

## **UWF honors Escambia County School District as community partner**

**Pensacola, Fla. – Sept. 26, 2016** – The University of West Florida College of Education and Professional Studies recently recognized the Escambia County School District as an Outstanding Community Partner. Dr. William Crawley, dean of the College, recently presented an award to Escambia Schools Superintendent Malcolm Thomas at a meeting for College faculty and staff.

The recognition is an acknowledgement of the many ties between the college and the school district, which include the National Writing Project for educators' professional development, lesson plans for field trips to Arcadia Mill Archaeological Site, the student teaching and internship program and other projects and initiatives across the College.

“Partnerships, like this with Escambia County School District, are mutually beneficial to the organization and to UWF,” said Dr. Diane Scott, associate dean of the College of Educational and Professional Studies. “These partnerships provide opportunities for students, faculty and the community to engage with one another and have an impact on real-world issues faced by our community. This partnership with Escambia Schools reflects the mission of the college and university.”



The Escambia County School District was integral in UWF receiving designation as a National Writing Project site in late 2015. During the application process, Thomas and other school district administrators worked with Dr. Susan James, assistant professor in the UWF Department of Teacher Education and Educational Leadership, to identify teachers' professional development needs. Area

teachers then took part in a three-week summer workshop at UWF to discover innovative and motivating curriculums to share with their classes. The Escambia County School District paid the teachers' salaries during this time.

When a site reviewer evaluated UWF before the National Writing Project site designation was given, Escambia County teachers shared their perspective on the program and how they are using the methods they learned in K-12 classrooms. In Summer 2016, 11 elementary and nine middle school teachers from Escambia County participated in the National Writing Project Summer Invitational Institute at UWF.

At the Arcadia Mill Archeological Site in Milton, 10 UWF students and two faculty members developed a field trip and associated lesson plans for approximately 200 students from Brentwood Elementary School and Ferry Pass Elementary School. The project was part of the UWF Emerge program, an initiative developed by the College to help faculty incorporate high-impact practices within their curriculum.

The lesson plans developed by the UWF Emerge students included a tour of Arcadia Mill, a scavenger hunt, worksheets to help teach the students about Arcadia Mill, and a craft activity in which students learned to weave using an index card and yarn. The lesson plans are available for schools to use on future field trips.

Each year, around 10 to 20 UWF students complete student teaching and other internships in an Escambia County school. Before they become student teachers, the students must complete two field experience courses that include 100 hours of exposure to a classroom or school environment. Escambia County School District provides these opportunities allowing UWF students to gain hands-on classroom knowledge that can help them become impactful teachers.

The Weis Community School is another example of the collaboration between UWF and Escambia County Schools. The school is supported by both the departments of social work and teacher education and educational leadership – both in the College of Education and Professional Studies – as well as the UWF College of Health. Social work students also have the opportunity to complete their internship there.

For more information about the College of Education and Professional Studies, visit [uwf.edu/ceps](http://uwf.edu/ceps).

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