Permanent Status Program Review

MEd in Teacher Leadership

April 2018

# Introduction

Based on the self-study report, the review team during the month of April met multiple times to evaluate and comment on the specific areas enumerated in the “Permanent Status Program Review Report Sample Outline for Evaluation Report” document and as a result has generated the subsequent report. The review team, as such, was required to make its assessment of the viability of the Masters of Education in Teacher Leadership, approved provisionally by the Faculty Senate on April 8, 2013.

# Objectives, Strengths, and Weaknesses

## 1.      Does the major/program meet its originally stated goals and objectives?

The MEd and teacher leadership was originally crafted as a fully online 30 credit graduate program which serve to prepare certified teachers to improve their understanding of teacher leadership roles and responsibilities. Further, the State of Delaware requires that 40% of teachers’ professional development be in the area of teacher leadership. The program was initially aligned with the national teacher leadership standards for degree programs. As such the program sought to address seven major functions of school leadership from creating a collaborative Culture to understanding and using research to improve practice to promoting professional opportunities for learning, to helping to improve instruction and student learning and improving use of assessment data for districtwide improvements.

Specifically, the objectives of the program sought to develop teachers who could:

* Coach and mentor others,
* leverage technology to foster collaboration,
* systematically look at classroom-based and school based data to identify people’s needs and collaboratively select intervention methods,
* apply understanding about diverse schools when developing culturally relevant professional development,
* use the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of a teacher leader to enable them to lead from the classroom.

Based on the self-study document these program aims have not changed.

A review of the courses required of students shows that these are in alignment with the objectives of the program.

Students are required to complete 10, 3-credit courses. Courses include critically aligned content such as Promoting Equitable Schools EDUC 776, Coaching Teachers EDUC 768, Designing Professional Development EDUC 774, Teacher Leadership in Education Policy EDUC 720, Fostering Technology-based Collaboration EDUC 777, as well as courses on Assessment and Research, such as Data Based Decision Making and Assessment EDUC 735, and Action Research EDUC 773.

Students appear to do well in these courses with majority receiving a B+ or higher.

## 2.      Is the major/program compatible with the Academic Priorities of the University?

The major aligns with a number of the University of Delaware’s academic priorities for students. These include a University goal of enhancing the success of our students to foster an environment of inclusive excellence and to foster a spirit of innovation and entrepreneurship. Given that this is a graduate program, it seeks to advance excellence in professional education as the program seeks to produce graduates who specialize in in leadership and can develop new mechanisms to strengthen their school communities. In addition, the program also works to strengthen interdisciplinary and global programs given the inherently interdisciplinary nature of K-12 teaching. The program as an online program with a partnership with Wiley has taken a relatively unique approach to implementation and serving professionals with more flexible master’s degree coursework options. Finally, the program has received approval for a reduction in per credit cost, which has potential he made it more accessible to a broader range of educators.

## 3.      What are the strengths and weaknesses of this major/program?

The program appears to have many strengths including the seven-week, five-term approach to instruction. The approach allows students to take courses in the fall spring A or summer but begin an any of the terms offered throughout the year thus providing more flexibility to enter and complete coursework while working as a professional in the field. Furthermore, the partnership with Wiley to create a fully online program that is lower cost them any other graduate programs has created a competitive advantage regionally given the lack of other masters in teacher leadership programs available. In terms of content, the program offers a unique educational program geared toward teachers who want to enhance their leadership capacity as teachers, distinct for educational administration. Enhancing teachers’ opportunities to lead from the classroom is an area of professional growth that while valued, lacks many graduate program options.

# Impact and Demand

## 1.                  Describe any significant impact the proposed curricula might have on other instructional, research, or service programs of the University.

There appears to be little potential impact of the program on other University programs. It does not have a relationship with programs or faculty in other disciplines, requires no electives, and is entirely focused on classroom practice and leadership in education. All courses come from the School of Education.

## 2.                  Are the admissions requirements for this major/program clearly stated and fairly implemented?

Admissions requirements are clearly stated and appear fairly implemented. Few changes have been made in this regard since the program’s inception with the exception of requiring a minimum GPA of 3.0 rather than 2.75 in order to better align enrollment criteria with program expectations which require a 3.0 GPA to graduate.

