

Preface

**VISION, MISSION AND
VALUES WHICH
DISTINGUISH THE HOPE
COLLEGE TEACHER**

The Vision and Mission Statements of the Hope College Education Department

The **vision** of the Hope College Education Department is to create, nurture and sustain an exemplary and distinctive teacher education program that is current, integrated with the liberal arts, which promotes and models six professional abilities.

Effective Communicators: Teachers must be able to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences in diverse settings – with students each day in class, with fellow teachers and administrators, with parents, and with community members.

Professional Collaborator: Teachers must have strong, positive interpersonal skills and be both enthusiastic and confident about working with diverse groups of people. Teamwork involves communication, coordination, division of labor, and effective negotiation.

Curriculum Developer: Teachers are not just “recipe readers” or followers of mandates. Teachers must know how to adjust the classroom environment, materials and activities to meet the needs of diverse learners. All students do not learn at the same rate or in the same way. Thus, teachers must learn to generate original, creative and appropriate learning experiences for diverse learners, as well as adapt existing state or district curricula to meet student needs.

Problem Solver: Teachers in today’s classroom are faced with multiple problems of varying degrees of severity each day. The sources of some problems come from outside of the classroom, while others are generated within the classroom itself. All, however, may need to be addressed in the school environment.

Decision Maker: Teachers often must make decisions based on incomplete information, ambiguous circumstances, and unpredictable, rather than certain outcomes. A professional must be willing to take a risk and decide a best course of action, based on personal and professional value systems. It is important for developing educators to clarify personal values and recognize professional choices and responsibilities in order to support actions and decisions made as a teacher.

Scholarly Educator: Professional educators understand that teaching is an intellectual activity. Although educational research is continually expanding our

understanding, knowledge about the teaching/learning process will always be incomplete. Still, our rich and varied professional literature can inform our classroom and curricular decisions. Teachers must regard professional development as a lifetime endeavor and continue to keep abreast of current research and innovations in education.

With faculty themselves well grounded in the six abilities, the **mission** of the professional teacher education program at Hope College is to prepare prospective teachers who have the knowledge, skills, and distinctive attitudes and values needed to make and implement professional decisions in a **changing world**.

Education Department Core Values

1. We believe that our colleagues, students and others should experience our trust, as well as integrity in our interactions.
2. We believe that it is our responsibility to both promote and model appreciation of diversity and the need for sensitivity when working with others.
3. We believe that the multiple perspectives of the historic Christian faith provide foundation of our work and lives.
4. We believe that all learning is developmental in nature and with this understanding are committed to the nurture of learning with high expectations in our own lives as well as the lives of our students.
5. We believe that we must approach our work and interactions with others with creativity and a sense of joy.

Adopted December 6, 2000.

The Hope College Teacher

What, then, distinguishes the Hope College teacher from teachers prepared at other institutions who share similar goals and objectives? While the interdependent scaffolding provided by the developmental perspective, six professional abilities, and three levels of course work supported by current knowledge bases undergirds each of our programs, the defining characteristic of Hope College graduates lies in their understanding that teaching and learning are both intellectual and spiritual endeavors. Our students understand teaching as a vocation that requires knowledge, passion, commitment, flexibility, as well as a sense of humor. They understand that they will serve as personal and professional role models for their students, and for each other, both in and out of the classroom. Hope College students experience themselves as individuals who are discovering their unique gifts as educators. Perhaps more importantly, they see themselves as part of a larger social-spiritual context in their growing understanding of stewardship as they offer those unique gifts in the service of others.

In keeping with the mission statement that defines Hope College education as being grounded in the “context of the historic Christian faith,” our students see themselves as members of a community of faith. We realize that each student will understand, define, and actualize this in a distinct and personal way. What unites the Hope College Department of Education faculty with our teacher education candidates can be summarized best by our college-wide motto, “Spera in Deo,” Hope in God. Together as novice and seasoned educators, we trust in our individual and collective vocations; we accept the challenges of teaching for equity, and for the moral and spiritual growth for all children and youth; and we place our hope in God that our efforts will foster justice, peace, enlightenment, and renaissance. We are confident that the education that beginning teachers receive at Hope College shapes their love of learning and teaching and promotes positive professional, personal, and spiritual dispositions that will last for a lifetime and will have a lasting impact on the future.

