

The Strategic Plan of the College of Education

Three Year Cycle: 2008 – 2011

Mission

Northern Illinois University's College of Education continues the institution's 100-year legacy of preparing professional educators for the state, region, nation, and world. The college is composed of hallmark programs developed through adherence to research-grounded, philosophical bases that have shaped its various disciplines. For undergraduates, the framework under which all programs function is that of the reflective practitioner. Yet, within each program, discipline specific features allow for student and program identity. The graduate programs prepare advanced professional educators for a wide variety of leadership positions in educational institutions, business, industry, and for-profit and not-for-profit agencies. All programs meet rigorous national standards for colleges of education and the specific disciplines represented by their program offerings.

Vision

The College of Education, in its leadership role in the state, region, nation, and world, prepares professional educators who are responsive to the needs of constituencies and audiences with whom they interact. State-of-the-art preparation addressing current societal needs is a symbol of the responsibility the college takes for its students. Among the societal needs to which the college is dedicated are issues associated with the interface of technology and the infusion of cognitive and affective dimensions related to a multi-cultural, multi-lingual, and pluralistic society. The college's intent is that its graduates will be responsible individuals of change and adaptation and be responsive to the needs of an ever-changing society. The College of Education, in its focus on excellence, promotes professional partnerships with local school districts, agencies, and industry.

The College of Education, in its service to students being prepared as highly competent professional educators, dedicates its energy to the following features as central to its mission:

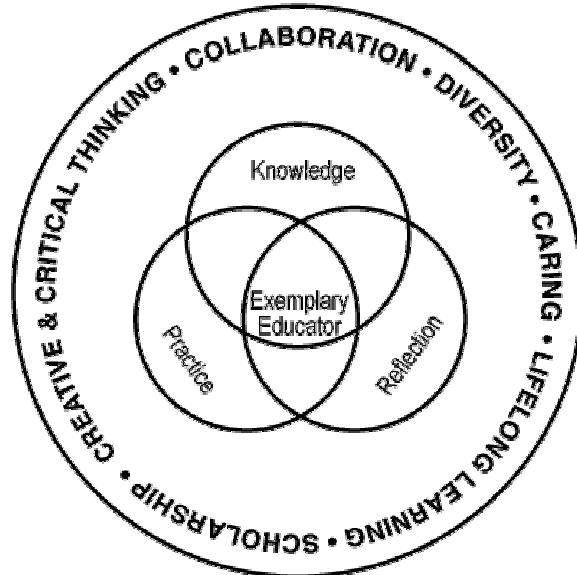
- the promotion of high standards of professional education in an environment attentive to the needs of undergraduate and graduate students;
- the development and implementation of the best instructional practices in the preparation of professional educators;
- the advancement and support of scholarly and artistic activity for faculty and students;
- the support of individual and collaborative efforts within and outside the college and university; and
- a culture that supports and reinforces ethical, professional behaviors for a democratic society.

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Northern Illinois University Conceptual Framework

NIU's Teacher Education Program is informed by the central tenets of the university's mission as shown in the graphic below.



A Community of Learners

The NIU community of Learners builds on knowledge, practice, and reflection to produce Exemplary Educators. The Community encompasses scholars, education professionals, and preservice teachers in an interaction that develops the strengths that embody excellence in education. These strengths include creative and critical thinking, scholarship and care. Application of these strengths emerges through the collaborative efforts of diverse community which supports lifelong learning.

Approved by 2005; 2007

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Northern Illinois University Strategic Planning Imperatives

1. Preserve, Strengthen, and Extend NIU's Teaching and Learning Environment;
2. Develop a Strategy for Investing in Multi-disciplinary Scholarship and Artistic Clusters – to complement NIU's focus on individual scholarly and artistic achievement;
3. Strengthen and Extend NIU's Global/Regional Impact; and
4. Make NIU an Institution of "First Choice" for Faculty, Students, and Staff.

College of Education Expanded Strategic Planning Imperative

Across all areas, the College of Education will celebrate a diverse community of people, ideas, scholarly and artistic specializations. More specifically, community of people will represent our region through the diversity of our faculty, staff and students.

1. Preserve, strengthen, and extend NIU's teaching and learning environment in preparing highly qualified, effective professionals who are focused on educational and other related professional issues.
2. Develop a strategy for investing in multi-disciplinary scholarship and artistic clusters – to complement NIU's focus on individual scholarly and artistic achievement that bring recognition to the College of Education's programs while developing research-practice centers that inform the state, region, nation, and world.
3. Strengthen and extend NIU's global and regional impact by highlighting and enhancing the College of Education's models of teaching in P-20 education and the workplace.
4. Make NIU an institution of "First Choice" for faculty, students, and staff by creating an environment that helps all to focus on their most natural and authentic professional strengths and by creating a "can do" culture in which innovation and creativity are celebrated.

