Greetings from the Dean

As a four time K-State alum, I was thrilled with the opportunity to return to my alma mater as the Associate Dean for the College of Education.

Having served in this position for over a year, I continue to be amazed at the students, faculty, alumni, and supporters of our great college.

Many people described the culture of the college to me, yet those descriptions did not adequately do it justice. This culture is manifested in supporting students, collaborating on research, and partnering with public schools.

The college has been very active this past year. We are excited to share with you new initiatives, national recognitions, and the accomplishments of our enthusiastic and devoted faculty that make the college so vibrant.

I feel a personal connection to each of you as you share my passion and support for the College of Education. This bond propels the college forward through your support of students, faculty, and college initiatives. Thank you for your contribution to our success.

Debbie Mercer, Ph.D., Associate Dean, College of Education
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Sharing Makes a World of Difference

As the college’s first communications coordinator, I feel fortunate to share the incredible stories and accomplishments packaged in this newly designed magazine. Much has happened since I earned my master’s degree in curriculum and instruction – and it’s all amazing.

Stay “connected” and learn about these other achievements by friending us on Facebook. We hope you enjoy the magazine’s new layout and feel, and that it keeps you informed because as teachers know, sharing makes a world of difference. Please contact me with story ideas.

Patrice Scott, M.S., Connections Editor
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AFTER 41 YEARS OF SERVICE to the College of Education at K-State, including 22 years as Dean, I will be relinquishing the position at the end of Spring Semester. I thank all of you; colleagues, students, alumni, and supporters, past and present, for the many important roles you have played in the tremendous changes and improvements I have witnessed in our college over these four decades. Please accept my appreciation for the countless ways you have contributed to what has been the most satisfying career I could have imagined.

We named this annual publication Connections because we intend it to be a primary vehicle for keeping you in touch with our achievements and aspirations. Once again, this past year the College has been recognized nationally for our contributions, and the number of these recognitions becomes particularly striking. I sincerely hope the many awards featured in the following articles are as much a source of pride for you as they are for me and for our faculty members.

Your college long ago accepted responsibility to provide leadership to our shared profession. This edition highlights the many ways our faculty translate into action our on-going commitment to the improvement of teaching and learning.

We continue to successfully compete for national grants and contracts, enabling us to advance our priorities for research, service and development. We emphasize increasing the numbers and quality of new teachers in areas of critical need for our nation, especially in science, mathematics, and technology.

Our faculty and students have become actively involved in international settings in recognition of the growing need for teachers to interpret for their students the interconnectedness of world economies, cultures, and social and political environments.

Finally, we recognize the individuals who have chosen to support our students and programs through gifts to the college through the K-State Foundation. These individuals have stepped forward to make a truly positive difference in the lives of our students.

Again, my thanks and best wishes.

Michael C. Holen, Dean of Education
mholen@ksu.edu

The College of Education is accredited by the Kansas State Department of Education and the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education.

“...and the American Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 have been legislated to the District of Columbia, Kansas, Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas. Additional benefits and responsibilities include a number of federal laws and regulations, including the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Fair Labor Standards Act, the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, the Family and Medical Leave Act, the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.”

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WHO COULD HAVE ENVISIONED that a federal grant targeting middle school students could also help College of Education (COE) students? The faculty.

A competitive grant for $677,000 was awarded to Manhattan-Ogden USD 383 through the Promoting Student Achievement at Schools Impacted by Military Force Structure Changes, which is part of the U.S. Department of Defense Education Activity Educational Partnership. The grant funded 21st Century Mind Adventures, a program designed to raise student achievement levels and increase enrollments in science, technology, engineering and math -- or STEM -- pathways.

The COE at K-State was the only education college in the country to partner with a school district for the STEM Institute, which was held on campus. The results were stunning -- for everyone.

Andrew Horton, a vocal music ed major, noted how this experience prepared him for the classroom. “Getting a small glimpse of what teaching is going to be about and how you are on all the time was a great ‘movie trailer’ for my career,” Horton said. “I am so much more prepared to embark on my journey the next two semesters knowing I really do want to teach and try to make a difference.”

How did Horton and the other 38 Block 1 pre-service teachers get this experience? How did the partnership between K-State and the school district develop? By working together.

