

**California State University, Fullerton, Higher Education
Master of Science in Education, Higher Education Emphasis (MSHE)
Doctor of Educational Leadership, Community College Specialization
Program Performance –External Review (April, 2016)**

We appreciate the opportunity to review the Higher Education Programs at California State University, Fullerton. Our opportunity to meet with program faculty, current doctoral students, master's degree students, and alumni from both programs provided excellent context by which we submit the following external report for your review.

The following report is presented in three distinct sections. We begin with the strengths of the Higher Education Programs, followed by observed challenges. We conclude with recommendations for maintaining the programs' strengths and addressing the challenges.

Strengths

The following points represent the strengths that emerged from our time with various constituents. Without a doubt, the most valuable asset in this department is the faculty. They serve both the master's and doctoral students in their respective programs. Specifically, we have identified the following elements of the work of faculty:

- *Justice Oriented.* Faculty are genuine in their commitment to equity and social justice. Many of the constituent groups mentioned how a Just Equitable Inclusive Education (JEIE) mindset is not merely rhetorical but foundational to the curriculum, teaching, and service of students. Justice extends to the types of students the department faculty intentionally seek to recruit and serve.
- *Responsive to Student Learning.* In alignment with their justice orientation, faculty are also responsive and dedicated to meeting needs of the students. This is manifested in the programmatic innovations, adjustments, and additions to respond to student needs. Many of these changes result in additional hours and time commitments outside of the class, such as the writers' orientation, and weekly meetings dedicated specially to discuss student related concerns and interventions. Additional examples cited include the re-sequencing of the cultural competence retreat to preemptively address challenges with race related conversations in the diversity course.
- *Hard-Working.* In being responsive, the faculty seem to have committed to long hours outside of classroom to serve the needs of students; in many ways they are engaged in work that goes well beyond regular workload and compensation. Examples include communicating with students during the admissions process and mentoring after graduation and throughout their careers, planning student programs, including logistics such as dealing with the administrative details of

car rental, insurance, and meeting other compliance standards of the university and the CSU system.

- *Innovative*. With all the extra-curricular activities and limited resources, faculty have been creative in finding ways to fund the programs and serve students. This includes the pursuit of external grants and additional funding streams to defray program costs and not burden the students. The department faculty also agreed to a dissertation unit re-structuring for the doctoral dissertation, which included a reduction in load credit to faculty for registered units that incentivized timely dissertation completion for students but reduced load credit for faculty.
- *Approachability*. Students feel very comfortable approaching any faculty member with concerns they have about the program/services either inside or outside of the classroom. Alumni are still part of the program, and faculty members continue to be involved in keeping relationships with alumni.

Challenges

The department faces a number of specific challenges. We have identified these challenges by focusing on the efforts that the department needs to retain in order to continue to provide their students with a high quality graduate education. In our analysis we identified three major challenges: Faculty Workload, Revenues/Resources, and Program Growth/Sustainability.

- *Faculty Workload*. As has been noted, the single most significant strength of the department is its faculty. It is important to begin our analysis of the challenges faced by the faculty by identifying those areas that negatively impact faculty workload. In our identification of the program's strengths, we have noted many of the extra activities undertaken by the faculty outside of their regular teaching, research, and community service responsibilities. These activities are central to the culture of the department. The faculty is very responsive to student needs. The department has established an environment that is caring, nurturing, and student-focused. There are a number of efforts that the faculty would like to enhance (international study opportunities for students, for example) but have been unable to do so because of the additional activities required to maintain this student-focused culture. One faculty member mentioned that, "our students never leave us, they call and ask for advice and assistance about prospective jobs, and upcoming interviews." This "approachability" takes additional time and effort to cultivate. This is a "hands-on" faculty, and all that that entails. The faculty has continued to engage in these activities with little administrative staff or operational support. It seems that the university may not understand the intricacies of their program. These workload challenges have had a direct and significantly negative impact on revenues and resources.

