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Closing the Gap

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Closing The Gap

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7th Annual Diversity Conference Held at EKU

by Emily Christensen

Nelson Lauver had dyslexia; but he didn't know that's what it was until he was 29 years old and a stranger asked him for directions.

Until that day, Lauver struggled with his dyslexia on his own. In 2nd grade, after being laughed at by his peers, he decided never to read out loud to an audience again. When he got to 3rd grade, he was teased for writing his name differently each day. His classmates would call him whatever he wrote, like "Nelson Liver," for the rest of the day.

It was at this young age that Lauver realized, "I could be the dumb kid or the bad kid; and I would give anything not to be the dumb kid."

Lauver graduated from high school and earned a diploma he couldn't read. Since he could not fill out resume forms, he decided to start his own businesses. Some failed and some did well, but he was still struggling with undiagnosed dyslexia. For years he worked various jobs just to keep food on the table. At 29, while Lauver was working as a parking lot line painter, he met a stranger who changed his life.

The stranger asked Lauver for directions and listened patiently while Lauver told him: you turn that way, and then this way, and it will be up ahead – carefully avoiding any use of the words "left" and "right". The stranger then asked Lauver if he would write the directions down for him. Lauver hesitated.

Annoyed now, Lauver told the man it wasn't hard, and quickly repeated: you turn this way, then that way, and go

straight down the road. The stranger, now confident in his notion, suggested to Lauver he might have dyslexia and offered to help.

For the first time in Lauver's life, he had a name for this struggle - a name for the cause of so much anger and frustration. Lauver got tested for dyslexia and finally had tools to help him. Today, he is the Founder and Director of the syndicated radio feature, The American Storyteller Radio Journal.

Nelson Lauver and many others shared their insights and life-stories at the 7th Annual Diversity Conference, held at Eastern Kentucky University February 6 and 7, "Addressing Diversity through Intervention". The conference was hosted by Eastern Kentucky University's College of Education, the Kentucky Educational Collaborative for State Agency Children, the Kentucky Center for School Safety, Southeast/South-Central Educational Cooperative, the Kentucky Department of Education, and AmeriCorps.

Speakers addressed issues such as: understanding various cultures and learning to appreciate the differences as well as similarities; understanding the method by which adolescents process and think about diversity and multi-

culturalism in society today; strategies for acknowledging and working with diversity issues related to sexuality such as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender students and staff; how to help children who self-harm; and learning about new opportunities for individuals with disabilities like "Camp Courageous" – a medical camping facility in Scottsville, Kentucky.

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Nelson Lauver speaking at Diversity Conference.

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Dean's Speaker Series Announces Goals

by Scott Diamond

The vision of the College of Education for our Dean's Speaker Series is to enrich the intellectual life of our college and improve educational outcomes for Kentucky youth by bringing colleagues with international, national, and statewide reputations for excellence. Our overarching goal is to encourage stake holders to cross cultural and professional boundaries to design, implement, and evaluate effective programs to improve education outcomes.

The spring 2008 series, Transitions to the Future, is the first such seminar series that the College of Education has hosted. We hope that the interactions between invited speakers and our faculty, stu-

dents, and community members will lead to fruitful collaboration, and be a learning experience for attendees and speakers alike.

Our goal this semester is to increase awareness of, and ability to use, postsecondary transition resources for students at risk or with disabilities. We want this series to be a "brass tacks" approach to transition: to foster communication between stakeholders, to let people know "how it really is," and to provide tools that can really be used in schools.

We seek to help stakeholders identify effective transition approaches to improve academic outcomes, provide career-planning, and give all children the chance to become productive citizens. Speakers from academic institutions, government, private agencies, and public schools will bring cutting-edge research findings, new faces and fresh perspectives to the table to help teachers, social-service workers, and families more effectively plan students'; transitions to adulthood.

Conference Deemed Great Success

(Continued from Front Page)

The conference featured artistic performances as well as speeches. Valerie Viramontes, from "Living Voices," did a stirring performance involving theater, video and live interaction as she described the life of a Latin American migrant farm worker from the 1960s. The audience was also treated to performances by the River City Drum Corp, which instills in its students (ages 2-18)

not only a love for African drumming, but also the tools to be successful in school, work, and life.

Many people found the Diversity Conference to be a great success. "They really do a top-notch performance," said Maureen Keithley, an ELL Consultant from the Department of Education. "They bring in great speakers and it's well organized. It's one of the best Kentucky Conferences!"

