

Professional Studies Department
Annual Report, June 2011

Prepared by Kent Becker, Department Head

Section 1: Introduction

The Professional Studies Department was formed in 2009 from the merger of three former departments (Adult Learning and Technology, Counselor Education, Educational Leadership) and Educational Research faculty and courses. Our department is comprised of 19 full-time faculty members who deliver a variety of graduate programs (PhD, EdD, MS, MA) as well as certificate programs and undergraduate courses that support the Teacher Education program and other programs across campus. We are pleased that Special Education faculty and programs will be joining the department July 1, 2011, bringing the department to 24 full-time faculty and two office associates.

The foundation of our work with students and colleagues is based upon our core value of respect, inclusion, collaboration, lifelong learning, and leadership. We believe that our goals and aspirations can best be met by promoting the scholarly integration of all aspects of our work, the fostering of an intellectual community, and the development of an attitude of professional leadership and stewardship.

Primary accomplishments over the past year include:

- Program faculty actively reviewed, screened and interviewed applicants to invite the most qualified candidates for graduate studies. As a department we reviewed 230 completed applications. The large majority of these individuals were granted individual interviews (face-to-face or Skype) or campus interviews (group and individual). Final ratings resulted in acceptance rates of 80% (M.S/M.A.), 88% (Ed.D.), and 38% (Ph.D.).
- Faculty continue to review and revise program procedures (admissions, orientation sessions, student handbooks, comprehensive exams...) and requirements (residency, retention policies...) to address changes in national trends, student needs, and shifts in professional standards. Faculty are committed to providing the best process and product possible for student consumers.
- Professional Studies faculty supported the graduation of 96 graduate students (summer 2010 to spring 2011). This included the assessment of a variety of capstone experiences (individual and team-based projects, electronic portfolios, research critiques, case study analysis, clinical vignettes...) and dissertations across a range of disciplines.
- Faculty conducted and completed two successful faculty searches. We are pleased to welcome Dr. Courtney Haines (Educational Research) and Dr. David Hvidston (Educational Leadership) for 2011-12.
- Staff, with faculty support, worked on the integration of a new website platform. This included merging all program websites with the new Professional Studies main page, updating faculty pages and ongoing revisions of new information for the public, applicants and current graduate students.
- Staff, with faculty support, developed new student databases and the reorganization of existing databases to improve graduate student tracking including application

(admissions/denials), student progress, graduation, and alumni information.

- Faculty continued to focus on critical issues facing administrators and school districts in Wyoming by joining and participating in Wyoming professional organizations, partnering with the Wyoming Department of Education (WDE) in grant activities focused on mentoring new principals, and by participating in a statewide initiative on systemic leadership development led by the WDE. *UP3 Action Item 96; Dept. Goal 2*
- Faculty, in collaboration with UWCC staff celebrated the graduation of the UWCC Counseling Cohort. This outreach program has been in existence for 15 years and has served the state by preparing master's level school and mental health counselors. These individuals are trained to address the social and emotional needs of children, adolescents and adults in rural areas. Due to faculty campus responsibilities and changes in accreditation requirements, this outreach program has been suspended.
- Faculty successfully finished the second cohort of the Early Childhood Mental Health Professional Certificate Program. This included professionals from across the state completing 10 credit hours, 100 practicum hours and 50 Reflective consultation hours. *UP3 Action Item 91; CoEd Action Items 12 & 13; Dept. Goal 2.*
- Faculty and students engaged in a variety of international collaborations. Faculty and graduate students participated in travel and discussions with the Wyoming Bolivian partnership exchange program, Universidad de Valle de Guatemala, the development of a Masters Program in Education in Bhutan, and possible student and faculty exchanges with universities in China.
- Faculty and students worked to obtain continued certification of the Counselor Education Training Clinic (CETC) by the Wyoming Department of Health-Mental Health and Substance Abuse Division to provide substance abuse assessments. With the support of the College, Counseling faculty upgraded technology capabilities in the CETC to address training needs.
- Faculty designed a UW Graduate Certificate in Online Instruction. This certificate program includes a newly approved course (Introduction to Online Instruction) and existing courses. The certificate has been approved by the College and initially reviewed by the UW Graduate Council. This certificate program will address instructional needs across the educational spectrum.
- The Association for Play Therapy (APT) awarded "Approved Center of Play Therapy Education" the department's Rocky Mountain Center of Play Therapy Studies (RMCPTS). The RMCPTS is one of only 14 approved play therapy centers in the country.

