



AZUSA PACIFIC UNIVERSITY

APU Special Education Newsletter Spring Edition

Message from the Department Chair:

Welcome to Azusa Pacific University (APU) and the Department of Special Education (SPED). As the Department Chair, I would like to welcome you to our spring term at our premiere institution. It is exciting to see another cohort group complete our Special Education programs and I look forward to continue our journey together as you begin your professional career in K-12 classrooms. I know the Lord will continue to bless you as you serve children with disabilities in different classroom settings.

As a special education candidate, you are enrolled in a national, regional, and state accredited program. The programs are fully accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), and the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC). The SPED Department offers many program options including Mild to Moderate, Moderate to Severe, Clear credentials, Added authorizations, Masters Degrees, face to face and online programs.

Graduates of the Special Education credential/Masters programs are consistently employed by school settings. Many school administrators view APU graduates as Highly Qualified and exceptionally well prepared teacher candidates. This current economic climate raises many concerns regarding employment opportunities, which will require you to capitalize on the many tools the SPED programs provide. Whether you are at the beginning or at the end of your program, I strongly recommend you to focus your full attention in the coursework, fieldwork, and clinical experience.

Upon graduation and subsequent employment as a special education teacher practitioner, you will be empowered to transform the lives of your students and enjoy your accomplishment.

I wish you many blessings this academic term and look forward to hearing about your successful educational and employment outcomes.

Nilsa J. Thorsos, Ph.D.

Whitney's Corner:

During your initial advisement session, if you were advised that a course could be waived due to your completion of an equal course from a different university, or another credential, please make sure to complete the "**Special Education Department Coursework Waiver**" form and provide all the accompanying necessary documents that support your request (i.e. transcript, plus a course catalog description, and/or course syllabus). All students completing a Masters Degree program within the Special Education Department need to pass the Comprehensive Examination. The next date to take that Comprehensive Examination is **March 24th**. A subsequent date has been scheduled for **June 23, 2012**.

International Christian Community for Teacher Education (ICCTE) Conference

Azusa Pacific University (APU) continues to embody the theme *God First* through hosting the International Christian Community for Teacher Education (ICCTE) Conference from Wednesday May 23rd through Saturday May 26th. The conference includes over 80 individual and group presentations by educational scholars from Council of Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU), including Azusa Pacific University.

The conference theme Responding to God's Call to Serve: Achieving the Educational Challenges of this Decade, which include presentation strands on *Best Practices: Call to Teach; Faith Integration; Faith and Learning; Spiritual Development and Mentoring; Community Partnerships and Relations*. A Poster Presentation session will feature current research for open discussions regarding methods, results, and conclusions. Also included in the conference is a special session detailing *how* to get your work published in research journals. A book author's panel will share insights on the craft of publishing.

The cost of the conference is \$400, which includes conference attendance, presentation materials, meals, (except for Thursday night's dinner), and three nights lodging on-campus.

For APU faculty and students attending the conference the cost is only \$200, if you use your meal card.

For Registration and more information, please go to the conference link:

<http://tinyurl.com/3nz6hfb>

Or contact the Conference Planning Committee Co-Chairs:

Nilisa J. Thorsos, at nthorsos@apu.edu

Ivy Yee-Sakamoto at iyeesakamoto@apu.edu

Look for future announcements for the following upcoming proposed events:

- 1) Step up to Writing Workshop- first two Saturdays in June/2012
- 2) APU Summer Symposium Workshops
- 3) Classroom Management Workshop by Rick Morris
- 4) Behavior Intervention Workshop
- 5) Spring SPED Graduate Recognition- May 4th 6p-8pm, Duke: 127 (West Campus)
- 6) **Spring Graduate Commencement**: Saturday May 5, 2012

"When we live for God, in Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit, we cannot help but give hope to others, and we cannot help but be inclusive. The gospel of Jesus Christ is a call to a new world where outsiders become insiders. The church as the body of Christ is the quintessential inclusive community, where Jesus Christ, the one who is identified with the outsider, presides as the copious host." (p.132)

Weiss Block, Jennie. *Copious Hosting: A Theology of Access for People with Disabilities*. New York: Continuum, 2002.

