

# Graduates ready for classrooms

Teaching program wraps up its first 15-month session on Thursday

By Michelle Tan  
Times staff writer

St. Cloud State University will graduate the first group of students from its Interdisciplinary Teacher Preparation program on Thursday.

The 17 members of the group underwent 15 months of intensive training and student-teaching to receive

their master's degrees and teaching licenses. The pilot program allowed the students, who already have a bachelor's degree in various fields, to become full-fledged teachers in almost half the time. Typically, it would take anyone with a non-teaching degree at least two years to meet the requirements for state licensure.

"It was a very intense program," said Diana Magarian, who will teach science this fall at North Junior High in St. Cloud. Magarian's undergraduate degree

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## If you go

**What:** Convocation ceremonies for the first graduates of St. Cloud State University's Interdisciplinary Teacher Preparation program.

**When:** 7 p.m. Thursday.

**Where:** Kimberly A. Ritsche Auditorium.

The public is invited to attend.

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was in biotechnology and she worked in a laboratory.

"I needed a career change, and it involved

working more directly with people," she said. "And I felt because of the knowledge I had in science, I needed to share with people."

This first group of ITP graduates spent long hours in classes at St. Cloud State and spent the entire school year student-teaching in local schools, said Robin Hasslen, associate child and family studies professor. The program focused on multicultural competence, Second Language Learners and special education.

"I think the (program)

was stimulating and exciting for them," Hasslen said. "Most have jobs already for fall."

Because it is a pilot program, St. Cloud State professors still are doing research. They also will track the progress of the new graduates, Hasslen said.

"One of the problems in education is retention," she said. "We want to see if we're preparing them in a way that will enable them to stay in the profession."

More than 650 teachers graduate from St. Cloud

State each year, making it the 10th-largest producer of teachers in the nation.

And to keep up with the increasing demand for teachers, the second group of ITP students already have started their 15-month training. The 15 students are expected to graduate in August 2002.

Magarian has this advice for the new class: Stay with the program.

"It's intense the whole way through," she said. "But it's not impossible. And in the end, it's well worth it."