

THE CHALKBOARD

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Teaching Fellows: Brooklyn College Responds to a New York City Crisis

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The New York State Education Department, faced with the problem of increasing numbers of retiring teachers and the need to replace them with qualified professionals, approved an alternative route to teacher certification. This program is designed for individuals who are drawn from other careers and those who, though already having bachelor's degrees, require further preparation in education in order to make the transition into teaching. It aims to attract people from professions outside the field of education who are committed to bringing their varied talents and experience into the New York City public schools. These students are now informally known as "Teaching Fellows." The first cohort as already been placed throughout the school system, having completed the first leg of the journey to certification this past summer.

Developed from a concept initiated by Chancellor Matthew Goldstein of CUNY and Chancellor Harold Levy of the Board of Education, the Teaching Fellows Program is the first pilot program of the State Education Department's alternative certification program. Brooklyn College's School of Education joined with two other CUNY colleges, Lehman and City College, to implement the program, which was launched this past summer with nearly 350 students citywide. Brooklyn College, with more than 125 students, makes up the largest cohort among the three participating colleges.

Approximately three quarters of the prospective teachers are destined for elementary schools, the remainder for middle schools and high schools. The State Education Department has designated all these schools as SURR (or

"School Under Registration Review"), schools whose academic test place them among the lowest-performing schools in the state. All costs for the teacher education program, including the underwriting of an M.A., for each student, is being borne by the New York City Board of Education.

More than 1,200 individuals citywide applied for the approximately 350 openings in the program. Candidates were screened in a rigorous, six-hour process at the Board of Education, requiring them to prepare and present a mini-lesson, write an essay, and face a personal interview panel. Entry requirements include at least a 3.0 undergraduate grade point average and a solid major or concentration in the liberal arts and sciences. Those who were accepted were then sent to the three participating colleges based on the location of their future school assignments, for a four-week, intensive preparation program.

In full partnership with the City University of New York, Dean [Deborah Shanley](#) worked with the Board of Education, United Federation of Teachers (UFT), and Teach for America to implement the program on campus. For the School of Education, the challenge was to try new modes of teaching and new ways of working with others to provide post-baccalaureate teacher education to people from a variety of disciplines.

Rather than develop an abbreviated version of the entire masters curriculum, Brooklyn College has opted to create a module containing all introductory, prerequisite courses, since these courses are designed especially for those new to the teaching profession. After two weeks in the program students are also required to pass the LAST (Liberal Arts and Sciences Test), a measure of undergraduate preparation in content areas. They also take a "content area specialty" test in their chosen teaching field. Secondary education students will continue with the prerequisite courses throughout the fall term; the elementary cohort will continue throughout the year, after which those students who do not already possess master's degrees will be screened for admission to M.A. programs. Of the 128 students registered in the program at Brooklyn College, 123(96 percent) passed the LAST and 112 (87 percent) passed their content area tests in their first attempt.

Brooklyn College's cohort came from incredibly diverse backgrounds. Approximately 60 percent had graduated from college within the past three years, but twenty-seven already held graduate degrees, including nine law degrees and four Ph.Ds. Most reported they had long thought of going into teaching and saw the Brooklyn College program as an effective way to do so. Among those students changing careers were medical technicians, social workers, lawyers, a broadcast journalist, restaurateur/bar-owner, physician, judge, and numerous people from the public service sector.

In morning sessions during the first week of the program, students visited elementary and intermediate schools in New York City, recording their observations in journals; from afternoon to evening they attended classes at the college. By the second week of the program, students had settled into a routine of 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. classes each day.

Four faculty members taught groups of twenty-five students each at Brooklyn College: Professor [Tibbi Duboys](#), program head of Childhood Education; Professor Wen-Song Hwu; and Professors [Elizabeth Dykman](#) and [Haroon Kharem](#), newcomers to the Brooklyn College campus this fall. Each faculty member was paired with a seasoned Board of Education professional—two or three from the UFT Teacher Centers—and worked with the Childhood Education sections. A member of the Board of Education's Office of Literacy, worked with [Professor Duboys](#) in her section; and two senior high school principals worked with [Professor Kharem](#) in his secondary education section. This collaborative approach guaranteed a unique blend of practice and theory. [Professor Segan](#) worked with students who were preparing for middle school placement.

In addition to the Brooklyn College faculty and Board of Education professionals, teachers who recently entered the profession from a nontraditional background were assigned to each cohort of students. These teachers conducted two-hour seminar/workshop sessions at the end of each day, providing mentoring, hints on managing Board of Education bureaucracy, meeting principals' and other supervisors' expectations, and other tips of the trade probably known best by classroom teachers.

