



# M.A. Higher Education Administration Program Review 2017-18

Closing MOU

August 14, 2018

## Overview

**Degree Program Reviewed:** M.A. Higher Education Administration (formerly, M.A. Educational Leadership)

**Department Chair & Dean:** Diane Barone, Director (outgoing)  
Maryann Demchak, Director (incoming)  
Ken Coll, Dean

**External Reviewers & Affiliation:** Dr. Paul Umbach, Professor, College of Education, North Carolina State University  
Dr. Edith Hernandez, Associate Vice President, Community Engagement and Diversity Initiative, Nevada State College

**Date of External Visit:** October 23-24, 2017

## Review Process Summary

The M.A. in Higher Education Administration (formerly, Educational Leadership) program was scheduled for regular program review as mandated by the Board of Regents and University policy. A self-study document for the program was developed by the director and faculty and completed in early Fall 2017. The report was provided to two reviewers before they conducted an on-campus visit on October 23-24, 2017. The external reviewers reviewed the program and met with relevant faculty, staff, students and administrators to determine the program’s accomplishments, examine strengths and weaknesses, and identify opportunities as it plans for the future. A final report was issued by the site visitors shortly after the review visit. In accordance with institution practice, responses to the review were solicited from the program. A final meeting of all parties took place on July 18, 2018. This document represents the final MOU of recommendations and findings from the review.

## Signatures

Executive Vice President &  
Provost:  
Vice Provost, Undergraduate  
Education:

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Joseph I. Cline Date: Aug 15, 2018

*Joseph I. Cline*

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## Major Findings and Conclusions

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1. There is a high demand for a master's program in this subject area, and the program fills an important local need for early career professionals from TMCC and UNR.
2. The UNR Athletics Department uses the program, and other educational leadership programs, as a recruitment tool to attract/retain early career professions; Student Services also uses it as a recruitment tool.
3. The current diversity of the student body is strong.
4. The program offers flexibility in the sequencing of courses needed by students, and courses are offered in the evening to meet the needs of employed students.
5. The program name has already been changed to clearly distinguish it. In addition, certain program entrance and completion requirements need to be examined for needed changes.
6. The program needs to make improvements in the advising and orientation provided to students and should consider professional development activities for students to increase their sense of belonging to the college and program.
7. There were some recommendations regarding the curriculum that have already been implemented or are being considered.
8. The program leadership has already implemented many positive changes. There is a need for comprehensive and strategic planning to guide the program for the next 4 or 5 years.

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## Next Steps for this Program/Department

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1. Program Name. Change this MA program name to clearly distinguish it from the Master of Education in Educational Leadership.

This process was begun shortly after the review visit. The program name change to the M.A., Higher Education Administration received final approval at the June 6, 2018, NSHE Academic Affairs Council meeting and is being implemented.

The UNR General Catalog descriptions for both of the programs need to be updated. Both catalog descriptions contain generic text that is applicable to both programs and should be revised to be specific to the program. Additionally, the catalog description for the Ph.D. in Education program is co-mingled with a description of the Ed.D. program. As discussed at the closing meeting, these catalog descriptions need to be clarified and individually tailored to each program.

2. Program Tracks. Given the utilization of the MA program by students involved in intercollegiate athletics, it was suggested by the reviewers that the program develop a designated focus area in this. The program has developed a suggested course sequence for students interested in focusing their coursework on athletics and will consider whether something more formal is feasible in this and other areas.

The program's advising manual has been updated to identify program required courses, other courses available to fulfill program requirements, when those courses will be offered over the next three academic years, and 2- and 3-year plans for completion with different topic areas. The Graduate School will be requiring these handbooks for all graduate programs, which will be vetted through the Curriculum process, and be included in the catalog next year.

3. Recruiting and Advising. The external reviewers provided a number of recommendations to improve the quality of students recruited into the program and to more effectively manage enrollment and advising of the students. The program has addressed several of the recommendations contained in the evaluation report. These include:
  - a. Shifting to a once each semester admit policy;

- b. Raising the undergraduate GPA expectation to 3.0;
- c. No longer using LOAs for advising;
- d. Recalibrating advising loads among full-time faculty;
- e. Setting a regular schedule for collection of student progression and success data;
- f. Hosting a department specific orientation for all incoming students; and
- g. Establishing a more strategic relationship with the Division of Student Services by including the Vice President for Student Services [or a designee] on the program's Advising Committee.