- Revenues/Resources.* There are many fiscal challenges that the Ed.D. program has had to address. The most recent has been to identify resources to fund the new salary increases that have been collectively bargained. All Ed.D. tuition revenues that are generated, fully and completely fund the on-going operation of the Ed.D. program. The Ed.D. program retains its full revenue in order to continue to sustain its program. This revenue funds all aspects of the program to include salaries, benefits, and all other operating expenses. These funds are used to support the College of Education, not just the Ed.D. department, i.e., College of Education faculty travel, funding for the Center for Educational Access and Leadership (C-REAL), and student fee waivers. This has resulted in fewer resources being made available for faculty professional development within the department. There are tensions and pressures to bring in more money. In an attempt to address these challenges, and to identify external funding sources, the faculty has had to become more entrepreneurial. The faculty has been forced to become more focused on grant-writing and to identify other income-generating activities. Again, as mentioned previously, all of these activities take the faculty away from their primary responsibilities of teaching, research, and community service. With the recent economic downturn and the lack of operational support, the faculty has taken on more administrative staff responsibilities. This highly innovative faculty has not had the commensurate support necessary to maintain its innovation. Accordingly, they have been forced to limit the time necessary to devote to innovation and the development of new program initiatives. The faculty's most recent focus has been to identify ways in which to sustain and grow the program.
- Program Growth/Sustainability.* The challenges of faculty workload and resource enhancement directly impact future program growth and sustainability. The Ed.D. program has established an excellent reputation for graduating students who are very well prepared to provide quality leadership within our local postsecondary institutions. It is imperative that this reputation be sustained and enhanced. A key variable in doing so is to enhance, support, and fund Ed.D. recruitment efforts. Ed.D. revenue is directly correlated to the number of students who are admitted to the program. Admission cohorts have numbered from a low of 15 to a high of 22. For more consistency and stability in the amount of annual revenue that is generated, there is an obvious need for more consistency in the number of students who are admitted. One way in which to enhance these efforts is to provide resources for alumni development. This was mentioned by faculty as a priority but, as with all other initiatives, is directly negatively impacted by faculty workload and a lack of resources. As alumni continue to become educational leaders, they can become the primary vehicle in the program's recruitment efforts. Consideration could also be given to increasing the number of students who are admitted to the program as a way to generate more revenue. Recruitment is currently the responsibility of one

faculty member who is granted released time for these efforts. For recruitment to be more effective, it should be noted that the entire department must engage in recruitment efforts in all their interactions external to the university. They are representatives of the Ed.D. department and, as such, are the face of the program in the community.

Recommendations

The Higher Education Programs are flourishing because the faculty have committed to practices that support student success and learning outcomes. The growing numbers of applicants, students and alumni with critical consciousness, high-quality dissertation scholarship, and timely student completion data point to a pro-active, high-touch faculty.

To maintain these strengths, we recommend continuing to focus on:

- *Faculty Development*: Consistent faculty team-building, collegiality, and culture (retreats, meetings to discuss students) model pay-it-forward values and attitudes that manifest among students and alumni.
- *Access, Equity, and Opportunity*: Commitment to admitting and educating students who aim to serve historically low-resourced, under-developed and marginalized populations actualizes the values of the California Master Plan and addresses CSUF's Strategic Plan.
- *Evidence-based Student Development*: Infusing the curriculum and practice with theory and evidence-based decision-making allows for students to observe and practice critical consciousness as they evolve into practitioners and scholars.

In addition, we observed that the Higher Education Programs are moving from initiation and establishment to the growth and maturation phase of program development. With this in mind, we offer recommendations for program growth, faculty self-governance, resource prioritization and sustainability.

To address the observed challenges, we offer recommendations for:

1. *Faculty Workload*

- *Articulate faculty work and compensation*. The dissertation unit re-structuring for the doctoral dissertation, while incentivizing students to complete their degrees in a timely way, seems to have made apparent that the prior formula for compensation allowed faculty to engage in “unarticulated” work, e.g., innovations, program, curriculum and partnership development, maintenance of

considerable annual program responsibilities including recruitment, admissions and assessment, follow-up with mentoring alumni in evolving careers, travel, risk management, paperwork, travel, etc. Articulating this “hidden” faculty work could provide the basis for compensation structures that allow for the sustainability of the faculty’s high-quality, high-touch efforts to mentor and advise students from recruitment through their career evolution.

- Investigate and establish needed infrastructure for growth phase of programs: Work with organizational consultant during annual retreats to consider infrastructure, human resources, and budgetary resources needed to support programs as they move from initiating phase to growth phase of program development. More specifically:
 - Annual program maintenance: Identify faculty/staff collaborative responsibilities and differentiated responsibilities to ensure consistency of communication and messaging to students (i.e., admissions recruitment, communications, advising, registration, etc.). Regularly revisit tasks and responsibilities to ensure that faculty and staff clarify, manage, and rebalance specific tasks and responsibilities for: curricular advising, placement fairs, graduate assistantships, retreats, travel, compliance and risk management, alumni network development, etc.
 - Innovations: When developing new projects and curricular opportunities, identify collaborative and differentiated faculty and staff responsibilities (i.e., relationship- building and curriculum development, travel and risk management, etc.)
 - Staff: Commit resources to ensure staff infrastructure dedicated to the Higher Education Programs, i.e., Student Services Professionals, Administrative Services Coordinator, Administrative Services Analyst, graduate assistants, and student assistants.

- University Infrastructure: CSUF should support the Higher Education Programs efforts by incentivizing, supporting, and sustaining faculty work and innovations through more efficient campus processes and systems. We recommend providing:
 - Centralized support for faculty innovations: Community-based partnerships, grant-writing and implementation, study abroad, and additional entrepreneurial/innovative activity should be made more efficient by coordinating resource allocations/acquisition, travel, risk management, and communication.
 - Access to student data: As the faculty aim to manage their workloads and become more efficient, they would benefit from access to student data collected at the institutional level, i.e., the “Student Dashboard.”

