

FOCUS ON EDUCATION

Niagara University • College of Education • Fall 2008

Key Facts About the College of Education at NU

NCATE Accredited Since 1985

Enrollment, Fall 2008:

- 1,558 students — 818 undergraduate students (including BPS students) and 739 graduate students.

Class of 2006*: Education Students Post-Graduation Employment Rates

- 90.7 percent of undergraduates and 99 percent of graduate students reported being employed (full or part time)
- 87 percent of undergraduate students and 91.7 percent of graduate students reported being employed in an area related to their major.
- 61 percent of undergraduate students reported plans to attend graduate school within five years.

Candidate Outcomes, 2007-2008

- New York State Certification Examinations – 100 percent pass rate among program completers on the New York State Certification Examinations; the Liberal Arts and Sciences Test (LAST) and the Assessment of Teaching Skills – Written (ATS-W)
- 96 percent pass rate average on content specialty tests (CST)

Field Experience/Clinical Practice of Candidates, 2007-2008

- 24,262 hours were completed for service learning in the community.

**Response rate: 50.1 percent graduate; 67.7 percent undergraduate*

College Celebrates First Ontario BPS Commencement

The College of Education held its inaugural commencement ceremony for the Bachelor of Professional Studies Program in Ontario at the Loretto Abbey, in Toronto, in May 2008. Seventy-four teacher candidates were awarded their degrees, representing primary/junior and intermediate/senior divisions. The keynote speaker was the Honourable William G. Davis, P.C. C.C., Q.C. The B.P.S. program is accredited by the Ontario College of Teachers and offered with consent of the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities.



Mentor Connector Program Offered for NCDSB

The Niagara Catholic District School Board, in conjunction with Brock and Niagara universities, has developed an innovative online mentoring and tutoring program. Students are able to log in and receive help for four hours Monday through Thursday for courses in religion, math, science, English, French and social studies. According to associate professor Dr. Vincent Rinaldo, the board is “really committed and invested in this technology,” and has created it to meet the needs of 21st century students. Dr. Thomas Sheeran agrees and feels strongly that “children may be more comfortable working in an online environment rather than face to face.” It is important to note that all communication between tutors and students is recorded for research and review as well as to protect the integrity of both parties. The program is free of charge for students to use and provides a service that has otherwise not been available. The partnership is extremely beneficial because it has allowed more than 65 students to volunteer their knowledge as a tutor and develop a working relationship with the NCDSB. Still under development is the addition of programs for students in seventh and eighth grade by 2010. The faculty is proud to offer this program for both prospective teachers as well as students who will benefit from working with a mentor.

Faculty News and Awards

The LaSalle Educational Club's 39th Annual Scholarship and Awards Banquet was held in June 2008. **Dr. Robin Erwin**, a College of Education faculty member, was recognized for his overwhelming support to the Niagara Falls City School District. One of the annual goals of the organization is sponsorship of educational scholarship for deserving high school graduates.

Dr. Mary Ellen Bardsley was recognized by Kappa Delta Pi as this year's outstanding education adviser for her helpful demeanor, compassion, approachability and extensive knowledge. Her primary teaching area is early childhood; however, she has taught numerous courses at both the undergraduate and graduate level. Currently, Bardsley is the adviser for 41 undergraduate students, yet she is willing to help any student who approaches her in need of help.

Dr. Raphael Heaggans and **Dr. Sylvia Valentin** conducted a workshop on Generating Expectations for Student Achievement. They have been trained as GESA instructors and will continue to conduct workshops on equity issues in our schools. The GESA workshop focused on the link between classroom interactions and high expectations for student achievement. The areas of disparity in the classroom were examined and educators were encouraged to use research-based, proactive instructional strategies and resources to support high expectations and resolve equity issues related to curriculum.

Dr. Roselind Bogner, assistant professor in the school counseling program, is working with the administration, faculty, students and families of St. Dominic Savio Middle School for the implementation of the innovative "Strong Kids" curriculum. Monthly, Niagara University faculty will provide information, as well as helpful tips for parents, grandparents, step-parents, guardians and other family members to implement at home.

Education Students Study Abroad in Europe

In May 2008, 18 education students participated in the study-abroad program entitled "The Schools and Culture of Europe in 2008." Led by two faculty members, Dr. Raphael Heaggans and Dr. Susan Sze, the students visited different schools with the goal of studying the education systems in the Netherlands, Belgium and Germany to see how they function and compare them to the American system.

