

**\*Immediate past plans and assessments are submitted. The Higher Education program assessment plan is being reconfigured as per the ADHE template.**

**Graduate Degree Program Assessment Progress Report Cover Sheet:**

**Degree:** \_\_\_\_\_ HIED EDD \_\_\_\_\_      **For Calendar Year:** \_\_2010-2011\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date submitted to college committee: \_4/22/11\_\_\_\_\_ By: \_Mark Fincher\_\_\_\_\_)  
(Date posted on college assessment website:\_\_\_\_\_)

Overall Rating: \_\_\_\_\_

Respond to all six parts following the “Degree Program Assessment Progress Report Instructions.” (NOTE: Parts 1 through 4 can be copied from the relevant sections of your assessment plan.) Attach additional pages as needed.

(1) Student learning goal(s) addressed this year:

Goal 1, Foundations of Higher Education: Program graduates will demonstrate mastery of the historical, philosophical, social, and cultural contexts of education, understanding the role of education in general, and higher education specifically, as a key social institution of a democratic society.

Goal 6, Research: Program graduates will demonstrate the ability to conduct analytical inquiry and independent research activities that include formulation, design, and investigation of major intellectual problems that make original contributions to the knowledge base in higher education

(2) Learning outcomes/objectives for those goals addressed this year:

**(1) Learning outcomes/objectives for those goals addressed this year:**

Goal 1, Foundations of Higher Education

- Articulate the underlying philosophical and theoretical foundations of higher education;
- Articulate, in writing and orally, an understanding of cultural, historical, social, economic, political, organizational contexts, and influences of higher education;
- Articulate an understanding of the place of the independent research project in the historical, philosophical, cultural, economic, social and political contexts of higher education.

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### Goal 6, Research

- Articulate and demonstrate the principles and skills underlying qualitative and quantitative research;
- Critique, synthesize, and interpret the findings from published research summaries;
- Develop meaningful research questions and use appropriate principles and methods for investigation and interpretation, applying standards of rigor to all research efforts;
- Conduct analytical inquiry and independent research activities that make original contributions to the knowledge base in higher education; and
- Articulate contributions of research to education, knowledge, and practice.

(3) Courses & activities where assessed:

### **Goal 1: Foundations of Higher Education**

#### Course Grades, Papers and Projects:

HIED 8301	History & Philosophy of Higher Education
HIED 8399	Dissertation Seminar
HIED 8320	The Two-Year College in America
HIED 8340	Organizational Behavior in Higher Education
HIED 8341	Financing of Colleges & Universities
HIED 8342	Governance and Policy Making in Higher Education
HIED 8343	Legal Aspects of Higher Education
HIED 8344	Legal Aspects of Teaching
HIED 7351	Intro to College Student Affairs
EDFN 7373	Qualitative Research Methods

#### Activities:

Comprehensive Examinations, written and oral  
Student Instructor Evaluation, by course on-line & by faculty request in class  
Student Program & Comprehensive Exam Feedback (after passing all sections of exam, oral and written)  
Stakeholder Feedback, annual meeting with employers & alumni

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### **Goal 6: Research**

#### Course Grades, Papers and Projects:

EDFN 7304 Basic Statistics  
EDFN 8305 Advanced Statistics  
EDFN 8306 Advanced Research Methods  
EDFN 7373 Qualitative Research Methods  
HIED 8301 History & Philosophy of Higher Education  
HIED 8341 Financing Colleges & Universities  
HIED 8342 Governance & Policy Making in Higher Education  
HIED 8330 College Teaching Problems and Issues  
HIED 7351 Intro to College Student Affairs  
HIED 7352 Student Development Theory  
HIED 8350 American College Student  
HIED 8353 Assessment and Program Evaluation  
HIED 8256 First-Year Doctoral Seminar in Student Affairs  
HIED 8157 Professional Seminar in Student Affairs  
HIED 8358 Capstone Seminar in Student Affairs  
*HIED 8399 Dissertation Seminar*

