

The Illinois Wesleyan University
Teacher Education Mission and Vision
(working draft, February 2008)

Teachers Scholars for Social Justice

At Illinois Wesleyan University, professional teacher education is grounded in the liberal arts and social justice mission of the University. Studies in the liberal arts, sciences, and humanities bring historical, philosophical, social and cultural context to the educative endeavor. The teacher's challenge requires the same spirit of inquiry, creativity of thought, skillful communication, and strength of character expressed in the university mission. As we educate future teachers, we aim to enable them to think critically and creatively about the processes and prospects of education, the place of education and the role of the teacher in a diverse and democratic society.

In particular, our mission is to educate candidates who are committed to social justice in their classrooms and schools so that the democratic ideals of equity and opportunity are realized for all students. This mission, in turn, necessitates that the university's commitment to diversity be embraced by teacher educators and future teachers alike. Given that the student population is becoming increasingly diverse while teachers remain overwhelmingly white, female, and middle class, teachers are challenged to work with students from a wide range of cultural, ethnic, and linguistic origins, abilities, and socio-economic backgrounds.

Thus, we strive to prepare teachers who understand, appreciate, and are responsive to students from diverse backgrounds, and who have the knowledge, skills and dispositions to foster learning among all children regardless of culture, ethnicity, language, class, gender and/or ability. We hold to a vision of teachers committed to making a meaningful difference in the lives of *all* students, teachers who will inspire among their students a passion for learning and acting in the world, and insodoing, who will transform the educational landscape. This is our vision of teacher-scholars committed to social justice.