

## **Education Policy Studies**

### **Overarching Strategic Goals**

#### **Reducing Disparities in Opportunities and Performance for All Students**

We seek to promote research that reduces inequality across a broad age range and across national boundaries. Specific programs of research which will contribute to this include:

- Rural populations in the U.S. and abroad
- Law, civil rights, and the impact of education
- Social stratification: causes and exacerbating factors and the role of education
- Coordination of K-12 and higher education
- Local districts, charters, private schools, and their inter-linkage

#### **Embracing Diversity in the University**

We seek to develop the coordinated development of multiple on-line, residential and blended programs that will attract a broad range of students from under-represented groups as well as international students. Specific actions include:

- Develop the AILP program through possible use of on-line programs
- Increase amount of video, blended learning in current programs
- Highlight ongoing faculty and student research on social inequality and reducing inequality
- Integrate scholarly work with on-going university and college efforts (e.g., campus diversity committees).

#### **Encourage Policy-Relevant Research**

We seek to integrate considerations of policy (from the local to the international) in all our research. From historical analyses to financial perspectives, all academic work in the department has policy implications which can be made more explicit. In addition we will:

- Develop a web presence that conveys faculty and student work in ways meaningful to policy makers
- Develop networks of alumni who work in governments, agencies, or other organizations that develop or advocate for policy development

#### **Expand our Multidisciplinary Components**

We seek to broaden and improve the methods and theories we use and pass on to our students. We propose to:

- Showcase to colleagues across the university in diverse fields how our research can assist or augment their work.
- Investigate how our researchers can provide analytic or evaluation skills on multi-team research projects.
- Communicate a willingness to consult with other scholars working on social disparities in order to provide expertise on analyzing the educational component.

**EPS Strategic Plan**  
**Draft: February 4, 2014**

Each program has provided responses to the initial queries from the dean's office. On February 7<sup>th</sup>, we will discuss cross-cutting themes, and create an integrated plan.

**HIED**

Question 1. In view of your unit's history and the evolving nature of your work, what different directions (mixes of themes) are you considering for your future? For each possible direction you identify, please indicate the reasons and your sense of opportunities and challenges.

- 1) We are focused on three elements (a) expanding enrollments in our Master's program; (b) improving the quality of Master's and Doctoral programs; (c) improving the efficiency of our programs by eliminating time-intensive administrative practices.
  - a. We are transforming the former College Student Affairs (CSA) program into a M.S. in HIED with an emphasis on Student Affairs. The planned changes will lead to larger cohorts of students, fewer program-exclusive (and low attendance) classes, reduced administrative costs, and greater connections of student affairs education to CSHE research. As an M.S. degree, the program is expected to stand out nationally among student affairs focused programs and aid us in attracting high quality applicants.
  - b. We are adjusting our M.Ed. program to reduce costs while enhancing student experiences. We have replaced a time-intensive Master's paper that met the needs of few of our students with a e-portfolio-based capstone experience that better allows students to focus on career development.
  - c. We are developing a World Campus version of the M.Ed. program and are on pace to admit our first cohort of students by Fall 2014. To promote enrollment, we plan to steadily expand the number of areas of emphasis within our on-line M.Ed. to allow us to capture a larger share of the student population in a number of professional niches. For each area of emphasis, we will work with other units to jointly develop classwork or utilize existing on-line classes. Furthermore, we will look for opportunities to create additional certificate programs (beyond our Institutional Research (IR) certificate) that can further promote enrollment growth. By working with CSHE, we hope to realize many of the opportunities present in online education in an innovative manner. Such certificates may include:
    - i. Academic Advising (with Division of Undergraduate Studies)
    - ii. Online Learning Administration (with World Campus, Adult Education and Learning Design Technology)

- iii. Teaching and Learning (with World Campus, Schreyer, and Graduate School)
  - iv. Higher Education Law (with Penn State Dickinson School of Law)
  - v. Development and Philanthropy (with CLA)
  - vi. Institutional Research (with OPIA)
  - vii. Enrollment Management
  - viii. Student Affairs (building upon the infrastructure created by our residential MS)
  - d. For our doctoral program, we are planning to
    - i. Adjust core course requirements and offerings to better reflect the strength of our faculty (which has changed rapidly in recent years) and the interests of our students.
    - ii. Better distinguish our Ph.D. and D.Ed. programs to make the latter more attractive to professionally-focused students.
  - e. In partnership with the CSHE, we wish to expand the Academic Leadership Academy and help its successful transition as the founder (Bob Hendrickson) moves into retirement. Our goal is 60 participants a year, which we are approaching thanks to steady growth in recent years.
- 2) As described in substantial detail within the CSHE strategic planning report, the HIED faculty are seeking to organize research efforts around key areas of interest that will (i) produce prominent academic research; (ii) be of interest to external funders; (iii) align with the interests/passions of the faculty; (iv) be distinctive from focus areas at other universities; and (v) be sustained over time in terms of a series of research projects. The CSHE report presents our current thinking on the areas of greatest promise given the strengths of our faculty and the external opportunities available.

Question 2. What is your preferred direction for the future and why?

Our preferred direction is to move forward in each of the areas described in our answer to question 1. Given the ambitious nature of our plans, we are focused on moving these plans forward in a systematic manner that produces a sustained level of success.

