

School of Education Features Many Faces In Many Places

The many faces and many places that make up The School of Education at Grand Valley State University are far-reaching.

Although based in West Michigan, the School of Education features a wide-range of programs delivered by more than 200 faculty, staff and field personnel located at numerous locations throughout Michigan.

More than 100 undergraduate and graduate classes are offered, as well as dozens of professional development and certification programs.

Teacher education courses are offered at GVSU's campuses in downtown Grand Rapids and Allendale, as well as satellite sites along the Lake Michigan shoreline in Holland, Traverse City and Petoskey. Classes are offered as far north as Sault Ste. Marie. Customized programs — such as Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages and Technology in the Classroom — are hand delivered to school districts on a customized basis with School of Education instructors making "house calls."

Traverse City Campus Celebrates Fifth Anniversary

The School of Education celebrated its fifth anniversary in Traverse City this spring with a graduating class of 18 for the spring of 2002.

A total of 88 students have gone through the program from start to finish, with another 10 who have completed practica with supervision from the Traverse City office.

An additional cohort for Elementary Education Certification began this spring following its initial program in 2001.

A Secondary Education program is being added.

Students at Traverse City range in age from

21 to 51 and travel from about a 60-mile radius to attend classes.

Graduate programs are offered in Early Childhood Development with PPI and ZA endorsement, along with a Master's in Elementary Education. In Petoskey, a master's program in Educational Leadership is offered.

"The feedback we are getting is very positive," Traverse City director Art Haeberle said. "We have an excellent staff of adjunct instructors and caring faculty, which deliver a well respected program of teacher education to a very grateful community."



From left to right, Marty Litherland, Anne Mulder, Gail Matesich, Art Haeberle, Linda McCrea and Pat Lipetzky overlooking the Bay in Traverse City

Students Go The Extra Mile For Distance Degrees

Chris Ackerman and Roger Coates can aptly be described as a pair of non-traditional students who are going that extra mile to attain their degrees.

Both are married and planning to become teachers by earning their certification and distance degrees from Grand Valley State University's campuses in Petoskey and Traverse City.

Ackerman, who lives in Cheboygan, takes classes in both Traverse City and Petoskey to accommodate his Social Studies major. Coates, who lives in Boyne City, is a displaced worker who decided to get certified to teach and has averaged taking between 20 to 22 credit hours per semester at GVSU's Petoskey campus over the past three semesters.

The School of Education has offered graduate level programs in Petoskey since 1995. Students there are currently pursuing master's degrees in Elementary Education, Early Childhood Education, Educational Leadership and Special Education with PPI. In addition, endorsements are offered in Early Childhood (ZA), Elementary Education and PPI.

At the undergrad level, the first cohort in Language Arts/Elementary began in 2001. The second cohort begins in May 2002. Classes are held at North Central Community College.

Coates — who is married and the father of three — received two years of tuition as part of



Ackerman



Coates

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— Ackerman

a severance package from his former employer. He has made the most of the time, taking more than 20 credit hours per semester to satisfy his general education requirements while keeping pace with his cohort.

"I initially wanted to go into education and

started working toward that degree before I started a family and went to work in the automotive industry," Coates said. "About the time the plant shut down and the company was offering the severance package, GVSU brought in the Education program to Petoskey.

"It was the right place and the right time and seemed like it was meant for me."

Ackerman, who was previously in management, wanted to make a career change after demands of his previous job took time away from family life. His wife, Michelle, is a GVSU graduate and an assistant principal at Cheboygan Middle School. Education seemed to be a perfect fit. For Ackerman, it is a 45-minute drive to Petoskey and a two-hour drive to Traverse City, where he is fulfilling the social studies component of his required classes. He logs more than 14,000 miles per year to pursue his education.

"It's necessary for me to do what I have to do for a job that I'm going to love, and it's well worth it," he said. "They're very professional at GVSU and are always right there to help you. The classroom experience and the professionalism all flow right together."

"It's definitely fulfilling a need in northern lower Michigan."

Coates and Ackerman will conduct their student assisting and student teaching during the 2002-2003 academic year before preparing to embark on their teaching careers.