Educator Appointed to NCTE Committee

by Linda Walters

Diana L. Porter was recently appointed to serve as a member of the Orbis Pictus Award for Outstanding Nonfiction for Children Advisory Committee for the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE). Her three-year term will begin now and end after the 2011 Chicago Annual Convention.

This Committee's task is to promote the use of nonfiction children's books in the classroom. It selects the recipient of the annual Orbis Pictus Award for

Outstanding Nonfiction for Children, and up to five honor books. It proposes a session on nonfiction books for children and plans a session featuring the award-winning author at NCTE's Annual Convention in November.

The National Council of Teachers of English, with 60,000 individual and institutional members worldwide, is dedicated to improving the teaching and learning of English and the language arts at all levels of education.

For more information, please visit www.ncte.org.



Tom Bonny, Assistant Director
SESC Educational Cooperative

Closing The Gap

Editor: Emily Christensen

Dean: Bill Phillips

Associate Dean: Kim Naugle

Assistant Dean: Sherwood Thompson

Attention Alumni!

Alumni, the College of Education wants to hear from YOU!

If you would like to share news with us to put in

"Closing the Gap"

please send us a typed update with your name, class, and major. (Photos are encouraged.)

Please send submissions to:

"Closing the Gap"

Combs 420 • Eastern Kentucky University • 521 Lancaster Avenue • Richmond, KY 40475-3102

Special Ed Undergoes Changes

by Justin Cooper

The Department of Special Education at Eastern Kentucky University has recently undergone some changes. Beginning with the 2007-2008 academic year, the Department of Special Education actually became two departments: the Department of Special Education, and the Department of American Sign Language and Interpreter Education. This change will help the College of Education more effectively administer both departments, leading to improved services for students.

The Department of Special Education will continue to offer both undergraduate and graduate programs in Interdisciplinary Early Childhood Education (IECE), Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH), Learning and Behavioral Disorders (LBD) and Communication Disorders (CD). In addition, the Department of Special Education is pleased to announce that we are now starting to offer a graduate-level certification in the area of Moderate to Severe Disabilities. This program will allow students with an existing teaching certification in one area to add the Moderate to Severe Disabilities (MSD) certification by completing a prescribed program of study, and by passing the required Praxis exams. The Department had an MSD program for several years, but it



Justin Cooper, Chair of Department of Special Education

was suspended three years ago. We are excited to once again be able to offer educators a route to become certified in the MSD area. The Department of American Sign Language and Interpreter Education will continue to offer undergraduate coursework in American Sign Language and they will offer a degree program in Interpreter Training. They also will continue to offer a minor in American Sign Language. The change in structure of these two departments will allow us to better meet the needs of the students and the professions for which we prepare our students. It is an exciting time to be in special education. There are serious shortages of qualified professionals across Kentucky and the rest of the nation, who are trained to work with children and adolescents with disabilities. If you have ever considered teaching as a career option, you may want to check out the Department of Special Education. There are few professions that are more rewarding than helping our youth become successful in life. If you would like more information on career options in special education, please contact our department at 859-622-4442, or visit our website at www.specialed.eku.edu/specialed/.

DATES TO REMEMBER

DEAN'S SPEAKER SERIES
Every Tuesday at 7 p.m.
SSB Room 549
March 4, Leslie Lederer
March 18, Dr. Marianne Mooney
March 25, Dr. Richard Luecking

COE STUDENT MEETING
March 4, 5-6 p.m.
SSB Lobby

SPRING BREAK
March 10-14

COE SPRING LUNCHEON
March 20

REGISTRATION BEGINS FOR SUMMER AND FALL 2008
April 2

SPRING ALUMNI WEEKEND
April 25-27

11TH EKU PRESIDENT DOUG WHITLOCK'S INAUGURATION
April 25

2006/2007

College of Education

Undergraduate

Degrees awarded:

259

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College of Education
420 Combs Building
Eastern Kentucky University
521 Lancaster Avenue
Richmond, KY 40475



ATTENTION MODEL STUDENTS AND FACULTY

The College of Education would like to feature artwork from our Model students in “Closing the Gap”!

If you have something you would like to submit (photos of drawings, paintings, or sculptures; poetry; descriptive paragraphs; etc.) please send them with your name, age, and the title of your piece.

Name _____ Age _____

Title of
Your Piece _____

Please send submissions to:

“Closing the Gap”
Combs 420
Eastern Kentucky University
521 Lancaster Avenue
Richmond, KY 40475