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Winter 2009 Bulletin

The Teachers for a New Era Project The University of Connecticut

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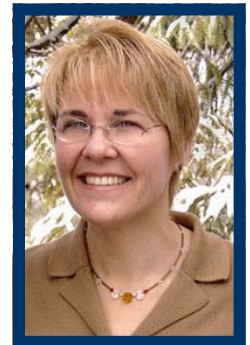
Message from the Director...

As I prepare to participate in the 2009 Conference of the American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education, I am hopeful that the Education agenda of the new administration in Washington will bring a new focus to teacher preparation and to the principles that have guided the work of TNE@UConn for the last five years.

The Obama-Biden administration proposes new Teacher Service Scholarships to improve the recruitment of teacher candidates from both traditional and non-traditional paths. With these scholarships in place, UConn can expect growing interest in the teaching profession. A new focus on the quality of teacher preparation and the deployment of well-prepared teachers to high-need schools will bring new energy to our work here at TNE. A more genuine interest in retaining teachers through mentoring and induction support mirrors our Teachers for New Era efforts to extend the reach of the university to help new teachers become lifelong education professionals.

The new president also proposes to make mathematics and science education a national priority, recruiting math and science degree graduates to the teaching profession and ensuring that all children have access to a strong science curriculum at all grade levels. Again, TNE@UConn is well on board with these efforts, hosting a math conversation in the fall and a science conversation in February, bringing together Neag and CLAS faculty to discuss their ideas for improving education in their respective fields.

Thanks to all who contribute your intelligence, creativity, and energy to enhancing UConn's Teacher Education programs!



Marijke Kehrhahn
Director of Teacher Education/Teachers for New Era

2nd Annual Teacher Recognition Event

When all is said and done, for many teachers, student teaching becomes one of the most memorable and influential experiences when becoming an educator. We would not have these experiences if it were not for the teachers who devote their time, energy and knowledge to the molding of future educators. The Neag School of Education's second Annual Teacher Recognition event will be held this April to appreciate the essential contributions that cooperating teachers make in shaping UCONN students into teachers.

Student and Cooperating Teachers, Mark your Calen-

Visit www.tne.uconn.edu for more information

**April 3, 2009
4:30 to 6:30 pm
Rome Ballroom**



“A great education begins with great teachers.”
- Vartan Gregorian

Math Education Conversation

November 6, 2008

By Dr. Charles Vinsonhaler, TNE Associate Director

Sponsored by TNE, a Math Ed Conversation took place on Thursday afternoon in the Department of Mathematics lounge with two dozen graduate students and faculty in attendance.

After a welcome and statement of purpose by Mathematics Department Head Michael Neumann, participants took turns describing the aspects of education that most appealed to them. Many expressed a desire to engage in some type of research. In response, Tom DeFranco, Associate Dean of the Neag School of Education, described some of the opportunities for research available through the recently created Center for Research in Mathematics Education (CRME). Tom Roby, Director of the University's Q-Center, reported on the wealth of data being generated by the thousands of students who utilize the drop-in tutoring program. Roby emphasized that researchers could mine that data for guidance on improving the learning of mathematics at the University.

Specific issues in curriculum became another popular item. Should the Department of Mathematics offer degrees in mathematics education at the Master's and Doctoral levels? Can undergraduate math courses be more aligned with the needs of education majors? In particular, how can we encourage more math education majors to take advantage of the additional degree option that was approved in 2007 by the university under the sponsorship of TNE?

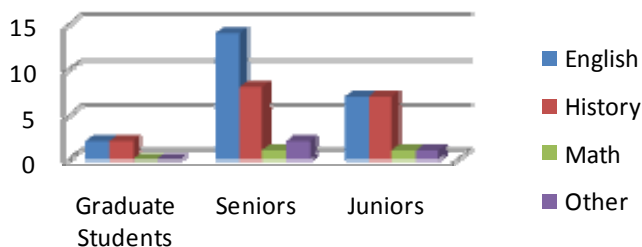
Pedagogy was another focus of attention. What can be done to improve mathematics teaching at all levels – in the schools, by our graduate TA's, by experienced faculty members? One well-received proposal was to offer an additional course or courses on the teaching and learning of mathematics, perhaps opening the door for more mathematicians to become involved in education research.

Next steps include the formation of focus groups to help decide what activities to pursue in the areas of research, curriculum, pedagogy and outreach. A web page will be added to the University's Mathematics website, listing the interests of faculty and graduate students who are involved in math education.

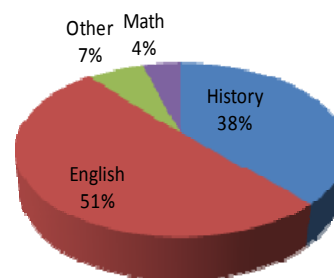
Additional Degree Update

By Ann Traynor, Neag Academic Advisor and Katy Simonds, TNE Research Assistant

Number of Students Currently Enrolled in Additional Degree Program by Graduating Class and Area of Concentration



Percentage of Currently Enrolled Students Receiving Additional Degrees in Subject Area Major



In November 2007, the University Senate approved the TNE Dual Degree Proposal that allowed students enrolled in the Neag School of Education's Integrated Bachelor's/Master's (IB/M) Teacher Preparation Program to obtain an additional degree through the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS), College of Agriculture and Natural Resources (CANR) or the School of Fine Arts (SFA). Since then, many Neag students have been taking advantage of this opportunity.

Forty-five students are currently enrolled in an additional degree program and nine have already graduated with an additional degree (in English, History, Mathematics and Spanish). While all Neag students are offered the opportunity to pursue an additional degree, it is primarily secondary education students who seek the additional degree. With proper planning, Special Education and Elementary Education students concentrating in English or History may be able to pursue the additional degree.