“I’m on the school district technology committee, and so is Carol Adams,” said Tim Frey, COE associate professor. (Adams is the executive director of teaching and learning at USD 383.) “She mentioned this grant, but all of the district buildings were under construction. We had to place my Block 1 students for summer so we said, ‘Let’s make this happen.’”

Addition and Compression

The district was notified in July 2010 it had been awarded the grant, which left little time to construct, organize and plan the half-day, Monday – Thursday, month-long institute. Local teachers contracted with the district and selected their course topics. They were Crime Scene Investigation, Solar Cars, Amusement Park Physics, Food Frenzy, Photography, Robotics, Explosions and Potions, Sports Biathlon and Rockets.

This shift from the traditional summer model also required Frey and Deb Andres, COE instructor, to reconstruct their Block 1 courses, which included the first-time use of online message boards. Technology was a great asset; however, experience is what mattered most. “The maximum amount of student contact time is about eight hours in four months,” Andres said about classroom experience during a typical semester. “But this offered three times the hours in four consecutive weeks.” Andres added college and middle school students both benefitted from the program’s structure. “The students (middle school) could learn through the experience, which is what mattered most. “The maximum amount of student contact time is about eight hours in four months,” Andres said about classroom experience during a typical semester.

KSU pre-service teacher Amy Calderwood and Manhattan-Ogden teacher Justin Wasmuth show STEM students how to use radar guns.

KSU pre-service teacher Chris Zimmerman assists a STEM student in preparing and reviewing microscopic slides during the CSI course.

KSU pre-service teacher Callie Courtney looks on as Photography students capture the success of a robotics project ward KSU pre-service teacher Callie Courtney.

Middle row, top to bottom: STEM students draw chalk outlines for the CSI course; Sue Mountford, Manhattan-Ogden administrator, asks KSU pre-service teacher Alex Cook questions during solar car development; a STEM student makes calculations for the explosions and potions course.
by two, rapid-fire, ‘Me too! Me too!’ as they passed by. “Then they modified my techniques. They experienced what it was really like being a teacher,” Wolters said.

Kaleb Todd, music ed major, discovered untapped flexibility. “My comfort level of going into the classroom with a plan has increased dramatically, and I am not always tied to my plan,” he said. “I am able to change on the spot to adapt when students require a modification for better learning.”

The institute’s 167 students were divided into 8 groups each week, and Frey believed this translated into a high-quality, authentic summer ed experience for everyone. “These were real middle school students in a real classroom setting, and our students had to deal with real issues like using cellphones or talking too much,” Frey said. “They could learn about classroom management then apply it. They were with the students four days in a row, not one day a month or two hours a day. It’s like we built a mini-middle school in four weeks.”

Wolters, who taught Food Frenzy, said the STEM format was fun for cooperating teachers. Students walked the distance of an acre, visited K-State’s grain science building and Call Hall (dairy bar). The experience gave full circle when students baked pizzas with the necessary ingredients of flour and cheese. “I was able to create my own curriculum,” Wolters said. “These are things we’ve done before, but we put all the different parts in the arena at once for 12 hours.”

Wolters has taught summer school for 25 years and appreciated all that was different about STEM. “It’s a lot of cool things all at once,” he said. “I think the kids are intrigued to come on campus – some are awestruck. There’s just something about being in a different place.”

What if by simply exposing the students to a university campus they can now imagine a different future for themselves? Tonnie Martinez, associate professor and former secondary education teacher, shared an important point with Frey in an email. “Today something very exciting happened, and I want to share it with you,” Martinez wrote. “Three kids were walking by my office and one said, ‘I can’t WAIT to get to college!’ This was followed by two, rapid-fire, ‘Me too! Me too!’ as they passed by.”

### THE RESULTS ARE IN:

**Why developing ‘knowledgeable, caring, ethical decision makers’ matters**

The College of Education (COE) at Kansas State University is home to a rich 100-year history. Tradition coupled with a progressive vision prove to be an award-winning combination.

The renowned faculty prepares highly trained teacher candidates for the future. With ground-breaking research and a live-by-example approach that inspires lifelong learning, college educators are changing lives — from every corner of Kansas to those living in different corners of the world. The K-State education faculty is making the world a better place one mind at a time.

Through research conducted in its three departments — educational leadership; curriculum and instruction; and special education, counseling and student affairs — the faculty challenge age-old assumptions and have made innovative discoveries. Here are just a few ways K-State impressed its peers and added value to its alumni’s degrees.

