

21st Century Teachers Project

Introduction

The 21st Century Teachers Project is Indiana University's contribution to the reinvention of teacher education across the nation. Research shows that students learn more from teachers who are themselves well educated in the subjects they teach. This means that we must focus our attention not only on methods courses taught by Education faculty, but also the courses in content disciplines taught by Arts and Sciences faculty. Our goal is to restructure the disciplinary training of future teachers to foster mastery of disciplinary content and the development of innovative and effective teaching methods that bring that content to life for primary and secondary students.

Indiana University's 21st Century Teachers Project began as a joint effort between Indiana University-Bloomington (IUB) and Indiana University-Purdue University-Indianapolis (IUPUI). By early Fall 2000 this project became a system-wide effort. The chancellors of the eight Indiana University campuses have agreed to work with their Deans and faculty to bring Arts & Sciences together with Education and local K-12 faculty to make real the vision of this project.

The Vision

Teacher education must become a committed partnership among the faculties of Arts and Sciences, Education, and K-12 schools. In September 2000, the chancellors from the eight campuses of Indiana University agreed to accept this ideal as part of their mission. Each campus will develop its own process to bring together the three faculties to identify the content knowledge teachers must have, support the evaluation of key courses that teachers take in order to obtain this knowledge, and support course reform where needed.

Each campus will also provide two representatives to the 21st Century Teachers Project Coordinating Council jointly chaired by Gerardo Gonzalez, University Dean for Education, and Herman Saatkamp, IUPUI Dean of the School of Liberal Arts. This Coordinating Council will share ideas and efforts happening at each campus and address system-wide issues raised by the implementation of changes to the teacher preparation programs on each campus.

As Indiana University moves forward with this project, a key issue is to provide information regarding our progress to the larger community of groups and individuals interested in education. This can be accomplished in part through the development of an interactive web-based system that will provide updates from each campus and also allow the formation of active discussion groups. An annual, system-wide meeting would allow all faculty members involved to discuss concerns and ideas directly with their counterparts on other campuses. The system-wide meeting could be provided with the venue changing each year to ultimately feature all campuses in the system. Meeting these and other funding needs will be a challenge for the Coordinating Council as well as for the campus-based groups.

An Example: Indiana University – Bloomington

The Bloomington campus (IUB) has chosen to retain the successful collaborative model used in the first phase of the project (Spring 2000) with some reorganization of the area committees to more clearly focus on key courses that preservice teachers take (see attached chart).

Area committees consisting of faculty in the College of Arts and Sciences (COAS) who teach the disciplinary courses typically taken by education students, faculty of the corresponding courses in Education, and primary and secondary teachers will be formed for each of six areas: Science, Literature and Speech, Mathematics, Visual and Performing Arts, Civics, and Globalization.

The charge to the committees is:

1. To evaluate the disciplinary and education courses currently taken by education students at Indiana University-Bloomington.
2. To propose changes to that curriculum—by changing existing courses, proposing new courses, or by proposing more radical changes in the instructional model.
3. To ensure that the curriculum aligns with current state and national standards.
4. To build a curriculum that integrates content across disciplines and that integrates disciplinary content and teaching methods.

