

Overview of the Proposed Doctoral Degree Program
PhD/EdD Degree in Educational Leadership/Public Policy

University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, School of Education, Public Policy & Civic Engagement

History

Since 1999, the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth has engaged the faculty, staff, students and a wide variety of external stakeholders in the development of a strategic plan designed to result in a stronger and more responsive regional research university. In moving that vision forward from planning to implementation, the University has steadily addressed its strategic goals and set a research agenda that includes the development of graduate programs that will integrate innovative teaching/learning strategies to prepare students for advancement in a 21st century environment.

More recently in the Fall of 2008, in response to a growing national imperative to improve educational standing and attainment, UMass Dartmouth held five public Forums to which faculty, university administrators, teachers, principals, superintendents, district leaders, regional community organizers and private citizens were invited to share their beliefs and ideas for improving specific conditions in the SouthCoast region, which is clearly ‘in crisis’ as it continues to lag behind the state in educational attainment and economic development. Several individuals from those Forums expressed a keen desire to become founding members of an Advisory Board to help guide this doctoral program into existence. We value that support and will also seek national and international representation to our Board of Advisors.

Goals

As a result of those discussions and the emergent vision that has evolved in response to so serious a regional and national need to improve educational attainment for all learners, the University, through its new School of Education, Public Policy & Civic Engagement, is developing a new doctoral degree program (PhD/EdD) in Educational Leadership/Policy Studies. Our twin goals for this program are to enlarge a community of learners and scholars as well as to embed the intellectual capital of faculty, staff and graduate students within the activities of the region and Commonwealth.

We intend to offer innovative pathways toward expanded graduate studies in the closely allied theoretical and applied research areas of leadership and policy studies, and where applicable, in close connection to academic foci and departments within SEPPCE (Teaching & Learning; Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics-STEM; and Public Policy) and within other colleges throughout the University (Charlton College of Business and the College of Arts & Sciences, for example). Interdisciplinary by design, we anticipate results from this endeavor will be to graduate individuals who can contribute to new research, lead various levels of educational institutions, and analyze, as well as generate, policies that will stand as models of effective positive change for regional, national or global 21st century educational enterprises.

Features of the Program

Researchers, policymakers, and practitioners increasingly recognize the role of school leaders in developing high-performing schools. With a national focus on raising achievement and educational attainment for all students, there has been growing attention to the pivotal role of school leaders in improving the quality of education. Largely overlooked in the various reform movements of the past two decades, principals, superintendents and regional communities are now regarded as central to the task of building schools that promote powerful teaching and learning for all students (NPBEA, 2001; Peterson, 2002). In the SouthCoast, we have been fortunate to witness good collaboration between SEPPCE and several regional school systems which shows a willingness to provide schools sites as potential “learning labs” for higher education students. Finally, high-performing schools will necessarily demand achievement of certain focused goals; therefore, we are structuring our proposed doctoral program so it will address selected features.

We concentrate on six key features in developing our doctoral program, namely:

- Emphasis on instructional leadership that integrates theory and practice
- Content rich preparation for leaders in working effectively with school communities
- Several routes to licensure for school leaders, replete with innovative internships that include authentic leadership opportunities
- Well-connected professional development opportunities that begin with well-crafted mentoring in interdisciplinary perspectives extending throughout the careers of school leaders
- Analysis and development of systems that require state and district policies aimed at providing the conditions, the authority and the incentives that leaders and their teams need to be successful in lifting the educational fortunes of all children
- Dissemination of research throughout the global learning community

Program Delivery and Coursework

The doctoral program will take place on campus, at off-campus locations, and in schools; courses will be delivered in traditional & hybrid (face-to-face & on-line) formats. Advanced undergraduates may begin the program through a related 5-year track of the MPP degree.

Courses in the Doctoral program will include, for example:

- Introduction to Organization Theory & Behavior
- Introduction to Educational Leadership & Policy, I & II
- Data Formation, Retrieval and Analysis
- Research Methods I
- Public Administration
- Research Methods II: Quantitative
- Research Methods III: Qualitative
- Public Finance
- School Law, I & II
- Integrative Seminar, I & II
- Analysis of Teaching & Learning
- Sociological Perspectives of Schooling
- Advanced Measurement/Assessment
- Learning Organizations
- Organization of Schools and School Systems
- Historical and Philosophical Foundations of Education
- Curriculum Design & Development, K-12
- Principles of Supervision
- Theories of Organizational Change within Educational Institutions
- Program Evaluation
- Leadership for Instruction/Principals
- Leadership of Systems /Superintendents
- Leadership / Educational Administration
- Equity and Achievement
- Politics and Education
- Special Topics in Leadership
- Professional Writing I & II
- Dissertation: Advanced Research Seminar
- Dissertation