5-31-2007

A Passion For Education

Follow this and additional works at: https://ecommons.udayton.edu/news_rls

Recommended Citation

https://ecommons.udayton.edu/news_rls/2124

This News Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Marketing and Communications at eCommons. It has been accepted for inclusion in News Releases by an authorized administrator of eCommons. For more information, please contact frice1@udayton.edu, mschlangen1@udayton.edu.
A Passion For Education

05.31.2007 | Engineering, Campus and Community, Science, Students

Former Ohio Gov. Bob Taft will launch the Center for Educational Excellence at the University of Dayton to encourage students to study science, technology, engineering and mathematics and to attract research funding on educational policy issues.

As distinguished research associate in educational excellence, Taft will be part of the University of Dayton Research Institute but collaborate with the School of Education and Allied Professions. It's a two-year appointment, with the option of renewal. The full-time post begins Aug. 15. Taft and his wife Hope plan to move to the Dayton region this summer.

It's a fit for Taft, whose passion is education. He taught English, math, geography and art to children in Tanzania as a Peace Corps volunteer for two years after graduating from college and earned a strong reputation for school quality initiatives as governor. Under his leadership, Ohio implemented rigorous standards for student learning and teacher training and boosted state aid to primary and secondary schools by nearly 60 percent. He spearheaded a $10 billion school construction and renovation program. In addition, he created OhioReads that mobilized more than 50,000 volunteer reading tutors across the state, and launched the Ohio Core, which requires a more rigorous high school curriculum emphasizing math and science.

"As governor, Bob Taft provided significant leadership on education issues and took important strides toward ensuring that Ohio had the conditions necessary for both student and teacher success. His initiatives created a solid foundation for much of the very good work that is continuing throughout the state of Ohio under the leadership of Gov. Ted Strickland," said Thomas Lasley, dean of the School of Education and Allied Professions.

Taft has been a national leader on education reform, serving as co-chair of Achieve, an organization created by the nation's governors and business leaders to help states raise academic standards and close the "expectations gap" so that all high school students graduate ready for college and work.

"The opportunity to help more students succeed is one of the reasons I ran for governor," he said. "It's my passion and was a priority throughout my administration. We established higher standards across the board and a more rigorous high school curriculum. Improving the quality of math and science education is critical to the future of our country."

Taft said he is excited about his new role. "As governor, I learned firsthand about the exceptional science, engineering and teacher preparation programs at the University of Dayton, and I am looking forward to helping the Miami Valley region become a national leader in math and science education."

As part of his role, Taft will serve as a consultant to the Miami Valley P-16 Education Consortium working to improve the region's math and science education at every level of education from preschool to college. He will work on a number of other regional efforts focused on enhancing P-16 educational policy and practice.

Taft will devote much of his energy on securing sponsored research funding for STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) initiatives and other programs in the Center for Educational Excellence. He also will spearhead an annual symposium that focuses on education policy issues and attracts national research groups to explore ways to improve education in the Dayton region. In addition, his work will focus on at-risk students in urban schools -- especially the Dayton Early College Academy -- and he will serve as a guest lecturer.

"We want to multiply our research efforts in the field of education at the University of Dayton, and Bob Taft has just the right experience to help us do that," said Mickey McCabe, vice president for research and executive director of UDRI.

University of Dayton administrators praised Taft's commitment to education reform. "Having worked closely with Governor Taft on the Ohio Partnership for Continued Learning, I am well aware of his knowledge of the critical issues facing education at all levels and his passion for finding practical solutions to some rather daunting problems. He will be a great asset to the already-strong UD team in the field of education research and policy analysis," said Fred Pestello, provost and senior vice president for educational affairs.

UD's School of Education and Allied Professions is a leader in urban and early childhood education. The Urban Teacher
Academy prepares teachers for urban classrooms. Students in the Lalanne Program teach for at least two years in a Catholic school, live together in a faith community and receive free tuition for master's degree courses taken during the summers. The Dayton Early College Academy -- a Dayton public high school on campus -- has received national attention for the way it's preparing high school students to earn a diploma and up to two years of college credit. The Bombeck Family Learning Center serves as a model for its approach to early childhood education.

The University of Dayton is also part an elite network of 49 colleges and universities dedicated to radically changing the way students are prepared to teach. The reform initiative, called the Teachers for a New Era (TNE) Learning Network, is supported by the Carnegie Corporation of New York and the Annenberg Foundation. Under the No Child Left Behind Act, states are required to have a high-quality teacher in every classroom. The institutions in the network are serving as national models for the way they prepare effective teachers.

Taft holds a bachelor's degree in English from Yale University, a master's degree in public affairs from Princeton University and a law degree from the University of Cincinnati.

Contact Teri Rizvi at 937-229-3255.