Education Faculty Happenings Over Summer 2007

Dr. Robert Legutko gave a presentation entitled “Back to the Future: The Practicality of Using Microsoft NetMeeting for Effective Distance Tutoring” at the Association for the Advancement of Computing in Education (AACE) ED-MEDIA World Conference on Educational Multimedia, Hypermedia & Telecommunications in Vancouver, Canada. This presentation was also accepted for publication by the Education Resource Information Clearinghouse (ERIC). His research, “Face-to-face or Cyberspace: Analysis of Course Delivery in a Graduate Educational Research Course” was published in the September 2007 issue of the Journal of Online Learning and Teaching.

Dr. Patricia Coughlin attended the Mid-Atlantic Handheld and Emerging Technology conference in Maryland, and she worked on the third grade curriculum module for the Lower Saucon Township Historical Society’s one-room schoolhouse. Coughlin is currently conducting research on the effectiveness of the DeSales mock interview process for graduating seniors at the completion of their student teaching program. Her research will suggest ways to revise the current program as well as the interview process itself.

Dr. Monica Miller Marsh has been invited to serve on the editorial review board of the Journal of School Connections—a newly founded journal by the College of Education at Kean University. The journal is devoted to research and theoretical perspectives that enhance in-school student learning and teaching practices from preschool through high school.

Chris Heery completed several classes for his doctoral program. He submitted a paper for publication on the possible implications of reducing play in the early childhood curriculum.

Dr. Eve Puhalla was awarded the 2007 American Educational Research Association Special Education Research Special Interest Group Outstanding Student Researcher Award for her dissertation, which examined the effects of explicit vocabulary techniques on the learning and expressive language skills of students who were at-risk for reading failure. In addition, she presented a workshop on advanced reading comprehension strategies in Seattle at Washington’s Reading First conference.

Dr. Lujean Baab, director of the master’s program, developed the instructional technology K-12 program so that it is now offered completely online. Baab attended the National Educational Computing Conference, sponsored by the International Society for Technology in Education, and returned with information and ideas to keep the instructional technology program current. The M.Ed. in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) also received attention when Baab partnered with the Allentown school district to host an English as a second language (ESL) conference and workshop in the DeSales University Center. ESL teachers, students in DeSales’s M.Ed. TESOL program, and invited guests attended, and there are plans to make it an annual event. As there is a growing demand for all teachers to understand language acquisition when teaching students with limited English proficiency, Baab again partnered with the Allentown school district to offer a two-day workshop/conference for Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP), an instructional framework proven to dramatically increase the academic achievement of a student acquiring English.

Fr. John Fisher, OSFS, gave a lecture to the Oblate faculty at St. Mary’s High School in Stockton, Calif., at the opening of the faculty Salesian retreat. He submitted an article for publication to Catholic Education: A Journal of Inquiry and Practice entitled, “In the Flow of God’s New Movement: Dealing with the Death of a Student in the Catholic High School.” Additionally, he submitted an article to Review for Religious, entitled “Suddenly, I Hate Sundays: on Losing the Last Parent.”

Inside This Issue:

Alumni Spotlight 2
2007-08 Student Teachers 2
Notice to Adjuncts 3
Chapter 49-2 3
New Faces 3
Last Year’s Graduates: Where are They Now? 3
Department Tidbits 4
Department Member Speaks at Colloquium 4

RECRUITMENT EFFORTS

The department is working closely with the admissions office in welcoming and discerning prospective students. Specifically, we welcome prospective students to observe classes as well as to meet the heads of the various departments, depending on their availability.

The department worked on a welcoming “acceptance” letter for prospective students that will come out of the admissions office. Finally, we are aiming to have our students present at the various departmental open house forums throughout the year.
2007 Alumni Spotlight

Recently we sent an e-mail questionnaire to last year’s graduates. Below are the responses from four of our Education Department alumni.

Patricia DeMatteo – Teaching playwriting in public and private schools in Sarasota, Fla.

