



EducationFirst

The University of Iowa College of Education Newsletter

October 2009

College Summer Round Up

Although the Lindquist Center halls are quieter during the summer with fewer students, the College of Education is still a busy, productive place. Summer 2009 featured unique conferences, groups of international visitors, and meaningful professional workshops. Some of the summer's events included:

Continuing Education

This year marked the 30th consecutive year the College of Education hosted the Annual Summer School for Helping Professionals (ASSHP). The four-day program drew 175 participants from all over the state.

Attendees learned best practices for working with people with mental health, substance abuse and disability issues, as well as issues of returning veterans, juvenile delinquents, and correctional populations.

"We are directly having an impact on the lives of people who are at risk and vulnerable in their home communities," said Professor **Dennis R. Maki**, ASSHP director for the past 13 years.

Next year, the 31st ASSHP will be held Aug 2-5, 2010.

Teacher Institute

Thirty teachers from across the state also got a taste of student life when they attended "We the People: The Citizen and Constitution Teacher Institute."

"The program provides teachers with important resources such as textbooks, lesson plans, and professional development opportunities so that they can help their students understand the history and principals of our constitutional government," said Professor **Gregory Hamot**, state director of the We the People program.

The institute culminated with the teachers participating in a mock congressional hearing judged by local leaders and political experts.

Equating Conference

Scholars from around the United States, Chile, and Spain converged to discuss test equating at a Center for Advanced Studies in Measurement and Assessment (CASMA) conference, directed by Professor **Robert L. Brennan**, coauthor of *Test Equating, Scaling, and Linking* and author of *Generalizability Theory*, two of the most popular books on the subject.

"In addition to core knowledge about equating from the man who literally wrote the book about it, I learned a practical skill set I will use in my work every day," said conference participant Rebecca Gerhardsein, a project director for Psychological Assessment Resources in Florida.

Twice Exceptionality Institute

Another conference brought teachers and parents together to discuss the educational, social, and emotional needs of twice-exceptional students, or students who are gifted but also have a disability that impacts their learning.

The Belin-Blank Advanced Leadership Institute featured hands-on activities as well as keynote addresses from professors **Nicholas Colangelo**, **Megan Foley Nicpon**, **Noel Estrada Hernandez**, and **Susannah Wood**.

Foley Nicpon noted that the Belin-Blank Center is unique in its expertise on twice exceptionality thanks to its three-year, grant-supported research project on the topic led by Professor **Susan Assouline**.

China BESTS

Twenty-one academically gifted Chinese high school juniors visited the UI Campus for a two-week immersion program.

Jan Warren, Belin-Blank Center administrator for student programs, said she hopes the visit will encourage the gifted students to return.

"We hope their familiarity with Iowa and their strong connection to the Belin-Blank Center will influence their decision to attend the UI," she said.

There is strong evidence that the partnership, in its second year, is a success: of the 38 students who visited last year, 11 began their undergraduate studies here this fall.

Korean Scholar Seminar

The Belin-Blank Center hosted 21 Korean educators for a two-week seminar as part of a partnership between the College of Education and the Daejeon Metropolitan Office of Education in Korea to enhance gifted education in both nations.

The Korean educators participated in classes on the nature and needs of high-ability learners as well as challenging those students across disciplines and encouraging creativity.

"By visiting the Center, they can learn more about best practices that are less common in Korea," said **Laurie Croft**, Belin-Blank Center administrator for professional development.

Remarkable Firsts

Yager's First Taiwanese Teacher's Workshop

After working with Taiwanese elementary school students for the past two years, Science Education Professor Emeritus **Robert Yager** played host to his first group of Taiwanese teachers this summer.

The 14 teachers spent two weeks learning about "minds-on," inquiry-based science education methods and witnessing Iowa City teachers use the methods with their own students.

"It's about placing student ideas, questions, and interests center stage with less focus on teacher plans, directions, and lectures," Yager said.

Yager said the visit was special because the teachers paid their own way and were engaged in what they were learning.



Teachers try minds-on, hands-on learning.

"They wanted to discover methods they could try with their own students," Yager said.

Pi-Chu Kuo (PhD '05), who works at the National Pingtung University of Education, organized the trip. She said she decided to bring teachers this year instead of kids in hopes that Yager's message could reach more people that way.

Kuo said it will be difficult for teachers to use the ideas they learned all the time due to Taiwan's national curriculum, but she hopes they will still find ways to diversify their instruction and imagine their classrooms from a student's perspective.

"I want them to try more hands-on activities and less lecturing," she said.

Kuo said she's also planning a conference to allow the 14 visitors to share what they learned with other teachers.

Supporting Disability, Celebrating Diversity

Congressman Dave Loebsack (D-IA) visited The University of Iowa College of Education to learn about disability research and initiatives.

Loebsack's visit included a roundtable discussion with College faculty as well as a tour of the Iowa Center for Assistive Technology Education and Research (ICATER).

Dean **Sandra Damico** said she was pleased to showcase the faculty and staff's exceptional work in this area at the roundtable discussion.

"This College has been committed for a long time to disability as a subset of diversity," she said. "Research about disabilities and sensitivity to disabilities are major themes here."

Loebsack learned in particular about the Rehabilitation Counseling program, professors **Bill Therrien** and **Brian**

Hand's new inquiry-based science education initiative that promises to be effective for students with behavioral and learning disabilities, as well as about the REACH program, which provides on-campus higher education opportunities to students with multiple cognitive and learning disabilities.

Loebsack also heard about the College of Education's Connie Belin & Jacqueline N. Blank International Center for Gifted Education and Talent Development's unique empirical study of students who are gifted but also have a disability.

James R. Stachowiak, ICATER coordinator, demonstrated assistive technologies he trains College of Education students to use in their future classrooms.

"What we're trying to do is create a new generation of teachers who understand assistive technologies," Stachowiak said.



Stachowiak explains and demonstrates ICATER assistive technology for Congressman Loebsack (R).



Professor Hendrickson (R) brings Congressman Loebsack to visit a REACH classroom.

Loebsack said he enjoyed his first visit to the College.

"Your College of Education is very impressive," he said. "There are so many things going on."

Loebsack made a follow up visit to the Belin-Blank Center

where he learned about the its comprehensive programming.

"It was a great opportunity to share with him and his staff our important work—and to put gifted education onto his radar," Associate Director **Susan Assouline** said.



Roundtable discussion included disabilities leaders (L to R): Bill Therrien, Vilia Tarvydas, Jo Hendrickson, Larry Bartlett, Susan Assouline, Dave Loebsack, Sandra Damico, James Stachowiak, Dennis Harper, and Noel Estrada Hernandez.

Touring the Iowa Center for Assistive Technology Education and Research (ICATER), Virginia Bureau (BA '59) observed technologies students and teachers can use in the classroom and in their learning demonstrated.

After the tour, Bureau remarked, "Visiting the assistive technology center was absolutely the most valuable half hour I have spent in my entire life."

Come see for yourself. www.education.uiowa.edu/icater

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