

Dr. Henry-Beauchamp is actively involved in several districts within the state of New Jersey providing in-service presentations and other staff development forums/workshops that address issues of inclusive education and whole-school reform.

**Title of Proposal:        Inclusive Education and the Impact on teacher Education**

### **Inclusive Education and the Impact on teacher Education**

Leah A. Henry-Beauchamp is an Associate Professor at Kean University in the Department of Special Education. Her research interest includes school reform, inclusive education, and health related educational issues. Her most recent publication dealt with type II diabetes within urban educational settings.

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### **ABSTRACT**

The education of prospective teachers becomes significantly impacted when individuals' with disabilities are included in the dialogue of school reform within schools. It is estimated the 54 million Americans live with disabilities. The exact prevalence figure indicates that 7.7 percent of the general school population is children with disabilities (U.S. Department of Education, 1998). School districts to date ("National Study," 1994, 1995) indicate an increase not only in the numbers of school districts implementing inclusive education programs, but also an increase in the numbers of special education students in general education classes. Despite these facts most educational theories have been formulated with little, if any, regard for disability (Hahn, 1994). It therefore becomes imperative to argue that in order to truly prepare prospective teachers to be responsive to the realities of today schools, the faculty from colleges of education, colleges of arts and sciences, and local schools need to coordinate their understanding, knowledge base, and efforts collaboratively to include individuals with disability. The purpose of this study was to explore how University faculty at the post-secondary level dealt with the training of prospective teachers regarding the issue of inclusion.

A survey was designed and data was collected from 171 university faculty to measure the attitudes and actions of college professor who prepare and train teachers for work in inclusive settings. The results of the study point to a key principle in preparing pre-service and in-service teachers to teach in inclusive settings: effective inclusion of students with disabling conditions requires reflective teacher educators to

modify their attitudes, teaching and classroom management practices, and curricula to accommodate such diversity that is evident in inclusive schools. This study points out that success in training pre-service and in-service teachers hinges on the faculty of universities possessing the ability to become more effective and reflective practitioners who are able to think critically about their beliefs, values and practices of inclusion.