team. She believes the proposed changes offer exciting opportunities for both educators and students.

“The Next Generation Science Standards propose substantial changes in K-12 science — the inclusion of engineering processes and practices, the focus on science practices that more closely approximate how scientists develop and agree upon new knowledge, and the opportunity for students to explore fewer concepts in more depth,” Spears said. “This will allow K-12 students and their teachers to engage in more authentic science activities, and university STEM — or science, technology, engineering and math — faculty will become critical to preparing future science educators and helping science teachers reframe K-12 science instruction.”

Science and Mathematics Teacher Imperative, or SMTI
Sherri Martinie, assistant professor of curriculum and instruction, or C&I, and Kimberly Staples, associate professor of C&I, attended the national conference this summer for the Science and Mathematics Teacher Imperative, or SMTI. It was established by the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities, or APLU, and is the nation’s largest initiative dedicated to producing more and better-prepared math and science teachers.

“The 47 states that have adopted the Common Core State Standards for mathematics and language arts will all be working from the same set of standards,” Martinie said. “In addition, a document was recently released to give publishers specific criteria for textbooks and that will really help enact those standards in the classroom. Standards alone are not going to raise achievement. Teachers trained to work with the new standards and materials aligned to the new standards will produce the most positive outcomes.”

Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate, or CPED
In 2012, the College of Education joined an elite national research consortium known as the Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate, or CPED. CPED is supported by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, the Council for Academic Deans of Research Education Institutions, or CADREI, and a $700,000 grant from the Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education, or FIPSE. David Thompson, professor and chair of educational leadership, was selected to be Kansas State University’s representative for the initiative.

CPED is a national consortium of more than 50 top colleges and schools of education, which have committed resources to work together to undertake a critical examination of the doctorate in education, or Ed.D. The goal is to redesign it as the premier and preferred degree for the advanced preparation of school practitioners and clinical faculty, academic leaders and professional staff.

“The College of Education at K-State is both pleased and proud to join this elite national project, as K-State has much to contribute to the national dialogue given its many outstanding doctoral programs across all three academic departments.”

— David Thompson
AACTE — Best Practice Award for Professional Ethics and Moral Dispositions

The American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education presented its 2012 Best Practice Award for Professional Ethics and Moral Dispositions in Teacher Education to Kansas State University’s College of Education at the association’s 64th annual meeting in Chicago. The award recognizes excellence in a school, college or department of education for illustrative and purposeful attention to professional ethics and moral dispositions in teacher education.

Faculty Awards

David C. Thompson — Distinguished Fellow of Research and Practice

David Thompson, professor and chair of educational leadership, was recognized with a National Educational Finance Conference Distinguished Fellow Award. The award is one of the highest recognitions given to those who have distinguished themselves in the field of education finance. Thompson has authored leading textbooks, including Money and Schools, now in its fifth edition. He is the legislative editor for the Journal of Education Finance and chair of Educational Considerations, a leading peer-reviewed publication produced at the College of Education.

Fred Bradley — Distinguished Alumnus

Fred Bradley, professor emeritus of special education, counseling and student affairs, was honored as a distinguished alumnus at the University of Wyoming.

Amanda Morales — Outstanding Dissertation Award

Amanda Morales, assistant professor of curriculum and instruction, accepted an American Educational Research Association’s Division K Outstanding Dissertation Award at the organization’s annual conference.

Lotta Larson — Kappa Delta Pi Program Award

Lotta Larson, assistant professor in curriculum and instruction, and seven pre-service teachers accepted multiple awards and made four presentations at the Kappa Delta Pi convocation in Indianapolis. The K-State chapter won the national Kappa Delta Pi Program Award in the service category for its Literacy Alive! Project, subtitled, Literacy Integrating Kids & Soldiers, or L.I.N.K.S, and general service projects.

Teresa Northern Miller — Excellence in Advising Awards

Teresa Northern Miller, associate professor of educational leadership, was selected for two excellence awards last semester: the College of Education Excellence in Advising Award for 2011-2012; and the 2012 Division of Continuing Education Outstanding Adviser.

