

# **Educational Leadership External Team Program Review**

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**Final Report**

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## **Context of the Educational Leadership Program Review**

### *State and University Level*

The state of New Mexico as other states and nations across the globe is experiencing an economic crisis that is necessitating a re-evaluation of priorities. Higher education is under scrutiny within New Mexico and other states. Frequently mentioned issues are duplication of programs, tenure versus non tenured faculty, delivery of program (online versus campus), and population served.

The University of New Mexico is classified by the Carnegie Research rankings as a “very high research” university. The University of New Mexico is also a Minority-Serving Institution that supports the first minority/majority state in the U.S. New Mexico is the fifth largest state geographically in the nation, with a total population in July 2008 of 1.98 million people. The University of New Mexico is undergoing budget stress due to the overall economic situation, with relatively small give backs of the budget to this point, however, it is likely that in the 2010-11 academic year a permanent decrease of 4%

or more from the base budget will occur. The University offers 215 degree and certificate programs. Of these, 94 are baccalaureate degrees, 71 masters' degrees, and 37 doctoral degrees.

During this same period the university is experiencing administrative shifts at the highest levels with new positions being created as well as new personnel occupying existing positions (i.e. new president and provost). These types of changes are usually accompanied by shifting priorities and realignment of university goals and processes.

#### *College Level*

The College of Education has a total of 94 faculty and is one of 12 Colleges within the University. The College of Education works with the 27<sup>th</sup> largest school district in the U.S., Albuquerque Public Schools, as well as with a large number of rural and geographically separated school districts. The *vision* of the College of Education is:

#### **Excellence and Diversity through People, Ideas and Innovation.**

The *mission* of the College of Education is:

**Our mission is the study and practice of education through teaching, research, and service.** *"We: address critical education issues; test new ideas and approaches to teaching and learning; educate professionals who can facilitate human growth and development in schools, homes, communities, and workplaces; and prepare students for participation in a complex and challenging society. In carrying out our mission we value: excellence in all that we do; diversity of people and perspectives; relationships of service, accountability, collaboration, and advocacy; the discovery, discussion, and dissemination of ideas; and innovation in teaching, technology, and leadership."*

A new Dean of the College was chosen in the past year who is a faculty member in the Educational Leadership Program. The newly appointed Dean of the College of Education offers opportunities for growth and change but given the fiscal restraints and his many commitments, these opportunities are not limited to the Educational Leadership

Program. Further there are significant “professional need” changes that must be addressed in this time of global economic and social instability.

First, the College experienced a significant decrease in credit hours a couple of years ago, with credit hour enrollment now stabilizing. The President of the University has recently emphasized the importance of enrollment growth and increasing 5-year graduation rates for the Colleges. In addition, given this recent decrease and now stabilization in student enrollment, it is unlikely that the College will receive significant new resources for their programs from the University. Thus, new faculty and new initiatives might need to find nontraditional funding sources. In this vein, the college is currently exploring online delivery education and partnering with school districts and colleges across the UNM campuses

#### *Educational Leadership Field Nationally*

Over the past three years, the field of Educational Leadership has developed new sets of standards, practices, and assessments for the preparation of school leaders and the study of Educational Leadership. NCATE and ELLC are the governing bodies which drive the accreditation of Educational Leadership Programs across the nation. These national standards require graduate programs in Educational Leadership to ensure that their students not only grasp of the knowledge bases necessary for schools’ success but also that they possess the leadership competencies that are essential to bringing school districts forward. This marks a substantial departure from past curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices for the faculty in most Educational Leadership programs. Expectations from accrediting bodies, state, and federal governments, and from school

districts have risen substantially for the Educational Leadership Programs to demonstrate in discrete ways that their graduates are effective school leaders.

*Educational Leadership Program at the University of New Mexico*

The Educational Leadership Program elucidates its purpose and scope:

The degree and certificate programs in Educational Leadership are designed to prepare individuals to assume leadership positions in complex educational organizations at successively higher levels of responsibility. All rely heavily on concepts drawn from the social sciences for insight into leadership behavior and are premised on five Core Domains: Strategic Leadership, Organizational Leadership, Leadership for Learning and Professional Development, Community & Political Leadership, and Informed Leadership.

The Educational Leadership Program at University of New Mexico has experienced discontinuities in faculty in the past six years, instead of a full complement of five tenure track faculty the department is currently served by three; all three have been at UNM less than five years. A new state-wide initiative, the New Mexico Leadership Institute, is supported by the State legislature and the Wallace Foundation. The faculty in the Educational Leadership Program have taken a lead role in acquisition and implementation of this new Institute.