### Award-Winning Programs

Prominent national education associations have taken note of K-State’s excellence, especially in the areas of teacher preparation and elementary education:

- K-State’s signature undergraduate teacher preparation program received the National Association for Professional Development Schools’ 2011 Award for Exemplary Professional Development School Achievement. In 2010, the college’s elementary education program received the Distinguished Program in Teacher Education Award from the Association of Teacher Educators.
- The academic advising certificate program won the 2010 Mature Credit Program Award from the Central Region of the University Professional and Continuing Education Association. The certificate program prepares students for positions as college academic advisors.
- K-State’s Brigade Command Team Spouse Development Program at Fort Leavenworth was selected by the American Association of Adult and Continuing Education for the 2010 Malcolm Knowles Outstanding Adult Learner Program of the Year. The brigade command program involves spouses of Army officers who are about to assume brigade command.
- AccessUS, an innovative 2+2 program designed for nontraditional Latino and Latina students who want to teach in southwest Kansas, won the 2010 Outstanding Service to Underserved Populations Award from the Association for Colleges of Higher Education.
- The Extending College Education for Lifelong Learning, or EXCELL, program was chosen by the Association for Continuing Higher Education as the 2011 Outstanding Noncredit Program. It also won the Innovative Program Award. The EXCELL program offers five-week on-campus classes to young adults with disabilities who might not otherwise be able to experience a college environment.

For more information about the College of Education, please visit www.coe.ksu.edu, or friend us on Facebook.
Numerous education faculty members have been recognized at the state and national levels in 2010-2011 including:

- Dean Michael Holen received the 2011 Community of Practice Faculty Service Award from the University Professional and Continuing Education Association.
- Janice Wissman, professor of curriculum and instruction, was honored with the American Association of Family & Consumer Sciences’ (AAFCS) most prestigious national award, the AAFCS Distinguished Service Award. She is the first Kansas member of AAFCS to receive the award.
- Linda P. Thurston, professor of special education and assistant dean, was awarded the Director’s Award from the National Science Foundation.
- Lotta Larson, assistant professor of curriculum and instruction, was named the 2011 Kappa Delta Pi Regional Counselor Award for the West Region.
- Laurie Curtis, assistant professor of curriculum and instruction, was named the 2011 National Science Foundation, the U.S. Department of Education, the Kansas Board of Regents, the Kansas State Board of Regents, the Kansas Foundation for the Classroom, and the Center for Civic Education.

Scholarships

In the last five years, the college has awarded 973 scholarships totaling more than $5.9 million.

International Programs

Ethiopia — Teachers from across the country have visited Ethiopia for the past two summers as part of a literacy project. Ethiopia Reads, facilitated by COE faculty. The group took books—a suitcase full more than doubled one library’s size. But they returned with much more: artifacts and meaningful ways to teach about cultural diversity.

Guatemala — Some who teach students who are different view them as students at risk. Those who teach these learners know them as students of promise. COE students and faculty who visit countries such as Guatemala, Mexico, Paraguay, and China gain opportunities and stretch their minds to know the latter.

Tanzania — For autistic children in Tanzania, a school day basically amounted to singing and recess. With the help of the COE, faculty taught Tanzanian teachers how to identify the disorder and provided structured teaching methods these children will benefit from.

Grants and Research

The faculty’s research has attracted attention from the public and private sectors. In the past five years, the college has been awarded more than $45 million for research. A few of the organizations that funded specific studies include the National Science Foundation, the U.S. Department of Education, the Kansas State Board of Education, the Kansas Board of Regents, and the Center for Civic Education.

AccessUS

A 2+2 program initiated in the department of Curriculum and Instruction (C&I) was nationally recognized for excellence winning the 2010 Outstanding Service to Underserved Populations Award from the Association of Continuing Higher Education. Program partners include the Department of Defense, the K-State College of Arts and Sciences, and three school districts and three community colleges in southwest Kansas.

AccessUS was created by Gail Shroyer, professor and C&I department chair, and Amanda Morales, C&I program assistant, to help paraprofessionals who are first generation English language learners in southwest Kansas earn education degrees. The faculty developed a specialized program that included two years of course work at a community college and two years of distance education with K-State. “The purpose of AccessUS was to fill two needs: the need for highly qualified teachers willing to work in southwest Kansas; and, more specifically, the need for bilingual teachers to work with the increasingly diverse student populations in the region,” Morales said.

