

**COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN SERVICES
DOCTORAL PROGRAMS IN EDUCATION
GRADUATE PROGRAM ASSESSMENT
ANNUAL REPORT
FALL 2006**

*Submitted by Dr. Teresa R. Eagle, Program Coordinator
t.eagle@marshall.edu*

*Marshall University Graduate College
Graduate School of Education and Professional Development
100 Angus E. Peyton Drive
South Charleston, WV 25303*

Program Overview

Marshall University was first granted the authority to offer a doctorate in education with a specialization in Educational Leadership in March of 2002. The North Central Association (NCA) allowed the addition of another major in 2004, at which time the Curriculum and Instruction major was added. This doctoral program is designed to offer eligible students in Southern West Virginia and neighboring states the opportunity to earn the Doctor of Education (EdD) degree. The majority of coursework and other requirements are met on the South Charleston campus, although some coursework is available on the Huntington campus.

Mission

The mission of the doctoral program in education is to prepare practitioners to be reflective, ethical educators and researchers who contribute to the field of education. Program faculty are committed to creating a community of scholars through mentoring, engaging in collaborative research, and maintaining a focus on sound educational practices.

Goals

Program graduates are expected to:

1. Demonstrate a broad and in-depth knowledge and understanding of the educational field;
2. Demonstrate an in-depth knowledge and understanding of a selected area of emphasis;
3. Demonstrate knowledge and skill as scholars and researchers;
4. Become participants and active contributors in the community of scholars;
5. Become reflective, ethical educators who contribute to best practice in the field of education.

Program Admissions

Upon the approval to offer the program in 2002, students currently in the cooperative program with WVU were given the opportunity to transfer to the MU program. Forty-one students took advantage of this opportunity. With the addition of the Curriculum and Instruction major in 2004, 21 students from the cooperative program transferred to the MU program. From July 2002 (the initial admissions for the program), the program has had 136 applications (non-duplicated), of which 83 were accepted.

During the 2006 calendar year, 35 applications for the program were received, four of which were incomplete and the major could not be identified. In the Educational Leadership major, two applicants were in the Public School Administration concentration and 10 were in the Higher Education Administration concentration. There were 39 applicants for the Curriculum and Instruction major. Of the 22 students accepted, 2 are in PS, 7 are HE, and 13 are in C&I. The overall acceptance rate is 62.9% (up from 49.2% in 2004), with an acceptance rate in Public School Administration of 100% (previously 66.7%), in Higher Education Administration of 70% (previously 39.5%), and in Curriculum and Instruction 68%.

Admissions test scores exceed the stated minimums. The average MAT of accepted students is 84; the average MAT of all applicants is 72. The average GRE of students accepted in 2006 is 1143 (n=3); the average GRE of all applicants was 1070.

Students represent a broad geographical area, with a high concentration within 40 miles of the MUGC campus. Twenty of the 2006 applicants are from the Charleston-Huntington Area, with 3 applicants from Ohio, 1 from Kentucky, 1 from South Carolina and one from Florida. Twenty-eight applicants are female, and 7 are male. Thirty-one (89%) of the applicants hold full time jobs.

Graduates

The program has produced 27 graduates since 2002, 11 of which completed in the 2005-2006 year. To date, only 12 students (out of 143) have withdrawn from the program without graduating. This is a significant improvement over the nearly 50% attrition rate in the previous cooperative program. The average time from admission to graduation is 15.7 semesters (just under 6 years); the average time from admission to candidacy is 6.6 semesters (just over 2 years). These numbers are high due to students who transferred to the MU program from the co-op program. Students who were admitted directly to the MU program (NOT as a transfer from the cooperative program) are currently averaging 10 semesters in the program (just over 3 years) and 4.8 semesters in candidacy (approximately 1.5 years).

Technology Utilization and Integration

Most courses in the program have a traditional mode of delivery with weekly class meetings. Courses which do not meet weekly use the Internet for course delivery or course supplement. Students must be able to function in an Internet-based delivery environment, including the skills of corresponding via email, sending attachments in email, accessing the online library and using Boolean search engines. Students work with computer software for data analysis both for quantitative and qualitative data. Graduates must convert their final dissertations to Portable Document Format (pdf) and submit them electronically.

