

MEMORANDUM

To: Board of Regents
From: Board Office
Subject: Teacher Preparation Program for the Visually Impaired
Date: January 7, 2002

Recommended Action: Receive the report.

Background: In July 1999, the Board of Regents requested that the universities and the special schools undertake a feasibility study to determine the need for a training program for teachers of the visually and hearing impaired in Iowa. That study indicated that there was a shortage of trained teachers for the hearing and visually impaired. The University of Northern Iowa took responsibility for leading an inter-institutional task force addressing the need for training programs in these two areas.

Analysis: Last year, the University of Iowa announced that it was establishing a Master's degree level program to prepare teachers of the hearing impaired.

The University of Northern Iowa now reports that it has taken steps to establish a program related to training teachers of the visually impaired. Since the last progress report, the University of Northern Iowa has been engaged in activities related to the recommendations approved by the Board of Regents in September 2000.

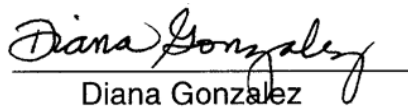
Action Steps The Department of Special Education in the College of Education at the University of Northern Iowa has accomplished three major action steps to establish a preparation program at the Master's degree level in the area of visual impairment.

1. UNI completed a statewide study in August 2001 that documented coursework and practicum experiences available at the three Regent universities relative to the requirements of the Iowa Board of Educational Examiners for certification in visual impairments.

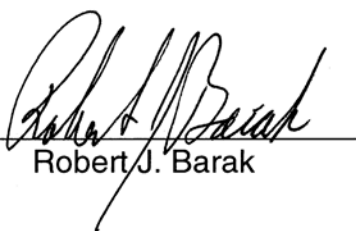
2. The UNI Office of the Provost provided funding to support a three-year term appointment for a new faculty member in the area of visual impairments. This position will begin in August 2002.

3. In collaboration with the Superintendent of the Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School, the Department of Special Education will form a search committee for this new three-year term appointment in January 2002. UNI will recruit students from in-state, as well as out-of-state, according to that timeline.

Board Office Recommendation: The Board Office recommends that the Board receive the report and commend the University of Northern Iowa for providing the leadership and funding to implement this much needed program.


Diana Gonzalez

Approved: _____


Robert J. Barak