

## **The Way Our Missions Would Have Us Be**

The mission statement of the Augsburg College Education Department parallels that of Augsburg College in several ways.

Both speak directly to developing future leaders.

- College: “To nurture future leaders in service to the world...”
- Education Department: “...to [develop] future educational leaders”

Both emphasize the importance of acquiring knowledge.

- College: “...providing high quality educational opportunities, which are based in the liberal arts...”
- Education Department: “...foster student learning and well being by being knowledgeable in their fields, being capable in pedagogy...”

Both raise up the importance of diversity and a commitment to serving diverse students.

- College: “...educational opportunities...based in...an intentionally diverse campus community.”
- Education Department: “...foster student learning...by...embracing diversity...”

Both demand a values orientation to our work.

- College: “...providing high quality educational opportunities...shaped by the faith and values of the Christian church...”
- Education Department: “...foster student learning and well-being by being...ethical in practice...”

The College mission statement explicitly identifies the context of our work as being within a “vital metropolitan setting.” The Education Department does not have specific language in its mission statement addressing our context; rather, we assume it and require that all our students have at least one field experience within the urban setting and several more within the metropolitan area, including additional urban placements.

## **The Ways Education Department Programs and Practices Embrace the College Mission.**

### Ways that Education Programs are “based in the liberal arts”:

- We prepare knowledgeable teachers who will teach liberal arts content by requiring elementary education majors to complete two college level math and three college level science requirements as well as a content specific middle school specialty area consisting of between three to seven content area courses. These requirements are also demanded of our MAE elementary licensure students.
- We prepare knowledgeable teachers who will teach liberal arts content by requiring all secondary and p-12 licensure students to have an undergraduate major, or the equivalent, in their content area. These requirements are also demanded of our MAE secondary/k-12 licensure students.
- We actively promote critical thinking and reflection through our course work and assignments. Our mission statement requires us to incorporate reflective thinking into our programs. Our practice is to foster intellectual curiosity by raising questions as much as by providing answers.
- We promote and model the concept of “teacher as life long learner” through our personal and professional intellectual pursuits that we share with our students.
- We foster interdisciplinary learning within our methods courses when we teach our students to see beyond content boundaries and capitalize on the connections among them when planning for and teaching k-12 students.
- We contribute to the development of “effective, informed, ethical” citizens of the world through our international course offerings and student teaching abroad opportunities.

### Ways that Education Programs are “shaped by the faith and values of the Christian church”:

- We encourage students to grapple with what it means to be human, especially within the context of schools and communities. This emerges specifically in our keystone courses – EDC 490 and SPE 490 with their retrospective look at faith and vocation.
- As a professional program, we approach teaching as a vocation by modeling our own vocational commitment to teaching, expecting our students to regard teaching as a vocation, and asking them to determine their commitment to that vocation as part of their course work and field experience.

- We treat our students respectfully with the goal of being “in relationship” with them. In turn, we try to nurture within our students the ability to establish genuine, authentic relationships with their students and a willingness to approach teaching as a gift of service to the world. Our mission demands that we help future teachers understand the importance of “...[nurturing] self-worth...”.
- As a department, we expect ourselves to honor and respect differences among our students, thereby making a wide range of people welcome within our programs. We treat our students in the way we expect them to treat their students, honoring and respecting difference in race, ethnicity, religion, family structure, physical and learning abilities, etc.
- As a professional program, we recognize the immense responsibility and public trust given teachers and accept the absolute necessity for “being ethical in practice”. Our programs are based in that recognition and we demand it of ourselves in our professional practice. Our profession demonstrate commitment to ethical practice through various ethical codes, some of which are placed in state statute.

Ways that Education Programs “are shaped by the context of a vital metropolitan setting...”

