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COLLEGE OF EDUCATION & HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Selected News Releases

UMaine Education Programs Earn Continuing Accreditation

ORONO, Maine -- The University of Maine's professional teacher programs have received full, five-year continuing approval from the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education and the State Board of Education. The unconditional reaccreditation of the College of Education and Human Development's undergraduate and graduate programs documents that it is meeting the highest standards ensuring that subject matter content and how to teach it is a priority.

“Overall, the visiting team found a vibrant and vital teacher education unit proactively headed in the right direction,” says College Dean Robert Cobb. “The accreditation process is an essential quality control measure that keeps us constantly vigilant.”

The intensive review was conducted in November by a joint team of state and national educational leaders, specialists and policymakers, who issued their report earlier this month.

In addition to the cost efficiency of a dual national/state accreditation visit, such a partnership more closely links Maine to the national standards and initial teacher certification system, according to Cobb.

“Our graduates are eligible for Maine teaching certification, but NCATE accreditation makes a big difference in how they are received when applying for positions in other states,” Cobb explains. “NCATE approval is validation that our programs are first rate and our graduates are well prepared to both teach and meet performance-based standards.”

The report highlights the College's collaboration, quality and leadership in a period of unprecedented educational reform and intense scrutiny of the nation's K-12 schools and educators. The examiners state that the College maintains a systematic and rigorous admission process in both its initial and advanced programs and recruits and retains students who have the potential for success in their chosen professional roles. “Students progress through a course of study beginning with the general education (liberal arts) core and culminating with focused concentration at upper level courses in their area of specialization,” the reviewers write. “The sequence is appropriate to the development of a strong grounding in content.”

Among its observations, the visiting team notes that the College has significantly revised its undergraduate and Master of Arts in Teaching programs and established a strong, evolving Professional Development Network with area schools to share in the preparation and on-going development of teachers. The examiners report that “conversations with faculty and school-based personnel offer credible evidence of continued, intensive and beneficial involvement of teacher preparation faculty in on-site Professional Development Network activities. “

The report describes the College faculty as “deeply involved in issues of teaching, pedagogy and scholarship,” and its research centers and initiatives to improve teaching and learning in Maine as “creating a statewide and national context for leadership in scholarship and service.” The report also states that the College cannot sustain any additional cuts and needs further resources to continue to advance program quality, research and service to the region and the state of Maine.

In its recommendations, the report cites the continuing challenge of the College and UMaine in increasing the diversity of its student population and faculty. The examiners call for the College to: establish a formal, comprehensive plan for evaluating programs for revision and improvement; establish performance criteria and greater coherence between the developing academic program and core instructional principles; and to strengthen coordination between education programs in art and music with the College's academic principles and operational procedures. Art and Music Education are currently majors within the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

NCATE is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as the professional accrediting body for schools, departments and colleges of education. Meeting NCATE standards helps institutions prepare teachers for new, stricter licensing standards in many states. Approximately 40 percent of institutions nationwide, which produce two-thirds of the nation's new teachers, are accredited by NCATE.

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