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## News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Stacie O'Flaherty is earning a teaching license through IU Kokomo, after a career as a lab chemist.

## Education program provides bridge to teaching for professionals

**KOKOMO, Ind.** — Once a lab chemist, now a student teacher. Stacie O'Flaherty is trading in her lab coat for a chalkboard instead.

O'Flaherty, 52, is taking advantage of the Change to Education program at Indiana University Kokomo that allows her to earn a teaching license in a short period of time.

"I did not want to go four years and earn another bachelor's degree," said O'Flaherty, a Sheridan resident. "Change to Education gets rid of all the fluff. It's all meat. It's all substance. I appreciate that we are treated like professionals, and they assume we can do the work."

Change to Education provides a way for people who have bachelor's degrees in math, science, English, or social studies, or a related field, to earn a teaching

certification in fewer than two years. Students take two full semesters of classes and a summer session, followed by a semester of student teaching.

O'Flaherty has a bachelor's degree in environmental studies from University of Tennessee, Chattanooga, and appreciates being able to add teaching skills to what she already knew about chemistry for students at Northwestern High School.

"Teaching something is different than doing something," she said. "As long as I can remember, I've understood these things. As a teacher, I have to reconnect with not knowing any of it. That's the challenge for people coming from an industry background. You're a doer, not a teacher. You've built a foundation of knowledge, and you don't have to think about it. Your students don't have that foundation, and you have to learn how to help them build it.

"As a mother of teenagers, I didn't like to hear my kids' friends says that science was hard," she said. "I don't want kids to feel like they can't do science. I want to be part of touching lives for the future, and helping someone realize they can do science, and understand things, and maybe even find a fulfilling career in science."

Randy Teachout, another Change to Education student, speaks French fluently, and has a passion for teaching the language and culture to his high school students.

"This program allowed me to earn the credential I needed to continue a job I love, in a short time period," said Teachout, 47, a Kokomo resident. "You have no idea how huge this opportunity was."

Teachout began teaching the language at Kokomo's Northwestern High School in 2010 on an emergency teaching license, which permits him to stay in the classroom as long as he is making progress to earn a license.

Having earned a bachelor's degree in theology from Northland International University, in Wisconsin, he found that other programs required him to earn a second bachelor's degree in education. He already had some experience, from teaching at private Christian schools and a Bible institute in West Africa. He lived in France when he was young, and speaks the language fluently.

"It was just the formal teaching methods classes I needed, not the language classes and other prerequisites," he said. "IU Kokomo gave me the information I need. These classes are very interesting and appropriate for people going into teaching. The French language itself did not represent any kind of mystery to me.

Dean Paul Paese said Change to Education is one way the School of Education fulfills its mission of recruiting and preparing talented, responsible, effective teachers for north central Indiana schools.

“Our region has a critical shortage of teachers in areas including science, math and special education,” he said. “Change to Education helps us fill that void more quickly, because it combines online and classroom experiences. The fast pace is important to potential teachers who have degrees and want to make a career change. We help them combine their knowledge with the best education practices, to prepare them to be excellent teachers.”

The School of Education enrolls new students in the program each semester. For more information, contact Paese at [pcpaese@iuk.edu](mailto:pcpaese@iuk.edu) or call 765-455-9441.

*Indiana University Kokomo serves north central Indiana.*

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