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### **Strengths of the Educational Leadership Program at UNM**

The program is well-respected in the State, with many of the State educational leaders having graduated from the program. Most of the faculty appear to be knowledgeable, highly skilled, and deeply committed to the mission of the department and college with noted innovations occurring over the past two years. There is a high commitment of most of the faculty to the diverse students and communities within the

State of New Mexico, a dedication to creating and maintaining a quality doctoral program, and a desire to be more involved in pertinent research.

*The New Mexico Leadership Institute* supported by the State legislature and the Wallace Foundation along with the entrepreneurial Dean recognize the centrality of the Educational Leadership Program to the College's mission, and this bodes well for the program overall. Improved partnerships with Albuquerque Public Schools and a willingness to partner with other, more rural and high poverty, school districts have become paramount since the hiring of new tenure-track faculty member this year.

Two of the tenure track faculty are highly involved in creating relationships with institutions across the eastern part of the state, both urban and rural. The synergy created by these two faculty is highly beneficial to the program, college, and university. They bring a great energy and dedication to serving the populations of New Mexico; they are asked to participate at the state legislative level, international outreach, urban and rural special program needs for school districts, and are viewed by a variety of constituents as the expert desired to assist these units with their needs.

The External Team met with a number of students. It is clear from our interviews that the program and its faculty attract diverse students from a variety of educational levels and institutions, including higher education and non-school settings. The diversity of students is a great strength of this program; students commended their experiences for expanding their understanding of how learning organizations need to function and what their own roles as leaders might be when students with diverse backgrounds are seeking degrees to fulfill a variety of purposes. This diversity of input and output places the program in a unique position to be influential across the state for the foreseeable future.

The new college Dean is a strength of the program, demonstrating to the external team a high respect for the program and the two aforementioned faculty. That being said, the Dean represents a variety of programs whose needs must be considered as well Educational Leadership.

### **Challenge Facing the Educational Leadership Program at UNM**

All programs deal with difficulties and have areas that need improvement. The External Review Team focused on issues relating to:

1. Impacts on the quality of program precipitated by changes of faculty and faculty size,
2. The communication among various constituents.
3. The culture for students and faculty,
4. The diverse purposes of the program.

#### *Impact on Program Quality*

The Educational Leadership Program has experienced discontinuities in faculty in the past six years, with only three tenure track faculty at this point in time. In the past, six tenure track faculty ran the program. The current faculty are highly ambitious with expectations to serve the entire state in school leadership preparation and to serve as the research and doctoral preparation center for the State. Although the Dean is supportive of that leadership role for the program faculty, the budget situation makes institutional support uncertain. The hiring of more tenure track or adjunct faculty is needed to achieve these university and college goals.

#### *The Communication among Various Constituents*

There is a lack of active, open dialogue among all faculty, the Department Chair, the Dean, and the students about the direction of the program, curricular interests, and populations served. While “time on task” may play a role in this lack of communication, it is also noted that a tension appears to exist about these issues. These necessary conversations rarely take place.

However, for this program to flourish and grow; these tensions must be addressed openly and all members must be reflective about their role in the state of tension. Members of diverse groups should meet separately but address many of the same concerns.

Some guidelines for a variety of discussions might include the following:

1. Accept that valid positions often lose their impact when continually stated.(i.e. “I know your position on that”, “I am from a certain background so that is all I need to say”)
2. Lay out activities and time commitments for all activities and members.

Discussing the following issues would prove fruitful. The ambitious expectations of this faculty to serve the entire state in school leadership preparation and serve as the research and doctoral preparation center with only two members actively involved is a “setup to failure”. A faculty in transition is now constituted and deployed in such a way that many stated ambitions cannot be met. The uncertain institutional supports- will drive the program to seek resources that an overburdened faculty who are in “survival mode” cannot possibly have the internal resources to grow a program. It is extremely difficult to conduct research, scholarship, and grant writing in this time of depleted resources.

*The culture for students and faculty*

Students and faculty need to be aware of what their common purpose is and how they are to achieve that purpose. This knowledge develops the processes and manner of achieving that purpose. In this way culture can be created or modified to reach that purpose. There appeared to be a strong disconnect among the some of the faculty (tenure and non tenured) as to purpose. Further in our discussions with students there appeared to be a lack of any knowledge about the program, faculty, or purpose other than “which courses do I take next”.

We recognize that Dr. Woodrum has begun to address this issue through an orientation for new students. We suggest that all students need to be brought together for a “community meeting” for the airing of concerns and questions. This could be a social event that can help strengthen bonds and create avenues for students to seek information and allay concerns.

*The diverse purposes of the program*

The University Provost did not have the level of knowledge of the program that would be desirable. This is of course partially due to her newness to the position and University. However, it behooves any program to have a “cheat sheet” that can be shared regularly with administrators and outside constitutions to make sure that the program is represented appropriately. This of course cannot take place until the faculty come to common purpose.



## **Master's Program Challenges**

The Educational Leadership Master's Program offers three concentration options, numerous electives, and is sought out by students from a variety of other programs, organizations and fields. There is also a need to meet Educational Specialist certificate requirements that necessitate resources of faculty.