The 30 AccessUS students successfully completed the program, with the second cohort experiencing a 100% graduation rate, unlike similar transfer students who typically have a 7% graduation rate. Despite this amazing success, funding shortfalls at the state forced the program’s closure.

However, positive news abounds. The Children’s Service League in Garden City named AccessUS graduate Brenda Rodriguez Employee of the Year. Rodriguez now mentors new teachers.

Three College Programs

Rank #1

Commanding Attention

The American Association of Adult and Continuing Education selected K-State’s Brigade Command Team Spouse Development Program at Fort Leavenworth for the 2010 Malcolm Knowles Outstanding Adult Learner Program of the Year.

Cheryl Polson, Ft. Leavenworth graduate program and outreach director and associate dean of the graduate school, led the program development using a multi-disciplinary team approach. The team combines the individual strengths and expertise of faculty from three K-State colleges: Polson and Jane Fischback from the College of Education; Charlie Griffin from the College of Human Ecology; and Donna Whitney-Bammerlin from the College of Business.

The curriculum consists of a unique blend of academic theory and military specific applications that meet critical knowledge requirements for Brigade Command Team spouses. Specifically, Polson’s team provides participants with a personal and professional growth opportunity through which they develop the self-awareness and leadership skills needed to effectively serve as a brigade level command team partner. Using these skills in support of the family, unit, and community environment, key members of the brigade command team will positively contribute to unit and family readiness.

"K-State’s interdisciplinary team received this national award because of the team’s commitment to principles of adult learning and the close adherence to the andragogical assumptions set forth by Malcolm Knowles in the course design and implementation. We were exceptionally honored to be recipients of the Knowles award," Polson said.

Story by Patrie Scott

Professional Development Schools

The College of Education's Professional Development School Partnership received the 2011 Exemplary Professional Development School Achievement Award for its proven success improving teaching and learning for all.

The partnership’s co-directors, Gail Shroyer, professor and Curriculum and Instruction (C&I) department chair, and Sally Yahneke, C&I associate professor, explained the partnership is based on the belief that the preparation of future teachers and K-12 school improvements should be the joint responsibilities of higher education institutions and school districts.

“Students preparing to be teachers are placed in our partnering Professional Development Schools for four different field experiences or internships,” Shroyer said. “The teachers at these schools work in collaboration with faculty from the College of Education and the College of Arts and Sciences to study best teaching practices, to examine and enhance their own teaching, and to plan and implement our teacher education program.”

Making the world a better place one mind at a time.
Tanzania

Imagine what life must be like for an autistic child. Now, imagine what life must be for an autistic child in a developing country.

Marilyn Kaff, associate professor in special education, counseling and student affairs, doesn’t have to wonder because she’s devoted a month each of the last four summers helping Tanzanian educators help autistic children.

“Children with autism are my great passion in life,” Kaff said. “We’ve come so far in the United States in our educational practices (concerning autistic students), but it’s just not at the same level in many developing nations, especially Tanzania.”

Many of these children live their lives without a diagnosis. This trip, Kaff and her four students had a goal to determine what Tanzanian teachers knew about autism and how to build a curriculum for them.

Once the groundwork had been laid, Kaff introduced the 31 general education teachers working for their special education diplomas at the Sebastian Kolowa University College to the Childhood Autism Rating Scale (CARS).

It is a five to 10-minute, observation-based test to determine if a child has the disorder and symptom severity versus an intellectual deficit, Kaff explained.

“When you open your eyes to the needs of other people, it changes you fundamentally,” Kaff said. “A small amount of time, energy and money can make a significant difference in the lives of other people. This is all part of capacity building to build capacity for teachers to serve kids with special needs.”

Guatemala

A three-week study abroad in Guatemala allowed participants to leave the U.S. with assumptions about poverty and return with new perspectives.

This is the fifth year Socorro Herrera, professor in elementary education and executive director of the Collaborative Intercultural and Multilingual Advocacy (CIMA) Center, has led a team of students abroad. She has taken pre-service English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers to Mexico, Paraguay, China, and the last two years to the Apoye en Mi (Lean on Me) school in Guatemala.

