and Education
Lead the Way in Early Care
and Education

By Mary McClintock, ’82

When Community Action’s staff couldn’t find enough college-level coursework in leadership to meet Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care requirements, Green Hawk knew who to call.

Hawk, Education Manager for Community Action’s Parent-Child Development Center (PCDC), phoned Kate Finnegan, Co-Chair of GCC’s Education Department, to talk about how to meet the workforce development need. That conversation led to Finnegan and Hawk creating and delivering EDU 244 “Leadership in Early Care and Education” in summer 2014 to 13 GCC students from Franklin, Hampshire, and Hampden counties.

Hawk said, “I turned to GCC for several reasons. GCC is a responsive community player uniquely involved in the development of the early care and education workforce. GCC’s Education Department was instrumental in my success within the field. I could not be the leader I am today without the leadership, mentoring, and wisdom of the Education Department leaders at GCC.

And, where to go to make things happen because GCC moves mountains when it comes to making community need?”

Hawk and Finnegan quickly realized they each brought invaluable perspective and knowledge to the project and needed to co-create a course. Finnegan brought a background in leadership and a broad theoretical perspective. Hawk, who holds an Associate of Science from GCC’s College of Arts, and a Bachelor’s degree from the University of Massachusetts, brought the context of working her way up from being an early childhood teacher to her current position managing the PCDC’s Head Start education center in Franklin, Hampshire, and Hampden counties. The Massachusetts Department of Higher Education’s Vision Project provided support for the development and delivery of the course.

Finnegan said, “When considering workforce development, we must listen to the people in the workplace. I could have developed an academically rigorous course on my own, but it was wonderful to share a rapid, thoughtful, creative course development process with Kate. It was so enriching to listen to the things they need more tools to help them do the job. This course is one of the tools.”

Topics covered by the seven-course work focused on building the students’ capability as supervisors and mentors. To serve students working in three counties, Finland and Hawk created an online course format with readings and writing assignments, online discussions, and three face-to-face sessions. The fast-to-bye sessions featured speakers addressing challenging real-life workforce situations and student presentations. Reflecting on the course’s impact on PCDC staff, Hawk said, “Early care and education is evolving as a field from a hierarchy-minded to an educational professional-minded. There’s something more important than the care provided to children and it takes a lot to run an effective program. We have a dedicated workforce, but they need more tools to help them do the job.”

Finnegan said EDU 244 is a model for other courses. She said, “When considering workforce development, we must listen to the people in the workplace. I could have developed an academically rigorous course on my own, but it was wonderful to share a rapid, thoughtful, creative course development process with Kate. It was so enriching to listen to the things they need more tools to help them do the job. This course is one of the tools.”

Upcoming Events...

Love in the Time of Climate Change

Wed., Nov. 5, 12 Noon, GCC Main Campus, Main Building, Humanities Studio, N250

Free and open to the public. (413) 773-1454

Book Signing: Nov. 7,7 Ward Eye Bookstore, Main St. Greenfield

“Love in the Time of Climate Change, a romantic comedy about global warming, is guaranteed to keep you laughing. Laughing and thinking.”

Professor Brian Adams has taught at GCC for the last 20 years. Brian is active in the climate change movement and has off campus. He has authored numerous health related brochures distributed nationally by ETR Associates. Love in the Time of Climate Change is Brian’s first novel.

SAVE THE DATE: 5K Turkey Run

Saturday, November 15, 2014
Race-day registration 8-8:45am
5K race/walk begins 9am

Contact: Shannon Larange at 413-775-1600 or Email: larange@gcc.mass.edu