Section 2: Academic Planning Implementation

As a department we are committed to addressing the goals and objectives outlined in our department plan. The status of each goal is highlighted below.

Goal 1: As a newly formed department, develop a departmental structure that will assist in clarifying our collective identity and support the continued success of programs, faculty and staff members.

- Program Coordinators met on a regular basis to address shared needs and interests (course scheduling, outreach delivery, research minors, student retention...). These meetings have allowed cross-pollination among the different program areas, and have led

to a variety of discussions about possible programmatic collaborations.

- As a department we met on a monthly basis to address department-level conversations and program faculty met on a weekly or bi-weekly basis to address program-level needs. This meeting structure has supported the development of our departmental identity while continuing to support the success of individual programs.
- First-year faculty met with the department head on a regular basis to support their transition, address teaching needs, clarify reappointment expectations and encourage active research agendas (including collaborative research projects and support). This structure included scheduled meetings with other faculty to support their early success.

Goal 2: Strengthen our department by reviewing and revising existing programs, partnerships and options for the future.

- Instructional Technology faculty worked toward reviewing and revising programs at the master's and doctoral levels. This included streamlining doctoral programs (Ph.D. & Ed.D.) to include more required courses and less electives in order to plan for future course offerings and meet faculty loads, revision of graduate handbooks (including policies and procedures), revision of program milestones to better meet the needs of students, revision of admission requirements to take effect Spring 2012 semester in order to improve graduate studies and programs (based on the Graduate Education White Paper), and revision of electronic portfolio guidelines (including more detailed expectations).
- Educational Leadership faculty received a grant from ECTL to work on program assessments. Throughout the year they have been working on realigning curriculum and assessments in master's core courses. Next year the focus will continue on master's courses and then progress to doctoral level course and assessment review.
- Adult and Postsecondary Education faculty reviewed their M.A., Ed.D., and Ph.D. curricula and, after a successful pilot, recommended revisions to strengthen the programs. These proposed revisions have been recommended for approval by the Professional Studies Department and ACGE.
- Counseling faculty worked on and submitted their CACREP Self-Study for review. This process included aligning course expectations and outcomes with the newly revised 2009 CACREP Standards. An on-site visit is expected for fall 2011.
- Adult and Postsecondary Education Faculty (in collaboration with the Instructional Technology faculty) revised the design for the annual Ed.D. Residency Session, implemented the new design, and hosted 22 doctoral students from across the country in April.
- Adult and Postsecondary Education faculty sent a representative to the School of Education at CU Denver to learn more about the Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate and the CU Denver design and implementation of the thematic dissertation for their Ed.D. program.
- Educational Leadership and Special Education faculty engaged in discussions about a possible Special Education Director's Certificate that incorporates current core courses.
- The Adult and Postsecondary Education faculty began discussions about developing an Educational Leadership minor for their Ph.D. and Ed.D. doctoral programs.

Goal 3: Promote and elevate the scholarly productivity of department faculty members.

- The department committee on Building Research Connections, Collaborations and Productivity organized and hosted our first Professional Studies Department Research and Scholarship Symposium. A call for proposals went out to all department faculty and graduate students. The committee conducted a blind review process that resulted in the acceptance of 18 presentations. Presentation speakers included 14 faculty & 15 graduate students across all program areas, including Special Education. The event was well attended and received favorable comments. As a department we have decided to make this an annual event.
- Cross-program connections are resulting in a variety of collaborative research projects that include pre-tenure and tenured faculty.
- The department provided support for one faculty member to engage in a research semester and have committed to supporting research semesters for two additional faculty next year.
- First year faculty engaged in a variety of meetings with colleagues in support of their developing research agendas.
- Faculty and graduate students presented at state, regional, national and international conferences. This included over 65 refereed presentations.
- Finally, faculty were successful in publishing in a range of professional journals resulting in approximately 40 refereed publications.
- For additional information refer to Section 4.

Goal 4: Implement recruitment, retention and graduation strategies to improve student graduation rates and increase the diversity of our faculty and student populations.

