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Eastern Kentucky University, Public Relations

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When Nina Coyer was an undergraduate student at EKU two decades ago, she felt “very isolated” as the only deaf person on campus.

Now, believed to be the first “culturally Deaf” professor in the Commonwealth to earn tenure, Coyer is a role model for deaf and hearing students alike at her alma mater. And, as part of a growing deaf community at EKU, she’s far from alone.

Coyer, an assistant professor in EKU’s acclaimed Interpreter Training Program, didn’t realize the significance of the achievement when she earned tenure earlier this year.

“When I became full-time (in 1997), I understood that I would have to work hard toward tenure,” Coyer said, “but I didn’t realize I would be the first. It’s an incredible honor, but I was too busy just trying to do it.”

Any individual who uses American Sign Language and interpreters and moves within and identifies with the deaf community is defined as “culturally Deaf.”

Deaf since birth, Coyer grew up in California, where she was educated in public schools. While in school, she took extensive speech training and communicated by reading lips and speaking to the best of her ability. It wasn’t until she was 19 that she learned American Sign Language. She now uses ASL almost exclusively “because I’m more comfortable with that.”

After receiving a baccalaureate degree in deaf education K-12 and elementary education, Coyer returned to Eastern, where she became the first Deaf person to earn a master’s degree in deaf education in 1985. She taught full-time at the Kentucky School for the Deaf for 12 years and part-time at EKU for nine years.

“It’s always a challenge for me, teaching new students who have no knowledge of sign language, deafness or deaf people,” Coyer said. “My goal is for them to be able to communicate with other deaf people. I enjoy that a lot.”

As a Deaf professor at a University that has about 40 students with varying degrees of deafness, Coyer relishes her “role model” status.

“I’m sure several deaf students here look up to me,” she said. “I try to encourage them to be successful.”

Coyer brings “perspective and experiences that hearing people do not have,” said Dr. Laurence Hayes, director of EKU’s four-year Interpreter Training Program. “She can share things with students that I have never been through. She can educate students, faculty and staff because, coming from her as a Deaf professional, it has a different meaning and impact. Nina is a real asset to our program.”

Interpreting services also are available to Coyer whenever she attends departmental, College of Education and University functions.

“The College of Education is trying very hard to work with me and my deafness,” she said. “I don’t feel I have to stay in the Interpreter Training Program. I can go outside the Department, be more assertive and expose people more to deafness.”

Coyer is thankful that she’s considered an equal partner in the Department of Special Education. “Faculty and staff are respectful, and there are a lot of other places not like this. A lot of people tell me, ‘Nina, you are so lucky.’ That’s why I love my job.”
**Events**

**Fall Career Day Is Sept. 25**

More than 40 employers and graduate and professional schools are expected to participate in EKU’s annual Career Day and Graduate and Professional School Day on Wednesday, Sept. 25.

The event, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the Keen Johnson Ballroom, is designed to help students and alumni from EKU and surrounding universities and colleges explore a range of full-time jobs, part-time opportunities, co-op positions and internships, as well as provide information on graduate and professional school programs.

Fall Career Day is an excellent opportunity for students and alumni to explore career options available to them and enhance their career prospects by meeting and networking with potential employers from a wide range of industries,” said Amanda Tudor, associate director of EKU’s Division of Career Services.

“Graduate school representatives also will be available to discuss professional degrees and educational opportunities. It is a well-rounded event that offers job seekers great exposure to professional contacts and provides employers with an opportunity to promote their job openings to qualified candidates.”

A continually updated list of recruiters planning to attend the event is available at the EKU Career Services Web site, www.career.eku.edu.

Parking will be available in the Statelands parking lot, located across the By-Pass from Roy Kidd Stadium. A shuttle service will provide transportation to and from the Keen Johnson Building.

Career Day sponsors are the divisions of Career Services, Cooperative Education and Alumni Relations, The Graduate School, the offices of Diversity and Services for Students with Disabilities, and The Eastern Progress.

**Challenge Course Host Community Day**

EKU’s year-old Challenge Course will host a Community Day Sunday, Oct. 6.

The event, from 2 to 5 p.m., will include tours, a cookout and, of course, opportunities for visitors to try the various elements of the course, which is located off Lancaster Avenue between the Stratton and Funderburk buildings.

The state-of-the-art experiential learning facility includes both low (10 feet or less off the ground) and high elements (up to 45 feet high) that help individuals and groups explore a variety of skills.

“It is great for improving communication, productivity, leadership and problem-solving, and it’s fun,” said Jason Burton, the course’s new coordinator.

The course is proving popular with University, civic, corporate, athletic, community, youth and social organizations, according to Burton. Typical group sessions are usually four hours, and weekdays and weekends are available for scheduling.

“We specially design programs to fit their needs,” Burton said. “We can make them as easy or as hard as a group needs.”

The course is adaptable to a wide range of ages (down to age 6) and physical abilities. Course users are requested to wear sturdy, athletic-style shoes, loose pants and no dangling jewelry.

For more information, call Burton at 622-1217 or visit www.cwe.eku.edu/challengecourse.

**Off-Campus Library Access Improved**

In an effort to better meet the research needs of students, faculty and staff, EKU Libraries has improved access to library resources for off-campus users.