#### Activities:

Comprehensive Examinations, written and oral  
Dissertation Proposal, oral and written  
Dissertation, written and oral defense  
Student Instructor Evaluation, by course on-line & by faculty request in class  
Student Program & Comprehensive Exam Feedback (after passing all sections of exam, oral and written  
Stakeholder Feedback, annual meeting

See Assessment Matrix

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**ASSESSMENT MATRIX  
Doctoral Degree Program  
Higher Education  
2008**

Objectives	Assessment Methods/Instruments	Reliability & Validity	When Assessed	Decision / Standards	Responsible Parties
<b>EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES</b>					
<p>1. Program graduates will demonstrate mastery of the historical, philosophical, social &amp; cultural contexts of education, understanding the role of education in general, and higher education specifically, as a key social institution of a democratic society.</p> <p>Tasks include the ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Articulate the underlying philosophical and theoretical foundations of higher education;</li> <li>• Articulates an understanding of cultural, historical, social, political, and organizational contexts and influences on higher education</li> <li>• Articulates an understanding of the independent research project in the historical, philosophical, cultural, social and/or political, contexts of higher education.</li> </ul>	1) Course exams	1) Rubrics (ongoing development)	1) Completion of HIED 8301, HIED 8342, HIED 8343, HIED 8344, HIED 7351, HIED 7352, HIED 8350, HIED 8353, HIED 8320	1) "B" or better/3.0 overall GPA	1) Course Instructors
	2) Papers	2) Rubrics (ongoing development)	2) Completion of HIED 8301, HIED 8342, HIED 8343, HIED 8344, HIED 7351, HIED 7352, HIED 8350, HIED 8353, HIED 8320	2) "B" or better	2) Course Instructor
	3) Comprehensive examinations	3) Rubrics (ongoing development)	3) After students have successfully completed all course work (except HIED 8399)	3) Pass Comprehensive examinations	3) Program faculty
	4) Dissertation	4) Rubrics (ongoing development)	4) Upon successful completion of written and oral comprehensives	4) Satisfactory approval of Dissertation Committee	4) Student's Dissertation Committee
	5) Employer Follow-up Survey	5) Statistical Analysis	5) Every 5 years beginning 1 year after graduation starting with May 2004 graduate	5) Satisfactory rating	5) Program Coordinator
<p>2. Program graduates will demonstrate mastery of project design, data collection, analysis and interpretation to assess and evaluate issues and improvement strategies for solving problems of performance, policy, and practice.</p> <p>Tasks include the ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Articulate the fundamental assessment and evaluation issues with n the graduate's area of</li> </ul>	1) Course exams	1) Rubrics (ongoing development)	1) Completion of HIED 8353, EDFN 7304, EDFN 8305, EDFN 8306, EDFN 7373	1) "B" or better/3.0 overall GPA	1) Course Instructors
	2) Course projects	2) Rubrics (ongoing development)	2) Completion of HIED 8353, EDFN 7304, EDFN 8305, EDFN 8306, EDFN 7373	2) "B" or better	2) Course Instructors

