

**Program Performance Review: Culmination Meeting Memo
Educational Leadership Ed.D., Higher Education M.S., and Educational Leadership and
Administration, M.S.**

The 2024-2025 Program Performance Review (PPR) process for the Educational Leadership Ed.D., Higher Education M.S. (MS-HE), and Educational Leadership and Administration, M.S. (MS-EDAD) programs in the College of Education (EDU) concluded with a culmination meeting on February 27, 2026.

The following people attended the meeting: Amir Dabirian (Provost), Lisa Kirtman (Dean), Kim Case (Associate Dean), Rohanna Ylagan-Nicanor (Director of Accreditation & Assessment), Nancy Watkins (Chair), Sean Walker (Deputy Provost), Aimee Nelson (Executive Director for Graduate Studies, EDGS), and Su Swarat (Senior AVP for Institutional Effectiveness and Planning, SAVPIEP).

The Provost commended the department for the contribution of its programs to the university. The following specific accomplishments were highlighted during the PPR process:

For the EdD program:

- The program's mission and goals are clearly aligned with the university's mission and the college's JEIE framework, resulting in high-quality learning experiences that support students in becoming scholar-practitioners who lead with purpose, courage, and dedication to equity.
- The program offers a cohort-based model through a hybrid format, which has been well-received by students, in particular working professionals.
- Faculty composition is robust and well-balanced, with extensive research publications, presentations, teaching roles, and leadership positions
- The program has dedicated advisors and staff who support students in course registration and address any issues related to planning and enrollment.

For the MS-HE program:

- The program's mission is clearly aligned with the university's mission and demonstrates a strong commitment to social justice.
- The program intentionally embeds social justice principles into the curriculum, preparing graduates to advocate for equity and inclusion post-graduation. Additionally, the program balances social justice and administrative considerations well in the curriculum, allowing students opportunities to understand the importance of doing social justice-informed work while meeting the realities of higher education.
- The program offers a cohort model that promotes support and community among peers.
- The program offers various opportunities for networking and job placement.
- The Program Coordinator is a key support for students, who actively works to improve the program.
- The program faculty are diverse and critical scholars who are committed to providing students with opportunities to connect the curriculum with real-world inequities.

For the MS-EDAD program:

- The program's mission and goals are clearly aligned with the university's mission, the college's JEIE framework, and program-specific needs, such as the California

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Administrator Performance Assessment (CalAPA), California Professional Standards for Education Leaders (CPSELs), and the California Administrator Performance Expectations (CAPEs).

- The program offers a hybrid cohort model, which allows students opportunities to develop a strong learning community while meeting students' needs.
- The student learning outcomes are clear and align with the program's curriculum; the program also participates in a cross-program assessment committee, which strengthens the assessment process.
- The program offers a variety of support (i.e., academic, community building, financial aid) to students from application to matriculation.
- The program has strong partnerships with school districts (i.e., AUHSD) that lead to various resources and engagement with school district administrators.
- Students value the experiences provided in the program, in particular spaces where students and faculty collectively analyze and deconstruct anti-racist practices.

Major recommendations and issues raised through the PPR process were discussed as follows:

For the EdD program:

1. Student outreach and recruitment:
 - The external reviewers recommended the program to improve recruitment strategies by leveraging alumni and partner school districts, hosting virtual information sessions, and developing targeted marketing strategies.
 - The Chair concurred and reported that current efforts are effective in attracting more applicants, including the highway billboard announcement.
 - The Chair stated that the program aims for a cohort size of 25, and the biggest need is to ensure there are enough faculty to mentor and oversee the dissertations.
 - The Dean and the Provost recommended the program to reach out to faculty from other departments in the college or from other colleges who have relevant expertise.
2. Transition to online program:
 - The program is recommended to continue transitioning to be more online in order to support accessibility and the needs of working students, and to work with the Dean's Office to identify resources to secure and train faculty with expertise in online education.
 - The Chair reported that the Instructional Designer has been very helpful in supporting faculty with online teaching.
 - The Dean reported that the college has supported a faculty search to address the need of online, which is currently taking place.
3. Dissertation expectation and support:
 - The PPR process raised the need to identify ways to more effectively communicate information about dissertation expectations to students, such as reviewing the handbook, hosting dissertation candidate and chair meetings, and regularly

