Education Funding Committee-Dr. Sarah K. Anderson

Good morning Chairman, Senators, Representatives. It is my pleasure to represent Mayville State University today as we meet here at my alma matter. UND is where I was equipped to be a teacher and a member of the higher education community, and so a fitting place for me to discuss teacher preparation with all of you.

As Mayville State celebrates its historic 125th anniversary, we are celebrating our past with a focus on the future, preparing teachers for the 21st Century classroom through the process of experience and reflection.

We recognize that an effective teacher is the most important school factor in how much a student learns. As such, the process of preparation beings the moment a potential teacher enters Mayville State.

Through essential study courses, candidates gain broad knowledge and transferable skills that are demonstrated in their campus and civic engagement. One good example involves two of our teacher candidates, who have taken these essential study values and created a community service group that is now the largest student organization on campus.

Responding to the observed need for service in surrounding communities, the university, and the general public, their work exemplifies the dispositions we except teacher candidates to hone as they progress into their specified majors.

Upon admission to the Teacher Education program, candidates move through instruction of pedagogical and content knowledge coupled with multiple clinical experiences in a variety of settings. Timely feedback on the transfer of skills helps candidates gain required competencies.

The last few years have brought significant alterations to teacher education programs. The combination of accreditation councils to form the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation, or CAEP, also produced a revised set of standards to which programs have aligned competencies.

In addition, licensure changes to meet the demand of shortage areas are reflected in new certification options for future educators. The Council for Exceptional

Children has also revised their preparation standards for special educators, and the Common Core has shifted both the content and pedagogy in which teachers are equipped.

There is also a call from the US Department of Education for states to track academic growth of a teacher's P-12 students back to the preparation program from which that teacher graduated for the cause of continuous program improvement.

These changes and initiatives are all directly related to the poignant desire to see a positive change in the learning outcomes of children. The classroom of today is filled with global citizens who present more diversity than ever before. But the US Department of Education acknowledges that, "The teaching workforce does not reflect the diversity of the nation's students, with a student body that is increasingly black or Hispanic being taught by a teaching force that remains predominately white". The teaching force according to CAEP, includes fewer than 20% of teachers of color. The National Center for Education Statistics reports that 48% of P-12 public school students are students of color, and projects that by 2021, the portion of students of color will exceed 52%. The US Bureau of the Census reports that 20% of the school-age population comes from homes where native languages other than English are spoken.

Mayville State seeks to increase competencies related to diversity through strategic recruitment, scholar support, and a campus-wide cooperation for global learning and intercultural knowledge.

The need for these competencies was most clear to me when working as a Fulbright Scholar in Norway. Visiting 53 schools in one academic year allowed me to experience what happens when lessons about perception, bias and empathy are both taught and ignored, and the importance of connecting people to produce a greater understanding of each other.

Mayville State is committed to shifting the types of experiences in which teacher candidates participate to ensure opportunities to work with the diversity 21st century learners present. Given the relative homogeneous nature of Mayville State's geographical location, faculty must engage in many efforts:

- collaboration within the North Dakota University System to maximize resources between institutions,
- cooperation with school districts and support agencies for clinical placements that include English Language Learners and Students with Disabilities but also contain a civic engagement or service learning component, and
- to utilize technology to engage diverse peers in examining perspectives on assets for learning.

As an exemplar of these efforts this spring semester, secondary education candidates engaged in collaborative discussions with students and a faculty member at a historically black college in South Carolina. They read six common articles decided upon by professors at both institutions, about the education gap as it relates to race, the social purpose of school, and how environmental and historical contexts relate to teaching and learning.

After doing so, candidates engaged in a virtual discussion using a blog and during a live Skype session. In addition, this diverse faculty member came to campus as a visiting scholar to share about black issues and engage learners in understanding frames of reference, the potential bias in these frames, and their potential impact on expectations and relationships with students and their families.

Teacher candidates reported the impact of this experience on their role as a teacher, and I quote:

- “Culture and community values really became apparent with the video chat. It's one thing to hear how people differ through books and another thing to actually hear individuals that have experienced it.”

- “Different people bring different ideas. Just because they are different it doesn't make them wrong.”
- “I learned how to collaborate and communicate with confidence. I also learned how to interact with others who have different experiences, talents, abilities, and prior learning.”

- “Effective teaching will change constantly because people change constantly. Educators need to understand the importance of continuous adaptation and that it is not simple. Teaching anyone is complicated.”

Reflection on experiences like these is one way we seek to create teachers prepared for classroom realities.

Mayville State is also responding specifically to changes stimulated from the adoption of Common Core Standards. Our office of student affairs is considering how to aligning higher education curriculum with college readiness and using Smarter Balanced Assessment results for admissions and placements.

The Division of Education & Psychology and the Teacher Education Committee is revising curriculum & experiences in disciplinary departments to teach the Common Core content.

In addition, faculty are prepared to work with the Education Standards and Practices Board to make revisions to preparation standards. Mayville State is also working in partnership with the Red River Valley Education Cooperative to provide professional development for teachers in local school districts as we are a source of external expertise.

It has been recognized that teachers need to be supported in the instructional changes the CC standards have brought. This requires more than teachers fitting the standards to their current practice. It requires a shift in how teaching and learning happens. MSU is training pre-service and in-service teachers to

- engage their students in deep reading of informational texts,
- produce evidence-based research and products,
- focus on the speaking and listening aspects of literacy,
- and create learning activities requiring the use of conceptual knowledge as it applies to real-life tasks and character-building activities.

A full-day of staff development in January found 250 teachers from 8 school districts on the Mayville State campus to work on these instructional skills. Alongside these current educators were our teacher education candidates who

learned not only about instruction under the common core, but about professional learning communities, becoming a reflective practitioner, and commitment to being a life-long learner. Mayville State faculty facilitated these sessions as service to the local districts in a joint effort to minimize costs.

Data collection and continued follow-up on implementation from this training means future professional development offered by the faculty at MSU can be tailored to the needs of the teachers, a true P-16 partnership.

Recognizing the proficiencies that in-service teachers continue to enhance, Mayville state is considering the development of focused and intensive training of specific knowledge and skills. These include:

- execution of a Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports for academic and behavior needs,
- utilizing data to inform teaching and learning,
- instructional coaching,
- teacher leadership, and
- integrating technology into methods for blended learning options

The revised InTASC standards require skilled interactions in both face-to-face and virtual contexts. Resonating with the move to online learning in higher education, teachers are now providing education in new learning platforms, such as the ND Center for Distance Education which provides online courses for High School, Middle School & Advanced placement courses. Some schools are also using online learning tools to minimize the loss of valuable teaching time due to adverse weather conditions. Teachers need to be prepared to provide learning opportunities in this format.

These factors related to teacher preparation pose both an enormous challenge and great opportunity to create a strong teaching force. Mayville State is moving to prepare the teachers needed for tomorrow’s schools, to guide future teachers, as individuals, so that they may realize their full career potential, enhance their lives and the lives of the students with whom they work.

Thank you.