

# THE URBAN TEACHER PROGRAM

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A TEACHER PREPARATION COLLABORATIVE OF INVER HILLS COMMUNITY COLLEGE, MINNEAPOLIS COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGE, AND METROPOLITAN STATE UNIVERSITY

ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT TO THE  
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OF THE MINNESOTA STATE LEGISLATURE

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Metropolitan  
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## **Program History and Overview**

### **Legislation**

In the spring of 2000 during the 81st Legislative Session, \$1,250,000 was appropriated for the "development and implementation" of collaborative urban secondary and urban early childhood teacher preparation programs to be offered at Metropolitan State University in partnership with Inver Hills Community College and Minneapolis Community and Technical College (H.F. No. 3800). The legislature expected the institutions to enroll at least 50 percent students of color in the program that would partner with urban and inner-ring suburban school districts to meet the schools' specific needs through direct classroom teaching experience for students in the program. The 2000 legislation to create the Urban Teacher Program has enabled students in the Twin Cities area to complete their teacher preparation in public, affordable institutions that are attractive to non-traditional and historically underrepresented students.

Minnesota session law specifies that Minneapolis Community and Technical College and Inver Hills Community College shall provide the first two years and Metropolitan State University shall provide the final two years of the Urban Teacher Program. The legislature appropriated funding for the development and implementation of the secondary and early childhood education components of a program leading to teacher licensure and directed that the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Board of Trustees annually submit a progress report to the chairs of the higher education finance divisions of the legislature regarding the development of the program.

Since receiving the base appropriation in 2001, each of these three state institutions has added further resources in order to grow the Urban Teacher Program. Since 2002, the three institutions have written and the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Board of Trustees has submitted annual progress reports documenting the steady growth and accomplishments of the Urban Teacher Program to the chairs of the higher education finance divisions of the legislature.

### **Vision and Mission**

The vision of the Urban Teacher Program (UTP) at Metropolitan State is that it will prepare diverse, reflective, and resilient teachers who are outstanding in their commitment and ability to meet the needs of historically and currently underserved urban learners, schools, and communities. The UTP collaborates with partners to assure that culturally and linguistically diverse urban learners experience high academic achievement from preschool through college.

The mission of the UTP is twofold:

1) To increase the number of well-prepared teachers of color in Minneapolis, St. Paul and inner-ring suburbs so that the urban teaching workforce reflects the ethnically diverse population of students and their communities; and

2) To empower urban teachers with the content knowledge, pedagogical skills, urban field experiences, and professional dispositions needed to improve the educational achievement of historically and currently underserved urban learners and advocate for their right to receive a high quality education.

The Urban Teacher Program vision, mission and goals continue to align with Minnesota State Colleges and Universities strategic and work plans. Currently, there is particular alignment between UTP goals

and Strategic Direction 1 in the system's 2006-2010 strategic plan to "Increase Access and Opportunity." With a focus on serving "new generations of Minnesotans [as they] look to higher education to advance their careers and contribute to their communities," Strategic Direction 1 includes goals to "raise Minnesota's participation and achievement in postsecondary education by meeting the needs of students with diverse backgrounds and educational goals" and to "work with other organizations to prepare all young people to graduate from high school and enroll in college ready for success." These clearly parallel UTP goals and in particular reflect its importance within the context of the system's "special responsibility to educate the child care workers, teachers....and others who can successfully support and prepare today's children for postsecondary education."

