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TO: CSU Deans of Education

DATE: July 14, 2005

FROM: Beverly L. Young 
Assistant Vice Chancellor

SUBJECT: CSU Systemwide Task Force in Teacher Preparation

I am writing to solicit your help in suggesting faculty for a very important initiative for the CSU in teacher preparation. As you will remember, several years ago the CSU teacher preparation evaluation results indicated that our campus programs might benefit from additional attention to the quality of preparation we provide to secondary teachers in the area of reading instruction. In response to that finding, we solicited your advice in finding the most qualified faculty members in this area to serve on a task force to examine the findings, recommend an intervention, and (as a consequence) develop materials and professional development for our faculty who teach in these areas. This effort, led through our systemwide Center for the Advancement of Reading (CAR) has resulted in a very high quality enhancement opportunity for our campuses and faculty, which is still ongoing throughout the system. We are hoping to see improved evaluation results in upcoming years that we can link to these extensive systemwide efforts.

As that initiative continues, we are adding another area for systemwide attention, that of the preparation of general education teachers, in both multiple and single subject programs, in the areas of working with children having special educational needs. Our evaluation results indicate that this can be a difficult area to address, especially as our campuses are making the transition from Ryan to SB 2042 programs---moving from a "mainstreaming" class structure for this content to one that includes the content in the preservice structure. We realize that campuses are making this transition in varying ways--retaining a stand-alone course for the material (either as a prerequisite or within the program), infusing the content into general ed courses, or some combination of approaches. No matter how this change is being structured at your campus, I believe we all agree that this is an area of critical importance to the preparation of CSU teacher graduates, and one that is worthy of our attention for systemwide improvement.

Toward that end, my office will be convening a group of faculty experts to examine the evaluation results and propose a course of intervention and action for the system. This proposal may or may not follow the highly successful model that was used in the effort around secondary reading--that is yet to be determined. But we will begin in the same way---talking with our faculty who know the most about this area and are committed to working together to ensure the highest quality in all of our programs.

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I am asking for your thought and recommendation for faculty members with expertise in this area. While we need your recommendations of special education faculty to include in this group, we also need to include the general education faculty who will be instrumental in how this content is ultimately delivered. Besides expertise and interest in this area, we need faculty who work well as part of a team, who are good listeners and contributors, and will be good communicators back to their colleagues around the system. We are hoping for the same type of collegial and productive team that we were able to assemble for the reading effort, based on your thoughtful recommendations, for this work. So if you do not have a faculty member that you would strongly recommend for this task, that's acceptable ---we will still insure that your campus stays informed as to the progress of the work, and will have a voice as the initiative moves forward. If you do have someone to recommend, please let me know as soon as possible, as we hope to begin this work early in the fall. As before, we are looking to form a relatively small group--NOT designed to include a representative from every campus--but perhaps consisting of only 10-12 members as a whole. So I would like you to consider carefully as to whether or not you have someone from your campus to recommend.

As with the reading initiative, we are all indebted to the directors of CAR, Dana Grisham and Nancy Brynelson, for taking on the leadership for this new systemwide effort. We believe this is important work for the CSU, and has the potential to help us all do a better job in preparing strong teachers for California's schools. Thanks for your help with this, and I hope to hear from you soon.

BY/ssg

c: CSU Presidents
CSU Academic Council
Charles B. Reed
David S. Spence
Keith O. Boyum
Nancy Brynelson
Dana L. Grisham