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# Closing the Gap

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# Closing The Gap

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## EKU Plans Regional Education Extension System

by Nancy Rodriguez

Published February 17, 2009  
in the Louisville Courier-Journal  
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Eastern Kentucky University plans to place seven education extension agents in the field next fall to help boost school achievement in 22 counties in its region.

The agents -- who will be similar to agricultural extension agents -- will work with education and community leaders in those counties and use ECU's resources and expertise to identify education needs.

University officials believe the initiative, which they announced last week, is the first of its kind undertaken by a regional comprehensive university anywhere in the country.

"Strategic investments such as this will go a long way toward strengthening our region of Kentucky and stamp ECU as an innovative leader in regional stewardship, not only in Kentucky but across the nation," ECU President Doug Whitlock said in a statement.

The initiative is being funded with \$260,000 in regional grant funds through the Commonwealth's Regional Stewardship Program, which the Kentucky Council on Post-secondary Education administers.

The 22 counties, which make up the university's primary-service area, are Bell, Boyle, Casey, Clay, Estill, Garrard, Harlan, Jackson, Knox, Laurel, Lee, Leslie, Lincoln, Madison, McCreary, Owsley, Perry, Powell, Pulaski, Rockcastle, Wayne and Whitley.

EKU Education Dean Bill Phillips, who is helping to coordinate the initiative with the university's Office of Regional Stewardship, said Whitlock developed the idea of employing the education extension agents. He said Whitlock "continually emphasizes regional stewardship as a cornerstone of the university's strategic plan."

"We want to provide resources from the university and commonwealth to help schools improve in ways that they identify," Phillips added. "Ultimately, we'd like to see student achievement improve in the public schools."

He said the agents will work closely with ECU faculty -- specifically through the Center for Educational Research in Appalachia -- to provide school districts with data, data analysis and research that they might not otherwise have.

Students in ECU's Educational Leadership and Policy Studies doctoral program also will be a "great resource" for the agents, Phillips said.

Bob Shadur, director of the Office of Regional Stewardship, said each agent will have a dual role: coordinate delivery of educational services and programs tailored to the needs of each school district, and coordinate the delivery of community services and programs, most likely at school sites.

Each agent will work with a local community resource council -- which will be established by the agents in collaboration with community and school leaders.

"This is anything but a one-size-fits-all model," Shadur said.

He said that ECU hopes to employ agents from the communities they would serve -- people who would know the communities and be well-known and respected.

The goals for each agent, while varying according to local needs, might include increased school attendance, lower dropout rates, improved literacy, improved performance in science and mathematics, an increase in applications to colleges and a decrease in the need for remediation.

The goals may be accomplished through targeted interventions, professional development, enrichment programs, community mentoring, civic engagement programs, student leadership programs and other methods. Community programs might include wellness fairs, domestic-violence intervention programs, CPR training and entrepreneurship training.

### Spring 2009 Student Meeting a Success

The College of Education hosted the Spring 2009 Education Student Meeting on March 3, 2009 in the lobby of the Student Services Building. Each College of Education department and organization were invited to participate by hosting a table with information on their programs and how to become involved in the various organizations represented. All Madison County High School seniors and their parents were invited to attend especially if the student is interested in pursuing a degree in Education.

Programs and organizations represented included The Center for Middle School Academic Achievement, The Education Living and Learning Center, ECU's Career Services Department, American Sign Language and Interpreter Education, Special Education, Counseling and Educational Psychology, Curriculum and Instruction, Future Teacher Corps, AmeriCorps, and Teacher Education Services.

Pizza and soft drinks provided by the Center for Middle School Academic Achievement were enjoyed by all during the meeting. Faculty and students were able to visit with each other in a relaxed environment and discuss issues or questions they had concerning Education programs or organizations.

For additional information please contact Theresa Collins at [theresa.collins@eku.edu](mailto:theresa.collins@eku.edu).

## INSIDE

COE Senior Scholars Assembly .....	Page 2
Alumni in the News .....	Page 2
Fifth Doctoral Symposium .....	Page 3
Dr. Orentlicher on Transitions .....	Page 3
Transitions: Teamwork toward the Future .....	Page 3
ASLIE Retreat .....	Page 4
Making a Difference .....	Page 4
Grant Writing Made Simple .....	Page 4
From Kentucky to Monterrey, Mexico and Back .....	Page 5
GEAR UP Hosts e-Celebration .....	Page 5
Staff Degree Recipients .....	Page 5

## College of Education Seniors during Scholars Assembly

Five graduating seniors were honored during the annual Eastern Kentucky University Scholars Assembly on Friday, April 17, 2009 in the Grand Reading Room of the Crabbe Library. President Whitlock opened the program and introduced Representative Ben Chandler who presented Dr. Whitlock with a check for \$951,000.00. This money will be used to purchase equipment for the new science building currently under construction.