The School of Education has a new Dean!

APU has announced the appointment of Anita Henck, Ph.D. as Dean of the Azusa Pacific University School of Education. Dr. Henck has over 30 years of academic and professional roles in higher education including experience in the K-12 setting and higher education administration. Dr. Henck holds a B.A. in Psychology from Indiana University in Bloomington, a M.A. in Educational Administration and a Ph.D. in Education from American University. Please make sure to welcome her to the School of Education when you visit the Special Education office.

Ron's Corner:

Remember to submit your signature assignments to TaskStream. If you do not have a Taskstream account, then call Ron Bejar at 815-6000 ext. 5430.

Analyst's Corner:

Make sure to **contact your credential analyst** by last name, (i.e. Bartholio=Audrey Strivings) once you have **completed** all of your credential coursework to complete the necessary steps in order to ***apply for your credential.***

Credential Analyst Office:

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The **deadline** to apply for the **FALL 2012** clinical practice experience is **April 1st**.

CARS Plus (+) 2012 Convention in Riverside, CA

On Friday, February 24 through Saturday February 25, 2012 The Riverside Convention Center hosted the California Association for Resource Specialist Plus (CARS+) annual conference. A few of your faculty members presented works based on their current research.

Dr. Nilsa Thorsos, Eric Medrano, Ed.D. & Jan Wadsworth-Jones presented on 15 strategies for the novice special educator for an effective school year.

Thorsos, N.J., Medrano, E., & Wadsworth-Jones, J. (2012). *Professional development for novice special education teachers: 15 effective strategies for a successful school year*. Paper presented at the California Association for Resource Specialist Annual Convention. Riverside, CA.

Lity Ruiz, M.A. presented step-by-step effective visual, multisensory, and practical writing strategies that aligned with curricular goals and state standards.

Ruiz, L. (2012). *Teaching effective multisensory writing strategies*. Paper presented at the California Association for Resource Specialist Annual Convention. Riverside, CA.

In an afternoon session, Craig Bartholio, Ed.D., presented on conducting Gold Standard IEP meetings, focusing on the action and decision steps that occur during the Pre-IEP, conducting the IEP, and Post-IEP meeting stages.

Bartholio, C. (2012). *Conducting gold standard IEP meetings*. Paper presented at the California Association for Resource Specialist Annual Convention. Riverside, CA.

Next years CARS+ convention will be held in Oakland, Ca February 15th-16th. Check the CARS+ website for updates: www.carsplus.org.

Fall 2012 Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) Cohort Announcement:

There is still time to become a part of the BCBA, Inc. –Approved, Fall 2012 cohort group for the Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) program at APU. The **11-month program** consists of one class per 9-week term, traditionally meeting one time per week and twice a week in the summer session. The BCBA program courses include:

SPED 503-Behavior Supports for Students with Moderate/Severe Disabilities

SPED 504-Introduction to Behavior Analysis in Applied Settings

SPED 514-Advanced Behavior Analysis in Applied Settings

SPED 524-Advanced Topical Study: Applications and Ethics in Applied Behavior Analysis

SPED 534- Single Case Designs: Measurement and Experimental Evaluation of Behavior.

Please contact Whitney Walter at wwalter@apu.edu to schedule an advisement appointment concerning your interest in the BCBA program.

Added Authorization in Special Education: Autism (AASE: Autism)

Education specialists who hold a Learning Handicapped (LH), or a Level 1 Educational Specialist credential, or a Level 2 Professional Clear Education Specialist credential who will be/ or are currently working with students identified for special education under the California Education Code 56846.2 "Autistic-Like Behaviors" [Autism 320], will need to acquire an Added Authorization in Special Education: Autism, in order to meet California Commission on Teacher Credentialing requirements to work with students identified for special education services under the description of Autism on their caseload.