### *Programmatic Considerations*

As indicated in earlier parts of this report, the Educational Leadership faculty face challenges in the delivery of the existing M.A. degree and Ed. S. certificate programs.

These challenges emerge from three conditions:

1. The Educational Leadership Profession has raised its standards of practice and preparation to emphasize the development of leader competencies that demonstrate impacts on schools' capacity to enhance the learning of children. The Educational Leadership faculty must address new standards from ELLC and the state of New Mexico and do so within two Conceptual Frameworks (the College and the program).
2. The College and program faculty espouse deep commitments to serve the children, communities, and schools of New Mexico. The program advocates a mission to "transform through leadership" the performance of underperforming schools. Faculty members and the Dean have set a course to become more involved in PK-12 school leadership by committing to house and steward the new New Mexico Leadership Institute.
3. The current curriculum and course delivery system and, to some degree, the faculty resources are not currently suited to meeting the challenges described in

(a) and (b). Although courses may be suitable to their own goals, they are not clearly interrelated to provide a developmental sequence that yields growth in leader competence in Master's and Ed. S. candidates.

The External Review Team recommends the following strategies to strengthen the Master's degree program:

Consider revisiting and sharpening the purpose of the Master's Program to ensure that the faculty can, within their clearly limited resources, prepare skilled and knowledgeable leaders;

Develop an appropriate set of courses to fulfill the purpose of preparing principals and continue to seek ways to offer this developmental sequence in school districts;

Determine a clear progression of classes to support the growth of students' leadership competencies (see UPI/ELLC).

Consider dropping the third concentration in the Master's and integrating the remaining two concentrations.

### **Doctoral Program Challenges**

As indicated previously in this report, the Educational Leadership faculty face challenges in the delivery of the existing Ed. D. program. These challenges are as follows:

- A doctoral program which has admitted students at a higher rate than it has been able to graduate them (leading to unacceptably high doctoral advising loads for the limited numbers of tenure-track faculty)
- The use of non-tenure track faculty to teach core doctoral courses
- A population of students that is more diverse in terms of goals than the curriculum is able to serve
- Many expectations from the broader University for this faculty to take leadership

roles outside of their programmatic responsibilities

Recommendations are that the faculty of the Doctoral program should revisit and sharpen the purpose of the Doctoral program in order to:

- Ensure that courses address the diverse fields and career ambitions of students:  
Will the doctoral program only focus on PK-12 leadership or will it be leadership in a broader sense in order to include areas like Higher Education Administration or possibly College Student Personnel?
- Ensure that all students develop a deep understanding of educational organizations and leadership and strong and demonstrable skills of scholarly inquiry and writing. Faculty needs to evaluate current courses and delivery methods, including the many electives, and create sequences of courses that will serve to carry students through a progressive learning process designed to yield on-the-ground leadership competencies. An audit of current courses is necessary to determine what is working and what is not.
- Consider starting a new cohort every other year (until you hire more full-time faculty, as a Doctoral program should have only full-time faculty teaching, either full-time from the program or sharing faculty from other programs on campus).

This will then

- Permit greater faculty attention to bringing all current students to completion of the dissertation
- Permit greater faculty involvement in research and publication
- Ensure more uniformly high student quality

The Review Team believes that core the Educational Leadership faculty possess the expertise and the dedication to leadership development in the state to accomplish the above tasks. They, however, need sensitive and persistent institutional support to see them through the four-phase process outlined above. It is likely to require several years to reconceptualize the program, redesign the curriculum, and ensure that UNM can support effective delivery. College leadership, with support from the Graduate School, will need to make this a priority as, in the present circumstances, the Educational Leadership faculty is so understaffed that it could not accomplish this improvement alone.

### **Summary for Program**

What can be done? It is, of course, the Educational Leadership faculty's and the College's responsibility to develop productive responses to these conditions spelled out in this report. The Review Committee recommends that they consider four interrelated strategies.

First, *address the human capacity issues* within the Educational Leadership faculty in order to ensure that the faculty share a commitment to working toward the goals described here and that the College and university can support them in that work. The impending hiring of new faculty offers superb opportunities for this as does the possible reorganization of faculty in the College. The faculty will need protected planning and research time and, very possibly, facilitation assistance to accomplish the goals set forth here. *If a faculty would be a "better fit" with another department, it*

*behooves the Dean to consider this move for the benefit of individual faculty and program needs.*

Second, identify the primary constituencies these programs will serve and *create a defensible conceptual framework* that will guide the faculty as they develop leaders with the competencies needed. Will the M.A. serve leaders from higher education and other levels as well as PK-12 leaders? Which knowledge areas, skills, and dispositions (from among the many listed by ELLC and New Mexico certification) will serve as the conceptual backbone for newly focused M.A. and Educational Specialist curricula? This small faculty cannot “be everything to everybody”; to attempt this is to risk being “not enough to anybody”.

