Message from the Department Chair:

The 2012/2013 school year promises many opportunities for special educators at national and state level including the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The adoption of Common Core State Standards (CCSS) delineates what students are expected to know from Kindergarten through high school and establishes expectations for students with disabilities to be challenged “to excel within the general curriculum and be prepared for success in their post-school lives, including college and/or careers.” I invite you to become familiar with the California adopted Common Core State Standards and how they interrelate to the students you educate. For more information, please log on to the Special Edge at: http://www.calstat.org/publications/pdfs/Edge_summer_2012_newsletter.pdf

We are pleased to announce that the department of Special Education has recently hired three new full-time members to our already distinguished faculty: Diana Dobrenen, M.A, Director, Mild/Moderate Program; Glen Green, Ed.D, Director, Master’s Program; Donna Block, M.A., Special Education Site Coordinator, Murrieta Regional Center. Please take this opportunity to welcome these new faculty members to the APU family.

The APU special education department has been looking at different ways to provide support for candidates as you complete your specific Education Specialist teacher preparation program. Completing the course requirements is very important, however passage of state tests is pivotal to finalizing earning your credential. One of these state tests is the Reading Instruction Competence Assessment (RICA). The Special Education department is committed to providing additional support for candidates who have not been able to pass the RICA test. Dr. Kimberly Dunbar facilitated the first RICA Intervention Module (RIM) during the later part of this summer. We are delighted to announce that based on the positive feedback received from the summer/2012 training; we plan to offer a RICA Intervention Module (RIM) this fall and another RIM in spring 2013. Finally, I would like to invite you to join us in prayer for our state’s economy, our K-12 students, and for each other. I pray for many blessings for all of you.

Many Blessings,
Dr. Nilsa J. Thorsos

Whitney’s Corner:

The California Commission on Teacher Credentialing is sun setting the Education Specialist Level 1 program this year for the Mild to Moderate and Moderate to Severe programs. This means if you want to earn a credential for the program you have begun, you must complete all program requirements no later than January 31, 2013, (Fall II 2012 term). Program requirements would entail all required courses, clinical practice (student teaching) and English Learner components. If you have any questions, please contact Whitney Walter at (626) 387-5791 or at wwalter@apu.edu.
International Christian Community for Teacher Education (ICCTE) Conference

Azusa Pacific University (APU) successfully hosted the International Christian Community for Teacher Education (ICCTE) conference from May 23rd through May 26th, 2012 in the Wilden Hall on the East Campus. There was a combination of presenters and poster presentations focusing on “God’s Call to Serve” in a range of educational topics. Several of your professors from the Department of Special Education provided inspiring presentations.


When you get the chance, talk with these professors about the process they are going through turning their presentations into a publication. At the ICCTE conference, several graduate students presented with a professor from their home university. If presenting at a conference interests you, discuss this potential opportunity with one of your professors. Conferences occur throughout the year.

“Disability, however, should not be construed as a “description of life as a tragedy.” The image of God in human beings remains un tarnished by the tragic. That is tragedy does not define a person. There are always humanizing possibilities, even in the most tragic of circumstances. Yet the fact remains that a large portion of tragedies experienced by human beings are themselves caused by human beings, directly or indirectly, through willful violations and passive negligence of complacency. Indeed the social systems in which we participate are often disabling, marking our body capital according to the cult of normalcy that distinguishes ability from disability, normality from abnormality, strength from weakness, fullness from lack.” (p.187-188)

APU 2011-12 Grads

Master of Arts in Education: Digital Teaching and Learning Mild/Moderate Educational Specialist Credential
Juan Hidalgo
Mojdeh Senzamici

Master of Arts in Education: Mild/Moderate Disabilities
Molly Gonzales
Kristen Goss
Lauren McDonald
Jonathan Murray
Jacquelyn Schroder
Jessica Miller
Catherine Fontanesi
Veronica Mendoza

Master of Arts in Education: Moderate/Severe Disabilities
Sara Cargill
Victoria Elisa Damico
Matthew McCall
Jenna Mitchell
Michelle Marin
Christina Gallardo-Barrett

Master of Arts in Education: Resource Specialist (RSP)
Tami Millard

Ron’s Corner:
The “Pre-Service Academy” is now available through Sakai. The cost is $300 and the time commitment is ~120 hours. If interested, please contact Ron Bejar at rbejar@pau.edu.

Analyst’s Corner:
If you have completed all of your credential coursework and clinical practice, contact your credential analyst to apply for your credential.