Question 3. To what degree does consensus exist around the pursuit of this preferred direction within your unit? If there are “minority” positions within your department or unit, what are they and how are you addressing the differences of opinion?

The majority of the higher education budgetary faculty have approved this plan.

Question 4. What are the concrete next steps you wish to take? Short term (next two years); longer term (> 2 years)

Our concrete next steps include:

1. Successfully moving our first M.S. cohort through to graduation in spring 2015, which requires the development of a research-based capstone project that is conducted in partnership with the Division of Student Affairs, OPIA, Undergraduate Education, and CSHE.
2. Successfully instituting our new e-portfolio based capstone experience for our current cohort of residential M.Ed. students.
3. Admitting our first World Campus cohort for fall 2014.
4. Further develop the number of areas of emphasis within the M.Ed. and when fruitful, tie those areas of emphasis to new certificates.
5. As the turnover in our faculty becomes complete, rethink the coursework underlying our doctoral program and the distinction between the Ph.D. and D.Ed.
6. In partnership with CSHE, institute a new leadership team for the Academic Leadership Academy during the 2014-15 academic year. Seek to sustain the steady enrollment growth observed over the last four years.
7. Build reputation and infrastructure in the areas of emphasis identified in the CSHE planning process so that we become the premier university for research in this area. Target specific funding opportunities to help support this work.

Question 5. What are the budget implications?

A byproduct of our efforts to improve and expand our educational efforts is a strengthening of our economic situation. Given the budgeting formulas employed by Penn State, the Academic Leadership Academy and World Campus will both increase revenue for the college.

Question 6. What does your unit wish to be known for in the future?

- 1) To continue the standing and reputation we have achieved allowing for the fact that essentially we have a new faculty whose work, including our newest members whose work builds on these strengths and includes new areas of focus that will allow us to continue to attract and support a diverse and competitive student body.
- 2) A place for PSU to go to consult/undertake research on an institutional level.
- 3) A top program nationally and internationally that prepares future leaders in the challenging field of higher education and reflect an approach to the study of higher education that is interdisciplinary.

The EDLDR program has in the past few years faced challenges: a) building cohorts of graduate students who are able to compete for department and college-level assistantships; b) perform comparably within classes with students from other programs within the EPS Department, and; c) complete rigorous and top-quality dissertations. How do we, as an EDLDR program, attract and admit larger numbers of talented and exceptional graduate students and simultaneously increase the rigor of our instruction and mentoring to graduate students? Some suggestions coming from the committee that reviewed the doctoral program suggest:

- Implement a vigorous recruitment process that is coordinated with other programs in the dept.
- Coordinate more with the AILP program and perhaps also reach out to HBCUs
- Aggressively recruit faculty from under-represented groups in future searches
- Promote research related to interests of students from under-represented groups.
- Improve and formalize the pro-seminar
- Clarify and revise the handbook to give students a better sense of EDLDR.
- Consider aligning candidacy and comprehensives with other dept. programs.
- Work to integrate students more into the overall dept.

### **AILP**

As far as the AILP and the Center goes we should continue to develop the goals we have already set for the April event and the Search.

- Clarify distinction between academic and administrative position
- Reach out to alumni for feedback and consultation
- Determine how best to work with and serve Native communities as they build their own educational systems.
- Recruit more PhD students from NA/AI backgrounds and support their integration into the department.

### **EDTHP**

Question 1. In view of your unit's history and the evolving nature of your work, what different directions (mixes of themes) are you considering for your future? For each possible direction you identify, please indicate the reasons and your sense of opportunities and challenges.

- Build more IUG students from EPP
- Build a pipeline for EPP students from Butler Community College
- Refine credit requirements for doctoral degree

- Consider building curriculum disciplinary areas to include philosophy, politics and economics of education

Question 2. What is your preferred direction for the future and why?

- Strengthen research in our mix of disciplinary areas
- Pursue funded research in these areas
- Improve recruitment
- Strengthen training for graduate students

Question 3. To what degree does consensus exist around the pursuit of this preferred direction within your unit? If there are “minority” positions within your department or unit, what are they and how are you addressing the differences of opinion?

- 100%

Question 4. What are the concrete next steps you wish to take? Short term (next two years); longer term (> 2 years)

- Invite students to talk about directions and needs for strengthening the program
- Talk to recent grads about their experience in the program
- Generate an exit survey

Question 5. What are the budget implications?

- Could use more money or course-off to conduct surveys, analyze data, and consult about strengthening the program

Question 6. What does your unit wish to be known for in the future?

- Doing good work
- Strong placement of program graduates
- Strong fundable research
- Attracting a wide diversity of students nationally and internationally

**EPP** is an example of a way to broaden the mission of the college. To boost enrollment, innovative ways of thinking are needed since the traditional recruitment tools such as Spend a Summer Day are not effective for a discovery major. So finding innovative ways to market EPP (and perhaps Rehab as well), including:

- -articulation agreements with community colleges
- -expanding IUG program to non honors students
- -ongoing proactive communication with DUS and other units

In addition, we need to find more systemic ways across our programs and including EPP to cultivate alumni better in terms of providing internships to our new students, reasons for them to return, donor opportunities.