## 3.                  Is there sufficient demand for this major/program to warrant granting it permanent status?  Are enrollments strong?

The projected enrollment was 30 students in year one building to 100 students by year 3. While the program has not quite attained their projected enrolled goals, the reviewers do feel program enrollment is strong and demonstrates a new thriving masters program. Applications to the program have grown between the years 2014 and 2017 from 22 to 28 to 45 and to 30 as of September 2017. The first cohort graduated 22 students in 2016 (2 withdrew from the program) and another 39 students in 2017. Only one student withdrew in the 2017 year. As such the program has graduated 61 students in two years, reflecting a strong demand.

## 4.                  Do the students in the major/program receive appropriate advising and mentoring?

Students meet regularly with faculty to discuss student progress in courses and in the program as a whole and information provided by the Interim Director for the School of Education indicates that “students report great satisfaction with the coursework both on their regular course evaluations and other measures collected by faculty.”

Because it is an online program, students also receive access to Canvas Online New Student Orientation materials. This orientation supplies students with information regarding logistical and programmatic information related to the graduate level program work requirements, faculty introductions, and a review of faculty and student policies and procedures prior to beginning classes. Based on student feedback and on the relatively few students withdrawing from the program or being delayed in their graduation, it appears as though students receive appropriate advising and/or mentorship.

## 5.                  Does the major/program require additional student expenses beyond the traditional books and supplies, such that additional need for financial aid can be expected?

No additional expenses are noted, however the opportunity to apply for financial aid exists through the UD Graduate office.

## 6.                  Does the program have the support of departmental and affiliated faculty?

Yes, the department has submitted a letter of support for the program.

## 7.                  Are resources available to support and maintain the program/major?

Yes, the program appears to have the resources necessary to support and maintain the program. The partnership with Wiley provides infrastructure support for admissions and for Virtual Open Houses, marketing and related resources. Further the partnership has provided resources to support course registration and information about financial aid. Further, the program is generative for the college and is perceived as a “strong asset” to the University’s efforts to build and strengthen opportunities for graduate education at UD.

# Evaluation

## 1.      Does the major/program address any of the ten goals of General Education at the University (question for undergraduate programs only)? N/A

## 2.      Has the major/program clearly delineated the knowledge, values, skills, and other learning outcomes that their graduates will be expected to have acquired?

Yes, the program has aligned the required skills and key elements set forth by the accrediting body, NCATE. These include content knowledge, Pedagogical Content Knowledge and Skills, Professional Content Knowledge and Skills, Student Learning and Professional Dispositions.

## 3.      Has the major/program implemented a plan to evaluate and assess the learning outcomes of its students?

Yes, student Content knowledge, Pedagogical Content Knowledge and Skills, Professional Content Knowledge and Skills, Student Learning and Professional Dispositions are all evaluated and assessed via exams, unit plans, action research projects or via instructor surveys. Student grades rarely fell below a B and faculty reports of student dispositions were reported as acceptable, with no student falling into the unacceptable category for any dimension.

## 4.      Please comment on completion and job placement of students who completed the program/major.

Student feedback about the program indicates that it has supported their confidence in interviewing for jobs, increased awareness of teachers as leaders and helped teachers achieve a status as a valued team member. However, this data appears to be informally gathered and we would recommend a more formal process to solicit program feedback. As for job placement, since the students in this program are currently employed certified teachers, many remain in their current position. However, it would be helpful to know whether completion of this masters program has led to career advancement such as advancing to department chair, curriculum coaches, demonstration teachers, professional development specialist or non-administrative leadership positions. This would be important data to track of the graduates.

## Additional Comments Please add any observations or comments you may have about this major/program.

# Overall, the reviewers feel that the MEd in Teacher Leadership is a thriving program with strong enrollment, a well-developed and established curriculum with clear outcomes, and should be recommended for permanent status. Student feedback is positive and it appears this program fills a niche. Professional development in the area of leadership is highly valued by the State of Delaware. Further, this program is aligned with the National Teacher Leadership Standards. Our only recommendation is that the program should track graduates to determine more systematically how and if the completion of a MEd in Teacher Leadership has changed the trajectory of their teaching or role in the building, as well as student satisfaction with the program.