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<p>specialized expertise</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design and implement assessments and program evaluation</li> <li>• Describe and compare a variety of assessment approaches and evaluation models</li> <li>• Select appropriate evaluations and assessment processes for various contexts or settings.</li> <li>• Incorporate assessment and evaluation findings into effective decision making.</li> </ul>	<p>3) Comprehensive examinations</p> <p>4) Dissertations, if applicable</p> <p>5) Employers Follow-Up Survey</p>	<p>3) Rubrics (ongoing development)</p> <p>4) Rubrics (ongoing development)</p> <p>5) Statistical Analysis</p>	<p>3) After students have successfully completed all course work (except HIED 8399)</p> <p>4) Upon successful completion of written and oral comprehensive exams</p> <p>5) Every 5 years beginning 1 year after graduation starting with May 2004 graduate</p>	<p>3) Pass Comprehensive examinations</p> <p>4) Satisfactory approval by dissertation Committee</p> <p>5) Satisfactory rating</p>	<p>3) Program Faculty</p> <p>4) Student's Dissertation Committee</p> <p>5) Program Coordinator</p>
<p>3. Program graduates will demonstrate a thorough understanding of the role, applications, and limitations of technology in learning and organizational processes.</p> <p>Tasks include the ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporate technological proficiencies as applied to communications, data analysis, pedagogical practice, and information collection and dissemination;</li> <li>• Use data and technology ethically.</li> </ul>	<p>1) Course projects</p> <p>2) Course papers</p> <p>3) Comprehensive examinations</p> <p>4) Dissertation</p> <p>5) Employer Follow-up Survey</p>	<p>1) Rubrics (ongoing development)</p> <p>2) Rubrics (ongoing development)</p> <p>3) Rubrics (ongoing development)</p> <p>4) Rubrics (ongoing development)</p> <p>5) Statistical Analysis</p>	<p>1) Completion of HIED 8301, HIED 8303, HIED 8399, HIED 8340, HIED 8341, HIED 8342, HIED 8343, HIED 8330, HIED 8331, HIED 8332, HIED 8344, HIED 7351, HIED 7352, HIED 8350, HIED 8353, HIED 8256, HIED 8157, HIED 8356, HIED 8358, HIED 8320, HIED 8321, HIED 8322, EDFN 7304, EDFN 8305, EDFN 8306, EDFN, 7373</p> <p>2) Same as above</p> <p>3) When students have successfully completed all course work except HIED 8399</p> <p>4) Upon successful completion of written and oral comprehensive exams</p> <p>5) Every 5 years beginning 1 year after graduation starting with May 2004 graduates</p>	<p>1) "B" or better/3.0 overall GPA</p> <p>2) "B" or better</p> <p>3) Pass Comprehensive examinations</p> <p>4) Satisfactory approval by student's dissertation committee</p> <p>5) Satisfactory rating</p>	<p>1) Course Instructors</p> <p>2) Course Instructors</p> <p>3) Program Faculty</p> <p>4) Student Dissertation Committee</p> <p>5) Program Coordinator</p>
<p>4. Program graduates will demonstrate leadership by facilitating the success of all students,</p>	<p>1) Course papers</p>	<p>1) Rubrics (ongoing development)</p>	<p>1) Completion of HIED 8301, HIED 8303, HIED</p>	<p>1) "B" or better</p>	<p>1) Course Instructor</p>

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<p>faculty, and the institution by leading the development, and achievement of a vision and mission of learning and professional development.</p> <p>Tasks include the ability to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foster individual and group action toward the development and achievement of vision, mission and goals;</li> <li>• Demonstrate satisfactory command of the required content, intellectual and research skills, and dispositions; apply appropriate techniques, technologies, and strategies, to achieve solutions to problems and issues in higher education.</li> </ul>	<p>2) Course projects</p> <p>3) Comprehensive examinations</p> <p>4) Dissertation</p> <p>5) Employer Follow-up Survey</p>	<p>2) Rubrics (ongoing development)</p> <p>3) (Rubrics (ongoing development)</p> <p>4) Rubrics (Ongoing development)</p> <p>5) Statistical Analysis</p>	<p>8340, HIED 8341, HIED 8342, HIED 8343, HIED 8330, HIED 8331, HIED 8256, HIED 8157, HIED 8358, HIED 8320, HIED 8321, HIED 8322</p> <p>2) Same as above</p> <p>3) When students have successfully completed all course work except HIED 8399</p> <p>4) Upon successful completion of written and oral comprehensive exams</p> <p>5) Every 5 years beginning 1 year after graduation starting with May 2004 graduates</p>	<p>2) "B" or better</p> <p>3) Pass Comprehensive examinations</p> <p>4) Satisfactory approval by student's dissertation committee</p> <p>5) Satisfactory rating</p>	<p>2) Course Instructor</p> <p>3) Program Faculty</p> <p>4) Student's Dissertation Committee</p> <p>5) Program Coordinator</p>
<p>5. Program Graduates will demonstrate effective written and oral communication and interpersonal skills.</p> <p>Tasks include the ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Written communication skills that demonstrate high levels of clarity, comprehension, synthesis, critical thinking, and analysis;</li> <li>• Articulate facts, ideas, beliefs, and arguments in a clear, logical and organized fashion;</li> <li>• Apply appropriate techniques, technologies, and strategies to achieve solutions to problems and issues in higher education</li> </ul>	<p>1) Course papers</p> <p>2) Course projects</p> <p>3) Comprehensive examinations</p>	<p>1) Rubrics (ongoing development)</p> <p>2) Rubrics (ongoing development)</p> <p>3) Rubrics (ongoing development)</p>	<p>1) Completion of HIED 8301, HIED 8303, HIED 8399, HIED 8340, HIED 8341, HIED 8342, HIED 8343, HIED 8330, HIED 8331, HIED 8332, HIED 8344, HIED 7351, HIED 7352, HIED 8350, HIED 8353, HIED 8256, HIED 8157, HIED 8356, HIED 8358, HIED 8320, HIED 8321, HIED 8322, EDFN 7304, EDFN 8305, EDFN 8306, EDFN 7373</p> <p>2) Same as above</p> <p>3) When student have successfully completed all course work (except HIED</p>	<p>1) "B" or better/3.0 overall GPA</p> <p>2) "B" or better</p> <p>3) Pass Comprehensive examinations</p>	<p>1) Course Instructors</p> <p>2) Course Instructors</p> <p>3) Program Faculty</p>

