Review of Graduate Programs within the 
Department of Educational Psychology and Leadership 
College of Education, Texas Tech University 
April 25, 2011

Executive Summary:
On February 17 and 18, 2011, three external and three internal (TTU) reviewers met with William Lan, Department Chair, Hansel Burley, Associate Dean of Graduate Education and Research, Larry Hovey, Director of Assessment, Peggy Johnson, Acting Dean, program coordinators, faculty members, and graduate students within the Department of Educational Psychology and Leadership (EP&L) in the College of Education. For meetings with faculty and graduate students, the reviewers Chris Jenkins (external) and Melanie Hart (TTU) met only with Higher Education and Educational Leadership, while the external reviewers Joyce Moore and Terence Ahern along with the internal reviewers Jason Whiting and Gregory Mumma met with the Educational Psychology, Counselor Education, Special Education and Instructional Technology. This report includes evaluations by the three internal reviewers, but also represents a compilation and synthesis of the reports of the three external reviewers (Jenkins for Higher Education and Educational Leadership; Terence Ahern for Instructional Technology; Moore for Educational Psychology, Counselor Education, and Special Education). It is based on the above meetings, addition to the materials provided to the committee by the Graduate School (the self report of the Department of EP&L with yearly data for the period 2004 to 2009), and additional material furnished directly to the reviewers by the Department of EP&L. Unless a specific program (or programs) is indicated, it should be assumed that the evaluation and comments apply to all programs within EP&L.

Program Overview and Vision
All six programs reviewed offer both doctoral and master’s degrees. All six programs offer the M.Ed. degree. For the doctoral degree, Counselor Education and Educational Psychology offer the Ph.D. whereas Educational Leadership, Instructional Technology, and Special Education offer the Ed.D. Higher Education offers specializations towards either doctoral degree. Several programs also offer Texas Graduate Certification (available in the areas of Applied Behavior Analysis, Autism, Dual Sensory Impairment, Mental Health Counseling, and Special Education Transition).

The faculty in all programs seem to be very collegial, and in general, supportive of the general expectations of Texas Tech University, which include increasing graduate student enrollment and the desire to reach tier one status. Specifically, during the review period, the faculty members have been very successful at increasing grant writing and funded research, while also generally recruiting and teaching larger numbers of graduate students. The review committee concurs with the conclusion of Dr. Moore that “The programs … seem to be functioning exceptionally well given these pressures.” However, input from faculty in several of the programs suggests they do not feel they have had a voice in producing these goals or a clear vision of how to assist the College of Education in reaching these goals. Further, although there is the goal to increase enrollment, the faculty do not perceive a significant desire or assistance from the administration to increase graduate student diversity. A general concern amongst faculty is that the University’s expectations are about numbers (e.g., student enrollment, funded external grants), whereas the faculty is concerned about the impact of these goals on maintaining the quality of professional training and development. Nevertheless, the committee believes the faculty members are doing what they can to assist in the overall University and College visions. The data provided by the Graduate School indicate the department’s graduate enrollment is increasing. Likewise, the faculty seems to perceive the University’s transition to an RCM model as positive. However, it is clear to the faculty as well as the review committee, that if these programs are to continue to grow, additional faculty lines need to be forthcoming.

The review committee was impressed with the sense of camaraderie within the Department, and understands the concerns of some faculty that this may be jeopardized with continued demands on faculty unless resources are also increased. Thus, administrators at various levels within the College and the
University need to provide the resources and support needed to sustain the goals of continued growth and faculty productivity.

The College of Education, specifically the Educational Leadership and Higher Education programs, is establishing itself as a leader in the area of distance education. The use of cohorts, or groups of students starting the program at the same time and progressing through the program together, is one technique they are using to establish this reputation. The faculty members feel this is a very important method to address the expectation of the university to increase enrollment while maintaining the quality of the instruction.

Within the department (i.e., across programs), there is a pattern of somewhat low long-term retention of senior faculty. Only four of the faculty members in the department have been at Texas Tech for 20 or more years, and only eight for 15 or more years. However, generally the faculty feel supported, and repeatedly mentioned that there are “no roadblocks” to tenure and promotion. They clearly perceived the change to a two-courses/semester teaching load as helpful. Additionally, a mentoring program to help guide faculty toward promotion to full professorship that existed between 1999 and 2004, was seen as helpful; however, the program was apparently discontinued due to decreased “administrative support”. Resuming the faculty mentoring program was discussed in the chair’s meeting and may be helpful. Although the reviewers were not able to delineate a comprehensive set of issues responsible for the somewhat low faculty retention, it appears that beyond the elimination of the mentoring program, the College of Education has not been able to make competitive counter-offers for senior faculty who have been offered positions elsewhere.

