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Closing the Gap

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Education Commissioner Terry Holliday Visits EKU

Last October, Kentucky Education Commissioner Terry Holliday visited EKU with his wife, Denise. Dr. Holliday toured the Model Laboratory School with department of curriculum and instruction chair Dr. Dorie Combs, and met individually with President Doug Whitlock and Executive Vice President Harry Moberly.

Education Dean Bill Phillips hosted the Commissioner and his wife at a private lunch with the President and key members of Eastern's faculty and administration. James Dantic, director of the Model Lab, assisted by Tim Hoover, gave a lunch presentation on the Model Vision.

Following lunch, Commissioner Holliday addressed the EDF 203 students of Drs. Richard Day and June Hyndman and met with faculty of the College of Education and the math department to discuss math transition, educational extension agents, EKU as partner with KDE, the Middle School Center, and the new doctoral program in educational leadership at EKU.

Dean Phillips promised to "help schools and communities get better together. One initiative is to provide transition courses for math, reading and writing so high school grads can come to higher education ready for rigorous coursework." Dr. Holliday challenged students to learn how to embrace technology in their classrooms. Citing the capacities of today's cell phones and laptops, Holliday observed, "We're still teaching 18th century style in a 21st century classroom. So I encourage you as professors to figure out what makes a good teacher for 21st century learning."

Holliday warned the students and professors that high stakes assessment would continue and grow: "Here's what's going to happen. You're going to go out and get that job teaching, and we're going to track you back to your university preparation program. We're going to provide the professors...with data that tells them how effective you are as a teacher."

He also called for more fair teacher evaluations than No Child Left Behind has

allowed. "We cannot let it happen that the only measure we look at is performance on standardized tests." The program has "let us know which students aren't getting it. But...many professors and many researchers will tell you this—there is a concern that maybe No Child Left Behind actually dumbed-down America."

Holliday encouraged the students and underscored the importance of highly effective teachers in building a better Kentucky. "Teachers are the only thing that make the most difference. We ought to be spending our time focusing on helping you guys be great instruction people. And principals need to be great instruction leaders."

Dr. Day said of the visit, "Students thought they were going to hear just another politician. What they heard instead was a leader who not only challenged them to become great teachers, but who wanted to listen to their ideas. And the students did not disappoint. Their questions challenged the commissioner to make good on his idea of producing an online instructional resource for teachers in all areas of the curriculum that would support teacher effectiveness; and an accountability system that evaluated teachers more fairly."

The students responded strongly to the Commissioner's speech. Michael Sparks said, "Dr. Holliday has very ambitious goals for education and I intend to be part of it in the near future."

Andrea James "particularly liked his plan for assessing effectiveness. Too often teachers

pass by year to year just being mediocre; we want excellence."

Dana Winkler "left class sharing his passion for education and with excitement for the future."

At the close of Dr. Holliday's presentation, President Whitlock complimented the students, "I was very proud of the quality and depth of the questions you asked today because I think it is both reflective of how serious you are about this preparation to become teachers. It's also a great testimony to the job our faculty is doing here exposing you to some of the real issues in education today."

Later that day, the class got a "shout out" from Dr. Holliday on his Twitter site: "Great visit today with staff at EKU. Very impressed with students in Richard Day's class and questions they asked in session on [teacher effectiveness]."

Dr. Day concluded, "Not only did the Commissioner inspire our students, but Eastern solidified itself as an active partner for school improvement alongside the Kentucky Department of Education. When the commissioner considers his resources for enhanced student achievement in Kentucky, I feel confident he will think MAROON."

Note: This is the second time Dr. Day has brought a Kentucky Education Commissioner to EKU's campus. In 2008, Commissioner Jon Draud spoke to Dr. Day's class. Draud is a graduate of EKU and a recent addition to the College of Education Hall of Fame.

Counseling Students Exceed National Average

Sixteen EKU students enrolled in mental health and school counseling master's degree programs in the department of counseling and educational psychology recently received National Counselor Certification, passing the National Board for Certified Counselors' certification exam with scores exceeding

the national average by approximately 75 points.

National certification proves to the public and employers that the counselor has met national professional standards. The certification travels with individuals wherever they practice, including outside the United States.

First Ed.D. Awarded to Long-Time Member of University Family

Eastern Kentucky University awarded its first doctoral degree to a long-time member of the campus community.