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	<p>4) Dissertation</p> <p>5) Employer and Student Follow-up Surveys</p>	<p>4) Rubrics (ongoing development)</p> <p>5) Statistical Analysis</p>	<p>8399)</p> <p>4) Upon successful completion of written and oral comprehensive examinations</p> <p>5) Every 5 years beginning 1 year after graduation starting with May 2004 graduates</p>	<p>4) Satisfactory approval by student's dissertation committee</p> <p>5) Satisfactory rating</p>	<p>4) Student's Dissertation Committee</p> <p>5) Program Coordinator</p>
<p>6. Program graduates will demonstrate the ability to conduct analytical inquiry and independent research activities that include the formulation, design, and investigation of major intellectual problems that make original contributions to the knowledge base in higher education.</p> <p>Tasks include the ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Principles and skills of research design, data collection, analysis, and interpretation;</li> <li>Appropriate technological tools for the conduct of research;</li> <li>Develop research questions and use appropriate principles and methods for investigation and interpretation, applying standards of rigor to all research efforts;</li> <li>Conduct analytical inquiry and independent research activities that make original contributions to the knowledge base in higher education.</li> </ul>	<p>1) Course exams</p> <p>2) Course papers</p> <p>3) Comprehensive examinations</p> <p>4) Dissertation Proposal</p> <p>5) Dissertation</p> <p>6) Employer and Student Follow-up Surveys</p>	<p>1) Rubrics (ongoing developments)</p> <p>2) Rubrics (ongoing development)</p> <p>3) Rubrics (ongoing development)</p> <p>4) Rubrics (ongoing development)</p> <p>5) Rubrics (ongoing development)</p> <p>6) Statistical Analysis</p>	<p>1) Completion of EDFN 7304, EDFN 8305, EDFN 8306, EDFN 7373</p> <p>2) Same as above</p> <p>3) After students have successfully completed all course work (except HIED 8399)</p> <p>4) After students have successfully completed HIED 8399</p> <p>5) Upon successful completion of comprehensive examinations and successfully completed HIED 83999</p> <p>6) Every 5 years beginning 1 year after graduation starting with May 2004 graduates</p>	<p>1) 'B' or better/3.0 overall gpa</p> <p>2) 'B' or better</p> <p>3) Pass comprehensive examinations</p> <p>4) Satisfactory approval by committee</p> <p>5) Satisfactory approval by committee</p> <p>6) Satisfactory rating</p>	<p>1) Course Instructors</p> <p>2) Course Instructors</p> <p>3) Program Faculty</p> <p>4) Student's Dissertation Committee</p> <p>5) Student's Dissertation Committee</p> <p>6) Program Coordinator</p>

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(4) Methods used:

**Knowledge Base; Student Enrollment and Graduation Data; Course Grades; oral and written Comprehensive Exam results; Dissertation proposal, written and oral; Dissertation written and oral defense; Stakeholder Feedback from current students, alumni, and employers.**

All students enrolled in the program were assessed on all appropriate instruments/variables and grades in courses. For those assessment activities that only apply to candidates or program graduates, all candidates and graduates were assessed through comprehensive exams and dissertation. In recent years, the program had been experiencing low pass rates for first-time sitters on comprehensive exams, and the program faculty compared the corresponding course grades with comprehensive exam “low passes” and “failures.” The program began a comprehensive student data base to track graduation rates and hurdles in the HIED pipeline that increase drop-out rates. Feedback from current students, alumni, and employers has been critical to program priorities, program changes, and program plans for the future. Those individuals directly involved with the development of this Assessment Progress Report included all full-time Higher Education faculty members. For the last two years, the major emphases of the Higher Education Ed.D. assessment effort has been to improve inputs and outcomes for the new and increased quality standards for passing comprehensive exams, increased quality standards for dissertations, and improved curriculum and instruction. During the last two years, efforts have been made to interject classroom activities that would improve the preparation of students for performing under the conditions of the qualifying examination. The essay nature of the testing, the time pressure, and the comprehensive nature of the testing were reflected in several of the key courses in the curriculum. The limited results seen in the qualifying examination this year were promising. Hopefully this level of success will become a trend. Stakeholder feedback has been gathered. This feedback was very supportive of the academic rigor of the program and the preparation that it offers for a career in higher education. Recent efforts to improve the social interaction of active students was appreciated and its continuation was encouraged.

### **Foundations of Higher Education:**

Students are systematically assessed on the knowledge base in each of the foundation of higher education courses. Different strategies are employed to assess student understanding of the historical, philosophical, social, cultural, economic, political, legal and organizational contexts and their influence on higher education. Primary assessments are course grades, including papers and projects; comprehensive exams, both written and oral; stakeholder feedback, including students, alumni, ad employers; and external experts.

### **Research:**

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Students are assessed on their *inquiry skills*—their ability to critically review research literature to identify a gap in the research base, plan a study, use various methods of observation and discovery, comprehend and extract information and ideas, sort and evaluate. These skills are assessed in courses through required research papers, case studies, and special projects, the comprehensive exams, the research proposal, during the writing and completion of a doctoral dissertation, and the oral defense. *Analytic skills* are evaluated through assessments of student abilities to formulate hypotheses and strategies for analysis; apply techniques, rules and models to solve problems; demonstrate breadth, flexibility and creativity; evaluate assumptions, evidence and reasoning; and find relationships and draw conclusions. (These analytic skills are assessed in a similar manner and at similar points in the curriculum as the inquiry skills.) Students are assessed on their *research skills* by demonstrating that they know the literature of their specialized field; know how to implement appropriate research methods; produce original research; make connections between theory and practice; and understand how to transmit that knowledge to analyze and solve problems in their field.

**Program-Level Assessments:**

Program level assessments include comprehensive exams, dissertation proposal and oral defense, dissertation, written and public, oral defense. Follow-up assessment will occur annually with alumni and employers through questionnaires regarding employment, promotions, publications, presentations, salary information, including feedback on program strengths, weaknesses, and suggestions for improvement.

**5. What are the assessment findings? How did you analyze them?**

**Goal 1: Foundations of Higher Education**

**1. Articulate the underlying philosophical and theoretical foundations of higher education.**

Each student who took the qualifying examination from the Spring of 2010 through the Spring of 2011 passed. This is in stark contrast to previous years. The observations within this data set are limited in number and preclude any statistical inference. It is, however, a promising short term trend. The higher education faculty in raised the standards for Comprehensive Exams in 2005. Students now must pass all sections of the exam in two sittings, or they are dismissed from the program. *Analysis of pass rates for first-time-sitting students over the years 2004-2007 reveal that only 62% of students pass all sections on the first try.* During that same time-frame, almost all students who re-sat passed sections previously failed; however, two students have been dismissed from the program during that time for failing higher education sections on the second sitting. Program faculty keep Comp Exam grids by student by section by “Pass”, “Low Pass”, “Fail”, and, occasionally, a rating may be identified as a “High Pass,” if the answer is exceptional. The improved performance of the last two years was produced without any changing of the requirements for success or a major change in the level of questioning. In the

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short term, class performance and qualifying examination performance were substantially more in line than they had been in the past.

