

**Program Review  
Department of Advanced Programs  
College of Education and Professional Studies  
Central Washington University**

by

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I conducted a program review of the Department of Advanced programs on April 8-9, 2010. This report summarizes my findings and perceptions of the self-study documents and campus interviews and observations.

### **General Observations**

The self-study report was comprehensive and well-done. Interviews with students, faculty and staff provided additional information to substantiate the program's quality. The department has a strong academic program and a dedicated faculty who are highly supportive of their students. The curriculum, assessment system, and LiveText e-portfolios and rubrics ensure a strong focus on student success. The Department of Advanced Programs is strong and is in good position to move forward.

### **Curriculum**

#### **Strengths**

Course offerings in the program are designed to meet state program and ISLLC standards for candidates to receive their administrative residency certificate. The scope of course offerings have been sequenced to build upon student knowledge, understanding and skills. Students enjoy the variety of classes, curriculum, and the access through delivery at multiple locations with distance learning. Students highlight the small class size.

#### **Challenges**

While the curriculum developed by the program appears to be successful, many of the courses carry 5 credits and are offered from 5:00-10:00 pm each quarter. For students who enroll in both the master's degree and certificate programs, they need 72 credits (56 + 16) to complete both components. This number of credits exceeds other state programs offering the equivalent degree/certification program. A challenge is to review the program feasibility to reduce the 5 credit courses to 3 credits. This could result in

compacting the curriculum and reducing the contact hours required for each course. The flow and continuity of the curriculum could also be refined in this review process.

A review of the program could also identify several program options for the Master's Degree of Education. For example, course offerings could focus on school administration/principal, school administration/program administrator, and instructional leadership. The preliminary discussions in the department of offering a master's degree in higher education administration should also continue, and the feasibility for such a program should be explored.

## **Program Planning and Assessment**

### **Strengths**

The program has a system in place for course and program evaluations. The program has determined the evidence needed to document current program effectiveness and student progress with assessments connected to positive impact on student learning. This evidence has been gathered into an electronic portfolio called LiveText with use of standards-based assessment rubrics. Faculty are able to use the rubric assessments as data to help guide instruction and program development.

### **Challenges**

The administrative internship is mentioned by students as the part of their program which is in need of some refinement. Students seek more clarification, structure and guidance around internship requirements, timelines, expectations, and supervisory visits. Development of a handbook for principal supervisors of interns may be helpful to communicate expectations for their roles, as well as what can be expected from the university intern supervisors.

A second challenge appears for students using LiveText e-portfolios. Students comment that LiveText is not user-friendly and question its effectiveness for their learning. For example, some students reported not receiving feedback on their LiveText entries. Perhaps more in-service training for students and faculty would assist in meeting these concerns.

Another challenge is to analyze and address a documented 41% graduation rate for the master's degree program. This appears to be a "systems" issue where the graduate admission's office, the College of Education's Dean's office, and the Advanced Program Department need to work together to analyze and refine the admission process and data collection. It appears that post baccalaureate and graduate student applications should be classified in different ways. Along with a review of the admissions process is a recommendation that master's degree and certification only applicants be interviewed before acceptance into the program. The result may be that a higher quality student population will be admitted and will complete the program.

## **Faculty**

### **Strengths**

The program has a diverse and knowledgeable group of dedicated faculty. The three faculty members are committed to their teaching and to their students. Students appreciate the diversity of styles, experiences, and perspectives of their instructors. They point out both the high quality of instruction and the high level of interest in student learning. Students describe the faculty as well-versed, supportive and flexible. Faculty conference presentations are an indicator of their willingness to share ideas and expertise with others in the field.

### **Challenges**

A challenge for the faculty is in their selection of professional/organizational affiliations. It may be beneficial for the program faculty to affiliate with UCEA and AERA to keep up with the latest research and practice in the field of school administration. Greater involvement in these or similar organizations and networking with other educational administration faculty regionally and nationally may also help in research production and grant writing.

### **Students**

#### **Strengths**

Students from a number of school districts are represented in the program. Because of the dual campuses in Ellensburg and Des Moines, geographic diversity is a positive component of the program. The students are receiving the preparation needed to be successful administrators, based on both the self-study report and interviews with faculty and students. Students feel prepared as they proceed through their internships. Students enjoy the camaraderie of their cohort group, and even desire more time together as a cohort during their internship (at least meeting together once per month). The monthly meeting time could also strengthen the faculty advising some students seek during their internship.

#### **Challenges**

Two challenges are raised around the student internship experiences. First, is a recommendation to review the reference-process for prospective students seeking an internship. Currently, students must attain a written recommendation from their district superintendent before placement in an internship. It is recommended that the program focus on the principal/supervisor recommendation rather than the superintendent as a reference. In addition, prospective interns who are certificated teachers, but not currently employed, could be helped by faculty in securing an internship placement in a school or school district.

### **Library and Information Literacy**

#### **Strengths**

The Brooks Library provides adequate access for campus and online resources for students. The Educational Technology Center (ETC) located in Black Hall is an outstanding resource for students. The ETC also houses a curriculum library where students have access to educational documents and theses.

The classrooms in Black Hall are well-equipped with technology to support the distance-learning delivery of program classes. Faculty have arranged their schedules to be present for several sessions at both the main campus and Des Moines sites during the quarter. Students like the dual-campus, distance-learning instruction; however, they find that the class sessions where faculty are present – in person – in the classroom to be more effective.

### **Challenges**

Several classes such as School/Community Relations are taught as online classes. Students actually prefer some class meetings along with the on-line instruction, creating a “hybrid” class for instructional delivery.

### **Future Directions**

Several recommendations are presented here for consideration by the Advanced Program Department as it shapes direction for the short term and long term:

- Getting past the stigma of 2007 state/NCATE reviews is both a strength and a challenge. The strength lies in the program faculty’s resiliency to continue offering a high quality program. The challenge is getting past this stigma and re-establishing the program to attract potential students from schools and school districts in the region.
- A marketing plan for the program to become more highly visible is necessary. One approach may be for program representatives to visit each school district in Kittitas, Yakima, Grant and Wenatchee counties over the next 18 months. Another component of the marketing plan would be addressing changes for the website and printed materials for the program. As marketing strategies are identified, more human resources will be necessary. For example, clerical/secretarial time could be extended from .5 to .75 FTE to provide assistance here.
- Identify a “niche” for principal preparation that will make the CWU program stand out in the state, and then grow the program. A critical question to ask is: What can make the CWU Master’s Degree and Certification program special and different from other preparation programs? For example, the technology infrastructure and capacity of the ETC could be utilized here. With the LiveText e-portfolio, distance learning, and online learning already in use, CWU could emerge as the leading program in technology applications for learning and principal preparation.