Faculty

Fifteen faculty members currently chair student doctoral committees, with four additional faculty eligible to chair. The average number of students chaired by faculty member is four, with an actual range of 1 to 7. In response to concerns raised during the North Central Association visit, faculty are allowed to chair a maximum of 7 students at any given time. With a current roster of 104 active students admitted to the program, faculty numbers appear to be adequate for providing guidance for students.

One requirement for Doctoral Graduate Faculty Status is a current and continuing involvement in research and writing. All faculty chairing committees have maintained on-going scholarly activity. Program requirements include the collaboration between faculty and students on presentations and publications. All doctoral faculty members are participating with students in these activities. Upcoming presentations include several accepted for presentation at the SRCEA conference in November.

Candidate Performance Data

Research Knowledge Base Assessment

The Research Knowledge Base Assessment was first given in September 2004. This assessment is now being used as a pretest/posttest in the course LS 703, Research Design. The assessment was designed to measure the preparation of students in basic research knowledge, to ensure the readiness of students to pursue research for the doctoral dissertation. Early analysis of the knowledge base of students indicated a severe lack of basic information regarding research, especially qualitative research. After taking steps to remedy this problem, specifically

requiring LS 703 early in the program and requiring all students to take at least the introductory course in qualitative research, the knowledge demonstrated by students has improved.

Pretests using this assessment continue to reveal entering skills lacking in basic research information, especially in the qualitative arena. With the continued attention to these issues in the LS 703 course, posttests indicate an increase in knowledge in the targeted areas.

Annual Review of Student Progress

The Annual Review of Student Progress was implemented at the spring 2004 Doctoral Student/Faculty Seminar. Each spring, students in attendance met with their chairs/advisors as a group during lunch. Discussions were held regarding a variety of topics, including the seminar itself, the review process and other issues of concern to the students. Students not in attendance met with their chairs at a later date to complete the process.

After three cycles of this process, changes to the procedure have been proposed for implementation in the spring of 2006. In order to better collect information on student involvement with faculty in scholarly activities, an emphasis on reporting this information will be made. Students will retrieve a copy of the annual report form from the website, and complete this type of information in advance of meeting with the chair or advisor at the spring seminar or shortly thereafter.

Faculty continue to meet and discuss issues raised during this review. Concerns raised seem to be fairly typical - concerns about writing, APA style and the IRB process. Students enrolled in LS 765, Advance Research, reported concerns with assistance provided there. Students requested more information about specific projects on which they might collaborate with faculty, classes they might co-teach, and opportunities for presentation and publication.

Exit Survey

Beginning with the first graduates from the program (2002-2003), graduating students have been asked to complete an Exit Survey. This survey was designed based on an examination of program completion instruments from institutions across the country. The purpose of this survey is to collect data about the student's experiences in the program. Questions are asked about information provided to the student, relationships within the program, and the adequacy of program services. Students are provided with this survey as they are finalizing paperwork for defense and graduation.

As of October 2006, 26 students have completed the Doctor of Education degree. All 26 completed the exit survey. Of these 26 graduates, 22 were originally admitted to the cooperative program.

In examining responses, many positive conclusions are evident. Students express an overall satisfaction with their experiences in the program, and given the chance, would select the same faculty members as chairs and committee members. The majority of student services are well used and meet students' needs. The following concerns are raised, however in survey responses:

- Students do not feel comfortable with qualitative research design.
- Students question the value of repeated enrollment in LS 765.
- Students need additional information about collaborating with faculty on presentations and publications.
- Little help has been given to students in seeking financial support for research.
- Students report minimal information about teaching opportunities.

Each of these concerns is currently being addressed with program changes. Students are now required to take a course in qualitative design. The revision of the residency and comprehensive exam process requires students and faculty to collaborate on presentations, publications and teaching. Therefore, faculty are more aware of the need to provide this information to students, and students are actively seeking these opportunities. The availability of partial funding for research has been gained and publicized, with several students taking advantage of these monies.

