

2001 Doctoral Cohort Survey Executive Summary

A total of 15 cohort members responded to the survey, eight women (53.3%) and seven men (46.7%). Of the respondents:

- eight (53.3%) were enrolled full-time and seven (46.7%) were enrolled part-time;
- ten (66.7%) were off-campus students and five (33.3%) were on-campus students;
- nine (60.0%) were employed full-time, four (26.7%) were employed part-time, and two (13.3%) were not currently employed;
- ten (66.7%) had formed their POS committees, four (26.7%) had not, and one (6.7%) did not respond; and
- nine (60.0%) indicated Higher Education emphases, five (33.3%) indicated Educational Administration emphases, and one (6.7%) indicated both emphases.

In terms of respondent age, four (26.7%) were between 25 and 35 years old, six (40.0%) were between 36 and 45, four (26.7%) were between 46 and 55, and one (6.7%) was over 55 years of age. Nine respondents (60.0%) self-identified as White (Caucasian), three (20.0%) self-identified as African-American, two (13.3%) self-identified as American Indian, and one (6.7%) self-identified as Other (Multiracial Latina).

Years of professional employment experience ranged from 7 to 27, with a mean of 16.4 years and a median of 16 years. On average, the respondents reported living 45.3 miles from campus. However, by removing two respondents (one who lives 200 miles away and the other who lives 180 miles away), the mean distance from campus decreased to 23.1 miles.

Regarding the respondents' satisfaction level that the six domains of the doctoral program have been addressed, on a range of "Very Dissatisfied" = 1, "Dissatisfied" = 2, "Neutral" = 3, "Satisfied" = 4, and "Very Satisfied" = 5, the respondents were most satisfied (mean = 4.33) that the leadership domain has been addressed. The respondents were least satisfied (mean = 3.40) that the technology domain has been addressed. The mean satisfaction scores follow for the remaining four domains: research (3.93), foundations (3.93), evaluation (3.73), and communication (3.53).

In general terms, the respondents viewed the rubrics favorably. On a range of "Disagree Strongly" = 1, "Disagree Somewhat" = 2, "Neither Agree Nor Disagree" = 3, "Agree Somewhat" = 4, and "Agree Strongly" = 5, the respondents indicated strongest agreement (mean = 4.27) with the statement, "The rubrics are being used in my courses." The respondents indicated weakest agreement (mean = 3.20) with the statement, "Faculty use rubrics to improve my learning." The mean score was second highest (4.07) in response to the statement: "Rubrics are important." This suggests that although rubrics are being used and the respondents view them as important, ELPS officials should examine just how effectively the rubrics are being used by faculty and how well-integrated the rubrics are into various aspects of the doctoral program.

A number of the program administration elements elicited positive, generally satisfied responses. There was general satisfaction (measured by mean scores of 4.00 or greater) with the following elements: opportunity to interact with students from different program areas (4.20), use of electronic communication (4.20), challenging curriculum (4.07), and scheduling of research methods and statistics courses (4.00). Satisfaction was lowest with the following elements: access to information from the department (3.20), availability of faculty (3.53), and organization of doctoral cohorts (3.60). None of the program administration elements received a mean score of less than 3.20. Although the mean scores were generally high, the program elements with the lowest mean scores warrant additional examination.

On a range of "Disagree Strongly" = 1, "Disagree Somewhat" = 2, "Neither Agree Nor Disagree" = 3, "Agree Somewhat" = 4, and "Strongly Agree" = 5, the admissions aspects of the doctoral program received mean scores ranging from 3.60 to 4.07. The respondents agreed (mean = 4.07) that the doctoral program has "a good mix of students." Other aspects of the admissions process regarding 1) timely provision of admissions information, 2) same admission criteria for full- and part-time students, and 3) clarity of the admissions process each received mean scores of 3.60. The respondents disagreed with the statement, "Students should not be admitted if they can't support themselves financially" (mean = 2.27).

Regarding the one-credit seminars, agreement was strongest (mean = 3.79) with the statement, "The seminars cover the right topics;" agreement was weakest (mean = 3.00) with the statement, "The seminars are offered at good times of day." The mean scores were second highest (mean = 3.40) related both to the seminars meeting students' expectations and to the appropriateness of seminar assignments. It appears that the students are most concerned about the times of the day (mean = 3.00) and the days of the week (mean = 3.13) on which the seminars are offered.

The respondents' views on program of study (POS) committee formation varied, with mean scores ranging from 2.73 to 3.60. Strongest agreement (mean = 3.60) was found with two statements: 1) "The procedures for setting up a committee are reasonable," and 2) "The students should take the lead in establishing a POS committee." Agreement was weakest (mean = 2.73) with the statement, "It is easy to put together a POS committee." With mean scores of only 3.27 related to ease of finding outside members for the POS committee and only 3.47 related to ease of finding a major professor, the most notable complications surrounding POS committee formation appear to be securing a major professor and outside committee members.

The capstone experience and the portfolio were the two areas that the respondents indicated the least amount of understanding and the least amount of agreement. The mean scores for the capstone experience statements ranged from 1.73 to 3.00. Agreement was particularly lacking with the statements, "I have a clear understanding of the role of the mentor" (mean = 1.73), "The expectations for the written paper are clear" (mean = 2.13), and "I have received adequate information about the capstone" (mean = 2.13). None of the capstone experience items achieved a mean of greater than 3.00, although the statement, "I am sure that I can meet the written paper requirements," received a mean score of 3.00.

Similar uncertainty exists regarding the portfolio as part of the preliminary oral examination process. The strongest agreement (mean = 3.20) was attained for the statement, "I am comfortable writing reflections about my progress as a learner." The weakest agreement (mean for both = 2.33) was found for two of the statements, "I have a good understanding of what is expected for my portfolio," and "I know what should be included in my portfolio."

With only one statement related to the capstone experience and one statement related to the portfolio receiving mean scores of 3.00 or greater, it would appear that ELPS program officials should examine how and what information is being communicated to students.