Program Specific Issues:

1) The Educational Leadership program experienced a decrease in enrollment during the past 2 years of the review period apparently due to competition from new or expanded programs from other universities in the area (e.g., Lubbock Christian University, Wayland Baptist University) and low-cost online programs (e.g., Lamar University). Although faculty members in the program did not seem to have clear plans regarding how to counteract this loss of students, they may benefit from examining ways to increase the competitiveness of their program without jeopardizing quality of training. For example, both the Educational Leadership and Higher Education programs seem to be excelling in distance education and how to integrate students living outside of the Lubbock area into a strong, rigorous program via distance/online/hybrid educational programs. The faculty members seem very supportive of each other in this endeavor.

2) In Higher Education, there is only one tenured professor. There are untenured assistant professors serving as program coordinators, which are very time-intensive positions.

Ratings:

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<th>Ed.D./Ph.D.</th>
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Faculty Productivity

Faculty members in the six programs are dedicated to working with each other and improving faculty productivity and the scholarly standards of the programs. Newer faculty felt that there was good support for the tenure process. Based on the information provided, faculty productivity has, on average, greatly increased from the last review period. Major strides in faculty productivity are evident, with almost three times the number of refereed publications generated by department faculty during the final year of the review period compared to the first year of this period. Likewise, the number of books or book chapters published almost doubled and presentations increased by over 50%. It is noteworthy that this strong publication record is evident despite continued faculty commitment to service-oriented duties and the addition of only a few faculty lines.

Faculty productivity also greatly increased during the review period in external awards. The number of external awards obtained by EP&L faculty increased by 50% over the review period. Funding
from these grants increased by 124%. The faculty appreciated college support for their research efforts, including the hiring of a full time statistics staff person, and grant writing staff support. The faculty seems to be doing an outstanding job absorbing the growth of students, and appear to be meeting the higher research expectations related to goal of becoming a national research university.

**General Issues:**

1) One issue that has the potential to limit scholarly productivity is the role of the program coordinators. These roles were uniformly seen as very time consuming and labor-intensive; they were reported to hinder faculty productivity. Although the coordinator roles are compensated with either additional stipend or a course release, it was the general consensus that there was a risk for burn out or frustration in those that hold these roles. Many program directors expressed a sense of lack of support, the need to do many things that are disruptive or time consuming, and that these duties do not contribute to their research or teaching productivity. Also, when this role is assumed by junior faculty, it is unclear the extent to which such service is valued for tenure of promotion. A much needed remedy to the intense demands of the program coordinator positions would be administrative support person(s) who could assume much of the more mundane and non-academic functions of the program coordinators.

2) An issue mentioned by a number of faculty members across programs was a large amount of time spent on student recruitment. a) Faculty were unsure of the extent to which their efforts in this area counted toward tenure and promotion, and clarification of this issue would be helpful. b) Department faculty would benefit from additional support for student recruitment. Consideration should be given to obtaining a full time staff person who could work on student applications and recruitment. Apparently, the Department of Curriculum and Instruction has such recruiters and advisors, whereas the Department of EP&L does not. Obtaining such support is important so that faculty can continue to pursue their successful scholarly work.

3) Many faculty members expressed a sense of being overwhelmed in terms of their varying duties. Some of the junior faculty worried about the emphasis for external funding, and whether it would be adequately valued during promotion and tenure reviews. Specifically, they felt like the time invested in getting grants would preclude them from producing other publications. a) Clarification of the extent to which efforts to pursue grants are weighted in the tenure and/or promotion process would be helpful, particularly if such efforts translate into fewer peer-reviewed publications. A specific suggestion from the faculty was that grant writing and applications should be considered as scholarly activity (regardless of outcome in terms of such applications). This consideration seems reasonable to the review committee. b) Given the success of the Department in obtaining external funding during the review period, further expansion of grant support personnel to assist the faculty in administration of the ongoing grants and further increasing grant writing activities is likely to pay off by maintaining and increasing the level of grant support provided by the department faculty.

4) The advising, chairing, and serving on doctoral committees seems to be disproportionately carried by a few faculty members. It might be helpful to evaluate the impact of this on faculty productivity. For example, is there a positive or negative impact of service as dissertation chair on faculty publications?

**Program Specific Issues:**

1) Because of the nature of the student population in Educational Leadership and Higher Education (e.g., employed in schools or community colleges full-time), most of the graduate assistantships assigned to the faculty in these programs are from Educational Psychology. Because these graduate assistants have limited knowledge and experience in Educational Leadership and Higher Education, the effectiveness of the assistance from these graduate students may be diminished. Providing assistantships for the students in these programs should be considered.

