

The quality of teacher education matters in North Carolina. Western Carolina University and other University of North Carolina System teacher preparation programs account for a third of our public schools but may not know how our universities prepare our public school educators to be effective teachers.

Quality is our constant goal. We strive to prepare the best educators possible and we measure our success against rigorous, state-of-the-

In the past, we evaluated the quality of college and university teacher education programs by mostly using measures such as the degrees and publications of faculty, number and kinds of books in the library, number and names of required courses, faculty-student ratios in courses, topics and assignments listed in course syllabi, and the overall grades of students in the programs. Such measures, referred to as input measures, are now just one part of the equation. We are increasingly focused on the performance of our graduates.

When WCU won the 2007 Christa McAuliffe Excellence in Teacher Education Award along with two other institutions presented by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, it was because our students demonstrated in their student teaching experiences that the students they were teaching made positive gains in the subjects being taught.

Every year, we report our licensure exam pass rates and the number of graduates in each program. Our programs enjoy state approval and national accreditation for the program as a whole (National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education) and for several specialty areas where accreditation is rigorous and meaningful (i.e., Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Education Programs, American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, National Association of School Psychology). These organizations look closely at the outcomes of our programs including licensure pass rates, quality of experiences, and perceptions of graduates and their employers. They meet directly with current students, faculty, graduates and employers. They directly observe our students in K-12 schools.

For the last few years, the University of North Carolina system has been conducting a series of teacher quality studies that looks at the success of our graduates to positively impact student learning in schools in North Carolina. Specifically, how do the students of teacher education graduates perform on statewide tests? Even more specifically, how do students of the graduates of Western Carolina

University perform in public schools on statewide tests? Those studies have shown, including the latest