

Subject: Teacher Preparation and Part-Time Students

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To: everyone@cnu.edu

At meetings with the Newport News City Council today, I have shared the following thoughts about the preparation of teachers and the enrollment of part-time students.

EDUCATION

Our education students are being taught out. Our seniors will graduate in May 2003 and our juniors in May 2004. Our juniors are taking their professional courses this spring and summer and will complete their general education courses and student teaching next year.

How will our City get the good teachers that are so desperately needed after the CNU education program closes? I know this has been a matter of great concern to each of you and to the citizens of Newport News.

Over the past several months, I have had many constructive meetings and conversations with Mayor Frank, the members of Council, Superintendent Wayne Lett, the Newport News School Board, and members of the CNU faculty and some very positive ideas have developed. I'm happy to report to you that CNU – in full partnership with Dr. Lett and the Newport News School system – is moving forward to implement a plan of action that will ensure a steady stream of good teachers in the future.

First, the Board of Visitors and I are committed to offering a graduate program in teaching. Beginning in the academic year 2004-2005, this program will provide professional training and licensure at the masters level. In 5 years, our students will be able to earn a baccalaureate degree in the liberal arts and sciences, a master's in teaching and licensure – doubly armed and empowered to be more effective in the classroom and able to earn a higher income from day one. \$2100 more in the Newport News Schools (\$32,742-\$30,600).

This will be a very different program than we have now. Our students will first complete a rich and rigorous curriculum of 120 hours in the liberal arts and sciences and then will take their professional courses in a 5th year. These courses will be taught by an interdisciplinary faculty drawn from the liberal arts and sciences who are also highly credentialed in the pedagogy of their disciplines and master teachers in residence drawn from the Newport News schools.

We have found a way to produce excellent teachers, keep the savings that result from the closing of our present education program (more than \$500,000), and do so in a manner consistent with our mission – we are a liberal arts and sciences school – and more consistent with the emerging view of how teachers should be prepared in the 21st century – 120 hours of study in the liberal arts and sciences plus the required professional training in a 5th year. That view is shared by some of the best schools in America – for example UVA – and a growing number of experts and commentators in the field of education, including the U.S. Department of Education.

A faculty committee has been established under the leadership of Dr. Marsha Sprague and includes faculty from the disciplines of biology, chemistry and environmental science, English, history sociology, mathematics, fine and performing arts and psychology. This faculty committee will recommend a curriculum for the masters programs and, after appropriate consultation, this program will be finalized in the spring.

Some people may wish to teach and not be able to afford the time or money to secure a master's degree. Therefore, CNU will establish a licensure only program at the graduate level that will allow people to be licensed without earning a master's degree. Moreover, it is important to Newport News and other school systems that new teachers who have only provisional licensure be able to receive coursework in their disciplines and the professional training necessary for licensure. CNU will provide those courses.

I have reviewed this plan of action with Superintendent Wayne Lett and he is very supportive. All of our students will do their student teaching in the Newport News public schools. Moreover, Dr. Lett has appointed 5 of his colleagues to work with CNU in shaping these programs and pursuing other ways to enhance the partnership between CNU and the city's schools.

I have suggested, for example, that students in our master's program be offered employment as teacher aides and school based subs. This cohort of college graduates pursuing a masters in teaching would enhance the operation of our schools. Their employment would virtually ensure they would want to remain in the system as teachers and, of course, the income they derived would provide a powerful incentive for them to pursue a master's in teaching at CNU. We have also talked about the establishment of a master teacher in residence program that would provide the opportunity for outstanding teachers in the Newport News School system to serve on our faculty – a wonderful professional experience for them and a wonderful learning opportunity for our students.

In summary, the Board of Visitors and I assure you that these programs will be in place by June 2004 and that there will be an uninterrupted flow of good teachers from CNU to our community.

PART-TIME STUDENTS

There has been much confusion and misunderstanding about our admission policy for part-time students.

The truth is that part-time students are and will continue to be a significant and valued part of our University. In Fall 2002, 1,080 students – 20% of the student body, were part-time.

When I first came to CNU, I taught a course on leadership and politics. My class was a mix of full-time and part-time students. In that class, I experienced the rich interaction of people of different ages, backgrounds and perspectives. I know first hand the benefit that part-time students bring to the educational experience at CNU.

In December, I said that we would review our policies and implement a simple and straightforward part-time student policy after consultation with our faculty, staff and the community. The community has spoken loud and clear and has underscored the importance of CNU offering part-time educational

opportunities. This is the part-time student policy that I will recommend to our faculty and the Board of Visitors.

Part-time students are welcome at CNU. They need only to meet our admission requirements.

Anyone who has earned a baccalaureate degree will be admitted.

Anyone who has attended college but has not graduated can apply as a transfer student. Transfer students must have a 3.0 GPA or better on their college courses and have left their last school in good standing.

Anyone who has graduated from high school but attended no college will also be able to attend CNU as a part-time student. They will be admitted on the same basis as all first-time freshmen.

So the retired Army officer who wants to take a French course for personal enrichment will be accepted on the basis of his or her baccalaureate degree.

The employee of the Shipyard or Canon who wants to take academic courses for professional advancement will be welcome.

So, too, will the enlisted sailor and soldier who want to pursue a college education.

Finally, high school graduates who cannot afford the time or money to attend college as full-time freshmen will also be welcome as part-time students and there is no limitation on how long they can remain part-time.