Dr. Rodney Piercey, EKV Provost, spoke on the importance of the event. He recommended that the scholars, as they launch their ship on life's journey, look for the unintended consequences of decisions they make. Experience, he said, is what you get when you do not achieve the intended outcome.

Representing the office of the Dean for the College of Education, Dr. Sherwood Thompson, Assistant Dean, made brief remarks and with the help of Dr. Dorie Combs and Dr. Karen Brown introduced the award recipients.

Gladys Perry Tyng Award: **Sherry Maggard** and **Thomas Chase Smith**. This award is given annually to the outstanding male and female graduating elementary education major. Selection is based upon teaching ability, dedication to the profession, professional attitude, potential for leadership, and grade point standing.

Student Achievement in Special Education Award: **Keelan Walker**. The Student Achievement in Special Education is awarded to a student with an exceptionally high grade point average and a record of distinguished service to others.

Evelyn Francis Language Arts Award: **Tammy Dowell**. This award is given to a graduating early elementary or middle grade education major who has demonstrated particular enthusiasm and competence for the teaching of communication skills through the selection of course work and the quality of



Left to right: Peggy McGuire, Mrs. Connie Hodge, Ms. Tammy Dowell (honoree), Mr. Sherry Maggard (honoree), and Ms. Peggy Petrilli. All three faculty teach on the extended campuses,

effort and performance in academic work in class and laboratory settings.

Nancy Greer Miller Award: **Justin Daniels**. This award is given to a graduating elementary or middle grade education major. The recipient is an individual whose love for and desire to serve mankind and whose vi-

brancy, industriousness, and positive attitude have won the respect of faculty and fellow students.

Students were given the opportunity to make a few comments after they received their award. Lee Kuiper declared, "success is not the opportunities presented to you, but what you make of those opportunities". Tina Brown, a non-traditional student remarked, "success in education is not about how smart you are, but about how hard you work". All the students felt that the EKV experience was life changing.

The scholars represented a varied group comprised of traditional and non-traditional students, online and extended campus students, an international student and a cancer survivor. Mrs. Connie Hodge, instructor on the Corbin and Manchester campuses stated this was diversity at its best.

Twenty-two seniors were honored during the program including five from the College of Education. A lunch reception followed for all student scholars hosted by Dr. Doug Whitlock, President of EKV, in the Regents' Dining Room of the Powell Building.



Dr. Justin Cooper, Chair, Special Education and Keelan Walker (honoree).

## Alumni in the News

Nina Coyer was appointed by the Governor as a representative for the Kentucky Association of the Deaf (KAD). Ms. Coyer received her B.S. and MAeD from Eastern Kentucky University in Deaf and Hard of Hearing Education. Formerly, Ms. Coyer was a teacher at the Kentucky School for the Deaf and presently is an Assistant Professor at her alma mater, EKV, in the Interpreter Training Program. Ms. Coyer was the first deaf professor to be tenured in the state of Kentucky. She was also appointed by the Governor to be one of the first board members for the Kentucky Licensure Board for Interpreters. Ms. Coyer's term will expire June 30, 2010. (Source: kcdhh.ky.gov)



Nina Coyer

## Closing The Gap

Editor: Joshua Koch

Dean: Bill Phillips

Associate Dean: Kim Naugle

Assistant Dean: Sherwood Thompson



## Fifth Doctoral Symposium held on EKU Campus

by Dr. Sherwood Thompson, Ed.D.

The fifth Doctoral Symposium and Dissertation Workshop was held at the Business and Technology Building on April 17th and 18th on the campus of Eastern Kentucky University. Doctoral student candidates from throughout Kentucky attended the symposium and participated in the workshops and open forums. Dr. Ronald Rochon, Dean of the School of Education and Associate Vice President for Teacher Education at Buffalo State University was the keynote speaker. Dr. Rochon maintained that, as doctoral candidates, students need to devote their training and professional lives to uplifting the condition of all students. He admonished the audience to believe that all children can learn, and that it is the job of educators to teach them. Dr. Keisha Love, a professor in the department of Counseling Psychology at

the University of Kentucky, Dr. Kevin Jones, Reference and Instruction Librarian, and Dr. Aaron Thompson, professor of Sociology in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies at Eastern Kentucky University, presented workshops on various topics pertaining to succeeding in the doctoral program.