2) Several programs, including Counselor Education, Special Education, and Educational Leadership, have their master’s or doctoral programs accredited by critically important national professional organizations, such as the Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation and Education
Professionals. Such activities place heavy demands on faculty time, especially that of the program administrators. Greater assistance and support on data collection and analysis from the College of Education Assessment Center would likely result in greater faculty productivity in these programs.

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**Graduate Students**

*Enrollment and degrees granted.* Graduate enrollment and degrees granted varies somewhat by program. For the M.Ed. degree, in Special Education the number of degrees granted tripled during the review period. In Counselor Education the number of M.A. degrees doubled between AY 2004-5 and 2005-6, then gradually declined by AY 2009-2010 to the 2004-2005 level. The number of doctoral degrees granted remained fairly constant during the review period for Counselor Education, Educational Psychology, Higher Education, and Special Education. A possible increase was apparent in Educational Leadership (although the number of doctoral degrees awarded from this program is small: 5 for each of the last two years of the review). The number of doctoral degrees in Counselor Education graduate enrollment has decreased steadily since 2004-2005. In an effort to increase enrollment, Counselor Education is collaborating with West Texas A&M to transition M.A. students from West Texas A&M into the Ph.D. program at Texas Tech. Also in an effort to increase enrollment, Educational Psychology has started its first cohort of students with an emphasis in School Psychology.

*Diversity.* College of Education, department, or program administrators did not mention diversity issues in student recruitment and enrollment as problematic. Nevertheless, data provided on some programs indicate that a relatively small percentage of Black and Hispanic applicants are ultimately enrolled in the program (e.g., For 2009: Educational Psychology: 13 minority applicants but only 1 student enrolled; Educational Leadership: 7 minority applicants but only 1 enrolled). The Department and/or specific programs may benefit from discussions of additional funding opportunities that may be available to recruit minority graduate students.

*Research productivity.* The research productivity of graduate students has increased dramatically during the review period. For example, student publications have increased from 2 in 2004-2005 to 54 in 2009-2010 while student presentations more than quadrupled between these two years. It is notable that this increase has occurred despite only modest increases (4%) in graduate student enrollment. The departmental faculty members are to be commended for their crucial role in this exceptional increase in graduate student research productivity. However, graduate students were concerned about the limited financial support ($300) for travel to conventions. Exploration of ways of enhancing travel support is important if graduate student productivity and representation at conventions is to be continued.

*Program outcomes and criteria:* Materials provided by the COE “Unit Assessment Report” show that program goals and objectives have been nicely delineated and criteria used to assess meeting of objectives nicely operationalized for each program and degree. For example, the M.Ed. in Special Education involves 10 outcomes. For each outcome, the methods used to evaluate the extent to which the outcome has been achieved are clearly stated. These criteria involve both internal program requirements such as the Comprehensive Exam or Dissertation study, or standardized exams developed by credentialing bodies (e.g., Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation and Education Professionals). The results of these assessment criteria are also clearly stated. Across programs and degrees, the vast majority of these criteria have been met during the review period. Although the review committee recognizes that this type of evaluation and monitoring is necessary for many of the programs to maintain certification, the accomplishments of the programs in these areas are all the more notable given the substantial increases in faculty productivity noted above that have occurred during this review period.
Employment outcomes. Program success in terms of initial job placement is difficult to assess given that the data reported were on a relatively small percentage of the students receiving degrees.

Student satisfaction with and perception of program and faculty. Discussions with graduate students suggested that graduate students were generally very satisfied with their programs. Students in applied programs appreciated the fact that faculty had practical/real world experience that was applicable to their fields. Graduate students generally perceive the quality of graduate-level instruction as very high. They also appreciate regular and positive communication between the faculty and graduate students and see the faculty as accessible and supportive. Graduate students from programs such as Educational Leadership were pleased that faculty treated them collegially and respected them as professionals who were already working in their fields. More generally, these students as well as students from programs requiring field placements in school setting appreciated the strong partnerships their programs had established with the local school districts.

Program Specific Issues:

1) Higher Education and Educational Leadership: The students at both the master’s and doctoral levels felt that more courses addressing research and academic writing should be included in the curricula. The usefulness of the educational psychology research course was perceived to be very limited. Students perceived that all of the examples given in the course were related to educational psychology with very limited mention of educational leadership or higher education research.

2) Higher Education and Educational Leadership: The students felt the cohort concept is very important, but at the same time felt additional instruction time should be spent at the off-campus sites (e.g., Hill Country). A few of the students feel the distance, because the courses typically originate from the Lubbock campus from rooms equipped with interactive videoconferencing (ITV). Some of the students feel there is a loss of some of the “human element” and a significant number of the students in one of the cohorts have not completed the program.