Survey of Doctoral Graduates One Year after Degree Completion

The Survey of Doctoral Graduates was implemented by email June 1, 2006. This represents the third year for this survey, since the first graduates of the MU program occurred in the 2002-2003 academic year. This schedule means that some of the graduates surveyed have actually had their degrees for more than one year, as some completed the degree in August, prior to May commencement, and some completed the degree in December, prior to May commencement. Of the five graduates who participated in May 2005 Commencement, all five returned the survey.

Of the respondents, three have changed jobs since completing the doctoral degree, and all indicated that possessing the degree was critical to advancement. One of the students indicated that, while she has not changed positions, having the EdD has changed some of her job responsibilities, allowing her to do more research and more advanced activities in administration and leadership positions.

Useful and beneficial knowledge or skills cited included research skills, communication and presentation skills and specific knowledge bases, such as law, governance, and finance. Higher Education Administration graduates mentioned the need for information and skills in grant writing and accreditation. Also mentioned was the need for additional help in learning to write for publication.

With one exception, the respondents were complimentary of the program and the accessibility of faculty. Several cited continuing relationships with faculty and other students as being a major strength of their experiences with the program. This is particularly validating of the doctoral faculty's continuing efforts to form collegial relationships with doctoral students.

Since these students completed the program, a class on Writing for Publication has been introduced. Major changes have been made to strengthen the program in research skills and knowledge, thus strengthening what they apparently believed to be an integral piece of the program. Faculty will need to examine the issue of grant writing skills.

Program Evaluation Survey

In March of 2006, all active students were asked to complete a survey regarding their opinions on the coursework in the program. Data from the surveys has been compiled and analyzed. Changes based upon the opinions expressed are under consideration and will be discussed at a faculty retreat in November 2006.

Summary Statement of Program Changes

Based on the analysis of collected data, a number of changes have been made in the program:

Interviews. Initially, a common set of questions was used by faculty in both majors in interviewing potential students. As more faculty became involved in this process the questions have become more unique to the major areas involved. Additional faculty from the Huntington campus have become involved in the program, several participating in the interview process. This is partially in response to student concerns regarding needing additional faculty in Curriculum and Instruction, and having faculty available on the Huntington campus. With the use of the Polycom for these interviews, students in the Huntington area could choose to go to the Huntington site for their interviews rather than drive to Charleston.

Course additions. Courses in Survey Research, Research Design, and Ethics in Education have been added to those courses available in the program. All three of these have been included as required courses in Educational Leadership; students in Curriculum and Instruction are required to take the first two.

Seminars. The planning and implementation of the Doctoral Student/Faculty Seminars has become a project for students in the program. This provides further opportunities for students to work closely with faculty members in meeting the needs of students. In response to student evaluations, the timing of the seminars has been altered to facilitate student participation.

Program of Study. The requirement of an “unspecified elective” has been dropped from the program of studies. The Introduction to doctoral studies class has been changed from a 3 hour course to a one hour course. This was accompanied by an additional elective in the major area, with a comprehensive result of increasing the number of hours in the program by one while adding to the flexibility of the program of study. Student assessment of the Intro class indicated a growing number of issues that were duplicated in the research design course.

Committee selection. Students may delay the selection of the external member until the completion of coursework. The External member must be identified and must participate in the evaluation of the student’s qualifying assessment. This is in response to student and faculty concerns regarding choosing an external member who will be beneficial to the student as he or she begins the dissertation phase of the program.

Annual Student Review. The Annual Student Review process has been changed to increase the responsibility of the student for this document. Students will have the responsibility of preparing a report of their progress for the year prior to meeting with the faculty chair or advisor. Of particular concern is the reporting of scholarly activities, specifically presentations or publications with faculty.

Writing Sample. The writing sample has been used to recommend early student experience in writing. Students with minimally acceptable writing samples have been required to take a course in writing as early in their programs as possible. To provide for some consistency in evaluating the writing samples, the faculty review committee has kept a consistent member from one writing sample window to the next.

Program removal/reinstatement. Specific steps have been designated for students to elect to withdraw from the program, and possibly see reinstatement at a later time. This is in response to concerns of students who encountered difficulty in continuing in an active student role for an extended period of time.

