

GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

Newsletter of the Office of Grants and Program Review

November 2004

UTC Launches BASE-TN Teacher Initiative

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Special educators are highly trained professionals who provide specifically designed instruction and services to children with disabilities. They adapt and develop materials to match the special needs of each student and use a variety of teaching strategies to ensure that students with disabilities reach their learning potential. The need for special education professionals has never been greater. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that the need for qualified special educators and related service personnel will increase "faster than most other professions" in the next 10 years. And the U.S. Department of Education reports, "The number of students with disabilities served under IDEA [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act] continues to increase at a rate higher than both the general population and school enrollment." Based upon these trends, the employment opportunities in special education teaching are expected to grow 21-35% through 2010, an increase of over 150,000 positions. Unfortunately, at a time when Tennessee's schools are trying desperately to meet the needs of a growing special education constituency, the number of highly-trained special educators remains too low to meet the demand.

To combat the critical shortage of special educators in Tennessee's classrooms, the Tennessee Department of Education has implemented

BASE-TN, a program whose name stands for "Become a Special Educator in Tennessee." This program seeks to meet the increasing demand for special education teachers by collaborating with colleges and universities all over Tennessee to recruit more special education teachers. This year BASE-TN is launching their Teaching Initiative. Through this program, the Division of Special Education within the Tennessee Department of Education will grant financial support for persons who meet the eligibility criteria and desire to earn an initial Tennessee teaching license in special education or an endorsement in special education. Students receiving this financial support must commit to teach in a Tennessee public school two years for each academic year of financial support received.

UTC is one of the Tennessee colleges and universities selected as a partner in the BASE-TN Teaching Program. Dr. Barbara Ray, UC Foundation Professor, received support totaling \$74,969 from the Tennessee Department of Education to implement a BASE-TN program on UTC's campus. Dr. Ray's expertise in preparing special education teachers has long been recognized by the Tennessee Department of Education, and her reputation in the field, strong plan for the BASE-TN program, and success with the long-standing Summer Institutes for special education professionals were critical factors in attracting these funds. Dr. Ray will serve as Project Coordinator and will provide general oversight and management for the BASE-TN pro-

gram. Dr. Ray also will chair a selection committee who will carefully select the ten best candidates to participate in the program. Eligible participants include (1) individuals who currently serve as educational assistants in public Tennessee special education classrooms and (2) baccalaureate holders in a discipline other than special education. The ten participants will receive financial support to enroll in coursework leading to special education licensure. The selection committee is comprised of UTC Teacher Preparation Academy faculty and will be responsible for reviewing applications, making selections, providing academic counseling, and assessing and taking action on any cases where students fail to meet satisfactory progress.

The BASE-TN partnership with the state of Tennessee exemplifies UTC's metropolitan mission to foster a strong P-16 educational pipeline through excellence in teacher preparation and outreach projects that create opportunities for higher education among youth and adults. By engaging and preparing more special educators, Dr. Ray and the project team will make a tremendous impact on the education that K-12 students with disabilities receive. Additional highly prepared special educators ensure that each child receives the individualized assessment, instruction, and support that he or she needs while reducing teacher fatigue and burn-out.

FUNDED GRANTS AND RESEARCH

November 2004

COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING & COMPUTER SCIENCE

SIM CENTER

Pointwise, Inc.	Gridgen Teaching License Program	\$10,580
General Dynamics	DARPA Friction Drag Reduction	\$75,000
Enterprise Center	Chattanooga Fuel Cell Demonstration	\$2,441,877

COLLEGE OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & PROFESSIONAL STUDIES

Education About Asia

DR. LUCIEN ELLINGTON

Freeman Foundation	National Consortium for Teaching About Asia	\$55,000
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ADMINISTRATIVE

Financial Aid

MR. JONATHAN LOONEY

TSAC	Peer Counselor Program 2004-05	\$17,820
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