

Celebrating  
**160**  
years  
of education firsts

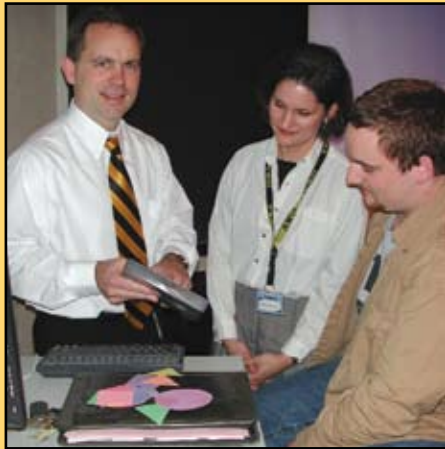
# Education First

The University of Iowa College of Education Newsletter

March 2007

## Remarkable Firsts

### Kelly Selected First Faculty of the Year



*Kelly encourages students to do their best.*

The University of Iowa Fraternity and Sorority Community overwhelmingly selected Clinical Associate Professor **Mitch Kelly** as the recipient of their first-ever Faculty of the Year Award for his hard work and dedication to students.

"There are some professors that are *so* good, they become *that teacher*," said Teacher Education student **Jason Jaffee**. "The type of teacher students insist their friends *must* take. Dr. Kelly is *that teacher*. He inspires countless students in his classes and has become one of the most highly sought-after professors."

Teacher Education student **Lauren Elies'** feelings echo Jaffee's.

"Dr. Kelly is an enthusiastic teacher and you can tell that he is really passionate about his students, which in turn made me more willing to learn," she said. "He continues to help his students any way he can whether he currently has them or previously had them in class."

Rachel Curtis, one of the students who planned the UI faculty appreciation ceremony, summed up the numerous nominations Kelly received.

"Just about everyone said that he is one teacher who is able to keep all of his students interested in every class throughout the semester, is always available outside of class, and is extremely dedicated to helping any student who needs it," Curtis said. "He continuously encourages his students to do their best and he's not afraid to ask for help in finding answers."

Kelly, a former UI wrestler, received his bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees from The University of Iowa.

## Remarkable Outreach

### Teachers, Professors Advocate for Alternative Education

Alternative education, one of the most neglected areas in education, serves youth in alternative educational settings, or settings where there is a high risk of school failure.

"Currently, there are more than 90 alternative schools/programs in Iowa," said **Jen Duncan** (BA '94/MAT '97), instructor at New Directions Alternative High School in Tipton. "They are working examples of the types of schools the UI College of Education encouraged me to be a part of— offering the best practices in teaching. They are places where teachers are facilitators instead of conduits of information. Students feel empowered, safe, and responsible for their own learning. Learners are able to choose from a variety of instructional styles. And teachers and students share mutual respect, adapting and learning from each other."

A number of students and faculty from Iowa's alternative schools gathered at the State Capitol last month at the annual IAAE (Iowa Association for Alternative Education) Legislative Day. This opportunity allowed them to meet with their legislators and share information about their programs.

"In my experience, alternative education school teachers are some of the most creative and hardworking teachers in the state," said Professor **Scott McNabb**. "It's important that they receive financial support and recognition from the state legislature."

The Honorable **Jeffrey Kaufmann** (BA '85 /MAT '90/PhD '00) said his support of alternative education in this state is a direct extension of his time at The University of Iowa and his continuing admiration for McNabb and all the educators giving Iowa's youth a second chance.

"Seeing Scott McNabb again and his continuing passion for alternative education was a reminder of my wonderful experience at the College of Education," he said. "I will always remember the academic quality, but cherish the friendships and the convictions of my professors even more," Kaufmann said.

"My professors, especially **Anne DiPardo**, drove me to look at myself introspectively and examine how I learn best in school and then use that information to reflect on how I can best teach others," Duncan said. "They have made an incredible impact on my life as a teacher."

Duncan says the best part of teaching alternative education students is their honesty.

"Alternative students are always willing to tell it like it is," she said. "Experts in the field of education, they know, better than anyone else, which teaching practices and strategies do not work for them. When you give them the chance to try and figure out what will work, the freedom to tell teachers and administrators their ideas, and a respectful environment where their ideas are not only heard but tried, miracles can occur. I love that I am in a fluidly changing partnership with my students, a partnership made possible by daily, honest conversations about the learning process."



*L to R: Duncan, McNabb, Kaufmann unite at the State Capitol to support alternative education.*

## Remarkable Outreach

### College Partnership Brings Respect, Skills to Students in Need

A new program designed to help special education students learn to manage life after high school benefits from a partnership between the Iowa City Community School District and The University of Iowa College of Education.

Shannon Sullivan-Channon, the district's Transition Services Center facilitator, said the Transitions program increases the students' independence by focusing on living, learning, and working skills.

"With well-planned transition services, students will seamlessly exit the school system and enter the adult world with the services and supports necessary to live most independently," Sullivan-Channon said.

The group, which currently consists of eight Special Education students, meets in a classroom at the College. Sullivan-Channon said meeting on a university campus allows her students to interact with other young adults and practice social skills that many of us take for granted, such as initiating greetings with unfamiliar peers and demonstrating manners appropriate to the situation.



With assistance from the Transitions program, Calea Lockhart (R) improves her independent living skills.

"The students' educational needs are supported in an age-appropriate setting," Sullivan-Channon said, "which strengthens their self esteem. Some students also work on community mobility goals such as street crossing, reading signs, and navigating their community to reach the classroom."

The Transitions program is valuable for both the special education students and UI Teacher Education students. The Teacher Education students receive extra credit or volunteer credit in their Educational Psychology classes for working with the Transitions group while learning more about this diverse group of students.

In a recent class, Sullivan-Channon and her assistants supervised while the Transitions students completed activities such as writing their day's schedule in a planner and completing nutrition worksheets.

This is the first year the district has had a Transition Services Center, already producing many positive results. One of her students has acquired a part-time job. One returned to school to work on earning her diploma after a year away. Another student who was afraid to ride the city bus has mastered riding it independently.

Calea Lockhart, a 19-year-old former West High student is a member of the Transitions group. She said she's enjoyed learning how to do everything from counting money to cleaning her apartment.

"It's a big help because I'm living on my own right now," she said, adding that she's also enjoyed making new friends through the group.

Sullivan-Channon hopes College of Education students will eventually assist not only with teaching the students, but with planning and implementing lessons.



Shannon Sullivan-Channon facilitates partnership with the Iowa City schools and UI College of Education.



Transitions program provides benefits for both special education students and teacher education volunteers.

Education **First** is produced monthly by The University of Iowa College of Education Office of External Relations, Jill Fishbaugh, director. Send items of interest to her at The University of Iowa/ College of Education/459 Lindquist Center North/Iowa City, IA 52242-1529 or by e-mail to [educationatiowa@uiowa.edu](mailto:educationatiowa@uiowa.edu).

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