Margaret Martin Moore, who has earned two degrees from ECU (as well as a P-12 Kentucky Teaching Certificate and a Rank II teaching certificate) and held a variety of teaching and administrative positions on the Richmond campus since 1989, received the Doctor of Education degree in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies during Spring Commencement exercises.

The program, a cornerstone of the University's commitment to regional stewardship, was launched in 2008 to focus on the improvement of P-12 public education.

Moore, who has taught part-time in the departments of Computer Science and Curriculum and Instruction, now serves as Data Management Coordinator in the College of Education's Office of Educational Research, Assessment and Technology.

That she is the first to complete the doctoral degree is no accident.

Moore was one of 15 recruited in 2007 to enroll in a specialist program as the University awaited approval of its Ed.D. degree program. At the start, Moore set a goal to complete the program in three years.

"One advantage came from being on campus. I used the time reading, studying and writing that others had to spend driving to campus," she said.

"I established a strict personal schedule of at least four hours per day devoted to my graduate work and a minimum of 14 hours every weekend, increasing the number of hours during the final semester.

"Another advantage was that I knew early in my program what I wanted to research (and this allowed me to focus my individual course assignments in a way that benefited my own research agenda. The most important advantage came from having a dedicated committee (comprised of Dr. James Rinehart, Dr. Cynthia Resor, Dr. Paul Erickson and Dr. Kim Naugle)."

The program's focus on enhancing educational quality in rural schools is reflected in the two courses that Moore cites as "most influential to me in my personal and academic growth": Seminar on Rural Schools and Communities and Leadership in Rural Settings.

"The structure of the courses allowed the 'head start' cohort to conduct research in six counties in the ECU service region," Moore explained. "We surveyed ECU students, high

school teachers and principals from these counties, and we interviewed individuals from the communities, including some government officials. The focus of the research was 'Discovering a Sense of Place in Rural Appalachia.'"

The research led to two national reviewed presentations and one regional reviewed presentation.

"The process of obtaining a doctorate has taught me many things," she said, "certainly not least of which is that there is so much more to learn. More than any previous educational experience, this process has taught me to question critically at a new level, it has introduced me to new research procedures, and it has reinforced my understanding that determination and persistence pays off."

ECU's doctoral program in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies is structured to attract a diverse mix of teachers and administrators from pre-school through postsecondary education as well as education officials.

For more information about the program, visit www.education.eku.edu/EDD or call 859-622-1125.

The "Call Me MISTER" Program Follows Its Vision

Eastern has joined a new initiative to address the critical lack of African-American male role models in American schools. At South Carolina's Clemson University, Dr. Roy Jones designed the MISTER program (Mentors Instructing Students towards Effective Role Models), which has now become a national initiative.

The mission of MISTER is to increase the pool of available teachers from a broader, more diverse background, particularly among the lowest-performing elementary schools. The program is open to all students enrolled at Eastern Kentucky University, not just males. This teacher leadership program gives "MISTER Scholars" the tools for success as pre-service teachers poised for successful careers in elementary schools. In addition to undergraduate and graduate level funding, the program helps MISTER Scholars attend national, regional and local educational

conferences that will enhance their knowledge, network and skills in the field of education.

Practical, professional and inspirational, the MISTER program has developed a powerful vision statement: "I am a dedicated Servant-Leader who is perpetuating a sorely needed concept, Servant-Leaders as role models in elementary schools. I am devoted to planting seeds of dignity and respect in children, and inspiring them to cultivate those seeds that will produce a crop of unprecedented success. I will teach reading, writing and arithmetic and progress to self-esteem, imagination and determination. Because of my immeasurable promise, not only have I earned your respect but I demand it! A title is only important if one's character and integrity dictate its use. So, when you address me, please verbalize my destiny, please do not call me by my first name, call me in reference to my great vision... Call Me MISTER."

Coyer Honored for Service to the Deaf

In September 2009, Nina Coyer, assistant professor at the Center on Deafness, attended the Kentucky Association of the Deaf (KAD) 42nd Biennial Conference at Cumberland Falls. She was surprised to receive two awards. First was KAD's President's Outstanding Award in appreciation for distinguished service to the Deaf Community. The second was the National Association of the Deaf's (NAD) Golden Hand Award in recognition of valuable contribution to KAD.