- Educational Leadership faculty are reviewing graduation rates and looking at ways to increase quality of entrants and ways to mentor current domestic and international students to successful program completion.
- The Adult and Postsecondary Education faculty reviewed the status and progress of all graduate students and adopted a formal notification process (implemented in January 2011) to warn students not making adequate progress and to help them return to adequate progress status.
- Staff and faculty have been working on department and program websites to make information more accessible to prospective applicants.
- All program areas have worked with Outreach to promote / market programs to specific target audiences.
- Faculty across all program areas have mentored graduate students in preparing conference proposals, manuscript submissions and job searches.
- For additional information refer to Section 6.

Section 3: Teaching Activities

Over the course of the year faculty delivered 252 credit hours of instruction and graduate assistants delivered 45 credit hours of instruction. This included instruction on campus and through Outreach (online, community-based, hybrid, compressed video...). All courses are evaluated by students. Faculty review these ratings and feedback closely as they strive to provide

the best educational experiences possible. As with all departments in the College of Education, teaching excellence is an expectation. Faculty and graduate students (with teaching loads) are highly encouraged to utilize the resources at the Ellbogen Center for Teaching and Learning (ECTL) in addition to workshops offered through Academic Affairs. At the department level all pre-tenured faculty are observed by the department head and are encouraged to invite other colleagues into their classrooms/online to provide critical feedback and support.

Section 4: Research and/or Creative Activities

With approximately 40 refereed publications (published, in press) and over 65 state, regional, national and international refereed presentations, Professional Studies faculty continue to contribute to their disciplines in a manner that expands the knowledge base of their fields and communicates our commitment to research and scholarly productivity. To further support these efforts, our department committee on Building Research Connections, Collaborations & Productivity developed and hosted our first annual Professional Studies Research & Scholarship Symposium where members of the department and graduate students presented their research work and engaged in critical dialogues with colleagues. This event was highly successful in allowing department faculty to better understand the diversity of research agendas and projects within the department. The Symposium also provided a vehicle to faculty to develop future research collaborations across program areas. As a department we have decided to make this an annual event.

Section 5: Service, Extension and Outreach Activities

Professional Studies faculty continue to be very active in the area of service. This includes service to the department, college, university, state, professional associations, editorial boards, accreditation organizations, advisory councils, etc. Faculty actively model (for graduate and undergraduate students) the need to be involved in leadership roles that have the potential to positively impact our professions and those we serve (students, communities, administrators, learners, clients...).

As a department we deliver programs on campus and partner with UWCC and the Outreach School to deliver programs throughout the state, region and nation. We use distance technologies to increase access and to improve the learning opportunities for student learners. Programs/courses in the areas of Counseling, Educational Leadership, Adult and Post Secondary Education, Instructional Technology and Educational Research include active collaborations with Outreach. While some of these programs/courses are delivered exclusively through Outreach, other programs are delivered using combinations of online, compressed video, Eluminate, and face-to-face instruction.

Section 6: Student Recruitment and Retention Activities and Enrollment Trends

Program faculty actively reviewed, screened and interviewed applicants to invite the most qualified candidates for graduate studies. As a department we reviewed 230 completed applications. The large majority of these individuals were granted individual interviews (face-to-

face or Skype) or group campus interviews. Final ratings resulted in acceptance rates of 80% (M.S/M.A.), 88% (Ed.D.), and 38% (Ph.D.).

Examples of student support include program orientation sessions, flexible advising strategies, use of student list serves to disseminate information, support of social gatherings, conference travel support (\$5340 granted), scholarship support (\$21,050 awarded), student mentoring programs, and solicitation of student feedback through formal and informal methods. In addition, 19 Professional Studies graduate students were supported by graduate assistantships from within the college and across campus.

Program Coordinators have been working with staff in the development and enhancement of databases used to track student progress and identify concerns. As concerns are identified, students are notified to clarify the concern and identify a solution in a timely manner.

Professional Studies faculty successfully graduated 96 graduate students (summer 2010 to spring 2011). This included the assessment of a variety of capstone experiences (individual and team-based projects, electronic portfolios, research critiques, case study analysis, clinical vignettes...) and dissertations across a range of disciplines.