Research Association's Division K Outstanding Dissertation Award at the organization's annual conference.

K-State President Kirk Schulz (right) and Curtin Property Company President Chris Curtin (left) pose with David Thompson as he accepts the Presidential Award for Outstanding Department Head.
It is no small task assuming responsibility for training teachers for the 21st century. But a new dean with a big idea believed a one-and-a-half pound device could hold the key to success.

College of Education Dean Debbie Mercer revealed her plan this summer to prepare preservice teachers for the use of technology in classrooms by announcing an iPad initiative that included providing the device for each full-time instructional faculty member.

"The iPad is the current icon for technology enhanced learning and is increasingly a top choice of many school districts because of its relative low cost," Mercer said. "It is critical that we have the expertise to model cutting-edge technology applications to most effectively prepare our candidates for their future classrooms."

So, how does one make this happen? Education, of course.

"The college is not merely putting iPads in professors' hands, but has developed a thorough professional development program that will begin with technical knowledge and move to content-based learning throughout the year," Mercer explained.

Dennis Devenney, director of the Catalyst Technology and Media Center, and his team – graphic designer Mary Hammel, programmer Matt Heinrich, videographer Rusty Earl and administrative assistant Val McKain – created training sessions for the college's 65 iPad recipients. Jackie Spears, professor of curriculum and instruction and director of the Center for Science Education, and Cyndi Danner-Kuhn, instructor, each received a third-generation iPad and attended the training sessions. In addition, Kuhn designed 12 professional development training sessions for this initiative.

Spears is cautious when it comes to trends in technology, so she was characteristically reserved when iPads were rolled out, and her first exposure is through this initiative. "I found it really easy to learn the things I was asked to learn," Spears said. "I'm glad the dean is doing this because it has motivated me to take a better look at it, and I'm already sold on the benefits for teaching."

The iPad is not new for faculty members like Danner-Kuhn, who was an early adopter. Some faculty purchased an iPad through a grant, bought it personally or was provided one by the college.

"Because Dean Mercer is an iPad user, she understood the benefits for education and the efficiencies of buying the 64 gigabyte because it is an
investment in growth,” Danner-Kuhn said.

“Faculty will have ample space for using the iPad for teaching, learning and for increasing productivity. This initiative is exactly what is needed because so many K-12 schools are adopting iPads, and it is imperative that we prepare our students to teach in that environment. Professional development is key to the iPad initiative being a success.”

“The college is not merely putting iPads in professors’ hands, but has developed a thorough professional development program that will begin with technical knowledge and move to content-based learning throughout the year.”

— Dean Debbie Mercer

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Technology in Action

Digital Reading – Lotta Larson

After publishing an article about digital reading in 2009, Amazon contacted Lotta Larson, assistant professor of curriculum and instruction, because the giant online retailer was intrigued with her research. Amazon provided Larson with Kindles, printed books and e-book gift cards for multiple literacy projects. She currently has several projects under way — from Kansas to Ireland — examining how digital reading impacts reading comprehension.

“When kids use digital readers, their reading stamina — or the amount of time they read — increases, along with their comprehension,” Larson said. “Using Kindles, students learn to customize the reading experience by changing the font, the font size, the layout of the page or using the text-to-speech feature.”

Download Democracy – Tom Vontz

The College of Education’s Center for Social Studies Education is offering online civics courses to help teachers and schools address the frequently ignored third “C” of K-12 education — college, careers and citizenship. The center developed a series of six one credit-hour online graduate courses that focus on teaching, learning and engaging core political ideas. The courses are designed to help K-12 teachers prepare competent, informed and reliable 21st-century citizens. Each course features mini-lectures, online discussions and culminates with a one-on-one discussion of key concepts with the instructor using the Wimba feature of K-State Online.

“We’re utilizing technology to provide a personalized and interactive experience online,” said Tom Vontz, center director of curriculum and instruction.