The airfare and lodging for 11 K-State students was made possible thanks to the Megan E. Taylor Memorial Scholarship for Study Abroad, which was created by Megan’s parents, Marilyn and Bill Taylor. (Read about Megan on page 15.)

Many of the children served by the school live in the Guatemala City landfill and do not have the opportunity to attend a state school. Herrera explained. The children are bussed in, but often their teachers travel to the landfill to feed them. Herrera said the government distributes special bags to the wealthy to place discarded food in so the children can sift through trash for “safe” food.

“Study abroad experiences go beyond changing the heart of the teacher and reaches deeply into their soul,” Herrera explained. “When you see the children and they’re happy and funny, and when you hear them laugh, sympathy becomes empathy.”

Herrera is a subject matter expert in more than one way. “For me, it’s personal,” she explained. Born to migrant farmers, her family lived in their car and traveled to where her parents could find work. “The things people say about poor people were things people said about me. I feel a sense of urgency in my professional life to show my students that anything is possible with any child,” she said.

Tonnie Martinez, assistant professor in curriculum and instruction and then-CIMA associate director, heard stories about Herrera’s travels. This year she went to Guatemala, and for a person born into a privileged life, dining out now seems indulgent. “The assumptions I had about poverty were blown out the window,” she said. “I will never be the same.”

ETIOPIA

Twelve U.S. educators traveled to Africa thanks to a grant, Ethiopia for Teachers, designed to explore better ways to teach about diversity. The group embarked on a month-long trip in July 2010 where they interacted with Ethiopian scholars, educators, and visited libraries implemented through the non-profit organization, Ethiopia Reads.

Ethiopia for Teachers was a Group Projects Abroad project funded by the U.S. Department of Education’s Fulbright-Hays program. Jackie Spears, director of the Center for Science Education and professor in Curriculum and Instruc-

tion (C&I), wrote the grant. She and Laurie Curtis, C&I assistant professor, led the teachers from across the country to gain insight into the history and diversity of Ethiopia.

Spears said the goal was for teachers to return with lesson plans about the Ethiopian culture they could integrate into their classrooms. “The teachers came home with something far more valuable: a deeper understanding of how to make diversity tangible to their students,” she said.

Curtis explained one participant/teacher, Carol Settgast, took part in an inventive transcontinental exercise for her elementary students in Junction City. Kan. They made books leaving blank space for the teachers in Ethiopia to translate the text into Amharic, one of the official languages. The result was books written in two languages the Ethiopian students could take home and practice reading. During the visit, the U.S. teachers modeled for the local teachers how to make books and other instructional materials.

Settgast and the other participants brought back authentic artifacts such as musical instruments, tools, and clothing to engage students, making an amazing—and very real—tactile learning experience. They also had powerful discussions about poverty, and more importantly, what they had in common with children 8,000 miles away.

For more information, discussion, pictures and ways to help, please visit with these faculty members on the College of Education’s Facebook page.
New Leadership Program Aimed at School District Executives

Mary Devin, associate professor of educational leadership in the College of Education and KELI executive director, wished a similar comprehensive program had been available to her as Geary County school superintendent. “While I was superintendent, we talked about the need for professional support,” she said. “In Kansas, we do a great job of developing teachers and principals, but there is so much more we can do to foster our superintendents’ professional growth. The vision for KELI was to create a program that went beyond theory or sharing war stories, but provided true on-going professional support.”

Pamela Coleman, director of teacher education and licensure at the Kansas State Department of Education, explained much planning was devoted to KELI’s creation and structure. “We sent a group of five superintendents and two KSDE employees to Harvard to assess a leadership program designed for teams at the district level. It was a high-quality program, but not one that completely represented our goals, regulations and laws in Kansas. So we selected the components that worked for us and built the rest,” Coleman said.

Mike Mathes, president of the Kansas School Superintendents Association and superintendent of Seaman USD 345, said there are many reasons KELI was needed. “In these trying economic and politically charged times, now more than ever before, public education needs strong leadership at all levels,” Mathes said. “Superintendents are expected to know everything about the districts they lead, yet nowhere do they receive that type of training. KELI offers an opportunity to provide superintendents with a professionally trained mentor as well as professional development opportunities specifically designed for each person’s district’s needs.”