Educating talented and committed New York City public school teachers is intrinsic to the School of Education's mission and concretely expresses the school's commitment to its community. The need for competent, caring and effective teachers is urgent and people willing to play a part in fulfilling this need have come forward in heartening numbers to begin new careers as teachers in the New York City public school system.

The program is expected to enroll ten times the present number of students in summer 2001.

Program Updates

Leadership for Higher Standards: Doctor of Philosophy in the field of Urban Education

Jay Lemke,

Executive Officer, Urban Education Ph.D. Program, CUNY Graduate Center

The City University of New York has recognized its responsibility to develop increasingly meaningful relationships with the New York City public schools. Among several strategies for doing so is the new Ph.D. Program in Urban Education.

Research in education is not solely concerned with the accumulation of knowledge for its own sake; researchers in education broadly agree that study which is guided by assessment of practical needs and priorities produces more interesting and more useful knowledge. The intellectual challenges of urban education require a partnership among many disciplines, and research conducted by students and faculty associated with this program can contribute to the knowledge base needed to improve urban education in New York and throughout the United States.

To meet these needs, the Graduate School and University Center of The City University of New York have established a new program of study leading to the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the field of Urban Education. The CUNY Board of Trustees approved the new program in June 2000 and the program was registered by the New York State Department of Education in July 2000. Student and additional faculty recruitment will occur in academic year 2000-2001 and classes begin in the Fall semester, 2001.

The curriculum, developed by a committee of more than two dozen faculty members from across CUNY, chaired by Prof. Jay Lemke of the School of Education, Brooklyn College, focuses faculty and doctoral student research in four areas that are critical for the City University of New York and the New York City public schools:

- Systemic reform of urban public education, including teacher education
- New information and communication technologies in K-16 education
- English-language skills for academic work and performance evaluation
- Use of private- and public-sector urban resources to improve K-16 education

Students will be expected to direct their dissertation research to large, compelling issues in urban education. Clusters of focused dissertation studies, coordinated with the continuing research programs of the faculty, will form the basis for continuing study of critical issues in urban education. Such focused and continuing research has an important role to play in the renewal of urban education; it will aim to integrate work in both curriculum studies and policy studies to provide a genuinely useful research base for the solution of contemporary educational problems, the program will offer doctoral students options to concentrate their studies in:

- Science, mathematics, and technology in education
- Arts, humanities, and social studies education
- Education policy studies and policy analysis

Graduates of this program will take on a wide variety of important roles in urban education: research and teaching in universities, including essential teacher education programs; research positions in urban school districts, and in state and federal government agencies; policy analysis positions for private foundations; and as staff to legislators and legislative committees.

There is a growing national consensus that educational policies and practices must be grounded in the same research-based approach that has been so successfully adopted in other key areas of our national life (National Research Council, 1999). This program will significantly help to provide the human resources needed for a careful and thoughtful, research-based approach to urban education.

The original initiative for this important new program came from a small group led by former Dean Madeleine

Grumet of our School of Education. During the several years of development of the program, major contributions were also made by Prof. Stephen Brumberg, who guided development of one of the five core courses, and Dean Deborah Shanley (starting well before she came to Brooklyn College from Medgar Evers). Professors Carol Korn-Burstyn, Ros Welchman, David Bloomfield, and Manuel Martinez-Pons also contributed their advice and support. Professor Michael Sobel of the Brooklyn College Physics department also participated in the program's development.

The Brooklyn College's School of Education has been central to developing this program of "urban intellectual renewal"; we will continue to work closely with the Graduate Center to make the program a leader in the field. For more information on the Ph.D. in Urban Education program, see: <http://academic.brooklyn.cuny.edu/education/cpse/index.htm>

The DeWitt Wallace – Reader's Digest Pathways to Teaching Careers Program

Dean Deborah Shanley, director
John Stahlnecker, coordinator,
office of student advisement, co-director

This nationally funded program addresses the recruitment—and retention-- of a diverse body of teachers for hard-to-staff school districts, a major concern of the School of Education. The challenge is being addressed on several fronts through collaborative programs geared toward enriching its own curriculum of teacher preparation as well as providing certified teachers to work in selected districts. Currently the School of Education supplies about 10% of all teachers entering the New York City public school system.

