

# THE GOODLAD OCCASIONAL

Volume One, Issue Four

April 18, 2006

The school-university settings in which future teachers are prepared differ widely across the United States. Nonetheless, there are some commonalities. Unfortunately, the differences often obscure the commonalities. And so there has not been as much communication and learning from one another as is desirable. I shall endeavor to address the commonalities.

It might be useful for the interested reader to peruse the last chapter in my book *Teachers for Our Nation's Schools*. In that chapter, I describe the creation of a center of pedagogy designed to bring together the three subcultures that contribute to teacher education programs: departments in the arts and sciences, divisions of the school or college of education, and schools in which future teachers get their first teaching experiences. Whether the Washington Center for Teaching and Learning, recently created as part of the Teachers for a New Era initiative, will have kinship with the center of pedagogy concept remains to be seen.

This issue of *The Goodlad Occasional* picks up from where I left off in issue three.



The 2004–2005 year was a busy one for Dean Maria Chavez that taxed her

ingenuity, social and political skills, and of course, her energy. On one hand, she was well aware that the College of Education was being called upon by the regents and president to strengthen the desired symbiotic relationship between the university and its immediate community. The university was an enormous community asset that required support. On the other hand, she knew that this mission did not square with the interests of some of her colleagues. She knew that there were a few among them who would prefer that the college not prepare future teachers at all. Their interests were in research and graduate studies. Consequently, she made it abundantly clear that teacher education was not required or, indeed, expected of everyone. However, she hoped that all faculty would take seriously the sharing of their research findings with educators in the community.

She reminded the entire faculty that the college received a percentage of the overhead from research grants for general use and made it possible, for example, to allocate a budget for faculty expenses at educational conferences. But she also made it clear that teacher education is a top priority for schools and colleges of education in universities that include them in their structure.

- She arranged with the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences for a meeting with department chairs and any professors they chose to

invite and brought with her to the meeting the director of teacher education and several faculty members heavily involved in teacher education. The subject was the contribution of the arts and sciences to the general and special subject areas of all future teachers in the university and the necessity of the College of Education to have input into the curricula. There emerged from this meeting the appointment of a small group to address improvement in this arena.

- She arranged for a late afternoon and dinner meeting with representatives from all the districts in which student teachers from the university had been placed during recent years. Again she included key colleagues and did not miss the importance of inviting the members of the committee that had been selected to tighten up the relationship of the College of Education and the arts and sciences departments with respect to their mutual role in teacher education.

Her primary topic this time was a proposed change in the relationship between the university and the individual schools in regard to the conduct of field experiences and student teaching for future teachers.

- Her next meeting was a longer one that began with a 3:00 p.m. reception. This one was for principals of schools that had accommodated student teachers from the university and/or

collaborated with university personnel in such initiatives as the improvement of science, mathematics, literacy, and more in either elementary or secondary schools. Faculty members from both the College of Education and the College of Arts and Sciences who had been involved in these activities also were invited. This time, the theme was the desirability of differentiating between partner schools committed to a long-term relationship with the university as teacher education schools and partnership schools that would engage in initiatives of varying lengths that brought together specialists from the university and teachers in the schools for a variety of educational improvement initiatives.

Partner schools would be engaged in a continuous process of total school renewal in which future teachers would participate as neophyte teachers instead of engaging only in the teaching of a single class. They would participate in all school affairs as if they were members of the faculty. Future teachers would work for an extended period of time in two different school settings during their final year of preparation. Dean Chavez noted that there are parallels here between teacher education and medical education. She pointed out that it was necessary for there to be enough of these partner schools to accommodate every student admitted to the teacher education program who had completed all of

the requirements up to the normal time for engaging in student teaching.

The partnership schools, on the other hand, might engage from time to time in collaborative projects with university personnel but would not undertake to provide internships for future teachers. There was a great deal of discussion of this differentiation. The basic concept was that the mentorship of prospective teachers is an activity that requires a great deal of knowledge and skill that is refined with experience. It was made clear at this meeting that the university would require over time enough of these partner schools to assure every future teacher in the program an induction into the entire scope of teaching in schools under the guidance of these skilled mentors.



Because I want to keep these epistles short and have them deal primarily with what I consider to be essentials in teacher education, I have not addressed the complications of what I shall call “the human problem.” The most difficult thing about change is not the lack of ideas, enthusiasm, or commitment. It is the matter of the diversity of human personalities. I have made significant change look easy, but it is incredibly difficult simply because everyone involved has personal interests, some of

which are bound to obstruct progress. I have dealt to some degree with the human problem in the concluding chapter of *Teachers for Our Nation’s Schools*. In that scenario, there are professors who go to the president to complain about the actions of the dean. I have endeavored in the above to make clear that Dean Chavez was aware of the quagmires into which she might fall if her plans and actions were not shared by her colleagues.

One of the mistakes deans often make is that they tend to include and give special responsibility only to those people who appear to be in harmony with their own thinking. I have found in my experience that it sometimes pays to select for major responsibilities colleagues who appear to be in opposition. One of the best leaders with whom I had the pleasure to work was a university president who, on beginning his tenure, selected as provost the faculty member who had been the biggest thorn in the side of his predecessor. Of course, he did not do this without checking sufficiently to believe that this man really needed the opportunity to lead and had most of the necessary qualifications. It was a brilliant move.

In the next epistle, I will turn more to the school side of simultaneous educational renewal.

John I. Goodlad  
Institute for Educational Inquiry  
124 East Edgar Street  
Seattle, WA 98102  
(206) 325-3010