ON THE POND

WHAT’S HAPPENING, WHAT’S NEW AND WHAT’S WHAT AT UM-DEARBORN

FOR 25 YEARS, the School of Education has prepared students for careers in the classroom. That preparation is evident at the Early Childhood Education Center.

SOE

MARRIAGE TO MOTOWN

THE BELL RINGS AND STUDENTS FILE
out of Pam Fisher’s (’03 M.A.) classroom, stuffing their backpacks with textbooks and homework assignments.

As the hallway grows quiet, Fisher grabs a stack of tests and heads home for the night. She grades a few papers and relaxes after yet another busy day in a Detroit classroom.

Fisher is among a growing number of School of Education (SOE) students who graduate from the university and go on to teaching jobs in metropolitan Detroit.

Fisher has spent her career in urban schools, and she now teaches English and social studies at University Prep Middle School in Detroit.

“Being a teacher here is very fulfilling,” she said. “Students in urban schools deserve the very best teachers and resources. It’s very satisfying to work with students who are capable of learning if they have the support of good teachers.”

SOE students know they’ll be exposed to diverse classroom settings, which is why many of them enroll in the program, said Gail Luera, associate professor of science education.

Those diverse classroom experiences prepare SOE students, as they seek teaching jobs in metropolitan Detroit.
Dearborn Public Schools in 2010. “I always felt I got one of the best educations from there. They were ahead of the curve. The professors knew how to teach, and that gave me a lifetime of success.”

The hometown appeal prompted Faitel to return to Dearborn, where she grew up. Faitel’s appreciation for Dearborn’s multicultural environment added to the appeal.

Like Luera, John Poster agrees that urban teaching jobs appeal to many UM-Dearborn students. SOE understands that, so it collaborates with area schools to help place students in southeast Michigan classrooms.

“They have an opportunity to see children of all ages and backgrounds,” said Poster, professor of public administration and education at UM-Dearborn.

SOE also can celebrate after being nationally accredited by the Teacher Education Accreditation Council. The school also was recognized as an “exemplary” teacher preparation institution for the fourth year in a row by the Michigan Department of Education.

“I congratulate the SOE faculty and staff and those across the university who work with our students for this important recognition, which is a tribute to their hard work,” Silver said. “This dedication helps our students realize their aspirations to become teachers who will influence the next generation of students and shape the future of our region.”

“They find out how hungry students are to learn,” Luera said. “They feel like they can have an impact.”

UM-Dearborn’s SOE has earned a great reputation in the region by preparing high-quality teachers for the classroom and educational leaders for local school districts. This year, the school celebrates its 25th birthday.

“Preparing teachers was an important part of what UM-Dearborn did for many years before the SOE was officially formed in 1987,” said Edward Silver, dean, “but the formation of a School of Education signaled the university’s commitment to education as a professional field of study and to its central role in achieving UM-Dearborn’s quest to be a great metropolitan university.”

Richard Moyer joined the university long before SOE was established. For more than a decade, Moyer taught science education courses through the Division of Urban Education, a standalone unit of the university. Even then, the university’s goal was the same – prepare students for diverse classrooms.

Moyer, now professor of science education and natural sciences, works closely with area school districts and is reminded of UM-Dearborn’s impact in metropolitan Detroit classrooms.

“Every so often, somebody will walk up to me and say, ‘I had you for a class and now I teach here,’” he said.

Moyer helped strengthen the university’s partnership with Detroit Public Schools, leading science workshops for the district’s teachers for nearly a decade. The workshops helped educate Detroit teachers about science teaching methods and also familiarized them with campus.

“It was a complete win-win,” Moyer said.

One area school district with close ties to the university is Westwood Community School District in Dearborn Heights. Many of the school district’s teachers graduate from UM-Dearborn, Moyer said.

Maureen Molloy (’85 B.A., ’92 M.A.) was one of them. Molloy worked at UM-Dearborn’s Child Development Center, now the Early Childhood Education Center, which helped her land an administrative job with Westwood. That led to a 15-year career with the Dearborn Heights school district, including a stint as principal of Thorne Elementary School.

“When I was principal, about half of my staff was from UM-Dearborn,” said Molloy, who now is principal at Edna M. Allen Elementary School in Plymouth.

At Westwood, she supervised several UM-Dearborn student teachers who received job offers there after graduation.

“Graduates of the elementary education prep really have a solid understanding of how children learn,” Molloy said. “I think UM-Dearborn does an outstanding job of instilling sound principles of pedagogy, and also helping students apply those ideas in a practical approach. It is a very rigorous program.”

Terri Faitel (’89 B.A.) can attest. Faitel has more than two decades of teaching experience under her belt, including 21 years at Trenton Public Schools.

“UM-Dearborn just really prepares students for the real world,” said Faitel, who took over as math coordinator for Dearborn Public Schools in 2010. “I always felt I got one of the best educations from there. They were ahead of the curve. The professors knew how to teach, and that gave me a lifetime of success.”

The hometown appeal prompted Faitel to return to Dearborn, where she grew up. Faitel’s appreciation for Dearborn’s multicultural environment added to the appeal.

Like Luera, John Poster agrees that urban teaching jobs appeal to many UM-Dearborn students. SOE understands that, so it collaborates with area schools to help place students in southeast Michigan classrooms.

“They have an opportunity to see children of all ages and backgrounds,” said Poster, professor of public administration and education at UM-Dearborn.

SOE also can celebrate after being nationally accredited by the Teacher Education Accreditation Council. The school also was recognized as an “exemplary” teacher preparation institution for the fourth year in a row by the Michigan Department of Education.

“I congratulate the SOE faculty and staff and those across the university who work with our students for this important recognition, which is a tribute to their hard work,” Silver said. “This dedication helps our students realize their aspirations to become teachers who will influence the next generation of students and shape the future of our region.”

**SOE CELEBRATED** its 25th anniversary on October 11 with students, faculty, staff and alumni. To learn more about the school and its 25th anniversary, visit soe.umd.umich.edu.