

Contact: Diana Gonzalez

**REQUEST TO CREATE NEW CENTER AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA:
CENTER FOR EDUCATIONAL TRANSFORMATION**

Action Requested: Consider recommending approval of the request by the University of Northern Iowa to establish the Center for Educational Transformation.

Executive Summary: The purpose of the proposed center is to support the University of Northern Iowa's role in leading education reform for the state of Iowa. The proposed center will provide the mechanism to meet the intent of the legislation that requires the university to engage in research, development, demonstration, and dissemination of best teaching practices. This proposal was reviewed by the Board Office and the Council of Provosts and is recommended for approval. Board of Regents Policy §6.08 requires that all centers and institutes be approved by the Board. This request addresses the Board of Regents Strategic Plan priorities to provide "educational excellence and impact" and "economic development and vitality," Goal #7 - "Iowa's public universities shall contribute to the expansion and diversification of the Iowa economy," and Goal #8 - "Iowa's public universities and special schools shall be increasingly efficient and productive."

Background:

- ◇ Description of proposed center. The linchpins of the proposed center are partnerships, innovation, and responsiveness. Partners will not only "reach in" to access the Center's expertise, the Center will "reach out" to promote best practices from research results and to connect partners with each other. The proposed center will balance both stability and fluidity – stability as the hub for Iowa's educational research and fluidity to tailor research initiatives to schools' needs. The overarching goals for the Center revolve around four areas – Research, Practice, Policy, and Innovation. Research activities will include a blend of long-term solutions and opportunities to quickly address issues and disseminate best practices across the state.
- ◇ Need for proposed center. UNI has received a legislative mandate to continue to lead education reform efforts for the state. This mandate resulted from a significant research and development gap in the state's educational system as well as the fact that educational needs are accelerating more quickly than it has been possible to address. Iowa's children, workforce, and economy are at risk without bold action. It is necessary to continuously question whether current systems can meet future global and economic challenges. Transformational change in Iowa and elsewhere is critical.

In order to fulfill this mandate, UNI must create a new transformative research and development model which will address the following elements. Achievement outcomes will be measured by monitoring test scores, high school graduation rates, and entrance into colleges and universities.

- ⇒ Raise and sustain the level of all PreK – 12 students' educational and personal development through innovative and promising practices.
- ⇒ Enhance the preparation and professional competencies of Iowa educators through collaborative inquiry leading to professional knowledge in teaching and learning.

- ⇒ Focus on research which transforms practice to meet the changing needs of Iowa's educational system.
- ◇ Proposed center activities and objectives. The goals of the proposed center reflect the legislative intent for educational research and development.
 - ⇒ Goal 1 – Research: Conduct research aimed at transforming current teaching, learning, and educational systems.
 - ⇒ Goal 2 – Practice: Distill, disseminate, and encourage best practices in curriculum, instruction, and assessment.
 - ⇒ Goal 3 – Policy: Leverage partnerships across the state to inform decision-makers and drive policy grounded in research results.
 - ⇒ Goal 4 – Innovation: Produce innovations to transform teaching, learning, and educational systems.
- ◇ Proposed center structure and organization. The proposed center will be administered by a director who will report to the university provost. Other personnel will include external fellows, Regents fellows, teachers on special assignment, graduate and undergraduate students, and support personnel.
- ◇ Relationship of proposed center to University's Strategic Plan. The proposed center is uniquely aligned with the University's Strategic Plan, especially Goal 3 – lead the state and nation in PreK-12 education. Teacher preparation is inclusive of all academic colleges and will contribute to a core function of the university. The proposed center is also in alignment with the College of Education's Strategic Plan, especially Goal 1 – lead the state and nation by developing highly effective professionals prepared to educate, serve, and lead future generations; Goal 3 – create, maintain, and enhance a culture that is characterized by a proactive commitment to diversity, collegiality, and mutual respect; and Goal 4 – increase resources, including human, capital, and informational.
- ◇ Relationship of proposed center to existing centers/institutes. The proposed center will emphasize applied research which offers the potential to lead to significant educational transformation. The use of UNI's distributed student teaching centers in the state and network of partners will enable research to begin immediately and impact all of Iowa.
 - ⇒ UNI is currently participating in a federally-funded Teacher Quality Partnership (TQP) grant whose partners include nine high-need rural school districts in the state. These districts, including CAL Community School District in Latimer and Montezuma Community School District, have expressed interest in continuing to partner with UNI to address future needs.
 - ⇒ UNI's Richard O. Jacobson Center for Comprehensive Literacy has worked extensively with the Marshalltown Community School District to develop a dynamic partnership. Marshalltown has expressed great interest in future collaborations with UNI researchers. The high concentration of English Language Learners (ELL) in Marshalltown will allow UNI researchers to explore research questions that affect education for this student population.
 - ⇒ The center will coordinate with other activities across campus, including the Center for Teaching and Learning Mathematics, the Regents Center for Early Childhood Education, the Center for Energy and Environmental Education, and the Center for Holocaust and Genocide Education.