The Doctoral Symposium and Dissertation Workshop is sponsored to encourage success among doctoral students. The Doctoral Symposium and Dissertation Workshop is meant to provide the doctoral candidates with valuable opportunities in which professional skills in the areas of research, teaching, and writing can be developed. A secondary purpose of this symposium weekend is to build relationships, contacts and networks with a cohort of scholars that are interested in assisting doctoral candidates in complet-



ing their doctoral studies. The College of Education at Eastern Kentucky University is committed to the success of the doctoral candidates attending the Doctoral Symposium and Dissertation Workshop. It is the philosophy of the College of Education that if our faculty reach out to students in the Doctoral Symposium and Dissertation Workshop and lend support to their studies, it is likely that, despite the challenges, more students will succeed in attaining the doctorate degree.



## Dr. Orentlicher on Transitions

By Joshua Koch

Dr. Meira Orentlicher was the guest presenter on March 31, 2009. She spoke as part of the Dean's Signature Symposium Series on Transitions. The Symposium Series is intended to bridge the gap between professional educators and Occupational Therapists, in an ongoing effort to shed new light on the challenges facing the academic community in assisting students with cognitive disabilities into adulthood. Her insights were especially helpful, as she is an authority in the field.



Dr. Orentlicher

Dr. Orentlicher is an expert in transitional education, and she has conducted research on the overlap of occupational therapy with educational transitions to adulthood. She currently teaches at the Manhattan Campus of Touro College in New York, where she serves as chair of the Occupational Therapy Department. Dr. Orentlicher's research on autism and other subjects has been published by the American Occupational Therapy Association, Occupational Therapy International, and the Developmental Disabilities Special Interest Quarterly.

## Transitions: Teamwork toward the Future

By Joshua Koch

Transitions are an area of increasing knowledge, and the EKU Model School and the College of Education are leading the way in delivering the benefits of increased knowledge to students with cognitive disorders in our own communities. The novel approach is taken by focusing on the student's goals and inclinations, rather than by the prejudices and preconceptions of society.

Dr. William Phillips, Dean of the College of Education, made this point extremely palpable by describing the progress achieved in the field of special education over the last three decades. He related the story of his experiences in college, where he helped in obtaining meaningful employment for cognitively challenged individuals.



Dr. William Phillips

Now, the idea has come full circle, with educators and Occupational Therapists working with the students to discover their needs. Instead of pushing the disabled into manual labor in droves, each person is treated with the individual respect and dignity deserved. All are allowed to try as many as twelve jobs or more to discover their hidden talents and to allow them to discover their own career paths. The goal is not the immediate job, but the path that will allow many students with cognitive disabilities to lead productive, rewarding, and fulfilling lives as full members of society.

"Why do we work?" asked Dean Phillips, "We need that feeling of peer acceptance, that socialization, and we need our own space in life." With this groundbreaking work in transitions, the College of Education is delivering on that basic human need. In developing student teachers with this mindset, EKU will keep fulfilling this promise vicariously for generations to come.

# ASLIE students and the Kentucky Association of Deaf-Blind Retreat

By Karen Petronio Ph.D., CI

For the 15th year in a row, students in the Department of American Sign Language and Interpreter Education (ASLIE) program volunteered during the annual retreat of the Kentucky Association of the Deaf-Blind (KADB). This year, the retreat was held April 15 – 17 at the Kentucky Leadership Center, a beautiful facility near Cumberland Lake in Jabez, KY.

Students acted as Support Service Providers (SSP) during the retreat for more than 30 Deaf-Blind attendees. SSPs included 25 ASLIE interpreting majors, 8 ASLIE faculty and staff members and 3 graduate students from the University of Kentucky. As in previous years, many ASLIE graduates returned to help. Having these skilled SSPs and interpreters made it possible for the Deaf-Blind participants to enjoy themselves and to be fully involved. The retreat, which started on Friday afternoon, included social activities, presentations, arts, crafts, and leisure activities such as hiking to Cumberland Lake.

Prior to the retreat, the students attended a one-day workshop taught



by two Deaf-Blind women from Louisiana. During this workshop, students learned about different types of deaf-blindness, deaf-blind etiquette, how to guide and provide visual information, and issues related to oppression and empowerment. Both of the presenters, who use Tactile ASL, helped prepare the student by providing a wealth of information as well as sharing personal experiences.

Volunteering at the KADB retreat is part of the student's coursework for ITP 370: Specialized Topics in Interpreting 1 and ITP 390: Linguistics and ASL 1. This opportunity is a win-win situation for both the students and the Deaf-Blind attendees. The students get hands-on experience as they learn about communication and interpreting needs of Deaf-Blind people and the Deaf-Blind individuals get the support services that allow them to be actively involved during the retreat.



