

Jan 7

## A Message from the Dean:

At this writing, I am now into my sixth year as dean. We are ranked 20th in the nation, with nine programs in the top 20 and five programs in the top 10.

Sounds like a numbers game, doesn't it? But it's not. The College of Education is far more than statistics, rankings, enrollment and programs. We are a complex and vibrant institution, part of a highly regarded research university, and

are on the brink of greatness.

That message was deftly articulated during a VIP Briefing we hosted at the college in June. As part of our continuing efforts to strengthen our reach and influence with stakeholders, we assembled some of our top faculty to present highlights from their on-going research. Members of your alumni board attended with other VIPs.

Following a "tapas" format, we offered samplings across several disciplines and assembled a comprehensive briefing book with one-page summaries of our teacher preparation and graduate degree programs, highlights of the work of our centers and institutes, and abstracts of our top-funded research projects.

The chair of our Board of Visitors, Raymond "Buzz" Bartlett, joined with William "Bud" Thomas to weave the presentations, lunch program, and discussion into a cohesive overview of our college. Thomas, vice president of student affairs emeritus of the university, closed the briefing with insightful commentary that I have chosen to share in my column here.

"We have heard impressive examples of the excellent scholarship being done in the University of Maryland College of Education.

We have been impressed by the magnitude and the scope of the work being done and the successes that have accrued. We have heard of productive collaborations and involvement of the faculty and the college in multiple arenas and external agencies.

We have once again witnessed the exciting, enthusiastic, and contagious commitment of Dean Szymanski to pursue excellence without faltering...even under difficult circumstances. What of all this?

Simply summarized, we have a better understanding of the work of the college...today will help to get us all on the same page. We are now better equipped to promote the mission and agenda of the college in the future. That said, serving for the past few years as a part-time consultant and occasional project facilitator for the dean, as well as a long-time observer of the college's fortunes, it is my observation that the College of Education, in this time in its long history, is alive and well...

- Or well enough to have survived periodic hardships when others did not.
- Well enough to have accomplished new and expanded missions and exciting new research, when others were content or forced to meet only minimal expectations.
- Well enough to have experienced more than a few moments of grand achievement and distinguished recognition, when others could only dream of such moments...  
...but occasional moments of greatness are not frequent enough, and 'well enough' is not good enough for a world class college!

Bear in mind that it is a widely accepted tenet of the quality assurance movement in world businesses that complex organizations are never static. If an organization is not improving... it is getting worse. If an organization is not growing, it is decaying.

Our College of Education has chosen not to settle for 'well enough.' It has chosen to improve and to grow.

But to gain and sustain excellence, the college needs active and generous support. It needs active champions in any arena, agency, or discussion where issues or priorities emerge that might help or hurt its mission.

It needs generous supporters who share with the college the timeless, yet still passionate belief that the advancement of education is a noble venture, as well as the stark realization that any society simply cannot long endure, let alone flourish, without maintaining a grand system of effective education.

The students, staff, faculty, and administration of the college are, as we have heard today in so many ways, all about 'effective education' in our society. The college is a central player in society's duty to educate itself effectively.

The college has been good at its work. The college has gotten, over the past several years, considerably better at its work. The college strives to be permanently among the very best.

That can only happen if each of us, and those we can recruit, are active as champions, and generous as supporters."

I want to thank Dr. Thomas for his thoughts, and thank our alumni and friends for their commitment to the College of Education.

Edna Mora Szymanski, Dean

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# ClassNotes

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... Lakeside, Calif., retired in 1992 after serving as the director of curriculum and staff development for the San Diego County Office of Education.

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... Baltimore, Md., as the president of Self-Science Instruments Co., patented and sold the first pacemaker. He has written 118 books on teaching electronics and health occupations and has been a nominee to the Inventors Hall of Fame and the Radio



