Dean’s Message

There has been a lot of attention recently on the topic of teacher accountability. Many of us watched as the Florida Legislature recently considered “Senate Bill 6” and its companion House bill. This proposed legislation would have greatly changed the way that teachers are evaluated and compensated, with increased attention to be given to student achievement measures as determiners of teacher performance. Proponents of the legislation claimed that the proposed strategies would allow the state to differentially reward the best teachers. Opponents labeled the bill as misdirected and ill-spirited, stating that it would unfairly penalize teachers who worked in more challenging classrooms and destroy teacher professionalism and morale.

In March, seven members of our College of Education and Human Services faculty and staff spent a day in Tallahassee speaking with legislators and their staffers about these bills and lobbying on behalf of teacher education in general. The bills were eventually approved by both chambers after much public debate and then vetoed by Governor Crist, who noted in his written response, “This legislation sped through committees without the meaningful input of parents, teachers, superintendents, and school boards.” While educators across the state are breathing a sigh of relief following the Governor’s veto, there is strong evidence that similar legislation will surface again in next year’s legislative session. Hopefully, future attempts at legislation for teacher accountability will be introduced only after considerable broad based input and support from all stakeholders, including institutions like UNF that are responsible for preparing future teachers.

Legislative mandates may try to define teacher accountability, but my years of experience as an educator have convinced me that accountability is projected from within the educator, not forced upon us from outside. Good teachers already hold themselves and their colleagues accountable—accountable to plan and construct excellent lessons, accountable to give 100% every day in the classroom, and ensure that every student they teach is provided a maximum opportunity to be successful. This accountability from within is far superior to any standard of external accountability.

Colleges of Education are also accountable for the work they do in preparing teachers and other school educators. College of Education and Human Services faculty are highly competent

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professionals who bring excellence to the classroom and to their work with schools and the community. Further, at UNF, our educator preparation programs are approved by the Florida Department of Education, and our teacher education unit as a whole is accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). Meeting the high standards of these accrediting and approval bodies assures that our graduates are better than good—they are absolutely excellent.

Perhaps the most visible evidence of our accountability as a College lies in the individual successes of our graduates. We regularly received unsolicited reports from superintendents, principals, and local corporate employers about the superiority of our graduates among those in hiring pools and the excellent performance of those who are employed. Recently, the excellence of several of our alumni has been confirmed by several awards recognizing teaching excellence:

- Two of the finalists for the 2010 Macy’s/Florida Department of Education Teacher of the Year Award are College of Education and Human Services alumni: Zachary Champagne, who is also Duval County’s 2010 Teacher of the Year and an elementary math/science teacher at Mandarin Oaks Elementary School, and Kelly Burnette, Nassau County’s 2010 Teacher of the Year, who teaches science and student life skills at Yulee High School.
- Of five finalists for the Duval County’s 2010 Teacher of the Year competition, three were COEHS alumni: Champagne, who won the award, as well as Shannon Wine, first grade teacher at Woodland Acres Elementary School; and Terry Woodlief, art teacher at Chaffee Trail Elementary School.
- The finalists for this year’s Florida Times Union Education EVE Award include two UNF alumni: Elizabeth Wierda, Principal, Cunningham Creek Elementary School; and Carol Catlett, second grade teacher, Sabal Palm Elementary School. (COEHS faculty member, Dr. Katherine Kasten, is also a finalist.)

College of Education and Human Services alumni also hold prestigious leadership positions, including:

- School district superintendents of three of our local school districts: W. Ed Pratt-Dannals, Duval County; Dr. John Ruis, Nassau County; and Dr. C. Beth Moore, Bradford County.
- The Honorable Patrick Faber, Minister of Education, Nation of Belize.
- Dr. Barbara Darby, President, Florida State College Jacksonville North Campus.
- Barbara Langley, President, Schultz Center for Teaching and Leadership.
- Nat Glover, Interim President Edward Waters College, and former Jacksonville Sheriff.
- The Honorable Jerry Holland, Duval County Supervisor of Elections.
- The Honorable Betty Holzendorf, former Florida State Senator.
- Dr. Bill Mason, President Emeritus, Baptist Health System.

