Roanoke College Teacher Licensure Program Awarded National Accreditation
by Dr. Lisa Earp

On March 26, 2010, the Roanoke College Teacher Licensure Program was awarded national accreditation by the Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC), one of two national accrediting agencies approved by the United States Department of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation. This marks the first time Roanoke College’s teacher licensure program has achieved national accreditation, a milestone in the program’s growth and development. TEAC accreditation places our program in the company of such colleges and universities achieving national accreditation through TEAC as the University of Virginia, Emory and Henry College, Boston College, Michigan State University and Princeton University.

To achieve this goal of national accreditation, the Education Department spent the last two years reviewing its program and gathering evidence that the program prepares teachers who “understand the subject matter they are certified to teach, understand the process of learning and teaching, and possess teaching skills that lead students to appropriate levels of achievement” (TEA). TEAC completed its audit visit in October 2009, and members of the Education Department met with TEAC’s accreditation panel in February 2010.

President Maxey calls this accomplishment “an important milestone for the College and the Education Department.” Dr. Richard Smith, vice president and dean of the College, describes TEAC accreditation as “a significant accomplishment for the College. It confirms that our teacher education programs compare well to the leading programs in the nation and is precisely the kind of recognition that a top-100 national liberal arts college should have.”

The program received accreditation for five years, the longest number of years of accreditation awarded to a first-time TEAC-accredited institution.

New Program: Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESL)
by Dr. Maria Stallions

The Education Department’s new TESL program is designed to prepare a new generation of teachers with the knowledge, skills and cross-cultural competencies that promote cultural self-awareness and appreciation of the cultural and linguistic diversity found in today’s classrooms. The Pre-Kindergarten-12 TESL teacher licensure program is grounded on culturally relevant pedagogy and a social constructive framework that draws on current scholarship and guides pre-service teachers in meeting rigorous state licensure requirements and instructional accountability standards. TESL teacher candidates will research, develop, implement and evaluate innovative instructional practices that support the academic achievement of culturally and linguistically diverse students. A concentration in TESL is also available to those who are interested in teaching English to speakers of other languages in venues in the United States and abroad.
Message from the Chair

As you’ll see in the newsletter, there are a number of exciting developments with the Teacher Education Program at Roanoke College. We’re very proud of our new licensure area, Teaching English as a Second Language. The program is contributing to our new emphasis of teaching in the diverse classroom. Dr. Stallions, the major instructor, is a welcomed addition to the faculty. Her Cuban cultural heritage and experience in urban schools are bringing a rich diversity to the conversations envisioning our future. As a faculty, we are committed to helping our graduates build an understanding and an ability to purposely and effectively encounter “the other.” It’s only by our capacity to work across cultures that we’ll be able to engage a world facing the challenges of a global community and economy.

Our international programs are growing, too. This year, we have our first student teachers in the Middle East at the International Qatar Academy, a cornerstone of Qatar’s Educational City. Elizabeth Depoy and Alexis Perry had wonderful experiences in a land of oil and sand. Enjoy the pictures they have shared with us (see page 3). On Christmas Eve 2009, I enjoyed hearing Elizabeth’s stories firsthand before a Christmas Eve Mass at Paris’s Notre Dame Cathedral. What a great opportunity to meet a student studying abroad in the grandeur of one of the world’s most beautiful churches and on a holy day in the Christian calendar.

Finally, the faculty is pleased and honored to have our program nationally accredited by the Teacher Education Accreditation Council. This is an important milestone for the Department and for the College because national accreditation furthers the College’s goal of being recognized as one of the nation’s leading liberal arts colleges. All the faculty members have worked diligently on this project. We’re especially thankful for Dr. Earp’s leadership in this multi-year endeavor.

Your Education faculty members think of you often and call your names remembering our times of learning together. We hope and pray that your vocations in the classroom or other venues are fulfilling and you are finding purpose in the journey we travel together.

Sincerely,

Dr. Gary Whitt and Professor Katie Elmore will travel to Great Britain with twelve students in May. The IL Comparative Education course is designed to offer pre-service teachers classroom experiences in an international school where they will perform instructional and professional tasks. Engagement in reflective activities will be a key component of the IL course as students will be required to critically analyze their educational philosophical perspective with the educational philosophies and beliefs of the hosting school. Fostering cultural awareness and understanding will also be part of the IL course. Students will explore Great Britain’s historical and social values during special weekend trips and activities.

Dr. Maria Stallion, associate professor of education, joined the Education Department in Fall 2008. Her areas of expertise include special education, cross-cultural learning, ESL, language learners, service-learning and educational leadership. Prior to coming to Roanoke College, Dr. Stallions served as assistant dean and associate professor of education at Barry University, Miami, Fla. She is the recipient of several professional awards, and has written various publications and has presented at local, national and international conferences.

We are pleased to introduce Mrs. Mary Shaner-Sigurdson, the new field placement and licensure assistant. A former middle school teacher, she brings experience, energy and support to the Education Department field placement component of teacher licensure programs.
Reauthorization of No Child Left Behind

In the spring, Congress began a series of hearings focusing on the reauthorization of No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Democrats and Republicans have expressed a strong desire to carefully review all NCLB issues prior to developing legislation. Among the list of priorities emerging from policy experts and educational advocates is how to best create a K-12 world-class education system that will prepare students for success. Other priority topics include incentives for high performing schools and dropout prevention programs. In preparation for his testimony before Congress regarding the reauthorization of NCLB, Secretary of Education Ernie Duncan participated in several community-based meetings where students, parents and teachers shared their concerns and made recommendations. In a recent speech, President Obama restated his commitment to restructuring NCLB and completing the reauthorization process in 2010.

Alumni News

Chris Coombs-Patoray ’97 teaches fifth grade at Sandston Elementary School in Henrico County. Chris, now in her sixth year of teaching, was Sandston’s 2008 Teacher of the Year. In addition to her teaching responsibilities, she serves as grade-level chair.
11th Annual Margaret Sue Copenhaver Institute

Visualizing Student Academic Achievement

Integrating Arts into the Core Curriculum to Improve Student Performance in Reading, Writing and Critical Thinking

The Institute will be held on the Roanoke College campus, June 21-23, 2010. It will feature keynote speakers Philip Yenawine, who will present his work on visual thinking strategies; and Tom Crockett, who will join with a presentation team from Young Audiences of Virginia to share innovative strategies in the arts that teachers can use to strengthen literacy skills in the core curriculum. The Institute will also offer a range of breakout sessions, hands-on technology workshops, discussion groups, curriculum development sessions, breakfasts, lunches, receptions and a closing celebration. The cost to accepted participants is $100; the fee includes participation in all Institute events, two nights lodging at Roanoke College, and session materials. Those interested may apply online at: www.roanoke.edu/msci/.

MSCI 2011

Stay the Course: Reviewing the Call to Teach

Keynote Speaker: Nel Noddings