Third, *reconstitute courses into a sequence of learning opportunities* that is designed to develop core knowledge, skills, and dispositions. Evaluate current courses, including the many electives, and create sequences of courses that will serve to carry students through a progressive learning process designed to yield on-the-ground leadership competencies. This will require close scrutiny of the three M.A. concentrations, the placement of a stand-alone internship experience, and the purpose and structure of any courses specifically designed for the Educational Specialist certificate.

Fourth, *examine carefully the delivery systems* for these learning experiences in light of faculty capacity and student/district demand. How often can the faculty offer each sequence and guarantee students the opportunity to complete in a reasonable time period? Does the faculty have the expertise to offer these courses well? Do they have the time and availability to teach these courses well? If not, who else does? Given the program’s primary constituents and their location, what are the most effective methods

for offering these learning sequences (face-to-face; practice-embedded; distance-learning; on-line)? Can this faculty serve these constituents in both M.A. and Educational Specialist pathways without overtaxing themselves and the University's resources?

The greatest asset of the Educational Leadership Program at UNM is its core faculty. In the Fall semester of 2009, the Educational Leadership faculty offered 14 courses at the Master's and Educational Specialist's levels. Of the 166 students enrolled in these courses, only 39 appear to have matriculated in the Masters' Program in the Educational Leadership Program and another 18 in the Educational Specialists' Program. The Educational Leadership faculty appear to be serving a significant number of non Educational Leadership students. *They are contributing to the college enrollment but possibly at the expense of developing their own program and constituencies.*

The Review Team believes that core Educational Leadership faculty possess the expertise and the dedication to leadership development in the state to accomplish the tasks described in this report. They, however, need sensitive and persistent institutional support to see them through the four-phase process outlined above. It is likely to require several years to reconceptualize the program, redesign the curriculum, and ensure that UNM can support effective delivery. Leadership faculty is so understaffed that it could not accomplish this improvement alone. College leadership, with support from the Graduate School, will need to make this a priority.

**Questions posed by Educational Leadership Faculty to the External Team****Question 1: How should faculty address the issue of research? Balance between teaching, service, and scholarship reconsidered?**

The faculty needs to become more involved in research supported by the College and University. Take advantage of applied research opportunities addressing the conditions and educational needs of the children, families, and communities of New Mexico. Contemplate collaborative research and service with other units at the University, and with the State. Place a priority on research publications and presentations State-wide and nationally that will enhance the College, University, and strength of the doctoral program.

**Question 2. Are there ways to make more efficient use of resources?**

In order for the program to survive and thrive, the faculty needs to develop a cohesive focus and teaching/advising assignments. Hire additional tenure-track faculty; six faculty needed to continue the current teaching and research, doctoral advising, dissertation chairing, and service obligations. Consider reorganization of Master's delivery following a developmental approach to ensure efficiency of class offerings and coherence of the curriculum and program.

**Question 3: Are we trying to do too many things? If so, how should we prioritize our activities?**

Yes, the faculty are stretched thin and stressed out; faculty are trying to deliver the curriculum developed five years ago with half as many faculty now as then.

The faculty needs to determine what their mission is and develop commitment from the faculty to the mission. The College needs to provide time and space for faculty to develop their program in directions they find to be appropriate.

Address the disconnect between the expectations and capacity at the Educational Leadership Program and college level - "who can you be well?" Communication needs to be enhanced at all levels, between the Dean and Chair, and within the faculty group. There is a need for collaboration on pedagogy and curriculum, as well as a need for institutional support for time and space, possibly facilitation, of faculty team in setting program mission, direction and delivery system.



## **Report Summary**

The Educational Leadership Program at University of New Mexico is at a turning point. Will the program serve the PK-12 population exclusively through certification at the principal and specialist level or expand its offerings to serve a broader population that includes higher education populations and other service and educational organizations such as private sector organizations, military and other public organizations such as non profits?

The change in upper administration and their goals also affect the program and which goals the program will be able to pursue. There are many areas, not of contention, rather of a lack of knowledge and actual lack of clear goals to be used as a guide. Upper administration must provide guidance for the Educational Leadership faculty while also providing adequate time to focus on their program and students before attending to outside requests for advice and participation. This approach needs to be accepted by the faculty also because of their natural tendency to serve and answer the call for assistance from many constituencies.

The faculty of the Educational Leadership Program has changed completely in the past five years. With this change, purpose, mission, interests, research, and program personality have changed as well. The student population appears to have changed also with more higher education students entering the program. The majority of the Educational Leadership faculty are energized and eager to enter the future for the program and the students and to contribute to a new future for New Mexico. We applaud the innovations in progress and encourage continued new approaches.