

College of Education

A foundation in the institution's mission and clearly articulated institutional, unit-level, and program – level goals that encompass all programs, services, and initiatives and are appropriately integrated with one another. (See Standards 1: Mission and goals and 2: Planning, Resource Allocation, and Institutional Renewal)

The conceptual framework of the College of Education is aligned with the mission of the University and approved by members of the faculty of education. The framework, delineated below, directs the mission, standards, goals, and assessment for all programs offered in Teacher Education, Counseling, Psychology, and Administration. The conceptual framework of the college is grounded in the Catholic and Vincentian tradition upheld by the founding fathers of Niagara University. As a Vincentian university, Niagara draws inspiration from St. Vincent de Paul, who organized his contemporaries to respond compassionately to people's basic needs. Continuing this tradition, Niagara seeks to inspire its students to serve all members of society, especially the poor and oppressed, in local communities and in the larger world.

Mission

It is the mission of the College of Education to prepare educational and mental health leaders, who demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to serve others and who further the values and practices of their respective professions. We seek to inspire our candidates in the Vincentian tradition; and to foster core values of professional commitment and responsibility, professional relationships, and critical thinking and reflective practice.

Members of the faculty of education, through the leadership of the Dean, implement this mission through a strategic plan. The strategic plan for 2004-2011 was approved by the members of the faculty of education in November of 2004 and includes objectives and implementation strategies that frame priorities and critical initiatives and measures over the next five years. Priority areas include enhancing diversity (within the population of teacher candidates, within the faculty, and in the curriculum), providing professional development for full and part-time faculty, continually improving the quality of programs, and establishing partnerships with Pre-K – 12 schools and community-based mental health agencies.

Theoretical Orientation

As a faculty we are committed to developing programs with courses, clinical experiences, and assessments based on the following three complimentary orientations:

Constructivism: Grounded in Dewey's Progressive educational philosophy and predicated on the learning theories of Piaget and Vygotsky, furthered through the research of such modern leaders as Darling-Hammond (2001), Shulman (2005), Gardner (1983) and Danielson (2002), this orientation is based on the belief that knowledge is created and developed by learners and is influenced by the experiences, values, and multiple diversities (e.g., race, class, culture, gender, nationality, exceptionality, language, etc.) of individuals. This perspective drives us to place the prior knowledge and experiences of students at the core of our instructional practice and facilitate their development through meaningful exploration. Constructivist practice invites candidates to be active participants in their own development and to view knowledge--in theory and in practice--as fluid social constructions that are made and re-made through reflective interactions with social, cultural, and natural phenomena (Marlowe & Page, 1998; Foote, Vermette, & Battaglia, 2001).

A Process-Product Framework: Within each program we emphasize the interdependence of process and product in the teaching and learning environment. Within this individualized framework for growth, there are multiple paths in teaching practice and we encourage educators to continuously examine and implement a wide range of research-based practices. This orientation toward examining the interplay of

practice and outcome transforms earlier behaviorist methodology and has been advocated by Good and Brophy (1986, 2003) in the many editions of their text *Looking in Classrooms* as well as by Darling-Hammond (2001) in her work on teacher-testing and performance-based assessment.

Reflective Practice: Self-assessment, peer-assessment, and critical examination of the efficacy of one's own practice are essential dispositions for all educational professionals (Feimann-Nemser, 1990). We believe that reflective practice can be taught with the view of students as knowledge producers in search of meaning (Palmer, 1983). Pedagogy that poses problems rather than transmits content encourages reflective thinking and doing (Miller, 1988, 1993). Educators must be reflective and meta-cognitive themselves in order to encourage these practices in those they serve (Eby, Herrell, & Hicks, 2002; Henderson, 1996; Zemelman, Daniels, & Hyde, 1998). We further believe that interaction with current and future practitioners both extends and promotes such reflection.

Goals of the College

1. The College of Education will demonstrate its commitment to a diverse, inclusive, multicultural, and international society through its personnel, candidates, curriculum, and clinical experiences.
2. The professional development for faculty, staff, and administrators within the College of Education will be substantive and on going with the aim of continuously promoting the quality of programs and extending the current contributions of the faculty and professional staff.
3. All programs within the College of Education will be based upon high standards consistent with our own values, and those of accreditation and review bodies; and will be consistently revised and developed to meet the needs of the counseling and education communities.
4. Candidates and graduates of the College of Education's programs will demonstrate the professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions of outstanding practitioners as defined by our own values and those of accreditation and review bodies.
5. The College of Education, in accordance with the mission of the University, will demonstrate its commitment to expanding professional partnerships and service endeavors to address the needs of the broader community.