KELI has contracted with nine superintendent mentors who have initiated relationships with the state’s 26 newest superintendents. “Since July, these new district leaders have had face-to-face visits each month and the expertise of these very successful superintendents on call as needed throughout the year,” Devin said. “What is so powerful about this program is our mentors will be out in the field and teaching the mentees how to survive in the real world while being a conduit for deep learning,” Devin said.

A subtle advantage of this program comes from the power of the partnership. “There were many well-intended programs designed to assist superintendents, but they were fragmented and disjointed,” Devin said. “We believe this (KELI) will be a more efficient and effective approach, and will result in higher performing superintendents and hopefully, increase retention.”

Coleman said there is a high turnover rate for superintendents between three and five years on the job. “Qualitative research indicates the need for on-going professional support,” she said. “For authentic development, all employees need to grow professionally both to enhance employment related skills and desired personal professional growth. We hope by pairing them with a trusted and respected colleague within the framework of KELI they will have the resources available to keep strengthening their leadership skills.”

Why devote a program solely to superintendents? Practical need and research proves the need for KELI.

“We have lots of research and common sense about the importance of the teacher in the classroom, but there is less appreciation for the impact of leadership,” Devin said. “What the research shows time and time again is high performing schools had high performing principals. The superintendent creates the environment where people believe that what they do can make a difference and this collective efficacy that ultimately moves the district forward. The superintendent champions this growth and allocates resources to make it happen.”

Coleman maintains, while there are several factors at play in a school district’s success, there is a direct link between quality leadership and results. “In order for Kansas to create meaningful post-secondary career prepared students – the workforce – school is where that happens. Executive leaders have every opportunity to truly influence that work,” she said.

Mathes described being a superintendent in the current environment challenging. The economic downturn, he asserted, has resulted in a “bottom line” mindset, not one necessarily focused on what is best for students. Often, the good news gets lost. “The media continues to portray the 5% of poorly performing schools across the nation as representatives of the entire system when 95% of schools are doing better than ever before,” Mathes said.

Mathes believes KELI is off to a solid start, which he attributes to Devin, who was named 1999 Kansas Superintendent of the Year. “With Dr. Mary Devin as KELI executive director, we have a proven leader who will guide this collaboration into immediate and future success.”

Dean Fink, a former superintendent and international education consultant, believes this program will bring national exposure. “The vision of the Kansas Educational Leadership Institute provides the roadmap for Kansas to lead the nation in leadership training both in developing new school leaders and in supporting experienced executive leaders,” he said at the May 12th grand opening ceremony.

Coleman and Mathes agree that KELI has entered uncharted waters. “I know of no other program that is a collaboration with as many educational associations as well as private involvement as KELI,” Mathes said. Coleman agreed. “Currently, there are no large-scale collaborative efforts being made that will result in a high-quality, research-based program such as KELI.”

For more information about KELI or to watch video clips from the grand opening celebration, please visit www.coe.k-state.edu/keli or scan the QR code below.

Opposite: Geary County ESD 475 Superintendent Ron Walker and KELI mentor tours USD 475 with new Chapman superintendent Lacee Sell.

Top: KELI executive director Mary Devin leads a meeting on the K-State campus with mentors on Sept. 15.

Left: Mentor Don Wells, retired Scott County superintendent, meets with Bobbi Williams, new superintendent at USD 225. Foxler.
However, it was when Chandler was in college that a special moment happened and would define his approach to teaching. “The College of Education helped lay the foundation for what I am able to do now with learners,” he said. “I remember distinctly an activity on deductive reasoning that we did in one of our methods classes where we worked to dissect an owl pellet without being told what it was. It was amazing to see the level of engagement when we were able to do something hands-on and to use higher-level thinking. Since that day, I resolved to make my own classroom a centrifuge of creativity and problem-based challenges.”

It happened because Chandler capitalized on kids’ interest in video games. “It has always been my belief that we learn much more from designing a video game than from playing one,” he said. “I wanted to see what my students and I could learn if we attempted to do so. We ended up with a crash course in computer science, programming, logic and reasoning, part-to-whole relationships, problem solving, and critical thinking.”

One element that made Chandler’s program and class so powerful was he recognized connections: He realized the power of a high-level exercise and applied that concept to a new situation; he recognized the link between kids’ interest in video games and potential educational benefits; and he saw the similarities between a video game designer’s job and teaching.

