

Detailed Assessment Report
2010-2011 Higher Education Administration EdD/PhD

Mission/Purpose

The Higher Education Administration program within the Department of Educational Studies and Research provides options for individuals interested in both administrative and faculty/research roles within post-secondary institutions. The program emphasizes the acquisition of skills and knowledge needed to perform effectively in various positions in higher education. Students seeking academic careers (e.g., scholarly study of higher education, university teaching, and policy analysis) are encouraged to take the Ph.D. track. Students seeking administrative positions (e.g., student affairs, institutional research and effectiveness, continuing education, and others) are encouraged to take the Ed.D. track. The program provides a foundation for graduates to generate new knowledge about post-secondary education and lead their organizations through visionary planning, strategic utilization of resources, effective motivation of employees, and practical application of research.

There has been unprecedented growth in universities, and higher education institutions are viewed as contributing to societal and economic growth. Growth in complexity and size of the administration of colleges and universities has prompted a need for professionally trained administrators who are knowledgeable of the structure, financing, legal issues, staffing, and administration of higher education organizations. Changes in the U.S. population have created more student diversity which in turn prompts a need for faculty and administrators to develop knowledge and skills in working with nontraditional students, returning veterans, disabled students, and students with multiple cultures and ethnicities. Increasing societal demands for accountability of educational institutions means that individuals with doctoral preparation in research, program evaluation, and assessment will be central to meeting this need. "Research in higher education and training in the art and science of administration and institutional leadership are critical to the future of the university" (Altbach, 2001, p. 2). The HE doctoral initiative contributes to USM's strategic plan in the following ways: (1) Climate for Academic Success: Creation of a climate supportive of diverse students that contributes to both academic and professional success, requiring high academic standards, and providing support for faculty and students in meeting them. (2) Image Development: By being engaged in research, faculty publish in peer-reviewed journals; make presentations at national/international conferences; serve on national boards of professional associations; and mentor students in the completion of dissertations, and submission of articles and presentations based on their research, as well as through a 3-part seminar that addresses preparing for, obtaining, and succeeding in an academic position. (3) Community Connections: Faculty interact with the community through making presentations and volunteering with community organizations including Habitat for Humanity, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, and Pine Belt Animal Shelter. Students engage with the community through internships and practica assignments in higher education settings. (4) Healthy Bodies, Minds, and Campuses: The Higher Education program hosts new student orientations, and social and advisement events for students.

Student Learning Outcomes, with Any Associations and Related Measures, Achievement Targets, Findings, and Action Plans

O 1: Context and Environment of Higher Education

Students will demonstrate knowledge of the context and environment of higher education.

Associations:

Council for the Advancement of Higher Education Programs, Association for the Study of Higher Education

Related Measures:

M 1: Research Paper on Innovations in Higher Education

IN HE 711: Higher Education in the United States, students will be assigned to write a paper regarding a current innovation in Higher Education. This paper will be assessed based on the following criteria: historical perspective, knowledge of the current innovation, knowledge of the literature, understanding of the implications of the research, and correct use of APA Style and Grammar.

Source of Evidence: Written assignment(s), usually scored by a rubric

Achievement Target:

Eighty-five percent of students will achieve a grade of B or better.

Findings (2010-2011) - Achievement Target: Met

100% (6/6) of students enrolled earned a grade of B or better.

M 2: In-Depth Study of Selected Higher Education Institution

In HE 711, students will write an original historical research paper about an in-depth study of one or more key aspects of a specific university or college of the student's choice. Papers are to be 15-20 pages in length and will be graded on a rubric of comprehension of issues in higher education, implications for management of higher education institutions, and anticipation of future trends, Papers must also meet APA Standards and use appropriate grammar and spelling.

Source of Evidence: Written assignment(s), usually scored by a rubric

Achievement Target:

Eighty-five percent of students will achieve a grade of B or better.

Findings (2010-2011) - Achievement Target: Met

100% (8/8) of students earned a grade of B or better.

O 2: Curriculum Development in Higher Education

Students will be able to describe and classify theories of curriculum development, as well as construct curricular models for higher education settings.

