



Professor Susan Carson, center, is all smiles when it comes to Diversity in Education.

FIE Grant Is Paving The Way For Urban Teacher Academy

A \$200,000 Fund for the Improvement of Education (FIE) grant has been awarded to GVSU's School of Education in an effort to improve science and mathematics progress at the elementary level.

The goal of the program is to create an Urban Teacher Academy for Elementary Math and Science. This will be accomplished by training a cadre of master teachers who will develop curriculum and mentor novice and pre-service elementary math and science teachers working with schools in the Greater Grand Rapids area that have at least 20 percent of students who come from diverse socio-economic, racial and linguistic backgrounds.

"What we will be doing is trying to increase standards-based science assessment, and integrate mathematics into the science experiences," said Loretta Konecki, who helped design the program. "We will develop the cadre of teachers, who — in turn — will work with novice teachers and pre-service teachers just completing teacher education programs."

Those to receive initial training will be current elementary level educators who have been identified in their schools as Master Teachers, particularly in the area of science.

The project — which will be delivered at both the undergraduate and graduate levels — is a collaboration among the School of Education, Regional Math & Science Center and GVSU Science Department. The Master Teachers will be identified in the Fall of 2002, and they will be prepared to work with novice and pre-service teachers beginning in the 2003-2004 academic year.

Autism Grants Create Opportunities

Grand Valley State was recently awarded a pair of grants aimed at increasing the number of teachers and providing additional methods and resources for teaching autistic students.

A \$1.25 million grant by the Michigan Department of Education enabled the formation of a State Assistance Team, named START (Statewide Autism Resources and Training). GVSU was awarded an additional \$250,000 for a University Training Collaborative to form ACE, an Autism Collaborative Endorsement.

"Overall, the goal is to increase the number and level of teachers and professionals trained to work with students with autism," said Amy L. Matthews, Ph.D., of GVSU's Psychology Department.

GVSU's Psychology Department and the School of Education have teamed together with other universities on the ACE grant to create a program that would be beneficial to students interested in the autism endorsement at GVSU or other teacher education institutions in Michigan. The hope is that meetings with other university representatives and state representatives will create a program that may serve as a model for low incidence disabilities.

On-line courses will be offered for the ACE program.

Diversity Program Opens Eyes And Doors To Higher Education

A special program developed by a GVSU professor is designed to open doors to higher education while opening eyes about diversity.

Professor Susan Carson's Diversity in Education classes (ED225) put theory into practice by administering a summer program at GVSU's Allendale campus.

The program enables inner-city children and their mentor teachers — who are teenagers from Potters House and GR Public High Schools — the opportunity to work and learn in a college atmosphere.

"With the mentor teachers we wanted to demonstrate that college life was possible for them, and we wanted to demystify the process of higher education," Carson said. "With the students, we wanted to get them out of the downtown area and into an educational setting that could be challenging and fun at the same time."

The program was developed as part of the Diversity in Education class, and students in the class help administer the program.

"I wanted my students to be able to walk the talk and teach a diverse student body," she said. "It was also my desire to create a learning environment for everyone that was exciting."

In 2001, the program averaged 108 students every week throughout the summer semester.

The program was created in conjunction with the Grand Rapids Downtown YMCA without any additional outside funding. The summer youth program includes participants from Grand Rapids Public Schools.

Eisenhower Grant Awarded To Improve Elementary Science Achievement

Grand Valley's Graduate Studies in Education (GSE) and Grand Rapids Public Schools (GRPS) are sharing the same vision for improving science education at the elementary level.

Together, they teamed up and were awarded an Eisenhower Higher Education Grant for a project titled "Visions for Improving Science Education in Our Schools."

The "VISIONS" award is a \$74,997 federal grant designed to underwrite faculty from GVSU and teachers from nine Grand Rapids elementary schools in their efforts to improve student achievement in science. The focus of the VISIONS project is delivering effective profes-

sional development in science education to the teachers of urban schools that have low MEAP scores in science and a student population of at least 50 percent from high poverty and multicultural populations.

The long-term goal of VISIONS is to work with Grand Rapids Public Schools through the change process to increase scientific literacy for all students and empower teachers to continue to do so long after the grant ends.

In addition to GSE faculty and GRPS teachers, the cross-functional team consists of GRPS administrators, parents, pre-service elementary science teachers, and staff members from the

Grand Valley Regional Mathematics/Science Center who facilitate workshops on teacher leadership development and school-based learning communities. Each VISIONS workshop stresses teaching curriculum that is experiential, based on inquiry, and problem-solving, and emphasizes depth of understanding.

By involving GVSU pre-service elementary science teachers, a unique education learning community is established as veteran teachers and prospective teachers learn together how they can help children learn inquiry-based science and meet the Michigan science benchmarks and standards of today and the future.