“Video game designers essentially face the same task as teachers. They are trying to get young people invested in a difficult task that requires extensive effort,” he said. “Elements of video games like control, interactivity, feedback, and multiple attempts at a learning task…all are relevant tools to engaging today’s learners.”

Chandler worked with pre-service teachers and colleges of education around the state where he conducted workshops entitled “What Educators Can Learn from Video Games.” “I truly believe that teacher preparation at colleges and universities is one of the most powerful avenues for improving Kansas schools,” he said. “I have really enjoyed being a part of that.”

There are many reasons people choose to give to the College of Education.

As development director, I’ve heard profound stories of how a teacher touched someone’s life or others who simply “gave” the value of education and want to be part of the special way it transforms lives.

But there is something fundamentally moving about memorial gifts. Sometimes they are given in honor of a person’s selfless and tireless service; other times it’s to give someone a chance to fulfill a loved one’s purpose or dream – a chance that person never had.

That’s why two families touched by tragedy have made an incalculable difference in the lives of pre-service teachers and their future students. Who knows how many students will truly be affected by the Taylor and Aarstad families’ unbridled generosity.

Marilyn and Bill Taylor, Overland Park, Kan., created a study abroad scholarship in memory of their daughter, Megan, who died in a bicycle accident touring Germany in 1992 as part of an exchange program with her high school hand. The scholarship paid the airfare and lodging for 11 pre-service teachers who traveled to Guatemala and China this summer. To date, 120 pre-service teachers have traveled abroad thanks to the Taylors. “We are both very passionate about helping young people and feel that this is a wonderful way to remember Megan and her interests,” Marilyn said. “We wanted something good to come from this.”

One student wrote in her journal this summer that the trip to Guatemala will undoubtedly make her a better teacher. “What about a better person?” I have a new realization of how strong people are and how much can be overcome,” the pre-service teacher wrote. “I saw people who showed love to strangers and made me feel genuinely welcome. I think I needed to see this generosity for my belief in humanity to be strengthened.”

Mike and Dixie Aarstad of Derby, Kan., are united with the Taylors in intent. Three short years following their daughter Krystal’s graduation from K-State, she died in a car accident on an icy February day in 2004. Through their scholarship, they can encourage others to pursue teaching and share her legacy. “You never want your child forgotten,” Dixie said. (Read Krystal’s and Megan’s stories on the College of Education’s Facebook page.)

To learn exactly why people have chosen to give back, listen to them. We’ve posted a new video at www.coe.ksu.edu/philanthropy for that reason. Their voices – and the intent behind their gifts – are what makes K-State so very different from the other 23 institutions in Kansas where students can earn a teaching degree.

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.
Courting Change

Public schools, with all their flavor and energy, have always made sense to Dwight D. Jones, the College of Education’s 2011 Alumni Fellow.

With nearly 25 impressive years in education, Jones was appointed superintendent of Clark County, Las Vegas — the fifth largest district in the country — in December 2010. With 310,000 students and a $2.2 billion budget, the district’s size is only eclipsed by what’s at stake.

“I think we have no time to waste. Every year that we convene another committee or have another commission, way too many graduates are ill prepared for the world they have to face,” he says.

Reform won’t be easy, with one of the hardest-hit economies in the nation, low graduation rates, and a major need for better outcomes. But he’s done it before in Colorado, first as superintendent at Fort Carson, then as the state’s commissioner.

Jones credits high standards and good work ethic to his Kansas upbringing and education. Jones, MS ’90, grew up on a farm in the western Kansas community of Sharon Springs. The town may have been small (population well under 1,000), but the Jones household was not.

“I have four brothers and four sisters,” he says with a smile. Accustomed to a full house, Jones decided early on where he belonged.

“I knew I wanted to be an educator from about third grade,” Jones says. “I thought we could raise the bar and have higher expectations for young people, and I wanted to be a part of that.”

During his February visit to campus to meet professors and students, he reflected on his time in the College of Education.

“My experience at K-State was tremendously. I had professors that pushed me hard, that encouraged me at the right time. It really prepared me well for the opportunities that have been presented to me.”

And the opportunities have been many. In fact, Jones has served in nearly every role in K-12 education. He spent five years as a classroom teacher at the elementary and junior high levels in Kansas, then nearly a decade as a principal for elementary and secondary schools. From there, he tackled superintendencies and other high-level positions in Kansas and Colorado.

