Project Update

The Teachers for a New Era (TNE) program at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UWM) operates a partnership between the university and the Milwaukee Partnership Academy (an urban PK-16 council for quality teaching and learning) which includes the Milwaukee Public Schools and the Milwaukee Teachers Education Association. Working together, this collaboration is undertaking the following activities with identified outcomes.

**Participation of Arts, Letters, and Science**

Curriculum activities for TNE at UWM take place under the auspices of Design Teams in the areas of humanities, social sciences, sciences, arts, mathematics, foreign language, and cultures and communities. The teams are composed of deans and faculty from Letters and Sciences (L&S), Peck School of the Arts (PSOA), School of Education (SOE), and Milwaukee Public School (MPS) teachers, specialists, and administrators.

Content-focused Design Teams have reviewed the Wisconsin Model Academic Standards (http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/dpi/standards/) and the MPS Learning Targets (http://www.milwaukee.k12.wi.us/pages/MPS/News/LearningTargets) within the team’s specific content area. A key outcome of this work is a strengthened alignment between the state curricular standards, school learning targets, and the relevant content courses offered in the PSOA and L&S. In addition, the teams have reviewed the current teacher preparation program at UWM and the PSOA and L&S courses in which most pre-ed majors enroll from the respective disciplines. Each team also studied the state licensing legislation (PI34) and discussed the implications the PRAXIS II exam might have on the curriculum. The PRAXIS II exam is the content assessment exam for prospective teachers administered through Educational Testing Service.

**Assessment and Evaluation**

*Program Assessment* has been undertaken by an interdisciplinary team which is doing the following: (1) identifying and creating models and methodologies to assess how changes in curricular efforts (as recommended by Design Teams) affect content knowledge and pedagogical learning by prospective teachers, (2) developing models to guide broader level assessment of the impact of changes in the overall teacher preparation program on effectiveness in urban schools, (3) support TNE efforts to create a common culture of assessment.

The *Pupil Learning Team* has explored how to measure the value-added to MPS student achievement associated with UWM-prepared teachers (prepared through curricular reforms created as the result of TNE). The project has been briefed on the value-added approach to pupil achievement based upon review of scholarly literature on this topic. We have also created a pupil-learning pilot that will implement empirically based, value-added measures of student achievement associated with UWM-prepared teachers, as well as value-added design to measure MPS student achievement, including identification of assessment measures (e.g., standards of tests), acquisition of pupil-level data, and protections of confidentiality.
Induction

Induction work included completion of a document that was initially drafted as part of a retreat in spring of 2004 (facilitated by TNE) titled Characteristics of a High Performing Urban Classroom. It creates a common language of practice for teaching and learning in MPS as a way to frame induction support. Pilot discussions of this document were conducted in the schools; the leadership of the induction design team provided training to MPS literacy and mathematics specialists to lead the pilot.

Our project is creating a comprehensive induction plan. This began with cataloguing exactly what happens from the time a new teacher contacts the district to the time he or she reaches a school. Clarification of the status quo has led to a common understanding of the need for induction to be intentional, strategic, and systematic. Each major stake holder’s role in this strategic, comprehensive plan has been explicitly defined. This includes the role of the IHEs, cutting across content and pedagogy. The first product was a brochure outlining the responsibilities of various stakeholders with regard to induction; a follow-up product will be a handbook on induction that sets a high bar in terms of the specific supports each stakeholder will provide. The implementation of a comprehensive plan is the major agenda for this team for the current academic year.

The project conducted focus groups of new teachers to discuss their induction experiences. Results of these focus groups documented many areas where new teachers need assistance and found that new teachers generally do not feel supported as they begin their work in the teaching profession.

Teachers-in-Residence

The Teachers-in-Residence program places master teachers from Milwaukee Public Schools on special full-time assignment to the university for a two-year period. They work as equal partners in the teacher preparation program and are incorporated into all aspects of the TNE program, which includes working with each of the blocks in the professional sequence, participating on design teams, and participating directly in academic content classes in various disciplines.

Special Focus 2005-06

With the task of aligning content knowledge curriculum in the arts, letters and sciences with state standards and MPS learning targets, the design teams will in the academic year interface directly with work focused on induction, program assessment, and relating content knowledge faculty to pedagogical training and clinical experiences for preparing teachers.