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Core Value

We value a diverse community of people, ideas, and scholarly and artistic specializations.

Goal

The College of Education will celebrate a diverse community of people, ideas, scholarly, and artistic specializations. The College of Education will represent and value the diversity of our region through composition and actions of our faculty, staff, and students.

Objectives

1. Increase the retention of individuals of diverse backgrounds in the college which includes academic programs, faculty, and staff.
2. Increase the rate at which all students succeed in their programs of study.
3. Enhance the integration of diversity throughout our curriculum, scholarly endeavors, and artistic specializations.
4. Improve our understanding and value of the diversity among all peoples of different races, sexes and sexual orientations, colors, religions, national origins, ages, disabilities, and veteran statuses.

Strategic Initiatives

1. Develop and implement a comprehensive plan for recruiting and retaining faculty, staff, and students from under-represented populations:
 - a. Work with the admissions office and graduate school in recruiting a diverse student population;
 - b. Develop strategies to recruit under-represented faculty, staff, and students;
 - c. Work with advisors in retaining under-represented students.
2. Create systems that support faculty, staff, and students of varied backgrounds.
3. Initiate a diversity awards program to recognize faculty and staff for their commitment to diversity in teaching, research, and service.
4. Provide mentoring for under-represented faculty, staff, and students.
5. Review all publicity materials to ensure a reflection of individuals of diverse backgrounds across the college, and distribute these materials in key sites.
6. Provide recruitment training for chairs.
7. Work with the Diversifying Faculty Institute to recruit under-represented faculty.

Benchmarks

1. Link all resource requests, where applicable, to Core Value number one by fall 2008.
2. Increase the fraction of under-represented students, faculty, leadership team, and staff by 5 percent by 2010.
3. Incorporate recognition of faculty, staff, and students into celebrations throughout the college by fall 2008.
4. Encourage all department chairs and search committee members to go through Affirmative Action workshop before serving on committee by fall 2009.
5. All graduates (100%) of the college will have a basic understanding of diversity through curriculum and field experiences begin immediately.

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6. Create an ad hoc committee or task force to offer suggestions and to evaluate and monitor progress of the college in this area by fall 2008.

Champions

Associate Dean

Department Chairs

College Curriculum Committee

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Core Value

We value innovative programs, engaging and effective teaching methods, and the synergy of teaching with scholarship.

Goals

The College will enhance the teaching and learning environment in preparing highly qualified, effective professionals who are focused on educational and other related professional issues.

Objectives

1. Improve our offerings and services to both traditional and non-traditional students, both on- and off-campus.
2. Establish systems to provide required field experience relevant to faculty areas or expertise.
3. Re-examine our programs and courses for areas of improvement and increased focus, and to examine the need for new opportunities for growth on an ongoing basis.
4. Reduce or remove barriers between program areas and departments to encourage cross-disciplinary collaboration and innovation.

Strategic Initiatives

1. Create and implement innovative course and program delivery options that utilize a variety of methods and technologies to best meet learner needs.
2. Embed within courses and programs processes to easily collect and analyze data for continuous quality improvement.
3. Sharpen our commitment to teaching and learning through theory and scholarship of evidence based practices and an active engagement in the research of learning pedagogy.

Benchmarks

1. Increase our offering of online classes by 10% by 2010.
2. Offer at least three master's programs anywhere in the world by 2011.
3. Have materials online for use by relevant committees, faculty, staff, and leadership team by 2010.
4. Evaluate the curriculum process for enhancement of communication and efficiency by 2010.
5. Develop yearly symposiums/conferences with practitioners and faculty to exchange relevant ideas and topics timely to their appropriate field by 2009.
6. Develop a program where all administrators and faculty meet the university's contemporary experience requirement immediately.

Champions

Senate
College Curriculum Committee
External Programs

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ETRA Faculty
Partnership Office

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Core Value

We value a culture of collegiality and collaboration that recognizes both individual and collective achievement.

Goal

The College will develop multi-disciplinary institutes, research-practice centers, and conferences that inform the state, region, nation, and world.

Objectives

1. Establish scholarly and artistic clusters or centers in the college.
2. Find new and innovative ways to encourage and reward collaborative creativity.
3. Expand the focus of the REPS office to include both contact/service activities and focused initiatives that assist faculty in writing proposals, gaining grants, and work experience.
4. Encourage faculty to work with External Programs on summer institutes, conferences, and workshops for the public.

Strategic Initiatives

1. Provide mechanisms that encourage innovation and experimentation, trying new ideas while accepting that not all new things will work the first time out.
2. Establish reward systems appropriate for efforts of faculty and departments.
3. Establish clear metrics for resource allocation (and reallocation) and criteria for resource sharing.
4. Provide mentorship and support aimed at improving external funding application success rates and reducing post-award difficulties.