Associations:

Council for the Advancement of Higher Education Programs, Association for the Study of Higher Education

Related Measures:

M 3: Design Project in Curriculum Development in Higher Education

In HE 713: Curricula in Higher Education, students design and present a curriculum for a course or program including the provision of appropriate rationales, assessments, and alignment with institutional mission. Students will follow university guidelines for submitting a course/program proposal and will prepare a proposal for approval at each level (department, college, Academic Council for undergraduate courses or Graduate Council for graduate courses). Students are to refer to Academic Council or Graduate Council guidelines for further guidance.

Source of Evidence: Presentation, either individual or group

Achievement Target:

Eighty-five percent of students will achieve a grade of B or better.

Findings (2010-2011) - Achievement Target: Met

100% (23/23) of students enrolled in Summer 2010 achieved a grade of B or better.

O 3: Higher Education Finance

Students will demonstrate knowledge of funding sources in higher education and gain experience with budget development, resource allocation, and financial management in higher education institutions.

Associations:

Council for the Advancement of Higher Education Programs, Association for the Study of Higher Education

Related Measures:

M 4: Higher Education Finance Final Examination

Students will complete a final examination in HE 714: Higher Education Finance that addresses the following issues: budgeting, accounting, financial planning, and cost benefit and analysis in a higher education setting.

Source of Evidence: Writing exam to assure certain proficiency level

Achievement Target:

Eighty-five percent of students will achieve a grade of B or better.

Findings (2010-2011) - Achievement Target: Met

100% (13/13) earned a grade of B or better.

O 4: Legal and Ethical Practices in Higher Education

Students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of legal and ethical practices related to higher education and apply them to specific higher education case studies.

Associations:

Council for the Advancement of Higher Education Programs, Association for the Study of Higher Education

Related Measures:

M 7: Legal Issues in Higher Education Essay Examination

In HE 716: Legal Issues in Higher Education, students will complete an essay examination that requires that they demonstrate understanding of and application of legal and ethical practices related to higher education case studies.

Source of Evidence: Writing exam to assure certain proficiency level

Achievement Target:

Eighty-five percent of students will achieve a grade of B or better.

Findings (2010-2011) - Achievement Target: Met

100% (10/10) of students enrolled in Fall 2010 achieved a grade of B or better.

O 5: Human Resources in Higher Education (EdD only)

Students will be able to comprehend and apply the legal regulations and policies surrounding today's workforce in areas of employee relations, recruitment and selection, training, benefits, compensation, diversity, documentation, information systems and other related topics for public universities.

Associations:

Council for the Advancement of Higher Education Programs, Association for the Study of Higher Education

Related Measures:

M 8: Human Resources in Higher Education Final Examination (Ed.D. only)

Students will complete a final examination that addresses: 1) the different types of employees in higher education, 2) laws affecting employment in higher education (e.g., Equal Employment Opportunity, Rehabilitation Act, Americans with Disabilities Act, 3) recruitment and retention of staff and faculty, 4) mandatory employee benefits (e.g., Social Security, Workers' Compensation, and Family and Medical Leave Act) and voluntary employee benefits, 5) classification and compensation, 6) performance appraisal, and 7) discipline and grievance procedures

Source of Evidence: Writing exam to assure certain proficiency level

Achievement Target:

Eighty-five percent of students will achieve a grade of B or better.

Findings (2010-2011) - Achievement Target: Not Reported This Cycle

This data will be reported at the end of Summer 2011 semester.

O 6: Faculty Roles and Responsibilities

Students will be able to articulate and rank the importance of faculty roles and responsibilities as they are applicable to different types of higher education settings.

Associations:

Council for the Advancement of Higher Education Programs, Association for the Study of Higher Education

Related Measures:

M 6: Career Preparation in Higher Education

While enrolled in HE 777: The Professoriate, students will complete several assignments essential to obtaining a career in Higher Education: 1) a curriculum vitae, 2) a letter of application, 3) a presentation (research and/or teaching) required for most faculty interviews, and 4) a detailed career plan projecting specific activities in a minimum of four domains including teaching, research, service, professional development, and other (e.g., clinical, grant writing) for the next five years. Students are able to tailor the assignments depending on whether they plan on an administrative or academic career.

Source of Evidence: Project, either individual or group

Achievement Target:

Eighty-five percent of students will achieve a grade of B or better.

Findings (2010-2011) - Achievement Target: Met

100% (16/16) of students enrolled in Fall 2010 achieved a grade of B or better in the four class assignments in HE 777: The Professoriate that make up this measure.

