From the
Dean’s Desk

“We slayed that PLT exam, didn’t we, Doc?”

This was the excited response I received from our ESU students after I told them that their entire group of twenty-five students passed the Principles of Learning and Teaching (PLT) Praxis II certification exam on their first attempt, thus earning a 100% first-time percent group passage rate on the exam for the ESU. As further evidence of their “slay ability,” the group is the first in ESU history to earn the distinction of a 100% first-time passage rate. Needless to say, they, along with the ESU faculty and staff, are very proud of this accomplishment.

I also want to highlight the “slay abilities” of the ESU faculty and staff who have worked diligently to assist our students reach this milestone through study sessions, course content alignments and tutoring services for the PLT exam. Their efforts on behalf of and dedication to the success of our students are inspirational and provide motivation when it is most needed. I am very thankful for their constant pursuit of excellence. This pursuit of excellence was also evident in recognition of two ESU faculty members, Drs. Lori Henderson and Jim Rubin.

Along with these achievements, the ESU has stayed busy with many projects including its annual Celebration of Diversity Event, a mentoring program with Barbourville Independent Schools, reading to elementary students as “celebrity” readers in the Barbourville Independent and Knox County Public School systems as part of their Read Across America/Dr. Seuss reading celebrations, and a faculty presentation for the Union... PAGE 4

UNION TEACHERS EARN 100% PLT PASS RATE

Teachers educated at Union College have earned a 100% first-time percent pass rate on the Principles of Learning and Teaching (PLT) Praxis II certification exams held late in 2016.

Dr. Jason Reeves, Dean of Union’s Educational Studies Unit, announced the 2016 testing results. Dr. Reeves said 25 ESU teacher candidates took the certification exam across three different testing platforms (Elementary, Middle, and Secondary). All of the teacher candidates passed the exam on their first attempt.

“These results show that ESU candidates who graduated in the last year are of excellent quality. In fact, all of these graduates are currently working in P-12 school settings across the state,” Dr. Reeves said.

UNION TO HOST ROGERS EXPLORERS

Union College is the newest higher education partner to host the exclusive Rogers Explorers program. The program is open to eighth grade middle school students looking to gain academic experiences beyond their home classroom.

Dr. Jason Reeves, Dean of the Educational Studies Unit at Union College, announced the partnership. He says Union will host its first Rogers Explorers camp July 19-21.

“This is an exciting opportunity for Union College, and the region,” said Dr. Reeves. “Not only do we get to share our wonderful campus with young students from throughout the region, we get to help shape the future of these students with the demands of academic... PAGE 4
ESU INTROS MENTORING PROGRAM

With the 2016-2017 academic year underway, representatives from Barbourville Independent Schools, Union’s Educational Studies Unit (ESU) and Forward in the Fifth launched their partnership to provide a mentoring program for students in Barbourville. The mentoring program pairs Union College education majors with 7th-9th grade students for a weekly mentoring session to focus on helping the students set, achieve and assess academic and social interaction goals.

Working closely with each student’s teacher, the Union College education major will serve in a co-teacher role for the student through tutoring, advising and academic planning services. Another focus of the weekly mentoring sessions is to help students begin thinking about possible career and/or college pathways. Mentors were paired with students based on shared interest areas including: favorite school subjects, hobbies, possible career interests and after school activities.

UNION GRAD AWARDED $80K GRANT

One Union College graduate student has acquired more than $80,000 in grants for the school system he serves in Johnson City, Tenn.

Jerry Higgins informed his Union College professors he had been awarded a $4,950 grant from Lowe's and a $76,000 community grant from the East Tennessee Foundation. Higgins’ grant work totaled $83,950.

“In the spring term alone, the entire class garnered approximately $100,000 in grant funding for their classrooms,” said Dr. Joy Ramsey, Associate Professor of Graduate Education at Union College.

Higgins is part of Dr. Ramsey’s grant writing course for Tennessee students enrolled in Union's Educational Specialist Degree Program in Kingsport. Those programs are offered in addition to undergraduate and master’s programs in education on Union's Barbourville campus. Dr. Jason Reeves, Dean of Union’s Educational Studies Unit, says students participate in the grant writing course as part of regular curriculum, but must focus their work on seeking grant opportunities to benefit their classrooms and schools.

PROFESSIONAL INTERACTIONS PROGRAM UNDERWAY

Representatives from Knox County and Barbourville Independent Schools visited Dr. Jason Reeves’ EDUC 488: Professional Interactions classroom to discuss common features of screening, interviewing and hiring processes among school districts. The P-12 representatives spoke with students about the challenges and rewards of a teacher’s first year of employment including new teacher induction programs and the KY Teacher Internship Program (KTIP). Administrators involved with the program include Mr. Raymond McGlone, Barbourville Independent School, Mr. Jeff Frost, Principal at Knox Central High School and Mr. Frank Shelton, Director of Public Relations/Career and Technical Education for Knox County Public Schools.
Students in the ESU’s undergraduate certification programs complete over 200 hours of intensive, sequential clinical placements in multiple P-12 settings before they begin their student teaching semester. Several of our students began work in their first clinical placements at Knox Middle and Central Elementary as part of the ESU’s partnership with the Knox County Public Schools district. Prior to starting clinicals, students received tours of each building from school administrators, including Linda Fortney, Assistant Principal for Knox Middle School and Eric Hubbard, Principal of Central Elementary School.

Students in Dr. Lori Henderson’s EDUC 348: Teaching Science in the Elementary Grades had the opportunity to meet with Dr. Rae McEntyre, from the KY Department of Education’s Office of Teaching and Learning. Dr. McEntyre discussed the use of Common Core Standards for Science in an elementary classroom. Dr. McEntyre also provided students with examples of standards-based instruction, methods for differing instructional strategies to address the needs of all learners, and answered student questions related to effective content assessments for P-5 classroom students.

As the 2016-2017 semester got underway, a group of early involvement students toured the Barbourville Independent School System to learn about P-12 education. Robin Jones, Director of Family Resources, conducted the tour. Students learned of the many projects that are going on at the school, including the Leader in Me Program, grant opportunities with the KY Arts and Humanities Council to provide P-12 students with access to arts and humanities instruction and the increased focus of the school on promoting college and career readiness for all students.

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Rogers Explorers program at Union is being coordinated to provide students with a community service opportunity, connections with esteemed alumni working in the field of chemistry and academic programs that focus on science, technology, engineering and math.

Rogers Explorers students must apply to the program. The selected students are then grouped and offered academic opportunities at Rogers Explorers partner institutions. Once on campus, students will spend three days and two nights receiving hands-on classroom instruction from experts in math, science, and technology; learning about different careers in the field; and developing a understanding of career goals.

The Rogers Explorers program is presented by The Center for Rural Development in partnership with the University of the Cumberlands, Lindsey Wilson College, Eastern Kentucky University, Morehead State University, Asbury University, University of Pikeville, and the newest partner, Union College.

Student Leadership

Education student Rachel Andrews received the Lambda Chapter: Delta Kappa Gamma’s Grant-in-Aid Award. Andrews, an Elementary Mathematics major, was nominated for the award based on her excellence in leadership as a student athlete, campus activities leader, and service to the local community.