Description of California Disability Category Autism 320:

Autism (AUT): Autism means a developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and non-verbal communication and social interaction, generally evident before age three, which adversely affects educational performance. Other characteristics often associated with autism include, engagement in repetitive activities and stereotyped movements, resistance to environmental change or change in daily routines, and unusual responses to sensory experiences. The term does not apply if a child's educational performance is adversely affected primarily because the child has an emotional disturbance. A child who manifests characteristics of "autism" after age three, that child could be diagnosed as having "autism" if the criteria in the above paragraph are satisfied. (34 CFR Sec. 300.7(c)(1)).

The AASE: Autism program consists of 4 courses:

SPED 512-ASD: From Theory to Practice

SPED 522-Collaboration and Communication Skills with ASD

SPED 503-Behavior Supports for Students with Moderate/Severe Disabilities

SPED 542-Meeting the Academic Needs of Individuals with Autism

The Added Authorization in Autism can be completed in a Level 2 or Clear Credential program. Please contact Emily Martinez in the Graduate Admissions Office at elmartinez@apu.edu to apply for the Clear Credential (SPED 11) program.

Contact Diana Dobrenen at ddobrenen@apu.edu if you have any questions regarding the SPED 11 program to clear either your Level 1 or Preliminary Mild/Moderate or Moderate/Severe Educational Specialist Credential.

"In presenting his impaired hands and feet to his startled friends, the resurrected Jesus is revealed as the disabled God. Jesus, the resurrected savior, calls for his frightened companions to recognize in the marks of impairment their own connection with God, their own salvation. In doing so, the disabled God is also the revealer of a new humanity. The disabled God is not only the One from heaven but the revelation of true personhood, underscoring the reality that full person personhood is fully compatible with the experience of disability." (p.100)

Eiesland, Nancy L. *The Disabled God: Toward a Liberatory Theology of Disability*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994.

Publications & News from APU Special Education Family:

Thorsos, N., (2012). Christian special educators responding to the call to serve: The perception of disability with a christian worldview lens. International Christian Community for Teacher Education, Vol 7 (1), Winter. Retrieved from <http://icctejournal.org/issues/v7i1/v7i1-thorsos/>

Anna Buzzone (Fall, 2011 Cohort: Orange County Regional Center) was awarded the Alice Watkins Scholarship.

Former student, Bonnie Garcia presented a paper with Professor Yvette Latunde, Ed.D. at the 2011 Association of Christian School International Conference in Anaheim, Ca.

Latunde, Y., Garcia, B. (2011). *Utilizing strengths for children with disabilities*. A paper presentation at the Annual Conference of Association of Christian Schools International. Anaheim, CA

Melody Peterson was recently appointed Department Chair for the Special Education Department at her school site through Green Dot Public Schools. She has also been accepted into Azusa Pacific University's Doctoral program in Educational Leadership.

My APU Story,

"I began my educational journey as a CAPS student with APU in 2007. I had no idea where that journey was going to take me. The support I received as an APU student was incredible. Before I knew it I was in the Master's program for Special Education. Once again I had the most remarkable experience, outstanding support, and wonderful mentors. The education and training I received was top-notch.

While beginning my student teaching I was offered a teaching assignment as a Special Education teacher for Silver Valley High School. I was hired as an intern. Within two months of my start date, I was assigned site coordinator for the new reading program, Scholastic READ 180. At the same time I was working on my Master's research project. READ 180 quickly became my research matter. Through the months of research, as well as teaching, I was quickly sold on the progress my students were making in the reading program. I displayed weekly progress for each of my students, which quickly became known school wide and district wide. I had teachers, administrators, and the assistant superintendent visiting my classroom just to see the progress the students were making.

After my research was completed, I was asked to participate in the Research Symposium at APU. This opportunity also allowed me to share the information with my fellow colleagues and administrators. Before long, the Scholastic READ 180 program was implemented district wide. Today, I have special education students that began the reading program reading far below basic and now they are reading at basic or proficient. I believe the exemplary education and training I received through APU provided me with more than just the basics."

By,
Marlo Knox