The Regents Scholars Program - Creating a Statewide Collaboration to Enhance Mathematics and Science Education

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Abstract: The Regents Scholars Program is a unique and distinguished academic experience for in-service teachers. This statewide program draws upon the expertise of university faculty across Ohio to offer professional development that combines mathematics or science content with inquiry-based pedagogy. Teachers will have the opportunity to work with Arts & Science and Education faculty at 13 participating universities in a combination of distance and face-to-face learning experiences. The implementation plan for this project emphasizes faculty development, course development and establishing a collaborative degree structure. The Regents Scholars Program anticipates enrolling students in the fall of 2003.

Introduction

The Regents Scholars Program is a unique and distinguished academic experience for in-service teachers. This statewide program draws upon the expertise of university faculty across Ohio to offer professional development that combines mathematics or science content with inquiry-based pedagogy. Teachers will have the opportunity to work with Arts & Science and Education faculty at 13 participating universities in a combination of distance and face-to-face learning experiences. After completing 35 semester hours and a capstone project, teachers earn a Master’s degree in mathematics or science education. The Regents Scholars Program anticipates enrolling students in the fall of 2003.

Two key features of the Regents Scholars Program are quality and the use of technology. By collaborating and sharing resources, participating universities will be able to offer their “best” to create a truly unique educational experience of distinct faculty, coursework and learning experiences. Technology permits the program to extend beyond one campus. E-mail, interactive television and the Internet also allows for learners to interact with counterparts from across the state and to collaborate with college faculty.
Program Development

The implementation plan for this project emphasizes faculty development, course development and establishing a collaborative degree structure. Faculty development strategies include listservs, a web site and online and face-to-face training sessions. Listservs and the web site are used to share information such as useful web sites, training opportunities and meeting minutes. Funds were also allotted for faculty to enroll in web-based mathematics and science education classes as well as course design and facilitation classes.

Course development strategies include faculty stipends, online course standards and establishing a Regents Scholars Content Excellence Seal for courses that meet the standards. Because of the unique challenges created by inquiry-based pedagogy, few online mathematics and science education courses existed in Ohio. Thus, faculty were offered a $3,000 incentive to put an existing course online. Course guidelines were also developed to reflect the National Research Council, National Council of Teachers of Mathematics and Ohio Academic Content Standards. Lastly, to capitalize on existing, outstanding learning opportunities, the Regents Scholars Content Excellence Seal was developed. Courses that are awarded the seal are eligible electives in a student’s program of study.

The collaborative degree structure emphasizes home institutions, cohorts, cross registration and face-to-face summer institutes. Students will be assigned to home institutions. The home institution serves as the university of record and enrolls the student, keeps the transcript and awards the degree. Cohorts will also be initiated at the face-to-face summer institutes and maintained through a Regents Scholars Program web site that promotes reflection, collaboration and support.

Participating Universities

Universities participating in the program include Bowling Green State University, Cleveland State University, Kent State University, Miami University, Ohio University, Shawnee State University, The Ohio State University, University of Akron, University of Cincinnati, University of Dayton, The University of Toledo, Wright State University and Youngstown State University. Sponsoring organizations include Ohio Board of Regents, Ohio Learning Network, Ohio Department of Education and Ohio Resource Center.

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