

Education First

THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA ♦ COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ♦ NEWSLETTER

Education Firsts

Scores Rank First

According to a report released by the UI Graduate College, grade point averages of graduate students entering the College of Education are the highest on campus. Results show the education graduate student average GPA is 3.40 compared to 3.30 for the 11 other UI colleges. Scores for the College's graduate students have significantly risen over the past five years.

On a national level, College of Education graduate student GRE scores lead the nation in every category and have for several decades. Latest results show average GRE total scores (verbal, analytical, and quantitative) for UI education graduate students is 1586, a significantly higher score than the 1485 reported by other education colleges in the nation.

The level of academic excellence demonstrated by College of Education students is not limited to the graduate level. ACT scores for undergraduate students applying to the Teacher Education Program are also well above the national average. Records for spring 2001 admission show average composite scores of students applying for mathematics was 31.5, music 29.0, science 26.5, foreign language 24.8, English 24.6, social studies 23.6, elementary education 23.1, and art 21.3.

At The University of Iowa, excellence in education always comes first.



Visiting Professors Capture the Future of Testing and Measurement



Visiting Professor Cyndie Schmeiser discusses the realities computerizing the ACT test.

Computerizing the ACT test sounds like a great idea. A simple text conversion from paper to screen, right? Guess again. Redesigning the existing ACT test is a colossal and complex endeavor. "There are many practical issues to take into consideration," said Visiting Professor and ACT Vice President for Test Development **Cynthia Board Schmeiser** (PhD 83). "And the end result needs to ensure that all scores between versions of the same test are completely interchangeable."

Schmeiser's contributions to the educational measurement profession are remarkable. "If an informed history of ACT were ever written, Dr. Schmeiser's contributions would loom as large or larger than any other employee in ACT's history," Iowa Testing Programs Director and Professor Robert Brennan said. "At what she does, in my opinion, there is no one better."

In addition to her work at ACT, Schmeiser taught a seminar in applied test development for the College last semester. Both inside and out of the testing world, computerization of the ACT test is a hot topic. Reasons include cutting test taking time, increasing test taking opportunities, and providing more immediate score results. "We have an obligation to use technology in the best way possible," Schmeiser said.

Many important design goals are considered. "Our intent is to design a test that will allow students to focus on the test items and be able to manipulate long passages within the interface and not lose time in navigation," Schmeiser said.

Test-taking strategies will differ between platforms. "Advice on how to pace yourself, how to navigate within the test, and whether to answer every question will likely vary between paper and pencil and computerized tests," Schmeiser said.

With an unlimited commitment to research at ACT, Schmeiser and the research and development team will continue the conversion process by challenging assumptions. "The reality is that technology should not drive assessment," Schmeiser said, "rather, assessment should be driven by substance."

"Considering test purposes to identify what we want to measure then deciding how to best deliver it is the best combination of what we know about development and technology," Schmeiser said.

The future for testing and measurement is growth. "There will be more testing uses for more purposes with more providers, in addition to more accountability," said visiting UCLA Professor Eva Baker at the sixth annual Coffman lecture.

Baker predicts an enormous increase of technological testing jobs. "The markets are up; foundations are rich. High salaries are paid for education reform applications and interventions," Baker said. "In addition, huge corporations believe investments in testing job certification, assessment, measurement, and quantitative methods are the way to go."

And Iowa graduates are the best-trained applicants to fulfill this increasing need for testing design, development, and measurement. "People who come out of The University of Iowa program are the most desired," Baker said.

But the stakes for accountability are high. "In association with student gains, there are huge pressures on teachers and on their students," she said. "It is important for the profession to help people understand what testing says or does not say about the school's function in school quality and individual accomplishment."

Baker believes it is necessary to create and advocate technical monitoring and guidance. "We need to help put testing in its proper place in the discussion of education equity," Baker said.

The Coffman lecture was sponsored by the Iowa Testing Programs and The Iowa Measurement Research Foundation.



Professor Robert Brennan presents UCLA Professor Eva Baker with the Coffman Distinguished Lecturer plaque.

January 2001

Carol Vogt Retires from College, Continues Work with Students

How can I help you?" These are familiar words to visitors in the College's Curriculum Lab from **Librarian Carol Vogt**. With a bachelor's degree in elementary education from Indiana University, a master's degree in education from Butler University in Indianapolis, and a master's degree in library science also from Indiana University, Vogt has been a most valuable resource in the lab for the past 27 and a half years.

We will miss a lot of things she does for us," Associate Professor Kit Gerken said. "Carol was always very pleasant and helpful in finding answers to questions, searching for special resources, and responding to special requests."

Vogt worked with hundreds of students over the years. A few of her most memorable groups were the ESL international students, physical education, and health education students. "Showing them video clips from subject areas plus transparencies from curriculum guides, for example, was very rewarding," she said.

"I've enjoyed working with the students, faculty, and staff and will miss that special contact," Vogt said. However, she plans to continue student interaction with several volunteer opportunities. She's applied to be a Girl Scout leader as well as an educational associate with the public schools.

Vogt not only helped those within the College, but served two terms on the University's Staff Council and planned chapter

meetings for the local chapter of Phi Delta Kappa, the state's largest chapter of the world's largest professional education organization.

Vogt plans to remain active in her role as PDK vice president for programs. "She's done a great job of organizing the meetings and we are grateful to have her continue her responsibilities," said Assistant Professor Greg Hamot, PDK chapter past president.

When there is time for fun, Vogt plays the keyboard as entertainment for nursing homes, and participates in Ceili (Irish), English Country, Barn, and Folk Dancing.

Summarizing her future plans, she said, "I'm interested in trying something other than media center work." With her abilities, knowledge, and experience, many students will continue to benefit by whatever she does.



Librarian Carol Vogt plans to enjoy her retirement with volunteer opportunities.



Dick Dustin, Sherry Watt, and Dennis Maki shared perspectives at Emeriti Luncheon.

Watt Shares Spirit at Emeriti Luncheon

Emeriti faculty help put the present in perspective," said Dean Sandra Damico as she welcomed a group of 30 former faculty and staff to the annual emeriti December luncheon. **Assistant Professor Sherry Watt's** research presentation, *The Spirit of a Woman: A Qualitative Study*, culminated the event.

Watt became interested in the spirituality of African-American college women when her work with this population sparked an interest in researching domains of identity. Examination of the literature revealed to Watt that spirituality was potentially an important part of African American women's college experience. "At some point we all search for a purpose or meaning in life," she said.

Several leading factors were found important in shaping spirituality for the women. They believed relationships are teachers; sisterhood support is valuable; angels in the midst watch over them; internal strength comes from other strong women in their lives; experience of violence and loss helps them understand the value of life; and finding independence, worthiness, and having experiences that confirm their inner beauty affirms them and brings joy.

Watt said the participants also believed in prayers. "Especially the power that a mother's prayers are more significant than their own," she said.

A 19-year-old participant expressed the purpose of life with eloquence, "Find out what your are here to learn; find out what you are here to teach; then act on those things," she said.

Colors of skin may vary, but the meaning of the message is the same for all. Watt plans to replicate this study with European-American college women.



A few entertaining moments captured with Beatrice Furner and Louise Beltramo, Bill Matthes and Sherry Watt, and at table: John Haefner, Harold Engen, Al Hood, Leonard Feldt, Bill Matthes, Charlie Mason, and David Leslie.

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