

THE COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES ENGAGEMENT WITH TEACHER EDUCATION

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In its fourth year of funding from the Carnegie Corporation, under their Teachers for a New Era (TNE) initiative, the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) has developed several initiatives to strengthen and sustain the engagement of the disciplines of the arts and sciences in teacher preparation.

In brief, CAS has focused its efforts at two levels, across the College and in collaboration with the College of Education (COE). To date the outcomes include a proposal to develop an Integrated Science Degree (ISD) that draws from the faculty of Astronomy, Atmospheric Sciences, Biology, Chemistry, Earth and Space Sciences, Physics, and Technical Communications. The English Department faculty has also proposed creating a pathway for English majors interested in becoming P-12 teachers. In fall 2006, the CAS Dean's Office inaugurated a series of luncheons to explore ways to increase and sustain the engagement of Arts and Science faculty in teacher preparation.

Collaboration between CAS and COE has also been productive. A collective group from the two colleges has created the "Minor in Education, Learning, and Society." Another inter-college faculty group completed a report with recommendations that addressed the "Cultural and Linguistic Needs of English Learners in Our Public Schools." A different shared project produced the "Urban Teacher Scholars Program," that designed an effective teaching strategy to better articulate theory and practice by incorporating in-school experiences as part of the math methods courses in COE. The renewal of the Elementary Teachers Education Program in COE benefited from the participation of CAS faculty as well.

CAS administration and faculty are committed to encouraging and shaping the role of the college in teacher education in several other ways that are not included in this brief synopsis.

There are several challenges to forward movement in CAS engagement. The structures of CAS and COE are different, but these structural discontinuities can be addressed collaboratively. More challenging are the different perspectives the two colleges bring to the topic of teacher education and the respective roles and responsibilities for each college in educating future teachers. These discussions are just beginning. The design and staffing of new curriculum poses different challenges for department units. Overall, however, CAS engagement with TNE and COE has already shaped new communities of faculty successfully addressing the intellectual changes that will result in effective and successful P-12 teachers.

Next steps will have to consider curriculum development to address some gaps in the education minor and integrated science degree. New courses will also be necessary to integrate other units such as American Ethnic Studies and Women Studies with the college engagement in teacher preparation. In order to add coherence to the CAS initiative other areas of the college must also be examined, for instance undergraduate advising, the relevance of the Diversity Minor, and programs like the Teachers as Scholars in the Simpson Center for the Humanities. To this end, the college will develop the College of Arts and Sciences Teaching and Learning Engagement (CASTLE), as a functional and practical inventory of current and past teaching and learning activities in CAS units.

Thinking ahead to post-TNE, CAS must begin to consider the means and strategies to sustain and move forward the interest, commitment, and involvement of its units and faculty with COE and P-12 education.