Certainly this list of accomplished alumni could go on for some time. The point is that UNF’s education alums are accountable professionals and visionary leaders who represent themselves, our wonderful University, and their profession in excellent ways every day. Anyone looking for accountability in education need look no further than the College of Education and Human Services.
After deciding that elementary education was definitely a better fit for her, Hopson enrolled in a graduate program in the College of Education and Human Services at UNF. Hopson applied for and received the Florida School Book Depository Fellowship. She explains that the fellowship paid for the majority of her educational expenses at UNF. “I was an older student, already married with a mortgage, so it lifted a huge financial burden, and allowed me to really focus on my studies,” says Hopson. “Without this fellowship, I would have had to work fulltime and take classes when I could.” Hopson’s first experience in an elementary school while at UNF was during her first pre-internship at Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary School. At the time, this urban school was designated an F school. Hopson says that she was initially intimidated and had never been in that kind of urban environment. However, she was paired with a wonderful teacher, Ms. Dixon. Hopson says Ms. Dixon taught her a lot and made sure she had a rich, meaningful pre-internship. “She showed me that you must develop a personal relationship with each child. Then you don’t see them as a group of kids who are difficult to teach---you see them as individuals.”

When asked what experience at UNF had the biggest impact on her, Hopson describes her internship at Pine Estates Elementary School. This transformational experience allowed her to see what it was really like to be a teacher, making lessons plans, learning about classroom management, etc. Pine Estates is one of four

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DEAN’S EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL

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*UNF Graduate

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Cunninghame’s passion for higher education is apparent in her work. This passion is what united her with UNF. She joined the Dean’s Education Advisory Council (DEAC) several years ago. She says the growth at UNF and DEAC’s increasing involvement in the College and community have made her involvement very meaningful. “The expansion and all that is going on at UNF, as well as the effective leadership of the administration is very exciting,” says Cunninghame. She says that DEAC has attracted some very strong members in the past few years. As Advancement Committee Chair for the upcoming year, she would like to see undergraduate scholarship and graduate fellowship funds increase. She is also excited to work in the effort to bring books to Belize. “I wish to continue to help make the Council known and see it grow in prominence at UNF,” says Cunninghame.

Her participation in higher education has been a driving source in Cunninghame’s work and volunteer life. When asked what launched this interest, Cunninghame explained that as the first person in her family to graduate from college she learned early on that “Education opens up opportunities to do whatever you want in life. To be successful, you must pursue it.”

Currently, Cunninghame is involved with Windera Power Systems, Inc., an innovative wind energy company she helped co-found in 2006. When asked what she does outside of work, Cunninghame explained that she considers her involvement with UNF to be a primary fun, leisure time activity. She is also a proud mother of two and expecting her second grandchild soon.

COEHS Programs

COEHS’s Innovative Urban Education Programs Featured in “Power of Transformation” Video

A new video highlighting COEHS’s urban education programs has been made possible due to the generosity of the Main Street America Group and InMotion Video Productions. This exciting, new video highlighting a sample of the College’s innovative, urban education partnerships can be viewed at:

http://youtube.com/watch?v=1i9rupuY7Qc

The “Power of Transformation” video will be used to build community awareness of successful urban education programs. Featured programs:

1. Urban Professional Development Schools
2. Poetry Stars
3. AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination)
4. SOAR (Supporters of Academic Rigor)

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Urban Professional Development Schools

This two-time, national award winning partnership between COEHS and Duval County Public Schools was established in 1997. The program has a proven track record of positively impacting student achievement, improving teacher effectiveness and reducing teacher turnover in urban schools.

An on-site, clinical faculty member, jointly funded by the school district and UNF, provides supervision of the pre-professional teacher interns, as well as training and individualized support for teachers employed at the school. All UNF teaching interns are required to complete at least one of their pre-service field experiences in an urban school. A UNF professor-in-residence teaches on-site college courses and works directly with each school to help improve the achievement levels of the children.