Credential Analyst Office:

Administrative Assistant
Kelli Starman 626.815.5346
kstarman@apu.edu

Analysts
Audrey Strivings (A-C, N) 626.387.5721
astrivings@apu.edu
Ann Plumb (D-H, O) 626.815.5445
aplumb@apu.edu
Lynne Stapenhill (I-M, P) 626.815.5093
lstapenhill@apu.edu
Wendy Ramsey (Q-Z) 626.815.5455
wramsey@apu.edu

Office of Student Placement:
Student Records Supervisor
Jon Capogrossi 626.815.5345
jcapogrossi@apu.edu

Student Records Coordinator- Special Education
Cheryl Ward 626.815.5353
clward@apu.edu

The deadline to apply for the Spring 2013 clinical practice experience is October 1st.
Attention Mild to Moderate Credentialed Teachers!

Do you want to be a more marketable teacher by receiving a second credential?

By taking ONLY four (4) more courses plus clinical practice, your may receive your moderate to severe preliminary credential and CLEAR your mild to moderate Level 1 or Preliminary as well!

For details, please contact Litzy Z. Ruiz, M.A., Moderate to Severe Programs, Director at lruiz@apu.edu, or Craig W. Bartholio, Ed.D. Added Authorizations, Coordinator at ebartholio@apu.edu or Diana Dobrenen, M.A., Mild to Moderate Program Director at ddobrenen@apu.edu.

Module 3: Spring/Fall 1
SPED 507 Assessment & IEP Development for Students w/ Moderate/Severe Disabilities
SPED 501 Instructional Strategies for Students w/ Moderate/Severe Disabilities
SPED 585A (Contract Teaching or SPED 586A (Student Teaching) Clinical Practice/Seminar for Moderate to Severe Disabilities I
SPED 585A (Contract Teaching or 586A (Student Teaching) Clinical Practice/Seminar for Moderate to Severe Disabilities I

Module 4: Spring/Fall 2
SPED 502 Diagnostic & Prescriptive Intervention for Students w/ Moderate/Severe Disabilities
SPED 503 Behavior Support to Students w/ Moderate/Severe Disabilities
SPED 585B (Contract Teaching or SPED 586B (Student Teaching) Clinical Practice/Seminar for Moderate to Severe Disabilities II
SPED 585B (Contract Teaching or 586B (Student Teaching) Clinical Practice/Seminar for Moderate to Severe Disabilities II

Fall 2012 Resource Specialist (RSP) Added Authorization [SPED 34]:

The curriculum for the Resource Specialist certificate of competency is designed to prepare candidates, who have approved entry-level skills and professional preparation and can assume the role as resource specialists in programs serving special education students.

The RSP added authorization program meets the competencies set forth by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing as well as additional standard deemed appropriate by the faculty of the Department of Special Education, other university personnel and community advisory board members. Students desiring this certificate without enrolling for a degree or credential should apply for admission to APU as post baccalaureate with a Resource Specialist objective.

Program Requirements:
Candidates must have a 3.0 GPA; must have passed the CBEST/CSET and three years of successful teaching involving both general education and special education settings.
Appropriate advanced specialist credential in special education (Learning Handicap or Severe Handicap). Potential Candidates should contact an APU credential analyst prior to initiating the program.

Coursework:
SPED 546: Resource Specialist Communication Skills (3 Units)
SPED 547: Implementation of Special Education Legislation (3 Units)
SPED 548: RSP: Staff Development and Parent Education Techniques (3 Units)
SPED 549: Fieldwork in RSP (3 Units)
“Expanding Your Expertise” 2-Day Summer Workshop (Review)

On July 24-25, 2012, the APU Special Education Department held a 2-Day workshop for Intern and non-Intern credential candidates, both current and recently graduated. The presentations of the two-day workshop focused on Behavior, Autism, Conducting IEP’s, and Classroom Design/Structured Teaching. The twenty-four workshop participants included both Mild/Moderate and Moderate/Severe credential Interns, Instructional Assistants, Substitute teachers, and individuals currently looking for his/her first teaching position.

The results from a Pre-conference survey indicated the following top ten reasons for attending the APU Special Education 2-Day Workshop:

1) Learn how to deal with problem students/classroom management
2) How to conduct a good IEP meeting
3) Learning how to develop myself as a teacher
4) Learn new strategies
5) Upgrade myself
6) Obtain new knowledge and strategies on how to deal with students with ASD
7) Improve my pedagogy
8) Want to get new information regarding special education
9) Credit towards clearing my credential
10) Learn how to motivate students to learn

The first presenter Joseph Trance, M.A. (Program Specialist, Temecula Valley Unified School District) started off the Expanding Your Expertise workshop with a riveting presentation focused on recognizing student target behavior, understanding the meaning behind the behavior, and practical classroom interventions designed to systematically address the behavioral issues. Dr. Craig W. Bartholio ended the first day with insights on the pre-IEP meeting, During the IEP meeting, and Post-IEP meeting actions that lead to successfully conducting Gold Standard level Individual Education Program meetings. Day two began with an in-depth presentation on Autism, learning how to use the PEP-3 assessment, and administering the CARS-2 inventory. The day ended with a comprehensive presentation by Litzy Ruiz, M.A. on structured teaching and organizing your classroom for maximum instructional design.
Updates from APU Candidates:

