

Tuesday, April 6, 2010

Elementary education programs, students ahead of state curve

By **Katie Land**, news editor

As Michigan legislators continue to increase certification requirements for teachers, Oakland University's students benefit from extensive coursework with the new guidelines already built in.

"This not only means that Oakland graduates do not need to devote additional time and expense to another graduate course, it is also confirmation that the OU program has always prepared future elementary teachers to be quality teachers of reading and language arts in their classrooms," said Robert Wiggins, OU's associate dean and certification officer.

The qualifications were revised last summer with Michigan Public Act 32, which requires that all certified teachers in the state take a course on the diagnosis and remediation of reading problems before renewing their provisional teaching certificates or advancing to a professional certificate.

Many recent graduates will now have to return to the classroom as students for a course that may or may not rely to any graduate work they are pursuing.

Not so for Oakland students. As part of the program requirements, OU's Elementary Teacher Preparation Program has always had a course in reading diagnosis and remediation that is required for all teacher candidates.

"In reading and language arts, OU goes above and beyond" said Jim Cipielewski, chair of the Department of Reading and Language Arts. "The state requires a minimum of six credits of courses in reading; we have always required twelve because preparing elementary teachers to teach reading well is so very important."

The Michigan Department of Education recently approved the coursework, determining that Oakland's program meets the requirements of the PA 32 legislation and Oakland students do not need to take an additional course.

"We are proud that our undergraduate Elementary Education Program has been recognized as fulfilling an important need for Michigan teachers and pleased that, once again, OU graduates are a step ahead of their peers," Wiggins continued.

For more information about Oakland's programs in the School of Education and Human Services, visit the Web site at oakland.edu/sehs.

For more information about the continuing certification requirements and opportunities at Oakland, visit the Web site at oakland.edu/sehs/certrenewal/.

SUMMARY

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Created by Katherine Land - Deleted (land@oakland.edu) on Tuesday, April 6, 2010
Modified by Katherine Land - Deleted (land@oakland.edu) on Wednesday, April 7, 2010
Article Start Date: Tuesday, April 6, 2010