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Learning to Lead

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School of Education and Health Sciences

LEARNING TO LEAD

Navigation



Learning to Lead

Learn, lead, and serve: that's what the University of Dayton calls every community member to do, and the faculty in the Department of Teacher Education have certainly answered. They are continuously learning and adapting to the ever-changing landscape of education, leading thousands of students to become leaders themselves, and serving society by producing quality educators.

While this calling is well known on campus, the faculty's response is gaining national attention. The National Council on Teacher Quality conducted the *2014 Teacher Prep Review*, in June 2014, they ranked UD's teacher education program No. 4 out of 107 "Top Ranked" teacher preparation programs. The *Review* evaluated a total of 1,612 programs.

The University of Dayton was recognized for the quality of its elementary education program, specifically early childhood education. The *Review* examined elementary content, early reading, working with struggling readers and classroom management, and assessed several EDT reading and math courses.



National Council on Teacher Quality

Connie Bowman, chair of the Department of Teacher Education, and faculty members Mary-Kate Sableski and Jackie Arnold were proud to see the department's efforts were being noticed.

"We've worked hard to make sure everything we do is grounded in best practice, so it was exciting to know that had been recognized," Arnold said.

The ranking came after extensive review within the department³/₄not to rebuild their strong existing program, but to take a closer look at revamping what was already in place. This included identifying gaps and overlaps in the syllabi and tightening the program to make it more comprehensive for students.

"It was a good chance to assess how the objectives in our syllabi were aligned with assignments, how assignments were aligned with assessments, and how assessments were aligned with our outcomes," Bowman said. "We knew it was all there, but it was a matter of organizing it more succinctly so students can understand the connections."

Aligning the syllabi to the NCTQ's expectations allowed the department to view the program through a different lens, but the main priority was not to sacrifice the values the program was built on.

"We wanted to make sure to reconcile our own goals with the NCTQ's goals³/₄not that they were in conflict, but we wanted to keep them consistent while not giving up one for the other," Sableski said.

"We have a vision for our students and we were not willing to stray from it," Arnold added.

The vision: to create the best quality teachers³/₄critical thinkers, community builders and change agents who can work with diverse populations and handle challenges with the belief that every student can learn. NCTQ, they all agreed, is only one part of that.

The department has taken an even deeper dive into specialized areas of teaching and UD was accredited by the International Dyslexia Association in May 2014 as one of 17 schools that effectively prepares teachers to assist students with dyslexia. They've also developed a certificate for students learning to assist English language learners, and faculty have begun to visit schools to observe and support students during their student teaching period.

Arnold emphasized the level of knowledge, flexibility and passion necessary for this profession. Teaching is an art and a science, she said, to master the content components founded in best practice, and possess the willingness to be lifelong learners like the students they teach.

Beyond the certifications, the faculty takes the opportunity to lead by example.

"I think I can speak for everyone here when I say we try to be the teachers we want our students to be," Arnold said.



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Nick Nagel '13, a graduate of the program who currently teaches math at Centerville High School, said his experience at UD prepared him exceptionally well for his career, referring to one example in particular.

“During a professional development session I was required to do, I realized everything I was learning was easy and familiar because it’s what I was taught since day one at UD,” he said. “The things I learned at UD is what’s expected now for all teachers. Teaching is by no means easy, but it’s easy to adjust to³/₄it’s all I know.”

Bowman, Arnold and Sableski reinforced the importance of going above and beyond to learn, lead and serve both in and out of the classroom.

“We teach our students not just to be teachers, but active participants in the school and integral parts of the community,” Sableski said. “While our Marianist values of community are not recognized by NCTQ, it’s what makes us strong.”

By Erin Callahan '15

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