Interpreters Respond to Statewide Demand

The 2008/09 school year brought numerous training opportunities for educational interpreters across the state. The ECU Interpreter Outreach program provided in excess of 40 training dates with 1,238 attendees and included 3 online forums. In-service/PD training reached 6 school districts from Pikeville to Paducah. Collaboration with the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) helped interpreters working in the legal settings meet training criteria for the national specialist certification. Special training opportunities were also available in vocational rehabilitation and in mental health settings through collaboration with the

Department of Mental Health. A statewide training session for interpreters working with deaf-blind individuals and a deaf-blind retreat was organized with Vocational Rehabilitation in Jabez.

In 2009/2010 the Interpreter Outreach team provided seven sessions on ethics, roles and responsibilities, and exploring sensitive content and use of strong language. The Outreach Program has worked with the Administrative Office of the Courts and Street Law Institute of Silver Spring, Md. to provide training to 48 interpreters (both spoken and sign language) in the courts system on language issues in the courtroom and to ten

interpreters preparing to take the national written legal exam.

In November our ITP students will be working with the Kentucky School for the Deaf "Hands Alive" program. Audrey Lambert, Outreach team member, will present in Morehead on ethical decision making in the educational setting and role and responsibilities of interpreters.

In December, 2009 the Outreach team coordinated "Personal Preparation for Working in Deafness Related Professions" for a presentation by the Leadership Institute of Colorado.

EKU Student Worker of the Year Award Goes to Sophomore in COE Office of the Dean

ECU's Richmond campus employs more than 600 students. This year, 26 were nominated for the student employment office's Student Worker of the Year award. Five of these outstanding nominees work in the College of Education: Caitlin Abbott in Teacher Education Services; Kendra Bailey in the Educational Collaborative for State Agency Children; Madeline Salmons in the Model Laboratory School; Jessica Humphrey and Melinda Ballinger in the office of the dean.

The office of the dean proudly announces that sophomore Melinda Ballinger won this year's award. Melinda has been accepted into the education program and aspires to be a kindergarten teacher. The administrative assistants nominating Melinda cite her "organization, attention to detail, creativity and task completion. It takes only a suggestion that 'this might be something we want to do' and it is a done deal." For example, when Dean Bill Phillips requested that the office reduce

paper records as part of a "go green" initiative, Melinda scanned the contents of every binder of copied documents, saving them to electronic folders which are now stored on an off-site server. This project has been so

successful that she will present it to the entire administrative staff of the college.

The College of Education is proud of all of its student workers, recognizing the impact they have on the work life of the offices.



Student Teacher Helps Rehab Rural Library

The Green Hills Elementary School Library in Harlan County is getting a significant facelift, thanks in part to members of the Kentucky Education Association-Student Program (KEA-SP) chapter at ECU's Corbin campus.

The driving force behind the renovations was Valerie Osborne, an ECU senior who has served Green Hills as a volunteer and substitute teacher for the past eight years and is now completing her student teaching assignment. Located in the rural community of Bledsoe, Green Hills counts approximately 175 students and has sustained significant water damage. Osborne and KEA-SP President Denise Lewis applied for a grant through Outreach to Teach, a KEA program that selects one or two public schools annually that are in need of a make-over. Photos of a blue tarp suspended from the Green Hills library ceiling prompted a record donation of \$6,000 toward the project.

A hole had been cut at the tarp's lowest point, funneling water into a large trashcan. The Green Hills students teasingly called their library "Blanton Falls," in honor of librarian Brenda Blanton.



The first phase of the renovations was completed in early April. Several Corbin KEA-SP students painted the library's walls and numerous bookshelves, assisted by Green Hills personnel and other volunteers. The Harlan County School District has now installed a new roof above the library.

In May, students from area KEA-SP programs and volunteers joined Corbin KEA-SP to complete the second phase. This one-day blitz resulted in a total redesign of the library. A special reading area was created and hundreds of books were re-shelved. A mural depicting a real waterfall was painted on one of the library's walls.

Generous Givers...

The College of Education at Eastern Kentucky University receives monetary donations from many people. These gifts support many programs for our students and our service region that would otherwise remain unfunded burning ideas. Please send your gift to EKU Foundation, Development Office, Eastern Kentucky University, CPO 19A, 521 Lancaster Avenue, Richmond, Kentucky 40475. Please specify the College of Education as the recipient of your donation.

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