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From the Lab to the Classroom

05.17.2011 | Education The University of Dayton today became one of seven Ohio universities selected to train science professionals to become teachers in the state's urban and rural schools.

Ohio Board of Regents Chancellor Jim Petro announced at the Ohio Statehouse the expansion of the Woodrow Wilson Ohio Teaching Fellowship program from four Ohio campuses to seven.

The program recruits accomplished career changers and outstanding recent college graduates in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM); transforms the way teachers are prepared for their jobs; and fills a growing need for high-quality science and math education in

Ohio's schools. (see video below).

"STEM teaching and learning must be improved, including teacher preparation and professional development, improved assessment and accountability, linking of research to classroom practice and increasing the diversity of the STEM teaching force," said Kevin Kelly, dean of the University of Dayton's School of Education and Allied Professions.

The University will collaborate with the Dayton Regional STEM Center and the University of Dayton Research Institute to design and implement the Woodrow Wilson Ohio Teaching Fellows program, Kelly said. The STEM Center has trained more than 600 fellows in the last two years, many of whom are teaching at local schools and can provide high-quality mentors for the Woodrow Wilson fellows.

The program will benefit from the University's strong tradition of developing specialty teaching tracks such as the Urban Teaching Academy and the Center for Catholic Education, as well as collaboration among the University's School of Education, College of Arts and Sciences and School of Engineering. One example of this collaboration is the "Engineering Innovation and Design for STEM Teachers Summer Institute," where teachers experience the engineering design process and develop related curriculum, Kelly said.

"The U.S. labor market is projected to grow faster in science and engineering than any other sector in the coming years," Petro said. "The University System of Ohio eagerly anticipates the difference these new educators will make in focusing more Ohio children on STEM degree pathways, and ultimately, careers in these vibrant sectors."

Partner universities in the Woodrow Wilson Teaching Fellowships have redesigned teacher preparation programs to prepare teachers in local classrooms, providing an in-depth clinical experience with mentoring and support from the university and teachers in the district. The training is similar to how physicians learn in hospitals and attorneys learn in law offices. Programs also emphasize specific teaching approaches for the STEM fields. After a year of classroom-based preparation, fellows commit to teach for at least three years in a high-need Ohio school.

Other universities joining the Woodrow Wilson Ohio Teaching Fellowship are Ohio University and the University of Toledo. Each will participate in the 2011-12 recruitment cycle, announcing their first classes of fellows in spring 2012. These universities join four others already involved in the program: John Carroll University, The Ohio State University, the University of Akron and the University of Cincinnati.

Petro also announced the selection of the first class of Ohio Teaching Fellows. A total of 65 fellows each will receive a \$30,000 stipend to complete a special master's program at John Carroll, Akron or Cincinnati. The new fellows will be ready to teach students in the fall of 2012.

Ohio launched its Woodrow Wilson Teaching Fellowship in March 2010, joining Indiana and Michigan as host states for the program.

The program is made possible with federal Race to the Top funds as well as commitments from six Ohio funders, including The Cleveland Foundation, George Gund Foundation, Martha Holden Jennings Foundation, GAR Foundation, Battelle Memorial Institute and The Battelle Fund at the Columbus Foundation, plus matching funds provided by the campuses. Additional support for the program came from the state's Choose Ohio First program.

The Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation of Princeton, N.J., administers the program.

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