A father of three (son Dallas is a sophomore in engineering at K-State), Jones and wife Jenifer, also an administrator, still have a second grader at home. So the stakes in creating a stronger school system couldn’t be higher…personally or professionally.

“I love my job. I still enjoy visiting classrooms and seeing that lightbulb go off when kids get it. I don’t know another profession that gives you that kind of reward.”

“My experience at K-State was tremendous.”
– Dwight D. Jones

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

Story by Patrice Scott

Haijun Kang, assistant professor in educational leadership, arrived in August from Jackson State University in Jackson, Miss., where he worked as an assistant professor for two years. He received his dual title doctoral degree in Adult Education and Comparative and International Education from The Pennsylvania State University in 2009.

Kang said the adult education program’s reputation both nationally and internationally drew him to K-State.

“I wanted to be part of this great program and contribute to the university’s 2025 strategic plan.”

His expertise is in the fields of adult and online education, and international and comparative education. “I have been working and conducting research in these areas for some years,” he said. “I am particularly interested in online adult learning theories, the impact of educational technologies and social media in adult teaching and learning, and the development of pedagogically sound technology-rich multicultural adult learning environments.”

Kang enjoys sports, especially swimming and spending time with his wife, Haiyu, and son Daniel, almost 2.

Sherri Martinie, assistant professor in curriculum and instruction, also joined the college in August after spending 7 years teaching in Shawnee Mission and the last 12 teaching in Wamego.

Martinie has experience in elementary, middle and high school and wanted higher education experience. “I hope to educate pre-service teachers on effective methods for teaching mathematics and reaching students, to open their minds to innovative ideas, and encourage them to educate students in a way that is engaging and meaningful.”

Martinie’s grandmother and father were both teachers and her father was a high school principal. As the mother of three small children, preschool has “given me a whole new perspective on teachers.”

She and husband, Brian, and twin sons Curtis and Peter, 3 ½, and daughter, Lucy, 2, are at home in Manhattan.

Dan Wilcox, assistant professor in special education, counseling and student affairs, joined the College of Education in 2010 after spending the last 15 years on campus in Counseling Services. He is beginning his 30th year in higher education.

Wilcox’s work spans many professional interests including college student development and career development, counseling and the psychotherapy process, training of new counselors and advisors, and the psychology of strengths, health and well-being.

Wilcox and his wife Beth’s three children, Hannah, David and Emily, are “busy flying in and out of the nest.” He enjoys hiking, which he once rode from Portland, Ore., to Mexico along the west coast. He also enjoys reading, swimming, cooking and listening to live music.

2010–2011 Faculty Retirees

Tweed Boss
Director of Technology/Associate Professor
May 1993 – June 2011

Robert Wolfersberger
Field Experience Assistant
September 2005 – June 2011

Michael Perl
Assistant Dean/Associate Professor
September 1976 – June 2011

Emmett Wright
Professor
June 1984 – May 2011

John Hortin
Associate Professor
September 1980 – May 2011

Gerald Bailey
Professor
August 1972 – December 2010

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Blueumont College of Education Requests

College of Education Honor Roll of Philanthropy
Diversity Leaders Enhance Education

TWO OF THE COLLEGE’S MAJOR CENTERS, both dealing with important diversity related issues, have successfully competed for federal grants since their establishment and recently received extraordinary news.

Charles Rankin, director of the Midwest Equity Assistance Center (MEAC), was informed in September of winning a competition for its region and being awarded $2 million over the next three years. The center includes Kansas, Missouri, Iowa and Nebraska and provides local and state educational agencies with professional development, technical assistance and disseminates information on race and gender equity.

Socorro Herrera, director of the Center for Intercultural and Multilingual Advocacy (CIMA), announced the center was awarded $2 million over the next five years. The CIMA center offers multiple programs for graduate and undergraduate students studying English as a Second Language (ESL).

Dean Mike Holen puts into perspective Charles’ and Socorro’s cumulative contributions. “Most impressively, these awards bring the total competitive funding received to $30 million for each of these centers. It’s hard to imagine two centers in one relatively small college generating $60 million in competitive funding,” he said. “Please join me in congratulating Charles and Socorro and all their staff for the fine work they do to enhance educational equity and opportunity for the children of our state and nation.”

“Preparing educators to be knowledgeable, ethical, caring decision makers.”

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION VISION STATEMENT