Students and faculty now can access nearly all electronic resources from off campus with a simple log-in process. An EKU mail username and password will gain access to Blackboard, campus computer labs, and library databases and e-journals.

Dean of Libraries Lee VanOort called the improved access “a hugely important step for the EKU community.”

To access electronic resources from off campus, go to the Libraries Web site at www.library.eku.edu, click on “Find Articles,” choose a resource and log in.

For more information, visit www.library.eku.edu/offcampus, call the reference desk at 622-6594 or e-mail reference.library@eku.edu.

**Kickoff Time Changed**

The kickoff time for the EKU-Tennessee Tech football game in Cookeville, Tenn., Oct. 26 has been changed to accommodate a live regional telecast by WSMV-TV in Nashville.

The game will now begin at noon CDT instead of 2 p.m.

**RDOT Honors Davis**

Dr. Rita Davis, acting vice president for student affairs, received the Department of the Army’s Commander’s Award for Public Service at the recent EKU Army ROTC picnic.

The award recognizes Davis’ “genuine endorsement of the ROTC mission” and said that “her active support of the Colonel’s Battalion Corps of Cadets contributed greatly to mission accomplishment.”

**Team Begins ‘Colonels’ Walk’**

A new football tradition has begun at EKU. Two hours and 15 minutes before every home game, the Eastern football team, along with coaching staff and cheerleaders, will begin the “Colonels’ Walk” in front of Alumni Coliseum and proceed as one unit through a designated area down the middle of the tailgating area in the lower Alumni Coliseum parking lot en route to the stadium.

“This is a good way for our fans to interact with the team and show their support,” said Interim Athletics Director Dan Duncan.

The Colonels host Glenville State Saturday, Oct. 26, and UT-Martin Sunday, Oct. 27. Both games begin at 6 p.m.

**Fort Haunting Scheduled**

The annual haunting of Fort Boonesborough, co-sponsored by the EKU Department of Recreation and Park Administration, will be held Oct. 25, 26 and 31 from 7 to 11 p.m. nightly.

The cost is $6 for adults and $4 for children under 10. Proceeds go toward educational and professional development of students in the Department.

For group rates, call Dr. Jon McChesney, 622-1835.

**International Sweater Days**

The International Office is requesting donations of sweaters, sweatshirts, coats, gloves, scarves and blankets to be given away to international students who are unprepared for cold weather. Items should be clean and in styles that would appeal to college students. They may be delivered to Case Annex 181 on or before Oct. 7.

Call Beth Blanchard, 622-4178, for more information.
The campus remembered the tragedies and sacrifices of Sept. 11, 2001 with several events, including a student-centered service in the Ravine that paid tribute to campus and local police, firefighters and servicemen and all those who lost their lives in the terrorist attacks. Other related events included a tree-planting in front of the Roark Building, a public forum that looked at the event from a variety of perspectives, and a presentation by Sixth District Congressman Ernie Fletcher.
ANOTHER ACHIEVEMENT BANNER – EKU student-athletes are joined by President Glasser in celebration of the University’s record eighth Ohio Valley Conference Academic Achievement Banner. The banner is given annually to the school whose student-athletes achieve the highest grade-point average compared to the average for their school’s student body. EKU’s student-athletes had a combined GPA of 2.80.

LEADERS VISIT CAMPUS – Gov. Paul Patton and Sixth District Congressman Ernie Fletcher were on campus recently, meeting students and community leaders, including President Glasser. Patton spoke at a Richmond Chamber of Commerce luncheon at the Perkins Building, and Fletcher addressed a group of students about how they can serve their country in the wake of the terrorism of Sept. 11, 2001.

Application Process Now Electronic

Human Resources, in conjunction with the University’s Web design team headed by Ron Yoder, is pleased to introduce a new electronic application process.

With the new electronic application an individual can work from any computer, at home or work, to complete an on-line application. The advantages of the new electronic system are many. The applicant can easily change or make corrections to an application. The application can be saved by the applicant, updated and re-submitted for other vacancies without having to complete an entirely new application. The system will provide Human Resources with a database history of all posting and applicants for each position. An automatic response is also sent to the applicant indicating that Human Resources has received the application. New posting templates bring consistency in appearance while saving considerable time in getting the job announcement on-line.

Human Resources will continue to print the applications and distribute to hiring officials, but soon these applications will be transmitted directly to the hiring official without having to produce a paper document.

“The new process looks sharp and will certainly improve efficiency and service to our customers,” said Sheila King, employment coordinator.

Your Resources

by Gary Barksdale, director of Human Resources

The Eastern Progress, EKU’s award-winning student newspaper, has been selected as a finalist for a Pacemaker, the nation’s top student journalism award from the Associated College Press.

The winner will be announced at the ACP’s annual convention, Oct. 31-Nov. 2, in Orlando, Fla.

Newspaper issues are judged for writing quality, editorial leadership, photography, evidence of in-depth reporting, and graphics.

Student editors in 2001-02 were Dena Tackett, Pikeville, and Jennifer Rogers, Lancaster. The faculty adviser was Dr. Libby Erazo.

The Progress has won numerous national awards, including a Pacemaker Award in 1996.