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# College of Education Earns National Accreditation

Posted [May 14, 2010](#) at 1:48 pm by [Melanie Marquez](#)

(St. Petersburg, Fla.) May 14, 2010 – The College of Education at USF St. Petersburg received a distinctive mark of professional approval with confirmed accreditation from the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, or NCATE. Studies show that teacher quality is the most important factor in P-12 student achievement and professional accreditation is one way to ensure that colleges of education are graduating well-qualified educators prepared to help all students learn.

The college earned this prestigious standing through a seven-year process. It is one of 12 institutions in Florida and one of 632 institutions in the country to have NCATE accreditation. NCATE-accredited institutions prepare two-thirds of the nation’s teachers and other education professionals.

“Graduates of all programs in the College of Education at USF St. Petersburg have demonstrated that they meet a higher standard of excellence for what they know and are able to do as professional educators,” said Vivian Fueyo, dean of the college. “Their skills and knowledge make a difference in the lives of students and other educators they interact with.”

To be accredited, colleges of education undergo rigorous review and meet national standards set by the education profession at large. Teacher candidates must have in-depth knowledge of the subject matter that they plan to teach as well as the skills necessary to ensure that their students learn. The college must have partnerships with P-12 schools that enable candidates to develop and practice the skills necessary to help students learn. Through internships with Pinellas County schools, teacher candidates at USF St. Petersburg contribute volunteer support equivalent to \$3 million annually when their hours are calculated according to the cost of a substitute teacher.

Unique initiatives at the college include collaboration with research firm SRI International to study the effectiveness of digital mathematics tools with middle school students. Preliminary results show improvements in algebraic thinking for the participating middle school students. In the last year, the college attracted more than \$1.8 million in state and private foundation grants to support local and statewide education research and initiatives. The college houses Project 10, a statewide program that addresses transition needs of students with disabilities.

The 2010 Florida Teacher of the Year, Megan Allen, earned her master’s degree at USF St. Petersburg. Allen earned the distinction after four years in the classroom. Teacher candidates at USFSP participate in annual Family Science Nights, events that allow them to create and lead interactive science-related experiences for elementary school students and their families.

Accreditation is determined by measuring evidence over a three-year period in six national standards: field experience in schools, college resources, candidate knowledge skills and dispositions, unit assessment system, diversity, and faculty qualifications and performance.

Faculty members in the College of Education at USF St. Petersburg are nationally recognized for their expertise in transitions to higher education for persons with disabilities, science education, math education, educational leadership, writing and literacy.

In April of 2010, the college founded a charter chapter of the international honor society in education, Kappa Delta Pi.

The college offers undergraduate degrees to prepare beginning teachers and graduate degrees to offer experienced teachers the opportunity to continue their professional education. The college has 22 full-time faculty members. During the 2008-2009 academic year, 581 students were enrolled, 80 students graduated with a bachelor's degree and 95 students graduated with a master's degree.