

UNI TO OFFER NEW ONLINE DEGREE PATHWAY FOR PARAEDUCATORS TO EARN TEACHING DEGREE



A new online, accelerated pathway to a bachelor's degree offered by the University of Northern Iowa could greatly increase the number of elementary and special

education teachers across the state. "Purple Pathway for Paraeducators" allows Paraeducators the ability to earn their teaching degree in two years and, upon successful completion of student teaching, be eligible for licensure in Iowa for two endorsements: elementary K-6 and strategist I, the special education endorsement for working with students with mild to moderate special needs.

Paraeducators go by various names: paraprofessionals, educational aides, teaching assistants, educational associates, instructional aides and behavior interventionists. They assist teachers in the classroom, often working with students who have challenging educational and development needs. Many have an associate's degree.

To be eligible for the Purple Pathway, paraeducators must be employed; have support from a building or district administrator and mentor teachers; hold an associate's degree; and be able to commit to an online schedule that includes one three-hour synchronous (real time) online evening session per week and one six-hour synchronous Saturday a month. All coursework is online, including additional asynchronous work-time. Paraeducators on this pathway will be able to apply their classroom roles and experiences to assignments and coursework objectives. Trained classroom teachers will serve as mentors onsite.

As with all online programming at UNI, the coursework is offered in conjunction with UNI Online & Distance Education, using online learning platforms and services designed for adult learners. Webinars for interested students and school administrators are planned beginning May 20. For webinar, program and application information, go to the Purple Pathway for Paraeducators page at: online.uni.edu/paraeducators.



UNI LAUNCHES STATEWIDE INITIATIVE TO REMOVE BARRIERS TO HIGH-DEMAND CAREERS IN IOWA

In a major milestone toward reaching its goals of providing adult and place-bound learners greater access to four-year degrees, the University of Northern Iowa is launching the UNI@IACC (Iowa Community Colleges) initiative. Starting this fall, Iowans with an associate's degree from any Iowa community college will be able to earn a UNI online degree without having to leave their hometown. UNI@IACC offers a pathway for Iowans who hold an associate's degree from any Iowa community college to pursue a bachelor's degree in several high-demand areas: Managing Business and Organizations, Management: Business Administration, Criminal Justice, Elementary Education, Human Services, Technology Management and the Bachelor of Liberal Studies.

To put a bachelor's degree within reach, UNI is also launching the Future Ready Scholarship Program to eligible participants in a UNI@IACC program. The Future Ready Scholarship comes with two years of eligibility and covers the difference between UNI and community college tuition. Information about the program and how to apply can be found at iacc.uni.edu.



For more information about the UNI@IACC partnership, program offerings and application instructions, visit <https://iacc.uni.edu>.