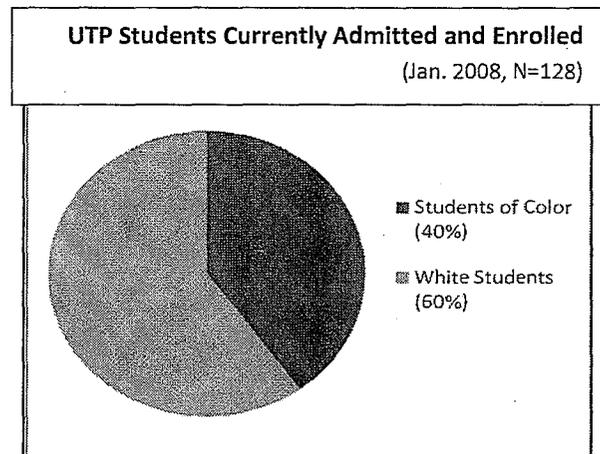
## Progress Report of the Urban Teacher Program at Metropolitan State University

### Program enrollment related to the legislative mandate to enroll at least 50% students of color

Given our legislative mandate to focus on the needs of urban schools, the Urban Teacher Program has an admissions process designed to identify and welcome undergraduate and post-baccalaureate students who are committed to urban teaching and who understand and respect diverse urban learners.

Overall enrollment in the Urban Teacher Program continues to grow. While the percentage of students of color in the program is less than 40%, the students in Metropolitan State's program are the most diverse of any Education department in the state and exceed Metropolitan State's overall percentage of students of color (25%).

✚ **128** students are currently admitted and actively enrolled in the UTP, of whom **52 (40%)** are students of color (students of color represent 25% of the university's enrollment). The percentage of students of color in the program has ranged from 32% in 2004 to 46% in 2006-07. Since revising our admission process in summer 2007 and focusing on new approaches to recruiting, **51%** of newly admitted students are students of color.



✚ **174** undergraduate and post-baccalaureate students are in "pre-admitted" status, having shown interest in becoming admitted to the UTP by declaring teaching majors and/or taking pre-professional urban education courses required for program admission.

✚ From the first group of seven graduates in the Fall of 2003 through the 27 graduates in 2007, a total of **105** students have now graduated from Metropolitan State University through the Urban Teacher Program.

### **Selected feedback from students about how the program meets their needs**

*(Source: February 2008 UTP Student Survey)*

*"It has put me on the path I want to be on. It gave me experience I needed, and it has also provided me with a job opportunity...indirectly, but I wouldn't have gotten where I am without the UTP."*

*"I feel the class schedule has allow[ed] me to complete my certificate requirements. [I] feel the course work has exposed me to a culturally sensitive teaching approach."*

*"I am learning a lot from my field experiences and I feel that I am getting prepared to student teach. I am also learning a lot about teaching in diverse settings and knowing how to meet the needs of every student."*

*"I love having the opportunity to have lots of hands on experiences. I feel that the program has helped me think critically and productively about the educational system."*

*"From my conversations with students in other education programs around the country, I have learned that the UTP emphasis on the urban student, diversity, and the variety of learning styles, combined with a focus on field experiences through-out the program, is unusual. MSU's UTP is a progressive approach to working in the urban school that makes sense to me. I need the contact with the students to make real what I am learning in class. Also, my education instructors are among the very best that I have had during my various times in college (I am a repeater, having gone to school at various times at OSU, UW Madison and UW Milwaukee)."*

*"I feel like I am prepared to work with urban learners... I am better at anticipating their needs, and I am understanding the cultural differences that exist in the students expressions compared to mine. UTP has been a great vehicle for becoming an urban teacher..."*

*"The UTP has prepared me and continues to prepare me for teaching in urban schools. The instructors are working in the field and have current information and experience to offer."*

*"It offers structure with enough flexibility to meet individual needs. The staff has been incredibly helpful and supportive. I feel that I have been given a wealth of information, and the opportunity to learn many teaching and learning styles. I have had some of the best teachers.... I like much of the information that focuses on urban learners."*

*"The program solidified what for me was an existing commitment to the education of city kids. I feel grateful to have been trained in the diversity of issues facing these urban learners. Given my training, my knowledge base, and my experiences in urban classrooms, I feel confident that I can walk into any classroom in the metro area as a strong candidate."*

*"The instructors are passionate and engaging. They are the best. They really help show us new styles of teaching."*

*"I am learning a lot about Urban students and schools. The program has opened my eyes to a whole new way of thinking about teaching!"*

### **Feedback from cooperating teachers in schools regarding how UTP students perform on site**

The UTP did a survey of alumni and their employers in schools in the late spring of 2007. When supervisors of UTP alumni were asked if the alum demonstrated the UTP vision of "preparing diverse, reflective, and resilient teachers who are outstanding in their commitment and ability to meet the needs of historically and currently underserved urban learners, schools, and communities," 100% responded, "to a great extent." Furthermore, 100% of employers stated that UTP graduates "met to a great extent" or "mostly met" the ten Minnesota Board of Teaching Standards of Effective Practice for Beginning Teachers.

