



The background of the entire page is a photograph of a college campus during autumn. The top half shows trees with vibrant orange and yellow leaves. The bottom half shows a large, colorful sculpture of the word 'LOVE' in a stylized font, with a young woman walking past it on the left and a young man walking past it on the right. The sculpture is made of large, 3D letters in red, orange, and grey, sitting on a brick base. The scene is bright and sunny, with shadows cast on the grass.

LYNCHBURG COLLEGE:

Revamping Teacher Education Programs

Lynchburg College will revamp its teacher education programs by the fall of 2019, becoming the first higher education institution in the country to integrate a mentor/coaching model championed by the New Teacher Center of Santa Cruz, California.

The Jessie Ball DuPont fund recently awarded an \$86,500 grant to the Lynchburg College School of Education, Leadership Studies, and Counseling to help redesign the teacher preparation programs and integrate evidence-based practices using the New Teacher Center model.

Focus on Continuous Improvement

That model “focuses on continuous improvement and reflection around the teaching and learning process,” said Dr. Roger Jones, dean of the School of Education, Leadership Studies, and Counseling.

Jones described the impact of the grant as “huge,” adding that, “In terms of our entire restructuring, it’s the linchpin that ties everything else together. Without this grant, we would have had to move in a different direction. It’s really huge.”

The grant-funded initiative responds to changes in state and national standards for teacher preparation programs and will serve as the national pilot to seamlessly integrate the New Teacher Center model from pre-service to early career teacher development.

And it came at a time Jones described as the “perfect storm.” New program approval regulations were due to be signed by Virginia Governor Terry McAuliffe. Lynchburg’s faculty are preparing to implement a new general education curriculum, and the licensure programs at Lynchburg are moving toward national accreditation.

The Best Mentor/Coaching Model in the Country

“All three of those things coming together at the same time really provides the catalyst for what we’re doing, to be able to connect to the New Teacher Center and their tools and research and mentoring and coaching model,” Dr. Jones said.

Jones adds, “This is the best mentor/coaching model for new teachers who are just hired in the country, and we will become the first college or university in the country to actually take their model and implement it in teacher preparation.”

The program also will enable Lynchburg, which will become the University of Lynchburg in the summer of 2018, to track the progress of its education graduates. “For teachers who are hired in Central Virginia, after they graduate with us, we’ll be able to follow their progress for one to two years after graduation,” Jones said.

“It really is a very unique program and at this point we are the national pilot with the New Teacher Center to integrate their new teacher resources and assessments into the teacher prep program.”

An Innovative Restructuring Effort

While the grant provides the “linchpin,” Dr. Jones said the entire restructuring effort is innovative in itself. Faculty are aggressively working to restructure the entire preparation program to become a top-tier program and a program of choice for anyone who wants to teach.

The restructuring will allow Lynchburg to better prepare teachers to work with students with disabilities or who speak English as a second language. Teacher candidates will focus on asset development, high expectations, strong relationships, and closing the achievement gap. They will be Google-Certified and able to work with all students, including those in an urban environment.

Developing a Professional Learning Community

Faculty also are working with Becky DuFour, an LC alumna, member of the Board of Trustees, and educational consultant, to make the future University of Lynchburg College of Education, Leadership Studies, and Counseling a Professional Learning Community (PLC).

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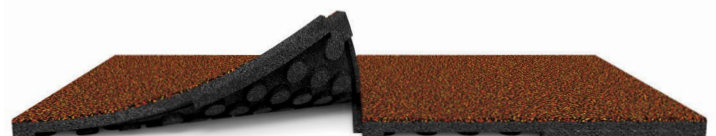
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The PLC will revolve around a series of beliefs, already developed by the faculty, that defines who Lynchburg is, including a powerful and attainable vision for its future, and that creates a culture of faculty excellence and teacher candidate learning.

While the non-negotiable core beliefs for the program go much deeper, Dr. Jones said the “big picture” beliefs include the following elements:

- (1) Provide diverse training to support all learners;
- (2) Establish and maintain a culture of safety, respect, and rapport in the classroom;
- (3) Make content accessible to all learners;
- (4) Plan standards-based instruction and formative assessments for transfer and independence;
- (5) Use a variety of instructional strategies to meet different student needs, develop student competencies, and achieve instructional purposes;
- (6) Engage, challenge and deepen conceptual understanding through critical thinking, complex problem solving, academic discussion, and student reflection;
- (7) Analyze student performance to determine the impact of instruction on student learning, provide feedback, and plan instructional next steps;
- (8) Collaborate with colleagues, resource personnel, and families to support student learning.



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Increasing Academic Qualifications of Candidate Cohorts

The vision for the program focuses on building a dynamic program. Elements include becoming a top-tier teacher preparation program, being a school of choice for anyone who wants to teach, and increasing the academic qualifications of candidate cohorts by creating a Teacher Scholar Program linked to Westover Scholars, Lynchburg's honors program, that will coincide with completion of a new residence hall that will house the Westover Honors College in the fall of 2019.

The program will also produce teacher candidates skilled in working with ESL students, students with disabilities, gifted students, and challenging students through high-expectations, asset development, and strong relationships—while knowing how to close the achievement and learning gaps and work in an urban environment. The program will hire teachers employed in central Virginia for at least one year after graduation.

"The foundation for the culture are the beliefs and vision," Jones said. "The culture is one that focuses on achievement and results. It is based on the mantra that the program is 'always in the process of becoming.' Faculty assume collective accountability for program results and support and encourage each other to focus on teaching, scholarship, and service."

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