

The Mission of the Education Department

Within the education unit, faculty are committed to preparing candidates to teach in diverse classrooms at the early childhood, childhood, and adolescent levels. Initial preparation of teacher candidates occurs at the undergraduate and the graduate levels. The education unit also serves to continue to develop the teaching skills, knowledge base, professional commitments and dispositions of in-service teachers as well as the professional skills of supervisors and administrators enrolled in advanced programs.

Iona College is located in southern Westchester, in the heart of a diverse community. Its geographic situation, therefore, provides a natural context for preparing teachers candidates and educators for service within schools having diverse populations. The mission of the education unit echoes the shared vision through its strong commitment to *all* students. Thus, the education unit aims at preparing teacher candidates and educators for working with diverse populations and in the development of the belief and practices that all students can learn. This belief is the foundation of the programs that prepare teacher candidates for working with all students and is enacted in the following ways: (1) Teacher candidates and educators are prepared with a strong knowledge-base of the disciplines that they teach, of child development, and of instructional and assessment strategies linked to “best practice.” (2) Teacher candidates and educators enter into the process of professional development as part of their training which continues throughout their professional lives. (3) Teacher candidates and educators receive field experience and clinical preparation in high-risk schools with diverse populations. (4) Assessment of teacher candidates’ and educators’ performances with respect to student learning is a dynamic and on-going process that is used to inform the effectiveness of the education unit and to strengthen and renew the programs it sponsors.

Thus, all faculty members, full-time, part-time, and clinical, within the education unit that prepares teacher candidates and educators must be adequately prepared to embrace the challenges defined by the mission of their department. To meet this mission, the expectations for each faculty member within the education unit are defined by the specific goals and the objectives within the following three areas: (1) **teaching**, (2) **scholarship**, and (3) **service**.

Teaching and Teacher-Candidates’ and Educators’ Learning: Indeed *teaching and learning* are the primary focus for all faculty at the college, but for the faculty within the education unit, their teaching and the teacher candidates’ and educators’ learning are regarded as defining the essence of their profession. The values of the reflective teacher, the dispositions associated with the effective teacher and professional educator, and the committed life-long learner are the engaging objectives each faculty member models and demonstrates to teacher candidates and educators that they teach and work within their classrooms and P-12 schools.

Research and Scholarly Activities are valued as fundamental to deepening the knowledge of the teaching profession for each member within the education unit. Faculty members are expected, therefore, to engage in research and study related to the courses that they teach. Their engagement in the pursuit of knowledge through research is for the primary purpose of enhancing their teaching and sharing pedagogical and professional

knowledge with teacher candidates, their colleagues, and the broader community of learners within the P-12 schools with which the education unit has formed partnerships.

Service is the third aspect that supports the education unit's mission. Faculty are encouraged to reach out to the community of learners and scholars within the college as well as to those who are part of the geographic community in which it serves. Because service propels a caring teacher and educator, there is a strong expectation that faculty serve the school and community through active participation in school partnerships and other forms of collaborative training that address the unmet needs that are too frequently felt by high-risk schools.