Administrative Assistant. Communication and record keeping have been enhanced by the addition of a full time assistant for the program. The result has been an improvement in the efficiency of meeting the needs of students.

Dissertation Style Guide. A style guide for writing in the program has been created and made available to students in three forms: on the website, on a CD and in hard copy. This is in response to student concerns about writing styles, and combining university requirements, program requirements and APA style.

Plans for Next Year and Beyond

As the program continues to grow, it is critical that data-based assessment play an important role in on-going monitoring and program improvement. To this end, the aforementioned assessment tools will continue to be used with revisions where deemed necessary. Additional changes include the following:

- Research skill monitoring will continue, with particular attention to the effects of the changes made in course requirements. Input from students and faculty members will be sought to validate the benefits of the new requirements and pinpoint additional weaknesses which need attention.
- The qualifying assessment process will be reexamined to determine areas of the experience which need strengthening. Faculty roles will be explored as to their responsibility in holding the student to high standards of achievement and reflection.
- Additional effort will be made to encourage and facilitate involvement of other faculty in the program, both as committee chairs and in other roles to support students.
- The need for doctoral faculty meetings will be reexamined. Changes in the time schedule for the seminars have created difficulty in meeting the initial intentions of regular faculty meetings.
- Additional program concentrations will be examined in the Educational Leadership area.

Assessment of Student Outcomes

Student Outcomes	Person or Office Responsible	Assessment Tool or Approach	Standards/Benchmark	Results/Analysis	Action Taken
<p>1. Graduates will have a strong foundation in research methods.</p>	<p>Doctoral Faculty and Coordinator</p>	<p>Research Survey instrument – an assessment of student research knowledge</p>	<p>80% correct or better</p>	<p>This was instituted as a result of faculty analysis of student weaknesses upon program completion, and graduates' responses on needed skills. Students were tested at two points in the program – entering students recently admitted, and students who have completed the Research Design course. Overall students' entering scores were very low. The posttest version of the assessment indicated a significant improvement in students' knowledge of basic research design. Discussion regarding the timing of this course in the student's pursuit of the degree debated upon requiring this course early in the student's experience or nearer the completion of coursework. Students have to date been divided according to their major in the program.</p>	<p>Decision: Students must be provided with a stronger knowledge base in research methods. Actions: 1. LS 703 Research Design will continue to be required within the first year of the student's entry into the program. 2. EDF 711 Survey Research in Education will be required of all students. This is a new course. 3. Consideration will be given to combining students from both major areas in the same section. 4. All students will take at least the introductory course in both qualitative and quantitative research. 5. Consideration will be given to an assessment of student knowledge at the time of the qualifying assessment to further examine the student's research knowledge resulting from their overall coursework. 6. A database will be created to provide appropriate tracking.</p>

Student Outcomes	Person or Office Responsible	Assessment Tool or Approach	Standards/Benchmark	Results/Analysis	Action Taken
<p>2. Students will produce scholarly work in the form of presentations at regional and national conferences and publications in professional journals.</p>	<p>Doctoral Faculty and Coordinator</p>	<p>Annual report of student and faculty collaboration on scholarly activities</p>	<p>Participation by each student in scholarly production</p>	<p>Very few students have traditionally chosen to participate in scholarly activities above and beyond the scope of that required in coursework and dissertation completion. Since the implementation of the portfolio for qualifying assessment, students have demonstrated a much greater effort to seek out opportunities to work with faculty. Additionally, faculty are making a greater effort to involve students in research activities.</p>	<p>Decision: To provide appropriate background experiences for students, participation in scholarly activities is imperative. Actions: 1. As a part of their residencies, students will continue to be required to collaborate with faculty on either a presentation or a publication. 2. Seminars will be provided to help students in pursuing these activities. 3. A portion of the residency portfolio will contain evidence of scholarly participation, and a portion of the student's qualifying assessment will be an analysis of this participation. 4. The newest version of the Annual Student Review will emphasize the reporting of scholarly activities. 5. Updated information on available conferences and publication opportunities will be made available to all students.</p>