Virginia Teacher of the Year: Stephanie A. Doyle ’99

by Megan Mooney ’11

Stephanie Doyle, a local middle school teacher and proud alumna of Roanoke College, was recently awarded the prestigious honor of being named Virginia’s Teacher of the Year. Doyle, sixth-grade history teacher at Breckinridge Middle School in Roanoke City, climbed a steep path to becoming Virginia’s Teacher of the Year. The process began in her own school where she was nominated by her peers and colleagues. From there, she won the title in Roanoke City. After interviewing with a panel of judges along with all the other representatives of the region, Doyle won in Region 6. Competition at the state level required a lengthy application with several essays. On October 24, 2008, Doyle was named the state winner.

Doyle believes the aspect of her career that most set her apart was the program she initiated for at-risk young women. The program, Girls Rising On to Womanhood (GROW) helps build social and academic skills for girls in grades 7 to 12, who may not have succeeded without a mentor. The organization currently works with four young ladies. This small number allows for interaction with the girls on a deeper, more personal level.

Doyle also acknowledges the Copenhaver Institute in her success. Immediately after graduating (and every year since then), she attended the institute where she was able to absorb all of the advice and practices of experienced educators. It was an eye-opening time for her where she could witness all of the educational theories she’d been taught in her college courses. She got a sense of what actually works in a classroom and what she could alter and implement when she embarked on her own career.

In regards to her alma mater, Doyle could not think of a better place to have “gotten her feet wet.” The educational program at Roanoke allows students to put theory into practice and produce successful educators. According to Doyle, Roanoke College “turns out student teachers like no other.” As for advice she would offer to undergrads in the education program, she suggests looking within the Roanoke Valley at all the teaching experiences and positions offered there. “Soak up every bit so that you can fill your bag of tricks.”

Obama Administration Brings Sweeping Change to Education Policies

by Katie S. Elmore, Teaching Associate

In a recent speech, profiling his agenda for education, President Obama declared, “The future belongs to the nation that best educates its citizens. In just a single generation, America has fallen from second place to eleventh place in the portion of students completing college.” (www.whitehouse.gov)

By appointing Arne Duncan as Secretary of Education, Obama has tapped a leader of school reform who hopes to reverse the trend of school failure in the U.S. Duncan announced in March that $44 billion in stimulus funding would be available to states as early as April. An additional $77 billion will be available later in 2009. Such federal levels of funding for education have never been seen before.

What will this mean for our teacher licensure candidates entering the field? Hopefully, more job security and opportunity, as the first round of funding has averted thousands of teacher layoffs. In the fast-paced world of sweeping educational reform, we must watch carefully as the decisions unfold. Stay informed on policies at www.ed.gov and keep track of where the money is going at www.recovery.org.
Month of the Year

“Change!” It seems to be the word of the year; a word on everyone’s mind. Author Christina Baldwin describes change as a “constant, the signal for rebirth, the egg of the phoenix.” Here at Roanoke, the Education Department is not immune from this constant. Fortunately, our change is signaling new beginnings.

First, we are changing our accreditation status. Historically, the program has been accredited and approved by the Virginia Department of Education. This year, the faculty, led by Dr. Lisa Earp, has engaged in a rigorous self-study process preparing us for our first national accreditation visit by the Teacher Education Accreditation Council. The visit is scheduled for October 25-28, 2009.

On page 4 of this newsletter, you’ll find an online survey link that will help us prepare for the visit. Please take the time to complete the survey. Your opinion is important to us and will aid our efforts to change for the positive.

Secondly, there is a program change. This year, the Department developed a new course of study for our elementary and secondary licensure students. The program is designed to better prepare pre-service teachers for the reality of diversity within classrooms. Hallmarks of the new program are differentiated instruction, social justice and cross-cultural communication and learning. It will be unveiled fall semester 2009. We’re excited about the changes it will make in the careers of our graduates.

Finally, a big change; one of our alumni has stirred excitement. Stephanie Doyle ’99 was named the Virginia Teacher of the Year. We’re proud that one of our alumni has been recognized for her work and are confident that she is representative of the work and dedication of all of you. Thanks for what you do for children, for schools and for us.

