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Ed.D. Cohort Connection

The Official Newsletter of the Ed.D. in Interdisciplinary Educational Studies • C.W. Post Campus of Long Island University

From the Program Director



I hope that this semester went well for you. It is very exciting to be completing the second year of our doctoral program. As a matter of fact, we are currently reviewing applications for the fall 2011 semester.

There are several updates that are important for you to know. First, registration for summer 2011 has begun. You may register online **(go to My.LIU.edu)**. You may also begin to register for fall 2011.

This past semester, the Executive Committee and the Dean approved the information regarding Dissertation Chairs and Committees; Digital Portfolios; and Written and Oral Comprehensive Exams. Detailed information for each of these topics is contained in this newsletter. Please go over the information carefully. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me or any member of the Executive Committee. You will be kept informed throughout the dissertation process.

In addition, we are in the process of completing a Dissertation Manual. As soon as it is completed and approved, copies will be available for you. Also, a list of faculty and their areas of interest is being prepared by the Dean's Office. Once again, as soon as it is completed and approved, copies will be available.

As always, you will be receiving e-mails from Joan McCarthy about upcoming events (such as dissertation proposal reviews from the doctoral program in Information Studies and conferences). Please check your e-mail regularly.

Finally, there will be an end of the semester get together on Monday, May 2 at 4:00 p.m. in Room 309 of the B. Davis Schwartz Memorial Library.

On behalf of the doctoral faculty, I wish you continued success.

Paula Lester

SUMMER 2011 REGISTRATION

The registration period for the summer 2011 semester is now open. Please be sure you register as soon as possible. You can do this on your *my.LIU.edu* account.

The first class of Summer 2011 will be held on Monday, May 9, 2011.

Please do not hesitate to contact us should you experience any problems in registering for the summer semester.

The Ed.D. in Interdisciplinary Educational Studies is registered by the New York State Education Department. It is offered by the College of Education and Information Sciences only at the C.W. Post Campus of Long Island University.

A Fast Track to Graduation and the Ed.D. Degree by Professor R. H. Red Owl, Ph.D.



Many of our doctoral students have asked me and other faculty members how soon they can graduate with their doctoral degrees. The answer to that question depends largely upon the students themselves and on their dissertation committees, but I want to use this space to suggest one plan for a fast track to graduation for our students who entered in fall 2009.

As they approach the end of their second year of doctoral studies, the students in our fall 2009 entering cohort have already made amazing progress toward graduation. This June they will have completed 36 credits and, assuming that they have selected dissertation committee chairs, they will be able to develop and submit their Digital Portfolios.

Next fall they will take their final field specialization course (either in Teaching & Learning or in Educational Leadership) as well as their last research methods course (EDD 1007, Applied Research

Design) and also will complete their doctoral Comprehensive Exams. After that, they will only need to take the Dissertation Seminar (EDD 1008) in spring 2012, the Doctoral Candidate Colloquium Workshop (EDD 1009) in fall 2012, and at least three credits of Dissertation Advisement (EDD 1010). Dissertation Advisement will be taken first in spring 2013, but they will also need to register for three credits of dissertation advisement during each other fall or spring semester until they graduate. Along the way, of course, they will also need to successfully defend their dissertation proposals (which may be possible as early as spring 2012) and obtain any required Institutional Review Board (IRB) approvals for their dissertation research.

Now, within that framework let me describe what I consider a possible "fast track" to graduation.

Doctoral students who will have completed 36 credits of coursework in June 2011 will not be taking any other courses this summer and will essentially be able to choose how they spend July and August. For many, those two months will provide a much needed respite from their doctoral studies — and I certainly would not blame any of them for taking that time to recharge their batteries. For others, however, those two "free" months this summer may provide the opportunity to get on a fast track to graduation.