2009-10 Urban Professional Development Schools:

Elementary Schools:
1. Pine Estates
2. West Jacksonville
3. Woodland Acres

Middle Schools:
1. Lake Shore

Elementary Education: Poetry Stars

Poetry Stars Program pairs the arts with literacy to help close the achievement gap for students in challenged schools. In addition to improving children’s literacy, writing and computer skills, children learn self-confidence and overcome shyness through participation in club activities and performing poetry. The program gives children a chance to blossom and find a source of self-satisfaction.

COEHS students gain extra class credit by volunteering to help with Poetry Club activities and tutor students in reading.

2009-10 Poetry Stars Participants:
1. St. Clair Evans Elementary
2. West Jacksonville Elementary

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Foundations and Secondary Education:
AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination)

AVID is a national program whose mission is to close the achievement gap by preparing all students in the academic middle for college readiness and success in a global society. It has a proven track record in bringing out the best in students and in improving student achievement.

AVID participants are 4th-12th grade students who are capable of completing a rigorous curriculum but are falling short of their potential. Typically, they will be the first in their families to attend college; many are from low-income or minority families.

AVID pulls these students out of their unchallenging courses and puts them on the college track: acceleration instead of remediation.

This year, COEHS began a partnership with Sandalwood High School’s AVID program. UNF students act as tutors in AVID classrooms, helping to infuse high school students with the desire to go to college and a willingness to work hard by providing the support needed to succeed.

School Counseling:
SOAR (Supporters of Academic Rigor)

The SOAR partnership provides COEHS graduate students with the opportunity to hone their skills through real world, field-based experiences in challenging urban environments. In individual or small group counseling sessions, COEHS graduate students provide both career and academic mentoring while helping to raise the middle/high school students’ awareness and aspirations regarding further education. Additionally, Counselor Education majors attend university classes held at partner schools.

The SOAR partnership provides critical, supplementary counseling resources for participating urban schools. COEHS graduate students increase the number of contact-hours of counseling services available, making it possible to provide more one-on-one and small group counseling focused on helping middle/high school students complete high school.

2009-10 SOAR Partner Schools:
Middle Schools:
1. Northwestern
2. Matthew Gilbert
3. Paxon
4. Jean Ribault
High Schools:
1. William M. Raines
When Gladys Prior was 88 years old, a former student gave her an extraordinary thank you. Gilchrist Berg recognized her influence on his young life by naming one of the most generous local teaching awards in the United States in Mrs. Prior’s honor. On February 1, 2010, the UNF College of Education and Human Services held a dinner to honor the 48 outstanding teachers who have received this prestigious award to-date. Forty-five of the forty-eight recipients attended along with many of their nominators. Gladys Prior Award recipients, Mai Keisling (2007) and Patrick Gibbons (2009), shared their stories of the teachers who inspired them to be teachers. Dr. Kathe Kasten and Dr. George Corrick, who worked with Mr. Berg to establish the awards in 1998, were among the 140 dinner guests. The evening was a glorious celebration of teaching excellence.

Years ago, Gilchrist Berg was a student in Mrs. Prior’s 4th grade class at Ortega Elementary School. A nine-year-old fascinated with numbers, Mrs. Prior inspired him to broaden his learning horizons by reading biographies and then discussing the books with him.

“She had an excellent attitude and was aggressive about life,” said Berg. “She pushed you to do better. She found out what her students’ needs and interests were and pursued that.”

Gilchrist Berg, founder and president of Water Street Capital, a Jacksonville investment company, honors inspiring Jacksonville career teachers each year with four awards of $15,000 to spend as they wish. To date, Berg has honored 52 teachers with a total of $620,000. The University of North Florida College of Education and Human Services is honored to be the steward of these prestigious awards.

“Teachers are one of our most important assets. We simply don’t do enough to remind ourselves of their great influence on us every day of our life. Maybe in some small way, these awards will cause others to reflect on the great contributions teachers have made to their lives and the lives of their families.”