Section 7: Development Activities and Public Relations

As a department we recognize the importance of a dynamic web presence. The process of transitioning to the new university platform has taken the better part of the entire year. After several delays we are pleased with the development and appearance of our new website. Program coordinators and staff are actively engaged in program-level revisions so the public and prospective applicants have the information they require.

It is important to note that all areas (development, public relations, website development and maintenance) require college and university support to be successful. Departments are limited by the resources and support made available. Consistent and reliable support services need to be a university priority.

Section 8: Classified and Professional Staffing

As stated in last year's annual report, department office associates have carried much of the burden associated with the merger and closing of the graduate school. Maintaining two office associate positions within our department has been critical. With distinct job descriptions, they each provide invaluable service toward the enhancement and maintenance of our many (and varied) graduate programs. Both individuals are student-centered and support the success of our students (graduate and undergraduate) from the application process through graduation. To say that they are the "lifeline" of our department is not an exaggeration.

Section 9: Diversity

Two successful faculty searches were conducted during the 2010-2011 academic year. The following sources were utilized to increase access to diverse candidates: 1) UW website; 2)

HigherEdJobs; 3) The Chronicle of Higher Education; 4) Academic Keys; 5) e-flyer to targeted departments in the United States; 6) Tribal College Journal; 7) Hispanic Outlook in Higher Education; and 8) Journal of Blacks in Higher Education. Although it is difficult to determine the diversity of the search pools, we do feel that we were successful in hiring the most highly qualified candidates.

In addition, graduate programs in Professional Studies continue to attract local, regional, national and international applicants.

Section 10: Assessment of Student Learning

As required, a graduate program from each program area within the department has been identified for 2011-2012. Identified programs include:

- M.A. in Education, Educational Leadership (Tier 1)
- M.S. in Counseling (Tier 1)
- M.A. in Education, Adult & Post Secondary Education (Tier 2)
- M.S. in Education, Instructional Technology (Tier 2)

M.A. in Education, Educational Leadership (Tier 1)

Assessments: The following types of assessment(s) have been implemented for this degree program

- Student learning portfolios
- Examination of student work examples
- Internship/externship reviews
- Oral examinations
- Simulation exercises
- Capstone projects

Accreditation: The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and the Educational Leadership Constituents Council (ELCC) accredit all programs in Educational Leadership. ELCC has granted full 8-year accreditation through 2015.

Assessment Project: Program faculty will develop a student satisfaction survey for current and graduating students that will be implemented spring 2012. This survey will invite student input on program structure, support, advising, and suggestions for improvement.

Program Report: Program faculty will submit its report July 2012.

M.S. in Counseling (Tier 1)

Assessments: The following types of assessment(s) have been implemented for this degree program

- Standardized Test (National Counselor Exam)
- Examination of student work examples
- Internship/externship reviews
- Oral examinations
- Simulation exercises
- Capstone project (clinical vignette)
- Alumni survey
- Student dispositions

Accreditation: The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Programs (CACREP) accredits all programs in Counseling. CACREP has granted full 8-year accreditation through 2012. Faculty have submitted their self-study for re-accreditation.

Assessment Project: Program faculty will develop a student satisfaction survey for current and graduating students that will be implemented spring 2012. This survey will invite student input on program structure, support, advising, and suggestions for improvement.

Program Report: Program faculty will submit its report July 2012.

M.A. in Education, Adult & Post Secondary Education (Tier 2)

Assessments: The following types of assessment(s) have been implemented for this degree program

- Examination of student work examples
- Oral examinations
- Capstone projects
- Final Case Studies

Strengths & Challenges: Strengths include students actively working in the field within a variety of settings that utilize assessment strategies. Students are invested in their program area and typically interested in supporting assessment efforts. The primary challenge is that the majority of students are off campus and busy (typically working full-time). Designing a survey that is meaningful and addresses their needs will be critical to obtain a strong sample.

Assessment Project: Program faculty will develop a student satisfaction survey for current and graduating students that will be implemented spring 2012. This survey will invite student input on program structure, support, advising, and suggestions for improvement.

Program Report: Program faculty will submit its report July 2012.

M.S. in Education, Instructional Technology (Tier 2)

Assessments: The following types of assessment(s) have been implemented for this degree program

- Examination of student work examples
- Student learning portfolios
- Oral examinations
- Capstone projects
- Final Case Studies

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