



## Helping Ignite the Flame African American Students Learn to See Themselves as UI College Students

The College of Education hosted over 50 Cedar Rapids middle school students from the McKinley African American Awareness Program (MAAAP) to share a taste of college life and reveal opportunities that await them at the UI.

Professor **Nicholas Colangelo**, director of the Belin Blank Center for Gifted Education, said he wanted the students to feel comfortable here.

"We believe you can keep taking the right steps and eventually be students here at The University of Iowa. Education is first and foremost about aspiration. It's about what's in your heart."

Students participated in a discussion about the book, *The Skin I'm In*. They heard from a panel of diverse college students about their experiences and advice, and visited with College of Education program leaders about their work.

Amira Nash, a seventh grader at McKinley, said her favorite part of

## Remarkable Outreach



the day was listening to the college student panel.

"They were interesting and smart," she said.

Tashona Marshall, who has served as MAAAP facilitator for the past five years, said the visit provided a great chance for her group to meet positive role models and imagine their future achievements.

"On the bus ride home, our students talked about the importance of receiving an education and that people who look just like them are finding success on a college campus," Marshall said. "I'm sure that years from now many of these very same young people will be UI students because a simple visit ignited a flame of desire within them."

## Yager's Work, Reputation Draws International Scholars



Yager's work with int'l scholars informs science education worldwide.

Professor Emeritus **Robert Yager's** international reputation as a leading science education expert has drawn three scholars from around the world to study under him.

This year, two scholars from Turkey, one from Egypt, (shown with Yager in photo) and five from Joetsu University in Japan said they chose to come to the UI because of Yager's prestigious international reputation.

"We consider him one of the main persons in science education, so I came here to learn from him," Mohamed Moustafa Ali from Egypt said. "The United States is advanced in science education and I can learn far more here than anywhere else."

Yager has extensive experience working with international scholars. He recently directed Ph.D. dissertations for five Turkish students and two Egyptian students. He has hosted post-doctoral students from Malaysia, Philippines, China, Japan, Korea, Australia, Estonia, Israel, Brazil, Indonesia, and Thailand.

"It's an honor for me personally and for The University of Iowa College of Education Science Education Program to have these scholars want to come here," he said. "It's a learning experience for all of us."

## Remarkable Firsts

### McDermott Recognized as Iowa's Best Biology Teacher

**Mark McDermott**, a doctoral candidate in Science Education, was named Iowa's 2008 Outstanding Biology Teacher of the Year by the National Association of Biology Teachers.

McDermott has been teaching at Iowa City's West High School for nine years, and said the award reflects the caliber of people he encounters there.



McDermott named Iowa's 2008 Biology Teacher of the Year.

"It's nice to be rewarded, but I think it reflects really well the type of kids I'm lucky enough to teach and the people I get to work with," McDermott said.

Paul Breitbach, a counselor at West High who often collaborates with McDermott, said McDermott has "great energy, passion, and love for what he does."

"He never questions, 'Can this student make it in my class?' It's 'How can I help this student make it?'" Breitbach said.

McDermott, who plans to attain his Ph.D. in 2009, is researching student learning at the College. His advisor, Professor **Brian Hand**, said the award shows he's integrating that research with his classroom practice.

"We think that's exciting," Hand said. "It shows a strong connection between University of Iowa research and the classroom."

Assistant Professor Soonhye Park, a member of McDermott's dissertation committee, agrees.

"Mark always seeks ways to improve his teaching," she said. "His doctoral study is an avenue to attain that goal, not simply to earn a Ph.D."

The National Association of Biology Teachers recognizes one teacher from each state annually for its Outstanding Biology Teacher Award.

## Hamot Named New Director of UI Center for Human Rights

Social Studies Education Professor **Greg Hamot** was named the new director of the UI Center for Human Rights (UICHR) for a two-year term.

Initiated by a multidisciplinary group of faculty 10 years ago, the UICHR supports the promotion and protection of human rights at home and abroad by providing leadership in human rights research, education, and public service to the University, its surrounding community, the state of Iowa, and beyond.

Hamot has served as a UICHR board member since its inception. He has also worked with the center on its Child Labor Project initiative as chief editor of the curriculum component, assisting area teachers with the creation of six teaching modules addressing child labor issues.

"Greg has been an invaluable contributor to the UIHRC and has just the right mix of energy and commitment to lead it," former director Downing Thomas said.

In addition to his work with the UICHR, Hamot has focused on democratic citizenship education reform work in Poland, the Czech Republic, Armenia, Bulgaria, and Kyrgyzstan. He has also worked on Holocaust education curriculum development in Latvia. For a dozen years, he has orchestrated the UI International Day program, which focuses on a different human rights theme each year.

In addition to his work on democratic citizenship education reform in post-Communist countries, Hamot's research focuses on infusing global perspectives into the curriculum. He is the College of Education

Coordinator for International Students and Programs, and serves as the state director for the "We the People: The Citizen and Constitution" program.



Prof. Greg Hamot

Hamot said he is eager to expand his involvement with the UICHR.

"I am looking forward to the possibility of a new degree program in human rights, the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the center," he said. "I am also looking forward to helping faculty find areas of scholarship, teaching, and service in human rights that can benefit our students and their careers."

## Increasing Accessibility for Disabled College Students

The Iowa Center for Assistive Technology Education and Research (ICATER) will use a \$337,000 three-year grant from the U.S. Dept. of Education to develop technology that will make higher education more accessible for people with disabilities.

Professor **Dennis Maki**, ICATER director, said that one in 11 U.S. college students has a disability. The adapted technologies will help those students succeed in college, and open doors to many more.

"Our goal is to give college students with disabilities a quality and accessible education," Maki said. "This will be done by developing comprehensive training materials and professional development opportunities designed specifically for postsecondary administrators and educators."

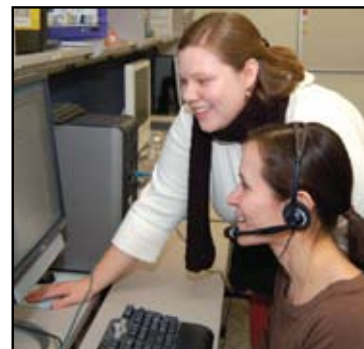
Experts at other institutions are looking to the UI as a model of how institutions of higher education can support and integrate students with disabilities. All materials and training programs will be easily replicable, available free online, and disseminated nationally.

"While higher education institutions usually make accommodations for students with disabilities, the law does not require them to provide the extent of services that students receive in K-12," ICATER coordinator **James R. Stachowiak** said.

Currently, an estimated 705 students with disabilities are attending the UI. This includes students with sensory, mobility, health, psychological, and learning disabilities.

The project will assess needs and measure attitudes at the UI and other U.S. colleges and universities

"There's a significant portion of our population that isn't getting the same college experience and opportunities that everyone else is getting. It's simply not available to them," Stachowiak said. "And there are some simple things that this grant will enable us to do to help open those doors to students with disabilities and make a profound difference in their lives."



Students learn to apply AT to writing with voice recognition software.

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