- All initial licensure education students are required to have an urban field experience as part of our first course (EDC 200/522) and field experiences in metro schools in a minimum of four additional courses for a minimum of 100 hours. Our students learn from Augsburg-based classroom experiences and from p-12-based field experiences. Their experiences in the field infiltrate our classes and our teaching is shaped, in part, by those experiences.
- We actively participate as a neighbor in the Cedar-Riverside community by bringing students to Cedar Riverside Charter School to teach in their classrooms and sending tutors to work with CRCS students.
- We are establishing a partnership with Ann Sullivan School (MPS) where portions of our courses are taught on-site, service learning placements are provided, and collaboration across Augsburg and Ann Sullivan personnel occurs as part of the teaching of our students.
- We have partnerships with other Minneapolis. Most often named among these partnership schools are Seward Montessori and South High School. North High School requested conversations that could lead to more collaboration in the future.
- We work closely with metro districts, including Minneapolis and St. Paul, to secure 12 to 14 week student teaching placements that provide high quality capstone experiences for our students.
- Our weekend licensure/degree programming is influenced by community need. SPE programs were developed in concert with MPS and SPPS and rose out of specific community needs. The MAE program came into being because potential students wanted a graduate option for licensure.
- We rely on current and former teachers from metro area schools to work with us and our students as full-time and adjunct instructors, speak in our classes and serve on our advisory board.
- Several of our courses make use of the city for field trips to places such as St. Martin’s Table, the MN History Center, and Courage Center.
- Assignments in some classes require students to investigate and have contact with the metro community: EDC 200/522 investigates community organizations that address social problems, SPE 490/540 involves students with parents and agencies, EDC 410/544 involves students with parents of children with special needs.
- We maintain an active program in continuing education, offering AP summer institute workshops to teachers coming primarily from the larger metropolitan area as well as courses taught by our education department faculty. The continuing education program also works with community organizations to administer credit and CEU’s for courses and conferences they sponsor. SEARCH Institute and VocalEssence are two organizations for which we administer CEU’s.
- Individuals within our department are responsible for strong programs and connections with p-12 children and teachers. Examples of such connections are the GEMS and GISE summer programs for elementary and middle school students, the paraprofessional math institute, health care externships, the Paideia seminar workshops, and Courage to Teach/Courage to Lead programs for k-16 educators and other professionals. Also, Augsburg sponsors metro area charter schools and the person who oversees sponsorship is a member of our department.
- Individuals within our department provide service to metro community agencies and schools by serving on school boards, school-based committees, community agency boards, etc.

Ways that Education Programs are “shaped by an intentionally diverse campus community...”

- We teach our students strategies that encourage civil discourse among divergent viewpoints through Paideia seminars and other strategies that encourage critical thinking and civil discussion.
- Several of our courses directly examine individual differences in p-12 students: Learning and Development, Diversity, MN American Indians, Learners with Special Needs. Part of our charge as teacher educators is to prepare future teachers to work effectively with diverse student bodies.
- We provide our students with opportunities to learn about other cultures and religions by providing placements in local schools.
- We benefit from periodic efforts by the state and the community to increase the numbers of teachers of color through existing programs like the SIG grant that provides funding for students of color and other under-represented populations in special education, the American Indian teacher education scholarship program, and the St. Paul Companies teacher of color scholarship program. In the past we have benefited from the state’s teacher of color and urban teacher grant programs that funded tuition for teacher licensure. We also award scholarship money to diverse populations through our designated scholarship programs at Augsburg (i.e., Rochester teachers of color scholarship).
- We value the presence of students from diverse backgrounds in our classes and the perspective they bring. We support students from diverse backgrounds through our advising and our teaching. We model for our students what it means to seek out and hear diverse opinions within the classroom.

Ways that the Education Department addresses leadership in our licensure and degree programs...

- Our department program theme is “Teacher as developing professional: from classroom decision-maker to educational leader”. Through this theme we honor the leadership teachers provide in different arenas and different stages of their careers. Initially, most teachers focus on providing excellent leadership for their classrooms. Our undergraduate licensure courses focus on developing the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to be effective classroom leaders. Undergraduate DAY students have the opportunity to experience leadership amongst peers through the Augsburg College Education Student organization that is currently being reactivated.
- Our Master of Arts in Education program is built around the theme of teacher leadership and moves the focus beyond the classroom to the schools, districts, and communities in which teachers work. The theme of teacher leadership is augmented in three ways throughout the program: by the graduate components of licensure courses offered jointly at undergraduate and graduate levels (our “slash” courses), by the Master of Arts in Leadership (ML) course requirements, and by the final project required of all MAE degree seekers. Our goal is to help existing and future teachers understand the responsibility that teachers have to participate in the shaping of the future of education within their classrooms and beyond. Our graduate students have the opportunity within their education courses to deepen knowledge in specific areas of interest, be experts among peers within their Augsburg education classes, and consider their potential to influence policy and practice beyond their p-12 classrooms. The ML course requirements give MAE students the chance to study with graduate students from other programs, and in the process, broaden how they view issues and contexts of leadership as well as how they see themselves as teacher leaders. The education final project gives MAE students the chance to identify an issue or problem of importance to them and take a leadership role in analyzing it and putting forward a solution for it.
- As faculty members, we are currently engaged in our own department-based professional development, reading about and discussing teacher leadership for the purpose of developing a shared understanding of and commitment to the theme of our graduate program. We are also examining how this theme is currently translated into our slash courses and how we might integrate the theme more fully and/or systematically.