~ Gilchrist Berg
2010 Gladys Prior Awards for Career Teaching Excellence

Four Duval County public school teachers received the 2010 Gladys Prior Awards for Career Teaching Excellence, administered by UNF’s College of Education and Human Services. On April 22, for the first time, the Gladys Prior Award winners were surprised on-site at their schools. Dean Larry Daniel of the College of Education and Human services, along with other faculty, staff and friends, visited each school and surprised each winner individually with a letter and the news of their award. This year, Barbara Green, Shannon Wine, Tim Allen and Kathy Poe were selected to receive this prestigious award.

Tim Allen is famous for his explosions at open houses for parents, according to Nancy Broner, School Board Member and parent of former students. One student from the 70’s remembers Allen’s thermite bombs fondly. “Tim Allen was zany. He made learning fun. He would be writing on the board and when he ran out of space he would write on the wall. I loved his ‘News You Can Use’ at the end of exams where he’d give us helpful hints. I learned so much physics from him that I rarely studied it at the University of Florida and passed. He was also the best math teacher I ever had, teaching me how to apply math.”

A teacher at Fletcher High School for 33 years, Allen inspired Terry Cavanaugh, a UNF professor, to become a science teacher. Allen made chemistry understandable, taking abstract complicated ideas and turning them into stories like the Happy Atom Hotel. “As a student in his class, I saw that teaching was an active, dynamic, happy event.” Cavanaugh uses the strategies he learned from Allen in the 70’s in his teaching today.

Allen’s colleague, Connie Boone, credits him with increasing student success beyond his classroom with computer tutorial programs he creates and shares. Allen’s experience working as a chemist helps him provide students with in-depth understanding of how to apply chemistry concepts.

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Barbara Green, a 35 year teaching veteran, teaches vocational and career preparation to adolescents with disabilities at Alden Road Exceptional Student Center. Green’s paraprofessional and students nominated her, citing her tireless efforts to involve her students in the community. Green has recruited business partners to provide funding for school materials and special events such as a river boat cruise after studying about the St. Johns River. Each year she takes her students on an overnight camping trip with the Boy Scouts. Green is passionate about teaching her students to be responsible and to believe in themselves.

Green who has a master’s degree in social work spent most of her career as the director and teacher in the SAVE (Selected Alternatives for Vocational Educational) program for severely academically and emotionally disturbed students at risk of dropping out. Many of these students credit Green with their future success as responsible members of society. One nominator says Green literally saved her life by getting her off drugs and out of a gang.

Kathy Poe, a Fletcher Middle School science teacher, has inspired students to love science for 39 years. She lives her love of science by linking learning to the lives of her students by creating a campus garden, building a pond, planting trees, recycling, and teaming with an art teacher to do a mural of marine life.

Poe feels she was destined to teach middle school as that was the worst time in her own life. She believes every child needs to be challenged, but given time and support to make the best use of their talents. She has 25 students in the district Science Fair, an unusually large number. She is a National Board Certified Teacher, a teacher liaison for the Space Foundation, and a 2007 Princeton Scholar where she studied art history and created a science unit linking Impressionist art works to the weather.

Poe shares her expertise with science educators and continues to enhance her own knowledge. Her first thoughts when she discovered she was a Gladys Prior winner was to use her award to go to Iceland to see the active volcano. Seconds later she was dreaming of the Galapagos Islands, another place to visit to bring science back to her students. One of her most famous teaching tools is a video of herself floating weightlessly in a zero-gravity astronaut training craft. Space education has been a lifelong interest and she wanted to know what zero gravity felt like, so she did it.
To see a first grade teacher inspiring middle and high school teachers in the UNF Educator Preparation Institute is amazing.

