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College of Education Offers Graduates New Scholarship Opportunity

Graduate students and teacher candidates have a new opportunity for funding their studies. The College of Education at USF St. Petersburg has a new scholarship opportunity for 35 students interested in obtaining their master's degrees with certification in Special Education and ESOL; Elementary Education and ESOL; and Reading.

The reason for expanding the master’s program, instead of the bachelor’s program, is that preliminary research on teacher retention in Florida indicates that teachers with certifications through master’s degree programs remain in their careers longer, said Joyce Nutta, associate professor of education at USF St. Petersburg.

The program was developed to address the statewide teacher shortage and will enroll its first group of students in January 2007. Participants will be eligible for $300 in the spring and $600 in the summer with future support pending re-approval of the project by the Florida Department of Education.

Nutta co-wrote the plan and will oversee the program at USF St. Petersburg. The program includes a structured curriculum with financial, academic and motivational support from beginning to end. Ideally, graduates will be placed in Pinellas County schools.

“The grant award will provide scholarship support that we haven’t had funds for in the past” Nutta said.

Vivian Fueyo, dean of the College of Education added, “Project objectives will complement the services of the Academic Success Center, Enrollment Services and University Relations and will develop comprehensive support for the College of Education’s efforts to address the statewide teacher shortage in critical shortage areas in teaching.”

The Colleges of Education at USF St. Petersburg and USF Tampa will share the $300,000 grant. The goal is to continue the project beyond the first year of funding.

Enrollment and scholarship applications are available at www.stpt.usf.edu/spgrad/Graduate_Programs.htm. Visit www.teachintampabay.org for more information.