Three-Year Check-In for New Programs

The creation and maintenance of graduate programs (degrees, majors and named options) represents significant commitments by faculty and staff. The approval process to authorize their implementation is structured to ensure adequate communication and sufficient planning so that programs are ready for students. Given the costs and importance of new graduate programs, in 2014 the Graduate Faculty Executive Committee (GFEC) determined that it was important to “check in” with newly approved programs prior to their first formal university review (which occurs in a new program’s fifth year.) Through this “check-in” the GFEC wishes to provide program faculty and staff the opportunity to assess the completeness of their new program’s implementation and to determine if all mechanisms are in place for sustained student success.

Progress reports will be included on GFEC agendas, and program representatives may be asked to attend GFEC if additional information is requested. In the interest of brevity, please keep responses to 300 words or less.

Program Name: _____ Wisconsin Idea Executive Ph.D. Cohort in K-12 Leadership ________________________________

Term of First Enrollments: _____ Fall 2007 ________________________________

Check-In Completed By: ____ M. Bruce King __________________________________________________________________________

Date of Check-In: ____ 31 October 2016 __________________________________________________________________________
1. Provide an update on the program’s curriculum and learning goals. Include a description of the program’s typical course modalities (face-to-face, online, asynchronous discussion, team or individual assignments) and if courses have evolved based on faculty or student feedback.

Our program’s overall goal continues to be, enhancing ELPA’s influence on educational quality and opportunity for all students in Wisconsin schools and beyond. To work toward this goal, the theme of District and School Leadership for Equity and Excellence is integrated through most program courses, and supported by theoretical and empirical, as well as practical, understandings. Cohort students receive training in qualitative and quantitative methods and analysis, and are supported by faculty to develop a study design for the dissertation that is appropriate to addressing their research questions.

To support learning goals and degree completion, we expected the cohort format to better nurture a professional learning community or community of practice for the program’s doctoral students. While each cohort’s community is somewhat different, the overall success of the program and students’ evaluations of its courses support the conclusion that this has occurred to a significant degree. As one put it, “Spending three years learning collaboratively with administrators from school districts of all shapes and sizes has been the most powerful professional learning I have ever had.”

Since inception with the first cohort in Fall 2007, courses have evolved to incorporate more distance education approaches, and two courses are now offered totally online. After assessing the first 2 cohorts, especially completed dissertations, we have modified the course requirements for the current third cohort (which began Fall 2015) by adding an additional research course. The course sequence for Cohort 3.0 is listed below in an Appendix.

We continue to assess the structure of the three summer cohort courses, offered in three different weeks spread out over 6 or 7 weeks total. The condensed intensive schedule accommodates our students work schedules well but presents challenges to pedagogy and learning, especially the reading requirements at the doctoral level.

2. Briefly explain the program’s assessment plan and discuss how you are or how you plan to evaluate student learning. Include a summary of direct or indirect measures, and summarize any data collected to date showing evidence of student learning.

The program’s assessment plan is no different from that of the overall PhD program in ELPA. While accelerated, with courses offered on a unique schedule to accommodate practicing K-12 educators, this PhD program was developed and is implemented to offer coursework equivalent to courses offered in our regular PhD program. In some cases, advanced versions of courses are offered to better provide curriculum to the executive level and to the experienced K-12 leaders who are the target students for the program.
Completion rates are as follows:

- Cohort 1.0, Fall 2007: 17 of 21 students (1 additional student dropped from the program)
- Cohort 2.0, Fall 2011: 8 of 16 (3 additional students dropped from the program)
- Cohort 3.0, Fall 2015: 23 admitted

Comparison of student course evaluations (Cohort 1.0 courses and non-cohort ELPA classes) shows that cohort students regard program classes highly.

![ELPA Course Evaluations, Fall 2007-Summer 2009](image)

Two cohort students have been recipients of the outstanding dissertation award in K-12 leadership:

- “The Perceived Effect of Racial Consciousness on Student Achievement in Two High Achieving School Districts”
- “Superintendent leadership practices that cultivate principal capacity to raise achievement across school districts”

Other completed dissertations show both students’ commitment to social justice leadership and their breadth of their scholarly interests. For example,
“Supporting beginning general education teachers in meeting the needs of a diverse classroom: A study of induction practices”

“The role of the superintendent in system-wide success for pre-K-12 English language learners”

“The educational experience of DACAmented students: Utilizing capitals to confront barriers and navigate the American educational experience”

“Advancing opportunities for all students: Superintendent leadership teams in high-achieving school districts”

“White educator practices that support the high academic achievement of African American students in predominantly white rural elementary schools and educator racial consciousness that inform those practices”

“Stories of social justice from superintendents of color: Intersections of resistance”

We do not systematically track finishing students employment but know that a few cohorters are faculty at the college/university level and the technical/community college level.

3. The GFEC is interested to learn how departments balance faculty and staff teaching loads and responsibilities between new and existing programs. Discuss how the department or program is achieving balance, and what challenges supporting multiple programs may have created for teaching, student services, advising or funding. Also of interest is information on what if any assets are shared between programs, or additional benefits that have been realized.