If their dissertation chairs and committees approve, those students could spend this July and August conducting literature research and producing preliminary drafts of their first two dissertation chapters (usually Introduction and Literature Review). Of course, such first drafts would be far from final form and would continue to be refined under dissertation committee guidance well past this summer. That would provide those students a wonderful head start on their dissertations even if their original drafts require substantial revision (or even rewriting).

As I wrote above, next September the students in the fall 2009 entering cohort will enroll in my Applied Research Design (EDU 1007) course. That course will cover the basic concepts of experimental, quasi-experimental, and observational research design, qualitative sampling, statistical sampling, power analysis, and the selection of appropriate analytic techniques (qualitative and quantitative) matched to research designs. The major requirement for that course will be a research design project and paper through which the students will demonstrate their mastery of the concepts covered in the class. Under certain conditions, however, I will offer an alternative course project in which some students will develop a draft methodology chapter (usually the third chapter) for their dissertations. To avail themselves of that alternative, they would need to have completed at least rough preliminary drafts of the introductory and literature review chapters for their dissertations, produced under the guidance of their dissertation committees. They would also need written approval from their dissertation committees to work on their methodology chapters in my course. I would grade such chapters only as a course project used to assess their mastery of the course concepts. My assessment of the project would be limited to my course, and would be entirely separate from the need for the students to follow the guidance of their dissertation committees.

Those students who prepare preliminary drafts of their Introduction and Literature Review chapters this summer and then develop a preliminary draft of their Methodology chapter in my course next fall will have a head start toward completing their dissertation research and will be on a fast track to graduation. They could obtain IRB approvals and also defend their dissertation proposals next spring (2012) and collect data and begin data analysis next summer (2012). In fall 2012 and spring 2013 they could complete their data analyses and write their Results (usually chapter 4) and Conclusions (usually chapter 5) chapters. They could then defend their dissertations in spring 2013 and graduate as doctors of Education in May 2013 — 51 credits and four years after entering the program!

In the most recent report of the Carnegie Commission, which was based on data from Academic Year 2003-2004, the median time to completion of a doctoral degree in Education was reported to be more than eight years (National Science Foundation, Division of Science Resources Statistics, Time to Degree of U.S. Research Doctorate Recipients, Arlington, VA (NSF 06-312) [March 2006]). Given the design of our doctoral program and the support of our faculty, it is possible for our students to graduate in about half that time — and I call that a fast track!

UPDATED INFORMATION ON THE ED.D. DEGREE

DISSERTATION CHAIRS AND COMMITTEES

One of the most important decisions a doctoral student will make is to select a faculty member to serve as the chair of his or her dissertation committee. Students will select chairs and work with their chairs to form dissertation committees in the spring semester of their second year of doctoral studies. From that point forward, the dissertation chair will serve as the student's primary mentor, advisor, and advocate throughout the rest of the program.

The dissertation chair should be a full-time member of the College of Education and Information Sciences faculty with expertise related to the student's intended area of dissertation research or with special expertise in the research methods relevant to the intended topic. The initial dissertation committee will also include two other faculty members in addition to the chair. At least one of those members should be a full-time faculty member from any campus, department, or program at Long Island University. The third member may either be any other Long Island University faculty member or may be an external committee member who holds an accredited doctoral degree in a relevant discipline and has special expertise in the student's intended area of research. The ability to have committee members from outside the College of Education and Information Sciences and to add an external member from outside the University reinforces the Interdisciplinary nature of the doctoral program.

The initial, three-person dissertation committee will work with the doctoral student in selecting a dissertation topic, developing a dissertation proposal, obtaining Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, conducting the dissertation research, and preparing the dissertation. The three-person committee will also be responsible for conducting a public defense of the dissertation proposal and for approving the student's proposal.

After the dissertation research has been completed and the dissertation has been written, the initial dissertation committee will be expanded to include two additional members who will serve as "readers" and who will participate as equal members of the committee in conducting the final public dissertation defense and approving the dissertation. At least one of the readers must be a Long Island University faculty member with expertise related to the dissertation topic. The other reader may be another LIU faculty member or may be an external reader who holds a doctorate from an accredited institution and has special expertise or experience related to the dissertation research.