## Making a Difference

Eastern Kentucky University AmeriCorps Member, Leigh Moberly, has served at Model Laboratory School for the past two years. COE's Model Laboratory School is grateful to Ms. Moberly for the many service projects she has successfully coordinated, including:

- ✓ Coordinating UNITE Club activities involving students in drug education



Leigh Moberly as the Cat in the Hat. (Back row center)

- ✓ Establishing a Too Good for Drugs Curricula teaching students to stay drug free
- ✓ Coordinating a literacy tutoring program tutoring 30 students in a research based reading program and the five key components of reading
- ✓ Coordinating Dr. Seuss's Birthday Celebration involving students and volunteers in Dr. Seuss reading activities
- ✓ Coordinating a Lincoln Bicentennial program celebrating the life and legacy of President Lincoln
- ✓ Coordinating a Book Buddy Project pairing upper grade elementary students to read to lower grade elementary students
- ✓ Making presentations highlighting her service to four community and civic organizations
- ✓ Coordinating community and student volunteers in a wide variety of service activities

## Grant Writing Made Simple

On March 20, 2009, the College of Education hosted a Grant Writing Seminar by Dr. Kenneth T. Henson, former Dean of the College of Education at ECU and noted author. Dr. Henson's presentation gave the 40 participants the tools required to effectively write grant applications. Held in the Crabbe Library, the seminar provided opportunities for discussion and questions as well as instruction in the basic skills of grant writing. Participants included faculty, staff and students from ECU as well as guests from off campus. Previously Dr. Henson presented a "Writing for Publication" workshop also sponsored by the College of Education and open to all on campus.





# From Kentucky to Monterrey, Mexico and Back

June Overton Hyndman, Ph.D.  
May 3, 2009

In Spring 2009, I had the opportunity to work with faculty at the University of Monterrey in Monterrey, Mexico through EKU's participation in the Magellan Project. I hope that others at EKU will take advantage of this program.

EKU provides multiple learning and travel opportunities for students and faculty through its Study Abroad program. One of the opportunities for faculty is the Magellan Exchange Program. The benefit of the Magellan Exchange Program is the availability of one to three-week lecture opportunities. Many universities participate in the



Magellan Project both inside and outside of North America. Universities work cooperatively for low cost experiences by providing housing, meals, and office support.

I applied for a Magellan Exchange experience at Monterrey by offering to share EKU's College of Education experience with TaskStream Portfolios. I was accepted and spent one week in Monterrey. While there, I conducted workshops for two days with faculty from different departments. While the workshops were the primary purpose of the visit, in retrospect, much of my learning came from other sources during the trip.

Experiencing a new culture provides a lens through which to approach challenges in our own culture. As an American, my experience in Monterrey helped me to consider the experiences of Mexican Americans settling in Kentucky.



## GEAR UP Hosts e-Celebration

by: Jevonda Keith

The word is getting out that the 2009 GEAR UP e-Mentor/Mentee Celebration was a wonderful success. Eastern Kentucky University GEAR UP hosted middle and high school students from Fayette, Knott, Harlan, Powell, Clay and Madison counties. About 200 people visited the campus for a tour given by college student mentors and attended a special motivational presentation by best-selling author Chad Foster (Teenagers Preparing for the Real World and Financial Literacy for Teens).

Grant Director Dr. Carol Gabbard said, "The success of this day was attributed to the collaboration of many individuals and groups. A special thank you is due to EKU Admissions, Dr. Jack Herlihy (Center for Educational Research in Appalachia), the Center for Middle School Academic Achievement, Dr. Bill Phillips (Dean, ECU College of Education), ECU Dining, ECU Office of Student Life, KnowHow2GOKY, and all Kentucky GEAR UP staff."



Front Row (from left to right): Renae Bishop, Tiffany Warren, Paige Young, Nichole Wiseman  
Back Row: Benji Stanger, Abby Lightle, Laura Bauer, Keri Jo Davis, Brad Parke, Josh Sparks, and Veronica Bowling. Rhianna Fair is missing from the picture.

Knott County Central High School Guidance Counselor Dianne Collins reported that the KCCHS students enjoyed their time at EKU tremendously and were very complimentary of the tour, lunch, and Mr. Foster's speech. "The GEAR UP program does make a difference in the education of our youth," said Mrs. Collins.

### Staff Degree Recipients

The College of Education is proud to announce that three of its staff completed and were awarded degrees during Spring Commencement Exercises on May 9, 2009. Kim Alexander, Alternative Certification Specialist received a bachelor's in Business Administration, General Studies. Lonna Lanter, Certification Specialist received a bachelor's in Business Administration in Administrative Communications and Services. Both are employees of the Teacher Education Services Department. Kaye Parker, interim Assistant Director of KECSAC received her Master's in Public Administration. In December 2008, Maura Hencker, ASLIE, received a bachelor's in Interpreter Education. All four achieved part of all of their classes using their ECU employee tuition scholarship. Congratulations to all!

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