Cohort classes and regular PhD classes are scheduled in such a way that the burden on faculty teaching load has not been negatively affected. We address the increase in the number of doctoral students in the K-12 strand by staggering the start of a new cohort to every four years. Many doctorate programs in school leadership at other institutions start new cohorts every year, but that is simply not feasible here with current resources.

Initially, the first cohort was designed to work closely with only a few ELPA faculty members and four professors served as advisors to all 21 cohort students. This was not sustainable nor was optimal for mentoring of students. For the current program, 9 ELPA faculty in the K-12 strand advise at least one cohort student. This shared and distributed model has improved the program in a number of ways (see 4).

4. Please describe how your program has ongoing and broad faculty commitment, including governance, to ensure its continued success. If applicable, reflections from faculty and staff can be included here or as an appendix. Also consider if implementation of this program is supporting the Department and/or School/College’s current strategic goals.
As mentioned above, we have moved from a model with limited faculty involvement to one with broad participation. Ten different ELPA instructors teach in the current program. The unique class schedule, with 2 classes meeting on five different Fridays and Saturdays (Fall and Spring semesters) has encouraged more collaboration between the 2 instructors, coordinating course themes and content, and in response to student feedback, balancing workloads and deadlines. In the Spring 2017 term, for example, data presented in the Urban Education Leadership class will be made available for analysis and interpretation to the concurrent courses in Advanced Quantitative Methods and Advanced Qualitative Methods (cohort students will select one type of methodology for more in-depth learning). Overall program decision making is done within the department’s program committee as needed, and also among K-12 faculty at the end of the full cycle of courses for each cohort (end of Fall 2017) and about a year before the start of the next cohort to prepare for the next application and admission period (Fall 2018).

Incorporating two non-ELPA classes into the cohort course sequence, to support student completion of distributed minor requirements, has increased collaboration with the departments of Educational Policy Studies and Curriculum & Instruction. A summer 2016 course was Social Justice & Multiculturalism in Ed Leadership, taught by Prof Carl Grant (C&I). Next summer’s course will likely be a Seminar in Comparative and International Education, taught by Prof Nancy Kendall (EPS).

The Department as a whole and faculty in the K-12 strand remain strongly supportive of and committed to the program. K-12 faculty reflections that were recorded highlight specific strengths: collaborative culture—support of students for each other; brings students together who may not participate in a traditional PhD program; the specific focus of equity and excellence; faculty required to collaborate on curriculum; and student diversity enhanced. Areas of concern were also identified: distinguishing between a researcher and practitioner track; qualitative research bias; more equitable advisory loads; limited access to Cohort instructors for traditional PhD students; and too many classes taught by the same professors. The last three concerns have been addressed through broader involvement of more K-12 faculty. The bias toward qualitative research methods that was clearly apparent in Cohort 1.0 has been addressed by adding two more quantitative courses (one required, one optional when students choose between advanced quantitative or advanced qualitative courses). The Department as a whole unanimously approved offering Cohort 2.0 starting Fall of 2011 and 3.0 starting Fall 2015.

**Operations and Administration**

5. Illustrate how the program has either brought in NEW and ADDITIONAL students (required for non-pooled programs), and/or how overall enrollment in your related programs has remained steady. If unanticipated overlap with existing programs has resulted, discuss steps to mitigate the overlap.
With 3 cohort sizes of 21, 16, and 23, we have successfully maintained and expanded our enrollment in the ELPA doctoral programs. We are confident that many, if not most, of these practicing K-12 educators would not pursue their PhD in our regular program format. Students who travel from some distance for cohort classes (middle and northern Wisconsin, northern Illinois and Chicago, and in Cohort 3.0, one from Boston) could not do so in the usual weekly class format. For the current ELPA PhD Cohort program, there were only two accepted applicants who did not enroll. We accepted 78% of the total number of applicants for Cohort 3.0.

6. Funding Considerations

a. For traditional/pooled programs – How is the program successfully funding its students?

b. For non-pooled programs – Provide a brief financial summary of projected vs. actual revenues and expenses. Does the program have sufficient enrollment for sustainability? Discuss the current market outlook compared to the original marketing study, and plans to grow or change the program to become sustainable.

ELPA Executive PhD 131-172310 has generated an overall profit of $48,426 since its inception as a non-pooled program in 2012. Prior to this, the program also generated revenue for the Department when operated under the 104 model. The program generates higher revenue at the beginning of each new cohort and lower profits near the end of each of the 4-year cycles. The actual numbers reflect a period in which revenue was generated at the end of Cohort 2’s intensive course taking period and the very beginning of Cohort 3’s intensive period of course taking.

The market outlook is optimistic based on school and district leadership turnover and retirements in the state, as well as contacts from prospective students who express interest in applying to the program. Cohort 1.0 and 2.0 students have been instrumental in spreading the word and recruiting colleagues in their home districts for the program’s next iteration.

7. If the program admits international students, describe how program processes address length of stay visa issues, online course restrictions, and needing ESL services.

There are no international students.

8. Are there any campus policies, services or resources that are impacting the program’s success? If so, please explain.

On March 2, 2015 (revised 6/9/2016), the university provided new guidance regarding academic programs (including online programs) with non-pooled tuition. Our cohort sizes are moderately smaller than suggested in campus guidelines, but despite this fact, the program generates a modest amount of revenue that helps the Department provide support for graduate students.