The readers will be provided a copy of the approved dissertation proposal and will evaluate the acceptability of the dissertation based on the previously approved research plan reflected in the proposal.

DIGITAL PORTFOLIOS

The Ed.D. Digital Portfolio will provide evidence of the doctoral student's intellectual development and achievement during the coursework phase of the doctoral program. It is intended to be a showcase of the student's growth in the knowledge base addressed in the Ed.D. program and of the student's personal intellectual development.

Each doctoral student will assemble a Digital Portfolio that includes: (a) a cover page and an index with hyper-links to all materials in the Portfolio; (b) one paper or project from each doctoral course completed in the first two years (36 credits) of the program, and (c) a written personal reflection (of about eight to ten pages) in APA style on the role and nature of Interdisciplinary Studies in Education with a special emphasis on the student's primary area of interest. All materials in the Portfolio must be in an Internet-accessible digital format and should include such resources as Adobe PDF or Microsoft Word documents, web sites, images, videos, or other digital media.

The Portfolio should be developed with the guidance of the student's dissertation committee chair who will also have the authority to approve the Digital Portfolio. Although the primary purpose of the Digital Portfolio is to provide evidence of a student's intellectual growth and achievement during the first two years of doctoral coursework, the Digital Portfolio can also serve as an electronic resume and may be useful for other professional purposes.

WRITTEN AND ORAL COMPREHENSIVE EXAMS – BLUE BOOKS ARE OUT

In considering the format of the Comprehensive Exams for the Ed.D. Program, the Doctoral Program Executive Committee wanted to develop an approach that would fulfill the evaluative and assessment objectives of the Comprehensive Exams and also maximize their value as an integral component of the learning experience for our students. We also wanted the format of the comprehensives to avoid any unnecessary or redundant retesting of our students' mastery of course content knowledge that would already have been assessed by individual course instructors. We also wanted to design a format for the comprehensives that would advance our students' progress toward their dissertation research.

With those objectives in mind, the Comprehensive Exams have been combined into a single, take-home exam in the form of a research précis that demonstrates the research methods, skills, and perspectives developed by our doctoral students during their core (covering research skills and methods) courses and reflects the field knowledge they developed in their track courses in the Teaching & Learning or Educational Leadership specialties.

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The written portion of the Comprehensive Exams will be a research précis comprising three components.

The first component will be a preliminary literature review related to the student's proposed area of dissertation research and should reflect both an understanding of research and of the student's specialized field of expertise (e.g., Teaching & Learning or Educational Leadership) [about 10 double-spaced pages plus References]. The second component will present a discussion of a proposed research methodology (including philosophical perspectives, analytic methods, sample, instruments and measures) and its strengths and limitations [about five to 7 pages plus References]. The third component will be a statement describing the interdisciplinary nature of the proposed research and of the benefits that will be achieved by the research [about three pages].

The research précis format of the combined Comprehensive Exams will provide an opportunity for the students to demonstrate their mastery of the broad learning objectives of the Ed.D. Program and will jump-start their progress toward the development of their dissertation proposals.

The written portion of the Comprehensive Exams will be graded by the dissertation committee chair and one other member of the dissertation committee. In the event of a split judgment, the third member of the committee would be asked to break the tie. If two members of the committee find the exam not ready for approval, the committee will offer corrective advice to the student and ask that the research précis be revised and resubmitted.

The oral portion of the Comprehensive Exams will be achieved by having the student make an oral presentation of the research précis to her or his three-person dissertation committee. The members of the committee will use that presentation as an opportunity to explore the student's mastery of the content knowledge and understanding of theory and research in her or his field specialization, especially as it relates to the student's planned dissertation topic.

So, blue books are out and our doctoral students can look forward to a Comprehensive Exams experience that reflects the type of authentic learning, scholarly growth, and assessment that we believe is appropriate for adult professionals engaged in doctoral studies.

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