Technology and Teaching – Cyndi Danner-Kuhn

Technology is changing the way we live, the way we learn and now, the way we teach. Cyndi Danner-Kuhn, instructor of curriculum and instruction, embraces this concept in the course Educational Technology for Teaching and Learning. Preservice teachers enrolled in the honor section are provided an iPad.

During the course, future teachers must develop and regularly post to their newly created website or blog. They must create podcasts and video casts. Danner-Kuhn explained the goal is for preservice teachers to become confident with technology, to apply technology tools and resources to increase productivity, and to use technology resources to meet specific teaching lesson’s objectives.

“If we’re not exposing preservice teachers to technology with purpose, then we are not doing our jobs,” she said. “Schools have to prepare students for the world they are going to be living in, and they must be prepared to teach in that environment.”
After a two-year stint at the National Science Foundation, or NSF, Linda P. Thurston, professor and associate dean for research and external funding, returned to the College of Education with an enhanced skill set that complements her already impressive educational tool chest.

Thurston was selected for a highly competitive rotator position, a post she held from September 2009 until December 2011 in Washington, D.C. Rotator positions, she explained, are an effective way for the NSF to stay in close contact with universities and industries and stay current.

“There were such big-picture people at NSF and in Washington,” Thurston said. “I was part of White House dialogues a couple of times.” She was also a member of a United Nations panel discussing women, disabilities and STEM careers — which include those in science, technology, engineering and math — at the United Nations Decade for Women events in February 2011. Thurston said the nation’s capital was an exciting and intellectual atmosphere. “You get these ideas, and I was able to make some of those ideas become a reality,” she said.

Thurston's rare background in science, disabilities and evaluation were the perfect combination for one of those ideas, and the concept would eventually involve two first ladies. “It became the only project like it in the country,” she said.

Thurston’s experience at NSF laid the foundation for a cross-discipline project with K-State first lady Noel Schulz and the Colleges of Engineering and Education. Thurston and Schulz developed a proposal to attract veterans and veterans with disabilities to STEM fields.

Veterans are a priority for President Barack Obama and first lady Michelle Obama, and when Thurston realized there were few national initiatives to encourage post-9/11 veterans with disabilities to transition into STEM careers, she took action. A few telephone calls later, and Thurston’s newly conceived idea became the NSF-funded Transition S.T.E.M. A Wounded Warriors Think Tank.

“These veterans had significant training to prepare for combat, and they had to perform specialized tasks,” Thurston said. “They are already very comfortable with computer technology and science, and of course it would be wonderful if we could recruit them as STEM teachers.”

Thurston is happy to return to the classroom because teaching students — her deepest passion — strikes at the heart of her personal mission. She is anxious to share what she learned about writing proposals and crossing disciplines and plans to encourage students and faculty to explore rotator positions in their respective fields.

“It’s all about teaching and learning,” she said.

Thurston was presented with an NSF Director’s Award for Excellence and was recently nominated for the highly coveted Alva and Gunnar Myrdal Government Award from the America Evaluation Association, or AEA.

Mark Leddy, an NSF program director, believes Thurston’s intellectual contributions have changed the dynamic at NSF. “Her specific work about, and advocacy for, the intersection between high-quality evaluation and the inclusion of women, persons with disabilities and underrepresented minorities has been a substantial contribution to the fields of broadening participation research and capacity building,” Leddy said.

Linda Thurston, center, visits with graduate students Josh O’Neal, Grizelda MacDonald, Cristina Fanning and Stephanie Pearson.

“You get all these ideas, and I was able to make some of those ideas become a reality.”

— Linda Thurston
The College of Education made history when it became the first college to offer advanced courses on the K-State Olathe campus in June.

Nineteen students enrolled in the eight-week course Principles of Teaching Adults taught by Royce Ann Collins, associate professor of educational leadership.

While most people are acutely aware of the college’s teacher education program, many are unaware of the role the college plays when professionals choose to advance or change their careers by obtaining a graduate degree. Just like the students in this class, the professionals come from diverse fields such as business and industry, nonprofits, the military, government agencies, education, law enforcement, the medical field and more.

What’s so interesting about advanced degrees in education is the course material is tailored to a profession through concepts and techniques, and the benefits are often immediate.

