Fort Hays State University

College of Education and Technology

Newsletter www.fhsu.edu/coe Spring 2007

Professional Educators: Prepared for Success

From the Dean

Greetings from the College of Education and Technology at Fort Hays State University! From humble beginnings in 1902 as a branch of the Kansas State Normal School, there has always been a focus on teacher preparation at FHSU. In fact during the first summer of existence, classes were held in a renovated building from the military fort to provide instruction for teachers and those wanting to earn teacher certificates. In 1910, the first four-year bachelor degree in education was approved. Since then over 10,000 degrees have been earned by students desiring technical skills and teacher preparation.

We take great pride in preparing elementary and secondary teachers, school specialists in reading, library media, counseling, and school administration. We also prepare special education and English as a Second or Other Language (ESOL) teachers, community counselors, addiction counselors, and business/ industrial personnel. The College has knowledgeable, caring faculty members who love to teach. They continue to share their enthusiasm for our profession.

The teaching shortage is growing in our region as well as in our state and nation. We regularly meet with superintendents and hear their concerns regarding openings in their districts. We work with the Kansas State Department of Education as we carry these concerns forward and work to implement productive change. The Transition to Teaching program, an alternative track to licensure, continues to grow. The College provides professional education coursework via online delivery to candidates who already hold a bachelor degree in their content area. These candidates are in Kansas classrooms, fulfilling a need for districts, while completing this series of courses.

The College continues its tradition of sharing expertise and providing service to schools and communities through annual conferences. First, the third annual Rural Symposium brought over 60 participants together to listen to national speakers and engage in conversations about rural education issues. The third annual Hispanic Leadership Conference is being planned in Garden City this fall. Participants collaborate and discuss issues surrounding involvement of Hispanics in higher education. The first annual Women's Leadership Conference was held this spring in Hays. Working in collaboration with the Center for Civic Leadership on campus, this event brought together over 200 participants to discuss issues related to women in leadership positions throughout our communities. These dialogues are critical to fulfilling our mission as a College.

Technology is changing how we communicate and teach. The College is involved in several innovative uses of technology. We are in a mobile teaching and learning environment. Technology use is integrated throughout our programs. In fact, most of the graduate programs are available entirely online – Special Education, Building and District Leadership, Reading Specialist, Library Media Specialist and content area Master degrees in education. We are experiencing increases in enrollments in these programs due, in part, to the online convenience. You will find our College to be dealing with cutting edge technology as applied to the school setting and to the distance education of our constituents.

The College is taking a close examination of our mission and our organizational structure. We certainly cannot go backward, nor can we stand still. The College will face monumental transformation in response to the realities of the changes around us. Revolutionary and rapid technological advances, intense economic shifts, changing demographic patterns, and the growing teacher shortage must be acknowledged. We are engaged in dialogue surrounding the new courses, programs, pedagogies and connections needed in order to successfully address our core mission as we "*prepare professionals for schools, business, and industry in a global society*." We are thinking in "future tense" without losing our meaning and purpose.

I am proud to be involved with such a dedicated, caring faculty. It continues to be an honor it is to serve Fort Hays State University as dean of the College of Education and Technology. I look forward to continuing to contribute to the outstanding work that takes place in our college and across our campus. Please feel free to contact me at any time with questions, concerns, or suggestions.

Dr. Debbie Mercer
Dean