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**Doctoral Program in Higher Education Leadership
Department of Higher, Adult, and Counselor Education (HACE)
College of Education
Academic Program Review, 2012-2013
Response to Recommendations of the On-Site Review Committee**

The Department of Higher, Adult, and Counselor Education and Higher Education Leadership faculty in particular wish to thank Dr. Adrienne E. Hyle (University of Texas – Arlington), Dr. Katherine Chaddock (University of South Carolina), and Dr. Beth Velde (East Carolina University) for their service as external reviewers of our doctoral program. The diligence, expertise, and insights they brought to the task will be of enormous benefit as we seek to enhance the overall quality of our program's offerings in the years ahead. We are grateful for the opportunity presented by this review to build on the strengths and successes identified by the committee members and to address challenges and concerns. Below, we respond to the review committee's recommendations by indicating any related actions that have been completed or will be completed by program faculty in the near future.

Recommendation 1: Increase communication to enhance program reputation/visibility

The Higher Education faculty have strengthened communication with constituencies inside and outside of the ECU Community. A new website for higher education has been drafted and will be functioning by March 1, 2013. The web update includes a modification of the faculty/staff accolades form to highlight the successes of our students. Faculty will utilize space on the HACE main page designated for this purpose. The College of Education has created hard copy and electronic promotional materials for all graduate programs. The Higher Education faculty, in conjunction with Counselor and Adult Education faculty, have ordered hard and electronic copy tenure announcements for faculty across all three programs to be disseminated to peer institutions as well as other institutions in the UNC system. This tenure announcement is being considered a new departmental tradition that will further promote all of our programs and associated faculty. The Higher Education faculty are considering a Facebook page and will create a weekly higher education newsletter, including national higher education news and research, beginning Summer 2013. The faculty will continue to utilize the College's accolades system to promote faculty success and will seek strategic opportunities to serve the university community in an effort to promote the department's work.

However, the faculty are concerned about the lack of a dedicated staff member at the College level designated to promote faculty, maintain the website, and assist with promotional materials. The faculty are equally concerned about the strain on staff support at the departmental level and the inability to employ graduate student assistance to maintain our web presence. Furthermore

faculty are concerned about workloads and the distribution of labor as the number of faculty effectively working in the department is fewer than the number of faculty assigned, a particular burden given our small size. Currently, one faculty member is on a medical leave of absence.

Recommendation 2: Refine and document a clear cohort and course delivery model

Cohort Locales and Composition

With regard to the reviewers' recommendations concerning a clear cohort and course delivery model, we have undertaken a number of measures to address this matter and are actively considering others. In terms of future cohort recruitment and composition, the faculty have developed an enrollment plan that seeks new cohorts of approximately 15 students each in Fall 2013 and Fall 2015, with additional cohorts of 15 students to be admitted in the fall of every other academic year beyond 2015, assuming adequate staffing levels. Tentatively, the Fall 2013 cohort is projected to draw students from institutions in the eastern-southeastern corridor of the state, with the first semester of courses to be held on the ECU campus and subsequent class meetings to be held at other venues in the region on a rotating basis based on the preferences and conveniences of those enrolled (using the same model of rotation in place in our Triangle Cohort).

During the summer of 2013, the program will conduct an in-depth market analysis of the professional development needs and particular challenges faced by historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) in North Carolina, with an eye toward the creation – in Fall 2015 – of an “executive cohort” of doctoral students sourced directly from the HBCU sector. With funding support from the College of Education, our plan is to engage the services of a consultant with expertise in HBCU issues to help the program design a customized experience beyond the standard course of study offered to other cohorts. Decisions about the location(s) of face-to-face class meetings will be made on the basis of findings from the market analysis. Another market analysis is planned for 2014 in the Charlotte region to determine the feasibility of starting an executive cohort in that area.

Course Rotation

The highest priority in developing faculty teaching schedules is always given to putting the right instructor in the right class (i.e., making sure that faculty teach their expertise), but this practice also virtually guarantees that students will potentially interact with a limited number of professors during a given year. In order for students to receive the benefit of more interactions with the full faculty, we will initiate a series of extracurricular seminars (on topics to be determined) to be hosted by the entire faculty and delivered once each term, with seminar locations rotating among the cohorts (for example, at UNCP in the spring, at ECU during the summer, and in the Triangle in the fall). Seminar discussions might address the future of public support for the liberal arts, the massive open online course (MOOC) revolution and its implications for postsecondary education, and the corporatization of higher education. These seminars will also facilitate greater student contact with an expanded roster of potential

dissertation advisors, methodologists, and committee members, which will aid in distributing responsibility for dissertation advising. Along similar lines, a practice approved and adopted by program faculty places a limit on the number of active dissertations (8) that faculty can chair in any semester.