DeMatteo is an actor/teaching artist for the Write-a-Play program at the Florida Studio Theatre. As an actor on the Playmakers’ Tour, she travels to schools all around Sarasota performing a show that encourages students to write their own plays. Schools also have the opportunity to order workshops along with the show package.

In this position, DeMatteo gets the opportunity to go into classrooms and work with the students on playwriting in a more personal environment. To get this job, she had to submit résumés and a headshot before she was even invited to audition. She then competed with many New York actors for this position.

DeMatteo says she never dreamed that she would be able to combine her two passions, acting and teaching, in the way that this job allows. She says she would encourage current DeSales students to never brush off an opportunity. “It might not sound like exactly what you want, it might not pay well, but any opportunity to teach is a gift, and you should value each one.”

“Sometimes the focus of our observations is just on a particular assignment or essay question, but there is so much to be learned beyond what is required to pass a course.”

– Louis Poczak ’07

Desirae Symons – Working in a self-contained autistic class at the Children’s Institute School in Verona, N.J.

In addition to teaching all subjects, Symons imparts life skills, career education, and social skills in her classroom. She feels fortunate to have the opportunity to teach at the Children’s Institute School and notes that working with the staff-support and students is a pleasure.

Symons continues to learn everyday working at such a well-established and successful program. Her parent-teacher conference and back-to-school night were successes. She feels having her students leave the school knowing they learned something is an accomplishment. She has actively participated in IEP meetings.

Casey Horvath – Teaching reading, writing, and math for 5th grade learning support students at Washington Elementary in Allentown, Pa.

Horvath writes that her experience thus far has been amazing and she is thankful everyday for the opportunities Washington Elementary school has afforded her. Teaching 5th grade learning support students has opened her eyes to more of what life has to offer.

“Sometimes the focus of our observations is just on a particular assignment or essay question, but there is so much to be learned beyond what is required to pass a course.”

– Louis Poczak ’07

Student Teachers 2007-08

Student teaching is an intense 14-week assignment. In the fall semester, 4 student teachers taught at the high school level, 3 taught in special education placements, and 15 taught in elementary schools. Those in elementary schools had two 7-week placements—one in a K-3 placement, and the other a 4-6 assignment.

In the spring semester, 27 students are in secondary placements, 25 students are in elementary schools, and 6 students are in special education assignments.
Notice to Adjuncts

The department has compiled a document for the implications of Chapter 49-2. If interested in reviewing its contents, e-mail department secretary Alice Debus and an electronic copy will be sent to you. One change is that the three curriculum and instruction I courses for the three levels (elementary, special, and secondary) will be subsumed into one.

Debus has all syllabi for courses you may be teaching in the ACCESS program for your review. Please remember that your syllabi should be consistent with those courses offered in the traditional day format.

If you know of colleagues who may have retired from their school district and would like to teach at DeSales, please have them submit their résumés to Debus.

If you have any purchasing requests for books or other media for any of your courses, please let Debus know and she will see if it can be procured.

Chapter 49-2 Affects the Education Department

The Pennsylvania State Department of Education has passed legislation implementing new required courses at universities throughout the state. In short, the new legislation will change some of the certification levels as well as add four more courses to those at the secondary and elementary levels. This immediately impacts our freshmen class.

Dr. Eve Puhalla and Dr. Patricia Coughlin worked with Fr. John Fisher, OSFS, to implement the demands of the legislation effectively into the curriculum. Their work is being reviewed, critiqued, and tweaked by all members of the department.

The new legislation has two immediate advantages for our students. It allows them to better address the needs of the diverse student body they will teach. Even if not specifically trained or degree in special education, today’s educators will have students with different abilities or students with IEPs in their room, or could be assigned to teach an inclusion class.

Additionally, three courses in special education and one for English language learners will make our students not only better prepared, but also more marketable.

NEW FACES

We welcome Dr. Eve Puhalla to the Education Department at DeSales University. Having recently taught at West Chester University, Puhalla brings with her a wealth of experience and a zest for teaching.

