

Grant provides opportunity for individuals desiring a teaching career

2/04/13 ks/kb Idaho area

HAYS, Kan. -- Fort Hays State University (FHSU) has an alternative route to become a middle school or high school teacher that can now be used to get a teaching license in Idaho. FHSU is a leader in the state of Kansas in alternative licensure with the Transition to Teaching (T2T) program. The T2T program is an **on-line** professional education curriculum designed to fill teaching vacancies in school districts and is approved by the Kansas State Department of Education, as well as accredited by NCATE.

"If an institution has NCATE accreditation, we can use that in Idaho," said Cina Lackey, certification and professional standards coordinator for the Certification/Professional Standards Commission of the Idaho State Department of Education. Lackey said that she "liked the online component" of FHSU's T2T program. "Besides the online nature of the program, the other thing that I really liked in the FHSU program was the flexibility of it."

"The FHSU alternative licensure program has had over 300 Kansas teachers go through our two-year program to become fully licensed teachers," said Kerry Schuckman, licensure officer for FHSU's College of Education and Technology. "The feedback we receive from hiring principals and teachers completing the program is overwhelmingly positive. We are excited to offer a high quality online program combined with low tuition to the people of Idaho."

"In fall 2012, the department received a sub-award of \$406,000 from the U.S. Department of Education Project m-NET grant obtained by The Ohio State University, Columbus. Project m-NET is an interstate consortium of higher education institutions, education agencies and non-profit organizations led by Ohio State", said Dr. Germaine Taggart, Chair of the Department of Teacher Education at FHSU. The aim of the award is to take mid-career professionals with a background in the STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) and provide them a path to full teaching licenses while teaching on a restricted license in high-need schools and school districts. Prospective teachers who meet criteria are eligible for scholarships of up to \$3,000 per year to cover tuition and books.

The process to alternative licensure in Idaho, said Lackey, is basically "a consortium between the school district, the candidate, the institution and the State Department of Education."

She added that the process is driven by district need. "For instance, the district needs a mathematics teacher and can't find one. But there is a local professional or business person with a Bachelor's degree in mathematics. That person can take a basic

pedagogy (teaching) course, and if he or she then passes a mathematics content assessment, they can get up to a three-year interim certificate to teach while they complete the educational institution's accredited program. In Idaho, the teacher has to complete the program and pass the certification tests in that three-year window", Lackey said.

To qualify for the T2T program, an applicant must have an undergraduate or graduate degree in the content area or equivalent coursework in the area, a minimum 2.75 GPA for the 60 most recent semester credit hours earned, a passing score on the content assessment required by the state board of education, and be hired to teach in the subject area for which they qualify.

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The T2T website is www.fhsu.edu/cert/t2t/

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