On-line and/or Face-to-Face Delivery

Given the appeal of our current blended delivery model in which half of instruction is face-to-face and half is online, we do not anticipate any near-term changes to this format. Faculty will continue to consider and discuss the merits of a creative alternative to our traditional practice of alternating semesters (face-to-face in the fall, online in spring, face-to-face in the first summer session, online in the second summer session).

Efficient Course Delivery

We welcome continued discussions with others in the College to consider a co-enrollment model (combining doctoral students from higher education and K-12, for instance) for select courses, including the four courses in the research sequence. We continue to modify the internship experience, including more of an emphasis on research-based projects that might result in a publishable or presentable work or that relate directly to the student's planned dissertation research.

Clear Dissertation Guidelines

Dissertation guidelines are now clearly delineated in Section IV of the Doctoral Student Handbook, which is in the final stages of editing and will be made available in electronic format on the program website. The target date for full dissemination of the Handbook is April 1, 2013. Additionally, dissertation guidelines – including the roles and responsibilities of candidates and their committee members – are described in detail in LEED 8440, which is the doctoral program's capstone research course. Committee composition guidelines were amended in late 2012 and are now in practice to allow for greater involvement by faculty outside the HACE and LEED departments in the interest of enhancing dissertation rigor through the contribution of multidisciplinary perspectives.

Enrollment of Non-Cohort Students

Program faculty continue to discuss the advisability of admitting doctoral students to the program outside of the traditional cohort model. Curriculum revisions submitted by the program in January 2013 reflect a proposed change in some course prerequisites to allow students not enrolled in a cohort program to take courses with the approval of the program faculty. We anticipate no changes to our practice of recruiting and admitting students with substantial leadership/administrative experience (approximately 3 to 5 years) in the postsecondary setting, as we believe that this background maximizes the overall learning experience of enrolled students.

Higher Education Leadership Conceptualized Across Contexts and Environments

Through rigorous scholarship and leadership preparation, the program aims to build the capacity of postsecondary education institutions and systems – including public and private colleges and universities, community colleges, and other academic organizations – to more effectively address contemporary and emerging social challenges and serve the public good. The broad scope of this mission statement, encompassing a full range of institutional types and profiles, is reflected in coursework, class discussions, and the composition of our cohorts.

New Courses/Concentrations

Program faculty will continue to review possibilities for new/innovative course offerings in an effort to expose students to the latest developments in higher education studies. Most immediately, a fixed-term faculty member with experience in the community college sector is drafting a proposal for a new course on the community college.

Input From Advisory Groups

We are in the process of constituting an advisory group composed of graduates, internal constituents, and external partners representing various institutional types. The inaugural meeting of the group is scheduled for April 2013.

Recommendation 3: Create a strategic action plan for the program

Higher Education Leadership faculty will hold a retreat between the spring and summer terms for purposes of developing a strategic action plan for the program, one that will build on the foundation set by our self-study and the academic program review. We are in the process of reviewing and selecting external consultants who will assist our faculty in the refinement of our vision, mission, goals, metrics, and quality improvement strategies. One of the features of this retreat will be a discussion of Barbara Kellerman's *The End of Leadership* (2012), which questions traditional assumptions about leadership and takes educators and trainers to task for failing to deliver program content reflective of a general trend toward more inclusive leadership. We will consider some of Kellerman's recommendations for designing leadership preparation better suited to contemporary challenges facing the education enterprise, business, government, and the nonprofit sector.

The Higher Education program has already redesigned its governance structure so that leadership responsibility is more broadly distributed across the faculty. While the position of program coordinator is filled at the current time by a single individual, all faculty members share responsibility for various aspects of program administration. This change has already resulted in vastly improved efficiency and effectiveness, even as it has required an additional commitment of time by a thinly stretched faculty.

Finally, the Departments of Higher, Adult, and Counselor Education (HACE) and Educational Leadership (LEED) will engage in structured, facilitated discussions this term concerning the

feasibility of merging our two departments in order to realize cost savings and pursue complimentary academic goals. These discussions are at an early and informal stage, but they will be accelerated and formalized in the very near term.

In closing, we again express our sincere thanks to the external review committee for its constructive feedback. We have taken seriously the committee's recommendations for program enhancement, and we look forward to continuing our work in support of an improved experience for our students, faculty, and stakeholders.