The program indicates it will identify recruiting targets for the total number of students in the program, the number of students in the athletics sequence, and the number of students with a student affairs focus, and track those numbers as the program grows. In addition, it should identify targets and track data for student time-to-degree and student completion. The program should pursue its interests in exploring the recruitment of students from other northern NSHE institutions and from the Sacramento area and the viability of offering courses online.

4. Curriculum. The external reviewers provided recommendations on the program requirements and the need to explore the sequencing and availability of courses, the expertise of faculty teaching courses, the improvement of student writing skills, and the internship experience. The dean's response described how the program has addressed these recommendations, including:
- a. Minimizing use of LOAs for the program so that courses are now taught by regular academic faculty with expertise in the course topic. (The program expects to use no LOAs in Fall 2018);
  - b. Aligning program needs with faculty searches, so that regular faculty with expertise are available to teach necessary courses in accordance with the schedule in the new advising manual. (This was done with the last two tenure-track faculty hires and will be done in a search planned for 2018-19);
  - c. Reviewing the core requirements. (The required courses were reduced from 7 to 6, and one of them is an introductory research class as recommended by the reviewers.)

The program faculty have conducted an audit of student internship experiences and will begin to work collaboratively to revise the internship experience. In addition, they are advised to look at the Internship, Service-Learning and Civic Engagement Policy in University Administrative Manual 3,100 to ensure the program's internship experiences are in compliance with university policy. If additional internship or assistantship sites are needed, the program is reminded of the recommendation to check with offices on campus for possible opportunities.

The program leadership reports that faculty have begun collaborating on ways of improving student writing throughout program coursework and implementing changes. Faculty are also advised to consult with Prof. Bill Macauley, Director of Composition and Communication in the Disciplines, for additional recommendations on how to strengthen the presence of writing in the curriculum through the use of various methods within courses, internship reflections, the comprehensive examination, and the thesis (for those students who elect that option).

5. Building a Sense of Community. The reviewers reported that students wished to see more program activities for professional development and to increase their "sense of belonging." In addition to a student orientation and group advising, arranging a seminar series or professional brown bag sessions for students was discussed, and the program will explore these.
6. Student Data, Student Success, Academic Assessment, Diversity. The external reviewers provided a number of recommendations in these areas, and there is a need to comply with UNR academic assessment expectations. The following work, already begun, will continue:
- a. Tracking alumni employment/placement/progression more exhaustively;
  - b. Setting targets for enrollment and progression (mentioned previously) and tracking and evaluating these metrics;

- c. Evaluating FTE versus enrollment (This is closely related to progression); and
  - d. Setting targets for diversity and tracking the targets.
7. Program Strategic Planning. A planning document for this program (as well as the Ph.D. program) should be prepared to guide the program faculty and leadership in the “build out” of the program over the next 3-5 years. The areas that should be addressed include the following:
- a. Program vision. The program leadership has taken several steps to add a rigorous academic foundation to the current professional development focus of the program. The planning document should expand upon this vision and the goals and objectives it will use to further it.
  - b. Program growth. Identify recruitment and enrollment targets for manageable growth of the program in line with the vision and link those to:
    - Expectations/desires in each focus area, including diversity;
    - Desired time-to-degree and completion rates;
    - Methods for achieving the targets.
  - c. Faculty growth. The program has already shifted from a reliance on LOAs to instruction of program courses by full-time faculty. It already has planned its next faculty hire to fulfill program needs. The planning document should predict its next 2-3 needed faculty hires, particularly in the event of any known retirements and increased advising and mentoring and with its enrollment and recruitment targets determined. Likewise, it would be useful to plan how shifting courses to online or hybrid courses will play a role in addressing program growth and instructional needs.
  - d. Program leadership. The program has a new director as of July 1, 2018. The plan should address how the program envisions handling its leadership in the next 3-5 years and ensure that steps are being planned to prepare future leaders for this role.
8. There is an expectation that tenured faculty in all colleges and departments continue to build a portfolio of scholarly work following achievement of tenure so as to move successfully through the promotional ranks to full professor. The college and program leadership should monitor and support progression of associate professors in required progress toward promotion.

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### Vital Statistics on NSHE Reports

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#### Educational Leadership, M.A.

Number of students with declared major in the program area 2015-16:	70
Number of graduates from the program, 2015-16:	32
Number of graduates from the program, 2016-17:	29
Number of graduates from the program, 2017-18	32
Headcount of students enrolled in any course related to the program (duplicated):	577*

\*Because the College of Education does not use departments in their official academic structure, courses were calculated using the subject prefix *EL*.