Sincerely,

Dr. Tim Reynolds
Chair

Two New IL Comparative Education Courses for May 2010 and 2011

by Dr. Gary Whitt, Associate Professor

Bilbo Baggins was right. Anyone venturing away from familiar home and hearth deserves whatever comes and can count on being forever changed. To provide time and place for such change, we’ve planned two intensive learning trips, one to Great Britain (2010) and one to the Mediterranean (2011). Designed specifically for our pre-service teachers, the students will intern in an international school of varying type and learn what it is like to be a classroom teacher. They will perform all the tasks required by the profession, tutor children and even teach a full lesson to the class. During their teaching, they will also compare the education philosophies and beliefs of the host nation with those of the host school and those of typical American schools. On the weekend, we’ll leave the duties of the classroom far behind as we travel to experience other cultures in interesting places. Different foods, different languages, different ways of being, we want to experience a little diversity in our lives and see how the rest of the world lives.

When finished, our pre-service teachers will have received competency for the Internship in Education, EDUC 338, credit for the Roanoke College Intensive Learning class, and an opportunity to experience life outside their own doors. Bilbo was right; who knows if home will ever look the same again?

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Message from the Chair

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10th Annual Margaret Sue Copenhaver Institute

The 10th annual Margaret Sue Copenhaver Institute for Teaching and Learning is scheduled for June 22-24. This year, featured speakers Dr. Diane Rodriguez and Dr. Rita Pierson will present the theme, The Changing Face of Who We Teach. During the three-day Institute, we’ll explore cross-cultural communication, learn skills in teaching English language learners, and discover the complexities of working with children who live in cultures of poverty.

Institute participants will include teachers, administrators and specialists representing school divisions across Virginia and the country. A group of Roanoke College and James Madison University pre-service teachers will round out the audience. We are also pleased that six school divisions are sponsoring this year’s Institute: Botetourt County Schools, City of Salem Schools, Evangelical Lutheran Church Schools, Roanoke City Schools, Roanoke County Schools and Virginia Beach City Schools. We hope many of you will be joining us.

Be sure to mark next year’s Institute on your calendar, June 21-23, 2010. It will be an exciting event because we’ll be working with Roanoke’s new Taubman Museum of Art to present the theme, Arts and Standards: Raising Student Achievement.

Education Department Seeking National Accreditation

by Dr. Lisa Earp, Assistant Professor

Roanoke College’s Education Department is seeking national accreditation of our state-approved teacher education program through the Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC), a national accrediting agency “dedicated to helping educator preparation programs improve and be accountable for their quality.” As members of TEAC, we join such institutes of higher learning as the University of Virginia, Hollins University, Lynchburg College, Boston College and Concordia College.

TEAC requires that each college seeking accreditation analyze and then report on the program’s preparation of competent, caring, qualified effective teachers. Our Department has identified four claims as a framework for describing our program; the claims are based on pre-service teacher knowledge of content, pedagogy, practice and progress.

The Inquiry Brief, a document that describes our program, will be submitted to TEAC for review in May 2009, and the Department will receive comments and suggestions from TEAC by June 2009. TEAC’s audit team will visit campus October 26-28, 2009.

TEAC accreditation is an ongoing process requiring yearly revisions and updates. There may be times when we utilize this newsletter as a means of data-collection and look forward to your input and comments!

Teachers of Promise

Ten winning pre-service teachers from Roanoke College were recently honored at the Commonwealth of Virginia’s Teachers of Promise Celebration hosted by James Madison University during the March 20-21 gathering of teaching greats. Selected as some of the most promising young teachers in Virginia, these Roanoke College superlatives joined other finalists from Virginia colleges and universities in the two-day gala event highlighting excellence in education. Joined by Virginia’s best teachers who served as personal mentors during the conference, our students took part in conversations regarding best practices and best purposes when teaching children and the attitudes and strategies which can maximize the learning in every classroom. Pre-service teachers were challenged during a formal dinner address by former State Superintendent of Public Instruction Jo Lynne DeMary, to never forget that inspiring teachers undergird the rest of humanity’s efforts. The Roanoke College students returned to their academic labors reminded and encouraged that theirs is a profession of great trials, greater aspirations and still greater rewards.
Planning for the Future: Online Survey

As we plan for the future, the Department has identified two areas of priority: teacher cross-cultural competencies and departmental facilities/resources. We would like to invite students, alumni, faculty, staff and community partners to share ideas regarding these two priority topics. An online survey is now available at http://faculty.roanoke.edu/whitt/survey.htm. This 14-item survey is designed to be completed in less than ten minutes. Your feedback is a vital component of our planning process. We thank you in advance for your participation and continued support.

For additional information regarding the survey, please contact Dr. Maria Stallions at stallions@roanoke.edu or 540-387-5167.

Educational Resources

Constructivist Learning Design Notes
http://www.prainbow.com/cld/cldn.html

Teachers.Net Lesson Plans
http://teachers.net/lessons/

Grade Level Skills
http://www.internet4classrooms.com/grade_level_help.htm