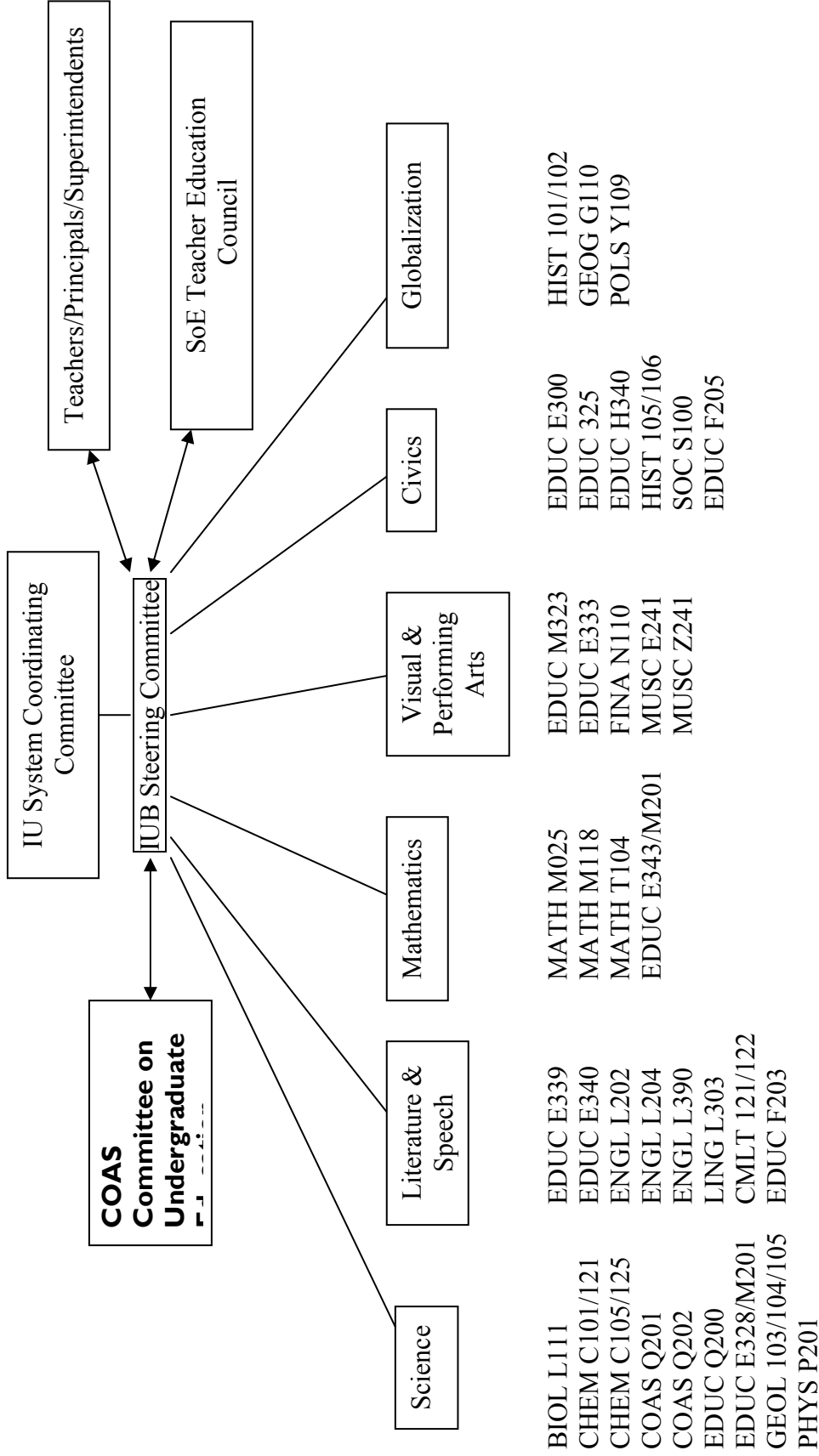
5. To propose a process to implement the proposed changes.
6. To identify new initiatives and opportunities that might lead to more profound changes in the institutional relations between disciplines in the College and the School of Education and to more profound changes in teacher preparation and thus ultimately to primary and secondary students' learning.

Each of the six domain areas committees will consist of 6-8 faculty members with at least two faculty members from each of the School of Education, the College of Arts and Sciences, and local K-12 schools. Overseeing the activities of these committees will be the IUB Steering Committee. The Steering Committee will consist of representative from local stakeholders, including a member from each domain area committee, the COAS Committee on Undergraduate Education, the School of Education Teacher Education Council, and K-12 representation from area teachers and school administrators. The IUB Coordinating Council will be co-chaired by Linda B. Smith, COAS Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education, and Bill Harwood, Executive Director of the 21st Century Teachers Project. The co-chairs of the IUB Steering Committee will represent IUB on the 21st Century Teachers Project Coordinating Council.

Conclusion

Indiana University's 21st Century Teachers Project represents true collaborative built upon recognition of the need for K-16 education reform. This collaborative project is consistent with those that have developed in several other places across the United States. A key feature of our model is the involvement of K-12 teachers as part of the team that develops university-level course reform. The impact that Indiana University can have through this project is profound. The American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education lists Indiana University as the third largest producer of teachers in the United States. The 21st Century Teachers Project likewise will promote the prominence of the School of Education as a nationally ranked unit. Improving the quality of our teacher preparation programs and support for new teachers will have a lasting effect on the quality of teaching experienced by children throughout Indiana, and across the nation.

July 12, 2002



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