

# MMC

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ally tied to in their goals, and our students, I think, will benefit," he said.

Drs. Nicholas Shudak and Deborah McCuin, who both helped develop the program, recently sent out invitations to teachers in the area to invite them to an informational open house on the program scheduled for Sept. 27 at 7 p.m. in the Roncalli Welcome Center in Yankton.

"We've invited teachers in the area that don't currently have their masters degrees," Shudak said. "We've taken a look at who those people are and if they're still teaching in the area and sent them post-card invitations in the mail. The open house is still open to anyone in the area, and not just teachers."

The open house will allow Shudak and McCuin to give people some background information about the program and its characteristics. They will also tell people how the program was designed and why it was designed the way it was.

"We will also tell the audience members at the open house why they should be interested in the program, why it's unique and what separates its from other programs in the area," Shudak said.

Shudak said this program is unique because it is designed specifically for the practicing classroom teacher and that they've tried to design the program to be in line with the Charlotte Danielson framework for effective teachers, with each course addressing one of the domains in the framework.

The program will incorporate compressed summer classes and allows teachers to use their classrooms at school as a site for a course. The summer courses will be three weeks, with one day of face-to-face interaction and the other days involving online work.

Programs are tentatively scheduled to start in the summer of 2013.

"The reality is that through the admissions process and the open houses, we are going to try to find a start date that works best for the teachers enrolled in the program," Shudak said. "Many teachers in the area have received the program warmly and are excited that it's a

# Lawsuit

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which they should be honored, not attacked. We believe that this product is questionable."

Zirnstein said that he had not yet been served with the lawsuit.

"I'm just a scientist giving my opinion. I'm not going to deal with this nonsense," he said, referring questions to his attorney.

Although several news organizations used the term "pink slime," Webb said ABC was being sued for attacking the company "night after night." The "defendants engaged in a monthlong vicious, concerted disinformation campaign against BPI," the lawsuit claims, citing 11 TV and 14 online reports from March 7 to April 3.

Craig Letch, BPI's director of food-quality assurance, said the company lost 80 percent of its business in 28 days. BPI has declined to discuss how much it lost in sales, but acknowledged it took a "substantial" hit. Some of the customers have returned, Letch said, but not enough to allow BPI to rehire former employees.

Webb said the reports had a "catastrophic" impact on the company, forcing it to close three of its four U.S. plants and lay off 700 workers.

ABC published a list of major grocery stores that stopped selling the product, pressuring others to follow suit by placing them on a "black list," he said.

BPI will have to prove the network intended to cause harm for the defamation lawsuit to succeed, said Patrick Garry, a media law expert at the University of South Dakota School of Law.

"The media — regardless of your opinion of them — don't usually print something that they know to be false," Garry said. "It may be negligent, but usually there's a malice requirement as well."

Bill Marler, a Seattle attorney who said he's representing Zirnstein and Custer, said his clients were considering a counter-claim against BPI.

"Our view is that the lawsuit against them, especially as public employees doing their job for food inspection, is completely bogus, without merit and frivolous," Marler said.

Critics worry about how the meat is processed. Bits of beef are heated and treated with a small amount of ammonia to kill bacteria, a practice that has been used for decades and meets federal food safety standards. Webb said that ABC ignored that information, instead giving the impression "that it's some type of chemical product ... some kind of repulsive, horrible, vile substance that got put into ground beef and hidden from consumers."

two year program. They're also excited that they get to use their own classrooms as a site for their coursework, as opposed to having to travel to a campus during the school year."

McCuin said the program is really data driven, which makes it unique and separates it from a lot of programs throughout the country.

"Having a program that's data driven will teach the teachers how to use their own student data and their own students' needs to drive the changes in the instruction that they might decide on," she said. "Each course will be very dynamic and will changed based on who is in the class."

Shudak said about 80 teachers were invited to the open house from throughout the area, and they recently set up posters in teachers' lounges and work rooms to promote

the open house.

"I'm hoping for a decent turnout, during the planning process we received a lot of emails about the program and when it will start," he said. "We are really looking to open houses to tweak the final aspects of the curriculum. We want the curriculum to be applicable to teachers. It won't work for everyone all the time, but we're really trying to make it relevant."

One way that they are trying to keep the program relevant for teachers is by requiring them to use the data they take from their classrooms as part of the program content.

"In the summer course we will come up with areas that teachers would like to try a new strategy and technique for their classrooms," McCuin said. "It's real data based on real research and teachers will im-

plement what they planned over the summer in their classrooms."

The program will offer three different tracks — a course only option, portfolio option and a thesis option.

"We're hoping the open house will help flush out the rest of the curriculum," Shudak said. "Teachers not currently working can still be part of the program for recertification courses."

McCuin added that MMC officials are going through local school districts to appeal to the potential students they are trying to reach.

The program was developed as part of the MMC master plan.

"We are trying to do a decent job creating a program that is convenient for teachers over a two year period," Shudak said. "We constantly ask ourselves how we can provide a

unique program that stays up to date with the trends in teaching."

He added that it is always a challenge to keep up with the changes in education.

"I think we've setup a program that has an impact and allows teachers to engage in genuine research," he said. "Our program is more two collegiates working together, rather than a student to teacher, like traditional programs."

McCuin said she is hoping teachers come to the open house because that's where officials will get the input on the summer dates to meet and any potential changes to the curriculum. They want to ask teachers how they will want this to be a program they would want to be a part of.

"We're hoping to provide the local teachers with a service so they

can perfect their craft," Shudak said. "There are a lot of people out there that love teaching and want to improve their teaching, this program will give them those tools and resources to become better teachers."

McCuin thinks the program could have big impacts for teachers across the region.

"I don't know a teacher that doesn't work on school things over the summer. This helps direct and focus their work and allows them to get credit for what they do anyway," she said. "Then they get to go and try the new strategies in their classrooms. Only teachers know the problems they see in their classrooms. They are the experts there."

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