Candidates completing our pre-service teacher education programs demonstrate their development of knowledge, skills, and dispositions in relation to the following Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium standards:

1. The candidate understands the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structure of the discipline he or she teaches and can create learning experiences that make these aspects of subject matter meaningful to students.
2. The candidate understands how children learn and develop, and can provide learning opportunities that support their intellectual, social, and personal development
3. The candidate understands how students differ in their approaches to learning and creates instructional opportunities that are adapted to diverse learners.
4. The candidate understands and uses a variety of instructional strategies to encourage students' development of critical thinking, problem solving, and performance skills.
5. The candidate encourages an understanding of individual and group motivation and behavior to create a learning environment that encourages positive social interactions, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation.
6. The candidate uses knowledge of effective verbal, non-verbal, and media communication techniques to foster active inquiry, collaboration, and supportive interaction in the classroom.
7. The candidate plans instruction based on knowledge of subject matter, students, the community, and curriculum goals.

8. The candidate understands and uses formal and informal assessment strategies to evaluate and ensure the continuous intellectual, social, and physical development of the learner.
9. The candidate is a reflective practitioner who continually evaluates the effects of his/her choices and actions on others (students, parents, and other professionals) and who actively seeks out opportunities to grow professionally.
10. The candidate fosters relationships with school colleagues, parents, and agencies in the larger community to support students' learning and well being.

Candidates completing our advanced teacher education programs demonstrate their development of knowledge, skills, and dispositions in the following National Board Professional Teaching Standards:

1. Teachers are committed to students and their learning.
2. Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students.
3. Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning.
4. Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience.
5. Teachers are members of learning communities.

Candidates completing our Educational Leadership programs will evidence their development of knowledge, skills, and dispositions in the following areas based on the Educational Leadership Constituent Council standards:

1. Candidates who complete the program are educational leaders who have the knowledge and ability to promote the success of all students by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a school or district vision of learning supported by the school community.
2. Candidates who complete the program are educational leaders who have the knowledge and ability to promote the success of all students by promoting a positive school culture, providing an effective instructional program, applying best practice to student learning, and designing comprehensive professional growth plans for staff.
3. Candidates who complete the program are educational leaders who have the knowledge and ability to promote the success of all students by managing the organization, operations, and resources in a way that promotes a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.
4. Candidates who complete the program are educational leaders who have the knowledge and ability to promote the success of all students by collaborating with families and other community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources.
5. Candidates who complete the program are educational leaders who have the knowledge and ability to promote the success of all students by acting with integrity, fairly, and in an ethical manner.
6. Candidates who complete the program are educational leaders who have the knowledge and ability to promote the success of all students by understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.
7. Internship. The internship provides significant opportunities for candidates to synthesize and apply the knowledge and practice and develop the skills identified in Standards 1-6 through substantial, sustained, standards-based work in real settings, planned and guided cooperatively by the institution and school district personnel for graduate credit.

Candidates in the School Psychology program demonstrate their development of knowledge, skills, and dispositions in the following areas as recognized by the National Association of School Psychologist:

1. Data-based Decision-making and Accountability
2. Consultation and Collaboration
3. Effective Instruction and Development of Cognitive/Academic Skills
4. Socialization and Development of Life Skills
5. Student Diversity in Development and Learning
6. School and Systems Organization, Policy Development, and Climate

7. Prevention, Crisis Intervention, and Mental Health
8. Home/School/Community Collaboration
9. Research and Program Evaluation
10. School Psychology Practice and Development
11. Information Technology

Candidates in the School and Mental Health Counseling programs demonstrate their development of knowledge, skills, and dispositions in the following areas as recognized by CACREP:

1. Professional Identity
2. Social and Cultural Diversity
3. Human Growth and Development
4. Career Development
5. Helping Relationships
6. Group Work
7. Assessment
8. Research and Program Evaluation