Collins explained this eight-week course is designed to immerse students in active learning techniques. “Most of the students in the class were new to adult education but quickly applied the concepts to their work or volunteer teaching situations with adult learners,” she said.

Steve McCorkill, training unit supervisor with the Shawnee Police Department, is one of those students. He has wanted to pursue his master’s degree since earning his bachelor’s degree in 1993, and this course supported his current career goals. The only surprise was how quickly he saw results. “I didn’t realize how much these classes would pertain to my current occupation,” McCorkill said. “I’m getting more out of the program than I imagined.”

Mike Saylor, a master patrolman with the Shawnee Police Department who is planning to retire in the next 10 years, agreed. “The material Dr. Collins presents is useful to our everyday work,” he said. “I’ve often taken concepts she presents in her class and used them successfully the very next day.”

McCorkill, Saylor and classmate Kayla Brohn, a radiology physician liaison with The University of Kansas Hospital, are all at very different places in their careers, yet the adult education program provides value for each of them.

Shortly after graduating with a bachelor’s in radiologic science, Brohn knew she wanted to get her master’s degree. “After working for a little over a year, I was promoted into the radiology administrative/leadership team at the hospital,” Brohn said. “Since then, I’ve been on the fast track to a leadership position. My boss and fellow mentors have really started molding and preparing me for that advancement and have encouraged me to pursue my master’s. K-State Olathe was exactly what I was looking for in a master’s program.”

Collins points out that the success of the adult education program belongs to many. “I was very pleased with the number and quality of students in this course,” she said. “This course would not have been such a success without the significant time and assistance of several people, especially the K-State Olathe staff, the department of educational leadership faculty, and staff members in the Division of Continuing Education and College of Education. I look forward to continuing the team effort to build the adult education program at K-State Olathe.”

Two adult education classes are under way this fall and three will be offered in the spring.
Sandy Risberg
Department: Curriculum and instruction
M.A., University of Colorado at Colorado Springs
Research interests: Educational needs of military-related students

Chepina Rumsey
Department: Curriculum and instruction
Ph.D., Illinois State University
Research interests: Mathematical argumentation, arithmetic properties and number sense, sociomathematical norms

Jeffrey Schafer
Department: Curriculum and instruction
Master’s, University of Nevada, Las Vegas
Research interests: Elementary education, library science

Susan Yelich Biniecki
Department: Educational leadership
Ph.D., University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
Research interests: Adult learning, international adult education and globalization

Robert Hachiya
Department: Educational leadership
Ed.D., University of Kansas
Research interest: School law, student/educator rights and school reform

Donna Augustine-Shaw
Department: Educational leadership
Ed.D., Wichita State University
Research interests: Leadership, change, curriculum and instruction and virtual learning

Judy Favor
Department: Educational leadership
Ph.D., University of Kansas
Research interests: Social and psychological factors that impact group dynamics

Donna Menke
Department: Special education, counseling and student affairs
Ph.D., Kansas State University
Recent interests: Career development of student athletes, women in higher education, multi- and/or bi-racial college students

New Faculty

The College of Education officially welcomed 11 faculty members who joined us since the last issue of Connections was published.

Karrie Swan
Department: Special education, counseling and student affairs
Ph.D., University of North Texas
Research interests: Evaluating school counseling programs, mindfulness in schools, play therapy in schools and social class in counseling

Sheryl Hodge
Department: Special education, counseling and student affairs
Ph.D., University of Missouri-Kansas City
Research interests: Social and psychological motivation in educational settings, and psychometric and technical aspects of web-based data collection

Albert Bimper Jr.
Department: Special education, counseling and student affairs
Ph.D., University of Texas at Austin
Research interests: Intersections of race and sport culture and education, diversity issues in sport and sport industries, student athlete identity development, African-Americans in sport, sociocultural influences in education and sport and critical race theory
The 26 participants in the Kansas Educational Leadership Institute, or KELI, a program instituted for the state’s first-year school superintendents, completed their inaugural year of mentoring, and 100 percent reported it helped them grow professionally. KELI is a partnership of six major professional entities that united to develop and support leadership for Kansas schools and districts in the 21st century.

