

**Graduate Program Review Appeals Committee  
Informational Session: June 26, 2006**

**Educational Leadership Ed.S.**

**Program representatives:** Van Cooley (professor, Teaching, Learning, and Leadership), Jianping Shen (professor, Teaching, Learning, and Leadership), Gary Wegenke (dean)

**Program's Appeal Summary**

Main reasons for appeal:

1. A nationally recognized degree in the field of education.
2. An important part of the full range of offering in educational leadership.
3. Contributing to the competitive edge of WMU's educational leadership programs.
4. No additional resources required for the specialist degree program in educational leadership.

Summary: President's Bailey's comment on the specialist degree program on April 19, 2006 during the meeting to discuss graduate program review.

"Bailey wondered why a specialist program in Educational Leadership would be dropped. Most of the students started out as doctoral students (ABD), and then switched to this program. Bailey reminded the group that this program offers a career path in education. The specialist degree means something to those working in the public schools: an increase in salary, possibility of promotion just short of becoming superintendent. The loss of this program might shuttle students to a competitor, who would see this as a big boon."

**Committee's Questions \***

1. Imagining a worst-case scenario in which you received no new resources, no new or replacement faculty hires, and no additional support for TAs, and had to self-fund 100 percent of your growth, what would your program look like three to five years from now?  
With no additional resources, we'd maintain our current level. We want to provide students with a choice between the master's and the Ph.D. or we lose out to the competition.
2. So it can be a terminal degree, or a step on the road, or a fallback degree if someone can't go all the way to the Ph.D.? Is it meant to be all of those things?  
It's probably all three, but it's a fallback for only a small percentage. In most states, the Ed.S is a superintendent's license. It's more about practitioner-driven, data-driven decision-making and less about a strong emphasis on the dissertation. We expect the program to flourish and become a revenue-generator as more and more people see the need for voluntary certification.
3. Why do the provost's enrollment numbers differ from yours?  
Our count is 20 specialist students. The discrepancy arose because students were wrongly coded as doctoral students in Banner.
4. What's the timeline for completing the Ed.S.?  
It's a terminal degree. They still have to finish all their requirements within seven years. It becomes an insurance policy, and it cuts down on negative publicity because we're able to help students whose circumstances are no longer conducive to getting a Ph.D.
5. So why aren't a lot more students taking this degree?

We've modified our doctorate so that students make a start on their dissertation in their first class. This serves the working practitioner, and helps us establish who's going to continue with the Ph.D. and who isn't.

6. How do these different degrees relate to specific careers?

With a master's, you might become a principal, school business manager, or curriculum manager; with an Ed.S., an assistant superintendent or superintendent; and a Ph.D. is essential if you want to be mobile. In places such as Detroit, for example, you wouldn't be considered without a doctorate, but the Ed.S. is fine in other, smaller locations. With the bill about to go before the House, it may play out that the Ed.S. will be tied specifically to the job of superintendent.

7. In terms of student-to-faculty ratio, is your goal to maintain all three degrees but keep enrollment in check?  
Yes, we need to get our figures down.

8. How does that ratio play out?

We have 12 faculty, and four or five may join us. But our students are mostly part-timers.

9. MSU has 20 advisees per faculty member?

We think we've done a pretty good job of managing the workload *and* supporting our faculty, who are very productive. We just need to be more selective in picking our students.

10. Do you have a plan?

Yes. This fall, we're not allowing any students in until we've evaluated the situation. That's just the beginning of the plan, which covers the program as whole. Our aim is to take only the top applicants.

11. How would you sum up the basis for your appeal?

Our enrollment has been very high, but now we're really concentrating on quality; our faculty are very productive; and we have an excellent reputation. Most of all, it's important that we continue to offer students this option.

*\* Q&A text is not verbatim*