Benchmarks

1. Work on communications, publications, and public relations of the REPS office and External Programs with regards to how they are relevant to faculty and graduate students by summer 2008.
2. Develop a structure for a reward system that encourages innovation and experimentation from faculty and departments by fall 2009.
3. REPS will work with appropriate committees to encourage, evaluate, and review cross collaboration efforts by faculty and departments begins immediately.
4. Increase the number of graduate students in the College supported by external funds by 50 percent by 2010.

Champions

Associate Dean
Research, Evaluations and Policy Studies
College Research Committee

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Core Value

We value engagement with schools and business, from local through global venues, in collaboration to improve the quality educational at all levels.

Goal

The College will be a leader and provide best practice models for partnerships, clinical experiences, and professional field experiences.

Objectives

1. Develop the premier clinical program in the region.
2. Maintain faculty applied relevancy to practice with on-going field-based contemporary professional experiences.
3. Provide innovative educational, scholarly, and field opportunities through regional, national, and international collaborations.

Strategic Initiatives

1. Embed practical, applied elements into our curriculum to better prepare individuals for their careers and future contributions to society.
2. Enhance the involvement of faculty and students in the applied work of their fields through continuing and relevant contemporary professional experiences.

Benchmarks

1. Increase the options for our field placements and internship/practicum efforts across all of our programs on an on going basis.
2. Create expectations, structure, and system to encourage all faculty to take part in a field experience relevant to their area of expertise immediately.
3. Create programs and services where practitioners may be a visiting faculty fellow in the college to share latest practices by 2009.
4. Offer student international exchanges and visitations for the College's students through the study abroad experiences and/or clinical experiences by 2010.

Champions

Associate Deans
Department Chairs
Partnership Office
Clinical Office

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Core Value

We value a high quality of work life for all our university employees.

Goal

The College of Education will be a competitive choice for Faculty and Staff by creating an environment that helps all to focus on their most natural and authentic professional strengths within a culture that celebrates innovation and creativity.

Objectives

1. Establish a continuing process for identifying and addressing issues of concern to faculty, staff, and students.
2. Invigorate the culture of shared governance and active participation.
3. Reduce barriers to inter- and intra-departmental cooperation.
4. Increase the quantity and quality of faculty-led extramural support.
5. Empower staff in their positions and responsibilities.

Strategic Initiatives

1. Create more focused and goal-oriented committee work, improved within and between department communication, faculty/administrator role clarification, and the setting of shared missions, strategies, and benchmarks for achievement.
2. Better define faculty roles and expectations, ensuring free thought and expression in teaching and scholarship (academic freedom) while providing transparency in the evaluation of effort, accomplishments, and work responsibilities (accountability).
3. Implement models of differentiated staffing, allowing different faculty to concentrate differentially in teaching, scholarship, and service throughout their careers to best achieve the overall objectives of the department and college.
4. Create models of mentoring that include senior to junior faculty, full-time to part-time, and faculty to student expectations of shared support and success.

Benchmarks

1. Provide training and support (technical and administrative) designed for efficiency and successful accountability for day to day operations (which begins immediately).
2. Create an ad hoc committee of students, staff, professionals, and faculty to evaluate best practices and the college's ecology for enhancement by spring 2009.
3. Continue to review the merit evaluation system to ensure equitable distribution of rewards and to support a culture of innovation and creativity immediately.
4. Create orientation and support systems for new staff and faculty by fall 2008

Champions

Associate Deans
Department Chairs
College Council
Learning Center

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Core Value

We value meaningful, engaging, and high quality student experiences.

Goal

The College of Education will be a competitive choice for students by creating an environment that is engaging, professional, challenging, and affirming in exploring their most natural and authentic professional strengths.

Objectives

1. Improve the quality and consistency of the student experience.
2. Expand the number and variety of ways for students to actively engage with faculty beyond the classroom, especially in field-based, scholarly, and creative activities.

Strategic Initiatives

1. Enhance advising resources, data systems, and means to access college resources.
2. Revitalize College of Education facilities and equipment by addressing safety and security concerns, and through the installing and using of the latest technologies and classroom improvements.
3. Increase the number and amount of support for students through increased internal and external funding and the generous contributions of alumni and retirees.
4. Approach undergraduate and graduate education as a team effort, with all members of the team sharing both the responsibility for student success and the rewards upon exemplary accomplishment.

Benchmarks

1. Create an ad hoc committee of students, staff, professionals, and faculty to evaluate best practices and the college's ecology for enhancement by spring 2009.
2. Create orientation and support systems for all new students by 2010.
3. Create a college-wide undergraduate research program embedded in curriculum by 2010.
4. Create structure for student feedback regarding all services offered by the College by 2009.

Champions

Associate Deans
Department Chairs
College Student Advisory Committee
Learning Center
Advising Office