

# Education *Action* in

Winter 2010

A Newsletter from Rowan University's College of Education

## Dean's Message



With our finger on the pulse of the community, the College of Education views it as our job to assess needs within our community and respond to those needs. We view it as our job to be a hub of information. It is our job to provide the best resources possible to area districts and the best education possible to preservice teachers and those pursuing continued education. Doing so ensures that the College is meeting its mission of building stronger classroom communities and confident, prepared educators.

I am pleased to share with you the stories on the next few pages. The College's faculty and staff have been engaged with our surrounding communities, living our mission of keeping a pulse on the community and its everchanging needs. It is only through these engaged faculty and staff that the College can continue to respond to those needs, providing new resources, expanded programs, research findings and more that benefit educators like you.

From creating a teacher residency program and an urban teacher academy, to fine tuning and expanding current programs and offerings, it is my hope that you feel, just as we do, that the Rowan College of Education is here for you.

We are educators together in profession, heart, and shared vision.

*Carol A. Sharp*

Dr. Carol A. Sharp, Dean

## \$3.2 Million Grant Awarded

Rowan University's College of Education was recently awarded a \$3.2 million grant to develop a teacher residency program and reform pre-baccalaureate programs which will, ultimately, impact both the teaching profession across New Jersey and the quality of education that urban students receive in high need subject areas.

The federal government awarded 28 such grants nationwide. Rowan's award is one component of a five-year, \$10.8 million grant awarded to the Garden State Partnership for Teacher Quality, a collaboration between Rowan, William Paterson and Kean Universities.

The dual-pronged approach of creating a teacher residency program (similar in style to a medical residency program) while simultaneously reforming pre-baccalaureate programs will help to create "a seamless progression from preservice to inservice teacher, demonstrating our belief that professional development, growth, and learning never ends," said Dr. Jill A. Perry, associate dean of the College of Education.

Each January for the next five years, the three participating universities will initiate a small group of new preservice teachers into the residency program, following them in their careers from preservice to tenure. Rowan's first class of five residents began the program in January and, at the end of their first 18 months in the program, will have earned both masters' degrees and dual certification.

"The program ensures that we focus

on meeting the needs of schools and children in high need, urban areas," said Perry, "while preparing highly qualified teachers with a dedication to urban education and



expertise in areas of critical need."

During their residency, the first five candidates, Perry said, will work four days a week at LEAP Academy Charter School in Camden.

In three to five years' time, Perry anticipates that the program will help to reduce teacher turnover in urban areas, allowing students to benefit from receiving their education in schools with a cohesive, experienced, high quality team of educators in place. ❖

# Expansion of Early Childhood Programs

by: Kathleen M. Malloy

*With the focus of Education In Action being on education, we thought it only natural to use this newsletter as a learning tool. Kathleen M. Malloy, a junior sociology and public relations major from Glassboro, took the lead on crafting this story for you after completing her summer internship with the Early Childhood Programs.*

Preservice teachers will now have access to greater educational and professional development opportunities with the expansion of the Early Childhood Programs.

The programs, located at both the Camden preschool and the Early Childhood Demonstration Center (ECDC) in Glassboro, offer on-site learning opportunities for both the children enrolled in the programs and the preservice teachers educating them.

Preservice teachers enrolled in the early childhood teacher preparation program rely on experiences at both sites to gain vital first-hand learning and work experience that will make them better educators in the future. Other disciplines within the College of Education are also encouraged to learn

from the programs as well.

The ECDC enables preservice teachers to utilize the demonstration observatory for class projects, case studies and to practice establishing thematic units geared to early education. Students can observe or practice using joint professional development with ECDC and preschool certified instructors.

The Camden Campus preschool offers Rowan students the opportunity to gain interactive field experience. The facility allows education majors to conduct small and large group instruction with preschoolers, in addition to student teaching and practicum work in other areas of study.

The programs implement a creative curriculum which presents lessons

through play. Preschoolers enjoy small and large group activities and individual exploration via learning centers to develop social and problem-solving skills. Following the curriculum's guidelines, certified instructors post lesson plans online through CC.net. The Web site facilitates communication between guardians and instructors, and allows parents to view their child's classroom in real time.

"Our research-based curriculum emphasizes play as a vehicle of learning," stated director of early childhood programs Lorraine Ricchezza. "Inquiry, exploration and interaction, in addition to fostering active learning, are the goals of the program with the teacher acting as the facilitator."

The Rowan at Camden Preschool extends to Camden City residents, while the ECDC is open to preschool-aged children of Rowan faculty, staff, students, and alumni. ❖

For more information, contact Lorraine Ricchezza at (856) 756-5400 x5402.

## Rehearsal-Based Learning

Through her experience with Hopeworks, a nonprofit located in Camden, Dr. Carol Thompson of the Foundations of Education department has been able to research how people learn through participation and rehearsal.

"I've identified a kind of participation that people tend to brush off," Thompson said. "There's not much research on rehearsal-based learning."

Through observation and examination Thompson has watched the teenage apprentices of Hopeworks thrive through an intense rehearsal-based training program. "Youth who never thought of themselves as going to college are going to college," she said.

The rehearsal approach to learning drives the apprentices to cognitive

growth and improvisational thinking.