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- communicating with students. Such dissertation support would also help increase graduation rates.
- The Chair stated that the program took this recommendation seriously and has implemented multiple strategies including embedding the information in the student handbook, regular email communications, and candidate orientation. The program is also providing training to dissertation committee chairs to help them perform the role effectively.
 - The EDGS suggested the program to consider peer support for dissertation, possibly from alumni.
 - o The Chair concurred and stated that the EdD program's Executive Council has been instrumental in facilitating mentoring support for the students, including engaging alumni and current students in research conversations.
4. AI integration:
- The external reviewers recommended the program to further integrate TitanGPT and GenAI tools into the curriculum as appropriate, such as developing a new course on Innovation and Technology.
 - The Chair concurred and reported a course has been developed for the online EdD program that has a significant yet balanced focus on AI.
 - The Dean commended the Chair for bringing faculty together over this controversial issue and successfully integrating AI into the curriculum.
5. Alumni engagement:
- The external reviewers recommended the program to increase alumni involvement in the program by hosting annual mixers, developing an alumni mentorship program, and showcasing alumni JEIE practices. Additionally, the program is recommended to extending faculty mentoring beyond dissertation to support alumni through faculty-led networking and career development events.
 - The Chair acknowledged the importance of alumni engagement and reported multiple events being organized, including the third alumni mixer that brings perspective students and alumni together and the "Spring into Leadership" event organized by the EdD Student Advisory Board.
6. Student learning outcome assessment:
- The external reviewers recommended the program to continue enhancing assessment efforts, including strengthening the methodology and ensuring students have clear avenues to express challenges and provide feedback.
 - The Chair stated that the program continues to do so, especially with the P-12 concentration where faculty expertise in the Carnegie methodology has not been consistent.
 - The Chair also reported that the EdD Advisory Board has served as an effective source of gathering student feedback.
 - The SAVPIEP commended the program for the improvement it has made in assessment practice.

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7. CREAL:

- The external reviewers recommended the program to partner with CREAL to promote resources available to students, such as hosting workshops or incorporating the information in advising sessions.
- The Chair reported that the program is working to integrate CREAL information in the syllabi and the orientation, as well as collaborating with CREAL to help students turn dissertations into journal articles.

For the MS-HE and MS-EDAD programs:

1. Student outreach and recruitment:

- The MS programs were recommended to enhance recruitment strategies to maintain enrollment and retention of students and to ensure appropriate support for students once enrolled.
- The Chair stated that the student populations for the two programs are different, with the MS-HE program attracting younger students in the field of student affairs and the MS-EDAD program drawing students who are more advanced in their career. As such, the programs call for different recruitment focus.
 - o The Chair reported that under the leadership of the MS-HE program coordinator, the program has identified areas for updates (e.g. course changes, catalog description), established a good advising model, and maintained stable enrollment. The MS-EDAD program's demand is declining, so the program is focusing on the well-developed partnership with Anaheim K-12 and high school districts and is working to establish similar partnerships with Orange Unified and La Habra districts. The focus is to help school districts grow leaders from within.
- The Dean encouraged the department to consider faculty hiring for next year, maybe focusing on the MS-EDAD program instead of the EdD program. With the right faculty composition, it is possible for the MS-HE program to grow and sustain 3 cohorts (25 per cohort) per year.

2. Fieldwork opportunities:

- The PPR process raised the need for both MS programs to review fieldwork opportunities to ensure compliance with UPS policies and procedures and to clarify student understanding of when and where the fieldwork is required.
- The Chair reported that the MS-HE program is revamping the fieldwork, which relies heavily on partnership with the Division of Student Affairs. The MS-EDAD program fieldwork has been incorporated into the coursework to ensure compliance with accreditation standards.

The Provost concluded the meeting by thanking the Chair for her leadership and the department faculty for their hard work. The Chair expressed appreciation for support received from multiple levels including the university and the college.