The trip included visits to: De Kapp public elementary school and the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam; Porta Mosana College and an international primary school in Maastricht, Netherlands; Heinrich Heine school in Aachen, Germany; and ended at the Technisch Instiuit in Massmecheleen, Belgium. This study of the relationship among culture, society and education in these countries helped to broaden the cultural awareness of the participating students. Another study-abroad trip to the Netherlands is currently scheduled for spring 2009.

LaSalle Preparatory School Students Experience Career Discovery Program

Niagara University hosted a full day of career awareness for students from LaSalle Preparatory School in Niagara Falls, N.Y. College of Education graduate students from the EDU 664 Career Counseling course were able to reach out to students ages 11 to 15 to help them discover their interests, abilities and explore possible future careers in April.

All students were able to participate in the Career Expedition Discovery Game to help them learn about possible career paths. "I had fun, it was awesome to learn about career choices and to find out what I'm good at," remarked one of the participants. This game was followed by one-on-one time with the students to teach them how to access and use two career Web sites that enabled them to further increase their knowledge about the world of work and career planning.



*Fulbright scholars visit
the College of Education*

Chinese Scholars Explore Partnership with Niagara

Invited by the College of Education, three Chinese Fulbright scholars at Yale University visited Niagara University in 2007. Dr. Debra Colley, dean of the College of Education; Dr. Chandra Foote

and Dr. Jinyan Huang welcomed Dr. Yizhong Ning, Dr. Yin Zhang, and Dr. Yun Wang to the recently completed Academic Complex. Dr. Colley and Dr. Ning introduced their respective colleges' education programs and discussed potential partnership opportunities between Niagara University and the Beijing Language and Culture University. These included: a Teacher of Chinese as a Foreign Language Program, a Chinese Proficiency Test Program, a Teacher of English as a Foreign Language Training Program at Niagara, and student and teacher exchange programs. This potential partnership would help Niagara students expand their cultural awareness and become more successful educators.

Partnership Established in High Needs School

The College of Education and Academy School #44 in the Buffalo City School District have formed a partnership to provide literacy instruction course work to teachers through the Teacher Leader Quality Project funded by the NYSED. Beyond the grant project, faculty and staff are involved in efforts that can enhance the partnership and lead to sustainable outcomes. The school's student population consists of high age, low achievers and the goals of the project are to help produce students that can be competitive to meet employment needs in today's job market. College of Education faculty is providing assistance in areas of professional development that have been identified to better meet the students' needs. Education preservice literacy candidates are tutoring students at the school providing additional reinforcement in reading.

College Holds Literacy Event

The Institute of Applied Learning and preservice literacy students sponsored a "Trick'r Treater Monster Reader" Halloween literacy event in the family literacy lab to promote reading skills for young students. Over 60 students (ages 3-12) from local school districts and their parents attended one of three hour-long sessions which included engaging activities such as: Bobbing for Books, the Reading Maze, and Tricks & Treats.



NU students and young visitors actively engaged in coloring activities at the Halloween literacy event.

The students were also able to listen to stories read aloud by several volunteers. This event was a great success and involved faculty, education graduate and undergraduate students and members of the local community.

Faculty Present at International Conference in Germany

Several College of Education faculty members presented at the second annual "International Educational Leadership Conference on Learning, Teaching, Leading, and School Development," from July 9-12, 2008, in Muenster, Germany. This international conference was hosted by the University of Muenster and included participants from Niagara University, Canada, Sweden, Germany, Switzerland, and India. Dr. Paul Vermette presented the opening keynote session, "Because it Matters: ENGAGING Teens in their Own Learning." Dr. Frank Calzi, Dr. Leticia Hahn, Dr. Robin Erwin, Dr. Barbara Iannarelli, Dr. Walter Polka, Dr. Mary Ellen Bardsley, Jason Blokhuis, and Norman Green also presented at the conference. A highlight of the trip was a meeting and discussion with the acting Bishop of Muenster, Dr. Franz-Josef Overbeck, with topics including co-operative learning and Catholic K-12 education in Germany.

The international leadership conference was established at Niagara University in summer 2007. The third annual conference will be held in Europe in fall 2009. In addition, an international leadership course was offered on campus this summer with leaders from Germany attending and studying with Niagara University professors. A focus on international partnerships is resulting in the development of new courses to address international issues in education, expansion of study-abroad programs for Niagara University students, and in collaborative research.

