



Summer 2005

A Moment for Grove City College

This Moment for Grove City College is about a single topic – our program for education majors. In life, there are many callings, but few as vital as that of teacher. The late Christa McAuliffe, the teacher who died in the Challenger space shuttle disaster, said, “I touch the future, I teach.” Simple and profound.

Grove City College has had a long and distinguished history of preparing teachers. On May 14, it was my distinct honor and privilege to hand out 551 diplomas to our graduating seniors. About 20 percent, or more than 100, were newly graduated teachers. (Of those, 10 or so were music teachers prepared thoroughly by Dr. Ed Arnold and his colleagues.) Let me tell you about them and how we go about educating the “educators-to-be.”

First, when these students came to us four years ago, they arrived with an SAT average of 1235. That one statistic (and there is much more, of course, to these young people than a statistic) is a “show stopper.” Few schools in the entire nation are enrolling such innately bright students who want to be our nation’s teachers. Continuing this trend, this fall’s new freshman class of education majors has an average SAT score of 1286, surpassing even pre-med as the most competitive major in which to enroll at Grove City College today!

How do we educate these teachers-to-be? Very thoroughly! While some schools teach only about teaching, we require that a full major be taken, and then we work hard at teaching the art and science of teaching. To quote Dr. John Stephens, who leads our education professors (Department of Education pictured above), “Grove City College education majors receive a content-based education that is part of a rigorous curriculum. These students continue the traditions developed in their high school years of participation in a wide variety of extracurricular activities, both on campus and in the communities surrounding the College.”

What should be apparent from this is that we produce well-rounded graduates to assume the role of teachers.

At our alma mater, we also make sure our teachers are being prepared outside the classroom. For example, Dr. Roger Mackey oversees our Urban Educational Experience. We have formal partnership agreements with six inner-city schools, and an additional six schools and ministries provide opportunities for our students. During the two-week Intersession periods in January and May, 50 students observe, tutor and teach children at these schools. A number actually do a full student teaching assignment and more than 40 students participate in educationally focused inner-city outreach trips to Pittsburgh and several other cities. Nearly 100 of our students are pen pals to inner-city youngsters, hundreds of whom come to the College for a day as our guests.



In addition to the inner-city, we also look abroad and overseas. For the past seven years, more than 100 education majors have studied comparative issues in London and at Oxford. This summer, 14 of our early childhood majors studied trends and issues in early education in the United Kingdom, under the guidance of Associate Director of the International Education Program Dr. Lois Johnson. Others taught and observed in a diverse school in London where more than 42 languages are spoken.

Back at the College, we also run the Early Education Center, under the patient hand of its director, Carolyn (Marziale '73) Patterson. In that fun-filled, colorful center, children ages 3 to 5 learn in our teaching "laboratory." This provides a wonderful early childhood learning experience for more than 70 youngsters and a great teaching opportunity for 15 to 20 of our education majors.

With a very bright group of students and a rigorous academic and extracurricular program, what is the outcome? You should not be surprised to learn:

1. We have an initial 80 percent-plus job placement rate each year, while the national average is 27 to 40 percent.
2. In the state of Pennsylvania, we have one of the highest pass rates on the National Teachers Examination, with a 98 percent mark (Educational Testing Service, January 6, 2005). A few years ago, a separate study showed that elementary school math teachers who received their training at Grove City College performed the best on the Pennsylvania Department of Education's Professional Development Assistance Program assessment tests (Pennsylvania Department of Education, May 2002).
3. Our teachers excel in many areas of education and teach subjects across the board: early childhood, elementary education, English, communication, French, history, social studies, math, music, biology, chemistry, environmental science, physics, Spanish and many more.

More importantly, I can tell you this: I meet many of the local teachers who host our student teachers in their classrooms and I am deluged with strongly favorable comments. Not surprisingly, our teachers are highly recruited.

As I write this Moment piece to our 22,000 alumni, 3,000 to 4,000 of you either were teachers (now retired) or are teachers. In fact, two of the very best teachers I had growing up were Grove City College grads. It is you who advanced the reputation of our alma mater in the teaching profession. It is you who prepared the way for our new teachers-to-be, and it is all of you who made a difference in countless lives by the profession you chose and followed. It is for these reasons, and many others, that we are dedicating this fall's issue of the GeDUNK Alumni Magazine to the field of education. Be sure to watch your mailboxes in September for great stories and photos of those alumni who are committed to teaching. We at the College are thankful to each of you and I am thankful for those professors who prepared you and are preparing our young people today.

Grove City College is one of our nation's truly preeminent schools of teacher preparation. Most probably don't think of us this way – but it is true. Teaching education and doing it in an unparalleled fashion will continue to be a hallmark of our educational experience. And **that is a promise.**

Yours for Grove City College,


Richard G. Jewell '67, J.D.
President