O 7: Leadership in Higher Education

Students will be able to describe leadership theories relevant to higher education and categorize specific leadership practices according to those theories.

Associations:

Council for the Advancement of Higher Education Programs, Association for the Study of Higher Education

Related Measures:

M 9: Leadership in Higher Education Portfolio

Students will prepare a portfolio containing all HE800: Seminar in Higher Education Leadership course assignments and write a reflective paper that summarizes and synthesizes the seminar's goals and its experiences, discussions, readings, and activities. The paper serves as the introduction for the portfolio which includes hyperlinks (electronic portfolio) or appendices (paper) for all course assignments. Students may submit their portfolio in print, CD, or Blog Formats.

Source of Evidence: Portfolio, showing skill development or best work

Achievement Target:

Eighty-five percent of students will achieve a grade of B or better.

Findings (2010-2011) - Achievement Target: Met

100% (20/20) of students enrolled in Spring 2011 achieved a grade of B or better.

O 8: Current Trends, Issues, and Innovations in Higher Education

Students will be able to characterize and critique current trends, issues, and innovations in Higher Education institutions.

Associations:

Council for the Advancement of Higher Education Programs, Association for the Study of Higher Education

Related Measures:

M 10: Problems and Issues Paper

In HE 816: Seminar in Problems in Higher Education, students are assigned a research paper that must address a current problem or policy issue in higher education. The paper is scored with a rubric using the following criteria: addresses full scope of current problem in higher education, provides implications for research and practice, uses APA Style appropriately, is analytical, and

elaborates on what higher education can do to confront this issue.

Source of Evidence: Written assignment(s), usually scored by a rubric

Achievement Target:

Eighty-five percent of students will achieve a grade of B or better.

Findings (2010-2011) - Achievement Target: Met

100% (18/18) of students achieved a grade of B or better.

O 9: Student Diversity in Higher Education (PhD Only)

Students will be able to implement strategies for creating a culturally responsive learning environment in their teaching.

Associations:

Council for the Advancement of Higher Education Programs, Association for the Study of Higher Education

Related Measures:

M 5: Diversity Among Learners in Higher Education (Ph.D. only)

In HE 715: College Teaching, students will select a form of diversity from a prepared list, research and characterize that form of diversity, characterize the challenges this form of diversity poses in higher education, and formulate strategies for welcoming and accommodating this form of diversity within higher education classrooms. The specific focus of the assignment is how all students can be encouraged and supported in their learning. Students may choose to address differences among students based on the following: race, ethnicity,, gender, citizenship and country of origin, background (e.g., veterans, non-traditional students, first-generation students, geographical origins), sexuality (e.g., Bisexual, Gay, Lesbian, and Transgender), educational preparation, and learning styles.

Source of Evidence: Written assignment(s), usually scored by a rubric

Achievement Target:

Eighty-five percent of students will achieve a grade of B or better.

Findings (2010-2011) - Achievement Target: Not Reported This Cycle

This assessment measure will be implemented the next time HE 715: College Teaching is offered in Fall 2012.

O 10: Proficient Researcher Practitioners

Students will demonstrate the ability to design, implement, and analyze research in higher education.

Associations:

Council for the Advancement of Higher Education Programs, Association for the Study of Higher Education

Related Measures:

M 11: Comprehensive Examination

Upon the completion of their coursework, students will complete a comprehensive examination that is composed in two sections. Section One contains case study questions that students are to answer based on their knowledge of higher education administration, finance, human resources, etc. Section Two questions are directed toward the students' intended dissertation topic and are designed to further their thinking in preparation for writing a dissertation proposal.

Source of Evidence: Comprehensive/end-of-program subject matter exam

Achievement Target:

Ninety percent of students will pass comprehensive examinations on their first attempt. Students who do not pass on their first attempt will be allowed one written re-take, but they must wait until the next semester to do so.

Findings (2010-2011) - Achievement Target: Met

100% (7/7) of students have passed their comprehensive exams on the first attempt.

M 12: Dissertation Proposal

Students will prepare a proposal for their dissertation that has implications for the literature of Higher Education. The dissertation proposed will be an original piece of research with clearly defined research question(s) that are situated within relevant literature in Higher Education, an appropriate methodology, and plans for data analysis.