**Morgan Galeener**
Educational Specialist  
Diamond Bar High School

**Elena D. Braggins**
Resource Specialist  
Lou Dantzler High School  
Los Angeles Unified School District

**Margarita Ramirez**
Mild/Moderate SDC (K-3)  
Morongo USD  
***Got Hired at the APU Teacher Career Faire***

**Deborah Du**
SDC (1-5) Emotional Disturbance  
Mojave School District

**Gerardo Gomez Jr.**
RSP Teacher  
Animo Watt’s College Preparatory Academy  
Los Angeles Unified School District

**Ashlyn Gruss**
Child Care Specialist  
Jill’s House- Respite Care Facility  
Washington, D.C.

**Michael Johnson**
Post-Secondary Teacher  
Agoura High School  
Las Virgenes USD

***************************Upcoming Workshop***************************

The Special Education Department will be hosting a **Fall Workshop** in December, 2012.

The Proposed Workshop Topics Include:

A) Working with Para-Educators  
B) Understanding Your Role as a Special Educator  
C) Integrating Technology into your Teaching Pedagogy  
D) IEP Development  
E) Behavior

Breakfast and Lunch will be provided.
My APU Story
by
Angel Toner

I once heard that life was compared to being a box of chocolate, and you never know what you’re going to get! By all means this is very true, especially for me. Over the last few years, I have chosen many different kinds of chocolate and just as I thought I had all the pieces figured out, God decided to shake up the box. Back in 2009, I was enrolled in the Masters of Counseling Psychology: Marriage Family Therapy program and working as an MFT intern at a private practice. It was during one of my sessions with a patient that I discovered Special Education. It prompted a lot of questions and curiosity for me, which resulted in a tremendous amount of research. The ending result was, I took a leap of faith that forced me to completely change my educational and career path. I selected APU to help me became a Special Education Specialist, with the hope of combining my psychology training to create a completely different approach to education.

I am passionate about people and teaching. It is my belief that, if I can build a person up from the inside out then I will get the desired results. My first experience to implement my philosophy in special education was in 2009 when I was hired a Resource aide for Bonsall Union School District. From there I was hired as an intern in lieu of student teaching as a Resource Specialist. The doors just kept opening and I felt confident walking through them because even though I know it would be a challenge I had the support and encouragement from all my wonderful APU professors. Donna Block, in particular spent countless hours of her own time to teach and instruct me, walk me through my first IEP, and answer all my questions (which I had many). APU provide me with a foundation to build upon and for that I will be forever grateful.
In 2011, I was still a full time student (working on my Masters in Special Education, Digital Teaching and Learning) and working full time as a Resource Teacher with River Springs Charter School. It was during this time, I was able to work with student’s ages 5-18, grades K-12. I was then offered a position with the Temecula Valley Unified School District as an SDC teacher. This was unfamiliar territory for me but I did it. I depended on the framework I learned during my credential program and autism authorization.

As a Special Education Specialist, I have really learned what it means to see things through the eyes of others; help mothers and fathers experience all stages of grief, continually; to laugh and cry; to love and give love but most importantly I’ve learned to listen. I found that when I listen I have the ability to touch the heart of another and that sometimes saying nothing at all is saying something.

While pursing the world of Education, I have had unbelievable opportunities that have challenged me in such a positive way. My job has required me to be a teacher and counselor. Although, my job is to educate, I am also there to counsel, listen, love, and guide. I too have grown as an individual, and developed an increasing joy to serve others. Having had all these opportunity to assist individuals in such a way has truly been a blessing and a privilege. Recently, I was selected by the Temecula Unified School District to be apart of a Behavioral Health Team. It is the first time the district has had such a team. The past few years have been a journey and I feel so blessed. The best part is seeing how God has allowed all the pieces to fall into place. I am extremely grateful to APU and all of the Special Education Staff that have supported me.
Studies have shown that skillfully managed inclusive classrooms benefit not just people with intellectual disabilities but also the non-disabled students. Of course, there are challenges at the pedagogical and interpersonal levels. But inclusive classrooms foster appreciation for the diversity of the human condition. Further, they generate situations that teach classmates and peers about fairness, equity, and justice, and provide opportunities for developing social sensitivities and a genuine sense of responsibility with and for others. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, classrooms that include a broad spectrum of children with intellectual abilities and disabilities make possible diverse forms of friendships and relationships, and such relationships shape the maturation of children as people. In short, inclusive classrooms allow ‘for the creation of a safe place for students to be.’” (p.111)