### **Program developments in 2007 at Metropolitan State**

- **Received Board of Teaching continuing program approval through 2014** for early childhood education, communication arts and literature (grades 5-12), life science/general science (grades 5-12), mathematics (grades 5-12) and social studies (grades 5-12) licensure programs after completing rigorous professional education program evaluation reports (PEPER) for program re-approval.
- **Met all standards for Board of Teaching institutional approval** by developing a comprehensive assessment system and long-range planning process to monitor the progress of teacher candidates and the effectiveness of the program.
- **Received approval from MnSCU to package graduate level courses into a graduate certificate** in Urban Secondary Education for students who hold previous bachelor's degrees and are seeking a teaching license.
- **Completed initial program approval documentation for urban elementary education** and is finalizing a proposal to develop an ESL endorsement licensure program.
- **Updated articulation agreements** with UTP partner Inver Hills Community College and finalized new articulation agreements with St. Paul College and Century College.
- **Raised more than \$90,000 from donors and grants** to support UTP students completing their studies in 2008, with a special focus on supporting urban teacher candidates during their culminating student teaching experience which is basically an unpaid internship for 12-15 weeks.
- **Continued to offer the most diverse group of faculty and staff** engaged in teacher preparation in the state. Ninety-two percent (92%) are persons of color who have a wealth of urban E-12 education experience and speak several languages, reflecting the mission of the urban teacher program to increase the numbers of teachers of color serving urban learners. Currently, the program has one Executive Director, 6 resident full-time faculty, 3 professional staff, and 2 office administrative specialists serving students, school partners, and other stakeholders. The program is also finalizing a search for a new Special Education faculty member who can lead the development of a special education licensure endorsement program that school partners identify as an important need.
- **Continued to expand partnerships with urban schools and community members** through the Joint Steering Committee and advisory groups. More than 60 school partners and community stakeholders receive updates about the program and are invited to Joint Steering Committee or advisory meetings. These meetings, scheduled throughout the year, provide a venue for school and community stakeholders to offer valuable feedback to the program as it grows, changes, and works to achieve its legislative mandate and mission.

### Critical Issues and Needs for Urban Teacher Preparation at Metropolitan State

1. **More financial support for students, particularly students of color, to complete their programs.**  
UTP students continue to be challenged by the reality that they must forego income and pay tuition during student teaching, which, in effect, is a 12-15 week unpaid full-time internship . Over the past seven years of the program's existence, an endowment has been created and begun to build funding for scholarships to support students in the Urban Teacher Program. However, the \$10,000 available in 2008 for scholarships is insufficient to support the more than 120 students in the program who are in financial need. In fact, a disproportionate number of teacher candidates of color are graduating but not getting licensed because they cannot afford to quit working in order to complete the student teaching requirement. If low-income students in the Urban Teacher Program could receive stipends from the state financial aid program for support during their student-teaching semesters, we are confident that the program could achieve even greater success in recruiting, retaining and graduating with licensure students of color, low-income, and first-generation college students who understand the experiences and needs of urban learners.
2. **Financial resources to develop and implement new programs** that respond to teacher shortages in the high demand fields of special education and bilingual/ESL instruction.
3. **Managing increased enrollments with a limited number of faculty and staff.** Adjunct/community faculty now teach one-third of the courses in the program, and adjunct/community faculty will be increasingly needed for student teacher supervision in addition to teaching courses. Furthermore, the program will not likely be able to retain its recruiter position which is critical to achieving the legislative mandate of 50% students of color enrolled in the program.
4. **Offering professional development to teachers in the Metropolitan area.** Legislation creating the program stated that UTP "may also focus on the professional development of pre-tenure teachers." However, the program's limited number of faculty is insufficient to provide needed and affordable professional development and graduate education to licensed urban educators in Minneapolis, St. Paul, and inner-ring suburban districts.
5. **Financial resources to build a curriculum resource library** as mandated by institutional approval standards from the Board of Teaching. Estimated start-up costs, based on information from existing curriculum resource libraries at private colleges and universities in the Twin Cities, is \$200,000, but the university has been able to allocate less than half that amount to secure materials and a part-time librarian specializing in E-12 curriculum resource collections.
6. **Inadequate funding for E-12 Education, with the resulting cuts in teaching positions and increasing class sizes decreasing demand for newly-licensed urban teachers** who have been well prepared to meet the needs of urban learners and close the achievement gap.