**2. Articulate, in writing and orally, an understanding of cultural, historical, social, political, economic & organizational contexts and influences on higher education**

Success as measured by the qualifying examination process improved substantially in 2007-2008. Analysis of the 2008 Qualifying Examination showed a 74% pass rate of students on the general content sections. This is in stark contrast to previous from the 2004-2007 timeframe. First-time-sitting pass rate for all Comp Exam sections was only 62% from 2004-2007.

A similar transition was visible in the research core portion of the qualifying exam. In 2004-2007, of 38 test-takers, there were 28 failures on EDFN comp sections with corresponding grades of 23 "A"s and 5 "B"s. In student feedback activities, students complain most frequently about the EDFN 7303, 9306, 7304, 8305, 7373 courses not preparing them for comprehensive exams and HIED 8399 dissertation seminar. The 2008 results on these sections was an 81% first-time pass rate.

Student comments indicate (as in years past) that program strengths as the quality and content of the HIED courses and the increased expectations for quality and rigor. Students continue to note higher education faculty turnover as a key program weakness.

*Students are generally satisfied when surveyed upon completion of qualifying examinations. A variety of recommendations, however, have been offered. A broad concern for a lack of on-ground options in certain courses seems apparent. This is somewhat balanced an appreciation of specific online courses, and a very positive evaluation of hybrid courses. Consequently, it appears that the program students have a positive view of online education techniques to a certain extent while reliance on the online medium is associated with some problems.*

**3. Articulate an understanding of the independent research project in the historical, philosophical, cultural, economic, social, and/or political, contexts of higher education.**

*Students are knowledgeable of historical, philosophical, cultural, economic, social and political contexts, but they have difficulty conceptualizing an independent research project. This finding comes from the careful analysis of results of first-time and second-time sitters on the comprehensive exams from the years 2004-2007 as reported under Objectives 1 and 2.*

**Goal 6: Research**

**1. Articulate and demonstrate the principles and skills underlying qualitative and quantitative research.**

The calendar year of 2010 was a good one for the program as measured by the research intensive portions of the qualifying examination. The limited number of students performed well on this

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portion of the examination. Efforts to create a more realistic preparation for the students for the examination may have contributed to this short term result and should be continued. Course grades clearly reflected testing performance in this area, indicating the possibility of an improved level of reliability. This is a departure from recent previous years. More analysis should be done on this in the future as more data becomes available.

Recent years have indicated a potential problem somewhere in the teaching, learning, and testing process for research and statistical methods. A 2004-2007 analysis revealed high “failure” & “low pass” rates for EDFN 7373/Qualitative Research (10 “failures” and 13 “low passes” out of 38 first-time test-takers), with a 47% failure rate in 2007.

Following this outcome, increased emphasis was placed on the preparation. An additional analysis was performed on the 2008 Qualifying Exam results. This produced 83% pass rate, indicating improvement.

Similar problems have historically existed for quantitative research preparation. A 2004-2007 analysis revealed high “failure” and “low pass” rates on the Comprehensive Exams for EDFN 7303 & 8306/Advanced Research Methods (7 “failures” & 4 “low passes” out of 38 first-time test-takers), with a 42% failure rate in 2007. In response to this history, the preparation process was revamped in 2008 which was followed by a 75% pass rate.

Students complain most frequently about : EDFN 7303, 8306, 7304, 8305, 7373 courses not preparing them for comprehensive exams, HIED 8399/ dissertation seminar; and dissertation proposal; faculty turnover is also cited as a key program weakness. A year of faculty stability (starting in 2009), along with increased exposure to quantitative analysis in test condition, will hopefully improve these concerns.

In 2010, student performance went up in this area while student complaints declined. This issue will be revisited next year.

