BSC grant will increase support of area schoolteachers to improve math scores

Birmingham-Southern has received a major grant as part of the national No Child Left Behind Act to initiate a professional development program for local schoolteachers that will strengthen student test scores.

The $55,000 grant from the Alabama Commission on Higher Education will support cooperative work between BSC faculty and middle-school math teachers in the Jefferson County, Bessemer, and Fairfield school systems to provide training for better development of math teaching.

Several workshops will be set up throughout the year for BSC faculty to provide teacher training and help raise academic standards at their schools. Technology instruction will be integrated into the workshop curriculum.

Principals from the area will be invited to attend meetings on the BSC campus to support teachers and help raise academic standards at their schools. Area businesses also will support and participate in workshops.

The grant proposal “Helping Teachers to Help Students in Mathematics” was a joint effort of the divisions of Education and Math/Science/Computer Science at BSC. The grant is renewable and will support a three-year program. The grant program will be directed by Mary Jane Turner, instructor of mathematics and secondary education at BSC, and supported by six additional members of the math and education faculty.

BSC professors receive grant to establish travel course

Dr. Barbara Domcekova, assistant Spanish professor, and Dr. Megan Peterson, assistant biology professor, have each received $2,000 curriculum grants from the Associated Colleges of the South to establish a January 2004 Interim travel program to Peru.

The course will be designed to introduce students to the importance of conserving rain forests, while using their Spanish-speaking skills.

The grants will support the professors’ travels to Peru next summer to initiate an interdisciplinary program that will combine environmental studies of the rain forest with Spanish translation and interpretation.

The program is based on a partnership between Birmingham-Southern and the Amazon Center for Environmental Education and Research, which promotes knowledge, conservation, and stewardship of rain forests. Joining the faculty in 1999, Domcekova received her master’s and doctoral degrees from the University of Florida. Peterson joined the faculty in 2001 and received her master’s and doctoral degrees from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette.

Education program again scores high on state report card

The State Department of Education’s report card on institutions that prepare undergraduate teachers once again gives high marks to Birmingham-Southern’s education program.

The Alabama Teacher Preparation Program Performance Profile released in December reported the status of the state’s teacher preparation departments in 29 colleges and universities in Alabama. It is the third year that the state has issued the report cards.

Each teacher preparation program is evaluated using performance reviews of its new graduates and surveys of graduates and supervisory staff. Each new teacher is evaluated three times during the first year of employment in an Alabama public school using the state’s Professional Education Personnel Evaluation Program. Superintendents, principals, and the teachers being evaluated also are surveyed for their opinion of the teacher preparation curriculum. This information is then compiled to establish the status of each preparation program.

All of Birmingham-Southern’s teacher preparation programs were designated as “clear” by the state because at least 90 percent of the graduates achieved an acceptable score on the evaluation. Several programs in the state were put on “caution” or “alert” status for below standard evaluation scores by graduates.

Gawronski is guest columnist for Mexican newspaper

An article by Assistant Political Science Professor Dr. Vincent T. Gawronski on the state of U.S. and Mexico relations was recently published in Mexico’s most widely read newspaper La Reforma.

The newspaper has asked Gawronski to become a regular contributor to their “Mexico: A View from the Outside” series.

Joining the BSC faculty in 2001, Gawronski received his master’s degree from the University of Texas at Austin and his doctorate from Arizona State University.