While enrolled with Hopeworks, trainees participate in programs that teach them how to build Web sites, present to the community, and answer questions. Community members can then, in turn, hire Hopeworks apprentices for projects.

One specific success story sticks with Thompson the most. As a public service to their hometown, the apprentices used a geographic information system to create the first map of Camden in 50 years. In addition to learning the necessary software and working as a team, the youth also developed business skills in sales and relationship building as they explored nuances such as how to sell ad space for the map. Once complete, the youth printed and distributed their maps free



of charge to community centered areas such as Cooper University Hospital.

Thompson brings these experiences into her university classroom. By researching rehearsal-based learning, Thompson can analyze how people learn, passing that research on to colleagues and her university students who will one day enter the field as teachers themselves. ❖

# Teaching Academy For High Schoolers

Last summer 27 high school juniors embarked on a journey that, for some, will be remembered as their first steps toward their intended future careers as educators.

Created in response to community need, the Rowan Urban Teacher Academy is designed to attract students to the teaching profession. "Over the next decade we're expecting a national shortage of teachers, particularly in urban settings and in subject areas such as science, special education, world languages, bilingual education and early childhood education," said Steven C. Farney, assistant dean of the College of Education and RUTA committee member.

Through RUTA, high school juniors across southern New Jersey who have an interest in exploring teaching are

invited to the two-week long academy. During that time students are exposed to an introduction to teaching, field trips to urban school settings, classroom observations, and the opportunity to create and teach their own lesson plan.

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**"We're expecting a national shortage of teachers, particularly in urban settings"**

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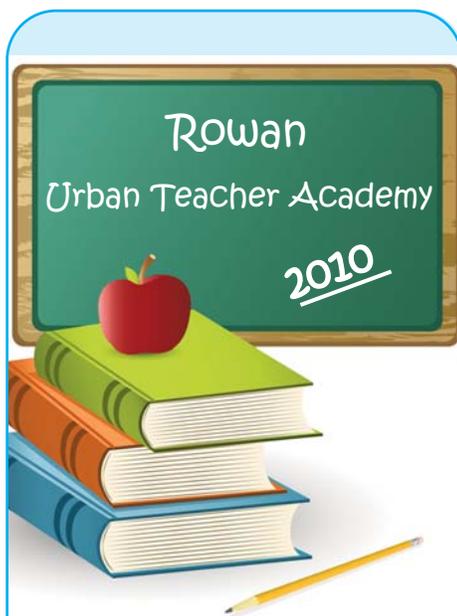
Just by chance, last year the students were in the right place at the right time and were invited to a press conference held by then-Governor Jon Corzine and former Camden Mayor Gwendolyn Faison. The experience highlighted for the students the

relationship between education and politics.

Sally Villa, RUTA participant and Camden resident, appreciated the urban emphasis of the program. "Everybody always wants to be a suburban teacher," Villa said. "Urban kids are underestimated and stereotyped. But this program got people to be open minded about urban areas."

The daytime program was offered to students free of charge, with those achieving perfect attendance receiving a modest stipend upon completion.

RUTA is sponsored by Rowan University as part of the Garden State Partnership for Teacher Quality, in cooperation with Rowan's College of Education. ❖



Application Deadline  
March 31

Academy Dates  
July 26 - August 6

Applications/questions  
contact Steven Farney at  
(856) 256-4754 or  
farney@rowan.edu

More information at  
[www.rowan.edu/coe/ruta](http://www.rowan.edu/coe/ruta)



Rowan Urban Teacher Academy (RUTA) high schooler participants Sally Villa (left) and Gabriella Francesconi conduct a lesson with students from the Lanning Square School reading program during RUTA's inaugural program last summer.

# Doctoral Grad Shares Experience

“I grew so much personally and professionally,” said Joanne M. Kennedy, a 2009 graduate of the doctorate in educational leadership program. “For me, that was the most beneficial part of the program.”

A Haddonfield resident and mom to Connor, 5, and twins Steven and Samantha, 3,

Kennedy started the doctoral program in 2005, eager to lay the groundwork to

advance her career. Kennedy, a former principal at a private special education school, envisions her future as one day including public school administration or higher education.

“The program taught me about who I am as a leader,” Kennedy said, adding that her newly acquired skill set and degree will help to set her apart professionally.

For her dissertation, Kennedy

created a refresher course for professors to orient them to Rowan University online academic programs, showing professors how to replicate face-to-face experiences in the online environment, create a true classroom experience, and use technology to its greatest potential.

Kennedy has not yet taught an online course, however that is one area that she’d like to dive

into now that her doctoral studies are complete.

Kennedy also accepted a new position, coordinator of doctoral programs at Rowan’s College of Education.

Now, the program she experienced as a student will directly benefit from her experience as a leader. ❖

**For information about the doctoral program, contact Joanne Kennedy at (856) 256-4721.**

“I grew so much personally and professionally”

## Education In Action

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Associate Dean

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Assistant Dean

*Education In Action* is published periodically by the Rowan College of Education to keep the community informed about College resources, accomplishments and events.

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A bold student participates in an activity run by the Health & Exercise Science Department during Rowan Day, a day set aside to celebrate student, employee, and departmental accomplishments.



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