Source of Evidence: Senior thesis or culminating major project

Achievement Target:

Ninety percent of students will successfully defend a dissertation proposal on the first attempt.

Findings (2010-2011) - Achievement Target: Met

100% (6/6) of students successfully defended a dissertation proposal on the first attempt.

M 13: Dissertation

Higher Education students must prepare and defend a dissertation which represents an original research problem situated in Higher Education. The dissertation committee consisting of 4-5 faculty with graduate status evaluates the dissertation based on the following criteria: appropriate research question, appropriate use of literature, design and methodology, implantation of research design, analyses of findings, and appropriate implications for future research and practice.

Source of Evidence: Capstone course assignments measuring mastery

Achievement Target:

Ninety percent of students will successfully defend their dissertation on their first attempt.

Findings (2010-2011) - Achievement Target: Met

100% (2/2) of students successfully completed and defended their dissertation.

Action Plan Details for This Cycle (by Established cycle, then alpha)

Change in Comprehensive Examinations

Comprehensive examinations in the Higher Education Administration doctoral programs are composed of two sections: 1) case study questions that students answer based on their knowledge of higher education law, finance, human resources, administrative and leadership knowledge, etc., and 2) four questions directed toward students' dissertation topics. (Students may not take the comprehensive exams until they complete REF 889: The Dissertation Process in which they write a proposal for their dissertation. The program coordinator develops the section 2 questions based on this proposal). The goal is that more students will progress toward completing a dissertation proposal. This will be monitored to see if this goal is being met.

Established in Cycle: 2010-2011

Implementation Status: Planned

Priority: High

Implementation Description: The Program Coordinator constructs students' comprehensive examinations. She will monitor the students who pass their comprehensive examinations to determine the percent who successfully defend their dissertation proposal.

Completion Date: 07/31/2013

Responsible Person/Group: Program Coordinator

Differentiation of the EdD and PhD programs

Historically, there has been little difference between the Doctor of Education and the Doctor of Philosophy programs in Higher Education Administration. A program proposal was approved by Graduate Council in May 2010 (effective Fall 2010) that clearly differentiates the program requirements in terms of the Higher Education courses and also in the Research course requirements. The total number of credit hours was reduced from 78 hours to 69 hours for the Ph.D. and 66 hours in the Ed.D. program. (At the same time, two master's level courses that were formerly required were changed to prerequisites for the program so students who do not have the prereqs will take 75 hours for the Ph.D. and 72 hours for the Ed.D.) The Action Plan will monitor the results of this change to determine whether it was appropriate.

Established in Cycle: 2010-2011

Implementation Status: Planned

Priority: High

Implementation Description: The HE Advising Team will discuss this as a regular item on the agenda.

Completion Date: 07/31/2013

Responsible Person/Group: Program Coordinator and Department Chair

Increasing Academic Rigor

In the past many courses have been taught by adjunct faculty who have/have had major administrative roles at the university. While the administrative perspectives of these individuals are valuable, some of their teaching behaviors did not support academic rigor. Therefore, the program is making efforts to have more courses taught by full-time faculty in order to increase academic rigor. These faculty participate in the HE Advising Team where we have had regular discussions of increasing academic rigor. These include providing students with a strong theoretical background, introducing students to the research literature of the discipline, requiring critical analysis and synthesis of ideas, expecting strong writing skills (including use of APA Style, as well as correct punctuation and grammar), and using clearly articulated grading criteria.

Established in Cycle: 2010-2011

Implementation Status: Planned

Priority: High

Implementation Description: This will be monitored over the next two years.

Completion Date: 07/31/2013

Responsible Person/Group: Program Coordinator and HE Advising Team

Analysis Answers

What specifically did your assessments show regarding proven strengths or progress you made on outcomes/objectives?

Students are successfully completing the required coursework of the Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) and Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) program in Higher Education Administration and are progressing through the final stages of the program including comprehensive examinations and defending a proposal and final dissertation.

What specifically did your assessments show regarding any outcomes/objectives that will require continued attention?

The program's outcomes are newly established in this assessment cycle and will be monitored in the coming years. Program changes since a new program coordinator was appointed in Spring 2009 include 1) differentiating the PhD and EdD degree programs, 2) increasing the academic rigor in the program by having full-time faculty teach in the program rather than adjuncts whenever possible, and 3) changing the focus of the comprehensive exams so that more students are encouraged to successfully completing and defending a dissertation proposal. The effect of these changes will be of special interest in future assessment cycles.