## **Progress Report of the Urban Teacher Program at Minneapolis Community and Technical College (MCTC)**

In 2007, Minneapolis Community and Technical College's Urban Teacher Program continued its commitment to increasing the number of students of color seeking to enter the teaching profession by offering a dynamic curriculum designed to prepare them for entry into the workforce as paraprofessionals and by creating a pathway toward a baccalaureate degree in education leading to teacher licensure. In 2007, 60.9% of the students enrolled in the program were students of color, an increase from 45.5% in 2006, and 93.2% were from underrepresented populations, an increase from 88.6% in 2006. Unduplicated headcounts have also increased in the program, from 88 in 2006 to a five year high of 133 in 2007. In 2007, the program awarded 9 associate degrees in education to UTP students.

In 2007, the Urban Teacher Program piloted a new course, *Tutoring the Urban Student*, in conjunction with Minneapolis Public Schools and Avid, a national program that exposes students in middle and high school to college readiness standards and builds academic rigor into the curriculum. The course provided MCTC students with hands-on teaching experiences as tutors in the public schools; these paid internships supported them in tutoring Avid students six hours a week.

One hallmark of the MCTC program is the connection to Public Achievement and Civic Engagement. As part of their UTP experience, students had the opportunity to create professional development for MCTC faculty through a Theatre of the Oppressed model. During MCTC's annual faculty development days, UTP students eloquently addressed the issues of race and privilege through role play, sparking an on-going dialogue with faculty on the topic and offering suggestions from their perspective on how to more effectively address this issue in their classes.

Based on recommendations from partner school districts and advisory committees in 2007, MCTC's Urban Teacher Program created a new 13 credit certificate in ESOL Education specifically designed for the paraprofessional. This certificate allows paraprofessionals to gain the content and pedagogy needed to be successful in an ESL environment. The courses will be offered beginning in Fall 2008.

In order to promote greater opportunities for articulation agreements with four-year college and university partners, MCTC's Urban Teacher Program embarked in a year-long redesign of its curriculum and award. In doing so, the program has created an education core curriculum to which students interested in working with children and youth will be exposed. MCTC's Child Development, Recreation Studies program, and Education program students will all take the 13 credit common core. This reduces curriculum duplication and allows for greater student exposure to career pathways.

The redesign also embeds in the Associate Degree courses specifically addressing special education, classroom management, child and youth growth and development, and child and adolescent

psychology. These courses should help to promote opportunities to expand articulation agreements with four-year partners, both public and private. If approved by Minnesota State Colleges & Universities, the college anticipates offering the new curriculum in Fall 2008.

In looking towards the future, Minneapolis Community and Technical College's Education program anticipates the need to develop additional coursework and credentialing options in special education. It is clear from student feedback that this is an area of interest to them, and community partners' have identified a clear need for skilled individuals to fill anticipated vacancies.

