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Aug. 1, 2006
Contact: Teri Rizvi
rizvi@udayton.edu
(937) 229-3241

NEWS RELEASE

CONSORTIUM WINS \$500,000 OHIO CORE TEACHING GRANT TO PREPARE MID-CAREER PROFESSIONALS TO TEACH SCIENCE AND MATH

DAYTON, Ohio – Virtually every large urban school district in the country reports a shortage of qualified mathematics and science teachers, according to a study by Recruiting New Teachers Inc.

A local consortium today won a one-year \$500,000 Ohio Core training grant to recruit up to 50 mid-career professionals with a bachelor's degree in math, chemistry or physics and prepare them for second careers as math and science teachers in Dayton-area high schools. The program will begin in November, with the courses offered either on weekends or online by the University of Dayton and Wright State University. Tuition will be covered by the grant, which will be administered by the Montgomery County Educational Service Center.

It's a fast-track effort: The teachers are expected to be provisionally licensed and ready to enter urban, suburban and rural classrooms in fall 2007, according to Don Thompson, superintendent of the Montgomery County Educational Service Center. Each will be paired with a veteran teacher, who will serve as a mentor during the preparation program.

"The partnership provides a unique opportunity for practicing classroom educators and those involved in providing professional development at the university level to work together to ensure that every student in the Miami Valley has an appropriately licensed and skilled math or science teacher," Thompson said.

Other consortium partners include the Engineering and Science Foundation and the West Ohio EXCEL Center of Excellence in Science and Mathematics Education.

Approximately 20 math, 20 chemistry and 10 physics teacher candidates and an equal number of mentors will be recruited for the teacher licensure training program. Those who want to teach math will enroll primarily at the University of Dayton, and those interested in chemistry or physics will enroll primarily at Wright State University.

Ohio Core will require all students, beginning with the high school class of 2011, to

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OFFICE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS
300 College Park Dayton, Ohio 45469-1679
(937) 229-3241 (937) 229-3063 Fax
www.udayton.edu

complete a rigorous curriculum before graduating from high school and being admitted into Ohio's four-year state-assisted universities and colleges. All students will be required to take a second year of algebra and more lab-based science classes, as well as two years of a foreign language. Ohio currently spends more than \$7 million annually to support professional development for math and science teachers, according to the governor's office.

"Wright State University fully supports Gov. Bob Taft's Ohio Core efforts to ensure a rigorous high school curriculum for all students, but especially increasing the knowledge and skills of graduates in math, science and foreign languages," said David Hopkins, provost at Wright State University. "From recruitment and preparation, to the placement, monitoring and mentoring of these new math and science educators, the one-year grant will help the Miami Valley build capacity in these high-need teaching areas."

The Dayton region is not the only one struggling to find highly qualified teachers for high school science and math classrooms. According to a 2002 study by the National Center for Education Statistics, 37 percent of high school math teachers and 31 percent of science teachers lack a major or certification in their field.

It's time to take a collaborative approach to solving the problem, according to Thomas Lasley, dean of the School of Education and Allied Professions at the University of Dayton.

"The power of the consortium approach is the partnership between the universities and the Montgomery County Educational Service Center," he said. "Given that the math and science problem of populating Miami Valley classrooms with highly effective and licensed teachers has not been solved adequately by individual institutions, we hope that a collective response will be of much more benefit to the region and to the state."

Gregory Bernhardt, dean of the College of Education and Human Services at Wright State University, agrees: "This initiative will focus on areas of strength for UD and WSU and will marry our efforts with the outstanding abilities of the MESC to identify the teaching needs of area high schools."

The \$500,000 grant is part of \$2.6 million awarded to higher education institutions in the state to train 260 Ohio teachers and mid-career professionals in high-need and hard-to-staff subject areas.

For more information, call **Tom Lasley** at 937-229-3327, **Don Thompson** at 937-225-4598 or **Greg Bernhardt** at 937-775-2822.