Mary Devin, KELI executive director and associate professor of educational leadership in the College of Education, said survey results indicated both the superintendents and the nine mentors deemed the program beneficial. That is fortunate because they spent considerable time together — almost a total of 700 total hours of one-on-one contact.

Devin said KELI has made available a second-year program for these superintendents to provide continuing, but less intense connection to the mentors. “Because we know good mentoring models support developing leaders beyond the first year of experience, KELI has made a second year possible to ensure our superintendents have the support they need to meet the leadership challenges specific to their individual districts,” she said.

In 2012-13, there are 22 first-year superintendents and seven mentors in KELI. Devin explained that because the program has been so successful, KELI leaders and advisors will spend this year designing a similar program for principals.

Thirty-six preservice teachers received invaluable experience during this summer’s STEM Institute, during which they applied techniques and faced authentic classroom challenges. This was the second year the institute was held in Bluemont Hall.

Nearly 200 students in grades 6-9 from Manhattan-Ogden USD 383 spent the month of June on campus as part of the summer STEM Institute. Fifteen courses were offered through the half-day sessions.

“I really appreciated how hands-on the STEM Institute is and how much I interacted with students,” said Macario Benavides, senior in secondary education. “This experience helped me grow in every aspect of my professional skills, and I feel much more comfortable in front of students and have a better grasp of classroom management skills. This experience has been a tremendous benefit to my education.”

The three-year institute was funded by a grant from the 21st Century Mind Adventures, a U.S. Department of Defense program. The institute is designed to raise student achievement levels and increase enrollment in STEM fields.

Macario Benavides, top, and Mattithyah Tillotson, below, teach middle school students during the STEM Institute held in Bluemont Hall.
Evaluation Unit Serves Clients from Kansas to China

Over the next 12 years, OEIE has provided nearly 100,000 hours of services for more than 200 projects exceeding $200 million in sponsored funding from an array of public entities, private foundations and organizations from here to China. Jan Middendorf was named OEIE director in 2009 when the inaugural director, Linda Thurston, departed for an assignment at the National Science Foundation.

Middendorf explained that education’s natural strengths in assessment and evaluation made the college the ideal home for the unit. The organization has grown to more than 30 employees, including six graduate and six undergraduate research assistants, and offers flagship services for its clients.

“Our hallmark services — evaluation services, integrating technology and a truly seamless data collection system — have made a huge difference,” Middendorf said. “We want our clients to know that evaluation is a vital component to a successful program, that we are client oriented, and that we are passionate about our work.”

Clients typically fall into one of three categories: researchers who look to OEIE to write the evaluation portion of their proposal; researchers who have funding but need a qualified evaluator; and clients seeking strategic planning.

“Evaluation can be your critical friend,” Middendorf said. “Our primary goal is to determine what’s working, why, under what circumstances, and how can we make it better. That is the core of what we do.”

K-State became a strategic planning client when President Kirk Schulz and Provost April Mason turned to OEIE for its expertise concerning the university’s ambitious K-State 2025 plan, designed to make the university a top 50 public research institution.

“The president and provost had a visionary goal, and we had the privilege of facilitating the process that produced the university’s strategic action plans,” Middendorf said.

Since November 2011, OEIE added eight full-time employees and three students.

“Each team member brings an exceptional work ethic and skill set, which has already been demonstrated through their efforts,” Middendorf said. “It is remarkable how much of a difference they have made in such a short amount of time.”

For more information, contact Jan Middendorf at jmiddend@ksu.edu or 785-532-4716 or visit the website at oeie.ksu.edu.
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<td>“Methods for Effective Teaching: Meeting the Needs of All Students (sixth ed.). Boston: Pearson.”</td>
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Faculty Publications


19 Making the world a better place one mind at a time
Dean Debbie Mercer identified the college’s top priorities after assessing needs for the 21st century.