Early Easter morning 2006, Wine’s whole world changed. Radarius Jackson, a former student, was shot and killed while walking home from a church-sponsored function with his brother. He had been Wine’s student for three years and was only 13 when he was killed. Wine had left Woodland Acres to work in another urban school, eventually becoming their reading coach. At that point, she was unsure of whether or not she wanted to continue teaching or venture into other avenues. RJ’s death was the deciding factor. Within days of attending his funeral, she called the principal of Woodland Acres, whom she had never met, and asked for a job. She knew that committing herself to children like RJ who truly needed her was where she needed to be. As her colleague, Sue Bell says, “Nobody ever leaves Woodland Acres and comes back, but Shannon did.”

Shannon Wine chooses to teach urban children. She shares her commitment with UNF faculty who prepare teachers at Woodland Acres in on-site literacy methods courses. She has modeled her excellent teaching for hundreds of UNF pre-service teachers over the last 13 years. Wine also shares her expertise with 50 career changers who are teaching, or wish to teach kindergarten through high school.

Urban Professional Development School (UPDS) in Jacksonville. This national award winning partnership between UNF and Duval County Public Schools provides innovative, on-site instruction/mentoring designed to help existing and future teachers become more effective in urban environments. Hopson explains that the UPDS program made interning in an urban school an impactful experience. “In different circumstances, I may have felt thrown into teaching, but with the UPDS program, I didn’t at all. Everyone in the program was very supportive of the interns and understood why we were there and gave us a lot of direction,” says Hopson. “Interns learn that being in an urban school can be a very positive experience,” she says. It is the place where you can actually learn the most if you go into it with the right attitude. You can really develop yourself as a teacher there.”

After graduating in December of 2009, Hopson gave birth to twin boys. “My plans for teaching were put off for a little while, but I hope to get back to teaching next year,” she says. Hopson would like to be hired in Duval County and find a school where she can teach for a long time. She has no specific school preference. “I think with the training I received at UNF, I can make a difference wherever I go,” she shares confidently.
Two of Five Finalists for Florida Teacher of the Year are COEHS Alums

Zachary Champagne and Kelly Burnette were chosen from a field of 72 district winners from across the state.

Zachary Champagne and Dean Larry Daniel

Kelly Burnette and Eric Smith, Commissioner of the Florida Department of Education

Duval County Public Schools’ Teacher of the Year

UF double alum, Zachary Champagne was recognized as Duval County Public Schools’ Teacher of the Year for 2010 at the Eddy Awards on April 29, 2010. Champagne is a fourth-grade Math and Science teacher at Mandarin Oaks Elementary School. He has been teaching elementary school in Duval County for eleven years. In 2007 he received the Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching. Champagne is also president of the Duval Elementary Math Council, a board member of the Florida Council of Teachers of Mathematics and an adjunct professor here at UNF.

Nassau County Public Schools’ Teacher of the Year

UF alum, Kelly Burnette, was selected as Nassau County Public Schools’ Teacher of the Year for 2010. Burnette teaches Biology, Environmental Science and Student Life Skills at Yulee High School. She holds National Board Certification and is a member of the Yulee High School Literacy Leadership Team. Burnette is also the lead author for Educational Tools, Inc.’s CORE (Curriculum Online Resources for Education) secondary science program.
Karen Patterson has been selected to serve as Chair of the Department of Exceptional Student and Deaf Education. Dr. Patterson’s appointment was effective January 4th. She replaced Dr. Len Roberson who recently accepted the position of Dean of the Graduate School. Dr. Patterson is an Associate Professor in the department and has served as the Program Leader for Exceptional Student Education. She is known for her collaborative spirit, high expectations for students, and commitment to excellence.

Linda Sciarratta has received a 2nd Place Outstanding Achievement Award recognition in the University of North Florida's Winter Excellence Award Program. The staff, faculty and students of the College of Education and Human Services know they can rely on Sciarratta's consistent professionalism, knowledge, respect and help. The COEHS Dean’s Office and the college run very efficiently because of Sciarratta's managerial and people-centered skills. In these tough budgetary times, she has worked tirelessly to be innovative in assisting the college to maximize its resources. Sciarratta is a multifaceted, talented individual who is a great asset, not just to the College of Education and Human Services, but to the entire University community.
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