Ratings: M.Ed. Ed.D./Ph.D.
All Programs Very Good to Excellent Very Good to Excellent

Curriculum and Programs of Study

The degree requirements of the programs in the Department EP&L are sufficient. Overall, enrollment in graduate courses offered by the faculty in EP&L is solid, and is consistent with the general effort to increase graduate student enrollment in the departmental programs. Student evaluations of the graduate classes are above the university average for all years of the review. Overall, input from students indicates they feel positively toward, and well mentored by faculty members. Students in the programs felt adequately prepared for their coursework and were generally satisfied with the program curriculum.

Each program seems to have a firm grasp of how to integrate a blended course into the curriculum and how to successfully integrate online elements of instruction into the curriculum. The full-time working professionals in each program truly appreciated the flexibility of blended courses. These types of alternative styles of delivery have been shown to enhance enrollment as well as the student experience. Additionally, Educational Leadership has had a significant increase in the master’s degree program in the Hill Country and the doctoral program is beginning to see an increase.

Educational Leadership and Higher Education both have the philosophy that it is important for the students to have some flexibility in designing their programs of study. This allows for the students to match their experiences with their career plans. Some of the educational leadership graduate students were slightly frustrated with the balance between face-to-face instruction and online instruction, but were supportive of the notion of keeping at least some of the program in a classroom setting.
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Facilities and Resources

The College of Education moved into a new building in 2002 with classroom space, meeting space, and lab facilities. Based on the review committee’s tour of the facility, it was evident that the facilities are of very high quality. For example, there is a large classroom dedicated to interactive videoconferencing for distance education courses. Also, up-to-date technology, including SmartBoards, is available for instructional use. There was no mention of concerns about office space by either faculty or graduate students. The curriculum library was a very busy place with a very helpful staff. During the tour, the review team observed a professor recording a lecture and students performing research. The computer lab was fantastic. The resources available to students from a technology and curriculum standpoint are excellent.

Rating: Excellent for all programs.

Conclusion:

There has been tremendous growth in faculty and graduate student research productivity and external grant funding within the Department of Educational Psychology and Leadership during the review period. Although some problems exist, for the six master’s and six doctoral programs reviewed, this growth does not appear to be at the expense of the quality of the education and training of the graduate students. That said, there are a number of issues that will need to be addressed in the near future if the very positive trajectory evident during the review period is to continue.

General Issues and Recommendations:

1. Program coordinators: Despite some financial incentives, support for the faculty coordinating the six master’s and six doctoral programs is inadequate. Program coordination responsibilities are overburdening the involved faculty. Unless remedied, this problem will quite likely result in undesirable consequences such as reduced faculty productivity or teaching quality. We recommend redefining the functions and roles of the program coordinators so as to focus on the more academic training issues. Additional personnel need to be provided for administrative assistance to the program coordinators to lessen the amount of work presently required of these positions.

2. Graduate student recruitment: Faculty members are being asked to devote an unreasonable amount of time and resources to recruitment of graduate students. Much of this time is for activities that could be done by staff. a) We recommend that the department identify a graduate student recruitment strategy that limits the role of faculty. This plan should include diversity enhancement, a somewhat neglected issue within the department. Hiring an additional staff person(s) is necessary and strongly recommended. b) Graduate admissions would also benefit from improved communication from the Graduate School. Obtaining timely information on applicants is necessary.

3. Grant writing support. Provide further support for grant writing and grants administration by establishing a college-level grant and research support office, run by permanent staff. Given the research and grant writing trajectory of the department during the review period and the experience of other colleges that have done so, implementing such a program will quite likely further increase grant submissions and faculty productivity.
4. **Grant writing in tenure and promotion decisions.** Review the role of grant writing in tenure and/or promotion decisions at all levels. Faculty are devoting increasing efforts to this activity and they deserve clarity on the role of these efforts in tenure and/or promotion decisions.

5. **Graduate student enrollment and faculty lines.** As programs increase in graduate student enrollment, additional faculty lines will need to be added. As the university moves toward Tier 1 status and some of the programs in the Department move toward the Ph.D. rather than (or in addition to) the Ed.D., it will become increasingly important to have tenure-track and tenure faculty teach courses and be available to mentor graduate student research (as opposed to relying, in part, on full time, non-tenure-track instructors).

**Program Specific Issues and Recommendations**

1. *Educational Leadership* should identify strategies to compete directly with sub-par universities without sacrificing quality of instruction. Also, consider originating more of the instruction from the sites away from the Lubbock campus. This will assist with providing the “human element” and increase recruitment and retention.