Scholarships
While our alumni and friends have allowed us to award a record level of scholarships, this remains our top priority because of rising tuition and the costs associated with student teaching. Scholarships allow us to attract the best undergraduate and graduate students who are passionate about teaching.

College of Education Needs and Priorities

Donors who create scholarships are people who believe in education’s transformative value and cherish their personal educational experiences. Just like great teachers (and many of these donors are), these philanthropists modeled something fundamentally important: giving back.

There are some exciting changes concerning “giving back” for the college and university. Telefund, which generated $115,000 in scholarships for education students this year, will expand to a new year-round calling program. KSU Foundation CEO Fred Cholick explained student callers currently reach about 30 percent of K-State alumni over the five-week calling period, but this new format will allow us to reach more K-Staters than ever before!

The next time you are on campus, please visit the Holen Courtyard located in front of Bluemont Hall honoring Dean Emeritus Mike Holen. The newly dedicated entry area surrounding Bluemont Bell has completely transformed Bluemont Hall’s front entryway into a park-like setting creating the perfect outdoor study area. This could not have been possible without the generosity of friends of the college because this project was funded by private support.

Much energy and assessment has gone into the creation of the College of Education’s Needs and Priorities list outlined on the next page. It demonstrates Dean Mercer’s unwavering commitment to teacher preparation, and the many ways we can all have a positive impact on our alma mater. These priorities will serve as the platform for the university’s capital campaign. We hope you will join us in making the College of Education even stronger for future generations.

As an education major, I’ve discovered you can earn a teaching degree, but it’s to the degree you learn to teach that makes the difference. That’s K-State.

Marty Kramer visits philanthropist Russ Alford at the College of Education Scholarship Connections reception.
Faculty/Partner Professional Development

Attracting the best and brightest students begins with attracting and retaining high-quality faculty. These gifts will allow us to provide field placements that provide opportunities for best practices in education, which will lead to cutting-edge research and quality classroom experiences through instruction and mentoring.

STEM Initiatives

There is no doubt that the state and nation need highly effective science, technology, engineering and math teachers to produce the nation’s STEM workforce. Our philanthropy goals include annual supplements for a distinguished professor/director of STEM Education Center, distinguished science professor and distinguished mathematics professor. Associated needs are specific technology upgrades to support STEM initiatives as well as lab and facility improvements.

Ways to Give

The gift planning professionals at the KSU Foundation can help determine the best giving options based on your personal financial and philanthropic goals. The tax advantages associated with charitable giving are widely known. However, some gifting options produce income while others, like life insurance, offer a powerful way to multiple the power of your gift.

If you would like more information about needs within the college or ways to give, please contact College of Education Development Director Marty Kramer at 785-532-7578 or email him at martyk@found.ksu.edu.

Kristen Eck, elementary education major and K-State Marching Band assistant drum major, and philanthropist Nancy Ryan at the scholarship reception.
Bequests or Deferred Gifts
$10,000 and above
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Alan and Karen Bell
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Honors Roll of Giving July 1, 2011–June 30, 2012

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Jacque Alstatt
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Jane and Douglas Ayre
Gerald and Gwen Bailey
Stephanie and Grant Bannister
Pamela and Dave Bearden
Edwin and Yelda Becker
Pati and Gerald Benda
Robert and Dennis Bennett
The area in front of Bluemont Hall has been officially named Holen Courtyard, in honor of the college's former long-serving dean Mike Holen.

A crowd gathered for the dedication on Sept. 7 where Holen was clearly touched by the expression of appreciation but explained he did not expect a project like this when he announced his retirement.

The renovation of the Holen Courtyard completely transformed the entrance into Bluemont Hall. Dean Debbie Mercer explained this was the ideal project because Holen was always thinking of students, and they will now have an inviting outdoor study and gathering area.

The courtyard boasts curved brick-lined pathways, limestone walls that double as seating and conceal electrical outlets for students to power an array of devices, and elegant landscaping. The final touches included lighting and purple umbrellas.

“I’m quite humbled by all of this. I thank you very much on behalf of me, my family and this great institution.”

— Mike Holen