- 2. Critique, synthesize, and interpret the findings from published research summaries**
- 3. Develop meaningful research questions and use appropriate principles and methods for investigation and interpretation, applying standards of rigor to all research effort**
- 4. Conduct analytical inquiry and independent research activities that make original contributions to the knowledge base in higher education.**

Students noted HIED Ed.D. program strengths as the increased expectations of quality and rigor for coursework, comprehensive exams, and dissertations, and the quality and content of the HIED courses.

**(6) What conclusions were drawn and what decisions were made as a result? How were stakeholder groups involved?**

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### **Goal 1, Foundations of Higher Education**

**1. Articulate the underlying philosophical and theoretical foundations of higher education.**

*Course content and expectations should be re-evaluated and realigned as necessary through revisions to course rubrics and comprehensive exam questions and rubrics.*

*Improvements to Comprehensive Exams are needed to support increased content rigor and quality standards for passing. Higher Education faculty initiated revisions to course syllabi, readings and assignments, revisions to course rubrics, and increased the number of mid-term and final exams taken under “comps conditions.”*

**2. Articulate, in writing and orally, an understanding of cultural, historical, social, political, economic & organizational contexts and influences on higher education.**

*Improvements to Comprehensive Exams are needed to support increased content rigor and quality standards for passing. Higher education program faculty took the following actions and decisions: analyzed and revised comprehensive exam questions; realigned questions and elements with student learning goals; increased guidance for comps study strategies for certain sections of the exam; secured an external analysis of existing comps rubrics; initiated revisions to comp question rubrics; changed time constraints around the exams from 2 consecutive 8-hour days of writing to 1½ days and 1 day over two consecutive weekends.*

*Historically there has been an unfortunate disparity between course grades and corresponding failing grades on certain sections of the Comprehensive Exams for first-time sitters. The higher education program faculty, with the help of the department chair, initiated development of an updated HIED student data base.*

The higher education faculty decided that it may lessen test anxiety to isolate the EDFN test sections to the first ½ day of first weekend of comp exams; this practice is to be implemented with the Spring 2008 administration of the exam. An additional change has been made in the way in which students are prepared for and exposed to the qualifying examination process for the research core. This is expected to improve both performance and skill levels in this area.

**3. Articulate an understanding of the independent research project in the historical, philosophical, cultural, economic, social, and/or political, contexts of higher education.**

Students completing the coursework process appear to have a limited skill level in producing in independent research project. Efforts have been made and are continuing to be made to expose students to a greater research experience.

### **Goal 6: Research**

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Courses and Comprehensive Exams, Objective 1

**1. Articulate and demonstrate the principles and skills underlying qualitative and quantitative research.**

Qualitative and Quantitative research course and Comprehensive Exam preparation, mastery and pass rates are improving but remain questionable..

Dissertation Phase, Objectives 2-4

**2. Critique, synthesize, and interpret the findings from published research summaries**

**3. Develop meaningful research questions and use appropriate principles and methods for investigation and interpretation, applying standards of rigor to all research effort**

**4. Conduct analytical inquiry and independent research activities that make original contributions to the knowledge base in higher education**

The 2010 performance of recent doctoral candidates (dissertation proposal and writing phase) has been very positive. The majority of these candidates are making timely progress and may graduate within the next 1-2 years. This may be related to recent changes in the advising and student tracking/ socialization process. Extensive efforts have been made to improve the completion of the dissertation process. Intensive advising efforts have been brought about to increase student engagement and streamline the completion process. Potential dropout points in the dissertation process have been improved with an intention to prevent stalling out for dedicated and capable students. Advanced orientations have been offered to students as well as social/networking gatherings. These steps will be completed and further analysis will be completed as additional data becomes available.

Post-Dissertation Phase, Objective 5

**5. Articulate contributions of research to education, knowledge, and practice**

The scholarly research efforts of doctoral students have been promising this year. The expectation of original and scholarly research that has been inserted into the program appears to be having the desired effect. Completed Ed.D. dissertations are consistently producing publishable findings. These efforts will be continued over the next year and evaluated further in the future.

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