Response to Task Force on Graduate Education
Educational Administration Program, College of Education

The Graduate Task Force identified several weaknesses in the educational administration program. These weaknesses are identified below. In each case, the program faculty has provided a response.

The Educational administration program includes three degree programs (MA, Ed.S., Ph.D.) and several licenses for school leaders (e.g., principals, superintendents, directors of special education). The Task Force report sought additional evaluative information on only the Ph.D. program.

1. Few faculty deliver the program. The Task Force report states that the educational administration program is delivered by “<2 FTE” faculty. This is inaccurate. The faculty includes 1.5 tenure-track FTE and 3 associate clinical professors with specific professional expertise required by the Iowa Department of Education. Our new Ph.D. in Educational Leadership enjoys the participation of 2 full professors, both of whom have primary appointments in the Higher Education program administered within the same department (Educational Policy and Leadership Studies).

2. Low financial support for students. Nearly all educational administration students are working professional educators who maintain employment during graduate study for personal reasons and professional requirements. The majority of educational administration students desire employment as school administrators. To be marketable, candidates need leadership experience in schools or districts.

3. Student recruitment. In recognition of the same enrollment shortfalls recognized by the Task Force, the educational administration faculty developed and implemented a new a Ph.D. in educational administration with leadership concentration in the fall of 2009. This interdisciplinary program has already begun to attract a broader audience of students who work in PreK-16 educational organizations.

In addition, we expect to receive formal approval of the program’s new superintendent licensure program in the next few weeks. This program, which has not been offered by the University for several years, will enable the educational administration program to enroll larger numbers of Ed.S. and Ph.D. students. The University of Iowa will be the first public university in Iowa to receive approval for this program, under a new template and process established by the Department of Education. Like the existing MA program, the new Ed.S. will be delivered in a blended face-to-face/online delivery model, enabling school leaders from throughout the state and region to enroll.

4. Concern regarding 3.7 years TTD. Many students begin the 90-semester hour Ph.D. with as many as 62 semester hours completed in the MA and Ed.S.

5. Practitioners require only Ed.S. degree. The Task Force report suggests that a practitioner requires only an Ed.S. degree, but many school districts and area education agencies desire and, in many cases require, that school district administrators hold a doctorate in educational administration. We expect the Ed.S. degree program to continue to serve as a pipeline to recruit students for the PhD. program.

6. Centrality of program to mission. This criterion was not addressed by the Task Force in its report, but was included in its charge. The University of Iowa offers one of only two Ph.D. educational administration programs in Iowa. The program’s graduates are leaders in large and rural communities throughout the state, and represent the University’s robust engagement with the educational and community development needs of its citizens. Limiting access to this program would be inconsistent with the University’s strategic outreach and engagement goals.