District 19/New York City Partnership: A New Learning Community

Wayne Reed, undergraduate deputy
Haroon Kharem, project coordinators

The School of Education, together with Community School District 19 and Breakthrough for Learning have formed an alliance to improve the academic achievement of students in the district. The Learning Community consists of a cluster of schools in close geographical proximity to each other. Student teachers from Brooklyn College go into the schools to practice teaching in an urban high-needs setting. In Fall 2000 the program was implemented in PS 159 and 202. Three additional schools, IS 218, PS 72 and PS 224 will be added within a year.

When a school becomes part of the Learning Community a faculty member works to place student teachers in the school. Workshops to support the practice of the student teachers include training in specialized curricula used by the District such as "Success for All", reading program (developed by Johns Hopkins University). Workshops in teaching strategies, parent involvement and cross-cultural teaching are also offered to immerse student teachers in the social and cultural realities of teaching in an urban public school context. In addition to student teachers, other education majors from Brooklyn College are being introduced to the District this fall. One section of ED16 is making a field visit to P.S. 159 in October.

On-site development of student teachers gives them the opportunity to benefit from the experience of veteran teachers. Model teachers have the chance to "bequeath" their knowledge and experience to Brooklyn College students, as well as provide a bridge between theory and practice so students can form a broad and realistic view of education.

Representatives from the School of Education, New York City Partnership's Breakthrough for Learning program, and District 19 plan to undertake an evaluation at the end of the school year, and will look at educational outcomes in matching classes as well as follow the paths of student teachers working in the participating schools.

A Chance to Reach Out: The Teacher Opportunity Corps at Brooklyn College

Carol Gross, Program Director
Marguerite Thompson, Educational Facilitator

The Teacher Opportunity Corps (TOC) is a project supported by the New York State Education Department that seeks to encourage minority or economically disadvantaged students to choose a career in elementary or early childhood education and to assist them through counseling as well as academic and financial services. All TOC participants receive a stipend to help with educational costs and are enrolled in regular education courses at Brooklyn College under close supervision and support in schools affiliated with the TOC. Academic services include peer tutoring core curriculum subjects--writing, math, the sciences, and foreign languages, as well as specialized curriculum modules in education of children at risk of failure as well as children from multi-cultural backgrounds.

In addition to academic and field-based support, TOC offers workshops for students and teachers that meet once a month. Many of these workshops include school children and their parents from participating districts and serve as a focus for community involvement in the preparation of teacher. In addition to addressing the core curriculum, these meetings encompass a broader mandate of expanding horizons for education students by introducing them to key people in the communities where they will teach. In October, Congressmen Major Owens and Adolphus Towns (chairman of the Subcommittee on Education, U.S. House of Representatives), were among invited guests to the monthly TOC workshop. Previous workshops featured the Boylan family, including Assemblyman Thomas Boylan, Councilwoman Tracy Boylan, and William Jr., district leader for Ocean Hill-Brownsville. The subject of the workshop was "the community as classroom". In May the TOC sponsored a "Speakout" for students completing their last year of field experience in Brooklyn public schools in Districts 16, 17, 22 and 23 after completing a year of mentorship with TOC mentor, Dulcie Reid.

The TOC currently has 25 undergraduate and 25 graduate student members. TOC graduate "ambassadors" have won numerous awards from their schools for teaching excellence. They have also gained foundation support for a number of special materials and programs for their schools.

A Seminar in Space: Brooklyn College K-9 Math & Science Consortium

Eleanor Miele, education
Rosamond Welchman, education
John Chamberlain, professor of geology
Project co-directors

During the month of July, Prof. Miele piloted the first Brooklyn College science education course taught in conjunction with the American Museum of Natural History. Twenty participants in the Dwight D. Eisenhower-funded consortium took a course entitled Workshop in Childhood Education: Science at the museum. They participated in the first Educator's Institute at the new Rose Center for Earth and Space as part of the course and continued to work in a laboratory classroom and in halls throughout the museum to develop approaches to teaching inquiry-based science using museum resources and hands-on materials.

Collaboration with the Museum of Natural History grew out of a partnership between Brooklyn College and Community School Districts 15, 18 19 and the United Federation of Teachers and built upon a collaboration begun under the NSF-funded New York Collaborative for Excellence in Teacher Preparation (NYCETP). A summer course in Earth Science for the Elementary School Teacher taught by Wayne Powell of the Geology Department was offered to graduate students in the master's program in Elementary Science and Environmental Education. They also participated in a summer institute that emphasized use of the museum's resources in teaching.

The consortium also supported summer classes on the Brooklyn College campus in discrete mathematics and in computers in education. Teachers in participating districts are invited to inquire about participating in consortium programs.

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