Annual Reports

Program Summary

The HE doctoral initiative advances USM's mission as a comprehensive doctoral institution classified by the Carnegie Institution as having high research activity (R/UH) through: (1) provision of education that improves intellectual, economic and personal well being of students through intellectual inquiry and engagement with applied knowledge and theory in higher education settings; (2) success demonstrated by students who are able to actively engage with the higher education literature, demonstrate intellectual development and critical thinking, and assume professional behavior and responsibilities in higher education settings; (3) contribution to the growing body of research in higher education, demonstrated by active research and publication records among faculty and students; (4) engagement with democratic values including teaching respect for diversity and creation of democratic settings conducive to learning; and (5) service to the department, college, university, community, and the profession in the provision of academic and scholarly services. Enrollment in the program has been an average of 70 students enrolled on an annual basis. Of those, approximately 20% are in the Ed.D. program and 80% in the Ph.D. Ten of the enrolled students are new admits for Fall 2011 indicating that interest in the program remains steady.

Continuous Improvement Initiatives

The HE Doctoral initiative within the department of Educational Studies and Research has had a dedicated program coordinator since Spring 2009 who brings stability and consistency (the initiative's history has been dominated by frequent changes in coordination). One result is that currently enrolled students and individuals inquiring about the programs receive quick and accurate responses to their questions. Since her appointment, Dr. Hill has created an HE Advising Team to ensure consistency in advising and to contribute to curricular/assessment planning. Program changes include a proposal approved by Graduate Council in May 2010 (effective Fall 2010) to differentiate degree requirements for the Ed.D. and Ph.D. The curriculum change allows students to select among several options with the guidance of their advisor including: 12 hours of higher education electives, a 12 hour minor, a 15

hour certificate program, and for the Ph.D. only, an 18 hour teaching . Students are counseled by their advisor to make these decisions based on their background and career goals, and that the selection of some options will increase the number of credit hours needed to graduate. The changes also include strengthening the research portion in the Ph.D. and sharpening HE requirements in the Ed.D, making both programs more competitive with others in the region. Two master's level research courses that had been part of the previous curriculum were shifted to become prerequisites meaning that students who do not have these are required to complete these prior to undertaking the doctoral level research courses. This choice freed up room for the addition of more senior research courses. The addition involved courses in Program Evaluation and Tests and Measurement in the Ed.D. program and courses in Advanced Design, Multivariate Analysis, and a choice among Qualitative Research, Structural Equation Modeling, or Heirarchical Linear Modeling in the Ph.D. program. In addition to differentiating the Ed.D. from the Ph.D., the changes reduced the total credit hours required to earn both degrees from 78 hours to 69 hours for the Ph.D. and 66 hours for the EdD. Additional changes include (1) change in admissions criteria for the Community College Leadership certificate so that any qualified graduate students on campus may apply rather than admissions being restricted to people already enrolled in HE; (2) establishing a 3-year course rotation so that students can plan their course of study with more confidence; and (3) a change in comprehensive exams intended to increase the quality of students' written work and graduation rates. Long-term curricular plans are to create several emphases within the HE initiative including Teaching and Learning, Community College, and Higher Education Administration. The initiative also offers courses in alternative formats (including Saturday classes, hybrid, online) to meet the needs of our students, almost all of whom are employed full-time and/or live at a distance. The Program Coordinator anticipates the development of more fully online courses. Program coordinators and the department chair meet monthly to integrate course and faculty scheduling and to plan for the Department of Educational Studies and Research (ESR). In cooperation with other initiatives in ESR, plans are underway to better publicize and market HE initiatives through print media and the Internet. Easy to read Program at a Glance sheets have been developed and placed on the ESR website that quickly communicate program requirements and a brochure is in development.

Closing the Loop

Given that this Assessment Plan is newly established there is little to be said at this point. All Achievement Targets have been met. Nevertheless, several Action Plans have been put in place to reflect program initiatives: 1) a change in the comprehensive examinations, 2) differentiating the Ed.D. and Ph.D. programs, and 3) increasing academic rigor. The effectiveness of these changes will be reflected on several times over the next two years.