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Pacific Visual Impairment Project

School for Global Inclusion and Social Development, University of Massachusetts Boston

College of Education and Human Development, University of Massachusetts Boston

University of Guam - Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research & Service

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Summary

The Vision Studies Program at the University of Massachusetts Boston in partnership with the University of Guam began in 2010. This partnership was formed to meet the critical need for highly qualified Vision Specialists in Guam, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Palau, Republic of the Marshall Islands, and American Samoa.



Goal

The primary goal of the Pacific Vision Impairment Project (VIP) is to increase the pool of fully credentialed, effective personnel educating students who are blind or have a Vision Impairment in remote areas where services either do not exist or need additional support.



Results/Impacts

The Pacific VIP project was successful in recruiting **20 Special Education Teachers** from the local communities; 6 from Guam, 2 from Saipan CNMI, 5 from American Samoa, 1 from Kosrae State FSM, 3 from Chuuk State FSM and 3 from Pohnpei State FSM. With one withdrawal the project enjoys a **95% retention rate**. 18 of the 19 are anticipated to graduate August 2014.



Approaches and Methods

The Pacific VIP Master's Degree Program utilizes a blended delivery approach of **on-line coursework** and **on-site course/lab work** on Guam, enhanced by integrated field experiences coordinated throughout the academic program.



Conclusion/Next Steps

Teacher Preparation in Low Incidence Professions require creative practices and multiple partnerships. The need for highly qualified personnel in remote areas such as the Pacific Islands can be addressed through: Distance Education, University Partnership, Regionalization and Shared Financial Resources.

Next Steps: Palau, Yap, and the Marshall Islands



State Education Agency Partners

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Pohnpei: Karlina Henry
Chuuk FSM: Ansina Kony
Kosrae FSM: Marbe Martin
Saipan CNMI: Suzanna Lizama
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