- ⇒ A variety of grant-funded efforts will also exist under the Center's umbrella. This will allow the center to play an important role in promoting education research and increasing cross-disciplinary study to understand more fully complex issues related to education.
- ◇ Existence of proposed center at other Iowa institutions. The proposed institute is a unique concept whose mission does not appear to have a parallel at the other Regent universities. The University of Iowa has a variety of centers and institutes related to education. Only the Iowa Academy of Education produces research papers on a variety of topics; however, that center does not appear to partner closely with PreK-12 schools. Iowa State University's Institute for Studies in Education produces research on education focused more at the collegiate level and functions more like a research design and data analysis consultant.
- ◇ Inter-institutional and collaborative efforts with other entities. The proposed center anticipates opportunities to partner with the other Regent universities. The center will include competitively-selected research fellows from both ISU and SUI. One fellow will be selected from each campus. There will also be representation from both ISU and SUI on the proposed Center's advisory council. Advisory council members will be able to identify opportunities for additional partnerships and resource sharing and will help ensure that personnel with needed expertise will be linked to the center. The partnerships will allow the center to benefit from the expertise and advice of others outside UNI; the fellows can also serve as liaisons to their respective campus.
- ◇ Unique features of the University of Northern Iowa to support the proposed center. UNI is uniquely positioned to lead the transformation that is needed for the state's educational system. Shaping PreK-12 education in Iowa dates back to UNI's origins as the Iowa State Teachers College. The university's rich tradition and focus on improving the educational experience of all Iowa children is one that will remain UNI's focus area for generations to come.
- UNI is the largest, most distributed teacher preparation program in the state. The existing infrastructure will enable the center to conduct research through the schools' 10 student teaching centers located across the state. More than 1,000 UNI preservice students pursuing teaching licensure are placed each year in local education agencies (LEAs) to complete field experiences. UNI's teacher and leader candidates are known for their command of content, authentic pedagogical practices, and competence and confidence working with all learners. Center coordinators are responsible for securing placements, maintaining collaborative agreements, supervising candidates, and conducting professional development. The coordinators are well-positioned to become UNI's liaisons for research and development in the LEAs and Area Education Agencies (AEAs). UNI also has 25 teachers who serve as field experience coordinators in area schools. These educators have hands-on experience in education research and development and they can work as conduits to promote connectivity at the LEA and AEA levels.
- ◇ Resources. The proposed center will be administered by a director who will report to the provost. Other personnel will include external fellows, Regent fellows, teachers on special assignment, graduate and undergraduate students, and support personnel. The center will share space with the Regents Center for Early Childhood Education in the Schindler Education Center. While the Schindler Education Center is being renovated, it will be housed temporarily in the Learning Commons at the Rod Library. No special or unique equipment will be needed for the proposed center.

- ◇ Advisory Council. The advisory council will provide guidance and recommendations regarding the overall direction of the center and the implementation of research projects. The council will also assist in establishing connections to various agencies and constituent groups in the state. The provost will serve as the chair of the advisory council; membership will include the Executive Director – Business and Community Services; Associate Provost for Academic Affairs; faculty member from Educational Leadership and Post-Secondary Education; Dean of the College of Humanities, Arts, and Sciences; Dean of the College of Education; faculty members representing STEM areas; Director of Research Services; superintendents of two school districts; Director of Assessment; representative from AEA 267; one representative each from the University of Iowa and Iowa State University; 1-2 K-12 teachers; and four Iowa legislators (two Senators and two House members). Other members may be added as needed.

- ◇ Expected need. The proposed center is expected to be in operation indefinitely because of its focus on continuous improvement in PreK-12 education. The importance of the center is a long-term commitment resulting from UNI’s focus on improving educational attainment.

- ◇ Support from existing campus structures. There was institutional consensus that the proposed center will address an important state need and will be viewed as a valuable institutional resource.

- ◇ Costs and funding sources. The total cost to operate the proposed center will be \$1,300,000 in Years One and Two and will be used for personnel, research activities, travel, supplies, and services. A grant from the Roy J. Carver Trust was obtained to support the implementation of the center. It will provide \$1M per year for the first two years. UNI will reallocate funds resulting from the teacher education restructuring in 2012 and will provide \$300,000 per year. Once in operation, the center will work in collaboration with the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs and the UNI Foundation to pursue strategic grant opportunities, contracts, and external foundation support to advance the mission of the center. Contingent on the level of funding, center activities will be scaled upward or downward.

PROPOSED CENTER COSTS AND FUNDING SOURCES

Funding Source	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4	YEAR 5	YEAR 6	YEAR 7
UNI	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$300,000
Carver Trust	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000					
Total	\$1,300,000	\$1,300,000	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$300,000

- ◇ Implementation. After obtaining Board approval, the UNI Center for Educational Transformation will be implemented in Spring 2014.