

FOCUS ON...
ANGELA SHREVE

From the moment I met Angela Shreve, I was impressed by her professionalism and her knowledgeability. It was to be her job to take the reins of the nascent Early Childhood Education program.

Unfortunately, upon her arrival in March, 1991 Angela discovered that there was no coordinator position through which to get the ECE program properly “up and running.” Consequently, she had to simultaneously take over the program and a full-time teaching load, including having to develop “preps” for the ECE courses she was assigned to teach. That first summer, after her ten-month contract ended, she spent her time developing syllabi for all the other ECE courses.

As she prepares to retire this June, she leaves things in a vastly different condition: she is now a department chair in her own right; there is a showcase Child Development Center where the dental health center used to be; she supervises a faculty of two full-time and numerous adjunct professionals with many years of experience in the field, and has oversight over the staff of the Child Development Center; and she presides over a cluster of academic programs which boast more than 300 students (about 80 percent will transfer to the University of Delaware or Wilmington College to continue their academic work).



Angela Shreve

Angela began the odyssey which brought her to this position over forty years ago when, upon graduating from Fairmont State in her native West Virginia, she entered the public schools as a teacher. Marriage to her husband, Chuck, and relocation DuPont-style eventually landed her in Delaware in the late 1960s, first in Seaford, followed by a move in 1971 to Wilmington. While teaching home economics, a fateful call came one day which was to lead to a major career turn: William Penn High School, where she had an application on file, asked her if she was interested in opening a child development program. The program, which was federally funded, was to be situated in the home economics department. At that time, there were no formal early childhood education programs, so Angela and her ten counterparts at other schools had to largely train themselves.

In 1977, husband Chuck’s position with DuPont once again required that the family relocate, and Angela found herself in Baton Rouge, LA. She decided to enroll in graduate school at LSU and achieved a masters degree in Child and Family Studies after just one year. At the time, Baton Rouge Vo Tech (similar to Delaware Tech) was looking to open an early childhood education program. Representatives from Vo Tech contacted LSU, and Angela’s name came up as just the person for the job. She took over the program from its inception, and ran it for eight years.

Then, in 1986, Angela found herself in yet another new setting: this time, Bethesda, MD. Once again, she plunged into academic advancement, enrolling in the University of Maryland’s doctoral program in vocational-technical education, with a focus on occupations in early childhood education. Although the family returned to Wilmington one year later, Angela commuted between Wilmington and Bethesda to finish her degree in 1989.

Then it was time to look for a position in this area and, in 1990, the Delaware Tech position opened up. The ECE program was already in place, having been overseen on an interim basis by Human Services department chairperson, Karen Stevenson.

Angela brought with her a broad knowledge of the field, yet she also had the specialized experience of having already set up and launched a similar program. Her managerial style is collegial: she prefers to let her faculty use their talents and skills to the best of their ability. At the same time, she is very tenacious and determined (to which anyone who knows her will attest). She points to the long-awaited child development center as a major outcome of that determination and tenacity.

The time it took to bring the child development center to fruition represented one of her greatest challenges while with Delaware Tech. She learned that because this is a state institution, when one wants something, patience is the order of the day. “Just do the planning, and keep requesting it,” she observed. The result: a highly regarded facility with state-of-the-art classrooms and both state and national accreditation.

Angela is acutely aware that working with community college students brings with it a host of special challenges: “[with] all the things that go on in their lives, [it’s a] challenge to help keep them motivated and moving toward their goals.”

Angela is a big believer in the use of portfolios. In fact, she will be making a presentation on this topic as part of the “End of the Year Workshop Series” (see “Mark Your Calendar” for more details).

We have been very fortunate to have had Angela with us; it will be sad to see her go.