Hopefully, the availability of the additional degree option will increase the number of applicants to Neag, especially in critical shortage areas such as math and science. Providing this opportunity for our future teachers puts Neag graduates at an advantage; having a content area degree gives them a richer background in their content area and allows them to teach advanced placement courses at the high school level.

Spotlight on a TCPCG Graduate: Joe Vincente

By Katy Simonds, TNE Research Assistant

The Teacher Certification Program for College Graduates (TCPCG) program offered through Neag prepares college graduates for the teaching profession with the same high standards and extensive experience provided by Neag's I/BM program. The TCPCG program is a four semester (beginning with two summer sessions) teacher certification program that includes clinical experiences, a problem-based inquiry project and courses in pedagogy and teacher leadership. This masters program culminates with a full time 12 week student teaching placement in the fall semester of the program.

Joe Vincente received his undergraduate degree in chemistry at UCONN in 2006 before earning his master's degree from the TCPCG program in 2007 with a secondary certification in chemistry and physics. Joe is in his second year of teaching at East Side Community High School, a small 6th through 12th grade middle and high school located on the Lower East Side of Manhattan in New York City. Joe is currently teaching 10th grade chemistry and agreed to share how his experiences at UCONN have helped shape him as an educator. ..

Do you feel your undergraduate degree has helped you in the teaching field?

My undergraduate degree (B.S. Chemistry – UConn, Storrs) has been a tremendous asset to me as a teacher. I consistently draw from my content knowledge strength to enhance my teaching. In order to complete the full scope and sequence of a Chemistry degree I was required to take several advanced chemistry and physics classes. I find that my time in those classes was well spent because, even though I will never teach such high-level content, they forced me to have such a deep understanding of the principles that I am capable of finding creative, insightful, and highly interconnected ways of teaching science.

What about the TCPCG program do you feel has benefited you the most as an educator?

There are several components of the TCPCG program that have benefited me as an educator. For example, the modeling of best practices by professors, the building of an online portfolio, and a strong student teaching experience that prepared me for my early teaching years. However, the most beneficial part of TCPCG program was the consistent integration of reflective practice. The idea of the teacher as a “reflective practitioner” is a core principle of the TCPCG program and was taught explicitly throughout each of the program's phases. Learning the value of reflection early in my educational career helped me to form several powerful habits.



What would you say to college graduates considering the TCPCG program?

To anyone considering the TCPCG program, I would say that I made some of my greatest friends and learned extremely valuable lessons in that one intense year that is TCPCG. The program is designed so that you join of a small cohort of students that essentially becomes your family as you go through your first growing-pains as an educator. If you are considering teaching, then TCPCG will prepare you thoroughly and literally jumpstart your development as a teacher.

The Educational Expansions Project

By Mary E. Yakimowski, Ph.D.; Director of Assessment

In 2008-2009, TNE assessment activities are plentiful. A key activity, the Educational Expansions project, is designed to explore the effects of student and teacher characteristics on the pupil performance and to examine the achievement patterns of pupils being taught by graduates of UConn's Neag School of Education's Teacher Preparation Program. By developing and testing statistical models, we are investigating to what degree there are significant differences for pupils in the classrooms instructed by Neag grads in comparison to those in classrooms instructed by non-Neag prepared teachers on the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) in reading, mathematics and writing. We have received data from participating districts and have spent much time cleaning the data from three years so that all data from participating districts can be merged. Variables include, for example, the scores of pupil performance at grades 3-8 on the new 4th generation CMT in reading, mathematics, and writing. Also included are independent variables collected on pupils including gender, race/ethnicity, special education, and English language program status. To date, we are working with over 65,000 pupil records! We look forward to a visit in February from a special consultant, Dr. George Noell, who has worked on similar projects in Louisiana. Our TNE Assessment Committee continues to offer valuable advice on analysis.

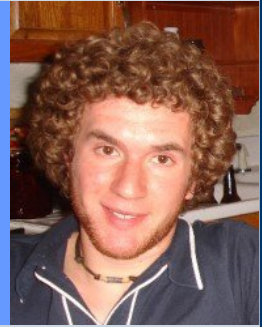
For more information on assessment visit the new website at: www.education.uconn.edu/assessment/

Looking Forward to the Future of Education....

Under the new Obama Administration, what changes do you anticipate in education?

"The prospects of the American education system under an Obama administration seem promising. I think that through increased college awareness and affordability, students will be more motivated to pursue education beyond high school. The idea of a universal \$4000 tax credit in exchange for public service will instill values in young adults and increase social awareness. Furthermore, the reformation of NCLB will increase focus on enrichment, promoting and cultivating students' passion for knowledge. Finally, I am optimistic that struggling schools will no longer feel the need to buckle under the pressure of failure, but instead take comfort in the knowledge that help is on the way."

-Erik Emanuelson, Neag I/BM Master's Student, Secondary English



"One of the positions that President Obama took during the campaign relates to preparing the increasing numbers of students to be ready to attend college. Many students get to college and find that they need to take remedial courses that don't count towards graduation, which increases time and costs required to get through school and can lead to an increased chance of not completing college. President Obama proposed \$25 million annually to states to develop Early Assessment Programs, where high school students can measure their readiness for college during their junior year. This program allows the student, the family and the school to see exactly where the student would stand in basic skill during the junior year."

-Dr. Joseph Madaus Special Education Associate Professor

For up-to-date news and information about TNE, please visit: www.tne.uconn.edu

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The TNE Bulletin was Designed by Katy Simonds, TNE Research Assistant



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