Innovation Incentive Proposals Awarded

To better tailor COE’s programs to the educational needs of Georgia’s education professionals, COE is spear-heading an effort to fund unique, cutting-edge academic programs developed by faculty. “We have a strong legacy of producing quality educators and educational leaders, but we’re not satisfied to stop there,” explained COE Dean Thomas R. Koballa. “The Innovation Incentive Program grew out of our desire to institutionalize innovation, and to bring together faculty from across the College in a cooperative effort to meet the needs of our students and in-service educators in our region and beyond.”

Three proposals were funded this fall.
Fourth Annual Scholarship of STEM Teaching and Learning Conference, March 5, 2015

COE Faculty & Staff Update

Assistant Professor Antonio Gutierrez, Curriculum, Foundations and Reading, has been appointed as a consulting editor to the prestigious Journal of Educational Psychology, beginning January 2015. The journal has been published for more than 100 years. Gutierrez joined COE in fall 2014. Among his research interests are self-regulated learning; meta-cognition; comprehension monitoring; calibration accuracy and bias and the role of visual displays in learning.

Assistant Professor Katie Brkich, Teaching and Learning, has been recognized by the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia’s Affordable Learning Georgia initiative for her work in transforming her use of the textbook. Brkich and the other awardees which contributed to more than $1 million in savings to USG students in academic year 2014.

Lori Wiggins, administrative secretary for COE’s Department of Teaching and

“Digital Media and Learning: Design, Make, Play,” was developed by Assistant Professors Mete Akcaoglu and Eunbae Lee to create a program to help pre-service and in-service educators use the latest technology as a learning tool using such cutting edge technology as robotics, gaming and 3-D printing. The proposal includes creating a flexible technology space where students become comfortable using the technology, learn how to incorporate it in lesson plans and help K-12 students see how technology can help solve real-world problems. The space also will be used to facilitate collaborative research projects and to provide faculty with professional development.

Also funded was “Improving Education for K-12 Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students,” a proposal developed by Assistant Professor Alisa Leckie and Associate Professor Robert Lake to bring additional knowledge and practical skills to those working with English language learners. The final project funded in this round of proposals is “M.A.T. in Early Childhood Education,” which will lead to a master’s degree and initial Georgia teaching license for individuals who already hold a bachelor’s degree and are interested in a career as a teacher of young children. The proposal was developed by Assistant Professor Katie Brkich and Associate Professor Julie Maudlin.

"I am impressed by how each proposal took advantage of the expertise and talent that already exists in the College while addressing specific needs that reach beyond our institutional walls," commented Koballa. Koballa said additional Innovation Incentive Program proposals may be funded in the coming year.

Guest Speaker Addresses Social Media
Vanessa Dennen will be leading a workshop on social media and teaching.

Can social media be a teaching tool? The answer is an emphatic 'yes' according to Associate Professor of Educational Psychology and Learning Systems at Florida State University Vanessa Dennen. Dennen will be at the College of Education January 30 for a workshop on how to incorporate social media into teaching, research and professional development. "Dr. Dennen is an expert in the field of online behaviors, online discourse and communities of practice," said Tracy Linderholm, professor and associate dean for graduate education and research. "She recently designed and offered a professional development MOOC on 'Social Media for Active Learning,'" Linderholm continued. The COE workshop will look at such issues as types of learning activities that are fostered or enhanced by social media tools, conditions and guidelines for social media integration, student preference and support issues and ways of using social media to answer research questions and collect data. "We're keenly aware that as a college of education this is an important area for our students, faculty and in-service teachers," Linderholm said. "It's one way of the ways we continue to innovate for all our constituencies," she added.

COE Earns Top 75 Ranking in Online Graduate Report

COE earned a top 75 ranking out of 252 schools offering online graduate education programs in the 2015 U.S. News & World Report "Best Online Graduate Education Programs" released January 7. "We're pleased to be in the top 100 tier, said COE Dean Thomas R. Koballa, Ph.D. "The College of Education continues its commitment to offer high-quality online graduate programs which provide students with the cutting-edge skills they need to increase their employment options," he said.

"Our online classes meet high standards for excellence," Koballa continued. "We have a committed faculty trained to teach distance learners, and students from across the region and state know they will be engaged in a rigorous graduate program that furthers their career as an educator in many professional settings," he said. This is the fourth year that U.S. News has ranked online graduate education schools. The College of Education scored particularly well in student services, an area that looks at diverse online learning technologies that "allow greater flexibility for students to take classes from a distance." The category also includes "strong support structures" which provide learning assistance, career guidance and financial aid resources "commensurate with quality campus-based programs." COE's graduate program is supported by TIAA-CREF and won the university-wide Merit Award of Excellence sponsored by TIAA-CREF. She was praised for her "great communication skills...her zeal in getting questions answered, her understanding of university policies and processes and her relationships with folks across campus." Wiggins, who has been with the department for two years, was previously with the Office of the Registrar.

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ALUMNI:
by a freestanding advisement center, the Graduate Academic Services Center, a dedicated center for graduate student advising and support. "As far as I know, we're the only education school within our region with a dedicated center for graduate students, commented Lydia Cross, the center's director. "We're particularly attuned to the needs of our online students and are available to them at any time through many platforms we've created," she continued. Read more about COE's ranking.

Student and Alumni News

Briana Boyd, an Ed.S. Middle Grades Education candidate, has been recognized as a Future English Teacher of Color by the Georgia Council of Teachers of English. Boyd will receive her award from GCTE at their annual conference in February where she will also be presenting a session, "Success Through Deep Engagement with Text."

Gary Guillory ('04 Ed.D. Educational Administration) was awarded the Silver Award for Ambassador of the Year, University System of Georgia's Chancellor's Service Excellence Award. Guillory is director of Student Support Services at Savannah State University.


McKenzie Smith Gay ('14 M.Ed Special Education) won a Cobb County School Foundation Teacher Impact Grant for her grant, "Making Chicken Soup for the Special Needs’ Soul" to fund her Friday cooking segments with students. Also included in the grant was Ryann Henderson ('07 B.S. Ed. Special Education). Both graduates now teach at Lewis Elementary School.

Torri Jackson ('02 M.Ed. Counselor Education and currently enrolled in the Ed.S. Leadership program) has been named first vice president of the Georgia School Counselors Association. Jackson is department leader at Bradwell Institute, Liberty County School System.
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