Student News and Awards

The College of Education has welcomed two recent graduates to the working community at NU. **Melissa Bonar** and **Joshua Prieur** began working in August 2008. Bonar works in the Institute of Applied Learning, while Prieur works in the Office of the Dean.

Jennifer Sedar, an Orchard Park High School graduate currently finishing her master's degree in special education at Niagara University, has received the Teacher of the Year award at Alva Elementary School in Fort Myers, Fla. Sedar, who earned her undergraduate degree from Fredonia State College, is a third-grade teacher.

Former Niagara University College of Education master's student **Beverly Jacobs** has been awarded her second community service award in four years at the Burlington Civic Recognition Awards Ceremony held in May 2008. Jacobs taught senior-level science at Lorne Park Secondary School in Mississauga for 29 years.

Graduate **Lucia Krul**, '03, was a nontraditional student who went on the study-abroad trip to Maastricht, Netherlands, during her undergraduate studies. Upon graduation, she decided to teach in Belgium at the international school in Antwerp. This would be a fantastic opportunity for recent graduates who are adventurous enough to live in Europe. More information on job availability can be found at www.ais-antwerp.bel/.

Six intermediate/senior biology teacher candidates, under the leadership of instructor **Bob Giza**, presented their "BioIndex: The Resource of the Future" to biology teachers at the Science Teachers Association of Ontario biannual conference. This major conference is attended by hundreds of Ontario's science teachers and suppliers. The BioIndex is an updateable, online compendium of resources created for biology teachers. You can find it at www.niagara.edu/biologyindex/index.htm.

Faculty Scholarship

Kester-Phillips, D.C., Bardsley, M.E., Bach, T., & Brown, K.G. (2008). "But I teach math!" — The journey of middle school mathematics teacher and literacy coaches learning to integrate literacy into math instruction. *Education, 129*(4).

Hodges, S. (2009). Mediation and college counseling: A viable partnership. *Journal of College Student Psychotherapy*.

Huang, J. (2008). How accurate are ESL students' holistic writing scores on large-scale assessments? — A generalizability theory approach. *Assessing Writing, 13*(2).

Vermette, P.J. (2008). ENGAGING teens in their own learning: 8 keys to student success. *Eye-On-Education*. Larchmont, NY.

Drs. Alice Kozen and Kathleen Brown represented Niagara University's College of Education at the "International Conference on Education, Economy and Society," from July 17-19, 2008, in Paris. Their presentation, "An Investigation of Factors that Positively or Negatively Influence Collaborative Relationships in Inclusive Classrooms," derived from a study by Drs. Kozen, **Kristine Augustyniak, Harold Mattie, and Barbara Iannarelli**, examined teachers' beliefs regarding benefits and problems associated with collaboration, components necessary to make collaboration successful, and barriers that interfered with the success of collaborative partnerships. Connections were established for joint research projects with international scholars interested in inclusive practice. Postconference work is already moving ahead with Dr. Umesh Sharma from Monash University in Victoria, Australia.

NU Students Experience Asian Culture Through Study-Abroad Program

The College of Education's study-abroad program in Thailand started four years ago under the guidance of Dr. R. Michael Smith and Dr. Thomas Sheeran. The most recent trip brought 23 students to see the Asian culture and educational systems in July 2008. The trip lasted for approximately 19 days and began with visitations to public, private and special education schools in Bangkok, the capital of Thailand.

Thanks to this program, the university is in the initial stages of conducting a mentoring program with Thai teachers and NU students. It will involve technology-based correspondence to improve the English skills of Thai teachers and improve the cultural understanding and appreciation of NU students.

Niagara Falls City School District Literacy and Math Fair

College of Education undergraduate and graduate students participated in the Niagara Falls City School District's third annual Literacy and Math Fair held on Nov. 15, 2008, at Niagara Falls High School. Students from two graduate methods courses, led by Christine Bialik and Annette Dobrasz, created interactive activities for over 700 students from grades Pre-K to 8.

The fair is a collaborative effort among the Niagara Falls City School District and the Niagara University and Buffalo State education departments. Thanks to this partnership, preservice education students are exposed to creating work centers in both literacy and mathematics. The fair gives graduate students a chance to create the activities and work at the booths with the students. All activities are based on the New York State Learning Standards and the district's Niagara's Choice Literacy Program.

Participants enjoy the chutes-and-ladders game prepared by education students.



Focus on Education is produced two times during the academic year by the Niagara University College of Education. For more information about the college and its programs, contact:

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