COE Launches New Center Aimed at Influencing Education Policy

College Park, MD (November 2013) — In an effort to forge stronger linkages between education researchers and state policymakers and encourage an informed policy dialogue to end disparities in educational opportunities, the College of Education and the Department of Teaching and Learning, Policy and Leadership (TLPL) have launched the Maryland Equity Project.

The Maryland Equity Project will draw on a network of scholars at the University of Maryland and beyond to conduct, synthesize and distribute research on key educational questions in the state of Maryland. The goal is to provide research and policy analysis that focuses on education issues and related social and economic challenges in Maryland. Dean Donna Wiseman and Francine Hultgren, Chair of TLPL, both indicate that the Equity Project will provide faculty in the College the opportunity to connect their research to the educational policy agenda in Maryland.

The project will focus on a broad range of factors that influence schooling in Maryland. Although Maryland has been a top-rated school system, it still faces many challenges to ensure equitable opportunities for all students. Inequities between racial and socioeconomic groups persist and the needs of many special populations of students, such as special education students or English language learners, remain unmet.

“So often the social and economic contexts in which children grow up are ignored when in fact, they are among the strongest predictors of how well a child will do in school,” says Gail Sunderman, project director. The project’s immediate agenda will address the increasing diversity of the state’s school age population and identify the policies and practices that have been successful at educating a diverse school aged population.

The Project hopes to foster an informed policy debate by equipping local leaders, educators and state policymakers with independent, non-partisan research and policy analysis on important issues.

“We want to make education research more accessible to Maryland policymakers and education leaders,” says Robert Croninger, faculty advisor to the project.

The project officially launches next week with a panel discussion on the steps to college enrollment and how these steps present barriers to four-year college enrollment. Daniel Klasik, post-doctoral fellow with the Maryland Equity Project, will present, with responses from Julie Park, University of Maryland, Andrew Nichols, Maryland Higher Education Commission, and Ed M. Pacchetti, U.S. Department of Education.
At the launch, the Maryland Equity Project will release the policy brief, *The College Application Gauntlet: A Systematic Analysis of the Steps to Four-Year College Enrollment* by Daniel Klasik. The brief is available at [www.mdequity.org/research/college](http://www.mdequity.org/research/college).

The launch event is scheduled for November 12, 2013, from 1:30 to 3:30 pm in the Stamp Union Juan Ramon Jimenez Room 2208 on the College Park campus. The event is free and open to the public. More information is available at [www.mdequity.org](http://www.mdequity.org).

**For more information on the College of Education, visit:**

[www.education.umd.edu](http://www.education.umd.edu)

or contact

**Halima Cherif, Director for Communications, at:** [hcherif@umd.edu](mailto:hcherif@umd.edu)