She earned her Ph.D. from Lehigh University and is assembling an excellent supporting cast of adjunct professors by matching their expertise to the course taught in the special education program. Puhalla is also collaborating with the instruction research group in Signal Hill, Calif., on several projects, including identifying response to intervention techniques in math and identifying critical content in skills that teachers must demonstrate in relationship to the NCTM Focal Points.

The Master’s in Education program and Dr. Lujean Baab, director of the M.Ed. program, are pleased to welcome Mary Rockel as the secretary for the master’s program at DeSales University. Rockel has learned the job quickly and adjusted to her new position. Prior to joining the staff in the M.Ed. program, she worked in the Campus Store.

LAST YEAR’S GRADUATES: Where Are They Now?

Though we are still compiling the list of our informal database “Where are They Now,” we are happy to report that most of last year’s graduates are active in the teaching profession.

Many of our former students are employed in DeSales University’s neighboring school districts including Allentown, Easton, Parkland, Whitehall, Bethlehem, and Palisades, as well as some Catholic grade schools and high schools. While most of our recent graduates teach locally, and a few are teaching relatively close in New Jersey and Delaware, we do have some who are teaching in states across the country, including Florida, Texas, and North Carolina.

Our students are teaching in traditional, inclusion, and self-contained classrooms for students with special needs. Fortunately, they are reporting that they feel well-prepared.

Individually, education graduates are working in some unique environments. One recent graduate is giving a year of service teaching at Nativity Prep—an Oblate-founded Catholic middle school in Wilmington, Del. Nativity Prep serves boys from low-income families who otherwise might not be able to afford a Catholic education. Another alum is doing an internship at Disney World. Close to him, one of his classmates is working in the education department of the Florida Studio Theatre.

Students in a Fall 2007 education class. (Photo: 2007 Phil Stein.)

One young graduate is in his first year of graduate school as an Oblate seminarian in Washington, D.C. One former student has stayed on campus and is serving in student life. To round out the diversity and talent of last year’s graduates, one is writing a novel. Look for the next issue to hear more about this inspiring author and his first masterpiece!
Dr. Monica Miller Marsh Speaks at Faculty Colloquium

Dr. Monica Miller Marsh represented the department well when she lectured to her colleagues at the University’s first faculty colloquium of the year. Miller Marsh presented a chapter of the new book she co-edited, *Other Kinds of Families: Embracing Diversity in Schools*. The chapter she presented was entitled, “Evolving Images: Crafting Family Lives in Colonial Pennsylvania.”

Miller Marsh is the first professor from DeSales to have a book published through Teachers College Press, Colombia University.

The book contends that “the vast diversity found in schools and society today suggests an urgent need to reconsider the ways in which families are currently represented and addressed in school curriculum and culture.”

In the book, Miller Marsh and co-author Tammy Turner-Vorbeck combine narrative experience with critical and theoretical analysis to address issues confronting today’s families. The book features articles written by teachers, students, parents, principals, school counselors, and professors. *Other Kinds of Families* explores families that diverge from the so-called norm, including single-parent, multiracial, foster, adoptive, blended, LGBTQ, and immigrant.

“It offers examples of how both school and university personnel have responded to incorporating all family types into the school community while providing guidance to help readers effect positive and appropriate change in their own classrooms and communities.”

As is the practice of books published by Teachers College Press, it includes questions for reflection and discussion at the end of each chapter.

DEPARTMENT TIDBITS

Dr. Lujean Baab to Present in Paris

Dr. Lujean Baab’s proposal, *Strategies for Fostering Students’ Sense of Connectedness and Ability to Learn in Distance Learning Courses*, has been accepted for presentation in an individual paper session at the Paris International Conference on Education, Economy, & Society (PICOEES) to be held July 17-19, 2008.

Webinar Session at DeSales a Success

Dr. Patricia Coughlin, Dr. Eve Puhalla, and Fr. John Fisher, OSFS, participated in a webinar session using Elluminate Live with professors from other Pennsylvania universities and representatives from the Pennsylvania Department of Education. The webinar addressed the teacher preparation-program review process.