### **Progress Report of the Urban Teacher Program at Inver Hills Community College**

The program in Urban Teaching at Inver Hills experienced a healthy jump in enrollment numbers, with a headcount of 142 in Spring 2008 compared to 55 in Spring 2007, and achieved even enrollment of students of color in Spring and Fall 2007. Of the Urban Education students who identified their ethnicity in 2007, approximately 24% were students of color, compared to 26% in 2006. However, the program awarded only 7 associate degrees and certificates in Education in 2007 compared to 27 in 2006.

To strengthen students' commitment to civic engagement, during Spring and Fall IHCC Education students completed 1,380 hours of service-learning in qualifying field experiences (i.e., at school sites with at least 30% students of color, 40% qualifying for free/reduced lunch, and 10% students whose home language is not English). To increase students' understanding of the necessity and availability of continuing education in the teaching profession, the Urban Teacher Club continued its sponsorship of students invited to attend Normandale College's "Winning Strategies" spring conference for paraprofessionals and future teachers. In 2007, 13 students attended the Normandale conference.

Feedback from students indicates that the program is heightening the understanding of the fundamentals and rewards of urban teaching, as exemplified in these reflections:

*"This program has taught me about patience, resiliency, and understanding where students are coming from. I have gotten a whole new perspective of what urban schools are and what they stand for."*

*"The most important thing I will take away from this program is a career. It has made me realize that I want to be an urban teacher. I have learned about resiliency, responsive classrooms, and constructivist classrooms, and have seen all of this at Dayton's Bluff Elementary."*

*"My service-learning experience at Eastern Heights elementary was a once in a lifetime opportunity that I will never forget. Through course readings, discussion and assignments, I definitely got a better understanding of what it is like to work with children in urban schools, and it has had a great impact on my consideration of a career choice.... After my service-learning at an urban school I know that I want to become a kindergarten teacher in an urban school."*

In response to invitations from schools in our service area, plans were put into place during the fall semester to train and place Urban Education students as AVID tutors in St. Paul District 625. AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) is a 30 year-old, in-school academic support program for

minority and low-income students without a college-going tradition in their families. Beginning in Spring 2008, students in the Introduction to Urban Education course are being trained as AVID tutors.

Supervising teachers in St. Paul service-learning sites have been appreciative of IHCC's Urban Education students:

*"We have all been very happy and appreciative of the work [name] has done with us. She is well liked by students and a welcome addition to our class."*

*"[Name] was very helpful and eager to work with any student or group; very polite and responsible."*

Program developments in 2007 include the revitalization of a dormant Urban Teacher Education external advisory board; the position approval and hiring of a full-time Service-Learning director to manage field experiences; the formalization of the requirement that all Education: Urban Teaching service-learning assignments be in schools classified as urban sites; the development of two new Education courses (Music for the Whole Child and Spanish for Educators); the initiation of a summer program offering CEUs in math, reading, and writing to licensed teachers; and the initiation of an articulation agreement with Winona State University to provide Urban Education pre-professional courses to students at the Winona State-Rochester Community & Technical College campus.

Pressing program needs that surfaced in 2007 include the following:

- Increasing communication with school partners.
- Improving Urban Education program information provided by the college counseling faculty. Students sometimes lack clarity regarding program and transfer options.
- Developing pre-professional education coursework in the area of special education. Students looking toward special education licensure currently transfer to Augsburg's Weekend College special education program, in which seats are limited.

## **For Further Information about the Programs and this Report**

*For more information about the Urban Teacher Program at Metropolitan State, visit:*

[www.metrostate.edu/cps/ut](http://www.metrostate.edu/cps/ut)

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*For more information about the Urban Teacher Program at Minneapolis Community and Technical College, visit:*

[http://www.minneapolis.edu/academics/areaofstudy.cfm?aos\\_id=27](http://www.minneapolis.edu/academics/areaofstudy.cfm?aos_id=27)

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*For more information about the Urban Teacher Program at Inver Hills Community College, visit:*

<http://www.inverhills.edu/AcademicPrograms/CareerPrograms/UrbanTeaching.aspx>

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