- Consistent coordination and communication with Graduate Studies: Higher Education faculty and students would benefit from consistent coordination and communication of key information from the Office of Graduate Studies, e.g., student commencement and participation.
2. Resources/Revenues: Key to sustaining and building upon its successful establishment of the Higher Education Programs, the faculty should retain oversight and allocation of the full revenue generated by the Ed.D. program. This authority will allow faculty to support CSUF's Strategic Plan, contribute to the health of the College of Education and reinvest in their programs in the following ways:
- Faculty Development: Faculty have indicated the need for updating their own Social Justice development in the form of on-going workshops and retreats. They need to maintain professional currency by attending conferences to learn cutting-edge scholarship and practice, not necessarily to present their own.
 - Curricular/Co-Curricular Development: Faculty need to devote time to refining and expanding upon curricular/co-curricular experiences for their students. Resources are needed for:
 - Reassigned Time: To manage faculty workload, faculty need to determine who, when, and how they will allocate resources to maintain program responsibilities, initiate projects, and support program innovations.
 - Study Abroad experiences for doctoral students: funding, mentoring, partner development, building social, cultural, political capital among students).
 - Professional development: We recommend investigating and seeking curriculum-related funding for student conference attendance and study abroad travel, i.e., Miscellaneous Course Fees (MCFs), Instructionally Related Activities fees (IRAs), and development funds from University Extended Education and International Programs and Global Engagement.
 - Faculty entrepreneurialism: While faculty are open and interested in engaging in grant-writing and implementation, their considerable expertise and experience in this area make them conscious of the implications of their entrepreneurial activity. Of note, they understand that time allocated for grant-related activity sometimes replaces the high-quality interaction with students and alumni on which they have built their programs' culture and reputations. Faculty authority to utilize revenue generated by the Ed.D. program will allow for allocations to temper the impact of entrepreneurial activity.
3. Program Growth/Sustainability: During the next phase of program development, we encourage the faculty to consider ways to stabilize program growth and establish systems, practices and cultural norms that support faculty development, student

development, and program sustainability. Students and alumni in both programs expressed tremendous gratitude for their faculty and programs' impact on the development of their critical consciousness and growth as theoretically driven, evidence-based practitioners and scholars and suggested ways to enhance the quality of their education and preparation. Toward this end, we recommend efforts to:

- Enhance, support, and fund systematic Ed.D. recruitment efforts.
- Establish consistent protocol for communication channels between faculty, staff and students. Determine and convey consistent messages among university-level Graduate Studies, Department of Educational Leadership and students. Conduct informal department-level surveys of students and alumni to elicit ideas and willingness to participate in program development efforts.
- Revisit student workload: Ed.D. students indicated that the three-year program limit attracted them to the program; while in hindsight, they said they would be willing to engage beyond the three years due to the accelerated curriculum. MSHE students who experience the program as full-time professionals and non-traditional students (e.g., older with family commitments) stated that they experience the program differently from their traditional cohort counterparts in part-time graduate assistantships.
- Consistently incorporate practice-focused themes and “world of work” content into existing curricula: For example some students requested curricular time devoted to understanding and applying law (e.g., Title IX), budgets, finance, economics, grant-writing, while other students noted that they had learned these topics through their graduate assistantships or jobs. In addition, some students requested curricular time for understanding the job search and preparing them for the world of work (e.g., resume development, cover letters, interview preparation, job negotiation and timelines, etc.), while others had been prepared through their professional placements or advisors.
- Illuminate what the “process” is in the program advice “trust the process.” Some students indicated that, in their contexts, the word “trust” triggered feelings of powerlessness and anxiety and that articulation of the relationship between understanding curricular requirements and their future work and professional paths would ease their minds and help them to embrace the unknowns of the process.
- Involve alumni in sustainability efforts. Alumni reflected thoughtfully on their experiences and indicated high levels of willingness to “give back” and “pay it forward.” Ways to involve alumni include:

- Develop and maintain alumni networks and communications. Establish annual gatherings at national conferences and local meetings at the university
- Develop and engage alumni in curricular panels and workshops. MSHE alumni specifically suggested that they could educate students on job search-related insights and activities and help them to network on their campuses and at conferences. Ed.D. alumni suggested similar networking and mentoring support to doctoral and master's students.
- Develop and engage alumni in advisory capacities. Local MSHE alumni suggested that they could informally serve as advisors to the Higher Education Leadership Organization (HELO).
- Develop and engage alumni in resource development and fundraising capacities. All alumni expressed enthusiastic gratitude for their faculty and their educational experiences. They understood well the financial challenges facing students and conveyed their interest in helping to support student travel and other seminal experiences that had directly contributed to their own growth and development.

Throughout the visit, the faculty, students, and alumni conveyed incredible energy, passion, and commitment to social justice and Just, Equitable, Inclusive Education. We highly commend the Higher Education Programs for so clearly actualizing these values. Their success is a direct reflection of extraordinary and innovative faculty and student engagement. Continued movement in this direction will solidify the Higher Education Programs' role in fostering educational leadership in the region, the state, the nation, and the world for years to come.